



B4 LC opening drops for most commodities



P11 Bangladesh U-17s win handball title



P7 Watchdog gets 3 more months for probing Adani



P6 Cannes open its doors to the world



Scrap iron is being melted in a furnace at a factory in the capital's Shyampur. This process of producing rods creates clouds of fumes and smoke that engulf the area adjacent to Dhaka-Narayanganj road, inset. The photos were taken around 1:00pm on Sunday. PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Old buses, trucks to be sent to the scrap yards

Gazette in this regard likely in days

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The government has decided that buses and trucks will be scrapped after 20 and 25 years of being on the road.

A circular of the Road Transport and Highways Division issued yesterday revealed the move, the first of its kind in Bangladesh.

The order will come into force through the publication of a gazette. The gazette will be issued within a few days, BRTA Chairman Nur Mohammad Mazumder told The Daily Star.

Experts said proper implementation of the move would improve road safety.

The Road Transport and Highways Division has also prepared a draft guideline for scrapping old vehicles. In the draft, it has been mentioned that no vehicle owner would be able to register a new vehicle if they own a vehicle that has exceeded the "service life" set by the government.

The draft Motor Vehicle Scrapping Guideline-2023 said the government would be outsourcing the vehicle scrapping job to private firms enlisted with the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) and under the BRTA's supervision.

The move comes more than four years after a special committee formed by the National Road Safety Council recommended setting the usable life of commercial vehicles to reduce road crashes and help bring discipline to the road transport sector.

Thousands of unfit and rickety vehicles are on the roads and the rising numbers of crashes and deaths have become a major concern.

"This is a good move for road safety but intensive monitoring and quality enforcement is the key to getting positive results," prominent transport expert Prof Shamsul Haque said.

Prof Shamsul, also the director of the Accident Research Institute at Buet, told The Daily Star yesterday that there are enough laws, rules and guidelines for the road transport sector but the problem lies in implementation and enforcement.

Due to the lack of monitoring and enforcement, one will see hundreds of unregistered and unfit vehicles even at the periphery of the capital, he said.

He, however, said the usable life of a vehicle shortens due to poor road quality, overloading, and improper maintenance. And these can lead to a vehicle having major issues even within the government-set service life of the bus or truck.

SERVICE LIFE

The BRTA in 2010 banned buses aged over 20 years and trucks over 25 years in the capital. The old vehicles then started operating on inter-district highways.

In March 2019, a committee, led by transport leader Shajahan Khan, made 111 recommendations to curb road accidents and bring discipline in the sector. The recommendations include setting the service life of buses and trucks to 20 and 25 years. It mentioned that old vehicles cause road crashes and congestion due to breakdowns.

The government formed a task force led by the home minister to implement the recommendations.

BRTA Chairman Mazumder told The Daily Star that the BRTA had sought opinions from stakeholders regarding the draft guideline. "The guideline will be finalised in the shortest possible time after an inter-ministerial meeting."

Mazumder said the BRTA would take outdated vehicles off the roads and would not wait for the approval of the guideline.

Khondaker Enayet Ullah, secretary general of Bangladesh Road Transport Owners Association, said, "We support the decision."

Replying to a question, he said he had no idea how many outdated vehicles were in the country. "But we think there are such vehicles in the districts."

- 20 years of useable life for buses and minibuses
- 25 years of service life for trucks
- Govt prepared draft guideline for scrapping vehicles
- Govt listed private firms to scrap the vehicles
- Owners with outdated vehicle will not get registration for new vehicles

Though in power for a long time, AL still popular Says PM



UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said the Awami League has successfully been able to retain its popularity even though it has been in power for a long time.

"Staying in power for a long time, a very few parties or men can sustain popularity or work for the welfare of the people continuously, but the Awami League has been able to do so. We've proved

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

51pc of Dhaka's poor are new

BIDS survey finds, blames Covid fallout

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fifty-one percent of the capital's poor people had slid into poverty because of the lingering fallout from the coronavirus pandemic, according to a survey by Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies.

The survey conducted on 2,046 households said 22.24 percent of Dhaka city's population was poor in 2022 and more than half of the poor people were "new poor".

The capital city currently has a population of over 1.02 crore, according to Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics data from last year.

Addressing the BIDS Research Almanac 2023 at a hotel yesterday, the institute's Director General Binayak Sen said, "Evidence shows that the new poor, as a new social category, is emerging as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic."

Steps must be taken to keep people

from becoming poor, he said while presenting a paper titled "Urban Poverty Dynamics During Covid-19: Anatomy of Resilience".

He added that from 2019 to 2022, the number of poor people in the capital fell by 4.3 percentage points from 26.54 percent.

Besides, the proportion of extremely poor households declined from 17.01 percent to 13.83 percent during the period.

The reduction of poverty happened due to self-employment, social safety net programmes and charity, and utilisation of savings by individuals, Binayak Sen said.

He said digital technology like mobile financial services played a positive role in creating self-employment.

During the pandemic, some researchers said the number of poor people doubled, he said, adding that their studies were done in a hurry.

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'Taqsem has turned Wasa into a den of corruption'

Says its chairman in letter to LGRD ministry

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Wasa Managing Director Taqsem A Khan has turned the state-run agency into "a den of corruption", according to an allegation made by Dhaka Wasa Chairman Gholam Mostafa.

Taqsem runs the administration in an autocratic manner, bypassing the board, Mostafa wrote in a letter to the secretary of the local government ministry yesterday.

He brought several other allegations against Taqsem, and sought directives from the secretary.

Only five days ago, three associations of employees of Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority wrote to the LGRD ministry demanding immediate action



Taqsem A Khan

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SAAT MASJID ROAD Trees felled for facelift, a new median strip

Say DSCC officials; experts slam the move, say the trees could've been easily saved

HELEMUL ALAM and DIPAN NANDY

City life comes with rapid change. But for the residents of Dhanmondi what didn't change for long were the trees and plants on the median of Saat Masjid Road. Bursting with blossoms in spring and summer, the krishnachuras and the radhachuras, among other trees, became a part of their lives.

Now the trees are almost gone, leaving residents baffled as to why a development project has to be carried out at the expense of those beautiful trees which also served as a bulwark against environmental degradation.

At a time when environmental issues

are at the heart of most policy discussions, the felling of several hundred trees by the Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) on Saat Masjid Road has raised more questions than answers.

According to DSCC officials, the trees were cut to correct the faulty alignment of the median on the Dhanmondi thoroughfare. The existing median divides the road unevenly, meaning the opposing lanes are not of the same width. The correction was needed to ensure smooth traffic flow as the road now has to accommodate more buses under a new route plan.

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The parking space at the Osmani Udyan lies unusable and has turned into a hub for criminal activities since the DSCC closed it down for renovation five years ago. The failure to complete the project has now resulted in the complete abandonment of the space. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Two army men killed in KNA attack in Bandarban

Says ISPR

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two soldiers of the Bangladesh Army were killed and two officers injured in an attack of Kuki-Chin National Army members in Bandarban's Ruma upazila on Tuesday, said the Inter Services Public Relations in a press release yesterday.

The KNA members detonated an improvised explosive device (IED) and opened fire on the army personnel, the release said.

The release did not contain the identities of the deceased.

The incident took place when an army patrol team led by Major Monowar on Tuesday left Sungsungpara army camp after receiving

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Foreign envoys will get addl security if they pay for it

Says home minister

UNB, Dhaka

The additional security for some countries, including the US and the UK, will be restored if they want it but they must pay for the facility, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan said yesterday.

"There was a reign of terror here when we saw the rise of militants... At that time, we used to give protection to only four embassies. They didn't write to us and no requests were made either. We gave them [additional security] so that they face no trouble," the minister said.

"We think that situation doesn't exist any more. That's why we have withdrawn this protection. However, if an ambassador thinks it will be needed, the new Ansar Guard Regiment will give protection..."

"I reiterate that we have police protection in every embassy. Gunmen are also there for the four ambassadors I spoke about. There are all kinds of protection. The protection we used to give only on the road has been withdrawn. I think I've made it clear."

Asaduzzaman Khan
Home Minister

They have to pay the cost and we will arrange it for them accordingly. That's how it has been decided."

The minister made the statement in response to a question after a meeting of a taskforce, formed to implement recommendations on ensuring discipline in the road transport sector and curbing accidents. The meeting was held at the conference room of the home ministry.

"I reiterate that we have police protection in every embassy. Gunmen are also there for the four ambassadors I spoke about. There are all kinds of protection. The protection we used to give only on the road has been withdrawn. I think I've made it clear," he said.

Asked if any attack on the envoys could create concern about their security in Bangladesh, Asaduzzaman said, "I have clarified that if they think they need protection on roads, we have everything ready. They'll get it if they want."

"We will also deploy Ansar Guard Regiment to ensure security of the ministers and VIPs in phases," he said.



People take part in a rally to show solidarity with Pakistan's army in Peshawar yesterday, after military installations were allegedly damaged by supporters of former Pakistan's prime minister Imran Khan following his arrest last week.

PHOTO: AFP

Next five years set to be hottest period ever: UN

AFP, Geneva

It is near-certain that 2023-2027 will be the warmest five-year period ever recorded, the United Nations warned as greenhouse gases and El Nino combine to send temperatures soaring.

Global temperatures are soon set to exceed the more ambitious target set out in the Paris climate accords, with a two-thirds chance that one of the next five years will do so, the UN's World Meteorological Organization said Tuesday.

The hottest eight years ever recorded were all between 2015 and 2022 -- but temperatures are forecast to increase further as climate change accelerates.

"There is a 98-percent likelihood that at least one of the next five years, and the five-year period as a whole, will be the warmest on record," the WMO said.

The 2015 Paris Agreement saw countries agree to cap global warming at "well below" two degrees Celsius above average levels measured between 1850 and 1900 -- and 1.5C if possible.

The global mean temperature in 2022 was 1.15C above the 1850-1900 average.

The WMO said there was a 66 percent chance that annual global surface temperatures will exceed 1.5C above pre-industrial levels for at least one of the years 2023-2027, with a range of 1.1C

to 1.8C forecasted for each of those five years.

While this does not mean that the world will permanently exceed the Paris benchmark, "WMO is sounding the alarm that we will breach the 1.5C level on a temporary basis with increasing frequency," said the agency's chief Petteri Taalas.

"A warming El Nino is expected to develop in the coming months and this will combine with human-induced climate change to push global temperatures into uncharted territory.

"This will have far-reaching repercussions for health, food security, water management and the environment. We need to be prepared."

El Nino is the large-scale warming of surface temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean. The weather phenomenon normally occurs every two to seven years.

Conditions oscillate between El Nino and its opposite La Nina, with neutral conditions in between.

The WMO said earlier this month that the chances of El Nino developing were 60 percent by the end of July and 80 percent by the end of September.

Typically, El Nino increases global temperatures in the year after it develops -- which in this cycle would be 2024.

The 2015 Paris Agreement saw countries agree to cap global warming at "well below" two degrees Celsius above average levels measured between 1850 and 1900 -- and 1.5C if possible.

ACC summons Zahangir over graft allegations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission summoned Zahangir Alam, the suspended mayor of Gazipur City Corporation, for interrogation over corruption allegations on Tuesday, a day after his expulsion from the ruling Awami League.

Zahangir was expelled on May 15. The next day, the ACC issued a notice upon him. Zahangir is facing various graft allegations allegedly committed during his tenure as the GCC mayor.

He has been asked to be present at the ACC's Segunbagicha headquarters at 10:00am on May 21 and 22, said ACC Secretary Mahbub Hossain at a press briefing yesterday.

He said two enquiries are going on against Zahangir.

"After examining documents and recording statements of several people, the investigation officers find it necessary to record his [Zahangir] statement on the allegations," he said.

The ACC traced a suspicious account of the GCC with Konabari Branch of Premier Bank. It collected information about the account that was opened when Zahangir was the GCC mayor, read an ACC press release yesterday.



25 pro-BNP lawyers sued over violence at SCBA office

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twenty-five pro-BNP lawyers have been sued over Tuesday's violence on the Supreme Court Bar Association office premises.

Md Rafiqullah, assistant superintendent of the SCBA, filed the case with Shahbagh Police Station on Tuesday night and also accused 150 unnamed others, Nur Mohammad, officer-in-charge of the police station, told The Daily Star.

According to the case statement, the accused are pro-BNP Jamaat lawyers. The plaintiff filed the case, bringing allegations of attempting to murder an AL-leaning lawyer, harassment of a female lawyer, theft, and vandalism.

The accused include BNP Joint Secretary General Mahbub Uddin Khokon, former secretary of SCBA Md Ruhul Kuddus Kazal, and BNP Law Affairs Secretary Kayser Kamal.

On Tuesday, Pro-BNP and AL-leaning lawyers scuffled while holding separate programmes on the SCBA office premises over its recent annual polls. The incident left around two dozen lawyers injured.

Madrasa student dies from electrocution

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

A madrasa student died after a live electric wire fell on him in Jhalakathi's Nalchity upazila yesterday. Dead Tahsin Khalifa, 9, was a grade-II student of local Sarmahal Karimia Madrasa, said police.

He was returning home from the institution after attending an exam. On his way, he was electrocuted to death in Moulabhi Bari area, said locals.

He was rushed to Nalchity Upazila Health Complex where doctors declared him dead.

Manoranjan, inspector of Nalchity Police Station, said he would take action after contacting the dead's family members.

Farmer shot dead near Indo-Bangla border

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A farmer was shot dead near Bangladesh-India border in Dinajpur's Chirirbandar upazila early yesterday.

The victim's family members and neighbours alleged that Indian Border Security Force (BSF) shot him. However, officials of Border Guard Bangladesh did not confirm.

Victim Monjurul Islam, 22, of Sahapur village in Chirirbandar, went out of home around 10:00pm on Tuesday night.

After hearing gunshots around midnight, locals informed police. The law enforcers recovered the body around 12:30am yesterday, said Bazlur Rashid, officer-in-charge of Chirirbandar Police Station.

The body had four bullet injuries, he further said, adding that the body was sent to M Abdur Rahim Medical College Hospital for autopsy.

Lt Col Alamgir Hossain, commanding officer of 29th BGB Battalion in Phulbari, said BGB urged BSF to hold a flag meeting in this connection.

Two army men

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information about a hideout of armed criminals in Jarulchharipara.

As the team reached near Jarulchharipara around 1:55pm, the KNA criminals detonated the IED and started firing indiscriminately, leaving two officers and two soldiers injured, it added.

The injured were flown to Combined Military Hospital, Chittagong, where the two soldiers died of their injuries, said the ISPR release, adding that the injured officers are receiving treatment at the hospital.

In recent times, the KNA has been trying to create a chaotic environment through criminal activities in the deep forests of Ruma, Rowangchhari and Thanchi upazilas of Bandarban, it added.

Army Chief General SM Shafiuddin Ahmed offered his deepest condolences to the family members of the slain army personnel.

Home ministry

FROM PAGE 12

been clearly instructed to appeal to the governments of the countries concerned to try the perpetrators of anti-state activities under their existing laws.

Bangladesh ambassadors and high commissioners in those countries have also been instructed to regularly monitor the activities of the listed persons or organisations and inform the authorities of any social media posts, content, news or information that are harmful and defamatory to the government or against the Bangladesh's interests.

Steps are already being taken to ensure that informative and objective news are regularly published in the international media to counter misinformation and promote a positive image for Bangladesh, the report said.

The ministry also placed a report regarding The Daily Star's news report titled "Sold as cyber slaves" in January.

The foreign ministry's senior secretary in the report said the expatriate welfare ministry had already been requesting necessary measures against Bangladeshi human trafficking rings.

Thai parties meet for coalition talks to form govt

AFP, Bangkok

Thai opposition groups met for coalition talks yesterday after hammering government rivals at the ballot box, but some junta-appointed senators warned they would try to stop the victorious party's leader from becoming prime minister.

The progressive Move Forward

Party (MFP) emerged from Sunday's election as the biggest party after voters emphatically rejected nearly a decade of military-backed rule.

MFP leader Pita Limjaroenrat met senior officials from five other opposition parties at a Bangkok restaurant, posing for photos before ushering them inside for closed-door talks.

Old buses, trucks to be sent

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DRAFT GUIDELINE

The preamble to the draft guideline mentions that the move is required to improve road safety, bring discipline to the transport sector and reduce pollution.

The guideline will also be applicable to written off vehicles of the government and non-government organisations, vehicles damaged by fire, explosion or natural calamities, illegal and banned vehicles, and vehicles ordered for scrapping by courts or other authorities concerned.

As per the guideline, the owner has to submit the necessary papers for the outdated vehicle to the BRTA which

would hand over the vehicle to the firm scrapping.

