



DHAKA WEDNESDAY APRIL 26, 2023

REGD. No. DA 781

VOL. XXXIII No. 98

BAISHAKH 13, 1430 BS

www.thedailystar.net

SHAWWAL 5, 1444 HJURI

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WB to give over \$8b in next 4yrs

Multilateral lender to present lending programme during PM's US visit

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The World Bank Group is set to provide Bangladesh with upwards of \$2 billion every year over the next four years to help the country gear up for its next phase of development.

The lending plan has been outlined in the new country partnership framework (CPF) for 2023-27, which will be approved by the WB board ahead of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to Washington DC to mark 50 years of partnership with the multilateral lender.

In recent years, the WB has been committing to up to \$2 billion a year.

The upcoming CPF, which has been prepared in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, is anchored in the government's 8th five-year plan.

It will have eight objectives with the view to increasing private sector jobs, improving socioeconomic inclusion and enhancing climate resilience.

"The WBG anticipates a robust engagement during the CPF period," said the draft document prepared for the board's approval.

The annual allocation from the International Development Association (IDA), the WB arm that provides concessional financing to poor nations, is expected to be within the \$1.5-2 billion per annum

The lending plan has been outlined in the new country partnership framework for 2023-27, which will be approved by the WB board ahead of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to Washington DC to mark 50 years of partnership with the multilateral lender.

range.

"Together with a current balance of about \$8.24 billion to be disbursed under the existing projects, this offers an opportunity for series of transformational projects across key sectors."

Some of the transformational projects earmarked include the development of an economic corridor centring on Jamuna River, restoration of the ecology of Dhaka rivers, Bay Terminal project, modernisation of public sector operation, and learning acceleration in secondary education.

At the same time, the International Finance Corporation, the WB arm that helps develop the private sector in developing countries, will strive to increase its investment programme to \$900 million per annum, including mobilisation.

The Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency, the WB arm that promotes investment in developing countries by offering political and economic risk insurance, will continue to support its existing portfolio of \$1.1 billion in gross outstanding exposure across the energy and manufacturing sectors.

In collaboration with the IFC, MIGA will seek to support foreign direct investment into the country through its guarantee instruments as well as find opportunities to use its trade finance support instruments.

Fostering entries of new enterprises into markets and their growth will help the private sector become more diversified, the WB said.

Subsequently, it will help Bangladesh develop a diversified and competitive private sector by building an enabling environment that fosters new enterprise development and FDI.

It will support necessary reforms and utilise its instruments to facilitate market entries of new domestic and foreign firms through regulatory simplification.

The WB will also work towards fostering efficient and sustainable use of energy resources during the CPF.

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The red carpet was rolled out and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was given a guard of honour after she landed at the Haneda International Airport in Japan yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

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10 YEARS AFTER RANA PLAZA DISASTER

Efforts to make RMG factories safety compliant slog on

ZYMA ISLAM

Even 10 years after the Rana Plaza collapse, export oriented ready-made garment factories' full compliance with international safety standards is far from being achieved.

The factory remediations that had started following the collapse are still slogging on.

Until 2020, there was a legally binding contract called the Accord on RMG fire and building safety. Accord forced as many as 200 brands to only source from factories that are under the process of implementing internationally supervised corrective safety measures.

Now, there is no such legal bar for brands, nor is there any authority that can force brands to stop buying from factories that are not making any halfway to become safe.

To get orders from the biggest brands, all that factories need to do is show that they are in a process of self-improvement, regardless of how long it takes them to actually become fully compliant.

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With the legal bindings gone, around 200 more factories got on board to become safety compliant over the last year.

These factories are now under national scrutiny. But now there are more non-complaint factories supplying clothes to big brands.

For every step taken, the finishing line moves further away and the job to make RMG factories safer gets even bigger. Most of the factories that are implementing the safety measures had their first inspections as early as 2014.

GAS LEAKS

Fix it all, avoid disaster

Experts say

HELEMUL ALAM

The gas leaks at different parts of Dhaka city on Monday once again exposed the vulnerability of distribution network of Titas Gas and served as a call to action to avoid a disaster, say energy and urban experts.

Many city dwellers complained of gas leaks in parts of the capital with some coming out of their homes and staying on the street for hours on Monday night fearing blasts. Announcements were made in some areas requesting people not to light their stoves.

The Fire Service and Civil Defence received over 100 phone calls about the leaks of gas at various points while some panicked city dwellers also called 999 for help.

Clarifying, Titas Gas yesterday said it was due to high pressure in the gas pipeline. "At present, the gas supply in Dhaka city is normal and people are advised to light gas stoves," the distributor said in a statement.

Energy experts, however, blamed Titas for transmitting gas through pipes most of which were laid decades ago.

"We have been repeatedly advising Titas to replace its old distribution network which developed numerous leaks, but they are not paying heed to it," energy expert Prof M Shamsul Alam told The Daily Star yesterday.

Sometimes, he said, the leaked gas gets trapped in a place and causes an explosion like the one in a Narayanganj mosque a year and a half ago. The blast claimed 34 lives.

"People usually cannot detect accumulated gas but pay the price when it causes an explosion," he added.

Shamsul said an automated system should be in place to control the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

HSC exams likely to be held mid-August

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Education Minister Dipu Moni yesterday said the HSC and its equivalent exams on abridged curricula are likely to begin in mid-August.

She also announced the closure of coaching centres across the country from April 26 to May 23 in order to ensure a proper environment for the Secondary Secondary Certificate (SSC) and equivalent exams that will begin on April 30.

The number of students sitting for the SSC and equivalent exams has increased by 50,295 compared to the previous year and nearly 77 percent of the additional students are girls, she told a press briefing at the International Mother Language Institute in the capital.

A total of 20,72,163 students have registered for the SSC and equivalent exams. Of them, 10,21,197

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Dinghies moored to the bank of the Buriganga in Keraniganj. At regular times, people often have to form queues to board the dinghies. Many people who left the capital for the holidays have yet to return.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

IMF LOAN CONDITIONS

Another power price hike likely by June

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

There is likely to be yet another increase in electricity tariff by June as the government looks to shed its subsidy burden in line with the demands of the International Monetary Fund.

The government has increased the electricity tariff three times this year: by 5 percent each time.

And yet that was not enough to rein in electricity subsidy: it was topped up by Tk 6,000 crore to Tk 23,000 crore in the revised budget.

With the view to containing the budget subsidies for natural gas and electricity to 0.9 percent of GDP, another increase in electricity tariff would be recommended this fiscal year that wraps up on June 30, finance ministry officials told the visiting IMF staff mission yesterday.

An eight-member IMF staff mission is in Dhaka until May 2 to discuss recent economic developments and policy implementation under the \$4.7 billion loan programme. The mission held a separate meeting with the Bangladesh Bank.

Rationalisation of subsidies is one of the programme stipulations, and the government has committed to adjusting electricity prices further to reduce the subsidy component.

"Not all subsidies are good, not all subsidies are geared towards the poor and the vulnerable. If you look at Bangladesh, a lot of subsidies are given for gas

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Bangladesh embassy in Sudan, ambassador’s home attacked

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh embassy in Sudan and the acting ambassador Tarek Ahmed’s residence in Khartoum came under attack on April 15, forcing Tarek to move to a safe place, sources at the foreign ministry said.

Bullets from machine guns hit the ambassador’s residence on April 15, the initial days of the conflicts that began between Sudan’s military and paramilitary forces.

A foreign ministry official said the Bangladesh embassy building on April 22 was hit by machine gun bullets. There were no casualties.

DEFAMATION CONVICTION Rahul Gandhi appeals after court denies stay

REUTERS, New Delhi

Indian opposition leader Rahul Gandhi yesterday appealed to the High Court in the western state of Gujarat seeking a stay of conviction in a defamation case, challenging a lower court’s ruling against his plea, his lawyer said.

Gandhi was convicted last month in a case brought by a state lawmaker from the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) after comments he made that were deemed to be insulting to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other people surnamed Modi.

The 52-year old scion of India’s Congress party was sentenced to two years’ imprisonment. His petition seeking a stay of conviction was rejected last week.

“We have filed an appeal challenging the Surat district court’s order,” Gandhi’s lawyer, Pankaj Champaneri, told Reuters.

Gandhi also lost his parliamentary seat following the conviction since lawmakers sentenced to jail terms of two years or more are automatically disqualified and barred from running for election.

His sentence will remain suspended until he exhausts all legal challenges.

Two more defamation cases have also been filed against Gandhi elsewhere in India relating to the same comment.



Indubala Bhaater Hotel – a web series on the OTT platform Hoichoi – is the current craze. I will not discuss the storyline in detail but let’s just say that it leaves you with a nostalgic pull for lost worlds and makes you realise how a woman can evolve through troubled times.



The city’s vegetarian EATERIES

RBR

I would, however, discuss the vegetarian dishes that played a supporting role in the series. A taro root mash or “kochu bhorta” in coconut shavings – mixed with mustard oil – is the recipe that saves Indubala and popularises her hotel. How a small portion of this special kochu bhorta and piping hot rice fills both the hearts and stomachs of the castaways and the regular people is what captured my imagination.

I took it upon myself to find restaurants like Indubala Bhaater Hotel in Dhaka, serving simple no-fuss vegetarian dishes like aubergine burnt in a coal fire and mixed with “aam tel” or mango pickle oil. It’s hard to find an exact match of the drama setting but there are a few restaurants in equally dreamy locations.

One is Jatra Biroti on Kemal Ataturk Avenue in Banani. It is a multi-purpose event space/art lounge and vegetarian restaurant serving exotic dishes like eggplant korma, cauliflower rezala, and wood-apple drinks. Give their vegetables a try and eat mushroom tehari, niramish (veg), and begun bhaji – their specialties.

Faiza Ahmed, food visionary and vegan chef, owner of Shanchayita, a restaurant in Mohakhali DOHS, has the most amazing vegan spread in town. Her popular meals are vegan dam biriyani served with cabbage pakora, a comfort runny veggie khichuri platter served with sour eggplant and lentil



PHOTO: SHANCHAYITA

fritters, boukhudi or broken rice dish with three local mashes of lentil, dry red chilli, and yummy peanut.

The most popular snack is batata puri (batata means potato in Portuguese). This is one of those classic mashed potato, onion, chilli, and cilantro concoctions topped with a tamarind sauce. This is served on crispy wheat chips.

The desserts available are vegan peanut laddu with no oil and no dairy, semolina halwa with date jaggery, and narikel (coconut) puli.

Faiza’s pickles are to die for and add that much-needed oomph to the food – dry jujube pickle, mango rasya, and Kartik jaitun pickle. She has a private

dine-in facility, where you need to make reservations first and enjoy a cosy meal. Faiza also takes 8 to 15 takeout orders a day. A very niche clientele is attracted to this beautiful restaurant.

There are a few more options of vegetarian and vegan eateries in town, but ISKCON Dhaka at Swami Bagh and Vishnupriya Vojanalay – a vegetarian restaurant in Kowtali Road, old Dhaka also has their loyal vegetarian regulars.

So, during this scorching Dhaka summer time do yourself a favour and have organic vegetarian dishes for a change. Popularise greens in Dhaka especially after coming out of the Eid food coma.

BCL leader sent to jail for rape attempt

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A Sherpur court sent a leader of the Bangladesh Chhatra League to jail for attempting to rape an indigenous girl belonging to the Garo community in Jhenaigati upazila.

Shahrier Khan Shawon, 31, was also expelled from his position as the general secretary of BCL’s Jhenaigati upazila unit on the same day.

Police arrested him after the 19-year-old girl lodged a complaint with the Jhenaigati Police Station on Monday night, said Officer-in-Charge Monirul Alam Bhuiyan.

According to the case statement, Shawon broke into the girl’s house on Saturday night and attempted to rape her.

Woman’s body recovered from RHD staff quarters

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lakshmipur

The dismembered body of a woman was found inside the staff quarters of the Roads and Highways Department in Lakshmipur Monday night.

The deceased was identified as Montaj Begum, wife of late Abdul Matin, a former employee of the department.

Montaj lived in the quarters with her two sons – Shariful Islam Bappi and Saiful Islam Rocky – since her husband died.

After returning home around 11:30pm, Bappi found his mother’s dismembered body and informed police who recovered it and sent to District Sadar Hospital morgue for an autopsy, said Mosleh Uddin, officer-in-charge of Lakshmipur Sadar Police Station.

4 held with drugs in Teknaf

UNB, Dhaka

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) detained four Myanmar nationals and seized 10,000 yaba pills, a little over 1kg of crystal meth, 35 bottles of foreign liquor, and 430 cans of beer from them at Jaliardwip in Teknaf upazila of Cox’s Bazar.

The detainees are Waz Karim, 22, Mahbubur Rahman, 19, Md Foyzal, 20, and Jashim Uddin.

Foyzal and Jashim are residents of Rohingya camps in the district.

Tipped off, a team of BGB-2 conducted a drive in the area on Monday night and challenged a boat while it was crossing the zero line of the bordering area around 10:20pm, said BGB-2 Commanding Officer Lt Col Mohiuddin Ahmed.

2 children drown in Kurigram

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Two children died after drowning in a canal in Rajarhat upazila of Kurigram yesterday.

The incident took place in Alsia Para village under the upazila’s Nazim Khan union.

Mahadi Hossain, 8, son of Sajidul Islam and Faradi Hossain, 9, son of Sohag Mia, are cousins.

The children drowned after they went to bathe in a canal near their house around noon. They did not know how to swim.

Family members found their bodies floating in the canal around an hour later.

Rajarhat Police Station Officer-in-Charge Abdullah Hail Zaman said the bodies of the two children were with their families.

There is no complaint from the family over this incident, he added.

WB to give

FROM PAGE 1

“The recent energy crisis in Bangladesh underlines the vulnerability of the sector due to high dependency on fossil fuels,” it said.

Along with the new CPF, the WB board with authorise budget support of \$500 million and a new project of \$250 million.

During the PM’s visit, \$1.53 billion of loan agreements for three projects will also be signed.

A daylong programme will be held on May 1 at the WB headquarters in Washington DC where the lender would be showcasing the outcome of its collaboration with Bangladesh, which has enabled the country to achieve lower middle-income status only within four decades of its independence.

Hasina would also be speaking at the meeting of the WB board of directors and participating in a panel discussion.

She will also meet with Ajay Banga, the incoming president of the World Bank Group, and Kristalina Georgieva, the managing director of the International Monetary Fund.

Another power price hike likely by June

FROM PAGE 1

and electricity. Who drives cars? Who consumes air conditioning? It is not the poor, it’s the rich people. Those people do not deserve the subsidy they are getting in the context of a country going through a fiscal problem,” said Krishna Srinivasan, director of the IMF’s Asia-Pacific department, in an interaction with Bangladeshi journalists in New Delhi earlier in February.

Blanket subsidies also limit how much the government can support social safety net programmes and infrastructure spending.

Subsequently, the lender insists on providing targeted subsidies and not blanket subsidies or blanket tax exemptions.

A record Tk 81,000 crore was earmarked for subsidy expenses in the original budget for this fiscal year. In the revised budget, another

Tk 21,000 crore had to be made available.

But for the common people grappling with a cost of living crisis, a fourth electricity price hike in six months might be a step too far.

In the first nine months of fiscal 2022-23, inflation averaged 8.81 percent, way above the budgetary target of 5.6 percent, according to data from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. In March, inflation stood at 9.33 percent, the highest in seven months.

The finance ministry officials have also informed the staff mission that it would be difficult to meet June’s target for net international reserves (NIR), one of the three mandatory conditions for the release of the next tranche of the loan.

The IMF stipulated a minimum NIR of \$24.46 billion on June 30.

On March 30, it was less than

\$22 billion – and missing the IMF’s floor of \$22.95 billion for March, The Daily Star has learnt from finance ministry officials involved with the proceedings.

