



"I hope that it marks the beginning of a new phase of Arab action for solidarity among us..."

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad tells Arab League summit attendees



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Trial courts must hold sentencing hearings: HC

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

In a landmark directive, the High Court has said the trial courts must hold separate hearings on sentencing in criminal cases.

The sentence in such a case must be pronounced at a later date.

The directive comes in the full text of a verdict, which observes that the number of death sentences at trial courts is rapidly increasing, and the convicts have to suffer on death row for around six years, as they go through the appeal hearing process.

Legal experts believe these directives will significantly reduce the number of death and long-term imprisonment sentences awarded by trial courts.

Courts in Bangladesh do not hold hearings on sentencing. But it is practised in different countries so that punishments commensurate with the crimes. Legal systems in the US, the UK, and Australia follow methods that ensure consistency in sentencing.

Talking to this newspaper, criminal law expert Khurshid Alam Khan said the separate hearing on sentencing is definitely a positive step, and it would add a new dimension to the criminal justice system.

"However, I think a specific law or guideline must be formulated in this regard," he said.

Supreme Court lawyer Mohammad Shishir Manir, who moved at least 120 death sentence-related cases before the HC, said, "This is a landmark judgement for this subcontinent. If this judgement is implemented, there will be a sea change in the criminal justice delivery system in Bangladesh."

"We have analysed 200 criminal cases and found that only 20 percent of the death and long-term imprisonment sentences are upheld, 50 percent are commuted and 30 percent of the convicts get acquitted."

As of November 1 last year, there were 2,162 convicts on death row in prisons across the country, said a report submitted to the HC bench.

The verdict mentions that the Supreme Court registrar general must issue a circular directing the courts and tribunals across the country to comply with the directive on sentencing.

The HC also asked the authorities concerned to send a copy of the judgement to the law secretary, so that necessary actions are taken.

Specifying how judgements will be delivered, the verdict says when the final argument of the parties is concluded and the judge has decided to award death or life imprisonment or imprisonment for a term of years, the judge will express the decision in the open court or tribunal.

The judge will then fix a date, within the shortest possible time, for a separate hearing in order to determine the appropriate sentences.

The 84-page verdict by the HC bench of Justice Sheikh Hassan Arif and Justice Biswajit Debnath was released on Thursday.

"In such [sentencing] hearings, the trial judge shall balance between aggravating and mitigating circumstances with an eye on particular issues like the nature of sentence, circumstances of its commission, the age and character of the offender, the injury to the individuals or to the society, whether the offender is a habitual, casual or a professional offender, effect of punishment on the offender, delay in the trial and mental agony suffered by the offender during the prolonged trial..." reads the verdict.

The trial court judges must also consider the possibility of correction and reformation of the offender before pronouncing the judgements, it says.

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BNP leaders and activists clash with police in Khulna city's press club area. The clash broke out yesterday afternoon after police intercepted a procession by party men heading towards the press club to join a protest rally. At least 40 people were injured.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

COUNTRYWIDE AGITATION BNP activists, cops clash, 40 hurt in Khulna

Govt's time over, Fakhru tells rally in the capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

On the first day of the countrywide demonstrations of the BNP yesterday, violence erupted in Khulna city where at least 40 people were injured in a clash between police and BNP men.

The party yesterday held rallies in 27 districts and cities, including Dhaka.

The clash took place near Khulna Press Club and adjoining areas around 4:00pm when BNP men were gathering there to join a party programme.

BNP leaders said they were holding a rally on the club premises to press home their 10-point demand, including the resignation of the government and holding the next national polls under a non-partisan government.

Witnesses said the clash broke out when a procession of BNP activists was heading to the rally.

Police charged truncheons on the BNP men, and fired tear gas shells and shotguns to disperse them.

The BNP men hurled brick chunks at the law enforcers.

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BNP making preparations to unleash violence

Says Quader on the party's road march

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League General Secretary Obaiddul Quader has said the BNP is preparing to unleash violence and arson attacks behind the facade of road march.

"The BNP can call for a movement, but people will not let their movement become successful. Their movement has failed... Their road march is their march towards fall," he said.

The road transport and bridges minister was addressing a "peace rally" in front of the AL central office in the capital's Gulistan yesterday. The Dhaka City (south) AL organised the event aimed at counteracting the BNP's protest rally in Shyamoli.

Addressing the foreign
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Wasa 'personal property' of Taqsem

Its board chairman doubles down on his allegations in interview with The Daily Star

DIPAN NANDY

Dhaka Wasa board Chairman Gholam Mostofa has said the organisation has become a "personal property" of its managing director, Taqsem A Khan.

"No other government organisation is run like the way the Wasa is being operated by the MD. He runs the agency at will, showing disregard for the organisational rules, government regulations and the board's opinions. He pays no heed to anyone's opinion," Mostofa said in an interview with The Daily Star yesterday.

The chairman sent a letter to the LGED ministry on Wednesday, detailing his complaints against the MD. He accused the MD of running the organisation autocratically.

Mostofa said he sent the letter after failing to resolve the longstanding disputes between Taqsem and the Wasa board of directors.

He said the board members tried to convince Taqsem of following the Wasa rules and showing respect for the board's jurisdiction, but the MD didn't heed their advice.

Criticising Taqsem's role in the board meetings, Mostofa said, "He does everything at will. It seems that he sits in board meetings to implement his agendas."

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Gholam Mostofa

Imran refuses home search by police

REUTERS, Lahore

Former Pakistan prime minister Imran Khan yesterday refused police permission to search his Lahore home for suspects involved in this month's attacks on state and army buildings and laid out his own terms for any such operation.

Khan has denied sheltering anyone involved in the violence and said a search could only be conducted by a panel set up by a high court, with members from both the government and his party - and on the condition that a female officer accompanies them.

"They first said that there were terrorists (inside), but then they said that there were wanted men," Khan told reporters.

"I asked them, they could come and see inside if there was any wanted men, but they said they wanted to search my home, which I couldn't allow," he said.

"If they have to search, it will be under a court order, like it said earlier, that there will be persons from both sides with a woman included."

He said he feared police, unsupervised, could plant weapons.

Amir Mir, information minister of the province of Punjab, of which Lahore is the capital, earlier told Reuters that police would only start a search after agreeing on conditions with Khan.



SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



A makeshift fish market beside the Dhaka-Chattogram highway hampers vehicular movement at Jatrabari in the capital. The market remains open from 4:00am to 9:00am every day. Because of this market, it takes around two-three hours to reach Sayedabad or Gulistan from Kanchpur, a journey that usually takes half an hour. The photo was taken around 5:30am yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Investigate allegations of irregularities, graft in Wasa

TIB urges govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

There is no scope for ignoring the allegations against the Wasa managing director now that its board chairman himself has raised them, said Transparency International Bangladesh yesterday.

In a statement, TIB urged the government to conduct a neutral probe into allegations of irregularities and corruption within Wasa that were reported in media.

Citing media reports, TIB said Wasa chairman wrote to the Local Government and Rural Development Ministry and also told media that its MD has made the state-run agency into "a den of corruption" and its board ineffective.

TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman said the whole issue is a glaring

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Onions to be imported if prices don't fall

Says commerce minister

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Dinajpur*

Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi said the government will take steps to import onions if the prices of the essential cooking ingredient do not fall within a day or two.

A kilogram of onion now costs Tk 80, whereas it cost Tk 40-50 only a year ago, said local traders.

He noted there was no reason for the prices of onions to skyrocket during peak season.

The minister made the remarks while talking to journalists at Shalban in Rangpur yesterday, after reaching there for a two-day visit.

He also said that even though the government has set the retail prices of sugar, these prices are not yet being reflected in all markets.

So, the minister urged the Directorate of National Consumer Rights Protection to ensure that markets across the country strictly adhered to the government-set prices of sugar.

Regarding the control of the kitchen market, Tipu Munshi said it was not solely the commerce ministry's responsibility. "There are different ministries to take care of that. The prices of vegetables are fluctuating all around the country. But, the situation is not so bad."

However, the minister said there are some issues regarding the prices of onion and sugar. "The situation will come under control soon."

"Some dishonest traders are exploiting the global recession situation. The government, however, is taking a tough stance in order to maintain market stability," he added.

"The prices of imported commodities have risen, but we are still doing well in consideration of the global situation," he added.

AMINI PROTESTS

Iran executes three men

AFP, *Tehran*

Iranian authorities yesterday executed three men convicted of violence against the Islamic republic's security forces during protests triggered by Mahsa Amini's death in custody last year, the judiciary said.

Majid Kazemi, Saleh Mirhashemi and Saeed Yaghoubi were convicted of "moharebeh", or "war against God", for drawing a gun during a demonstration in the central city of Isfahan, leading to the deaths of three members of the security forces, the judiciary's Mizan Online news website said.

Iran witnessed waves of protests following the September 16 death of 22-year-old Amini, an Iranian Kurd who had been arrested for an alleged breach of strict dress rules for women.



A man crating up Himsagar mangoes for sending the juicy summer fruit to the capital after harvesting. The photo was taken at a mango orchard in Phultola village of Satkhira Sadar upazila recently.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

ADANI PROBE

India regulator 'draws a blank' in foreign links

REUTERS, *Mumbai*

India's markets watchdog has 'drawn a blank' in investigations into suspected violations in overseas investments in the Adani group and pursuing the case could be a "journey without a destination", a court-appointed panel said.

Shares of companies of the coal-to-airports conglomerate, controlled by billionaire Gautam Adani, were up between 1.2 percent to 7 percent in late trade yesterday in a largely flat wider market.

The group's listed companies lost more than \$100 billion in market value earlier this year after US-based Hindenburg Research raised several governance concerns. The group has denied wrongdoing.

Following this, the Supreme Court asked the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to probe some of the allegations made and submit its findings to a six-member panel formed in March, which included a retired judge and veteran bankers.

"The foundation of SEBI's suspicion that led to investigations into the overseas entities' ownership is that they have 'opaque' structures," said the panel in a report dated May 6 and seen by Reuters yesterday.

"The ultimate chain of ownership above the 13 overseas entities is not clear."

But despite involving various Indian

and overseas agencies in the investigation across multiple countries, "SEBI has drawn a blank", the report said, adding that trying to prove who had invested in foreign portfolio investors who then pumped money into Adani could be an arduous task.

"It is evident that such an exercise could be a voluminous one but potentially a journey without a destination," the panel said. "... it would be a humongous task to figure out who the ultimate beneficial owner is."

Adani and the SEBI did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

The court on Wednesday granted SEBI additional time until August 14 to complete its investigation into possible violation of securities law and regulatory disclosures by the Adani group. The court initially wanted it done by May 2.

SEBI is investigating alleged breach of related-party transaction rules, public shareholding norms and share price manipulation.

Related party transaction rules lay down practices to be followed when a listed company is involved in a transaction with another party, while public shareholding norms set out the minimum shareholding of a listed company required to be held by the public.



Modi seeks to boost New Delhi's Indo-Pacific role

AFP, *New Delhi*

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi heads to Papua New Guinea and Australia tomorrow as New Delhi seeks to counter mounting Chinese influence in both the Indian and Pacific oceans.

Western nations regularly refer to the wider region as the Indo-Pacific, but New Delhi has been left far behind by Beijing's efforts in recent years to woo the small island states that dot the vast expanses of water with trade and aid.

Several Pacific island states have switched their diplomatic recognition from Taipei to Beijing in recent decades, and before the coronavirus pandemic enjoyed economic boosts from Chinese tourists.

At the same time, as part of its Belt and Road Initiative, Beijing has negotiated infrastructure deals with countries around the Indian Ocean including Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Bangladesh, and Djibouti, sometimes accompanied by military agreements.

New Delhi sees the area as its backyard, and Beijing's activities have alarmed Indian officials.

32 BNP men sent to jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Mymensingh*

A Netrakona court yesterday sent 32 BNP men to jail for their alleged involvement in police assault and anti-state activities.

Police conducted multiple drives and arrested them on Thursday night and early yesterday, said Lutfur Rahman, additional superintendent of the district police.

Prof Md Anwarul Haque Bhuiyan, convener of Netrakona district unit BNP, alleged that police arrested the leaders and activists to foil the party's upcoming agitation programme in the district on Saturday.

The arrests were made to harass leaders and activists of the BNP and its front wing organisations, he added.

He also demanded immediate release of the arrested partymen.

Police, however, refused his allegations.

7 lakh shrimp fry seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Patuakhali*

A joint force of Bangladesh Coast Guard and Department of Fisheries seized 7 lakh pieces of shrimp fry near Bablatata Bazar in Patuakhali's Kalapara upazila on Thursday.

Ashikur Rahman, fisheries officer in the upazila, said they conducted a raid on two trawlers, a canal and a shop and seized the fry.

A gang has been poaching various endangered species of fish, including shrimp fry, for long, he added.

Those who brought the shrimp fry managed to flee the scene. They will be brought to book, he further said.

The seized shrimp fry were released in the Andharmanik river near Nizampur Coast Guard Station.

Fisherman killed by lightning strike

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Mymensingh*

A fisherman was killed and another injured by lightning strike in Netrakona's Mohanganj upazila yesterday morning.

The dead is Sumon Barman, 30, of Barantor village in Mohanganj.

Sumon and his neighbour Rubel Barman, 28, sustained injuries while they had been catching fishes in a local waterbody around 9:00am, said Rafiqul Islam, officer-in-charge of Mohanganj Police Station.

They were rushed to Mohanganj Upazila Health Complex where doctors declared Sumon dead.

On information, police recovered the body and handed it over to family members.

An unnatural death case was lodged with the police station in this connection.

Trial courts must hold sentencing hearings: HC

FROM PAGE 1

"Taking away the life of an individual is a highly serious act and the courts of law are always reluctant to pass any such order, unless it is bound to do so by the Act of the Legislature."

Some countries have already abolished death sentences as the parties to a criminal proceeding are human beings. Humans are bound to make mistakes, and mistakes should not take away the life of an individual, it says.

"Indian Supreme Court in Bachan Singh vs. State of Punjab (1980) 2 SCC-684, which is widely known as Bachan Singh case, has already given

some strict guidelines to be followed and has categorically declared that death sentence may only be given in 'rarest of rare cases'.

"Different benches of the Indian Supreme Court have also expressed their view to hold separate sentencing hearings on the ground that it would be fairer to the parties concerned, in particular the accused, and such hearing is necessary for balancing between aggravating and mitigating circumstances."

On February 28 this year, the HC bench pronounced the judgement in a case filed under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act

for the rape and murder of a third grader in Jashore in 2014.

The HC commuted the death sentence to life imprisonment for one convict and the other convict was already dead.

The full verdict released on Thursday mentions that the authorities concerned should immediately move the convict from death row to a general prison cell.

Law Minister Anisul Huq earlier said the government would formulate a uniform guideline to determine the types of sentences in criminal cases.

He said people are struggling to survive as prices of all the daily necessities, including rice, oil, egg, salt, sugar, onion, garlic, and ginger, have increased two to threefold.

The BNP leader said Hasina and her party leaders cannot sense the pulse of people as they have gotten isolated.

He alleged that the government is now using "false and ghost" cases against the opposition leaders and activists as a last resort to clinging to power at the flag end of its rule.

Fakhrul slammed the ruling party leaders for their comments that the caretaker government system has already gone to its grave.

"We want to make it clear that the people of this country will not accept any election without a caretaker government."

He asked the law enforcers not to play a biased role as the current government has lost support both at home and abroad.

The demonstrations will also be held today and on May 26 and 27.

Wasa 'personal property' of Taqsem

FROM PAGE 1

According to the Wasa law, the board should convene at least once in every two months. But the board didn't hold any meeting since March 15 due to the unwillingness of Taqsem, the chairman added.

Mostofa accused Taqsem of presenting budgets before the board unilaterally without having opinions from the board members beforehand. Whenever the board raised concerns or questions over different issues, Taqsem would dismiss those concerns and ask them to focus on the bigger pictures of the issues.

He said Taqsem made decisions on major purchases involving hundreds of crores of taka without the board's approval.

The chairman said they tried to set a limit for the MD's spending but faced resistance from him.

Taqsem also prevented the board of the Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority from holding meetings whenever he was on leave or didn't have any agenda, Mostofa added.

He said the Wasa board should be the apex governing body of the organisation and the MD should place his agendas before the board to ensure transparency and accountability.

The chairman alleged that Taqsem's activities undermined the board's authority and obstructed its members from carrying out their responsibilities.

He said the MD violated the government regulations by approving all budgets himself.

"A board meeting cannot be held without the assistance of some officials concerned. However, those officials are loyal to Taqsem A Khan. The acting board secretary was also appointed by the MD.

The government made such appointments previously."

The Wasa law stipulates that its secretary should have at least seven year's experience as a deputy secretary or as an official of that equivalent rank. However, Taqsem appointed an engineer as the acting secretary who didn't meet the appointment criteria, Mostofa said.

He said the Wasa board requested Taqsem to hire additional manpower for it, but he informed the board that new recruitment would be made once the organisation would have a new organogram.

In the letter sent to the ministry on Wednesday, Mostofa said that there is a lack of discipline in the Wasa.

The chairman said many Wasa staffers do not follow the office timing. A deputy managing director (human resources) tried to introduce a biometric attendance system, but Taqsem opposed the move, he added.

He said that the MD violated promotion rules and made unilateral decisions on many promotions and transfers.

Mostofa stressed the need for setting up a separate office for the Wasa board.

"We [board members] have come from different organisations. We are not doing full-time jobs. But Taqsem A Khan sent a letter to the LGRD ministry without mentioning the name of the sender, complaining that I go to the office regularly. He also claimed that I held meetings with some officials and CBA leaders and gave them directives. Enquired by the ministry, I wrote a letter to it."

Asked about complaints lodged with the ministry against him, the chairman said those who wrote against him did so under pressure.

"The leaders of the organisations, which sent letters to the ministry,

were not elected fairly. Elections to those platforms have not been conducted fairly since 2019. The presidents and secretaries of those organisations were selected by the MD himself," he said.

Mostofa said the MD divided the Wasa CBA into two factions and refused to allow the leaders of one of them to carry out their activities even though they had a court order in favour of their operations.

Asked about his expectations, Mostofa said they want the LGRD ministry to engage in discussions with the Wasa board and take necessary measures to address the problems in the organisation.

This correspondent could not reach Taqsem for comments as he did not respond to calls and texts yesterday.

Russia puts ICC prosecutor Khan on wanted list

AFP, *Moscow*

Russian authorities have put International Criminal Court prosecutor Karim Khan on a "wanted" list after the Hague-based court issued an arrest warrant for President Vladimir Putin in March.

Khan's picture could be seen in the Russian interior ministry's database yesterday.

The notice described him as a man born on March 30, 1970 in Edinburgh, Scotland but did not specify his offence.

