

# Local production propelling the AC market in Bangladesh

**Previously, AC was a luxury product for upper-class people, but gradually, it is getting popular among all classes due to the country's hot weather, 100 per cent electrification, swelling purchasing power, affordable prices and quick services for the product.**

JAGARAN CHAKMA

Locally manufactured air conditioners (ACs) are starting to dominate the domestic market as consumers are pleased to be getting good quality cooling systems at reasonable prices.

Over the past decade, the AC market has been growing steadily in Bangladesh due to the country's hot and humid climate, along with the increased purchasing power of affluent people.

As such, the demand for air conditioners in both residential and commercial sectors has grown significantly. According to market insiders, locally manufactured units of GREE, Walton, Singer, Media, and Vision now occupy around 70 to 75 per cent of the AC market in Bangladesh.

Besides, international brands, such as Panasonic, Daikin, LG, Samsung, Sharp, General, Toshiba, and Whirlpool are available as higher middle-class and premium customers prefer globally renowned brands.

However, both foreign and local brands of AC offer a wide range of different features and prices to cater to the diverse needs and preferences of consumers.

On the number of ACs being sold, reliable data is hard to come by. Industry people estimate that at least 500,000 units meant for homes would be sold this year, while it was around 400,000 last year.

They say the projected rise in sales is mainly due to rising temperatures in Dhaka city, which recently reached a six-decade-high of 40.5 degrees Celsius. On average, Tk 5,000 crore worth of ACs are sold for residential and commercial purposes every year.

According to them, the market grew at around 10 per cent annually as prices came down over the last 10 years.

The split air conditioner segment is the largest in the market, followed by the window air conditioner segment.

SEE PAGE J2

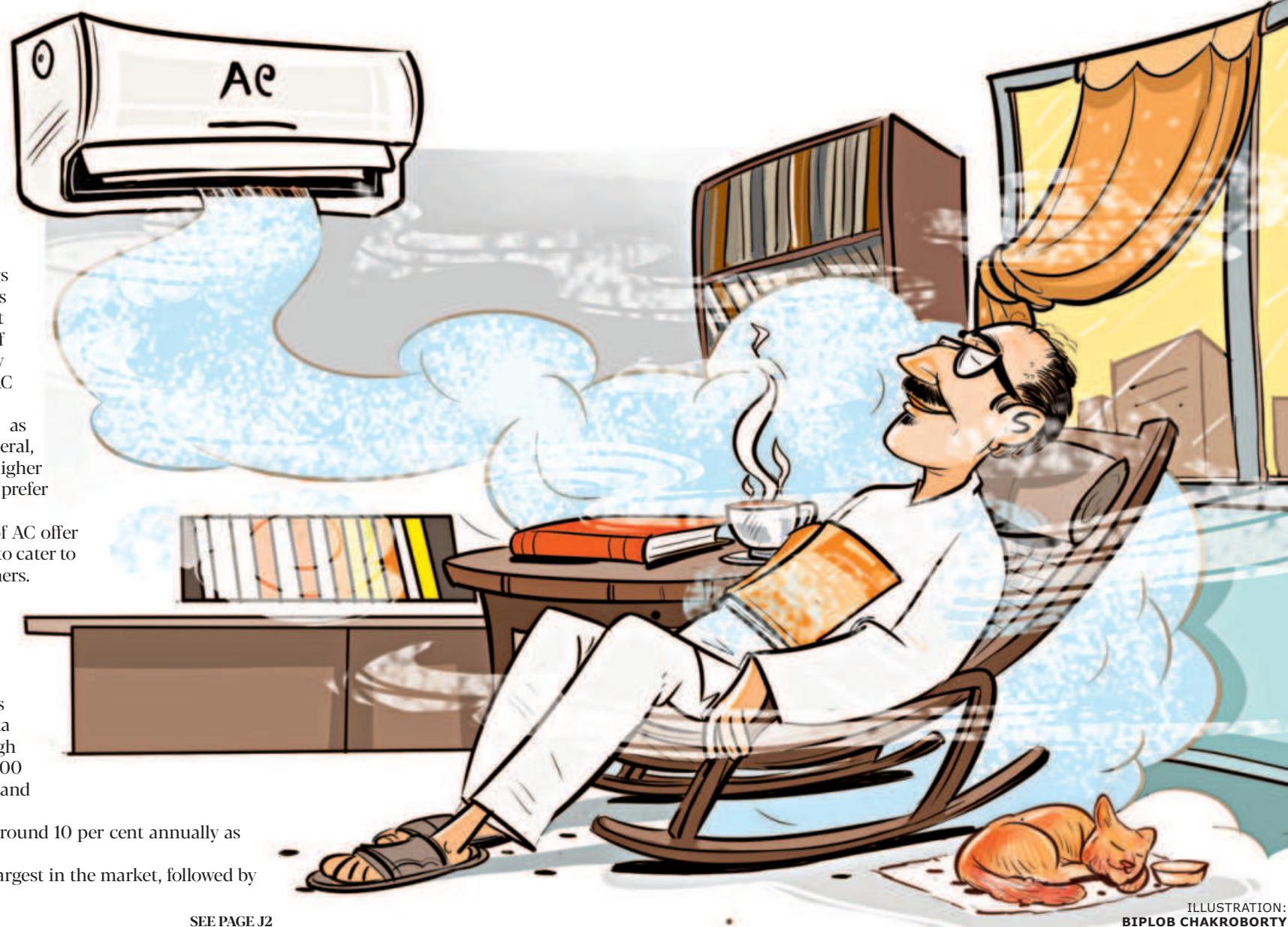


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# Evolution of Air Conditioning

**Initially ACs were large and expensive and primarily used for commercial purposes. The technology slowly became affordable through increased use in public places such as department stores.**

**STAR BUSINESS REPORT**

As the mercury's rise will presumably show no sign of letting up at least until mid-June in Bangladesh, many will be resorting to air conditioning units to beat the sweltering heat.

There are alternatives to cooling off which were practiced in the good old days, such as taking a dip in a water body, relishing an ice lolly or simply sitting in the cool shade under a gigantic banyan tree's thick canopy.

Still, it is hard to beat this 21st century's climate controlled rooms. The rise of HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning) systems have fundamentally changed the way people go about their everyday lives.

It all started off around 1850 with the designing of a simple machine that creates ice using a compressor powered by horse, water, wind or steam. It would take another 50 year or so for the first air conditioner (AC) to be invented.

Initially they were large and expensive and primarily used for commercial purposes. The technology slowly became affordable through increased use in public places such as department stores.

The first residential unit was developed around 1950 and its use slowly became widespread through improvements, such as the development of central air conditioning systems which are able to cool whole houses.

Energy price hikes in the 1970s shifted the focus on achieving energy efficiency while ensuring effective cooling. Hence variable speed compressors and improved insulation methods were developed.

From the 1990s, ozone-depleting chlorofluorocarbons started to be phased out and be replaced by new refrigerants to make air conditioners more environment friendly and achieve better performance and efficiency.

Over the past decade or so, manufacturers came up with non-vapour compression technologies, smart thermostats and home automation systems allowing remote control and optimized energy use, zoned cooling through ductless mini-split systems and apparatus for air purification and ventilation.



PHOTO: STAR

And products making use of such advanced technologies are being offered right here in Bangladesh by household appliance makers. Take the case of Walton Group.

The local electronics giant offers variable refrigerant flow, which is an air-conditioning configuration with one outdoor condensing unit and multiple indoor units. Its air conditioners can be run on offline voice commands in Bangla and English alongside smartphones, calculate electricity bills and release ions to reduce airborne particles. They also have an automatic cleaning feature.

"Walton has already brought ACs with 5.5 star energy rating, which is one of the most energy efficient ACs in the world. We are using eco-friendly R-32 and R-410 refrigerant on our ACs for which they are most environment friendly," said Engineer Ariful Islam, head of Walton AC's Research & Innovation.

"We have a strong Research & Innovation team with highly efficient engineers and giving highest priority to make ACs most energy efficient and environment friendly. Customers will get more and more technologies, energy efficient and environment friendly ACs in future," he said.

An assortment of air filters is provided in Elite Hitech Industries Ltd's "Elite" and "Midea" air conditioners.

Depending on the type, they may include an antibacterial filter, "anti fungus" HEPA (high efficiency particulate air) filter, carbon fibre filter, "Vitamin C" filter, HAF (high air flow) electrostatically charged filter, nano filter and bio filter.

One Midea AC comes with a DC inverter compressor, which are much more economical and safer than ACs with a constant output of compressor, said Moztoba Nadim, brand manager at Elite Hitech Industries Ltd.

The DC inverter units convert

incoming AC current to DC and produces current of desired frequency to control the speed of the compressor motor so as to continuously regulate the temperature.

The company conducts little marketing and focuses on performance with the latest psychrometric laboratory for R&D, added Nadim.

Singer Bangladesh Limited also offers a "4 in 1 filter" in its air conditioners, saying it ensures micro-particle filtration for a cleaner air flow. They are also said to be able to detect the zone where the user is to direct a four-way air flow (up, down, right and left).

Singer Green Inverter AC has eco-friendly R32 gas which saves up to 60 per cent electricity compared to normal AC, said Chandana Samarasinghe, marketing director at Singer Bangladesh Ltd.

If there is no gas in the compressor, an E9 signal will appear on the AC

display and the AC will not run until the gas is refilled, he said. Moreover, its state-of-the-art technology keeps the AC running amidst voltage fluctuations and even at only 150 volts, he added.

The temperature can be conveniently maintained through an "I-Feel" mode by Electro Mart Ltd's GREE air conditioners.

A temperature sense technology adopted by the remote controller can intelligently detect the temperature around the user and automatically send the information to the unit every 10 minutes to conduct adjustments accordingly.

The ACs also have a "Self Diagnosis" option. Once abnormal operation or part failure occurs, the unit shuts off automatically to protect the system while displaying protection or error code for fast service.

Thanks to technological upgrades and their low power consumption, the ACs with inverters account for 65 per cent of Electro Mart's AC sales whereas it was the opposite just three years ago, said Nurul Afsar, deputy managing director of Electro Mart Limited.

He believes in the future non-inverter ACs would be forced out of the market as demand for those was going down continuously.

Apart from Samsung, Panasonic, Hisense and Toshin ACs, Rangs eMART recently launched LG ACs with "Dual Inverter Technology", saying they are 70 per cent more energy efficient and offer 40 per cent faster cooling than conventional ACs.

Rangs eMART is focused on technologically superior ACs, which put power efficiency and product innovation above everything else, said Raihan Ahmed, category head, Rangs eMART.

A new range of energy-efficient and IoT-based AC models from well-known manufacturers will be released soon, he added.

Air conditioning technology is likely to continue to evolve to be more effective and affordable, with a focus on more sustainable refrigerants alongside energy efficiency and integration of renewable energy sources such as solar power.

## Local production propelling the AC market in Bangladesh

FROM PAGE J1

In addition to non-inverter ACs, the market is also seeing an increase in demand for inverter units, which are more energy-efficient and environmentally friendly.

According to Statista, a market assessment firm, the AC market in Bangladesh is anticipated to grow in coming years on account of rising urbanisation and an increase in per capita income due to Vision 2021 and 2041.

Moreover, acceptance of air conditioning systems as a utility product rather than a luxury item is also augmenting the market's growth.

Further, an increase in sales of power-efficient air conditioning systems, along with rising adoption of superior technology, is anticipated to proliferate the double-digit growth of the local market.

However, the Covid-19 pandemic hampered the overall economic growth of Bangladesh, restraining the growth of the AC market as well.

According to 6Wresearch, a Delhi-based one-stop market intelligence and advisory centre, Bangladesh's AC market size will grow by around 16 per cent annually until 2026.

The AC market is projected to grow at a healthy rate in the coming period as the economy is returning to normalcy.

Nurul Afsar, deputy managing director of Electro Mart Limited, which manufactures and retails GREE ACs, said the market has been increasing by 10 to 12 per cent annually during the last 10 years.

This is because prices came within the reach of middle-class people due to growing local production.

Besides, the government has given exemption of value added tax (VAT) on imports of raw materials for refrigerators and ACs.

With this backdrop, international brands like Samsung and LG invested in local assembly and manufacturing to catch the growing market.

According to him, local and international brands have invested around Tk 3,000 crore to set up manufacturing plants over the last 10 years, creating around 100,000

opportunities for direct and indirect employment.

ACs of GREE, also known as the "World Brand", are among the most popular due to their unique features, affordable prices and after-sales service. Also, GREE's compressors are well known in the domestic market for longevity, he claimed.

"If customers are looking for an energy-efficient AC, then GREE can be a great choice," he said, adding that the country's growing middle economy is constantly increasing the demand for budget home appliances.

GREE ACs are available in the market in the price range of Tk 36,000 to Tk 100,000.

Saidur Rahman Khan, head of marketing at Rangs eMart, which retails ACs of Panasonic, Samsung, LG and Hisense brands, said higher middle-class to premium-class customers are their targeted group.

**The AC market is projected to grow at a healthy rate in the coming period as the economy is returning to normalcy.**

Bangladesh has changed in the past decade, with the demand for ACs having increased in line with the growing purchasing power of the general people. Besides, the tropical weather of the country is also propelling sales, he added.

Tanvir Rahman, chief business officer of Walton Air Conditioner, said the demand for ACs is growing very fast in Bangladesh.

Previously, it was a luxury product for upper-class people, but gradually, it is getting popular among all classes due to the country's hot weather, 100 per cent electrification, swelling purchasing power, affordable prices and quick services for the product.

Referring to their market study, he said they expect sales growth of around 20 per cent year-on-year in 2023.

Walton, one of the largest AC manufacturers in Bangladesh, has a yearly production capacity of

200,000 units. The company has 49 models of inverter and non-inverter residential ACs available in the market, along with 19 models of cassette and ceiling-type commercial ACs, as well as various capacities of VRPs and chillers.

Walton has a strong research and innovation team with highly efficient engineers and gives the highest priority to making highly energy-efficient and environmentally friendly ACs, he added.

According to Rahman, around 40 per cent of the demand for ACs comes from Dhaka alone.

Moztoba Nadim, brand manager of Elite AC, said the demand for window-type units had been replaced by split ACs.

"Along with more time and increased income, people are changing their lifestyles and expect more comfort," he added.

Elite locally manufactures and retails Media ACs, which is an international brand.

Nadim then said they import basic parts of the product and assemble them in Bangladesh, which helps bring down prices.

Fahima Pervin, head of products at Singer Bangladesh Limited, said ACs are no longer considered a luxury product as they are now a necessity.

"Due to the unbearable heatwave, we are seeing an unexpected spike in AC sales. With the increased demand, we expect around 20 per cent growth in the market," she added.

Regarding the higher demand for ACs, Pervin said changing weather, growth in the middle-class and upper-middle class segments, and changing lifestyles are fuelling the local AC market.

According to her, Singer has introduced a new range of inverter series with eco-friendly R32 gas. The product is very efficient with fast cooling with its four-in-one filter and zone follow features.

She also said they ran a free AC cleaning service campaign before summer started this year.

"During the peak season, Singer ensured 99 per cent on-time installation," Pervin added.

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# A guide to safe air conditioning

**Additionally, some ACs are prone to overheating if left running for prolonged periods due to the excessive strain on electrical components. Likewise, power surges or low voltage can cause electrical malfunctions and result in a faulty unit.**

ABRAR HOSSAIN

Air conditioners (ACs) are seen as a luxury item in Bangladesh, with the prevalence of such cooling technology seldom seen outside of affluent homes.

However, what if your unit becomes a ticking time bomb? This is a scary thought, to say the least, as nothing could be more frightening than enjoying a good night's rest only to be rudely awoken by a deafening explosion.

Even so, this is the best-case scenario as one could be easily injured or even killed if the explosion occurs in close proximity.

In August last year, a couple died while three of their family members suffered injuries when an AC exploded at their house in Rajapur upazila of Jhalakathi.

In October 2021, two workers sustained burns in a fire believed to have originated from an AC exploding at a restaurant in Dhaka's Ashkona area.

Similarly, one person died, and at least six others were injured after an AC exploded at a high-rise in Dhaka's Gulshan earlier that same year.

However, the deadliest incident in recent times came in September 2020, when at least 12 people were killed after six ACs exploded in a mosque on the outskirts of Dhaka.

This begs the question, what exactly causes an AC to explode?

A major cause is leaking refrigerant, which can ignite if sparked.

Also, poor maintenance on the owner's part can lead to a build-up of dirt and debris in the absence of regular servicing, which leads to blockages that can cause the unit to overheat and potentially explode.

This mostly happens during winter, when ACs are kept off for weeks on end without any form of upkeep.

Additionally, some ACs are prone to overheating if left running for prolonged periods due to the excessive strain on electrical components.

Likewise, power surges or low voltage can cause electrical malfunctions and result in a faulty unit.

So, what can be done to prevent such incidents in your own home? To put it simply: ensure that your AC is properly maintained through regular check-ups. Besides, this reduces the chances of leaks occurring due to excessive pressure on major components amid rising temperatures.

Also, keep in mind that ACs should not be kept running for extended periods while technicians should be called immediately should the unit emit any strange noise or smell.

Incidents of AC explosions are happening in many places and with the way temperatures are constantly rising, it is very important to ensure that units are operated as per the safety guidelines, according to Md Nurul Afsar, deputy managing director of Electro Mart Limited, which markets Gree ACs.

"Keeping this in mind, Gree AC has always adopted advanced technology," he said.

In addition, they have coated vital components in polyester powder so that the unit remains free of any rust of weather damage in any weather.

This doubly ensures that the condensers never leak, meaning that there is no chance of an accident, Afsar added.

He went on to say that a major reason for ACs to malfunction is electric fluctuations or short circuits while using the incorrect type of refrigerant in the unit also plays a part.

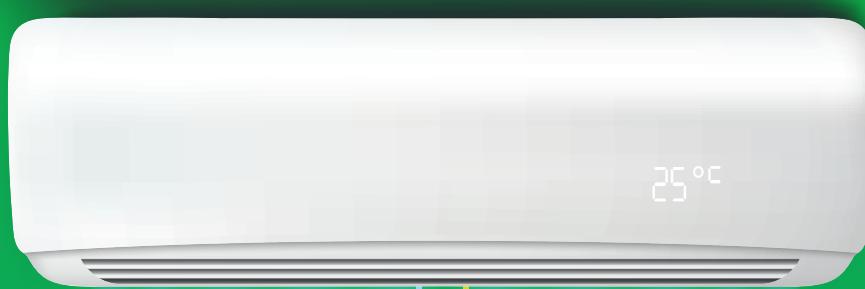
"So, we made the circuit of Gree ACs fireproof with glue coating. Also, we are using environmentally friendly R32 gas in our units," Afsar said.

Gree ACs also have an auto-cleaning function, which reduces the servicing requirement to just once a year.

"And to make our customers free of worry even in this regard, we provide free servicing once a year," he added.

## COOLING YOUR HOME

Consider these before buying an AC



Don't forget to check the warranty or guarantee offered by the manufacturer, including the duration and coverage of the warranty.