Meanwhile, BB officials informed the staff mission that the central bank is on track to introduce a market-determined exchange rate for all official foreign exchange transactions and interest rate corridor by June, as sought by the Washington-based multilateral lender.

“We have almost arrived at a position to introduce a single exchange rate,” Md. Mezbaul Haque, BB spokesman, told reporters yesterday.

The monetary policy that would be announced in July would reflect many of the recommendations such as reporting on foreign exchange reserves as per the IMF’s BPM6 manual, he said.

The president spends

FROM PAGE 1

contingent drawn from the Bangladesh Army, Navy and Air Force presented the state salute on the occasion as the bugles played the last post.

Shahabuddin, himself a valiant freedom fighter, stood in solemn silence for the memories of the heroes who made the supreme sacrifice for the motherland during the nine-month war in 1971. He also signed the visitors’ book there.

From Savar, the president went to Bangabandhu Memorial Museum at Dhanmondi 32 and placed a wreath at the portrait of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, reports UNB.

He witnessed a holographic presentation on Bangabandhu’s historic March 7 speech and signed the visitors’ book.

Later, the president paid his respect to the martyrs of the Language Movement by placing wreaths at the Central Shaheed Minar. He stood in solemn silence to honour the memories of the heroes who embraced death for the state recognition of the mother tongue in 1952.

Earlier in the morning, President Shahabuddin received the maiden ceremonial salute at the southwestern part of the Credential Ground of the Bangabhaban.

Family members and Bangabhaban officials witnessed the ceremony held at around 10:30am, reports BSS.

A contingent of the President Guard Regiment (PGR) extended him a guard of honour as part of the ceremony while a band comprising army, navy, and air force played the welcome tune.

President Shahabuddin’s family members, including wife Dr Rebecca Sultana and son Arshad Adnan Roni, arrived at the Bangabhaban around 8:50pm on Monday in a motorcade from his Gulshan residence.

On his arrival at the Bangabhaban, a contingent of the horse-mounted PGR welcomed the president at the main gate.

From there, they took them to the main building gate, where he was greeted with flowers by the officials and employees of the presidential palace.

Senior military and civil officials, including President’s Office Secretary Sampad Barua, Military Secretary Major General SM Salahuddin Islam, Press Secretary Md Joyal Abedin and Secretary (Attachment) Md Wahidul Islam Khan were present there.

Around 11:00am on Monday, he was sworn in as the head of state in an impressive ceremony as Jatiya Sangsad Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury administered his oath.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Chief Justice Hasan Foez Siddique, Bangabandhu’s younger daughter Sheikh Rehana, cabinet members, and several hundred distinguished guests attended the state programme.

After his swearing-in, the new president and outgoing president M Abdul Hamid officially changed their seats as part of the ceremony of changing the charge of the office.

President Shahabuddin is scheduled to visit Tungipara today to pay his respect at the Mausoleum of Bangabandhu.

HSC exams

FROM PAGE 1

are boys and 10,50,966 are girls; 16,49,275 will sit for the SSC; 2,95,121 for Dakhil; and 1,27,767 for vocational tests.

The number of science students in the SSC has increased by 37,320, Dipu Moni added.

The exams will take place at 3,810 centres across the country for the students from 29,798 schools, madrasas, and technical institutes. Some 374 students will sit for the tests from abroad.

The exams will be held on all subjects with full marks on abridged syllabuses.

Students will have to be at the exam centres 30 minutes before the three-hour tests start and those with disabilities will be allowed an additional 20-30 minutes.

Smartphones with internet and camera will be prohibited at the centres, she said, adding that the exam centre secretaries will be allowed to carry feature phones.

Deputy Minister for Education Mohibul Hasan Chowdhury and officials of the ministry were present at the event.

Fix it all, avoid disaster

FROM PAGE 1

sudden rise of gas pressure. “But this [Monday’s] incident proves they do not have this system.”

Over the past few years, there were a number of fire or blast incidents caused by accumulated gas in homes, industries, and markets.

Iqbal Habib, joint secretary of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon, said Monday’s leaks could have caused serious accidents.

He warned that if the leaks are not fixed immediately, incidents like that in Narayanganj and Moghbazar may happen again.

Another energy expert, Md Maqbul E Elahi Chowdhury said mixing odorant was a good initiative that alerted people about the leaked gas on Monday.

By using an odorant, it is possible to identify 80 to 85 percent leaks, he added.

Odorant is chemical additive that is mixed into natural gas to create an artificial smell. It serves as a warning in the detection of natural gas in the air when there is a leak.

“But Titas is not using it regularly in its entire network,” said Maqbul.

“Titas should repair all the leaks of the distribution network immediately to avert accidents,” added Maqbul, a former director of Petrobangla.

Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company is the biggest distributor of pipeline gas in the country with 7,000km of lines in Dhaka alone and 28.57 lakh domestic connections across the country.

However, most of the pipes in the

city are around 40 years old and the distribution network has developed many leaks.

In a survey conducted on a 1,682km pipeline in Dhaka in fiscal 2021-22, Titas detected 985 leaks at 449 points. Titas officials claimed that they have repaired those.

But experts said had Titas conducted a survey on the rest of the network, they would have found a lot more leaks.

Asked about Monday’s leaks, Titas Managing Director Md Harunur Rashid Mollah said these were very minor.

The leaks are not repairable but not risky, he added.

“The smell has spread as we have used odorant. But these were very minor leaks which increased due to the pressure of gas and again it

reduced when we have reduced the gas pressure,” he said.

“We are regularly fixing the leaks which are repairable.”

Rashid further claimed no pipeline in Dhaka city is risky and there is no chance of explosion.

An official of Titas said illegal gas connections and damage of the gas pipelines by other utility service providers are mainly responsible for the leaks.

Titas has identified 60 areas in Dhaka and Narayanganj where old and narrow gas pipes need to be changed to solve the problem of leaks and low gas pressure.

“A DPP has already been sent to the ministry concerned in this regard. Once we get the approval, we will start our work,” said the MD of Titas.

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President Mohammed Shahabuddin stands in solemn silence for some time after placing a wreath at the National Memorial in Savar yesterday, as a mark of profound respect to the memories of the martyrs of the Liberation War. Shahabuddin was sworn in as the 22nd President of Bangladesh at the Bangabhaban on Monday.

PHOTO: PTD

DHAKA'S INDO-PACIFIC OUTLOOK

No scope for further confusion: experts

PORIMOL PALMA

The home grown Indo-Pacific Outlook that Dhaka announced on Monday will clear the confusion of the global partners, which will eventually help Bangladesh boost trade and investments for achieving the country's development goals, said experts.

Bangladesh publicly articulated its position on the Indo-Pacific that it wants a free, open, inclusive and secure Indo-Pacific region, which is the focus of the global powers. With 60 percent of the world's population, the region is projected to be the largest contributor to global growth over the next 30 years.

Bangladesh considers the stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region to be a crucial factor in realising her "Vision 2041" while pursuing the principles of respect for national sovereignty and equality, political independence, and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries.

The outlook seeks peaceful settlement of international disputes, respect for international law and the principles enunciated in the UN Charter while striving for renunciation of the use of force in international relations and for general and complete disarmament.

This is a vision. When practical projects will be taken up and issues will arise, we can address them based on this vision. The outlook can also have revisions as required. Now, we need to explain this vision to our partners. We need expert diplomats for this purpose.

SHAHIDUL HAQUE
Former foreign secretary

Many experts say Western countries, especially the US and its allies want to counter China through its Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS).

China also has a global initiative called Belt and Road Initiative aiming to connect Europe and Africa through road, sea and airways. Bangladesh joined the initiative in 2016, and Western countries and their allies were concerned that Bangladesh was going into the Chinese bloc.

Former Chinese ambassador to Bangladesh Li Jiming in 2021 had said Bangladesh's relations with China will

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NON-RMG SECTORS

Safety compliances still a far cry

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA and
JAGARAN CHAKMA

Workplace safety in the RMG sector improved to a great extent. However, the safety and compliance in the non-RMG sectors are yet to improve as per the standards of the garment sector.

Improving the safety standards

KEY ISSUES

- Non-RMG industrial safety almost unaddressed
- Majority of accidents related to fire
- REASONS**
- Lack of unwillingness for improving safety standards
- Limited advocacy
- RECOMMENDATIONS**
- Implement safety standards immediately
- Collaboration between govt, relevant orgs

After the Hashem Foods incident, FBCCI, in collaboration with Bangladesh Investment Development Authority, identified 44,000 non-RMG factories, in which, safety compliances needed to be improved.

Jashim Uddin
President of FBCCI

Safety compliance in the RMG sector has improved because of the pressure from the international communities like Accord. Similar initiatives should be taken to improve non-RMG sectors too.

Nazma Akter
President of Sammito Garment
Sramik Federation

and compliances in the non-RMG sectors has been either ignored or there has been a lack of initiatives for improvement for many years.

As a result, fire incidents have been taking place in factories non-compliant with safety standards, taking the lives of workers and others. For instance, the devastating fire incident at Hashem Foods Ltd in Narayanganj's Rupganj in July 2021, took the lives of 52 workers, who were trapped in the factory building at the time of the fire.

When the factory caught on

fire, workers could not come out from Hashem Food's juice factory as they did not find the exit points. The reason behind that was the non-compliance of the factory to implement safety rules in the building.

Earlier, another devastating fire incident at Tampaco Foils in Gazipur's Tongi took the lives of 34 workers on September 10, 2016. The fire at Chakbazar in February 2019, also took the lives of 71 people. The chemical warehouses in Old Dhaka were supposed to be relocated to

another area. However, the work has not yet been completed to that end.

Although the latest Bangabazar fire did not take human lives, it gutted nearly 5,000 small shops. Traders faced a loss of around Tk 1,000 crore. The fire in New Market also burnt a good number of shops, gutting the goods bought especially for Eid sales.

Safety compliance in the non-RMG sectors has been largely ignored, said Md Jashim Uddin, president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI). "After the Hashem Foods incident, FBCCI, in collaboration with Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA), identified 44,000 non-RMG factories, in which, safety compliances needed to be improved," said Jashim.

He also mentioned that under

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

The benefits that Hamid will receive as ex-president

RASHIDUL HASAN

After holding the office of president for the longest time – 10 years spanning two consecutive terms – Abdul Hamid went into retirement on Monday and left Bangabhaban, the office and residence of the head of state.

But even after his retirement, Hamid is going to get some benefits, including retirement and medical allowances as per law.

The benefits a former president will receive is stated in the President's Retirement Allowance, Perquisites and Other Benefits Act.

According to the law, a person who resigns after serving at least six months in the office of president, or when the term expires, will get a monthly pension at the rate of 75 percent of the last monthly salary he was getting as president until his death.

As per the President's (Remuneration and Privileges) Act, 1975 (as amended up to May 2016), the monthly salary of the president is currently Tk 1.20 lakh.

As such, after his retirement, Abdul Hamid will get a retirement allowance of Tk 90,000 per month.

According to the law, if a person retires from

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Hasina opens VVIP terminal at Dhaka airport

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday inaugurated the newly constructed VVIP terminal of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in the capital.

She opened the terminal in the morning before she flew for Tokyo on the first leg of her two-week tri-nation official visit to Japan, the US and the UK.

Cabinet members and high government officials were present during the unveiling of the screen of the terminal's plaque.

Hasina is now visiting Japan from April 25 to 28 at the invitation of Japanese counterpart Fumio Kishida.

She is expected to return home on May 9 after visiting the US and the UK.

Rizvi released from jail after 140 days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP's senior joint secretary general Ruhul Kabir Rizvi walked out from jail 140 days after being arrested.

He was released from Keraniganj Central Jail at 4:00pm yesterday as he secured bail in all the cases filed against him, said party officials.

Around a hundred party leaders and activists welcomed Rizvi at the jail gate and from there he went to the party's Nayapaltn headquarters.

The BNP leader was arrested on December 7 last year following a clash between law enforcers and BNP men in front of the party's Nayapaltn headquarters centring the December 10 Dhaka rally.

He will remain our inspiration forever

Last respects paid to Pankaj Bhattacharya

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

People from all walks of life bade farewell to veteran politician Pankaj Bhattacharya, president of Oikya NAP and one of the organisers of the Liberation War.

The body of Pankaj, who died on Sunday in Dhaka, was brought to the Central Shaheed Minar from the morgue of Samorita Hospital for civic tribute yesterday afternoon.

His body was cremated at Postogola Crematorium in Dhaka after the tribute.

He was given a guard of honour by Dhaka district administration at Central Shaheed Minar, led by Additional District Magistrate AKM Hedaitul Islam.

Awami League advisory council member Nurul Islam Nahid, joint general secretary Hasan Mahmud, cultural secretary Asim Kumar Ukil and BNP vice chairman Abdullah Al Noman paid their tributes.

Gonoforum President Dr Kamal Hossain, State Minister for Shipping Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury, Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor Prof Akhtaruzzaman, Workers' Party President Rashed Khan Menon, former president of CPB Mujahidul Islam Selim, cultural personalities Ramendu Majumdar, Mamunur Rashid, Pankaj Bhattacharya's political ally Chitta Ghosh, trustees of the Liberation War Museum Dr Sarwar Ali and Mofidul Hoque, Prof Mejbah Kamal, Adivasi leader Sanjib Drong, and activist Khushi Kabir also paid their respects, alongside various political, cultural and social organisations.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



People from all walks of life bade farewell to veteran politician Pankaj Bhattacharya, president of Oikya NAP and one of the organisers of the Liberation War, at Central Shaheed Minar yesterday. His body was cremated at Postogola Crematorium after the tribute. Pankaj Bhattacharya passed away in Dhaka on Sunday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED



What you're witnessing in this photo is a circumstance that is not often experienced by residents of Dhaka -- streets without gridlock. With many being away for Eid holidays, city residents get some respite travelling to places for a few days. This photo was taken in Moghbazar area yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

IMMUNISATION WEEK Restore immunisation coverage: WHO

UNB, Dhaka

The Covid-19 pandemic caused millions of children to miss out on routine vaccines and countries must act now to restore essential immunisation coverage to a least of 2019 levels, said World Health Organization (WHO), marking the start of World Immunization Week. Under the banner of "The Big Catch-Up", WHO and partners will support countries to get back on track so that more children and adults are protected from preventable diseases.

An estimated 25 million children missed out on essential vaccination in 2021 alone, according to the United Nations.

World Immunization Week runs through Sunday, and WHO has joined forces with the UN Children's Fund (Unicef), Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and many other international partners.

Particular focus will be given to the 20 countries that are home to three-quarters of the children who missed vaccinations in 2021, which include Afghanistan, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, India, Pakistan, Somalia and Myanmar.

Catherine Russell, Unicef executive director, said, "Routine vaccines are typically a child's first entry into their health system. Children who miss out on their early vaccines are at added risk of being cut out of health care in the long run."

Eleven more hospitalised with dengue



UNB, Dhaka

Eleven more patients were hospitalised with dengue in the 24 hours till yesterday morning.

Of the new patients, five were admitted to hospitals in Dhaka, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Thirty-two dengue patients, including 18 in the capital, are now receiving treatment at hospitals across the country.

So far, the DGHS has recorded 941 dengue cases, 899 recoveries, and ten deaths this year.

The country logged 281 dengue deaths in 2022 -- the highest on record after 179 deaths recorded in 2019. Also, it recorded 62,423 dengue cases and 61,971 recoveries last year.

No scope for further

FROM PAGE 3

"substantially be damaged" if Bangladesh joined "Quad", a US-led initiative. He had termed Quad "a military alliance against China".

Bangladesh always maintained that it believes in a non-alignment policy dictum of "friendship to all and malice to none" and does not want to be part of any military alliance. This was very explicit in Bangladesh's Indo-Pacific Outlook, said former foreign secretary Shahidul Haque, also Bangabandhu Chair at the University of Delhi.

"This is a major policy of Bangladesh related to its engagement with its bilateral, regional or multilateral partners. The fact that it has now been made public is great," he told this correspondent yesterday.

B a n g l a d e s h ' s development and trade partners will have a clear understanding of what and how Bangladesh wants things to operate in the Indo-Pacific, Haque said.

"This is a vision. When practical projects will be taken up and issues will arise, we can address them based on this vision. The outlook can also have revisions as required," he added.

"Now, we need to explain

this vision to our partners. We need expert diplomats for this purpose," he said.

Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) Research Director Dr Mahfuz Kabir said as Bangladesh is a growing economy, with its international trade growth, it wants no conflicts and a free, open and secure region.

It also wants inclusivity, which means it does not want any exclusion of any country or partner, he added.

The principles in the Indo-Pacific Outlook may look like those in the US-led IPS, but it is not like that in reality, said Mahfuz Kabir. "We don't exclude anyone. We will work with all in the areas where our policies match."

He said the US, Japan, India and China are some of the major development and trade partners of Bangladesh.

"I think our trade and investment will grow rapidly as our vision on the Indo-Pacific is clear now," he said.

Shahidul Haque said defence alliances in the region mean conflicts, which will only hamper regional development.

"We are for unity, stability and peace, not conflicts. That's very clear in our outlook."

He will remain our

FROM PAGE 3

After paying his homage to Pankaj, Hasan Mahmud said Pankaj participated in all mass movements and played an active role in the pro-democracy movement after independence.

"His death has created a void in the political arena, and we have a lot to learn from his life and political life," added Hasan.

"Hewas one of the people

who always inspired us at political rallies since our younger years," said Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury.

Dr Kamal Hossain said, "We will never again find anyone with such a generous and fearless mind. He will forever remain our inspiration."

While paying his homage to Pankaj, Rashed Khan Menon said, "We were friends from the 1960s. I lost a friend who dedicated his life to the people."

"It is the end of an era of left-leaning politics in our country. Pankaj never tasted power but he served the people all his life," said Mamunur Rashid.

FOR SALE
Wheel loader, tipper truck, Forklift, Generator, bulldozer, Pile driver barge, Concrete Block-making mixer machine Etc.
Location: Barisal. **CICO** Bangladesh Gulshan-2, Dhaka. **01709030675**

actionaid
Tender Notice
ActionAid Bangladesh invites sealed quotations from qualified Contractor/vendor/supplier for Long-term Agreements (1 year) for Construction Materials, Rent-A-Car & Food supplies at Ukhiya & Teknaf Rohingya Camps & Host Communities at Cox's Bazar. The details are as follows-

Sl.	Name of Item	Quantity
1	Construction Materials	As per list
2	Rent-A-Car	As per list
3	Food Supply	As per list

The Separate Tender Schedule will be available for collect at ActionAid Cox's Bazar Office (House No-752, Ward- 11, Jhawtola, Masjid Road, Cox's Bazar- 4700) from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm during office hour of 26 April- 02 May 2023 (Working Day) or can collect schedule from following web site.

Website	
Construction Materials	https://actionaidbd.org/tender-notice
Rent-A-Car	https://actionaidbd.org/tender-notice
Food Supply	https://actionaidbd.org/tender-notice

Quotation needs to be submitted in sealed envelope **on or before 3rd May 2023 by 10:00 AM at above locations.**
The authority of ActionAid Bangladesh reserves the right to accept or reject any or all quotations without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Safety compliances still a far cry

FROM PAGE 3

The national safety committee, guided by FBCCI and BIDA, some 5,200 factories have already been inspected. The inspection of 7,000 factories will start soon.

Moreover, letters were served to 144 very factories vulnerable to such accidents to improve their safety arrangements. However, Jashim could not confirm immediately whether the improvements took place or not.

The FBCCI chief also said a safety cell under FBCCI has been mainly inspecting the fire, structural and electrical safety standards during the inspection of the factories.

Awareness of safety compliances in the non-RMG sectors is largely ignored, said Md Saiful Islam, president of the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI). "For instance, 12 fire incidents took place in different business houses and markets across the country on 17 days in April," he said.

"The government, along with relevant organisations, should improve workplace safety in the non-RMG sectors because human lives matter," he added.

Amirul Haque Amin, president of National Garment Workers Federation (NGWF) suggested improving four factors in the non-RMG sectors -- a good working environment, a safe working place, a good salary and freedom of expression.

Sirajul Islam Rony, workers' representative at the minimum wage board formed for RMG workers, said safety measures need to be improved in sectors like jute, chemicals, cement, plastic, shopping malls, markets and even in some pharmaceuticals immediately, to save the lives of workers.

Nazma Akter, president of Sammilito Garment Sramik Federation, said, "Safety compliance in the RMG sector has improved because of the pressure from the international communities like Accord. Similar initiatives should be taken to improve non-RMG sectors too."

Meanwhile, around two months ago, the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE) started sending letters to 106 non-RMG factories that lack safety compliances, said Md Nasir

Uddin Ahmed, inspector general of DIFE.

"The letters have detailed instructions regarding where the factories should take corrective measures to ensure safety compliances," said Nasir.

"We will revisit the factories we have identified as risky after the deadline set for improvement measures. If they fail to comply with the instructions within the deadline, necessary action will be taken," he added.

Earlier, BIDA identified 106 factories as risky for lacking required fire safety measures and having vulnerable working conditions, under a nationwide initiative aimed at preventing fire incidents and other disasters.

Out of the 106 factories, 17 are very vulnerable and need to comply with fire safety and environmental standards immediately to protect the workers from any health hazards, according to a BIDA official. The rest of the 89 factories can fulfil compliance measures in phases.

Most of the vulnerable factories are located in Keraniganj and Narayanganj and represent the chemical, plastic and knitwear sectors.

The benefits that Hamid will receive

FROM PAGE 3

any other service or position before assuming the office of president, he or she can choose between receiving either that pension or the president's pension. If the president dies while getting pension, his surviving spouse shall receive a monthly pension for life at the rate of two-thirds of the pension.

Hamid will get some other benefits as a former president. As per the law, he will get a personal assistant and an attendant. He will also receive office expenses, the total annual amount of which will be fixed by the government from time to time.

Apart from this, the

former president will get medical benefits equal to that of a minister. He will also enjoy free use of government vehicles for attending government functions, a telephone connection at his residence and exemption from payment of its bills up to the limit prescribed by the government from time to time.

Hamid will also receive a diplomatic passport. He will then get the benefit of rent-free accommodation in government circuit houses or rest houses while traveling within the country.

Hamid's wife will also get medical facilities, a diplomatic passport and the opportunity to avail

government circuit houses or rest houses within the country without paying any rent.

The eventful two consecutive terms of President Hamid finally ended on Monday as President-elect Md Shahabuddin took his oath of office.

Hamid's journey from grassroots to the Bangabhaban was quite significant.

He made a unique record in the history of Bangladesh as he was the only president who completed two five-year tenures of presidency in a row. After leaving Bangabhaban, Hamid is staying at his residence at city's Nikunja.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer, Department of Public Health Engineering
Rangamati Division, Rangamati

Invitation e-Tender

Tender Notice Memo No. 46.03.2200.061.14.026.19-1032 Date: 25/04/2023

1	Ministry/Division	Local Government Division
2	Agency	Department of Public Health Engineering
3	Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (OTM)
4	e-Tender ID	ID No: 822243, 822252, 822246
5	Description of works:	Installation of Water Source (100x38mm Deep Tube Well) with Submersible pump motor, 6 No. Hand Pump & Ringwell for celebrating Mujib Shata Barsha at different Upazila of Rangamati District under Budget Repair of 4 th Class office Staff house and boundary wall under DPHE Rangamati Division (FY: 2022-2023)
6	Name, designation & address of official inviting tender	Engr. Parag Barua, Executive Engineer, DPHE, Rangamati Division, Rangamati.
7	This is online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and on offline/hard copies will be accepted. Interested persons/firms can see details in the: www.eprocure.gov.bd	

Engr. Parag Barua
Executive Engineer
Department of Public Health Engineering
Rangamati Division, Rangamati

GD-731

Patuakhali Paurashava, Patuakhali
www.patuaakhalimunicipality.gov.bd
ফোনঃ +৮৮০-৪৪১-৬২০২০, ফ্যাক্সঃ +৮৮০-৪৪১-৬২০১২
E-mail: office@patuaakhalimunicipality.gov.bd

Memo No. Patu/LGCRRP/2023/212 Date: 24/04/2023

e-Tender Notice

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

Tender ID No.	Package No.	Description of the works	Documents last selling date & time	Last date and time for tender /proposal security submission	Tender/ proposal closing/ opening date and time
817636	LGCRRP/Patuakhali/ 2022-23/W-01	Widening of Existing WBM Road with side walk from Sonali Bank turning to Foticker Khuya in Ward No. 08 of Patuakhali Pourashava. Ch. 00-585.0m	24-May-2023 16:00	25-May-2023 13:00	25-May-2023 14:00

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. 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 document from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Md. Zasim Uddin Arzu
Executive Engineer
Patuakhali Paurashava

GD-728

Bangladesh Satellite Company Limited
(A State Owned Organization)
116, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1205
www.bscl.gov.bd

BSCL

Invitation for Tenders

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Ministry/Division	Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications and Information Technology.			
Agency	Posts and Telecommunications Division.			
Procuring entity name	Bangladesh Satellite Company Limited.			
Procuring entity code	Not used at present.			
Procuring entity district	Dhaka.			
Invitation Ref No.	14.39.0000.012.07.002.23.188			
Date	24/04/2023.			

KEY INFORMATION

Procurement method	Open Tender.		
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FUNDING INFORMATION

Budget and source of funds	Company's own fund.		
Tender Package No.	BSCL/2022-23/PG-13.		
Tender package name	Procurement of Substation Spare Parts for both Ground Station.		
Tender publication date	26/04/2023.		
Tender last selling date	11/05/2023, Time: 04:00pm.		

Date	Time
14/05/2023	12:05pm
14/05/2023	12:20pm

Address
Managing Director,
Bangladesh Satellite Company Limited
SEL Rose-N-Dale, Level-07, 116, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1000

INFORMATION FOR TENDERER

Brief eligibility and qualification of tenderer	Minimum 3 years in supplying related goods.
Brief description of goods	Procurement of Substation Spare Parts for both Ground Station.
Price of tender document (Tk)	Tk. 500 (Five Taka only).

Lot No.	Identification of lot	Location	Tender security amount (Tk)	Completion time in days
01	Nil	Gazipur & Betbunia	Tk. 25,000 (Fifteen thousand)	As per the tender document

PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS

Name of official inviting tender	Md. Shafiqul Islam.			
Designation of official inviting tender	Managing Director.			
Address of official inviting tender	Bangladesh Satellite Company Limited SEL Rose-N-Dale, Level-07, 116, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1000.			
Contact details of official inviting tender	0241030091-93	<Fax No.>	procurement@bscl.com.bd	

The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all tenders or annul the tender proceedings.

(Signed)
Md. Shafiqul Islam
Managing Director
Bangladesh Satellite Company Limited

GD-727



Passengers can finally breathe a sigh of relief as rail operation between Dhaka and Narayanganj is likely to resume early next month, with the new rail line between Kamalapur and Gendaria steadily inching towards completion.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

DHAKA-NARAYANGANJ ROUTE

Rail operation likely to resume next week

TUHIN SHUBHIRA ADHIKARY

Rail operation between Dhaka and Narayanganj is likely to resume early next month as laying of a new rail line between Kamalapur and Gendaria is almost complete.

Operation of trains on this route remained suspended for around five months to facilitate the work of the Padma Bridge Rail Link Project (PBRRLP).

“Work is almost done, except some signalling works, which will be completed within two or three days,” said Project Director Afzal Hossain.

“We have already requested GIBR (Government Inspector of Bangladesh Railway) to inspect the line. We hope that operation will resume in the next week,” he told The Daily Star yesterday.

A BR official from Dhaka division, said their carriages and manpower are ready and they will be able to resume operation once the line is handed over to them.

Before the operation suspension on December 4 last year, BR had been operating nine pairs of trains – eight pairs of local trains and one Demu train – between Dhaka and Narayanganj daily.

PBRRLP, the railway’s biggest project, is being implemented to build a 169-km rail line from Dhaka to Jashore through the Padma Bridge at a cost of Tk 39,247 crore.

Under the project, BR is constructing three dual gauge lines from Kamalapur to Gendaria. Of the three lines, one will be completed within two-three days.

Work of two other lines are ongoing and will take some more time to complete, Afzal said.

Gendaria is connected to Narayanganj with a single line and BR is implementing a separate project to build another line up to Narayanganj.

We have already requested GIBR (Government Inspector of Bangladesh Railway) to inspect the line; and operation will resume following his recommendation. We hope that operation will resume in the next week.

AFZAL HOSSAIN, Project Director

Passengers could reach Narayanganj from Dhaka within 45 minutes at a fare of only Tk 15. On the other hand, it takes almost an hour to reach Narayanganj by bus at a Tk 55 fare.

Many people from Narayanganj use trains to commute to and from Dhaka. The suspension of the operations for around five months caused them sufferings.

‘Harassment’ of headteacher by mayor protested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

The mayor of Phulbari upazila municipality and his assistant “verbally” abused the headteacher of Golam Mostafa Pilot High School on April 18 over an issue regarding the use of a schoolroom for distributing rice among the poor.

The incident led to a protest by students yesterday, who formed a human chain and held a rally demanding punishment for the mayor Mahmud Alam Liton and his cohort Shoyeb Pappu.

Contacted, the mayor and his aide denied the allegations.

Tozammel Hossain, the headteacher of the school, told The Daily Star that the mayor wanted to use a classroom for distributing rice among the poor under the VGF (Vulnerable Group Feeding) programme of the government.

But when he declined stating that classrooms were occupied for exams, the mayor and his aide verbally abused him, he added.

Four held over killing of former UP chairman

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

Four people were arrested on Monday night in connection with the killing of a former union parishad (UP) member and his nephew, who were hacked to death in Jhalakathi’s Rajapur upazila the same night.

The deceased are Abdur Rab Howlader, 55, former UP member of ward-6 (Suktagar union), and his nephew Belayet Hossain, 45. Pulok Chandra Roy, officer-in-charge of Rajapur Police Station, said they arrested the four following a case filed by Howlader’s son Liakat Hossain with the police station.

The OC did not reveal the names of the arrestees.

“A case was filed accusing 15 named and 5-6 unnamed persons following the murder. Drives are underway to arrest them. We suspect the murder took place as a result of a longstanding feud between neighbours,” he added.

PRAYER TIMING
APRIL 26

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4:20	12:45	4:45	6:29	8:00
JAMAAT 4:55	1:15	5:00	6:34	8:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Atrai held hostage to greed

The once-wide river has turned into a 30 feet canal, affecting lives of locals

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, Pabna

The Atrai river, which once flowed wide and strong through Santhia upazila in Pabna, is now barely recognisable.

Residents who used to swim and fish in the river during their childhood now find no sign of it near the Kashinathpur haat area, said Abul Hossain, an elderly local.

The river, which is 47 kilometres long and flows through three upazilas, has played a vital role in bringing a flow of water to Gaznar beel of Pabna’s Sujanagar upazila and setting a link with Jamuna river. However, it has lost its natural flow of water in the last four decades due to rampant encroachment.

According to Water Development Board (WDB), the minimum width of the river was 80 to 90 feet, and the maximum width was about 190 to 200 feet. However, the river has turned into a 30-foot canal now, as encroachers have occupied the rest.

Residents of the area blame a small culvert that was established near the Kashinathpur haat three to four decades ago for halting the flow of water. Since then, encroachers have started establishing a series of structures around the river.

The Kashinathpur point of the river is the connecting point of Santhia and Sujanagar upazila. Different authorities have taken different initiatives but the river’s situation remains unchanged.

During a recent visit to Kashinathpur haat, this correspondent found that people dump garbage from Kashinathpur haat on both sides of the culvert, while encroachment continues unabated by the pile of garbage.

Meer Monjur Elahi, chairman of Kashinathpur union parishad, said the killing of the river began in the 80s after the launch of an



irrigation project.

“Since introducing the irrigation project, the river turned into a narrow canal, as people started cultivating paddy by encroaching river banks,” he added.

Md Mosharaf Hossain, assistant director of Pabna Water Development Board, said WDB launched the irrigation project in the Atrai river for the sake of increasing crop cultivation in this region.

“We have several sluice gates for controlling the flow of water. We are preserving water and

supplying it according to our needs,” he said.

However, during the visit to the sluice gate beside the Kashinathpur haat, this correspondent found only a few feet of the canal exists, with no flow of water.

People are cultivating paddy while many establishments exist around the river, encroaching on river banks.

However, owners of these structures have claimed that they all have legal land documents, signed by the relevant government authorities.

Sultan Hoossain, a shopkeeper running his business on the river bank, claimed, “This is not a river land. I bought the land earlier, abiding by all legal procedures.”

Locals and environmentalists have claimed that the destruction of the Atrai river has not only affected the environment but also the lives of the people who depended on the river for their livelihoods.

The situation calls for immediate action to restore the river’s natural flow of water and prevent further encroachment, they added.

The bridge that has not been crossed

Locals suffer as approach roads yet to be set up in 3yrs

MENTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

Thousands of people from seven villages have been suffering as a concrete bridge remains without approach roads in Kaerchak area of Kulaura upazila in Moulvibazar district for three years.

Locals said, the bridge was unplanned and no one uses it; the reason being that there is no road on both sides of the bridge.

Visiting the site recently, this correspondent saw that the bridge built on top of the canal was lying there like an isolated island. There’s no connecting road on either side of it. The canal has also dried up. People are crossing the bridge through the dried-up canal.

Khasruzzaman, a local union parishad member, said a bridge is needed here. But the bridge is about 15-16 feet high and there’s no need for such a high bridge. It was constructed without planning, due to which no one is benefitting from this bridge.



Shatirul Islam, a resident of the village, said most people of this Haor area are involved in agricultural activities and they have to carry their agro-products to nearby areas. But the dilapidated condition of the road have been hampering smooth transportation of the products.

The government spent Tk 30 lakh on this bridge, but many parts of the bridge has already broken down, he added.

Bhukshimoil Union Parishad chairman Azizur Rahman Monir, said soil has been laid out on both sides of the bridge this year. Hopefully the road will be ready for walking within next year.



Upazila Project Implementation Officer (PIO) Shimul Ali said soil was placed on the connecting road on both sides of the bridge, but it was swept away by flood water.

Necessary steps will be taken for constructing the approach roads, he added.



Adorned in colourful attires, residents of Khulna walk in a rally, celebrating Khulna’s 142nd anniversary yesterday. The rally was organised by Greater Khulna Development Struggle Coordination Committee. This photo was taken in the city’s Shibbari Mor area.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

 Rajshahi City Corporation Engineering Department Nagar Bhaban, Rajshahi					
Memo No. 46.12.5081.006.07.205.2022.410 Invitation for Tenders (IFT) 06/2022-23					
e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of the following goods:					
SL. No.	ID No.	Reference No.	Name of works	Tender/proposal document last selling time and date	
1.	823197	46.12.5081.006.07.205.2022.409	Supply & Installation of 800 KVA Substation, 300 KVA Generator and Related Goods at Anex Building & Nagar Bhaban.	12.30pm on 17-May-2023	
This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).					
৯৮৮/৯৮৮-১১৮(২০২২-২৩) তারিখ-২২.০৪.২০২৩ ৪"×৩=১২					
A. B. M. Asaduzzaman Sweet Executive Engineer (Electrical) Rajshahi City Corporation Tel. +880 2588879220 E-mail: sweet_eee86@yahoo.com					

Junta must take first step to end violence

Ex-UN Chief Ban Ki Moon urges during Myanmar visit

REUTERS

Former UN chief Ban Ki-Moon yesterday called for an end to violence in Myanmar after meeting the leader of its ruling military, which he said “must take the first steps”.

Ban met junta chief Min Aung Hlaing and a reformist ex-president, Thein Sein, this week in what was seen as a peacemaking mission to the strife-torn country.

Myanmar has been in crisis since the military ousted an elected government led by Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi in February 2021, with the generals struggling to consolidate power and fighting on multiple fronts against ethnic minority insurgents and an armed pro-democracy movement.

“I came to Myanmar to urge the military to adopt an immediate cessation of violence, and start constructive dialogue among all parties concerned,” Ban said in a statement issued by “The Elders”, a group of former global leaders of which he is deputy chair.

The state-run Global New Light of Myanmar newspaper reported that Ban and Min Aung Hlaing “exchanged views on the latest progress of Myanmar and cordially discussed it with constructive attitudes”.

The surprise visit on Sunday was at the invitation of the military and Ban, who is South Korean, urged the generals to act on a peace consensus agreed in 2021 with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Ban “warned that ... holding elections under current conditions risks further violence and division, and the results not being recognised by the people of Myanmar, ASEAN and the wider international community”.

Min Aung Hlaing said in February that multi-party elections must be held “as the people desire”, but did not provide a timeline.

Ban made multiple trips to Myanmar with the UN before a tentative transition began in 2011 after five decades of military rule, supporting political and economic reforms under retired general Thein Sein that were reversed by the coup.

There has been no sign of any let-up in violence in Myanmar.

More than 100 people were killed on April 11 in an air strike by the military on a village, according to opposition activists and media.

Suu Kyi is serving 33 years in prison for various offences that she denied and her party has been disbanded.



Fishermen work on their boats amid floating waste at Kasimedu fishing harbour during a 61-day trawling ban in Chennai yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

PAKISTAN AMMUNITION STORE BLAST Death toll rises to 16

AFP, *Kabal*

The death toll from a series of explosions caused by a fire in a munitions cache in a Pakistan police station rose to 16 yesterday, police said.

The explosions levelled the specialist counter-terrorism station in Kabal town of Swat Valley, in the northwestern region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa which neighbours Afghanistan.

Swat police said a short-circuit

in a basement storing “grenades and other explosives” was the cause of the blasts.

“It was like hell let loose on me,” said Abbas Khan, 21, who had parked his car near the police station.

The dead included policemen, five suspected terrorists being held for interrogation, and two brothers aged four and six who lived nearby, Akhtar Hayat Gandapur, the inspector general of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police,

told AFP.

More than 50 people are being treated in various hospitals for their wounds.

Gandapur ruled out the possibility of any terrorist activity.

“We have not yet found any material or visual evidence suggesting a suicide attack but we will look into all aspects during investigations,” he said.

The intense explosion rained pieces of munition on nearby houses and streets.

‘CRIME OF REMOVING HIJAB’ Iran charges 2 actresses

AFP, *Tehran*

Iran has charged two prominent actresses for publishing pictures of themselves flouting the country’s dress code for women.

Police in Tehran have referred the case against Katayoun Riahi and Pantea Bahram to Iran’s judiciary, accusing them of “the crime of removing the hijab in public and posting photos on the internet”, the Tasnim news agency said late Monday.

If prosecuted, the pair could face fines or prison terms.

Earlier this month police said they would begin using “smart” technology in public places to crack down on women defying Iran’s compulsory dress code.

Last week, photos of Bahram, 53, went viral after she posed without a headscarf at a film screening, while Riahi, 61, posted several photos taken in public places around Tehran in which she did not wear a headscarf.


Japan supports industrial use of AI: Kishida

REUTERS, *Tokyo*

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said yesterday the country supports the development of industrial uses of generative artificial intelligence technologies such as OpenAI’s ChatGPT.

Kishida met the chief executive of Microsoft MSFT.O-backed OpenAI in Tokyo earlier this month and reportedly said the Group of Seven summit meeting next month in Hiroshima will address “international rules” on generative AI.

Rapid advances in AI technologies are complicating governments’ efforts to agree on laws governing the use of the technology, as national, international governing bodies are taking steps to regulate AI tools.




Bangladesh Bank
Common Services Department-2
(Mechanical Engineering Wing)
Head Office, Dhaka-1000

Invitation for Tender (Goods & related works)

01.	Procuring entity	Common Services Department-2, Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka-1000.
02.	Procurement method	Single stage two envelope system (Technical offer & Financial offer in separate envelope) (NCT)
03.	Invitation Ref. No. & date	CSD-2(MES): ½ (lift)/2023-96 Date: 24/04/2023
04.	Budget & source of funds	Bangladesh Bank's own fund.
05.	Tender package number	Single Lot
06.	Tender package name	Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of 1350 Kg Capacity 03 (Three) Nos. passenger lift for Main Building at Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka.
07.	Tender last selling date	The tender documents may be obtained from the office of the Director (Engineering-E/M), Common Services Department-2, Bangladesh Bank (7 th floor of 30 th storied Building), Head Office, Dhaka on payment of Tk 3,000/- (Taka three thousand) only (non-refundable) per set during office hours on or before 13/06/2023.
08.	Tender closing date & time	14/06/2023 up to 3:00pm.
09.	Tender opening date & time	14/06/2023 at 3:30pm.
10.	Name & address of the office (Receiving/opening tender document(s))	Director (Engineering-E/M), Common Services Department-2, Bangladesh Bank (7 th floor of 30 th storied Building), Head Office, Dhaka.
11.	Qualification of the tenderer	(a) Tenderers shall have at least 10 (ten) years of overall business experience in the supply and installation of mechanical machineries. (b) Tenderer shall have minimum specific experience as supplier in supply of Lift in any govt./semi-govt./autonomous organization in maximum 03 contracts having total value not less than 4.50 crore successfully completed within the last 05 years, each with a value of at least Tk 1.00 crore. (c) Tenderers shall have agency/distributorship/authorization from Manufacturer of the proposed brand lift, Scanned Copy of original Distributor/Agencyship certificate/authorization certificate from Manufacturer shall be enclosed with the offer. (d) The minimum amount of liquid assets i.e. working capital or credit line(s) of the Tenderer shall be Tk 4.00 crore. In case of credit facilities, Bank shall ensure that the abovementioned credit limit will be given if the said work is awarded to the contractor. (e) Tenderer shall have to furnish the certificate in this respect from an officer not below the rank of Executive Engineer or equivalent and shall meet all other criteria, terms & conditions as specified in the tender documents without which the tender will not be considered.
12.	Tender security	Tender Security amount is BDT 13,60,000/- (Thirteen lac sixty thousand) only will be required in the form of Pay Order/Bank Draft/Bank Guarantee in favour of Director (Engineering-E/M), Common Services Department-2, Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka.
13.	Time for completion of the works	12 (twelve) months from the date of signing of the Award of Contract.
14.	Name and address of official inviting tender	Sudhangshu Kumar Sarker, Director (Engineering-E/M), Common Services Department-2, Bangladesh Bank (7 th floor of 30 th storied Building), Head Office, Dhaka
15.	Contact details of official inviting tender	Phone: 88-02-9530490, Fax: +88-029530321
16.	Special instructions	(i) Original PO/BD/BG as Tender Security has to be submitted to Director (Engineering-E/M), Common Services Department-2 within stipulated date and time of TDS. (ii) Tenderer shall submit the documentary evidence etc. (attested or original whichever necessary) at the time of Tender opening or when required, failing which the tender may be considered as non-responsive. (iii) Tenderer shall duly fill in the Form PG3-1/A (Technical offer) & PG3-1/B (Financial offer) (Tender Submission Letter) and Form PG3-2/G-4 (Tenderer Information Sheet) as per format given in Tender Document. (iv) Form PG3-1/A form will be completed and signed by the Authorized Signatory on the letterhead pad in original during submitting tender to Director (Engineering-E/M), CSD-2 at scheduled time as per TDS. (v) Furnishing of any false, misleading documents shall result in rejection of the tender and may lead to action under Rules 127 of PPR 2008. (vi) All sorts of Security and Safety measures shall be carried out by the Contractor during execution of the work. (vii) Bangladesh Bank reserves all right to accept or reject any or all the tender without assigning any reason whatsoever. No claim will be entertained in this regard.

DCP: 48/2023-1038
Date: 25-04-2023
GD-729

ব্যাংকিং ও আর্থিক সেবা পেতে হায়ারনির শিকার হচ্ছে কিংবা কোনো অভিযোগ থাকলে ১৬২৩৬ নম্বরে ফোন করুন।

**Sudhangshu Kumar Sarker**
Director (Engineering-E/M)
Phone: 02-9530490

Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Director
Chittagong Medical College Hospital.
www.cmch.gov.bd

Memo No: CMCH/Tender/2022-2023/Medicine/4492 Date: 25-04-2023.

Inviation For Tender

Sealed tenders are hereby invited from experienced medicine manufacturing company to supply Medicine (Oncology Product) for CMCH in the fiscal 2022-2023. As per PPA-2006 & PPR-2008 (Including all corrigendum); Terms and conditions are as follow(s):

KEY INFORMATION			
1	Ministry / Division	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.	
2	Agency	Chittagong Medical College Hospital, Chattogram.	
3	PE Name, Designation & Contact details	Brigadier General Md. Shamim Ahsan; Director, Chittagong Medical College Hospital. Telephone: +880233360179 E-mail address: cmch@hospi.dghs.gov.bd	
4	Procuring Entity Code & District	GOB, Chattogram.	
5	Invitation for	Procurement of Medicine Goods for Chittagong Medical College Hospital in the fiscal year 2022-2023.	
6	Tender Ref. No & date	CMCH/Tender/2022-2023/Medicine/4492 Dated: 25-04-2023.	
7	Procurement Method	Open Tender Method (National). Item-by-item.	
8	Budget and Source of Funds	GOB, Economic code: 3252105.	
9	Tender Publication Date	26-04-2023.	
10	Tender Schedule Selling Starting Date and Time	26-04-2023 During office hours.	
11	Pre-Tender Meeting	04-05-2023, 11:00 A. M.	
12	Tender Last Selling Date and Time	09-05-2023, 12:00 P. M.	
13	Tender Dropping & Closing Date and Time	Dropping date: 10-05-2023, Dropping time: from 09:00 AM to 12:00 PM Closing time: 12:01 P. M.	
14	Tender Opening Date and Time	10-05-2023 at 01:00 P.M.	
Name and address of the Office’s			
15	(a) Selling Tender Documents	Cashier, Office of the Director, Chittagong Medical College Hospital.	
		Cashier, Office of the Civil Surgeon, Chattogram District.	
	(b) Receiving Tender Documents	Office of the Director, Chittagong Medical College Hospital.	
		Officer In-charge, Panchlaish Model Thana, Chattogram Metropolitan Police.	
	Tender Documents Opening Place	Office of the Director, Chittagong Medical College Hospital, KB Fazul Kader Road, Chattogram-4203.	
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER			
16	Bidders Eligibility	Details in Tender Booklet.	
17	Description of Group, Price of Tender Document, Tender Security etc.		
	Name of Group	Description of Group	Price of Tender Document in BDT (Only in Cash, Non Refundable)
	A	Medicine (Oncology Product).	2,000.00 (Two Thousand Only) Taka
18	Description of Related Services	Details in Tender Booklet.	

Note:
(a) *Corrigendum if necessary in future will be a part of this notice. The competent authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tender without assigning any reason whatsoever.*
(b) *If the date of selling, receiving & opening of tender is disturbed under any unavoidable circumstances, the next working day will be applicable for the same respectively.*

(Brigadier General Md. Shamim Ahsan)
Director
Chittagong Medical College Hospital.
Telephone: +880233360179
E-mail: cmch@hospi.dghs.gov.bd
GD- 730

Italy rescues 1,600 migrants in Med

At least 23 feared dead

REUTERS, Rome

Italy has rescued 47 boats carrying around 1,600 migrants in the central Mediterranean sea in the last two days and brought them ashore to the island of Lampedusa.

Italy's coastguard said in a statement late on Monday that it had taken to safety around 1,200 migrants but that at least 23 people were missing and one body was recovered at sea following three shipwrecks.

Another 12 boats with around 400 migrants were rescued yesterday, according to news agency ANSA.

The past months have seen a sharp increase in migrant boats trying to reach the Italian coast from Tunisia, which has become a more accessible departure point after crackdowns on human trafficking in Libya in recent months.

With the number of people crossing the Mediterranean in smugglers' boats on the rise, Rome's conservative government has urged Brussels to do more to reduce irregular arrivals.

On Monday, Italy offered Tunisia a prospect of money in exchange for economic and political reforms as European Union foreign ministers discussed in Luxembourg how to respond to growing instability in the African country.

Italian Interior Minister Matteo Piantedosi will visit Tunisia later this week, together with EU's top migrants official and French counterpart.



Rescuers and volunteers work at the site of a building of local museum heavily damaged by a Russian missile strike, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in the town of Kupiansk, Kharkiv region, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Isolating China against UK's interest: Cleverly

REUTERS, London

Foreign Secretary James Cleverly yesterday was expected to argue it would be "a betrayal" of Britain's national interest to isolate China and urge against declaring "a new Cold War".



In a speech in London setting out Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's foreign policy towards Beijing after a review, Cleverly was going to advocate constructive engagement on key global issues.

But he was also going to vow to strengthen national security protections in the face of China's military build-up, and deepen cooperation with allies in the Indo-Pacific region to uphold international law.

"It would be clear and easy -- perhaps even satisfying -- for me to declare a new Cold War and say that our goal is to isolate China," Cleverly was expected to say at an annual speech given by Britain's foreign secretary.

"Clear, easy, satisfying -- and wrong. Because it would be a betrayal of our national interest and a wilful misunderstanding of the modern world."

The stance will likely anger hawkish elements in the ruling Conservative party, who have been pushing for several years for London to adopt a more bullish approach towards Beijing.

Former Tory party leader Iain Duncan-Smith, one of 10 UK organisations and individuals sanctioned by China in 2021 over their criticisms, last year called its rulers a "brutal, dictatorial, ghastly regime".

In a refresh of its strategic foreign and defence policy, the government in March detailed plans to bolster military and security spending to confront the "epoch-defining challenge" posed by China.

'Ukraine war not main cause of global food crisis'

Says Russia, remains downbeat on Black Sea grain deal; Zelensky slams strike on Kupiansk museum

REUTERS, Kyiv

The Kremlin said yesterday that a global shortfall in food supplies was not primarily attributable to a lack of Russian and Ukrainian grain on the market.

It also reaffirmed its position that the Black Sea grain deal is not working for Moscow, a day after the head of the United Nations handed Russia a letter with proposals to improve and expand it.

"Despite the fact that so much time has passed, (the deal) has not yet been implemented, it has not come together as a package, the conditions that concerned us have still not been realised," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

"Therefore, while the circumstances don't add up in favour of this deal, we continue to observe," he said.

Meanwhile, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy slammed Russian missile strike on a museum in the centre of the eastern Ukrainian city of Kupiansk that killed two women and wounded 10 other people.

The Black Sea grain deal was brokered by Turkey and the United Nations last July to allow Kyiv to resume grain exports from its Black Sea ports that had been severed after Russia invaded Ukraine five months earlier.

Russia has signalled that it will not allow the deal to be extended beyond May 18 unless obstacles to its own food and fertiliser exports are removed.

On Monday, a UN spokesperson said United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres had proposed to Russian President Vladimir Putin a "way forward aimed at the

improvement, extension and expansion" of the agreement.

The proposal was outlined in a letter that Guterres asked Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov to deliver to Putin.

The grain deal was aimed at alleviating a global food crisis, as both Ukraine and Russia are major exporters of grain. Peskov, however, played down the extent to which shortfalls of grain from both countries had contributed to the crisis.

"We all know that the genesis of the global food crisis has other roots. And it is not a direct consequence of the loss of Ukrainian grain from the market," he said.

"Of course, the loss of Ukrainian grain and Russian grain from the market may be one of the factors, but not decisive."

The Russian missile strike killed two women and wounded 10, the state emergency service said.

Rescue workers dug through mounds of rubble to retrieve the bodies after the local history museum was hit by what President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's chief of staff and the regional governor said was a Russian S-300 missile.

Zelenskyy posted a video of a devastated building that had spewed out rubble and debris into the street. Its windows were smashed and a section of the wall and roof was destroyed.

"The terrorist country is doing everything to destroy us completely," he wrote in a Telegram post. "Our history, our culture, our people."

Russia did not immediately comment on the attack.



Probably on verge of new world war: Putin ally Dmitry Medvedev

RUSSIA, Moscow

An ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin said yesterday that the world was probably on the verge of a new world war and the risks of a nuclear confrontation were rising.

"The world is sick and quite probably is on the verge of a new world war," Dmitry Medvedev, deputy chairman of Putin's powerful security council, told a conference in Moscow.

He said such a new world war was not inevitable but the risks of a nuclear confrontation were growing and more serious than concerns about climate change.

Putin says the world faces the most dangerous decade since World War Two. He casts the war in Ukraine as an existential battle with an aggressive and arrogant West, and has said that Russia will use all available means to protect itself against any aggressor.

The United States and its allies have condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine as an imperial land grab. Ukraine has vowed to fight until all Russian troops withdraw from its territory, and says Russian rhetoric on nuclear war is intended to intimidate the West into curbing military aid.

UN urges Singapore to halt execution over drug offence

AFP, Singapore

The United Nations Human Rights Office pressed Singapore yesterday to "urgently reconsider" its scheduled execution of a man over one kilogram of cannabis.

Singaporean Tangaraju Suppiah, 46, is set to be hanged on today after he was convicted of conspiracy to traffic 1,017.9 grams (35.9 ounces) of cannabis, twice the amount that merits the death sentence in the city-state.

It would be Singapore's first execution in six months and the 12th since last year.

The Asian financial hub has some of the world's toughest anti-drug laws and insists the death penalty remains an effective deterrent against trafficking.

KENYA STARVATION CULT Death toll climbs to 90

AFP, Malindi

Kenyan investigators unearthed another 16 bodies yesterday in a forest where a cult was believed to be practising mass starvation, bringing the number of victims so far to 90 including children.

There are fears more corpses could be found in Shakahola forest where cult leader Paul Mackenzie Nthenge had allegedly been telling his followers that starvation was the only path to God.

Children are among the latest victims of the "Shakahola Forest Massacre", with search teams in white overalls still undertaking the macabre task inland from Malindi on Kenya's Indian Ocean coast.

The grim discovery has shocked the nation and President William Ruto has pledged a crackdown on "unacceptable" religious movements as horrifying details unfold by the day.

Visiting the site yesterday, Interior Minister Kithure Kindiki warned that worse could still come.

"We don't know how many more graves, how many more bodies, we are likely to discover," he told reporters, adding the crimes were serious enough to warrant terrorism charges against Nthenge.

Efforts to make RMG factories safety compliant slog on

FROM PAGE 1

The RMG factories in the process of remediation are now either under the Department of Inspection of Factories and Establishments (DIFE), led "National Initiative" (NI), or the private RMG Sustainability Council (RSC), which was formed in 2020 after the Accord ended following an apex court verdict.

In a paper released recently, the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) found that the progress of implanting safety measures in the factories under DIFE was only 54 percent on average.

The 54 percent progress does not necessarily mean the most serious safety issues have been addressed. In fact, the data shows that the progress of remediation remained the least in issues related to fire, said the paper titled "Emerging Concerns of Occupational Safety

and Health of the RMG Industry: Role of Public and Private Monitoring Agencies".

The DIFE is overseeing the progress of the implementation of safety measures in 659 factories, said the CPD. These factories were first inspected in 2015.

According to the DIFE's inspection report, 361 of the factories made less than 50 percent progress.

The CPD said the procrastination stems from a "lack of self-interest of the NI factories' owners as they were not adequately pressurised by the government, business associations, and their buyers who are mostly from non-European and non-North-American countries".

In addition, many factories are in rented buildings which makes it difficult to invest in certain safety measures. These businesses are often found

to be financially weak with limited access to credit.

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) in a press release yesterday said that after the DIFE took over, inspections halved in the last fiscal year and the quality of the inspections remained questionable due to corruption. "Bribing of compliance auditors to overlook non-compliance issues and ignoring important concerns worsen the situation."

When the Accord ended, over 1,700 factories were handed over to the RSC. Of the factories, about 1,000 were classified as running behind schedule for becoming fully safe.

The CPD pointed out that 500 factories under the RSC have become fully compliant. In January 2021 when Accord ended, 326 factories were compliant.

The issues in the initial findings had a correction progress rate of 91.32

percent in January 2023. "However, item-wise progress shows that the progress rate is lower for a few common fire-related items (such as fire detection and alarm system, installation of fire suppression system)," said the CPD.

The progress rate of fire detection and suppression installation is 53 and 63.5 percent respectively, found the CPD.

Easy steps like the removal of collapsible gates saw the highest implementation.

As per the RSC website, it has at least 1,884 factories to watch. It is yet to provide 211 factories with their corrective action plans.

On the addition of more factories to the RSC, Golam Moazzem, research director of the CPD and the author of the research, said, "This is a positive signal. More factories now want to be on board,

and be under scrutiny. The question is whether the RSC is increasing its capacity."

The CPD pointed out that because the RSC does not shut down non-compliant factories, the functionality of the RSC remains below par on many accounts.

The RSC on its website classified 1,061 factories as "behind schedule".

Chief Safety Officer George Faller of the RSC said, "There is good progress on most fire-related items, but automatic detection and alarms and fire suppression systems are more complex issues and therefore the RSC is not only monitoring the design and installation of these systems, but also carrying out commissioning and testing for them, which takes more time and effort than for other items for final approval.

"The RSC is continuously

delisting some factories and onboarding new ones, so the overall percentage progress does not reflect progress on factories that have been under the programme for a long time."

The TIB said exploitative practices of some brands and buyers motivated by short-term profitability at the expense of business integrity, together with the continued failure of authorities to ensure accountability and workers' rights-sensitive governance, pose the most formidable challenges for sustainability in the industry.

In 2018 and 2019, the number of deaths in RMG factories were 10 and 2 respectively. In 2020 when Accord ended, that figure was one. In 2021, it rose to 13, says the CPD.

The DIFE inspector general did not respond to calls and texts from The Daily Star.

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Can a state agency just gobble up land?

BADC must stop filling water retention area in Gabtoli

It's alarming to know that the state-run Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC) has filled 11 acres of a 53-acre water retention area in Gabtoli, Dhaka in violation of the Environment Conservation (Amendment) Act-2010. Even more alarmingly, the Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC), Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (Rajuk), and the Department of Environment (DoE) – which together were responsible for the land – did nothing to prevent the filling although it continued for over six months until March. The area in question is marked as water retention land in the Detailed Area Plan (DAP). Reportedly, the BADC got neither a land use clearance from Rajuk nor any environmental clearance certificate from the DoE, both of which are mandatory.

A correspondent of this newspaper found that the BADC has set up a fence around the area and an excavator was being used to level it. Using a dredger, the height of the ground has been raised by up to about six feet. All these activities, locals fear, will adversely affect the drainage in and around Gabtoli City Colony, Goidertak, Mirpur, Mazar Road, Mohammadia Housing, Mohammadia Homes, Navodaya Housing, Shyamoli Housing, and Mansoorabad Housing. They also said that when it rains, waterlogging happens in that area. Earlier, some of the water used to recede through the now-occupied land. Now that it has been filled up, they expect the waterlogging problem to get worse.

After much delay, the DNCC, which made lofty promises about preventing waterlogging in the past, wrote to the BADC on March 29 to suspend the land development work. It also concurred that construction of a proposed four-story building meant for a tissue culture laboratory would seriously obstruct drainage. Unless the land filling is stopped and reversed, it will badly affect locals by aggravating the waterlogging problem. While the BADC is the obvious guilty party here, we cannot help but ask why the DNCC failed to intervene sooner or more strongly, as it should have.

Meanwhile, Rajuk, just like the DoE, pretended to have no idea about what has been going on with a category of land deemed extremely important for a city to function. Contradicting all their versions, however, the project director of the Central Tissue Culture and Seed Health Laboratory at the BADC claimed that there was no water retention land at the project site. Additionally, he claimed to have obtained permissions from the authorities concerned when the project was approved, but failed to produce any document to back up his claim. So, the question is, which of these government organisations is lying?

As things stand, it is the BADC that must take responsibility for how things turned out. The way it has gone about occupying or filling that crucial land, without any care about its environmental effect or the suffering of the people, is completely unacceptable. It just shows how unaccountable some of the government organisations have become. We urge the higher authorities to immediately stop the land filling in Gabtoli, and restore and properly preserve the water retention area.

Rana Plaza victims are still owed justice

Lack of progress in the trial process is deeply upsetting

A disaster of the scale of the Rana Plaza – considered the deadliest garment factory accident in history – must involve a multidimensional response. Healing or recovery must take place at the victim level, at the industrial level, and at the state level. After 10 years since the 2013 accident, which killed 1,135 people and injured about as many, we must admit that there has been noteworthy progress in terms of industrial reforms as well as rebuilding the lives of individual survivors. Of course, the memories of horror will live on, and some grievances may never be addressed. But the families of victims have come a long way from that moment of utter chaos and helplessness. But what about the justice that the state owes to them?

As per a report by *Prothom Alo*, there has been little progress on that front in all these years, despite repeated appeals from rights and labour organisations to expedite the trial process. A total of three cases were filed after the accident: one for murder (by police), one for violating the Building Construction Act (by Rajuk), and one for corruption related to the construction (by ACC). All cases are still stuck at various stages of the investigative process.

In the murder case, there are currently 39 accused and 594 witnesses. Of the witnesses, the testimonies of only 36 have been recorded so far, which shows how sluggish the entire process has been. Although various reasons have been cited for the delay, none of them are too convincing given the importance of the case which required fast-tracking. The other two cases have also suffered unjustifiable delay. All this makes one wonder whether the families of victims will at all see justice and finally have some sense of closure. The state has a historic responsibility to hold to account all individuals and parties culpable for the disaster. Every day wasted because of inaction pushes any possibility further away.

It is a shame for us that even today the survivors and those advocating for their rights are having to come out on the streets to demand fair compensation and justice. Although there has been a lot of activity to ensure workers' rights and safety at RMG factories since 2013, many of the demands raised so far remain unmet, including compensation equal to lifetime income, free lifelong treatment of injured workers, punishment for those involved in the collapse, confiscation of the Rana Plaza land and permanent rehabilitation of the injured there, etc. These demands are certainly legitimate, and can be met without much delay. The question is, why aren't they?

Taking stock of the 10 years of the Rana Plaza disaster gives us an opportunity to understand what have worked and what haven't, and to start afresh. Therefore, we urge the authorities to critically examine why the justice system has failed to deliver for the Rana Plaza victims, and ensure that all barriers to the trial process are removed. We cannot move ahead without ensuring justice in this darkest chapter in our industrial history.

Why is safe drinking water so hard to get?



Kallol Mustafa is an engineer and writer who focuses on power, energy, environment and development economics.

KALLOL MUSTAFA

As always, this summer we are seeing a shortage of piped water supplied by the Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) in various parts of the capital. The crisis is more severe in Adabar, Shekhertek, Jurain, Muradpur, Nandipara, Badda and Banasree areas, where you hardly get any water in the pipeline – and if you do get it, it's dirty. Residents of these areas are forced to spend extra money to purchase water from Wasa water trucks, which is not available on time. There are many other areas in Bangladesh where there is a shortage of clean drinking water, in some places throughout the year.

Water is an essential element of life and one of the most important fundamental rights of citizens. It is the state's responsibility to ensure that all people – urban or rural, rich or poor – have access to safe drinking water. Although Bangladesh is going through significant infrastructural development, not enough investment has been made to ensure the availability of safe water for all. There are wide disparities in the availability, quality and prices of water between



According to a WHO-Unicef report, 68.3 million people in Bangladesh don't have access to safely managed drinking water.

FILE PHOTO: AFP

Due to the neglect and inaction of the state, water supply has been virtually privatised in the coastal region. At one such private water business in Satkhira's Shyamnagar, one has to buy water for Tk 2 per litre. Shyamnagar now has 25 such plants for around 400,000 residents.

urban and rural, central and coastal, rich and poor people.

It is the responsibility of water supply and municipal authorities to supply water through pipelines in cities and towns. According to the WHO-Unicef Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) report, 68.3 million people in Bangladesh (41 percent of the population) don't have access to safely managed drinking water. Only 159 municipalities out of 328 across the country have piped water supply systems. And even where piped water supply is available, not all households get access to it. For example, there are more than 12,000 households under Mongla municipality, but the number of water connections there is only 2,700.

The availability and quality of water are not the same everywhere and in every season. The tariff, too, varies from place to place. At the residential level, the price per thousand litres of water is Tk 15.18 in Dhaka Wasa. For the same amount

of water, Chattogram Wasa charges Tk 18, Rajshahi Wasa Tk 6.81, and Khulna Wasa Tk 8.98. Residents of Chalna, which is just 25 kilometres away from Khulna city, have to pay Tk 0.5-1 for just one litre of water.

The quality of piped water is relatively good and its availability is also higher in the affluent areas of towns and cities. In impoverished areas, water is often not available during the dry season, and what is available is dirty, smelly and contaminated. According to a report by the Brac Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD) titled "Water Governance in Dhaka," the daily per capita water consumption in Dhaka is 360 litres on an average. The per capita water consumption in affluent areas like Gulshan and Banani is 509 litres, while it is 215 litres in middle- and lower-middle-income areas like Badda, Kuril and Joar Sahara, and only 85 litres at households in the informal settlements. On an average, 22 percent of the households surveyed do not have access to water as per the demand.

Groundwater drawn up using tube wells is considered comparatively safe. However, in many places, safe water sources are shrinking due to arsenic contamination and the lowering of groundwater table. According to a survey conducted by the Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) in 2021-22, excessive arsenic was found in the water of 14 percent tube wells across the country. And according to a 2019 cluster survey by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) and Unicef, 20 million people in the country drink arsenic-mixed water.

People living in the mountains and coastal areas suffer from an acute water crisis. According to DPHE data, 63 percent of the population in Rangamati, 61 percent in Bandarban and 78 percent in Khagrachhari

have basic water coverage, which in reality is just 50-60 percent of the population in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) area. The rest of the population have to depend on springs and streams as water sources. But as the hills are being cleared of forests and the sand and boulders are being extracted, those springs and streams are drying up, which is causing an

Besides, there are some rainwater harvesting projects by NGOs that are insufficient compared to the need.

Instead of making safe water accessible by reducing the price in the coastal areas, it seems the government is working to increase the price of water in the urban areas. For example, instead of Dhaka Wasa, the responsibility of supplying water

acute water crisis in the region from December to May every year. At the same time, due to increased human movement and increased use of chemical fertilisers and insecticides in agricultural activities nearby, these natural water sources are getting contaminated, leading to the locals often getting sick with diarrhoea and other waterborne diseases.

In the coastal areas, saltwater intrusion is on the rise due to shrimp farming and climate change, resulting in freshwater scarcity. Also in many places, the groundwater table has dropped and deep or shallow tube wells are no longer effective as water sources, so rain and pond water are the only options. Although rainwater is available during the monsoon season, not all families are equipped to store that water for a long time.

According to a UNDP survey in 2021, 73 percent of people living in Koyra, Dakop and Paikgasa upazilas in Khulna and Assasuni and Shyamnagar upazilas in Satkhira are drinking unsafe saline water. Where a salinity of more than 1,000 milligrams per litre is considered non-drinkable, the water in those upazilas has a salinity level of 1,427 to 2,406 milligrams per litre. About 52 percent of the ponds and 77 percent of the tube wells in these areas were found to have high levels of salinity.

Because of this, the coastal population, especially women, have to walk several kilometres to collect drinking water. Also, people in the coastal areas have to spend much more money than those in the urban areas.

Due to the neglect and inaction of the state, water supply has been virtually privatised in the coastal region. At one such private water business in Satkhira's Shyamnagar, one has to buy water for Tk 2 per litre. Shyamnagar now has 25 such plants for around 400,000 residents.

to the Purbachal New Town has been handed over to a public-private partnership entity comprising Rajuk and the United Delcot Water Limited, a private consortium comprising the United Water (Suqian) Co Ltd from China and Delcot Water from Bangladesh. The total cost of the project, including installation of 15 deep tube wells and pipelines, is set at Tk 592.39 crore, with Rajuk bearing Tk 299.80 crore and the consortium Tk 292.39 crore. The consortium will run the supply for 11 years to recover their investment and make a profit before handing over the responsibilities. Meanwhile, Rajuk will provide Tk 56 crore in maintenance cost every year.

On the one hand, extracting more groundwater will put additional pressure on the already depleting groundwater reserve. On the other hand, inequality in access to water will increase due to water being supplied by a for-profit private entity. Already, the household water tariff fixed at Purbachal is 31 percent higher than that in Dhaka Wasa.

It seems the ongoing economic growth and development activities have failed to ensure safe drinking water for all. Sources of safe water have been reduced due to the pollution of rivers and water bodies, uncontrolled usage of chemicals and pesticides, construction of dams and barrages by India on the transboundary rivers, and salinity intrusion in the coastal areas. Instead of surface water, the dependency on groundwater has increased dangerously. Taking advantage of this crisis, commercialisation of water has also risen. To change this situation, the government must stop treating water as a commercial product and take the necessary steps to ensure safe drinking water for the entire population in the country.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send us your letters to letters@thedailystar.net

Concern about widespread gas leaks

On Monday night, many residents in the capital complained of gas leaks. These complaints arose as people began detecting the smell of gas in various parts of Dhaka city. Now, Titas Gas has reassured citizens that there is no danger in lighting stoves and that the issue has been resolved.

However, this is a constant fear that people in the country must live with. Over the past few years, there have been a number of fire or blast incidents caused by accumulated gas

in homes, industries, markets, and even at a mosque (in one known case). And, given the frequent fire incidents happening especially in the capital since the beginning of this year, it is not shocking that citizens' first response was to panic. All this points to the need for the authorities to take issues of fire safety seriously, across the board. No gas leak or irregularity in building design should be taken lightly.

Ali Ahmed, Dhaka

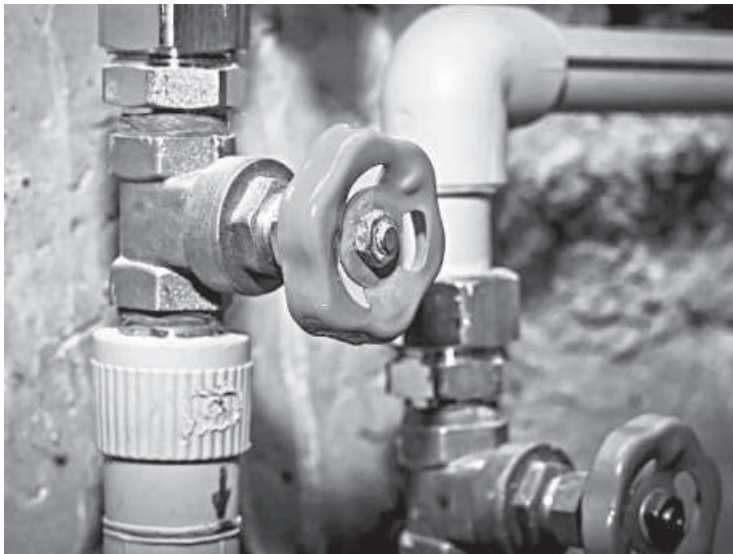


PHOTO: FREEPIK

Messages for Bangladesh from Ashoka Mody's 'India Is Broken'



Dr Manzoor Ahmed is professor emeritus at Brac University, chair of Bangladesh ECD Network, and vice-chair of Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE). Views expressed in this column are the author's own.

MANZOOR AHMED

A new book by economist Ashoka Mody, visiting professor at Princeton University, titled *India Is Broken: A People Betrayed, Independence to Today*, has created a stir in the talk show circuit as well as print media in India. Originally published by the Stanford University Press, the paperback version is subtitled *And why it is hard to fix*. Prof Mody contends that all of India's leaders, from the founding Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to the incumbent Narendra Modi, have placed the country's national development on a wrong trajectory that has failed to meet the needs and aspirations of its people. Is this a storm in a teacup? And are there lessons from it for Bangladesh?

The main, sometimes complex, arguments of the 600-plus page book have been expressed in simpler terms in Mody's conversations with some of the webinar hosts. Citing Japan's Meiji restoration in the 1860s, post-revolution Russia, and China and South Korea of recent times, he says, "Every successful country has educated its children and has brought its women to the workforce. Quality basic education for all children is the key, there is no exception to this rule." India has failed in this respect, he says.

This is not so for a lack of policy, Mody says. Universal basic education was proclaimed as a policy early on. Though progress was slow, by around 2000 most children were enrolled in school. But, even today, most fifth-graders cannot do second-grade maths or read a second-grade text. After 75 years of independence, more than a third of the young population in India do not complete secondary schooling, and those who complete it, go to colleges where real learning hardly happens.

Taking a historical perspective, Mody asserts that Nehru, despite his progressive ideas about development and his vision about a democratic, egalitarian and secular India, failed to grasp the critical importance of basic education for the young as the building blocks for such a society. He did not heed the messages of Rabindranath Tagore and even Mahatma Gandhi, who had underscored the need for a new education for the new generation infused with a moral purpose and equipped with essential skills and capabilities for life and work.

Nehru opted for creating a number of world-class tertiary institutions concentrating on science and technology in the form of the Indian Institutes of Technology and Indian Institutes of Management, instead of world-class school education. These institutions indeed earned international names. But without the foundation of quality basic education for the population, these became institutions for the elite, supplying personnel to multinational corporations and providing CEOs and top managers to dozens of Fortune-500 companies. Renowned scientist Meghnad Saha said the IITs eviscerated the university system of India.

The benefits of the elite institutions did not reach the masses of India and did not serve the goal of designing and implementing the social and economic development strategies for a democratic, equitable and secular India. Incidentally, Mody and his spouse are both products of IIT and in due course moved to the United States to pursue their illustrious careers.

The educational priorities were of a piece with Nehru's economic development agenda, Mody argues. Nehru's economic planners shunned the job-creating, labour-intensive economic model that could move low-earning and low-productivity agricultural workforce to labour-intensive manufacturing, and take advantage of the post-World War II global export boom. Instead, they opted for government-owned heavy industry, which Nehru called the "temples of new India," to build the base for self-sufficient industrial development. The Chicago school monetarist and Nobel Laureate Milton Friedman was a consultant for India's second five-year plan. Friedman wrote in 1955 opposing the reliance on the extremes of heavy and cottage industry, at the cost of labour-

intensive light manufacturing. Both were highly inefficient because the former deployed capital with too little labour – in spite of India's comparative advantage in labour – and the latter used labour with too little capital to be competitive.

Prof Mody argues that the metric of decent job creation – jobs that pay a living wage and secure basic rights and protection of the worker, even in the context of the large informal economy, and not the GDP growth rate – should be the main measure of development.

Nehru, a man of high idealism, fell short in translating his idealism into practical policy and action, as Mody saw it. Nehru deliberately chose to neglect the goals of human development and not do what was needed in basic education and basic healthcare to achieve the human development objectives, though 60 percent of the population remained in abject poverty. The lip service instead of real action on human development intensified with the neoliberal market approach adopted by India since the late 1980s. The acceleration of GDP growth, shifting upwards from the "Hindu rate" of around three percent, validated the approach of jobless, climate-damaging and inequality-generating economic growth along with the neglect of peoples' education, health, decent jobs, clean air and water, and liveable cities.



India Is Broken

A PEOPLE BETRAYED, INDEPENDENCE TO TODAY

Ashoka Mody



In the largest democracy in the world, its façade and form existed, not the spirit, and it betrayed the people, asserts Mody, because the education, health and jobs that the people wanted were not delivered. The objective contemporary view of the early post-independence Congress rule, Mody explains, was that the leaders and cadres, with some exceptions, were "a bunch of crooks." Nehru and those who came after him to head the government knew this, but were incapable and unwilling to stand up to this debasement of politics. "The arc of moral degeneration" that arose early widened further over the years.

Moving fast forward to the present, the vaunted Gujarat Model was hyped up with Narendra Modi as the state's chief minister in 2001-14. Since Modi became the prime minister in 2014, it has been presented as the model for India. Prof Mody describes it as "marauding development on steroid." It is not development that serves the people, but a bonanza for business, taxpayers subsidising favourite industrialists who created no jobs, caused great damage to waterways,

destroyed livelihood of fishermen, decimated community pastureland, and ravaged mangroves. Gautam Adani is a poster boy of the Gujarat Model. Prof Mody notes that he was a favourite of the regime, whose petrochemical plant built with multiple state subsidies increased the GDP of the state and his own wealth, but created few jobs, raised incomes for only a few common citizens, and chalked up a huge carbon footprint that is not even counted.

Is there a lesson for Bangladesh from the unvarnished account of India's development journey? The trajectory has not been the same. Bangladesh's journey as a nation began a quarter century later in 1971. Then a decade and a half was lost with military rulers holding back normal social, economic and political evolution of a democratic nation. Only in 1990, with the restoration of elected government, did a semblance of normal statecraft resume. It can be said that continuity in governance has existed since 2009 with the current prime minister heading the government.

There are, however, uncanny similarities with India in the broad sweep of economic, education and social development – albeit over a shorter span of time. Most observers would agree that progress in human development in terms of basic education and healthcare has been in terms of numbers with huge deficiencies in quality and outcome. The majority of Class 5 students not being able to do Class 2 level reading or maths is a familiar story in Bangladesh. Jobless growth, unliveable cities, polluted air and water, pervasive corruption, growing inequality and polarised politics are our stories as well. So is the single-minded focus on GDP growth,



ILLUSTRATION: BIPLOB CHAKROBORTY

Time to make climate funds part of mainstream finance



POLITICS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Dr Saleemul Huq is director of the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD) at Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB).

SALEEMUL HUQ

The problem of global climate change has already gone through two eras and has now entered the third era. The first was the era of mitigation; the second was the era of adaptation; and now we are in the era of loss and damage from human-induced climate change. Mitigation and adaptation are still prevalent issues, and now we have to deal with loss and damage, too.

How are we going to deal with all these evolving climate issues, and what kind of finance is needed for that?

Over the last two decades, there has been some progress in setting up different funds for dealing with mitigation and adaptation. These funds are already operating, although the scale of funding is still quite inadequate.

The funds that were created under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) so far include the Adaptation Fund, the Special Climate Change Fund, and the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) – all using the Global Environment Facility (GEF) based in Washington, DC as their secretariat.

Then, later, the UNFCCC created another, bigger fund called the Green Climate Fund (GCF) with its own separate secretariat and board based in Songdo, South Korea.

These funds have received and disbursed tens of billions of US Dollars to developing countries over the last two decades. However, they still have a hard time getting replenished by the developed countries who have promised to provide the funding for all of them. In fact, the developed countries promised in 2015 as part of the Paris Agreement to provide \$100 billion every year from 2020 onwards to tackle mitigation and adaptation.

Unfortunately, 2020 has come and gone, but the \$100 billion goal was never reached. The developed

countries now promise to deliver it from 2025 onwards. Another anomaly in the proportion of funding that was actually delivered was that over 80 percent of it went to support mitigation while only 20 percent went to support adaptation, whereas the expectation was that the division would be 50-50.

This anomaly was addressed at the 26th annual climate conference (COP26) in Glasgow, Scotland in 2021, where the developed countries promised to double the proportion of funds allocated for adaptation

Among the issues to be resolved is where the funds could come from, without cannibalising the funds for mitigation and adaptation, which are already inadequate. There are some interesting, innovative options, such as taxing polluters like fossil fuel companies and air and sea transport.

in the most vulnerable developing countries. This promise is also yet to be fulfilled.

Then at COP27 in Egypt last year, there was a breakthrough agreement to set up new funding arrangements to address the loss and damage caused by climate change. A Transitional Committee has been set up to work on the options and present their recommendations at COP28, scheduled to be held in Dubai in December 2023.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- Use the tub
- 6 A+, e.g.
- Continental coins
- Egypt neighbor
- Casino fixtures
- Arthur's step-brother
- Objective
- Language suffix
- Clerical errors
- Choir singers
- Turn red, maybe
- Look upon
- "The Naked Maja" painter
- Venomous viper
- Canary sound
- Bona fide

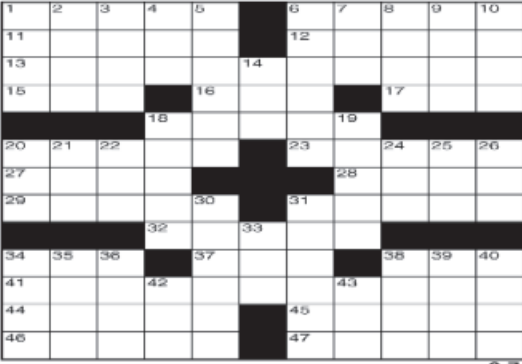
- Mud bath site
- SUV or sedan
- Me, to Michel
- Bits for Fido
- Districts
- Permitted
- Karate levels
- Cast out

DOWN

- "Loser" singer
- Mystique
- Serving aid
- Bunny move
- School papers
- Elegant beauty
- Chest bone
- Qualified
- Colors
- Move slowly
- Pointer
- Drying need
- Vision

- Director DuVernay
- Pot part
- Baseball's Williams
- "Lenore" writer
- Iris setting
- Catch some z's
- School break
- Compass creation
- Tank fill
- Rough guess
- Cut down
- Cain's brother
- Christmas travelers
- Milky gem
- Map dot
- Back muscle, for short
- Writer Stout

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FRIDAY'S ANSWERS





Ananda Cinema hall.



Chayabani, Mymensingh.



Lion Cinemas.

The state of Eid cinemas

Due to the release of so many films, more than 100 halls, that were previously closed, were reopened during Eid—outside the existing 60 halls in the country.

ZAHHID AKBAR

Unlike the previous Eid, this one was quite special for the Bangladeshi film industry, as a total of eight films were released in theaters. The movies released were: *Leader Amie Bangladesh*, *Jinn*, *Kill Him*, *Paap*, *Shotru*, *Prem Pritir Bandhan* and *Adam*.

Due to the release of so many films, more than 100 halls, that were previously closed, were reopened during Eid—outside the existing 60 halls in the country.

Since its release, the Shakib Khan and Bubly starrer, “*Leader Amie Bangladesh*”, has been attracting a large audience. The film was released in 100 theatres across the country, the highest number from these eight films. Due to its popularity, Blockbuster Cinemas (Jamuna Future Park) increased the number of shows



PHOTOS: STAR & COLLECTED

the box office. Some shows have even been running houseful in the theatres for the seven other films.

The Bappy starrer film, *Shotru*, directed by Suman Dhar, was released in 24 cinema halls. The film is doing well on single screens outside Dhaka. Some of its shows even went houseful. However, the film is not doing well at the multiplexes. Now, we have learned that *Shotru* will be released in even more single screens in the second week.

One of the most hyped films of this Eid was the Puja Chery and Sajal starrer, *Jinn*. Jaaz Multimedia’s horror project was able to generate a lot of curiosity among the audience, due to its unique promotional campaign. The film was released in 14 theatres this Eid, with some shows going houseful. Interestingly, it has been seen that this film is popular among female audiences.

Local, directed by Saif Chandan, was released in 11 theatres across the country. The movie stars Shobnom Bubly and Ador Azad in

the lead roles. The movie has performed well in multiplexes across the country since its release. The film’s production house said that more halls would be added in the second week of screening.

The Saikat Nasir directorial, *Paap*, starring Bobby and Ziaul Roshan, was released in eight theatres. The storyline and performance of Ziaul Roshan were appreciated by the audience. Although, due to the lack of promotion by the production company, the film was unable to attract the audience.

Another highly anticipated film this Eid was Ananta Jalil’s *Kill Him*. The film was released in 11 theatres. Directed by Mohammad Iqbal, *Kill Him* portrays Ananta Jalil in the role of an agent. This movie has also been performing well in multiplexes.

“All of the films released this Eid have been performing well at the box office. If this continues, then the films will also do good in the second week. From these eight movies, two or three will become superhits, I hope. Screenings of *Leader Amie Bangladesh*, *Jinn*, *Kill Him*, *Local*, *Adam* and *Paap* are going houseful here. I believe that Bengali cinema will turn around if it continues like this,” shared Mesbah Uddin Ahmed, Manager, Media and Marketing Department, Star Cineplex.

“We have been getting a very good response since Eid. People are coming here since Eid day to watch Shakib Khan’s *Leader Amie Bangladesh*. I believe the film will continued to do well in the future. The rest will be clearer next week,” said Iftekhar Uddin Naushad, owner of Modhumita Cinema Hall.

Meanwhile, 7 out of 8 movies released in Lion Cinemas in Old Dhaka. Here, *Leader Amie Bangladesh* and *Jinn* have been doing well. *Kill Him*, *Local*, and *Paap* are also running fairly well.

Netflix to invest massively in South Korea for TV shows, movies



Netflix announced that it will invest USD 2.5 billion in South Korea over the next four years to produce Korean TV series, movies, and unscripted shows, more than doubling its previous investment in the country since 2016.

The announcement came following a meeting between South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol and Netflix co-CEO Ted Sarandos. Yoon arrived in Washington for a six-day state visit on Monday.

Squid Game, a 2021 release, remains Netflix’s most-watched series of all-time, having racked up 1.65 billion hours of streaming in the first 28 days.

Oni Hasan drops biggest guitar collab in Bangladesh

On Monday, Oni Hasan delivered on his promise of bringing us the ‘biggest Bangladeshi guitar collaboration’ during Eid, as he dropped a 23-minute-long video on his YouTube channel.

The video titled, *The Biggest Bangladeshi Guitar Collab Song -I*, featured a total of 32 guitarists, all of whom played over different sections of the same backing track. While some of the bigger names like Shishir Ahmed, Raef Al Hasan Raza, Ershad Zaman, Iqbal Asif Jewel, Saadi Muktafi, etc. had some fantastic shredding for us fans, the lesser known guitarists from YouTube and the local community also delivered amazing performances.

The video even featured Nafisa Khanam Nitu, a female guitarist from Chattogram who is also a guitar instructor at Guitar Hall - School of Music.



COUNTRYWIDE

BORO HARVEST

Labour crisis worries growers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

Crisis of hired farm labourers is hampering Boro harvest in many areas of the district.

As a result, farmers in different upazilas of the district are facing huge difficulty in harvesting their ripe paddy for want of adequate number of labourers.

Meanwhile, finding no other alternatives, many growers and their family members are working for harvesting Boro crops from the field.

“Now, one has to pay Tk 800 plus lunch as daily wage to hire a farm labourer,” said farmer Ali Azam Sheikh of Kadamtala village in Sadar upazila.

Another grower Abdul Hakim from the village said nowadays a man can earn over Tk 1,000 daily by driving a battery-run auto-rickshaw.

So, many day labourers now prefer to drive auto-rickshaw instead of selling their hard labour in the crop fields, he added.

Moreover, due to shortage of labourers those who are available charging higher wages.

Other the hand, many day labourers said they are compelling to charge higher wages due to the price hike of daily

essentials.

Day labourer Safayet Hossain said, “At present, we are facing serious difficulty in managing our family with the poor income.”

Farmer Mostafa of Jujkhola village said now they have to pay Tk 8,000 to take lease of one bigha of land.

One has to spend Tk 3,000 to plough one bigha land, Tk 1,000 for seeds, Tk 5,000 for sapling plantation, Tk 6,000 as fertiliser and pesticide cost and finally Tk 6,000 for harvesting the paddy, added Mostafa.

Usually, on an average, a farmer gets 40 maunds of paddy from one bigha land.

“This year we are expecting to sell Boro paddy at Tk 1,200 per maund,” another grower Abul Kalam said.

According to Pirojpur Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE), this year a total of 32,396 hectares of land have been brought under Boro cultivation, compared to 26,070 hectares last year.

Contacted, Pirojpur DAE Deputy Director Mohammad Nazrul Islam Sikder said the quantity of cultivable land has increased as many barren lands have been brought under Boro farming this year.



Growers in many areas are working for harvesting their ripe Boro paddy for want of farm labourers. The photo was taken from Jujkhola village in Pirojpur Sadar upazila.

2 arrested

FROM PAGE 12

Cox’s Bazar Sadar Model Police Station around noon yesterday.

She accused four named and around 60 unnamed people.

Police did not disclose the motive behind the killing or disclosed the identities of the other accused.

Before daybreak on Sunday, the crew of a boat noticed part of a sunken boat during low tide near Sonadia island. The fishermen then towed the boat ashore and found the bodies in the storage meant for fish.

The sunken boat’s owner Shamsul was a resident of Hariachara Chonkhola area of Moheshkhali, police said.

But the boat did not have a name and it was not enlisted with Cox’s Bazar Fishing Boat Owners’ Association, said Delwar Hossain, the general secretary of the association.

Unnamed boats are often used for robbery in the seas, Delwar added.

Of the 10 bodies, six were identified and handed over to the families. Four unidentified bodies are at Cox’s Bazar Sadar Hospital morgue.

Belafonte

FROM PAGE 12

calypso singer and actor

spent part of his childhood in Jamaica before returning to New York – a binational upbringing that shaped his musical and political outlooks, and saw him campaign tirelessly for racial equality.

Belafonte’s calypso, the genre of Caribbean music that drew from West African and French influences, saw him skyrocket to fame in the midst of post-World War II prosperity and suburbanisation.

DMP to bring capital under CCTV coverage

FROM PAGE 12

from these CCTVs, the DMP officials said.

Hafiz Akhter said DMP is planning to tag this technology with the national emergency number 999 to provide prompt service.

The officials said there is no specific time frame as it is a voluntary public-supported project.

Barrister Sarwat Siraj, secretary general of Gulshan Society, told The Daily Star that the number of petty crimes like mugging in the Gulshan area has come down dramatically after the police-led CCTV initiative.

The cameras also help a lot in solving crimes, she claimed.

“If anyone reports or seeks our assistance after any criminal incidents, now we can locate the place of occurrence, mark the spot by the CCTV footage, and inform police about it. And we have instances of

solving crimes through the process,” she added.

Asked, the DMP officials claimed there are no legal issues regarding privacy as these CCTVs are installed only in the public areas.

Barrister Sarwat agreed and said they are getting requests from the community to install more CCTVs to secure the whole society.

DMP officials say the initiative has been inspired by successful experiments abroad like that in the United Kingdom.

In India, installation of CCTV cameras across the city has helped Delhi police to solve more criminal cases, they said, citing Indian media reports.

The initiative comes as crimes in Dhaka city are on the rise.

The database of the DMP headquarters shows mugging cases almost doubled in the last two years. Around 165 mugging

cases were filed in 2022 compared to only 88 cases in 2021.

Besides mugging, a total of 173 murder cases, 27 dacoity cases, 713 burglary cases, and 172 pornography cases were filed in 2022, while the figures were 166, 23, 643, and 117 respectively in 2021, the DMP HQ database shows.

A huge number of narcotics cases were also filed. The figure was 16,035 in 2022 while it was 16,213 in 2021.

Acknowledging the data, Hafiz Akhter said new technologies and approaches are needed to tackle the changing crime patterns.

He said the CCTV network will also help to identify the criminals who flee the capital after committing a crime.

The DMP has already installed CCTVs at all 14 entry and exit points of Dhaka city, according to

officials of the DMP HQ.

According to DMP Headquarters sources, the central monitoring system of DMP now has around 680 CCTVs at 221 points in Dhaka city. There are also 625 CCTVs in Dhaka South City Corporation areas at 199 locations, they added.

Dr Tawohidul Haque, assistant professor of the Institute of Social Welfare and Research of Dhaka University, told The Daily Star that the cameras would help the law enforcers.

“But we have to remember that professional criminals also know how to commit crimes by dodging surveillance,” he said.

Along with increasing digital surveillance, police need to perform their duty with integrity and professionalism to improve the situation, he added.

Dr Tawohidul also emphasised on the need for creating awareness among the city dwellers.

Govt moves

FROM PAGE 12

including the South Asian ones, have been evacuating their citizens via the sea. There is a border with Egypt. We are trying to find the safest route,” he told this correspondent, adding that the arrangement will be finalised in a day or two.

Violence broke out in Sudan over a week ago between the Sudanese Armed Forces and Rapid Support Forces.

At least 427 people have been killed and more than 3,700 wounded, reports AFP.

Among the latest to die was the assistant administrative attache at the Egypt embassy in Khartoum, Egypt’s foreign ministry said.

The 72-hour ceasefire brokered by the US was agreed by the two factions.

Let’s finish

FROM PAGE 12

his age in order to win re-election, with 44% of Democrats saying he is too old to run, a Reuters/Ipsos poll completed on Monday found.

Trump, 76, also faces concerns about his age with 35% of Republicans saying he is too old.

The poll showed that a majority of registered voters don’t want either Biden or Trump to run again.

While Biden’s approval rating is relatively low, his aides are confident he can beat Trump again. The Reuters/Ipsos poll showed him with a lead of 43% to 38% over his Republican rival among registered voters.



The traditional Jabbarer Boli Khela (Jabbar’s Wrestling Competition), which stands as one of Chattogram’s major festivals in the Laldighi area, saw its 114th edition completed on Tuesday. Shahjalal Boli of Cumilla was crowned champion after beating last year’s champion Tarekul Islam Jibon of Chakaria. Shahjalal, who ended as runner up the year prior, said he was delighted to have claimed the title. A total of 114 wrestler’s took part in this year’s event, showing that the event has lost little of its lustre since its inaugural edition in 1909.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

‘Bowling quick is my strength’

Ebadot Hossain has transformed into one of the finest bowlers in Bangladesh’s pace-bowling unit, which has started to show great promise in recent times. The 29-year-old has emerged as a cross-format pacer for the Tigers and spoke with **The Daily Star’s Mazhar Uddin** during an exclusive interview, sharing insight into his work ethic, ambition and a few other topics. The excerpts of the interview are given below:

The Daily Star(DS): The national camp for the Ireland series is beginning from today in Sylhet. How’s the preparation?

Ebadot Hossain (EH): I already started my personal preparations during Ramadan. I have been working on my fitness in the gym in the evening. We won’t get weather exactly like England, but what I can do is to maintain my fitness. I can’t be relaxed during a break. I am in touch with a trainer, who suggested spot-training three-four times a day and I did.

DS: Although you got your international debut in the Test format, you have gradually transformed into a cross-format bowler. How did you manage to adjust to white-ball cricket?

EH: When I was only playing Test cricket, I used to tell our then pace-bowling coach Ottis Gibson of my desire to play white-ball cricket as well and he encouraged me. At the same time, he also prescribed a few areas of improvement, which helped me cope with the white-ball formats. I am still following the process shown by Gibson and getting results till now. Whenever I struggle, I go back to basics. Also improving fitness is very important since I am now playing three formats. It is also important to be able to play with the batters’ mind so you need to be smart.

DS: Can you elaborate on the specific areas of improvement that Gibson pointed out?

EH: In Tests, I normally used to bowl at the same speed throughout the day, which is okay for the longer version. But in limited-over formats, you need variation. You have to bowl a certain way with the new ball but that changes when it’s a semi-new ball. It’s different again when you bowl in death overs. He handed me the white ball and asked me to bowl at the centre wickets under different scenarios. I learned how to bowl in three different ways with the same ball.

DS: You have shown consistency in bowling yorkers, especially in the death overs. Obviously variations are key, but do you believe speed is your strength?

EH: Even [ODI captain] Tamim [Iqbal] bhai wants me to bowl fast and aggressive. Since the captain wants that from me and since those are my two main weapons, it gives me freedom to give my best. He said even if I conceded 60 or 80 runs, he wouldn’t mind as long as I was able to bowl quick and at a consistent line where the batters struggle to play. And I am able to get breakthroughs. If you noticed, previously the spinners would come after 10 overs. But this trend has changed as dominant pacers like Mark Wood, Lockie Ferguson and other threatening bowlers try to dominate, which I am trying to implement.

DS: You were instrumental in Bangladesh’s historic Test win against New Zealand at Mount Maunganui. Since then, the Bangladesh pace-bowling department has stepped up to



play match-winning roles. Where does this belief come from?

EH: To be honest, Ottis Gibson laid this foundation for us and another person I would like to mention is our former Test captain Mominul Haque. This man has helped us immensely and I can’t describe the amount of belief he showed us. Mominul bhai used to sit with us and encourage our pace-bowling department a lot. I think both Gibson and Mominul bhai helped us to change the mindset and improve as a pace-bowling unit.

DS: What are the areas current

pace-bowling coach Allan Donald is emphasising?

EH: Donald is focusing on instilling an aggressive mindset. If Taskin Ahmed, Hasan Mahmud, Mustafizur Rahman and I are all receptive to aggressive bowling. Donald himself was a dominant bowler and was nicknamed ‘White Lightning’ for that reason. At times we make mistakes but you may have noticed that he will rush towards us and try to remind us.

DS: Do you wish to bowl even quicker in the future?

EH: Not really. I clicked 149.6 kmph during the Ireland series but there is no desire to set any target to click the fastest delivery. Bowling quick is my strength and I will continue to work. When I was in the pacer hunt, my pace was around 139 kmph and now it’s 149.6. That’s a massive jump. It’s not a matter of joke to increase 10 kmph during this period.

DS: We all know about your trademark salute after picking up a wicket. But are you aware that Virat Kohli was unable to score a century for nearly three years after you gave him a send-off with that salute?

EH: (Smiles) Look, everyone makes fun of it but I don’t believe this. I think Kohli went through a tough phase and that’s it. But yes, since then my teammates started to request me not to salute them and make fun. Even after dismissing Mohammad Rizwan, I gave him a salute and many were saying his career was done. But he went on to score hundreds after that.

U-17s set for Turkmenistan challenge

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh are set to face an unfamiliar opponent in the form of Turkmenistan when they begin their AFC U-17 Women’s Asia Cup Qualifiers Round-1 campaign at the Jalan Besar Stadium in Singapore today.

The match will get underway at 8:00pm (BST). Bangladesh, who qualified for the finals of the AFC U-16 Women’s Championship Qualifiers in 2017 and 2019, will be eager to progress to the finals of the AFC U-17 Women’s Asia Cup.

But they first need to progress past Round-1 of the Qualifiers, where they have been pitted against Turkmenistan and the hosts.

Bangladesh have never faced Turkmenistan in an U-17 competitions, with the Turkmen set to make their debut. However, a Bangladesh U-20 side beat Turkmenistan 4-0 in the AFC U-20 Women’s Asia Cup Qualifiers in March last year in Dhaka.

“It is a very important match for the girls. We are hoping that they will display their natural performance and leave with a victory,” head coach Golam Rabbani Choton said yesterday.

“Turkmenistan came to play this tournament for the first time, so they will be trying their best. What we always do is that we respect our opponents and consider them a strong side. We also believe we can leave the ground with a victory if the girls show their normal performance,” he added.



Former national tennis champ no more

SPORTS REPORTER

Former Bangladesh tennis player Shovon Jamaly breathed his last on Tuesday in Canberra, Australia. He was 55 at the time of his demise.

Jamaly, who was suffering from colon cancer, will today be buried in the capital of Australia where he had been residing for a long time.

A three-time National Tennis Champion and two-time National Doubles Champion, Jamaly represented the country in the Davies Cup, the Junior US Open, and the Junior Wimbledon.

Jamaly represented Bangladesh in the Davies Cup on 10 occasions between 1986 and 1999. One of the reliable faces in the Bangladesh side during his time, Jamaly played a total of 53 matches in the competition and boasted 25 wins.

He was the son of the former general secretary of the Bangladesh Tennis Federation Masud Hasan Jamaly.

In a press release issued on Tuesday, the Bangladesh Tennis Federation expressed its deepest condolences to the bereaved family.



Gunners must gun down City to keep fate in own hands

AGENCIES

Like a sky blue juggernaut, Manchester City have begun to fill Arsenal’s rearview mirror and on Wednesday the reigning champions have the chance to begin their over-taking manoeuvre on the road to a fifth Premier League title in six years.

A match that has loomed on the fixture list for months as a likely title-decider now feels like a must-win game for an Arsenal side whose hold on the summit is coming loose.

While treble-chasing City have been churning out the wins, just as they usually do at the business end of a season, Arsenal’s young pretenders have been struck by vertigo.

They could have been going to City with a double-digit points lead but after surrendering 2-0 advantages to draw consecutive away games 2-2 at Liverpool and West Ham United, they were then held to a frenzied 3-3 draw by bottom club Southampton on Friday.

After that rip-roaring contest, in which Arsenal needed late



goals from Martin Odegaard and Bukayo Saka just to salvage a point, the players slumped to the turf and their fans filed away wondering if the dream of a first title since 2004 was fading.

Arsenal still have a five-point lead with six games to play but City have two matches in hand and look irresistible having collected 25 points from the last 27 on offer.

According to statistician Simon Gleave of data company Gracenote, Arsenal’s draw with



Southampton left them with a 21% chance of dethroning City, while Pep Guardiola’s side now have a 79% probability of finishing top.

Anything other than a first away win against City since 2015 would leave the destiny of the title in Pep Guardiola’s side’s hands.

Coach Mikel Arteta, having seen Arsenal record several notable away wins this season, told a pre-match news conference on Tuesday: “It is going to be a tough

night and challenge, yes, but the opportunity is incredible for us.

“We knew from the beginning – we have to go to City and we have to beat them – you want to be champion, you have to win these matches, it is as simple as that.”

City have chipped away at Arsenal’s lead while also progressing to the semifinals of the Champions League and on Saturday reached the FA Cup final after easing past Sheffield United in third gear.

The games are coming thick and fast for Guardiola’s side but such is the quality and depth of his expensively-assembled squad that few doubt their ability to chase only the second treble – Premier League, FA Cup, Champions League – by an English side after Manchester United.

And Arteta was aware of the quality, especially the prowess of City’s goal-machine Erling Haaland. “When you look at the numbers, there is no comparison with anybody else. He (Haaland) is able to produce that as well because the setup is done in the right way for him,” Arteta said.



The Bangladesh team will travel to Sylhet today for a three-day camp and veteran Mushfiqur Rahim, not one to miss a beat when it comes to self-improvement in practice sessions, was seen driving at a delivery at Mirpur’s SBNCS yesterday a day ahead of the team’s departure. The Tigers will take the available players to Sylhet but BCB sources could not confirm whether ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan will attend the camp in Sylhet.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



‘Let’s finish this job’

Biden, 80, makes 2024 presidential run official

REUTERS, Washington

President Joe Biden yesterday launched his re-election bid with a promise to protect American liberties from “extremists” linked to former President Donald Trump, who he beat in 2020 and might face again in 2024.

Biden made his announcement in a slickly produced video released by his new campaign team that opens with imagery from the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the US Capitol by Trump’s supporters.

“When I ran for president four years ago, I said we’re in a battle for the soul of America, and we still are,” Biden said. “This is not a time to be complacent. That’s why I’m running for re-election.”

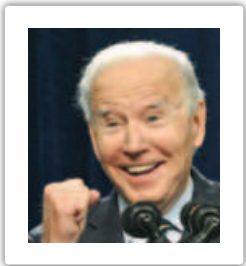
“Let’s finish this job. I know we can,” he said.

He described Republican platforms as threats to American freedoms, vowed to fight efforts to limit women’s healthcare, cut Social Security and ban books, and blasted “MAGA extremists.”

MAGA is the acronym for the “Make America Great Again” slogan of Trump, who is the early frontrunner in the Republican primary race. If he wins, he will face off against Biden again in the November 2024 election.

Biden, 80, must overcome Americans’ concerns about

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The pillars of the flyover near Malibagh level-crossing are a cluttered mess because of the unsightly posters. The photo taken yesterday shows a clear violation of a High Court order from early February. The court not only ordered removal of posters from the flyovers, but also asked the authorities to take action against those who deface pillars and walls.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

2 arrested in connection with bodies found in boat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox’s Bazar

Police have arrested two fishermen accused in a case filed after the recovery of 10 bodies from the storage of a sunken fishing boat in Nazirartek, Cox’s Bazar.

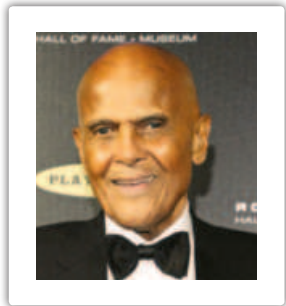
During primary interrogation, Kamal, who owns another fishing boat, and Karim Sikder, a fishing boat crew member, admitted that they were involved in the crime, said Mahfujul Islam, superintendent of police in the district.

Police heard that the 10 people found dead could have been lynched when they went to the sea to rob fishing boats, he told reporters at his office.

The suspects will be produced before a court with remand prayers for further interrogation.

Rokeya Akhter, widow of boat owner Shamsul Alam who was among the 10 victims, filed the case with

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Harry Belafonte dies at 96

AFP, New York

Harry Belafonte, the superstar entertainer who introduced a Caribbean flair to mainstream US music and became well known for his deep personal investment in civil rights, died Tuesday in Manhattan, his publicist said. He was 96.

The barrier-breaking artist-activist died of congestive heart failure at his New York home, according to the publicist’s statement.

Born in Harlem to a Jamaican mother and a father from the French territory of Martinique, the

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

DMP to bring capital under CCTV coverage

Plans to add 50,000 private CCTVs to its central system to tackle rising crimes

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Dhaka Metropolitan Police is working to bring the whole capital under the surveillance of Close Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras to tackle rising crimes like murders, burglary, theft, and robberies.

For that, the DMP is counting heavily on voluntary public support.

Initially, it aims to incorporate around 50,000 private CCTV cameras into its surveillance apparatus. It has already started requesting area-based housing societies, apartment cooperatives, individual households and businesses to upgrade their existing CCTV cameras.

The DMP wants people to upgrade their existing CCTVs so that the devices can supply live feed and have II types of specialised features like face detection, automated alarm system, and vehicle number plate tracing.

“The upgrade of these private CCTVs is not being carried out under any government project. We are doing it solely with public support,” AKM Hafiz Akhter, additional commissioner (admin) of DMP, told The Daily Star.

“We, through police stations, are reaching out to the CCTV owners and requesting them to improve

The central monitoring system of the DMP now has around 680 CCTVs at 221 points in Dhaka city. There are also 625 CCTVs in Dhaka South City Corporation areas at 199 locations.



their camera quality. If they agree, these cameras will be brought under a central networking system so that we can get support from it,” explained the official.

Requesting anonymity, a DMP official said they are expecting a good response from the societies, households, and business owners as the upgrade and incorporation of their CCTV cameras into the central system will also help secure their premises.

With voluntary public support, according to DMP officials, around 1,500 CCTVs have been upgraded so far in Banani, Niketon, Gulshan, and Baridhara areas. Police have already begun monitoring live feed

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

Govt moves to evacuate Bangladeshis from Sudan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has started making arrangements to evacuate Bangladeshis from Sudan as the warring sides have agreed to a 72-hour ceasefire that came into effect early yesterday.

How the Bangladeshis will be evacuated will depend on the situation, Shahriar Alam, state minister for foreign affairs wrote in a Facebook post yesterday.

The Bangladesh Embassy in Khartoum is circulating these messages to the Bangladeshis there, he added.

He urged Bangladeshis to register with the embassy. About 1,500 Bangladeshis are currently in Sudan, said Tariqul Islam, director of Africa Wing at the foreign ministry.

“Many countries,

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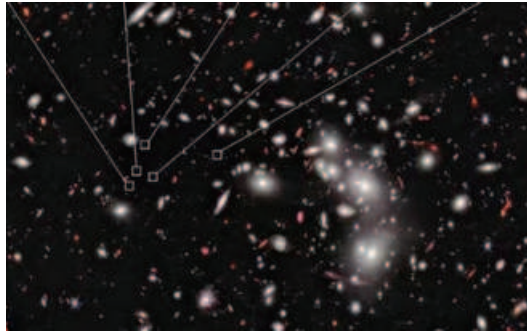
Webb telescope finds most distant galaxy cluster

INDEPENDENT ONLINE

The most distant cluster of galaxies ever seen by humans has been found by astronomers using NASA’s James Webb Space Telescope.

The advance sheds more light on the formative years of the early universe.

A cluster of seven galaxies was revealed at a distance astronomers refer to as redshift 7.9, according to the research, published on Monday in The Astrophysical Journal Letters.



The discovery showed the formation of the cluster a mere 650 million years after the big bang.

The nascent galaxy cluster will likely grow in size and mass to resemble the Coma Cluster – a “monster” of the modern universe – estimated scientists, including those from the California Institute of Technology in the US.

FACTIONAL CLASH

AL activist beaten to death in Rangpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

An Awami League activist was beaten to death allegedly by supporters of another faction of the party in Kaunia upazila of Rangpur.

The deceased Sona Mia, 55, of Najirdah village under Haragach municipality, was a member of the AL’s Kaunia upazila unit.

The incident took place in front of Khansama Imamganj School around 8:30pm on Monday.

According to sources, Kaunia upazila unit AL organised an event at the school grounds, which Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi was supposed to attend to exchange Eid greetings.

Ahead of the programme, the victim, Sona Mia, his brother, Mukul Mia, and other AL activists started chanting slogans hailing Tipu Munshi, also the local lawmaker.

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Rescue teams search for victims in the rubble of a badly damaged building a day after multiple explosions caused by fire in a munitions cache levelled a specialist counter-terrorism police station in Kabal town of Swat Valley, in Pakistan’s northwestern region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, yesterday. The death toll from the explosions rose to 17, police said.

PHOTO: AFP

Sudan ceasefire largely holds

Countries step up evacuations; WHO warns of ‘huge biological risk’ after fighters occupy lab

AFP, Khartoum

A US brokered ceasefire between Sudan’s warring generals was largely holding in much of the capital yesterday, but witnesses in some areas reported ongoing clashes between the army and paramilitary forces.

Foreign nations stepped up efforts to evacuate their nationals from the chaos-torn nation, but security fears were compounded when the World Health Organization (WHO) warned of a “huge biological risk” after fighters occupied a Khartoum laboratory holding samples of cholera, measles, polio and other infectious diseases.

Ten days of heavy fighting until Monday – including air strikes and artillery barrages – have killed hundreds of people, many of them civilians, and left some neighbourhoods of greater Khartoum in ruins.

Much of the city of five million had seen a reduction in fighting, witnesses said, since foreign governments have scrambled road convoys, aircraft and ships to get their nationals out since the weekend.

Britain, which has thousands of citizens in Sudan, announced “a large-scale evacuation” from yesterday, with Prime Minister Rishi Sunak saying “priority will be given to the most vulnerable”.

Germany announced its last evacuation flight was scheduled to take off yesterday evening to Jordan.

Little was known about the security situation in remote areas of the poverty-stricken nation, after Darfur in particular has seen heavy fighting in recent days and the looting of aid depots.