In March, Russia opened a criminal probe into Khan after the ICC announced an arrest warrant for Putin on the war crime accusation of unlawfully deporting Ukrainian children.

Stand up against militancy, terrorism

PM urges Islamic scholars

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday called upon the hajj pilgrims and Alem-Ulema (Islamic scholars) to contribute in building a modern and knowledge-based developed nation by keeping the children away from militancy and terrorism.

The premier made this call while inaugurating the Hajj Programme-2023 (1444 Hijri) at the Hajji Office in the capital's Ashkona area as the chief guest.

She said Islam is a religion of peace and Islam ensures the rights of people. "Those who are involved in militancy and terrorism they have no religion," she added.

Hasina urged the hajj pilgrims to pray that Bangladesh and its people are protected from any man-made or natural disaster. She also asked them to pray that the development and the current progress of Bangladesh would continue in the future.

The first hajj flight is scheduled to depart from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport for Saudi Arabia at 2:45am today.

This year, a total of 122,221 pilgrims from Bangladesh are going to perform the hajj. The number of hajj pilgrims from Bangladesh was 57,585 last year due to the Covid-19 restriction.

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, 127,198 pilgrims from Bangladesh performed hajj in 2019. The hajj is expected to be held on June 27 depending on the sighting of the moon.



Youth activists from Fridays for Future Bangladesh and YouthNet for Climate Justice gather in front of the Jatiya Press Club in the capital yesterday, calling on G7 countries to cease financing fossil fuel-based power projects and shift their investments towards renewable energy sources. This plea takes centre stage in anticipation of the upcoming 49th G7 Summit, held in Hiroshima, Japan, where global leaders will convene to address pressing environmental challenges.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

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‘Stop financing fossil fuel’

Bangladeshi youth activists urge G7 countries

UNB, Dhaka

Youth activists in Bangladesh have called on the G7 countries to immediately halt the financing of fossil fuel-based power projects and prioritise investments in renewable energy.

During a climate strike held yesterday in front of Jatiya Press Club in the capital, Fridays for Future Bangladesh and YouthNet for Climate Justice pledged to end fossil fuel financing and reduce the country's dependence on fossil fuel imports, primarily liquefied natural gas (LNG).

The urgent plea came ahead of the 49th G7 Summit, scheduled to take place on May 19–21, 2023, in Japan's Hiroshima. The summit will address regional and global crises, including the pressing climate crisis.

SATMASJID ROAD

A curious tradeoff

DSCC planting flower saplings in place of axed trees, environmentalists term the move illogical

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) has faced criticism from environmentalists after cutting down several hundred trees, including Banyan, Nim, Plum, and other varieties, along the median of Satmasjid Road.

In what appears to be an attempt to 'compensate' for the loss, DSCC has now started planting saplings of flower trees in the same spot.

According to a press release issued by DSCC yesterday, the flower trees being planted include Rangan, Kamini, Bagan Bilash, Chandraprova, and Kanchan.

We aim to plant a total of 1500 tree saplings on the median of Satmasjid Road. We hope to complete our efforts to adorn the road dividers with flowering trees within the next two days."

The entire project, including the cost of planting the saplings, soil, sand, cow dung, and fertiliser, is estimated to amount to Tk 10.40 lakh.

Syeda Rizwana Hasan, chief executive of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA), voiced her concerns over felling hundreds of local, herbal, and fruit trees and

The expenditure of Tk 10.40 lakh in planting the flower trees seems to be nothing more than a wasteful misuse of hard-earned public money.

SYEDA RIZWANA HASAN
Chief executive of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association



However, environmentalists have strongly condemned this move, describing the felling of large trees and their replacement with flower trees as a tragic waste of public money that lacks any logical justification. Flower trees are not an adequate substitute for the ecological benefits provided by the felled giants, they said.

The press release from DSCC mentioned that the tree saplings are being planted with a distance of four to five feet between each sapling. So far, 650 saplings have been planted, it added.

DSCC Project Director Md Khairul Baker said, "We have already begun planting flower tree saplings on the medians,

replacing them with flower trees.

Pointing out DSCC's promise that more trees will be planted in place of the felled ones, she questioned whether planting 1,500 flower trees like Rangan and Bagan Bilas could truly be considered a tree plantation.

Rizwana emphasised the importance of considering factors such as heat absorption, air pollution reduction and the importance of seeking shade under large trees.

"The expenditure of Tk 10.40 lakh in planting the flower trees seems to be nothing more than a wasteful misuse of hard-earned public money," she said.

‘A selfless crusader for secularism, democracy’

Eminent citizens pay tribute to Pankaj Bhattacharya

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Politicians, academics, rights activists, and other notable figures gathered at the National Museum to express their condolences and pay tribute to the late Oikya NAP President Pankaj Bhattacharya yesterday.

Described as a lifelong crusader for the establishment of a secular and democratic society, as well as a champion for the rights of marginalised people, Pankaj was remembered as an honest, humble, and fearless politician who dedicated his life to serving the nation.

During the commemoration meeting organised by a group of citizens, mourners expressed their grief through the recitation of poems and the singing of Tagore songs, commemorating Pankaj's contributions as one of the organisers of the country's Liberation War.

Dr Kamal Hossain, president of Gano Forum and a longtime colleague of Pankaj, praised his fearlessness in standing against injustice, even in the face of risk.

"Pankaj fought tirelessly for the rights of the people until his last breath," he said.

Pankaj was a key member of Gano Forum, which was established in 1993, and eventually formed the Oikya Nap in 2013.

He had previously served as the General Secretary of the National Awami Party during the Liberation War and fulfilled his duties until 1971.

Pankaj played a crucial role as one of the leaders of the NAP-Communist Party-Students Union Special Guerrilla Forces, an armed force that fought valiantly during the Liberation War.

Dr Kamal emphasised the importance of spreading Pankaj's ideology and selfless contributions to the nation and its people. He noted that Pankaj was an exceptional individual who could not be swayed by allurements or threats, and his memory would forever remain with those who knew him.

Rashed Khan Menon, president of the Workers Party, highlighted Pankaj's unwavering stance against communalism and his advocacy for a secular society. He also recognised Pankaj as a vocal advocate for the rights of indigenous groups.

Information Minister Hasan Mahmud echoed these sentiments, stating that Pankaj was a non-



Described as a lifelong crusader for the establishment of a secular and democratic society, as well as a champion for the rights of marginalised people, Pankaj was remembered as an honest, humble, and fearless politician who dedicated his life to serving the nation.

communal man who actively participated in every democratic movement in the country.

Sultana Kamal, a prominent rights activist, described individuals like Pankaj as rare, emphasising his honesty and steadfastness in his belief that politics should not divide people or society. She praised Pankaj for his dedication to the welfare of the common people, without seeking personal supremacy.

Sarwar Ali, a trustee of the Liberation War Museum, recalled Pankaj's unwavering support for victims of communal attacks and his commitment to resisting communalism. He regarded Pankaj as a trusted and true friend of marginalised communities.

Presiding over the meeting, historian Syed Anwar Hossain hailed Pankaj as a true politician who sacrificed his life for the betterment of the common people.

During the commemoration meeting, several other notable figures, including Communist Party of Bangladesh President Mohammad Shah Alam, Oikya NAP central leader ASMA Sabur, Bangladesh Adivasi Forum General Secretary Sanjeeb Drong, Pankaj's brother-in-law Manas Basu, Sammilita Samajik Andolan leader Mohammad Nur Mohammad, thespian Ramendu Majumdar, DU Pro-VC and poet Muhammad Samad, delivered speeches honouring Pankaj's memory.

Muhith was pioneer of environmental movement: minister

BSS, Dhaka

Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Md Shahab Uddin yesterday said an eminent economist, diplomat, freedom fighter and former finance minister AMA Muhith was a pioneer of the environmental movement in Bangladesh.

"He was the founding president of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa), an organisation for the environmental movement. Before this, he was also the founding president of an environmentalist group called 'Parash'. If everyone is environmentally conscious like him, the overall environment of the country will improve," said Shahab Uddin.

The environment minister was addressing a programme of the unveiling and commemoration of the memorial book, titled "Kingbadanti Abul Mal Abdul Muhit", at Diploma Engineering Institute in the capital's Kakrail as the special guest, said a press release.

Jatiya Sangsad Speaker Dr Shirin Sharmin

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3-yr-old ‘bought’ for Tk 2 lakh

Five including human trafficking couple arrested

STAR REPORT

Rab said its members rescued a three-year-old boy in Gopalganj yesterday, more than three weeks after he was abducted from near his home in the capital and subsequently "sold" for Tk 2 lakh in a deal struck on Facebook.

The law enforcers also arrested five people, including the abductor Pijus Kanti Paul, 29, and Sujon Sutar, the man who "bought" the toddler.

The three other arrestees are – Pijus's wife Riddhita Paul, 25, Pallav Kanti Biswas, 52 and his wife Baby Sarker, 46.

In a press briefing at the Rab media centre yesterday, Rab-2 Commanding Officer Anwar Hossain Khan said on April 26, Pijus lured the child with chocolates and abducted him from near his home in Dhaka Udyan. The boy was

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3 hospitalised with dengue

UNB, Dhaka

Three more people were hospitalised with dengue in 24 hours till yesterday morning.

No cases were recorded outside Dhaka in the past 24 hours till yesterday.

According to DGHS, 127 dengue patients, including 106 in the capital, are now receiving treatment at hospitals across the country.



PRAYER TIMING		MAY 20	
Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib Esha
4:05	12:45	5:00	6:40 8:30
JAMAT 4:40	1:15	5:15	6:45 8:30
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION			



In Mirpur's Diabari area, makeshift sugarcane vans line the roadside, impeding the smooth passage of commuters. Adding to the chaos, discarded sugarcane scraps intended for proper disposal now mar the roadside, creating an unsightly scene. This photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

GAZIPUR CITY POLLS

‘They want to kill me, my son’

Zahangir's mother points fingers at AL candidate

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Zaida Khatun, an independent candidate in the mayoral race for Gazipur city polls and mother of the suspended mayor Zahangir Alam, made a startling claim yesterday, alleging that there is an ongoing attempt to kill her and her son due to their participation in the electoral campaign.

During a press conference held at her residence in Gazipur's Chhoydana area, Zaida raised concerns about the obstruction they have faced while seeking votes. She expressed her frustration, stating, "My son and I went to people to seek votes. But we were obstructed from doing that. We have been attacked. If I cannot seek votes for myself, how will people vote for us?"

The incident in question occurred on Thursday night when a vehicle carrying

Zahangir and Zaida was attacked in ward-44 of the city. Witnesses and Zahangir's supporters reported that the attackers vandalised their Toyota Land Cruiser Prado and pelted it with bricks. Zahangir, who is coordinating his mother's electoral campaign, accused the supporters of Azmat Ullah, the nominated mayoral candidate from AL, of launching the attack.

Zahangir further highlighted the challenges they faced during their campaign, stating, "Whenever my mother Zaida Khatun and I go somewhere to conduct an electoral campaign, we have been barred in various ways. Some of Azmat Ullah's own and party men are harassing our leaders and workers."

Zahangir, who was denied the Awami League ticket this time, expressed

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Stop financing fossil They want to kill me

FROM PAGE 3
In their passionate plea, the youth activists also emphasised the importance of loss and damage financing while cautioning against false solutions such as hydrogen and ammonia. They also highlighted the existing ambiguity, delays, and instability surrounding discussions on fossil fuel and renewable energy financing within the G7.

They also demanded that developed nations adhere to the Paris Agreement, strictly limit the global temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius, and discourage multinational corporations from investing in fossil fuel power generation, thereby reducing harmful carbon emissions.

Sohanur Rahman, executive coordinator of YouthNet for Climate Justice, said, "We cannot afford to wait for tomorrow to realise the urgent need to phase out harmful and expensive fossil fuels. The time for action is now."

Speakers also emphasised the need to substantially increase

the global commitment to climate financing, advocating for an annual commitment of \$100 billion, with at least 50 percent allocated specifically for renewable energy financing.

Prof Ahmad Kamruzzaman Majumder, chairman of the Center for Atmospheric Pollution Studies (CAPS), adds, "We must act promptly to combat climate change and curb air pollution, for there are two interrelated challenges. Let us unite as individuals, businesses, and financial institutions to facilitate investments in renewable energy and pave the way toward a sustainable future."

Prof Saleemul Huq, COP28 president's adviser and director of the International Centre for Climate Change & Development (ICCCAD), said, "The climate crisis is not a distant threat confined to the future; it is already wreaking havoc on vulnerable communities in Bangladesh and worldwide, despite their minimal contribution to its creation."

FROM PAGE 3
disappointment with the administration and the Election Commission, emphasising that their responsibility is to ensure a fair and impartial voting process. He alleged that a section of the administration is harassing their workers, even picking them up from their homes and threatening them. Additionally, some individuals are attempting to influence voters by offering money and instructing them to vote against the "table clock" symbol, representing Zaida's candidacy.

Zahangir Alam concluded his statements by urging voters to exercise their rights freely, stating, "Voters are the owners of their own votes, and they should cast their votes as per their will."

He criticised the lack of fairness in the electoral campaign, expressing his concerns about the election commissioner favouring a specific candidate.

Zahangir demanded equal treatment for all

candidates and respect for the electoral process. "If you think that the opinion of the people of the area is not necessary, if the election commissioner wants to get a person, I mean Azmat Ullah, elected, then call all the aspirants. Then we will leave the field. But you should not disrespect this election. The verdict should come in favour of whom the people will vote for," he said.

Faridul Islam, the returning officer for the polls, assured that every candidate has equal rights to conduct their electoral campaign. He stated that if any incidents of attack or vandalism are reported, law enforcers will take appropriate action based on complaints or filed cases. In the absence of prompt action from the authorities, the returning officer pledged to take necessary steps once informed.

Despite repeated attempts, Azmat Ullah Khan, the nominated mayoral candidate from the Awami League, could not be reached for comment.

The drama nears

FROM PAGE 5
Meanwhile, police at first denied Ariful permission for the mass gathering at the field. The mayor started a sit-in protest in the afternoon in front of the ground. Around an hour later, he was permitted.

Sudip Das, additional deputy commissioner of Sylhet Metropolitan Police, said, "There remains no barrier for the mayor to organise the mass gathering. We will ensure strict security."

Ariful Haque Choudhury, a central member of BNP, is the elected mayor of the city for two consecutive terms since 2013.

Ahead of the Sylhet city polls, BNP decided not to participate in the demand for a free and fair national election.

To decide on his participation, Ariful on March went to the UK to meet the party's acting chairperson Tarique Rahman.

After 14 days, he returned on April 14 and said the party would not participate in the polls and he needed time to think about his decision.

Contacted, Ariful said, "The people of the city elected me twice and I will declare my decision at the programme."

One ambulance

FROM PAGE 5
were also missing. However, no case has been filed by the authorities yet.

Around 200-300 patients are treated by the health complex daily with only one ambulance, said Mahfuza Khatun, upazila health officer of Mollahat.

"The wheels of the other ambulance were stolen before I joined, making the vehicle immobile. The garage needs to be secured immediately," she added.

"Patients have to be regularly sent to Bagerhat District Hospital and Khulna Medical College Hospital. In such situations, we have to opt for private ambulance services which cost almost double," said Hafiz Sheikh, a local.

The government ambulance costs around Tk 1,500 to 1,800, while patients have to pay Tk 2,500-3,000 for private ambulance services, informed Abul Kalam, a patient.

According to locals, two night watchmen have been appointed by the complex. However, they do not perform their duties well as their salaries have been withheld for the last 11 months.

Highway

FROM PAGE 5
Chowdhury, sub divisional engineer of Sitakunda office of Roads and Highways Department, said the highway will be closed to avoid any kind of accident while installing the beam of the under-construction pedestrian bridge.

Relevant departments have already been notified, he said.

Belal Uddin Jahangir, officer-in-charge of Bara Aulia Highway Police Station, said, "We've asked the executive engineer to increase the manpower and complete the work quickly."

93 teacher posts vacant

FROM PAGE 5
female students on campus. Our quality of life is deteriorating due to this overpopulation," said Jannatul Tanha, a final year student.

In 2014, 11 additional teachers were employed under Skills and Training Enhancement Project initiated by the Directorate of Technical Education. The project expired on

June 30, 2019. The teachers were paid by the revenue department till June, 2020.

"We have not received any salary for the last 35 months. We were assured that we would be transferred to the revenue sector, but no progress has been made in this regard," said teacher Sanjay Chandra Sarkar, one of the teachers.

Mostafizur Rahman

Khan, principal of the institution, said, "We have sent repeated letters to the authorities about the aforementioned problems. We were assured that the teachers will receive their pending salaries by next month."

"We had asked for funds to renovate the abandoned dorm. However, we have not been allotted a budget yet," he added.

3-yr-old 'bought' for Tk 2 lakh

FROM PAGE 3
playing with his elder sister and other playmates at the time he was kidnapped.

His sister went home and told their mother about the incident. The family later filed a case with Mohammadpur Police Station.

The Rab CO said they analysed the CCTV footage and by collecting other evidence, tracked the perpetrators. They first arrested Sujan from Shahbagh and then rescued the baby from Pallav's house in Gopalganj, and handed the child back to his family today.

Rab members then arrested Pijus and his wife

from Savar, said the Rab CO.

Anwar said Pijus and Riddhita were involved in human trafficking and Pijus was arrested in a human trafficking case filed with Banani Police Station in 2022. He had later gotten out on bail.

Pijus and his wife had been advertising that they provide adoption services on a Facebook group.

The CO said Sujan uploaded a post on the group saying he wanted to adopt a baby. On April 21, Riddhita sent him a picture of her own son, saying he is the child of her domestic worker who wanted to put her baby up for adoption for Tk 2 lakh.

Sujan agreed to the deal and on April 26, Pijus abducted the three-year-old from Dhaka Udyan and took him to his house in Savar, Rab said quoting the couple.

Operating under fake names, the couple then handed the child over to Sujan at Argargaon. Pijus and Riddhita gave Sujan photocopies of their own child's vaccine card and birth certificate as documents for the abducted child.

During interrogation, Sujan told Rab that he bought the baby from the couple for Tk 2 lakh as his close relative Pallav and his wife Baby had been looking to adopt a baby.

