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16 PAGES PLUS LIFE STYLE : Tk 15.00

Polls-time govt a possibility but without BNP

PM again rules out dialogue

Govt has no objection to BNP's movement but violence won't be tolerated

Age limit for entering govt jobs won't rise

Not too many reasons to be worried about forex reserves



Fishermen in Cox's Bazar's Najirartek beach ready their boats to go back out to sea, a day after Cyclone Mocha made its landfall on the Myanmar coast and the impacts are over. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: MOKAMMEL SHUVO



AL expels Zahangir

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Suspended mayor of Gazipur City Corporation Zahangir Alam has been permanently expelled from the ruling Awami League, said a party press release yesterday.

"Awami League's central executive committee expelled Zahangir permanently as per the party charter. It will come into effect immediately," read the release signed by Biplab Barua, AL office secretary.

The decision came a day after a secretary-level meeting of the ruling party, with General Secretary Obaidul Quader in the chair, recommended expelling Zahangir from the party.

Zahangir, who was elected Gazipur mayor in 2018 on AL ticket, also became the general secretary of the party's Gazipur city unit.

On November 19, 2021, he was expelled from the party after he was heard in a viral footage making derogatory remarks on Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and questioning the number of the Liberation War martyrs.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

STAR REPORT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said an election-time government can be formed with the parties having representation in parliament, although the next general election will be held following the Westminster-style of democracy in Britain.

"We will hold the election like it is conducted in Britain ... We can show our generosity if any MP from the political parties having representation in parliament expresses the desire to join the election-time government. We are ready to welcome them," she said.

Hasina was addressing a press conference at the Gono Bhaban yesterday afternoon. The event was organised to brief the media about the outcome of her recent visits to Japan, the US, and the UK, reports BSS.

Mentioning that the Awami League showed such generosity previously, the premier said BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia was asked to give the name of her party's representative for the polls-time government ahead of the 2014 national election, but the BNP did not.

"They [BNP] are not in parliament now. There is nothing to think about," she said.

All seven BNP MPs resigned from the Jatiya Sangsad in December last year as part of the party's anti-government movement.

Asked if the government would hold any talks with those political parties who are now waging an anti-government movement, the premier said, "Why would we call them to talks? Their demands are not clear."

Talking about the US dollar crisis, Hasina said the crisis is not only in SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Govt calls off addl security for 6 envoys

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The government has withdrawn additional security given to the ambassadors and high commissioners of India, China, Australia, Saudi Arabia and the US and UK, saying that the security situation in the country is "very satisfactory" and that there is a shortage of police personnel.

"Recently, a number of embassies have demanded additional security. We have decided not to extend this service to any," Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen told The Daily Star yesterday.

He, however, said if any embassy wants it, it can avail itself of such SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Reforms must address rising inequality

Speakers tell dialogue on upcoming budget

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government should adjust economic reforms in such a way so that inequality is reined in, said speakers at a dialogue organised by the Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh.

The dialogue was organised to stress that concerns of the disadvantaged should be addressed in the upcoming national budget. It is the first budget after the IMF started disbursing funds under its \$4.7 billion loan programme for Bangladesh.

The IMF has attached several conditions for the loan. Debapriya Bhattacharya, a

distinguished fellow of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), said most of the reform measures built into the IMF loan were overdue. "The government should have carried out these reforms on its own."

He said numerous studies, including ones by the IMF, have consistently showed that inequality tends to rise during IMF programmes or as a result of IMF conditions.

He suggested that if the government calibrated the IMF conditions in a proper way, inequality could be contained.

"For example, the IMF has SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



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Two held for rape attempt on JU student

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

Two men were arrested on charge of attempting to rape a Jahangirnagar University student at her house near the campus early yesterday.

The victim filed a case against them with Ashulia Police Station in this connection, SM Kamruzzaman, officer-in-charge of the police station, told The Daily Star.

The arrestees are Rakib Hossain, a resident of Pallabi area in Dhaka, and Mezbah Uddin, of the capital's Baridhara area. They are under 30 years old and are not students of the university, police said.

The incident took place around 12:30am at the student's rented flat near the university campus, according to the case statement.

Rakib and Mezbah had earlier been introduced to the victim by another student, and they were at her flat on Sunday night, said statement.

As the victim was sleeping in her room, Rakib tried to rape her with the help of Mezbah. The victim over phone called students at the university who rushed there and rescued her. They also held the two and took them to the campus, the statement added.

The JU proctorial team then handed them over to Ashulia police.

Mohibur Rouf, an assistant proctor, said the incident took place outside the campus.

A Dhaka court sent the two to jail.

IMRAN KHAN'S RELEASE

Govt supporters call for Pak top judge to quit

AGENCIES

Several thousand pro-government protesters yesterday demanded the resignation of Pakistan's top judge for releasing Imran Khan last week, as the former prime minister went back to court facing yet more legal cases.

Khan, who was ousted from power last April, was arrested last Tuesday following months of simmering political crisis, prompting his voters to rampage through cities.

His arrest was declared unlawful by the Supreme Court's chief justice and Khan was later released and granted various bail applications, reports AFP.

"The chief justice and a few of his cronies are disgracing the judiciary like never before. Their justice seems to be serving one leader only," said Malik Hassam Mehmood, a 36-year-old trader and supporter of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's party.



PHOTO: AFP

Smoke billows in the distance in Khartoum, Sudan amid ongoing fighting between the forces of two rival generals yesterday.

BANGLADESH'S INDO-PACIFIC OUTLOOK

Canberra lauds Dhaka

Australian assistant minister says his country eyes int'l rule-based Indo-Pacific

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Australia said it wants an Indo-Pacific region where "no country dominates or is dominated" by others.

Tim Watts, assistant minister for foreign affairs of Australia, lauded Bangladesh's Indo-Pacific Outlook, saying that he particularly liked Dhaka's argument for an "inclusive region", a concept he said is also shared by Australia.

"Australia's vision in the Indo-Pacific is having a prosperous and resilient region governed by international rules, strategic equilibrium, sovereignty and where ... no country dominates or is dominated," said Watts.

He made the comments while in discussion with a select group of journalists on Sunday after attending the Indian Ocean Conference on May 12-13. On the sidelines, he also held a bilateral meeting with State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam.

Asked, he said Australia is eager to enhance security cooperation with Bangladesh, adding that Australia has recently sent a defence adviser to Dhaka as part of its goal to enhance maritime security cooperation.

"Strategic equilibrium" is important in the region, he added.

The bilateral trade between Bangladesh

and Australia is \$3.6 billion and the signing of the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement last year means the Australian investment in Bangladesh will grow in the coming days, Watts said.

He said potential areas of growth are agriculture, education, vocational training and energy. Bangladesh also imports cotton from Australia, which supports the RMG sector in Bangladesh.

Watts said Australia is a "trusted and reliable" energy supplier to many countries around the world. Amid the global green economy and clean energy push, Australia is aiming to become a renewable energy superpower, he said.

Watts said they believe that Australia has the required solar and wind power resources and space to generate enormous renewable energy that can be exported to Bangladesh and other countries in the Indo-Pacific region.

"We are aiming to help Bangladesh meet its green energy needs."

Prime Minister's Energy Adviser Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury has recently visited Australia to evaluate the potential for exports of renewable energy and green hydrogen.

"I think that the visit is a good indicator of the potential for further cooperation between Australia and Bangladesh," Watts said.

US won't comment on participatory polls in Bangladesh

BSS, Dhaka

The US is not concerned about participation of any particular party in Bangladesh's next elections but it wants the polls to be fair and held in a congenial environment, a senior visiting State Department official said.

"We are not making a comment on whether or not elections are participatory, more we are focused on electoral environment (in Bangladesh)," US Deputy Assistant Secretary Afreen Akhter told BSS diplomatic correspondent Tanzim Anwar on Saturday in the capital.

She added, "Ultimately it is up to (political) parties themselves to decide" if they would participate in the elections and "again we are not commenting whether it (requires to be) participatory".

The senior US diplomat said her country was not interfering or weighing in with any particular party or candidate though they were working to support the electoral environment here.

Akhter's comments came as asked if BNP or any other particular party's election participation would concern Washington.

"Let me emphasize that the US does not support any political party, any candidate, any individual," Akhter said adding that they were not seeking to mediate the election either.

Polls-time govt a possibility

FROM PAGE 1

Bangladesh, but across the world.

"There is no serious crisis [of dollar in Bangladesh]. During the BNP's rule in 2006, the country had forex reserves of only \$0.744 billion. But now we have \$31.22 billion."

She said the IMF provided a loan to Bangladesh as the country has the capability to repay it and the country's economy has not become weak.

Asked if there was any reason to be afraid of following her statement that the government won't buy anything from those countries who imposed sanctions, the PM said, "I made a decision in this regard and told the finance and planning ministries to include a clause [in the related rules] stating that we won't buy anything from those who would impose sanctions. What is to be afraid of regarding this?"

The AL chief said they will make a declaration on developing "Smart Bangladesh" in the party's next election manifesto.

She said her success is that she has been able to turn the country into a developing one. However, those who opposed the country's independence, and killed Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman won't like it, the PM added.

Hasina said she would take part in the next election because she couldn't

complete the process of turning the country into a developing nation by 2024 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. "I hope to make it happen by 2026."

The AL president said she has been working for the welfare of the people.

Responding to a question about announcing dearness allowance for journalists, the premier said she has a special feeling for journalists as her father worked as a journalist for some time, reports UNB.

She said her government granted permission to a number of private television channels and newspapers aiming to create employment for journalists and ensure their betterment.

Hasina said her government in 2015 announced that dearness allowance would be given to the government employees every year considering the increased inflation.

She said the government can do it for its employees, but the newspapers and TV channels are being run under private ownerships.

The PM hoped that the owners of the media outlets would take necessary measures to this end.

Hasina expressed gratefulness to Allah for saving Bangladesh from Cyclone Mocha. She said her government had taken adequate preparations to minimise damage.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader, Planning Minister Abdul Mannan, AL presidium members Matia Chowdhury, Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim and Mosharraf Hossain, and PM's Private Industry and Investment Adviser Salman Fazlur Rahman were present at the press conference, moderated by PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim.

Hasina returned home from London on May 9 wrapping up her 15-day visit to Japan, the US, and the UK.

AL expels Zahangir

FROM PAGE 1

Seven days after his expulsion, the government suspended him as the GCC mayor. The ruling party, however, granted him amnesty on January 21 this year on condition that any further violation of organisational rules by him would be deemed unforgivable.

Ignoring the party directive, Zahangir decided to run for the Gazipur city polls to be held on May 25 against AL candidate Azamat Ullah Khan.

The Election Commission cancelled his nomination as Zahangir was a defaulter as a loan guarantor. Now he is campaigning for his mother Zaida Khatun, an independent mayoral candidate.

security.

Meanwhile, Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner Khandker Golam Faruq said the envoys who have been obtaining extra police protection when they move will be provided with Ansar members instead of police personnel.

"We have decided to deploy Ansar members, instead of police, when they move, as we have a manpower crisis. We will ensure protection through the Ansar members," he told this newspaper yesterday.

Faruq said this is not weakening of their security. The police personnel deployed for the security of embassies

and high commissions will remain the same.

Asked about it, the US embassy in Dhaka said that in accordance with a longstanding policy, they do not disclose security details concerning the embassy.

"The safety and security of our diplomatic personnel and facilities are of the utmost importance. As per the Vienna Convention, the host country must uphold its obligations to ensure the protection of all diplomatic missions and personnel," said Sean J McIntosh, US embassy counsellor for public affairs.

Reforms must address rising inequality

FROM PAGE 1

recommended flexible interest rates targeting monetary policy modernisation, which we are also in favour of."

But specialised and subsidised credit schemes for the disadvantaged such as those involved in agriculture and MCSMEs, and women and youth should be continued.

Besides, the IMF's loan conditions call for a reduction in tax exemption. But tax exemption rationalisation should be done through an open and transparent process and with consultations with stakeholders so that industries, particularly Small and Medium Enterprises, do not suffer, he added.

According to the noted economist, inequality in rural areas declined slightly because of the positive impact of non-farm activities, agricultural output, and social safety net programmes.

"On the other hand, urban inequality increased significantly..." he said.

Urban inequality has been fuelled by rural-urban migration, said Debapriya.

He suggested that the government implement IMF programme-stipulated reforms and policy steps by taking the inequality concerns into cognisance and in consultation with the disadvantaged.

"When the IMF goes to a country with their programme, it establishes a singular authority over economic management," he said.

"Recently I have said the budget has now become an orphan and the IMF has become its foster father."

Speakers at the dialogue held at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre also said the government should increase the budget allocation for disadvantaged groups and resources must be

allocated based on their priorities.

The disadvantaged groups, including climate-vulnerable people, Dalits, children, domestic workers, indigenous and ethnic groups, and micro, cottage, small and medium enterprises, should get priority in the budget allocation.

People with disabilities, migrant workers who have returned home from abroad, senior citizens, transgender people, people of the Urdu-speaking community, women, and youths should also get increased allocations, they said.

The budget should lay proper emphasis on agriculture, climate change and environment, education, skill development, entrepreneurship, and mental health.

Debapriya said, "Disaggregated data of allocations for these groups and sectors should be well presented to make the budget allocations and delivery visible for transparency and accountability."

At the dialogue, Planning Minister MA Mannan said the government should change their mentality of having big cars and big houses. "Now austerity measures are in place in all fields."

"The truth is that the poor are deprived. I've seen how they're deprived. They are deprived for procedural reasons. The government allocations don't always reach them."

He said there are many tax evaders and defaulters in the country. "It's an old disease. ... but we admit that we are not trying enough," said Mannan.

The minister said many vested groups are here and they have been in an advantageous position for a long time. Taking action against them might put the government in trouble.

He said there is inflationary pressure in the country, but it decreased a bit last month and wages have slowly been rising.