The government would give special benefits to owners who would have the document certifying that they have scrapped their old vehicles, it read.

The BRTA would issue gazettes cancelling the registrations of scrapped vehicles.

A seven-member committee led by the director (engineering) of the BRTA will decide which parts of the vehicles could be recycled and fix the price of scrap metal, plastic and other products, it added.

Violation of the guideline would be tantamount to violation of the Road Transport Act-2018, it read.

Taqsem has turned Wasa

FROM PAGE 1

against Mostafa for "tarnishing the image of Wasa" on a TV talk show.

In yesterday's letter, the board chairman said as per the Wasa Act-1996, there is an obligation to convene a board meeting every two months. But the managing director often ignores this obligation.

After Mostafa's talk show appearance, Taqsem, who was abroad at that time, tried to force the employees to form human chains against Mostafa. After he failed to do so, Taqsem had employee associations file a complaint against him with the LGRD ministry, read the letter.

Mostafa's letter read, "The list of his [Taqsem's] irregularities and

misrule is so long that it is not possible to write them here."

Taqsem runs Wasa as he wishes and the internal situation in Dhaka Wasa is very bad, read the letter.

"He terminated those who raised voices against him. Hundreds of such incidents happened in the past. Therefore, no one dares to speak against him for fear of getting fired. A government agency cannot run this way."

"Dhaka Wasa is being run bypassing the board and the board's decision," it added.

When this correspondent called Taqsem, he rejected the call. In his reply to a text message, he wrote, "Sorry, I can't talk right now."

Trees felled for facelift, a new median strip

FROM PAGE 1

Although they could not confirm exactly when the trees were planted, Dhanmondi residents said they had been planted at least 15 years ago.

Talking about the issue, officials also referred to an integrated Tk 1,719 crore project called "Different Infrastructure Development Project" (DIDP), under which the DSCC is carrying out a number of infrastructural and beautification projects.

The DIDP includes beautification of footpaths and median strips and construction of public urinals. It covers infrastructural development and beautification on four different roads -- Saat Masjid Road, the stretch from Golapshah Mazar in Gulistan to Bangabazar in Fulbaria, the stretch from Palashi to Nilkhet and the stretch from Gulistan underpass to Golapshah Mazar. It also aims to widen the two-kilometre median on the Saat Masjid Road from 36 inches to 42 inches.

However, environmentalists and urban experts have raised questions about the rationale for cutting the trees which are vital for fresh air in an increasingly polluted city. They believe the project could be carried out without cutting the trees.

According to environmentalists, the DSCC has cut down nearly 600 trees from the median without having secured any permission from the forest department, which is illegal.

"The DSCC is doing it on the pretext of beautification and facilitating vehicular movement. However, it serves no such purpose," said Syeda Rizwana Hasan, chief executive of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela).

Terming the move poorly planned, Adil Mohammad Khan, former general secretary of Bangladesh Institute of Planners, said that the development work on Saat Masjid Road could have been done by protecting the trees because the condition of the median was fit for

the purpose.

The DSCC did not discuss it with professionals, nor did they care about public opinion though professional engagement and public participation are the two necessary factors before deciding on such issues, said Adil.

"Beautification by getting rid of trees is unacceptable," he added.

DSCC Chief Engineer Saleh Ahmed said they had to cut the trees to relocate the median at the centre of the road.

"Under new route plans, buses running from Ghatarchar to Kanchpur via Basila will ply Saat Masjid Road. But the problem is that the width of the road was not equal on both sides. So, we're making the width of both sides equal by relocating the median," Saleh Ahmed told The Daily Star.

"Besides, there were 10 to 12 intersections on this road. We will close them all except for four to five so that pedestrians and vehicles can cross safely," he added.

DSCC Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh on Tuesday told reporters that trees were cut only when there was no other alternative.

"Trees are being cut down on Saat Masjid Road to introduce an automatic traffic system. Residents of the area have already started to get the benefits of the ongoing development work," he said.

Responding to a question, the mayor said, "The information about the felling of 563 trees is false. We have cut only a few trees and the rest have fallen."

"We are sorry for the trees but we will plant three times the number that has been cut. Also, no more big trees will be planted on the median."

About not securing permission from the department of forest, a DSCC high-up, preferring not to be named, said, "It is necessary to take permission to cut the trees which are valued for timber but the trees which

we have cut had no such value."

Terming this claim unfounded, Adil stressed that cutting trees on such a long stretch of road without the permission of the forest officials is illegal.

Echoing Adil, Iqbal Habib, joint secretary of Bangladesh Paribesh Adolon, said indiscriminate cutting of trees for implementing any project is illegal.

"The DSCC should have done a proper study considering the trees as living beings, but they didn't," Habib added.

Communications expert Prof Md Shamsul Hoque of Buet said he did not notice any anomaly with the median on Saat Masjid Road.

He also said that the decision to close so many intersections on the road might have a negative impact on curbing congestion.

51pc of Dhaka's poor are new

FROM PAGE 1

But the BIDS study found that poverty increased in the first few months of the pandemic and then started to decline, he added.

He said digital technology like mobile banking services played a positive role in creating self-employment.

"However, the number of new poor rose, and the government should work on it."

Planning Minister MA Mannan said disparity was rising as the economy was growing.

The government is trying to reduce disparity through social safety net programmes that directly benefit the poor, he added.

Thanks to government initiatives, extreme poverty has fallen, he added while addressing the event as the chief guest.

Satyajit Karmaker, secretary at the planning ministry, also spoke at the event.

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ILLEGAL BRICK KILNS IN N'GANJ

High Court blasts government for not demolishing them

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday blasted the government authorities for not demolishing all the illegal brick kilns in Narayanganj despite its repeated orders.

"It has been found from relevant documents that one of the owners of illegal brick kilns has been jailed for a month while other such offenders have only been fined. There might have been some under-the-table dealings among officials and owners of such kilns," the HC bench of Justice KM Kamrul Kader and Justice Mohammad Showkat Ali Chowdhury said during the hearing of a petition filed by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh.

Petitioner's lawyer Manzill Murshid told the HC bench that though the HC issued contempt of court rules against the high officials of the government, appropriate action was not taken against them.

The HC bench also summoned the deputy commissioner of Narayanganj and two other high officials on May 31 to explain why illegal brick kilns were not shut down despite its repeated directives.

The other two officials are the director (enforcement) of the DoE and the deputy director of DoE (Narayanganj).

DoE's lawyer Amatul Karim Swapna told The Daily Star that the DoE has demolished one illegal brick kiln and shut down the operations of 10 others in Narayanganj in compliance with the HC orders.

"The government officials cannot comply with the HC orders as the owners of brick kilns moved appeals before the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court against the HC orders," she added.



Senior Awami League leaders present a bouquet to party President and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Gono Bhaban yesterday, marking the premier's 43rd Homecoming Day.

PHOTO: PID

Community clinic gets global recognition

UN adopts it as a resolution

UNB, Dhaka

The United Nations have unanimously adopted the first-ever resolution on community-based health care.

The resolution, titled "Community-based primary health care: a participatory and inclusive approach to universal health coverage", acknowledged the important role community clinics play in promoting primary health care, women's empowerment, community engagement and mobilisation towards achieving universal access to health.

The resolution, in recognition of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's contribution in establishing model community clinics in Bangladesh, highlighted "The Sheikh Hasina Initiative" as an exemplary innovative model of public-private partnership.

By introducing the "Community Clinic Model of Bangladesh", the resolution asks member states to explore measures to scale up and reference best practices to benefit from successful national experience.

It reflects Bangladesh's commitment to improving its citizens' health and well-being and to contributing to global health equity.

Permanent Representative of
SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Don't play with fire

Quader warns BNP

BSS, Dhaka

Awami League General Secretary and Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday urged BNP not to play with fire.

He said this while speaking at a discussion organised by AL at Bangabandhu International Conference Center.

The discussion was organised marking the 43rd homecoming day of AL President and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Quader said, "Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina did not go abroad to complain. She went to make the country's economy more prosperous. After her tour, she does not return empty-handed."

AL Presidium Member Mosharrif Hossain said, "We got back democracy, we got back the right to vote as Sheikh Hasina came back to the country."

DHOLAIKHAL RETENTION POND

DSCC to undertake beautification works

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) has taken an initiative to beautify the retention pond at Dholaikhal.

"The environment of Dholaikhal water retention pond will be more beautiful than Hatirjheel when the activities undertaken by the city corporation are completed," said DSCC Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh while laying the foundation stone of the project at the site yesterday.

The project will be implemented on a 200297.4 square feet

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Provide fishers with salaries, insurance

Speakers urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government should support hilsa fishers by providing salaries and insurance coverage to enhance their livelihood, said speakers yesterday.

Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon, Sundarbans and Coast Protection Movement, and Waterkeepers Bangladesh made the demand in a dialogue held at Jatiya Press Club.

Researcher Syed Ali Azhar stressed the importance of ensuring adequate security against robbers.

Bapa General Secretary Sharif Jamil highlighted the decline in fish eggs per litre in Pasur river, urging for a closer examination of the gap between hilsa production and its accessibility for the common people.

Gulshan Ara Latifa, former chair of Dhaka University's Zoology Department, called for research on development projects to safeguard hilsa sanctuaries.

Mir Mohammad Al, assistant professor and chairman of the Department of Aquaculture at Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University, emphasised the need for regional collaboration in determining the duration of the ban on hilsa catching and creation of funds to support fishers.

Bapa President Sultana Kamal questioned the adequacy of a 40-kilo grant of rice for a fisherman's family. She also criticised the irregularities and shortcomings in the allowance card distribution.

Action against those selling drugs at higher price

DGDA decides in meeting

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law enforcement agencies will take action if anyone sells drugs and other medical products at a higher price than the one fixed by the drug administration.

The Directorate General of Drug Administration (DGDA) decided this at a meeting yesterday after it was instructed by the prime minister's office recently to take measures to reduce the "excessive price hike" of drugs and medical equipment.

Representatives of pharmaceutical companies, medical product importers, consumers and law enforcement agencies attended the meeting with Maj Gen Mohammad Yousuf, DGDA director general, in the chair.

The meeting concluded that the recent price hike is not "excessive" since it was done to adjust the depreciation of the taka against the US dollar, Yousuf told reporters after the meeting.

On June 30 last year, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare hiked the prices of 53 out of 117 essential medicines by 13 to 75 percent.

Prices of around 1,500 generic medicines and all other medical equipment – which are indicated by DGDA based on the demand of the companies – were also hiked at different times accordingly.

On June 30 last year, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare hiked the prices of 53 out of 117 essential medicines by 13 to 75 percent. Prices of around 1,500 generic medicines and all other medical equipment – which are indicated by DGDA based on the demand of the companies – were also hiked at different times accordingly.

"No one in the meeting could place any proof that the price has been hiked excessively. But we will find a way if there is an option to reduce the price," said Yousuf.

DGDA will also write to the National Board of Revenue for tax and other duty exemptions on medical imports and to the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Make SRHR services more accessible

Speakers tell roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a programme yesterday emphasised the need for making Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) easily accessible and judgement-free while also protecting adolescents' privacy and informing them of their legal rights on SRHR issues.

The roundtable, titled "Adolescent Sexual Health and Rights (SRHR), Service Access in Bangladesh", was jointly organised by Dnet and Unicef at Dnet's office in the capital.

Dr Jannatul Ferdous, health specialist (maternal and adolescent health) at Unicef Bangladesh, said, "For adolescents to break social norms and protect their health rights, schools must teach their students about all facets of sexual and reproductive health care."

Dr Fariha Haseen, head of the Division of Reproductive and Child Health at BSMMU, said, "The contact information of the closest adolescent health facilities must be provided to students by all educational institutions."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

NIKO GRAFT CASE

Khaleda files petition to scrap indictment order

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday filed a revision petition with the High Court challenging a lower court order that framed charges against her and seven others in the Niko corruption case.

She submitted the petition through her lawyer Kayser Kamal. ACC filed the case on December 9, 2007, accusing Khaleda and several others of abusing power to award a gas exploration and extraction deal to Canadian company Niko.

38 more hospitalised with dengue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 38 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 1,330. Some 111 dengue patients are still undergoing treatment while 1,207 have been released from hospitals. Twelve people have died from dengue so far this year.



Carrying large bags full of plastic waste, a boat wades through hyacinth-filled water of the Buriganga to take the plastic to a factory in Kamrangirchar for recycling. The growing problem of water hyacinths in the river poses a significant challenge for those who depend on it for transportation and trade. This photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

323 extremists to surrender to Rab on May 21

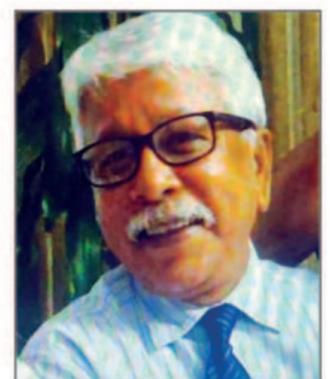
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With over 200 arms and weapons, at least 323 members of over 14 extremist groups in the country's northwestern and southwestern regions will surrender on May 21.

They will surrender under the supervision of Rab-12 at the Sirajganj Stadium, in the presence of Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal.

Commander Khandaker Al Moin, director of the legal and media wing of Rab Headquarters, confirmed the development. "This initiative has been taken by Rab after extremist group members from the regions including Tangail, Sirajganj, Rajbari, Pabna, Bogura, Kushia, and Meherpur districts expressed willingness to return to normal life," he said.

We Mourn



"The Staff of the Embassy of Italy in Dhaka and many of his friends inside the Italian community mourn the sad loss of Dr. Ehsanur Rabbi, an eminent orthopedic surgeon, an extraordinary person and a dear friend to all of us. Gone from our sight but never from our heart. May his soul rest in peace. Our deepest sympathy goes out to his wife and all members of his family."

Embassy of Italy
Dhaka
PRAYER TIMING
MAY 18

Fazr	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

Sayed Khokon relieved of Tk 34.89cr embezzlement charges

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday relieved Dhaka South City Corporation former mayor Sayeed Khokon and six others from the charges of the case filed over embezzlement of Tk 34.89 crore.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Rajesh Chowdhury passed the order, accepting the probe report filed with the court by the Police Bureau of Investigation in May 9.

PBI Inspector AZM Moniruzzaman said the charges against Sayeed Khokon and other accused were not found true.

On December 29, 2020, Delwar Hossain, president of Traders Owners Association of Fulbaria City Supermarket-2 in the capital's Gulistan, filed the case.

According to the case documents, Khokon and six others built shops, violating the main design of the market and allocated those.



As part of a newly-launched campaign, Dhaka North City Corporation brings out a procession in Mirpur-1 yesterday. DNCC will now work with members of national cadet corps and scouts to raise awareness on dengue. PHOTO: COLLECTED

Hasnat to lead AL polls

FROM PAGE 5

AL Joint General Secretary AFM Bahauddin Nasim has been made coordinator and Organising Secretary Afzal Hossain the joint convener.

The six other members of the team are AL presidium members Jahangir Kabir Nanak, Abdur Rahman, Dr Shammil Ahmed, the party's international affairs secretary Siddiqur Rahman, and members Golam Kabir Rabbani Chinu and Anisur Rahman.

Abul Khair Abdullah previously formed two electioneering committees to help him garner votes in the polls.

However, the incumbent mayor and Barishal city AL General Secretary Serniabat Sadiq Abdullah, who had also been vying for the party ticket, and his followers were not included in either committee.

Abul Hasnat Abdullah, who is father of Sadiq, was made the chief of one of the committees -- a 31-member

advisory committee.

On May 8, Khair announced formation of the advisory committee during a press conference at his campaign office.

The other one -- a 16-member election conducting committee -- was formed on April 28.

Meanwhile, the Election Commission will scrutinise the nomination papers submitted by the mayoral and councillor aspirants today.

Action against those

FROM PAGE 3

health ministry to revise the price fixation rule for drugs and other medical products, he added.

According to sources, the health ministry will arrange a meeting of the "medicine price fixation committee" based on recommendation made at the meeting.

A summary of reports from the PMO and the Special Branch of Police, including a 17-point recommendation was also discussed in the meeting. This newspaper obtained a copy of the recommendations, which was annexed with a letter sent by the health ministry to DGDA on May 9.

The recommendations highlighted weak market surveillance, raw material crisis due to the dollar price hike, and aggressive marketing by pharmaceutical companies. It included establishing DGDA's authority to fix prices of all medicines in addition to the 117 essential medicines, increasing supply of high-demand medicines, reducing unnecessary packaging costs, etc.