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Khulna-Mongla Port Rail Line Project, Khulna, Bangladesh
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NT No. IRCON/9043/BD-KHU-MON/TENDER/STEEL-RF/163/2023-07 Dt. 18.05.2023
Open Tender in Single packet bid system are invited from Bona fide reputed manufacturers approved in railways projects/other govt. department of Bangladesh for "Supply of HYSD (Grade Fe-500) Steel reinforcement bars of various dia. conforming to IS 1786-1985 for Khulna-Mongla Port Rail line Project" (Quantity - 43.50 MT).
Estimated Cost of work : BDT 41,96,967.00
Earnest Money Deposit : Not Applicable
Completion Period : 15 (Fifteen) Days
Cost of Tender Document : Tk. 5,000/- (Pay Order in favor of Iron International Limited)
Last Date & Time for Bid Submission: Dt. 04.06.2023 upto 15.00 Hrs. Opening at 15.30 Hrs.
For further details and updates, Bidders may visit IRCON office, House No. 411, Road No. 4, Sonadanga R/A, Phase-2, Khulna-9100, Project Manager/KMRLP Iron International Ltd.
Contact No. 01783965380, email at kmprlb9043@ircon.org

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উত্তরা দিয়াবাড়ি মেট্রো স্টেশন থেকে মাত্র ৩০ মিনিট দূরত্ব সানার কার্টনমেন্ট শাল্ল সানার ডিওএইচএস-এ বিভিন্ন সাইজের রেডি ফ্ল্যাট বিক্রি চলছে।

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Bangladesh Fisheries Development Corporation
Ref. No-33.03.1561.008.07.001.21.929(KHA) Date: 16/05/2023
e-Tender Notice
e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal(<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following works are described below:

Ser.	Tender ID	Name of Work	Tender Publication Date	Last Selling, Closing& Opening Date
1.	834154	Supply Of Structural Items For 350 Sets Green House Mechanical Dryer(2 nd Phase).	16.05.2023	31.05.2023

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no Offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading e-tender document from the national e-gp system portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank's branches by 13:30 hours on 31.05.2023.

Further information and guidelines are available in the national e-GP system portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd) contact No. BFDC, Ctg Fish Harbour (01716169062 and 01719319043)

General Manager

GD-879

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

Rabeya Huq (1939-2023)
May she rest in peace.
We deeply mourn the sad demise of Mrs. Rabeya Huq, wife of late Dr. Munirul Huq (Soil Scientist and former director of Soil Resources and Development Institute). She breathed her last at 6.51 PM on May 11, 2023. Indeed we belong to Allah (SWT) & indeed to Him we will return.
She was 83 years old and is survived by her two sons, nine grandchildren, four siblings, many relatives, friends and well-wishers. She was former and longest-serving founding member and principal of Purana Paltan Girls College.
We would kindly request all well wishers to pray to Allah (SWT) for the salvation of the departed soul. May Allah (SWT) rest her soul in peace, forgive her earthly shortcomings, expand and lighten her grave and grant her amongst the highest levels of Jannah on the judgement day.
Doctor Muhammad Mohsinul Huq & Md. Moinul Huq

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
অধিনায়কের কার্যালয়
র‍্যাপিড এ্যাকশন ব্যাটালিয়ন-৭
পতেঙ্গা, চট্টগ্রাম
দরপত্র আহ্বান বিজ্ঞপ্তি
এতদ্বারা ২০২৩-২০২৪ অর্থ বৎসরে (জুলাই/২৩ হতে জুন/২৪ পর্যন্ত) চট্টগ্রামস্থ র‍্যাপিড এ্যাকশন ব্যাটালিয়ন-৭ এর ব্যবহার্য বিভিন্ন মালামাল সরবরাহ/পরিবহন ভাড়া/পোষাক সেলাই এর নিমিত্তে পিপিআর-২০০৮ অনুযায়ী যোগ্যতা সম্পন্ন এবং দেশের কোন আইন দ্বারা অযোগ্য নন এমন ব্যবসায়ী/প্রস্তুতকারী/সরবরাহকারী/ঠিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হতে সীলমোহরকৃত খামে প্রতিযোগিতামূলক উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছেঃ

১।	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	২।	স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রণালয় (পুলিশ বিভাগ)।
২।	সংস্থা	৩।	র‍্যাপিড এ্যাকশন ব্যাটালিয়ন (র‍্যাব)।
৩।	দরপত্র সম্পাদনকারী প্রধান	৪।	অধিনায়ক, র‍্যাব-৭, পতেঙ্গা, চট্টগ্রাম।
৪।	দরপত্র জামানত (ফেরতযোগ্য)	৫।	ক। ৩২২১১০৬-পনের ভাড়া ও পরিবহন ব্যয়-১,০০,০০০/- (এক লক্ষ) টাকা। খ। ৩২৫২১০৫-চিকিৎসা ও শৈল চিকিৎসা সামগ্রী সরবরাহ-৪০,০০০/- (চল্লিশ হাজার) টাকা। গ। ৩২৫২১০৮-স্বাস্থ্য বিধান সামগ্রী সরবরাহ-৬০,০০০/- (ষাট হাজার) টাকা। ঘ। ৩২৫৫১০১-কম্পিউটার সামগ্রী সরবরাহ-২০,০০০/- (বিশ হাজার) টাকা। ঙ। ৩২৫৫১০৫-অন্যান্য মনিহারী সরবরাহ-৯০,০০০/- (নব্বই হাজার) টাকা। চ। ৩২৫৬১০৩-ব্যবহার্য দ্রব্যাদি সরবরাহ-২,০০,০০০/- (দুই লক্ষ) টাকা। ছ। ৩২৫৬১০৫-মোটরযানের যুচরা যন্ত্রাংশ সরবরাহ-২,২০,০০০/- (দুই লক্ষ বিশ হাজার) টাকা। জ। ৩২৫৬১০৬-পোষাক সেলাই (দর্জি ঠিকাদার নিয়োগ)-১০,০০০/- (দশ হাজার) টাকা। ঝ। ৩২৫৮১০১-মোটরযান মোরামত ও সংরক্ষণ-১৭,০০০/- (সতের হাজার) টাকা। ঞ। ৩২৫৮১০৩-কম্পিউটার মোরামত-১২,০০০/- (বার হাজার) টাকা। ট। ৩২৫৮১০৫-অন্যান্য যন্ত্রপাতি মোরামত-১২,০০০/- (বার হাজার) টাকা। ঠ। ৩২৫৮১২৮-জলযান মোরামত-২২,০০০/- (বাইশ হাজার) টাকা। ড। ৪১১২২০২-কম্পিউটার ও আনুষঙ্গিক সরবরাহ-২২,০০০/- (বাইশ হাজার) টাকা। ঢ। ৪১১২৩১৪-আসবাবপত্র সরবরাহ-৬৬,০০০/- (ষেষ্টিশ হাজার) টাকা।
৫।	দরপত্রের বিষয়/কাজের নাম ও সিডিউলের মূল্য (অফেরতযোগ্য)	৬।	ক। ৩২২১১০৬ খাতে পনের ভাড়া ও পরিবহন ব্যয়-৭৫০/- (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ) টাকা। খ। ৩২৫২১০৫ খাতে চিকিৎসা ও শৈল চিকিৎসা সামগ্রী সরবরাহ-৭৫০/- (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ) টাকা। গ। ৩২৫২১০৮ খাতে স্বাস্থ্য বিধান সামগ্রী সরবরাহ-৭৫০/- (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ) টাকা। ঘ। ৩২৫৫১০১ খাতে কম্পিউটার সামগ্রী সরবরাহ-৭৫০/- (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ) টাকা। ঙ। ৩২৫৫১০৫ খাতে অন্যান্য মনিহারী সরবরাহ-৭৫০/- (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ) টাকা। চ। ৩২৫৬১০৩ খাতে ব্যবহার্য দ্রব্যাদি সরবরাহ-৭৫০/- (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ) টাকা। ছ। ৩২৫৬১০৫ খাতে মোটরযানের যুচরা যন্ত্রাংশ সরবরাহ-৭৫০/- (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ) টাকা। জ। ৩২৫৬১০৬ খাতে পোষাক সেলাই (দর্জি ঠিকাদার নিয়োগ)- ৪০০/- (চার শত) টাকা। ঝ। ৩২৫৮১০১ খাতে মোটরযান মোরামত ও সংরক্ষণ-৭৫০/- (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ) টাকা। ঞ। ৩২৫৮১০৩ খাতে কম্পিউটার মোরামত-৭৫০/- (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ) টাকা। ট। ৩২৫৮১০৫ খাতে অন্যান্য যন্ত্রপাতি মোরামত-৪০০/- (চারশত) টাকা। ঠ। ৩২৫৮১২৮ খাতে জলযান মোরামত-৭৫০/- (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ) টাকা। ড। ৪১১২২০২ খাতে কম্পিউটার ও আনুষঙ্গিক সরবরাহ-৭৫০/- (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ) টাকা। ঢ। ৪১১২৩১৪ খাতে আসবাবপত্র সরবরাহ-৭৫০/- (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ) টাকা।
৬।	খরচের উৎস ও অর্থনৈতিক খাত	৭।	২০২৩-২০২৪ অর্থ বৎসরে র‍্যাব এর বিভিন্ন কোডে বাজেট প্রাপ্তি সাপেক্ষে।
৭।	দরপত্রের সূত্র নং ও তারিখ	৮।	র‍্যাব-৭ স্মারক নং-৭৭৬২/হিসাব/বিজ্ঞপ্তি/র‍্যাব-৭ তারিখ ২৬ মে ২০২৩ইং।
৮।	সিডিউল বিক্রির তারিখ ও সময়	৯।	০৩ জুন ২০২৩ তারিখ হতে ৩০ জুন ২০২৩ তারিখ (অফিস চলাকালীন সময়) পর্যন্ত।
৯।	দরপত্র জমা প্রদানের সর্বশেষ তারিখ ও সময়	১০।	০৩ জুলাই ২০২৩ তারিখ ১২৩০ ঘটিকায় দরপত্রদাতা বা মনোনীত প্রতিনিধিদের উপস্থিতিতে (যদি কেহ উপস্থিত থাকেন)।
১০।	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	১১।	০৪ জুলাই ২০২৩ তারিখ ১২৩০ ঘটিকায় দরপত্রদাতা বা মনোনীত প্রতিনিধিদের উপস্থিতিতে (যদি কেহ উপস্থিত থাকেন)।
১১।	দরপত্র প্রাপ্তি/দাখিলের স্থান	১২।	র‍্যাব-৭, পতেঙ্গা, চট্টগ্রাম (হিসাব শাখা)।
১৩।	দরপত্র দাখিলের শর্তাবলী	১৪।	দরপত্র দাখিলের শর্তাবলী প্রত্যেকটি সিডিউলে পৃথকভাবে উল্লেখ করা হবে।
১৪।	দরপত্রদাতার যোগ্যতা	১৫।	পিপিআর-২০০৮ অনুযায়ী ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, ভাটি ও অয়াকরের কাগজ, নাপারিক সনদপত্র, ব্যাংকের প্রত্যয়নপত্র এবং অভিজ্ঞতার সনদপত্র (১ম শ্রেণীর কর্মকর্তা দ্বারা সত্যায়িত)।
১৫।	বিশেষ নির্দেশাবলী		কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকেই সর্বনিম্ন দরপত্রগ্রহণ যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন। অনুমোদিত বরাদ্দের আলোকে কার্যাদেশ প্রদান করা হবে। এতদসংক্রান্ত কোন আপত্তি গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে না।

মোঃ মাহবুব আলম, পিপিএম, পিএসসি
সে. কর্ণেল
পরিচালক
র‍্যাব-৭, পতেঙ্গা, চট্টগ্রাম

জিডি-৮৮০



In certain areas of Mahishkhocha union in Lalmonirhat's Aditmari upazila, the tranquil banks of the Teesta River are facing an alarming threat. Locals report that an illicit syndicate are engaged in illegal sand extraction, an activity that has persisted unchecked for the past six months, disrupting the river's balance. Unfortunately, the syndicate's political influence instills fear in the hearts of the community, preventing them from raising their voices in protest.

PHOTO: STAR

Man held with 1,400 yaba pills in Teknaf: BGB

UNB, Teknaf

Members of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) have arrested a man with 1,400 yaba pills from Teknaf's Damdamia checkpoint.

The identity of the arrestee could not be known immediately.

According to a press release sent by BGB-2, a patrol team of BGB in Damdamia under Teknaf Battalion was conducting search operations at Damdamia checkpoint.

They stopped a bus of Palki Paribahan from Teknaf to Cox's Bazar at the checkpoint on Thursday. After a search, the officials found the pills under a passenger's seat. A case was filed and the arrestee was handed over to Teknaf Model Police Station.

Sand lifting from Teesta bank rampant

Dredgers destroyed, lifters fined but the menace still persists

S DILIP ROY

Sand is being extracted illegally from the Teesta river in some places of Mahishkhocha union in Lalmonirhat's Aditmari upazila, making the river bank vulnerable to erosion.

Aditmari Upazila Assistant Commissioner (Land) and Executive Magistrate Raojatun Jannat led a mobile court drive against the illegal sand extraction recently. A dredger machine was demolished in the union's Dakshin Balapara area. Three sand extractors were detained on the spot and fined Tk 50,000 each.

Officer-in-charge (OC) of Aditmari police station Mozammel Haque confirmed the matter.

The detainee sand miners are – Ariful Islam, 33, Dulu Mia, 36, from Mahishkhocha village; and Nuruzzaman Mia, 37, from Mahisha Shahor village in Aditmari upazila.

Locals said a syndicate has been illegally extracting sand from Teesta river and selling it for the past six months. As the syndicate members are politically influential, locals do not dare to protest against them.

As the head of this syndicate has not yet been detained, sand is extracted again after paying the fined money to the mobile court after its drives.

FARMER NADER ISLAM

The administration sometimes conducts raids and fines the sand mining workers. But the members of the syndicate are not detained, they alleged.

In the last six months, the syndicate has illegally earned crores by selling illegally extracted sand.

Nader Islam, a farmer in Gobordhan area, said the Teesta

riverbank is under threat of erosion due to illegal sand extraction. Because of this, locals of the riverside areas will face losses in the upcoming monsoon.

As the head of this syndicate has not yet been detained, sand is extracted again after paying the fined money to the mobile court after its drives, he said.

"Syndicate members are profiting by selling sand but we are facing losses. We have to lose arable land and homesteads due to river erosion. We, the riverside people, are very helpless," he added.

Farmer Samad Mia, 65, of Dakshin Balapara village said the roads in the village have been damaged due to the transportation of sand by heavy trucks. It will be difficult for them to travel through these roads during monsoon.

Asked, Raojatun Jannat said the mobile court operation against illegal sand extraction is ongoing.

The drama nears the end

Ariful to inform his decision on city polls today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A month before the Sylhet city polls, tension has taken over the political atmosphere in Sylhet as the incumbent mayor Ariful Haque Choudhury called an open mass gathering today to declare his decision over the polls.

Since his return from the UK on April 16 after visiting BNP's acting chairman Tarique Rahman, he kept on adding to the tension by not clearing his stance regarding the polls.

In the presence of Sylhet dwellers and the media at the mass gathering of the Registrar's Office field in the city's Bandarbazar area at 2:00pm, he will declare his decision on whether he is participating in the polls or not.

However, BNP officially declared that the party will not participate in the city polls scheduled for June 21 and asked all BNP men to refrain from participating.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

One ambulance for 300 patients

Wheels, medical equipment of the other one 'stolen'; authorities refrain from filing cases

PARTHA CHAKRABORTTY, Bagerhat

Although Mollahat Upazila Health Complex in Bagerhat has two government ambulances, only one of them is currently operational. With no intention of repairs or replacement, the other one has been sitting in their garage for the past one and a half years.

According to sources, the complex was allotted an ambulance (Dhaka-162/2) for the fiscal year 2020-2021 on September 15, 2021, and arrived at the hospital within the next few days. However, the



vehicle, worth Tk 45 lakh, has not made any trips since then due to the absence of a driver.

Meanwhile, the four wheels of the vehicle, alongside many other valuable parts, were stolen, despite two night guards being on regular duty.

A general daily (GD) was filed last year with Mollahat Police Station after the ambulance wheels were stolen. Another GD was filed on February 5 this year, after the windows of the ambulance were found broken. Its oxygen and firebox cylinder, a 12-volt battery and the cover of the mobile chamber

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



A mere drizzle in the morning causes major roads in Khulna city to flood, as drains become overwhelmed by garbage. This photo taken recently, captures the situation in front of Joragata Biswas Petrol Pump, highlighting the consequences of neglected drainage systems.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Highway to remain closed for 2hrs today

UNB, Chattogram

Vehicular movement on Dhaka-Chattogram highway will remain suspended for two hours today due to installation of the beam of a bridge at Bashbaria in Sitakunda, Chattogram.

The highway will be closed from 5:30am to 7:30am in RR Textile Mills area of Bashbaria union under the upazila, said Chattogram Roads and Highways authorities.

Rokon Uddin Khaled

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

PATUAKHALI POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

93 teacher posts vacant out of 125

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

Polytechnic Institute in Patuakhali is facing serious problems due to its shortage of teachers. While 93 of its 125 teacher posts have remained vacant for the last five years, 11 additional teachers have not been paid their salaries for the last three years.

Established in 1989 on 10 acres of land, this institute currently has 2,000 students studying in its four active departments – civil, electrical, refrigeration and air-conditioning (RAC), and computer science.

According to sources, 22 of its 25 teacher posts in the civil department, 22 of 26 posts in the electrical department, nine of 15 posts in RAC, and 10 of 14 posts in computer engineering department are

currently vacant. The institution also needs two vice-principals urgently.

The institution has two on-campus dormitories (one male, one female), with the 102-seat male hall being closed for around a decade.

Following a case filed in regards to in-fighting, the dorm was temporarily closed as per court orders.

"I have to live in a mess which costs me a lot more than the dorm. Although the court ban has been lifted, the dorm needs renovation," said Shamim Mia, a 7th semester civil department student hailing from Kurigram.

Meanwhile, the female dorm, which can accommodate 45 students, is currently home to 146 students.

"We badly need another dorm for

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

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*1 Sq. Ft. = 0.0929 Sq. M.



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কেন আমরাই সেরা?

▷ দেড় হাজারের অধিক ফ্ল্যাট নির্মাণের অভিজ্ঞতা।

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▷ নির্মাণে সর্বোচ্চ গুণগত মানের প্রতিশ্রুতি।

▷ বিনিয়োগে সর্বোচ্চ রিটার্নের নিশ্চয়তা।



আসুন একসাথে নির্মাণ করি আপনার ড্রিম হোম

ল্যাক্স ডেভেলপমেন্ট
এক্সপার্টের সাথে কথা বলুন

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কর্পোরেট অফিস:

এ্যাসুরেন্স টাওয়ার, ৬৫/বি, কামাল আতাতুর্ক এভিনিউ,
বনানী, ঢাকা-১২১৩.

যেসব লোকেশনে আমরা
জমি খুঁজছি

গুলশান, বনানী, উত্তরা,
বারিধারা, বসুন্ধরা,
নিকেতন, ধানমন্ডি,
লালমাটিয়া,
মোহাম্মদপুর, সিদ্ধেশ্বরী,
কলাবাগান, শান্তিনগর,
মগবাজার।

ASSURANCE
DEVELOPMENTS

CENTRAL ASIA'S DEVELOPMENT

Xi unveils grand plan

REUTERS, Xian

Chinese President Xi Jinping yesterday unveiled a grand plan for Central Asia's development, from building infrastructure to boosting trade, taking on a new leadership role in a region that has traditionally been a Russian sphere of influence.