To ensure lower energy use, check the energy efficiency rating (EER)



Consider the room's size and type to establish the ideal cooling capacity



Look for advanced functions and features like a programmable thermostat, air quality sensors, and a purifying air system



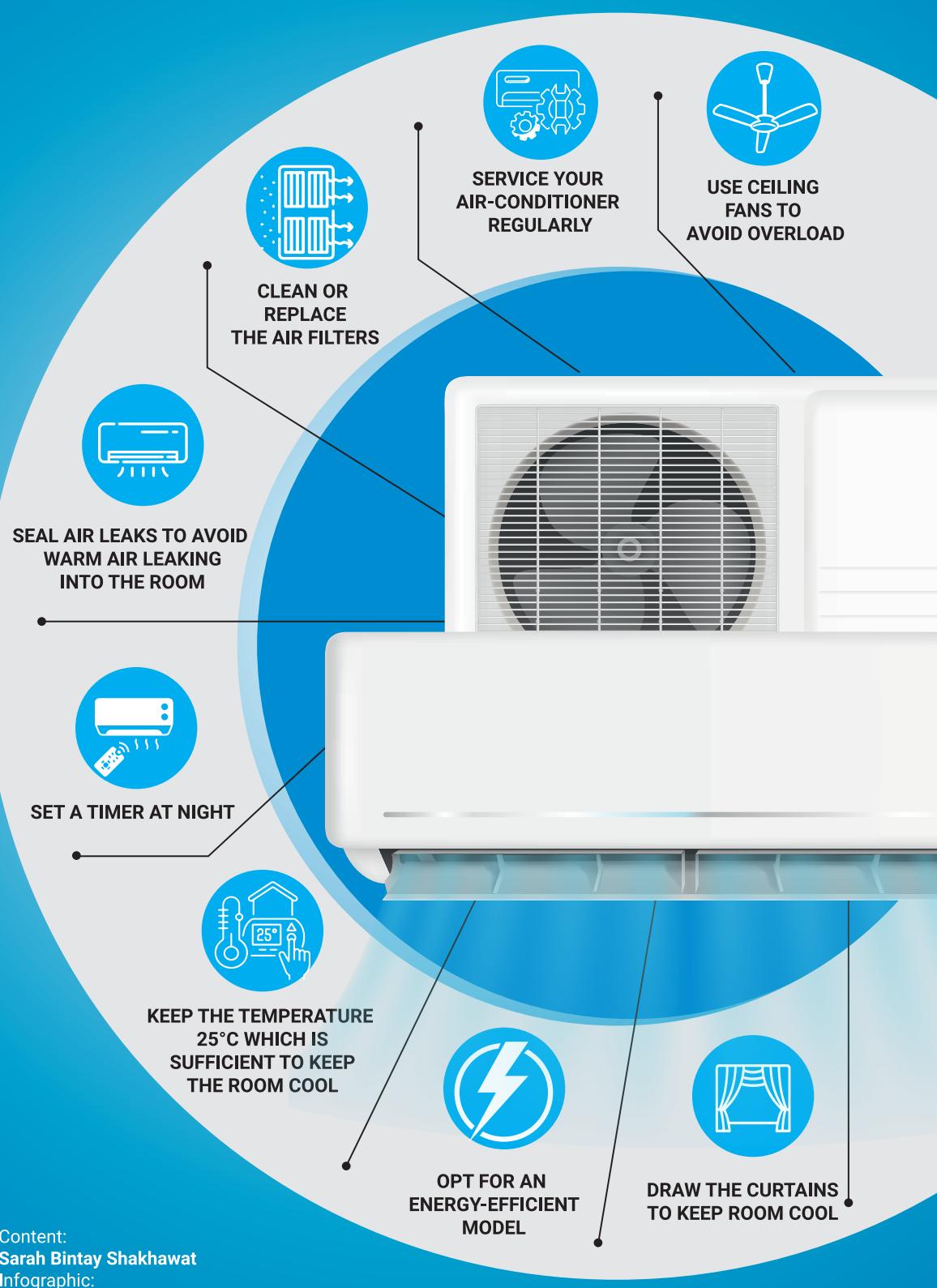
Pick the best air conditioner for your home, whether it's a split system, window or portable unit



Verify the product's quality and dependability by reading reviews written by actual customers

Content:  
Sarah Bintay Shakhawat  
Infographic:  
Md. Akram Hossen

## TIPS AND TRICKS TO MAINTAIN YOUR AIR CONDITIONER



Content:  
Sarah Bintay Shakhawat  
Infographic:  
Md. Akram Hossen



# Walk the Talk

**MD Noor A Alam**  
Deputy Managing Director, Elite Hitech Industries Ltd



Our company has long been established itself as a "AC specialist of Bangladesh" and continued to invest in cutting edge R&D on more and more product variant within the HVAC industry. The company would like to keep manufacturing new and technically advanced AC products which will reduce Bangladesh's dependency on foreign imported products and save foreign currency.

We continuously work with leading global AC R&D teams for innovation and also leading local Engineering university as industry academia collaboration for future ideas. We plan to develop our ability to produce the higher capacity AC and more diverse application AC variants in order to cater bigger spectrum of the industrial and commercial needs.

**Md. Nurul Afsar**  
Deputy Managing Director, Electromart Ltd



Electro Mart Group, the country's leading manufacturer and marketer of electronics products, has been dealing Gree AC in the Bangladeshi market over last 25 years with credibility, reputation and trust. The group made a plan to export the air conditioner in the South Asian countries within 2028.

We think the government's policy support in the pre-corona period was quite favorable for electronics manufacturing. There are VAT & Tax exemptions on the manufacturing stage of various home appliances products till 2023. Besides, we demand to reduce the duty and tax rate imposed at the import level. We request the government to extend the benefits provided here for another 7-10 years. It will attract foreign investors.

**Md. Rashedul Islam**  
Head of Brand and Sales, RANGS eMART



RANGS eMART, a concern of RANCON Group and one of the leading electronics retail chain in Bangladesh, is revolutionizing the way customers shop for electronic appliances. With a focus on meeting customer demands, RANGS eMART has introduced a wide range of International brands and products to create a new and enhanced shopping experience.

Among the various electronic appliances, the spotlight is on technologically advanced air conditioners (ACs) that prioritize power consumption and product innovation. To address these concerns, RANGS eMART is set to launch a series of power-saving and IoT-based AC models from globally recognized brands such as Samsung, Hitachi, LG, Panasonic, Hisense and Toshin.

With 44 years of excellence, the RANCON Group aims to manufacture world-class and globally leading brands' electronics products in Bangladesh.

**M. H. M. Fairoz**  
Managing Director & CEO, Singer Bangladesh Limited



Global warming has become a concern for the whole world. The average temperature is rising, and Bangladesh is also facing its consequences. With the rising heat, Air Conditioners have transformed from luxury to a necessity for Bangladeshi consumers. With the increasing purchase capacity of the people of Bangladesh, the demand of AC has increased drastically. We incorporated environment-friendly R32 gas in our new ACs with the promise to ensure up to 60% energy saving. At Singer, we prioritize our consumers' needs as well as our obligations to nature while designing and developing our products. With the support of Arcelik, we are bringing global design & technologies, advanced R&D and improved supply chain management to ensure the best service to the consumers.

**Tanvir Rahman,**  
Chief Business Officer, Walton Air Conditioner



Walton is one of largest AC manufacturers in the country and we have a yearly production capacity of 200,000 units. We have 49 models of energy efficient residential ACs in the market along with 19 models of cassette and ceiling type commercial ACs and various capacity's VRF and Chiller. Our target is to increase the market share and growth by providing most energy efficient and environment friendly residential and commercial air conditioners with all advance features and technologies at competitive prices.

We have already increased our production capacities for residential air conditioner and set up production plant for commercial AC. Thus, Bangladesh has emerged as the 9th country in the world to have VRF manufacturing plant.



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our  
movement'

## Contract farming takes over poultry industry

Big companies allegedly control prices, force marginal poultry farmers to comply with their conditions

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

In the last week of March, marginal poultry farmer Delowar Hossain bought nearly 4,000 one-day-old Sonali chicks from a large poultry company. After rearing them for 40 days, when he tried selling them, he found it shockingly difficult to recover his production cost, let alone make any profit.

He bought the chicks for Tk 64 each and by the time they had been ready for sale, his production cost stood at Tk 262 per kg chicken. But the market price was Tk 215 per kg at that time.

Marginal poultry farmers like Delowar are incurring losses due to increasing production costs, which they often find to be higher than the market price.

Big poultry farms control prices and they often lower the market price to increase profit and force marginal farmers to fall in line with their business strategies, according to Bangladesh Poultry Association (BPA).

A syndicate of large poultry farms, greedy middlemen, and poor government monitoring are responsible for the market's instability, said BPA President Sumon Howlader.

The current market situation has driven nearly two-thirds of marginal farmers out of business. There were nearly 1.6 lakh marginal poultry

- » Marginal farmers fail to compete against the contractual farming system due to huge gap in production cost
- » The farmers are forced to fall in line with the big companies' strategies to survive
- » Syndicate of large companies, greedy middlemen, and poor government monitoring responsible for the market's instability, say industry insiders.



farmers in the country. Only 60-65 thousand of them are now in business, said Sumon.

The BPA held a human chain at the Jatiya Press Club on Saturday, protesting price manipulation by big companies. It said that consumers are also suffering as they have to buy poultry meat at a higher price due to such manipulation. It also demanded a rational fixing of prices of poultry feed and chicks.

Representatives of large companies, however, denied the existence of any syndicate that controls market prices. They said market prices are determined by demand and supply.

The production cost in this business mainly comprises the costs incurred to buy one-day-old chicks (DOCs) and poultry feed.

Marginal farmers have to buy both items from large farms because the latter have a monopoly over the production of these. That's why it is easy for large farms to hike the prices of these products with the help of middlemen, said Sumon.

In the absence of proper government monitoring, dealers hiked the price of chicks and feed ahead of the last Eid. As a result, marginal farmers, who made comparatively large investments targeting the Eid market, were deprived of the profit they deserved, " said Sumon.

The production cost, however, is not high under the model of contract farming that the big companies practise, alleges Sumon.

In the contract farming system, the company and farmers sign a deal and the company delivers the chicks, the feed and the medicine for free. In return, farmers rear the chicks and receive a profit of Tk 10-12 for every kg chicken.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

## 495 BNP men sued over Patuakhali violence

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Patuakhali

A total of 495 BNP leaders and activists were made accused in two cases filed over the clash between BNP and Awami League activists in Patuakhali town on Saturday.

Forty-five BNP leaders and activists were named as accused in the cases, said police.

Chhatra League's district unit Assistant Secretary Raihan Hossain on Saturday night filed one of the cases naming 29 people and 200 other unidentified BNP men.

Last morning, district Jubo League Organising Secretary Nasir Uddin filed the other case against 16 named BNP leaders and activists and 250 more unidentified BNP men.

Confirming the matter, Patuakhali Sadar Police Station Officer-in-Charge

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



Police stop green activists at Bangabazar intersection yesterday. The activists were heading towards Nagar Bhaban to lay siege to it to demand an end to tree felling on Satmasjid Road in Dhanmondi and elsewhere in the country in the name of development work.  
Story on page 3.



Graffiti on a garbage storage facility in the capital's Mirpur paints garbage collectors as heroes. The makeover of the facility near the historic Jallad Khana Bodhobhumi was recently done by cartoonist Syed Rashad Imam Tamoy.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

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## Bangladesh losing \$3.3b a year to power cuts

WB report also says electricity generation plants underutilised

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Bangladesh loses around \$3.3 billion a year due to unreliable power supply to homes, offices, and factories.

This amount is around 1.5 percent of the GDP, said a World Bank report.

Despite impressive gains made in terms of access to energy, power cuts remain regular in Bangladesh, it said, adding that on average there are over 400 storm-triggered electricity outages every year.

Even though Bangladesh's power generation capacity is over 23,000 megawatt, the report said, "Power generation asset utilisation remains low, below 50 percent, due to fuel shortages, poor dispatch, and transmission constraints."

The WB made the observations in the report of First Green and Climate Resilient Development Credit, under which Bangladesh received \$500 million loan. The loan was approved during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to the World Bank's headquarters last month.

The WB, however, tagged several conditions for the loan, including six conditions on power and energy.

The government had to comply with two of the conditions before getting the loan.

No capacity payment for rental power plants seeking renewal of contract is one of the conditions that has been complied with by the government on January 8 through a circular.

"No electricity, no payment [without any minimum guaranteed off-take]," the circular read.

Finance Minister AFM Mustafa Kamal in a letter to WB President David Malpass in March said the government plans to run more efficient larger power plants and close inefficient liquid-fuel rental generators and small independent power plants.

He said the government is focused on achieving an efficient fuel mix and reducing the average cost of power generation in future.

He said that in 2010 Bangladesh went for quick rental power plants to close the gap between generation and demand, particularly during peak periods.

Now, only 1 percent of the electricity generated in the country comes from rental plants.

The minister said the government pays a significant amount to rental power plants as capacity payments.

To systematically assess energy-saving potential and improve the efficiency of

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

## 'ACC being used to harass me'

Says Zahangir about probe into graft allegations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Suspended Gazipur mayor Zahangir Alam yesterday said a certain quarter was using the Anti-Corruption Commission to harass him during the final moments of his mother's election campaign.

"The Anti-Corruption Commission has summoned me while I'm busy campaigning. Why am I forced to come here during the campaign?" he told reporters at the capital's ACC office.

A day after the ruling party expelled him on May 15, the ACC summoned Zahangir for interrogation over allegations of corruption. He was supposed to attend one session yesterday and another today.

On Thursday, he wrote to the ACC to delay the quizzing by a month. He went to the ACC office yesterday to find out whether the application was approved. He was not quizzed yesterday.

Zahangir's mother Zaida Khatun is running for mayor in Gazipur city. The campaign deadline is 48 hours before the election takes place on May 25.

After the ruling Awami League nominated Azmat Ulla Khan for mayor, a disgruntled Zahangir attempted to run for mayor as an independent, but his candidacy was cancelled by the Election Commission.



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## 5 CITY ELECTIONS

## Questions to be raised for lack of competition

Speakers at Shujan roundtable point at boycott by BNP, other parties

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The absence of strong candidates running against ruling party contenders in the upcoming elections to the five city corporations raises concerns about the credibility and acceptability of the polls, said discussants at a programme yesterday.

They also said people's expectation of a competitive polls would not be fulfilled as major opposition BNP and other parties boycotted the polls.

Sushashoner Jonno Nagorik virtually organised the roundtable titled "The upcoming city corporation elections: relevant thoughts."

"The upcoming elections to the five city corporations have great significance as it will indicate how the next national polls will be," said Badiul Alam Majumdar, secretary of Shujan.

Without mentioning the name of a major opposition party, he said the party is not joining the five city polls. For this, the polls would not be competitive.

"But election means voters will choose their candidates. As the elections are not competitive, these will not be acceptable," he said.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



## PM leaves for Doha today

**She'll attend Qatar Economic Forum on May 23-25**

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will leave Dhaka for Doha today on a three-day official visit to attend the Qatar Economic Forum 2023 scheduled to be held on May 23-25.

A VVIP flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines, carrying the premier and her entourage, will depart Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport at 3:00pm.

The flight is scheduled to land at Hamad International Airport at 6:00pm local time (9:00pm Bangladesh Time).

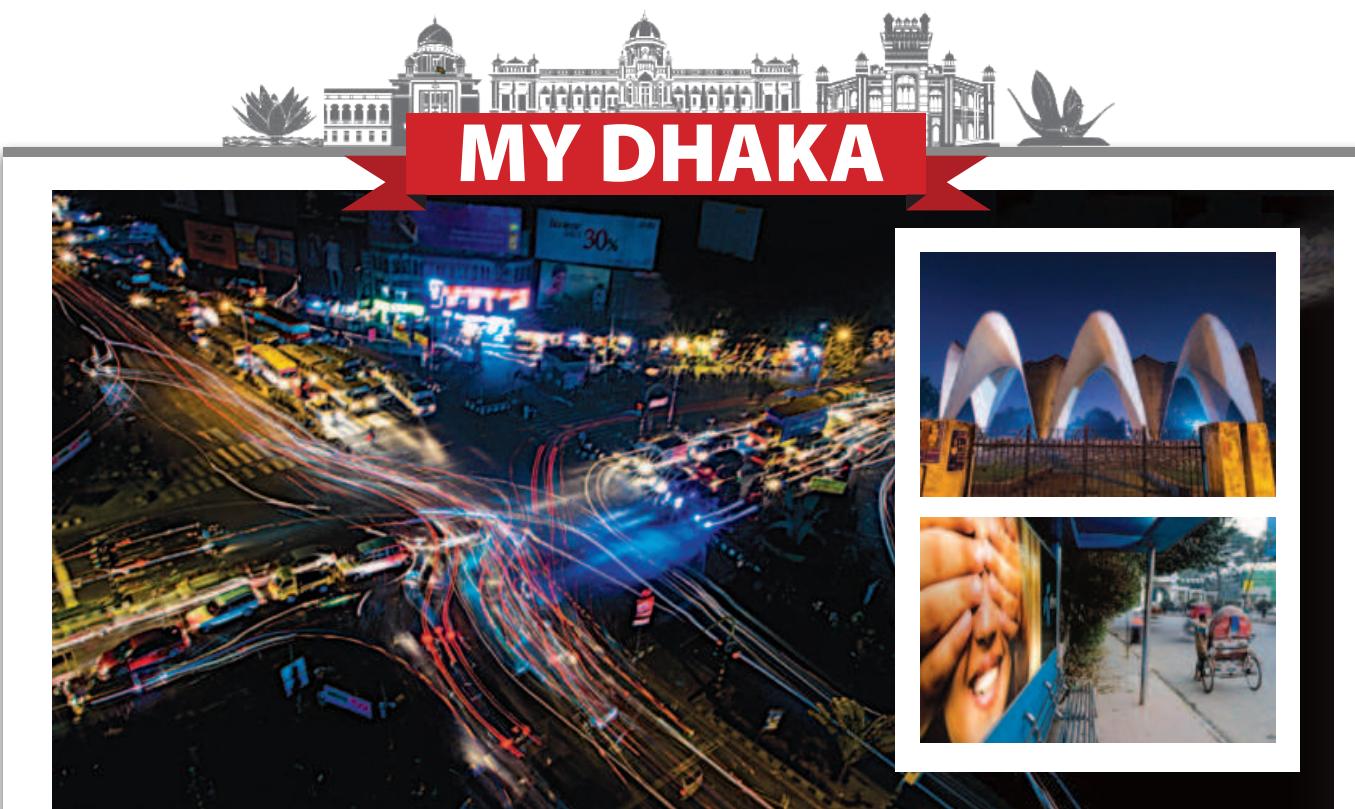
The prime minister will attend the Forum titled "3rd Qatar Economic Forum: A New Global Growth Story" at the invitation of the Emir of Qatar Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani.

The Qatar Economic Forum is the Middle East's leading voice dedicated to global business and investment. The main objective of this forum is to find a solution by increasing mutual cooperation among the international community to deal with the multi-faceted challenges and crises going on globally and the adverse economic consequences arising from them.

On May 23, Sheikh Hasina will join the opening session of the 3rd Qatar Economic Forum, address the students of Qatar University in Doha, and hold meetings separately with Qatar Minister of State for Energy Affairs Saad bin Sherida Al Kaabi and Minister of Investment of Saudi Arabia Khalid A Al Falih.

On May 24, the PM will join the forum, hold a meeting with the Emir of Qatar Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani (at Amiri Diwan) and visit Awsaj Academy (a specialised school).

Sheikh Hasina is expected to arrive home on May 25 morning.



## This city holds my heart

NAVID ANJUM

Urban life with its whirlwind of chaos and cacophony has an allure that captivates me. The bustling streets, the vibrant markets, and the din of horns merging into a symphony of urban rhythm all blend to create a kaleidoscope of experiences. Amid this chaos, there is a certain beauty and an inexplicable charm.

Let us not romanticise this urban existence without acknowledging its faults. Dhaka, as a city, is far from being perfect. Its streets are marred by traffic congestion, the air heavy with pollution, and the infrastructure strained under the weight of a burgeoning population. The flaws are evident and we cannot turn a blind eye to them.