"Stopping aggressive marketing is a policy-related

issue... the ministry should take the lead in this regard. A proposal has been sent to the ministry a year ago," said the DGDA director general.

Humayun Kabir Bhuiyan, general secretary of Consumer Association of Bangladesh, also spoke.

"The meeting was to discuss ways to reduce the price. However, no conclusive recommendations were made other than discussing the rising production cost," he told The Daily Star.

Make SRHR

FROM PAGE 3

Dr Md Shamsul Hoque, programme manager at the DGHS, said a major portion of rural people lack knowledge regarding SRHR issues and tools, which is also responsible for the increasing cases of early marriages.

"The first place to learn from is family. Fathers should break the social stigma and contribute to making children aware of SRHR issues, said Dr Md Manjur Hossain, programme manager of adolescent and reproductive health, MCH-Services Unit, Directorate General of Family Planning.

We all want fair polls: Menon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

People of the country will hold a fair election for their own interest, not at the behest of foreigners, said Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon yesterday.

He was addressing the closing rally of the year-long programme, marking the party's 50th anniversary.

He said, "When the elections came, conspiracies were hatched at home and abroad. The country's people are worried about the upcoming elections. Foreign friends want free, fair and participatory elections. They are threatening in many ways. But we want to make it clear that we all want such elections."

Menon said. "We want free and fair, participatory elections, but as in the past, the Workers Party will fight and resist any conspiracy to sabotage the election."

DSCC to undertake

FROM PAGE 3

area with Tk 19.88 crore. There will be 1,968-foot walkways, 2,155 feet bicycle lanes, 60,000 square feet of greeneries, two amphitheatres, a staircase, a play zone for children, four fountains and kiosks.

"Dholaikhal reservoir is a lung of the Old Dhaka. The current situation of this place will be changed within the next year and a more beautiful and greener environment than Hatirjheel will be created,"

he said.

The mayor also mentioned the plan to build an open stage where cultural practices could take place.

"We will remove and transfer the sewage connections tied to this spot so that the water remains uncontaminated. Besides, we will permanently remove the sediments accumulated here and harvest rainwater during the monsoon," he added.

SKS Foundation
College Road, Uttar Horin Singha, Gaibandha

Tender Notice

SKS Foundation is inviting tender from real supplier/vendor for purchasing goods for Solar Home System of "Lighting the Poor and Disadvantaged Families Living in Char Areas Project" supported by Andheri- Hilfe Bonn, Germany. Detail terms and conditions, particulars and quantity will be mentioned in schedule. Schedule can be collected from SKS Head Office, College Road, Uttar Harin Singha, Gaibandha (Admin Department) from 21/05/2023 to 31/05/2023 (Last time-12:00pm on 31/05/2023). Rate of schedule: 500/- (Not returnable). It is requested to drop schedule in tender box on mention dates and tender will be opened at 1:00pm on 31/05/2023 in presence of bidders (if anybody present). Authority reserves the right to accept or cancel fully/partially all the schedules without assigning any reasons.

Chairperson-Procurement Committee
SKS Foundation, Gaibandha

Azmat for

FROM PAGE 5

Tetultala intersection, where he said, "I want to transform Gazipur into a corruption-free city. I want to transform it into a planned city."

Zaida campaigned at various places along the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway, Gazipur Chowrasta and Banglabazar areas. Her son Zahangir and supporters accompanied her.

At that time, Zahangir said, "We want a fair election. Wherever we are going for campaign we are being barred and attacked. We want voters' security."

Meanwhile, Gazi Aatur Rahman, mayoral candidate of Islami Andolon Bangladesh, announced his election manifesto yesterday.

His 34-point manifesto prioritises a corruption-free Gazipur city, formation of pollution control board, rehabilitation of hawkers and women-friendly public transports and formation of zakat fund.

Community

FROM PAGE 3

Bangladesh to the United Nations in New York Ambassador Muhammad Abdul Muhith introduced the resolution in the General Assembly.

The resolution, the first of its kind in the United Nations or the World Health Organization, was co-sponsored by 70 countries.

On behalf of the Bangladesh Permanent Mission in New York, the resolution was facilitated by Md Monwar Hossain, deputy permanent representative.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Resilient Infrastructure for Adaptation and Vulnerability Reduction (RIVER) Project
Workshop Bhaban (Level-3), Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207.
www.lged.gov.bd

Memo No. 46.02.0000.670.07.003.23.01 Date: 17/05/2023

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (EOI)
(CONSULTING SERVICES - FIRMS SELECTION)
[INTERNATIONAL]

Country: Bangladesh
Name of Project: Resilient Infrastructure for Adaptation and Vulnerability Reduction (RIVER) Project
Assignment Title: Consulting Services for Design & Supervision
Reference No. LGED/RIVER/21-22/SD-1
Credit No.: IDA-7167-BD

The People's Republic of Bangladesh has received a credit from the International Development Association (IDA) of the World Bank Group toward the cost of the Resilient Infrastructure for Adaptation and Vulnerability Reduction (RIVER) Project, and intends to apply part of the proceeds for the consulting services of Design and Supervision (D&S).

The consulting services ("the Services") include: The D&S consultancy Firm will support the implementing agency in the Design phase to prepare the initial and final detailed designs; technical specifications, bill of quantity (BoQ), cost estimate and procurement support including bidding documents, and followed by the Supervision phase including contract management, construction supervision, and project management support. The firm will also support the preparation of the site screening and environmental and social reports required by and complied with the World Bank's new Environmental and Social Framework (ESF); developing, maintaining and improving the Information, Communication Technology (ICT) based monitoring and decision support systems and integrating with the LGED and the concerned project, etc.

The detailed Terms of Reference (TOR) for the assignment and soft copy of prescribed format for submission of Expression of Interest can be found at the following address and website: www.lged.gov.bd. The duration of the assignment will be about sixty (60) months covering the full project period. The assignment is expected to commence on December 2023.

The Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) now invites eligible consultancy firms ("Consultants") to indicate their interest in providing D&S Consulting Services. Interested Consultancy firms should provide information demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services. The shortlisting criteria are:

- General Experience of the Firm (core business and years in business).
- Experience in similar assignments of compatible size, complexity and technical speciality in the required area. International experience and experience in development partner-financed contracts will be considered an advantage.
- Firm's in-house staffing resources with relevant expertise (extent of relevant expertise available among the staff who are on the firm's regular payroll). However, CVs of individual staff will not be evaluated in the EOI/shortlisting stage.

Consultants are requested to submit at least the following supporting documents in support of the above-mentioned criteria: (a) The Firm's Incorporation/Trade/registration documents from the country of the firm; (b) JV agreement/letter of intent (if applicable); (c) Firm's brochure; (d) Audited financial reports for last 3 years; (e) list of the firm's in-house/regular staff with relevant expertise (f) description of experience of similar assignments (including nature, scope of services, contract amount, name of employer, period of contract (date of contract signing to date of completion) funding agency(s), location /country of service etc.)

The attention of interested Consultants is drawn to Section III, paragraphs, 3.14, 3.16, and 3.17 of the World Bank Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers (Fourth Edition, November 2020) ("Procurement Regulations") setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest.

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. The qualifications of sub-consultants will not be considered in the EOI evaluation and Shortlisting process. 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, and it is preferable to limit the maximum number of JV partners to 04 (four) including the Lead Firm. In the case of an association (JV or Sub-consultancy), the Consultants must explain in the EOI submission (a) the rationale for forming the association and (b) the anticipated role and relevant qualifications of each member of the Joint Venture and/or of each sub-consultant for carrying out the assignment, to justify the proposed inclusion of the JV members and/or sub-consultants in the association. Failure to provide the above explanation in the Expression of Interest may risk the association not being shortlisted for the assignment.

A Consultant will be selected in accordance with the Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS) method set out in the Procurement Regulations.

Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours from 09.00 to 16.00 hours local time.

Expressions of interest must be delivered in a written form to the address below in person, or by mail or by email by 15.00 local time (GMT+ 6 hours) on or before June 07, 2023. In the case of hard copy, one original and three copies should be submitted.

(Signature)
(Arun Kumar Chowdhury)
Project Director
Phone: +88-02-44826155
pd.lged.river@gmail.com

বিসমিল্লাহির রহমানির রাহীম
বনপাড়া পৌরসভা
তাকদীর হাজারী, উপজেলাঃ বড়াইখাম, জেলাঃ নাটোর
www.bonparapourashava.com
E-mail: mayorbbonpara@gmail.com

শেখ হাসিনার স্মরণীয়
গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি

টোলফোন: ০২-৫৮৮৮৭৯৫৬ (সেবার)
০২-৫৮৮৮৭৯৫৬ (সেবার)

Memo No. 46.01.0000.057.11.068.22/2068/Betar Date: 17/05/2023

Invitation for e-Tender (OTM)
Tender No. 05/2022-23

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

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Package No.	Name of works	Tender documents last selling/ downloading date and time	Tender closing and opening date and time
01.	832060	LGCRPP/ Bonpara/2022-23/W-03	a) Construction of Road start from Bonpara-Haikumal Bypass Road towards Rakibullahs Mazar by DBC in Ward No. 11, under Bonpara Pourashava, Natore (Ch 0+00m to 0+615m). b) Construction of Road start from Kalkapur Takulderpara Road H/O Fatema to H/O Zakir by CC in Ward No. 08 under Bonpara Pourashava. (Ch. 0+00m to 0+135m)	11-Jun-2023 15:30	12-Jun-2023 15:00

These are online tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP System Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.
To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd). The bill will be paid when fund received.

Md. Aatur Rahman
Executive Engineer
Bonpara Pourashava, Natore

GD-860

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Bangladesh Police
Police Telecommunication Organization
Police Telecom Bhabon, Rajarbag, Dhaka.
www.telecom.police.gov.bd

Invitation for Re e-Tender

Memo No-44.01.0000.057.11.068.22/2068/Betar Date: 17-05-2023.

For the financial year 2022-2023. Re e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of the following items.

SL	Description	e-Tender ID	Procurement Method	Online Tender Publication Date & Time	Online Tender Closing Date & Time
1.	Purchase of Pack Battery for Motorola VHF DMR XiR P-6620i	834075	OTM	18 May 2023 15:00	05 June 2023 14:00
2.	Purchase of Parabolic Grid Dish Antenna.	834076	OTM	18 May 2023 15:00	05 June 2023 14:05

This is an online Tender, Where only Re e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no offline/ hard copies will be accepted. To submit Re e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP Systems Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

The fees for downloading the Re e-tender documents from the National e-GP System portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank branches.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal and from e-GP help desk (<http://www.helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd>).

The Procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all Tenders/Proposal/Pre-Qualification/EOIs.

(Signature)
(M. Anwar Zahid)
BP 7806114418
SP (Logistics)
Police Telecommunication Organization
Rajarbag, Dhaka.
Mobile: 02226663809 Fax: 8301404
E-mail: splog.telecom@police.gov.bd

GD-859

CITY

CYCLONE MOCHA

US providing \$250k as emergency relief

STAR REPORT

The US is providing \$250,000 to assist Cyclone Mocha emergency relief efforts in the country's most severely affected areas.

"The people of the United States stand with the people of Bangladesh and the Rohingya refugees affected by the cyclone," US Ambassador Peter Haas said in a statement yesterday.

On May 14, Cyclone Mocha moved through the Bay of Bengal, making landfall in Myanmar and Bangladesh, affecting nearly half a million Bangladeshis living in coastal areas of south-eastern Bangladesh and almost one million Rohingyas in refugee camps, the statement said.

The storm was one of the strongest in recent years causing significant tidal surges, heavy rain, and wind speeds of up to 140 kilometres per hour in Bangladesh, resulting in widespread wind damage, flooding, and landslides.



Millions of children at risk: Unicef

UNB, Dhaka

The trail of destruction left by Cyclone Mocha in parts of Bangladesh and Myanmar is causing severe disruption to the lives of millions of vulnerable children and families, said Unicef yesterday.

Even as the worst of the storm has passed, the risk of landslides remains high. Further dangers, including waterborne diseases, will likely grow in the days ahead.

Cyclone Mocha hit the coastlines of Bangladesh and Myanmar on May 14, around 3:00pm local time, bringing heavy rainfall, storm surges, and strong winds.

"Some of the world's most vulnerable children and families are, yet again, at the sharp end of a crisis they did not create," said Unicef Executive Director Catherine Russell.

In Bangladesh, home to the world's largest refugee camp in the coastal areas of Cox's Bazar, one million Rohingyas faced the brunt of the heavy storms. Half of the population consists of children.



To press home its 10-point demand, including holding the next polls under a non-party neutral caretaker government and to protest against the arrest and harassment of party leaders and activists in "false cases", BNP held a rally in the capital's Basabo area yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

POLLS TO 5 CITY CORPORATIONS

Azmat for 'smart' Gazipur, Zaida wants voter security

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With only eight days left for Gazipur City Corporation polls slated for May 25, mayoral and councillor aspirants spent a busy day in electioneering yesterday.

While conducting her electoral campaign, Zaida Khatun, an independent candidate and mother of suspended Gazipur mayor Zahangir Alam demanded level playing field and an assurance that people can cast their votes freely.

On the other hand, the ruling Awami League nominated candidate Azamat Ullah Khan alleged that the government's allocation was not properly utilised during the previous mayor's tenure and pledged to build a corruption-free Gazipur city.

He conducted campaign in Konabari, Bymile Quader Market, Kashimpur Jail Khana Road, and Nachhar market areas.

Later, Azmat addressed a public rally at

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Hasnat to lead AL polls committee in Barishal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ruling Awami League yesterday formed a nine-member central coordination team for the June 12 Barishal City Corporation polls to work in favour of AL-nominated mayoral candidate Abul Khair Abdullah.

Khair Abdullah's elder brother Abul Hasnat Abdullah, president of Barishal district AL and lawmaker from Barishal-1 and a member of AL central working committee, has been made leader of the team.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

We want a fair election. Wherever we are going for campaign we are being barred and attacked. We want voters' security.

ZAHANGIR ALAM Son of independent mayoral candidate Zaida Khatun

Elephant killed after being hit by train

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An elephant died after a train hit it in Dhaka's Uttara area yesterday.

The incident happened around 1:45pm in Court Bari area when two elephants, guided by their mahouts, were walking along the rail tracks, said Sub-inspector Akbar Ali, in charge of Airport Railway Police Outpost.

The Chattogram-bound Chattala Express Train hit one of the elephants, leaving the animal dead on the spot, he said.

The mahouts fled away immediately with the other elephant, he added. They were trying to identify them, the official said.

The SI also said they have informed the incident to the officials of forest department.

Contacted, Imran Ahmed, conservator (wildlife and nature conservation) of forest department, said they will conduct a post-mortem and bury the animal on the accident spot, if possible.

CORRUPTION CASE

Former Rajuk chair appears in court on stretcher, gets bail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Appearing in court on a stretcher, Humayun Khadem, former chairman of Rajuk, yesterday secured bail till June 4 in a case filed over the allotment of government land in the name of individuals in the capital's Gulshan.

Judge Md Iqbal Hossain of the Special Judge's Court-5 of Dhaka passed the order.

During yesterday's hearing, Humayun's lawyer told the court that his client, was not in a position to appear before it earlier as he could not move without the help of others. The judge granted him bail till June 4, the next scheduled date.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Local Government Engineering Department. Memo No. 46.02.0000.999.14.005.2022.144. Date: 16/05/2023. IFT No. 01/2022-23. Includes procurement details for Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar.

Bangladesh Land Port Authority F-19/A, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar. e-Tender Notice. Construction of open Yard with land development at extended area of cargo vehicle terminal at Benapole Land Port, Benapole.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার. জেলা সুপারের কার্যালয়. নোয়াখালী জেলা কারাগার. jaisupemoakhal@gmail.com. দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি. Includes details for various construction and service tenders.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Office of the Executive Engineer Health Engineering Department (HED). e-Tender Notice-07/2022-2023. Re-Construction of Maradighi Community Clinic (Old Ward-02) at 1 No. Mougati Union in Netrokona Sadar Upazila under Netrokona District.



Michael Douglas on stage.



PHOTOS: REUTERS

Johnny Depp is swarmed by fans as he arrives for the premiere of "Jeanne du Barry".

Cannes opens its doors to the world

The red carpet on the opening night saw a sea of stars like Brie Larson, Uma Thurman, Gong Li, Elle Fanning, Naomi Campbell, Catherine Deneuve and a blue-haired Helen Mirren.

AAQIB HASIB

On Tuesday, arguably one of the most hyped events of the entertainment world, the Cannes Film Festival opened its doors to the world for the 76th time. The festival kicked-off with the premiere of the Louis XV period drama, *Jeanne du Barry*, which stars Johnny Depp.