China is ready to coordinate development strategies with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, and promote the modernisation of all, Xi said in an address to a China-Central Asia Summit in northwest China.

"This summit has added new impetus to the development and revitalisation of the six counties, and injected strong positive energy into regional peace and stability," Xi said later at a press conference with his Central Asian counterparts.

"We will jointly foster a new paradigm of deeply complementary and high-level win-win cooperation."

With its engagement, China has put itself at the forefront of the race for political influence and energy assets in the resource-rich region, with Russia distracted by its war in Ukraine and the withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan diminishing the US presence in the region.

The five former Soviet republics, with a network of trade corridors, offer China alternative routes to transport fuel, food and other commodities in the event of disruptions elsewhere.

The pledges of support and cooperation at the two-day summit will present a contrast to a "negative" image of China invoked at a summit of Group of Seven leaders in Japan from yesterday.

Xi said China and the Central Asian countries should deepen trust and offer "clear and strong support" on core interests such as sovereignty, independence, national dignity and long-term development.



Demonstrators gesture during a protest against Arab normalisation with Syria's President Bashar al-Assad and the Arab League's reintegration of Syria, in the rebel-held city of Azaz, Syria yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

SUDAN CONFLICT

Over 1m people displaced: UN

Air strikes hammer Khartoum

REUTERS, Geneva

More than a million people have been displaced by fighting in Sudan so far, including a quarter of a million refugees, a UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) spokesperson said yesterday.

The army and paramilitary Rapid Support Forces have been locked in weeks of conflict that has killed hundreds of people and turned the streets of the capital Khartoum into war zones.

The latest figure includes some 843,000 people displaced internally and around 250,000 people who have fled across Sudan's borders, UN refugee agency spokesperson Matthew Saltmarsh told a Geneva briefing.

Refugees have streamed into Sudan's

neighbours, including Chad, Ethiopia and South Sudan, with their own poorly-funded humanitarian crises. Egypt has so far received the highest number of Sudanese refugees with around 110,000 arriving there since the conflict broke out last month, Saltmarsh added.

"Many of those who have approached us are in a distressed state having been exposed to violence or traumatic conditions in Sudan, and having suffered arduous journeys," Saltmarsh said. The pace has increased in recent weeks, he added, with some 5,000 arriving each day in Egypt.

Meanwhile, Sudan's capital Khartoum and sister city Bahri came under renewed air attack yesterday as the war between the army and paramilitary forces entered its

fifth week.

Mass looting by armed men and civilians alike is making life an even greater misery for Khartoum residents pinned down by fierce fighting between the regular military and paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), witnesses said.

Army chief General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan took the long-anticipated step of removing RSF chief Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, better known as Hemedti, from his post as his deputy on the ruling Sovereign Council.

The two had run the council since 2019 when they overthrew strongman President Omar al-Bashir amid mass protests against his rule, before staging a coup in 2021 as a deadline neared to hand power to civilians for a transition towards free elections.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Half of world's large lakes drying up: study

REUTERS, London



More than half of the world's large lakes and reservoirs have shrunk since the early 1990s, chiefly because of climate change, intensifying concerns about water for agriculture, hydropower and human consumption, a study published on Thursday found. A team of researchers reported that some of the world's most important freshwater sources - from the Caspian Sea between Europe and Asia to South America's Lake Titicaca - lost water at a cumulative rate of around 22 gigatonnes per year for nearly three decades. That's about 17 times the volume of Lake Mead, the US' largest reservoir. Fangfang Yao, a surface hydrologist at University of Virginia who led the study in journal Science, said 56 percent of decline in natural lakes was driven by climate warming and human consumption, with warming "the larger share of that". Scientists generally think the world's arid areas will become drier under climate change, and wet areas will get wetter, but the study found significant water loss even in humid regions.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Nearly 337m life years lost: WHO

AFP, Geneva

Nearly 337 million life years were lost in the two first years of the Covid-19 pandemic, as millions of people died prematurely, the World Health Organization said yesterday. The UN health agency's annual world statistics report also showed a swelling threat from non-communicable diseases such as heart disease, cancer and diabetes. The most dramatic finding, based on data up to 2022, was the estimate of how many years of life Covid had taken, WHO said. The pandemic wreaked global devastation and officially killed nearly 7 million people, with the true figure believed to be closer to 20 million. The WHO report lays bare how the broader impact of the crisis cut short the lives of millions of people. While the WHO officially registered 5.4 million deaths, its excess mortality data shows around 14.9 million actually likely died due to the crisis over that period.

A shocking savagery

FROM PAGE 12

threw many bodies into the river. People of Chuknagar and the nearby villages became so frightened that they never ventured near these rivers for the rest of the war," he said.

As Chuknagar, now a small town, was located near a navigable river channel and was too remote to be occupied by the Pakistan army, refugees considered it an ideal route for their journey to the Indian border.

Thousands of refugees started to gather at Chuknagar at the beginning of May 1971. On the 18th and 19th of May, thousands of people from Bagerhat, Rampal, Morelganj, Sharankhola, Mongla, Dakope, Batiaghata, Chalna and even many people from as far as Faridpur and Barishal started to come to Chuknagar.

They used to rest at Chuknagar after crossing the Bhadra before continuing their journey to the Indian border.

At that time, Golam Hossain, a Muslim League leader, was the chairman of the Atolia union council. When Golam (now deceased) learnt about the massive gathering of refugees at Chuknagar, he informed the Pakistan army stationed in Satkhira district. They sent a platoon of soldiers on May 20 to conduct a raid at Chuknagar, locals said.

Shushila Bairagi, now in her 90s, is one of the survivors who lost seven of her family members on that fateful day.

She said almost all the inhabitants of her village, named Aushkhali in Khulna's Batiaghata, started leaving their homes on the 4th of Jaishtha (the second month of summer according to the Bangla calendar) and boarded three boats.

Once they reached Chuknagar, they wanted to have their meal and start for the border, she said.

"As soon as we started preparation for cooking, the Pakistan army invaded the area from the west. They were firing at us and we were running to save our lives. My brother-in-law



was hit by a bullet and instantly fell on the ground," she said.

"All of a sudden, my son and my son-in-law got hit by bullets. I went to my son-in-law and saw his lifeless body. Then I ran to my son and found him dead. At that time, we could not think of anything else other than saving our lives. The entire field was covered with bodies," she added.

(The article was translated from Bangla to English by Md Shahnawaz Khan Chandan)

Two Malaysian high officials

FROM PAGE 12

faced unemployment since their arrival in Malaysia," the report said.

Reports have emerged of hundreds of South Asian migrants in Malaysia claiming that recruitment agents enticed them with promises of job opportunities in exchange for exorbitant fees.

In mid-April, the Malaysian authorities recalled and remanded two officers from its high commission in Dhaka on suspicion of receiving bribes of over Tk 7.5 crore for issuing visas to Bangladeshi workers and tourists.

The Malaysiakini report quoted insiders as saying that Zaini's internal investigation also revealed that a number of lower-ranking staffers did the bidding of senior officials, and the staffers had come forward to name those who had given the orders.

Yesterday, news portal

FreeMalaysiaToday reported that at least 120 Bangladeshi workers who have been stranded without jobs since their arrival four months ago were absorbed by a new firm "with their wages paid".

The report also said several local agents are being investigated over dubious foreign worker quota approvals.

Earlier this month, Malaysia's Human Resources Minister V Sivakumar confirmed that five of his staff members had been sacked. He had said the sacking was to ensure that the ministry functions effectively and smoothly.

Last month, the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) arrested three of his aides in connection with an investigation into the recruitment of foreign workers. On April 16, Sivakumar also gave his statement to MACC on the matter.

BNP making preparations

FROM PAGE 1

ambassadors, Quader said, "No matter how many complaints the BNP makes, I want to assure our foreign friends that the next election will be free, fair, unbiased and participatory. You do not have to worry about that."

The AL has been holding events that "coincide" with BNP programmes since December 10, when the opposition party held a large rally in the capital.

Quader yesterday said, "Those who are organising programmes blocking traffic will face people's wrath. We will break the arms that set fire.

"The warm up session is going on. The final game is yet to be played," he said.

Awami League Presidium Member Quamrul Islam said, "The caretaker government issue is dead. People do not want restoration of the caretaker government system."

The Jubo League also held a rally in the city's Kajla area.

AL leader

FROM PAGE 12

and hacked at his neck with sharp weapons in front of a mosque in Alekhachar village when Enamul was returning home after Juma prayers.

He was first taken to the Cumilla Sadar Upazila Health Complex and later shifted to Cumilla Medical College Hospital where he died around 3:00pm, Wadud added.

The body was kept at the hospital morgue.

Ahmed Niaz Pabel, joint general secretary of Sadar Upazila AL, said there was a longstanding dispute between Enamul and Kazi Zahir over establishing supremacy at the Alekhachar madrasa, which was established by Enamul.

Besides, Zahir had been trying to take over the madrasa for a long time, he said.

Yesterday, a video clip of Kazi Zahir consuming drugs and gambling went viral on social media. Our Cumilla correspondent obtained a copy of the clip.

Pabel claimed that Zahir blamed Enamul for the release of the video. For this, Jamaat-Shibir activists, including his brother Amanul, stabbed Enamul to death in Zahir's presence.

Inspector Mamun further said additional police personnel were deployed in the area. "The attackers went into hiding after the incident. A drive is underway to arrest the accused."

Investigate allegations of irregularities

FROM PAGE 1

example of disregard for "institutional responsibility and accountability".

"Although allegations of institutionalising irregularity and corruption in Dhaka Wasa through misuse of power were raised continuously, no visible progress to prevent these was seen," he said.

"With the influence of an invisible power, such waywardness has been established as a model of disregard for accountability," he added.

The TIB executive director added that the allegations made by the Wasa chairman are similar to what the TIB

found in a study it conducted in 2019.

In line with the study findings, TIB had earlier brought the issue of "institutionalised graft" within Wasa to the attention of the authorities concerned, stressing that Dhaka residents were deprived of services from the agency as a result, said Iftekharuzzaman, adding that the situation has not changed.

He added that the city dwellers do not get water supply from Wasa as per their demand. Moreover, they have to spend extra to purify the water supplied by Wasa.

It is imperative to control graft in

Wasa to get rid of this problem, he added.

Iftekharuzzaman added that although there is a court order to probe an allegation of embezzlement of Tk 132 crore against nine people, including the Wasa MD, there is no visible progress in this regard.

Dhaka Wasa Managing Director Taqsem A Khan runs the administration in an autocratic manner, bypassing the board, alleged board Chairman Gholam Mostafa in a letter to the secretary of the local government ministry on Wednesday.

Imran refuses home search

FROM PAGE 1

The standoff is the latest in a tussle between former cricket star Khan, 70, and the powerful military that has deepened political instability in the South Asian nation of 220 million.

Khan's home is in the Zaman Park neighbourhood of Lahore and was the site of pitched battles in March between his supporters and police who had tried to arrest Khan for not showing up in court.

Khan was eventually arrested on May 9 on graft charges, which he denies, and released on bail that expires this month.


His arrest triggered a wave of violence by supporters who attacked government buildings, public properties and military installations, including its headquarters and the house of a military commander in Lahore.

Mir said there were no plans to

rearrest Khan.

Lahore police chief Bilal Kamyana said police had arrested 14 suspects involved in the attack on the commander's house as they tried to escape Zaman Park.

A government statement said the team handed over all the evidence about the suspects to the administration of Zaman Park. It said a list of 2,200 suspects involved in the violence was also handed over to Khan.



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Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, and Sharing (MELS) Head	https://jobs.silkroad.com/IFDC/Careers/jobs/1108?embedded=true
Access to Finance Officer	https://jobs.silkroad.com/IFDC/Careers/jobs/1107?embedded=true
Senior Communication Specialist	https://jobs.silkroad.com/IFDC/Careers/jobs/1105?embedded=true
Agri-Machinery Specialist	https://jobs.silkroad.com/IFDC/Careers/jobs/1114?embedded=true
Accounts Assistant, Barisal	https://jobs.silkroad.com/IFDC/Careers/jobs/1112?embedded=true
Accounts Assistant, Jessore	https://jobs.silkroad.com/IFDC/Careers/jobs/1113?embedded=true
Soil Health-Fertilizer Management Specialist	https://jobs.silkroad.com/IFDC/Careers/jobs/1117?embedded=true

All applications should be submitted via the IFDC career portal as stated above on or before 10 June 2023. *IFDC IS an equal opportunity employer*

D-65

Perennially PRITOM



From making us cry with “Bhenge Porona” to making us fall in love with “Morey Jak”- Pritom Hasan’s success spree continues as Coke Studio’s “Deora” reigns supreme in playlists of the youth. Arriving late for his shoot, because of a huge traffic jam, Pritom has an ice-cream and talks to The Daily Star about the secret to his consistency.

RAKSHANDA RAHMAN
MISHA

‘Deora’ is trending on YouTube, and has already got 18 million views.
When Coke Studio came to me, I thought it was a great opportunity for me to infuse new sounds and give something new to the audiences. I wanted to combine three different genres including Pala, Shaari, and Bhatiali ‘gaan’. These songs have a unique energy to it and I knew it will be a magical combination. I am really happy that people are continuously showering the song with love.

How did you involve Islam Uddin Palakar in ‘Deora’?
Deora is a song which is sung from a women’s perspective, and thus I was confused what to do with it. Arnob bhai (Shayan Chowdhury Arnob) suggested that we involved a Pala gaan artiste, as they dress up according to their character and gracefully embrace the roles within them. In Dhaka, people have little to no knowledge of this genre. When I discovered him on YouTube, I was blown away, and instantly reached out to him.

The ‘stomping’ percussive sound in ‘Deora’ was really interesting. How did you come up with it?
If you would see the original video of *Haath ey Lage Betha* on YouTube, you will see that there is a *nouka baich*, two people are standing on the boat while other are rowing. They are making sounds of stomping with the help of bottles and their feet. We decided to replicate the video in the same way but with a different rhythm. I told Armeen *apu* to bring her entire choir group to the studio where we would record the sound of stomping. Apart from that, we took additional sounds by hitting a cardboard forcefully to replicate the stomping sound. We even hurt our hands while doing that but we were happy with the product.

Why aren’t you seen as much in playback?
Whenever we record a song, we have a concept in our mind. When the song is finally shot on video, it becomes something completely different. Last year, I worked in lots of movies, but in the end, some movies either cut the songs or removed the scenes altogether.
You giving Shahtaj ‘salami’ became viral over social media. What’s the story behind it?
Shahtaj told me that husbands usually give their wives ‘salami’, and thus I asked her what she wanted, and she told me she desired a play-pen for her rabbits. I saw the price and told her, “this is your salami and you can do whatever you want with it!”.

PHOTOS:
SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

STYLE STATEMENT Elle Fanning

The Cannes Festival is finally upon us this week and that entails a time to rejoice for the fashion world, as the red carpet invites some of the most interesting looks. On the festival’s opening day, actress Elle Fanning was seen in a beautiful blush coloured Alexander McQueen piece, attending the *Jeanne du Berry* premiere. The strapless gown sported an extensively beaded bodice in mineral colours, that extended down the chiffon gown. Her bodice was shaped like an inverted flower, the petals unfurling to make way for the waterfall of chiffon. The *Maleficent* actress styled the gown in her signature ethereal and dewy makeup, paired with a string of jewels across her neck. Her strawberry blond hair was kept in a sleek up-do, that complemented her slender features.



REUTERS/ERIC GAILLARD

Elle Fanning attending the opening ceremony and premiere of “Jeanne du Barry” at the 76th Cannes Film Festival on May 16, 2023.

OUT AND ABOUT IN DHAKA



Hatirpool Sessions Live
May 26 | 7 pm
Alliance Française de Dhaka,
Gulshan Branch



Ami Birangana Bolchhi
May 26 | 4 pm – 7:30 pm
Studio Theatre Hall, Bangladesh
Shilpakala Academy



**Yamaha One True Sound |
Aftermath**
May 26 | 6 pm – 9 pm
Yamaha Flagship Center

TRENDY STREAMS

Netflix
Mrs Chatterjee vs
Norway

Disney Plus
The Crossover

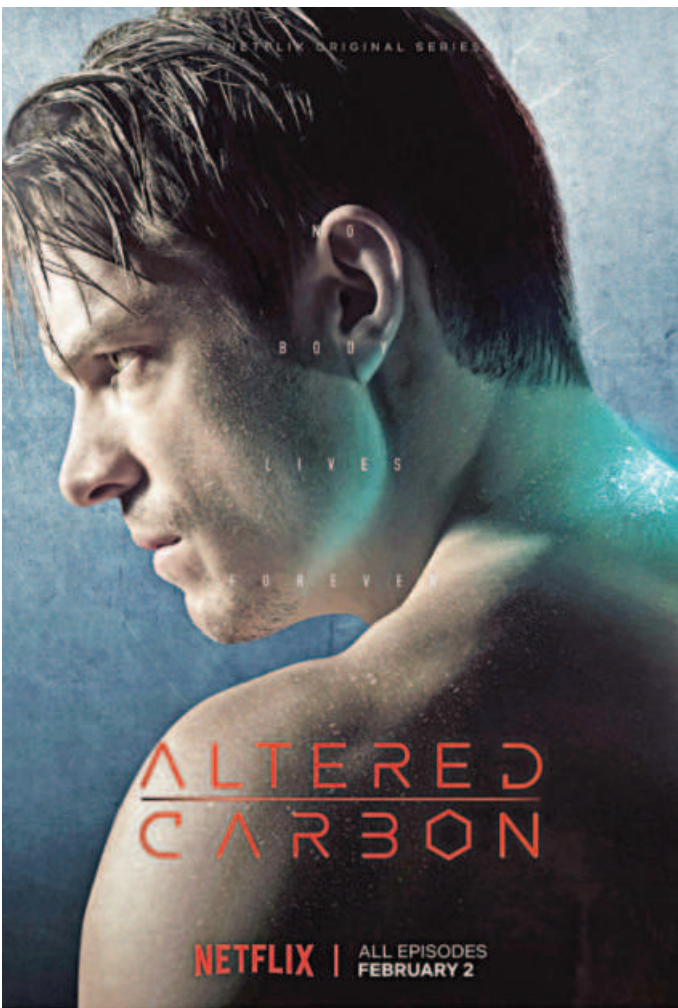
Amazon Prime
Dead Ringers

Hoichoi
Byomkesh

Chorki
Extraordinary You

TV TALKIES ALTERED CARBON An out of body experience

The 2018 Netflix adaptation of Richard Morgan’s cyberpunk novel offers exactly that. The show is set in a time where human consciousness can be stored in discs or ‘stacks’, that are fitted at the back of people’s necks. The series follows a mercenary who wakes up after 300 years to find out his body has been ‘killed’ and he is in a different one. He is offered the dilemma of living behind bars or helping to solve a grueling crime.
This particular series commands to be watched on a larger screen than what a mobile app will allow, for the viewer to fully immerse themselves in the expansive sci-fi, cyberpunk universe. As the series progresses further, it tests the audience’s ability to stomach the constant shock factor in play.
Although the dialogues do need a bit of breaking down and looking into, the series might be able to satiate the palates of science fiction fans with the extraordinary visuals it presents, not to mention the baffling question it leaves you with, what will happen to the world if our bodies become mere clothes that we wear?



