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Monipuri
weavers see
huge Eid
salesMominul
opens
up on
strugglesRussian ships
planning
North Sea
sabotageWind power
plant for
clean energy
production

YABA GLUT menacing the city

Law enforcers blame Myanmar
junta-led production spree

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

It was close to 10:00pm on April 11. As usual, people were busy buying daily commodities from shops at the capital's Mohammadpur Geneva Camp.

This correspondent, posing as a buyer, was walking around there.

- Online sales of the drug, ingenious smuggling methods are making it harder for law enforcers to check the trade
- Expert stress on holistic approach, arrest of kingpins to tackle crisis
- Drug users, peddlers say yaba price plummeting

Within three to four minutes, a 25-year-old skinny youth appeared from an alley, and asked "Mama, how many [yaba] do you want?"

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

PM'S JAPAN VISIT Dhaka, Tokyo eye greater cooperation

PORIMOL PALMA



In a world polarized by the US-led West and China-Russia bloc, Dhaka and Tokyo want to elevate their relationship to a strategic level during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to Japan scheduled for April 25-28.

Hasina will meet Japanese Prime Minister Kishida Fumio, who will host a working dinner.

She will also call on the emperor of Japan, according to the foreign ministry.

Dhaka and Tokyo are expected to sign 10 memorandums of understanding (MoU) on defence cooperation, economic partnership agreement, cyber security, ICT, agriculture, human resource development, education, trade and investment.

Foreign ministry officials said the defence cooperation does not mean buying military equipment.

Initially, it will be mostly training and information exchange. Later, if needed, Bangladesh may buy defence equipment, including patrol boats or radars for maritime security.

The economic partnership agreement will be signed so that Bangladesh continues to have trade privileges after its graduation from LDC.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

Car troubles during Eid trip? Call 999

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

Worried about car troubles during your Eid journey? Don't be.

The Highway Police has taken special initiatives to make the Eid journey smooth and comfortable. They will even provide you with mechanics if your car breaks down on the highway.

What do you have to do? Just call 999.

Police have collected the phone numbers of local garage mechanics and listed them so that if your vehicle breaks down on the road, they can be repaired quickly.

Highway Police Chief Additional IGP AKM Shahabuddin Khan yesterday revealed this information to reporters after inspecting the road at Baipal Trimor area of Nabinagar Chandra highway in Ashulia, reports our Savar correspondent.

He said the initiative will help maintain traffic movement during the Eid rush. He hoped that despite the expected rush, the Eid journey will be comfortable this time.

Deputy Inspector General of Highway Police Mahfuzur Rahman, Additional DIG Barkatullah Khan, Additional DIG Shyamal Kumar Mukherjee, Gazipur Region Superintendent of Police Mostafizur Rahman, and Additional Superintendent of Police (Dhaka District North Traffic Police) Abdullah Hill Kafi were present.



Hundreds of motorcyclists waiting to pay the toll to travel across the Jamuna through the Bangabandhu bridge in Tangail. The long queue formed yesterday morning even after the authorities set up two toll collection booths only for the bikers.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Eid journey largely trouble-free

Trains on time; highways jam-free

TUHIN SHUBHIRA ADHIKARY and
SAJJAD HOSSAIN

To celebrate Eid with their loved ones, thousands left Dhaka yesterday on trains, buses, and launches, and their journeys were mostly free of hassles.

Almost all trains left Dhaka on time and no major traffic congestion was reported from any key highways as of 7:30pm.

However, on the first day of Eid holidays, passengers heading for the south from the Sayedabad Bus Terminal had to pay extra and wait a long time to get on buses.

People started to leave Dhaka in the morning and formed huge crowds at bus terminals and the Kamalapur Railway Station. The crowd shrunk around noon but started to swell in the evening.

According to the control room set up by the road transport and bridges ministry at the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA), there were no major issues for travellers.

These correspondents visited Gabtoli and Sayedabad bus terminals between 11:00am and 2:00pm and found not so big crowds.

At Sayedabad, some alleged that they were being overcharged by up to Tk 200. Although

Tk 200. Although there was a police control room and BRTA booths, the authorities did not intervene, they alleged.

Suman Hossain had to pay Tk 750 for a non-AC bus ticket for Barishal even though the ticket mentioned Tk 600 as the fare. The actual price of the ticket is Tk 534 as per the BRTA fare chart.

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When Suman asked why he was being overcharged, the ticket seller at the Shyamoli Paribahan counter said he was charging as per the owner's directives.

Asked, Ramesh Chandra Ghosh, Shyamoli Paribahan owner and the chairman of Bangladesh Bus-Truck Owners Association, yesterday said almost empty buses return to Dhaka

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

AL POLITICS Barishal sees overnight shift

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE with SUSHANTA GHOSH

The Awami League's decision to choose Abul Khair Abdullah over his nephew and incumbent mayor Serniabat Sadiq Abdullah as the Barishal mayoral candidate has changed political equations in the city.

Sadiq is the son of Abul Hasnat Abdullah, a veteran politician who is the president of Barishal district Awami League, lawmaker from Barishal-1 and a member of AL's central working committee.

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

The two have already started losing their grip on local politics with Khair, the youngest brother of Hasnat, appearing on the scene.

Immediately after his nomination on Saturday, the speedboat terminal of Barishal, a city crisscrossed by rivers and canals, was captured by the anti-Sadiq faction within the party.

The faction is also looking to take the microbus and three-wheelers stand at Rupatali and the central bus terminal at Nathullabad, and a tense situation is prevailing in the areas.

Sadiq earned a bad name for keeping these terminals under his control.

His rivals, who never dared speak against him or his father, brought out a procession welcoming the party decision and distributed sweets on Saturday night.

There has been a festive mood among the followers of

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

BUSINESS

Eid shopping peaks

Eid shopping in Bangladesh has reached its peak as shoppers are thronging shopping malls and markets although higher consumer prices and the heatwave mean businesses might not pull off the sales target they have set for the biggest spending season. Some shoppers came in droves and they were all in a festive mood, going from one outlet to another to buy their desired clothes and other items to celebrate the festival.

STORY ON B1



Shopkeepers of Bangabazar are selling clothes under large umbrellas on the ground where the market stood before the devastating fire on April 4. However, only a fraction of the affected traders have been able to set up shops.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

4 women killed after being hit by train

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Tangail

Four women were killed after a train hit them when they were walking on a railway track in Tangail's Kalihati upazila early yesterday.

The victims are Bashonti, 60, Aroti Rani Das, 55, Shanti Rani, 45, and Shilpi Rani, 28, of the district's Bhuapur upazila, said Nazmul Hasan, sub-inspector of Bangabandhu Bridge East Police Station.

The incident took place in Mirhamjani area of Salla union around 5:30am, he added.

"They were hit by Dhaka-bound Ekota Express when they were walking on the railway track."

Another woman named Josna Rani Das was injured in the incident. She was undergoing treatment at Bhuapur Upazila Health Complex, said the police officer.

RAMPAL POWER PLANT Production resumes after 5 days

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

After five days, Rampal power plant yesterday resumed production.

On April 14, power generation at the plant stopped due to mechanical failure, causing severe load shedding in Bagerhat and surrounding districts.

Now 400MW is being generated at the plant, said Anwarul Azim, deputy general manager of Bangladesh India Partnership Power Company Ltd.

He said the production resumed at 1:00am.

The plant was connected to the national grid from December 17 last year. It stopped production on January 14 due to coal shortage. After about a month, power generation started again on February 15.

15 Tunisian migrants missing in the Med

AFP, Tunis

Fifteen Tunisian migrants are missing after their boat sank in the Mediterranean during an attempt to reach Europe, authorities said yesterday.

The boat carrying 19 Tunisians sank Monday night, said a statement by Tunisia's National Guard, which oversees the coastguard.

Four migrants were rescued by a fisherman after the boat sank, while the search for the remaining 15 continued yesterday morning, the statement added.

Tunisia, whose coastline is less than 150 kilometres (90 miles) from the Italian island of Lampedusa, has long been a favoured stepping stone for migrants attempting the perilous sea journey.

Last week, 32 migrants from sub-Saharan Africa drowned while attempting the crossing.

The number of departures of African migrants has intensified after President Kais Saied made a fiery speech on February 21 claiming that illegal immigration was a demographic threat to Tunisia.

The North African country is in the grip of a long, worsening economic crisis that has pushed many of its citizens to take desperate measures in search of better lives abroad.



Shahidul sells hand fans made of palm leaves for Tk 25 each on the streets of Barishal city. He has been earning about Tk 800 a day since the temperatures began to rise a week ago.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

South Asia home to highest number of child brides

Shows Unicef study

REUTERS, New Delhi

South Asia is home to highest number of child brides in the world as increased financial pressures and school closures due to Covid-19 forced families to marry off their young daughters, according to new estimates released by Unicef yesterday.

There were 290 million child brides in the region, accounting for 45 percent of the global total, the children's agency of the United Nations said, calling for more efforts to end the practice.

"The fact that South Asia has the highest child marriage burden in the world is nothing short of tragic," said Noala Skinner, Unicef's regional director for South Asia, said in a statement.

"Child marriage locks girls out of learning, puts their health and wellbeing at risk and compromises their future. Every girl who gets married as a child is one girl too many."

A new study by the agency that also included interviews and discussions across 16 locations in Bangladesh, India and Nepal found that many parents saw marriage as the best option for daughters who had limited options to study during Covid lockdowns.

The legal age of marriage for females

is 20 in Nepal, 18 in India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh and 16 in Afghanistan. It is 16 in Pakistan except for Sindh province, where the minimum age is 18.

The UN study also found that families were pushed by financial strains during the pandemic to marry their daughters young in order to reduce costs at home.

The UN study included interviews and discussions across 16 locations in Bangladesh, India and Nepal.

The agency said potential solutions identified in discussions include enacting social protection measures to counter poverty, protecting every child's right to education, ensuring an adequate framework to enforce the law and making more efforts to address social norms.

"We must do more and strengthen partnerships to empower girls through education, including comprehensive sexuality education, and equipping them with skills, while supporting communities to come together to end this deeply rooted practice," said Björn Andersson, Asia-Pacific regional director of the United Nations Population Fund.

Swathes of Asia sweat in heatwave

Swathes of Asia sweat in heatwave

AFP, Bangkok

Sweltering under a blistering sun, people across South and Southeast Asia have been taking cover beneath any shelter they can find as they pray for cooling rains with record temperatures hitting the region.

Bangladesh saw its highest temperature for almost 60 years in the past week, while in India at least 13 people died from heatstroke along with two in Thailand, according to local media.

Thailand's Meteorological Department said Wednesday that temperatures hit a record-equalling 44.6 degrees Celsius (112 Fahrenheit) in the western province of Tak on April 15.

"This year's record heat in Thailand, China and South Asia is a clear climate trend and will cause public health challenges for years to come," said scientist Fahad Saeed, regional lead for climate policy institute Climate Analytics.

He warned that soaring temperatures were a result of climate change – and that the impact on vulnerable populations would be dire.

50 Rohingya houses burned

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Around 50 houses were burned as a fire broke out at a refugee camp in Teknaf upazila of Cox's Bazar early yesterday.

Firefighters brought the situation under control after one and a half hours, said Rashed Mohammad Ali, chairman of Hnila Union Parishad.

The fire broke out at camp 24 which is located near Cox's Bazar-Teknaf highway, he added.

"We have come to know that some 50 Rohingya houses were damaged. We are working to find out the reason behind the fire," said Mohammad Jamal Pasha, superintendent of police (media) of Armed Police Battalion 16.

Man dies in train accident

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A young man died after being hit by a train at Shibbari in Sylhet's Dakshin Surma upazila on Tuesday night.

Dead Abdur Rahman, 37, of Zakiganj upazila, used to reside in Dakshin Surma upazila.

The man was sitting on the rail line around 10:00pm when Chattogram-bound Udayan Express hit him, said SM Kamal Hossain, officer-in-charge of Railway Police Station in Sylhet.

Police recovered the body and sent it to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College for autopsy, he further said, adding that a case would be filed in this connection.

2 friends die in road crash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Two friends were killed in a road accident on Dhaka-Khulna highway in Faridpur Sadar upazila early yesterday.

The dead are Nazrul Islam, 28, and Rayhan Molla, 29, of Domrakandi area in the upazila.

The duo was on a motorcycle when a truck hit them. They fell on the road. A CNG-run three-wheeler ran over them. Nazrul died on the spot and Rayhan breathed his last on his way to Dhaka, said Sohidur Rahman, officer in charge of Karimpur Highway Police Station.

WHO warns Covid pandemic still volatile

AFP, Geneva

The World Health Organization on Tuesday warned the Covid pandemic was still volatile, saying there could be further trouble before the virus settles into a predictable pattern.

In the last 28 days, more than 23,000 deaths and three million new cases have been reported to the WHO, in the context of much-reduced testing.

While the numbers are decreasing, "that's still a lot of people dying and that's still a lot of people getting sick", WHO emergencies director Michael Ryan told a press conference.

He said respiratory viruses do not pass from a pandemic to an endemic phase, but instead move to low levels of activity with potentially seasonal epidemic peaks.

Yaba glut menacing the city

FROM PAGE 1

As this correspondent wanted to know the price of two big sized yaba pills, he demanded Tk 400 for them.

After a little bargaining, he lowered his price to Tk 250, saying it was his last offer.

For obvious reasons, this correspondent refused the offer saying that "the price is still high".

The Daily Star has visited at least five spots in the capital over the last couple of weeks and learnt that the flow of yaba, a popular and highly-addictive drug, has increased significantly recently.

Besides the Geneva Camp, the four other spots are the capital's Kawran Bazar railway tracks; near the FDC gate of south Begunbari; Gudaraghata of Mirpur I; and near the Ceramic Gate in Pallabi section 12.

During the visits, this newspaper managed to talk to at least three community leaders, two drug peddlers, and two buyers, who confirmed the recent surge in supply.

Law enforcement agencies have attributed the surge and price drop to increased production of the drug in Myanmar under the patronisation of its junta government, a claim supported by reports published in international media.

Last month, the UN said law enforcement agencies across Southeast and East Asia netted nearly 172 tonnes of methamphetamine, the ingredient of yaba, in 2021 – about seven times more than a decade ago.

The surge in supply has sent street prices in Thailand and Malaysia crashing to all-time lows, according to international media reports.

The reports said the Myanmar junta is protecting large scale drug production to ensure stability in conflict zones as it faces a revolt against the 2021 coup.

This includes Shan state, Southeast Asia's primary source of methamphetamine, according to the United Nations.

The reports correspond with the recent price drop in Bangladesh.

While visiting the Kawran Bazar railway tracks on Monday night, this correspondent met a yaba user who works at a nearby kitchen market.

"I have been taking the pills since 2012. At first, the price was around Tk 300, but now I can buy it for only Tk 150. It has become cheaper recently," the person said.

Humayun Kabir Khondakar, deputy director of the Department of Narcotic Control (DNC), admitted the surge in supply and price drop.

Khondakar, who has conducted research on yaba for the last two years, said the flow started to increase after the Myanmar military took over power in February 2021 and started patronising yaba production.

Khondakar conducted his research with the assistance of 120 yaba users from different rehab centres, 180 officials of law enforcement agencies, and dozens of yaba dealers in Cox's Bazar.

His research found that Myanmar state patronage has halved the production cost of yaba.

Just two years ago, the production cost of a pill was 1,000 Myanmar Kyat, equivalent to Tk 50. It is now less than 500 Myanmar Kyat, said Khondakar, citing his findings.

A piece of yaba now costs only Tk 25 at the Rohingya camps, he added.

This correspondent, while talking to addicts and traders, learnt that the current slump in price in the capital came around two months ago.

Users and traders said the retail price for a small-sized yaba is now Tk 70 to Tk 80, which was Tk 120 just two months ago.