The red carpet on the opening night saw a sea of stars like Brie Larson, Uma Thurman, Gong Li, Elle Fanning, Naomi Campbell, Catherine Deneuve and a blue-haired Helen Mirren.

During the opening ceremony, Michael Douglas and Harrison Ford were given the honorary Palme d'Or. While everything seemed perfect in the moment, there was a feeling of unease, what with the ongoing strike by screenwriters in Hollywood, which could have an unpredictable impact on the festival. France itself is also suffering from recent labour unrest, as protests are planned to take place for the recently changed pension system in the country.

At the same time, the recent announcement by Adèle Haenel, one of the top French actors, that she was quitting the French film industry for "complacency toward sexual aggressors" has also left many uneasy over attending the festival. This was further amplified after the Cannes Film Festival chief,



Michael Douglas with wife Catherine Zeta Jones and daughter Carys.

Thierry Fremaux rejected her criticisms while addressing members of the media on Monday.

However, the festival, lined up with highly-anticipated big-budget films including James Mangold's *Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny* and Martin Scorsese's *Killers of the Flower Moon*, is unlikely to be hindered despite the controversy.

Additionally, just the list of stars who are set to hit the red carpet over the next week and a half—like Natalie Portman, Leonardo DiCaprio, Cate Blanchett, Sean Penn, Alicia Vikander, Scarlett Johansson and Abel Tesfaye (The Weeknd) — means few will bat an eye eventually.

The endless crowd of onlookers screamed Johnny Depp's name, while signs all over the venue read "Viva Johnny", as he arrived

in purple-tinted sunglasses and signed autographs. *Jeanne du Barry* is in many ways being considered Depp's comeback to Cannes, after his infamous trial with ex-wife Amber Heard last year. The last time Depp made a red-carpet outing was during the Rome Film Festival in 2021.

After the screening, audiences celebrated Depp with a standing ovation, during which the actor teared up.

This year is also a special one for Bangladesh, as the country will be taking its first ever stall to Cannes. Besides that, Aronyo Anawer directorial *Maa*, starring Pori Moni as the lead, will be showcased at the Marche Du Film section on May 20.

Many Bollywood celebrities were also seen adding glamour to the red carpet, including Sara Ali Khan, Manushi Chhillar, Urvashi Rautela and Esha Gupta. This would be Sara Ali Khan's Cannes debut, and the actress would put a desi spin on her look, wearing a gorgeous lehenga instead of a gown—like her co-workers—to the red carpet.

Some other films, that will be screened at the festival, include *The Zone of Interest*, directed by Jonathan Glazer; *Banel & Adama*, by French Senegalese filmmaker Ramata-Toulaye Sy; *Occupied City* by Steve McQueen; *The Old Oak*, directed by Ken Loach and *Asteroid City* by Wes Anderson, just to name a few.

The festival will continue till May 27, 2023.

Chanchal Chowdhury fully set in Mrinal Sen role



Actor Chanchal Chowdhury has unveiled yet another captivating look for his highly anticipated biographical film on legendary filmmaker Mrinal Sen, *Padatik*, directed by Srijit Mukherji.

Taking to his Facebook profile, Chanchal shared the mesmerizing picture, expressing his initial astonishment, "At first, I was surprised to see the picture... is it Mrinal Sen or me!!! It took a while to realize the truth, but it also felt a lot better. What a wonderful work by makeup artist Somnath Kundu."

'The Kerala Story' screening gets cancelled in the UK

Cinema halls in the UK had to abruptly cancel shows of *The Kerala Story*, and also had to refund the audiences. The screening of the movie was halted, as the authorities failed to give it an age certificate. Most of the audience were furious with the sudden decision to stop the screening of the film.

The organisation sent an email giving justification to the viewers, "The British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) didn't issue the age certificate for *The Kerala Story* and thus they had to cancel the bookings. The authorities sincerely apologise for the inconvenience."



COUNTRYWIDE

Low yield frustrates Moulvibazar litchi growers

MINTU DESHWARA

Litchi growers in Moulvibazar fear a low production of the juicy summer fruit this year due to unfavourable weather condition during the peak time of flowering.

Local farmers said production of the fruit was badly hampered due to the drought like situation and lack of adequate rainfall.

As a result, most of the litchi trees could not flowered during the flowering season, while the sizes of fruit is also smaller than the usual one.

Moreover, wild animals like squirrels, bats and different kinds of birds often damaging the litchi, forcing many growers to sell their unripe litchi in advance.

Abdus Shahid, a fruit seller in Moulvibazar town, said currently there is no quality litchi available in the market as the area hardly saw any rainfall during the flowering of the fruit that has a high demand.

According to Moulvibazar Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) Office and local litchi growers, the fruit is available

in different hilly areas of the district since the end of the Bangla month of Baishakh, but it started entering different markets of the town a few days ago. Now the summer fruit is being sold at Chaumohana Intersection, Court Road, Shamsheernagar Road, Pashchim Bazar, Kusumbagh, Chandni Ghat and many other areas of the town. Traders said they were selling 100 litchi at Tk 200 to Tk 250, depending on its size.

One of the wholesale traders Zahid Mia said although there are at least seven to ten litchi trees at some houses in Barbari, Barshijora and Pahar Barshijora villages, but the yield has drastically fall this year due to the unfavourable weather condition.

Farmer Humayun Kabir of Burutla village said most of the litchis in his area got damaged due to scanty rainfall and the drought like weather condition.

While talking to this correspondent, a number of traders in the district expressed their concern over counting a huge loss this season.

Moulvibazar DAE Deputy Director Shamsuddin Ahmed said farmers in different areas of the district planted litchi trees on about 244 hectares land.



A litchi orchard at Barshijora village in Moulvibazar Sadar upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

Imran

FROM PAGE 12

hand them over or face a police operation.

Khan, 70, a former captain of Pakistan's cricket team, said his re-arrest was imminent. Hours earlier, Islamabad's High Court had granted him a bail extension until May 31, his lawyer Faisal Chaudhry said.

"Probably my last tweet before my next arrest," Khan tweeted yesterday evening, adding that police had surrounded his house in the eastern city of Lahore.

In a live video statement, he said his opponents were out to trigger a fight between him and the army.

"I'm afraid that this will bring a big backlash that will cause huge loss to our country," he said. "... If someone thinks that this strategy can win a ban on my party, it is not going to happen."

He demanded a judicial commission headed by the chief justice to probe the violence.

Punjab province's information minister Amir Mir said intelligence and law enforcement agencies had identified that some 30 to 40 people accused of attacking military installations were hiding at Khan's home.

"We're giving an ultimatum that these terrorists should be turned over to the police, or else there will be action," Mir told a press conference. He said Khan had 24 hours to surrender the suspects, and that a police operation would be launched if he did not comply.

Khan's aide, Ittikhar Durrani, denied the former PM was sheltering people suspected of involvement in the violence.

Khan, who has been rallying his supporters to demand a snap election since he was ousted in a parliamentary vote of confidence in April 2022, called on authorities to come to his house with arrest warrants rather than storming it.

Unaffected by Dhaka's relations

FROM PAGE 12

Her comments came months after US Ambassador in Dhaka Peter Haas said Washington DC does not force countries to choose sides over relationships with other countries and particularly with China.

Afreen thanked Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for her recent joint statement with her Japanese counterpart Fumio Kishida "condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine as a violation of international law and the UN charter".

RAB SANCTIONS
Afreen said Washington

DC was pleased to see "a substantial decrease in extrajudicial killings" after its sanction on the Rapid Action Battalion.

"We welcome that decrease... [but] we need to see a long time sustained trend, positive changes of behaviour [in Rab]," she said, adding that Washington DC focused on ensuring accountability, reform and transparency of the force.

She said the US needs to see long term systemic change for removal of sanctions to be considered.

Talking about the Rohingya, the state department official said her country was working to find a durable solution to the Rohingya crisis through their repatriation to Myanmar under right conditions, a task she termed "difficult and challenging".

"We believe very firmly that the conditions in Myanmar right now do not warrant a safe, voluntary, dignified return and so we would oppose any effort to forcibly repatriate individuals to Myanmar," she added.

NSU Associate Prof Jashim Uddin said the trilateral cooperation involving the Matarbari port may be a matter of concern for China, but Bangladesh can surely do whatever needs to be done

in its national interest. Unless Bangladesh joins any military alliance, there should not be any major issue from China's perspective, he added.

Asian Confluence Executive Director Sabyasachi Dutta and NSU Vice Chancellor Prof Atiqul Islam also spoke at the event, moderated by NSU Prof Sk Tawfique M Haque.

It'll boost GDP, create 9 lakh jobs

FROM PAGE 12

The foreign secretary said Indian companies are expected to invest in Bangladesh, with more opportunities being created.

Japanese Ambassador to Bangladesh Iwama Kiminori said his country will continue carrying out development activities in Bangladesh like it has been doing for 50 years,

regardless of who is in power in Bangladesh.

Asked about Bangladesh's elections, he said he won't comment on the matter.

Prof Shahidul Haque of SIPG said both Japan and India are very close and strategic partners of Bangladesh, and global shift in geopolitics has catalysed the three

countries for the trilateral initiative.

"We also need to improve people-to-people cooperation," he said.

NSU Associate Prof Jashim Uddin said the trilateral cooperation involving the Matarbari port may be a matter of concern for China, but Bangladesh can surely do whatever needs to be done

Though in power for a long time

FROM PAGE 1

the electoral system, Hasina said those who once rigged votes are now vocal about democracy and voting rights in the country.

"Those who were the thieves and robbers of votes [in the past] now want democracy and are talking about voting rights. They were born in an illegal way. But we are to hear such words from them."

The AL chief asked her party leaders and activists not to consider such political rhetoric seriously. She said they should rather stay by the people and work for them to change their fortune.

"We'll have to retain the

confidence of the people. The trust of the people is our only source of power. We've no other power except it."

Hasina asked the AL members to reorganise the party and its associate bodies.

She said the AL is the only party that thinks about the welfare of Bangladesh while the others are plunderers.

The PM said Bangladesh has gained success in every area, including saving the environment, food production or protection of human rights, curbing militancy and terrorism. Bangladesh has also been

able to show this success before the world, she said.

"Since we've truly developed the country with limited resources, Bangladesh is now a role model for development."

So, the anti-liberation elements, war criminals, their successors and local and international patrons would not like this progress of Bangladesh, she said.

Hasina recalled the days when she returned home from exile and remembered those who helped her during those tough days. "Since then [1981], the country's people and the Awami League have been my family."

Ukraine grain deal extended for two months

Says Erdogan; UK, Germany say US must decide on jets for Kyiv

AFP, Istanbul

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan yesterday announced a two-month extension of a UN-backed deal under which Ukraine ships grain across the Black Sea to global markets.

"With the efforts of our country, the support of our Russian friends, the contribution of our Ukrainian friends, it was decided to prolong the Black Sea grain deal for two more months," Erdogan announced one day before the deal was due to expire.

Russia agreed not to block ships from leaving two Ukrainian harbours, Erdogan said, expressing his hope that the deal would be "beneficial for all the parties".

He thanked Russian President Vladimir Putin, Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelensky and UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres for their roles in extending the agreement.

Ukraine was one of the world's major grain exporters before Russia invaded in February of last year.

Russian warships blockaded Ukraine's Black Sea ports, sending food prices skyrocketing on global markets and disproportionately hitting the world's poorest, reports AFP.

Turkey and the United Nations first brokered a deal between the warring parties in July 2022, which created safe corridors for the export of Ukrainian produce to assuage the crisis.

But the agreement has periodically come under threat since then as Russia and Ukraine struggled to agree on renewing it before expiration deadlines.

Meanwhile, any decision to send F16 fighter jets to Ukraine will fall on the White House, the UK and German defence ministers said yesterday despite a jet "coalition" announced by Britain and the Netherlands this week.

"This is up to the White House to decide whether it wants to release that technology," British Defence Minister Ben Wallace said after talks with his German counterpart Boris Pistorius in Berlin.

"It depends on the White House... to decide whether the F16 fighter planes can be delivered," Pistorius added.

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and Dutch counterpart Mark Rutte had agreed on the fighter jet club on the first day of a Council of Europe summit in Iceland this week.

They said they would build an "international coalition to provide Ukraine with combat air capabilities, supporting with everything from training to procuring F16 jets".



Anti-G7 protesters walk through the city, ahead of the G7 summit, in Hiroshima, Japan yesterday. Rich nations should boost financial and technical support to poorer countries to help them tackle climate change, a senior Japanese environment ministry official said ahead of the May 19-21 talks.

PHOTO: REUTERS

MAJOR TRANSPORT NETWORK Iran, Russia ink deal to complete INSTC

AFP, Tehran

Iran and Russia yesterday agreed to collaborate on the construction of the final part of a commercial transport network linking to the Gulf and India while avoiding Western sea lanes.

Iranian Transport Minister Mehرداد Bazrpash, who signed the agreement with his Russian counterpart in Tehran, said the 164-kilometre (102-mile) railway in Iran's north would be completed within three years.

It is the only missing link in the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) from northeast Russia via Azerbaijan to Iran's southern coastline and on to India by sea.

Russia and Iran are both under international sanctions that restrict trade.

The freight network of ship, rail

and road routes, which covers some 7,200 kilometres, avoids the Suez Canal between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea which would otherwise transport some Russian seaborne cargo.

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, who attended the signing ceremony, and Russia's Vladimir Putin, who spoke there via videoconference, both hailed the economic opportunities the agreement presents.

The planned railroad would connect Rasht, a city in northern Iran, and the Astara crossing on the border with Azerbaijan. Bazrpash said the "process of construction" of the Rasht-Astara railway "has started and we will finalise it within the next three years".

Raisi said that, once completed, the INSTC will boost regional trade and noted the "great potential" in ties with Russia.

SUDAN CONFLICT Aid needs surge as fighting rages on

REUTERS, Khartoum

The United Nations said yesterday more than half Sudan's population now needed aid and protection, as civilians sought shelter from air strikes and sporadic clashes between rival military factions in the Khartoum area.

Residents said power had been cut, food was in short supply, and drinking water scarce due to the violent power struggle, now in its second month despite international mediation efforts. In Geneva, the OCHA said 25 million people needed help - the highest number ever recorded in Sudan.

ADANI PROBE

India's top court grants 3 months extension to SEBI

REUTERS, Mumbai

India's Supreme Court yesterday granted the country's market regulator additional time till August 14 to complete its investigation into possible violation of securities law and regulatory disclosures by the Adani group. The court directed the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to complete its probe in three months and file a status report on its investigations against the group, whose shares plunged after being criticised by US-based short-seller Hindenburg Research in January. In a petition filed on April 29, SEBI had sought another six months to complete its probe, following a court order on March 2 which had asked the regulator to submit a report by May 2. Hindenburg Research had raised several governance concerns around Adani group, leading to a loss of more than \$100 billion in the market capitalisation of companies in the group founded by billionaire Gautam Adani. Following this, the SC asked SEBI to probe the allegations and submit a report to a court-appointed panel.

Harry, Meghan in 'near catastrophic' car chase

AFP, New York

Prince Harry and wife Meghan Markle were involved in a "near catastrophic car chase" involving paparazzi in New York, a spokesperson for the couple said yesterday. The incident happened on Tuesday night after Harry, 38, and Meghan, 41, attended an awards ceremony in America's financial capital. Meghan's mother Doria Ragland was with them in the vehicle, the spokesperson said in a statement emailed to AFP. "Last night, The Duke and Duchess of Sussex and Ms. Ragland were involved in a near catastrophic car chase at the hands of a ring of highly aggressive paparazzi. "This relentless pursuit, lasting over two hours, resulted in multiple near collisions involving other drivers on the road, pedestrians and two NYPD officers," the spokesperson said. A source close to the couple said Meghan and Harry were pursued by half a dozen blacked out vehicles with "unidentified people driving recklessly and endangering the convoy and everyone around them."



A speleological alpine rescuer looks in a car for missing persons near a supermarket in a flooded area in Cesena, Italy yesterday. Heavy rains have caused major floodings in central Italy, where trains were stopped and schools were closed in many towns while people were asked to leave the ground floors of their homes and to avoid going out.

PHOTO: AFP

ACCESS TO CYCLONE-HIT STATE Aid groups seek green light from Myanmar junta

REUTERS

Relief organisations were awaiting clearance from Myanmar's military rulers yesterday to access areas of Rakhine State devastated by a deadly cyclone three days ago, and deliver food and medicine to communities in urgent need.