Turn dirty power plants into clean ones

We need to invest in renewables now

If the energy crisis of the past year ought to have taught the Bangladesh government anything, it should have been to move away from expensive and dirty coal and fossil fuel-powered plants to cleaner and cheaper alternatives. As such, we agree with the recommendation of the World Bank to set up solar power plants using the sites of five cancelled coal-fired projects in the country to produce up to 3,788MW of electricity.

The multilateral agency made the recommendation after analysing the potential of the sites and finding that it is both financially and technically feasible to repurpose them. As per the report, shared at a recent seminar, the proposed 2,462MW Moheshkhali solar plant would be 40 times bigger than the largest solar power plant currently operating in Bangladesh. It also suggested that another solar power plant be built in Jamalpur with a capacity of 2,518MW.

Of all the renewable alternatives, the greatest potential in Bangladesh lies in solar energy. But the challenge there is finding enough contiguous land in which to deploy solar PV electricity on a large scale, without encroaching into much-needed agricultural land. Under the circumstances, being able to repurpose abandoned coal-powered plants into functioning solar-powered ones would no doubt be a game-changer.

A recent study by the Coastal Livelihood and Environmental Action Network (CLEAN) pointed out that only 39.9 percent of active power plants are running properly, while almost half of the state-owned ones are sitting idle for more than half the time, costing the government – and more importantly, the public – billions of dollars every year. The government should urgently consider phasing out non-performing or idle power plants and explore the feasibility of converting them into solar power plants. According to the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), the government would save \$2.5 billion in the first year, \$7 billion in the second year and \$6.3 billion in the third year if it phased out diesel-fired power plants now.

Unfortunately, our policymakers don't seem to be paying attention. It is of paramount importance that we make well-thought-out investments in renewables *now*, instead of blindly pursuing unsustainable fossil fuel-based projects that will cost us as well as our environment for decades to come.

Out with the old Implement initiative to scrap old buses and trucks

The government's recent decision to issue a circular to scrap buses after 20 years and trucks after 25 years of being on the road is a reassuring sign. Though the move came four years after the National Road Safety Council recommended standardising a usable life of commercial vehicles to reduce road crashes and congestion, and bring discipline to the road transport sector, we commend the progress. Old rickety vehicles that are often on the roads without a licence have been cited as one of the primary causes for uncountable road accidents. Stipulating a service life will hopefully nudge vehicle owners into compliance.

However, we welcome the initiative with a grain of salt, given the fact that many rules, laws – including the Road Transport Act, 2018 – do exist. Yet, it is their lack of enforcement and implementation, and the authorities' tendency to prefer lip service over action, that cost us dearly. Just in April, 413 road accidents occurred in the country – 497 people were killed and 778 were injured – according to the Road Safety Foundation.

The scrapping policy will come into effect once a gazette is issued, and we sincerely hope there are no characteristic delays in the process. We remain conscious that the infrastructure to strictly monitor the expiration of licensed vehicles and enforcement will be integral to ensuring that the move has an impact. As per the guideline, the owner has to submit the necessary papers for the outdated vehicle to the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA). The BRTA must now ensure a proper system to track down illegal vehicles, because its failure to do so in the past has also failed to prevent accidents.

The Road Transport and Highways Division has also prepared a draft guideline, the Motor Vehicle Scrapping Guideline, 2023, which includes outsourcing the vehicle scrapping job to private firms enlisted with the BRTA and under the BRTA's supervision. Taking notes from other countries with viable vehicle scrapping policies for road safety, we expect this initiative to also include a solid infrastructure of scrapyards for disposal of unfit vehicles.

Guidelines to create a system to remove unfit automobiles is undoubtedly a step in the positive direction. But given the catastrophic scale of road crashes, new rules that come into effect must be sincerely actioned.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

letters@thedailystar.net

Excited, but also worried about the new underpass

While I am excited about the new underpass in Dhaka's airport area that will link the Dhaka airport terminals, railway, BRT, MRT stations and the Hajj Camp, I am also worried about all the troubles commuters will face during the construction phase. I understand development is necessary for a growing economy such as ours. But commuters to the city's Uttara area have long been suffering due to the construction work of one project or the other. From damaged roads to huge construction materials strewn about the main thoroughfares, it is nothing but a nightmare travelling to and from Uttara, especially during rush hours. In fact, the construction has also led to a tragic accident due to lack of proper safety protocols. This time around, can the authorities kindly put tangible measures in place so we do not have to face the perils of development until the project is completed?

Tasneem Alam
Uttara

Bracing for another storm



BLOWIN' IN
THE WIND

Dr Shamsad Mortuza
is a professor of English at
Dhaka University.

SHAMSAD MORTUZA



The wind speed in St Martin's Island reached a maximum of 121 kilometres per hour when Cyclone Mocha was making landfall.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

an Islamic one if Yusuf could get rid of the monster. Legend has it, Yusuf was successful, and the Maldives changed.

This anecdote of mass conversion made me reflect on the psychological impact of disasters on those who experience them. A video clip from a livestream on Facebook from St Martin's Island showed how women and children were struggling to climb down the stairs of a shelter home whose roofs were torn by the gale force. The blast of wind and water took me back to a childhood memory of being stranded in an open field somewhere in Khulna during a nor'wester. We were in an open Jeep with a makeshift plastic cover. The rain blades ripped through the plastic sheet and hit my cheek. The flashback of that traumatic experience still haunts me 40 years later.

So I wondered, how do these people who experienced all these cyclones negotiate with these traumas? Is there any official policy in our disaster

central rulers were. The storm severed whatever semblance of ties we had until then.

Indeed, we are much more prepared to deal with natural disasters in our own independent country. It was heartening to see our emergency servicemen reach out to the people in distress. Such rapid response is restricted to physical damages. But I am afraid that the long-lasting impacts of natural disasters are largely ignored.

Victims of a natural disaster can develop PTSD not only through the degree of physical injury they suffer, but also through the immediate risks they face. The experience of losing family members or property, relocation or migration following a natural event can put victims at a higher risk of developing PTSD. In India, psychosocial services were incorporated into their policy framework after Cyclone Fani. Mohammad Budrudzaman, a field researcher writing for The Third Pole, observed that there was no such policy

and celebrate life, while there will be others who will keep on reliving the trauma and can even self-annihilate. There were reports that the island dwellers refused to be relocated before the storm, showing that they did not take the warnings seriously. Their memories of negating and negotiating previous storms probably made them take extra risks. The same goes for the disaster tourists who went to the beach to witness the full blow of the cyclone for a few more likes on Facebook. These are all case studies.

If my Google search on the psychological impact of disasters in Bangladesh is to be trusted, then there is hardly enough research on the links between mental health and environmental stressors exacerbated by natural disasters. Our actions and reactions to Cyclone Mocha suggest that we need a thorough scanning of our national psyche to understand how we approach future storms and offer psychosocial after-services.

In the age of climate change, holistic disaster management is the key



Abida Rahman Chowdhury
is a member of the editorial team
at The Daily Star with interests
in wildlife and biodiversity
conservation.

ABIDA RAHMAN CHOWDHURY

The last house on the seafront at Akmal Ali Ghat in Chatogram's EPZ area belongs to 60-year-old Haribala. Originally from Kutubdia, she migrated to the port town years ago. Her husband, a rickshaw puller by profession, has passed away. She now lives in a makeshift shanty with her son by the embankment at Akmal Ali Ghat's Jele Para, the raging sea just on the other side. Her house is heavily exposed to the elements. Yet, after receiving warnings of Cyclone Mocha, Haribala refused to go to a cyclone shelter for fear of losing her precious little belongings.

Haribala was not the only one who did not go. According to a report in this daily, nearly 1,500 families live in the fishing village where Haribala lives. The report revealed that many of the villagers refused to go to the shelter because they were afraid of losing their belongings.

Over the years, this community has faced many such cyclones. And according to their accounts, upon returning from the shelter from previous cyclones, they would find that all their belongings had been stolen. For a community already socioeconomically marginalised, losing all their belongings is catastrophic. So, they would rather stay back and face the fury of the storm, even if it is one that threatens to pack in a wind speed of 200kmph.

Not only fears of being robbed, but previous experiences have shown

that people also end up not going to the shelter despite warnings because they just don't have the means, or they don't want to leave their beloved cattle or pets behind. Most times, shelters don't have the capacity to accommodate both people and livestock. Take, for example, the case of St Martin's Island. The island is basically home to 10,000 residents. Taki Usmani, an entrepreneur and resident of the island, said those who could manage to leave the island did so before it was cut off altogether from the mainland owing to rough seas. Nearly 2,000-2,500 people left the island before Cyclone Mocha made landfall. He quoted officials to inform this newspaper that the shelters there can accommodate 5,000 people. And all the cattle on the island were let loose to ride out the storm on their own.

According to the World Risk Report in 2018, Bangladesh has been identified as the most vulnerable country in the world in terms of natural disasters, compounded further by the effects of climate change. Owing to our long history of battling cyclones, the country has made steady strides in disaster risk management. Over time the concept of response – i.e. acting after disaster strikes – was changed to encompass total disaster management that now includes response, recovery, rehabilitation and prevention, mitigation, and preparedness. The momentum increased significantly

towards risk reduction after the 1998 floods. All of this is well ahead of many other global initiatives. Over the years, Bangladesh has managed to scale up its early warning systems and preparedness. Many lives have been spared due to these early interventions.

Despite that, every time a cyclone hits, there will always be a sizable population that ends up staying back, and always more at risk owing to their socioeconomic structure. This is true globally as well. A poll conducted six weeks after Hurricane Katrina in 2005 revealed myriad reasons why people refused to heed warnings and evacuate to safe shelters, such as financial constraints, believing they could handle it themselves, underestimating the crisis, confusion or lack of knowledge regarding what to do with their pets or domestic animals, etc. A study in Bangladesh on reasons behind non-compliance with evacuation orders found that the long distance between a cyclone shelter and home, absence of the head of the family, gender-related concerns (for example, women who practise purdah may be reluctant to share space in packed shelters with unknown men), not enough space in the shelter, poor road network, and no space for livestock were among the major reasons. Another study on evacuation during cyclones in Bangladesh found that women often do not receive warning signals, and men who go fishing at sea with absolutely no connection or contact with the land also miss out on warning signals. To this day, many locals depend on local, indigenous knowledge instead of official warnings.

All of this essentially skews the balance of disaster management towards response, recovery and rehabilitation, as opposed to prevention, mitigation and preparedness. Cyclone Mocha was just the first of the season, and Bangladesh

will face more in the days to come. We need to focus on a more holistic approach to disaster management, especially the evacuation process and recovery aspect.

After the devastating Bhola Cyclone of 1970, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman initiated the construction of *Mujib Killa* across the country. They were intended to protect resources, especially livestock, from cyclones, storm surges and floods. Back in 2018, the Department of Disaster Management undertook a project to renovate the existing Mujib Killas and construct more, raising the total to 550. But many experts who work in this field say that is not nearly enough.

Most people in line of disaster are often the poorest and do not want to leave behind their belongings. One way to address this would be to install lockers in shelters where people can store their valuables. Multi-purpose shelters, which is the direction we are heading towards, should include safekeeping of livestock. The Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief must focus on providing training on seamless evacuations that includes knowledge regarding evacuating with livestock and pets. Those with older family members, members with disabilities and children should have a plan of action for such disasters. Mass transit using government vehicles can help move people, their important belongings and livestock from the line of danger. It is also time to heavily invest in climate-resilient housing to ensure we don't have to painstakingly build back from scratch every time a disaster strikes.

As a nation, if we want to ensure that no one is left behind, we must adapt to the changing times. We must learn from previous experiences to navigate through the era of climate change fury and get out unscathed.



CEC Kazi Habibul Awal

FILE PHOTO

What message does the CEC’s comment on black money convey?



THE STREET VIEW

Mohammad Al-Masum Molla is chief reporter at The Daily Star.

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Elections in Bangladesh come with two things attached: muscle power and vote-buying. Historically, these phenomena have been at the centre of discussions as major contenders accuse each other of committing either or both. And this is where the Election Commission is expected to step in as the custodian of the elections. As the custodian, every word, every action of the commission has a grave significance during an election. While the Election Commission is primarily tasked with holding free and fair elections, that task involves much effort on different fronts, the key among which is earning the trust of the political parties as well as the people of the country. So, people expect election commissioners to be mindful when they speak, when they act, and even when they react.

One recent comment by Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Habibul Awal caught the attention of many. At a discussion with candidates and other stakeholders of the impending

While the Election Commission is primarily tasked with holding free and fair elections, that task involves much effort on different fronts, the key among which is earning the trust of the political parties as well as the people of the country. So, people expect election commissioners to be mindful when they speak, when they act, and when they react.

Gazipur City Corporation election, the election chief on May 10 said, “Don’t worry too much about black money. If you think that you cannot contain the disbursement of black money, tell the recipients [of black money], ‘Even if you take black money, cast your vote independently. Vote for the person you believe in and consider good. Because when you cast your vote, the person who gave you black money will not stand beside you...’”

A video clip of his comment went viral on social media. Netizens have been asking whether it behoves the CEC to make such a comment. The remark is all the more significant since it comes at a time when the credibility of this Election Commission hangs in the balance and is being questioned by the opposition political parties. It sounds all the more ominous

in the context of the two previous parliamentary elections in 2014 and 2018, which seriously question the independence and neutrality of the election office. Predictably, and quite understandably, political parties have already started expressing their apprehension regarding the comment.

Hardly anyone will disagree that black money has an influence on any election, but a few questions arise from the CEC’s comment. First, if the candidates have to stop the disbursement of black money, then what is the role of the Election Commission or the returning officers or the law enforcement agencies? It falls upon them to create a congenial atmosphere for a free, fair and credible election. Obviously, black money is a barrier to that.

The second question that arises from the CEC’s comment is: would it instigate the contenders to distribute black money? If his remarks, which could be perceived as directives, are taken to heart, it would do precious little to deter the candidates from buying votes.

The third question is, does this mean that the Election Commission has expressed its helplessness in advance to stop vote-buying? If that is indeed the case, should the incumbent commission continue staying in office and proceed with conducting elections?

According to the city corporation election rules, no gift can be given to the voters and the commission can sentence violators up to six months in prison or charge them with Tk 50,000 fine or both. The rules also stipulate that monetary or any other reward to influence a person to contest as a candidate, not be a candidate, withdraw their candidature, vote, or keep them from voting will be considered as bribery. Both giving and taking bribes are punishable offences. The punishment for this offence is imprisonment from six months to two years or a fine.

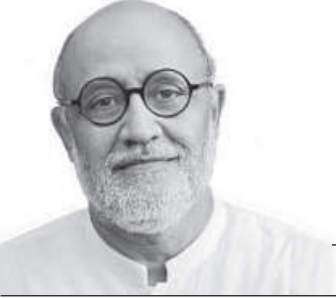
At the same meeting, the CEC emphasised the importance of the upcoming Gazipur City Corporation polls, saying that the election was crucial due to the attention it was receiving from the international community. In that case, his comment on black money will surely tarnish the commission’s image.

The Gazipur City Corporation election is among the five city polls that are going to be held before the upcoming 12th parliamentary polls. The CEC’s comments at such a juncture will certainly not help uphold the commission’s dignity, but question its intention and credibility instead.

Politicians can play with rhetoric and expect more latitude for their remarks and comments. The Election Commission cannot.

BOOK REVIEW

Understanding Dhaka’s urbanism



Rahul Mehrotra is founder principal of architecture firm RMA Architects of Mumbai-Boston, and is professor of urban design and planning and chair of the Department of Urban Planning and Design at the Harvard Graduate School of Design in the US.

RAHUL MEHROTRA

Cities in South Asia are characterised by physical and visual contradictions that coalesce into a landscape of incredible pluralism. Spatial ambiguity perhaps forms the dominant image of the city in South Asia. These cities are made and remade every day. They are twitching organisms and are characterised by physical and visual contradictions that morph into a landscape of flux, charged with uncertainty but optimistic energy. In contradiction to this intrinsic character, architects, planners and politicians often bring other imaginations to bear on this landscape, perpetuated by a tyranny of external images from the “global city.” This is a notion of remaking the city in a singular image, using architecture as the spectacle to represent global aspirations. In fact, the radical transformation of the physical form of the city is seen as the most immediate method to make the city viable for integration into a global network of cities and economies. New highways, flyovers, airports, corporate hotels, and convention centres are followed by a secondary development of museums, galleries, parks, and progressive urban regulations. These infrastructures supposedly demonstrate

principle of the city, but in this seeming chaos are embedded aspiration to be global and impulses to use formally produced architecture as an organising instrument of the static city. Here, incredible examples of modernist architecture weather gracefully – exerting their presence, albeit as somewhat alien objects in the landscape. Where the logic of what drives, makes and remakes the city is not discernible. It is clearly a delirious condition. One can’t help but allude to Rem Koolhaas’ seminal work in *Delirious New York*. This book was a celebration and analysis of New York and depicted the city as a metaphor for the incredible variety of human behaviour. A city where at the end of the 19th century, population, information, and technology explosions made Manhattan a laboratory for the invention and testing of a metropolitan lifestyle – “the culture of congestion” – and its architecture.