Gas supply cut in parts of Mohammadpur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Titas Gas authorities suspended gas supply to six housing societies in the capital's Mohammadpur yesterday.

The action was taken against those on the list of having illegal connections and customers who had not paid their bills for a long time.

Dhaka Udyan, Chand Udyan, Nabinagar Housing, Chandrima Housing, Ekota Housing, and Turag Housing areas were on that list.

Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company Ltd issued a press release last night, but no officials were available for comment in this regard.

The release did not specify how long the supply would be suspended.

Mother, son found dead of apparent suicide

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Police recovered the hanging bodies of a woman and her three-year-old son from their residence in Bhairab upazila of Kishoreganj yesterday.

Jonaki Akter, 35, was the wife of an expatriate working in Italy Farhad Mia, and Alif Hossain was their only child, police said.

Bhairab Police Station OC Shah Alam Mollah said the bodies were sent to Kishoreganj General Hospital for autopsy.

Jonaki's family alleged that her in-laws put her through psychological abuse for dowry. Her in-laws fled the house after the incident.

Hearing on charge framing against Khaleda on June 15

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday set June 15 for the hearing on charge framing against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia in 11 cases filed in 2015.

Judge Md Asaduzzaman of Dhaka Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court adjourned the hearing and fixed the new date, said Additional Public Prosecutor Tapash Kumar Pal.

The adjournment came following petitions submitted by the defence citing different reasons. Khaleda, who is out of jail following an executive order from the government, is now unwell and staying at her Gulshan residence.

Ten of the 11 cases were filed in the first three months of 2015 over arson attacks, while the other one was filed with a Dhaka court on a charge of making seditious comments on freedom fighters and martyrs of the Liberation War.

Three corruption cases against Khaleda — Gatco, Niko and Boropukuria coalmine — are now pending with three other special courts in Dhaka.

Two more cases are pending with the Second Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court.

Govt calls off addl security

FROM PAGE 1

services in exchange for payment.

He added that police have already informed the embassies concerned of the government decision and also sought to know if they want the additional security on payment.

"We don't want to provide any embassies with additional security. However, general security will be ensured for them as per the rules," Momen said.

He added that no diplomat will be given additional security with the taxpayers' money. In no country, Bangladeshi ambassador gets such

"We need safe homes built for us and opportunities for employment."

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'The property belongs to govt'

SC on case filed over ownership of abandoned property worth Tk 300cr in Dhanmondi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court yesterday quashed a case filed by one S Nehal Ahmed who sought ownership of an abandoned property in Dhanmondi worth around Tk 300 crore.

Upholding an HC verdict which ruled that the government is the owner of the property, the court said it found forgery in documents submitted in support of the case.

The property is located at House-29 of Road-2 in Dhanmondi.

A three-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Hasan Foez Siddique delivered the order after hearing four petitions filed by Nehal Ahmed, a claimant of the property, and the government.

"It is being found from the documents that different signatures of the same person have been put in the papers prepared and submitted in one day to the court in connection with this case," the CJ told the lawyers for Nehal Ahmed during the hearing.

"The documents over the date of birth are also seen tampered. There is no signature and seal of the court of settlement in the relevant papers of the case. Why did such forgery take place? There must be a syndicate behind this," he added.

The apex court also affirmed the HC order that fined Tk 10,000 to journalist Abed Khan for claiming

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



In times of calamity, animals often fade into the background, but not for this little girl. In the aftermath of Cyclone Mocha, she tenderly holds her two beloved cats while her family tries to salvage whatever's left. This photo was taken in St Martin's Island yesterday. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



It may disrupt smooth LDC graduation

Hasina on climate-induced disasters

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said she feared that frequent climate-induced disasters may disrupt Bangladesh's smooth transition from LDC to a developing country.

"Climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction are, therefore, policy priorities of my government," she said.

The premier said this in her pre-recorded video speech that was played in the 79th Annual Session of the Economic and Social

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Dhaka facing over 600 MW of load shedding during daytime

UNB, Dhaka

Dhaka alone been experiencing more than 600 MW of load shedding during daytime.

According to official sources, like the previous few days, the country has been seeing over 2,000 MW of power shortage. As a result, consumers across the country are facing power outages for 6 to 7 hours at different times of the day.

"After evening, the situation will be deteriorating with the increase in demand," said a top official of the Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB). He pointed at gas shortage for the reason behind the lack in power supply.

"We have been getting a lower supply of gas that forced us to keep at least 25 generation units across the country shut," he said. BPDB receives a normal supply of gas. It can produce 6,500 MW of electricity from its gas-fired plants.

"We're now producing 4,667 MW because of gas shortage," he noted.

Meanwhile, Managing Director of Dhaka Electric Supply Company (Desco), Md Kausar Ameer Ali, said the area under them was experiencing 308 MW of load shedding during daytime. "Desco is receiving about 800 MW against a demand of 1,111 MW," he said.

Desco is entrusted with the distribution of electricity in Dhaka's north, north-west and eastern parts, while Dhaka Power Distribution Company (DPPC) is responsible for power supply in the south, south-east and central parts.

DPDC Managing Director Bikash Dewan said areas under DPDC has been experiencing a shortage of about 340 MW which might be up after the evening. DPDC has a demand of more than 1,600 MW and receiving 1,250 MW.

Meanwhile, State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources, Nasrul Hamid yesterday said that it will take two days to improve the power and gas supply situation in the country.

Will identify, demolish risky buildings

Rajuk chairman tells seminar on earthquake

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Local Government, Rural Development, and Cooperatives (LGRD) Minister Md Tazul Islam yesterday underscored the importance of constructing earthquake resilient infrastructures in the country.

"Numerous areas of Dhaka lack the necessary infrastructure and facilities to carry out post-earthquake rescue operations. It is imperative that we acknowledge this before it is too late," he said.

The minister was speaking at a seminar titled "Dhaka at earthquake risk, what the media should do", organised by the Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) at its auditorium.

He also highlighted the importance of wide roads and open spaces where people could seek shelter during the earthquake.

He said, "Our country is prone to earthquake, so even minor flaws during construction can result in a disaster."

Regarding unplanned development and infrastructure construction, the minister held everyone accountable and called for stronger roles from institutions responsible for overseeing structures to ensure compliance with the National Building Code.

He criticised companies that

deviate from the approved plans by Rajuk for financial gains. To address this issue, he proposed that Rajuk appoint a monitoring agency to oversee construction works.

Pointing out the lack of accountability in accidents such as the Rana Plaza collapse, the minister stressed the need to

three months, following which the city corporations would start demolishing those.

The seminar featured a keynote paper on earthquake risk reduction in Bangladesh, presented by Mehedi Ahmed Ansary, a professor at the department of civil engineering at Buet.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Construct earthquake resilient infrastructures

Build facilities for post earthquake rescue efforts

Increase accountability of authorities concerned

Establish monitoring agency to oversee construction works

ensure responsibility.

"While the building owner was arrested, the construction company responsible for the structure was not held accountable," he said.

He also emphasised the importance of creating a master plan for a well-planned Dhaka.

Rajuk Chairman Md Anisur Rahman Miah, a special guest at the seminar, announced that all risky buildings in Dhaka would be identified within the next

The event was presided over by Mursalin Nomani, president of DRU, and moderated by Tofazzel Hossain Rubel, the information technology and training affairs secretary of DRU.

Among others, former director general of fire service Brig Genl (ret'd) Ali Ahmed Khan, architect Iqbal Habib, and assistant professor of the institute of disaster management and vulnerability studies at Dhaka University Jewel Mia addressed the programme.

18 more get hospitalised with dengue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 18 dengue patients were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning.

With the new ones, the total number of dengue cases this year rose to 1,261, according to the DGHS.

Some 93 dengue patients are still undergoing treatment while the total number of deaths this year is 12 so far.

PRAYER TIMING
MAY 16Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-10 12-45 5-00 6-36 8-00
JAMAAT 4-45 1-15 5-15 6-40 8-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Participants of the World Human Rights Day Write-up Competition-2022 at the capital's The Daily Star Centre yesterday. The Law and Our Rights section of The Daily Star organised the event. Editor and Publisher of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam handed over certificates to the participants. PHOTO: STAR

PHOTO: STAR

HUMAN RIGHTS Star awards two best writers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Daily Star yesterday recognised two best writers on human rights and handed over certificates to participants of World Human Rights Day Write-up Competition-2022.

The Law and Our Rights section of The Daily Star has been organising the competition since 2017.

Tareq Hasan and Julian Rafah of Dhaka University were recognised as the best writers.

In November last year, the newspaper called for write-ups. Around 20 students, professionals, rights activists, and even others responded to the call.

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Postponed SSC exams to be held after May 23

Says Dipu Moni

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Education Minister Dipu Moni yesterday said the postponed SSC and equivalent examinations, which were scheduled for May 14 and 15, will be held after the theoretical examinations ends on May 23.

The education minister told reporters of the development while answering a question during a programme in the capital.

The SSC and equivalent exams were postponed due to cyclone Mocha.

'He tarnished Wasa's image' 3 employee orgs demand action against chairman for 'remarks in talk show'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three employee associations of Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) demanded immediate action against Wasa board Chairman Gholam Mostafa for what they claimed tarnished the image of the state-run agency.

In a letter sent to the local government ministry on May 11, Dhaka Wasa Sramik Union, Dhaka Wasa Engineers Association, and Dhaka Wasa Diploma Engineers Association said Mostafa tarnished Wasa's image through his remarks in a recent TV talk show.

According to the letter, the chairman said the Wasa board was virtually ineffective.

The board consisted of 13 members including Wasa Managing Director Taqsim A Khan, who has no voting rights. However, Taqsim never allowed any board meeting to happen in his absence, the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

DGDA meeting over drug price hike tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Directorate General of Drug Administration (DGDA) has called a meeting tomorrow with high-ups of different government agencies and business organisations to rein in the price hike of medicines and medical equipment, after a notice was issued by the Prime Minister's Office last Thursday.

The meeting will be held at the drug administration headquarters in Dhaka.

Additional Inspector General of Special Branch (Police), Director Generals of the Directorate of National Consumers' Right Protection and the National Security Intelligence, high ups from the PMO, health directorate, and the health ministry as well as representatives of business organisations will join the meeting, among others.

SALE OF INDUSTRIAL LIFT

One reputed industrial concern at Gazipur is looking for a potential bid for a fully operational Cargo Lift. The details of the lift are as below: Type: Cargo Elevator, Capacity: 1000 Kgs; Floor: G, 1, 2, 3; Motor: 15Kw (Hitachi Japan); Door Opening: W=2000mm, H:2100mm, Car Size: L=3000, W=3000, H2100mm; Car Door: Collapsible; Main Guide Rail: 4Pcs, Counter Guide Rail: 2Pcs; Shaft Size: 21500mm; Main Steel Rope: 4Pcs; Shaft height: 21500mm.

Table with 2 columns: S.N. and বিক্রয়/ক্রয়/সেবার বিবরণ. It lists details for the sale of industrial lift, including technical specifications and contact information for the seller, Mr. Ujjal.

Polls code

FROM PAGE 5 take legal action against those who continue to violate the rules by running campaigns.

In response to the warning, Anwaruzzaman stated that his campaign cell had not yet started their electoral campaign, and they had not printed any leaflets. He claimed that some supporters were running campaigns using the boat symbol and he would address the issue internally.

Babul claimed to be unaware of electoral rules and stated that he had not yet received the cautionary letter from the EC.

On the other hand, Mahmudul said to the best of his understanding, they were not violating electoral rules, as the leaflets he distributed were only intended as introductory materials to familiarise people with his candidacy.

Syed Kamal Hossain, staff officer (media relations) of the EC in Sylhet, confirmed that the RO had issued a warning letter to all mayoral candidates. He said the assistant returning officers were monitoring the situation on the field and would soon take legal action against any violation.

The property belongs

FROM PAGE 3 ownership before the HC by suppressing fact of his losing a legal battle in the court of settlement in a case over the same property, said DAG Kazi Mynul Hassan.

Details of the SC order could not be known as its full text was not released yet. On November 21 last year, the HC delivered verdict after holding hearing on two petitions filed by Abed Khan and the government.

DAG Mynul said owners of the land left country in 1972 and the then government took the possession of the land as an abandoned property.

Journalists Abed Khan, Toab Khan and eight others filed a case with the first settlement court claiming the ownership of the land in 1989. Abed and his brother said their father Abdul Hakim Khan had purchased the land.

The court delivered the

verdict in 1992 and rejected their claims.

At a stage of the legal battle, a man named S.Nehal lodged a case with the court in 1996 claiming the land's ownership. Interestingly, S.Nehal mentioned 1987 as the year of filing of the application in the case.

The court delivered the verdict in 1997 in favour of S.Nehal, said Mynul.

Abed filed a petition with the HC in 2015 for releasing the land from the list of abandoned properties in his favour. In the petition, Abed suppressed the information of the first settlement court verdict.

The suppression of fact appeared to the HC as fraud and fined Abed Tk 10,000.

The government filed a petition with the HC in 2018 challenging the 1997 verdict delivered by the court, Mynul said. The HC then delivered the verdict in favour of the government.

80 days

FROM PAGE 5 with the assistance of the higher authorities to avoid being arrested and then re-joined after receiving the go-ahead from the CID report.

THE FINAL REPORT In the final report, CID mentioned that after his release, Mustakim first went to Chattogram General Hospital for treatment, where the on-duty doctors suggested him go to Chattogram Medical College Hospital.

The report stated Mustakim said he did not go to CMCH fearing further police harassment. However, he submitted an outdoor patient ticket with the case documents, proving otherwise. Besides, Mustakim alleged that the OC kicked his mother at CMCH during the protest, which the CID report said was also not true.

Bangladesh Human Rights Foundation (BHRF) is providing legal support to Mustakim in court.

Advocate Zia Habib Ahasan of BHRF said, "According to the law, the complainant should be informed before any agency submits a final report. But in this case, he was not informed."