Hundreds of people are estimated to have been killed in the impoverished region after cyclone Mocha on Sunday tore down houses, communication towers and bridges with winds of up to 210 kph (130 mph) and triggered a storm surge that inundated the state capital Sittwe.

Residents contacted by Reuters said no help had arrived even days after the storm and volunteers were digging through debris to search for the missing.

One resident who declined to be identified for safety reasons said about 400 people had died and more were at risk of dying "for not having food, purified water and emergency treatment. There are no ... search and

rescue teams."

Rakhine State, with a population of more than three million, is particularly vulnerable, and is home to the persecuted Rohingya Muslims minority that successive governments in predominantly Buddhist Myanmar have refused to recognise.

Some 600,000 Rohingyas still live in the state, while more than a million live in sprawling camps in neighbouring Bangladesh, having fled military crackdowns in recent years. Some still embark on perilous boat journeys to Malaysia and Indonesia.

UN agencies said they were still awaiting a green light from authorities to assess and distribute supplies in affected areas, some of which were inaccessible due to extensive damage.

"We have established communications channels with all authorities in Myanmar. We have asked for unrestricted access to affected communities," said Pierre Peron, a spokesperson for the UN office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

Quad summit cancelled

REUTERS, Sydney

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said yesterday a Quad summit would not proceed in Sydney next week without US President Joe Biden, who postponed his trip because of debt ceiling negotiations in Washington.

Albanese said the leaders of Australia, the United States, India and Japan would instead meet at the G7 in Japan this weekend, after Biden cancelled a trip to Sydney on the second leg of his upcoming Asia trip, which was also to have included a visit to Papua New Guinea.

"The Quad leaders meeting will not be going ahead in Sydney next week. We, though will be having that discussion between Quad leaders in Japan," Albanese told a news conference.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh				
Central Medical Stores Depot (CMSD)				
Department of Health Services, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Dhaka				
Re-Tender for Goods				
Ref No. CMSD/HSM-2202(R)/ICT/Re-Tender/2022-2023/Proc-1/60				Date: 17/05/2023
KEY INFORMATION				
1	Procurement method/document	ICT Open		
FUNDING INFORMATION				
2	Source of funds	Development Budget (Aid Grant/Credit)		
3	Development partner			
PARTICULAR INFORMATION				
4	Project/programme code			
5	Project/programme name	4th Health Population & Nutrition Sector Program (HPNSP)		
6	Tender Package No.	HSM-2202 (R)		
7	Tender package name	Procurement of "CT Scan Machine"		
8	Tender publication date	18/05/2023		
9	Tender last selling date	14/06/2023		
10	Tender closing date and time	15/06/2023 11:00am		
11	Tender opening date and time	15/06/2023 11:30am		
12	Name and address of the office(s)			
	- Selling tender document (principal)	Central Medical Stores Depot, 30, Shahid Taj Uddin Ahmed Sharani, Tejgaon, Dhaka-1208. Tender document will be delivered from the counter of CMSD to the tenderers or their local agents.		
	- Selling tender document (others)	CMSD		
	- Receiving tender document	Do		
	- Opening tender document	Do		
13	Place/date/time for pre-tender meeting	Conference Room, Room No. 115, Central Medical Stores Depot (CMSD), 25/05/2023 11:30am		
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER				
14	Eligibility of tenderer	As mentioned in the tender document		
15	Brief description of goods or works	Procurement of "CT Scan Machine"		
16	Brief description of related services	As per Technical Specification		
17	Tender document price	BDT 4,000/- (Bangladesh Taka four thousand) or USD 50.00 (United State Dollar Fifty) only. The method of payment will be in Pay Order from any scheduled bank in Bangladesh.		
17	Lot No.	Identification	Location	Tender security amount in Taka
	Single Lot	Procurement of "CT Scan Machine"	Central Medical Stores Depot, 30, Shahid Taj Uddin Ahmed Sharani, Tejgaon, Dhaka-1208.	BDT 80,00,000.00 or USD 76,200.00 or equivalent amount in freely convertible currency.
				To be delivered on or before 20 weeks following the date of contract signature, or the date of opening L/C, or the date of confirmation of the L/C. Tenderers offering delivery schedule beyond 20 weeks will be treated as non-responsive.
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS				
18	Name of official inviting tender	Dr. Tauhid Ahmed		
19	Designation of official inviting tender	Deputy Director (CMSD), Director In-charge		
20	Address of official inviting tender	30, Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Sharani, Tejgaon, Dhaka.		
21	Contact details of official inviting tender	Tel No. 88-2-48115486 E-mail: cmsdstore@dhaka.net		
The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders.				

GD-884

Early action key to dengue control

Lessons from past years must reflect in decisions by relevant authorities

Dengue is hardly a seasonal nuisance anymore with cases being reported round the year, although the peak time may still coincide with the beginning of monsoon around June-July. That is when things start to go downhill. So far this year, 12 dengue patients died and 1,261 were hospitalised. Last year, a total of 281 patients died – the highest on record in Bangladesh – while 62,382 were hospitalised, most of which occurred in the second half of the year. That means, if the authorities had any plan to launch an all-out drive to prevent another deadly outbreak, the time is now.

Early action determines to a large extent how the dengue record book will look like down the year. It is all the more important given the increasing severity of infections, with there now being four distinct serotypes of the virus: DENV-1, DENV-2, DENV-3 and DENV-4. The inclusion of the fourth last year has resulted in a higher number of fatalities despite fewer infections compared to 2019, when a staggering 1.13 lakh cases were recorded. Meanwhile, unplanned urbanisation – one of the main reasons for the spread of the disease – has been persistent, meaning that dengue will be harder to control going forward.

Experts have already warned that the country may witness an even worse outbreak this year as the presence of Aedes mosquitoes increased in the early days of summer. Earlier this month, the DGHS said that there is a risk of death for those who had previously been infected if they are reinfected by a different type of dengue, the possibility of which has grown because of the presence of multiple serotypes. This will require proper scientific interventions. For now, the task for the city corporations, municipalities and other relevant agencies is rather simple: conduct anti-mosquito drives, clean dengue hotspots and breeding grounds, communicate precautionary measures to all at-risk households, ensure early detection, and prepare hospitals for a likely patient surge.

Any success this year will depend on a combination of better planning, early action and coordinated interventions. One persistent complaint against the relevant authorities has been lack of early response, which, after the disastrous year that 2022 has been, we hope they will address. That should extend to not just Dhaka but all other cities and towns as well. We must learn from past mistakes and act quickly to prevent another dengue outbreak.

Stop sand extraction in Teesta

Govt must protect rivers from being polluted, encroached or harmed in other ways

The senseless and continuous destruction of our rivers for the sake of personal benefit is deeply saddening. According to a new report by this daily, a powerful syndicate has been extracting sand from Teesta River at the Mohishkchocha union of Aditmari upazila in Lalmonirhat. This has endangered not just the health of the river, but also the lives and livelihoods of those who live on its banks.

With the monsoon season right around the corner, locals have expressed fear that their homesteads and agricultural land along the river will be at risk of erosion owing to continued sand extraction, inevitably paying the price for the exploits of an unscrupulous few. It is quite telling that those directly affected by this feel they do not have the means to stop this activity because of the involvement of politically connected people in the syndicate.

Reportedly, the local administration recently conducted a drive against sand extraction in Teesta. They destroyed one of the machines used for extraction and fined three people in this connection. Locals, however, said that those in charge conduct such operations irregularly and usually fine workers – employed by the syndicate – but those truly responsible are not held accountable. This, we must say, only helps keep the sand extraction business alive.

Without ensuring accountability for those committing crimes against rivers, we cannot stop such practices. It is no secret that our rivers are dying. In the 57 years until 2020, at least 158 rivers dried up in Bangladesh. Indiscriminate disposal of waste as well as irresponsible river management have turned once-mighty and healthy rivers like the Buriganga, Meghna, Kirtankhola, Galachipa and Payra into veritable garbage dumps. Encroachment and unplanned development have finished many others.

The question is, why are the authorities responsible for our rivers not doing anything to reverse this trend? It is because of their inaction and indifference that Bangladesh is a Land of Dying Rivers now. This must stop. The authorities must take stern action against the perpetrators of river pollution and destruction.

Why the DSA should be scrapped

Dr CR Abrar is an academic with interest in human rights issues. Barrister Jyotirmoy Barua is an advocate at the Supreme Court of Bangladesh. Rezaur Rahman Lenin is an academic activist.

CR ABRAR, JYOTIRMOY BARUA and REZAUR RAHMAN LENIN

Over the last few months, the draconian Digital Security Act (DSA), 2018 has come under intense scrutiny. Journalists, lawyers, human rights defenders, teachers, students, and various civic bodies at home and rights organisations abroad have been demanding a re-examination of the law. While some are asking for its thorough amendment, others firmly hold the view that the act needs to be repealed. The rash increase in the law's application in recent months and the death of a woman charged under the DSA in custody appear to have partly swayed the opinion of the common masses against the law. Though many a time senior functionaries of the state publicly acknowledged the gaps that exist in the law, little was done to amend it. As international pressure mounted, the law minister conceded to consider only amending the rule pertaining to the act. Jurists and activists raise the question: can any substantive law be modified through a rule, a subordinate legislation?

While the state remained unyielding, political opponents and dissenting voices suffered immeasurably. Many women and children also became victims of the DSA. It was at this point that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) called on the Bangladesh authorities to impose an immediate moratorium on the use of DSA and "to reform comprehensively its provisions to bring them in line with the requirements of international human rights law." The OHCHR recommended scrapping of sections 21 and 28 and amending eight other sections of the law. The commissioner reminded the government that his office had consistently raised concerns

their demand for scrapping the law. This piece presents the arguments for repealing the DSA, made at a recent webinar organised by Nagorik, a platform for human rights and the rule of law.

The principal weakness of the DSA is that many of its provisions impinge on citizens' rights: freedom of expression and the right to privacy of communication. There was little disputation that its key aim was reinstating Section 57 of the ICT Act, 2006 (amended in 2009 and 2013) which the state was forced to discard in view of widespread public condemnation of its misuse.

The participants believed that the

particular care in registering cases against them under the DSA. Does preferential treatment of a particular group in the application of the law not breach the equality clause enshrined in Article 27 of the constitution?

Sections 17 (on unauthorised access to information infrastructure), 18 (on unauthorised access to computers, digital devices, computer systems, etc), 19 (on damaging computers and computer systems), 20 (pertaining to change of computer code), 33 (unauthorised access acquisition and storage of information), and 34 (on hacking) of the DSA suffer from several weaknesses. Many of these provisions remain vague and undefined. Those convey the message that the law did not adequately consider the issue of intent and thus failed to distinguish between criminal acts and creative pursuits and between hacking for public interest and hacking with

not conclude in time, the judge can continue proceedings by submitting a report to the High Court explaining the delay. In most cases, such a procedure is followed. Instances were cited in which, even after the cases were quashed, the jail authority took unreasonable time to release the detainee.

The law stipulates the establishment of a Cyber Appellate Tribunal. The state is yet to form the tribunal in more than four years since the law was enacted, and thus the litigants have no other option but to move to the High Court, navigating a complex and time-consuming process.

In several cases, the accused have alleged that they were tortured in custody. Two detainees, Mushtaq Ahmed and Sultana Jasmine, died in such facilities, with families claiming they died due to torture. Recently

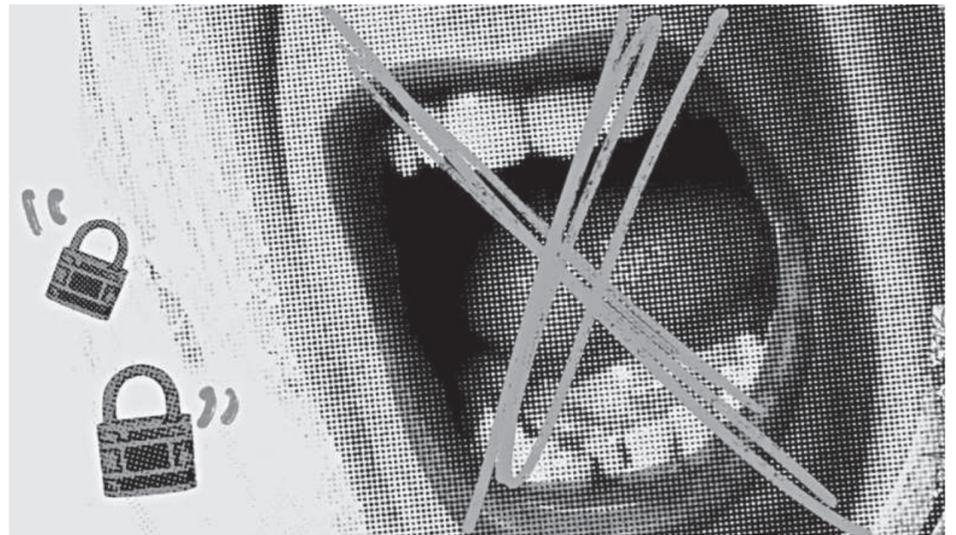


ILLUSTRATION: REHNUMA PROSHOON

The DSA effectively criminalises people's initiatives for good governance. The lodging of a number of cases against active citizens exposing wrongdoings of state functionaries and people's representatives and expressing concerns about public health issues during the Covid pandemic is a case in point.

about the overly broad and ill-defined provisions of the DSA. He called for the creation of an independent judicial panel to review all pending cases brought under the DSA with a view to those accused being released.

The government's failure in delivering on its promise to establish safeguards against the arbitrary or excessive application of the law is noteworthy. It was only on May 3 that the law minister announced that a few provisions of the DSA would be amended by September. While the ministerial pronouncement has been welcomed by those who favour amendment, albeit with a degree of scepticism, others remain resolute in

law, formulated weeks before the 2018 elections, in all likelihood, was intended to curtail key fundamental rights accorded by the constitution. It also contradicts several other laws, regulations and guidelines. Most importantly, it contradicts the right to equal protection of law as guaranteed by Article 27 of the constitution. Several provisions of the DSA directly contravene the much-celebrated Right to Information (RTI) Act. The DSA has slashed some important rights that citizens enjoy under other laws. For example, the Disclosure of Public Interest Information (Protection) Act, 2011 provides adequate protection to whistleblowers for exposing wrongdoers, but Section 32 of DSA prohibits access to that information in the name of state secrecy and security. Likewise, while the Children Act, 2013 provides substantial protection to children from being prosecuted in criminal cases, the DSA has been indiscriminately applied to children as well.

A major weakness of the law is its inconsistency with the other existing laws. Section 29 of DSA provides for three years' jail sentence for defamation and up to Tk 5 lakh fine; the punishment gets harsher for committing the offence a second time. Section 500 of the Penal Code, on the other hand, provides two years' jail sentence with a fine for the same offence. The offence remains the same, but the punishment differs in two different platforms, which is discriminatory and not tenable as per provisions of Article 27 of the constitution. On several occasions, ministerial promises were made that the state would treat journalists with

criminal intent.

As a state party to several international human rights treaties, it is incumbent on Bangladesh to abide by the provisions of those instruments. Any restriction imposed on freedom of expression and communication must uphold three fundamental principles: a) should be established by law; b) have to be framed with legitimate aims; and c) the necessity and proportionality doctrines should be strictly adhered to. The DSA does not meet principles (b) and (c) and thus falls short of upholding international standards.

In addition to identifying substantive anomalies of the law with the constitution and other laws and regulations, the participants of the webinar highlighted serious gaps in its enforcement. Since its inception in 2018, the law has become a major source of criminalisation of legitimate expression, judicial harassment and suffering for the innocent. A review of 1,228 cases of Dhaka Cyber Tribunal, under the ICT Act and DSA, filed between October 15, 2018 and March 31, 2021, informs that 47 percent were dismissed at the first hearing. In most such cases, the accused had to endure severe financial and other hardships and mental trauma.

The law requires the police to complete an investigation within 75 days, but that deadline is hardly met. In many cases, if the investigating officers file reports, they do much later than the time stipulated under the law. The act requires the judges to complete trials within six months, and if they cannot meet the deadline, they can request a three-month extension in writing. If the trial does

cases have been reported in which the accused were subjected to involuntary disappearance for lengths of time before subsequently "shown arrested" by law enforcement agencies. Such treatment of detainees is in stark violation of Articles 31, 32 and 33 of the constitution and the provisions of the Torture and Custodial Death (Prohibition) Act, 2013. It also breaches Supreme Court directives on the treatment of detainees issued in the BLAST vs Bangladesh & Others case.

The act effectively criminalises people's initiatives for good governance. The lodging of a number of cases against active citizens exposing wrongdoings of state functionaries and people's representatives and expressing concerns about public health issues during the Covid pandemic is a case in point.