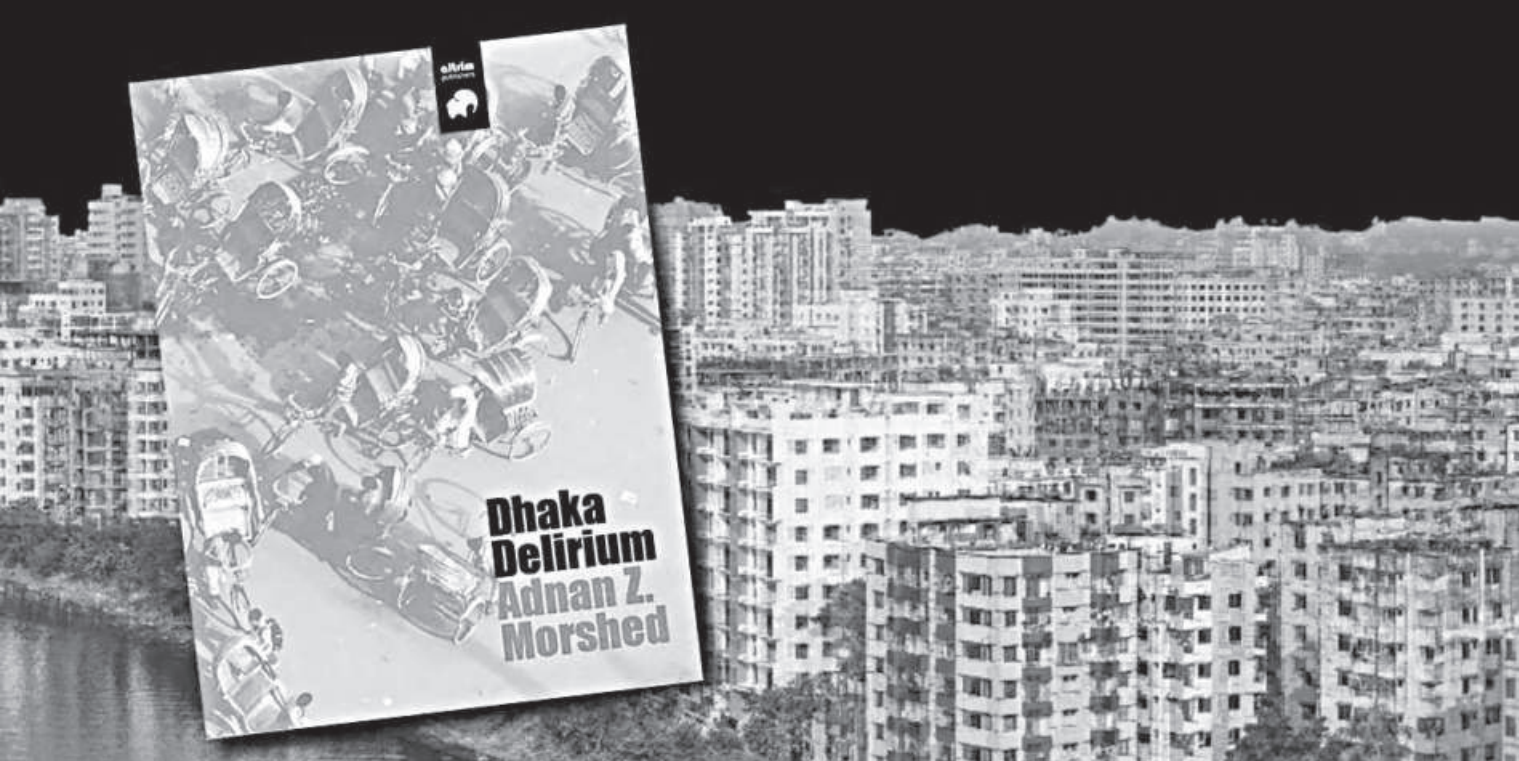
But this was clearly a condition in the Western world where architecture was the protagonist and depicted as the central spectacle of the city. How, then, do we capture and represent a city undergoing a similar metamorphosis in the “majority world”? I use this

to the citizen, yet articulate the issues in the city at a level of intellectual engagement that would rouse a debate among academics, professionals and policymakers alike. Some of the many themes he writes about are climate change, public spaces, transportation, heritage conservation, ecology, football culture, housing, terrorism in the city, as well as an absolutely fascinating fictional conversation between Louis Kahn and Le Corbusier on their fictional visit together to Dhaka! A range that gives us multiple perspectives in understanding the city of Dhaka through both its people and culture, as well as its architecture and urbanism.

Clearly, no single lens can discern the emergent patterns that we see in the South Asian city. Perhaps the effective way to look at urbanism in South Asia is by looking at it from different perspectives. Perhaps to look at it as though through a kaleidoscope; it’s not about a single view, but turning the kaleidoscope to see new patterns emerge. This requires one to practise the suspension of quick judgements and instead understand underlying protocols and procedures in a given context, before making any decision on the nature of the problem. This is necessarily a grounded activity; it is a form of reflexive practice where choices and judgements are seen as a reiterative process. This process oscillates between engaging with the on-the-ground reality and reflecting on the patterns one is observing and experiencing. Through this process, feedback loops for more effective action are established.

so we should feel compelled to act on these grounds. Architecture, planning and landscape architecture are deeply political professions. Avoiding political questions is actually absolving ourselves of that responsibility. Engaging with political questions can be done in many ways, ranging from advocacy and organising action to creating the tools or instruments for advocacy – they are equally important. The tools for advocacy include research, writing, and communication to inform public opinion. It is here that architecture, landscape and planning education becomes important in its broadest sense.

While it is the education of design professionals, it is also the education of the public in the understanding and cultivation of environmental values and the resulting cultural values. In countries like Bangladesh, South Asia and, the “majority world” more broadly, students move from architecture to urban design or planning while pursuing postgraduate studies. They often do this because they see architecture as serving only the indulgences of the rich, whereas in urban design or planning, they see an opportunity to serve society in the larger ambit. Adnan Morshed asks this question in a pointed way in one of the essays: “I have been thinking about the ‘fairness’ measure of cities in Bangladesh. As I go around in Dhaka, I keep wondering, is this city fair to all its people? Is this city guided by a basic philosophy of social justice? Again, fairness and social justice are abstract notions, and often ignored quietly and cleverly as left-leaning



VISUAL: STAR

The city is an ever-transforming landscape – a city in constant motion where the physical fabric is characterised by the kinetic. Architecture is not the “spectacle” of the city, nor does it even comprise the single dominant image of the city. In contrast, festivals and other spectacles of human occupation exert a presence on the everyday landscape and dominate the image of the city.

category specifically picking up on this description coined by the Bangladesh-based photographer Shahidul Alam to describe the part of the globe where a majority of the planetary population lives. This term is being increasingly used, to replace the terms “developing world” or “third world,” which most Southern practitioners consider derogatory. And the notion of the “majority world” is perhaps more accurate, because it refers to the metric of people in space, rather than other economic developmental metrics. For, finally how people organise themselves in space to dwell and live together to make the city becomes the critical question. And it is in this spirit that *Dhaka Delirium* begins to show us through confronting a range of questions and observations as to what might be the appropriate lenses to understand the megacity and political capital of Bangladesh, as well as by extension open up our understanding of urbanism in South Asia more broadly.

In the series of essays in this book, the subjects covered by Adnan Morshed are diverse. They are accessible as they originally were written largely for *The Daily Star* and a few for BDNews24.com, both widely accessed platforms in Bangladesh and internationally. Given this venue of a rather public platform, the essays are accessible

Kaleidoscopic thinking is about continuously including a broader constituency in the patterns one sees and imagines. This is a crucial first step for any form of public engagement. And it is here that *Dhaka Delirium* and Adnan Morshed’s contribution are significant. He is an academic and practitioner, and one rooted on the ground but also who can take a long view on his city. He uses various media, issues, and venues to share his ideas and observations. He engages with the public realm in an accessible and productive way. He communicates to the layperson through local newspapers while draws academics closer to the issues through more scholarly writing. And it is these disparate formats and experiences over two decades that seamlessly come together in *Dhaka Delirium*.

In *Dhaka Delirium*, Adnan Morshed speaks to us as a design professional, student, academic, public intellectual, activist, policymaker, and a concerned citizen. He provokes the professionals to play a greater role in the public sphere. As architects and practitioners of urban and landscape design, we have to build constituencies that engage in organising people to act. We are trained to see spatial possibilities in ways societies can be organised productively and equitably, and

obstacles to a neoliberal worldview, typically rigged to favour the privileged and the powerful. But we need to decide how we develop our cities and what kind of humanity we institute in them.” This is an underlying question that lingers through the book, and is perhaps the critical one for all of us as citizens and professionals to ask today.

However, we are not asking this question enough today as a profession – and when we are, we do it largely for circulation among our peers. We will be judged as a profession by the issues we engage with and where the public sees us collectively expending our energy. This is the range of challenges that *Dhaka Delirium* outlines for us through the different essays – issues that all need spatial practitioners to more actively engage with through speculative thinking as well as action. Our focus as a profession has been caught up in a landscape of indulgence, while the issues our societies face on the ground have to do with another reality: the lack of amenities for the poor, severe shortage of affordable housing, insensitivity towards the natural landscape and ecology, and so on. These issues should be where we expend our energy and focus.

If history has to judge our profession in the last three or four decades, it will be a judgement that will damn us for forgetting about a majority of the population and society we were supposed to serve. Instead, our profession has been completely seduced by the rich and, by extension, the global capital that is disrupting our society and the well-being of a majority. *Dhaka Delirium*, in the context of this megacity in South Asia, reminds us as professionals and citizens of our responsibilities and commitments to society at large.

What to WATCH

T Sports and GTV

Indian Premier League

Delhi vs Chennai

Live from 4:00 pm

Kolkata vs Lucknow

Live from 8:00 pm

Star Sports Select HD2

English Premier League

Tottenham Hotspurs vs Brentford

Live from 5:30 pm

Bournemouth vs Manchester United

Live from 8:00 pm

Nottingham Forest vs Arsenal

Live from 10:30 pm

BD A salvage draw in rain-hit affair

SPORTS REPORTER

The first of the three-match unofficial Test between Bangladesh A and their West Indian counterparts ended in a draw at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium yesterday after rain, which played a significant role throughout the match, again came to the Afif Hossain-led side's rescue.

Trailing by 192 runs in their second innings in reply to the visitors' 417-run first-innings total, Bangladesh ended the final day on 187 for seven when play was called off due to bad light, with only 49.1 overs completed on the day.

Shadman Islam top-scored with 64 off 90 deliveries while Jaker Ali was unbeaten on 36. Player of the match Jair McAllister, who bagged a fiver in the first innings, scalped two more in the second innings.

The result notwithstanding, the visitors dominated all four days, totally outplaying the visitors in all the departments. The second four-day is scheduled from May 23 at the same venue.



Erik Lamela came off the bench and scored a fabulous header five minutes into extra time to help Europa League thoroughbreds Sevilla to a gritty 2-1 win in a pulsating semifinal second leg against Juventus on Thursday, securing a 3-2 aggregate victory. The Spaniards will bid for a record-extending seventh Europa League title when they face AS Roma in the final in Budapest on May 31, after Jose Mourinho's side drew 0-0 at Bayer Leverkusen to secure a 1-0 aggregate victory in their semifinal.

PHOTO: AFP/REUTERS

‘Not thinking of World Cup yet’

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh chief selector Minhajul Abedin Nannu feels that it is too soon to talk about the ODI World Cup squad with a few more assignments left before the showpiece event.

Talks regarding who will make the World Cup squad have been the rage in the media with Mahmudullah Riyad, Afif Hossain and a few other names in the mix.

“We will not make any decisions in a hurry. We are playing back-to-back series and the best possible side will be built. We still have four months before the World Cup and we have Afghanistan coming up for a series including all three formats, so, we are thinking of organising the sides [for that series],” Minhajul told the media yesterday. “I feel like we are the only Test-playing side where the World Cup discussion is taking place so early. However, we are not thinking of the World Cup but about the Afghanistan series.”

Test captain Shakib Al Hasan is currently out with injury and is expected to miss the one-off Test against Afghanistan, starting from June 14. Minhajul was hoping the all-rounder would be fit for the ODI series, set to begin from July 5. “There is a long gap before the ODI series due to Eid-ul Adha and I hope he will be able to return to the ODI squad,” Minhajul said.

The Tigers will not be experimenting against Afghanistan in the Test, Minhajul opined, given their bitter experience when they suffered a 224-run hammering in their first Test against Afghanistan in 2019 in Chattogram.

‘Everything is about mindset’

Bangladesh's fast-bowling department has been a revelation, with the Tigers enjoying the luxury of an extended crop of promising pacers that have started to win games for Bangladesh at home and, most noticeably, in foreign conditions. Overseeing the pace-bowling brigade is legendary South Africa pacer Allan Donald, who spoke with *The Daily Star's Ekush Tapader* about the changes he has seen in the pacers' skillset as well as mindset while giving inside into what had done the trick for over the past 12 months. The excerpts are below:

The Daily Star (DS): Bangladesh's pacers have been performing very impressively. What is the main reason behind this development of pacers?

Allan Donald (AD): I'm extremely proud of how everyone's moved forward in the past 12 months and I think our biggest improvement has been in a mental capacity. When I first came in, the first thing that I looked at and stood back and watched was our skill level. The second thing I looked at was what our mindset was like in a competitive environment. For me, everything at this level is about mindset. Skill will take over but if we are ferociously competitive as a group and not just as individuals... that was my biggest mission. To make this group competitive in every way.

From a bowling point of view, I'm so proud of how everyone has embraced this new way not worrying about getting hit for a six, not worrying about what it might look like if I get it wrong. In terms of strike rates, I think we've improved in all formats, especially in white ball because that's a given, that's what it should be. If you don't go at the batters and don't take risks,



you're not going anywhere. It's all about aggression versus aggression.

DS: Do you think Bangladesh will have one of the best pace attacks in this year's World Cup?

AD: There will be very good wickets, there's no question about it. In 2011, I was there with New Zealand and experienced that first hand. All the pitches were just sublime. So, there's going to be really tough moments and that's when we have to be at our best. It's going to come down to how

cool can we be under pressure in those moments when we need to close a game out.

DS: Hasan Mahmood is bowling well. He seems very mature, especially for his age. What do you think his specialty is?

AD: Hasan Mahmud is an extremely talented young man. I just love his personality, his character. He doesn't seem to be fazed by pressure although it's still early in his career. I think the impact he's had, especially with the new

ball, was significant because he's always broken partnerships very quickly with high-class fast bowling. I think he always asks very good questions and simplifies everything. He doesn't really overthink things. Whenever he's come on, he's had an impact almost immediately. He's not going to get it right all the time but so far he's been superb under pressure.

DS: There are many pacers in the pipeline now. Does that motivate everyone?

AD: The competition among all the pacers for places is great to see. It's obviously going to be a very difficult choice for selectors. For the Asia Cup, I think you probably see what direction the selectors may go for. Having to pick five seamers for the World Cup, or six, we don't know.

I think just looking around and how hard everyone's working is terrific. How everyone is punching the door down to get into the final selection places for the World Cup is what we want. That's what we spoke about six months ago. Not that everyone works against each other, but work for each other. The closeness that has been created in this group vastly has been nothing but complementary.



Not going to bottle it, says Arteta

REUTERS, London

Arsenal may have handed Manchester City a huge advantage going into a decisive weekend in the Premier League title race but they will keep their wits about them in the final two games despite their slim chances, manager Mikel Arteta said on Friday.

City are on 85 points and have a four-point lead with a game in hand over Arsenal, who must win at Nottingham Forest on Saturday to realistically stay in the title race at least until Pep Guardiola's side face Chelsea a day later.

“Two games to go and we can still be champions against arguably the best team in the history of the Premier League. We are still there and we're not going to bottle that, that's for sure,” Arteta told reporters.

“It shows the level of this league. That team (City) has the capacity to win 105 to 110 points. They haven't done that this season because of the level of the league and we've been there toe-to-toe

for 10 months.”

Arteta said Arsenal's 3-0 home loss to Brighton & Hove Albion last weekend was a difficult pill to swallow but he looked to gain perspective on what his young squad had achieved this season.

“We discussed in the following days about where we are, what we've done, the remaining two games -- what the possibilities are, what is in our hands and what we can deliver,” he added.

“We want to continue to be at the level that we've been for 10 months... We can't lose sight of what happened in moments where we weren't at our best or at the level required to be champions and we have to acknowledge that.

“But obviously the team, the players, the club deserve huge credit for how far we've come in the season. There are still two very important games to play.”

Arteta said his side will be without the injured Gabriel Martinelli and Oleksandr Zinchenko for the rest of the season. Martinelli was taken off against Brighton with an ankle injury.

Kings one win away from title

SPORTS REPORTER

Defending champions Bashundhara Kings ensured they would need just a solitary win from their remaining four matches to retain the title of Bangladesh Premier League as they notched a 2-0 win against Chittagong Abahani at the Bashundhara Kings Arena yesterday.

The three-time champions now have 43 points from 16 matches, 10 points more than nearest rivals Abahani, who yesterday thrashed Sheikh Russel KC 3-1 at Shaheed Dhirendranath Datta Stadium in Cumilla.

Kings will now aim to complete a fourth straight league triumph and take an unassailable lead when they face Sheikh Russel in their next game.

In Mohammedan defeated Sheikh Jamal to jump into third position in the 11-team table, with 22 points from 15 matches. Sheikh Russel and Sheikh Jamal slipped to the fourth and fifth position respectively, with 22 and 21 points. However, Sheikh Russel have played a match less than Sheikh Jamal.

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“Last season we hardly got any time to make a good squad because the board of directors had just taken over the responsibility of club. However, we had enough time to consult and form a strong team this time and believe that success is possible.”

GHULAM MOHAMMAD ALOMGIR,
Mohammedan's football committee chairman





Signs of overdue spark in Mohammedan's recovery arc

There were instances of some Mohammedan officials who even ventured beyond the border to rope in foreign players. The recent past, however, witnessed the club opting for mediocre players instead, citing financial limitations, and straying from title aspirations as a consequence. Besides, there has been whispers that top footballers did not trust the club officials to make any deals in last season following several instances of irregular payments in the preceding seasons.

ANISUR RAHMAN

Mohammedan Sporting Club, one of the oldest clubs in Bangladesh whose evolution since inception had been driven through sheer emotion from numerous passionate fans across the country, is more than a sporting outfit.

The Black and Whites had won the hearts of millions before and after the country's independence, courtesy of scintillating displays on the football pitch rather than the ones in cricket, hockey, chess and a few other indoor disciplines.

However, following continuous failures on the ground for over a decade, Mohammedan no longer occupy the same space in the hearts of its supporters. The crowd-pulling outfit continue to yearn for success in the most coveted football event in the domestic circuit since the introduction of the professional football league in 2007.

The administrative and organisational failures have been marked as one of the big reasons behind Mohammedan's setback in football. Although revival initiatives recently taken by the club since the casino scandal and ensuring the final berth of the ongoing Federation Cup certainly present a glimpse of hope, the road to re-establishing its position as one of the best top-flight football clubs in the country still remains arduous for Mohammedan.

Glorious past weighs heavy

During its early years, coinciding with the period before the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971, Mohammedan emerged as a



editions. They stooped to the lowest in the 2016-17 season by finishing 10th out of 12 clubs, demoralising millions of their fan-base.