Asked, a drug trader in the Geneva Camp said the price dropped as a huge number of pills have flooded the market.

Another trader said the drug is now being sold online increasingly, and users can have home deliveries. It makes the spread of the drug ominously easier.

"For home delivery, the drug dealer always sends female carriers to evade law enforcers," he said.

Asked about the supply surge, Md Mehedi Hasan, assistant director of the Department of Narcotic Control, said the seizure of yaba tripled in recent months.

"We used to seize around 10 to 20 thousand pills a month just a year ago, but it now rose to 50 to 60 thousand pills," he said.

Sources say the majority of the yaba consignments are entering the country through different points in Teknaf and Cox's Bazar. After entering the country, the yaba consignments are first stored at the Rohingya camps. From there, those are smuggled to different parts of the country.

The drug smugglers are using ingenious ways for transferring yaba and mainly using poor women and children as drug mules to avoid suspicion and arrests, according to sources at the Rohingya camps.

Contacted, Md Faruk Ahmed, assistant superintendent of police (ops and media) of the Armed Police Battalion (APBn-8), said they are on alert and conducting regular drives in the Rohingya camps.

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PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Clockwise from left, amidst the scorching summer sun, holidaymakers at Dhaka's Kamalapur Railway Station struggle to board overcrowded trains. Some were even seen squeezing into the goods compartment after buying standing tickets. A mother's love is evident as she fans her child, while another holds a table fan in front of the baby. These scenes from yesterday showcase the journeys of those who yearn to be with their loved ones during Eid.

Take measure to deal with fire incidents
CAAB issues warning to all airports

RASHIDUL HASAN

Fire incidents are taking place one after another in Dhaka, and amid this situation, Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh has been put on high alert to take measures to deal with such incidents.

Warnings have been issued at all airports of the country, including Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA), considering those places as sensitive and important facilities that have to deal with fire risk.

Meenawhile, Commissioner of Dhaka Customs in a letter to CAAB on Sunday said the fire risk level is very high in the customs houses and warehouses, which are under the control of CAAB.

"If adequate precautions are not taken, there is potential for major revenue risks," warned the notice.

CAAB has already beefed up security at various locations, especially at Dhaka airport's customs house, airfreight warehouses and the import and export cargo village.

The authority has also issued three directives to prevent fire at HSIA.

Group Captain Kamrul Islam, executive director of HSIA, told The Daily Star that the directives stated that everyone should have their own fire extinguisher, be trained in fire control, and keep contact number of the nearest fire station.

"We are very alert about dealing with fire outbreaks. We have already issued a warning notice to all airport authorities," a CAAB official said.

Kamrul Islam said few days ago, they have already conducted a fire-extinguishing programme to ensure everyone is prepared to deal with a fire. "We are always vigilant and conducting inspections, and have been training personnel for fire extinguishing over the last few days."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

PRAYER TIMING
APRIL 20
Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4:14 12:45 4:45 6:26 8:00
JAMAAT 4:24 1:15 5:00 6:36 8:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING
RAMADAN APRIL SEHRI IFTAR
28 20 6:26
29 21 4:08 6:26
30 22 4:07 6:27

JAMIL MAHMUD

Recruitment of new Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia has been tainted by a number of irregularities, with a few dozen workers falling into trouble, which includes joblessness.

The anomalies surfaced amid allegations of high recruitment costs and "syndication", factors which plagued the recruitment process and led to a suspension in the past.

Malaysia reopened its labour market for Bangladesh last year, after nearly four years of suspension, with the first batch of new migrants reaching there in early August under a new arrangement.

Between August 2022 and February 2023, around 1.04 lakh migrant workers went to Malaysia for employment, according to the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET).

However, the Malaysian authorities sent 19 workers home from Kuala Lumpur International Airport on February 17, after the migrants' data were not found in the computerised system.

On March 16, news outlet Free Malaysia Today reported that 10 Bangladeshi workers were detained there after their supposed employer failed to provide them with jobs. The migrants entered Malaysia last December and were detained for "not possessing valid documents".

On March 16, news outlet Free Malaysia Today reported that 10 Bangladeshi workers were detained there after their supposed employer failed to provide them with jobs.

The migrants entered Malaysia last December and were detained for "not possessing valid documents", the report said.

They were among 95 workers who paid around RM 20,000 or Tk 4.75 lakh (RM 1 equivalent to Tk 23.76) each in recruitment fees to an agency in Bangladesh, which promised them jobs at an engineering company in Selangor, it added.

Contacted, Nazmus Sadat Salim, minister (labour) of Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur, recently said the mission learnt about the incidents and took prompt

lifting the embargo and agreeing to send and receive workers under a new arrangement.

However, a section of recruiting agencies questioned the new arrangement, alleging that a "syndicate" of only 25 agencies were given permission to send workers to Malaysia.

Currently, the number of agencies has been increased to 100, according to sector insiders.

The expatriates' welfare ministry fixed the



- ✓ 11.61 lakh workers hired from 1978 to Feb 2023
- ✓ Recruitment stopped in Sep 2018, following allegations of 'scams' by agencies
- ✓ MoU signed in Dec 2021, lifting embargo
- ✓ Around 1.04 lakh workers migrated between Aug 2022 and Feb 2023
- ✓ 19 workers detained on Feb 17, for absence of data in computerised system

TIMELINE

steps to resolve the issues.

Multiple stakeholders both in Bangladesh and Malaysia are involved in the recruitment of Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia. All parties need to be committed and sincere to ensure safe and orderly migration, he said.

A large labour market for Bangladesh, Malaysia hired about 11.61 lakh workers from Bangladesh from 1978 till February this year, shows BMET data.

The Southeast Asian country stopped recruiting Bangladeshi workers in September 2018, after media reports in Malaysia revealed a financial scam involving a "syndicate" of 10 Bangladeshi agencies and a Malaysian businessman who charged up to Tk 4 lakh against each worker.

After prolonged negotiations, the two countries signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in December 2021,

maximum migration cost at Tk 78,990 at the Bangladesh end to send a worker to Malaysia.

After a meeting with Malaysian Home Minister Saifuddin Nasution Ismail in Dhaka on February 5, Expatriates' Welfare Minister Imran Ahmad said the MoU is likely to be amended to make the recruitment process easier.

The Bangladeshi minister pointed out the political change in Malaysia, as a new government was formed following a general election in November last year. He said, "... There will be significant changes in whatever issues we had agreed upon with the previous government."

Labour migration expert Shariful Hasan said there has been information regarding the joblessness of Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



A resident finds solace in a makeshift oasis amid the sweltering weather in Dhaka. Using a pipe that was meant for watering plants, he washes his face in the middle of the road, seeking relief from the intense temperature. This photo was taken in Bijoy Sarani area on Tuesday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

How he became guardian to Gonoshasthaya family

Aleya Chowdhury in conversation with Star on brother Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury

STAR REPORT

Relinquishing the allurement of a luxurious lifestyle and personal interests, he became a companion of the destitute and helpless.

Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury fought for the country's independence in 1971. Later, he devoted himself to developing the country's public health system, women empowerment and establishing equality.

Zafrullah played a pioneering role in improving the public health sector of the newly independent Bangladesh by establishing Gonoshasthaya Kendra. He was popularly known as "Goriber Daktar (doctor of the poor)". He fought for establishing the rights of those afflicted with poverty till his death on April 12.

How was Dr Zafrullah's familial life? What kind of role did he play in the family of 10 siblings? How did he pass his last days?



He [Zafrullah] was the most respectful person in our family. He loved all of our siblings too much. He performed his responsibilities towards us like a parent would for his children.

The Daily Star talked to Zafrullah's sister Aleya Chowdhury at Gonoshasthaya Nagar Hospital in Dhaka recently, to highlight these aspects of the visionary's life.

The Gonoshasthaya Kendra founder was born in Chattogram's Rauzan upazila on December 27, 1941. He was the eldest and Aleya was the fourth among 10 siblings.

"He [Zafrullah] was the most respectful

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Asiruddin Ahmed's death anniv observed

STAR REPORT

The 24th death anniversary of Asiruddin Ahmed, a retired cooperative inspector of Rangpur, was observed yesterday, said a press release.

On the occasion, Quran-khwani, and doa and iftar mahfils were held after Asr prayers at his residence in Maltale, Rangpur.

His relatives, friends, colleagues and well-wishers have been requested to pray for the salvation of the departed soul.

Prof Eaysmin Ara Lekha
Uttara Univ VC

STAR REPORT

Prof Eaysmin Ara Lekha has been appointed as the vice-chancellor of Uttara University, said a press release.

She received her BA in 1992 and MA in Bangla literature and linguistics in 1995 from Dhaka University. She received her PhD in linguistics from Jadavpur University, Kolkata.

Dr Lekha has been involved with Uttara University since 2003, having previously served as professor, chairman and dean of the School of Education. She is the immediate past pro-VC of the university.



Sada Pathor, a heaven made of white stones in Sylhet, is an ideal place to get away from the hustle and bustle of daily life and be captured by nature's breathtaking beauty. With nearby views of Meghalaya's mountains, it's no surprise that hundreds of travellers visit this peaceful destination every day, especially around Eid

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

How he became guardian

FROM PAGE 3

person in our family. He loved all of our siblings too much. He performed his responsibilities towards us like a parent would for his children. For example, he paid the fees for all my examinations since I was a sixth or seventh grader," said Aleya.

In the 1960s, Aleya studied at the then Muslim Girls School on Nazimuddin Road in Old Dhaka. Zafrullah was a student at Dhaka Medical College at that time.

Their father Humayun Morshed was a police officer. He shifted from Chattogram to Dhaka's

Bakshibazar. About their mother Hasina Begum, Aleya said, "She was a visionary person. Our Bakshibazar residence was a hub for meet and greet with all our friends and relatives, thanks to her. Many doctors, engineers, lawmakers and social workers used to go there."

"My mother always advised my brother [Zafrullah] to be a people-friendly doctor and to ensure treatment for the poor."

Zafrullah was elected as general secretary (GS) of Dhaka Medical College Students' Council. "At that time, I visited him several

times. I saw how respected he was there," she added.

HIS LAST DAYS

Zafrullah became severely ill on April 5. Aleya was with him till March 16.

"I used to visit him at the hospital twice daily. I used to feed him. During that time, he told me that he wanted to eat rice with honey. My only regret is that I couldn't feed him what he asked for. Ramadan began, and he started fasting. He could only fast for four days," said Aleya.

"During his last few days, he always told all of the siblings to remain united. He asked us to look after Gonoshasthaya Kendra. On several occasions, he told us that he would not survive till May."

KENDRA

"Our father died in 2008. Our mother kept staying at the Bakshibazar residence. Later, we sold it. With this money, we introduced a stipend at Gono Bishwabidyalay."

ZAFRULLAH

Zafrullah will remain alive with his works and organisations, viewed Aleya.

ALEYA

"He always told the truth regarding any political crisis and national disaster. He was always vocal when it came to truth and justice. His survival for a few more days was essential, particularly in this political climate."

Still married

FROM PAGE 3

In addition to charging high recruitment fees, there have also been allegations of "syndication" in sending workers to Malaysia and conducting medical tests of workers in Bangladesh, Shariful said.

"Overall, irregularities... that persisted in the past could not be eliminated," he said, adding that incidents of irregularities will augment concern over ensuring jobs for workers who have been in the pipeline.

As the new Malaysian government hinted at bringing change in the recruitment process, the Bangladesh government should also strongly address

irregularities by enhancing monitoring mechanisms, he mentioned.

Abul Basher, president of Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (Baira), said there could be some "stray incidents" in the recruitment of new Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia.

Baira has taken steps within the organisation and also sought remedy from the expatriates' welfare ministry to stop such incidents, Basher said.

He urged Bangladeshi officials to properly verify documents related to Bangladeshi workers' recruitment before attesting those.

Secure your

FROM PAGE 3

Responding to questions about the recent incidents of fires in markets, Al-Mamun said, "We are closely investigating the incidents of fire. It is being investigated whether there is any sabotage involved. If

someone is found involved, strict action would be taken against them."

He also said discussions are ongoing with market committees in Dhaka and other districts to coordinate efforts and ensure people's safety.

Winds of change

FROM PAGE 5

said, adding that they were getting even 15 m/s wind speed at the project area.

He said that Wuling Power Corporation Ltd, a subsidiary of China's State Power Investment Corporation Limited, is funding the project.

The company will sell electricity to state-owned BPDB at \$0.12 per unit, he said.

"We hope that we will be able to contribute 145 gigawatts per hour of electricity to the national grid in a year," Mukit said.

Earlier on March 31, 2022, State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Nasrul Hamid laid the foundation stone of the project.

Currently, the total capacity of the other three wind power plants – two in Kutubdia of Cox's Bazar and one in Sonagazi of Feni -- is a mere 2.9 MW, according to

Imtiaz Ahmed Faridi, deputy director of Independent Power Producer Cell 3 of Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB), said the cost per kilowatt hour of electricity will be \$0.12, and the company will supply the electricity for 20 years according to the contract.

The project was

HC blasts IO for

FROM PAGE 5

Champa actually filed a murder case against her brother for the killing her husband. It has also been ordered to investigate whether the confession of the accused Sohel was extracted from him upon torture or duress.

PBI has been ordered to investigate whether SI Masudur had any involvement with any third party in conducting his probe and whether

Champa actually filed a murder case against her brother for the killing her husband. It has also been ordered to investigate whether the confession of the accused Sohel was extracted from him upon torture or duress.

Accused Sohel and Champa filed the petition with the HC on March 5, seeking its directive to summon the case documents before it.

Irfat Aziz passes away

STAR REPORT

Irfat Aziz -- wife of late Syed Azizul Haque, former DGM of Adamjee Jute Mills -- passed away at a Delhi hospital on April 15, where she was undergoing treatment.

She was in her late 60s.

Irfat taught at Sunydale School for 25 years. She was the youngest sister of late filmmaker Alamgir Kabir and dramatist of Sakal-Sandhya Fame Momtaz Hossain.

She was buried at Banani graveyard on April 16.

One held for stealing wire from Rampal power plant

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

Ansar members yesterday morning detained a thief in Bagerhat and recovered 1,100 kg of copper wire from his possession near Rampal Thermal Power Plant.

Md Rabiul Islam (35) was apprehended near the plant with copper cables worth Tk 16,50,000 at 7:30am, said Chandan Debnath, commander of 3 Ansar Battalion.

The detainee and the recovered goods were handed over to Rampal Police Station. A case has been filed.

Chattogram ready

FROM PAGE 5

may be extended up to 10 minutes.

The arena is either a circular or square shape, measuring at least fourteen to twenty feet across.

The game is based on raw physical strength and technique. The wrestlers are not allowed to punch or kick their opponent. The wrestler who manages to take down their opponent wins the round.

Take measure to deal

FROM PAGE 3

He added: "Our vehicles are ready, taking standby support from Bangladesh Air Force and fire service."

He further said all electric connections are regularly checked.

Dhaka Customs in a notice said import-export cargo village warehouses under all airports of the country store various life-saving medicines, state-important products, industrial raw materials

and various chemicals.

They can catch fire at any time and cause major damage. Dhaka Customs asked CAAB to strengthen and ensure the firefighting system.

In the letter, Commissioner of Dhaka Customs AKM Narul Huda Azad also mentioned that the fire risk level is very high in the customs houses and warehouses of Dhaka. Therefore, government revenue is also at risk.

Reinstate Selina, repeal DSA

FROM PAGE 3

Digital Security Act 2019, gross violation of social media user guideline 2019 and CPA service rules," read the suspension letter.

Protesting the authorities' move, poets, writers, teachers and activists, under the banner of Nipironer Biruddhey Shahbagh, held a human chain in the capital's Shahbagh.

"This suspension based on a social media post is evidence of the dictatorial and undemocratic nature of the ruling class," said Sharif Chouhan, general secretary of Workers Party of Bangladesh Chattogram unit.