The participants noted that contrary to children, anti-trafficking, and migration laws that ensured a reasonable degree of stakeholder consultation, the DSA was formulated with little input from the stakeholders, particularly from civil society. The vast and disproportionate number of cases filed against the political opposition and those expressing independent views since its inception only indicate that the DSA has become a handy tool to suppress dissent. Also, it has a dampening effect on critical thinking and creative quests. Contrary to those who view the DSA as a purposeful and necessary law that requires minor amendments, the webinar participants unanimously rejected such contention and called for its immediate abrogation.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send us your letters to letters@thedailystar.net

VIP movement wasting citizens' time

Every other day we get out of our house, we don't know the fate of when, or if, we will reach our destination. We test our luck and pray that there will be no VIP movement. If there is, roads are blocked and cleared out so that the first class citizens can travel through the roads smoothly. We, the secondary citizens, get stuck in the same area for a ridiculous number of hours. We cannot go to work on time. We might

be late in dropping off or picking up our children from school. We might even miss doctors' appointments for life-threatening illnesses. The higher power does not seem to care about these consequences of blocking roads more than the luxury of traffic-free travel.

Our lives become halted and our time is utterly wasted every time the VIP has any sort of engagement. How is this remotely

acceptable? This hierarchy in traffic management must stop. The traffic situation in Dhaka is already unbearable as it is. Now we also have to tolerate more horrendous traffic because of this norm. We should not be okay with it. This despicable culture of putting metropolitan life to a standstill for the convenience of VIPs must end.

Nafisa Mustafa, Dhaka

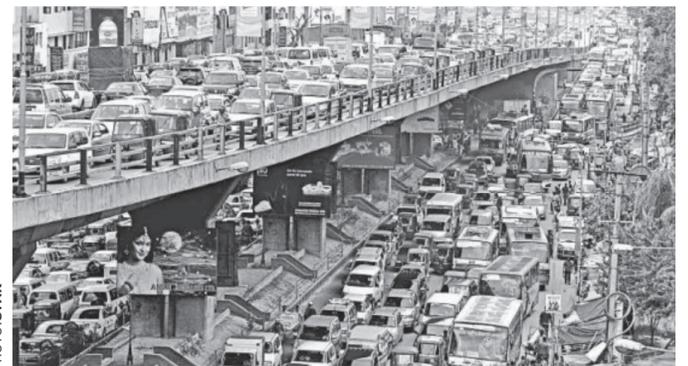


PHOTO: STAR

UN's commemoration of Nakba and the West's complicity



Ramisa Rob is a journalist at The Daily Star.

RAMISA ROB

Amid the risk of a third intifada looming over the Israel-Palestine conflict, the United Nations, on May 15, officially commemorated Nakba, the ethnic cleansing of roughly 700,000 Palestinians in the process of Israel's creation in 1948.

Palestinians and Israelis in each episodic blow-up should have put that to bed.

Just last year, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the West Bank took the bloodiest turn since the second intifada, killing around 150 Palestinians and 30 Israelis. In 2021, Israeli forces killed 236 Palestinians on the Gaza Strip, and thousands lost their homes. Time and time again, the West has backed the "self-defence" narrative that Israel has used to dodge accountability.

The UN's commemoration was welcomed by Palestine, harshly condemned by Israel, and rejected by major Western friends of the latter. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has called the commemoration "historic," given the General Assembly's role to partition British-ruled Palestine into two states, one Arab and one Jewish, with Jerusalem placed under a special international regime.

Though it is indeed a historic gesture, the international and Western support for Palestinian human rights has a faint heartbeat. The US, UK, and members of the EU, who strongly uphold the rhetoric of the two-state solution, did not attend the event. They chose to tread on the safer side, and by signalling their "neutrality" on Nakba, the West has blatantly revealed its lack of empathy for Palestinian calls for justice. This moment serves as a reflection, and a reminder, of the Western complicity in perpetuating the injustice against Palestinians.

The Israeli attack last week came despite another fragile ceasefire in place, after cross-frontier exchanges followed the death of Khader Adnan, a prominent political figure affiliated with Islamic Jihad, in Israeli custody. Israel continues to detain Palestinians, encroach their lands, launch "pre-emptive" airstrikes against terrorist groups, Palestine's Islamist Jihad party and Iran-backed Hamas. Of course, the rise of militancy in Palestine is a matter of safety concern for Israeli citizens - as it is for Palestinian citizens. But if there was ever a debate regarding who the victim or oppressor is, the disparity in the casualties between

Palestinians are repressed in countless other forms: illegal Israeli



Smoke rises following an Israeli strike in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip on May 9, 2023. PHOTO: REUTERS

settlements in the West Bank, and the apartheid system that subjects Palestinians in Israel-occupied territories to draconian laws. But Western sympathisers, who visit the region and tepidly call for peace, continue to turn a deaf ear towards the plight of Palestinians.

It is incredibly shameful that the US, UK, Canada, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands - all big global players who claim to champion the highest standards of democracy, were among the 30 nations who outrightly voted against the UN resolution to commemorate Nakba. Explaining the decision behind the US' absence in the UN event, the White House spokesperson told Axios that the US "has long-standing concerns over anti-Israel bias within the UN system, which is counterproductive to peace. We do not support events organized by bodies designed to perpetuate anti-Israel bias." The choice of words from the White House starkly shows that their own long-standing bias on the matter remains ironclad.

Despite their garrulous calls for a two-state solution, the US has unabashedly failed to condemn Netanyahu's settlement policies that have foreclosed the options of the two-state solution itself. Even after the killing of Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh last year, the US failed to independently launch an investigation. The US has always backed the oppression

of Palestinians, through their commitment to ensure that Israel maintains its Qualitative Military Edge to "potential regional threats." With roughly \$150 billion in financial aid, they've developed Israel's advanced military. And by being an apologist for the far-right government's misuse of military powers against Palestinian civilians, they've let Netanyahu's regime operate with impunity.

The UK, former colonisers of Palestine, also deals with the conflict with similar duplicity. (It is worth mentioning that the UK has never faced their unique historical role in Nakba, and the fact that they paved the way for the 1948 displacement of Palestinians when they issued the Balfour Declaration). In a pact signed this March, the UK pledged to confront "anti-Israel bias" in international organisations and opposed using the term "apartheid" to describe Israel's oppression of Palestine. For years, the UK has

maintained an exclusive arms trade with Israel, and continues to supply drones that are used in surveillance and attacks on Palestinians in Gaza. Likewise, EU member states increasingly engage in arms trade and economically beef up Israel's forces. But sanctimoniously, the EU released a statement on May 14, welcoming the latest ceasefire and reinstating their readiness to work with "all partners to bring relief, assist in achieving calm for both Israelis and Palestinians and restore a political horizon." The readiness is limited to political convenience: members of the EU did not attend the UN's commemoration of Nakba; the president of the European Commission instead sent a special message to celebrate 75 years of Israel's independence, where she praised Israel as a vibrant democracy.

When it comes to Israel and Palestine, the West finds it hard to stick to their so-called moral values, because it's politically difficult. They don't even shy away from disjoining hands with the UN and humanitarian bodies. But if they truly care about peace, the West must come to terms with its own complicity regarding the loss of Palestinian lives. Until then, Israel will have no incentive to comply with international law and Palestinians will continue to suffer. Nakba will go on, as it does, with Israel knowing that powerful governments will stand by it.

Bangladesh can become a semiconductor packaging hub



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A S M HASEEB

Recently, there have been discussions going on in the country on developing a semiconductor manufacturing sector, in an effort to diversify our economy and accelerate economic growth. Semiconductor chips, or integrated circuit (IC) chips, are the brains of modern electronic devices. In 2020, more than 932 billion chips were produced in the world - that's more than 116 chips per person. You may be using more than 150 IC chips on a daily basis via your smartphone, depending on the model. In the era of Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), the demand for IC chips is only going to rise, which means semiconductor manufacturing will keep growing; the semiconductor market is expected to almost double in value, to become a USD 1 trillion industry, by the end of this decade.

Manufacturing IC chips and integrating them into commercial electronic devices constitute probably the most technologically advanced and complex manufacturing value chain. Simply put, the major steps in semiconductor manufacturing include: 1) IC chip design; 2) silicon wafer production; 3) IC chip fabrication; 4) IC chip packaging, assembly and testing; and 5) integration to systems/commercial products.

In Bangladesh, some IC design-related activities have started recently. But that is not the focus of this article. Out of the steps listed above, IC chip fabrication, also called front-end process, consists of highly sophisticated process steps that need huge capital (several billion US dollars), highly skilled engineers and scientists, and intense involvement in advanced research and development (R&D). Only a few companies in the

world are able to do IC fabrication, such as TSMC, Intel, Samsung, Global Foundries, etc. At present, it is not realistic for Bangladesh to enter the IC chip fabrication sector. But what is doable right now is IC chip packaging, assembly and testing.

For simplicity, let's use "packaging" to refer to this step, which is also called back-end process. An IC chip, built on a thin single crystal silicon wafer, is vulnerable, fragile, and easily gets damaged when exposed to the ambient atmosphere. So, it must be secured in a package that provides the necessary protection against mechanical, thermal, and chemical damages. An IC chip cannot work on its own. Hence, the package must provide connection between the chip and other circuit components. The package must also dissipate the heat generated because of the current flowing through the chip so as not to overheat and destroy it.

IC packaging is technologically less demanding and labour-intensive. That is why this segment of semiconductor manufacturing was shifted from the West to the Asia-Pacific region in the early 1980s. Packaging has been thriving in this region that used to offer low wages - e.g. in Malaysia, China, Taiwan, etc. However, labour costs in these countries have risen over the years. IC packaging is again being shifted to new, lower-wage countries. Vietnam, taking advantage of this shift, has been able to attract multi-billion-dollar foreign direct investment (FDI) in semiconductor manufacturing. Companies like Intel, Samsung, LG, Amkor, Panasonic, Foxconn, etc have been investing heavily in high-tech parks in Vietnam. The Philippines

is also reaping benefits from this trend. India, too, has entered the semiconductor industry very recently in an emphatic way.

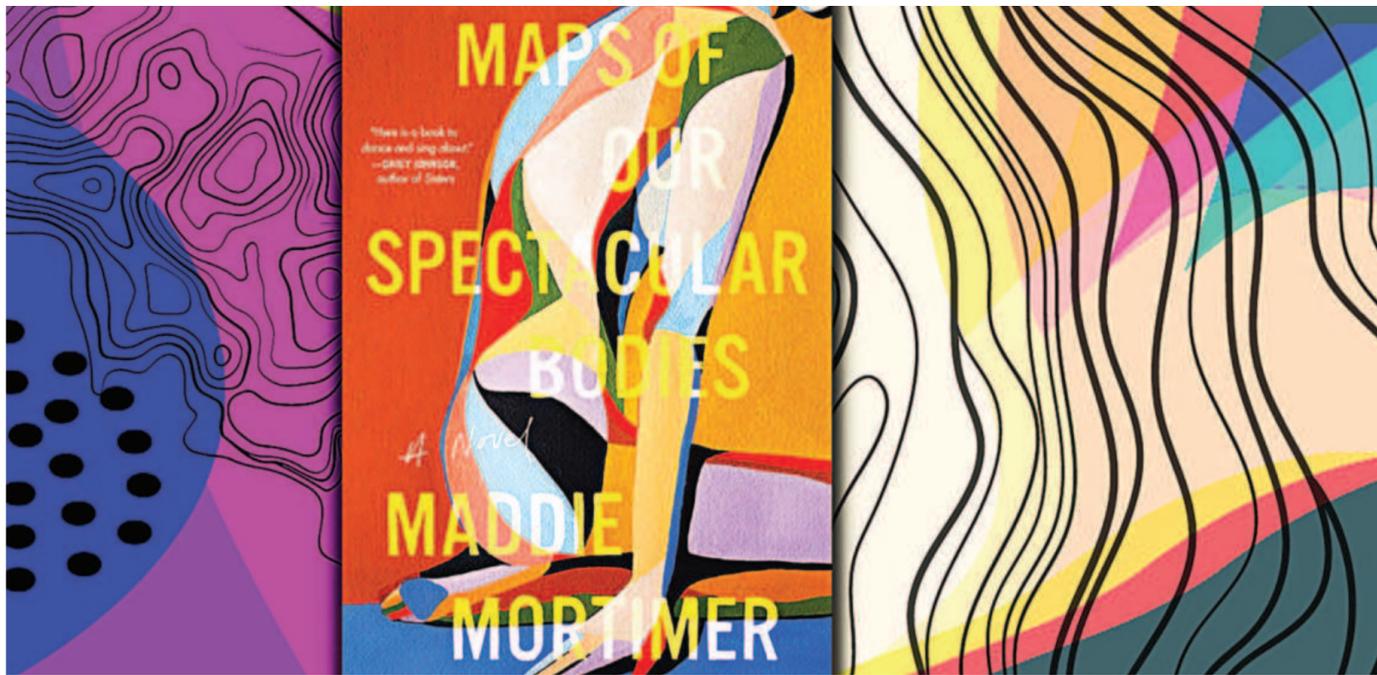
Against this backdrop, Bangladesh can position itself to be an active player, particularly in semiconductor packaging. The country has a good number of advantages, a key advantage being the availability of cheap labour. The country has a young workforce, which is an important asset. The ongoing nationwide effort on the quality assurance of higher education should help convince investors in this tech-intensive sector about the supply of talents in engineering and science. Our solid experience in managing export-oriented industry in other sectors is a plus point as well.

Recent changes in the geopolitical scenario have been compelling the global semiconductor manufacturing sector to diversify its supply chain and relocate some of the process steps to countries that pose lower risks. Bangladesh can be a beneficiary of this development. The country may aim to attract a few prominent international players to bring in FDI by providing attractive tax and other incentives, and by ensuring ease of doing business. This needs consideration and solicitation at the highest level.

Policies should also be friendly to local entrepreneurs. Domestic entrepreneurs with lower budgets may explore the possibility of entering the IC packaging sector by targeting simpler products that require smaller investments.

The time is ripe for Bangladesh to explore the possibility of entering the lucrative semiconductor manufacturing sector in a substantial way. It may be worth mentioning again that semiconductor manufacturing is probably the most complex value chain there is. So, due diligence by investing time and efforts is vital to comprehend this sector of great promise. Intermingling with international players and experts to create a solid understanding will help in devising good policies and in targeting niche areas to engage in.

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০১ মনোনায় বিভাগ: সমাজকল্যাণ মনোনায়
০২ এজেন্সি: সমাজসেবা অধিদফতর, ঢাকা
০৩ সমগ্রিক সত্তার নাম: সমাজসেবা অধিদফতর, ঢাকা এর পক্ষে জেলা প্রশাসক, বরিশাল।
০৪ সমগ্রিক সত্তার জেলা: বরিশাল।
০৫ যে কাজের দরপত্র: ২০২৩-২০২৪ অর্থ বছরে সমাজসেবা অধিদফতর এর আওতাধীন ১) সরকারী শিশু পরিবার (বালক) ২) সরকারী শিশু পরিবার বালিকা (উত্তর) ৩) সরকারী শিশু পরিবার বালিকা(দক্ষিণ) ৪) সরকারী শিশু প্রতিবন্ধী বিদ্যালয় ৫) মহিলা ও শিশু বিশেষী হেফাজতীর নিরাপত্তা আবাসন কেন্দ্র ৬) সামাজিক প্রতিবন্ধী মেয়েদের প্রশিক্ষণ ও পুনর্বাসন কেন্দ্র ৭) সম্বিত শিশু প্রতিবন্ধী শিক্ষা কার্যক্রম, বরিশাল ৮) হোটেলনি নিবাস, ১লা, ২লা, ৩লা, ৪লা, ৫লা, ৬লা, ৭লা, ৮লা, ৯লা, ১০লা, ১১লা, ১২লা, ১৩লা, ১৪লা, ১৫লা, ১৬লা, ১৭লা, ১৮লা, ১৯লা, ২০লা, ২১লা, ২২লা, ২৩লা, ২৪লা, ২৫লা, ২৬লা, ২৭লা, ২৮লা, ২৯লা, ৩০লা, ৩১লা, ৩২লা, ৩৩লা, ৩৪লা, ৩৫লা, ৩৬লা, ৩৭লা, ৩৮লা, ৩৯লা, ৪০লা, ৪১লা, ৪২লা, ৪৩লা, ৪৪লা, ৪৫লা, ৪৬লা, ৪৭লা, ৪৮লা, ৪৯লা, ৫০লা, ৫১লা, ৫২লা, ৫৩লা, ৫৪লা, ৫৫লা, ৫৬লা, ৫৭লা, ৫৮লা, ৫৯লা, ৬০লা, ৬১লা, ৬২লা, ৬৩লা, ৬৪লা, ৬৫লা, ৬৬লা, ৬৭লা, ৬৮লা, ৬৯লা, ৭০লা, ৭১লা, ৭২লা, ৭৩লা, ৭৪লা, ৭৫লা, ৭৬লা, ৭৭লা, ৭৮লা, ৭৯লা, ৮০লা, ৮১লা, ৮২লা, ৮৩লা, ৮৪লা, ৮৫লা, ৮৬লা, ৮৭লা, ৮৮লা, ৮৯লা, ৯০লা, ৯১লা, ৯২লা, ৯৩লা, ৯৪লা, ৯৫লা, ৯৬লা, ৯৭লা, ৯৮লা, ৯৯লা, ১০০লা, ১০১লা, ১০২লা, 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DESIGN: MAISHA SYEDA

BOOK REVIEW: FICTION

FLESH IN RUINS

'Maps of Our Spectacular Bodies' by Maddie Mortimer (Scribner, 2022)

While there have been multiple stories concerning cancer, and the experiences it involves for the afflicted, Maps of Our Spectacular Bodies is the first book by an author where they have presented the perception of the disease as well. This unique detail adds a much more intimate and realistic note to the text's creation.