Absence of scouting programme

During the national football league championship of the pre-BPL era, Mohammedan officials were known to have travelled all over the country to unearth raw talents. Resultantly, illustrious names like Badal Roy, Mosabber Hossain, Jasimuddin Josy were scouted from the district level.

There were instances of some Mohammedan officials who even ventured beyond the border to rope in foreign players. The recent past, however, witnessed the club opting for mediocre players instead, citing financial limitations, and straying from title aspirations as a consequence. Besides, there has been whispers that top footballers did not trust the club officials to make any deals in last season following several

squads only on paper. They train on a rented field and, to make matters worse, are often forced to conduct senior team's training in the small ground at the club premises. Thus, the coaches face huge challenge to brief tactical aspects ahead of matches.

Once there used to be some loyal footballers who played for Mohammedan year after year. They did not think much of payment back then but the scenario inverted in time as Mohammedan, having failed to live up to their financial commitments in previous seasons, can no longer take the signing of top local footballers for granted.

Fans' apathy

It was once unthinkable for Mohammedan to even consider dropping a point in a league match as their fans inevitably had the players confined at the stadium for hours before rushing to the club tent to protest the poor performances of their beloved team. Fearing backlash, the players

resulted in a sustained period of underachievement, with the club failing to clinch major titles and struggling to maintain consistency on the field.

However, the casino scandal became a turning point for the Motijheel-based outfit with the emergence of a set of new board of directors in early 2021. They are now trying to solve financial issues and form comparatively better squads in football and cricket, while having inserted dedicated former players in different sub-committees.

Financial constraints

Till the late 1980s, the management ran the club smoothly, a period where success rate was higher than the subsequent decades. Financial constraints played a major part in Mohammedan becoming underachievers in football and cricket. Under the leadership of long-serving Lokman Hossain Bhuiyan, who later was allegedly involved with the casino scandal, the club turned into a limited company in 2011, with an aim to bringing some financial solvency but the scenario did not improve. Instead, the club had hit its all-time low in terms of performance on the ground.

A Mohammedan official, seeking anonymity, said the club needs Tk 20 lakh per month to maintain daily operations but they have a permanent income of Tk 45 thousand per month, generated from two shops at the club tent.

Although the new board of directors headed by former Army Chief General Md Abdul Mubeen has not brought the desired financial stability yet, the club has not faced any financial crisis when it came to forming squads in football and cricket and running the club in general.

It was also learned that president Mubeen and football committee chairman and director Ghulam Mohammad Alomgir bear majority of the expenditure. Meanwhile, Max Group is sponsoring the football team and in cricket, United Group and Pran Group were involved with the Mohammedan cricket team in the just-concluded Dhaka Premier League. However, it is worth mentioning that Alomgir and Mubeen are affiliated with Max and United Group, respectively.

‘Top clubs should have permanent income sources’

Former national forward Imtiaz Ahmed Nakib has been continuously involved with Mohammedan Sporting Club for the past 24 years and saw ups and downs of one of the country's most popular outfits. The prolific striker had donned the Black and White jersey for 13 seasons since 1989, barring a five-year stint at Muktijoddha Sangsad in between, before calling time in 2007. Ever since, Nakib featured in different managerial roles at Mohammedan. In an exclusive interview with **Anisur Rahman of The Daily Star**, the 48-year-old talked about different aspects surrounding the club after they made it to the Federation Cup final for the first time in 14 years.

The Daily Star (DS): Your feelings after Mohammedan reached the final of the Federation Cup after 14 years?

Imtiaz Ahmed Nakib (IAN): Of course, it feels great to see my beloved Mohammedan in the Federation Cup final, and we are also happy to meet Abahani there. Before the transfer, we promised to form a young and capable team that would always fight but the appointment of Shafiqul Islam Manik bhai as the head coach was not right, I think.

I believe we have formed a good squad with the best promising players after around 10 to 12 years, but they did not perform well in the first leg of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL). However, they have started performing in the second leg of the league with the promotion of assistant coach Alfaz Ahmed, who had before worked with British coach Sean Lane for nearly three years. The coach is an important factor in football and a good change has come in our squad after the replacement of the head coach.

DS: Does Mohammedan show professionalism while running the club?

IAN: The path Mohammedan follows is not proper. Only two people, club president Mubeen sir and football committee chairman Alomgir bhai, are running the show with their utmost financial help but the fact is that football is now a big business in the world and you need to handle it properly.

We have a lot of backups in former Mohammedan players, the supporters and more but we can't go forward because of a lack of timely logistic support. The financial constraint has been Mohammedan's main problem for over 12 to 15 years and we haven't fully recovered from this financial crisis yet.

Besides, Mohammedan don't have a permanent ground. We also need to improve the standard of current accommodation, food, gym facilities among other things, otherwise we would keep going through such a lean patch in the coming days as well.

DS: Is it possible to solve the financial crisis in the coming days?

IAN: I believe 16 directors and the president of the club have the capability to change everything. The club has 5.5 bigha (79,200 square feet) land in the centre of Motijheel area. We don't need the donation to run the club if we make this land for a source of permanent money income. And even though the directors are providing money as per the club's requirement of Tk 15 to 16 crore every year, how long and why they will keep providing the money is a question. I think we can earn money permanently from the club land in Motijheel.

DS: Why do you think Mohammedan are missing financial fluency, dedicated players and supporters it once had?

IAN: I was also a Mohammedan footballer but I didn't see the decision-makers of the club had any vision or long-term plan, especially after the 1990s. There was no plan in football, cricket and hockey. During the transfers of every season, one or two persons were given the responsibility to form the respective squads and they did their job on a season basis.

Whereas, you see the plan of Bashundhara Kings, who made a stadium, gymnasium, dormitory for the players and have a proper plan of how the squad will be for the next season, but we don't have such a plan.

DS: How much blame should be shared by clubs for the miserable state of country's football?

IAN: Of course, the clubs are to be blamed hundred per cent for this fall because the federation would not grow footballers. Can you show me any plans from the clubs? Are there any youth teams of any clubs, except on paper? But the clubs are supposed to have youth teams who are meant to be nursed round the year in order to bring out quality players.

I think the federation is also a bit responsible for this situation because if they could run the district football regularly, then new footballers would come out but they did not. Besides, all leagues except BPL are being played on the poor artificial turf at Kamalapur stadium, leading to a lot of promising players dropping early after sustaining injuries.

DS: Why has Mohammedan been unable to develop its marketing wing?

IAN: I think the board of directors can tell you about it. What I see is that if social clubs like Dhaka Club, Gulshan Club, Chittagong Club are running by generating their own fund, then why a sporting club can't generate its own? I think all top-tier clubs should have permanent income sources.

DS: Mohammedan won all domestic trophies except for BPL. Can the Black and Whites taste the professional league title in coming days?

IAN: Actually, it depends on the decision of the club high-ups. If the club president and the football committee chairman can provide us confidence, then I think we can go forward. That is all.



local powerhouse in football. The Black and Whites continued their dominance despite the emergence of Abahani and, thus, had the nation divided into two groups of football fans. A record 12 titles of top-flight football league in 29 editions, prior to the introduction of the professional football league in the form of Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) in 2007, has been the evidence of Mohammedan's dominance.

Moreover, the Motijheel-based outfit won several silverwares in DMFLC Cup, Federation Cup, Independence Cup, Super Cup, National Championship, but the only missing silverware from the club's rich trophy cabinet is the prestigious BPL. Except for the first three seasons, Mohammedan struggled in almost all BPL

instances of irregular payments in the preceding seasons.

Club-licencing issue

To take part in any Asian Football Confederation (AFC)-sanctioned professional tournaments, clubs must meet several licencing criteria set by the AFC. Although Mohammedan could tick some of the boxes within five different sections – on sporting, infrastructure, personnel and administrative, legal, and financial grounds – they still lack modern training facilities, well-equipped gymnasium, permanent venue, and youth development setup, pinning the Black and Whites at the backseat of progress.

Having a youth development setup is mandatory for club-licencing but, like other clubs, Mohammedan have their youth

and club officials did not even come out publicly. The visible pressure from fans has diminished and now expectations are limited to sporadic successes in cup competitions.

Organisational weaknesses

Mohammedan was once run by some dedicated and competent organisers like Moinul Islam, Abdul Monem, MA Malek, Monirul Haque Chowdhury, Sheikh Akmal Hossain, Sirajul Haque Chowdhury, Anwarul Haque Helal up until the early 1990s. A dearth of quality organisers, however, triggered a decline in performance and posed a myriad of challenges in subsequent years.

Internal conflicts, financial instability, and lack of adequate infrastructure further hampered the club's progress. These issues



CHUKNAGAR

A shocking savagery

Remembering one of the biggest massacres on this day in 1971

AHMAD ISTIAK

It was around 11:00am on May 20, 1971. A truck and a jeep, full of Pakistani soldiers, reached the Jhautala area of Malotia intersection of Chuknagar, a small village back then in Atolia union under Khulna's Dumuria upazila.

A farmer was working in his jute field nearby. Before he could understand anything, the Pakistan army fired at him, killing him on the spot. As the occupation troops approached the village, they found a demolished culvert, which connects two parts of the village.

From that point, the platoon got divided into three raiding parties -- one of which entered Chuknagar bazaar, another went towards Malopara-Raypara area along the Bhadra river, and the remaining group strode towards Patkhola Beel.

A huge number of refugees took shelter at that time at Patkhola Beel. As one of the marauding groups found the refugees gathered there, they started firing indiscriminately. Another group coming from Malopara-Raypara area soon joined the army.

People started running frantically for life, but most of them were gunned down. The entire marsh turned into a sea of bodies.



A memorial built for those killed in the 1971 massacre at Chuknagar in Khulna's Dumuria upazila. PHOTO: STAR

"When they started firing, I ran to a nearby mosque. A girl from our neighbouring house covered me with a mattress to hide me. Although I survived, eight of my family members -- my father, uncles, cousins, aunts -- were killed by the Pakistan army on that day," said Nitai Gain, now in his mid-70s, recalling the brutal massacre.

On that day, more than 10,000 people, mostly belonging to the Hindu community, were slain by the Pakistan army at Chuknagar in only six hours, according to "Bangladesher Shadhinota Juddho: Dalilpatro".

The genocide of Chuknagar was the most brutal and extensive massacre committed by the Pakistan army during the Liberation War. They started the massacre at 11:00am and stopped at 5:00pm on May 20 only due to the fact that they ran out of ammunition. Most of the bodies were dumped into the Bhadra.

"Nobody will believe what happened that day. No words can describe the unimaginable horror. There were so many bodies all around the field that it was impossible to bury them or burn them in accordance with the ritual," Abul Kalam, a merchant of Chuknagar bazaar and a witness to the massacre, told The Daily Star.

"So, the bazaar committee decided to dispose of the bodies into the river as the nearby Bhadra and Ghangrail rivers were quite torrential. We hired 40-45 labourers from the jute warehouses to take care of the bodies. They

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



Fatema, a homemaker from Khulna's Dumuria upazila, fishes in the Salta river during low tide as her four-year-old son Rakibul looks on. The low-income families in the area are dependent on small fish from the river as they cannot afford to buy fish from markets. The photo was taken on Thursday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

800,000 affected by Cyclone Mocha in Myanmar: UN

AFP, Geneva

At least 800,000 people in Myanmar need emergency food aid and other assistance after Cyclone Mocha slammed into the conflict-torn country earlier this week, the United Nations said yesterday.

Mocha brought lashing rain and winds of up to 195 kilometres (120 miles) per hour to Myanmar and neighbouring Bangladesh on Sunday, with Myanmar's junta saying 145 people had been killed and media reports suggesting the number was far higher.

The UN's World Food Programme described "a trail of devastation" across Myanmar's Rakhine State, a region that is home to hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees who live in displacement camps following decades of ethnic conflict.

The cyclone left "houses flattened, roads cut off by uprooted trees, hospitals and schools destroyed, and telecommunications and power lines severely disrupted," Anthea Webb, WFP's deputy regional director for Asia and the Pacific, told reporters in Geneva via video-link from Bangkok.

"There are at least 800,000 people in urgent need of emergency food assistance," she said, adding that "greater needs for food, shelter, water, health and other humanitarian aid are expected to be revealed as we reach more areas."

And while Bangladesh was spared a direct hit, "nearly half a million Bangladeshis and thousands of Rohingya refugees have lost their homes and assets", she said.

Webb said that WFP had started its response to Mocha before the storm hit, reaching 28,000 people in Bangladesh near the Myanmar border with advance cash aid to help them prepare.

And, she said, as soon as the worst of the storm passed, the agency had reached thousands of refugees with emergency food assistance, and were working "around the clock" to resume their regular food support.

The UN's World Food Programme described "a trail of devastation" across Myanmar's Rakhine State, a region that is home to hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees who live in displacement camps.

BANGLADESHI WORKERS

Two Malaysian high officials transferred over migrants' plight

STAR REPORT

The Malaysian human resources ministry transferred two of its top officials in connection with the recent recruitment of Bangladeshi and Nepalese workers, who arrived in Malaysia with valid permits but without jobs, reports Malaysian media.

Labour Director-General Asri Ab Rahman was one of the two officials, and he was issued the transfer orders on Thursday, according to reports.

A report in Malaysiakini said Muhd Khair Razman Mohamed Annuar, the ministry's deputy secretary-general of operations, has also been transferred.

The swift personnel changes come under the direction of the ministry's newly appointed Secretary-General Zaini Ujang, who assumed his position in April amid a growing number of foreign workers stranded in the country without work, Malaysiakini quoted ministry sources as saying.

The report also said it was understood that there has been an internal investigation into foreign labour quota approvals.

"The scrutiny into the approval process was prompted by concerns about the treatment of Bangladeshi and Nepalese workers, who have

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

'Mini kangaroos' hop back in South Australia



AFP, Sydney

The brush-tailed bettong -- a rare, very cute marsupial resembling a rabbit-sized kangaroo -- is bouncing back on the South Australian mainland, more than 100 years after disappearing from the region.

Bettongs, which leap with their hindlegs much like a full-sized kangaroo, populated over 60 percent of Australia before falling victim to cats, foxes and land-clearing after European settlement more than two centuries ago.

Now they are making a comeback in South Australia's Yorke Peninsula, after wildlife scientists released 120 of the animals over a two-year period to see if they could survive outside of predator-proof enclosures or islands.

New monitoring shows they are thriving, researchers said yesterday.

Scientists said they had trapped 85 brush-tailed bettongs, finding that 40 percent of them were new animals born in the peninsula and 42 of the 45 females had young in their pouches.

"It's fantastic to see so many new animals in the population," said Derek Sandow, ecologist for the Northern and Yorke Landscape Board.



PHOTO: REUTERS

President Joe Biden and other G7 leaders pose for a photo during a visit to the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park in Hiroshima, Japan yesterday.

G7 agrees to step up sanctions on Russia

Pledges financial support for Ukraine, calls for a 'world without nuclear weapons'

REUTERS, Hiroshima

Leaders of the world's richest democracies yesterday agreed to stiffen sanctions against Russia and pledged financial support for Ukraine as its president, Volodymyr Zelensky, prepared to join them in the Japanese city of Hiroshima.

The Group of Seven leaders are also expected to address growing tension between their economies and China during their summit that runs until Sunday. Officials said Zelensky would attend in person over the weekend.

The leaders said in a joint statement existing measures against Russia would be broadened and any exports that could help it in its 15-month war against Ukraine would be restricted across the G7 countries.

"This includes exports of industrial machinery, tools, and other technology that Russia uses to rebuild its war machine," they said in a joint statement, adding that efforts would continue to restrict Russian revenues from its trade in metals and diamonds.

Amid evidence that existing sanctions were being weakened by circumvention,

they said the group was "engaging" with countries through which any restricted G7 goods, services or technology could transit through to Russia.

"We note and encourage commitments made by these countries to ensure our measures are not circumvented and have the intended effect," they said, without naming any territories.

Breakdowns of German trade data show that its exports to countries bordering Russia have risen sharply, fuelling concerns that about the re-exportation of goods from those neighbouring states.

The group of rich democracies reaffirmed their condemnation of what they called Russia's aggression and promised further support for Ukraine, in terms of military help and financial aid for its war-shattered economy this year and next.

The members of the G7 -- the United States, Japan, Germany, Britain, France, Canada and Italy -- also called for a "world without nuclear weapons," urging Russia, Iran, China and North Korea to cease nuclear escalation and embrace non-proliferation, a statement released by the White House showed.



Mangrove forest destroyed in Maheshkhali channel along the Bay of Bengal for shrimp farming. This photo was taken recently. PHOTO: SM RUBEL

The mangrove forest was encroached in Cox's Bazar chiefly to build homes and in the rest of the district for shrimp farming, said Nazmul, who has been transferred recently from Cox's Bazar office to Narsingdi.

MOSTAFA YOUSUF

The coastal people of Cox's Bazar and Chattogram are left exposed to the wrath of natural disasters as a vast swath of mangrove forest -- which serves as a natural shield against cyclones -- was cleared up over the years to develop economic zones and shrimp farming along coastal belts.

According to the World Bank's estimate, mangrove forests globally protect millions of people and several billions worth of property each year from cyclones and tidal surges.

Over the last decade, the government leased out around 41,000 acres of mangrove forest to establish economic zones, tourism parks, and energy structures in Chattogram and Cox's Bazar, according to the forest department's data.

Besides, around 12,500 acres of mangrove forest were grabbed by politically influential people for shrimp farming in Moheshkhali and Chakaria upazila, the data showed.

However, the amount of land grabbed is higher than the official records as encroachment continued unabated over the last two decades, sources in the forest department said.

"The coastal areas are protected by the mangrove forest. For example, mangrove forests in Satkhira and Bagerhat bore the

WHY MANGROVES MATTER

Keystone of a coastal ecosystem	forest food webs	Provide a buffer zone that protects land from wind, wave damage
Ideal breeding grounds for fish, shrimp, crabs, other shellfish	Basis of an incredibly productive food web	Offer many resources upon which coastal people depend for their survival, livelihood
Provide habitat for thousands of species at all levels of marine,	Protect both the saltwater, freshwater ecosystems	
	Trees stabilise shorelines against erosion	

Need to protect mangroves for coastal people

Prof Kamal Hossen in conversation with Star

MOSTAFA YOUSUF

Kamal Hossen is a recently retired professor at the Institute of Forestry and Environmental Science of Chattogram University. In a conversation with The Daily Star, he emphasised the importance of the conservation of mangrove forests.



DS: Why are mangrove forests important for the coastal people?

Prof Kamal: The mangrove was created in 1995 along the coastal belt beginning from the open coast in Barishal to Teknaf in Cox's Bazar in light of the evidence of the Sundarbans reducing the impact of cyclones. Experts at that time expected that by creating a green belt, the wind speed and tidal surges could be slowed down by 50 percent. There was some success in the coastal forestation at many parts of the coastal belt.