Former president of Bangladesh Chhatra Union Sharifuzzaman Sharif demanded the scrapping of

DSA saying that it is being used to muzzle people's voices.

Meanwhile, cultural activists, under the banner of Sachetan Sangskritik Karmi, formed a human chain in Chattogram's Cheraagi Pahar area.

"This suspension based on a social media post is evidence of the dictatorial and undemocratic nature of the ruling class," said Sharif Chouhan, general secretary of Workers Party of Bangladesh Chattogram unit.

Playwright Mostafa Kamal Jatra said, "Freedom of expression is being stifled

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:

- Shareholders whose names will appear in the share register of the Company or in the depositary register as on Record Date i.e., 2 April 2023 will be eligible to attend and vote at the Extra-Ordinary General Meeting.
- 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>.

Office of the Rangpur City Corporation

Memo No. 46.18.0000.500.11.001.2023-23

Invitation for Tenders (Goods)
e-Tender Notice No. 07/2022-2023

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

| Sl. No. | Package No. | Description | Tender last selling (date & time) | Tender closing & opening (date & time) |
|---------|---|--|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1. | Rang-City/2022-23/Goods/01 (Re-Tender ID: 820181) | Purchase of electric goods under Rangpur City Corporation. | 07/05/2023 (15:00) | 08/05/2023 (12:00) |

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

Interested person/firm can see details in the website: <http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>.

Md. Asaduzzaman
Superintending Engineer
Rangpur City Corporation, Rangpur
Phone: 0521-55902
Fax: 0521-64858
E-mail: se@rpcc.gov.bd

EID RETURNEES BMET urges Dhaka airport to provide special services

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET) has requested the Dhaka airport authorities to provide special services to expatriate workers returning home during the Eid-ul-Fitr holiday.

Dhaka airport sources said expatriate workers have started coming back for the Eid celebration and this trend will continue for the next few days.

BMET wrote a letter to the executive director of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport on Monday requesting to provide special services to the returnees.

The letter said on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr, around 3,500 and 4,000 expatriates are coming to the country every day amid the nationwide heatwave.

"Remittances sent by migrant workers are playing an important role in the socio-economic development of the country. The Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare has requested all concerned to provide special services so that the migrant workers can return home safely," read the letter.

Group Captain Kamrul Islam, executive director of the Dhaka airport, said work is constantly going on to improve services to the passengers.

"Meetings are being held regularly with domestic and foreign airlines. Every expatriate who comes to the country during the Eid holiday brings many gifts for their relatives. Airlines have been given special instructions to ensure that no passenger's luggage goes missing. Apart from this, a meeting has been held with APBN, Immigration and Customs authorities in this regard," said Kamrul.

RUBEL MURDER CASE HC blasts IO for 'perfunctory' probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court in the full text of an order has blasted Manikganj Sadar Police Station's sub-inspector Masudur Rahman for allegedly conducting a "perfunctory" investigation of the Rubel murder case, submitting the charge sheet hurriedly, and providing false information before the court.

"It appears that the investigating officer has made false statements before this court. The manner of investigation also seems to be faulty of malfeasance and corruption on the part of the investigation officer. For such misdeeds and falsehoods, he should be punished," the HC bench of Justice Md Badruzzaman and Justice SM Masud Hossain Dolon said in the seven-page full-text order released yesterday.

In the full text, the HC asked the superintendent of police of Manikganj to suspend SI Masudur Rahman and directed Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) to conduct further investigation into the murder case and submit its report before this court in 60 days.

Earlier, on April 3, the bench delivered the order following a petition filed by Champa Aktar alias Anjona, wife of deceased Rubel, and her brother Sohel

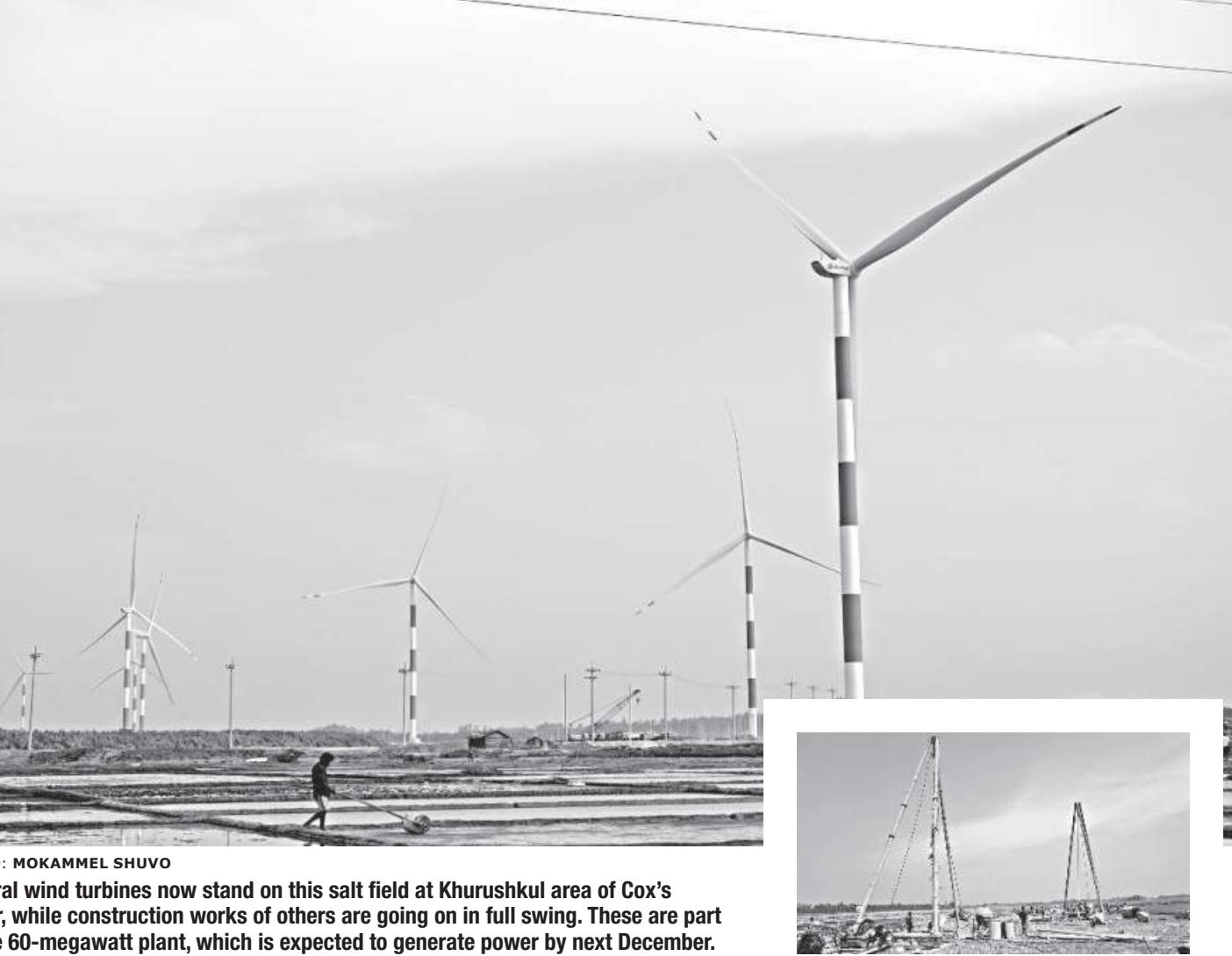


PHOTO: MOKAMMEL SHUVO

Several wind turbines now stand on this salt field at Khurushkul area of Cox's Bazar, while construction works of others are going on in full swing. These are part of the 60-megawatt plant, which is expected to generate power by next December.



Winds of change approaching

60-MW wind power plant to expand clean energy production

MOKAMMEL SHUVO, back from Cox's Bazar

"Are you talking about those big pankhas?" auto-rickshaw driver Osman Ali responded when this reporter asked to take him to the wind power plant in Khurushkul area of Cox's Bazar.

The 60-megawatt plant is popularly known as Pankha, a Bangla word that means a fan, to locals because of the wind turbines with long blades.

While visiting the project area stretching over five kilometres on the outskirts of Cox's Bazar town, the reporter saw several wind turbines standing on the salt field, and construction works of others were going on in full swing.

This is the biggest wind power plant under construction in the country, a place where the contribution of renewable or green energy in the energy mix is less than four percent.

This plant is a small yet significant step of

This is the biggest wind power plant under construction in the country, a place where the contribution of renewable or green energy in the energy mix is less than four percent. This plant is a small yet significant step of the government to expand clean energy production to 40 percent by 2041, as pledged.

the government to expand clean energy production to 40 percent by 2041, as pledged.

The plant is good enough to provide electricity to Cox's Bazar town and its surrounding areas, which requires an average of 40 MW each day, according to Cox's Bazar Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPD) sources.

US DK Green Energy (BD), a private firm, is

implementing the project at a cost of \$116.51 million.

"We are expecting to complete the construction work and start power generation by next December," said project manager Mukit Alam Khan.

He said they are constructing 22 turbines, with each having a capacity of producing 3 MW of electricity, in four unions – including Khuruskul, Chawfaldandi, PM Khali and Pokkhali – under Sadar upazila, adding that 10 have already been installed.

Mukit Alam said two turbines will be installed as standby.

The height of a tower is 90 metres, while each of the blades is 60 metres long, he added.

"We need an average wind speed of 5.5 metres per second [m/s] to generate power since we are using modern technology. And for running the turbines at full capacity, we need a minimum 10 m/s wind speed," Mukit Alam said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Chattogram ready for 'Jabbarer Boli Khela'

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Chattogram

The sounds of drums and cheers will soon fill the air of Chattogram as the 114th edition of the historic Jabbarer Boli Khela wrestling competition is set to take place at the Lalidighi Maidan.

This traditional form of wrestling, which has been held annually since 1909, has not only become a celebrated event in the region but also holds a significant place in the city's history.

As the stage is set and preparations are almost complete, locals and visitors alike are eagerly looking forward to witnessing this cultural and sporting extravaganza.

The main wrestling stage has already been set up in the middle of Lalidighi Maidan. Heavyweight wrestlers around the country will lock horns in this ring on April 25. The event is traditionally held along with a three-day fair called Boishakhi Mela, named after the first month of the Bengali calendar. The fair, which will showcase handicrafts and locally made household utensils, among other items, will start on April 24, a day before the wrestling competition.

Chattogram City Corporation (CCC) Mayor Rezaul Karim Chowdhury unveiled the trophy for the winners of the wrestling competition yesterday. The organisers are expecting more than 200 wrestlers to participate in this year's competition.

The event's theme song has also been inaugurated, and to celebrate the joy of Eid-ul-Fitr, Chatgaiya Utsob will be organised on the third and final day of the three-day fair.

Chowdhury Farid, the vice-chairman of the organising committee, believes that the event's timing, just after Eid-ul-Fitr, will add more colour to the festivity of the local people.

The Jabbarer Boli Khela was introduced in 1909 by Abdul Jabbar Shawdagar, a local merchant. He wanted to motivate the local youths and make them physically fit for the struggle against the British imperialist rulers.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE
The Jabbarer Boli Khela was introduced in 1909 by Abdul Jabbar Shawdagar, a local merchant of Bakshirhat and a resident of Badarpotia area in the port city. He wanted to motivate the local youths and make them physically fit for the struggle against the British imperialist rulers.

Shakhawat Anwar Badol, secretary of the organising committee and also the grandchild of Abdul Jabbar, said although his grandfather initiated the event, it is no longer a family tradition. "It

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Rent-a-car driver killed in Faridpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Police recovered the body of a car driver from Mathurapur area of Faridpur's Madhukhali upazila yesterday.

The deceased is Md Ujjal, 50, who was working as a rent-a-car driver.

According to local sources, Ujjal's body was found on Gajna-Mathurapur road, on the bank of Mandartola canal.

Locals discovered the body and informed police around 6:30am yesterday. Police then recovered the body and sent it to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical College Hospital in Faridpur for autopsy.

Additional Superintendent of Police (Madhukali Circle) Sumon Kar confirmed that the driver was killed by unidentified miscreants.

The miscreants used a rope to strangle Ujjal. Moreover, there were eight deep stab wounds on the left side of his chest. After killing him, the miscreants took away his car.

Sumon further added that according to Ujjal's family, he used to drive a rented car in Dhaka. On Tuesday evening, the unidentified miscreants hired his car to go to Gopalganj from Ashulia area of Dhaka. Ujjal was supposed to return to Dhaka that night.

DHAKA THURSDAY APRIL 20, 2023

BAISHAKH 7, 1430 BS

The Daily Star

5

Expecting record Boro production this year: minister

UNB, Sunamganj

Agriculture Minister Abdur Razzaque yesterday said he is expecting a record production of Boro this year, as there were no early floods or any other serious challenges.

He said Boro paddy has been cultivated on about 50 lakh hectares of land across the country in the current fiscal year 2022-23.

If there is no natural disaster and rice is brought home on time, there will be record production of Boro, he said while exchanging views with farmers during the Boro paddy harvesting festival at Dekar Haor in Shantiganj upazila of Sunamganj.

Sunamganj District Administration and Agriculture Extension Office organised the event.

Highlighting the government's steps to make paddy harvesting in haors risk-free, the minister said, "We have to live in fear every year about taking haor paddy home due to early floods and flash floods. We are working in such a way... in the next two to three years, rice production in the haors will be risk-free."

The minister also urged farmers not to cultivate BRI 28 and BRI 29 varieties of rice, mentioning various issues, like low production potential and disease proneness.

"Instead of these varieties, high-yielding new varieties such as BRI 81, BRI 89... should be cultivated," he advised.

Notable, an incentive of Tk 170 crore was given to increase the cultivation and production of Boro this year. About 27 lakh farmers across the country have gotten free seeds and fertilisers under this incentive.

Planning Minister MA Mannan and Deputy Minister for Water Resources AKM Enamul Haque Shamim were also present at the programme, among others.

Whale buried after collecting samples

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

The 40-foot-long whale, weighing around 25 tonnes, which was found dead on Cox's Bazar Sea Beach on Tuesday, has been buried.

Tarikul Islam, a senior scientific officer at Bangladesh Oceanographic Research Institute, reported that the whale, wrapped in a net, had injury marks on its body, and its tail was already decomposed.

According to Syed Mohammad Belal Haider, director general of Bangladesh Maritime Research Institute, the whale belongs to the Bryde's species, scientifically known as Balaenoptera edeni.

The institute collected samples from the whale, but it had to be buried due to the foul odour emanating from its decomposing body.

Sarwar Shamim, chief executive officer and executive magistrate of Cox's Bazar municipality, said due to its massive size, the whale could not be moved anywhere else.

A crane was brought, and it was buried on the instructions of the deputy commissioner, he added.

চাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন
নগর ভবন, ঢাকা

স্থায়ী নম্বরঃ ৪৬.২০৭.০০০.০৩.০১.৭৪৩.২০২২-২০২৫

তারিখঃ ০৫ বৈশাখ ১৪৩০ বঙ্গবন্ধু
১৮ এপ্রিল ২০২৩ স্বিটার্ড

"শেখ হাসিনার মুলভূটি
শাম শহরের ভূমি"

০৫ বৈশাখ ১৪৩০ বঙ্গবন্ধু
১৮ এপ্রিল ২০২৩ স্বিটার্ড

মৌখিক পরীক্ষার বিজ্ঞপ্তি

দৈনিক জাতীয় পরিচায়া প্রকল্পের দ্বারা নগর দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশনের ০৫.১২.২০২২-২০২৩ তারিখের ৪৬.২০৭.০০০.০৩.০১.৭৪৩.২০২২-২০২৫ নম্বর নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি মাধ্যমে অনুষ্ঠানে প্রাপ্ত আবেদনকারীদের লিখিত পরীক্ষা অনুষ্ঠিত হচ্ছে। লিখিত পরীক্ষার অংশগ্রহণকারীদের মধ্যে হচ্ছে নিম্নোক্ত তেল নথি নথিগুলি প্রাপ্তি হচ্ছে। নির্বাচিত প্রার্থীদের মৌখিক পরীক্ষা আনুসরণ কর্তৃপক্ষের অনুমতি প্রাপ্ত হচ্ছে।

| ক্র. নং | পদের নাম | মৌখিক পরীক্ষার জন্য নির্বাচিত প্রার্থীদের নথি নথির | মৌখিক পরীক্ষার তারিখ ও স্থান |
|---------|---|---|--|
| ১. | আবেদিকালার কর্মকর্তা | ১১০০০১, ১১০০০২, ১১০০০৩, ১১০০০৪, ১১০০০৫ = ৫ জন | ০৮.০৫.২০২৩ সোমবার, বেলা ২.০০ ঘটকা |
| ২. | হাজার তালুকার কর্মকর্তা | ১২০০০৩, ১২০০০৪, ১২০০০০৮, ১২০০০১, ১২০০০১১, ১২০০০১৩ = ৬ জন | ০৮.০৫.২০২৩ সোমবার, বেলা ৩.০০ ঘটকা |
| ৩. | ভিত্তি ক্যাম্পাস কর্মকর্তা | ১৩০০০০২, ১৩০০০০৩, ১৩০০০০৮ = ৩ জন। | ০৯.০৫.২০২৩ সুলতান, বেলা ২.০০টা ঘটকা |
| ৪. | ক্ষেত্রকারী | ১৪০০০০৩, ১৪০০০০৪, ১৪০০০১১, ১৪০০০১৪, ১৪০০০১৫, ১৪০০০১৭ = ৬ জন। | ০৯.০৫.২০২৩ সুলতান, বেলা ৩.০০ ঘটকা |
| ২। | নিম্নোক্ত শাস্তিকারণ মৌখিক পরীক্ষার ক্ষেত্রে আবেদনের প্রয়োজন করতে হবে: | | |
| | (১) মৌখিক পরীক্ষার জন্য নথি করে প্রেরণের ইন্যুক্ত করতে হবে; | | |
| | (২) সকল প্রকার যোগাযোগ সম্পর্ক, প্রশংসক ও অভিকর্তা সমন্বয়ের মাধ্যমে মূলকপুর প্রদর্শন করতে হবে। প্রথম মোবাইল প্রেসে ক্ষেত্রকারী কর্মকর্তা ক্ষেত্রে প্রত্যায়িত প্রার্থীদের সময়ে প্রতিক্রিয়া দেওয়া হবে; | | |
| | (৩) সরকারি/আধা-সরকারি/বাজার-শিল্পসমূহের প্রত্যায়িত প্রার্থীদের সময়ে প্রতিক্রিয়া দেওয | | |



EID VIBES FOR CELEBS

As we grow up, the festival of Eid-ul-Fitr, one of the biggest celebrations of the Muslim community, changes meaning. The definition of Eid and what it means varies from person to person, and our celebrities are no different. The Daily star talked to a few top celebrities in the country, and here is how they see Eid.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

"As a child, I used to celebrate Eid in Pirojpur, mostly," shares Siam Ahmed. "I cherish the moments shared with all the cousins, as we would gather after a long time."

Ganging up with all his cousins, Siam would visit all of the relatives' houses and collect 'salami'. "There would be a competition amongst all of us about who could collect the highest amount of 'salami'."

Nusraat Faria is gearing up for her new music video titled *Bujhina To Tai* this Eid. The actress recently ended her relationship with her fiancé. "Please, don't say it like we broke up the relationship. I would say we both took a mutual decision that works for us. We are still in touch and co-parenting our kids. We are good friends now. So, it's all fine." She is looking forward to spending Eid with the success of her new music video.

Arifin Shuvoo likes to be lazy on Eid day. "This is the only day we get to do as we like," says the *Mission Extreme* actor. "I will be at home spending the entire day until the evening, as I will meet my family and friends for dinner -- this is the only occasion we get to meet and spend time with them."

"My daughter, Ayra will get new clothes from her grand-parents, uncles, aunts," shared Rafiha Rashid Mithila. "Ayra loves putting mehendi, and usually she is the most excited about 'chaand raat', because she gets to put on mehendi." The actress spoke about her grandmother, who passed away a few months ago. "This will be the first Eid without my *dadi*," said Mithila. "I will miss her so much."

Badhan's childhood memories of Eid were deeply ingrained by the beautiful moments spent at her grandparents' house. The nostalgia and the banter still remain fresh in her mind and soul.

"I had to spend Eid-ul-Fitr in our maternal grandparent's house in Dhaka while the Qurbani Eid was celebrated in my paternal grandparent's house in Bikrampur, Munshiganj which is now called Srinagar. When we used to stay in Mojossal, I used to wait to go to Dhaka as all my cousins are there."

"This Eid will be really special for our family, as we have been blessed with a little bundle of joy 'Azma Haque', my eldest brother's daughter, who came into our lives on March 12," said National Award winner Badhan to The Daily Star. "I live with my parents and my brother also stays with us so we will be busy taking care of the little angel."



PHOTOS: STAR & COLLECTED

Pori Moni to anchor BTV show

Although Dhallywood actor Pori Moni has been busy enjoying the joys of motherhood, leading to her being somewhat inactive on the showbiz front, she will soon be seen hosting a celebrity magazine show for this Eid.

Titled *Tarar Mela*, the show will be aired on BTV Chattogram on Eid day at 9 pm. The programme will be a star studded affair, as Apu Biswas and Prarthana Fardin Dighi will be performing in the special dance segments of the show.

Pori Moni is currently in Chattogram, finishing the shooting of the show.

Chanchal, Shaon back with new duet track

After the success of *Juboti Radhe*, the duo of Chanchal Chowdhury and Meher Afroz Shaon are back to entertain the audience this Eid, with a new song. Titled *Dhaka Shohor Aisha Amar*, the song will be released on IPDC Amader Gaan.

In a special episode of the show, *IPDC Amader Gaan tribute to Gazi Mazharul Anwar*, the duo will perform the classic song *Dhaka Shohor Aisha Amar*. The song was originally used in the film *Oshikkhito*, directed by Azizur Rahman in 1978. The 1978 version of the song was voiced by Shammi Akhtar and Khondokar Faruk Ahmed.

The song will be released on the Facebook and YouTube pages of IPDC on the day before Eid.



COUNTRYWIDE

Hard days for shital pati makers

MINTU DESHWARA

The life of Harendra Kumar Das, an experienced craftsman from Dholijora village in Moulvibazar's Rajnagar upazila, is wrapped in the beauty of cool mat, also known as shital pati.

But now the elderly craftsman, who travelled many countries around the world and received huge praises, is worried about maintaining the reputation and tradition of the century-old crafts.

Moreover, his passion of weaving shital pati has halted due to shortage of capital.

Dholijora village in Panchgaon union has a huge reputation for producing quality shital pati.

There was a time, when over a hundred families of the village used to weave shital pati for generations.

Nowadays many shital pati artisans have changed their professions, but shital pati has now become a part of world heritage.

In 2017, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) included shital pati in the list of important intangible cultural heritage of the world.

While talking to this correspondent Harendra said he has been involved in the industry for nearly 40 years.

As a reward for his work, he has appeared in many fairs organised by various organizations and also travelled to Japan, Korea, Nepal, Hong Kong and Sri Lanka with his own made crafts.



Craftsman Nirendra Kumar of Gagra village in Moulvibazar's Barlekha is seen busy weaving a shital pati at his residence.
PHOTO: STAR

Don't indulge in mudslinging

FROM PAGE 12

She called upon AL men across the country to remain vigilant of arson attacks by BNP-Jamaat.

Greeting the party men on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr, Hasina advised the leaders to increase contacts with the party activists and the ordinary people.

She directed them to inquire about the beneficiaries of government projects and continue communications with the people during the Eid holidays.

The PM instructed Chhatra League President Saddam Hussain and General Secretary Sheikh Wali Asif Enan to form

the BCL's fully-fledged committee soon after Eid.

Briefing journalists before the meeting, Quader said democratic practices will follow the constitution, not the instructions of any individual.

"Evil forces who are emerging under the leadership of the BNP will be resisted under the leadership of Sheikh Hasina. We are preparing for the [next national] election according to the constitution. We will resist whatever obstacles may come in the way," said the AL general secretary.

He alleged that the BNP was making ill efforts to make the election questionable.

Dhaka, Tokyo

FROM PAGE 1

"I would like to tell those at home and abroad, who want to overthrow Sheikh Hasina's government unjustly and by creating chaos without any reason, we will not let them create an unusual situation like that of 1/11."

AL presidium members

Matia Chowdhury, Kazi

Zafar Ullah, Lt Col (retd)

Faruk Khan, Jahangir Kabir

Nanak, Shahjahan Khan,

Mustafa Jalal Mohiuddin,

Organising Secretary SM

Kamal Hossain, Science

and Technology Affairs

Secretary Abdus Sabur, and

central executive committee

member Anwar Hossain

were present at the meeting.

in the region.

"We are supportive of regional connectivity and trade. We appreciate such a proposal by Japan and are eager to work together," a foreign ministry official said.

A Japanese diplomat in Dhaka told this correspondent that as part of Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific policy, Japan wants to see socio-economic development in the Bay of Bengal region and an end to the Rohingya crisis.

"We cannot have a stable and developed region leaving the Rohingya crisis unresolved," the diplomat said.

Foreign ministry officials said Dhaka would make a strong appeal to Japan for helping solve the Rohingya crisis.

"We hope to start a new era in our relationship with Japan. The country has been a true friend for us since our independence," an official said.

During her trip, Hasina will also attend a community reception, an investment summit, and hand over the "Friends of Liberation War Honour" to four Japanese nationals for their contribution to the independence of Bangladesh.

Eid journey largely trouble-free

FROM PAGE 1

during the Eid and that was why bus operators charge people extra to cover the losses.

Jalal Uddin had to wait almost two hours at Sayedabad to get a ticket for Gopalganj. He paid Tk 700 when the actual fare is Tk 488.

Abu Bakar Helal, a traffic inspector at the terminal, said they took punitive action against four buses for overcharging.

The crowd at Gabtoli was small when one of these correspondents visited between 1:00pm and

2:00pm.

Gabtoli is seeing fewer passengers this year as many buses serving the south started operating from Sayedabad instead after the Padma Bridge opened.

Thousands left Dhaka on trains that were mostly on time, said Shahalam Kiran Shishir, divisional commercial officer (Dhaka division) of Bangladesh Railway.

However, many passengers, who gathered at Kamalapur for sarding tickets, failed to get any. The number of standing tickets BR was selling was 25 percent of the Shovan Chair seats each train had.

Shishir said BR operated 56 trains, including 40 intercity trains and three special trains, yesterday.

A large number of passengers travelled from Sadarghat Launch Terminal yesterday, said Alamgir Kabir, joint director of Araihaazr Special Economic Zone, and metro rail in Dhaka.

He said the number of launch passengers decreased as many opted to travel by road since it is quicker via Padma Bridge.

He said as of 8:00pm, 70 launches left the terminal.

Temperature likely to dip in a day or two

FROM PAGE 1

division, Panchagarh, Rangpur, Nilphamari, Moulvibazar, Rangamati and Bandarban districts and other parts of Rajshahi division, the Met office added.

Yesterday's highest temperature was 42.8 degrees Celsius in Chuadanga and Ishwardi of Pabna.

Rashed Chowdhury, adjunct professor at School of Sustainable Engineering and the Built

Environment of Arizona State University, said a jet stream, relatively narrow bands of strong wind in the upper levels of the atmosphere, that flow from west to east is thought to be responsible for this heatwave.

"The hypothesis is that the changing temperature difference between the equator and the North Pole could slow down this key weather maker (the jet stream), especially during the summer," he said while talking to The Daily Star yesterday.

These kinds of interconnected heatwaves could become even more extreme in the future, as human-caused climate change affects the jet streams, he added.

People across the country are reeling from the unbearable heat over the last couple of days.

Meanwhile, poultry farmers are also facing challenges as broiler chickens are dying of heatstroke.

Shahinur Rahman, a farmer of Belghachia union of Kurigram Sadar upazila, said he is rearing 1,000 broilers but 30 chickens died of heatstroke over the last four days.

Poultry farmer Mehedi Hasan of Harishwar Kaloa village in the upazila said it had become difficult to control the temperature in his chicken shed as power cuts render the electric fans useless.

FAILURE TO PROVIDE FUNDS FOR POLLS Pak SC warns govt of 'serious consequences'

DAWN ONLINE

Pakistan's Supreme Court (SC) yesterday warned the government of "serious consequences" if it failed to release the funds required for conducting polls in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

It also declared as inadmissible for hearing the defence ministry's plea to hold general elections across Pakistan simultaneously upon completion of the terms of the national as well as Sindh and Balochistan assemblies.

The top court issued the warning while hearing the ministry's request to hold general elections across Pakistan simultaneously upon completion of the terms of the national as well as Sindh and Balochistan assemblies.

A three-judge bench comprising Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial, Justice Ijaz Ahsan and Justice Munib Akhtar heard the petition.

A day earlier, the defence ministry filed an application in the SC, requesting the top court to recall its April 4 order that had fixed May 14 as the election date for the Punjab Assembly.

The application asked the apex court to issue directives that general elections to the national and all provincial assemblies be held on the same date.

Along with the application, the defence

ministry also issued a report in court, laid before the SC in compliance with its directives to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) and other departments to furnish reports after releasing Rs21 billion to the ECP for holding elections to the Punjab and KP assemblies.

In its report, the ministry highlighted the need of holding the elections on the same day in view of the heightened security situation in the country. It also said that the armed forces would be able to carry out election duties by early October.

"Due to the prevalent security situation and counter-terrorism operations being carried out in KP and Balochistan as well as the intelligence-based operations in Punjab and Sindh, the armed forces, Rangers, Frontier Constabulary and other forces are not logically available to be repositioned and re-posted for providing election security, twice in a span of six months," the report said.

"Significant time is required to prepare the members of the armed forces for the election duty, given much of the force has been actively engaged in operations for a considerable period of time," the application said, adding the security situation in Punjab and Sindh has been stable in the light of the efforts of the ongoing operations in KP and Balochistan, respectively.

CORRUPTION, OTHER CHARGES

Myanmar SC to hear appeal of Suu Kyi

REUTERS

The Supreme Court in military-ruled Myanmar will hear an appeal by deposed leader Aung San Suu Kyi against her convictions for corruption and violating election and state secrets laws, according to a source familiar with the matter.

The 77-year-old Nobel laureate is serving 33 years in prison after convictions in more than a dozen cases that Suu Kyi has called absurd and her allies say were orchestrated by the junta to destroy her political career.

Suu Kyi's former ruling National League for Democracy (NLD) party won re-election in a landslide in November 2020 but the army arrested her three months later during a coup and annulled the vote, citing unaddressed irregularities.

The source, who declined to be identified due to the sensitivity of matter, said no date had been set by the Supreme Court to hear the appeal of Suu Kyi and co-defendant Win Myint, the ousted former president.

"Today the judge accepted the proposals to listen to the appeals on those seven cases," the source said.

The appeal comes as the military struggles to assert control over large parts of Myanmar and intensifies air and ground operations against ethnic minority armies and a pro-democracy resistance movement.

Suu Kyi is currently being held in an annex of a prison in the capital Naypyitaw.

She led Myanmar for five years from 2015 during a decade of tentative democracy and tense power-sharing with the military after it ended its 49-year rule in 2011.