Yet, despite thousands of faults, I am drawn to this city like a moth to a flame. It is here that I have grown, learned, and forged lasting connections. The very essence of Dhaka has engrossed me, and try as I may, I cannot escape its clutches. It is

the familiar faces, the vibrant cultures, and the shared experiences that have woven themselves into the fabric of my existence.

*The city holds my heart  
Within walls of glass and steel  
Can't you see I just can't go?  
These walls are all I know  
The city holds my heart  
Like a shell  
I cannot feel surrounds.*  
— Margaux Sauvé



These poignant words by the French-Canadian singer-songwriter resonate deep within me as I reflect upon the city that has shaped my existence. Dhaka -- the metropolis that engulfs, enchants, and forever holds me captive. It is a city that has become an integral part of my being, and its spirit flows through my veins.

In Dhaka, I have discovered the depths of human resilience. It is a city that has weathered storms and emerged stronger. Its people, diverse in their backgrounds

and beliefs, share an unwavering spirit of determination. Together, we navigate through the hurdles, savouring the triumphs, and embracing the setbacks. It is this collective resilience that binds us, reminding me of the strength I possess within.

Although enchanted by its vibrancy, I am repelled by its imperfections. So, I embrace the chaos, the imperfections, and the constant evolution of this city. It is here that I have learned to adapt,

PHOTO: SAZZAD IBNE SAYED

to find strength in the face of adversity, and to appreciate the myriad shades of life. I have discovered my resilience and my capacity for growth.

In the end, we all carry within us the essence of the places we call home. Dhaka, with all its flaws and splendours, will forever remain intertwined with my identity. It is a part of me -- a city that holds my heart, encompassing my past, present, and future within its boundaries of concrete.

The writer is a communication professional.

## Contract farming takes over poultry industry

FROM PAGE 1

This model significantly drops production costs and ensures that big companies make profits even when market prices drop. But marginal farmers cannot replicate this model as they have to buy chicks and feed from the same companies or their dealers at higher prices.

At the end of the day, small farmers cannot compete as large companies often sell chickens at a price lower than the small farmers' production cost, said Sumon.

Dhaka School of Economics Director Jahangir Alam Khan said, "The country's poultry market is very unstable. By the time the government intervenes to bring stability, the syndicate has pocketed a huge sum."

Poultry feed plays a key role in the increase of production costs for marginal farmers.

Maize and soybean meal are the main constituents of poultry feed ingredients. Even though maize is grown in Bangladesh, companies have to import maize and soybean to meet the growing demand for feed.

According to data collected by BPA in 2021, the price of maize was Tk 28 per kg and the chicken feed price was Tk 50 per kg. Maize price was the same in 2022 but the companies hiked the feed price to Tk 54 per kg.

In February this year, the feed price rose to Tk 74.8 per kg when the maize price was Tk 38.39 per kg. In March, the maize price dropped to Tk 24 per kg but the feed price remained unchanged.

Only recently, the feed price has been reduced by an insignificant Tk 1.5 per kg.

Kazi Zahidul Hasan, founder and managing director of Kazi Farms, said there is no "syndicate" manipulating the prices of DOCs.

"When broiler prices are low in the market, farmers buy fewer chicks to avoid losses. This results in falling DOG prices. When broiler prices are attractively high, there is a mad rush

among farmers to buy chicks. This causes the DOG prices to skyrocket," he said.

As for the price of feed, he said feed prices are dependent on several factors including the prices of ingredients, electricity and diesel, ocean freights, and the value of dollars.

"Severe inflationary pressures can be seen all over the world since the beginning of the war in Ukraine. Prices of all items have gone up substantially. This is the reason behind the huge feed price escalation," he said.

Paragon Group Managing Director Moshirul Rahman said small and big farms have been blaming each other for more than a year now.

"I don't have much to say regarding this," said Moshirul, also president of Bangladesh Poultry Industries Central Council.

Over the years the poultry industry has grown exponentially in Bangladesh. In May 2020, the Embassy of the Netherlands in Bangladesh published a report titled "Poultry Sector Study Bangladesh". It estimated that about 3.7 billion euros was invested in the poultry sector in 2019 and about 899 million broiler, Sonali, layer and native chickens were produced that year.

Approximately seven million tonnes of chicken feed were produced in 2019. The broiler feed market is expected to produce 2.3 million tonnes of feed in 2025, reads the study.

The study also said dealers sell DOGs and feed to farmers on credit while they get discounted prices from feed producers and they have strong negotiation power over feed prices.

According to the National Poultry Development Policy 2008 (NPDP 2008), proper technical assistance will be given to marginal and poor farmers so that they can earn through poultry farming. It tasks the Department of Livestock Services (DLS) with monitoring the poultry

markets, dispelling anomalies, reducing the influence of dealers, and protecting marginal farmers.

However, BPA leaders alleged that the DLS is extending support to big companies.

Referring to a draft amendment to the NPDP 2008, Sumon said, "The draft policy lends validity to contract farming, without addressing the issues arising from it."

Contacted, DLS Director General Emdadul Haque Talukder said there is a difference between production cost and selling price. "We're working to reduce the gap so that intermediaries cannot take advantage of it. We've already succeeded in minimising the gap to some extent," he said, adding that the DLS is working to protect the interest of both consumers and producers.

When his attention was drawn to the problems faced by marginal farmers, he said poultry is a rising industry and that the DLS is working to address all anomalies plaguing the sector.

BPA leaders also said that there are many instances in which farmers complying with contract farming incurred losses and were legally harassed.

Mahmudur Rahman Akash, a poultry farmer of Jhenidah, is facing a Tk 50 lakh lawsuit filed by a large company.

About eight months ago, he entered into a contract with the company, for which he had to sign a blank cheque which did not mention any date.

The Daily Star has obtained a copy of the contract which contains 35 conditions, most of which serve the interests of the company.

"They gave me 2,500 chicks. About 500 of them died of a disease. As they did not provide me with the required medicine on time, I declined to continue farming with them," he said.

After that, the company filed the case. "In the case, they showed me as

their business partner, whereas I was only involved in contract farming," he added.

About 10,000 farmers and dealers, mostly from Bogura, Joypurhat and Jhenidah are facing cases related to blank cheques, said BPA leaders.

"There needs to be strong monitoring and support by the government to protect marginal farmers from losses," said Prof Anwarul Haque Beg of the Department of Poultry Science at Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University, who is also involved in the amendment of the National Poultry Development Policy 2008.

Jahangir said the relevant government department should monitor and check price manipulation but it is not doing so.

He suggested that the government provide loans at simple interest rates to small farmers. "This will rein in the dominance of the big companies," he said.

Regarding the relevant government department should monitor and check price manipulation but it is not doing so.

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provide loans at simple interest rates to small farmers. "This will rein in the dominance of the big companies," he said.

Washington also proposed signing two defence agreements with Dhaka as the latter seeks to buy equipment from

the US.

The BNP was supposed to hold a public rally in front of the Patuakhali district BNP office at 10:00am on Saturday.

Just before the rally was about to start, a clash broke out between the activists of BNP and Awami League and its associate bodies Chhatra League and Jubo League.

Contacted, district BNP member secretary Snehantha Sarkar Kutty said, "Awami League leaders and activists, including those of the Chhatra League and Jubo League, attacked our peaceful rally and foiled it."

"More than 100 of our leaders and workers suffered injuries. None of our men attacked AL leaders and activists."

"We are also preparing to file a case against the attackers," he added.

## US embassy alerts its citizens ahead of national polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The US embassy in Dhaka has issued an alert to US citizens fearing an escalation of violence ahead of the next national elections and advised them to remain vigilant.

"The next general election is anticipated to occur before or during January 2024, and political party rallies and other election-related activities have already commenced. Political rallies and demonstrations may be held with increasing frequency or intensity as the general election draws nearer," said the US embassy in a statement yesterday.

It advised that US citizens should practice vigilance and remember that demonstrations intended to be peaceful can turn confrontational and escalate into violence.

"You should avoid demonstrations and exercise caution in the vicinity of any large gatherings. Review personal security plans; remain aware of your surroundings, including local events; and monitor local news stations for updates," the embassy said.

The embassy last issued such alerts on December 29, 2022.

## Schoolteacher jailed for helping SSC examinee cheat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

A schoolteacher was sent to jail for helping an SSC examinee cheat in the exams in Tangail's Mirzapur upazila yesterday.

The teacher is Ariful Islam, assistant headmaster of Haat Foteepur High School.

Farhad Hossain, Mirzapur upazila statistics officer, also the tag officer of Mirzapur Pilot Girls' High School centre, caught the teacher red-handed. He continued to commit the crime after repeated warnings.

On information, Executive Magistrate Aminul Islam Bulbul, also assistant commissioner (land) of Mirzapur, went to the spot and passed the order.

## Man beaten to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A batten-run three-wheeler driver was beaten to death allegedly by a youth in Mymensingh's Ishwarganj yesterday.

The victim is Sohel Mia, 19, of Gulikanda village in the upazila.

Moynal Mia, son of Sarisha Union Parishad Member Abul Hashem, beat Sohel senseless as Sohel's knocked him while he was crossing a road, said Jahangir Alam, inspector of Atharbari Police Investigation Centre in Ishwarganj.

Sohel was rushed to Ishwarganj Upazila Health Complex where doctors declared him dead, he added.

Police recovered the body and sent it to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

## No reason for US to impose

the US.

The US, which is the largest single market for Bangladesh's garment products, also expressed concerns over labour rights and the Digital Security Act in Bangladesh.

Yesterday, Agriculture Minister Razzaque said as an independent and sovereign country, Bangladesh never expects foreign interference in its internal matters.

"There is an elected government and [there] will be another election after six months. It will be held according to the constitution," he said.

Regarding the Kalbela report, the US embassy in Dhaka yesterday told UNB that the US maintained a "broad and deep" relationship with Bangladesh.

Meanwhile, the foreign ministry in a statement said the Kalbela report falsely stated that Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen used to work as a lobbyist for a Chinese firm before he became a minister.

"Such publicity against the foreign minister is tantamount to defaming him and tarnishing the country's image," the statement said.

## Questions to be raised

FROM PAGE 1

Addressing the event, Brig Gen (retd) M Sakhawat Hussain, a former election commissioner, criticised the Election Commission for failing to create a conducive environment for voters so that they can go to the polling centres without any fear and obstacle.

He added that if the elections are not competitive, voters will not show interest in casting votes.

Sakhawat said even activists of political parties will not go to polling centres because they know that their candidates will win.

The former election commissioner said the EC cannot prove its capability by holding the five city polls as the polls are going to be lopsided.

Tofail Ahmed, a local governance expert, said the election process is not followed properly as there is a lack of competitiveness.

Hafiz, also former adviser to a caretaker government, said it is seen that free and fair elections can only be held under a caretaker government system. "So, this system should be restored."

He added that a new trend is seen that the EC and government officials are favouring the candidates of the party that is in power.

Asif Nazrul, professor of Dhaka University's law department, said people are losing their interest in casting votes as various irregularities are taking place in the elections held under the Awami League government. "Only a caretaker government can hold a fair and acceptable election."

Presiding over the programme, Shujan President M Hafiz Uddin Khan said our electoral system has been completely destroyed, and the mindset to restore it is lacking within the political parties.

Hafiz, also former adviser to a caretaker government, said it is seen that free and fair elections can only be held under a caretaker government system. "So, this system should be restored."

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## DSCC TREE FELLING

# 'Will continue our movement'

Say protesters, police bar them from going to Nagar Bhaban

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 200 people, protesting Dhaka South City Corporation's move to cut down trees on the capital's Satmasjid Road, held a rally at Bangabazar intersection after police stopped them from marching to Nagar Bhaban yesterday.

Under the banner of Satmasjid Sarak Gach Rokkha Andolan (Movement to Save Trees on Satmasjid Road), they were marching towards DSCC headquarters.

But when they reached Bangabazar intersection, police barred them.

In response, protesters sat on the road and demanded that DSCC Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh come and address them. After about 45 minutes, DSCC officials including Chief Executive Officer Mizanur Rahman and Chief Property Officer Russell Sabrin arrived at the Bangabazar intersection to initiate a dialogue with the protesters.

Mizanur Rahman said, "You (the protesters) have come with demands, and I have come here to show you respect. Unfortunately, the mayor couldn't join us as he was engaged in a pre-scheduled

meeting. He sends his apologies."

Rahman emphasised that the DSCC has undertaken extensive tree planting initiatives. Regarding the protesters' demands, he assured, "I will present them to the mayor."



Syeda Rizwana Hasan, chief executive of the Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association, said, "The mayor's decision (to fell trees) has generated such public disapproval that he is unwilling to face the people and be held accountable. He lacks the preparedness to justify an unpopular decision."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



With prices of essentials soaring, individuals from lower-income group have no option but to patiently wait in line behind OMS (open market sale) trucks, braving harsh weather conditions. This photo was taken in Mirpur Mazar road, around 11:00am yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## Recognise the 1971 genocide

Speakers urge UN

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers yesterday appealed to the United Nations to officially acknowledge the mass killings perpetrated by the Pakistani occupation army during the Liberation War in 1971 as an act of genocide.

Highlighting the significance of recognising this genocide, Mahbub Zaman, chairperson of Amra 71, an organisation dedicated to pursuing recognition of the 1971 genocide for the past two years, explained that the atrocities committed during the Liberation War unquestionably possessed the defining characteristics of genocide.

He made the call during a press conference held at the Jatiya Press Club, a day prior to the international seminar titled "International Conference for Bangladesh Genocide Recognition," scheduled to take place at Dhaka University.

When questioned about the timing of their pursuit for this recognition after 52 years, he responded by saying that they do not believe it is too late.

"The demand is not new. Various individuals and organisations have been making this demand after the Liberation War, and now the demand has gained momentum," he said.

According to him, they have been engaging in campaigns for the past two years to achieve this objective.

"We have been in contact with international communities, including some European countries, and have been organising seminars, discussions, and debates on this matter. Today's seminar is a part of our campaign," he said.

A delegation consisting of five members from Europe has arrived to participate in the seminar. They are expected to visit locations of the genocide, speak with witnesses and family members of the victims, and visit museums in the country.

During the briefing, Harry Van Bommel, a Dutch politician, and rights activist, expressed that there have

## HIGH ACCIDENT FATALITY RATES It will undermine the progress

Says WB country director on Bangladesh's economic growth, poverty reduction

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The high fatality and injury rates can undermine the progress Bangladesh has made in reducing poverty and boosting economic growth, said Abdoulaye Seck, World Bank country director for Bangladesh and Bhutan, yesterday.

"Road safety has become a global crisis, and Bangladesh is no exception," he said at a programme at a city hotel in the capital.

WB, Brac and the government jointly organised the programme to promote use of standard motorcycle helmet in Bangladesh to mark the UN Road Safety Week, which is being observed in between May 15 and 21.

Abdoulaye said the annual road crash deaths per capita in Bangladesh are twice the average rate for high-income country.

More than 200 people are permanently disabled by road crashes every day, he said, adding that in Bangladesh, around 70 percent of all road crash victims are pedestrians, cyclists or motorcyclists.

Most of the motorcycle road fatalities are youths aged between 26 and 30, he said. "Economic losses from inaction could be substantial -- World Bank estimates that costs

related to traffic crashes can be as high as 5 percent of GDP".

Research shows, he said, standardised helmets can prevent head injuries by up to 44 percent. But unfortunately, most helmets available in Bangladesh do not meet international standards when it comes to quality and protection, he added.

However, adoption of the national safety standard for helmets in October last year is commendable, he added.

**Economic losses from inaction could be substantial -- World Bank estimates that costs related to traffic crashes can be as high as 5 percent of GDP.**

ABDOU LAYE SECK  
WB country director  
for Bangladesh, Bhutan

Abdus Sabur, director general of Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI), said BSTI is now capable for testing standards of helmets. Most of the helmets are imported and no local manufacturers received BSTI certificate yet, he said.

He recommended to raise education and awareness among stakeholders

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

2,000 hajj pilgrims leave Dhaka for Saudi Arabia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 2,000 hajj pilgrims left Dhaka for Saudi Arabia on the first day of hajj flight operation yesterday.

The flight took off from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport at 3:20am and landed at Jeddah airport at 7:20am (Saudi Arabia time) yesterday.

State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Md Mahbub Ali, State Minister for Religion Md Faridul Haque Khan, lawmaker Habib Hasan, Biman Governing Council Chairman Mustafa Kamal Uddin, and KSA Ambassador to Bangladesh Issa Bin Youssef Al-Dahilan, among others, saw off the hajj pilgrims in Dhaka.

The second flight reached there around 11:30am carrying 415 pilgrims.

All these pilgrims were welcomed at Jeddah airport by Ambassador of Bangladesh to Saudi Arabia Mohammad Javed Patwary and Saudi Deputy Minister of Hajj and Umrah Dr Abdulfattah bin Sulaiman Mashat.

Allocate more for children  
Unicef recommends ahead of budget

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh made significant progress in various indicators regarding the well-being of children, however, many areas remain that require attention, said Unicef Bangladesh yesterday.

Unicef Bangladesh held a media briefing at its office in the capital where it shared various activities and focused on the need for public financing for children ahead of the national budget.

**While considering allocation for children in the upcoming national budget, the government should put focus on areas like education, universal health coverage, nutrition, child protection, water sanitation, and social protection.**

ASHIQ IQBAL  
Social, economic analysis  
specialist at Unicef Bangladesh

It said over the years, Bangladesh has made remarkable progress in areas like access to drinking water, birth registration, stunting, under-five mortality, primary education enrolment, and vaccination by age of 12 months.

On the other hand, 51 percent girls are married before their 18th birthday.

Sheldon Yett, Unicef representative to Bangladesh, said, "Violence against children is a huge issue... 89 percent children [1-14 years] experience violence. That's extremely high. Child marriage is another huge issue."

According to Sheldon's presentation, access

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

DENGUE  
One dead, 33 hospitalised

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least one dengue patient died while 33 were hospitalised across the country in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning.

The total number of deaths this year rose to 13, according to DGHS.

The total number of dengue cases this year rose to 1,447.

Some 151 patients are still undergoing treatment while 1,283 have been released from hospitals.

Likely elsewhere, World Meditation Day was observed in the country yesterday.

Meditation Day observed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The celebration's main event was held at the Jatiya Press Club by Quantum Foundation.

The programme began at 6:00am with a breathing exercise and autosuggestion.

According to a press release, distinguished guests from various regions of the country attended the event and spoke about meditation's physical and psychological benefits.

Nahar Al Bukhari, director general of Quantum Foundation, said in an audio message, "Regular meditation is not difficult... if we meditate regularly, our brain will become more active."

Deregister nursing colleges that breached protocol  
Demands nurses' association

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Nurses' Association yesterday demanded immediate cancellation of the registration of nursing colleges that had violated the registration protocol.

Hossain Ahmed Shipon, legal adviser to the association, stated during a press conference at the Dhaka Reporters Unity, "A syndicate of a few officials at the council [Bangladesh Nursing and Midwifery Council] has been involved in granting registrations in exchange for money."

According to the association, a group of individuals has been engaged in the business of selling certificates by exploiting these colleges.

The activists also presented four other demands, which included an increase in stipends for intern nursing students to Tk 20,000 per month, recognising three-year diploma courses as an honours programme and introduction of a special cadre service for nurses.

They urged to address their demands by May 30. If their demands are not met, they threatened to organise human chains across the country.

