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INVEST IN Bangladesh

Hasina urges Japanese
businesses, guarantees success

UNB, Tokyo

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has urged Japanese businesses to be partners in Bangladesh's development and achievements as the country moves towards a prosperous future.

"Do invest in Bangladesh. We are confident that your investment will bring you a huge success," she said while inaugurating the Bangladesh Investment Summit at the Westin Tokyo yesterday.

She specifically urged them to invest in the Japanese Economic Zone in Araihaazar of Narayanganj.

The numbers of non-resident Bangladeshis and people of Bangladesh origin living in Japan are gradually increasing, and they remit significant amounts back home, she said.

"I also urge them to develop more entrepreneurship, engage in business initiatives and joint ventures with their Japanese friends."

Nishimura Yasutoshi, minister of economy, trade and industry of Japan; Ishiguro Norihiko, chairman of



"With our pragmatic policies and vision, Bangladesh is guaranteed to emerge as a regional hub for investment, industrialisation and exports to diverse destinations in the region and beyond."

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina

Japan External Trade Organization; and Ken Kobayashi, chairman of Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, also spoke at the programme.

Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission and Bangladesh Investment Development Authority jointly organised the summit titled "Trade and Investment Opportunities between Bangladesh and Japan".

Since Bangladesh is going to graduate from LDC status by 2026, the country is working with Japan to make the Economic Partnership Agreement possible, so that bilateral trade and investment can expand, she said.

Thanks to Bangladesh's ever-expanding economy, opportunities have increased considerably in sectors like the ICT, electronics, infrastructure, leather, textile, hospitality and tourism, heavy industry, chemical and fertiliser, and small and medium-sized enterprises.

The government is building 100 economic zones and hi-tech and software parks that will be opened for foreign investment, she said.

"All required agencies and framework to facilitate your businesses have been set up."

During her successive terms in the government, people's socio-economic condition has improved as per the government's Vision 2021 and Vision 2041.

"Bangladesh, as a country, is now cited as a role model for development and sets examples in many fields ranging from poverty reduction, empowerment of women, digitalisation, food production, and in addressing climate change challenges.

"We are determined in our journey towards a modern, developed and knowledge-based 'Smart Bangladesh' by 2041."

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her sister Sheikh Rehana among the recipients of Friends of Liberation War Honour at the Akasaka Palace Guest House in Tokyo yesterday.

PHOTO: PTI

Dhaka, Tokyo take ties beyond economy

PORIMOL PALMA

The Japan-Bangladesh relationship has gained a new dimension, going beyond economy to regional and global spheres, as premiers of the two countries met in Tokyo and signed a joint declaration on Wednesday.

Following an over-three-hour meeting, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Japanese counterpart Kishida Fumio announced that the relationship has been elevated to "strategic partnership" from the "comprehensive partnership", which was declared during Hasina's visit to Japan in 2014.

The strategic partnership is a framework for the ties for the next 50 years, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen said in a briefing in Tokyo. Former foreign secretary Shahidul Haque said, "So far, our relationship was mostly economic. However, now it is beyond that." The relationship now is "all encompassing -- it is economic, defence and security, and a regional approach is there", he said.

Momen termed the outcome a milestone and said it can be a game changer for Bangladesh and the region, as Japan is eager to turn Bangladesh into a regional industrial hub by making investments, supporting policy and technological reforms, and improving transport centring the Matarbari Deep Sea Port.

Over the last 50 years, Japan became Bangladesh's single

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



Rooppur power plant runs into further snag

Fresh US sanctions heighten uncertainty

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

A fresh bout of uncertainty has emerged surrounding the completion of the Rooppur nuclear power plant after its engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) contractor was included in the latest round of sanctions by the US to squeeze Russia for its war in Ukraine.

The sanctions' targets include JSC Nauchno-Issledovatel'skiy i Konstruktor'skiy Institut Montazhnoy Tekhnologii Atomstroy (NIKIMT), which was awarded the EPC contract for Bangladesh's first nuclear power plant in 2015.

NIKIMT is a subsidiary of Russian state-owned nuclear power conglomerate Rosatom, which is building the \$12.65 billion nuclear power plant in Iswardi, Pabna.

In a diplomatic note, the US embassy in Dhaka informed the ministry of foreign affairs of the sanctions ahead of going public on April 12.

"One entity included in this tranche of designations, NIKIMT Atomstroy JSC (a subsidiary of the State Atomic Energy Corporation Rosatom), has transacted with Bangladesh in the past. We look forward to continuing our discussion regarding ongoing and future transactions to support the Rooppur nuclear power plant," the diplomatic note said.

The sanctions mean transactions with NIKIMT would run afoul of the US, Bangladesh's single-largest export destination.

Contacted, the US embassy declined to disclose

the content of the diplomatic note.

"Nonetheless, Russia's brutal, unprovoked invasion of Ukraine is unacceptable. Many countries, including the US, are taking action to deter President Putin from continuing his war in Ukraine and have announced strong sanctions and export controls, presenting a united front against this aggression," Sean J McIntosh, US Embassy Counsellor for Public Affairs, told The Daily Star.

One entity included in the latest batch of US sanctions is Rosatom subsidiary NIKIMT Atomstroy JSC, which is the engineering, procurement and construction contractor of Rooppur nuclear power plant.

Already, Bangladesh has run into difficulty servicing a \$500 million loan taken in 2013 from Russia for the Rooppur project's primary work following Western sanctions on Russian banks.

While a preliminary agreement was struck to service the stalled payments in Chinese currency, that modality is unlikely to progress after the latest sanctions.

But the stuck payments pose another problem

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

Nor'wester lashes parts of country

Temperature drops

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 20 districts that had been enduring a mild to moderate heatwave over the last few days got thundershowers yesterday evening.

Dhaka witnessed a nor'wester with wind speed of up to 74kmph in the evening. The shower gave some relief to the city dwellers.

The highest temperature yesterday was recorded in Bandarban, 38.4 degrees Celsius. The highest in Dhaka was 37.3 degrees Celsius.

Temperatures are expected to stay below the severe heatwave level for the next few days, said Shaheenul Islam, meteorologist of the BMD.

Temperatures between 36 and 38 degrees are considered mild heatwaves, 38 to 40 moderate, and 40 to 42 severe heatwaves and 42 and above heavy severe.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



RAINS OF RELIEF ... After a rather sunny and hot afternoon, a sudden shower in the evening offered some relief to residents of the capital yesterday. The photo was taken on Dhaka University premises.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

GAZIPUR CITY POLLS

It might now be AL vs AL

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Politics in Gazipur city may heat up as suspended city mayor Zahangir Alam and his mother have submitted nomination papers to run for mayor as independents in the May 25 polls.

Zahangir's supporters submitted his nomination form to the returning officer in his presence around 3:30pm yesterday, about half an hour after the former mayor filed his mother's nomination paper.

Awami League candidate Azmat Ullah Khan, president of Gazipur city AL, also submitted his nomination form yesterday, the last day for filing nomination papers.

"I have submitted my nomination form as a citizen following the electoral laws. I know I may come under attack... Since my mother has submitted nomination papers, I'm willing to sacrifice my life for my mother. I will try for my mother till the end.

"I had to bear the burden of a lie for 18 months. I want to get rid of it," Zahangir told reporters after filing his mother's nomination form.

If the candidatures of the mother and son are not withdrawn by May 8, the last day for withdrawing candidatures, and not cancelled by polls officials during scrutiny, the main battle of ballots will be between Azmat and Zahangir as the opposition BNP is boycotting the election, said local AL leaders.

Local leaders and activists of the ruling party have virtually become divided in two centering the polls to Gazipur City Corporation.

A group of Gazipur AL leaders is angry with Azmat and

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

Dhaka, Tokyo to enhance defence co-op

BSS, Tokyo

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Japanese counterpart Kishida Fumio have welcomed the commencement of the negotiations on the agreement concerning the transfer of defense equipment and technology.

The two premiers decided to elevate the bilateral relationship to a “strategic partnership” as a guiding principle to lead the two countries’ journey into the next 50 years and beyond, according to a joint statement issued in Tokyo yesterday.

They expressed determination to enhance cooperation, specifically cooperation for peace and stability in the region and beyond, and expansion of cultural cooperation and people-to-people exchanges.

Hasina is now on an official visit to Japan at the invitation of the Japanese PM.

The two leaders welcomed recent frequent port calls at Chattogram by vessels of the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) and the high-level mutual visits of the JMSDF and Bangladesh Armed Forces.

They agreed to continue promoting security cooperation such as mutual visits by vessels and aircraft, unit-to-unit exchange, training programmes and goodwill exercises.

Hasina and Kishida have decided to consider opening Defense Wing in Tokyo and National Security Wing in Dhaka in their respective embassies in the near future.

They also agreed to enhance dialogue among the respective diplomatic and defense authorities to identify possible ways to strengthen security cooperation.

Kishida explained Japan’s efforts for fundamentally reinforcing its defence capabilities and strengthening diplomatic efforts.

Hasina talked about Bangladesh’s plan and initiative for modernising its armed forces under the Forces Goal 2030.

Both the PMs acknowledged the efforts by the two countries to contribute to their respective regional security.

The Bangladesh premier acknowledged the establishment of the Official Security Assistance by Japan, a new cooperation framework for the benefit of armed forces and other related organisations of like-minded countries for deepening security cooperation. She looked forward to future cooperation under this framework.

The two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to realising a free and open Indo-Pacific based on the rule of law, where the rights, freedom and sovereignty of all countries, regardless of size or power, would be protected by international law, rules and norms.

Invest in Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 1

Bangladesh is a country of 170 million people and it has a growing market.

“With our pragmatic policies and vision, Bangladesh is guaranteed to emerge as a regional hub for investment, industrialisation and exports to diverse destinations in the region and beyond.”

Returns on investment have been consistently high, she said. “Besides, business friendly fiscal and non-fiscal policies and incentives, stable democracy, prudent governance and leadership guarantee your investment will return good value.”

During the Covid-19 pandemic that severely impacted trade and investment, Bangladesh was able to tackle the crisis through effective measures and interventions.

“Our economy has shown strong resilience, maintained growth, and is still sustaining the pressure from the volatile world financial situation and supply side constraints.”

Bangladesh maintained its growth and achieved 7.1 percent GDP growth in 2021-2022 fiscal.

“Despite the Ukraine war, we are projecting a 6.5 percent growth rate in the current fiscal year.”

At the event, 11 memorandums of understanding between companies from Bangladesh and Japan were signed in the presence of the prime minister.

Nor’wester

FROM PAGE 1

“There is no chance of heavy rain; some parts of the country will have light to moderate rain in the next few days,” he said.

He went on to say that there is a possibility of heavy rain across the country in the first week of June.

The country witnessed severe heatwaves for several weeks before Eid.

The capital on April 16 recorded its highest temperature in decades with the mercury soaring to 40.6 degrees Celsius.

MY DHAKA



The Dhaka we know today is a rapidly pacing monstrous city with a dazzling skyline and busy city dwellers pulsating through its streets. Counterintuitively, confined within the same borders of Dhaka is another part of the city that is quieter, where life is laidback, and where every alley has historical stories to tell.

The Dhakaiya pride

FARIHA AMBER

The tales of old Dhaka are as interesting as its people – it is them who make these up after all, the Dhakaiyas. But how much do we know these Dhakaiyas? Aimlessly walking down the lanes dressed in a silk Punjabi, paired with a gold chain while joyfully chewing on some good old paan – is that all there is to being Dhakaiya?

Being a Dhakaiya myself, I honestly cannot put the blame on the non-Dhakaiya populace for picturing Dhakaiyas to be as such. The image of Dhakaiya people has been portrayed in such a manner via drama and movies that this distinguished picture now acts as a direct portraiture of the typical Dhakaiya.

But there is more to being a Dhakaiya than just having lachhi and kachhi, chewing on paan, and living in a house with an “uthaan”. And just as these are perceived as characteristic Dhakaiya traits, so is the matter of Dhakaiya pride.

Most Dhakaiyas take pride in the fact of just being born into a Dhakaiya family, and view it as a privilege of some sort, to the extent of boasting about being the original tenants of Dhaka city,

city, many classify themselves as the elite and the other party as peasants. I personally know people who use the term “Bangal” as a derogatory remark, as if it is embarrassing to be anything but a Dhakaiya.

Dhakaiyas also take pride in the rich heritage of food, and rightfully so. But using this acquired richness as a form of condescension is where the line should be drawn. Some Dhakaiyas also have their rendition of “maache bhaate Bangali” in the form of “polao kormay Dhakaiya”!

But it is not only Dhakaiyas who perceive themselves as another being, many non-Dhakaiyas look down on people living in old town, making fun of their dialect being too loud, dressing sense being too flashy, and behaviour being very unsmart – none of which should be perceived with a negative connotation.

But it is this mix of people that makes up the beautiful city we live in, whether through lineage or through moving in. And we Dhakaiyas love hosting, and truly believe in the statement “the more, the merrier”. Apart from the Dhakaiya pride taking over some tenants, Dhakaiyas love to welcome dwellers into the place we all call home.

asking the leavers during Eid to never return, and flaunting generational wealth. While it is good to be happy about one’s lineage, maintaining a certain threshold is necessary before arrogance sweeps in.

And sadly, for many Dhakaiyas, such is the case.

Despite being part of the same

Dhaka, Tokyo take ties beyond economy

FROM PAGE 1

largest bilateral donor, providing about \$25 billion. Presently, it is implementing some major infrastructure projects like Matarbari port, third terminal of Dhaka airport, Araihaaz Special Economic Zone and metro rail.

In the joint statement, the two PMs affirmed that the development of Bangladesh through regional connectivity would contribute to the overall stability of the Indo-Pacific region.

The two countries would continue to develop economic infrastructure, enhance regional connectivity as a new concept of Industrial Value Chain connecting the Bay of Bengal and neighbouring regions was launched.

Shahidul Haque said this is a trilateral concept involving Bangladesh, India and Japan. This can eventually connect Nepal and Bhutan, beyond northeast of India. Thus, the very goal of Bangladesh to connect the region would be achieved.

Prof Ali Ashraf of Dhaka University international relations department said Bangladesh has the “Look East Policy”, which is aimed at connecting

South, Southeast and East Asia. Connectivity centring Matarbari can be a leap forward towards this end if Japan’s plan is properly implemented.

He also said addressing Rohingya issue would be a must for the regional actors, especially Japan, India and China, to achieve the goal.

According to Shahidul Haque, “defence and security” is one component of “Strategic Partnership” but it also means cooperation in protecting the strategic interests of both the countries.

During the meet, the two prime ministers decided to set up defence wings in Dhaka and Tokyo, enhance diplomatic and defence dialogues, exchange training and cooperation between the defence forces, transfer defence equipment and technology. They also acknowledged the contribution of both countries in regional security.

Hasina stressed the need for establishment of Official Security Assistance by Japan, a new cooperation framework for the benefit of armed forces and other related like-minded countries for deepening security cooperation.

It might now be AL vs AL

FROM PAGE 1

Ataullah Mandal, general secretary of Gazipur city AL, over issuance of show-cause notices to more than 200 party leaders and activists, who are close to Zahangir, said ruling party leaders.

The notices asked the AL leaders and activists to explain why organisational actions should not be taken against them for anti-disciplinary activities.

Among the 200 are 19 leaders of Gazipur city AL.

Besides, 61 out of 76 Gazipur city councillors wrote to the LGRD ministry seeking reinstatement of Zahangir as mayor.

It would be difficult for the ruling party to make all those aggrieved leaders work for the party nominee, at least three Gazipur AL leaders told The Daily Star wishing anonymity.

Zahnagir, who was elected mayor in 2018 on AL ticket, was expelled from the party on November 19, 2021, over making derogatory remarks about Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and expressing doubts about the number of martyrs in the Liberation War.

Seven days after his expulsion, the government suspended him as mayor. The ruling party, however, granted him amnesty on January 21

this year.

Azmat, a former mayor of Tongi municipality, enjoys support from senior district AL leaders, but Zahangir has strong control over the party grassroots and junior leaders, according to sources in the party.

“Zahangir has his own vote bank. He will have support from Hefajat-e-Islam, and a section of BNP supporters as the party have decided to boycott the polls,” said an organising secretary of Gazipur city AL.

Speaking to reporters after submitting his nomination paper, Azmat yesterday said, “I read in

Ukraine and Indo-Pacific region.

In their views, the securities of Europe and of the Indo-Pacific are inseparable and conflict in any region has ramifications in the Indo-Pacific.

A day before the PM’s visit to Japan, Bangladesh launched Indo-Pacific Outlook. Its foundation is Bangladesh’s aspiration to become a developed country through trade and commerce.

Dhaka also spoke of a free, open, inclusive and secure Indo-Pacific – a stance that has much commonality with that of Japan’s policy on the Indo-Pacific. PM Hasina shared the same with her counterpart in Tokyo.

Shahidul Haque said Bangladesh can have better relations with Japan’s other allies, including the US and India, by sharing the much similar vision on the Indo-Pacific region, which is a focus of the global powers.

Prof Lailufar Yasmin of DU international relations department said Bangladesh’s economic growth and location that connects South and Southeast Asia is very well recognised by the global powers now.