Mustakim could not be contacted for comments despite repeated attempts.

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World Health Organization Bangladesh REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) The World Health Organization in Bangladesh invites proposals/bids from the interested Companies in Bangladesh for the following service: 1. RFP/BAN/2023/014: Development of National guidelines on physical activity and sedentary behaviour in Bangladesh. Deadline for the submission of RFP: 14:00hrs, 30 May 2023.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার বিজ্ঞাপন বন কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয় সামাজিক বন বিভাগ, ফেনী www.forest.feni.gov.bd দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি ১৯-১৬ জুই ২০২৩-২০২৩ তারিখ ১৪/০৫/২০২৩

Will stand by mother

FROM PAGE 5 campaigning, mayoral candidates and their supporters reached out to voters in various areas of the town.

Zahangir's nomination was canceled by the Election Commission, citing him as a loan guarantor defaulter. As a result, he is currently campaigning on behalf of his mother.

Meanwhile, the electioneering efforts of both mayoral and councillor candidates are gaining momentum in Gazipur. On the seventh day of

It may disrupt smooth

FROM PAGE 3 adequate finance for climate-vulnerable developing countries, making trade facilitation measures, digital trade and IT-enabled services available in the developing countries and strengthening sub-regional cooperation.

"Let us join our hands to consolidate our partnership to fight against the perilous threats of Climate Change and make the world a safer and better place for our future generation," she said.

Star awards two best

FROM PAGE 3 Of them, two best write-ups were selected by a jury board, which were later published in the newspaper's special supplement of Law & Our Rights on December 9 last year.

At the event, Editor and Publisher of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam handed over certificates to the participants. "I have the highest respect for law. It is a very vital subject as it involved in every aspect of our life," he said.

To the participants, Mahfuz Anam said, "You must think about yourself, in which country you were born, at which historic era, at what culture you were born, and what is the heritage that you inherited."

"Your dream, your desire to evolve and your ambition is important to fulfill your potential," he added. "So you have to decide what you want to be."

Emraan Azad, in charge of the Law Desk at The Daily Star, moderated the programme.

PALLI KARMA-SAHAYAK FOUNDATION (PKSF)

PKSF Bhaban, E-4/B, Agargaon Administrative Area, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207 Phone: 88-02-222218331-33, 222218335-39, E-mail: sep.procure@gmail.com Website: www.pksf.org.bd

Memo No: 53.23.0000.013.34.001.23.4009 Date: 16 May 2023

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (CONSULTING SERVICES - FIRM SELECTION)

Country: The People's Republic of Bangladesh Name of the project: Sustainable Enterprise Project (SEP) Credit No.: IDA-6209

Assignment Title: Final Evaluation of the Sustainable Enterprise Project (SEP) Reference No. PKSF/SEP/S-06(R)

- 1. The Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF) has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the Sustainable Enterprise Project (SEP), and intends to apply part of the proceeds for consulting services. 2. The consulting services ("the Services") include (but not limited to) assessing the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact drawn from the design and implementation following the standard evaluation criteria, measuring the results level changes i.e., Project Development Objectives (PDOs) and Intermediaries Results Indicator (IRI), assessing the level of satisfaction of various categories of project participants with services provided by the project, and drawing lessons learned and good practices for replication and provide recommendations for continued project interventions and scaling it up etc.

The assignment will require an estimated of 23 professional staff-months and also non-key experts as per the assignment requirement mentioned in the Terms of Reference (TOR). The assignment is scheduled to be completed within a period of six (06) months and is expected to be started from August 2023.

The detailed Terms of Reference (TOR) for the assignment can be obtained from the PKSF website (www.pksf.org.bd/tender).

The Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF) now invites eligible consulting firms ("Consultants") to indicate their interest in providing the Services. Interested Consultants should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services. The shortlisting criteria are: General experience, Experience in similar assignments, Experience in conducting studies under multilateral development partner (The World Bank/ IFAD/ EU/ UN agencies) funded projects, and Financial Capability of the firm.

Consultants are requested to submit the following supporting documents in support of the above-mentioned criteria:

- a. Up-to-date relevant registration papers of the firm(s); b. JV agreement/letter of intent (if applicable) along with the proposed JV agreement; c. Firm's brochure including staffing; d. Audited financial reports for the last three (03) years (including turnover from consulting services and other activities, profit & loss, current asset & liability and fixed asset & liability); e. Relevant experience record of Last seven (07) years (including name of the assignment, nature, total cost of contract, total input in terms of man-month, employer, location of service etc.) f. All other items necessary to substantiate satisfaction of the shortlisting criteria listed above and/or included in the TOR; However, Key Experts will not be evaluated at the shortlisting stage; 5. The attention of interested Consultants is drawn to Section III, paragraphs, 3.14, 3.16, and 3.17 of the World Bank's "Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers" Nov 2020 setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest. 6. Consultants may associate with other firms to enhance their qualifications, but should indicate clearly whether the association is in the form of a joint venture and/or a sub-consultancy. In the case of a joint venture, all the partners in the joint venture shall be jointly and severally liable for the entire contract, if selected. In the case of an association, all members of such "association" should have real and well-defined inputs to the assignment and in such "association" it is preferable to limit the total number of firms including the associates to a maximum of 02 (Two). 7. A Consultant will be selected in accordance with the Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS) method set out in the World Bank Procurement Regulations. 8. Further information can be obtained at the address below either by e-mail or in person during office hours: 10:00 to 15:00 hours. 9. Expression of Interest (EOI) must be delivered in a written form (Hard copy along with a soft copy through flash-drive) to the address below (in person, or by courier mail) by 31 May 2023 on or before 13:00 hours. 10. The Procuring Entity (PE) reserves the right to accept or reject any or all EOIs without assigning any reason whatsoever.

AQM Golam Mawla Deputy Managing Director

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার জাতীয় বাতজ্বর ও হৃদরোগ নিয়ন্ত্রণ কেন্দ্র শের-ই-বাংলা নগর, ঢাকা-১২০৭ National Centre for Control of Rheumatic Fever and Heart Diseases Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207, Phone : 9123722-23, Fax : 9115481 Memo No. NCCRFHD/Tender/2023/323 Date:15/05/2023 e-Tender Notice This is an online Tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline/ Hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-tender, please register on e-GP system portal (https://www.eprocure.gov.bd). For more details, please contact support desk contract numbers. e-Tender are invited in e-GP system portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) by Dr. Neena Islam, Director, National Center for Control Of Rheumatic Fever & Heart Disease, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka for the Procurement of;

He tarnished

FROM PAGE 3 chairman was quoted as saying.

According to the letter, the chairman said, "Everything is done by bypassing the board. Dhaka Wasa is not functioning as per the Dhaka Wasa Act-1996. As a result, the board cannot enforce its authority."

Dhaka Wasa Sramik Union President Tasadduk Hossain and Engineers Association President Waz Uddin Wazed confirmed that they sent the letter to the ministry.

Abdur Rab Miah, president of Dhaka Wasa Diploma Engineers Association, declined to comment on the matter.

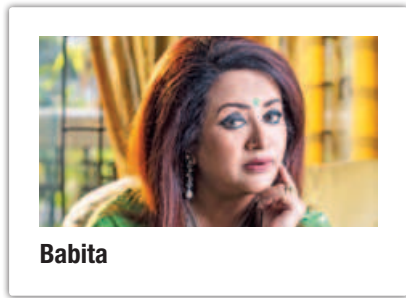
Contacted, Mostofa said, "None of the officials and employees of Wasa suffered damages due to my remarks. I believe no one from the agency filed the complaint against me on their own. They did it under pressure."

On October 30 last year, a section of the Wasa staff complained to the local government ministry against Mostafa, alleging that the chairman meddled in the daily and administrative affairs of Wasa.

'HIS LOSS IS IRREPAIRABLE'

Legends remember Bangla cinema's 'Mia Bhai', Farooque

He identified as a freedom fighter and a true patriot first, and an actor second. Akbar Hossain Pathan, known by his stage name Farooque, passed away yesterday at 8:30 am, leaving behind the cultural arena in grief. We reached out to some of his colleagues, who remember him fondly.



Babita

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

We created magic on screen: Babita

I met Farooque a long time ago. Although I had heard he was very moody, he was so friendly on set. He was dedicated to making scenes more beautiful and dialogues more impactful while shooting. We formed an excellent bond while working together.

The news of Farooque bhai's death ruined my morning. I never thought I would hear such devastating news.

Together we have made hit films like "Noyon Moni". We created magic on-



Uzzal

screen, which is why people still love our on-screen chemistry, even today.

We also did "Golapi Ekhn Trainee" together. This film received a lot of appreciation and reached the masses in our country. Now, these are all but memories.

Though Farooque may have left this world, his legacy lives on through the movies he starred in, which remain beloved by generations of Bangladeshis.

The nation mourns the loss of one of its greatest cinematic treasures, and his memory will continue to inspire and entertain for years to come.

Please pray for him: Alamgir

I am deeply hurt, I cannot say much. I will pray for his soul, I will pray that the Almighty forgives him. Once someone is gone, they never come back - and I will earnestly request my fellow



Alamgir

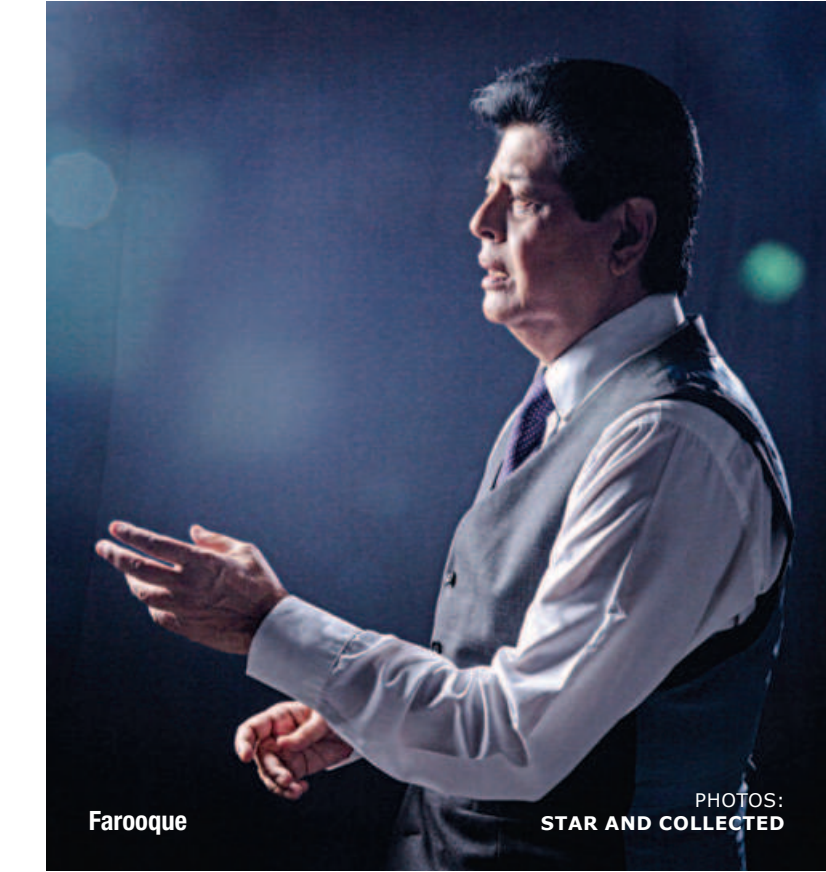
Bangladeshi people - please keep him in your thoughts and prayers. He was a good man, his contribution to the Bangladeshi film industry will never be forgotten, and neither will his love for the country.

Our 50-year friendship was priceless: Uzzal

Both Farooque and I have known each other before our independence, since 1970. We started our acting career in that same year. Farooque debuted with "Jolchhobi" while my first film was "Binimoy." Our friendship, which blossomed in the initial year of struggle turned into strong friendship, which lasted till his death. We had such strong



Rozina



Farooque

PHOTOS: STAR AND COLLECTED

love for each other, I just can't believe he is no longer with us.

Our friendship is like the golden era of Bangladeshi cinema - truly pure and priceless. We were both part of politics, but had completely different opinion. Nevertheless, this didn't affect us as our bond was too strong to be affected by it, we truly put ourselves before any arbitrary opinion.

We both had our offices in Kakrail, that too in the same building. Our rooms were nearby, and so we had many wonderful conversations there. We have talked about how we can improve our film industry, and reach out to more people. We even took part in organisations such as Shilpi Samity and Film producers association. We have dedicated our entire life to film industry.

Farooque and I used to address each other as 'tui', and never had to use the word 'apni' as our relationship was never formal.

The eighties were the best period of our life, and the most glorious period of the film industry. We gave our heart and soul for the sake of it. I can't believe he has left the world, leaving me alone to fend for myself. My heartiest condolence for the evergreen actor, and his family. May the Almighty bless him with eternal peace.

He was a brother to me: Rozina

We first acted in the film, "Chokher Moni", directed by Narayan Ghosh Mita. We collaborated on many popular films under his direction.

We shot the film on a cold winter night. However, Farooque bhai provided

me with all kinds of support to help me shoot in the harsh weather. He was not only a fellow artiste, but also a brother to me.

Apart from his talent as an actor, Farooque was also known for his bravery and love for Bangladesh, and its great leader, the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. He was not afraid to speak out against injustice, and was known for his simplicity.

We have so many memories together in this one life. They are making me nostalgic and melancholic now. I am still asking myself, is he really gone?

I will never get to call him 'Dulu' again: Sohel Rana

When I was a student of Dhaka University, Farooque was a first-year student of Jagannath College. I was involved in Central Chhatra League politics, while he was involved in College Chhatra League politics. Our relationship was developed while doing the politics based on the ideologies of Bangabandhu.

It's hard to believe that he is no more. He had great respect for me, and vice versa. He was very dear to me. Interestingly, many would not know that his nickname was Dulu. I used to



Sohel Rana

call him by that name.

He has given a lot to the industry. His bold dialogues in social cinema were well received by the audience. At this point, the news of his demise broke me mentally. Dulu, may you rest in peace, wherever you are.

COUNTRYWIDE

MOULVIBAZAR POWER SUB-STATION Construction work goes on at snail's pace

MINTU DESHWARA

Construction work of Moulvibazar 132/33 KV Grid Substation sees very slow progress, much to the inconvenience of the consumers.

Meanwhile, the earth filling work of the project has not been completed since the project started three years ago.

Construction of other infrastructures like control room and installation of transformers will be done after completion of the earth filling work.

According to the sources at the project site, the government decided to construct Moulvibazar 132/33 KV Grid Substation to provide uninterrupted power supply to Moulvibazar town and Srihatta Economic Zone and reduce load shedding.

In 2019, a total of over 5 acres of land was acquired at Raishree village in Sadar upazila for construction of the power substation, under the supervision of the ministry of power, energy and mineral resources.

Jointly funded by the governments of Bangladesh and China, the project is being implemented through the Power Grid Company of Bangladesh Limited (PGCB) and it is scheduled to be

completed by June 2025.

Local people said although the earth filling work of project started in 2021, only half of the work has been done so far.

According to Moulvibazar Electricity Development Board, there are about 30,000 electricity consumers in Moulvibazar town and its suburb areas while the demand of electricity is 14 MW.

Currently, electricity is being supplied in those areas through 40-kilometre-long Moulvibazar-Fenchuganj line and 28-kilometre-long Moulvibazar-Srimangal line.

But, those lines often get damaged even after a slight rain or wind. Taking this into consideration, the government has decided to construct a grid substation in Moulvibazar town.

Moulvibazar Electricity Development Board Executive Engineer Habibur Bahar said construction work of Moulvibazar 132/33 KV Grid Substation is going on slowly due to various complications. Even if the work is done at a faster speed now, it will take at least two and a half years to three years to complete the entire work, he said, adding that now we are worried about completing the work within the stipulated time.



Construction work of Moulvibazar 132/33 KV Grid Substation at Raishree village in Moulvibazar Sadar upazila is going on at a slow pace. PHOTO: STAR

The passing

FROM PAGE 12

Born in Old Dhaka in 1948, Farooque made his silver screen debut with the film "Jolchhobi" in 1971. He went on to win the hearts of millions across the nation with memorable performances in films like "Lathial", "Noyon Moni" and "Golapi Ekhn Train-E".

Throughout his five-decade-long career, he appeared in over 150 films, a majority of which earned incredible commercial success.

"Nagordola", "Shurjo Songram", "Ghor Jamai", "Matir Putul", and "Trishna" are just a few of those.

He was lovingly called "Mia Bhai" by fans and colleagues - derived from the Chashi Nazrul Islam film of the same name, in which he had acted.

Considered by many to be the one of the most prolific actors of his time, Farooque's acting prowess earned him the National Film Award for "Best Supporting Actor" in 1975.

In 2016, he was given the Lifetime Achievement Award.

Farooque was a devoted patriot with a rebellious spirit.

He was involved in the Six-point movement in 1966 and was also involved in the first resistance in Malitola after Operation Searchlight on March 25, 1971. He fought under guerilla legend "Nader Gunda".

In an earlier interview, when asked why he became a freedom fighter, Farooque had said, "I was once slapped by Pakistanis for speaking in Bangla when I was six years old. It was one of the worst things to have happened to me, and what later led me to join the Liberation War."

Successful in his political career, Farooque

was also the MP-elect from Dhaka-17 as a ruling-Awami League candidate in the 2018 elections.

After falling ill, Farooque was taken to Singapore's Mount Elizabeth Hospital on September 13, 2020. A month later, he was diagnosed with tuberculosis and returned to Dhaka after treatment.

In March 2021, he was taken back to Singapore and was admitted to the ICU. He remained in hospital for over two years for treatment, before passing away at 8:30am yesterday.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and President Mohammed Shahabuddin in separate condolence messages have expressed their sorrow at the actor's demise.

"His contributions in the film industry, as well as our politics, will never be forgotten," Hasina said in her statement.

Shahabuddin said, "This [Farooque's death] is an irreparable loss to the cultural sector of Bangladesh."

Farooque's body will be brought to Dhaka by air today, after which he will be taken to his Uttara home around 9:00am.

At 11:00am, his body will be taken to the Central Shaheed Minar for well-wishers and colleagues to pay their final respects.

His namaz-e-janaza will take place at the Bangladesh Film Development Corporation after Zuhr prayers.

His body will then be taken to Gulshan Azad Mosque for his second namaz-e-janaza and then he will be laid to rest in his hometown in Gazipur's Kaliganj.

The actor is survived by his wife Farhana Pathan, daughter Fariha Tabassum Hossain and son Rowshon Hossain Sharot.

JP doubtful of EC's control

FROM PAGE 12

the police neutral," Awal said. The CEC said that they have not faced any pressure from the government over any elections till now. Police also played a neutral role, he added.

"If they maintain such a neutral stance, it will be possible for the Election Commission to conduct elections in a better way."

Earlier, Mujibul told reporters that they were worried about whether the upcoming city polls would be free and fair.

He said it is the EC's responsibility to make

sure that no political party can have influence on the elections. The commission should also have to ensure that no candidate can take any advantage by using the administration and the voters can exercise their franchise freely, the JP leader added.

He said they told the EC that the JP mayor candidate in Barishal city had sent a letter to the CEC alleging that the returning officer was working in favour of the nominee of a particular political party. "[He [Jatiya Party candidate] sought withdrawal of the

returning officer."

Mujibul also said that the ruling Awami League mayor nominee in Sylhet city was violating the electoral code of conduct by seeking votes even before the start of the electioneering. "The CEC has assured us that the matter will be taken care of."

The CEC said that many allegations of breaching the electoral code of conduct are raised, but the EC cannot take all those into consideration. What matters to the commission at the end of the day is how the election is held, he added.

Cyclone Mocha

FROM PAGE 12

my family and I are living under the open sky," said Abdul Haque, a resident of the island.

People there are also suffering from an acute crisis of drinking water. Around 300 families of Jaliapara depend on a single deep tube well, which has been dysfunctional since Saturday morning due to load-shedding.

"We are now having to boil saline water to make it drinkable," said Laila Begum, of Jaliapara in Shahporir Dwp.

Visiting the area yesterday morning, a correspondent of The Daily Star saw many people busy

repairing their houses and shops.

They alleged that traders were overcharging them for the material needed for repair work, as the demands are now high after the cyclone.

Shafiqul Alam, of the same area, said, "I am trying to repair my partially-damaged grocery shop. Normally, we can buy 100 bamboo pieces for Tk 3,500, but the traders are now charging us Tk 5,000."

Trader Jafar Alam, however, denied the allegation and said the price hike was due to a crisis of bamboo.

Meanwhile, Saint

Martin's Island was still out of electricity till the filing of this report at 8:30pm last night, as electric cables and utility poles were damaged in the cyclone's impact, Mujibur Rahman, chairman of Saint Martin union parishad, said.

M u h a m m a d Shaheen Imran, deputy commissioner in Cox's Bazar, yesterday visited the island and handed over 1,000 sacks of rice as relief.

He also announced that cash and tin sheets will be distributed among the victims.

(Our Cox's Bazar and Chattogram correspondents contributed to the report.)

Conflict intensifies

FROM PAGE 12

the mayoral candidate and seeking votes for him.

Central Awami League leaders who hail from Barishal, including party advisory council member Amir Hossain Amu, presidium member Jahangir Kabir Nanak, Barishal Sadar constituency lawmaker and State Minister for Water Resources Colonel (ret'd) Zahid Faruk, were sidelined in the district politics

because of Sadiq and his father.

Now they are consolidating their grip on local politics, sources said.

About the current political situation of Barishal, senior AL leader in the city Tarun Chanda told The Daily Star that with this party nomination, a political polarisation has been made in Barishal. "In future, pro-Amu group will get political mileage while pro-Hasnat group will lag

behind."

Shah Sajeda, former convener of Sacheton Nagorik Committee, a platform of civil society member, said, "Barishal city dwellers are now out of the culture of fear that had long been prevailing in the city."

Meanwhile, pro-AL student body Chhatra League yesterday dissolved its convening committee for Barishal city Chhatra League.

Imran recalls Bangladesh liberation to slam Pak army

ANI, Islamabad

Former Pakistan prime minister and PTI chief Imran Khan while addressing the nation on Saturday night said people should understand atrocities committed in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh).

"Today, we should understand what happened in East Pakistan and the atrocities committed. The party there which won a majority and should have been Prime Minister, was denied their right," the PTI chief said.

"We lost half the country. We cannot imagine the damage done to the country. Because people make decisions behind closed doors, a handful of people that don't know how the rest of the world is operating, make decisions," Khan said.

The PTI chief further said: "They don't even allow people to assess the damage done because of their decisions. When the Hamoodur Commission Report was written, it was never published and after 25 years, it was published in India."

Khan said he wants to remind people about East Pakistan. He said it happened during his lifetime, in March 1971.

"I went to play a match in East Pakistan against the U-19 team. Ours was the last flight out of East Pakistan. I still remember the hate people had towards East Pakistan. We were ignorant of what was happening because the media was controlled as it is today. The difference is, we have social media today. And they shut down social media as well," Khan said.

"Because they wanted to promote their own narrative, that those protesting are rioters, they shut down social media, Facebook, Twitter, internet services. We can't imagine the damage to the country's economy. So, this is what happened in East Pakistan," he added.



A protester carries luggage symbolising Palestinians who fled or were expelled from their homes 75 years ago during a rally marking 'Nakba' day in the Ramallah city centre in the occupied West Bank yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

HOPEFUL ELECTION WINNER

Thai Senate could hold the key

REUTERS, Bangkok

Thailand's Move Forward party announced yesterday that it had sufficient votes to form a coalition government but a military-appointed Senate, the party's position on a royal insult law and a complaint against its leader may stand in the way.

Pita Limjareonrat, 42, led the Move Forward party to a stunning victory in Sunday's general election, winning the highest number of seats, ahead of another opposition party, the political heavyweight Pheu Thai.

The victory of the two opposition parties may pave the way to ending nearly 10 years of military-backed governments led by a former army chief, Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha, whose newly formed party won a small fraction of the seats that the opposition parties did.

"I am ready to become Thailand's 30th prime minister," Pita declared, explaining that his party and its five prospective coalition partners, including Pheu Thai, would secure 309 seats in the 500-seat lower house of parliament.

However, to be indisputably in a position to become prime minister he needs to be able to command a majority in a joint sitting of the bicameral legislature, which includes 250 members of a military-appointed Senate.

So he needs 376 members of a joint session to vote for him.

Reuters spoke to six senators to try to gauge the mood of the upper house. Some of them suggested they would not necessarily vote with the majority in parliament, even though that reflected the will of the people as expressed on Sunday.

Senator Somchai Sawangkarn said

his vote for who becomes prime minister would be based on his criteria and a lower-house majority alone was not sufficient.

"The person must be honest and not cause problems in the country," Somchai said.

"Hitler was elected in a majority but led the country to world war ... If there is a possibility of creating division in the country, I will not vote for them," he said. Another, Kittisak Rattanawaraha, said the next leader must be loyal to the nation, religion and king and not corrupt.

A polarising issue for Move Forward is its position on amending a strict royal insult law, which sets out a sentence of up to 15 years for defaming the monarchy.

Critics says conservative governments have used the law to stifle dissent but conservatives are fiercely opposed to any suggestion of amending it.

2024 LOK SABHA POLLS

Will support Congress where it is strong

Says Mamata Banerjee on opposition unity

NDTV ONLINE

West Bengal Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee yesterday said her party will support the Congress where it is strong in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. This is the first time that Mamata cleared the air on Trinamool's stand on a possible strategy for opposition unity in the electoral battle ahead. "Wherever the Congress is strong, let them fight. We will give them support, there is nothing wrong (in that). But they have to support other political parties also," Mamata told reporters at the state secretariat. However, to get support, Congress also has to back other parties, she said. The Trinamool chief also made it clear that she expected the seat-sharing formula to give priority to regional players in areas where they were strong. "Strong regional parties must be given priority," she said. Mamata had earlier saluted the people of Karnataka after the BJP lost power there while avoiding mention of the grand old party with which Trinamool has had run-ins in the past.

CAMBODIA ELECTIONS

Main opposition party excluded

AFP, Phnom Penh

Cambodia's election body yesterday refused to register the main opposition party and chief challenger to Prime Minister Hun Sen for upcoming national elections. The National Election Committee said in a statement that the opposition Candlelight Party (CP) had failed to submit certain documents, so it would not be permitted to contest the July 23 vote. Hun Sen is one of the world's longest-serving leaders and critics and rights groups accuse him of using the legal system to crush opposition to his rule, particularly in the run-up to elections. The CP -- seen as the only viable challenger to Hun Sen's ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP) -- told AFP they would appeal to "restore a democratic base." If the ruling is upheld, it will pave the way for the CPP to effectively compete in a one-horse race.

THE RIGHT OPPORTUNITY IS HERE



Islami Bank
Bangladesh Limited
Based on Islamic Shari'ah

Islami Bank Bangladesh Limited, the major Shari'ah based bank of South-East Asia and largest commercial bank of the country, dedicated in the service for the welfare of the people through extensive branch network with state-of-the-art technology; characterized as a leading bank in the poverty eradication, recognized as the first ever bank of the country ranked in the top 1000 banks of the world; recipient of numerous prestigious awards at home and abroad for its outstanding contribution to the socio-economic advancement, excellence in good governance, Shari'ah compliance, corporate culture, employment generation and human development is looking for committed, self-driven, active, energetic, experienced and talented Bangladeshi citizens with requisite qualifications for appointment in the mentioned posts of the bank.

1. Additional Managing Director

Age: Maximum 64 years as on 31.05.2023

Banking experience: Minimum 21 years experience as Officer in any reputed commercial bank including at least 02 years as DMD or equivalent rank.

2. Deputy Managing Director

Age: Maximum 63 years as on 31.05.2023

Banking experience: Minimum 20 years experience as Officer in any reputed commercial bank including at least 02 years as SEVP or equivalent rank.

3. Senior Executive Vice President

Age: Maximum 55 years as on 31.05.2023

Banking experience: Minimum 18 years experience as Officer in any reputed commercial bank including at least 02 years as EVP or equivalent rank.

4. Executive Vice President (Head of Zone/ Manager)

Age: Maximum 55 years as on 31.05.2023

Banking experience: Minimum 18 years experience as Officer in any reputed commercial bank including at least 02 years as SVP or equivalent rank.

5. Senior Vice President

Age: Maximum 52 years as on 31.05.2023

Banking experience: Minimum 16 years experience as Officer in any reputed commercial bank including at least 02 years as Vice President or equivalent rank.

6. Senior Vice President/ Vice President (Public Relations Officer)

Age: Maximum 52 years for the post of Senior Vice President and 50 years for the post of Vice President as on 31.05.2023

Educational Qualification: Minimum qualification is Masters/Equivalent/04 years Graduation from any reputed university preferably in Mass Communication/ Journalism.

Banking experience: i) Minimum 16 years experience as Officer in any reputed commercial bank including at least 02 years as Vice President or equivalent rank.

ii) Minimum 14 years experience as Officer in any reputed commercial bank including at least 02 years as Senior Assistant Vice President or equivalent rank.

Other experience: Must have proven experience and in-depth knowledge in mass communication, holding responsibility of press, publications and other media functions, ability to independently carry out public relations activities of the bank, arrange/prepare meeting, appointments, report writing, press release, press report, promotional advertisements of banking services & products and to deal with press/media.

7. Vice President

Age: Maximum 50 years as on 31.05.2023

Banking experience: Minimum 14 years experience as Officer in any reputed commercial bank including at least 02 years as Senior Assistant Vice President or equivalent rank.

8. Senior Assistant Vice President

Age: Maximum 45 years as on 31.05.2023

Banking experience: Minimum 13 years experience as Officer in any reputed commercial bank including at least 02 years as Assistant Vice President or equivalent rank.

9. Assistant Vice President

Age: Maximum 45 years as on 31.05.2023

Banking experience: Minimum 12 years experience as Officer in any reputed commercial bank including at least 02 years as First Assistant Vice President or equivalent rank.

10. First Assistant Vice President

Age: Maximum 42 years as on 31.05.2023

Banking experience: Minimum 10 years experience as Officer in any reputed commercial bank including at least 02 years as Senior Principal Officer or equivalent rank.

11. Senior Principal Officer

Age: Maximum 42 years as on 31.05.2023

Banking experience: Minimum 8 years experience as Officer in any reputed commercial bank including at least 02 years as Principal Officer or equivalent rank.

12. Principal Officer

Age: Maximum 40 years as on 31.05.2023

Banking experience: Minimum 6 years experience as Officer in any reputed commercial bank including at least 02 years as Senior Officer or equivalent rank.

Educational Qualification for all posts (excluding SI No.06):

Minimum qualification is Masters/Equivalent/04 years Graduation from any reputed university having sound track record in academic feat. Candidates having 3rd Division/Class in any examinations need not apply.

Salary & Allowances:

Selected candidates will be eligible for the bank's regular scale of pay as admissible in the post.

Other Requirements	Selection Procedures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Candidates are expected to apply through proper channel. Employees of IBBL need not apply. Candidates must not apply for more than one post. Selected candidates shall have to execute a Surety Bond to serve the Bank for a minimum period of 03 (three) years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only short listed candidates will be called for appearing at the Written Examination/Viva-Voce. The authority reserves the right to accept / reject any application without assigning any reason. The authority reserves the right to cancel this advertisement or to amend any part thereof. All correspondences will be made through email/SMS.

NB. No TA/DA will be allowed for appearing at the Written Examination / Viva-Voce.

How to Apply:

Eligible and interested candidates shall apply through online (career.islamibankbd.com) with scanned passport size photograph latest by June 15, 2023. **Beside online application, candidates must send hard copy of application, attested photocopies of all academic certificates, professional certificates, experience certificates, last promotion letter, last pay certificate, NID card and two recent passport size photographs within June 25, 2023 to Human Resources Wing, Islami Bank Tower, 40 Dilkusha Commercial Area, Dhaka-1000 through courier or postal service duly mentioning the name of the post on the top of the envelope, failing which the online application shall be treated as cancelled. Any application delivered by hand shall not be accepted. The procedures for filling in the online application form will be available at the mentioned website.**

Head of Human Resources Wing & CHRO

Time to rebuild life in St Martin

With the worst averted, relief, rehabilitation are priority in Mocha-hit areas

We are relieved that the extremely severe cyclonic storm Mocha did not cause as much damage in Bangladesh as initially feared. The hardest hit regions in the country were Cox's Bazar and Saint Martin's Island, where around 13,500 houses were affected. Among them, around 1,200 houses were destroyed on St Martin's Island, and more than 2,800 shanties were affected in the Rohingya refugee camps of Cox's Bazar.

Apart from a change in the direction of the storm – away from Bangladesh and toward Myanmar – a low tide at the time of landfall further helped in minimising damage in Bangladesh. Early evacuation of more than a million people also played a big part. Nevertheless, thousands of people have been left homeless, leaving them open to huge suffering. This makes it vital that urgent assistance is provided by the government, which should coordinate with humanitarian organisations to ensure that aid reaches victims on time and in an organised manner.

Aside from financial assistance, the government and others should provide medical and food assistance as well. It is important to remember that the chance of diseases breaking out post-disaster is always high. Therefore, there should be no delay in providing medical assistance in the affected coastal areas. Removing the remnants of uprooted trees and damaged houses is also a challenging task. Rebuilding efforts are particularly needed on Saint Martin's Island, which took a massive battering even though there was no reported loss of life.

Although it is early to estimate the full extent of the damage caused by Mocha, there is no doubt that it has caused significant harm to local industries and businesses. Movement of goods at the Chatogram Port has had to be halted since Friday, which is going to be costly for the economy, particularly for many of our exporters. So, the government should take special measures to ensure that operational activities at our main seaport resume without further hindrance.

Ultimately, the nation was spared from much greater damage due to good fortune. At the same time, our strong disaster preparedness also played a part in that. Since we cannot bet on luck to save us from future disasters, after helping people to recover from the fallouts of Cyclone Mocha, the government should continue to focus on its disaster preparedness, including by fortifying compromised embankments.

We must restore trust in e-commerce

Authorities should ensure full repayment to defrauded customers

It is difficult to buy into the promise of a Smart Bangladesh when justice continues to elude many victims of e-commerce scams. Over the past few years, thousands of customers have lost money to such scams. As per a new report, as many as 19,623 complaints against 50 e-commerce companies – filed with the Directorate of National Consumer Rights Protection – remain unresolved, with Tk 600 crore yet to be paid to complainants. This points to a desperate need for safeguarding the interests of customers and strengthening the legal framework related to e-commerce platforms.

Many of the companies that have been accused of scams are practically defunct now. In the absence of adequate mechanisms to hold them accountable, the commerce ministry is paying victims from the Tk 525 crore (of 27 e-commerce companies) stuck in payment gateways. One would think that the priority would be recovering money from the companies themselves. But owners of fraudulent companies seem to be out of reach, some being unresponsive presently (such as the bosses at Evely) and others having fled the country. How did we get to this point? Why haven't systems been put into place to protect e-commerce consumers? They certainly do not deserve the uncertainty that has been created. Against this backdrop, one hopes that the Central Complaint Management System (CCMS) launched by the ministry on February 19 will be helpful in addressing some of the concerns.

As e-commerce thrives around the globe, we sincerely hope that Bangladesh will be able to keep up by establishing a foolproof digital infrastructure and ensuring best service for customers. The scams carried out in recent years must not result in citizens losing faith in the sector altogether. We urge the relevant authorities to prioritise the formulation and implementation of proper laws and regulations that protect consumers' best interests. More importantly, those companies accused of scams must face justice for public trust to be fully restored. They must be made to clear the dues owed to complainants, so that no other companies dare to commit fraud in the future.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

letters@thedailystar.net

Rebuild homes lost to Mocha

It is a great relief for Bangladesh that Cyclone Mocha passed us by without incurring the high scale of damage that we had expected. However, it has not left us completely unscathed. Thousands of houses in Cox's Bazar and St Martin's Island have been destroyed by the cyclone. As such, the local authorities and central government must now work together to ensure that these houses are rebuilt and that the people affected are given the aid they need. Let not a short-lived cyclone leave behind long-term devastation.

Shams Prottoy, Cumilla

What the new budget should offer to common people



MACRO MIRROR

Dr Fahmida Khatun is executive director at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD). Views expressed in this article are the author's own.

FAHMIDA KHATUN

On June 1, 2023, the finance minister is set to present the national budget for the 2023-24 fiscal year in parliament. This particular budget poses significant challenges – arguably the most challenging in recent times – for economic policymaking in Bangladesh. The current geopolitical and geo-economic situations are unfavourable, and the world is still grappling with the aftermath of the pandemic and the fallout of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war.

The multifaceted challenges have resulted in an overall lower economic growth around the world, with some economies facing recession-like situations. In April, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) updated its projection of global growth, showing a rocky recovery. The IMF projects that in 2023, the global economic growth will fall to 2.8 percent from 3.4 percent in 2022, and eventually settle at 3 percent in 2024.

Bangladesh's economy is also going through several challenges. These include the burden of high prices, pressure on the external sector, fluctuating foreign exchange rates, and a decline in foreign exchange reserves. Additionally, the country continues to face long-standing issues such as insufficient domestic resource mobilisation, low and stagnant private investment, inadequate public expenditure capacity, youth unemployment, and socioeconomic inequality. Even though the poverty rate has been declining over the past decade, as per the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), the recently published Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) 2022 revealed that inequality has increased. For example, in the HIES 2010, the Gini coefficient was 0.458, which increased to 0.482 in HIES 2016. In HIES 2022, the Gini coefficient has gone up to 0.499.

Given the current global and domestic circumstances, the upcoming annual budget must incorporate strategies to tackle immediate challenges while also addressing medium-term issues. The persistence of a global economic downturn and inflationary pressures, compounded by the ongoing war, necessitates a comprehensive response from the government. To effectively confront this crisis, it is imperative for the government to coordinate fiscal and monetary policy measures. Additionally, specific measures

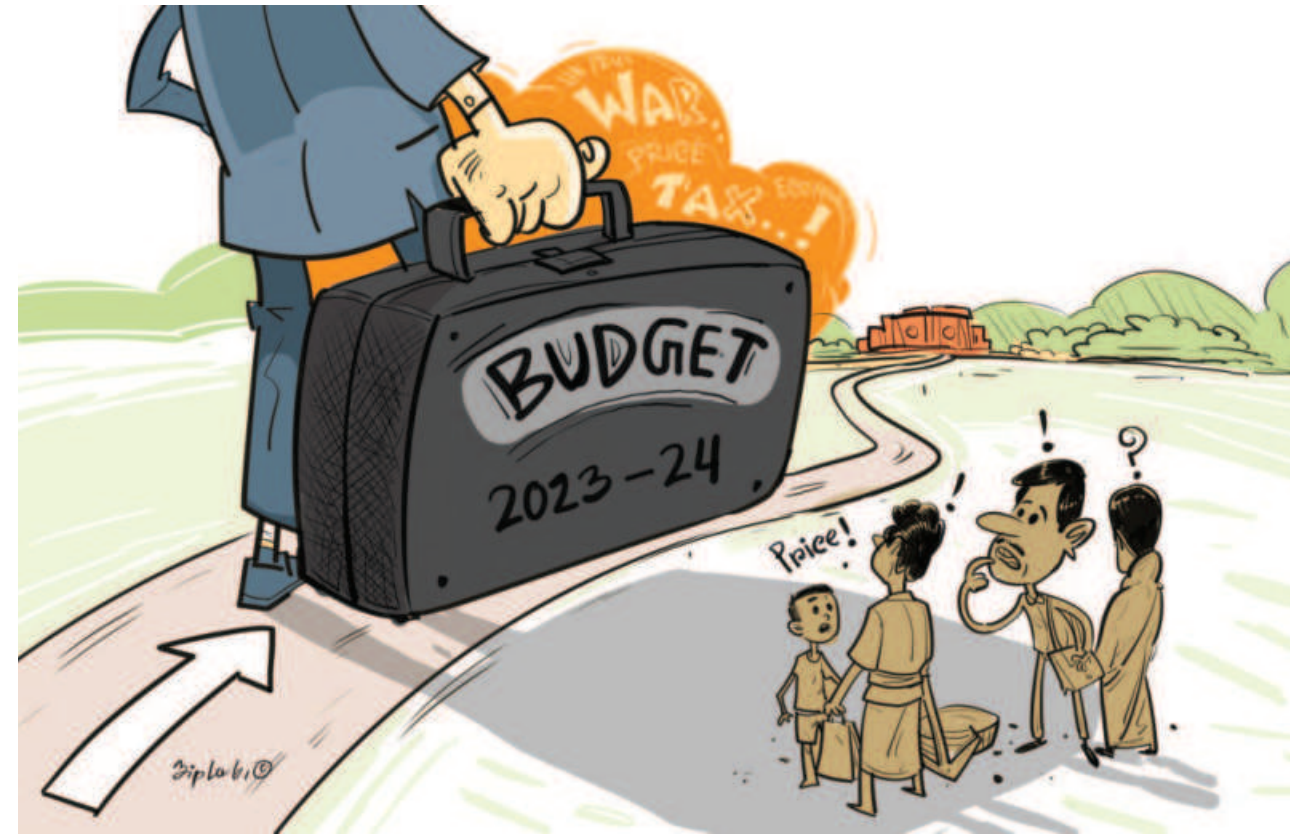


ILLUSTRATION: BIPOLO CHAKROBORTY

tailored to combat these challenges should be implemented.

First, the government should eliminate various taxes – such as advance income tax, advance tax, and regulatory duty – imposed on all imported essential items. Social protection programmes should be expanded to include direct cash support for the impoverished. To cater to the needs of low-income groups, there should be an abundant supply of essential items in the open market, available at reduced prices through operations such as open market sale (OMS). Moreover, the tax-free income threshold should be increased to Tk 3.5 lakh for the low-income households.

Second, although the government is committed to eliminating subsidies, as per the IMF conditionalities for the \$4.7 billion loan, this measure needs careful thinking. Subsidy management has to be in a targeted manner so that poor and low-income households are not affected. For example, agriculture subsidies for fertilisers and pesticides need to be sustained to avoid food insecurity. Given the global price and supply constraints, and limited fiscal space in the country, the government must adopt a rational policy measure to feed its large population.

to avoid domestic market crises.

Third, to meet the growing demand for increased and affordable supply in the market, financial support is essential. Therefore, policymakers must focus on creating sufficient fiscal space by implementing strategies for domestic resource mobilisation. Understandably, reduction of taxes on essential items will subsequently lower import taxes. To compensate for the potential revenue loss, higher taxes on luxury goods can be imposed. The government is already imposing higher taxes on many luxury items. However, while this may serve as an immediate solution to generate additional revenue and meet the increased financial requirements, the ultimate objective should be to enhance revenue through the collection of income tax. Reforming the existing revenue collection system is the pre-condition for achieving this objective. The government should prioritise the establishment of an independent and fully automated tax system, supported by adequate and efficient human resources.

Fourth, the government should exercise caution while attempting to reduce expenditure, ensuring that it does not result in a drastic decline in government spending, a contraction

due to insufficient efforts in revenue generation and competing priorities, particularly in physical infrastructure. Consequently, these sectors receive minimal budgetary allocations as a percentage of GDP. However, if economic growth is not accompanied by an appropriate allocation of resources to the social sector, the sustainability of this growth will be jeopardised. Insufficient allocation of public resources to these sectors will further exacerbate societal inequality.

Fifth, while the national budget has certain limitations in addressing medium- and long-term issues, it plays a crucial role in determining resource allocation and generation for each financial year. Although the budget tends to follow an incremental approach, it has the ability to make choices and decisions within the broader national policy frameworks that are designed with medium- to long-term objectives in mind. Consequently, the annual budget is expected to not only devise short-term fiscal measures, but also allocate resources towards medium-term objectives, ensuring a continued focus on long-term goals. The budget should be formulated keeping these perspectives in mind.

In Pakistan, a mass reckoning remains unlikely



Huma Yusuf is a political and integrity risk analyst. Her Twitter handle is @humayusuf

HUMA YUSUF

When this spin of the political merry-go-round pauses, one image will linger: a young man, veiled by his blue surgical mask, clinging to a bewildered peacock.

The peacock had been looted from the Lahore corps commander's house in the wake of Imran Khan's arrest, an ill-thought-out gesture to reclaim what rightfully belonged to the people. One wonders what became of that peacock, and one fears for its welfare. Its fate is an apt metaphor for the prospect of a mass political mobilisation in Pakistan.

The unprecedented events of recent days have again stirred the question: is a revolution coming? Social media is flooded with videos of angry young men pillaging the corps commander's house, smashing candelabras and burning furniture, disgusted to find frozen strawberries in an elite kitchen in the same country where food inflation is running well over 40 percent and most people are struggling to eat two square meals a day.

That unthinkable moment when people pushed through the gates of GHQ has raised tantalising prospects

that the status quo might yet be challenged.

Indeed, there are several revolutionary ingredients in the mix: soaring inflation, polarised politics, a weaponised society with nothing to lose, and a new ability to smash the sacred cows of previously untouchable elite institutions. But despite the unrest and white smoke plumes of tear gas, a mass reckoning remains unlikely.

This is because public agitation continues to be reactionary, rather than visionary and aimed at creating (a new paradigm, a new society, a new status quo). If there is a mass movement brewing, it's all "anti" and not enough "pro." And history has taught us that you can't build anything from hate.

The lack of issue-based mobilisation – even at this critical time – is a reflection of Pakistan's paucity of issue-based politics. In an authoritarian state that has been under military rule for much of its history, politics has always been a game of survival, rather than a public service. The resulting distortions in the country's political discourse are

all aimed at weakening opponents and appeasing puppet masters.

These distortions are now reflected in Pakistan's mass mobilisations: there is rage and rejection, but little in the way of grassroots activism. We know what we don't want, but we have never dared to ask for what we could have.

Many of the key ingredients of a successful revolution remain missing: credible leadership (beyond a cult personality), a free media that can support and disseminate a movement's messaging, and a population that understands the need for structural change and is ready to participate based on perceived benefits.

Pakistan's young, urban population should fulfil this last criteria, but the prevalence of misinformation, conspiracy theories, and the shambles that is our public education sector has limited the critical requirement for understanding.

Ironically, the closest we have come to mass reform movements in recent years is in the form of the TTP or other similar religio-political movements. These comprised a rejection of the status quo and offered an alternative vision as articulated in concrete demands (for example, regarding the imposition of Shariah law).

It is not surprising that the TTP – despite killing tens of thousands of Pakistanis – enjoyed some traction (albeit ambivalent) with the public for over a decade. That itself is a testament to Pakistanis' hunger for issue-based politics.

There have, of course, also been recent attempts at mass movements

without a violent extremist bent. Think of the PTM or the Haq Do Tehreek in Gwadar, which offered progressive politics and a specific people-oriented agenda.

Unfortunately, status quo beneficiaries in Pakistan know a meaningful mass movement threat when they see one; they managed to nullify these groups' leadership through extended jail terms and contain them with media blackouts.

The comparison between the imprisonment tenures of Imran Khan and Ali Wazir offers a clue as to which movement has more potential to actually effect change.

In the West, there is a growing recognition that mass mobilisations that challenge the status quo will only occur – and succeed – if they can offer a political alternative that is rooted in specific pro-people demands. Climate change activists, for example, are increasingly seeking to align with labour movements or minority rights' movements in order to embed abstract net-zero demands into a progressive vision that privileges equality, human rights, and security.

The number of issues around which Pakistanis should be coalescing is staggering: food security, safety, dignity of work, free speech, minority rights, welfare protections, healthcare provisions, climate resilience. Until we can craft a politics that champions for the people rather than against their overlords, our future will be riot, not reform.

The piece was first published in Dawn, an ANN partner of The Daily Star, on May 15, 2023.



FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

Why the US dollar is an optimal reserve currency for Bangladesh



Dr Mizanur Rahman
is a commissioner of the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) and a member of the Financial Reporting Council (FRC) of Bangladesh. Views expressed in this article are the author's own and not of the institutions he is affiliated with.

MIZANUR RAHMAN

Bangladesh received an infamous and inappropriate coverage in the global press that the country was planning to use Indian rupee or Chinese renminbi for international payment settlements. In other words, the argument was that the Bangladesh Bank, the country's central bank, would be diversifying its foreign exchange reserves away from the US dollar to include more renminbi and rupee instead. It is infamous and inappropriate because the country's forex reserves continue to consist mostly of the US dollar-denominated assets.

Bangladesh has experienced persistent and increasing bilateral trade imbalances against both China and India over the past decade, particularly since July 1, 2021. Note that most of the country's bilateral trades with China and India are invoiced in US dollars, and so the resultant international payment obligations are settled in US dollars. The idea of settling accrued payment obligations using either the Indian rupee or the renminbi instead of the US dollar is without substance, because their payment settlement is predetermined. In addition, the prevailing forex market really doesn't have access to those alternative currencies at any reasonable costs.

Now, considering that exports from China or India to Bangladesh are invoiced by their national currencies instead of the dollar, one would expect that Bangladeshi importers would be required to settle their international payment obligations in the same currencies. Given that Bangladesh incurred bilateral trade deficits of \$23.5 billion against China and \$15 billion against India in FY2021-22, the Bangladesh Bank would be obliged to act as the marketmaker for a forex market in the renminbi or rupee. But such a forex market will be dysfunctional, because supply and demand for either of the two currencies are wildly unequal. So the forex market will never clear unless the central bank intervenes as a marketmaker and fills in the gap between demand and supply.

This market-making operation of the central bank will be uneconomical for two reasons. One, the Bangladesh Bank will have to significantly diversify its forex reserves into rupee-denominated or renminbi denominated assets. The central bank will therefore be susceptible to significant exchange losses every time either of the currencies depreciates against the dollar. Two, more than 90 percent of the global over-the-counter (OTC) forex transactions are denominated in the US dollars. The daily turnover of this market was \$7.5 trillion in April 2022. Neither the Chinese yuan nor the Indian rupee enjoys any significance as of now in global forex markets. So as a part of market-making operations, whenever the Bangladesh Bank will buy either the

rupee or the renminbi in exchange for the dollar, it will incur relatively large transaction costs. How large will it be? It can be more than 10 times the transaction cost of trading in the US dollars.

As most of the country's international trade and financial transactions have been denominated in the US dollar, bilateral imbalance in the supply and demand for foreign exchange never caused market failure. Until recent times, the OTC market of foreign exchange always cleared without substantial interventions of the central bank. Over the last two financial years, the private flows of foreign exchange didn't clear the market, and so the central bank had to sell more than \$20 billion dollars of its net forex reserves. Disequilibrium in the forex market continued nonetheless. The taka has depreciated by more than 30 percent against the US dollar over the last couple of years. As the US dollar is still trading with significant premium in the kerb market, the home currency has remained under devaluation pressure.

Central banks, financial institutions, corporations and currency speculators invoice their international trade and financial transactions in terms of the US dollar because it has been the norm in the international monetary order after World War II. Accordingly, the Bangladesh Bank has maintained a growing volume of forex reserves mostly in the US dollar since its independence in 1971. So the forex market in Bangladesh is characterised by demand for and supply of US dollars. This OTC market in foreign exchange is highly liquid and very efficient, meaning that bid-ask spread is less than 50 basis points for large-size payment settlements. The forex market is also globally integrated.

The proposition that Bangladesh will move away from the US dollar-based payment settlement to a new international payment settlement, which will involve either the rupee or the renminbi as the invoice currency, is of no economic substance. It will produce a number of unintended consequences. Firstly, it will cause inefficient fragmentation of the prevailing forex market, which is dollar-based and globally integrated. Secondly, the Bangladesh Bank will need to diversify its portfolio of forex reserves giving significantly larger weights to the rupee and renminbi. That will complicate monetary and exchange rate policies of the central bank. Thirdly and most intriguingly, such a diversification of the forex portfolio will not be maximising profits for Bangladeshi exporters and importers, domestic borrowers in foreign currencies, nor for the Bangladesh Bank.

Exporters of China or India will not prefer invoicing their exports even in their national currencies,

not to mention the Bangladeshi taka. It is because of the prohibitive exchange rate uncertainty of those currencies and the lack of instantaneous liquidity of financial assets denominated by those currencies. In fact, the market for government securities or AAA-rated corporate bonds, which are denominated by either the Indian rupee or Chinese renminbi, is mostly localised. Their weight in the global financial market is insignificant. A perilous implication is that corporations will incur prohibitive transaction costs (broadly defined) in settlement of their international payment obligations in this proposed scenario.

Consider this example, if the rupee depreciates by 10 percent against the US dollar over a period of six months, which is the typical credit period of an export, the Indian exporter would lose 10 percent value of his exports in terms of the US dollar because of a rupee-invoicing. The counterparties in Bangladesh, that is, the importers, will face a dysfunctional forex market in the rupee. As I explained previously, those markets will be very illiquid and costly. So all parties to trade will incur larger costs and uncertainties. International trade and finance will surely decline in this case. A natural hedge of any company is to invoice their international trade or financial transactions in a few major currencies including the US dollar notably. A political decision to force international trade and payment settlement away from the US dollar to any non-major currencies will be disruptive, risky and costly.

Think of a scenario where a government-owned corporation in Dhaka will have a Chinese renminbi loan due for settlement on June 30, 2023. The OTC market for foreign exchange in renminbi will not work, because there is already a disequilibrium between demand for and supply of it. It shows that the Bangladesh Bank will be forced to convert their US dollar reserves into renminbi and supply the same to the local forex market in renminbi. Ultimately, the Bangladesh Bank is committing itself into a self-defeating strategy that it will micromanage a forex market in an unimportant currency, incurring private costs and unforeseen exchange risks.

Finally, a fragmented forex market in some peripheral currencies will prove unforgiving for managing external debt of both public and private sectors of a developing country. As of June 30, 2022, more than 90 percent of public sector external debt, which is approximately \$75 billion, is dollar-denominated. Almost 100 percent of private sector external debt, which is approximately \$25 billion, is also dollar-denominated. While the external indebtedness of the public sector is long-term and of low cost, that of the private sector is mostly short-term, variable-rated and unhedged. Faced with such a condition, any diversification of forex reserves into peripheral currencies will increase sovereign risks and downgrade the global rating of the country. It is hoped that policymakers will not jump to such a self-sabotaging strategy of exchange rate and forex reserve management.

It's time we talked about menopause

Raffat Binte Rashid
is the features editor at
The Daily Star.

RAFFAT BINTE RASHID

When I was in my 20s, my mother was going through a physical and mental transition that her family took lightly, unknowingly. In fact, my father was lost as to how to suddenly deal with a depressed wife. She was an emotional bomb about to burst for no reason; those mood swings were the worst besides her lack of sleep and hot flashes.

The family was not supportive of her newfound indifference towards her everyday normal routine, and could not take the cue as a sign of some sort of health crisis. Later, we realised she was going through menopause. She faced a bad spell

hormonal changes throughout her life. These are all part of natural reproductive health. However, these stages have their nuances that need to be sorted.

In my mother's time, a woman's health – and that, too, her menstrual health – was not something to speak about even within her family boundaries. "Periods are normal and hormonal changes are natural, so deal with it" – this was our attitude towards her monthly cycles.

Even women did not know how to address these changes in them – until recently, when they can freely talk about taboo health topics. Thus, our mothers aged quickly and were sad most of the time, while we modern women try to learn and make adjustments as our body demands.

I made sure my husband is aware of my severe, monthly premenstrual

and a while later you are in socks and layers of clothing. You feel hot and then cold in the middle of the night, a very common phenomenon in women. The constant brain fog because of lack of sleep affects your daily productivity.

Facing difficulty in sleeping, emotional changes, irritability, mood swings or mild depression are normal for menopausal women, along with racing hearts, headaches, joint and muscle aches and pains, weight gain, hair loss or thinning, and sagging of skin. These experiences are all part of your body adjusting to ageing, and this can last for five to ten years.

Women need not suffer for these and they must learn to seek medical help. It's also the people around them who need to be empathetic to their mental and physical changes and well-being.

You need to learn how to regulate



ILLUSTRATION: REHNUMA PROSHOON

of hormonal changes, which might not be the case for others as the symptoms vary.

The physiological age for menopause is between 45 and 55 years; many women go through surgical menopause caused by hysterectomy for other health reasons. With menopause comes various bodily irritability, because the production of the female hormone oestrogen and progesterone, at the time, decreases. It is the big drop in oestrogen levels that causes most of the symptoms of menopause.

A woman, from her puberty or menarche to pregnancy and lactation period to perimenopause, menopause, and finally post-menopause stages, lives with and adapts to different levels of

syndrome (PMS). Now, when I am going through menopause, he is more patient towards my transition. I cannot help my depressive spells or mood swings and hot flashes, but I am definitely aware of my triggers and the reason why it is happening.

I am better equipped to handle the stress. I meditate, take long hot showers, do some brisk walking or gardening to release the pressure of coping with menopausal hormonal changes. I believe setting some time for myself and doing the things I want helps me adjust to such changes mentally.

The reason I am pointing this out is because, until recently, we as a society were not mindful of a woman's hormonal fluctuations that she deals with daily. You feel hot at one point of the night and have the air conditioner at full blast,

your diet and the foods that trigger certain reactions. The sudden onset of multi-joint pain will force you to start exercising regularly. The adjustments you need to make are mostly about food and exercise, listening to your body, and trying to learn as much as possible about this stage of your life.

The initial physical changes will be scary, but a supportive husband/partner can be extremely helpful in learning to deal with bad tempers, mood swings, and other elements of this natural transition.

It is only right to address these symptoms of hormonal changes with tender loving care. It is vital to talk about and listen to her; she needs support and to feel loved and taken care of through this phase of life.



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PRICE SENSITIVE INFORMATION

This is for kind information of all concerned that the Board of Directors of IFIC Bank PLC in its 857th Meeting held on 14 May 2023 during 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. through Digital Platform, among other issues, has approved the Un-audited Financial Statements of the Bank as at and for the 1st Quarter (Q1) ended on 31 March 2023 with the following financial highlights:

(Fig. in BDT)

Particulars	Consolidated Position		Separate/Solo Position	
	Jan.-Mar. 2023	Jan.-Mar. 2022	Jan.-Mar. 2023	Jan.-Mar. 2022
Net Asset Value (NAV) Per Share	19.17	17.14	17.02	15.34
Earnings Per Share (EPS)	0.35	0.18	0.17	0.15
Net Operating Cash Flow Per Share (NOCFPS)	(3.05)	0.85	(3.18)	0.83

Furthermore, pursuant to condition 3(2) of the Notification of BSEC and regulation 16(2) of the Listing Regulations, 2015 of the Stock Exchanges, the following comparative statements are also disclosed:

(Fig. in BDT)

Particulars	Consolidated		Separate/Solo	
	Jan.-Mar. 2023	Jan.-Mar. 2022	Jan.-Mar. 2023	Jan.-Mar. 2022
Earnings Per Share (EPS)	0.35	0.18	0.17	0.15

Y2022 figures are restated.

* The consolidated EPS of the Bank as of Q1 Y2023 is higher compared to Q1 Y2022 due to better performance of one of the subsidiaries.

* The consolidated and separate NOCFPS of the Bank as of Q1 Y2023 is lower compared to Q1 Y2022 due to higher investment in trading securities.

By order of the Board of Directors

Dated: Dhaka
14 May 2023

Mokammel Hoque, FCS
Company Secretary

Navigating Higher Education Abroad Things to Consider Before Applying

With proper preparation and guidance, it can be an exciting opportunity to pursue higher education in some of the most prestigious institutions in the world and gain invaluable academic and professional skills.

SARA KABIR

In today's interconnected world, studying abroad is an excellent way for Bangladeshi students to broaden their horizons and gain a global perspective, which can have a positive impact on their future career prospects. The United Kingdom and the United States are two of the most sought-after destinations for higher education, thanks to their top-ranked universities and diverse student communities. However, applying to universities in these countries can be a daunting process, requiring careful consideration and preparation.

As someone who has navigated this process, I understand the challenges and opportunities that come with studying abroad. I also know how important it is to have access to reliable information and guidance to make informed decisions. In this article, we'll explore some key considerations for Bangladeshi students who are interested in pursuing higher education abroad. Whether you're just starting your research or ready to apply, I hope you'll find some valuable insights here.

Research and shortlist universities
Before applying to universities in the USA and UK, it is crucial to keep a couple of important

factors in mind. Firstly, researching and shortlisting universities that align with your academic interests, career goals, and personal preferences is essential. Secondly, don't forget to consider factors such as location, cost, campus life, research potential, and the reputation of the universities.

In the USA, universities range from world-renowned Ivy League institutions to public and private universities. Meanwhile, the UK is known for having some of the oldest and most prestigious universities in the world and offers post-study work visas that allow students to think long-term and explore career opportunities in the UK after completing their studies.

"The UK is the dream destination for many students, especially those interested in gaining an international postgraduate degree, as most master's programs in the UK can be completed in just one year. This is a great opportunity for students who want to experience a culturally diverse environment and gain an international degree that will add

great value to their future academic and professional careers," shares Md. Nuruzzaman, Bangladesh's Regional Manager of the University of Portsmouth, UK.

However, studying in major cities such as London and Edinburgh can be quite expensive. Therefore, many students try to find reputable universities just outside the city that offer almost all the same facilities but are more affordable. The University of Portsmouth, located just 90 minutes away from Central London by train, offers a world-class education and boasts a 94% rate of students finding jobs or pursuing further studies after graduation.

On the other hand, "The US is a melting pot of different cultures and is known for its strong economy and thriving job market. Studying in the US can open up a range of career opportunities, giving you the chance to gain valuable work experience and build professional global networks. Many universities also offer a wide range of extracurricular activities, including sports, clubs, and student

organizations, which can help students to meet new friends and be an exciting and enriching experience," adds S M Mohaimanul Hoque, Bangladesh's Regional Advisor of Trine University, USA.

Typically, students aspiring to study in the US look for strong academic programs and innovative research opportunities. Trine University offers a wide range of undergraduate and graduate degree programs in multidisciplinary fields and hands-on learning opportunities, making it a strong contender for interested students.

Keep the deadlines in mind

Though some postgraduate programs may have up to five intakes each year, depending on the number of available seats, most universities in the USA usually have four distinct application deadlines that students can apply to in Summer, Fall, and Spring. On the other hand, in the UK, applications for selective programs usually open in January, and the rest open in September, which is the main academic session. It is crucial to check the availability on the university's websites or ask your local university representative before applying.

The application process typically involves submitting your academic transcripts, standardized test scores, academic and work recommendation letters, personal essays, resumes, and other relevant documents. In the USA, it is important to carefully read and follow the application instructions provided by each university, as the requirements can vary. In the UK, most universities use the UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service) system mainly for undergraduate programs, through which you can apply to up to five universities. However, many universities accept direct applications as well.

Prepare for exams

Standardized tests are also an essential requirement for most universities in the USA, such as the IELTS, TOEFL, SAT, PTE, ACT, GRE, or

GMAT. In the UK, similar standardized tests are required such as the IELTS, TOEFL, BMAT, LNAT, or UKCAT for certain courses. You should prepare for these tests well in advance and aim to score as high as possible, as it can have a significant impact on your admission chances.

Explore financial aid options

When considering attending universities in the USA and UK, it is important to factor in the potentially high costs and carefully consider available financial aid options. Many institutions offer scholarships, grants, and loans to international students to help ease the financial burden. Popular external government-funded scholarships include the Fulbright Program in the US, and Commonwealth Shared Scholarships, Chevening, and GREAT Scholarships in the UK.

In addition, some universities provide country-specific scholarships. Bangladeshi students, for example, are eligible for either the Vice Chancellors Global Development Scholarship, which provides GBP 1600, or the Chancellor's Global Academic Merit Scholarship, which provides GBP 3000, to support their academic pursuits at the University of Portsmouth. For undergraduate students, Trine University offers a variety of scholarships up to \$19000. It's crucial to research and apply for these options well in advance as they are typically highly competitive and have early application deadlines.

If overwhelmed, get expert opinions

With proper preparation and guidance, it can be an exciting opportunity to pursue higher education in some of the most prestigious institutions in the world and gain invaluable academic and professional skills. But keeping track of the multiple applications and updates can be quite a stressful factor for many Bangladeshi students, so many turn to local education consultancy services and regional representatives to aid them with the process and find the right information.

Sara Kabir is a journalist at The Daily Star

IMAGE: FREEPKX






Set Sail for Success: Start Your Educational Journey at University of Portsmouth, UK

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- Computing
- Creative Technologies
- Engineering
- English
- Environmental Science
- International Relations and Politics
- Law
- Marketing
- Pharmacy

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Fine-tuning a settled group the need of the hour

SPORTS REPORTER

The Ireland series provided big lessons in terms of the mentality required at the global stage regardless of Bangladesh's dominance in the ODI format and the Tigers ended things on a positive note in two tight contests. The series will serve as a boost to World Cup preparations with a few matters left to be resolved, most importantly the squad for the World Cup in India.

A return to runs for Tamim Iqbal was a positive despite the captain not finding his flow in that third ODI during a 69-run knock. Youngsters have come through in the shape of Najmul Hossain Shanto, Towhid Hridoy and Hasan Mahmud. Shanto especially has gone through every possible step that Bangladesh cricket had to offer to be where he is and it is a credit to the BCB and their show of faith despite criticism.

Belief in the process must be showcased throughout if the Tigers are to go into the World Cup with a settled group of players.

That is where the outside noise has been having an effect. Talks of Mahmudullah Riyad at the World Cup are growing, but if process is to be maintained, Riyad should



have been playing the recent series that he was 'rested' for.

If there was faith lacking in Mahmudullah before the last T20 World Cup, by what criteria can he make the side this time? His performances had seen him out of the side and the experience being talked about may not be the end all and be all.

After all, Bangladesh had suffered the bitter experience of experienced stars not leading through performances in the 2019

ODI World Cup. Experience not backed up by performances may be disastrous once again. More importantly, the noise from outside will not help the players who are looking to carve out a place through performances.

"I can't say this is the World Cup team. There will be one or two spots where we are thinking who suits us best. Afif [Hossain] is there, Yasir [Ali] too, who was extremely unlucky not to get a game here and Riyad bhai is there too," skipper Tamim Iqbal

had said after the second ODI on Sunday.

Bangladesh will feature in a series against Afghanistan, the Asia Cup and a series against New Zealand before the World Cup to test bench strength. "I have an open mind and we will go for whoever suits our team best," Tamim added.

The team management can resolve such issues discretely without hampering the progress made by younger performers. The number seven spot is one key area where change can come.

Mehedi Hasan Miraz at seven is likely to be key if Tigers are to play at least three pacers. If aggression is the means for success, that aggression will have to be shown through attacking team selection. Thus, being one batter short may not be a negative but a requirement.

The upcoming series will see the focus on that batting order and the responsibility of the top-order. Mushfiqur Rahim has already given Bangladesh more options by playing the number six position so well. The task now will be to settle issues in the available time. Will Riyad be playing in the next series? What will his inclusion signal to the youngsters? Only time will tell but it will be a big cue around the process of building the team.



A couple of Bangladesh players try to avert an Indian offensive during the last group match of the under-19 women's teams of the Bangabandhu IHF Challenge Women's Trophy at the Shaheed M Mansur Ali National Handball Stadium yesterday. Bangladesh's under-19 and under-17 teams lost against their Indian counterparts in the dress rehearsals for the finals, which will be held tomorrow.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

'Very real possibility' of Pakistan boycotting WC

REUTERS

There is a "very real possibility" that Pakistan will boycott this year's World Cup in India if they lose hosting rights to the Asia Cup, the chairman of the country's cricket board Najam Sethi told Reuters.

India, citing safety concerns, have ruled out travelling to Pakistan for the Asia Cup in September and the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has offered to let them play their matches in the UAE in what has been dubbed a "hybrid model".

While the BCCI has yet to deliver a formal response to the offer, Sethi said India wanted the entire tournament moved out of Pakistan. That could have serious ramifications for the 50-overs World Cup in India this year as well as the 2025 Champions Trophy in Pakistan, he added.

"India should not be looking at a situation where we end up boycotting the Asia Cup and also the World Cup, and then India ends up boycotting the Champions Trophy. That will be a huge mess," he said in a zoom interview.

Sri Lanka and Bangladesh have also come out against playing in the UAE, heightening speculation that the ACC may look to move the entire tournament out of Pakistan.

Sethi said that was "not acceptable" and reaffirmed that Pakistan may boycott the World Cup if that happened.

"That's a very real possibility, of course," he added.

HC directs ACC to probe allegations against BFF officials

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) to conduct an inquiry into the corruption allegations raised against the officials concerned of Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) and to submit the probe report in four months.

The court also issued a rule asking the respondents to explain why their inaction to conduct the inquiry into these allegations should not be declared illegal.

The HC bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice Khizir Hayat Lizu issued the order and rule following a writ petition filed seeking its directive on the ACC.

Syed Sayedul Haque Suman, a Supreme Court lawyer, submitted the petition as public interest litigation to the HC on Sunday requesting it to order the ACC to probe the allegation against BFF officials including its president Kazi Salahuddin, senior vice-president and finance committee chairman Abdus Salam Murshedy and former general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag of committing "corruption", "money laundering", "forgery" and "embezzlement of money".

Secretary at the Ministry of Youth and Sports; Bangladesh Bank governor; ACC chairman; head of Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU); National Board of Revenue chairman; Salahuddin; Murshedy and Shohag have been made respondents to the required rule.

'Main target is to play the World Cup final'

Injury and Taskin Ahmed have been the close associates of each other ever since the pacer made his international debut.

Taskin who is recovering from a side strain injury is gearing up to return even stronger as the 28 year old who has been a revolution in the Tigers pace bowling unit spoke about his bowling, plans over the upcoming World Cup along with a few other topics during an exclusive interview with Mazhar Uddin of The Daily Star

The excerpts of the interview are given below:

The Daily Star (DS): What is the latest on your recovery process?

Taskin Ahmed (TA): Alhamdulillah the recovery process is going well. I have already started bowling from this week.

DS: Were you disappointed to miss yet another couple of series due to injury despite being in good rhythm?

TA: Definitely it feels bad if I miss any series and if it is for injury then as a player it obviously feels bad. But this is also part of a cricketer's career and I believe whatever happens its for good. I try not to keep that disappointment in my mind for long and stick to my process.

DS: You have successfully overcome injuries in the past. How difficult it is for a fast bowler to return with full rhythm after recovering from injury constantly?

TA: To be honest its not easy to back in full rhythm after any injury as it starts to improve once you get the match fitness. But obviously its challenging and wait patiently rather than become disappointed if things doesn't go well at the start and focus on the process. So patience is very important after recovering from the injury.

DS: What are the aspects you work with your personal mind trainer?

TA: Well we all have different mindset and emotions as a person and the topic of work is very confidential with the mind trainer. Basically it's a confidential thing but yes this is very helpful aspect of a sportsman and maybe it is not as regular



in Bangladesh than the other countries. It doesn't matter whether you are going through a bad or good time it's important to have a mind trainer in various phase of our life.

DS: How did you see the performance of our fast bowlers in the Ireland series?

TA: I think we did reasonably well overall in the Ireland series but I believe we are better than this. But its okay since there will be different experiences in different conditions and the more we play in such conditions we will learn more. I won't say we did too bad it was not very good too and it's a good learning experience for us.

DS: Apart from your bowling skills the young pacers in the team are also following your footsteps to improve their batting skills.

TA: Well the main skill of the bowlers is bowling but if we can improve our batting it will eventually help our team. In world cricket if you notice most the tail enders are now contributing and we have been

talking about this among the bowling group. There is no hard if we can work on our batting a little bit and we get the help from our batting coaches and players. So this is the main aim to contribute if there is any early collapse and support the set batsman at the crease. I am trying that and but still I have a lot to learn and I think keeping the modern day cricket in mind it is important for the bowling unit to also be able to bat.

DS: Since the ODI World Cup scheduled later this year do you have any personal target for the flagship event?

TA: I am not going to share about my world cup plan at the moment but I will tell once it's the right time. But the main target is to play the final of the World Cup if the almighty keeps us healthy.

DS: Since you are now one of the experienced bowler in the Tigers side what are your expectation from the pace bowling unit in India for the World Cup?

TA: I have played a T20 World Cup and a Test match in India. India has always got sporting wickets however there are few grounds which is batting friendly so its going to be challenging for the pacers. But at the same time the bowling unit we have if we can execute properly we will be able to give a tough fight against any team. We are improving and we still have four-five months before the world cup so we will try to take our skill levels one step further and I have big hopes to do something extraordinary in the World Cup.

Can Pioli conjure '11 lions'?

AGENCIES, MILAN

AC Milan will come into the second leg of their Champions League semifinal against Inter Milan tonight nursing the bruises from a 2-0 loss in the first leg, the woes of which were only worsened after an embarrassing defeat at lowly Spezia on Saturday which ended with team and coach Stefano Pioli gathering in front of the away crowd and having an animated discussion.

Pioli and his players had their heads bowed in remorse while Milan's hardcore ultras bellowed encouragement in the hope that their words might add something which was missing in the first leg. The Milan squad then headed to the dressing room as the Curva Sud chanted "we want 11 lions" in their native Italian.

While this season's progress in Europe has been better than their previous 15 campaigns, Milan's are at risk of missing out on Champions League football next season due to their slide in Serie A. There are real fears that there could be a repeat of the 3-0 Supercoppa final loss against Inter.

Pioli remained optimistic, especially after the news that Rafael Leao would be fit



to the return to the side. Leao assisted both of Milan's goals in the two ties against Napoli in the quarterfinal to secure a 2-1 win on aggregate and without him last week the seven-time European champions were painfully short of cutting edge.

"We're playing a match which could

make history for us, we need to believe that we can beat Inter," said Pioli on Saturday. "We haven't been good enough in our last two matches, but we can play much better."

However, Inter remain better-placed to become the first Italian finalist since Juventus faced Real Madrid six years ago, with the Nerazzurri having won seven in a row.

Simone Inzaghi would not allow room for complacency, underlining the significance of the second leg by saying it would be 'one of the most important matches' in the club's history.

"As a coach I treat every game in the same way. Tomorrow we know it's one of the most important matches in Inter's history. Tomorrow we know we have a well-deserved advantage, but we won't just have to manage it, we'll have to play the Inter way, knowing that we have a strong team up front."

"Tomorrow I have no doubts, the supporters have always been with us in the bad times and the good."

"We know who we're going to face, but we also know that we're in an excellent run of form. We're ready for a match of this magnitude."



FC Barcelona wrapped up this season's LaLiga title with four games to spare after two first-half goals from Pichichi frontrunner Robert Lewandowski spurred them to a 4-2 win against city rivals Espanyol on Sunday, taking an unassailable 14-point lead over second-placed Real Madrid. Barcelona's 27th league triumph, ending a four-year drought for the Catalan giants, was a fitting farewell to captain Sergio Busquets, who last week announced that he will be leaving Barca after 15 years at the end of the season. Meanwhile, head coach Xavi Hernandez became the 11th name in Spanish top-flight history to win the league as both player and manager.

PHOTO: TWITTER



Turkey faces election runoff

Erdogan leads the first round of voting, seen with momentum ahead of the second round

REUTERS, Ankara

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan yesterday emerged from his toughest election test unbowed and in a strong position to extend two decades of his Islamic-rooted rule by another five years in a historic May 28 runoff.

Turkish assets weakened on the news, which showed Erdogan just below the 50 percent threshold needed to avoid sending the Nato-member country to a second round of a presidential election viewed as passing judgment on his autocratic rule.

Erdogan's People's Alliance, comprising his Islamist-rooted AK Party and its nationalist partners, also appeared set to win a majority in the new parliament with 321 of the 600 seats, further boosting his chances in the presidential runoff.

"The winner has undoubtedly been our country," Erdogan said in a speech to cheering supporters at the AKP headquarters in the capital Ankara overnight.

With 99 percent of ballot boxes counted in the presidential vote, Erdogan led with 49.4 percent and his main opposition rival Kemal Kilicdaroglu had 44.96 percent, High Election Board chairman Ahmet Yener told



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Cars wait in a long queue outside a CNG filling station in the capital's Nikunja area around 9:00am yesterday. Many other filling stations in the city saw long queues of vehicles mainly due to frequent load-shedding, which slowed refill services.

BARISHAL AL POLITICS

Conflict intensifies as city polls near

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE with SUSHANTA GHOSH

The rift between Awami League's mayoral candidate Abul Khair Abdullah and his nephew Serniabat Sadiq Abdullah, the incumbent mayor of Barishal, has turned into a violent face-off ahead of the city polls slated for June 12.

Khair Abdullah, comparatively an unknown face in Barishal, is gaining strength after getting the party ticket while his nephew Sadiq Abdullah, who virtually controls the city, is desperate to retain his position, leading to confrontation.

An attack on Khair's followers on Sunday night and the arrest of Sadiq's men yesterday in this connection further exacerbated the situation.

The arrestees include Roiz Ahmed Manna, convener of Barishal city unit Chhatra League, his brother and 12 other BCL men.

Their arrests came hours after Khair Abdullah appealed the authorities to put the attackers behind bars while visiting his injured followers at Barishal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital.

Barishal city AL president AKM Jahangir Alam, who is loyal to Sadiq Abdullah, protested the arrest

immediately, saying Manna was not within two kilometres of the area where the incident took place.

During a press conference in the city, Jahangir alleged that they were facing various threats in recent days.

Sadiq is the general secretary of the unit, which is yet to join the mass contact with the AL candidate.

The unit leaders say they are waiting for a joint meeting and a directive from Sadiq's father Abul Hasnat Abdullah, a veteran

An attack on Khair's followers on Sunday night and the arrest of Sadiq's men yesterday in this connection further exacerbated the situation.

politician who is the president of Barishal district AL, lawmaker from Barishal-1 and a member of AL central working committee, about their action plan over the city polls.

However, none could say when the joint meeting would be held.

Jahangir said they will conduct electioneering when the formal campaign starts and follow the decision of the joint meeting. He kept mum when asked about a

specific date of the meeting.

On the other hand, AL men loyal to Khair Abdullah, consider his eldest brother Abul Hasnat and nephew Sadiq as "an enemy in one's own home" and on Saturday, they announced Sadiq Abdullah would be "resisted" in Barishal.

They don't care whether or not the father and son support Khair or not, sources said.

Khair Abdullah has already formed two electioneering committees excluding followers of incumbent mayor. Abul Hasnat, however, was made the chief of one of the committees.

After the AL picked Khair as the mayoral candidate, Sadiq and his father started losing their grip on everything including local politics, insiders said.

Speedboat terminal of Barishal is now controlled by Shekhor Chandra Das, while Rupatali bus stand by Sultan Mahmud. Aftab Ahmed is now controlling the central bus terminal at Nathullabad, according to sources.

All three are known as anti-Sadiq and they are now being seen besides Khair Abdullah.

Apart from this, many local AL leaders and activists already shifted their stance in favour of

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5



FAROOQUE 1948-2023

The passing of a freedom fighter, movie legend

AAQIB HASIB

Freedom Fighter, actor and Member of Parliament Akbar Hossain Pathan (Farooque) passed away at the Mount Elizabeth Hospital in Singapore yesterday morning.

He was 74. His son Sharot confirmed the news of the death and requested everyone to pray for the departed soul of his beloved father.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

US man breaks record for living underwater

THE STRAITS TIMES ONLINE



A university professor from the United States broke the world record for the longest time living underwater over the weekend, and he is set to continue with his subaquatic lifestyle for the next few weeks.

Saturday was Dr Joseph Dituri's 74th day residing in the Jules Undersea Lodge, a hotel for scuba divers located in a 9m deep lagoon in Key Largo, Florida.

"The record is a small bump and we love it, and I really appreciate it and I'm honoured to have it, but we still have more science to do; the science doesn't stop here," said Dr Dituri.

The previous record was set by two professors from Tennessee in 2014. Dr Bruce Cantrell and Dr Jessica Fain also stayed in the same hotel for 73 days, two hours and 34 minutes.

Despite his record-breaking feat, Dr Dituri, who is also known as "Dr Deep Sea", is not celebrating yet.

The University of South Florida educator and retired US naval officer is set to continue living underwater at ambient pressure until June 9 when he reaches 100 days, as part of an underwater mission called Project Neptune 100.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

POLLS TO 5 CITIES

JP doubtful of EC's control over police

CEC says they'll try to keep cops neutral

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Expressing doubts whether the upcoming five city polls will be free and fair, Jatiya Party yesterday demanded the Election Commission have control over the police during the elections.

Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Habibur Awal assured the main opposition in parliament of trying to ensure the neutrality of the police.

The CEC was speaking to reporters after a meeting with a JP delegation at his office. Awal said it will not be possible for the EC alone to hold a free and fair elections without the goodwill of the government and cooperation from the political parties and rival candidates.

He added that the JP delegation, led by party Secretary General Mujibur Haque Chunnua, discussed the situation in the electoral areas.

"They have urged us to have control over the police.... In the elections to local bodies, candidates sometimes try to make sure that police act in their favour. We have told them that we will try to keep

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5



MONKEY BUSINESS ... With summer fruits well into ripeness, a monkey reaps the benefits by feasting on jackfruits that have just fallen from a tree in Sylhet city's Shahi Eidgah area. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Cyclone Mocha ravages around 12,000 houses

Shahporir Dwip faces drinking water crisis

STAR REPORT

Around 12,000 homes have been damaged by Cyclone Mocha in Saint Martin's Island and Cox's Bazar, Enamur Rahman, state minister for disaster management and relief, said yesterday.

Of these, some 2,000 were completely damaged and the rest partially damaged. "Some people were injured by falling trees and were given treatment at local hospitals," he told journalists at the secretariat.

"We were able to bring all people from risky areas to the shelter centers. That's why there are no reported deaths."

The authorities concerned have been instructed to distribute tin sheets and cash assistance for rehabilitation of those affected by the storm, Enamur said.

"A list of the cyclone victims is being prepared. They will be given assistance according to their needs."

Meanwhile, around 100 people are living out in the open in Shahporir Dwip, after Cyclone Mocha decimated their houses.

"The tin roof of my house was blown away by the storm. As I don't have the financial means to repair it right now,

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5