However, large parts of the mangrove forest in the Mirsarai region got lost due to the construction of the economic zone.

DS: How do you view the decision of the government to lease out mangrove forests for development projects?

Prof Kamal: In the entire sub-continent, we had the oldest mangrove forest known as Chakaria Sundarbans aged 10,000 years, even older than the Sundarbans. But we could not save it from encroachment. The purpose of creating the mangrove and conserving it has now become less important to the authorities.

DS: How important political goodwill is to protect our forests?

Prof Kamal: Political goodwill has to be at the heart of any plan to protect forests. If the prime minister declares that no one can destroy forests, no one will dare to do it. We have to protect mangroves for the sake of the coastal people.

connections for shrimp farming. The rest of Chakaria Sundarbans has been encroached on over the years since 1990.

Mokaddam Hossain said apart from the disappearance of Chakaria Sundarbans, influential people turned the mangrove forest in Moheshkhali into a shrimp farm, increasing the vulnerability of the coastal people.

In Chattogram, Bangladesh Economic Zone Authority (BEZA) built the Mirsarai Economic Zone over an area of 30,000 acres of mangrove forest, felling 5.2 million trees. More trees had to be felled for the eco-tourism park on Sonadia island.

The coastal island of Moheshkhali, Saint Martin's Island, Kutubdia, Sonadia and Chakaria lost their mangroves due to massive land grabbing for shrimp farming, local environmental activists said.

Nazmul Huda, deputy director of the Department of Environment (DoE), said they filed around nine cases against the clearing of the mangroves in Chakaria, Sonadia, Moheshkhali and the Bakkhali river in Cox's Bazar.

The mangrove forest was encroached in Cox's Bazar chiefly to build homes and in the rest of the district for shrimp farming, said Nazmul, who has been transferred recently from Cox's Bazar office to Narsingdi.

Seeking anonymity, officials of the Department of Environment (DoE) said they cannot take action against such deforestation as the perpetrators are politically influential.

Kalim Ullah, general secretary of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon's (Bapa) Cox's Bazar unit, said mangroves not only saves people from cyclones, but also protects islands from erosion. Every year, coastal residents lose their homes to erosion in the absence of

mangroves.

"Wiping out mangroves gradually in Chakaria, Sonadia and Moheshkhali for shrimp farming and salt production has left coastal people without any natural shield," he said.

He suggested that a task force be formed consisting of various government agencies to stop the onslaught on the forests.

SM Rubel, convener of Nagorik Andolon -- a citizen's platform in Moheshkhali upazila -- said influential people started ravaging the mangrove forest in Moheshkhali in 2003, which is still ongoing.

"Mangroves used to save us from any natural disaster. But now there is no natural shield for the coastal people left on the island," he said.

Mohammad Abdur Rahman, divisional forest officer of Coastal Division, Chattogram, said they filed at least 30 cases against encroachers.

"We cannot stop encroachment as we don't have the human resources, vehicles, and speed boats required to conduct drives there. We cannot ensure the presence of a patrol team required to stop the menace in the forest due to our shortage of human resources," he said.

He also mentioned that they don't get the necessary support from the police and the local administration.

"These agencies only assure us of cooperation verbally. But in reality, we are left alone to deal with this crisis," he said.

"To stop encroachment, the forest department must be strengthened. Otherwise, it would be tough to protect the green belt," he added.



brunt of cyclone Aila in 2009 and saved millions of people from its wrath," said Prof Khondoker Mokaddam Hossain of Institute of Disaster Management and Vulnerability Studies at Dhaka University.

"We have to maintain a balance between development and forest conservation. Development should not come at the cost of forest and environment," he added.

In Chakaria upazila, an entire forest known as "Chakaria Sundarbans", was wiped out from the south-eastern landscape following a government policy of promoting shrimp farming by the then Ershad government by clearing the forest.

In 1989, the then government leased out a total of 21,000 acres of forest -- which had an area of 48,000 acres -- to people with political



POETRY

THREE SONGS

Kazi Nazrul Islam

TRANSLATED BY MOHAMMAD SHAFIQUL ISLAM

A wounded bird

Like a wounded bird, my songs
tumble down at your feet, my love.
Hold in your heart this songbird
wounded with an arrow of love.
At your feet shall I embrace death,
O the peerless beauty, my love.
On lyrical wings, he was flying in the
sky,
why did you pierce him with an arrow
in the eye?
From his dying voice,
such a tender tune gushes forth!
In the midst of intense agonies,
ambrosia dribbles from my
melancholic notes.

ACROSS PATHWAYS

In a trice if we ever meet across
pathways,
lay your eyes on mine
as you'd do in the past—
across pathways, my love.
That moment if you feel to weep,
don't pretend to hide your tears.
Once more call me with summer
name
that you'd do with in the past, my
love.
Your loved one beside you

will be my friend too—don't worry.
I'll implore him to love you
more than I do, my love.
If you get hurt, losing your love,
the distressed and forlorn me,
quietly shall I depart.
A thorn on the way I won't stand—
so forsake me and be happy, my
love.
In a trice if we ever meet across
pathways...

The strange bird

In what tune do you sing, O strange
bird!
It's sweet wine, not tune—
O Saki strewing a mellow strain.
Sitting by the window,
why, with this agonizing melancholy,
do you wake me every day
calling out so dolefully?
At your tune weeps the dawn,
embracing the sinking moon.
Dews as if tears roll down
soaking the descending dawn sky.
I cannot stay home
for my heart's restlessness.
I cannot keep my mind on work,
with the eyes rife in tears.

Mohammad Shafiqul Islam is a poet, translator, and academic, and Professor of English literature at Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, Sylhet, Bangladesh. Email: msislam_eng@sust.edu.

POETRY

Embracing WHOLE-NESS

SHEIKH SHADMAN MOKADDES RAHMAN

Mental health is really a fragile thing,
That should be cared for, like a delicate wing.
It's easy to overlook, to push aside,
But it's crucial for living a fulfilling life.

Thoughts and emotions that we can't control,
Can lead us to a dark, a spiral, lonely hole.
But you should remember that you're not alone,
There is always help, and a path to a happier
home.

Don't be afraid to speak up and share,
Your struggles and fears, with someone who
cares.
It's not a sign of weakness, to ask for aid,
Rather it takes strength to seek help, to not be
afraid.

Mental health is just as important as physical,
It's time to break the stigma, be vocal and
critical.
It's time to take care of ourselves, both mind and
soul,
To live a life that is complete and whole.

So let's start today, to be kind to ourselves,
Get help when needed, to improve our mental
health.
And believe that it's real, that it is also there
That is just as necessary as our physical health
care.

Sheikh Shadman Mokaddes Rahman is a student of 12th grade at Dhaka College.



DESIGN: MAISHA SYEDA

FICTION

The story of an ancient silence

ABDULLAH RAYHAN

The pleasing melancholia of Friday morning hovers through the window as a heavy gloom and sways within the fake plastic daisies lying on Marium's table while the smell of burning spices filled her entire house. Marium's mother couldn't care less about the condition of the kitchen now. Her husband has just collapsed to the floor.

Rahmat Ali's heart is older than he is. This was fated to happen one day. He had been preparing to take a shower and get ready for the Jummah prayer when his chest muscles suddenly felt like they were ripping apart. The next thing he knew was an impenetrable abyss. No, he isn't dead yet. Marium checks for his pulse and immediately calls an ambulance. The 'hee-woo' of the siren coming from the ambulance merges into the "Hayya 'alas-salah" of the azaan.

The weather is too hot today. Marium's mothers' sweat and tears are inseparable behind her niqab. Both she and Marium are rubbing her father's chilled palms while an attendant in the ambulance checks Rahmat Ali's pulse. He is still with them, and he will survive this blow if they

Marium feels a strong urge to burst into tears while her helplessness chokes her throat and eats away her voice. She slowly absorbs all the anguish and remains silent. She has to. What can she possibly say? What can she possibly do? Ask the devoted souls to stop their prayers and make way for her dying father?



PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

reach the hospital in time.

The ambulance is rushing past the buildings and walls like a lonely butterfly. Thanks to the weekly holiday, there aren't many vehicles on the road. They are moving pretty fast. Unfortunately, the nearest hospital isn't that close. They are taking a long route to reach their destination.

But, with their speed, it shouldn't have been a problem. They would've arrived at the hospital before the sun reached the top of the sky, but something stood in their way. Suddenly, a line of traffic arrives in front of the ambulance like a perching angel of death.

Marium starts to panic. They can't afford to lose time. She silently pants, "Is the jam long?"

"Don't know", the driver says while scrolling on his phone.

"Can you please go and check how long the traffic is?" Marium's request sounded like a desperate appeal.

The driver gets out of the car, making his annoyance apparent with a loud grunt.

After a moment, the driver returns. "It will take a while. They have stood for the Jummah prayer. The mosque is overloaded. So, they had to come out onto the road", said the driver while entering the car.

Marium can feel her throat parching. An abrupt panic spreads throughout her body while her heart restlessly squirms like a storm trapped boat behind her rib-cage. Her trembling voice reeks of desperation. "Can we take another lane? Is that possible?"

"No. This is a one-way road. If we want to go through a different lane, we will have to take a U-turn and go back the way we came from."

"So what? Turn the car around", Marium insists with the last drop of energy left in her heart.

"That wouldn't be a good idea. There are tons of mosques behind us too. That road is probably blocked as well."

A monotonous murmur vibrates in the air. The mild rattling of the small fan in the ambulance rhymes with the whisper, "Allahu laaa ilaaha illaa huwal kaiyul kaiyoom", of Marium's mother.

Marium feels a strong urge to burst into tears while her helplessness chokes her throat and eats away her voice. She slowly absorbs all the anguish and remains silent. She has to. What can she possibly say? What can she possibly do? Ask the devoted souls to stop their prayers and make way for her dying father? Interrupt the sacred ritual of rescuing the gutted spirits just because her father, an individual among millions, is being ripped apart from the bosom of earth? Should she do that? Is she even allowed to do that? Has anyone ever broken the silence of the man's invisible encounter with God without being endowed with sin?

A few minutes pass. No one is reciting Ayatul Kursi anymore. The monotonous rattle of the fan effortlessly tries to freeze the ebb of time in futile attempts. Outside, in the scorching heat, muffled echoes are passing the ambulance. Vague silhouettes of conversations and laughter calmly crawl inside the silent and warm vehicle where Marium sits with her head buried in her hands. The atmosphere here is completely still with the serenity of a grave. The silence from before remains constant behind a new mirror. It is the same silence echoing through an old ocean of dried up sweat and tears without a sailor breaking through the waves.

It is nothing new. A thousand epochs of ancient silence have once again paused a heart for the rest of eternity, and for the rest of eternity it will continue to do so.

Abdullah Rayhan is studying English Literature at Jahangirnagar University.



A CRY FOR WATER

Over 100 families of at least 90 Mro neighbourhoods in Bandarban and its foothills face a severe water crisis almost every year, especially from January to May. The unabated extraction of stones from springs and streams -- the main sources of water there -- has caused them to dry up. All that is left for these families during this time are small trickling streams of water from rocks or the groundwater surfacing from crab burrows. To collect water from the streams, the locals have set up small brick chambers near the rocks.

PHOTOS: MONG SING HAI MARMA



PRESS RELEASE

Company offers Cyclone Tourism package starting at Tk 85k++

SATIREDAY DESK

Amoral Travel Agency has announced a brand new, extensive tourism package for people eager to escape the drudgery, grime and anxiety of city life and experience a refreshing change that will wash all of that, and more, away.

With temperatures reaching 40-plus degrees Celsius in the city, have you been dreaming of some rain? Does every cloud in the sky make you hopeful, only for that hope to be dashed by the searing, glaring, daring and uncaring sun peeking out the window, asks the Amoral Travel Agency press release.

Do you wish for the openness of the beaches when the hydraulic horn blasts holes in your eardrum while you sit in

traffic? Do you wish for a different kind of sound, like a whoosh whoosh to replace the honk honk?

Most importantly, tired of posting your selfies taken in front of walls, shop windows inside malls, inside restaurants and at random intersections, do you want to post selfies that bear your face and as the

background, the full force of nature's powers, the release asks once more.

And do you think life is dull?

"Then we have the package for you!"

"Starting at Tk 85,000++ for a tour



Prabir Das

as long as a cyclone lasts, we will offer you excitement, rain, wind, and most of all ... selfies."

The Tk 85,000++ package does not

include air fare, hotel fare, food, or security. But there is a treat for those willing to shell out some extra bucks.

"For the Tk 1,00,000++ package, we will throw in a 3,000mAh power bank, because we think about your selfie needs. As the cyclone tears through the shore, trees, buildings, general infrastructure and

maybe even you, haha, we know you will need extra battery to power those selfies."

There is also a Tk 1,25,000++ package, and tourists who buy those will be directed, by Amoral Travel Agency personnel marking themselves safe in Dhaka, to a relief centre where tourists can take selfies with shelter seekers in the background.

"All packages come with a free pen to sign documents saying that we are not liable for any property loss, injury, or death.

"Demand is expected to be high, so we advise you start booking the moment the next time a low-pressure system is detected over the Bay of Bengal. To show we mean well, here is a pro tip: you can get the packages right now for 10 percent extra.

"All packages are non-refundable."



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

‘Coincidence? I think not’

Law enforcers shook after being accused of ‘false sickness’

NAZIFA RAIDAH

On a fateful day, Officers Abul and Kabul arrested a student during a protest against the price hike of kidney dialysis. The arrestee was defiant of the police officers, making preposterous arguments about freedom of speech and the right to protest, which had really ticked the officers off.

And duly, as one would expect, the student was taken to the police cell and beaten to a pulp.

"You are a menace to society," said Officer Abul, finishing each word of the sentence with a kick to the student's stomach.

But the student kept making them upset, spewing woke dialect like a sermon.

"You can't do this. It is my right, as a citizen..." and before he could even finish his sentence, Officer Kabul stepped into the ring and slapped him across the face.

"And we are merely serving our duty of crowd control," he said.

After a good beating session, with a wave of his mighty pen, Nazmul filed a case, accusing Masnoon of assaulting law enforcers.

But alas, Masnoon managed to secure bail and later lodged a complaint, claiming he was subjected to torture while in police custody.

"I think you need to call Inspector Kaizer,

Abul. Just in case, to be safe," winked Kabul.

The court declared that the officers must show themselves in court to present their defence. However, our law-loving, gun-slinging officers, unfortunately caught the stomach flu together, leading to them taking a sick leave.

Following a court order, CID sprang into action and filed a case against the esteemed officers. However, it seems that somewhere along the way, some "mistakes" were made. The CID's final report revealed that there were indeed some "errors". Turns out that some of the information presented was, in fact, false. One might wonder how such mistakes could occur, but let us not dwell on the trivialities.

"Justice is subjective. Just because a citizen is claiming that they got 'beaten', doesn't always mean it's true. And besides, this particular citizen is a student, and you all know how they all are liars," said Inspector Kaizer, addressing a press conference.

"When they are late to submit anything, they blame it on their pets. When they are absent from class, they kill their grandparents in their excuses probably a thousand times. Liars, all of them!" he exclaimed.

Meanwhile, this correspondent visited the residence of the two officers to check up on their health, but found both residences to be empty.

Contacting Officer Kabul on the phone, the sound of the wind blared in the background as he tried to hear this correspondent over the phone. But immediately after this correspondent introduced themselves, he said, "Uh, brother, wrong number" and hung up.

The same occurred while calling Officer Abul. When he was told that ocean waves could be heard in the background, he immediately hung up the phone.

After CID revealed the synopsis of the case however, both returned from their sick leave immediately and presented themselves at court.

When asked why they were out of the city when the investigation was ongoing, Officer Abul said, "Your Honour, I believe there is no better medicine than a bit of fresh air. So, when I felt better, I returned."

Kabul echoed the same, failing to come up with anything original.

However, the student still remains elusive, despite repeated attempts to contact him for comments. Perhaps he is lost in the wilderness of justice, where the odds are never in his favour. Or maybe, just maybe, he is recovering from his own ailment -- a condition known as "truthsickness" that seems to afflict those who dare challenge the establishment.

Real seek entry into Farmgate coaching centre after failing English test

MAHBUB ALAM MUNNA

Real Madrid players have reportedly come to Bangladesh hoping for admission to a well-known coaching centre of Farmgate after they failed their English test, held in Etihad exam hall on English soil.

Since Farmgate is known as the global headquarter of coaching centres, Real Madrid players thought it would be a superb idea to come to Bangladesh and study at a coaching centre in the area that would provide world class lessons in English. This was after they had been heavily hammered by Pep Guardiola's Manchester City, an English club that flummoxed Madrid with their difficult English questions.

Real Madrid somehow managed to pass the English test last year despite having a difficult question paper back then too. That success shocked and enraged City's mercenary fans and they alleged that Real Madrid adopted unfair means to pass the test.

"They were losing the match and somehow they snuck a peak and passed. But every day is not Sunday. We caught them red-handed this time and guess what, they failed miserably!" Bodiuzzaman Barca, a recently-converted Manchester City fan, said in ecstasy after destroying Madrid.

Madrid's great escape last year and this year's debacle have really forced the club to think about their English skills as they struggled on both occasions.

After hearing from a foreign Bangladeshi in England, who scored 7 in his IELTS test after taking lessons from one of the coaching centres of Farmgate, Real Madrid wasted no time to take the decision to rush to Bangladesh.

This Satireday correspondent met some of Madrid's talents ahead of their coaching sessions. They were all loitering here and there aimlessly as our correspondent approached them. Karim Benzema, the Madrid striker who submitted a blank English answer script, was seen buying goggles under the Farmgate footbridge.

Asked why he failed to write anything, he said, "I speak French, but the question was in English. How could I answer it when I didn't even understand the question?"

Vinicius Junior, Madrid's star boy who submitted his answer script with barely a page of scribbling on it, was caught trying to enter Ananda Cinema Hall. When asked why he was trying to enter a cinema hall despite coming here for educational purpose, he said, "Was it a cinema hall? I thought it was the coaching centre we came here for."

Rodrygo, the game changer, was seen buying course material from the stall of a coaching centre. When asked why he was absent from the semifinal against Man City, he said, "Actually, I attended the exam, but my presence couldn't draw the attention of the teacher."

On the other hand, Guardiola seemed relaxed as he didn't have to cut his hair and go bald. "You thought I would go bald? Bro, I am already bald. That was an intentional prank. I got you, didn't I?"

“Justice is subjective. Just because a citizen is claiming that they got ‘beaten’, doesn’t always mean it’s true. And besides, this particular citizen is a student, and you all know how they all are liars. When they are late to submit anything, they blame it on their pets. When they are absent from class, they kill their grandparents in their excuses probably a thousand times. Liars, all of them!” said Inspector Kaizer.



I can't go out,
cough *cough* I'm sick.