“We must best utilise it.”

newspapers that he [Zahangir] and his mother bought nomination forms. He sought Awami League’s nomination...if he has confidence in the Awami League leadership, he will accept the party’s decision and conduct his activities accordingly.”

Shahnoor Islam Rony, son of local BNP leader Nurul Islam Sarker, submitted his nomination paper as an independent yesterday. Locals said his candidacy will not be a major factor in the polls results as he is not locally well-known.

As many as 13 nomination forms were bought for the post of mayor and 12 of those were submitted.

Police arrest fugitive wanted in 11 cases

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Lalmonirhat police yesterday arrested a convicted criminal wanted in 11 cases who had been on the run for the past four years.

Prithis Kumar Barman, of Rajpur in Sadar upazila, was arrested from a house in Nilphamari Sadar early morning.

This was a special operation by Lalmonirhat Sadar Police Station with the help of Nilphamari District Police.

Lalmonirhat Sadar Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC) Ershadul Alam said, “Prithis is accused in 11 cases of various crimes including drugs and theft. He was convicted in 5 cases. There are warrants against him in the remaining 6 cases.”

The location of the fugitive was determined with tracking technology, OC said.

2 school teachers hurt as ceiling plaster falls on them

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Parts of the ceiling including an overhead fan collapsed at a school classroom during an ongoing class at the dilapidated building of West Jalisha Government Primary School in Patuakhali’s Dumki upazila yesterday.

Two assistant teachers – Kabita Rani and Dalil Uddin received injuries as a result. However, the 20 children also present in class around 11:30am remained unhurt.

The injured were given treatment at Dumki Upazila Health Complex.

The school was established in 1975 as a tin shed structure and a single-storey concrete building was constructed in 1994.

The plaster of its ceiling often fell off although the school was repaired with money allocated from the emergency fund in 2022.

Dumki Upazila Nirbahi Officer Md Al Imran said, “I’ve asked the primary education officer to visit the scene and make arrangements for alternative classrooms.”

70-yr-old sent to jail for raping child

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A Kishoreganj court yesterday sent a 70-year-old man accused in a case filed over raping an eight-year-old girl.

Abdul Quddus, of Chowdhuryhati village in Sadar upazila, was earlier in the day arrested in the district’s Karinganj upazila.

The girl’s father lodged a case against Quddus with Kishoreganj Sadar Model Police Station on Wednesday, said Officer-in-Charge Md Daud.

Quoting the case statement, the OC said Quddus lured the child to a deserted place and raped her on Monday noon.

Hearing her screams, neighbours rushed in and rescued the child but Quddus managed to flee the scene.

The girl received medical attention at Kishoreganj General Hospital.

Rooppur power

FROM PAGE 1

for Bangladesh: risks of being classed as a defaulter of foreign loan.

Subsequently, the Economic Relations Division, the government wing responsible for handling foreign loans, has decided to open an escrow account with the Bangladesh Bank, officials informed the visiting staff mission of the International Monetary Fund yesterday.

Payments for Rooppur would be deposited in the escrow account, which is an account where funds are held in trust while two or more parties complete a transaction.

Along with NIKIMT, the US Treasury and State departments have imposed sanctions on four entities and one individual that are part of Rosatom.

“We are imposing these designations to constrain Rosatom, given that it uses energy exports, including in the nuclear sector, to exert political and economic pressure on its customers globally,” said the US state department when announcing the sanctions on April 12.

The sanctions come after documents showed that Rosatom has been supplying the Russian arms industry with components, technology and raw materials for missile fuel, aiding Moscow’s continuing onslaught on Ukraine, reported The Washington Post in January.

Russia through Rosatom dominates the global nuclear supply chain. Russia has the world’s largest uranium enrichment capabilities, accounting for almost half the global capacity.

Rosatom though dismissed any fears of the commissioning of the Rooppur nuclear power plant getting delayed beyond the scheduled 2025 for the sanctions.

“Sanctions against individual enterprises within the framework of Rosatom will not affect the implementation of the Rooppur nuclear power plant project in Bangladesh. Together with the government of Bangladesh, we continue to actively prepare for the key event: the delivery of fuel to unit 1 of the Rooppur NPP,” the firm told The Daily Star.

President pays tribute to martyred members of armed forces

UNB, Dhaka

President Mohammed Shahabuddin yesterday paid tributes to the martyred members of the Bangladesh Armed Forces at the Shikha Anirban (flame eternal) at Dhaka Cantonment.

The president paid the homage by placing a wreath at the Shikha Anirban at 11:20am.

After laying the wreath, he stood in solemn silence for some time as a mark of profound respect to the memories of the armed forces martyrs, who made supreme sacrifices during the Liberation War.

A smartly-turned out contingent drawn from Bangladesh Army, Navy and Air Force presented a guard of honour at that time, while the bugle played the last post. Later, President Shahabuddin signed the visitors' book there.



President Mohammed Shahabuddin pays tributes to the martyred members of the Bangladesh Armed Forces at the Shikha Anirban (flame eternal) at Dhaka Cantonment yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

DSA case against ex-Ducus VP Nur dismissed

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka tribunal yesterday dismissed the case filed against former Ducus vice president Nurul Haque Nur over "hurting religious sentiments of Awami League activists and its supporters and defaming the party with his derogatory comments".

The tribunal also discharged Nur from the charges, said Special Public Prosecutor Nazrul Islam Shamim. Judge AM Zulfiker Hayat passed the order.

The judge said the complainant is neither a victim of the circumstances nor an activist of Awami League. On April 18 of 2021, singer Eleyas Hossain filed the case with Paltan Police Station against Nur for his comments during a Facebook live session on April 14 the same year.

WITHDRAW CASE AGAINST JOURNO JAHANGIR

Manabadhikar Shongskriti Foundation yesterday protested the incident

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PRAYER TIMING		APRIL 28			
Fazr	Juma	Asr	Maghrib	Esha	
AZAN 4:20	12:30	4:45	6:29	8:00	
JAMAAT 4:55	1:15	5:00	6:34	8:30	
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION					

8.8 lakh received free legal aid in 14yrs

Says law ministry

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has provided legal aid to 8,79,929 poor and helpless people and given legal advice to 3,53,656 such individuals in the last 14 years free of cost.

The legal assistance was given since 2009 till March this year through the National Legal Aid and Services Organisation (NLASO) under the law ministry in line with the National Legal Aid Act, 2000.

Moreover, the NLASO has collected Tk 134.9 crore as compensation through disposing of 1,72,978 legal aid related cases and gave the money to the victims in this period (14 years), a law ministry press release said yesterday as the National Legal Aid Day-2023 will be observed today.

The NLASO has provided legal aid to 3,44,417 disadvantaged people through 64 district legal aid offices, to 23,052 such individuals through the Supreme Court Legal Aid Committee, to 1,53,413 ones through the national helpline number (16430).

The NLASO has provided legal aid to 3,44,417 disadvantaged people through 64 district legal aid offices, to 23,052 such individuals through the Supreme Court Legal Aid Committee, to 1,53,413 ones through the national helpline number (16430) and to 20,155 labourers through Dhaka and Chattogram Labour Legal Aid Cells during the same period.

Contacted, Law Minister Anisul Huq told The Daily Star that he has a plan to extend the functions of NLASO.

A necessary but expensive expansion

11.5km Ctg Port Access Road to be expanded at a cost of Tk 3,300cr

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The government is going to expand the Chattogram Port Access Road up to six lanes to improve connectivity between the country's largest seaport, the Dhaka-Chattogram Highway and the yet-to-open Bangabandhu Tunnel.

Roads and Highways Department (RHD) has already submitted a project proposal to turn the 11.5km two-lane road into a four-to-six-lane highway.

The amount needed for the project is Tk 3,300 crore. There will be service lanes on both sides, according to the plan.

This implies that the authorities have to spend Tk 286.95 crore for expanding per km of the road, which is more than the per km cost of the Dhaka-Mawa-Bhanga Expressway. This is mainly due to the high land prices in the area, said officials concerned.

The 55km road, the first expressway in the country, was built at a cost of Tk 11,003 crore (around 200 crore per km), making it the most expensive road in terms of length.

Asian Development Bank is expected to provide a loan for the project – formally known as SASEC Chattogram Port Access Road Improvement Project. The project proposal is now pending with the Planning Commission for the pre-approval process.

"We expect to start physical works on the road in the last

The authorities have to spend Tk 286.95 crore for expanding per km of the road, which is more than the per km cost of the Dhaka-Mawa-Bhanga Expressway. This is mainly due to the high land prices in the area.

quarter of next year. The deadline for the project is June 2028," Mohammad Sabbir Hasan Khan, the focal point of the project, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Constructed in 2007, the existing access road is one of few roads in the country where users have to pay a toll for usage. Until

Chattogram Port. The Dhaka-Chattogram Highway is considered the economic lifeline of the country.

However, the two-lane port access road is failing to handle the huge onrush of vehicles, said Sabbir Hasan. "So we decided to expand the highway," he added.

AT A GLANCE

- Govt to expand Port Access Road up to 6 lanes
- RHD already submitted project proposal
- Amount needed for project Tk 3,300cr
- ADB supposed to provide Tk 1,268.96cr

The width is a reason for the hefty cost. But the main reason is the land acquisition cost. This is a rare project when the land acquisition cost is higher than civil (construction) costs.

Sabbir Hasan Khan
Focal point of project

the construction of the road, all vehicles from and to the port had to use the road which goes through port city.

More than 90 percent of Bangladesh's \$130 billion foreign trade goes through the

Moreover, the vehicles to and from the Bangabandhu Tunnel will also use the 7.5km portion of the road. The underwater tunnel in Karnaphuli River is expected to open in September this year.

The project will contribute

to strengthening domestic and international trade, enhance transport facilities and provide easier access in and out of the Chattogram Port, reads an ADB document on the project.

Asked about the hefty construction cost, Sabbir said the road is not a usual one.

They plan to expand the 7.5km road from the city end to six lanes, with a 7.3-metre service land on one side. Meanwhile, the expansion of the 5km road from the port end to four lanes will see another 7.3-metre service lanes on both sides, he said.

No highway in the country has a service lane with a width of more than 5.5m. "The width is a reason for the hefty cost. But the main reason is the land acquisition cost. This is a rare project when the land acquisition cost is higher than civil (construction) costs," said Sabbir.

According to RHD sources, around Tk 1,504 crore has to be spend for acquiring 52 acres of land there.

"We expect the project to be approved by September this year and a loan contract will be signed with ADB afterwards. We hope to start civil works in the last quarter of the next year after completing the tendering process," said Sabbir.

Out of the total project cost of Tk 3,300.87cr, ADB is supposed to provide Tk 1,268.96cr. The government will bear the rest of the cost.

We never forget our friends

Hasina confers 'Friends of Liberation War Honour' to four Japanese nationals

AGENCIES

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday paid homage to the Japanese who raised voice during the Liberation War of Bangladesh and hoped the new generation would carry forward the "lasting friendship and enviable partnership" between the two countries in the years to come.

The premier was addressing a ceremony to confer "Friends of Liberation War Honour" to four Japanese nationals at Akasaka Palace Guest House, Tokyo.

"I thank all of you for joining us on this humble occasion where we not only honour our friends but also celebrate the bonds of amity with Japan," she said.

The premier said the Japanese people stood beside Bangladesh, adding that Bangladesh had a modest list of eight honourees whom the country has honoured with "Friends of Liberation War Honour" on March 27, 2012 and October 1, 2013.

"This evening we are in Tokyo to honour four more great friends of Bangladesh who stood by us, organised the moral and material support and ensured assistance. They rose to protest atrocities and sent humanitarian reliefs, medical facilities to our helpless people," she said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



We will carry on our fight against communal forces

Says Quader

BSS, Dhaka

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said fight against communal forces will continue aiming to build Smart Bangladesh.

Quader said this while talking to reporters after paying homage, on behalf of the AL, to the then Chief Minister of undivided Bengal Sher-e-Bangla AK Fazlul Huq on the occasion of his 61st death anniversary.

"Our goal is to build Smart Bangladesh by fighting those (communal forces)...," he added.

About the remarks of BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul over the role of new president in resolving ongoing political crisis, he said the president believes in the spirit of democracy and patriotism. "He (president) is a follower of Bangabandhu's ideology...," he said.

Vote for boat to continue development

Says law minister

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

Law Minister Anisul Huq has sought vote for the ruling party's symbol -- "boat" in the upcoming general election for maintaining peace and development in the country.

He appealed to the people while addressing as the chief guest at a function organised on the occasion of the centenary celebration of Kaitola Yajneswar High School in Brahmanbaria's Nabinagar upazila yesterday.

"Bangladesh now holds a prestigious position in the global arena, thanks to the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina...," he said.

Army chief meets Indian counterpart

Discusses defence cooperation

UNB, Dhaka

Chief of Bangladesh Army General SM Shafiuddin Ahmed yesterday commenced his three-day India visit by paying tributes to the fallen heroes of the Indian Armed Forces by laying a wreath at the National War Memorial in Delhi.

The visiting general was accorded a guard of honour at the South Block Lawns after which he called on General Manoj Pande, the chief of the Indian army staff.

They discussed various issues pertaining to enhancing and strengthening interoperability, training, anti-terrorism collaboration, and overall bilateral cooperation as part of the comprehensive strategic partnership between the two nations.

General SM Shafiuddin

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



PHOTO: COLLECTED

Chief of Bangladesh Army General SM Shafiuddin Ahmed being accorded a guard of honour at the South Block Lawns in Delhi yesterday.

Kamal Uddin
no more

STAR REPORT

Ezzy Group Chairman Kamal Uddin Ahmed, a social worker and entrepreneur, passed away on April 26, at a hospital in Karbala, Iraq. He was 83, said a press release.

He left behind his wife, two sons, a daughter, and numerous well-wishers.

He was born in Chattogram. His eldest son, Zulfiqar Ali, is the current managing director of Ezzy Group.

Kamal Uddin Ahmed was buried at the Karbala cemetery.



Army chief meets

FROM PAGE 3
Ahmed later called on General Anil Chauhan, chief of defence staff; Admiral R Hari Kumar, chief of naval staff; Air Marshal AP Singh, vice chief of air staff; defence secretary and the foreign secretary.

He was also briefed on the Indian indigenous defence equipment manufacturing eco-system by the Department of Defence Production (DDP) and the Army Design Bureau, according to the Press Information Bureau of India.

An "Implementing Arrangement" for UN Peacekeeping Operations and Training Cooperation between the Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping (CUNPK)

in India and Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operations Training (BIPSOT) was signed during the visit.

DSA case

FROM PAGE 3
On April 12, police filed the case against the DSA with Hatirjheel Police Station against Jahangir and several others on charge of anti-state activities following their group discussions in Facebook messenger.

We never forget our friends

FROM PAGE 3
"They (Japanese) faced great challenges, but did not fall back. Their act of selflessness rekindled our spirit in the face of threats. Most unforgettable was the charitable gesture of Japanese school children who saved and donated their Tiffin money to help our people," she recalled.

"Your voice added strength to our voice and was magnified to the global community. You rallied with our cause and together raised a human citadel against a ruthless force. In the land of the rising sun, we see the image of a nation with dignity and humanity," she said.

"We never forget our friends," she added.

Hasina said for her it was an honor to carry on her father's legacy and visit Japan in 1997, 2010, 2014, 2016 and 2019 to further strengthen the relations.

The premier said Bangladesh and Japan share the same noble ideas and principles of equality, democracy and democratic practice, inclusive development, social justice and rule of law.

Prime Minister's younger sister Sheikh Rehana was present on dais while Lt Col (Retd) Quazi Sazzad Ali moderated the event.

Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Kalam recited the citation in honour of the four Japanese. They are President Emeritus of Japan Red Cross Society Tadateru

Konoe, Prof Gyalpo Pema, political leader Hideo Takano (posthumous) and photo journalist Taizo Ichinose (posthumous).

Prof Gyalpo expressed his feelings in the event on behalf of the recipients.

JAPAN TO BUILD CHILDREN'S LIBRARY IN BANGLADESH

Tadao Ando Architect and Associates, established by world renowned architect Tadao Ando, will build a children's library in Dhaka.

This was disclosed when a delegation led by Tadao called on Hasina at

Akasaka Palace.

PM's Speechwriter M Nazrul Islam briefed the journalists after the meeting.

Prior to the call on, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the Bangladesh National Museum (BNM) and the Tadao Ando Architect Associates was signed by BNM Director General Md Kamruzzaman and Tadao Ando in the presence of the prime minister.

The MoU was signed to build a children's library in Bangladesh on Japanese donation.

PM VISITS SCIENCE, INNOVATION MUSEUM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday visited the National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation, known as "Miraikan", at Amoi, Koto-ku in Tokyo, reports UNB.

On her arrival at 'Miraikan', Hasina was warmly received by the authorities concerned. She was apprised of how humankind can survive in a sustainable way in environment friendly atmosphere, said Nazrul Islam.

We Mourn



All the Members of the Executive Board and General Body and all the staff of the Bangladesh Center for Communication Programs (BCCP) deeply mourn the sad demise of Dr. A. Majeed Khan, the President of the Executive Board of BCCP who passed away on April 26, 2023 at the Evercare Hospital due to old age complications. As a visionary leader, Dr. Khan dedicated his life to the cause of social development, particularly to expand education among the mass people. Born on July 01, 1929 at Faridpur, Dr. Khan was educated in Kolkata, London and Minnesota, USA. Passing through a bright and colorful life, he held several important positions and made significant contributions both at home and abroad. He was a cabinet minister for Education and Planning.

Dr. Khan served as an Ambassador of Bangladesh to France, Spain and Morocco. He was a Senior Director to UNDP; a member of the Executive Board and Permanent Representative to UNESCO. Expanding education and pioneering the establishment of private university in Bangladesh, he founded the first-ever private university Independent University Bangladesh (IUB) and was honored to be the President Emeritus and Founder President of IUB and thereafter, he also established the first-ever IT based university called University of Information Technology and Sciences (UITS). Dr. Khan's exemplary contributions to social development was visible through his significant role in establishing the Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development in Cumilla. He was the former Chairperson of the Committee of Action for Research, Extension and Services (CARES).

His Namaz-E-Janaza will be held at the Baridhara Jame Mosque & Islamic Center after the Juma Prayers on Friday, April 28, 2023. We pray for his departed soul to rest in eternal peace. Our deepest, most heartfelt condolences and sincerest sympathy go to the bereaved family.

Majeed Khan

FROM PAGE 5
He founded Independent University, Bangladesh and was honoured as the president emeritus and founder president of IUB. He also established University of Information Technology and Sciences.

Khan founded the Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development in Cumilla. He was the founder chairperson of the Committee of Action for Research, Extension and Services.

His namaz e-janaza will be held at the Baridhara Jame Mosque and Islamic Center after the Juma prayers today.

FLAT RENT

Fully furnished 2650sqft. Apartment at Banani, Living Room, 3 Bedroom & bath, 3 Balconies, Equipped kitchen, Dining, Servant room & bath, Lift, Generator & Parking. Foreigners Preferred. Contact: 01978-096622

INVITATION FOR TENDER

Pubali Bank Limited, the largest online commercial Bank in Bangladesh, is hereby inviting sealed Tenders from the eligible Tenderers who can participate in the following Tender as defined in the tender documents of the under mentioned work as per Terms and Conditions stated below:

1. **Purchasing 32 (Thirty Two) Pcs maintenance free battery** (120A, 12V) of 80KVA AROS online UPS for Data Center (10th Floor), Head Office, Dhaka.

Please visit <https://www.pubalibangla.com/tender.asp> for more details. Interested Parties may purchase Tender documents by **16 May 2023** duly fulfilling all other requirements.

(Md. Helal Uddin)
GM & Division Head

পূবালী ব্যাংক লিমিটেড
PUBALI BANK LIMITED
ICT OPERATION DIVISION
Head office, 26 Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka.

ALIF INDUSTRIES LIMITED
COMPOSITE KNITTING DYEING & GARMENTS
Bilquis Tower (9th Floor), House # 06, Road # 46, Gulshan-2, Dhaka-1212.
Tel : +88-02-58815226, 58815227, 58815229, 58815230, 9857660
Fax : +88-02-58815228, E-mail: alifindustries95@gmail.com

Price Sensitive Information

This is for kind information of all concerned that the Board of Directors of Alif Industries Limited in its Board Meeting held on April 27, 2023 at 3:00 PM at registered office has approved the Un-audited Financial Statements of Third Quarter (Q3) period ended March 31, 2023. The highlight of the said Financial Statements of Third Quarter (Q3) are as follows:

Particular	July 01, 2022 to March 31, 2023 (9 Month)	July 01, 2021 to March 31, 2022 (9 Month)	January 01, 2023 to March 31, 2023 (3 Month)	January 01, 2022 to March 31, 2022 (3 Month)
Profit after Tax	52,900,472	50,834,997	18,517,322	17,784,146
Earnings Per Share (EPS) TK.	1.20	1.15	0.42	0.40
Net operating cash flow per Share	1.74	0.54	-----	-----

Particular	As on March 31, 2023	As on March 31, 2022
Net Asset Value (NAV)	999,683,849	965,491,528
Net Asset Value (NAV) per Share	22.59	21.82
No of Share used to compute	44,256,169	44,251,669

Dated: April 27, 2023

By the order of the board
Company Secretary (Acting)
Alif Industries Limited

CA BANGLADESH
THE INSTITUTE OF CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS OF BANGLADESH

NOTICE
Inviting Applications for CA Certificate Level Examinations

Next CA Certificate Level Examinations will be held from **Saturday, June 10, 2023** at Dhaka, Chattogram, Rajshahi, Rangpur, Khulna and London Centres. Applications for admission to the examinations can be submitted online visiting the url: <https://exam.icab.org.bd> from **Monday, May 01, 2023** to **Monday, May 15, 2023**.

Examination fees of **CL: Tk.1,500 per subject for 100 marks and Tk.1,200 per subject for 50 marks** may be paid online by using payment gateway available in examination form submitting page. If any candidate likes to pay offline, s/he may pay it in any branch of **Southeast Bank Ltd. (Account No.-0015 111 0000 6409)**, with the prescribed pay slip downloaded from ICAB website.

Course Completed (CC) candidates must pay their annual fees, if not paid earlier, together with the examination fees.

Certificate Level Examinations will be held online on objective type questions including MCQ, scenario-based objectives etc.

If any candidate faces any difficulty in submitting examination application form, s/he is advised to contact through e-mail: examinfo@icab.org.bd.

N.B: Time will not be extended for submission of Exam application forms.

Shubhashish Bose
Chief Executive Officer, ICAB

www.icab.org.bd

PRIME TEXTILE SPINNING MILLS LIMITED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION (UN-AUDITED) AS AT MARCH 31, 2023				
Taka in '000'				
Particulars	Note	As at March 31, 2023	As at March 30, 2022	
ASSETS				
Non-Current Assets :				
Property, Plant and Equipment	02	2,761,030	2,869,988	
RoU Assets -net	03	2,730,131	2,801,164	
Investment in Associates and Others	04	7,015	16,035	
		23,864	52,789	
Current Assets :				
Investment in shares of Listed Companies	05	1,403	1,388	
Inventories	06	450,743	688,285	
Trade and Other Receivables	07	983,072	994,811	
Advances, Deposits & Prepayments	08	718,236	592,088	
Cash and Cash Equivalents	09	31,000	26,865	
TOTAL ASSETS		4,945,484	5,173,425	
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES:				
Share Holders' Equity :				
Share Capital	10	2,623,863	2,851,614	
Share Premium	11	382,000	382,000	
Reserves	12	1,695,241	1,716,003	
Tax Holiday & Investment Reserve		139,884	139,884	
Unrealised Gain/(Loss)		103,016	79,874	
Retained Earnings		(78,278)	151,853	
Non-Current Liabilities:				
Long Term Loan	13	730,506	725,233	
Lease obligation	14	509,800	489,884	
Deferred Tax Liability	15	2,101	9,692	
		218,605	225,657	
Current Liabilities :				
Short Term Loan	16	1,591,115	1,596,578	
Current portion of Long Term Loan	17	1,096,468	1,049,332	
Current portion of lease liability	18	93,391	93,391	
Trade and Other Payable	19	235,492	292,581	
Provisions for tax Liabilities	20	124,690	120,982	
Dividend payable		31,417	30,635	
TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES		4,945,484	5,173,425	
Net Asset value per Share (NAVPS)				
Number of Ordinary Shares (in thousand) used to Compute NAVPS		68.69	74.65	
		38,200	38,200	

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS (UN-AUDITED) FOR THE THIRD QUARTER ENDED MARCH 31, 2023				
Taka in '000'				
Particulars	Note	July 1, 2023 to March 31, 2023	July 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022	
Cash Flows from Operating Activities:				
Collections from Turnover & Others	33	(68,233)	2,103	
Payment for Cost & Expenses		842,096	1,209,762	
Financial Expenses		(796,392)	(1,089,954)	
Income Tax Paid & Deducted at Source		(110,229)	(112,093)	
		(3,708)	(5,612)	
Cash Flows from Investing Activities :		12,173	3,018	
Tangible Fixed Asset Acquired		-	-	
RoU assets Increased/(Decreased)		9,020	-	
Dividend Received & Others		3,138	3,018	
Investment in Share		15	-	
Cash Flows from Financing Activities:				
Inc. ase/(Decrease) in Short Term Borrowing		47,137	(5,688)	
Increase/(Decrease) in Long Term Borrowing		19,916	21,733	
Dividend paid		(6,858)	(6,335)	
Effect of exchange rate charge on cash and cash equivalents		-	16	
Net Increase in Cash and Cash Equivalents		4,135	14,847	
Opening Cash and Cash Equivalents		26,865	39,397	
Closing Cash and Cash Equivalents		31,000	54,244	
Net Operating Cash Flows per Share (NOCFPS)				
Number of Ordinary Shares (in thousand) used to Compute NOCFPS		(1.79)	0.06	
		38,200	38,200	
Note :				
*The accompanying policies and explanatory notes form an integral part of these Financial Statement.				
*The details of the published 3rd Quarter Un-Audited Financial Statements are available in the website of the company.				
The address of the web-side is www.primegroup.com.bd				

PRIME TEXTILE SPINNING MILLS LIMITED STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND COMPREHENSIVE INCOME (UN-AUDITED) FOR THE THIRD QUARTER ENDED MARCH 31, 2023						
Taka in '000'						
Particulars	Notes	July 1, 2023 to March 31, 2023	July 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022	January 1, 2023 to March 31, 2023	January 1, 2022 to March 31, 2022	
Sales Revenue	21	807,231	1,199,241	313,377	353,749	
Less: Cost of Sales	22	878,107	1,014,481	401,076	295,051	
Gross Profit		(70,876)	184,760	(87,699)	58,698	
Less: Operating Expenses :						
Administrative Expenses	23	43,778	52,074	14,815	16,859	
Selling and Distribution Expenses	24	36,984	44,446	12,913	14,582	
Profit/(Loss) from Operations		6,794	7,628	1,902	2,277	
		(114,654)	132,686	(102,514)	41,839	
Less: Financial Expenses						
Profit/(Loss) after Financial Expenses	25	110,229	112,093	37,705	36,481	
Add: Non Operating Income	26	(224,883)	20,593	(140,219)	5,358	
Profit/(Loss) before provision for WPPF		3,138	3,034	2,875	2,952	
Less: Provision for WPPF		(221,745)	23,627	(137,344)	8,310	
Net Profit/(Loss) before Tax		1,125	1,125	396	396	
Less: Provision for Tax :		(221,745)	22,502	(137,344)	7,914	
Current Tax		320	4,159	611	1,124	
Deferred Tax		(3,708)	7,196	1,546	2,123	
		(3,388)	(3,037)	(935)	(999)	
Net Profit/(Loss) after Tax		(222,065)	18,343	(137,955)	6,790	
Add: Other Comprehensive Income:						
Unrealised Gain/(Loss) from Listed securities		15	(157)	(11)	20	
Unrealised Gain/(Loss) on Accounts Receivables		102,173	(16)	(42,461)	2	
		102,188	(141)	(42,472)	18	
Total Comprehensive Income		(119,877)	18,202	(180,427)	6,808	
Base Earning per Share (Per share value Taka 10/-)	27	(5.81)	0.48	(3.61)	0.18	
Number of Shares (in thousand) used to Compute EPS		38,200	38,200	38,200	38,200	

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY (UN-AUDITED) FOR THE THIRD QUARTER ENDED MARCH 31, 2023						
Taka in '000'						
Particulars	Share Capital	Share Premium	Revaluation Surplus	Tax Holiday Reserve	Unrealised Gain (AFS Reserve)	Retained Earnings
1. As at July 1, 2022	382,000	382,000	1,716,003	139,884	79,874	151,853
2. Revaluation Surplus trans. to retained earning	-	-	(24,426)	-	-	24,426
3. Adjustment for Deferred Tax Liability	-	-	3,664	-	-	3,664
4. Profit/(Loss) Surplus after Tax	-	-	-	-	-	(222,065)
5. Adjustment of Dividend	-	-	-	-	-	(7,640)
6. Adjustment for Tax	-	-	-	-	-	-
7. Adjustment of Unrealised Gain/(Loss) for Trade Receivables	-	-	-	-	23,127	23,127
8. Adjustment for Profit/(Loss) on Investment in Associates	-	-	-	-	-	(24,852)
9. Unrealised Gain/(Loss) for Investment in Share	-	-	-	-	15	15
As at March 31, 2023	382,000	382,000	1,695,241	139,884	103,016	(78,278)
Total						2,623,863
Number of Ordinary Shares (in thousand) on 31 March, 2023						
						38,200
Net Asset value (NAVPS) per share on 31 March, 2023						
						68.69

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY (UN-AUDITED)
FOR THE THIRD QUARTER ENDED MARCH 31, 2022

Taka in '000'


Particulars	Share Capital	Share Premium	Revaluation Surplus	Tax Holiday Reserve	Unrealised Gain (AFS Reserve)	Retained Earnings	Total July 1, 2021 in March 31, 2022
1. As at July 1, 2021	382,000	382,000	1,585,248	139,884	973	104,767	2,594,872
2. Revaluation Surplus trans. to retained earning	-	-	(26,217)	-	-	26,217	-
3. Adjustment for Deferred Tax Liability	-	-	3,933	-	-	-	3,933
4. Profit/(Loss) Surplus after Tax	-	-	-	-	-	18,343	18,343
5. Adjustment of Dividend	-	-	-	-	-	(7,640)	(7,640)
6. Adjustment of Unrealised Gain/(Loss)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
7. Unrealised Gain/(Loss)	-	-	-	-	(156)	-	(156)
As at March 31, 2022	382,000	382,000	1,562,964	139,884	817	141,687	2,609,352


Number of Ordinary Shares(in thousands) on 31 March,2022


38,200

Net Asset value (NAVPS) per share on 31 March,2022

68.31


Director


Company Secretary


Chief Financial Officer

AL wins Ctg-8 by-polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Awami League candidate Noman Al Mahmud won the Chattogram-8 by-polls yesterday.

He got 67,205 votes and his nearest rival Bangladesh Islamic Front candidate Shahab Uddin Md Abdus Samad bagged 5,087, said Mohammad Hasanuzzan, the returning officer. He said the voter turnout was 14.55 percent.

BNP boycotted the polls.

The constituency remained vacant after the death of AL lawmaker Moslem Uddin Ahmed on February 5.

2 held over woman's murder in Jhalakathi

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

Police have arrested two people in Jhalakathi on Wednesday night, in a case filed over the murder of a woman.

The identity of the arrestees could not be known immediately. Earlier in the day, police recovered the body of Smrity, 35, daughter of late Matiur Rahman Mollah from a field at Paschim Kamdebpur village in Nalchhity upazila.

According to the family, Smrity was mentally unstable. Mohammad Ataur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Nalchhity Police Station, said they suspect that the woman might have been murdered after being raped. It would be clear after getting the autopsy report, said the OC.

He said the victim's brother filed a case, accusing four named and two-three unnamed persons.

Lightning kills 2

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

Two persons were killed and two others injured by lightning strike in Chapainawabganj yesterday.

The incident happened at Sharatnagar village in Shibganj upazila around noon.

The deceased were Shahin Ali, 20, from Gopalnagar village; and Wasim, 12, son of Harun Ali from Sharatnagar village in Shibganj. The injured were admitted to Shibganj Upazila Health Complex.

Shibganj Police Station Officer-in-Charge Jubear Ahmed said a thunderbolt struck them while they were working at a mango orchard during rain.

13 more hospitalised with dengue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 13 dengue patients were hospitalised across the country in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning.

With the new cases, the total number of dengue cases rose to 962 this year, according to DGHS. The total number of deaths this year is 10 so far.

Some 13 dengue patients are still undergoing treatment of which 10 are from outside Dhaka.



At the Eid mela, a man captivates a group of curious children with the enchanting images inside his bioscope. Oliyur Bishash, a seasoned veteran of this art, has dedicated 40 years to this profession. For a mere Tk 10, he transports his young audience to a world of wonder. This photo was taken in Khulna's Khalishpur area recently.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Six killed, five hurt in road accidents

STAR REPORT

Six people were killed and five injured in road accidents in three districts yesterday, according to reports from our correspondents.

In Bhola, three people were killed in separate road accidents in Borhanuddin and Sadar upazilas.

The deceased were identified as Monir Sharif, 55, Asgar Ali, 35, and Arif Hossain, 25.

Inspector (Investigation) of Borhanuddin Police Station Rezaul Karim Rajib, and Bhola Sadar Model Police Station Officer-in-Charge Shaheen Fakir confirmed the incidents to The Daily Star.

In Borhanuddin, two motorcyclists – Monir and Asgar – died on the spot when their bike was hit by a passenger bus in Buddharpur area around 8:50am, said Inspector Rezaul.

Police seized the bus, said Rezaul, adding that legal action will be taken in this regard.

In Sadar upazila, a battery-run auto-rickshaw driver Arif died instantly as an oncoming truck hit his vehicle on Bhola-Veduria Ferry Ghat road, said OC Shaheen.

In Panchagarh, a bicyclist died after a truck hit his bicycle at Ukiljoth in Tentulia, said Tentulia Highway Police Station OC Zakir Hossain Mollah.

The victim – Wazed Ali, 65 – was from Fakirpara village in the upazila.

The trucker and his helper fled and police seized the vehicle.

In Naogaon, two persons were killed and around five people injured when a Rajshahi-bound passenger bus of Alif Paribahan and a pickup collided head-on on Naogaon-Rajshahi regional highway near Chalkgori Bazar.

Harun Mondol, 35, the pickup driver, died on the spot, said Mohadevpur Police Station OC Abul Kalam Azad.

Mojibor Ali, 32, a labourer, succumbed to his injuries at Naogaon Sadar Hospital, he said. Locals took the injured to a local hospital.

Majeed Khan passes away

STAR REPORT

Dr A Majeed Khan, president of the executive board of Bangladesh Center for Communication Programs, passed away at Evercare Hospital on April 26. He was 94, said a press release.

Born on July 1, 1929 in Faridpur, Khan was educated in Kolkata, London and Minnesota, USA.

Former education minister and planning minister, Khan earlier served as ambassador of Bangladesh to France, Spain and Morocco. He was a senior director at UNDP and a member of the executive board and permanent representative at Unesco.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

KILLING OF 2 AL MEN Families point finger at rival faction

STAR REPORT

Family members yesterday blamed political opponents for the killing of two former ruling party leaders in Lakshmipur as police failed to arrest anyone involved with the incident.

Around 9:30pm on Tuesday, unidentified miscreants opened fire on Abdullah Al Noman, 36, former general secretary of the district unit Jubo League and Rakib Uddin Imam, former organising secretary of the district unit BCL, in the Nagarhat area under Bashikpur union.

They were rushed to Sadar Hospital in critical condition. Noman was declared dead by doctors there, said Sohel Rana, additional superintendent of police.

Rakib was referred to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, but died on the way around 11:30pm, Sohel added.

Tohidul Islam, officer-in-charge of Chandraganj Police Station, said police are conducting drives, but couldn't arrest any suspect.

Asked, the OC refused to comment on the possible motives behind the killings, saying the matter is under investigation.

However, family members of the victims claimed that the duo were killed due to political rivalry.

Mahfuzur Rahman, Noman's elder brother and chairman of Bashikpur Union Parishad, told The Daily Star that his political rivals, who were defeated in the last union parishad elections, were behind the murders.

He accused the former chairman and vice president of Awami League's Chandraganj unit Abul Kashem Jihadi and his associates of being involved in the killings.

In the last union parishad election, Mahfuzur contested as an independent candidate and defeated Awami League candidate Jihadi.

"After the defeat, Jihadi had been threatening me and my family," he said.

The Daily Star could not reach out to Abul Kashem Jihadi despite several attempts.

No case was filed in connection with the double murder till this report was filed last night.

Baby zebra born at Gazipur safari park

Total number now 26

STAR REPORT

A zebra foal was born at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Safari Park in Gazipur in the middle of the month.

With the latest one, the number of the Zebra stands at 26, our Gazipur correspondent reports quoting the park's in-charge Assistant Conservator of Forest Rafiqul Islam.

However, the sex of the baby zebra could not be ascertained yet.

The official said the mother zebra was kept in a relatively cool place inside the park for the last few weeks during the birth. The foal is believed to have been born in the middle of this month.

But the matter was kept secret for security reasons, he said.

According to park sources, the zebras have been brought in several phases since 2013 through Falcon Traders, a livestock importer, from South Africa.



Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Executive Engineer
District: Panchagarh
www.lged.gov.bd



শেখ হাসিনার মূলনীতি:
গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি

Memo No: 46.02.7700.000.17.001.23-1184 Dated: 26-04-2023

Corrigendum Notice (e-Tender Notice No: 40/2022-2023)


This is inform to all concern that due to unavoidable circumstances that the pre-schedule Date and Time of e-Tender ID No: 804682 the i) Document last selling ii) Tender Security Submission and iii) Tender Closing Last Date and Time has been changed as i) Date: 07-May-2023; Time: 15.00 ii) Date: 08-May-2023; Time: 12.00 and iii) Date: 08-May-2023; Time: 13.00 instead of i) Date: 26-Apr-2023; Time: 15.00 ii) Date: 27-Apr-2023; Time: 12.00 and iii) Date: 27-Apr-2023; Time: 13.00 respectively. Others terms & conditions of these tender will be remained unchanged.


(Md. Shamsuddin Khan)
 Executive Engineer
 LGED, Panchagarh
 Telephone No: 02589-941088
xen.panchagarh@lged.gov.bd

GD- 744

In Bhola, two motorcyclists – Monir and Asgar – died on the spot when their bike was hit by a passenger bus at Buddharpur in Borhanuddin around 8:50am yesterday.

REZAUL KARIM RAJIB
Inspector (Investigation) of Borhanuddin Police Station



Investment Corporation of Bangladesh
Head Office
8 Rajuk Avenue, Dhaka-1000.

Price Sensitive Information

This is for kind information of all concerned that the Board of Directors of Investment Corporation of Bangladesh (ICB) in its 626th Meeting held on April 27, 2023, Thursday at 4:30 p.m at the Head Office of the Corporation, approved the un-audited Third Quarter (Q3) Accounts of the Corporation for the period from 01 January, 2023 to 31 March, 2023 and 09 months Accounts for the period from 01 July, 2022 to 31 March, 2023. As per the un-audited accounts the summarized information are as follows:

Particulars	FY: 2022-23 (01.01.2023 to 31.03.2023)		FY: 2021-22 (01.01.2022 to 31.03.2022)		FY: 2022-23 (01.07.2022 to 31.03.2023)		FY: 2021-22 (01.07.2021 to 31.03.2022)	
	ICB (Consolidated)	ICB (Solo)	ICB (Consolidated)	ICB (Solo)	ICB (Consolidated)	ICB (Solo)	ICB (Consolidated)	ICB (Solo)
Net Profit after Tax (Taka in Crore)	2.73	(13.21)	22.28	4.07	49.23	2.07	162.36	104.91
Earnings Per Share (Taka)	0.03	(0.16)	0.26	0.05	0.58	0.02	1.92	1.24
Net Operating Cash Flow Per Share (Taka)	-	-	-	-	(1.20)	(1.00)	(7.37)	(2.91)

Net Asset Value per share (Taka)	As on 31.03.2023		As on 30.06.2022	
	ICB (Consolidated)	ICB (Solo)	ICB (Consolidated)	ICB (Solo)
		53.02	42.74	52.94

By order of the Board of Directors


(Ruksana Yasmin)
 Board Secretary

Date: 27th April, 2023.



গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ
পুলিশ স্টাফ কলেজ বাংলাদেশ
সেকশন-১৪, মিরপুর, ঢাকা।
পুনঃদরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

১.	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	ঃ	স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রণালয়, জননিরাপত্তা বিভাগ
২.	সংস্থা	ঃ	বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ
৩.	ক্রয়কারী সত্তার নাম	ঃ	রেক্টর, পুলিশ স্টাফ কলেজ বাংলাদেশ
৪.	দরপত্র আহ্বানের বিষয়	ঃ	পুলিশ স্টাফ কলেজ বাংলাদেশ এর অভ্যন্তরে মেসারস/সংস্থার কাজ
৫.	দরপত্র নম্বর ও তারিখ	ঃ	স্মারক নং-৪৪.০১.০৪০০.১৪.০৪৩.২০২৩/১২২৯ তারিখ: ২৬/০৪/২০২৩খ্রিঃ
৬.	দরপত্র পদ্ধতি	ঃ	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি
৭.	বাজেট ও তহবিলের উৎস	ঃ	রাজস্ব বাজেট
৮.	দরপত্র সিডিউল প্রাপ্তি/বিতরণের স্থান	ঃ	পুলিশ স্টাফ কলেজ বাংলাদেশ, মিরপুর-১৪, মিরপুর, ঢাকা।
৯.	দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	ঃ	০৬/০৫/২০২৩খ্রিঃ অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত
১০.	আবেদনপত্র ও দরপত্র দাখিলের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	ঃ	০৭/০৫/২০২৩খ্রিঃ ১২:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত
১১.	দরপত্র সিডিউল উন্মুক্তকরণের স্থান, তারিখ ও সময়	ঃ	পুলিশ স্টাফ কলেজ বাংলাদেশ, মিরপুর-১৪, মিরপুর, ঢাকা ০৭/০৫/২০২৩খ্রিঃ ১২:৩০ ঘটিকা
১২.	দরপত্রদাতার যোগ্যতা	ঃ	যোগ্যতা/শর্তাবলী: (১) দরপত্র দাতাগণের ভবন নির্মাণ/মেসারস/সংস্থার সন্তোষ কাজের জন্য ০৫ বছরের সাধারণ অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে। (২) দরপত্রদাতাগণের বিগত ০৫ বছরের মধ্যে ন্যূনতম ০৯টি ০৭(সাত) লক্ষ টাকার একই ধরনের কাজের Specific Experience থাকতে হবে। (৩) দরপত্রদাতাগণের বিগত ০৩ বছরের Annual Average Construction Turnover ০৮ (আট) লক্ষ টাকার অধিক হতে হবে। (৪) দরপত্রদাতাগণের Liquid Asset হিসেবে ০৮ (আট) লক্ষ টাকার Credit Line/ বিগত ০৬ মাসের ব্যাংক সেন্সেন্সের হিসাব বিবরণী থাকতে হবে। (৫) দরপত্রদাতাগণের উক্ত মূল্য Official Cost Estimate অশেফা ± ১০% এর অধিক হলে সংশ্লিষ্ট দরপত্র Non Responsive বিবেচিত হবে। (৬) দরপত্রদাতাগণকে দরপত্র দাখিলের সাথে নিম্নোক্ত প্রয়োজনীয় কাগজপত্রসহ দাখিল করতে হবে- (ক) হালনাগাদ বৈধ ট্রেড লাইসেন্স (খ) অয়কর সার্টিফিকেট এবং হালনাগাদ অয়কর পরিশোধের প্রত্যায়নপত্র (গ) হালনাগাদ ভাট রেজিস্ট্রেশন সার্টিফিকেট (ঘ) জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্রের কপি (ঙ) কালো ডালিকাভুক্ত নয় মর্মে প্রত্যয়নপত্র (চ) দরদাতার ০২(দুই) কপি পাসপোর্ট সাইজের ছবিসহ বর্ণিত কাগজপত্র প্রথম শ্রেণীর গেজেটেড কর্মকর্তা কর্তৃক সত্যায়িত হতে হবে
১৩.	ক্রম নং	ঃ	কাজের নাম
	১.	ঃ	পুলিশ স্টাফ কলেজ বাংলাদেশ এর কোর্স মেস ও ব্যারাকের ভাঙ্গা অংশেজো টিন ইন্ডাস্ট্রিয়াল শীট দ্বারা পরিবর্তন, রকেব্র, ব্যারাক ১ ও ২ এর বাথরুম ও ওয়াশ ফ্লোর টাইলস বসানো এবং স্যানিটারীসহ বৈদ্যুতিক কাজ
		ঃ	দরপত্র জামানত (ক্রেতৃত্বযোগ্য) ২৭,৫০০/-
		ঃ	দরপত্র দাখিলের মূল্য (অফেরতযোগ্য) ৫০০/-
১৪.	বিশেষ নির্দেশনা: (ক) দরপত্র সন্তোষ ব্যবহার নির্দেশনা/শর্তাবলী টেন্ডার সিডিউলে উল্লেখ করা হয়েছে। (খ) দরপত্র জামানত/পে-অর্ডার পরিচালক (প্রকল্প ও উন্নয়ন) পুলিশ স্টাফ কলেজ বাংলাদেশ এর অনুমোদন জমা প্রদান করতে হবে। (গ) দরপত্র সম্পর্কিত সকল কার্যাবলি পিপিএ-২০০৬ ও পিপিআর-২০০৮ এর তদীয় সংশোধনী অনুযায়ী পরিচালিত হবে। (ঘ) ব্যক্তি বা প্রতিষ্ঠানের স্বত্বাধিকারীর স্বাক্ষরযুক্ত প্যাডে আবেদনপত্রের নির্ধারিত তারিখে অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত দরপত্র সিডিউল সংগ্রহ করা যাবে। (ঙ) দরদাতা প্রতিষ্ঠানকে কার্যাদেশ প্রাপ্তির পূর্বে ৩০০/- (ত্রিশশত) টাকার নন রিটার্নেবল স্ট্যাম্পে চুক্তি করতে হবে। (চ) সীলগালা যুক্ত খামের উপর কাজের নাম উল্লেখপূর্বক আলাদাভাবে দরপত্র জমা প্রদান করতে হবে। অন্যথায় দরপত্র বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে। (ছ) কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতীত যে কোন অথবা সকল দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিলের পূর্ব ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।		


মোঃ সোহেল রানা
 বিপি-৭৮০৫১১২০৬৯
 পরিচালক (প্রকল্প ও উন্নয়ন)
 পক্ষে-রেক্টর
 পুলিশ স্টাফ কলেজ বাংলাদেশ।

জিডি-৭৪৩



PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

The universality of dance

An art form fit for any emotion, in any language, at any time



“The power of dance was witnessed as the world stood still during the pandemic. As people were cooped up, dance provided a way to release pent up energy within the confines of the homes.”

SUDESHNA SWAYAMPRABHA

Arts allow for a semblance of normalcy, an escape from the otherwise cruel realities and crises of the present world. One would find solace in the embrace of arts, diverting the mind to provide a means of reflection, to find beauty in life, to enable self-expression. Dance is one of those art forms that helps to soothe the troubled soul and envelopes us to momentarily get lost in the rhythm and motion of the universe.

Dance has been, from the ancient times the most instinctive form of art. Humans unconsciously learn to dance even before they learn any other social skills; so ingrained is dance within us. While everyone possesses this basic language of communication through the body without even knowing, there are those who dedicate their lives to practice and elevate this language to an aesthetic level to make it art. Dancers work hard to improve skills, stretch themselves to limits, connect to the inner selves to create dance pieces.

The power of dance was witnessed as the world stood still during the pandemic. As people were cooped up, dance provided a way to release pent up energy within the confines of the homes. Technology and social media blessed us with visuals of dance from all around the world, where dancers and non-dancers equally shared their innermost expressions through a common shared language of the

body. All coming together to create a rhythm that was felt by all who viewed; an artistic and creative form of body movement that brought its audience around the world to connect as a community during a period of grave uncertainty and tragedy.

29 April marks “International Dance Day”, initiated in 1982 by the Dance Committee of ITI (International Theatre Institute) celebrating the birth anniversary of Jean-George Noverre, (1727-1810 the creator of modern ballet). The day is celebrated with high spirits in the dance community to make people aware of the value and importance of the dance. The dance community present and promote their work on a broad scale, so that people in places of authority are aware of the value of the art form to support it.

However, should we limit dance to just aesthetic performances that is to be appreciated and enjoyed by its audience? Being the art that derives its’ tools and inspiration from nature itself, I believe we should do more to give back to nature and life itself through dance. In a tumultuous world, the possibilities are numerous, from using dance to address social issues, raising awareness for social injustices, to using it for its healing capabilities for both physical and mental concerns. The embodied experience of dance, that has its’ roots in the nature can help to create empathy towards other humans and be inclusive of all regardless of gender,

race, class, physical capabilities. Even though inaudible, the language of dance is capable of speaking loudly to convey messages that need to be heard. Dance has the capability to help us connect ourselves to the rhythm of the cosmos, to actually go back to the bosom of nature where it all began, to help protect the world and make it a place for all to tap their feet to the eternal beat harmoniously.

Just as the author of this year’s International Dance Day Message, YANG Liping, famous dancer and choreographer from China very clearly highlights in her note: “...As human beings, we should respect nature, learn from nature, and harmonize with nature, just like the earth, the mountains, and the sky.

Dancers and choreographers need to listen more attentively to the joys and sorrows of the world, using dance to complete the dialogue we have had with nature, and life which has lasted for thousands of years.

Today, I will not only continue to share our dance culture with the world, but I also hope to invite all the dancers in the world who love dance and who would like to express their emotions through dance, to jointly dance for conveying our love and praise to heaven and earth.

Life never ends, and dance never stops.”

The author is a renowned dancer and choreographer.

Bhawaiya legend Sharifa Rani passes away

Legendary Bhawaiya singer Sharifa Rani has passed away yesterday at 10 am, in a private hospital at capital’s Shyamoli. The news of her passing was confirmed to the media by the deceased’s relative, reporter Ali Akhtar Golam Kibria. She was 73.

Born on June 9, 1950, she was a native of Rangpur upazila. After settling down in Dhaka with her engineer husband, Sharifa left her career of singing for radio and TV, around 1977-78.

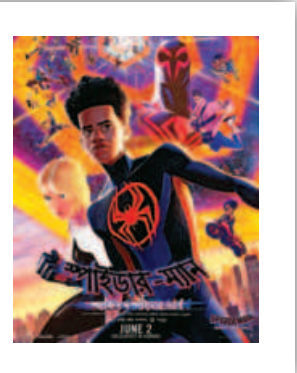
Her songs which had been published before the Liberation War, reached immense popularity for their folk roots and her extraordinary voice. Iconic songs like, *Kanichato Garinu Akashi Akali* was widely beloved when it was released in Rangpur Betar.



Sony releases Bangla poster for ‘Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse’

The long-awaited sequel of Academy Award winning *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* is finally set to be hitting the theatres soon. Sony has already released a multitude of posters for the new film, to cater to the fans waiting eagerly all across the world.

Excitedly for the Bengali fans, there’s a poster of *Spider Man- Across the Spider-Verse* in Bengali that has been released with posters in other languages like, English, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Punjabi, Gujarati, Marathi, Kannada and Malayalam. This was done as a promotion for the film’s Pan-Indian release.



COUNTRYWIDE



A local influential man built this illegal structure after occupying part of the government road at Hosnabad village in Lalmonirhat’s Patgram upazila. PHOTO: STAR

Illegal structure on government road

Eviction order yet to be implemented

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

More than half a hundred farmer families in Patgram upazila have been facing serious trouble for long as a local influential man restricted their movements by building a permanent structure, occupying a portion of a government road.

As a result, several hundred residents of Hosnabad village under Baura union are compelled to use the adjacent cropland to go to their destinations as there is no other alternative.

Following several complaints submitted by the villagers, Lalmonirhat Deputy Commissioner (DC) Mohammad Ullah conducted a separate investigation in this regard.

After investigation, DC Mohammad Ullah issued an eviction order on April 2 in order to remove the illegal structure from the government road.

But, unfortunately the eviction order has not been implemented yet due to unknown reason, putting the villagers in utter disappointment.

Local farmers said former Jamaat leader Shafiqul Islam and his men forcibly occupied six decimals area of the government road nearly two years ago and built concrete structure on it.

Since then Shafiqul and his men has

continued obstructing the villagers from using the road.

Meanwhile, due to obstacle, farmers living in the nearby area have to face serious problems in bringing their agricultural products at home, locals said.

Farmer Shahinur Islam said they will have to leave the village and shift elsewhere if the road is not freed for public’s movement by removing the illegal structure.

This road is the only way of communication for the residents of Hosnabad village, he said, adding that villagers have been using arable land that went alongside the road as an alternative for the last two years.

Manik Mia, a member of Baura Union Parishad (UP), said Shafiqul is so influential that no one dares to protest him in fear of harassment.

“I have personally tried to resolve the issue on several occasions, but failed,” Manik said.

Contacted, Shafiqul claimed that he is the genuine owner of the land and said unfortunately the land has been registered as government khas land.

Lalmonirhat DC Mohammad Ullah said the road will be freed from the illegal encroachment soon.

‘Don’t know if I’ll be alive till then’

FROM PAGE 12

No people on the streets. All shops are closed,” he said.

Monowar said he wanted to return to Bangladesh. “Don’t know whether I can return home alive?”

Twenty-four-year-old Md Rasel Mia, who was with Monowar, went to Sudan in August of 2015. He hasn’t been back home since.

“I was planning to go to Bangladesh but now I fear for my life,” he said.

Rasel said more than 1,000 Bangladeshis live in Khartoum and all are at risk.

Most Bangladeshis living in the Sudani capital work in tailor shops and polythene factories. “Our shop was in a risky area and during the ceasefire, we moved to this place. But this is not safe either.”

Hailing from Narayanganj, Rasel said the ceasefire was not holding as gunfire

continued and people are moving to safer places. “But it seems that there is no safe place in the country right now.”

Rasel said that the Bangladeshi embassy was working to bring them back to Bangladesh and possibly they will be taken to a safer place on April 30.

“I don’t know whether I will be alive till then.”

Sultan Danesh Ali, president of the Bangladesh Community in Sudan, said



the situation in Khartoum is deteriorating day by day.

On Wednesday, armed men stormed a building in a Khartoum neighbourhood where 50 Bangladeshis were staying. They took their money, food, and mobile phones, he said.

Bangladeshis are running out of money and food.

Whenever Bangladeshis are getting out on the streets, they are getting mugged. There were cases in which the muggers took the shirts the victims were wearing, he said.

Islami Andolon

FROM PAGE 12

Even though Rupon is running as an independent and doesn’t have a political affiliation, locals say that he has a great chance in the city known as a BNP stronghold.

Besides, rifts within the Awami League in Barishal are common knowledge. AL insiders say their activists and leaders may not be able to overlook the difference and unite for the polls.

Besides, rifts within the Awami League in Barishal are common knowledge. AL insiders say their activists and leaders may not be able to overlook the difference and unite for the polls.

Islami Andolon Bangladesh (IAB) also has a lot of supporters in the city.

As the BNP boycotted the election, its supporters may extend their support to the IAB leader, making it difficult for AL candidate Abul Khair Abdullah to win the election on June 12.

Teletalk SIMs for Rohingya

FROM PAGE 12

The SIM cards would be sold against the ‘Family Counting Number’ from the database prepared by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Subsequently, the committee recommended access to the database for mobile operators and law enforcement agencies.

It would be a challenging task to get the refugees to get used to using the new SIM since the network of Myanmar operators is strong and they use Myanmar SIMs to communicate with relatives, business partners (especially drug trade and other businesses) located in Myanmar, said a representative of the special branch said.

But, weakening Myanmar’s network by installing jammers on the border is costly, according to an official of another intelligence agency.

About 1,100 jammers would be needed and each jammer costs Tk 2 crore, taking the total cost to approximately Tk 2,200 crore, he added.

“We are trying to

provide them with SIMs to bring them into a system,” Zaman told The Daily Star.

More meetings will be held before a final decision is made, he added.

The length of the Bangladesh-Myanmar border is very small compared with the Bangladesh-India border, said Abu Saeed Khan, a senior policy fellow at LIRNEasia.

“Bangladesh previously was able to stop the signal of Indian network operators. So, the government should utilise the experience of those officials who accomplished that.”

The cross-border criminals, including Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army, are comfortably communicating using the network of Myanmar operators.

Before the Rohingya refugee influx to Bangladesh, there was no Myanmar network coverage on the border, Khan said.

“It’s a national security threat to both Myanmar and Bangladesh and this is what the Bangladesh government should

Sugar price

FROM PAGE 12

National Board of Revenue (NBR).

Taslim Shahriar, senior assistant general manager of the Meghna Group of Industries, told The Daily Star, “The sugar price is increasing almost every day. Today (yesterday), the price of sugar increased by \$ 20 to \$670 per tonne in just two hours.”

He said, “The mill-gate price of sugar, which is currently awaiting release from port, will be at least Tk 125 per kg.

The Tk 25-30 VAT on every kg of Sugar should be discounted, he said.

This month, Meghna Group delivered 62,920 tonnes that had import prices between \$510 and \$30, as per documents.

When his attention was drawn to this, Taslim said they have to pay ship owners between \$40,000 and \$50,000 for each day of delay in offloading the cargo. Besides, the weak taka has increased the cost.

“The average import price of sugar awaiting release from the port is more than \$600 per tonne,” he said.

Biden, Yoon warn N Korea of nuclear response

China warns US, S Korea against ‘provoking confrontation’

AFP, Washington/ Beijing

US President Joe Biden and his South Korean counterpart Yoon Suk Yeol warned North Korea it would face a nuclear response and the “end” of the leadership there if Pyongyang uses its own arsenal.

Speaking at the White House after Oval Office talks during only the second state visit so far in the Biden presidency, the two leaders said the US security shield for South Korea was being strengthened in the face of the nuclear-armed North’s aggressive missile tests.

Following the statement by Biden and Yoon, China yesterday warned Washington and Seoul against “provoking confrontation” with North Korea.

Biden and Yoon also made clear that if the isolated, communist dictatorship in North Korea attacks the South or the United States, the response will be devastating.

“A nuclear attack by North Korea against the United States or its allies... will result in the end of whatever regime were to take such an action,” Biden told reporters at a joint press conference with Yoon.



Yoon said his priority was to secure peace through “superiority of overwhelming forces and not a false peace based on the goodwill of the other side.”

“In the event of a North Korean nuclear attack,” he said, Washington and Seoul have agreed to “respond swiftly, overwhelmingly and decisively using the full force of the alliance including US nuclear weapons.”

Yoon and Biden issued what was titled the Washington Declaration, bolstering the US nuclear umbrella over South Korea, which is increasingly nervous about the saber-rattling in the north.

Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning referring to the warning by US and S Korea, said, “All parties should face up to the crux of the (Korean) peninsula issue and play a constructive role in promoting a peaceful settlement of the issue.”

She urged against “deliberately stirring up tensions, provoking confrontation and playing up threats”.

Biden and Yoon also agreed that the US security shield for S Korea would be strengthened in the face of the nuclear-armed North’s missile tests.

Beijing condemned that decision saying, Washington “ignores regional security and insists on exploiting the peninsula issue to create tension.”

“What the US is doing ... provokes confrontation between camps, undermines the nuclear non-proliferation regime and the strategic interests of other countries,” Mao said.



Damaged cars and buildings are seen at the central market during clashes between the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces and the army in Khartoum North, Sudan yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

XI-ZELENSKY CALL

Moscow welcomes peace effort

Warns against testing its ‘patience over nuclear escalation’

AGENCIES

The Kremlin yesterday said it welcomed any attempt to end the Ukrainian conflict, on Moscow’s terms, a day after the leaders of China and Ukraine had their first call since the offensive.

“We are ready to welcome anything that can bring forward the end of the conflict in Ukraine and the achievement of Russia’s goals,” Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters, according to AFP.

“As for the very fact of communication, this is the sovereign matter of these countries,” Peskov added.

Meanwhile, Russian foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said that Russia does not intend to take the path of nuclear escalation in its standoff with the West over Ukraine but others should not test its patience, reports Reuters.

Her comments follow a flurry of warnings by senior Russian officials, including President Vladimir Putin,

that Western military support for Ukraine is increasing the risks of a catastrophic nuclear conflict.

“We will do everything to prevent the development of events according to the worst scenario, but not at the cost of infringing on our vital interests,” Zakharova told a regular news conference.

“I do not recommend that anybody doubt our determination and put it to the test in practice,” she added.

Russia has strongly criticised the supply of Western arms to Ukraine and the expansion of the NATO military alliance closer to its borders. Finland, which shares a long border with Russia, this month became the 31st member of NATO, while Ukraine itself also wishes to join, though it faces opposition from some countries.

“They (the United States) continue to deliberately infringe on our fundamental interests, deliberately generate risks and raise the stakes in the confrontation with Russia...,” said Zakharova.



A local woman speaks on her phone as she sits on a bench next to a residential house damaged by a Russian missile strike, amid Russia’s attack on Ukraine, in Mykolaiv, Ukraine yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

UKRAINE WAR Russia fines Wikipedia again over article

REUTERS

A Russian court yesterday fined the Wikimedia Foundation, which owns Wikipedia, two million roubles (\$24,510) for not deleting what it said was “banned content” related to the Russian military, Interfax reported.

It said this was the seventh fine imposed on Wikimedia in 2023 for not removing prohibited information. The fines now total 8.4 million roubles.

The latest penalty was for not removing an article about a military unit that contained “classified military information” about its location, composition and equipment, including information related to the progress of what Russia calls its special military operation in Ukraine.

Horn of Africa drought made possible by global warming Say climate scientists

AFP, Paris

A devastating drought that has struck the Horn of Africa could not have occurred without global warming, according to a new report released yesterday from an international team of climate scientists.

“Human-caused climate change has made agricultural drought in the Horn of Africa about 100 times more likely,” said a summary of the report by the World Weather Attribution (WWA) group.

“The ongoing devastating drought would not have happened at all without the effect of greenhouse gas emissions,” it added.

Since late 2020, countries on the Horn of Africa – Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan – have been suffering the worst drought in 40 years. The extended drought has led to the deaths

of millions of heads of cattle and wiped out crops.

The WWA study concentrated on the three areas worst hit by the drought: southern Ethiopia, Somalia and eastern Kenya.

While climate change had little effect on total annual rainfall in the region, “higher temperatures have significantly increased evaporation from soil and plants, which has made dry soils much more likely”, according to the 19 scientists who contributed to the WWA report.

“Without this effect, the region would not have experienced agricultural drought – when crops and pastures are affected by dry conditions – over the last two years,” the summary added.

“Instead, widespread crop failures and livestock deaths have left more than 20 million people at risk of acute food insecurity.”





We are deeply saddened by the sudden demise of Trustee Dr. A Majeed Khan, Founder President of Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB), on April 26, 2023. Inna Lillahe Wa Inna Ilaihe Rajeun.

A former cabinet minister of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Dr. Khan also served as the Ambassador to France, Spain and Morocco. Born in Faridpur in 1929 and educated in Kolkata, London, and Minnesota, he was the first PhD recipient in Sociology and Anthropology from Bangladesh.

He was a member of the Phi Beta Kappa Society in the USA and received the prestigious Doctor of Humane Letters from Hamline University, St Paul Minnesota. He held various positions at Hamline University, Minnesota, USA; University of Wisconsin, USA; and taught at universities in the Netherlands, Sweden and Jordan. Dr. Khan was a member of the Executive Board and Permanent Representative to UNESCO and was honoured with the Officier of the L'Ordre des Palmes Académiques in France.

Apart from IUB, he played pivotal roles in establishing a number of other organizations including the Education, Science, Technology and Cultural Development Trust (ESTCDT); Chittagong Independent University (CIU); Academy for Rural Development, Comilla; College of Social Work at Rajshahi University; and the University of Information Technology and Sciences (UITS).

The IUB family, including the members the Board of Trustees, ESTCDT, faculty and administration, students, and the alumni community, expresses heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family and prays to the Almighty for the eternal Peace of his departed soul.

Huge case backlog only hurting citizens

Urgent solution needed to this longstanding problem in the judicial process

We are alarmed to learn that a backlog of around 42 lakh cases is pending with courts across the country, including the Appellate and High Court Divisions of the Supreme Court. Reportedly, of the cases, 7,89,179 have been pending with district courts for more than five years. This is causing immense suffering for litigants who have seen their legal fees increased (making it hard to pursue justice for many) with the addition of stress which comes with long-unresolved cases. If legal redress or equitable relief for an injured party is not forthcoming in a timely fashion, it is effectively the same as having no remedy at all. Justice delayed is justice denied, as the maxim goes. As such, the backlog is putting a big question mark on our justice system.

The pile-up of cases is happening in spite of an increased rate of case disposals in recent years. At present, there are eight judges for the Appellate Division, 90 judges for the High Court Division, and around 1,800 judges for the lower courts. These numbers are minuscule in a country of about 17 crore people, and no amount of sincerity on the part of the judges can meet their legal needs. For years, legal experts have been drawing attention to this crisis. It is, therefore, vital that the government takes it seriously and fast-tracks the work on enacting a law for the appointment of High Court judges, which is reportedly underway. Moreover, as the chief justice himself had previously said, the number of lower court judges also needs to be doubled or tripled to reduce the increasing backlog of cases. Since the number of judges cannot be increased significantly overnight, the government needs to formulate a comprehensive strategy on how to conduct the appointments over time, but also with urgency.

As well as judge shortages, the other major reasons behind the backlog of cases are the extremely slow process of investigation and charge-sheet submission, continued postponement of hearing dates, and lack of witnesses to testify during trials. These are systemic problems that need to be sorted out systemically.

Delay in disposal of cases, which has become a norm these days, is discouraging people from pursuing justice through the legal channel, according to various studies. This shows that on the one hand, people are losing faith in the justice system, while on the other hand, they are pursuing other means of settling disputes so as not to go through hassles – high legal fees, endless court visits, etc. – involved with going to the court. But that is only for those who are privileged enough to find alternative settlement options. What about those who do not even have the means to do so?

At the end of the day, a functioning democracy must be able to equitably deliver justice through the judicial process. This calls for the state to urgently fix all the problems and anomalies associated with case backlog, so that citizens don't have to wait endlessly for a legal remedy.

Leave no one behind in Sudan

Trapped Bangladeshis must be rescued without delay amid ceasefire uncertainty

Amid uncertainty over the extension of a fragile 72-hour ceasefire – which was due to expire late on Thursday – in conflict-ridden Sudan, it is the safety of foreign nationals trapped in the country that has emerged as a major headache for all concerned. Even if the so-called truce between the military government and the rival paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) is extended for another 72 hours, following the initial approval given by the former late on Wednesday, it is unlikely to lead to an immediate improvement on the ground. This makes it extremely important that, whatever window of opportunity is opened in the event of an extension, countries including Bangladesh make the best use of it to evacuate their citizens.

According to an estimate, some 1,500 Bangladeshis, who mostly work in construction or domestic services, are presently in Sudan. It is not a labour-hiring country, so Bangladeshis go there mostly for an opportunity to move to other countries like Libya later. But with the scope of such migrations now diminished, many who could not move to other countries stayed back. We must acknowledge that the government of Bangladesh has been sincere if not decisive enough on the issue of their evacuation since fighting erupted in the country on April 15. After the state minister for foreign affairs announced initiatives to evacuate them on April 25 – when the previous ceasefire took hold – around 500 Bangladeshis reportedly registered, and we are told that they will be evacuated via Jeddah in Saudi Arabia early next month. While we would have appreciated it more if the government had intervened sooner or more strongly, like some other countries, we hope that any casualty can be avoided before that time arrives.

The problem for Bangladesh came into focus after its embassy building in Sudan was hit by bullets on April 22, damaging the third-floor wall. Earlier, on April 15, the residence of Charge De Affaires Tareq Ahmed, which is close to the Khartoum International Airport, had machine gun bullets hitting and piercing through its windows. However, no one was hurt in either of the incidents. Since then, we have come across reports of how trapped Bangladeshis, along with other foreign nationals and the local population, have been struggling to find food, water, electricity, medicine and other basic supplies. Since the fighting began, at least 512 people have been killed in air raids and artillery attacks so far. Thousands have been wounded. The ceasefire has had little effect on this situation, which makes us worried about the outcome of any possible extension.

Still, there is no alternative to a ceasefire and a political solution to the crisis. We urge global leaders to make decisive interventions in Sudan so that a lasting truce can be achieved as soon as possible. Meanwhile, we hope that our government will make sure that all Bangladeshis who want to return to the country can do so without delay or any hassle on the way. Their safety is of utmost importance.

So long as DSA exists, free and fair elections are impossible



Zillur Rahman is the executive director of the Centre for Governance Studies (CGS) and a television talk show host. His Twitter handle is @zillur

ZILLUR RAHMAN

Sometimes, the line between reality and fiction becomes blurry, and one must ask some fundamental questions to ground oneself in the truth. In the strange times that we live in today, I would like to posit some fundamental questions to you, dear reader: Can democracy exist without freedom of expression? Can there be free and fair elections without freedom of the press? I believe that, for any soul who believes in the tenets of democracy, the answer will always be a resounding “no.”

On March 29, at about 4am, a group of around 15 plainclothes officers of the Criminal Investigation Department picked up *Prothom Alo* correspondent Samsuzzaman Shams from his residence in Savar. Shams is now facing two legal charges under the Digital Security Act 2018, one of which also names *Prothom Alo* editor Matiuur Rahman.

Unfortunately, this recent abuse of the DSA is only another grim statistic in Bangladesh's morbid trajectory of decline in media freedom. The Centre for Governance Studies' DSA tracker project paints a clear picture of how the law has been turned into a weapon of naked partisanship, primarily used to censor and suppress information that the incumbent government does not want the public to see, and has created a climate of self-censorship among journalists and reporters.

The project's principal investigator, Illinois State University's distinguished professor Prof Ali Riaz, recently stated that at least 355 journalists, 403 politicians and even 26 children were accused under the Digital Security Act. According to his study published in January titled, “What's Happening: Trends and Patterns of the Use of the Digital Security Act 2018 in Bangladesh,” of all those accused under the DSA, 29.25 percent are politicians and 27.21 percent are journalists.

Of the plaintiffs, the study finds, 29 percent were people related to

government service and 40 percent were directly involved with a political party, primarily Awami League.

The heavy-handed application of the law against journalists and opposition politicians is a black mark against the image of Bangladesh both at home and abroad. Not only is the law being used as a tool of censorship, but it also allows the violation of multiple international human rights.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has repeatedly brought the issue forth to Bangladesh. The response from the Bangladesh side has been agonisingly weak. The “OHCHR Technical Note to the Government of Bangladesh on Review of the Digital Security Act,” issued to



ILLUSTRATION: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

restricting freedom of expression and access to information.”

In the technical note, the UN Human Rights Office expressed concerns over the power of the DSA to detain those accused without a warrant and under harsh sentencing periods. Various amendments and annulments to and of various DSA clauses were suggested to the government, only to be promptly rejected by the law minister. It now appears that the government has no intention to let go of this weapon before the upcoming national election.

But how can there be any talk of free and fair elections if such draconian laws as the DSA continue to exist? Needless to say, for a democracy to

Is ‘honest politician’ an oxymoron?



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

QUAMRUL HAIDER

Politicians come in all shapes, sizes, and colours. Some come from ruling parties, some from the military, some from the world of business and entertainment, while some have their roots deep within the security sector of a state. Some politicians are charismatic, some are boring, and some are full of hot air.

Politics is all about power. And to politicians – most of whom lack an iota of personal integrity – power is control over their citizens, patriotism is servility, and democracy is absolutism. They use power to rig elections by allowing their cadres to stuff ballot boxes, and/or encourage their supporters to vote under the cover of darkness the day before the election. Or like Richard Daly, mayor of Chicago from 1955 to 1976, they are adept at making the dead vote for themselves. Or, as Stalin said, “The people who cast the votes decide nothing. The people who count the votes [lackeys of the politicians] decide everything.” Or, according to a former governor of Louisiana, where election fraud is rampant, he could make the voting machines sing any tune he wants to.

Politicians manipulate public employees, use state funds for political campaigns, resort to terror by unleashing their ancillary groups that are thinly conceived and at times crudely manoeuvred, and grant extensive power to law enforcement agencies to arrest their opponents without warrant.

Before (s)elections, their words are the most beautiful ever uttered on behalf of democracy. But once (s) elected, they conveniently become amnesiac and their eyes become focused on the nation's treasury.

The sense of power leads politicians to indulge in unbridled corruption and ethical lapses. Their colossal hubris, high decibel level of hate speech, intolerance against differing views, use of uncivil language, kidnapping for political ends, and targeted killing to eliminate their foes dominate the political landscape of the third world.

For politicians, save a few, power also goes hand-in-hand with sex, greed, money, crime, and nepotism. That is why they use brute force and dirty tricks to stay in power.

To perpetuate their rule, politicians eliminate space for dissent by the opposition, and fine-tune the constitution more to their liking by eliminating amendments after amendments and introducing new amendments. They pass draconian laws to stifle dissent on social media, websites, and other digital platforms with the argument that times have changed and surely the founding fathers would not want them to live in an “analogue” age that is horribly out of sync with the modern digital age. Their target includes journalists, cartoonists, musicians, activists, entrepreneurs, students, peasants who cannot read or write, and even minors, among others.

Politicians seem to have a visceral need for enemies. They love enemies because by bashing them, they can stir up public's sentiment and distract their attention from the myriad of problems facing their nation.

Most politicians are egotistical, narcissistic maniacs, completely detached from their people, surrounded by stooges, toadies, and overzealous, greedy enablers. Their mind is programmed to believe that

they are indispensable to the stability and well-being of their nations. Hence, they control the entire machinery of the state and its security apparatus.

Political hooliganism and criminal activities by politicians and their surrogates have lent credence to George Bernard Shaw's characterisation of politics as the “last

Politicians manipulate public employees, use state funds for political campaigns, resort to terror by unleashing their ancillary groups that are thinly conceived and at times crudely manoeuvred, and grant extensive power to law enforcement agencies to arrest their opponents without warrant.

resort for the scoundrels.” If blanket use of Shaw's definition of politics and politicians seems derogatory, then a more pliant definition could be that it is the profession of people who lack talent for other professions.

Today, with the exception of a few, most politicians are liars extraordinaire. To score political points and advance their self-interest, they lie left, right, and centre. After all, when Bill Clinton said, “I did not have sex with that woman,” he lied through his teeth to maintain a facade of morality. Exaggeration, omissions of truth, bending of truth, and sometimes flat-out lies are part of the arsenal of a competent politician in a high office.

People's perception of politicians worldwide is more strident. Most of them are seen as crooks who are corrupt to the core. When Nixon said,

thrive, press freedom is essential. To ensure that individuals in authority are held responsible to the public, journalists must have the liberty to probe and report on government acts, policies, and decisions. In order to form educated opinions about their government and actively engage in the democratic process, citizens need access to this data.

Without press freedom, governments may censor or restrict information, preventing the public from receiving important information about their leaders and the policies they are enacting. Corruption, power abuse, and a decline of the public's faith in government are all possible outcomes of a breakdown in accountability and transparency. The right to free speech and expression is also intrinsically tied to journalistic freedom. A free and open press is crucial to foster an atmosphere where differing viewpoints may be heard and debated.

A tell-tale sign of an authoritarian regime is the undermining of journalistic institutions. The most common play in the dictator's handbook is to paint the media as the enemy of the people. There can be no proper election if the government keeps using the DSA against journalists. A free and independent press plays a critical role in informing citizens about the electoral process, including the positions of candidates, the issues at stake, and particularly the conduct of the election itself.

Furthermore, a free press is needed to provide a platform for all candidates and parties to present their views and engage in public debate, helping to ensure a level playing field and preventing any one group from dominating the discussion.

Without a free press, citizens may be subject to biased or incomplete information, and this can impact their ability to make informed choices at the ballot box. Bangladesh is already mired in accusations of electoral fraud, election time violence, and abusing law enforcement institutions to harass opposition candidates.

Whether or not Bangladesh can salvage its image as a democracy will entirely depend on how the next election is conducted. However, the government's stubborn refusal to get rid of its tools of censorship does not bode well for us in the slightest.

“I personally thought it [Watergate cover-up] was a stupid thing to do, apart from being an illegal thing to do,” he negated his earlier utterance of the infamous five words “I am not a crook.”

Crookery and double-dealing are what the Republicans in the US Congress are doing today. They sing songs of praise of their leader Donald Trump – the greatest thug, sexual predator, and tax dodger in the history of US politics. They are doing so in order to get reelected to serve their personal interests, to make deals on expediency, not principle, and cynically seek to manipulate the fragile democratic process rather than preserve it.

Bernard Shaw summed up a politician as a scoundrel who “knows nothing and he thinks he knows everything.” The political satirist Jarod Kintz describes most of the scoundrels more bluntly. He notes, “I once saw a politician walking a dog and I thought, how absurd – an animal walking an animal. Then I thought, if given the choice, I'd rather vote for the dog.”

So, what can be done to pull a politically sick country out of the morass of “filth, corruption, dishonesty and above all the criminalisation that has come to afflict” its social fabric? We often hear people saying, “Vote out the incumbents. If we cannot vote them out, then impose term limits.” But the dynastic succession that is in vogue in many countries makes it difficult to bring about a change in the existing political culture. Furthermore, injecting integrity into and changing the status quo of a corrupt system is too unpalatable to politicians.

Finally, is it possible for a politician to be honest? Can we equate morality and politics? Is “honest politician” an oxymoron? Maybe yes, maybe no. Although honesty and politics are strange bedfellows. Historically, there have been examples, albeit rare, of patriotic and altruistic politicians. However, a politician who admits that he/she does politics for money and power is definitely an honest politician and deserves our kudos!



VISUAL: BIPOB CHAKROBORTY

Why we can't get enough of aliens



NO STRINGS ATTACHED

Aasha Mehreen Amin
is joint editor at The Daily Star.

AASHA MEHREEN AMIN

April 26, apparently, was Alien Day. Before your imagination runs wild (which it is supposed to on this occasion), this was not a day when the first alien was discovered on Earth or when aliens celebrated their domination of our planet, or when they declared their “alienable” rights in the galaxies. It is a day for the celebration of science fiction, especially in films that have captured the fascination of many humans. Held on 4/26, it is a reference to LV-426, the moon where a human crew discovers aliens in the 1979 Ridley Scott film *Alien*. Thanks to the abundance of sci-fi films, many of us have grown up with that irresistible fascination for life outside Earth and a nagging desire to believe in its existence.

It is interesting, though, how the word “alien” is used in a country where many of the most famous films on aliens have been born. In the US, an alien is not just an extraterrestrial; it could simply mean someone from a foreign country. So an illegal alien (the lowest rung in the immigration ladder) is a foreigner who got into the US without legal documentation or stayed longer than permitted by their visa. A legal alien on the other hand, is a foreign-born person who has all the right documents to be in the US. Remember how Sting famously announced his immigration status: “I’m a legal alien. I’m an Englishman in New York”?

Other than that curious deviation, in general, an alien refers to a being from another planet. And it’s not just sci-fi movies that harp on extraterrestrials coming down to Earth, usually with sinister purposes (though sometimes they are cute little fellows who just want to go home).

The Pentagon, for years, had projects to investigate “military sightings of UFOs” (now known as “unidentified aerial phenomena”). In fact, just this February, after all the excitement over “Chinese balloons”

and other unidentified objects, a US Air Force general said he would “not rule out aliens or any other explanation,” though other defence and intelligence officials have said that the military has not yet found evidence of extraterrestrial activity in the US. Well, of course they have to say that, silly. It’s classified information.

Now that one thinks of it, even our own land could be a site of alien activity. Remember the alien abductions in films like *The X-Files* where humans were taken and then sent back, traumatised and with amnesia? Well, this could explain all the unexplained disappearances of people for days and months, after which they “reappeared” in far-off places, usually near the border, looking confused and disoriented. Most of all, they never talk about what had happened to them, just like those stupefied human abductees who can barely explain anything about their time aboard the alien ship.

In most sci-fi movies, the ill intentions of the aliens are amply displayed – how they just want to suck out our life force in order to survive, invade our planet altogether as their own abode is dying. This could explain the unsolved murders that keep adding to our repertoire of grisly events. The Sagar-Runi murder case, for instance, the probe report of which could not be submitted for the 97th time on April 9. If the concerned law enforcement agency has failed for 97 times to come up with some sort of deduction from the last 11 years of investigation, does this not sound a little “science fiction-y”? Other unsolved murders continue to pile up, with no clues regarding who could have carried them out. Sounds suspiciously like alien aggression.

Speaking of aggression, if any of you have seen *Mars Attacks*, you will know just how vicious and sarcastic little Martians can be. Not to mention, ugly as sin. Initially,

when the humongous-headed Martians arrive, the people of the world (which basically means the US) herald their coming as they would that of a messiah. People from all walks of life travel thousands of miles to welcome them with open arms and doves that symbolise peace and friendship. Only the intentions of these little green men are not as noble, as is soon revealed when the officials of the welcoming committee are blown into smithereens with a ray gun by a cackling Martian, triggered by a hippie setting free a dove. After a lot of mayhem and destruction, a young boy saves the day when he inadvertently plays a favourite song of his grandmother’s, whom he has rescued. The yodelling sounds of the song “*Indian Love Call*”, that the boy plays in the car, is by default the only weapon to annihilate the marauding aliens – the melody causes their slimy green brains to explode. The hidden message in this: it is music (denoting love and soft power, perhaps?), not state-of-the-art arms, that can conquer the enemy and save the world. Superpowers of the world, which are so infatuated with war and sophisticated weaponry, should take heed.

Science fiction may stretch scientific phenomena for dramatic effect and to ensure box office hits, but many things in sci-fi films have predicted future scenarios – like holograms, smartphones, smart watches, and eye glasses that can be used as computer screens. Whether we will ever encounter little green or grey men with creepy eyes and bulbous heads, or amorously shaped beings with superior intelligence, is something that at this time will remain within the confines of sci-fi films and literature. But the idea of life outside our planet is something that will fascinate scientists and ordinary people alike. There is something hopeful and humbling about thinking that there are living beings besides the ones we are familiar with in our earthly abode.

Meanwhile, there is that strange smell wafting from the kitchens, sending many a human out on the streets of Dhaka. Titas Gas says it’s because of high pressure of gas in the pipes and the idea that there are major leaks is baseless. Maybe it’s just aliens breathing.

Dr Zafrullah’s real utopia

Dr Mirza Hassan
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MIRZA HASSAN

With the passing of Dr Zafrullah Choudhury, one of our finest socialist visionaries and activists has ceased to dream and act. Along with Muhammad Yunus and Fazle Hasan Abed, Zafrullah was a global persona in Bangladesh’s domain of development and social change.

His socialism was cosmopolitan (inspired by Latin-American revolutions and socialist practices, China’s cultural revolution, and the radical social democracy of the 60s in Europe), pragmatic/concrete (using existing state and social institutions) and not merely oppositional or movement-centred (although he enormously contributed to these for decades – financially and logistically), and based on the proto-hegemonic radical humanist discourse of Maulana Bhashani.

More importantly, Zafrullah’s socialism was *useful* in contrast to ones offered by the dominant leftist parties of the country, characterised by theoretical obscurantism,

early 80s was a cognitive shock, to say the least. We were stopped at the main gate by smartly dressed female security guards and, horror of horrors, I immediately saw women drivers parking their jeeps. For a moment I felt like I was in *Sultana’s Dream*, the feminist utopian novel of Rokeya Shakawat Hossain. Dr Zafrullah was indeed one of the earliest advocates and implementers of positive discrimination policies for women, and such practices were constitutive of his real utopia. As is well known, he was also a great champion of male solidarity with feminist causes and eagerly committed resources for feminist activism.

The national drug policy of 1982 that Dr Zafrullah and his comrades conceived, which was soon adopted by the state, was an attempt to establish his real utopian vision on a national scale. The drug policy was essentially a manifesto of emancipatory reforms, which helped build emancipatory alternatives to health capitalism. A constitutive element of this policy was the de-commodification of healthcare, whereby life-sustaining services and other basic necessities (education, housing) would be de-linked from the profit-seeking market logic. The drug policy was enacted despite resistance from

surgery and decided to set up the facility at GK hospital, charging patients a minimal fee. His own cataract surgery was performed at Gonoshasthaya Nagar Hospital, despite strong reluctance from the surgeons who did not want to take risks with his eyes. Zafrullah’s point was, “If I do not trust GK for my own eye surgery, how can I convince others?”

Back in the early 80s, he took grave reputational risks as a socialist activist when he used dictator General Ershad to formulate and implement the drug policy. Such an entirely strategic decision generated adverse political consequences for him, but he never veered from his transformative vision. Most recently, during the Covid-19 pandemic, he risked his life by exposing himself physically while conducting numerous meetings in his quest to develop and promote cheaper knowledge-based solutions to the virus. Unfortunately, his noble efforts were sabotaged by those very local pharmaceutical bourgeoisie who greatly prospered thanks to his drug policy of 1982.

Now that he is gone, the million-dollar question is: who is going to carry forward his post-capitalist visions and protect and nurture the priceless institutions he built?



GK as a real utopia combines a vision and a method.

PHOTO: GONOSHASTHAYA KENDRA ARCHIVE

fractiousness, political irrelevance, and their inconsequentiality to the daily lives of the masses. It was useful because he was spectacularly successful in establishing a real utopia – the Gonoshasthaya Kendra (GK). To quote radical sociologist Erik Olin Wright, “Real utopias transform the no-where of utopia into the now-here of creating emancipatory alternatives of the world as it could be in the world as it is.”

GK as a real utopia combines a vision and a method. The vision includes desire for a radically inclusive health system and the rejection of “capitalist realism” – an ideology (masquerading as a scientific approach) claiming that capitalism is the only viable political and economic system and it is impossible even to conceive a coherent alternative to it.

Dr Zafrullah conceived the capitalist health system as a dystopia. His vision was predominantly influenced by Cuba’s health system. The real utopia as a method points towards an effort to go beyond a desired vision and ground it in the local life of the community, institutionally specifying the pathways to realise the vision.

My first trip to the GK back in the

powerful adversaries – especially multinational drug companies. But over the successive decades, its progressive components were neutered or eliminated entirely, thanks to our political and state elites’ capitulation to the interests of commercial elites, both local and foreign. The current drug policy, alas, is nothing but a pale shadow of Dr Zafrullah’s deeply transformative vision.

As a radical institutional builder and reformer, Dr Zafrullah believed that one can only generate people’s trust in one’s visions and action if one has skin in the game. That is, one must show through her behaviour that she sincerely believes or meticulously follows what she preaches. This is particularly true for alternative system builders battling the hegemonic ideologies and institutional norms masquerading as common sense. Dr Zafrullah was a role model in this regard.

For his own treatment, serious or otherwise, he always turned to GK and later to Dhaka-based Gonoshasthaya Nagar Hospital. When I met him a couple of years ago, he told me that he was appalled to see private hospitals charging very high fees for a simple cataract

Unfortunately, our anaemic and progressively diminutive left – politically, intellectually, and socially – failed miserably to shoulder this responsibility in the past decades, and I do not expect them to do better in the future. Given the miserable state of our health system, characterised by regulatory capture by medical business elites, unbridled commercialisation of health services, toxic influences of partisan doctors’ associations, and the impotence of the Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA), there is an urgent need to return the drug policy to its original form and replicate GK-type institutions across the nation. Inspired by the radical vision of Dr Zafrullah, we need to voice demands for decentralised health services, robust regulation of health capitalism, and community ownership/democratisation of health services.

Our progressive and socially conscious young generation, more attuned to the radical sensitivity of the 21st century, should come forward and fight for the emancipatory vision of Dr Zafrullah. I believe this would be the most fitting tribute that we can pay to the great socialist.

/Opinion

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CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 Applied gently

7 Bushy do

11 How some drugs are taken

12 Lethargic

13 Deep red

14 Coyote sound

15 Constricted

17 Support

20 Dancer

Castle

23 Swelled head

24 Subsequently

26 Pole worker

27 Water cooler

28 Pea's place

29 Sticky sweets

31 Singer Yoko

32 Work byproduct

33 Hearty dish

34 Strangely

wondrous

37 Seaside setting

39 Found darling

43 Smell

44 Glean

45 Young ones

46 Shop tool

DOWN

1 Friend of

Dopey

2 “Roses — red”

3 Saloon

4 Eye action

5 “Frozen” queen

6 Fabric worker

7 On the beach

8 Item on a window-sill

9 Join the crew

10 Symbol of wisdom

16 Ceremonies

17 Sugar source

18 Radiant

19 Brewing need

21 Nary a soul

22 Supply with funds

24 Mislead

25 Trick taker, often

30 Copy senders

33 Ridicule

35 Young boys

36 Inking

37 Guest's bed

38 Bustle

40 Relieve (of)

41 Apple sampler

42 German article

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WEDNESDAY'S ANSWERS

B	A	T	H	E		G	R	A	D	E
E	U	R	O	S		L	I	B	E	A
C	R	A	P	S	T	A	B	L	E	S
K	A	Y		A	I	M	E	S	E	
			T	Y	P	O	S			
A	L	T	O	S		R	I	P	E	N
V	I	E	W			G	O	Y	A	
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			L	E	G	I	T			
S	P	A		C	A	R		M	O	I
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A	R	E	A	S		L	E	G	A	L
B	E	L	T	S		E	X	I	L	E

BEETLE BAILEY BY MORT WALKER

BABY BLUES BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT

LAW INTERVIEW

THE PROCLAMATION OF INDEPENDENCE 1971

Not a mere creation of the skillful draftsmen, rather a reflection of the will of the people

I believe the drafters of the POI took a very bold step. That is because the ICJ's advisory opinion regarding the UDI in respect of Kosovo has only recently decided on the legality of the UDI. As for principles of international law, principles of self-determination, the right of self-defence, the UDI, amongst others, are all well-reflected in our POI.

Dr. Muhammad Ekramul Haque is a Professor of Constitutional Law and Comparative Constitutional Law at the Department of Law, University of Dhaka, of which he is also an alumnus. He did his PhD in Constitutional Law and International Law at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia. Dr. Haque is one of the leading scholars in the fields of constitutional law and comparative constitutional law in Bangladesh, and his contributions focus on how comparative constitutional experience and international law reflect and help shape the understanding and developing contents of Bangladeshi constitutional provisions and their interpretations. He is a member of the Research Group on "Cross-Judicial Fertilization: The Use of Foreign Precedents by Constitutional Judges", International Association of Constitutional Law (IACL) and the International Society of Public Law ICON-S. His most recent publication includes *Encyclopedia of Public International Law in Asia* (BRILL, NIJHOFF, 2021), in which he served as the State Volume Editor for Bangladesh. Currently, he is writing one monograph and co-editing two books which will be published later this year, namely *International Encyclopedia of Constitutional Law* (Kluwer Law International), and *The Constitutional Law of Bangladesh: Progression and Transformation at its 50th Anniversary* (Springer Australia) and *Implementation of Sustainable Development in the Global South: Strategies, Innovations and Challenges* (HART Publishing UK) respectively. On the 52nd anniversary of the adoption of the Proclamation of Independence, the Law Desk spoke with him on the following issues:

Law Desk (LD): What role do you think

the Proclamation of Independence (POI) played in the liberation war of 1971?
Muhammad Ekramul Haque (MEH): The promulgation of such a well-drafted unilateral declaration of independence (UDI) provided Bangladesh with an international legal contour to its emergence as a new state. The

people. Fifthly, it highlighted the continuous genocide being committed and in particular the atrocities committed on 25 March, which alone is enough to prove under international law that Pakistan committed genocide. Sixthly, it emphasised the fact that we were exercising our legitimate right to self-determination and self-

determination through the making of UDI was distinctive in nature back in 1971. Till then, the right to self-determination was more commonly used in the context of decolonisation. On the other hand, Bangladesh took a pioneering step and exercised this right to achieve its independence. Prior to this, there was no instance of

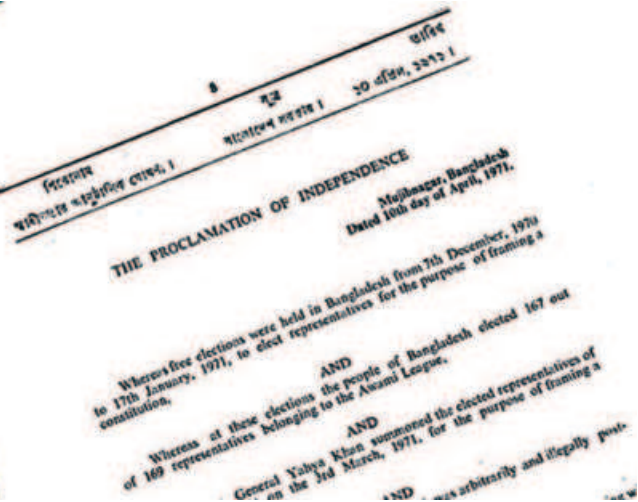
espoused in the POI?
MEH: Generally, the answer would be in the affirmative. First, the source of the supreme power in both documents has been given to the solemn will of the people. Article 7(2) of the Constitution, which enunciates this point is considered to be the polestar of the constitution. Secondly, the fact that lawmakers have to be elected in order to be legitimate has been reflected in both documents. Thirdly, the values of equality, human dignity, and social justice enshrined in paragraph 12 of the POI are also enunciated in the preamble of the 1972 Constitution. Fourthly, the value of free choice mentioned under article 25(b) of the Constitution was essentially the basis of the POI. Fifthly, the value of supporting oppressed people under article 25(c) further corresponds with the main idea behind the POI. However, one facet where the constitution did not fully reflect the POI would be in the realm of international law obligations, where the POI proved to incorporate a kind of blank cheque towards its intentions to apply international law and on the other hand the Constitution applied a more restrained version of this ideology through a limited perspective in article 25.

LD: How do you think the POI reflected the will of the people of Bangladesh?

MEH: The POI was not merely a creation of skillful draftsmen but rather a reflection of the will of the people. The first evidence of this connection can be found in the 10th paragraph of the POI where it is mentioned that the mandate of the Mujibnagar government was given by the people whose will is supreme. And secondly, the 4th paragraph from bottom of the POI again highlights the fact that the members of the Mujibnagar government were all duly elected and thus reflected the will of the people.

LD: Many thanks for talking to us.

MEH: You are welcome, and thanks are also due to *The Daily Star* for showing interest to discuss about the POI, which I think will create newer scopes for developing newer ideas in the constitutional law study of Bangladesh.



significance of the POI which was adopted on 10 April 1971 is manifold in the liberation struggle of Bangladesh. First and foremost, it created the entire legal framework for the liberation war and stands as the first constitution of Bangladesh. Secondly, with its retrospective effect, it reiterated the point that the liberation war did indeed begin on 26 March and since then there was a sovereign government. Thirdly, it fulfilled the remaining elements of statehood under traditional political science, namely government and sovereignty. Fourthly, it highlighted that Bangladesh was exercising its legitimate right of self-defence against the unjust and treacherous war waged against its

defence. Finally, it talked about having established effective control over the territory of Bangladesh, which is one of the key requirements for a legitimate government in international law.

LD: What is the importance of the POI in connection with Bangabandhu's declaration of independence?

MEH: The connection can be clarified in 3 key-points. First, the 6th paragraph of the POI recognises the declaration made on March 26 and acknowledges that the struggle for liberation did not begin from 10 April. Secondly, the reason the POI itself is important is that it formalised Bangabandhu's declaration of independence on 26 March. Lastly, it is a unique UDI because, amongst other reasons, it highlighted the point of effective control for the Mujibnagar government in-exile.

LD: Would you comment on the historical context in which the POI was drafted?

MEH: The advent of Bangladesh by the exercise of the right to self-

successfully claiming the right to self-determination in a non-colonial setup for independence. In this regard, the example of Bangladesh has contributed to the development of the jurisprudence of international law.

LD: How is a document like the POI treated in international law? Do you think it reflected the relevant principles of international law?

MEH: I believe the drafters of the POI took a very bold step. That is because the ICJ's advisory opinion regarding the UDI in respect of Kosovo has only recently decided on the legality of the UDI. As for principles of international law, principles of self-determination, the right of self-defence, the UDI, amongst others, are all well-reflected in our POI. However, it is unfortunate that despite contributing to the development of the jurisprudence of such principles, the example of Bangladesh is hardly mentioned by scholars.

LD: Do you think the 1972 Constitution fully reflects the values

RIGHTS WATCH

Questioning the 'token repatriation' of the Rohingyas

SAKHAWAT SAJJAT SEJAN

Last month, a delegation from Myanmar visited the Rohingya camps in Bangladesh to advance the talks in relation to the repatriation of the Rohingyas on a pilot basis. The Myanmar representatives planned to verify documents and repatriate around 1000 Rohingyas to Myanmar. But they have not assured citizenship for the returnees or recognised their identity as Rohingyas. Neither have they specified their place of settlement after their return to homeland.

Allegedly, the Myanmar military junta has initiated this 'token repatriation' scheme to eyewash the ICJ's probe of accusations (rape, murder, arson, genocide etc.) against the military forces. To pacify peer pressure from China and other states, Myanmar is doing so to legitimise their military regime among international community. But rights-groups claim that the situation in Myanmar is not stable and safe enough to repatriate the Rohingyas. Internal conflicts and violent clashes with military regime are ongoing. Security forces are present in Northern Rakhine and arresting or executing the Rohingyas who are unofficially returning to the country.

In this misty situation, it is never advisable to repatriate the Rohingyas. International refugee law and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) discourage return in the origin country during the existence of a military regime, political unrest, serious harm, or apprehension of serious harm. The UNHCR's handbook on voluntary repatriation says: (i) refugees must



be prior informed of the situation in the origin country; (ii) origin country must support the repatriation process; (iii) it shall ensure such return in non-militarised, non-political, and peaceful areas; and (iv) it must comply with the humanitarian mandate of the UNHCR. Absence of any of these safeguards will make the return questionable and doubtful. Needless to say, the Rohingyas in Bangladesh want to return to Myanmar voluntarily but a return without transparency will put them at grave risks. This means

voluntariness must be considered as a prerequisite to start and complete the much-awaited repatriation.

Unfortunately, the UN Refugee Convention 1951 does not directly discuss about the voluntariness principle of repatriation. The OAU Refugee Convention 1967 might be a resort in this regard. The Convention enshrines two standards to ensure voluntariness while repatriating, i.e., (a) situation in the country of origin and consent of refugees to return in such situations, and (b) the condition of the country of asylum, whether it

permits a free choice to return or not. False promises, wrong information or concealment of any necessary information regarding repatriation would invalidate the process.

Human Rights Watch emphasises that repatriation must be dignified to constitute voluntariness in the process. Absolute voluntariness is the most practical approach for sustainable return. In sustainable returns, refugees cannot be imposed with a lot of restrictions and denied the rights of a refugee to influence their free will or

achieve voluntariness. In the case of the Rohingyas, Bangladesh is continuously saying that there are no other solutions except voluntary repatriation. But questions remains if the voluntary repatriation is ever achievable in the existence of the military regime in Myanmar.

Because, first, the UNHCR's collaboration with the representatives of military junta to initiate 'token repatriation' is violation of its own handbook and international refugee law. The voluntary repatriation handbook

designates such returns during military regime as 'unadvised return.' Secondly, voluntary repatriation is accomplished through return with safety and dignity. Myanmar officials have been very much shady regarding these terms and conditions of repatriation, specially the Rohingyas' right to movement and to return with dignity. Voluntary repatriation must always be unconditional.

That the UNHCR and the Bangladesh government shall immediately step back from such repatriation does not comply with voluntariness principle of international refugee law too. Because it will not only violate the right to dignified return of the Rohingyas but also create complications for the disposal of *The Gambia v Myanmar* case in the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

Arakan Rohingya National Alliance claimed that the token repatriation will help the military junta pose counterarguments and pretend sincerity towards the Rohingyas, once the hearing restarts in the ICJ. Free Rohingya Coalition also termed this unadvised repatriation as 'PR Campaign' to align with the ongoing case in the ICJ and ease pressure from international community including China. It seems like a futile, political, shrewd and impracticable approach from Myanmar's military junta to execute (un)voluntary repatriation and gain international acceptance. These questions and doubts make this repatriation of the Rohingyas non-humanitarian and unadvised.

The Writer is a Lecturer in Law, Feni University.

City now the favourites

STAR SPORTS DESK

Before Wednesday, Arsenal had things under control in the Premier League title race. All they had to do to not relinquish that control was to travel to Manchester and beat defending champions Manchester City at the Etihad Stadium.

However, it definitely was easier said than done, proven how Pep Guardiola's men outclassed leaders Gunners in a dominant 4-1 win to cut the gap to two points while playing two games less than Mikel Arteta's troops.

As things stand, the equation for City is now simple. They can afford to lose one of their final seven games and still clinch their fifth Premier League title in six seasons with a one point cushion over Arsenal, given Arsenal don't drop any more points.

Guardiola's side can mathematically win the Premier League title by mounting five wins and two draws in their remaining seven games, courtesy of their superior goal difference.

For Arsenal, however, things are not in their hands anymore. Not only they need to win rest of their five games, but also hope for City to lose



two or play three drawn matches.

Arsenal can't afford to drop points in this situation. If they win all remaining five games, they will finish at 90 points. They are winless from the last four games and they have to put on their best version because a couple of games are tricky like Chelsea and Brighton. Brighton are the side that will face both Arsenal and Man City. Arsenal can hope for an upset from the Seagulls and they have the ability to achieve this.

City travel to Fulham, Brentford, Brighton and Everton while they will be hosting West Ham United, Leeds United and Chelsea. It does not seem that City have any big thorn on their way to the summit.

However, the one thing that Arsenal could be hopeful about is how the Premier League has a history of not being decided till the final whistle of the final match of the league gets blown and that City have a tough schedule in the coming weeks as they face Real Madrid in the Champions League semifinals. But given the depth that Guardiola has in his squad, rotating the squad and still maintaining top gear seems to be the least of the worries for City, who boast a 49-goal (all competitions) Erling Haaland.

Arsenal can only do is focus on winning their last five games and leave it on Man City. If glory is written then it will automatically find a way to reach the Emirates.



Wednesday could have been one of those rare days when Manchester City triumphed and Erling Haaland did not make it into the scoresheet. But the Norwegian would not let that happen as he set a new record of 33 Premier League goals in a 38-game season deep into stoppage time to take his tally in all competitions for the campaign to 49. Haaland's late goal in City's 4-1 victory over Arsenal saw him surpass Mohamed Salah, who held the record for most goals in a 38-game Premier League season with 32 strikes in the 2017-18 season for Liverpool. With seven league games remaining, Haaland requires just two more goals to have the record outright by surpassing the joint record by Andrew Cole and Alan Shearer of 34 goals in 1993/94 and 1994/95 respectively, when the season comprised of 42 matches.

PHOTO: MANCHESTER CITY

‘Have to understand how much the team requires Riyadh’

SPORTS REPORTER

Having performed various roles with the national side over the years, Abahani coach and BCB director Khaled Mahmud has seen a change of seasons, changes in thoughts, colours and perceptions in and around the national team more than most.

However, he felt it was not curious that Mahmudullah Riyad was out of national-team contention with it being a World Cup year, fueling the media's speculation about whether the end of Riyad's international career had arrived.

Mahmudullah has not exactly shined with his performances in this year's Dhaka Premier League, scoring 284 runs at an average of 28.40 and a strike-rate of 88.47 in 11 outings for Mohammedan.

"I am not in the national set-up, so I don't know about the planning. Of course, Riyad is a very important player and has been witness to many performances and won many matches. But honestly, though I am not involved with the team, personally I don't see him in the World Cup team at the moment. Because if he was, he would have featured in recent series. There are not many days left until the World Cup," Mahmud said yesterday.

BCB president Nazmul Hassan had said after the England series that some players were to be 'rested' so new players could be tried in a bid to increase the pool of talent

Overall, we have to understand how much the team requires him [Mahmudullah Riyad] under the current circumstances or if his replacements are performing. If the team is satisfied [right now], Riyad will have less of an opportunity.

KHALED MAHMUD SUJON
BANGLADESH CRICKET BOARD (BCB) DIRECTOR
on Mahmudullah Riyad's chances
of earning his place back into the side.

for the World Cup.

Towhid Hridoy and Rony Talukdar came in to the side along with Yasir Ali, with Rony replacing the injured Zakir Hasan. Unable to get a game, Alif Hossain too faced the drop in the Ireland series.

There have been key performances especially from Hridoy and Mushfiqur Rahim, who found a new lease of life batting at number six.

For a major chunk of his career, Riyad had to perform the role of a finisher. If the team management was looking for options in that role, they are finding them.

Riyad's approach, despite crucial

knocks, did not impress due to the lack of consistency in terms of the approach the team required. Mahmud spoke of Riyad being able to fare well in the DPL's Super League stage, but more importantly, pondered whether the national team needed his services.

"Riyad batted at an important position, where you can become hero or zero. He got a taste of both. There have been matches where he single-handedly won Bangladesh the game. Overall, we have to understand how much the team requires him under current circumstances and whether his replacements are performing. If the team is satisfied, Riyad will have less of an opportunity.

"But if that doesn't happen, we all believe he is an experienced cricketer who, if backed, can perform. There is still time and it's not like Riyad is completely out," he opined.

He opined that it would be a mistake to suddenly call Riyad up before the World Cup, saying that if he was in the team's plans then the idea should have been to give him matches.

It has been communicated to Alif what is required of him for him to get into the team, but was the same done for Riyad? Mahmud does not know, but believed that players deserve a healthy exit and that if it had been explained to Riyad, the player would understand.

Junior hockey team to play 10 matches in India

SPORTS REPORTER

Keeping their sights on a berth in the FIH Junior World Cup, the Bangladesh U-21 national hockey team are all set for extended preparations in India before heading to Oman to participate in the Junior Asia Cup, scheduled to get underway from May 23.

Mamunur Rashid's charges are expected to play 10 practice matches against teams from Haryana and Jalandhar as well as academies and universities during an 18-day stay.

The team was scheduled to cross the Benapole border today after starting their journey from Dhaka last night. They will then catch a train to Delhi before travelling to Haryana by bus.

The circuitous journey was a talking point of yesterday's press conference at the Bangladesh Hockey Federation.

"I think the journey will not have any impact on performance during their preparations in India because the journey is now more comfortable than before," head coach Rashid said.

"There is no scope for a luxurious trip given the country's economic condition. We see no problem sending them to India via bus and train. Besides, we don't have any sponsors at the moment. We, the officials together, are sending the team to prepare in India," said BHF general secretary AKM Mominul Haque Shaeed.

Bangladesh have been drawn in Pool B alongside Malaysia, South Korea, Uzbekistan and hosts Oman in the Junior Asia Cup. The team's target is to finish second in their pool and ensure a semifinals berth. That would also clinch a spot in the FIH Junior World Cup.

"The opening match against Oman is very important. We need a winning start and we then have to beat South Korea to meet our target because Malaysia are currently a very strong side," Rashid added.

Ceferin lays bare UEFA's pretense

AGENCIES

UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin has admitted that his organisation "pretend" that at least one club playing in UEFA competitions does not share the same owners, although one entity owning more than one club is not in contradiction to any rules.

The complication, according to UEFA's laws, arises when two clubs owned by the same entity are participating in the same competition, such as the Champions League. Speaking on the football podcast Men In Blazers, Ceferin said: "For now we are just discussing it. There are clubs – or at least one – where we still pretend it's not the same owner [as another] but it's the same owner, and I will not tell you which. You can guess.

"One or two of those potential bidders for another club said to me, 'Look we have, like, 250 companies. We can do it [the takeover] from another company but we don't want to do that. Because it's us. We can circumvent the rules'. They don't want to do it. So we have to discuss things.

"You can be an owner of two, three, four, five clubs. That is not a problem for UEFA. The problem is you cannot play in the same competition."

Match scenario simulations THE FOCUS IN SYLHET

SPORTS REPORTER

The first day of the closed-door training camp of the Bangladesh cricket team under head coach Chandika Hathurusingha was focused on adapting to match scenarios at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium yesterday.

Liton Das and Mustafizur Rahman, who are playing in the Indian Premier League, were two of the absentees while Shakib Al Hasan is away on a break. However, the other remaining members of the squad sweated it out in the training session.

The access to cover the training session for the media was limited to just 30 minutes. The Tigers worked on specific areas keeping in mind the upcoming ODI series against Ireland in the United Kingdom next month.

Hathurusingha and the team management opted to hold the camp in Sylhet bearing in mind the relatively bouncy tracks which are similar to what the Tigers are expected to face in Chelmsford, England.

Pacer Mritunjay Chowdhury, who is the only new face in the Bangladesh squad, reiterated that aspect of settling the camp in Sylhet could help the Tigers as the pitches there have a reputation of offering adequate

bounce for preparation. The left-arm seamer also pointed out that there are still many areas the visitors will need to adjust in England.

"Look, as you said, the pitches in England are bouncy. So in that context, the pitches in Sylhet have a reputation [of being similar to the ones in England]. We practised today [yesterday] and there was bounce on the surface which might help us a bit to prepare for England. But it won't help entirely since it's not possible to have exactly the same pitches here. But so far, it went well for us," Mritunjay told the media yesterday.

The 21-year-old went on to elaborate on the activities done on the first day of the training camp, revealing that the batters, in particular, were given specific tasks during the session, with an onus on the batting in the first 10 overs and at the back-end of the innings.

"Today's [Thursday] practice session was about training within match situations; How to play in the first 10 overs and to play in the back end of the innings. The batters went according to their batting orders, and according to the plans assigned, and those who came later down the order were instructed to hit. We only tried to adjust with the match scenario today," he said.



Lionel Messi, whose contract at PSG is due to expire in June, returned to training for the Parisians on Wednesday following a sojourn in Barcelona with his family. Even though Messi's entourage made it clear that his trip had nothing to do with his possible return to Barcelona, it did fuel speculations as it remains unclear as to where he will be playing his football next season.

PHOTO: PSG



REFUGEE CAMPS

Teletalk SIMs for Rohingya families likely

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rohingya refugees would soon be able to purchase Teletalk SIM cards as part of the government's efforts to bridle the 'growing criminal tendencies' among the displaced Myanmar citizens and bring them under Bangladeshi network coverage.

At present, the displaced Myanmar citizens use SIMs of two or three operators from Myanmar and Bangladesh, which are obtained by registering illegally under local people.

Crime is increasing every day among the Rohingya community and they use mobile phones for various activities including drug trade, kidnapping and human trafficking, said the representative of police in the meeting.

As the refugees use SIMs of foreign mobile operators, it makes tracking their movements difficult for law enforcement agencies.

So, it is necessary to bring the refugees under local network coverage and stop using Myanmar SIM, as per the decision of the first meeting of the committee to formulate recommendations about the sale of SIM cards to displaced Myanmar citizens in the Rohingya camp.

Every Rohingya family would get a SIM each, according to the minutes of the meeting, which was presided by Abu Hena Mostofa Zaman, joint secretary of the public security division. The meeting took place last month.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



KINGS OF THE SKY ... With talons neatly tucked in, a black kite soars above the cricketing grounds in the capital's Mirpur. Black kites, known as "cheel" in Bangla, are one of the most commonly sighted birds in the country. The medium-sized diurnal birds of prey can be found on almost every continent, with the current global population estimated at six million individuals. Opportunistic hunters and scavengers, they are known to be attracted to fires and smoke, where they can find escaping prey such as other birds, rodents, bats, etc. It is believed that kites sometimes even help spread fire by dropping burning twigs to flush out potential prey! With large numbers across South Asia, these birds have evolved and become accustomed to living in bustling cities. With wingspans ranging from 120-155cm, watching black kites glide across the sky for hours is quite the visual treat.

PHOTO: **FIROZ AHMED**

SEE PAGE 6 COL 7

‘Don’t know if I’ll be alive till then’

Says Bangladeshi tailor in Sudan awaiting evacuation



MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

It was raining bullets for most of two days near the shop in Khartoum where Monowar Hossain works. He was stuck inside the shop for three days.

Then there was a 10-minute calm before the 72-hour ceasefire was announced around midnight on Monday.

Monowar and along with four others had to take advantage of the lull and get out of the area or else risk getting stuck there again.

They went to a building around two hours away on foot as there were no vehicles around.

Speaking to The Daily Star over phone yesterday, the Bangladeshi expatriate said they have been stuck in the building for three days. The fighting intensified over the previous day and a half.

The 39-year-old went to Sudan in June last year to work in a tailor's shop.

"Soon after the fighting broke out, the country became lawless. Stealing, killing, and extortion are rampant. Even food was snatched away. There are

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

AC SYSTEM FAILURE

Cardiac surgeries halted for days at NICVD

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN

Cardiac surgeries have been halted for at least 10 days at the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD) for failure of the air conditioning system at the intensive care units.

As a result, many patients, mostly from the low-income groups and in dire need of intervention, have been suffering.

A lack of coordination between the hospital authorities and the Public Works Department (PWD), which is responsible for the maintenance of the AC system, is prolonging the situation, according to multiple high officials.

They said that on average, around five cardiac surgeries are done every day at NICVD, the country's premier hospital for cardiovascular diseases.

The hospital accommodates 1,200 indoor patients at a time against its 800-bed capacity and has two ICUs with a total of 48 beds.

Patients often require intensive care for 3-7 days following a surgery.

Speaking to The Daily Star yesterday, Prof Dr Monzurul Alam, head of the hospital's cardiac surgery department, said, "The AC system failure has been causing a temperature imbalance at the ICU, which is resulting in hospital acquired infections among patients. So, we had to stop surgeries from April 18."

ICU workers said they had noticed issues with the AC system at the beginning of the

month and informed the hospital director, who then asked the PWD to take necessary steps.

"In response, the PWD asked us to evacuate the ICUs. We completed evacuation targeting the Eid holidays. However, even after the holidays ended, PWD could not yet start working to fix the AC system," Alam said.

"We usually use the 3-4 days of Eid holidays for disinfection purposes at the ICUs. This involves both evacuation and halting of surgeries. We wanted to use the same amount of time for the repair work, but it is now being prolonged,"

Dr Mir Jamal Uddin, director of NICVD, highlighted three reasons behind the suspension of surgeries -- AC system failure; routine disinfection work during Eid holidays; and the time sought by the PWD.

Somiron Mistry, executive engineer of PWD, yesterday told The Daily Star, "Our team will start repairing the system on Saturday and it will be done within 3-4 days."

Asked about the delay, he said, "The procurement of the necessary equipment was not possible amid Eid holidays."

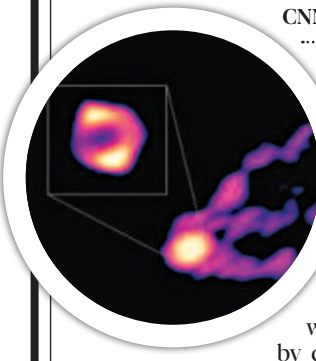
A visit to the surgery unit of the NICVD showed most beds were empty. Meanwhile, several patients said they had been waiting for their surgeries.

"I need a valve implant and I don't know when it will be done," Asadul Islam, a 35-year-old cardiac patient said.

"The reasons behind suspension of surgeries are AC system failure; disinfection during Eid holidays; and time sought by the PWD."

Black hole image reveals powerful jet of material

CNN ONLINE



Astronomers have captured for the first time the shadow of a black hole and the powerful jet of material emerging from it in a newly released image.

The supermassive black hole is at the center of the galaxy Messier 87, or M87. The observations were initially made in 2018 by combining the capabilities of multiple telescopes.

The new image and an accompanying research paper were published Wednesday in the journal Nature.

The groundbreaking image can help astronomers gain more insight into how black holes behave and what enables them to launch energetic jets of material across the universe.

The Atacama Large Millimeter/submillimeter Array in Chile, the Greenland Telescope and the Global Millimetre VLBI Array of telescopes across Europe and North America worked together to create a virtual Earth-size telescope and peer into the heart of M87, located 55 million light-years away.

The black hole at M87's galactic center is 6.5 billion times more massive than the sun.

"We know that jets are ejected from the region surrounding black holes, but we still do not fully understand how this actually happens. To study this directly we need to observe the origin of the jet as close as possible to the black hole," said lead study author Ru-Sen Lu, astronomer at the Shanghai Astronomical Observatory in China, in a statement.

BARISHAL CITY POLLS

Islami Andolon names its candidate

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Islami Andolon Bangladesh has nominated its senior leader Syed Muhammad Faizul Karim to run for mayor in Barishal.

The party founded by late Fazlul Karim, popularly known as Charmonai Pir, announced the decision during a press conference at Charmonai madrasa in Barishal yesterday afternoon.

"I want to send the government the message that if you try to grab power through some other means in the city polls, this will be the beginning of the end," said the mayor nominee, also the senior nayebe-amir, the second highest leader, of the party.

Kamrul Ahsan Rupon, son of BNP leader and former mayor Ahsan Habib Kamal, is also running for mayor.

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Dumping of waste and sewage into the Ramchandrapur canal goes on unchecked in the capital's Adabor. A makeshift bridge is the only crossing over the water body for the locals. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: **RASHED SHUMON**

US slaps more sanctions on Russia, Iran

AFP, Washington

The United States added new sanctions on Russia's FSB intelligence agency and Iran's Revolutionary Guard yesterday for taking "hostage" Americans like a Wall Street Journal reporter arrested in Russia last month.

The US is "showing that one cannot engage in this sort of awful behavior of using human beings as pawns, as bargaining chips, without paying consequences," said a senior US official.

Both agencies have already been hit with punitive measures by the US State and Treasury Departments in the past.

But the official said the new sanctions would underscore the US view of what he described as an increasing phenomenon of governments detaining foreign nationals to extract political benefits.

"The use of human beings as political pawns, as bargaining chips, detained by governments but on false pretenses, is a practice that seems to be trending in the wrong direction," the official said.

Applying sanctions aims "to promote accountability for the culprits, and by doing so, to prevent and deter the next set of cases from arising in the first place," the official said.

The sanctions came a month after Russia detained Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich, charging him with spying.