NUR-E-JANNAT ALIF

"I, itch of ink, think of thing, plucked open at her start; no bigger than a capillary, no wiser than a cantaloupe, and quite optimistic about what my life would come to look like."

The opening sentence of Maddie Mortimer's debut novel, *Maps of Our Spectacular Bodies*, is sheer poetry—it cascades off the tongue in rhythmic, ornamental verses. In the first moments that I was perusing the book, I had a rather inapt notion about its premise. For a while, I imagined the book taking place in New York, and I was there, watching it unfold over a cup of freshly brewed coffee.

It does not start in that vein, the book. It takes place in London, a nuclear, happy family the highlight of its restive prose. We accompany the mother, Lia, in the streets. On a dreary, sombre morning, clearing her path among the rush-hour congestion to the doctor's office. Her cancer has resurfaced. After an interval of two years, the tumour is regrowing in the crevice of her body. Only when she had accepted that everything was exactly the manner it ought to be, when life seemed to be lingering again, her nemesis arrived to cut its trip short.

Harry, her pleasant, optimistic husband was fairly alright upon her pronouncement. His ceaseless mantra of "we have done it before and we'll do it again" is recognized in the book as a "burnt shape of hope". Her adolescent daughter, Iris, teetered on the thin line between acceptance and resentment. During one of their word-talks following her diagnosis, Lia had asked Iris how the term Can-cer resonated with her. "It doesn't sound like anything. It sounds flat and cold like a slab of stone."

When cancer arrived, it carried with it very many prayers of friends and foes. Of a mother who was spiteful and of a lover who was lost. It came to Lia baring its claws, clung to a lump

of her flesh and prowled. Misery, anguish, loss, guilt—all slithered into her fickle blood. There was an instance where Iris asked her mother why she had not considered raising another child.

"They told me I might get ill again if I had another child."

"But you still got ill again. So it wasn't worth it. And now I am lonely too."

At another point in the book, her husband said, "But I don't want to be anywhere that you are not."

It is nearly lethal, the value of despair these simple statements hold. It becomes a subject of push and pull for Harry and Iris. Harry with his blatant friendly attraction to a student, Iris with her navigation of juvenility. It manifests in every taunt, every squabble, every minuscule hint of unsolicited jealousy.

We become acquainted with Lia's mother, Anne, too. We receive previous glimpses into Lia's early life as a young girl evolving in a vicarage—an eerie correspondence of her past and Iris' present. It presents motherhood on two sides of the same coin. *Maps* develops an inception for Iris, while Lia stumbles to her end. When asked in a Booker Prizes interview if the book was inspired from her mother's battle with cancer, the author replied, "Parts of the book certainly ended up being just that. But I also wanted to find a space to write about a mother-daughter relationship similar to ours, to preserve some of the magic I felt she passed on, to write of that closeness, and that love."

While there have been multiple stories concerning cancer, and the experiences it involves for the afflicted, *Maps of Our Spectacular Bodies* is the first book by an author where they have presented the perception of the disease as well. This unique detail adds a much more intimate and realistic

note to the text's creation.

Apart from the depictions of agonising chemotherapy, Lia's loss of her breasts, and the painful prickle in her numb feet, it is also a book where the human body is considered a shrine. Or perhaps, a sin. A plague infested itself in Lia's muscles, and now hers is flesh in ruins. But her flesh was gone long, before the detestation struck, to love and to Matthew, her old lover. It went to him in bits, in all their years of a youthful, illicit affair. It disintegrated amid her tug-of-war with God.

Conceivably, it is the disease that maintains the upper hand in the plot. A jarring voice of its own, the toxins spilling across the pages in bold, chaotic words. What initially seems like a narrative of the disease turns into boldly worded essays becoming more and more obscure with each passing chapter. Ultimately it reads as Lia's conscience. Certain viewers might find the author's abstract style of writing unsettling. At times it speaks of travelling to her thoracic cavity, and at others, there are profound references to *Sex and the City*.

In reality, the book is a bundle of frayed nerves. There are thousands of wonders sparsed in there, hundreds of things to talk about. But cancer comes and destroys each of them before fruition. Cancer, the unseen protagonist of *Maps of Our Spectacular Bodies* by Maddie Mortimer. It is daunting how a mere illness can make us lose control over our bodies in a trice, how unsure we can become of our existence due to its malignant presence. We think our body is ours only, but perhaps it is not. Perhaps it is only bound to us through an obligation.

Nur-E-Jannat Alif is a Gender Studies major and part-time writer, who dreams of authoring a book someday. Find her at @literatureinsolitude on Instagram or send her your book/movie/television recommendations at nurejannatalif@gmail.com.

FEATURE

Where to start reading Samaresh Majumdar

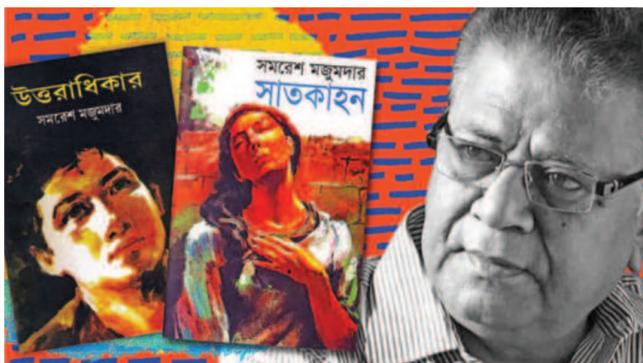
The beloved Bengali novelist passed on May 8, 2023, leaving behind a body of work that inspired generations

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Samaresh Majumdar. A renowned fiction writer in both Bengals. Few other writers have attained such heights of popularity and fame for their novels. Through his books, which have long been favourites among his readership, he was able to easily convey the simplicities of life, as well as the language and sensibilities of lower-middle class masses and ordinary people. His novels, notable among which are *Uttaradhikar*, *Kalbela*, *Kalpurush*, *Satkahon*, and *Garbhadharini*, have reached readers far and wide.

Let's talk about *Satkahon* first. More popular among educated women in Bangladesh and West Bengal, it was as if *Satkahon* had bewitched its readers. Dipabali's character in *Satkahon* said aloud what was on every girl's mind. It was every college and university going girl's dream to be Dipabali. Her character had stumbled early in life, and she managed to not only overcome its shock, but returned to her studies too. Despite her struggles, she strove to gain and maintain her own footing in the world. It is no wonder that she was a character that so many young girls looked up to. When they grew up, they wanted her courage and stability; they wanted to do something for their country and communities. The lives of millions of girls across the nation had been enriched through a novel like *Satkahon*. The book's appeal has yet to run out.

Uttaradhikar, *Kalbela*, and *Kalpurush* comprise Samaresh Majumdar's trilogy. It is difficult to come by a reader who has not fallen in love with tea gardens after reading



DESIGN: MAISHA SYEDA

Uttaradhikar. The tender call of the Angraava River and the tea plantations of Dooars are impossible to miss after one has read the book. *Uttaradhikar* discusses the Naxalite movement. It also tells the tale of a boy named Animesh, who becomes a singer in *Kalbela*. In *Kalpurush*, he endures blow after blow as his life moves forward.

Honesty is Animesh's most prominent characteristic, enchanting to his readers; it is rare to come by another character who is quite so sincere. He is fiercely patriotic, too. When he grows up, he leaves behind the tea gardens to study in Kolkata, where he falls into the grip of student politics. As he ventures into student life at Kolkata University and becomes acquainted with its politics, a new world opens up before him.

His life becomes entangled with

Madhabilata's, until there is nothing more to his life than her presence. Young men and women who read the book, even today, want to take after its leading couple—they want to be Animesh and Madhabilata. After all, who else can love like they do? Samaresh Majumdar fills the pages of his book with descriptions of their love, life, struggle, and disillusionment.

The trilogy explores society, politics, economy, patriotism, and the connections people come to form with one another. That is where Samaresh Majumdar is most successful. His writing transcends class boundaries. He was able to see the readers' reception to his work while he was still alive, a fate not all writers are fortunate enough to enjoy.

In *Kalpurush*, Arko is born to Animesh and Madhabilata, and their dreams all

revolve around him. The life they lead is truly miserable, and yet they continue to dream. Some say that Animesh and Madhabilata have failed at life, but do they truly face defeat? Or do they find another life because they avoid giving in to greed? Even if it is defeat, and even if they do not live luxurious lives, Animesh and Madhabilata's lives, inextricably intertwined with another, are filled with love. Is there any greater achievement?

Garbhadharini is another of Samaresh Majumdar's acclaimed works, with countless readers aspiring to be Joyita, who was incredibly brave and modern for her time. The novel made many women want to leave their homes, and no doubt inspired some to follow through. This is to be expected, after all, and perhaps this is where the writer's labour bears fruit.

Koshto Koshto Shukh is another novel where he manages to explore life with a spectacular depth to his writing. *Cinemawala*, too, is an incredible novel about dreams coming true, in which a girl takes her cart from house to house to sell trinkets. She catches the eye of a director's wife; the director had been searching for an actress for his new film. And so, a new struggle begins centering the young girl. One day, she becomes a Tollywood star.

Such is the writer's hand, able to make his readers wait with unending anticipation. New readers will certainly seek out his work and find it, and will so be bound to shower it once more with love.

Translated from the Bangla by Amreeta Lethe.

Shah Alam Shazu is a writer and journalist.

FEATURE

When the message of Bangladesh's liberation travelled on two wheels

ANSAR AHMED ULLAH

Soon after the independence of Bangladesh, four freedom fighters, Jamal Hasan, Anwar Ahmed, Mahmud Abdul Quayum, and Syed Akhtar Ali, set out on a world cycle tour on a special mission. They wanted to thank the people of the world who had supported Bangladesh's Liberation War, having started their tour from the front garden of Dhanmondi 32. They carried with them a personalised message of well wishes from Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to the people—from different walks of life—that they were going to visit.

One of the four, Jamal Hasan, recently published a book to recall their trip. *Goodwill on Two Wheels* (Amazon, 2023) was launched in the Over 50 Club, Southgate, in North London. Dr Naz Rashid acted as moderator for the event. Ian Martin, ex-Secretary General of Amnesty International and currently working as a representative of the United Nations, wrote the foreword. He gave an introductory talk at the event. Author Asaduzzaman Malik also spoke about the author's previous book and expressed his high expectations from *Goodwill on Two Wheels*. Catherine Lepper and Mahmud Quayum read a few excerpts from the book before the floor was opened for questions.

Goodwill on Two Wheels is a memoir based on the struggles of the 1971 Liberation War and the celebration of Bangladesh's hard-earned independence. Jamal Hasan made the perilous journey across the border into India, hoping to find a place in one of the training camps for freedom fighters. But the camps were full of volunteers, and he had to wait his turn.

Jamal had an idea. He found three friends and persuaded them to go on a world cycle tour to drum up support for the Bangladesh Liberation War. They spoke to exiled Bangladeshi politicians; a prominent Indian company donated four sturdy bicycles. They obtained Indian travel documents and made the necessary preparations. When they were about to start, the Pakistan military capitulated to the Bengali freedom fighters, and Bangladesh became an independent country.

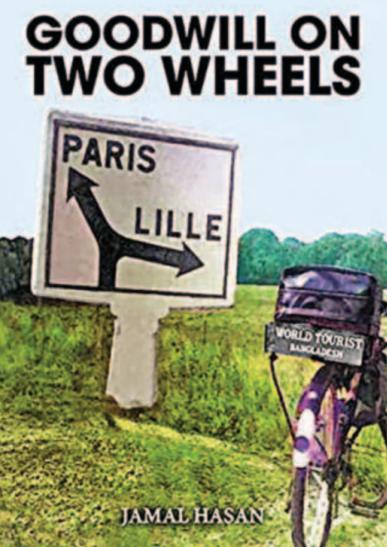
Jamal and his three teammates adjusted their plan. They decided to go on a goodwill mission instead, for the fledgling state to thank the people of the world for supporting their Liberation War. Bangladesh's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dhaka University, and Bangladesh Sports Federation sponsored their tour. On April 7, 1972, they started their journey from the front garden of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The Bangladesh Deputy High Commission Office, Kolkata arranged a press conference to introduce them to the Indian media. The Chief Minister of West Bengal helped secure the assistance of the central government, and the Secretary Department of Public Works of West Bengal allowed them to stay free of charge in the government bungalows on their way to Delhi. From Kolkata, they cycled to New Delhi and then to Mumbai. Because they could not pass through Pakistan and Middle Eastern countries, they had to take an ocean going liner from Cochin to Greece to begin the European leg of their journey. After seven months on the road, they finally arrived in London.

Each of the 26 chapters of *Goodwill on Two Wheels* focuses on a particular country, city, or a place of interest. The author skillfully takes readers with him through the journey and shares his many insights on life, faiths, traditions, and cultures as he travels from place to place. The descriptions of how he felt watching the endless water during a month-long ocean voyage is incredible.

The author also cites historical references to the places they visit, describing each country's past, glory, and attractions. Although *Goodwill on Two Wheels* is a travel story well documented with rare written materials and photographs, it reads like fiction—even the telling of historical context is never dull.

Ansar Ahmed Ullah is a contributor.



COVER DESIGN: IMON HASAN

Girls accomplish 'tough' task



Bangladesh coach Dalia Akter and her charges celebrate with the trophy after beating India in the final of the youth section of Bangabandhu IHF Challenge Trophy at the Shaheed M Mansur Ali National Handball Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

SPORTS REPORTER

"I never experienced beating India in my playing career but today I wrote my name in this achievement as a coach," Dalia Akter expressed her emotions after Bangladesh U-17 women's team notched up a nail-biting 46-43 win over their Indian counterparts in the final match of Bangabandhu IHF Challenge Trophy (youth and junior) in Dhaka yesterday.

Although Bangladesh suffered a 43-33 defeat to India in the group's last match, the women in red and green reversed the tide in the all-important clash by fighting neck-to-neck till the last moment.

"Before the tournament's start, I mentioned the surprise which the girls showed today. Beating India is always tough, it is tougher when it is handball and our girls accomplished that tough task today (yesterday)," said the Bangladesh coach.

Since getting off the mark, Bangladesh did not enjoy a lead up until the last four minutes, a period where the hosts levelled the margin at 42-42 before Tania and Runa Laila skillfully picked three key points in succession to take the match away from India. Both teams had been a player short following marching order.

The Bangladesh U-19 women's team, however, became runners-up in the junior section following a heavy 48-17 defeat against favourites India.

Cabrera eyes SAFF semis despite Lebanon in group

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh coach Javier Cabrera took a positive view of the draw for the upcoming SAFF Championship and said he wants to grab the opportunity to advance to the semifinals of the regional football event, which is scheduled for June 21 to July 4 in Bengaluru, India.

With two teams from Middle East - Lebanon and Kuwait, invited to the regional tournament for the first time, Bangladesh were drawn in

GROUP A

INDIA, KUWAIT, NEPAL AND PAKISTAN

GROUP B

LEBANON, MALDIVES, BHUTAN AND BANGLADESH

FIXTURES

June 21: Kuwait vs Nepal, India vs Pakistan

June 22: Lebanon vs Bangladesh, Maldives vs Bhutan

June 24: Pakistan vs Kuwait, Nepal vs India

June 25: Bangladesh vs Maldives, Bhutan vs Lebanon

June 27: Nepal vs Pakistan, India vs Kuwait

June 28: Lebanon vs Maldives, Bhutan vs Bangladesh

July 1: Two semifinals

July 4: Final

comparatively easier Group B alongside top-ranked Lebanon, Maldives and Bhutan. Group A features hosts India, Kuwait, Nepal and Pakistan.