PRAYER TIMING  
MAY 22



Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 4:05 12:45 5:00 6:40 8:00  
JAMAT 4:40 1:15 5:15 6:45 8:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



People from all strata of life take part in a meditation programme at Jatiya Press Club yesterday, in observance of World Meditation Day.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Golam Rasul's death anniv

STAR REPORT

Today is the 17th death anniversary of Golam Rasul Mallick, a freedom fighter and founding editor of Eastern News Agency (ENA), said a press release.

On the occasion, Qurankhwani and food distribution programme will be held after the Asr prayers at his residence.

During the Liberation War, he launched ENA as a Bangladeshi journalist.

He was elected chairman of Commonwealth Press Union, Bangladesh wing for three times and was the first member of Press Institute Bangladesh.

It will undermine

FROM PAGE 3  
and enforce the law properly.

Nurul Mohammad Mazumder, chairman of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority, emphasised the use of standard helmets as bikes are involved in more than 40 percent of road crashes in recent time.

Road Transport and Highways Division Secretary ABM Amin Ullah Nuri said the government is working to reduce 50 percent of road crashes by 2030.

**জমির শেয়ার বিক্রয়**  
বসুকান আ/এ ৩০০ ফিট স্টার্ট সলিকাট, এন-ব্রেক ২০০ ফিট স্ট্যাল গ্রেডে সামে ৪ কাঠো সিলে ইভেন্টের জমির শেয়ার বিক্রয়। \* প্রাপ্তি স্ট্যাট ১৭০০বাহু।  
মূল্য: ১৮,৫০০লক। ব্যাকরণের প্রজেক্ট।  
# ০১৭৪৮-১৭০০৮৮, ০১৭০০১৯৭০

People have no interest in city polls: Fakhrul

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday said people have no interest in the city polls being held under the Election Commission, which is regulated by the government.

Speaking at a discussion, he also feared that the upcoming elections to the five city corporations will be stage-managed.

"Arif (Ariful Haque Chowdhury) is a very popular two-time mayor in Sylhet and the people of Sylhet want to see him as mayor again. In a public meeting, Arif yesterday (Saturday) said this election will never be accepted as the government has made a blueprint. So, there is no point in going to this election as it will be meaningless," Quader said.

Fakhrul said the government has taken the election system to such a situation that ruling the party's alliance partner and Workers Party President, Rashed Khan Menon, said a few days back that they do not want "planned" elections.

BNP's ploy to foil polls will be resisted

Says Quader

BSS, Dhaka

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said if BNP wants to foil the upcoming general elections, it will be resisted.

If BNP wants to disrupt the elections without joining it, the party will be resisted with the help of people. The ruling party will no longer respond to BNP by holding peace rallies, rather BNP must be resisted from the union level to central level," Quader told a rally.

Dhaka north city unit of Awami League arranged the "peace rally" in front of the Science Museum at Agargaon.

Quader said the plot BNP is hatching, is against the spirit of Liberation War.

"We have held many peace rallies. We will ask Awami League leaders and workers not to hold peace rallies anymore... The dens of killers and evil forces should be dismantled," Quader said.

Will continue

FROM PAGE 3

"It is disheartening to witness the cutting down of large trees only to replace them with flowers," she said.

"What kind of mockery is this?"

Shireen Huq, one of the founding members of Naripokkho, commented, "The mayor has a responsibility to listen

Azmat promises

FROM PAGE 5

stands and terminals, and improved rail service.

He also assured regular monitoring to safeguard workers' rights and safety.

Azmat also emphasised the importance of ensuring civil facilities for slum dwellers in Gazipur city and providing free health cards to workers, slum dwellers, and those in need.

Other significant pledges in his manifesto

Recognise the 1971

FROM PAGE 3

been numerous lesser-known genocides that have taken place in various countries. According to him, recognising the genocide is crucial in raising awareness about the atrocities faced by the people of the country, ensuring punishment of the perpetrators, and preventing the occurrence of such genocides in the future.

When asked about the timeline for achieving recognition of the genocide, Bommel said, "Discussions about the genocide in Bangladesh are ongoing in the US, the UK and the European Union. I don't think it's going to take 100 years... International recognition will be obtained in the next few years. It may take some years, not decades."

Mentioning that Bangladesh continues to suffer due to the mass killings, Prof. Antonius Holslag of Vrije Universiteit of Amsterdam, said the recognition of genocide is significant beyond the political recognition.

Chris Blackburn,

communications director at Swiss Interstry Group based in Zurich, said their mission is to understand the story of the Bangladesh genocide and share it with the world.

Presided over by Farida Yeasmin, president of the Jatiya Press Club, the event was also addressed by Aroma Dutta, an Awami League lawmaker (reserved Seat-II); Bikash Chowdhury Barua, chairman of Basug Diaspora and Development, based in the Netherlands, Germany, and Bangladesh; and Ansar Ahmed Ullah, co-president of EBF and a community leader residing in the UK.

Welcoming the surrendered persons to the new life,

the home minister assured them of rehabilitation.

The event chaired by M Khurshid Hossain, director general of Rab.

Earlier in 2019, over 500 extremists surrendered to the law enforcers.



Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan inspecting the firearms surrendered by the 315 extremists at the event yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

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Eastern Bank Limited invites sealed bids from bona fide/eligible suppliers for "Supply, Installation, Implementation, Data Migration, Commissioning and Support" of Loan Originating System (LOS).

Interested bidders are requested to collect the RFP document electronically by sending email from their official email address to "bidit@ebi-bd.com" mentioning the name of the company, authorized contact person, mailing address, telephone & mobile phone numbers on or before Thursday, 25 May 2023.

Bids prepared in accordance with the instructions contained in the RFP document must be submitted in two separate envelopes clearly marking 'Technical & Functional' and 'Financial' on the envelopes to the Office of the Chairman, Purchase Committee, Head Office, Eastern Bank Limited, 100 Gulshan Avenue, Dhaka-1212 on or before Thursday, 15 June 2023.



**জাতীয় বিদ্যুৎ বিজ্ঞান এবং প্রযুক্তি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়**

গাজীপুর-১৭০৮

শাখাক নং-১-(১৯৮৬)জাতীয়বিদ্যুৎপ্রশাসন/২০১০(অংশ-৩)/১/৪২৭১

তারিখ: ০৪ জৈষ্ঠ ১৪৩০ বঙ্গাব্দ

১৮ মে ২০২৩ খ্রিস্টাব্দ

**নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি**

জাতীয় বিদ্যুৎ বিজ্ঞান এবং প্রযুক্তি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে গাইরু অধিনিতি বিষয়ে অধ্যাপক (প্রফেসর)-এর স্থায়ী শূল পদে ০১ (এক) জন এবং ইতিহাস বিষয়ে সহকারী অধ্যাপক (প্রফেসর-৬)-এর স্থায়ী শূল পদে ০১ (এক) জন শিক্ষক নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে জন্মসূত্রে বাংলাদেশী নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে ১৮/০৫/২০২৩ থেকে ১৫/০৬/২০২৩ তারিখ পর্যন্ত Online-এ আবেদন আহবান করা যাচ্ছে। নিয়োগ সংক্রান্ত সকল শর্তাবলী ও আবেদন ফরম বিদ্যুৎ বিজ্ঞান এবং প্রযুক্তি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ওয়েবসাইট [jobs.nu.ac.bd](http://jobs.nu.ac.bd) এ পাওয়া যাবে।

ভাইস-চ্যাসেলর-এর নির্দেশাবলী

১৮/০৫/২৩

মোস্তাফা মাহফুজ আল-হোসেন

বেজিস্ট্রার

BNP's ploy to foil polls will be resisted

Says Quader

BSS, Dhaka

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said if BNP wants to foil the upcoming general elections, it will be resisted.

"If BNP wants to disrupt the elections without joining it, the party will be resisted with the help of people. The ruling party will no longer respond to BNP by holding peace rallies, rather BNP must be resisted from the union level to central level," Quader told a rally.

Dhaka north city unit of Awami League arranged the "peace rally" in front of the Science Museum at Agargaon.

Quader said the plot BNP is hatching, is against the spirit of Liberation War.

"We have held many peace rallies. We will ask Awami League leaders and workers not to hold peace rallies anymore... The dens of killers and evil forces should be dismantled," Quader said.

Will continue

FROM PAGE 5

"It is disheartening to witness the cutting down of large trees only to replace them with flowers," she said.

"What kind of mockery is this?"

Shireen Huq, one of the founding members of Naripokkho, commented, "The mayor has a responsibility to listen

Azmat promises

FROM PAGE 5

stands and terminals, and improved rail service.

He also assured regular monitoring to safeguard workers' rights and safety.

Azmat also emphasised the importance of ensuring civil facilities for slum dwellers in Gazipur city and providing free health cards to workers, slum dwellers, and those in need.

Other significant pledges in his manifesto

Recognise the 1971

FROM PAGE 3

been numerous lesser-known genocides that have taken place in various countries. According to him, recognising the genocide is crucial in raising awareness about the atrocities faced by the people of the country, ensuring punishment of the perpetrators, and preventing the occurrence of such genocides in the future.

When asked about the timeline for achieving recognition of the genocide, Bommel said, "Discussions about the genocide in Bangladesh are ongoing in the US, the UK and the European Union. I don't think it's going to take 100 years... International recognition will be obtained in the next few years. It may take some years, not decades."

Mentioning that Bangladesh continues to suffer due to the mass killings, Prof. Antonius Holslag of Vrije Universiteit of Amsterdam, said the recognition of genocide is significant beyond the political recognition.

Chris Blackburn,

communications director at Swiss Interstry Group based in Zurich, said their mission is to understand the story of the Bangladesh genocide and share it with the world.

Presided over by Farida Yeasmin, president of the Jatiya Press Club, the event was also addressed by Aroma Dutta, an Awami League lawmaker (reserved Seat-II); Bikash Chowdhury Barua, chairman of Basug Diaspora and Development, based in the Netherlands, Germany, and Bangladesh; and Ansar Ahmed Ullah, co-president of EBF and a community leader residing in the UK.

When asked about the timeline for achieving recognition of the genocide, Bommel said, "Discussions about the genocide in Bangladesh are ongoing in the US, the UK and the European Union. I don't think it's going to take 100 years... International recognition will be obtained in the next few years. It may take some years, not decades."

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Chris Blackburn,

315 extremists surrender with firearms

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A total of 315 extremists surrendered along with their firearms in Sirajganj yesterday.

The surrendered are from Pabna, Sirajganj, Bogura, Tangail, Kustia, Rajbari and the adjoining districts.

They surrendered to Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal during a programme at Rab-12 headquarters in Solonga, Sirajganj. They handed over a total of around 219 firearms on the occasion.

Welcoming the surrendered persons to the new life, the home minister assured them of rehabilitation.

The event chaired by M Khurshid Hossain, director general of Rab.

Earlier in 2019, over 500 extremists surrendered to the law enforcers.

Welcoming the surrendered persons to the new life, the home minister assured them of rehabilitation.

The event chaired by M Khurshid Hossain, director general of Rab.

## POLLS TO 5 CITY CORPORATIONS

Azmat promises a better Gazipur  
Unveils 28-point manifesto

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ruling Awami League nominated mayoral candidate in Gazipur city polls Azmat Ullah Khan, has pledged to ensure administrative transparency, accountability and planned development of the city as per a master plan if he is voted mayor.

While unveiling his election manifesto yesterday, he also addressed the shortcomings of the past decade, highlighting the lack of proper planning, irregularities, and corruption under the former mayors.

The manifesto encompasses a total of 28 points, covering various aspects of city governance and services. Azmat pledged to enhance the quality of services, provide compensation for land acquired for development work, improve healthcare in government hospitals, and establish low-cost ambulance service facilities.

To tackle the issue of traffic congestion, he promised the construction of pedestrian friendly roads, multi-storey and underground parking complexes, modern bus

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

## Why am I being attacked?

## Zaida says violence won't deter her from contesting polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Zaida Khatun, an independent candidate in the upcoming Gazipur City Corporation (GCC) Polls, expressed her determination to remain in the election race despite facing repeated attacks.

During a press conference held at her residence in Chhoydanga area, Zaida, who is also the mother of suspended Gazipur mayor Zahangir Alam, said, "Azmat Ullah [the Awami League mayoral candidate] is a senior leader whereas I am new. He is a member of a political party while I am running for office independently. Why

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

## Uncle-nephew conflict likely to end in Barishal



Awami League's election-conducting committee at a meeting at AL President Sheikh Hasina's Dhanmondi political office yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

MD ABBAS and SUSHANTA GHOSH

The long awaited meeting, aimed at resolving the internal conflict between Awami League's Barishal mayoral candidate Abul Khair Abdullah and his nephew Serniabat Sadiq Abdullah, has been scheduled to take place on May 26.

Local leaders are hopeful that this meeting will heal the divide that developed after Abul Khair earned the AL ticket for the next mayoral election, over the incumbent mayor Sadiq Abdullah.

This possible conflict resolution is expected to have positive outcomes for the ruling party in the Barishal City Corporation (BCC) polls, scheduled to be held on June 12.

The decision to hold the meeting between the two factions was made during the party's election-conducting committee meeting at AL President Sheikh Hasina's Dhanmondi political office yesterday.

The meeting was attended by senior AL leaders, including Abul Hasan Abdullah, chief of AL's BCC election-

conducting committee, and also a member of the AL central committee. He is also the father of Sadiq Abdullah and elder brother of Khair Abdullah.

All members of the Barishal City unit AL, all presidents and secretaries of the Barishal ward units AL, all members of the Barishal district units AL, all presidents and secretaries of the Barishal upazila units AL, and all AL-backed public representatives in the Barishal municipality, will attend the special meeting on May 26, according to AL sources.

The meeting will be held at 3:00pm at the premises of Gouronadi municipality. Besides, another significant meeting has been scheduled for June 1 at the same location, which will bring together the presidents and secretaries of all the districts under the Barishal division, along with the presidents and secretaries of the upazila units under the Barishal division (excluding the Barishal district).

Furthermore, the meeting will be attended by the chairman and

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

VIOLENCE AT SCBA  
25 pro-BNP  
lawyers get  
anticipatory  
bail from HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twenty-five pro-BNP lawyers yesterday secured anticipatory bail from the High Court in a case filed over the violence on the Supreme Court Bar Association office premises on May 16.

The HC bench of Justice Md Salim and Justice Md Riaz Uddin Khan granted the bail till submission of the police report in this case following a petition filed the accused lawyers.

Earlier, the accused petitioners including BNP Joint Secretary General Mahbub Uddin Khokon, former secretary of SCBA Md Ruhul Kuddus Kazal, and BNP Law Affairs Secretary Kayser Kamal appeared before the HC bench for bail.

Md Rafiqullah, SCBA assistant superintendent, filed the case on May 16.

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

Earlier in the same day, pro-BNP and AL-leaning lawyers scuffled while holding separate programmes on the SCBA office premises over its recent annual polls. The incident left around two dozen lawyers injured.

'They violated law'  
Say 127 temporary workers  
after Chevron sacks them

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chevron Bangladesh has terminated around 127 temporary workers from the company in the last three months unlawfully, claimed the "terminated employees" at a press conference yesterday.

The press conference was held at Dhaka Reporters' Unity, on behalf of the employees of block 13 and 14. Under the two blocks, Chevron operates Bibiyana, Jalalabad and Moulavibazar gas fields.

The "terminated employees" said they had been serving the company for a long time.

"Chevron told all of us that they will make us permanent, but they didn't. We have pending cases against the company in labour court since 2015, demanding appointment letters and all facilities..." said Mosfeq Os Salaheen Khan, a former employee of catering services of the company.

Citing clause 228 (1) of Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006, he said, conditions of service have to remain unchanged while proceedings are pending in the court. "Chevron violated law by firing us," he added.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

## Woman's throat-slit body found

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The throat-slit body of a woman was recovered from the room of a security guard in the capital's Tejgaon area early yesterday.

Hailing from Mymensingh, 37-year old Julekha used to work as house-help.

Shah Alam, an inspector (investigation) of Tejgaon Police Station, said Julekha came to see the security guard of "Zaman Tower" in Tejgaon a couple of days back in search of a job.

Being informed by locals, police recovered the body from Siraj's room yesterday, he said, adding that police detained Siraj in this connection.

The body was sent to Surawardhy Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy. Legal action will be taken after getting the autopsy report, he added.



## Bangladesh Shipping Corporation

Chattogram

Memo No. 18.16.0000.362.07.001.23/

## Time Extension Notice for the Submission of Expressions of Interest

The last date for EoI submission for the consultancy firm for the following project is hereby extended as shown below:

Sl. No.	EoI Ref. No. and date	Title of service	Last date of EoI submission	
			Original	Extended
1.	18.16.0000.362.07.001.23; Dated: 12-04-2023	Maritime Commerce and Business Models, Finding out scope of shipping businesses adopting Innovative Ideas, and Expanding Existing Services/ Businesses, Fostering 'Shipping Business: Beyond Boundary' as Core to Transform BSC an Entity in Achieving Desired National Economic Development	24-05-2023	09-07-2023

- Prospective bidders are advised and requested to find the detailed notice and Terms of Reference (ToR) on BSC website <<https://bsc.portal.gov.bd>>.
- All other terms and conditions will remain unchanged.
- Late submission will not be considered under any circumstances.

Capt. Md. Mozibur Rahman  
General Manager (Planning)-C.C

GD-889

## Government of the people's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer

Education Engineering Department

Chuadanga

[www.eedmoe.gov.bd](http://www.eedmoe.gov.bd)

Date: 21/05/2023 Eng.

Memo No: 37.07.1800.009.00.001.23/1165

## e-Tender Notice No :- xen/eed/chu/04/Academic(7016-SHED)/2022-2023

e-Tender (OTM) is invited in the e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following works details are given below.

Sl. No	Package No.	Tender ID No.	Description of Works	Tender document last Selling/ (Date & Time)	Tender Closing/ Opening (Date & Time)
01	CHU-SHED-7016-KDSSG	836142	CONSTRUCTION OF SINGLE STOREY ACADEMIC BUILDING WITH 4-STORIED FOUNDATION INC. SANITARY, WATER SUPPLY & ELECTRIFICATION WORKS AT KARPASDANGA SECONDARY GIRLS SCHOOL IN DAMURHUDA UPAZILLA UNDER CHUADANGA DISTRICT.	04/06/2023 14.00	05/06/2023 14.00
02	CHU-SHED-7016-KDSS	836143	CONSTRUCTION OF SINGLE STOREY ACADEMIC BUILDING WITH 4-STORIED FOUNDATION INC. SANITARY, WATER SUPPLY & ELECTRIFICATION WORKS AT KANAIDANGA SECONDARY SCHOOL IN DAMURHUDA UPAZILLA UNDER CHUADANGA DISTRICT.	04/06/2023 14.00	05/06/2023 14.00

This is an online Tender. Where only e-tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System portal have to be deposited online through any registers Banks branches up to above mentioned date & time.

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

Md. Golam Muttaqin  
Executive Engineer  
Chuadanga  
Tel: 0247778257  
e-mail: ee\_chu@eedmoe.gov.bd

GD-892

DESCO

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Email: pit@desco.gov.bd, Web: [www.desco.gov.bd](http://www.desco.gov.bd)

## e-Tender Notice

e-Tenders are being invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the following packages as the detailed e-Tender Notices have been published therein:

Tender ID	Tender Name	Tender Document Last Selling/Downloading Date and Time	Closing Date and Time	Opening Date and Time
794238	Procurement of Ultrasonic Diagnostic Solution	30 May 2023 15:30	31 May 2023 15:00	31 May 2023 15:00
817002	Procurement of Conductor & Cable Accessories	11 June 2023 15:00	12 June 2023 15:00	12 June 2023 15:00

These are online Tenders, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP System Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal is required.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank branch.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

Interested Tenderers can communicate with the undersigned during office hours.

16 May 2023

Memo No: 27.24.0000.021.07.019.23.541

Engr. Mohammad Kamruzzaman

Superintending Engineer (P.I&amp;T)



## Civil Aviation Authority, Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer

E/M Division-1, Kurmitola, Dhaka-1229

Date: 18-05-2023

## e-Tender Notice

e-Tenders are invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>). Package information is available in tender notice under e-GP system portal.

These are online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches. Detailed of the Works listed below:

SI No.	Name of works	Tender ID	Last Selling Date and Time	Closing Date and Time
1	Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of Automatic Transfer switching control panel and Re-installation of 2X900 KVA Diesel Engine Generating sets including other related works at Community Center, HSIA.	831282	04-June-2023 4.00 PM	05-June-2023 

# LAILA SHARMEEN'S 'GOLDEN BENGAL'

## A thoughtful, artistic tribute to nature

**"I am deeply inspired by literature and philosophy, and they hold a special significance in my portrayal of nature. My artworks also reflect my childhood, spent in Gendaria, among gardens and lakes. The spontaneous beauty of the geese from our pond, dhundul flowers in the backyard, and soft breezes across the gardens all find a spot in my paintings."**

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

Laila Sharmin's 12th solo painting exhibition, *Golden Bengal*, has begun at the La Galerie of Alliance Française de Dhaka (AFD). The exhibition's opening ceremony took place on Saturday, May 20, and was graced by the presence of Dr Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury MP, Speaker of Bangladesh Parliament as the chief guest. HE Marie Masdupuy, Ambassador of France to Bangladesh, Prof. Shibli Rubayat-Ul-Islam, Chairman, Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission, and Mr. Faruque Hassan, President, Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) were also present as special guests.

"AFD has played an important role in the art scene of Bangladesh, by supporting art for many years now. Art moves beyond barriers, and transcends borders, being able to communicate without words. In our history, it has inspired common people during different movements," Dr Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury asserted. She further applauded the artist, mentioning her use of metaphors to denote climate change and the existential threat it possesses.

Prof. Shibli Rubayat-Ul-Islam noted how human civilisation has developed



PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

solely due to the power of art and words. Faruque Hassan explained how he believes that art and culture could play a pivotal role in branding the real Bangladesh. He congratulated the artist, and spoke about BGMEA's efforts in terms of promoting art.

The 30 artworks on display feature Sharmin's delicate use of colours and distinctive brushstrokes in mixed media on paper and acrylic on canvas. She paints an imaginary world with natural elements using dramatic textures on white canvas with sinuous lines and lyrical strokes. The majority of the artworks were

made during the previous two years and depict a colourful interpretation of nature. Her meditative observation on her surroundings lends a symbolic complexity to her artworks, which use nature as a metaphor to capture her lived experiences and imagine reality.

The artworks in this series explore the grandeur of Bangladesh's nature. She draws inspiration from Bangla literature, philosophy, and mythologies, as well as the writings of literary and philosophical luminaries such as T S Eliot, Jibanananda Das, Kant, Derrida, and Foucault. Her artworks include *kash* and *hyacinth*

flowers, paddy fields, rivers, birds, butterflies, fish, fireflies, and the immense expanse of the sky. It takes the audience on a transformative journey of exploring the essence of nature, in its true glory.

"I am deeply inspired by literature and philosophy, and they hold a special significance in my portrayal of nature. My artworks also reflect my childhood, spent in Gendaria, among gardens and

lakes. The spontaneous beauty of the geese from our pond, *dhundul* flowers in the backyard, and soft breezes across the gardens all find a spot in my paintings," she mentioned.

Her poetic self can be found in an essay accompanying her art, titled *Bedbug, Dhaka, and Toronto*. It expresses her artistic purpose as she explains how she found fresh ideas for art in a variety of mediums. Her wide range of genres, from etching to painting to mixed media, is surprisingly minimalist. The liberal use of empty space, in contrast to the rich colours and textures, enables visitors to contribute their own colours of imagination to complete the picture.

The exhibition also included her latest project, *Return to Nature*. Vegetable seeds, contained in jute pouches, were coiled like a snake on the gallery floor, intending to fascinate visitors as they toured the display. After the inauguration, the pouches were distributed with the request that the seeds be planted in kitchen gardens.

Sharmin wants her audience to have a united experience with the exhibits while raising awareness about deforestation, global warming, and climate change.

"My works convey a clarion cry to return to nature. It has a tint of nostalgia as I look back at the pristine nature of my childhood home, while also shedding light on the alarming changes brought about by capitalism," she explained.

The exhibition is open to all till Monday, May 29.



## COUNTRYWIDE

### Hindu family faces eviction threat

S DILIP ROY

A family from the minority community in Kurigram's Phulbari upazila is now living in fear of eviction from their ancestral home by an influential land grabber.

Locals said there had been a longstanding rivalry between Ratikant Roy, 45, a day labourer from Naodanga village, and one Azimul Islam of the same village over the ownership land.

Ratikant alleged that Azimul and his men are trying to evict them from their ancestral home for long.

"Azimul's men attacked my family thrice in the last one year," he said.

On May 14 this year, a gang led by Azimul, equipped with sharp weapons, tried to attack him and his wife, but they somehow managed to flee the scene, Ratikant said adding that, "Then I dialled 999 and sought help from the local police, who reached the spot and the situation."

On April 22, Ratikant and his wife Dadoshi Rani were brutally beaten up by Azimul and his cohorts.

"After the brutal torture my wife had to take treatment at Phulbari Upazila Health Complex for six days.

On April 27, he filed a case with Kurigram Judicial Magistrate's Court accusing six people including Azimul, Ratikant said.

Currently police are investigating the case.



Ratikant and his wife Dadoshi, residents of Naodanga village in Kurigram's Phulbari upazila, are now passing days in fear of being evicted from their ancestral home by a local influential.

### DSA to be amended by September

FROM PAGE 12

He said the government will not allow the misuse of digital space to defame the country, the government and any individual.

"Women are harassed in online, which needs to be addressed. All countries are governing digital space as it is the need of the hour. We need to protect our national interest and our people who are vulnerable to target and attack. There is no question of repealing this law, but

review is definitely being considered," the law minister added.

At one stage of the function, the speakers joined an open discussion and questioned the minister about the DSA.

Jatiya Party lawmaker Ahsan Adelur Rahman said punishment under some sections of the DSA are harsher than those in the Penal Code, and those are unfortunately a big barrier to freedom of expression.

He requested the

minister to specify the sections and amend the law to reduce the punishment.

Senior journalist Monjurul Ahsan Bulbul said misuse and abuse of the DSA must be stopped. The law must be amended, incorporating the bail provision, he added.

UN Resident Coordinator in Bangladesh Gwyn Lewis chaired the event, jointly organised by the office of UN resident coordinator and Brac University.

### China envoy visits Teknaf

FROM PAGE 12

He delegates during the visit.

The Chinese diplomats returned to Cox's Bazar after visiting the repatriation centre and its adjacent jetty. But they did not visit any Rohingya camps, said Hannan.

Some Rohingyas believe Chinese mediation would be crucial to begin the repatriation process. However, others say Rohingyas won't go back to Myanmar without ensuring their citizenship status.

"Rohingyas are not much enthusiastic about his (Chinese ambassador's) visit. Rohingyas will go back to Myanmar only after securing citizenship,"

said Noor Mohammad, a Rohingya community leader at Kutupalong refugee camp in Ukhia.

Bangladesh is home to about a million Rohingyas, most of whom fled a 2017 military crackdown in Myanmar that is now subject to a United Nations genocide investigation.

Around 11.5 lakhs registered Rohingyas are now living in 33 refugee camps in Ukhia and Teknaf. Their repatriation could not be started due to dilly-dallying of Myanmar authorities.

As part of the Bangladesh government's repatriation initiative, a delegation of 20 Rohingyas

visited Myanmar's Maungdaw township on May 5 to see two model villages build as a pilot project for the resettlement of the persecuted minority.

After the visit, a delegation from Myanmar was supposed to visit Bangladesh to convince Rohingyas for the repatriation. But it was postponed due to cyclone Mocha that hit Bangladesh and Myanmar coast on May 14.

Contacted, Rohingya Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner Mohammed Mizanur Rahman said, "We want to begin repatriation. But we cannot confirm its timetable right now."

### Trial of Tarique

FROM PAGE 12

London since 2008.

Tarique is accused in 15 other cases, mostly filed during the caretaker government rule in 2007 and 2008, and Zubaida has been indicted only in this one.

Accepting the charges brought against them, this court on November 1 last year issued arrest warrants against the duo.

On June 26 last year, the HC declared Tarique and Zubaida "fugitives" and rejected their writ petitions challenging the filing of the graft case.

The HC also withdrew the stay order on the case.

On September 26, 2007, the ACC filed the case with Kafrul Police Station against the two

and Zubaida's mother Syeda Iqbal Mand Banu, on charges of amassing assets worth Tk 4.82 crore through illegal means and concealing the information of Tk 2.16 crore in their wealth statements.

After a probe, the investigation officer pressed charges against the three on March 31, 2009.

However, trial proceedings against Zubaida's mother were cancelled.

Tarique has been sentenced to life imprisonment in the August 21 grenade attack cases.

He was also sentenced in two other cases, including the Zia Orphanage Trust graft case.

### Bangladesh losing \$3.3b a year

FROM PAGE 1

large consumers, the WB recommended the amendment of the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Rules with provisions for annual energy consumption reports, periodic energy audits, and capacity development.

The lender expected that the amendments and their implementation would result in the energy saving of around 1,000GWh in five years from 2022.

The government amended the rules in line with the WB recommendations in February with provisions for all industries to submit annual energy consumption reports and conduct audits by a certified energy auditor within 18 months and then every three years.

The finance minister in his letter said the government would adopt a market-linked system from September that would periodically and automatically adjust diesel, heavy fuel oil, and octane prices.

"The power and energy ministry has prepared a roadmap for the automated price adjustment mechanism for petroleum products, including the necessary institutional responsibilities, consultations process, and other activities needed to approve the system by September 2023," he said.

"We will support the establishment of an independent system operator as envisaged in the electricity act to improve the dispatch and efficiency of the power generation system," he said.

### 'ACC being used to harass me'

FROM PAGE 1

"I was elected mayor of Gazipur City Corporation for five years. I was suspended through an illegal order from Dhaka," he said yesterday.

There is no need for voting if a public representative can not

assume the position, he said, adding, "After I was elected mayor, I did not receive any allowance or honorarium in three years."

There were only two projects worth around Tk 1,500 crore at the city corporation, but the allegations of corruption

involve about Tk 7,500 crore, he said.

Zahangir is facing two separate investigations by the ACC.

Officials earlier said they found a suspicious bank account of the GCC with the Konabari Branch of Premier Bank.

## SUDAN CONFLICT

### Battles rage hrs after rivals agree to ceasefire

AFP, Khartoum

Residents of Sudan's capital again awoke to heavy clashes yesterday morning just hours after rival generals agreed to an upcoming one-week ceasefire amid ongoing talks in Saudi Arabia.

The ceasefire -- the latest following many successive truces that have been systematically violated -- is set to go into effect at 9:45 pm (1945 GMT) today, the US and Saudi Arabia said in a joint statement.

The ceasefire "shall remain in effect for seven days and may be extended with the agreement of both parties", the statement added after talks in Jeddah.

Multiple truces have been violated since fighting broke out five weeks ago, which the Saudi foreign ministry acknowledged in a statement published by the official Saudi Press Agency early yesterday.

"Unlike previous ceasefires, the Agreement reached in Jeddah was signed by parties and will be supported by a US-Saudi and international supported ceasefire monitoring mechanism," it said.

But Khartoum residents -- who for weeks have been sheltering from urban warfare amid desperately low supplies of food and vital resources -- were sceptical that this time would be any different.

"They have announced truces that they have not held to before," said Hussein Mohammed, who remains in Khartoum North, sheltering in place with his sick mother even as their neighbourhood became deserted.

"We hope that this time mediators can monitor that the ceasefire is implemented," he told AFP, adding that his mother has been unable to make her regular doctor's appointments since before the conflict erupted on April 15.

The fighting pits the Sudanese army, led by General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, against the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, led by Burhan's former deputy Mohamed Hamdan Daglo.

Around 1,000 people have been killed and over a million displaced throughout the weeks of intense fighting, leaving millions more with sporadic access to water, electricity or medicine.

Along with the capital, the war-scarred western region of Darfur has seen some of the worst of the fighting.

"We do not trust the warring sides," said Adam Issa, a shop owner in El Geneina, West Darfur. "Every time they announce a truce and they go back to fighting. We want a permanent ceasefire, not a temporary truce."

The region is still reeling from a conflict that erupted in 2003 when former autocrat Omar al-Bashir unleashed the feared Janjaweed militia -- which formed the basis for the RSF -- to crush a rebellion by ethnic minority groups.



Climate activists hold a banner after pouring vegetable charcoal in the Trevi Fountain water, during a demonstration against fossil fuels, in Rome, Italy yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Biden sees shift in ties with China 'shortly'

Says G7 wants to de-risk, not decouple

REUTERS, Hiroshima

US President Joe Biden yesterday said the Group of Seven nations were agreed in their approach to China and the need to diversify their supply chains so they are not dependent on one country.

"We're not looking to decouple from China. We're looking to de-risk and diversify our relationship with China," Biden told reporters in Hiroshima, Japan, at the conclusion of a meeting of world leaders.

He added that he expected a thaw in frosty relations with China "shortly" after strains caused by an incident earlier this year when the United States shot down a Chinese balloon that flew over sensitive military sites.

Biden also said he had received a "flat assurance" from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky that he would not use Western-provided F-16 jets to go into Russian territory.

Biden told reporters that F-16 warplanes could be used "wherever Russian troops are within Ukraine and the area".

He said it was "highly unlikely" the planes would be used in any Ukrainian offensive in the coming weeks, but that Ukrainian troops could need such weapons to defend themselves against Russian forces beyond their current reach.

Leaders of the Group of Seven (G7) richest democracies yesterday said they would not back down from supporting Ukraine, in a warning

to Russian President Vladimir Putin as he claimed to have taken the eastern city of Bakhmut, something Kyiv denied.

Biden announced a \$375 million package of military aid, including artillery and armoured vehicles, for Ukraine during the final day of a three-day G7 summit.

Biden told G7 leaders during the summit Washington supports joint allied training programs for Ukrainian pilots on F-16s warplanes, although Kyiv has not won specific, public commitments for delivery of the fighter jets.

Zelensky said yesterday he was confident Kyiv would receive F-16 fighter jets from the West after months of lobbying for the planes.



Mongolia's President Ukhnaagiin Khurelsukh, right, speaks with France's President Emmanuel Macron inside a traditional yurt during a meeting at the Government Palace in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## EL SALVADOR STADIUM

### 12 people killed in stampede

More than 500 injured

AFP, San Salvador

Twelve people were killed and hundreds injured Saturday in a stampede at an El Salvador soccer stadium, police and emergency services said.

Authorities said initial reports pointed to a crush of fans who tried to enter Cuscatlan Stadium in the Central American country's capital San Salvador to watch a local tournament match between teams Alianza and FAS.

The match was suspended as emergency personnel evacuated people from the stadium, where hundreds of police officers and soldiers gathered as ambulance sirens wailed.

"Salvadoran soccer is in mourning," National Civil Police (PNC) director Mauricio Arriaza told reporters as he confirmed the death toll of 12.

Among the stampede survivors, Sandra Guzman, 40, left a capital hospital early yesterday with a



bandage on her left knee, walking with difficulty alongside her friend, Javier Ramirez, 31.

Both said this was the "first and last time" they would experience such a misfortune because they would not return to the stadium.

"A large crowd of people fell on me. I couldn't even breathe, they were choking me," Guzman told AFP.

When she was in front of a stadium gate, she said "people were pushing me to get in, they didn't give me a chance to go back. When I came to see, I panicked, I had a lot of people on top of me."

"I fainted, and when I woke up I was in the hospital."

Health Minister Francisco Alabi said earlier that the country's hospital network was "providing medical care to all patients."

Carlos Fuentes, spokesman for the emergency services group Comandos de Salvamento, said they were treating more than 500 people.

About 100 people in serious condition were taken to hospital, with some showing signs of asphyxia and other types of trauma, Fuentes said.

The stampede apparently started after a stadium gate fell, causing people to crowd together, he said.

At least two of the injured were in critical condition, according to police.

El Salvador's President Nayib Bukele said the PNC and the Attorney General's Office would investigate the incident and those responsible would be punished. "Everyone will be investigated: teams, managers, stadium, box office, league, federation," Bukele said on Twitter.

'Don't have a problem with army chief'

Says Imran Khan

AGENCIES

Former Pakistan prime minister Imran Khan has told Al Jazeera he does not "have a problem" with the country's army chief but accused Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir of trying to stop him from returning to power.

"I have no problem with him, but he seems to have a problem with me," Khan told Al Jazeera in an interview on Saturday days after the civilian government said it will use a controversial army law to try supporters of his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party involved in damaging military installations.

"I haven't done anything to antagonise the army chief, but there is something he has against me which I don't know," the former prime minister and head of the PTI party said.

The cricketer-turned-politician has accused Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif of being "a puppet" of the powerful army, which has carried out multiple coups against civilian governments since the South Asian country's independence in 1947.

The 70-year-old leader, speaking from his residence in the eastern city of Lahore, accused the police of arresting 7,500 protesters believed to be from his party.

Khan urged his supporters to remain peaceful in case he is arrested, adding that the government will use instances of violence to launch a crackdown on the opposition activists and leaders.

## CLASH IN SOUTHEAST

### 5 Iranian border guards killed

AFP, Tehran

Five Iranian border guards were killed yesterday during clashes with an armed group in the restive southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan, state media reported. The guards were killed in Saravan, near Iran's border with Pakistan, the official IRNA news agency said. Earlier, the judiciary's Mizan Online website had quoted local prosecutor Mehdi Shamsabadi as saying that six border guards were killed but later the number was revised down to five. Yesterday's attack was carried out by "a terrorist group that was seeking to infiltrate the country" but whose members "fled the scene after suffering injuries", IRNA said. Iran foreign ministry spokesman Nasser Kanani condemned the attack saying Iran expects Pakistan to "crack down on terrorist groups" and "try to improve the security of the common borders". "Certainly, the aim of these terrorist groups is to disrupt the security of the people living on the borders of the two countries," he added. Poverty-stricken Sistan-Baluchestan, which also borders Afghanistan, is a flashpoint for clashes with rebels from Baluchi minority.

## Gurkha amputee scales Everest

AFP, Kathmandu

Gurkha veteran Hari Budha Magar, who was almost killed serving with the British army in Afghanistan, has become the first double above-the-knee amputee to climb Everest, a member of his team said yesterday. "He reached the top of Sagarmatha at around 3 PM [Nepali time] on Friday. After successfully summing the peak, he has now descended to the base camp, and will return to Kathmandu tomorrow (today)," Him Bista told AFP, using the Nepali name for Everest. Magar, 43, lost his legs after stepping on an improvised explosive device in 2010 while on patrol in Afghanistan with the Gurkhas. Two below-the-knee amputees have reached the peak in the past -- New Zealander Mark Inglis in 2006 and China's Xia Boyu in 2018. Magar was fitted with prosthetic legs and aside from kayaking, Magar climbed several peaks including Morocco's Mount Toubkal as well as Ben Nevis in Scotland and Mont Blanc.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার			
বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ			
কেন্দ্রীয় পুলিশ হাসপাতাল			
রাজারবাগ, ঢাকা			
তারিখ: ২১/০৫/২০২৩			
দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি			
পাবলিক প্রক্রিয়েমেন্ট রেগিস্ট্রেশন/০৮(সর্বোচ্চ সশ্রাধামী) অনুমতি ২০২৩-২০২৪ অর্থ সালে কেন্দ্রীয় পুলিশ হাসপাতাল, রাজারবাগ, ঢাকা দরপত্রে মাধ্যমে (১) জনবীরি মেডিসিন (২) আউটসের্ভিস পক্ষতে অভিজ্ঞ ডাক্তার, নার্স, মেডিকেল টেকনোলজিষ্ট পদে সেবা কর্তৃপক্ষ আঘাতী ও অভিজ্ঞতাসম্পন্ন সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হতে সীলনোহরণকৃত খামে দরপত্র আপ্রেভিউ করা যাচ্ছে।			
১	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	৮	ব্রহ্মপুর মন্ত্রণালয়।
২	সংস্থা	৮	বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ।
৩	দরপত্র সম্পাদনকারী প্রধান	৮	পরিচালক (ডিআইজি), কেন্দ্রীয় পুলিশ হাসপাতাল, রাজারবাগ, ঢাকা।
৪	সংস্থা সত্ত্ব জ্ঞেয়	৮	ঢাকা।
৫	দরপত্রের বিষয়	৮	(১) জনবীরি মেডিসিন (২) আউটসের্ভিস পক্ষতে অভিজ্ঞ ডাক্তার, নার্স, মেডিকেল টেকনোলজিষ্ট পদে সেবা কর্তৃপক্ষ।
৬	দরপত্রের স্তুতি ও তারিখ	৮	কেঁপঁ ৪৪ পুর/দরপত্র-২৬৮০, তারিখ: ২১/০৫/২০২৩।
৭	দরপত্র প্রক্রিয়া	৮	বেলা দরপত্র (ওটিএম)।
৮	সর্বোচ্চ তারিখ	৮	১৮/০৫/২০২৩।
৯	দরপত্র জমানামের সর্বোচ্চ তারিখ	৮	১৯/০৫/২০২৩।
১০	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	৮	১৯/০৫/২০২৩।
১১	বাজেট এবং অর্থের উৎস	৮	রাজ্য বাজেট (জিভিবি)।
১২	দরপত্র সম্পাদনকারী অফিস ও ঠিকানা	৮	পরিচালক (ডিআইজি) এবং কার্যালয়, সিপিএইচ, ঢাকা।
১৩	দরপত্র সিডিউল প্রাতিষ্ঠা ছান	৮	পরিচালক (ডিআইজি) এবং কার্যালয়, সিপিএইচ, ঢাকা।
১৪	দরপত্র দাখিলের ছান	৮	পরিচালক (ডিআইজি) এবং কার্যালয়, সিপিএইচ, ঢাকা।
১৫	দরপত্র খোলার ছান	৮	পরিচালক (ডিআইজি) এবং কার্যালয়, সিপিএইচ, ঢাকা।
১৬	দরপত্রের সাথে যে সরকার কাগজপত্র ও প্রমাণাত্মক সংযুক্ত করতে হবে	৮	1. Photocopy of up-to-date trade license. 2. Up-to-date bank solvency certificate. 3. Photocopy of up-to-date income tax certificate. 4. Photocopy of VAT certificate. 5. Original money receipt paid for purchasing tender document. 6. Photocopy of up-to-date bank statement certificate. 7. Work order certificate.
১৭	কাজের বিবরণ	৮	সিডিউল মূল্য দরপত্র জামানত কাজের ধরণ</td

## What is the point of attacking BNP rallies?

The ruling regime must ensure opposition's constitutional rights

As the next parliamentary election approaches, it is becoming increasingly clearer that the promises of a "level playing field" for the opposition are nothing beyond mere rhetoric. Yet again, BNP rallies in at least four districts have allegedly been foiled by members of the ruling party and law enforcement agencies. According to our report, at least 40 people were injured in Khulna, and at least 30 people in Patuakhali town, with the police using firearms and tear gas shells during clashes between AL and BNP activists during the first two days of the latter's countrywide demonstrations. BNP members also alleged that members of the ruling party, aided by police, attacked them in Rajbari, Netrakona and Mymensingh.

In an inevitable unfolding of the narrative, law enforcers have claimed that it was the BNP activists who started attacking members of the ruling party and the law enforcement. They have already filed cases against 48 BNP activists and hundreds of unnamed people in Khulna, and are planning to do the same in other districts. We may have had doubts about the veracity of the BNP's claims, had similar incidents of provocation and violence not taken place across the country over the past year whenever the party declared agitations. At this point, it seems almost futile to ask what logic there might be in BNP attacking law enforcers and risking mass arrests at such a crucial time of their movement. It is even more pointless to have to point out the uncanny coincidence of AL holding counter programmes at the same place and time as the BNP, resulting in inescapable clashes.

Surely, the ruling regime understands that the more it attacks the BNP, the less reassuring its promises of ensuring a free, fair and participatory election appears to those concerned. If it cannot even provide space for an opposition to carry out its constitutional right of freedom of expression and assembly, how can we be confident that it can take a backseat and allow the Election Commission to do its job during the elections? The only way it can convince anyone of its commitment to a fair election is by engaging in fair play. Unfortunately, the AL and its prominent leaders seem more bent on playing their usual game of confrontation and intimidation, and in the process, proving the BNP's claims that a fair election is simply not possible under the present government.

For all concerned, particularly the people of this country, we urge the AL to respect the constitutional rights of the opposition. They need to have faith in their own programmes and pledges to the people, instead of needlessly engaging in confrontational politics.

## Too out of track

The chronic inefficiencies of Bangladesh Railway must be addressed

For the Bangladesh Railway, old habits die too hard. The state-run organisation has once again dwindled on its lofty promises and failed to procure 70 locomotives for a single project they embarked upon in 2011. The long delayed project, along with another project to overhaul 21 MG locomotives, will now be cancelled. According to the latest report by this daily, authorities have already spent Tk 5.15 crore on this project, wasting valuable taxpayers' money.

The BR has time and time again shown its incompetency to execute ambitious projects undertaken in the name of "development." We are, frankly, tired of reading reports after reports on railway projects gone awry. Corruption and irregularities, flawed project design, poor feasibility studies, issues over land acquisition and so on have been reported as some of the underlying reasons. Yet, no steps have been taken to address them.

A report in just December last year revealed that 35 ongoing projects are running behind schedule. The delays and revisions escalated costs to an amount higher than the cost of constructing the Padma Bridge. The transport agency poses a significant burden on the government and the nation's citizens. It is unacceptable that the organisation is being allowed to run in the same old lacklustre fashion.

The BR has now reportedly prepared a new plan to buy 30 locomotives at a cost of Tk 2,247 crore, which is Tk 301 crore more than the failed 70 locomotive procurement project. Before jumping on costlier new investments to replace collapsed plans, the railway authorities must critically solve the systemic failures that caused the collapse in the first place. With the overwhelming precedence of underperformance, how can we trust that the new plan will not reach the same fate as the previous ones?

Curtailing financial losses from the BR's inefficiency should be prioritised during the economic turmoil. Bangladesh aspires to become a powerful economy and to graduate to an economically-developed nation by 2041. But with chronic unpreparedness of state-run agencies and copious amounts of money wasted on development projects, it is hard to imagine how that dream will be fulfilled. We strongly urge the authorities to address the chronic inefficiencies of the Bangladesh Railway and overhaul it.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

letters@thedadlystar.net

### Solve the nurse crisis

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) standards, a country should have 23 nurses for every 10,000 people. But there are only three nurses against every 10,000 people in Bangladesh. Due to this situation, a nurse has to take six times more pressure than the norm. Overworked nurses quickly get exhausted and their enthusiasm for work also decreases. The issues faced by nurses, as caregivers, also adversely affects the quality of medical care. The persistent crisis must be addressed urgently.

Ashikujaman Syed  
Center for Research Innovation and Development (CRID)

## The untapped potential of Bangladesh-Japan trade



### MACRO MIRROR

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

FAHMIDA KATUN

Over the last five decades, the relationship between Bangladesh and Japan has flourished and evolved into a mutually beneficial and symbiotic partnership, bringing about positive outcomes for both countries. The bilateral relationship has undergone significant growth – trade and investment have emerged as crucial factors contributing to this progress. Japan has established itself as one of Bangladesh's primary trading partners, alongside the US and the European Union (EU). Over the years, Bangladesh's exports of apparels and ready-made garment (RMG) products to Japan have experienced a steady rise, currently constituting approximately 83 percent of the country's total exports to Japan. Furthermore, the export of footwear and leather products to Japan holds notable significance, although it only accounts for 2.4 percent of the total exports to the East Asian country. Notably, the export of leather products has exhibited consistent growth, reaching its highest share of 4.1 percent in FY2020-21. Bangladesh's export of fisheries to Japan has been gradually increasing, too, albeit at a slow pace.

Bangladesh has also experienced a notable increase in its imports from Japan. Japan serves as a significant source for various raw materials, including steel and iron. In 2020, the highest imports from Japan to Bangladesh consisted primarily of iron and steel, followed by Japanese vehicles, vehicle parts and accessories, and man-made staple fibres.

Despite all this, there remains untapped trade potential on both sides. The actual export value of certain items falls below their potential export value, indicating an opportunity for Bangladesh to expand the supply of these items to the Japanese markets. Notably, there are significantly unexplored export avenues such as knitwear, textile, shrimps, and frozen goods. Likewise, Japan can also expand its range of export products for Bangladesh, including diesel powered trucks, compression-ignition internal engines, waste and scrap iron and steel, and other machinery items.

The bilateral trade between the two countries increased because of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership launched in 2014. Japan has granted Bangladesh the General System of Preference (GSP) facility, which allows lower tariffs compared to the general rates. Additionally, as a least developed country (LDC) at the moment, Bangladesh benefits from special preferential tariffs, allowing duty-free and quota-free (DFQF) market access to

Japan for 97.9 percent of its exported products, excluding fishery products, rice, sugar, and articles of leather. The implementation of a free trade agreement (FTA) between Bangladesh and Japan would create investment opportunities and enhance market access for both nations. Without a bilateral trade agreement, when Bangladesh graduates to the developing country category in a few years, it will lose the preferential tariffs for its export goods. According to estimates based on data from the International Trade Centre, manufactured goods, particularly textiles and RMG items, would be imposed with higher tariffs, ranging from approximately 7.4 percent to 12.8 percent, after Bangladesh's LDC graduation.

Trade in services also presents significant opportunities for these two countries. A notable opportunity lies in Japan's growing demand for caregivers, driven by its ageing population and increased life expectancy. Bangladesh has a sizable young workforce; capitalising on this demographic advantage, young people from Bangladesh can find employment in Japan's healthcare sector.

To facilitate this mutually beneficial arrangement, collaborative partnerships between both the governments and private sectors can establish training programmes to this end. By seizing the opportunity to

send caregivers to Japan, Bangladesh stands to gain through remittance and the enhancement of interconnected relationship between the two nations. Simultaneously, Japan would greatly benefit as its expanding elderly population receives the invaluable support and compassionate care provided by these caregivers.

The Japanese foreign direct

industrial units are expected to create more than 60,000 job opportunities. This development is likely to attract more Japanese investments, ultimately bolstering the bilateral trade.

In order to have a fruitful collaboration, Bangladesh must focus on diversifying its economy, enhancing the skills of its workforce, and improving production efficiency.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina meets with her Japanese counterpart Kishida Fumio during her visit to Japan in April 2023.

FILE PHOTO: PID

investment (FDI) in Bangladesh commenced in the mid-1970s and gained momentum during the early 1990s with the implementation of liberalisation policies in Bangladesh. Though the Japanese FDI in Bangladesh has experienced fluctuations, it increased in 2022, when Bangladesh received the highest influx of FDI from Japan, totalling a little over \$120 million. Currently, approximately 300 Japanese companies are operating within Bangladesh. Recognising the significance of Japanese investment, the government has designated places in Araihazar, Narayanganj to establish the Japanese Economic Zone (JEZ). Spanning 1,000 acres initially, the JEZ holds the potential for future expansion. The completion of the JEZ is expected in 2034, with operations commencing in the same year.

Companies operating within the economic zones of Bangladesh, including the JEZ, will enjoy various benefits such as tax exemptions, 50 percent income tax immunity on export earnings, duty-free exports, cash incentives, facilities for bonded warehouses, and duty drawbacks. Additionally, the JEZ in Narayanganj will offer basic healthcare facilities for companies located within its premises. Projections indicate that by 2034, the JEZ will reach the maximum occupancy of industrial space, accommodating over 120 industrial units. These

To ensure greater efficiency and competitiveness, we should expedite the adoption and adaptation of technology. In facilitating a seamless transition towards a developing country, Japan has the potential to collaborate with Bangladesh by increasing investments in technology, physical and soft infrastructure, and fostering improved trade and financial integration. Japan is expected to remain a crucial and strategic partner for Bangladesh throughout its upcoming developmental journey, particularly during the Fourth Industrial Revolution and beyond LDC graduation.

As the largest bilateral development partner of Bangladesh, Japan has been a dedicated collaborator, working closely with the nation in numerous initiatives. Their joint efforts have been focused on infrastructure development, fostering industrialisation, improving access to healthcare and education, and addressing vulnerabilities. The long-standing friendship between Bangladesh and Japan provides a strong foundation for propelling their partnership forward into the next phase. By leveraging the substantial demographic, investment, trade, and technological complementarities between the two countries, this partnership can create a mutually advantageous alliance for their shared journey of progress.

## Environmental compliance may weed out smaller garment factories



### RMG NOTES

Mostafiz Uddin  
is the managing director of Denim  
Expert Limited. He is also the  
founder and CEO of Bangladesh  
Denim Expo and Bangladesh  
Apparel Exchange (BAE).

MOSTAFIZ UDDIN

The pressure on supply chains to reduce CO2 emissions intensifies as dates for meeting global climate targets inch closer. There are concerns that CO2 levels are heading in the wrong direction at precisely the wrong time.

Many measures can be introduced to reduce the environmental burden of garment production. The one thing they all have in common, though, is the cost. In some cases, there are exorbitant costs involved. There are several reasons for this. The first is the technology involved. The second is that it is often easier – and more beneficial – to build a completely new factory to the highest possible environmental specifications than to "retrofit" an existing production unit.

It is my firm belief that as global fashion supply chains are "greened" we will see more and more newbuild factories, with access to renewable energy, the latest and most efficient effluent treatment technology, and all other kinds of benefits.

And yet, the cost of a newbuild garment factory is significant. These

costs can vary around the world depending on various factors, such as location, size, construction quality, labour, machinery and equipment, and any additional features or requirements specific to the factory. To provide a rough estimate, this cost can range from a few hundred thousand dollars for a small-scale facility to several million dollars for a larger state-of-the-art factory. The latter is what we are looking at and what many of the world's leading garment factories (in terms of reduced environmental footprint) will spend to build.

The relevance of all this is that it does raise a vital question: will the shift towards sustainable fashion supply chains lead to a corresponding consolidation of the industry? Will we see an industry which has fewer and larger players? In Bangladesh, we once had more than 5,000 garment factories. That number has diminished in recent years and I am doubtful as to whether we will ever reach 5,000 again. We have seen smaller operators go bust or find

themselves unable to keep up with the pace of change. Sub-contracting has also reduced as buyers have demanded that less production is outsourced to poorly regulated operators. The pandemic also led to some factories falling by the wayside.

But I also think we could be starting to see a trend whereby garment production becomes more and more consolidated into fewer, larger factories that have the financial clout to meet the highest environmental standards. When one considers this issue logically, it is the only rational way forward.

It is worth pointing out that, in recent years, we have already seen some of the world's largest textile chemical companies merge. Joint ventures and acquisitions have become common in that segment as the cost of regulation makes economies of scale vital.

I expect garment production itself to follow suit. I believe we could see the rise of the super factory, not just in Bangladesh, but also in other textile production hubs such as India, Pakistan and Vietnam.

Is this necessarily a bad thing? Is it wrong that only the largest players will be in a position to successfully compete while also meeting environmental and compliance issues? I think in the shift towards larger conglomerates, we may lose something along the way in regards to the rich and varied nature of our proud garment industry.

At the same time, size and scale

might also bring benefits. Larger players are better structured at an operational level. They might have whole teams in place, whereas smaller factories may have just one person. They are more sophisticated in terms of human resource management, marketing, public relations and legal issues. In short, they have much more in common with the multinational buyers they are working with.

This, in turn, could ensure they are treated more fairly as equal partners than in the past when the buyer-supplier relationship felt unequal and adversarial at times. Another factor is that the more factories you have, the more likely there will be one factory prepared to undercut the rest on pricing issues. As the saying goes, you are only as good as your weakest link. At times, our weakest link(s) has often been our undoing as an industry. The vast, sprawling and often fragmented nature of our garment industry has probably worked against us when it comes to pricing and negotiating with buyers.

By way of contrast, a smaller batch of genuinely world-class operators is arguably a much better fit for our country moving forward. Such an industry will better suited to evolve, innovate and introduce the kind of continuous improvement and best practice programmes that our global client base is increasingly demanding as a prerequisite for doing business.

# The problem is not with coaching centres or ChatGPT

It's with our education system



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

MANZOOR AHMED

The commercial education technology firm in the US called Chegg is somewhat equivalent of our coaching and tutoring centres for school students. It reported five million student subscribers and a revenue of \$200 million in the fourth quarter of 2022. It lost \$1 billion in share value in the New York Stock Exchange on May 1 due to the reported inroad of artificial intelligence (AI)-generated language tools such as ChatGPT. Launched by OpenAI in November last year, ChatGPT has already taken the digital information world by storm. Microsoft and others are working on their own models. Among other things, students can directly access these language tools to get answers to their questions in texts that can help doing school assignments and homework. Pearson, the UK-based multinational edtech company, has also reported a similar market loss as Chegg.

The low-tech version of student learning assistance in Bangladesh is the ubiquitous coaching and tutoring centres and their analogue devices—the commercial guidebooks and notebooks. Private tutoring and commercial guidebooks have been, in fact, branded by the education authorities, and even many educators, as the villain of the piece for the low quality of education and student learning outcome. Students don't pay attention to schoolwork or study their textbooks, it is alleged;

they memorise guidebooks to prepare for the exams, while teachers neglect classroom teaching and go for more lucrative private tutoring after-hours. And, of course, only those who can afford the private fees take advantage of these. Apparently, those who can pay the higher fees for the "best" tutors, engage more tutors for different subjects, and select the "most reputed" coaching centres, can be assured of higher exam scores, including the coveted "Golden GPA."

An education law has been under discussion and has gone through various iterations for more than a decade. The law, among other things, is supposed to restrict private tutoring and coaching centres. An agreement, however, could not be reached about what restrictions would work best and how these could be actually enforced.

The authorities have ordered the coaching centres to be shut down two weeks ahead of the ongoing SSC examination. A recent Bangla news report revealed that students and tutors were found at a coaching centre in Mymensingh behind drawn curtains and closed shutters. Students said they were engaged in last-minute preparation for their tests and the tutors were there to give them helpful tips. In this scenario, how could one blame or punish either the students or the tutors?

Identifying private tutoring, coaching centres and guidebooks as the source of education quality



FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

**AI and AI-aided learning with radical consequences for society and individuals are here to stay.**

problems leads to treating the symptoms without looking at the root of the disease. Educators point out that the real factors include the inadequate numbers and lack of professional skills of the teachers; motivation of and incentives and professional support for teachers; the facilities and learning environment in the school and the classroom; the quality and content of the curriculum and the learning materials; and the nature and methods of student learning assessment. These are complex and difficult problems that have no easy solutions. But ignoring them and finding scapegoats elsewhere cannot be the solution. Clearly, why students, parents and teachers resort to private tuition and

guidebooks have to be addressed, and the reasons for this dependence have to be mitigated.

Countries all over, including those with advanced education systems, have tutoring centres and guides, notes and help books for school subjects and other vocational and occupational subjects, as well as for self-learning. Students make use of these frequently. The difference is that these are not seen as substitutes for schoolwork and classroom teaching, but as complements to what happens at school. We need to ask why it is not so in our schools, and what should be done about it, rather than the prescription of chopping the head off because one has a headache. There are also online tutoring and

learning platforms, which have grown rapidly in recent years.

The yawning gap in access and use of educational technology between the higher- and the lower-income countries became sharply visible during the pandemic driven school closure. There is also a large disparity within each country between those who are privileged in enjoying access to digital technology and being tech-savvy and those who are deprived in this respect.

AI and AI-aided learning with radical consequences for society and individuals are here to stay, and will have profound effects in the educational systems. *Fortune* magazine estimates that edtech and smart classroom business globally

has surpassed \$100 billion and will continue to grow rapidly. Chegg, Pearson, and similar companies, such as Byju's in India and Zuoyebang in China will surely find ways to build into their own business model the use of ChatGPT and other AI-based methods.

Despite the spread of edtech and its potential benefits, experience so far shows edtech (including AI-based edtech) facing two major challenges. First, access to and enjoying its benefits remain highly unequal, reinforcing the already existing disparities and inequalities in educational systems and in the larger society. Secondly, edtech's strength is in the limited sphere of cognitive learning; it neglects or sidesteps social, emotional, and ethical learning and development. These aspects of learning call for social interaction between students and teachers and among peers as essential elements of the learning process.

A conceptualisation of education and learning that recognises and addresses the two challenges of equity and holistic learning need to be ingrained in the minds of education policymakers and decision-makers. AI and edtech can be helpful for our students in an inclusive manner when the plans and programmes in this respect recognise the basic and long-standing weaknesses in the system. A comprehensive view embracing the basic elements of skilled teachers, motivated learners, effective pedagogy, conducive learning environment, and supportive social interaction cannot be replaced by AI and edtech. But there can be room for online and offline tutoring and digital (and analogue) guidebooks and learning materials within this broader vision of learning and teaching.

## The US' wars and debt crisis



**Jeffrey D Sachs**  
is a world renowned economist, academic, and public policy analyst who serves as the director of the Center for Sustainable Development at Columbia University.

JEFFREY D SACHS

In the year 2000, the US government debt was \$3.5 trillion, equal to 35 percent of GDP. By 2022, the debt was \$24 trillion, equal to 95 percent of GDP. The US debt is soaring, hence America's current debt crisis. Yet, both Republicans and Democrats are missing the solution: stopping America's wars of choice and slashing military outlays.

Suppose the government's debt had remained at a modest 35 percent of GDP, as in 2000. Today's debt would be \$9 trillion, as opposed to \$24 trillion. Why did the US government incur the excess \$15 trillion in debt?

The single biggest answer is the US government's addiction to war and military spending. According to the Watson Institute at Brown University, the cost of US wars from fiscal year 2001 to fiscal year 2022 amounted to a whopping \$8 trillion, more than half of the extra \$15 trillion in debt. The other \$7 trillion arose roughly equally from budget deficits caused by the 2008 financial crisis and the Covid-19 pandemic.

To surmount the debt crisis, the US needs to stop feeding the Military-Industrial Complex (MIC), the most powerful lobby in Washington. As President Dwight D. Eisenhower famously warned on January 17, 1961, "In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist." Since 2000, the MIC has led the US into disastrous wars of choice in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya, and now Ukraine.

The MIC long ago adopted a winning political strategy by ensuring that the military budget reaches into every Congressional district. The Congressional Research Service recently reminded Congress, "Defense spending touches every Member of Congress's district through pay and benefits for military service members and retirees,

economic and environmental impact of installations, and procurement of weapons systems and parts from local industry, among other activities."

Only a brave member of Congress would vote against the military-industry lobby, yet bravery is certainly no hallmark of Congress.

The US' annual military spending is now around \$900 billion, roughly 40 percent of the world's total, and greater than the next 10 countries combined. US military spending in 2022 was triple that of China. According to the Congressional Budget Office, the military outlays for 2024-2033 will be a staggering \$10.3 trillion on current baseline. A quarter or more of that could be avoided by ending its wars of choice, closing down many of the country's 800 or so military bases around the world, and negotiating new arms control agreements with China and Russia.

Yet, instead of peace through diplomacy and fiscal responsibility, the MIC regularly scares the American people with a comic-book style depiction of villains whom the US must stop at all costs. The post-2000 list has included Afghanistan's Taliban, Iraq's Saddam Hussein, Syria's Bashar al-Assad, Libya's Muammar Gaddafi, Russia's Vladimir Putin, and recently, China's Xi Jinping. War, we are repeatedly told, is necessary for America's survival.

A peace-oriented foreign policy would be opposed strenuously by the military-industrial lobby, but not by the public. Significant public pluralities already want less, not more, US involvement in other countries' affairs, and less, not more, US troop deployments overseas. Regarding Ukraine, Americans overwhelmingly want a "minor role" (52 percent) rather than a "major role" (26 percent) in the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. This is why neither Biden nor any recent president has dared to ask Congress for any tax increase to pay for the US' wars. The public's response would be a resounding "No!"

While America's wars of choice have been awful for the country,

they have been far greater disasters for countries that it purports to be saving. As Henry Kissinger famously quipped, "To be an enemy of the United States can be dangerous, but to be a friend is fatal." Afghanistan was America's cause during 2001 to 2021, until the US left it broken, bankrupt, and hungry. Ukraine is now in America's embrace, with the same likely results: ongoing war, death, and destruction.

The military budget could be cut prudently and deeply if the US replaced its wars of choice and arms races with real diplomacy and arms agreements. If presidents and Congresses had only heeded the warnings of top American diplomats such as William Burns, the US ambassador to Russia in 2008, and now CIA director, the US would have protected Ukraine's security through diplomacy, agreeing with Russia that the US would not expand Nato into Ukraine if Russia also kept its military out of Ukraine. Yet, relentless Nato expansion is a favourite cause of the MIC; new Nato members are major customers of US armaments.

The US has also unilaterally abandoned key arms control agreements. In 2002, the country unilaterally walked out of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. And rather than promote nuclear disarmament, as the US and other nuclear powers are required to do under Article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the MIC has sold the Congress on plans to spend more than \$600 billion by 2030 to "modernise" the US nuclear arsenal.

Now the MIC is talking up the prospect of war with China over Taiwan. The drumbeats of war with China are stoking the military budget, yet war with China is easily avoidable if the US adheres to the One China policy that properly underpins US-China relations. Such a war should be unthinkable. More than bankrupting the US, it could end the world.

Military spending is not the only budget challenge. Ageing and rising healthcare costs add to the fiscal woes. According to the Congressional Budget Office, debt will reach 185 percent of GDP by 2052 if current policies remain unchanged. Healthcare costs should be capped while taxes on the rich should be raised. Yet, facing down the military-industrial lobby is the vital first step to putting America's fiscal house in order, needed to save the country, and possibly the world, from America's perverse lobby-driven politics.

While America's wars of choice have been awful for the country,

### Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Director

Sylhet M.A.G Osmani Medical College Hospital, Sylhet

#### Invitation for Tender for Cochlear Implant

Date: 20/05/2023

Sealed tenders are hereby invited from bona fide experienced manufacturer/agent/importer/supplier to supply Medical Equipment as per PPR-2008. Terms and conditions are as follows:

1. Ministry/Division	Ministry of Social Welfare
2. Agency	Sylhet M.A.G Osmani Medical College Hospital, Sylhet
3. Procuring entity name	Director, Sylhet M.A.G Osmani Medical College Hospital, Sylhet
4. Procuring entity code	3631199
5. Procuring entity district	Sylhet
6. Invitation for	Medical Equipment & Computer accessories (For Cochlear implant)
7. Tender Ref. No.	SOMCH/TS/2023/792/16 Date: 20/05/2023

#### KEY INFORMATION

8. Procurement method	Open Tender Method (OTM)
-----------------------	--------------------------

#### FUNDING INFORMATION

9. Budget and source of funds	GOB (Development)
10. Developments partners	N/A

#### PARTICULAR INFORMATION

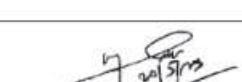
11. Project/program code	N/A
12. Project/program name	Cochlear implant project Sylhet M.A.G Osmani Medical College Hospital, Sylhet
13. Tender name	Procurement of Medical Equipment (For Cochlear implant)
14. Tender publication date	20/05/2023
15. Tender last selling date	05/06/2023 up to 12.00 Noon
16. Tender closing date and time	06/06/2023 at 12.00 Noon
17. Tender opening date and time	06/06/2023 at 12.30pm
18. Name and address of the offices	
a) Selling tender schedule	Office of the Director, Sylhet M A G Osmani Medical College Hospital, Sylhet
b) Receiving tenders schedule	(1) Office of the Director, Sylhet M A G Osmani Medical College Hospital, Sylhet. (2) Deputy Commissioner, Sylhet and (3) Superintendent of Police, Sylhet.
c) Opening tender schedule	Office of the Director, Sylhet M A G Osmani Medical College Hospital, Sylhet.
19. Place/date/time of pre-tender meeting	No pre-bid meeting.

#### INFORMATION FOR TENDERER

20. Brief description of goods	Medical Equipment (Cochlear implant device, Otologic drill attachment, Otologic drill burrs (different size), ENT Motorized chair, Disposable surgical Items)
21. Brief description of related services	Not applicable
22. Procedure of payment of tender schedule	Through Treasury Chalan, Taka 3,000/- (Three thousand) to be paid at Bangladesh Bank/Sonali Bank against Code No. (1) (2)(7)(1)(1) (0) (0) (0) (0) (2)(3)(6)(6). Tender schedule should be collected from SOMCH office on submitting the original challan.
23. Tender earnest money	Taka 5,25,000.00 (Five lac twenty-five thousand only) Bank Draft or Pay Order in favor of Director, Sylhet M A G Osmani Medical College Hospital, Sylhet.

#### PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS

24. Name of official inviting tenders	Director, Sylhet M A G Osmani Medical College Hospital, Sylhet.
25. Designation of official inviting tenders	Director, Sylhet M A G Osmani Medical College Hospital, Sylhet.
26. Address of official inviting tenders	Office of the Director, Sylhet M A G Osmani Medical College Hospital, Sylhet.
27. Contact details of official inviting tenders	Office of the Director, Sylhet M A G Osmani Medical College Hospital, Sylhet.

  
Director

Sylhet M.A.G Osmani Medical College Hospital, Sylhet  
Email: magomch@osp.hosp.dgsb.gov.bd

GD-886

# Birth Centenary of RANAJIT GUHA



Guha was as much an intellectual and thinker as he was a historian

An intellectual biography of Guha, if ever written, will make for a fascinating story of one very gifted Bengali-Indian intellectual and historian, living in self-exile for the majority part of his life but forever focused on the country he chose to leave, trying to make historical sense of life and politics as he had seen them.

Ranajit Guha (May 23, 1923 - April 28, 2023) was an influential Indian historian and scholar renowned for his groundbreaking contributions to the field of Subaltern Studies. His approach to historiography has had a profound impact on the field of history, both in India and globally. His ideas continue to influence scholars, prompting critical examinations of power, agency, and resistance within historical narratives. Guha's legacy lies in his efforts to bring the stories of the subaltern to the forefront, challenging dominant historical interpretations and fostering a more comprehensive understanding of the past. In this interview with Priyam Pritim Paul, Dipesh Chakrabarty, one of the founding members of Subaltern Studies and the Lawrence A. Kimpton Distinguished Service Professor of History at the University of Chicago, provides insights into the life and significant contributions of Ranajit Guha.

You wrote that Ranajit Guha was your guru and friend. How does the relationship of guru and friendship mutually build or contribute to making thinkers like you and so many other historians?

Ranajit had both the manner and the intellectual make-up of a guru-like teacher. He was clearly ahead of us in reflecting on several problems that dogged the received historiography of South Asia. He could demonstrate, through his own research and writing, ways of addressing these issues and had a vision of subaltern history that inspired us all. He also knew how to be a co-learner with us who were like his students. So being a "guru" did not necessarily mean any kind of oppressive hierarchy in our relationships. There was much friendship as well. Besides, he hand-picked the people he wanted to work with. None of us were formally his students. The only ingredient that bound us together was the excitement over the ideas that he had to share and his capacity to generate an intellectual

#### of the twentieth century. Would you agree with him? Why?

He was original, imaginative, and brilliant, without a doubt. I would refrain from deciding if he was "the best" among his peers as that would once again take us back to another theme Sen has also elaborated on – the obsession with first-boys in the subcontinent. Originality was the hallmark of all of Guha's writings. A Rule of Property for Bengal insisted on and demonstrated the importance of ideas in colonial economic policy-making in India long before any other historian – with the sole and remarkable exception of Eric Stokes – turned to the subject. And you only have to read Stokes and Guha

and intellectually secure enough to let their students draw inspiration from what Ranajitda had to offer. These four people formed the oldest nucleus of what became Subaltern Studies. By the time Partha Chatterjee, Gautam Bhadra, and I came into the group, its basic tenets had been worked out and given a form in writing. But we all found them exciting. The agenda for history-writing that the group had worked out and that Ranajitda had set down on paper acted as some kind of a manifesto for the group. It was also new and inspiring.

#### Why can his book Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency be considered a groundbreaking

the discourse of the colonial state and could never be separated from statist concerns. He found Hegel to be the philosopher of such a statist idea of history, and he wanted to oppose to that tradition Tagore's thoughts on human pasts, thoughts that always saw the modern state as something profoundly alien to the spirit of "Indian" society.

#### Why has colonialism been his primary area of interest for a long time? Why did he shift his focus from Gandhi to peasants in order to gain a deeper understanding of them?

This has something to do with certain facts of his life: he grew up in the

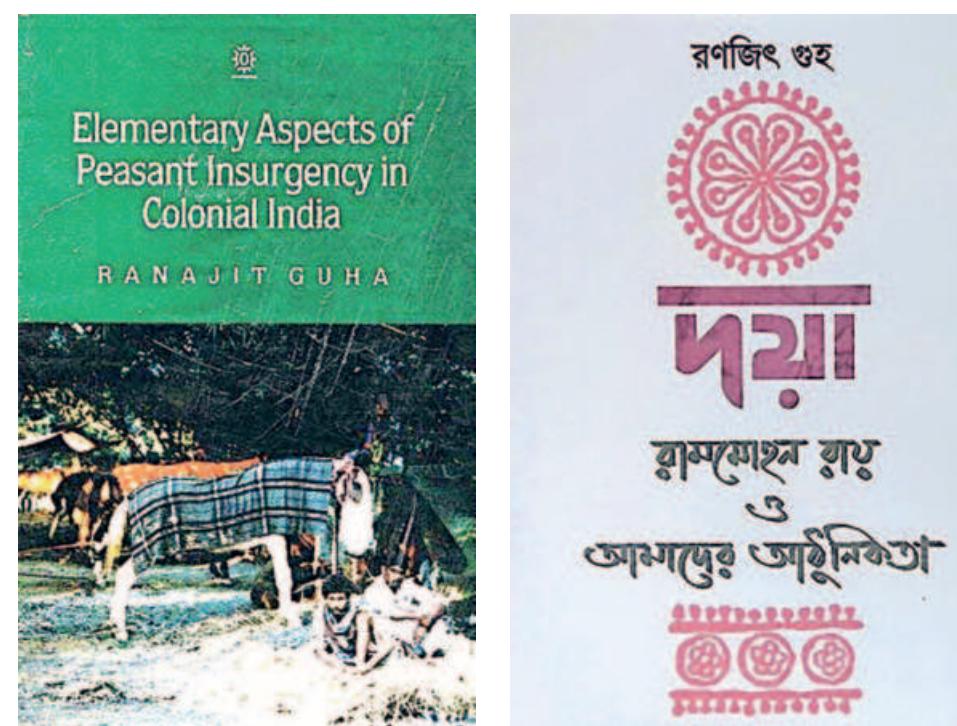
#### India?

Like many others, he would have been opposed to it, and opposed to their attempts at distorting history.

#### What was Guha's perspective on the partition of Bengal in 1947?

Never discussed this specifically. He was unsentimental about it and seemed to have accepted it as a fact of life. But when I visited him in March this year, I asked him if he thought of his early days in Barisal in these final years of his life. He said, "a lot. I think of my childhood days in Barisal all the time."

Do you believe that the extensive discussions about Guha's legacies following his passing will reignite



(L) The covers of Ranajit Guha's two books (R) Content of the first volume of the Subaltern Studies

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together to see the difference in Guha's approach. He was also the first historian in Indian history to seriously introduce "structuralist" ways of thinking. This gave us some very interesting means for thinking about that which, in India, seemed "archaic" in the very middle of the "modern." This he achieved during his Subaltern Studies days. His essays like "The Prose of Counter-Insurgency," "Chandra's Death" are brilliant expositions of his thoughts on reading the archives and the necessarily episodic nature of "subaltern" histories. You may or may not agree with his conclusions, but you would not be left in doubt of his creativity and brilliance. He was also a very gifted and self-conscious writer of prose in both English and Bengali.

How did he organise a group of young historians like you in forming the seminal Subaltern Studies group and what was his method of providing intellectual insight to those who were not his direct students?

As I said, he hand-picked people or they chose him. He started with two doctoral students at Sussex – David Arnold and David Hardiman – and two doctoral students at Oxford. The two Davids worked with Anthony Low who was later my supervisor as well in Canberra. The students from Oxford, Gyan Pandey and Shahid Amin, worked with Tapan Ray Chaudhuri for their doctoral degree. When I look back on this, I realise that this could not have been an easy situation for either Anthony and Tapana but they were both temperamentally generous

#### work that laid the foundation for Subaltern Studies worldwide?

Well, even if it did not lay down a universal foundation for subaltern studies worldwide – that would not have been Guha's claim either, for he always spoke of "convergences" of agendas and aspirations of different historiographies. Guha breathed new life into the word "subaltern" and the concept of subaltern histories that were relatively independent of elite actions. But Elementary Aspects was undoubtedly a novel work. It was truly heroic of Guha to examine closely the histories of more than a hundred peasant rebellions in nineteenth-century India and then build up a model for understanding patterns in collective rebellious behaviour of peasants, and to develop some deep insights into the insurgent consciousness that, Guha argued, underlay such behaviour.

How do you perceive the philosophical trajectory in Guha's thought, which encompassed Tagore to Hegel or the Indian tradition with modern European thought?

Guha thought of the discipline of history in the subcontinent as something that could not be separated, in its intellectual origins, from the history of the colonial state. For, colonial officials of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries wrote modern "histories" as part of administrative documents. Disciplinary history, for Guha, was thus what some might today call "colonial knowledge." It was part of

last twenty-five years of colonial rule, came under the influence of the Communist Party, understood the predicament of his own class, Bengali landlords and the bhadrolok generally, as being a result of colonial rules and policies. Gandhi interested him deeply – how could he not, it was Gandhi who connected the nationalisms of the urban and upper classes in India with the worlds of the peasantry. In fact, the last class Guha ever taught, as a visiting professor at the University of California at Santa Cruz, was on Gandhi. He also would have retained a long-term interest in peasant movements, given the history of Bengal in the 1940s. But the interest in writing about peasant insurgency probably arose out of his interactions with young Naxalites of Delhi in 1970 when he and his wife spent a year in the country on sabbatical leave.

Which were his other areas of interest besides history?

Philosophies of history and language. Also, philosophies of Sanskrit grammar, theories of enjoyment in Sanskrit (rasatattva), Tagore, Bengali poetry and literature in general.

How do you assess his later works, written in Bengali from Vienna, concerning literature and philosophy?

I cannot provide a thorough evaluation since I have yet to read them carefully. However, based on what I have seen, his works are filled with stimulating thoughts and questions.

What was Guha's opinion on the idea and formation of Hindutva in

#### a debate on historiography or the approach to writing history in South Asia?

I hope it does. That would be the best outcome. Among all the tributes, however, there has already been a piece that I thought was particularly ungenerous, intellectually speaking. But that's how often South Asian academics argue, by putting people down, by dismissing their contributions, by ridiculing them. Maybe all this will eventually give rise to a debate that can elevate itself above the rhetoric of insults.

Having known Ranajit Guha for nearly five decades and being one of his close associates, considering Guha's life, what advice would you give to young historians?

That is a tough one. Best not to give any advice. An intellectual biography of Guha, if ever written, will make for a fascinating story of one very gifted Bengali-Indian intellectual and historian, living in self-exile for the majority part of his life but forever focused on the country he chose to leave, trying to make historical sense of life and politics as he had seen them. Perhaps others will draw their own lessons – not just academic lessons but lessons for life – from the substantial number of writings he has left behind. For at the end of the day, Guha was as much an intellectual and thinker as he was a historian. I think it would be wrong to reduce him simply to that last category. He looked upon History, the discipline, as a gateway to more general forms of thinking.



Ranajit Guha (right) with his wife Mechthild in 2008.  
(Photo: Professor Nonica Datta).

conversation that created a sense of community among us. And because it was a group that was put together by him, it made you feel "chosen." He was special in that way. He did not much care for institutional conventions – this was not always well received by others – but this way he could build a sense of a group with a historiographic mission that had serious implications about how to understand modernity and the modern political in the context of South Asia.

Amartya Sen said Guha was the most imaginative Indian historian

## '5-6 captaincy candidates' in Shakib's absence

SPORTS REPORTER

With Shakib Al Hasan currently out injured with finger injury, the question has arisen on who would lead the Bangladesh Test side against Afghanistan on June 14. Under natural circumstances, the vice-captain comes in to lead the side but rumours are floating around that Liton Das does not want to lead the side in the match.

If Liton does not lead the side, the responsibility may fall to younger stars such as Mehedi Hasan Miraz or Nazmul Hossain Shanto. Former Bangladesh captain Akram Khan, current chairman of facilities, spoke to reporters regarding Miraz and Shanto.

"They are players of the future. When they were picked, some of the players had captaincy qualities. They have those qualities," Akram said.

He also put forward the notion that "five or six players" are candidates to take over responsibility as skipper in Shakib's absence but "it will depend on the current captain, selectors and coach".

BCB president Nazmul Hassan, however, is yet to hear about Liton's unwillingness to lead. "I talked to Shakib and he was hopeful of playing the Afghanistan ODIs and T20Is. In his absence the vice captain is supposed to take over but I haven't heard anything from Liton yet," the BCB president told The Daily Star yesterday.

## Murray pulls out of French Open

REUTERS

Former world number one Andy Murray has withdrawn from the French Open.

The 36-year-old, who has made just one appearance at Roland Garros since reaching the semi-finals in 2017, last month said he wanted another chance to play at the clay court Grand Slam while he is still fit and healthy.

Three-times Grand Slam champion Murray won the second-tier Aix-en-Provence Challenger Tour crown earlier this month, but suffered early exits in Monte Carlo, Madrid, Rome and Bordeaux.

The Scot, who reached the final of the French Open in 2016, has opted to skip tournaments during the claycourt season in the past to focus on the grasscourt swing heading into Wimbledon. In February, he said Wimbledon offered him the best chance of going deep at a Grand Slam.

The French Open runs from May 28 to June 11. Holder Rafa Nadal, who has won the French Open a record 14 times, also pulled out of the tournament after failing to regain full fitness from a hip injury. Australian Nick Kyrgios and Matteo Berrettini of Italy will also miss the tournament.



The Premier League and Manchester City's top-scorer Erling Haaland walks into the Etihad Stadium with fans cheering on the new champions of the Premier League on Sunday. City were also accorded a guard of honour as per the norm by Chelsea. Pep Guardiola's men clinched their third successive title just a day before second-placed Arsenal went down 1-0 away to Nottingham Forest.

PHOTO: AFP

## Guardiola mind games get the better of Arsenal

REUTERS

Arsenal's collapse in the Premier League title race showed they lacked the mentality and depth to dethrone Manchester City, but if there is any solace Mikel Arteta can take from the season is that they finally have a team that can be title contenders.

Arsenal's 1-0 loss at Nottingham Forest on Saturday brought the two-horse race to a premature end as Pep Guardiola's City were crowned champions with three games to spare, completing part one of a potential treble.

Having enjoyed the view from the top for nearly 250 days, Arsenal's title challenge crumbled in the face of a relentless, well-oiled winning machine that had been assembled and perfected over many years by Guardiola.

While Arteta and his players dismissed talk of "bottling" the title race, for their fans there is a crushing sense of what could have been.

Arsenal were eight points clear two months ago and appeared to be heading towards bagging their first league title since Arsene Wenger's 2003-04 'Invincibles'.

### GUARDIOLA MIND GAMES

But the eight-point gap was an illusion as City always had games in hand while Guardiola played mind games, effusive in his praise of Arsenal and Arteta, his former assistant at City.

"Our problem is Arsenal was amazing so far. They do really well," Guardiola had said in April. "We are still there but there is another one better than you. You have to

accept it, admit it and keep going."

As Arsenal stumbled with three straight draws last month, they glanced at the rear-view mirror and took their eyes off the road.

What started with Roberto Firmino's late equaliser in a 2-2 draw with Liverpool at Anfield, finished with Taiwo Awoniyi's winner on Saturday



Arsenal dropped 15 points in eight games.

Guardiola has seen his fair share of tense title races and even when Arsenal had three games to go, he gently applied more pressure.

"Definitely they are going to win their three games. I would like them to drop points to be honest, but I think they will

get nine points," he said as he flashed a knowing smile.

Arsenal lost two of those games without scoring, losing 3-0 at home to Brighton & Hove Albion before defeat at Forest.

City, meanwhile, banked on their experience in title run-ins to win all their games, even dismantling European powerhouses Bayern Munich and Real Madrid in the Champions League along the way.

The master had outshone the apprentice as Guardiola's side marched to their fifth league title in six seasons.

### SQUAD DEPTH

City's enviable squad depth has also been a major talking point with no outfield player clocking more than 3,000 minutes in an exhausting league season while Arsenal have had three led by Gabriel, Bukayo Saka and Martin Odegaard.

While Arteta had a starting line-up that challenged the best in the business, long-term injuries to key players -- such as defensive lynchpin William Saliba -- exposed the lack of capable backup players who could step in and do the job.

After playing out of their skins until April, Arsenal simply ran out of steam with no scope for player rotation.

"We wanted to squeeze everything that we had out of that group and find alternatives and ways to reach certain levels," Arteta said.

"We fell short and it is my job and my responsibility. I have to analyse that and think."

What to WATCH | Star Sports Select HD2 English Premier League Newcastle United vs Leicester City Live from 1:00 am (Tuesday)

## Boomers can qualify for semis, believes Nabil

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation has appointed David Dobarro Magan as national team's physiotherapist for next month's FIFA friendly against Cambodia and the subsequent SAFF Championship in India.

The appointment of the Spaniard was disclosed following a meeting of the National Teams Committee at the BFF yesterday. The meeting also decided to bring in David Gomez Gonzalez as assistant coach and Miguel Angel Anido Iglesias as goalkeeping coach, with both Spaniards being part of the team's coaching staff during March's home FIFA friendlies against Seychelles.



Kazi Nabil Ahmed, chairman of the NTC, informed that the Javier Cabrera-led side will leave Dhaka for Cambodia on June 10 for the June 15 friendly following a training camp, which will start on June 4 at Regency Hotel and Resorts in the capital. Shawkat Ali Khan Jahangir has been nominated as the team leader for the two assignments, he informed.

The BFF vice-president said despite having tough teams in the SAFF Championships, Bangladesh can still qualify for the semifinals.

"All teams are strong. Kuwait and Lebanon, the two invited teams, are way ahead in rankings. We will start against the strongest team (Lebanon)," Nabil said. "But I think we have chance to qualify if we play two good games."



Argentina's World Cup winning goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez is likely to come to Dhaka in July ahead of his scheduled visit to Kolkata. Satadru Dutta, an Indian sports promoter who brought football legends like Pele and Diego Maradona to Kolkata, is all set to bring the Argentina No. 1 to the city of joy. "Emiliano Martinez is probably the most popular Argentina player after Lionel Messi. So me and my partners are bringing him to Kolkata," the 43-year-old sports promoter told The Daily Star from Kolkata on Sunday.



Barcelona might have lost 2-1 to Real Sociedad but with the league title in the bag, there was an end-of-season feel at Camp Nou on Saturday. Despite the loss, Barcelona players were in a jolly mood, throwing manager Xavi Hernandez in the air as the Catalans celebrated their La Liga triumph, confirmed last week when they beat Espanyol 4-2 away from home.

PHOTO: BARCELONA

## 'Bayern can still win title'

AFP, Berlin

Bayern Munich captain Thomas Mueller said his side were not out of the Bundesliga title race after the 3-1 home loss against RB Leipzig on Saturday gave Borussia Dortmund the edge.

Dortmund can go two points clear with one round of games remaining by winning at Augsburg on Sunday, but Mueller, 33, was confident his side could come back.

"Of course" the veteran told Sky Sports Germany, "we can still be German champions."

"Dortmund still need to win twice and we'll see what happens."

"I've won a few championships, even when we weren't big favourites. There's still a chance."

Mueller, who came through the junior ranks at Bayern, has won 11 titles in Munich, including the last ten in a row.

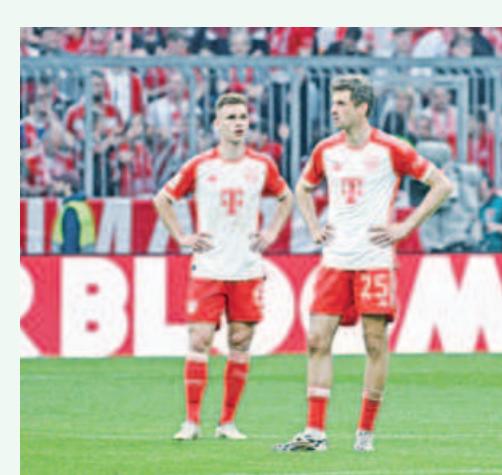
"They have to win both games and I want to see that first."

"If they do that then I congratulate them, but until then we'll be together and do everything we can to get three points next week."

Bayern manager Thomas Tuchel said "the season isn't over" but admitted that his side were not playing well enough.

"When you play so far below your level, then it's hard to win games and when it's hard to win games, it's hard to win (the title)."

Taking over from the sacked Julian Nagelsmann in late March, Tuchel has won just five of 11 matches in charge of Bayern, a period which has included elimination from the



Champions League and the German Cup.

Bayern's final game is at Cologne, while Dortmund play at home against Mainz, with the games kicking off simultaneously on Saturday.

A "deeply disappointed" Bayern CEO Oliver Kahn, who made the decision to sack Nagelsmann and replace him with Tuchel, said it was "bitter" that his side "did not have the title in our hands anymore."

"We had a giant chance to become German champions and we gave it away," he said.

"(Now) we're relying on other results on other pitches - but it's not over yet."

"It's only over when the referee in Cologne signals that it's over."

Brighton seal maiden European berth

REUTERS, Brighton

Brighton & Hove Albion ensured they will play in Europe next season for the first time in their history after beating Southampton 3-1 at the Amex Stadium in the Premier League on Sunday, with teenage striker Evan Ferguson scoring twice.

Brighton are sixth in the standings on 61 points and can no longer be caught by eighth-placed Tottenham Hotspur, meaning they are guaranteed a spot in Europe next season either in the Europa League or the Europa Conference League.

Brighton went ahead in the 29th minute through Ferguson's powerful effort. A moment of individual brilliance from Kauro Mitoma doubled Brighton's advantage 10 minutes later. Mohamed Elyounoussi pulled one back for Southampton in the 58th minute, but Pascal Gross wrapped up the win.



## CORRUPTION CASE

### Trial of Tarique, Zubaida begins in absentia



#### COURT CORRESPONDENT

The trial of a graft case filed against BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman and his wife Zubaida Rahman began at a Dhaka court yesterday.

It began with the complainant, ACC Deputy Director Mohammad Huda, testifying in the case filed in 2007 by the Anti Corruption Commission.

Zahirul, for over three hours, narrated how Tarique and Zubaida acquired money illegally.

The couple has been shown fugitives in the charge sheet. No lawyers defended them in court yesterday.

On April 13, the same court framed charges against them. Before that, the court dismissed a lawyer's petition seeking permission to defend them.

Tarique and Zubaida have been in

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No safety measure has been taken after the authorities dug up huge holes in the pavement to build a footbridge near Graphic Arts Institute on Satmasjid Road. Many students use this pavement. In poor light at night, the holes are hardly visible.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## DSA to be amended by September

Law minister says the changes will minimise its misuse

#### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Anisul Huq yesterday reiterated that some amendments will be brought to the Digital Security Act by September this year to minimise its misuse and ensure best practices.

"I have personally intervened in cases to ensure the Digital Security Act is not misused. However, I understand that we need a durable solution. Once we complete the review, some amendments will be made to ensure minimisation of the law's misuse."

"Some doubters may think I'm buying time, but that is far from the truth. I have said before and reiterate now that we will make the amendments by September," he said while speaking as the chief guest at a dialogue on "Digital Laws and Freedom of Opinion in Bangladesh" at Brac University.

The law minister said the DSA was not enacted to curb freedom of expression or control the media nor is being used to do so, as its purpose was to combat the cybercrimes.

"We have heard several speakers by now and learnt about different views. Dialogue and discussion are the key to a democratic society, therefore, the government of Bangladesh encourages consultations with a cross section of society as well as with international organisations. We have had lengthy discussions with the office of United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and have listened to its views. We received the inputs and these are being reviewed," said Anisul.

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## G7 offers Ukraine long-term support

**Zelensky laments Bakhmut 'tragedy', denies loss of the city to Russia**

#### REUTERS, Hiroshima

Leaders of the world's richest democracies said yesterday they would not back down from supporting Ukraine, in a warning to Russian President Vladimir Putin as he claimed to have taken the eastern city of Bakhmut, something Kyiv denied.

The Group of Seven (G7) summit in the Japanese city of Hiroshima was electrified this weekend by the arrival of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, who arrived on a French government plane to canvass for greater support against Russia's invasion.

Zelensky told reporters on the sidelines of the summit that the battered eastern city of Bakhmut, the focus of fighting in recent months, was destroyed.

"It is tragedy," Zelensky said. "There is nothing on this place" what remained was "a lot of dead Russians."

There was confusion over whether he had been asked if the city was still in Kyiv's hands or Russian forces had taken Bakhmut, but a Zelensky spokesperson said the comments were a denial the city had fallen.

Zelensky later made his way to Hiroshima's peace memorial, where he laid flowers at the cenotaph to victims of the world's first nuclear bombing.

During the final day of the three day G7 summit, US President Joe Biden announced a \$375 million package of military aid, including artillery and armoured vehicles, for Ukraine.

#### ROHINGYA REFUGEES

**China envoy visits Teknaf repatriation centre**

#### OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Yao Wen has visited the Rohingya repatriation centre in Cox's Bazar's Teknaf upazila.

The ambassador, accompanied by two other diplomats of the Chinese embassy, visited the centre at Kerontoli around 1:00pm on Saturday, said local administration sources.

His visit comes at a time when the issue of Rohingya repatriation is being widely discussed.

On April 18, a tripartite meeting among officials of Bangladesh, China and Myanmar was held at Kunming of China. The meeting decided to repatriate 1,176 Rohingya refugees under a pilot project in May this year.

Additional Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner Md Khalid Hossain and Teknaf's Nayapara Registered Refugee Camp in Charge Abdul Hannan accompanied the Chinese

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## It's time to reform UNSC

UN chief says global financial architecture failed to fulfil its core function

#### REUTERS, Hiroshima

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said yesterday that it was time to reform both the Security Council and Bretton Woods to align with the "realities of today's world".

Speaking at a press conference in Hiroshima, Japan, where the Group of Seven summit meeting had been held, Guterres said both institutions reflected the power relations of 1945 and needed to be updated.

"The global financial architecture became outdated, dysfunctional and unfair," he said. "In the face of the economic shocks from the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine, it has failed to fulfil its core function as a global safety net."

Guterres also spoke of how he felt that at the G7 summit there was a growing consciousness among developing countries that not enough was being done to reform outdated institutions or "remove the frustrations" of the Global South.

India's economy will grow over six percent this year and next, the International Monetary Fund said in its World Economic Outlook this January.

China and India together will account for about 50 percent of world growth in 2023, IMF chief economist



**"The global financial architecture became outdated, dysfunctional and unfair."**

Antonio Guterres, UN Secretary-General

and director of the research department Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas said at the time.

"We will see now what is the impact of the discussions that were held here in Hiroshima," Guterres said. "The G7 members were able to discuss with some of the most important emerging economies in the world."

G7 host Japan made a point of inviting figures from the so-called Global South to Hiroshima for talks. Invited included Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and Indonesian President Joko Widodo.



US President Joe Biden, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and other G7 leaders pose for a photo before a working session on Ukraine during the G7 summit in Hiroshima, Japan yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

## Scientists detect radioactive heat source inside Mars

#### INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

The main source of heat on Mars is from the decay over time of radioactive elements like Uranium -- deep in the Red Planet's interior, according to a new study.

Scientists, including those from ETH Zurich in Germany, also estimated the thickness of the Martian crust by analysing seismic data obtained by Nasa's InSight lander.

The research, published recently in the journal Geophysical Research Letters, assessed Marsquakes data, including a powerful 4.6-magnitude quake that struck the planet in May 2022, said to be the largest one recorded during the entire InSight mission.

"We were fortunate to observe this quake... This marsquake sent out strong seismic waves that travelled along the surface of Mars," study co-author Doyeon Kim from ETH Zurich said in a statement, adding that the waves "circled Mars up to three times".

By measuring how fast the waves propagated at different frequencies, researchers could gain insights into the interior structure of Mars at different depths.

The new analysis helped scientists determine the thickness of the Martian crust, which they found averages 42.56km (26.35 miles). In comparison, the average thickness of the Earth's crust ranges from 21-27km (13-17 miles).

## Indian police return remains of Bangladeshi after 9 months

#### OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Indian police handed over the remains of a Bangladeshi man to Bangladesh police at Bangabandha Check Post in Tenthula on Saturday almost nine months after his death.

Abdus Salam, 32, of Samura Kaharpura in Panchagarh Sadar was beaten to death by a mob at a village in Jalpaiguri of West Bengal on August 24, 2022.

Police said the mob thought he was a cattle thief.

Abdul Latif Mia, officer-in-charge of Panchagarh Sadar Police Station, said after Salam was killed, a case was filed with Rajganj Police Station.

When his family members came to know what had happened from social media, they informed the local administration.

Officials later started corresponding with their counterparts in India about Salam's body.

The victim's elder brother Alam said what remained of the body was almost a skeleton.