Russian spy ships planning North Sea sabotage

Says media report; Kremlin dismisses the claim as a 'mistake'; Kyiv receives Patriot air defence systems

AFP, Stockholm

A documentary being aired by Nordic public broadcasters yesterday claimed Russia is suspected of having a spy programme in the North Sea planning the sabotage of energy infrastructures in Northern Europe.

The Kremlin yesterday dismissed the media claims as a "mistake" and "without basis", reiterating its appeal for "a transparent and impartial international inquiry" into the sabotage of the Baltic Sea Nord Stream gas pipelines in September 2022.

A joint investigation conducted by public television stations NRK in Norway, DR in Denmark, SVT in Sweden and YLE in Finland claimed Moscow is using dozens of military and civilian vessels to collect information on wind farms and communication cables.

The report cited intelligence officials in the Nordic countries.

The Russian spy programme is known by the acronym GUGI, or the Main Directorate of Deep-Sea Research, according to DR.

One ship documented was the Admiral Vladimirsky, officially an oceanographic research vessel, that was observed sailing near large offshore windfarm parks off Britain and Denmark at the end of 2022.

When a DR team approached the vessel in a dinghy, masked and heavily-armed men appeared on deck, an excerpt published by the Danish broadcaster showed.

Russian intelligence is also accused of using fishing trawlers, cargo ships and even yachts kitted out with underwater and radio surveillance technology, the investigation claimed.

The documentary, titled "The Shadow

War", says Norwegian police who boarded two Russian fishing trawlers discovered old Soviet-era radios, with an operator in a locked compartment.

In Sweden, 27 suspect vessels have allegedly sailed through its waters or docked in its ports in the past five years, SVT said.

In Norway, over a period of 10 years, at least 50 Russian vessels "had the possibility to collect information clandestinely", according to a tally based on the ships' Automatic Identification System (AIS), NRK said.

Meanwhile, Russia launched a drone attack on Ukraine's southern port city of Odesa early yesterday but there were no reports of casualties, authorities said.

"At night, the enemy carried out an attack by UAVs of the Shahed-136 type on the Odesa region," Yuriy Kruk, head of the Odesa district military administration, said in a statement on Telegram.

Kruk said Ukraine's air defences had destroyed most of the attacking drones but some civilian infrastructure had been hit.

In Kyiv, Ukraine's defence minister confirmed yesterday that Kyiv had taken delivery of Patriot air defence systems, and said this made Ukrainian skies more secure.

"Our air defenders have mastered them as fast as they could. And our partners have kept their word," Defence Minister Oleksii Reznikov wrote on Twitter. He did not specify which partners he was referring to but his tweet offered thanks to Germany's defence minister.

Washington late last year said it would provide Ukraine with its Patriot air defence system as Russia pounded Ukraine's energy infrastructure from the air.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has said the system will "significantly" strengthen Ukraine's defence against Russian strikes.

Russian President Vladimir Putin dismissed the announcement at the time, saying Russia will find an "antidote".

Germany announced in January that it was following the United States in sending one of the advanced missile defence batteries to Ukraine. The Netherlands said it would supply parts of a Patriot air defence system to Ukraine.



French President Emmanuel Macron talks to a person opposed to the pension reform, in Selestat, eastern France yesterday.



Let the Blessings Go Around!

With compassion in our hearts, HBL wishes a very happy Eid Mubarak!

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Rescuers help a migrant child disembark from a Spanish coast guard vessel in the port of Arguineguin, in the island of Gran Canaria, Spain yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

JERUSALEM SHOOTING

Israel arrests Palestinian teen

AFP, Jerusalem

Israeli forces in the occupied West Bank arrested a Palestinian teenager suspected of wounding two Israelis in a shooting in annexed east Jerusalem, the army said yesterday. Special military and police forces operating in Nablus overnight "apprehended within a few minutes the terrorist who carried out the shooting attack in Jerusalem yesterday", an army statement said. The suspect, who is from the Askar refugee camp near Nablus, "linked himself to the incident during the initial inquiry", the army said, adding that he was being held by the Shin Bet internal security service for further questioning. Tuesday's attack saw a gunman open fire on two Israeli motorists in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood of east Jerusalem, near the tomb of Shimon Hatzadik, a site frequented by religious Jews. The wounded men, one aged 48 and the other in his 50s, were hospitalised in moderate condition.

NEW ANTARCTIC STATION

China ramps up construction

REUTERS, Washington

China is increasing its Antarctic footprint according to new satellite imagery collected by a Washington-based think tank that shows construction has resumed for the first time since 2018 on the country's fifth station in the southern polar region. Beijing has sought to develop new shipping routes in the Arctic and expand its research in Antarctica, but Western governments worry its increasing presence in the polar regions could provide the People's Liberation Army (PLA) with better surveillance capabilities. The new station, on Inexpressible Island near the Ross Sea, is expected to include an observatory with a satellite ground station, and should help China "fill in a major gap" in its ability to access the continent, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) said in a report.

Rajuk must lead drive on risky buildings

Recent accidents highlight the urgency of proactive measures

A series of accidents in recent times have brought to light how vulnerable many buildings in Dhaka are to fires, explosions or collapses. Given the general disregard for building and fire safety regulations and the lack of enforcement by responsible authorities, questions can be asked about the electrical and structural safety of most buildings. However, one threat that is not talked about enough is their vulnerability to earthquakes, which, in a region considered highly vulnerable to quakes, should worry us.

According to a recent report by *Prothom Alo*, there are at least 41 highly vulnerable public buildings in areas under the jurisdiction of Rajuk: 23 in Dhaka, three in Gazipur, six in Savar, eight in Narayanganj, and one in Keraniganj. These have been identified after Rajuk, through its Urban Resilience Project, conducted a rapid visual screening of 3,252 buildings of government, semi-government and autonomous institutions. Those identified as highly risky following a subsequent preliminary engineering assessment (PEA) of 579 of all buildings need to be demolished. The question is, who will take the initiative?

Although Rajuk hasn't made public the list of the 41 buildings, we come to know about them from the report. Apparently, the authorities of those buildings are unlikely to demolish them of their own volition, but neither will Rajuk. Rajuk feels it has done its part by conducting the assessments and sending letters to the concerned institutions to vacate and demolish all dangerous buildings. We understand that demolishing entire buildings and relocating to safer alternatives are no easy task. There are also administrative challenges that can get in the way. But this has to be done, sooner rather than later. And as the central authority on development in this region, Rajuk must play a leading role in any demolition drive.

We have previously seen how lack of initiative, collaboration and coordination among government institutions can delay or undo vital, life-saving interventions. For example, over the last two decades, total of 19 kitchen market buildings in Dhaka were identified as risky, yet those continue to be in operation to this day. Of them, nine are under the DNCC, and 10 under the DSCC. Despite promising to phase them out and relocate shops to new buildings, the city corporations have done little so far beyond putting up signboards. Millions continue to visit these establishments at great personal risk. Who will take responsibility in the event of a collapse or any other tragedy?

The standard response, after every tragedy, remains a mix of blame game and fruitless promises of action, but hardly anything concrete is done to prevent the recurrence of tragedies. Just imagine: In 2018, there were 19,642 fires in Dhaka. The number rose to 24,102 last year. If you add earthquake vulnerability to the equation, this city is literally strewn with ticking time bombs. Given the multidimensional safety challenge facing many of its buildings, we urge the government to take the safety issue seriously, as well as our unplanned urbanisation that is causing the threats in many cases, and make decisive interventions. There is no alternative to proactive measures at this stage.

Rajshahi faces a hotter future

Govt must prevent unplanned urbanisation from killing our cities

On April 17, Rajshahi city experienced one of its hottest days in over six years, with the mercury rising to a staggering 42.6 degrees Celsius. According to the meteorological department, this falls within the range categorised as a severe heatwave. The heat is so intense that health experts have warned residents to stay indoors for most of the daytime, up until 4:00pm, and even advised them to complete their Eid shopping after dark if needed. For the past two weeks, people have been suffering heavily as temperature has been hitting the 40-degree mark consistently.

A report published by Banik Barta further illustrates the challenge for Rajshahi. A lecturer at the Rajshahi University of Engineering and Technology (RUET) said that irrespective of the temperature recorded, the "real feel" will be at least 10 degrees hotter. The decreasing amount of water vapour in the air of Rajshahi is responsible for this. Unfortunately, the situation has been more or less the same across the country. The question is, how can people function normally if the heat is this oppressive? What's equally concerning is that excessive heat can disproportionately affect the poor, and significantly lower productivity.

While we understand that urban spaces are one of the key drivers of development, it is the rapid and unplanned urbanisation that is now rendering many of these places almost uninhabitable. The decline in quality has been quite jarring. For example, between 1999 and 2019, Rajshahi's urban areas increased by about 16 percent, while the city lost 19 percent of its tree cover and four percent of its waterbodies and wetlands. Another study revealed that in the last 30 years, the city lost 17 percent of its greenery, and correspondingly, temperature has risen by 12 degrees Celsius. If the current trend holds, the city may experience much higher temperatures in the future.

True, human induced climate change is largely to blame for the intense heatwaves we are facing today. But our city and development authorities cannot be excused either. It is the poor and unplanned urbanisation under their supervision, without much thought given to protecting natural spaces, that has resulted in localised "heat islands". Not just Rajshahi, this is a phenomenon experienced in Dhaka, Chattogram and Khulna too. If this mad rush for development continues, our cities will soon become all but uninhabitable.

Natural and green spaces play a crucial role in temperature regulation. Research has found that temperature tends to be higher in urban areas and barren lands than in wetlands and green spaces. We, therefore, urge the authorities to take note of the drastic rise in temperature in our cities across the country. To check this trend, they must act immediately. They must protect what remains of our wetlands and green spaces, and bring encroachers and polluters to book. Our cities must be developed in a way that they can be climate-resilient.

EDITORIAL

Is renewable deployment suffering from fossil fuel lock-in?



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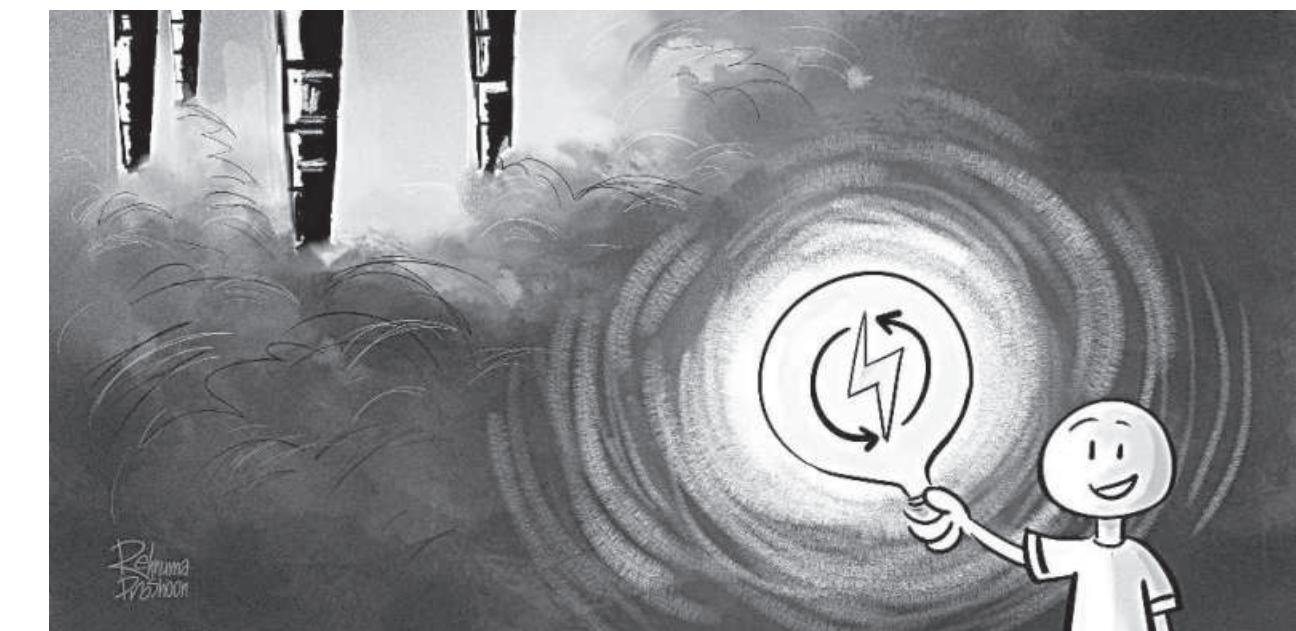
MOSHAHIDA SULTANA RITU

While the peak electricity supply reached 15,604MW in Bangladesh at the beginning of summer, many areas, mostly outside Dhaka, have been facing long hours of load shedding and disruption of economic activities. The reason behind the current crisis is not the lower installed capacity, but the inability to buy imported energy to run the existing power plants and interrupted services due to technical inefficiency. It is tragic to see that while people are suffering from the crisis, over 40 percent of installed capacity remains idle. It is even more tragic that the new capacity addition of 660MW from the trial operation of Rampal and import of 748MW from Adani's Godda coal-based power plant could not be of any use to reduce people's suffering. On top of that, more committed power plants including Matarbari, Banshkhali, Rooppur nuclear power plant, and the second unit of Payra are waiting to be finished.

The question is no longer whether Bangladesh has the installed capacity to meet the electricity demand. Rather, the question is whether Bangladesh will be able to pay for the imported energy to fulfil its demand amid the US dollar crisis coupled with high international prices and dwindling foreign exchange reserves.

The excruciating summer temperature and the deteriorating power crisis in Bangladesh brought back the agenda of solar electricity. In this respect, recent policy developments need attention. The draft renewable energy policy set a target to increase the renewables' contribution to 40 percent by 2041. So far, the feasibility of the target has been discussed mainly from the technical and economic perspectives. Previous debates mostly focused on grid capacity, intermittent supply, battery use, demand management, etc. Another concern has been the high cost of solar power, until the cost declined globally over the last decade. Now, the new experiences of integrating renewables to the grid are widely known. Significant spillover of knowledge around the world made solar technology accessible to countries like Bangladesh. However, while the fossil fuel lock-in as a barrier to clean energy technology adoption is widely discussed in the West, it is yet to receive much attention in Bangladesh.

Technological lock-in refers to the situation of persistent failure to switch to a new technology as replacing the incumbent technology becomes highly expensive. Although the term has been used by economists, historians and sociologists since the 1980s, scholars



have started to use "lock-in" in relation to fossil fuel use and the difficulty to switch to renewable energy. Others use the term carbon lock-in to describe a force that prolongs fossil fuel use despite knowing the risks of fossil fuels and having cost-effective alternatives. As a consequence, low-carbon technology diffuses at such a slow rate that the cost to society and the environment becomes too high.

Currently, many countries that are willing to phase out coal are finding it difficult to replace it, because it has already established a deep-rooted connection to society, institutions, and the economy. When a technology is adopted, it is not only about the energy it uses, it is also about the employment it creates, and the dependency it creates with the infrastructure, industry, and society. It is now very difficult for coal-dependent countries like Germany, India, Indonesia, and China to replace coal because it is expensive to replace the technology. The coal phaseout in those countries are slow, not only because the strong coal lobby resists phaseout, but also because it is expensive to compensate the workers, employ them elsewhere, and reorganise the infrastructure, economy, and institutions for clean energy use.

Considering the electricity overcapacity in Bangladesh created over the last decade, I want to say that Bangladesh, with its decisions to build coal power plants and an expensive nuclear power plant, has already started to feel the symptoms of technology lock-in. Even if Bangladesh wants to replace the

existing technology with renewable technologies in the future, the possibility is getting weaker every day.

The investment of billions of dollars in LNG infrastructure, coal, and nuclear power plants over the last decade has already made the incumbent projects irreplaceable. It has already become difficult to implement a clean energy plan because of the existing overcapacity. Financing new

seven percent average. The Russia-Ukraine war, dollar crisis, rising inflation, forex reserve crisis, and poor economic performance do not seem to increase the demand as high as the predicted growth level. So, the new addition by committed power plants will more likely increase the burden as more plants need to remain idle.

The current gap between predicted and actual demand has questioned the

VISUAL: REHNUMA PROSHOON

reliability of the demand estimation. Even the past electricity demand estimation of the 2016 Master Plan was based on the assumption of 10 percent demand growth. The draft Integrated Energy and Power Master Plan (IEPMP) 2022 estimated that if the existing and committed power plants (gas, oil, coal, nuclear, and import) start production, by 2030 the total installed capacity will be 35,261MW. Based on various scenarios, the maximum demand in the same year will range from 31,709MW (low) to 41,890MW (high). After allowing for 10-15 percent reserve margin, the existing and already committed power plants will most likely satisfy the low scenario predicted demand, at the cost of limiting solar growth.

The existing coal-based capacity is 1,661MW, and committed capacity is 8,256MW. If more coal-based power plants are planned without considering the potential lock-in in the future, the electricity sector will again face a crisis. The persistent gap between actual generation and installed capacity has flagged the problem. It should ring the alarm now, rather than later when it will be even more difficult to replace the incumbent technologies. The government should learn from the crisis, revise the demand growth estimation based on more realistic assumptions, stop fossil fuel-based power plants, invest more on renewable deployment, and save the country from potential carbon lock-in. Expressing intention to transition to clean energy is not sufficient to save us from carbon lock-in.

We, as humans, must stop adapting to the unbearable



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HealthBridge.

DEBRA EFROYMSON

It is astonishing the tenacity with which we cling to the untenable. We humans seem to have an infinite capacity to adapt to the unbearable, but when it comes to suggesting a solution, we resist with admirable, if misdirected, strength. We complain endlessly about problems, but are adamant in our belief that nothing better is possible.

This is, in a word, stupid.

Consider our modern cities, particularly those in South Asia. They are highly polluted. People regularly die on the roads. We spend a fortune building new roads, flyovers, and elevated expressways, and then spend some more on vehicles to drive on them. We spend hours stuck in traffic every day. But if anyone suggests that perhaps our current approach to movement in cities is wrong, we write them off as crazy or impractical or unrealistic.

As if our current situation is same, practical, and realistic.

Sometimes I think that humans

are actually too adaptable. We learn to live with the unbearable. Air pollution and road crashes kill us, noise drives us crazy, and yet we fail to act urgently about these matters. We aren't happy that children can't play outdoors, but hey, they've all got smartphones now. The climate crisis threatens our very survival, and yet we can't be bothered to act about it, because we're too distracted by studies, work, and social media.

There exists a very different possibility for our cities. It's a radical solution to much of what ails us. It would be incredibly difficult to achieve, but if we were to achieve it, our lives would improve dramatically. It takes courage to dream of something radically better. And it requires intelligence, strategy, and persistence to achieve it. But if more of us dreamt it and worked towards achieving it, we could make it a possibility – and that would make it all worthwhile.

Major improvements in our lives

have not come about by accepting misery as inevitable. People have risen up and protested, whether it be against insane working hours, terrible working conditions, or denying women the right to vote. People dreamt big, worked hard, and through their dedication, intelligence, strategy, and persistence, they brought about change. Others called them crazy. Others told them they would never achieve their goals. But rather than listen to the naysayers, they persisted. Rather than be discouraged by their failures, they learnt from them. And we have them to thank for much that is better in our lives today.

Now, imagine being able to walk safely and comfortably in cities, without fearing being hit by a car, without choking on car exhaust, without being subjected to constant honking. Imagine being able to move around by bicycle, reaching your destination in little time and essentially at no cost. Or taking a rickshaw or a tram and actually arriving at our destinations in a reasonable amount of time.

Imagine children playing outdoors – remember when that was a thing? Skating, cycling, playing badminton, chasing each other, laughing. Clusters of school children walking or cycling to school together.

But why just children? Imagine youth having space outdoors to socialise and the ability to move about

actively and safely.

Adults, too, of all ages, walking, taking bicycles or rickshaws. Benches on the footpaths where people can rest under the shade of a tree.

Trees? Did I mention trees? Imagine a city with more parks, canals, and other green space. A city that is cooler, thanks to all the dirt, water, and trees. A city that doesn't flood despite the worsening climate crisis, thanks to plenty of natural drainage. Rainwater seeps into the soil and replenishes the groundwater. Because there's space for that now. Because that's what we prioritise now.

A city that invites nature back in. Connected green spaces populated with local birds. Clean canals populated with local fish. Air that nourishes rather than poisons us.

Cities that are good for our health, for the health of other creatures, good for our pocketbooks. Cities that are safe, pleasant to live in.

I know, it's hard to imagine. And you're wondering, "Okay, sure, but what do we have to give up?"

Well, of course you'd have to give something up. Nothing comes for free! You'd have to give up, let's see... filthy air. Terrible congestion. Frequent road crashes.

And, yeah, the convenience and "status" of owning/using an automobile or a motorbike.

'The way parliament is run these days is detrimental to holding the government accountable'

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Jatiya Sangsad, five-time lawmaker and president of the ruling alliance partner Workers' Party, Rashed Khan Menon, talks about what an effective parliament should be like in an interview with Mohiuddin Alamgir of The Daily Star.

You recently said at the House that the standard of Jatiya Sangsad was on a continuous decline. Why do you think so?

Not only is the standard of Jatiya Sangsad on a decline, but its character is changing too. In the past, mainly active politicians would become members of parliament (MPs), but now businessmen are becoming MPs. It's not like we didn't have businessmen in our parliament before, but they were primarily politicians – they took part in movements and went to jail. In fact, now businessmen are the majority in the House. As a result, no substantive discussions take place in parliament.

A researcher once said that during a one-hour session in parliament, people's issues are discussed for three minutes, while the rest of the time is spent praising the ruling party, its leader and others. This wasn't the case in the past. In the past, even during the Pakistan period, parliamentarians including Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman used parliament to talk about people's issues. These days, we speak about some development work to please the local constituency, but that is not done in the proper way, in my opinion.

Recently, the government increased the prices of fertilisers. Ideally, questions would have been raised about the decision to raise fertiliser prices. In reality, although the government is saying that the price hike was done in accordance with the international market, we know the decision was made in line with the IMF conditionalities.

Is there any discussion on the growing income inequality in parliament these days? Some of us are trying to raise these issues, but the rest are saying nothing.

Be it Bangabandhu or other politicians of that era – they all spoke of these issues. Even the parliaments that were dominated by Awami League members featured these discussions. But now, these issues are not discussed.

Article 70 of the constitution, which deals with vacating the seat on resignation or voting against a political party, has become a big barrier to freedom of expression, which is another reason why the parliament's

character has changed. Even though the prime minister has said that this is a tool to curb floor-crossing in parliament, has it been able to stop that from happening? We have seen in the recent past how members have moved from BNP to Awami League and have even become ministers.

Do you think Article 70 should be scrapped?

No, we are talking about a reform of the system. There should be three kinds of whips in parliament. For general topics, the discussion will be open, and when the government thinks some issue is important, the second whip will be called upon. The third and final whip will be that an MP will not be able to vote against the party in the cases of defence, budget, and votes of no confidence.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of Jatiya Sangsad. How has its journey been?

The journey of our parliament has been turbulent. The framers of our constitution introduced a parliamentary democracy. But we first stumbled during the 4th amendment of the constitution, when a presidential system was put in place. The parliament became paralysed during the regime of Ziaur Rahman, who made amendments and an anti-Liberation War individual was made the leader of the House. It failed to play an effective role then. The parliament of 1979, even though it had no power, was lively.

After parliamentary democracy was restored in 1991, the sessions of parliament became lively again; we even put forth a proposal of no confidence against the agriculture minister. We tabled a proposal of no confidence against the government. We put forward a demand for the ban of Jamaat. Even the parliament of 2008 was quite lively, because it had a substantial presence of the opposition.

Our parliamentary culture did not grow due to the tradition of boycotting the parliament.

The parliament is at the centre of institutionalising democracy. It holds



FILE PHOTO: STAR

public opinion and expectations. How far has this principle been upheld?

It is written in our constitution that the people will yield authority over the country through their representatives. Theoretically, this seems okay. But practically all laws and budgets are formulated by the bureaucrats, and the MPs' role is very little. MPs can't change even 0.1 percent of the budget if the government is not willing.

Then what is the role of parliament? In India, after the budget is proposed, it goes to the standing committee, where it is discussed and examined thoroughly, a report is produced, and that creates the basis of discussion over the budget. These practices are non-existent in our parliament.

The question-answer sessions faced by the ministers of the government have also become futile as well. On many occasions, the relevant ministers are absent.

Many MPs show a lack of interest in the process of law enactment, although it is their primary role.

What is your take on that?

MPs' involvement in legislation faces hindrance because of the existence of Article 70. I have not seen any difference of opinion from the treasury bench when a law is passed. It has turned into a majoritarian system, which is why discussions don't take place when it comes to enacting laws. Barring a few exceptions, discussion does not take place even in parliamentary committees, which have the power to change laws.

As the majority of the MPs are businessmen, it is also a reason for not having discussions during the process of law passage. Regarding the matter, I want to quote President Abdul Hamid, who symbolically said the number of lawyers in parliament decreased to such a level that we might need to hire experts to enact laws.

For issues such as the soaring prices of essentials, gas, electricity are soaring, widespread corruption, allegations of breach of rights and even extrajudicial killings against law enforcement personnel, etc, our parliament has a role to play in making the executive branch accountable. How far has it been successful to this end?

The process of making the executive branch accountable was present in the past, but now it has reduced significantly. There are various ways to hold the executive branch to account, such as point of order, question-answer segment, different kinds of motions, and having discussions on matters of urgent public importance. But, other than the question-answer segment, which itself is often tabled, none of these are in practice. The way parliament is conducted these days is detrimental to holding the government accountable for its actions.

The opposition in the House has a role in making parliament effective. Many say the current opposition is a "friendly opposition." How do you evaluate the current opposition?

It is not possible to make the parliament effective with such an opposition. Being a treasury bench member, I try to speak on

public interest issues. If anyone tries to talk, they still can discuss.

You have participated in the last two elections as part of an alliance. It seems that the Awami League leaders have already started seeking votes in favour of the party symbol. What is your thought on that as an alliance partner?

Regarding the next election, we have spoken with the prime minister and she has said she wants to participate in the election as a coalition. She has already been asking for votes for the Awami League, but as the leader of the alliance, she will also need to seek votes for the Workers' Party or for JASAD.

Is there any crack in the alliance?

There could be some struggle in the politics of alliance. But I think that alliances have become marginalised over time.

There is a saying in the political circuit that whenever the Awami League falls in trouble, it seeks refuge in the 14-party alliance, but at other times, it does not listen to the opinions of the alliance partners.

Look, when we formed the 14-party coalition, it was decided that we would move together, go to the polls together, and form the government together. I think they did not act accordingly. Giving importance to the partners only in times of one's need is not the right approach.

Another election is approaching. What should an effective parliament be like?

We proposed for a parliament based on proportional representation. If that is not possible, then some space should be offered to the opposition and other parties so they can organise among themselves and come to parliament. A parliament should be a mixture; it can't be dominated by majoritarianism. A parliament is formed by the speaker, the government, and the opposition. If that pyramid is followed, then it can become a proper parliament.

Transcribed and translated by Azmin Azran.

PM'S JAPAN VISIT

A new turning point in Bangladesh-Japan ties?

Dr Sabera Chowdhury
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SABERA CHOWDHURY

Being one of the most open and trade-oriented economies in South Asia, Bangladesh is slowly becoming a promising and lucrative business destination in the region. Japan, Bangladesh's long-standing development partner, is eager to strengthen the bilateral connections due to the latter's 170-million-strong consumer base, an expanding middle class, improved purchasing power, local demands, easily accessible labour, and economic development. Due to worries about overdependence and supply chain disruptions in the wake of the pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war, Bangladesh can be an alluring alternative location for Japanese businesses that are looking to pivot away from China. The East Asian country is making significant investments in Bangladesh. As a result, Bangladesh's success in the near future may be greatly influenced by its economic relations with Japan.

The two countries have had friendly ties ever since Tokyo recognised the People's Republic of Bangladesh on February 10, 1972. Japan has generously contributed to Bangladesh through Official Development Assistance (ODA) since 1972, and has advanced to become the country's leading bilateral donor. Bangladesh receives the most ODA from Japan, according to Ito Naoki, former Japanese ambassador to the country. In 2014, Bangladesh and Japan began a comprehensive partnership, which resulted in an increase in financial assistance.

Japan provided Bangladesh with \$2.63 billion in aid, more than any other country, for the 2020-21 fiscal year. Since Bangladesh's independence, Japan has made

a contribution of \$24.72 billion, roughly split between grants and loans. Japan provides assistance to Bangladesh in a number of fields, including energy production, social and economic development, and the development of both real and intangible infrastructure.

Investment links between Bangladesh and Japan are expanding in sectors like gas and coal, the blue economy, health, and human resource development. Japanese businesses are considering Bangladesh as a potential new investment location. Only 82 Japanese companies had stakes in Bangladesh 10 years ago. Over the past decade, that number

from Japan. In actuality, the only country that has been allowed to make significant investments in northeast India because of the area's strategic location is Japan. Northeast India is landlocked by Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, and Myanmar. All of these factors played a role in the development of the "free and open Indo-Pacific" idea, one of Japan's most important foreign policy initiatives. Although former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe initially proposed this idea, it has been continued by the succeeding administrations. Japan has been working to uphold a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific region as part of this.

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, while announcing Japan's new "free and open Indo-Pacific" strategy, said northeast India still has unrealised economic potential. In order to assist the growth of the entire region, Japan wants to construct the Bengal-Northeast India industrial value chain concept in partnership with Bangladesh and India, treating Bangladesh and the other South Asian countries as a single economic zone. An "Act East" conference was previously held by India and Japan to investigate business opportunities in Bangladesh and elsewhere. The plan calls for it to be a component of Tokyo's larger Bay of Bengal and Northeast India infrastructure development plans, with a focus on multilayer connectivity. Japan has unveiled its new vision for the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP), which calls for the integrated development of Bangladesh and northeast India as parts of a wider Bay of Bengal community.

Bangladesh's primary Asian export market is Japan. Although Bangladesh's exports to Japan have nearly doubled over the past 10 years, there is still a lot of unrealised trade potential in the country. According to a 2014 Pew Research survey, 71 percent of Bangladeshis support Japan, making it one of Asia's most pro-Japanese nations.

In favour of Japan, Bangladesh withdrew its candidacy for non-permanent membership in the UN Security Council (UNSC) in 2014.

Bangladesh plays a significant role in Japan's strategic and diplomatic agenda in South Asia. But Bangladesh must enhance its economic climate, for instance by implementing fast-track projects, in order to become an investment-friendly hub for Japan. Additionally, the transfer of technological know-how will be crucial for Bangladesh, who will profit for years to come if it can advance technologically through its partnership with Japan. Japan ought to permit Bangladeshi goods to be imported duty-free to establish a level

playing field. The removal of current barriers to their bilateral interactions, such as protracted customs clearance processes, double taxation, and foreign exchange concerns, requires coordinated efforts from both sides.

Aside from economic considerations, improving ties with Dhaka will give Tokyo the opportunity to reconsider its South Asian power structure beyond New Delhi. On the other hand, a close relationship with Japan will help Bangladesh realise its full economic potential, face challenges that may appear after it becomes a developing country in 2026, and diversify its diplomatic relations with major powers. By looking for

new avenues for collaboration in the development of vaccines, healthcare, the blue economy, high-tech industries, shipbuilding, automobile manufacture, and other fields, both parties may enhance their bonds.

The innovative leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has helped Bangladesh become a development model. A crucial component of her outstanding leadership is how well she and her government handled interactions with local communities and other international organisations. We anticipate that the prime minister's upcoming Japan visit, scheduled for April 25-28, will create new economic prospects for both countries.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Chattogram City Corporation
Tigerpass, Chattogram
www.ccc.gov.bd

Date: 18.04.2023

e-Tender Notice-DRIIDARP/2022-23/06

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

| Package/Lot No. | Tender ID | Identification of lot | Tender document last selling date and time | Tender closing & opening date and time |
|-------------------------------|-----------|--|--|--|
| DRIIDARP/2022-23/CCC/W16/L2/A | 821437 | Development of Habib Lane, Arakan H/S Road, Al Madani Road & bylane and Alfallah H/S Mosque Road at 8 No. Ward | 14-May-2023 11:00 | 14-May-2023 14:00 |

The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders.

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and offline hard copies will not 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 branches up to particular date and time specified on the tender notice.

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

Md. Jashim Uddin
Deputy Project Director
"Different Roads and Important Infrastructure Development including Airport Road under Chattogram City Corporation" & Executive Engineer
Chattogram City Corporation

CCC/PRD-149/22-23
Size 5"x4 Col
GD-725

A bookstore is a time machine—Zeenat Book Supply through the ages

Last week, one of Dhaka's oldest bookstores announced that they will be closing shop on May 1 after running for 60 years

"Other times, I would catch thieves who came in to steal our books because they didn't have the money to buy them. We caught them, let them go, caught them again and again to quench their addiction to reading. Shei boi porar nesha."

SARAH ANJUM BARI

Books are rooms. Books are spaces. Their stories may inhabit us, but we inhabit them just as much—from the gate of the front cover to the markings etched across its pages and the smells that seep into its soil. Each smudge, each stroke of ink is a landmark that transports you to a corresponding past. Much like walking down the street of your childhood home.

To most people who lived in or passed through Dhaka, particularly through the '60s and '80s, the cracking open of a weather-beaten spine may uncover a small seal stamped onto the bottom right corner of the book's front pages. 'Zeenat Book Supply Ltd. 190 Dhaka New Market. Dhaka 1205.'

A soft laughter. "Ashole amader dokaner lokra onek puraton manush toh, our staff have been working here for so long that they are partial to these old practices instead of the more cost effective stickers I keep getting for our books."

And so the memories come leaping back.

I think it was at Zeenat I first said, 'Wow, this Stephen King guy seems very popular.'

This past week, while hunting for readers

the late music composer Niloy Das.

Dr. Faustina Pereira, a human rights lawyer and academic, treasured the monthly trips to New Market with her mother in the 1970s. "As a young girl, I would save paisa by paisa, my precious allowance money from weekly chores", she says.

Aspiring writer Sameirah Nasrin Ahsan is to be found alongside her toddler at most children's storytelling sessions in the city's bookstores today. She says, "Zeenat was one of the few places we frequented, I vaguely remember going through books there with my mom closeby, there was a table fan there somewhere. I remember the sound of its gentle hum, the periodic rustling of paper as the fan slowly oscillated from side to side. After we picked our books, I remember reading them on our way back home, stretched out on my mother's lap, my senses filled with the sweet fragrance of new books and Maa's starched cotton sari."

"I realised that it was out of my budget", said Shahir Tasnim, another reader who frequented the store as a child with her mother, and returned during the Covid for a Milan Kundera title she couldn't find anywhere else. "The owner could tell that I really needed the book and he gave it to me for less than half the price."

quotes soon shed away to make room for awe.

Please don't tell our mother!

A bookstore is a unique site of community building, one of the few places where a child can feel their tastes are as important, as worthy of commanding physical space as an adult's, while a grownup can revel in the whimsy that a child enjoys while listening to stories. Bookstores make space for diversity—of interests, of backgrounds—and also for dialogues manifested by time travel. That all those anecdotes surrounding Zeenat are nearly identical speaks volumes about the kind of space it created for its clients. In much of Bangladeshi culture preceding the last decade, fathers were painted as an aloof figure who brought in the family finances, while mothers reigned only in matters of the domestic front. But these memories tied with Zeenat testify to times, spanning back years and decades, of both parents nurturing their children's intellectual curiosity, their emotional development and, therefore, their agency.

Perhaps even more precious in these accounts is the proof that so many different people can harbour such similar, overlapping memories and sentiments, despite all that may separate them across age, class, interests and experiences. In this last respect, the culture at Zeenat seemed to bleed into a community role all but absent in Dhaka—that of the library, which wipes out the capitalistic undertones of a bookstore's operations.

This is what occurs to me when I spend an hour and a half on the phone on Monday night, listening to and laughing at the history of Zeenat Book Supply shared by store owner Syed Faisal, who took charge of the shop after his father passed away in 1993.

"Two young brothers—they are all grown up and quite well known now—they would sneak out of their home when their mother took her afternoon nap."

He continues, "They would run to Zeenat, pick up books from the floor and read as much as they could while sweating profusely in the heat. They scrambled back home before they would get into trouble, their sandals flying. Please don't tell our mother, they would tell me."

"Other times, I would catch thieves who came in to steal our books because they didn't have the money to buy them. We caught them, let them go, caught them again a few days later. They came back again and again to quench their addiction to reading. Shei boi porar nesha."

We talk about the beginnings of the store in 1963, about Faisal bringing in the first Ladybird children's books to Bangladesh, about learning to sense clients' taste in books, and the shifting reading practices brought over by technology.

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

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PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

most meaningful memories at one of Dhaka's oldest bookshops in New Market, I expected to chance upon something like a Quality Streets box of chocolates, varieties and all. But stories command their own trajectories, and the memories I gained access to are, across a spectrum of ages and backgrounds, all the same.

"My mom used to buy books from there whenever she took us to new market", says music journalist Milu Aman, who has recently authored books on Bangladeshi rock music and

And then there are the stories of how Zeenat helped readers discover canon—Archie Comics, DC and Marvel comics, *Nancy Drew* and *The Famous Five* for Dr. Pereira, Stephen King for Toronto-based author of *The Storm*, Arif Anwar, Joyce's *Ulysses* for Milu Aman, and discounted leather-bound editions of Wordsworth, Scott Fitzgerald, Virginia Woolf and *The Little Prince* for Nodi Tabassum, a lecturer at Southeast University. Whatever concerns I felt at the similarities of these

TALESPEOPLE SPIELS

At least we tried

Sehri Tales is an annual flash writing challenge brought to you by the Talespeople group. This is the final instalment in a series on creative writing

ABAK HUSSAIN

If fiction writers are blessed with slightly larger imaginations than the rest of the world, then so is their capacity for grudges, pettiness, beef. Let's face it—it takes a certain narcissism and an absurd amount of self-belief to think readers will stick through with you, page after page, to the bitter end, especially in this day and age when so

much content is easily accessible. If a writer bores you for even a fraction of a section, a click of the mouse or a gentle upward swipe of your thumb can transport you to something else, something more interesting. In this unforgiving world of readers, writers want to be read—more than anything else. The narcissism can enter into an uneasy marriage with crippling anxiety, self-doubt, and self-loathing. No wonder so many writers were famously reclusive (Salinger, maybe Coetzee), and a considerable number of them wanted to have their manuscripts never see the light of day (most famously Kafka).

Writing, at the end of the day, is a solitary activity. Unlike the film director, who commands a large budget and an army of cast and crew, and is practiced in the art of compromise, a writer's task is much simpler—stare into a blank page and write something worth reading. This is terrifying, even for the best of writers, and really the most private of acts. Sharing one's work, whether it is through publishing the old-fashioned way, self-publishing, bringing out an ebook, or simply posting a vignette on social media, can be daunting—a bit like undressing in public.

Even worse can be the experience of sharing your work with other writers, opening yourself up to their feedback, counting the number of likes. If you put your heart into a piece, and it gets not a single heart react when you post it, the experience can—well—break your heart. Writers' groups or communities can seem oxymoronic for such a lone wolf trade, and yet, we always keep coming back to them. Such is the pull and power of community—it can transcend all the pettiness and make us all better.

So on the one hand, there is the cinematic image of the writer—antisocial, lonely, maybe with a drinking problem, wallowing in self-doubt, typing out copy after copy, crumpling up pieces of paper and tossing them in the bin. On the other hand, there is the enormous popularity globally of literary festivals, writers' retreats, MFA programs—and this popularity is only growing. New forms of community will no doubt emerge in the coming years, all as a counterweight to the solitary world of creative writing. With the Talespeople community, and the Sehri Tales challenge, we tried to do something along those lines. The response has gone beyond what we had imagined, so maybe it was worth it. A big thank you to all of our participants and partners for coming along with us in this ride so far, and to the core Talespeople moderators for working so hard to pull off this crazy month-long Ramadan writing challenge.

Abak Hussain is a journalist, and a Director of Talespeople.

THE SHELF

5 lightweight books for your hometown commute this Eid

MEHJABIN BIVA

For many Dhaka residents, the festivity and excitement of Eid starts the very moment they start their journey to their hometown to spend the Eid holiday with loved ones. In this year's sun-sational summer heat, the journey can be either of two things: you either pleasantly reach your destination while enjoying the sunlit rural landscape, or you spend the entire time badly craving teleportation powers to avoid the heatwave. In both situations, an enjoyable read can be a good companion to improve the travel experience. These lightweight and unpudownable books can be carried with comfort on the commute.

BANIYULALU
Shibabrata Barman
Baatighar, 2019

Baniyulalu is an anthology of 11 startling short stories that perfectly combine the logical aspects of science fiction and the surrealism of fantasy. From multiverses, sentient robots to extraterrestrial life and time travelling, the book covers numerous concepts that explore possibilities and impossibilities

taking place beyond our known world. The way the stories are told, by integrating the mysteries of nature with theoretical science, provides readers with an immersive experience, all while keeping them grounded.

AYNA
Abul Mansur Ahmad
Ahmed Publishing House, 1935
When it comes to Bengali satire, Abul Mansur Ahmad's *Ayna* is one of its kind. The classic is a collection of seven short stories, all of which shed light on some of the most deep-rooted societal issues. The witty



but lightweight narrative captures themes of religious hypocrisy, communal riots, socio-political crises, stories of opportunists etc. Even though it was first published in 1935, the book has remained timeless due to its topical relevance.

ZUBOVSKIY BULVAR
Mashiul Alam
Prothoma Prokashon, 2011
Zubovskiy Bulvar is a book named after a street in Moscow along which there once resided one of the largest translation agencies of the world, Progoti Prokashon or Progress Publishers. They translated

and published various books of science, arts, politics, classics, and children's literature in about 60 languages, but had to close down due to the Soviet Union's collapse. The book reminisces the golden days of Progoti Prokashon through its fictional protagonist Soumen Roy, who leaves Bangladesh to work as a translator in the publishing house. The nostalgic narrative and simple prose are what make this book a readers' favorite.

KALO BOROF
Mahmudul Haque
Shahitya Prakash, 2007

Kalo Borof is a cult novel that tells the reminiscent tales of Abdul Khaled, a fictional college teacher in newly independent Bangladesh. It is said that Mahmudul Haque drew this novel from his own experiences and the tide of emotions he had to navigate during 1947's India-Pakistan Partition. The book revolves around the recollections of Abdul Khaled's Pre-Partition childhood days in suburban Calcutta and the invisible scars he inherited as a witness of the Partition. It is a brilliant blend of spellbinding descriptions of nature, poignant memories of communal riots, and

nostalgic childhood chronicles.

An English translation done by Mahmud Rahman is also available, titled *Black Ice* (Harper Perennial, 2012).

MORON BILASH
Ahmed Sofa

Moron Bilash is a work of political fiction that revolves around the conversations between Fazle Elahi, a dying minister, and his spineless minion, Mawla Baksh. The minister decides to confess all the misdeeds he has engaged in during his lifetime at his deathbed and admits to doing them with a clear conscience, but puts the blame on society to justify himself. The sharp, merciless recollection of his past startles someone as morally weak as Mawla Baksh. Through the contrast of these two characters' dilemma and confidence, Sofa brilliantly portrays the picture of our society where immorality and wrongdoing, not justice or ethics, are the keys to rising.

Mehjabin Biva is an architecture student. Send her Marie Kondo videos at mehjabinbiva@gmail.com.



Real 'hit a good level' as Chelsea sink

AGENCIES

Real Madrid marched on in their defence of their European crown as they booked their place in the Champions League semi-finals for the 11th time in the last 13 competitions on Tuesday.

Carlo Ancelotti's men breezed past Chelsea at Stamford Bridge with Rodrygo's double securing a 2-0 win.

"Chelsea did very well in the first half and caused us a few problems, but we put in a very well rounded second half, raised our game and moved the ball around better and had more dynamism. We hit a good level," Ancelotti told reporters.

"We are delighted to play in another semi-final and will keep striving to reach the final. Reaching a semi-final is always a success because it allows you to dream of winning another Champions League and playing another final."

Chelsea's interim manager Frank Lampard found crumbs of comfort from his side's performance despite a crushing quarter-final exit.

"I think for 60 minutes the only thing missing was a goal," Lampard told reporters. "One goal or two goals changes the face of the game and at this level when you're not clinical you see what happens. The end bit of scoring is crucial and something we need to address."

But he says the rebuilding job must start in the time he remains at the helm.

"Manchester United have spent time out (of the Champions League), Arsenal have spent time out. It's impossible to try and predict it. We can set the building blocks now of where we want to get to."



Real Madrid winger Rodrygo conjured up his inner Cristiano Ronaldo when he netted twice in his side's 2-0 win over Chelsea in the second leg of the quarterfinals of the UEFA Champion League at Stamford Bridge yesterday. The 22-year-old pulled out the Ronaldo celebration when he gave Real the lead in the 58th minute and paid homage to his idol, who has scored the most goals in the competition's history and had made it a habit of scoring on the biggest occasions.

PHOTO: REAL MADRID

'When I started weaving that dream, I got a shock to the system'

Loneliness during bad patches in top-level cricket often does not come into the spotlight. It is an issue Virat Kohli had spoken about recently. When former Bangladesh Test captain Mominul Haque was struggling with performances, on top of the responsibilities of captaincy, difficult times engulfed him and he was eventually relieved of captaincy. He talked about those times, his dreams of Test captaincy and the work he is doing to get

back to rhythm with The Daily Star's Abdullah Al Mehdi. The excerpts are below:

DS: How did it feel to score runs Maunganui too. What was it like going through the slump?

MH: As you said, when there is a new innings after a bad patch it's a good feeling and that knock was really important to me. It was something to feel good about as well.

DS: Oftentimes batters don't score runs despite everything looking good. Did you face a similar issue during the slump?

MH: At my age, having played 55 Tests, there aren't any technical issues. I know the way I score runs and maybe at that time I was mentally broken. Or when I was captain, I was thinking too much about the team. When I took the captaincy, I had said that I have a big dream regarding the Test team. When I started weaving that dream, I got a shock to the system a little bit. Maybe that's why my focus wavered.

DS: Where did that shock to the system come from?

MH: Actually, by saying shock what I mean is that when you are building a dream, you have to perform yourself as well, but I wasn't performing myself.

DS: But you scored at Mount

you can check it too, I was batting at a strike rate of 50 to 55. The ones where I didn't score runs, my strike rate was 30 to 35.

DS: Because you weren't playing your natural game?

MH: Yes. Knowing that particular fact worked well for me. I thought about it and was able to bring it back. Maybe I scored 84 (against India) but my strike rate was good.

The more defensive you become, the more it will kill you. You will die trying to survive, whether in a battlefield or in life. If you look to dominate, maybe you will face difficulties at first but you will be successful going forward.

DS: Who were you working with apart from Salahuddin sir?

MH: I worked with Wasim Jaffer. He was working with the U-19s and sir was busy with the BPL. I was mentally down and sir was busy too, so I couldn't find

anyone. It was a little difficult during the BPL. I appreciate Shahriar Nafees bhai for helping me with the practice facility.

DS: You feel less pressure now?

MH: When you don't have captaincy, that pressure comes down. You can focus on your own game but the dream I have won't end.

DS: How far did you come along to making the Test team a real unit?

MH: I was almost there. Pace-bowling unit wise at least.

DS: What have your interactions been like with Hathurusingha?

MH: I feel that he is more mature than before. He is much better now in the context of giving freedom.

DS: Did you have issues with him in his previous stint?

MH: No there was no problem. It was created by you guys (smiles).

DS: Plans on upcoming Afghanistan series?

MH: Premier League has ended for me and I will begin preparations soon. West Indies A team are also due and I will get two four-day matches there. Being on the field continuously will help me.



80 is the new 50

REUTERS, TOKYO

Mutsuhiko Nomura's football career has spanned 18 World Cups, or 70 years, to be exact. Now the silver-haired former Japanese national team player is a member of the brand new over-80 division of Tokyo's "Soccer For Life" (SFL) league, which played its first match this month.

The sprightly 83-year-old and his teammates are among a growing number of seniors pushing the boundaries of active living in Japan, one of the world's fastest greying societies.

"When I was a kid, men in their 50s and 60s were considered 'grandpas,'" Nomura, already a member of several amateur teams, said after a pre-season practice match in February.

"And now, we're all still at it in our 80s. It's shocking."

It was only two decades ago that Tokyo created a division for the 0-60 age group. In 2012, the 0-70 division followed, and five years later, the 0-75 category. At that



rate, 0-80 was simply a matter of time.

If his more "mature" teammates are something to go by, Nomura may easily have

another decade on the pitch: the oldest player, Shingo Shiozawa, is 93.

"If I hadn't played football, I'd have been dead by now,"

said the former designer of racing cars, who plays goalie.

He credits the sport with motivating him to quit smoking and helping to speed

his recovery after treatment for spinal stenosis.

With an average age of 83-1/2, however, stiff backs, creaky knees and laboured breathing were often on display as the players of the three SFL teams slogged through inaugural matches under a blazing sun last Wednesday.

A ball propelled forward by a player failed to reach his slow-moving teammate, while a few stumbled and wobbled on the pitch. An 89-year-old who ran out of breath asked to be substituted about 10 minutes into a match, unable to play the rest of the 15-minute half.

After the game, Nomura and his teammates toasted their prowess with cans of beer, in a ritual familiar to many younger players.

"I think the formation of the 0-80 division is a reflection of what we're seeing in Japanese society, where the elderly demographic can be active like this," said Yutaka Ito, the secretary general of the SFL league.

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| SONY SPORTS 1 |
| UEFA Europa League |
| Sevilla vs Manchester United |
| Live from 1:00 am (Friday) |
| SONY SPORTS 2 |
| UEFA Europa League |
| Sporting Lisbon vs Juventus |
| Live from 1:00 am (Friday) |

Semifinal berth a 'big step forward' for Milan

AGENCIES

AC Milan reached the Champions League semi-finals for the first time since they won the trophy 16 years ago thanks to a first-half goal from Olivier Giroud at Napoli that secured a 1-1 draw and 2-1 aggregate win despite a barrage of pressure on Tuesday.

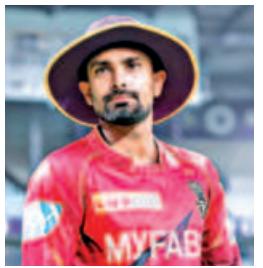
"We're too happy to have overcome such a good team... it's a great feeling," AC Milan coach Stefano Pioli said after the match.

"Let's take it one step at a time, whoever we get, we get. Whoever we get it will be a great derby and Champions League semi-final."

They have overcome a post-World Cup slump in recent weeks and Tuesday's performance was another statement display which gives them hope of reaching the final.

"These are experiences which give you the strength and ability to manage a certain type of pressure. For many of us it was the first time that we were playing such an important match... it's another big step forward."

Napoli, who were in the last eight for the first time, are in a mini slump without a victory in their last three matches in all competitions.



Liton-Fizz duel in store?

STAR SPORTS DESK

Delhi Capitals are slated for a clash against Kolkata Knight Riders at the Arun Jaitley Stadium in Delhi today (8:00 pm BST) and the hosts would be desperate to stage a revival act after losing all five matches of the 2023 Indian Premier League (IPL) season.

For Bangladesh fans following the IPL, this game presents the first opportunity of the season to watch the only two Bangladesh stars – batter Liton Das and pacer Mustafizur Rahman – in the same fixture of the ongoing IPL edition.

While Liton is yet to feature for Kolkata in his maiden IPL stint, Mustafizur has had a lacklustre show by his standards as the "cutter master" has only been able to make impact sporadically for Delhi in two outings.

Based on recent form, Kolkata is undoubtedly the favourites in the fixture but two back-to-back losses would be playing on their minds. Bangladesh fans would thus hope that Kolkata would change their playing eleven, unlike how they operated in the two previous games, and allow Liton to make his much-anticipated IPL debut.

The two sides are faced with contrasting problems on the batting front. While Delhi has repeatedly struggled to capitalise inside Powerplay since the tournament's start, Kolkata's death-over batting in their last match against Mumbai Indians had left a lot to be desired.

4 guest nations on SAFF C'ship radar

SPORTS REPORTER

The South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) is preparing to invite guest nations to take part in the upcoming SAFF Championship after all South Asian nations, bar Sri Lanka, confirmed their participation.

The 14th SAFF Championship is scheduled to begin on June 21 in Bengaluru and will feature eight teams, with one or two nations beyond the South Asia region being invited depending on the number of participating nations from South Asia.

India, Bangladesh, Maldives, Pakistan, Nepal and Bhutan have already confirmed their participation and there is hardly any possibility to include Sri Lanka, whose football federation was suspended by FIFA.

So, concerned authorities are mulling to include two guest teams from among four further invitees.

A SAFF secretariat insider informed that they would invite 54th-ranked Saudi Arabia, 95th-ranked Vietnam, 138th-ranked Malaysia and 149th-ranked Indonesia before choosing two.

"The scheduled of the SAFF Championship has been fixed outside the FIFA Window (June 12 to 20), so it will be a challenging job to get guest teams since they may have domestic commitments," said a source seeking anonymity. "However, we will try our best. The All Indian Football Federation will also be trying to convince the guest nations to play the SAFF Championship."

The draw for the tournament will be held after the SAFF Congress on May 6 in Dhaka.



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BORO HARVEST

Blast disease sinks farmers' hopes in haors

STAR REPORT

Every year, a festive mood prevails in the haor regions at this time as farmers get busy harvesting and threshing their Boro crops. But not this year.

Many farmers in haor areas are in severe distress as a large chunk of their Boro crops have been damaged by the Blast disease, caused by fungus.

The disease, one of the most devastating cereal diseases in the world, has infected vast swathes of paddy fields in Hakaluki haor in Kulaura, Barlekha, Juri upazilas; Kawadighi haor in Moulvibazar Sadar upazila; and Haili haor of Sreemangal upazila.

"All my crop is gone," said Anil Das, a farmer in Palermura area of Hakaluki Haor in Kulaura.

He cultivated the BRRI Dhan-28 on 45 decimals of land.

Amid such a situation, a group of farmers held a press conference at Sreemangal Press Club on April 8 and said almost all Boro crops in the haor region have been damaged by the Blast disease.

Of the total 1,991 hectares dedicated to rice cultivation in the haor region, crops on 837 hectares have been infected with the Blast fungus, also known as rice rotten neck, according to Md Ashraf Uddin, additional director of the Department of Agricultural Extension's Field

- BRRI 28 variety hit by blast disease
- Paddy on 2,000 hectares infected with blast fungus
- Boro cultivated on 49.9 lakh hectares
- Boro production target 2.15cr tonnes this year
- 28pc of Boro crop in haor area has been harvested

Services Wing.

"Basically, those farmers who cultivated the early variety BRRI Dhan-28 had their crops affected," he said, adding that they have advised farmers to spray fungicide in the field to avert such a situation.

Those who sprayed fungicide did not lose much.

"However, we will discourage farmers to cultivate the BRRI Dhan-28 from next season," he said.

Once a highly productive Boro variety, the BRRI Dhan-28 has now become highly susceptible to pest attacks.

The BRRI Dhan-28 is the only fast-growing variety sold by the Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation outpost in the haor area, said Ranjan Talukder, a farmer of Ulukandi village in Sunamganj's Jamalganj upazila.

"I didn't want to plant BRRI Dhan-28 paddy. As I didn't get other seeds, I was compelled to plant BRRI-28 seed," said Goura Das, a farmer in Palermura area of Hakaluki Haor.

Farmers were discouraged from planting the BRRI Dhan-28 rice seed and were urged to go for the modern BRRI Dhan-88 and Dhan-89, said Md Mohiuddin, an agriculturist at Sreemangal Upazila Agriculture Office.

Besides, the DAE suggested farmers to use fungicide twice. But some farmers did not do so. Furthermore, fungicide was washed away by rain in some areas.

"That's why such a huge amount of paddy have been damaged," Mohiuddin said.

A list of affected farmers would be prepared, said Shamsuddin Ahmed, deputy director at Directorate of Agricultural Extension in Moulvibazar. If any government fund is allocated in future, they would be assisted.

Our district correspondents concerned contributed to this report.



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

This road in the capital's Mohakhali area is almost empty on the first day of Eid holidays yesterday. The city traffic became less

chaotic as thousands of people started leaving the capital to celebrate Eid with their near and dear ones outside Dhaka.

Don't indulge in mudslinging over nomination
Hasina asks party leaders, warns them of possible arson by BNP-Jamaat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked the party leaders and activists to refrain from mudslinging over securing nominations.

She said there is no point in being involved in internal factionalism as she will give party tickets.

Hasina, also the prime minister, gave the instruction to the leaders of AL and its associate bodies through a video call during a joint meeting of the party.

The meeting was held at the AL chief's political office in the capital's Dhanmondi.

The PM said those who are interested in getting nominations will have to work with the party's grassroots leaders and activists in their electoral areas.

She asked the leaders not to get involved in any conflict in their respective areas, two AL leaders, who were present at the meeting, told The Daily Star.

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SUDAN FIGHTING

Thousands flee capital as ceasefire crumbles

Death toll rises to 270; 2,600 injured

AGENCIES

Thousands of residents yesterday fled Sudan's capital, where witnesses said bodies lay in the street from fighting between the army and paramilitaries after a 24-hour truce failed to take hold.

At least 270 people have died and 2,600 have been injured in the five days of fighting in Khartoum and elsewhere in the country, Sudan's health ministry said.

Foreign diplomats have been attacked, and United Nations emergency relief coordinator Martin Griffiths said the UN had received "reports of attacks and sexual violence against aid workers".

Governments started planning to evacuate their citizens, among them many UN staff.

The violence erupted on Saturday between the forces of two generals who seized power in a 2021 coup: army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and his deputy, Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, who commands the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF).

It followed a bitter dispute between them over the planned integration of the RSF into the regular army -- a key condition for a final deal aimed at restoring Sudan's democratic transition.

"Life in Khartoum is impossible if this war does not stop," said Alaway al-Tayeb, 33, on her way out of the capital.

"I tried to make children not see the slain bodies on the streets," she said, adding that her children currently suffer from shock and will need treatment.

Deafening explosions rattled buildings and heavy gunfire was

heard in Khartoum, as witnesses said plumes of thick black smoke emanated from buildings around the army headquarters in central Khartoum, reports AFP.

RSF fighters atop armoured vehicles and pickup trucks laden with weapons swarmed the streets. Fighter jets roared overhead and fired on RSF targets, the witnesses said.

Civilians huddled in their homes were becoming increasingly desperate, with dwindling food

supplies, power outages, and a lack of running water.

A 24-hour humanitarian ceasefire announced by South Sudan failed to take hold at its proposed start at 1600 GMT on Tuesday.

Yesterday, the RSF said it would "fully commit to a complete ceasefire", again from 1600 GMT and for 24 hours. The army had made no comment on such a development.

Thousands of people took matters into their own hands and, according to witnesses, began leaving their homes in Khartoum, some in cars and others on foot, including women and children.

They said the streets were littered with dead bodies, the stench of which filled the air.

"We are now on our way to Madani to stay with our relatives after my family and kids lived through the terror of explosions," said Mohamed Saleh, 43, a government employee.

"We were very worried fighters would start storming homes."

Out of 59 main hospitals in Khartoum, about 39 are currently "out of service", said the official doctors' union which reported "severe shortages" in remaining facilities.

Webb telescope captures glowing starburst



CNN ONLINE

A brilliant starburst feature shines in the latest image taken by the James Webb Space Telescope. The space observatory captured a bright burst of star formation triggered by two spiral galaxies crashing into one another.

The colliding galaxies, known collectively as Arp 220, generated an infrared glow that contains the light of more than 1 trillion suns. For comparison, the Milky Way galaxy has a luminosity that is the equivalent of about 10 billion suns.

The scintillating light show from the ultra-luminous infrared galaxy is the spiked starburst feature at the center of the new Webb image, which was released on Monday.

The telescope's Near-Infrared Camera and Mid-Infrared Instrument captured the composite image.

Arp 220 is located 250 million light-years away in the Serpens constellation, and it's the brightest of the three galactic mergers closest to Earth.

These two galaxies began colliding about 700 million years ago, and as the gas and dust combined, a tremendous flare of star birth began.

India to become most populous country by June

AFP, New Delhi

India is set to overtake China as the world's most populous country by the end of June, UN estimates showed yesterday, posing huge challenges to a nation with creaking infrastructure and insufficient jobs for millions of young people.

The seismic shift will see India's population hit 1.4286 billion -- almost three million more than China's 1.4257 billion -- at mid-year, the United Nations Population Fund's State of World Population report forecast.

China has generally been regarded as the world's most populous country since the fall of the Roman Empire but last year its population shrank for the first time since 1960, while India's has continued to rise.

The South Asian giant spreads from the Himalayas to the beaches of Kerala, with 22 official languages, and nearly half its inhabitants are under 25.

The country faces huge challenges providing electricity, food and housing for its growing population, with many of its massive cities already struggling with water shortages, air and water pollution, and packed slums.

According to the Pew Research Centre, the number of people in India has grown by more than one billion since 1950, the year the UN began gathering population data.



Firefighters tackle a blaze at Janata Cold Storage in Chattogram city's Rajakhali area early yesterday. The cold storage, which had dry fish, caught fire after an explosion on the ground floor of the building. A worker is seen carrying a sack of dry fish out of the building. Four people were injured when the blast caused a wall to collapse on them.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

US ELECTION LIES Fox settles Dominion case for \$787.5m

REUTERS, Wilmington

Fox Corp FOXA.O and Fox News on Tuesday settled a defamation lawsuit by Dominion Voting Systems for \$787.5 million, averting a trial putting one of the world's top media companies in the crosshairs over its coverage of false vote-rigging claims in the 2020 US election.

The settlement, which legal experts said was the largest struck by an American media company, was announced by the two sides and the judge in the case at the 11th hour.

The jury had been selected earlier in the day and the trial poised for opening statements in Wilmington, Delaware. Dominion had sought \$1.6 billion in damages in the lawsuit filed in 2021. Dominion CEO John Poulos called the settlement "historic."

"Fox has admitted to telling lies about Dominion that caused enormous damage to my company, our employees and our customers," Poulos said in a statement. "Truthful reporting in the media is essential to our democracy," Poulos said.

At issue in the lawsuit was whether Fox was liable for airing the false claims that Denver-based Dominion's ballot-counting machines were used to manipulate the presidential election in favour of Democrat Joe Biden over then-President Donald Trump, a Republican.

Tuesday's settlement spared Fox the peril of having some of its best-known figures called to the witness stand and subjected to potentially withering questioning.