Bangladesh, the 2003 champion, could not get out of the group stages in the last five editions. The recent performance of the men in red and green is not that promising, yet Cabrera is hopeful about making it to the semifinals.

"Both groups are very tough. We got the highest ranked team of Lebanon. We believe if we are able to perform at the level that we have to, then we will have chances to achieve the objective, which is semifinals," Cabrera told reporters following the draw in New Delhi.

In reply to another question, the Spaniard said, "We believe we can make things difficult for everyone as we are going to give our best to make the semifinal possible. The plan is to win two matches to go to the semifinals."

Bangladesh team will start a residential camp from June 4 and will play an international friendly against Cambodia on June 15 before heading to Bengaluru for the SAFF Championship.

'Our plan was to provide opportunities'

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Under-19 team lost the lone T20 against their Pakistani counterparts by four wickets at the Shahid Kamruzzaman Stadium in Rajshahi yesterday.

Pakistan chased the target of 160 runs posted by Bangladesh losing six wickets and five balls to spare where opener Shamyul Hossain top scored with 67 off 49 balls striking seven fours and a six.

The triumph completed a successful tour for the visitors, who won the lone youth Test and also clinched the five-match one day series 4-1.

Bangladesh's batting was the biggest area of concern, with the young Tigers unable to post over 200 runs in any of the five one-dayers against Pakistan. The only time Bangladesh managed to score over 200 on the entire tour was in the second innings of the lone youth Test, although that did not avert a comprehensive 10-wicket defeat.

According to age-level selector Hannan Sarkar, the home series against Pakistan was part of an experimental process aimed to provide opportunities and test team's bench strength ahead of the ICC Under-19 World Cup in Sri Lanka next year.

"The boys did well in Pakistan and also managed to win the tri-nation series in the UAE featuring Sri Lanka and Afghanistan recently. Our plan was to provide opportunities to other players in the squad for our next home series. Six cricketers made their debut against Pakistan in this series," Hannan told The Daily Star.

"We needed to prepare back-up players with injuries and other issues in mind ahead of the World Cup. Maybe we had a tough time against Pakistan, but we are not concerned about the results. This was part of an experimental process with our long-term goal, which is the World Cup next year, in mind."

The young Tigers will host South Africa in July for a five-match one-day series and the board is also planning to play a tri-nation series before the Asia Cup later this year.

Which strengths to focus on for next Afghanistan Test?

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) announced the itinerary for Afghanistan's tour of Bangladesh in two phases, with the visitors set to arrive on June 10 for the one-off Test in Mirpur.

The Tigers do not have happy memories of hosting Afghanistan in lone Tests. Afghanistan had won by a mammoth 224 runs the maiden Test between the two countries in Chattogram as Bangladesh's plans backfired.

On a surface with turn for spinners, Afghanistan had one pacer while Bangladesh's only pace-bowling option was Soumya Sarkar. But despite Bangladesh's deep batting line-up, the Afghan spinners had more effect on how the match was played than their counterparts.

This time, the lone Test will be in Mirpur from June



Afghanistan's spinners are a force to reckon with, especially considering that Bangladesh's strength now lies in their pace department?

On a spinning track, Afghanistan's spinners are expected to do better than Bangladesh's. But if the Test against Ireland last month in Mirpur is anything to go by, Bangladesh's pace attack did not have much to enjoy from the surface although the Tigers opted for a best-of-both-worlds policy with three pacers and three spinners.

This time, the Tigers will likely have to do without skipper Shakib Al Hasan. He injured his right index finger during the Ireland series and will take six weeks to heal. "Yes, chances of Shakib being there are low. Not having him is definitely a big setback, but there's not much to do if he can't play," selector Habibul Bashar said.

The Tigers had shown ambition with their selection, picking pacers Ebadot Hossain, Khaled Ahmed and Shoriful Islam for the Ireland Test. Chandika Hathurusingha will have his own process heading into the Test and Bashar believes that in time, their plans will be activated.

"We haven't gone according to a plan since there is a lot of time left before the Test. We do have some plans but it's not something to be shared," Bashar remarked.

The team management will however be hopeful that results are not as disastrous in terms of their own planning this time around.

ITINERARY

June 14-18: One-off Test in Mirpur.

July 5: 1st ODI in Chattogram.

July 8: 2nd ODI in Chattogram.

July 11: 3rd ODI in Chattogram.

July 14: 1st T20I in Sylhet.

July 16: 2nd T20I in Sylhet.

14 before Afghanistan depart on June 19 for their series against India during the Eid-ul-Adha break. Afghanistan will return again on July 1 to play three ODIs on July 5, 8 and 11 respectively before playing two T20Is in Sylhet on July 14 and 16.

After that lone Test in 2019, lots of discussions revolved around why captain Shakib Al Hasan had preferred a spinning track. "First thing to ask is where are the pacers? We played on sporting wickets at the World Cup. Why the reversal in plans? I have to know who came up with these plans first," BCB boss Nazmul Hassan Papon had said back then.

"I thought we were going to play on a sporting wicket," he had also stated.

Will there be a shift in tactics knowing that

'Inter realised a dream'

REUTERS

A month ago Inter Milan boss Simone Inzaghi's job seemed to be hanging by a thread amid a wretched run of form, but the Italian has masterminded a revival that has moved the club back into the top four while they have advanced to two major finals.

Inter's season nearly unravelled after a six-match winless run, which included three straight Serie A defeats that dropped them out of the top four having been second for several weeks.

A 3-3 draw in the second leg of the Champions League quarter-finals against Benfica allowed Inter to advance 5-3 on aggregate and that gave Inzaghi some breathing room, an opportunity to set things right.

Inzaghi had attempted to implement different tactics this season with a high press, a stark contrast to their title-winning season two years ago when a counter-attacking system was the norm.

But when that did not work after Inter conceded goals easily, Inzaghi reverted to type and stuck to their strengths - being compact and playing on the counter which helped them win games again.

The result was an eight-match winning run in all competitions this past month during



Inter Milan forward Lautaro Martinez celebrates with roaring Nerazzurri fans after the Argentine's thumping near-post strike 16 minutes from time extinguished the remnant of hope for arch-rivals AC Milan and eventually decided the second leg of the Champions League semifinals, ending 3-0 in aggregate, at the San Siro in Milan on Tuesday night.

PHOTO: AFP

which Inter came through a testing set of fixtures with a perfect record, beating Juventus, Lazio, AS Roma and arch-rivals AC Milan twice.

Juve were knocked out in the Coppa Italia

semi-finals while Milan did not even manage to score against Inter in four encounters this year, crashing out of the Champions League after Inter won their semi-final tie 3-0 on aggregate.

The last time Milan lost four times to Inter in a season was in the 1973-74 campaign.

"We've faced AC Milan so many times, in the last few months we've played four derbies and won them all. They have great quality but the lads did very well and it's right that they enjoy evenings like this," Inzaghi said.

"It was a dream at the start but we always believed, we had an extraordinary run and to win the semi-final in a derby this way is immensely satisfying.

"Nobody has given us anything, we have realised a dream with a lot of hard work and sacrifice."

Inter looked far from being contenders this season with several players on the wrong side of 30 and with contracts expiring at the end of the season.

Stalwarts like 37-year-old striker Edin Dzeko, Francesco Acerbi, Stefan de Vrij and Romelu Lukaku are set to leave in the close season.

But Inzaghi has managed to get them all to pull in the same direction in search of glory.

Inter may be favourites for the Coppa Italia against Fiorentina but Inzaghi has no qualms in admitting his side are 'underdogs' in the Champions League final as they look to end a 13-year wait for a trophy they have won three times.



What counts is the squad. I experienced it at the World Cup (with Argentina). It makes it easy if you have a united squad with everyone pulling in the same direction. It means you get to play these very important matches in the best possible way. After winning the World Cup and experiencing what is the pinnacle for a player, I knew we could reach this final, and we did it.

LAUTARO MARTINEZ



PAKISTAN VIOLENCE Imran says cops surround his house, fears re-arrest

REUTERS, Islamabad

Former Pakistani prime minister Imran Khan said yesterday that police had surrounded his house and that he expected to be rearrested soon, after the government warned him to hand over supporters who it blamed for attacks on the army.



Khan was arrested by the army on May 9 on graft allegations, which he denies, triggering a wave of violence that has deepened political instability in the South Asian nation of 220 million. Pakistan has also been facing its worst ever economic crisis, with a long delay in securing critical IMF funding.

The country's Supreme Court ordered Khan's release on bail last Friday.

But yesterday the government accused him of sheltering aides and supporters wanted over the attacks following his arrest, and warned he had 24 hours to

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This picture taken yesterday shows roofs and buildings damaged by Cyclone Mocha in Sittwe in Myanmar's Rakhine state.

PHOTO: AFP

'ANTI-STATE PROPAGANDA' Home ministry sends a list of expatriates to missions abroad

RASHIDUL HASAN

The home ministry has prepared a list of Bangladeshi expatriates engaged in spreading "propaganda against the country", and sent it to the Bangladeshi missions abroad for taking necessary steps in this regard.

Foreign ministry officials said this at a meeting of the parliamentary standing committee on foreign affairs yesterday.

There, the officials placed a progress report, which mentioned what role the Bangladeshi missions have been playing to prevent the spread of anti-state propaganda.

In the nine-point progress report, they said the missions are always active in protesting and responding to the propaganda through the foreign ministries of the respective countries.

However, they also said the list prepared by the home ministry carries no specific details.

The foreign ministry officials added that the missions abroad have

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

MATARBARI DEEP SEA PORT

It'll boost GDP, create 9 lakh jobs

Claims SANEM study; Japanese envoy says support to continue regardless of who's in power here

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The Matarbari deep seaport, which is set to start operation in 2026, will help Bangladesh accelerate its GDP growth by an additional 1.14 percentage points and create nine lakh jobs, says a study.

Bangladesh's first deep sea port in Cox's Bazar and the other related regional connectivity projects can also help the country tackle the challenges of its LDC graduation, it said.

The study was jointly conducted by the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM) and Shillong-based Indian think tank Asian Confluence.

Selim Raihan, executive director of SANEM and also an economics professor at Dhaka University, presented the study on the impact of Matarbari port at a policy conference at the capital's North South University (NSU) yesterday.

"The Matarbari deep sea port will significantly reduce the travel time and distance for carrying goods, making trade more viable."

Selim Raihan
Executive Director of SANEM

The Center for Peace Studies (CPS) of the South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG) at the NSU organised the event titled "From the Himalayas to the Bay of Bengal: New Possibilities in the Bangladesh, Japan, India Trilateral Partnership".

During Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's recent visit to Japan, the countries discussed the creation of industrial value chain and connectivity to the Northeastern India and southeastern Bangladesh centering the Matarbari port. Japan is implementing the port project.

Prof Selim said the Matarbari port will facilitate berthing of ships with a draft of more than 16 metres, compared to those of 9.5 metres in Chattogram Port. This would significantly reduce the travel time and distance for carrying goods, making trade more viable, he added.

He said there are still significant challenges to developing infrastructures for connecting the Northeastern India with Bangladesh and building inland and overland transportation networks.

With the India-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) in operation and Bangladesh planning CEPA with India and Japan, a trilateral free trade zone would eventually emerge in the near future, Selim told the programme.

The SANEM executive director suggested India and Bangladesh scale up the multi-modal connectivity, bring synergy in trade facilitation and build express corridors for transshipment and transit of goods from the Northeast of India to Chattogram and Matarbari and vice versa.

Speaking at the event, Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen said Matarbari deep sea port along with the other ports in Payra, Mongla and Chattogram, and other connectivity to India, Nepal, Bhutan and Asean can help Bangladesh achieve 10 percent GDP growth, which is required for the country to become a developed nation by 2041.

Japanese companies are already in the process of investing in the Japan-built special economic zone in Araihaazar of Narayanganj, Masud said.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

RESALE OF RUSSIAN OIL

EU should crack down on India

Says bloc's diplomatic chief

REUTERS

The European Union should crack down on India reselling Russian oil into Europe as refined fuel, including diesel, EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said in an interview with the Financial Times published on Tuesday.

India has emerged in the past year as a top buyer of Russian oil following Moscow's invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022. Access to cheap Russian crude has boosted output and profits at Indian refineries, enabling them to export refined products competitively to Europe and take a bigger market share.

Borrell told the newspaper he would raise the issue with India's foreign minister, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, at a meeting in Brussels on Tuesday.

"If diesel or gasoline is entering Europe ... coming from India and being produced with Russian oil, that is certainly a circumvention of sanctions and member states have to take measures," the EU's chief diplomat said.

"That India buys Russian oil, it's normal... But if they use that in order to be a centre where Russian

oil is being refined and by-products are being sold to us... we have to act," Borrell said.

In remarks after the meeting, Borrell said he had brought up Russia's invasion of Ukraine, including the issue of food security, in his talks with Jaishankar, but his remarks did not refer to Russian oil. Jaishankar told a news conference his understanding of EU sanctions rules was that Russian

According to ship-tracking data from Kpler, Reliance Industries (RELI.NS) and Nayara Energy were the key exporters of refined fuels and buyers of Russian oil.

crude substantially transformed in a third country was no longer considered to be a Russian product.

European Commission Vice President Margrethe Vestager said the EU would have a discussion with India on the issue "but it will be with an extended hand and of course not with a pointed finger".

Indian refiners, which rarely bought Russian oil previously due

to high transport costs, imported 970,000-981,000 bpd of it in fiscal 2022/23 (April-March), accounting for more than a fifth of the country's overall fuel imports.

Russia's largest oil producer Rosneft (ROSN.MM) and top Indian refiner Indian Oil Corp (IOC.NS) have also signed a term deal to substantially increase and diversify oil grades delivered to India.

According to ship-tracking data from Kpler, Reliance Industries (RELI.NS) and Nayara Energy were the key exporters of refined fuels and buyers of Russian oil.

No immediate response was available from the companies.

India typically exported an average of 154,000 barrels per day (bpd) of diesel and jet fuel to Europe before Russia's invasion of Ukraine. However, that has increased to 200,000 bpd after the EU banned Russian oil products imports from Feb. 5 this year, data from Kpler shows.

Any mechanism to stem the flow of Russian oil would need to be implemented by the national authorities, Borrell told the FT, suggesting that the EU could target buyers of Indian refined fuels which it believes are derived from Russian crude.

China fines comedy company \$2m over army joke



AFP, Beijing

Chinese authorities yesterday fined a comedy company millions of yuan and threatened further legal action after one of its members made an oblique joke about the People's Liberation Army during a stand-up act.

Li Haoshu, who performs under the name House, referred to a PLA slogan during a show in Beijing on Saturday, according to audio posted on social media network Weibo.

Li was talking about his pet dogs chasing a squirrel when he referred to the slogan "Good style of work, capable of winning battles".

Beijing's Municipal Culture and Tourism Bureau said yesterday it had investigated Li's agency after a report from a member of the public and found the joke had broken the law and "caused a bad social impact".

Xiaoguo Culture Media was fined 14.7 million yuan (US\$2.13 million) and had all its future performances suspended indefinitely in both Beijing and Shanghai.

The space for dissent in China has shrunk dramatically over the past decade under leader Xi Jinping.

BANGLADESH, US TIES Unaffected by Dhaka's relations with Beijing, Moscow Says state dept official

BSS, Dhaka

US Deputy Assistant Secretary Afiren Akhter has said Washington DC does not define its relationship with Dhaka taking into account Bangladesh's ties with Russia and China or any other country.

She said this in an interview with the BSS in Dhaka this week.

Afiren said the US has a multi-dimensional relationship with Bangladesh, and it found a lot of synergies as Dhaka recently released its Indo-Pacific Outlook (IPO) that had many elements in common with the US Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS).

"Broadly, we see a lot of synergies between our two documents, our strategy, and your outlook. We both are focused on building economic prosperity in the region and through infrastructure, through our substantial development projects," said the senior state department official.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



PEANUT PARADE! ... Farmers of West Islampur Union in Sylhet's Companiganj upazila sorting through their freshly harvested peanuts. After devastating losses last year due to floods, the farmers are overjoyed with the massive yield this year. The upazila's DAE office said the growers had planted peanuts on 17 hectares of land and got almost 100 percent yield, with seven maunds of nuts harvested from each bigha.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR