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'He was a director who elevated numerous stars'

Bracing for budget of self-preservation

ZINA TASREEN

In 2019, when AHM Mustafa Kamal took charge as the finance minister, the Bangladesh economy was taxing for take-off for its long-haul flight to the developed country club.

Four years later, it failed to fly into the air, as Kamal refrained from opening the throttle to increase the engine power needed for the economy to take off.

For the Bangladesh economy, the throttle is the tax revenue collection, which would enable the government to make the expenditure needed to level up GDP growth in an equitable manner.

As per the original flight schedule, the budget for fiscal 2023-24 would have been the one priming the Bangladesh economy for cruise control in the post LDC-world.

But Kamal's bolting for the auto-pilot mode from the onset has left the economy ill-positioned to withstand the adverse conditions of the global coronavirus pandemic and the Ukraine war – even while on the runway.

Subsequently, the budget that he is set to unveil today, his fifth as the finance minister, has become one of survival amid spiralling inflation, depleting reserves, rising poverty and slowing economic activities.

And whether he manages to succeed in barely

that is also in question given the narrow fiscal space, which got narrower during his term.

When he took charge, Bangladesh's tax-GDP ratio was in the neighbourhood of 10 percent. Now, it is about 7.5 percent is the lowest in South Asia, and on average, almost 5 percent less than lower middle-income countries, according to a study by the International Growth Centre.

It is for this reason that he did not go for an expansionary budget amid the pandemic, when most countries in the world were going for one to prevent a hard landing of their economies from the worst global economic and public health crisis in recent memory.

And it is for this reason, he is unable to provide the funds needed to extend adequate cash support to the poor and the low-income people to cushion themselves from the vagaries of inflation, which averaged 8.85 percent in the first ten months of the fiscal year and way above the budgetary target of 5.6 percent.

What he can manage at best is a token amount that would not be of much help to this demographic amid the high prices of essentials.

This would unravel the decades of gains made in poverty alleviation – and would be stepping back in time. Already there are signs of this

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



A BIWTA excavator knocks down a warehouse of Metro Courier, illegally built on the Turag, during an eviction drive in Savar's Birulia yesterday. The authorities plan to install demarcation pillars and construct walkways along the riverbanks to protect the water body from encroachment.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

BUSINESS

Moody's cuts ratings for 6 local banks

US-based global ratings agency Moody's Investors Service yesterday downgraded the credit rating of six local banks by one notch, a day after it cut the sovereign credit rating for Bangladesh.

The banks are Brac, City, Dutch Bangla, Eastern, NCC and Premier.

Selim RF Hussain, chairman of the Association of Bankers, Bangladesh, says the credit rating for the banks slipped by one notch automatically as the country's rating has been downgraded.

STORY ON B1

Foreign debt servicing likely to soar by 45pc

REJAU KARIM BYRON

The government's foreign debt servicing burden may rise by as much as 45 percent in the next fiscal year due to the devaluation of taka and higher utilisation of foreign loans in recent years.

About Tk 24,700 crore would be set aside in fiscal 2023-24's budget for foreign loan repayment, according to finance ministry officials.

It is about \$2.42 billion considering the current exchange rate of Tk 102 for a dollar.

In the outgoing fiscal year, Tk 17,000 crore was initially allocated for this overhead, which was later revised upwards to Tk 18,150 crore. The revised allocation is about \$1.78 billion considering the current exchange rate.

The higher allocation is due to the slide in the value of taka in recent times, said a finance ministry official.

Taka has depreciated by about 23 percent against the dollar in the past year.

Besides, Bangladesh's use of foreign funding has increased in recent years, hitting a peak of \$10 billion in fiscal 2021-22.

This fiscal year, the government is projected to utilise foreign assistance of around \$12 billion.

Different mega projects including the Dhaka metro rail, Matarbari port and coal-fired power project, are being implemented in full swing and with it, more foreign funds are being used.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

SAFETY NET PROGRAMMES

Slice for the poor only gets thinner

MD ASADUZ ZAMAN

Although budgetary allocation for social safety net programmes has increased over the past 13 years, the share of compatible programmes has declined significantly.

Compatible social safety net programmes (SSNPs) mean such programmes that actually provide protection to poor and vulnerable people. For example, old age allowance; allowances for the widowed, deserted and destitute women; and allowances for people with disability who are financially insolvent.

Over the years, the list of safety net programmes, however, has included loosely related or completely unrelated programmes that do not have much to do with protection of vulnerable groups of people. Examples include pension for retired government officials, agriculture subsidies, and various credit programmes and infrastructure projects.

The Centre for Policy Dialogue has made these observations in its review report titled "State of the Bangladesh Economy in FY2022-23". Citing the government's allocation of Tk 1.13 lakh crore for 115 social security programmes in the current fiscal, the report says that Tk 33,966 crore or only 29.7 percent of the total allocation is used for compatible safety net programmes.

In the 2009-10 fiscal year, the share of

compatible SSNPs was as high as 62.2 percent, says the CPD report.

Terming the completely unrelated programmes non-compatible, the report says that the share of such programmes has risen to 65.5 percent of total allocation in the current fiscal, which was only 25.5 percent in FY 2010.

The list of safety net programmes has included over the years loosely related or completely unrelated programmes that don't have much to do with protection of vulnerable groups of people.

"While it can be argued that fringe elements need to be included to make a comprehensive list, the inclusion of completely unrelated programmes raises questions as to whether the intention was to inflate the statistics in the first place," says the report.

In the current fiscal, Tk 28,037 crore is allocated for the pension of retired government officials, Tk 12,500 crore for agricultural subsidies, and Tk 7,907 crore for savings certificate interest assistance.

The share of non-compatible programmes

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

Govt trying its best to keep the economy vibrant: PM

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said the government is making all-out efforts to keep the country's economy vibrant despite the global economic recession caused by the Russia-Ukraine war and the Covid-19 pandemic.

The premier was responding to a question from Awami League MP M Abdul Latif (Chattogram-11) during the question-answer session in parliament yesterday.

The PM's answers to the lawmakers' questions were tabled in the House, with Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury in the chair.

Yesterday, the Jatiya Sangsad went into its budget session around 5:00pm.

Hasina said the government has been able to quickly bring the country's

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



28 arrested in DSA cases last month

Almost all BNP activists; the number was eight in April, says rights body

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 28 people were arrested under the Digital Security Act across the country in May, and only one of them was not a BNP activist, according to a report by Manabdhikar Shongskriti Foundation.

In April, eight people, including a journalist, a teen, and a BNP activist, were arrested in seven cases filed under the act, said the report signed by its founding president Sultana Kamal.

The report released yesterday was based on reports published by 18 media outlets. The news reports were verified by rights activists, it said.

The rights body strongly condemns the government's failure to address the violations of human rights.

According to the report, the misuse of the DSA persisted in May when six of the DSA cases were filed for "tarnishing the images" of either the country or Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, high-ranking government officials and members of the ruling party on social media.

Two DSA cases were filed in Faridpur and Rajbari, against BNP activists and leaders.

Besides, a Narayanganj court issued an arrest warrant for a journalist for publishing an article about Narayanganj-4 MP AKM Shamim Osman.

The DSA is being abused to keep people from expressing their opinions and to intimidate and silence them, it said, adding that at least 45 journalists were humiliated, harassed, and tortured in May.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



This used to be a hillock at Doripura village in Narsingdi's Shibpur upazila. The owner has illegally sold off the soil to brick kilns, caring little about the damage done to the environment. Locals said that mobile courts often raid the area and fine errant owners, but the raids fail to stop the activity.

PHOTO: JAHIDUL ISLAM

New visa policy USA's own affair

Says home boss after meeting with Haas

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan has said it is the USA's concern who they will allow to enter the country and who they won't.

Speaking to reporters at the secretariat after a meeting with US Ambassador Peter Haas yesterday, the minister said the envoy wanted feedback on the American visa policy for Bangladeshis who "undermine the democratic election process".

The ambassador also enquired why the extra police security facilities for some envoys were withdrawn suddenly, the minister added.

The visa policy was not adopted targeting any particular person, rather it was adopted so that a fair election could be held, the minister quoted Haas as saying.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

PASSENGER'S HEART ATTACK

Biman fires captain for negligence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Biman has fired Capt Dildar Ahmed Tufail for negligence in duty while captaining a flight on January 15.

He was reportedly napping in the crew rest area, leaving the cockpit of the Boeing 777 300ER technically unmanned.

A passenger had a heart attack during the overnight flight to Dhaka from Jeddah.

Capt Tufail did not declare medical emergency and landed the plane in Dhaka four hours after the incident.

The passenger, Kabir Ahmed, a migrant worker from Noakhali, was pronounced dead on arrival at a city hospital.

Aviation rules allow captains to take rest on flights longer than 8 hours, but only when a relief crew, which is usually on standby, takes over.

There was no relief crew as this was only a six-hour flight.

The cockpit is supposed to be manned by two pilots capable of flying the plane independently if required.

On this particular flight, Capt Tufail was the pilot in command. He had Irfan Ul Haq beside him who was under training and not qualified to fly the plane. The flight was actually Irfan's test flight.

Capt Fariduzzaman, a retired pilot, was evaluating Irfan from the jump seat in the cockpit. He also didn't have a pilot's licence as he was well over the age limit of 65 for being a pilot.

According to sources, when Capt Tufail went into the rest area, he left the plane in the hands of people who are not authorised to fly the plane.

Following an announcement by the cabin crew, a doctor on board, ABM Haroon, managing director of Samorita Hospital, advised emergency landing.

According to aviation rules, in such cases, a "medical emergency" is to be raised by the pilot, which notifies every nearby airport of a possible arrival with the need for emergency medical support.

However, Tufail did not divert or raise the alarm, confirmed civil aviation insiders looking into the event. The mandatory air safety report was also not filed after the flight.

Following an investigation, Biman authorities found evidence of Capt Tufail's negligence and served him a show-cause notice.

As the authorities were not convinced by his reply, Biman fired him.



A view shows destroyed vehicles following what was said to be Ukrainian forces' shelling in the course of Russia-Ukraine conflict in the town of Shebekino in the Belgorod region, Russia, in this handout image released yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Russia reports attacks on oil refineries, town

Ukrainian shelling kills five in Russian-occupied Luhansk; four hurt in a town in Belgorod border region

REUTERS, Moscow/Kyiv

Russia said Ukrainian artillery hit a Russian town for a third time this week and drones struck two oil refineries in an uptick in attacks on Russian territory as Ukraine prepares a Western-backed push to end Russia's invasion.

Inside Ukraine, Russian-installed officials said five people had been killed in Ukrainian army shelling of a Russian-occupied village in eastern Luhansk region, where Russia has fought months of bloody and inconclusive battles to try to seize more territory.

There was no immediate comment from Ukraine on the Russian reports, in a week when the two countries accused each other of spreading terror in their capitals with air strikes.

Thousands of civilians have been killed in Ukraine and towns and cities laid to waste since Moscow's forces invaded 15 months ago, but Tuesday marked only the second time Moscow had come under direct fire - from a flurry of drones - although oil and military facilities elsewhere in Russia have been hit.

In the Russian town of Shebekino in Belgorod border region, two of four wounded people were hospitalised and

shells damaged an apartment building, four homes and a school as well as power lines, regional governor Vyacheslav Gladkov said.

Gladkov said on Saturday that he had come under artillery fire when trying to enter the town, about 7 km north of the border with Ukraine, and that two industrial facilities were hit there on Monday.

Both sides say they are targeting the buildup of each other's forces and military equipment ahead of Ukraine's counteroffensive, which it says will come in days or weeks, to try to drive Russian forces out of its east and south.

Germany, once Russia's biggest energy market, reiterated that it deemed such Ukrainian attacks on Russian soil legitimate in terms of international law, and announced a sharp downgrading of diplomatic representation in both Russia and Germany.

Ukraine's general staff said its forces had fended off 22 Russian attacks in eastern Ukraine over the past day and Ukrainian aircraft had carried out 11 strikes on Russian personnel and military equipment, without specifying where.

Noab demands withdrawal of tax, duties on newsprint

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Newspaper Owners Association of Bangladesh has demanded the withdrawal of taxes and duties on newsprint in the budget for the fiscal year 2023-24.

In a press release yesterday, Noab said it made the demands during a pre-budget discussion with the National Board of Revenue. The release mentioned that NBR Chairman Abu Hena Md Rahmatul Muneem promised to consider the demands.

The release, signed by Noab President AK Azad, said newspapers have become a struggling industry in the era of globalisation and digital media. Due to the pandemic, there has been a significant decline in newspaper circulation and advertisements, making it impossible to cover production costs with advertising income.

The statement mentioned that even a year and a half ago, the price of foreign newsprint was \$570 a tonne when a dollar was worth Tk 85, but now it has risen to over \$700 and a dollar is worth Tk 109.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

PM may visit Switzerland this month

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is likely to visit Switzerland to attend the "World of Work Summit: Social Justice for All" to be held in Geneva on June 14-15.



The summit is a high-level forum for global voices to address the need for increased, coordinated and coherent action in support of social justice.

It will provide an opportunity to discuss and inform the proposal to forge a Global Coalition for Social Justice, which was welcomed by the Governing Body of the International Labour Office at its 347th Session.

Once finalised, the PM will visit Geneva from June 13 to June 16, a diplomatic source told UNB.

The summit will feature addresses by heads of state and government, UN secretary general, ILO director-general and high-level representatives of employers' and workers' organisations.

It will provide a forum for participants to share their vision of, and priorities for, social justice and to showcase the actions they are taking and they commit to take to advance social justice.

Man dies falling from roof of CU shuttle train

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A man was killed after falling from the roof of a shuttle train of Chittagong University at Chowdhury Hat Railway Station yesterday afternoon.

The dead is Mohammad Yasin, 30, of Fatehpur village in Chattogram's Hathazari upazila, said police.

Yasin boarded the train from the Chittagong University Station. He tried to climb to the roof when the train was approaching Chowdhury Hat Station around 2:00pm, said witnesses.

He then fell down and seriously hurt himself, they added.

The CU students and locals took him to a nearby clinic, but doctors there referred him to Chattogram Medical College Hospital.

CMCH doctors declared him dead around 2:50pm, said Nurul Alam, in-charge at Chattogram Medical College Hospital's police camp.

Woman found dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

Police yesterday recovered the body of an unidentified woman from a building in Savar's Bank Colony area.

The victim is aged around 35, said Zahirul Islam, sub-inspector of Savar Model Police Station, adding that her body was found in a plastic sack under the staircase of the building.

Police primarily suspect the woman was suffocated to death, he added.

A team of Police Bureau of Investigation is working to identify the body, said Dipok Chandra Saha, officer-in-charge of Savar Model Police Station.

Meanwhile, police arrested a man for quizzing.

EU chief hails 'big progress' in Moldova membership bid

AFP, Chisinau

Brussels chief Ursula von der Leyen congratulated Moldova's President Maia Sandu yesterday on making "big progress" in the reforms required to back a bid for European Union membership.

The President of the European Commission was making a joint press appearance in Moldova's capital Chisinau, on the eve of a major summit of European leaders.

"Moldova is at the heart of Europe. Moldova is Europe. And today and tomorrow, the whole of Europe is Moldova," von der Leyen said.

Moldova hopes that its hosting of dozens of leaders at today's European Political Community (EPC) summit will showcase the strength of its European ambition.

28 arrested

FROM PAGE 1

According to the report, 545 political activists were injured during 35 political events and in electoral violence.

At least 24 cases filed against BNP men led to the arrest and imprisonment of 565 leaders and activists.

However, the BNP has claimed that between May 19 and May 24, at least 650 of its leaders and activists were arrested across the country and 148 cases were filed against 5,000 BNP men.

Meanwhile, violence against women and children continues to rise as 457 cases of violence against women and children were filed in May. Ninety-three of those were rape cases.

There have been seven incidents of persecution of religious and ethnic minorities at various levels, it adds.

At least 11 people died in prison in May.

Bracing for budget of self-preservation

FROM PAGE 1

happening, as disclosed by a recent survey of the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies: in 2022, 51 percent of Dhaka's total poor were new.

In other words, had Kamal managed to ramp up the government's revenue base in line with the economic progress, the Bangladesh economy would not be staggering from the blows of the Ukraine war more than a year on, when much of the world has learnt to live with it.

Neither would it have to desperately seek budget support from development partners nor would it need to borrow heavily from banks and the Bangladesh Bank, which is fuelling inflation further.

It really seems like a losing battle, one that could have been managed with grace had Kamal worked on boosting the tax morale of the citizens during his time in office.

As of April, less than 2 percent of the population pays tax, which is more than 6 percent in neighbouring India.

Tax morale is the intrinsic motivation to pay taxes and voluntary compliance of taxpayers is a vital aspect of the tax system. It depends on the citizens' trust in the government and their satisfaction with the quality of public services received.

Corruption, especially extreme

levels of corruption, can significantly erode people's trust in the system leading to tax evasion. On the other hand, corruption in tax administration can also create opportunities to evade taxes.

Therefore, corruption can be both a reason and a tool for tax evasion. And Kamal failed to work on either.

Cost overruns in projects are always accommodated and low-priority projects were given funding. In 2022, Bangladesh was the 12th most corrupt country in the world second-most corrupt country in South Asia, according to Transparency International's Global Corruption Perception Index.

In the four years, he could neither make much headway in automating the tax administration, which would have addressed corruption in the National Board of Revenue nor expand the capacity of the organisation to be able to expand the tax net meaningfully.

Neither did he show any resolve in pushing for VAT and income tax laws befitting an economy in the 21st century, which would have made evasion costlier.

Studies show that people evade paying taxes payment when the cost of evasion is smaller than the benefits from it. Taxes are evaded because paying the bribe along with the small chance of getting caught are much

he said.

According to the CPD report, the allocation for compatible safety net programmes has declined from 1.6 percent of GDP in FY 2010 to 0.8 percent of GDP in FY 2023. In terms of the national budget, it has declined from 9.5 percent in FY 2010 to 5.0 percent in FY 2023.

The government should increase financial allocations for social safety net programmes in order to provide relief to the poor from the pressures of upcoming economic reforms, said

less costly than paying the requisite level of tax.

Similarly, the tax collectors may find it more rewarding to get paid by the taxpayers than waiting to be rewarded by the authorities for recording and collecting the correct tax payments.

Kamal continued to extend tax exemption to industries, which is not only costing the state in missed revenues but is also failing to get businesses to prepare for the competitive post-LDC world.

The narrow fiscal space also means the government was found wanting in social spending, again leaving it ill-prepared to face the challenges of graduation from the least-developed country bracket.

Which is why, today's budget holds much significance: it would be a test of the current government and Kamal's resolve and sincerity in lassoing the economy back from heading back into the hangar.

Already, the International Monetary Fund has provided guidelines on what needs doing in the upcoming fiscal year's budget in terms of revenue mobilisation, social spending, development spending and deficit financing.

It remains to be seen whether the government heeds the good advice or reverts to type.

Khan.

Referring to a study conducted by the CPD in 2020, Khan said that around 65.6 percent of the country's households that receive financial assistance under the government's social safety net programmes are ineligible for the scheme as they belong to the non-poor category.

The government should remove ineligible beneficiaries and focus on ensuring that the benefits from these safety net programmes reach the right people, added Khan.

Govt trying its best

FROM PAGE 1

economy to the path of high pre-Covid growth through dealing with the negative impacts resulting from the global economic recession, inflation and instability caused by the pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war.

"Despite the severe crisis during the Covid-19 pandemic, our GDP growth was 3.45 percent in the 2019-20 fiscal year, which was one of the highest in the world during that period," she said.

The leader of the House said the GDP growth increased to 6.94 percent in the FY 2020-21 due to various steps taken by the government to boost the country's economy. "It further increased to 7.10 percent in FY 2021-22."

She highlighted various measures,

including rationalisation of government expenditures, subsidies given to the power, energy and agriculture sectors, and incentives on exports, taken by her government to keep the economy vibrant.

Responding to another question from Jatiya Party MP Syed Abu Hossain, Hasina said the government has taken different steps to control prices of essentials and that's why it has been possible to control the prices, and the poor people are benefiting from it.

Replying to a query from JP MP Rustam Ali Farazi, the premier said that it will be possible to start rail services on the Dhaka-Mawa-Bhanga section of the Padma Bridge Rail Link Project by September and the Bhanga-Jashore section from June 2024.

New visa policy

FROM PAGE 1

"I have informed them that issuing visas is an internal matter of a country.... The announcement they made on the issuance of visas is their own matter," he said.

The home boss said the US wants a fair election in Bangladesh.

"The US has expressed enthusiasm about it [election] and we welcome the visa policy for that."

Asked if more US sanctions were on the way, the minister said, "It is a matter of the US. I don't know what they will do."

Regarding escorts to certain envoys on roads, Asaduzzaman said that he told the US ambassador that the security for them was being changed and the foreign missions concerned were also informed about the matter by the foreign ministry.

He said the US envoy was told about the government providing them with security with the Ansar Guard Regiment.

Arrangements will be made to

ensure security in the diplomatic areas and also during the movements of diplomats, he added.

The government on May 15 withdrew "additional police escorts" given to the heads of missions of four countries - the US, the UK, India, and Saudi Arabia.

Earlier, the home minister had said if any envoy thought that they needed additional security, then the new Ansar Guard Regiment would give protection.

Foreign debt

FROM PAGE 1

The debt servicing cost is increasing as the interest payment for these project's loans is gradually rising, according to an Economic Relations Division (ERD) official.

In the next fiscal year, the government would be using foreign loans and grant of about Tk 127,190 crore, of which about Tk 29,290 crore would be taken as budget support, which is equivalent to \$2.87 billion.

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Heatwave likely to continue for a week



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mild to moderate heatwave that the country is experiencing currently will likely to continue for a week, said Meteorological Department.

On Wednesday, Rajshahi saw the highest temperature 38.6 degree Celsius while Dhaka's mercury was 37.2 as per daily bulletin of the Met Department. The lowest temperature 23.3 degree Celsius was recorded in Tetulia, Rangpur.

Abul Kalam Mollik, a meteorologist, told The Daily Star that sunshine duration increased in absence of cloud and there is less pace in the air.

"The heatwave is likely to continue for a week. The temperature could vary from 36 to 40 degree Celsius. The moisture content in the air is less than 60 percent which turned the air dry resulting in no sweating....," he added.

Mohammed Ibrahim who sells clothes on a rickshaw-van at the capital's Panthapath told The Daily Star that the rising temperature is making their job difficult as he has to spend most of his days on the street.

"Although the temperature is mild in the morning, it gets hotter as the day progresses," he added.



People getting on the metro rail at Agargaon station yesterday. From now on the metro rail will run from 8:00am to 8:00pm six days a week. As per the new schedule, weekly closure will be changed from Tuesday to Friday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Metro to run from 8:00am to 8:00pm

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

From now on the metro rail will run from 8:00am to 8:00pm six days a week.

Mahfuz Rahman, manager of Dhaka Mass Transit Company Limited (DMTCL), confirmed to The Daily Star that the metro rail started following the new schedule from yesterday morning.

As per the new schedule, weekly closure of the metro rail will be changed from Tuesday to Friday.

Trains will run every 10 minutes from 8:00am to 11:00pm (peak hours), every 15 minutes from 11:01am to 3:00pm (off-peak), every 10 minutes from 3:01pm to 6:00pm (peak), and every 15 minutes from 6:01pm to 8:00pm (off-peak), he added.

Earlier, the operating hours of Dhaka Metro Rail was from 8:00am to 2:00pm.

Metro rail services will be closed on the day of Eid-ul-Azha, according to DMTCL.

Pay Tk 12cr tax on gifts to 3 charitable trusts

HC asks Yunus

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday said Nobel Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus will have to pay Tk 12 crore as tax on the money he gifted to his three charitable trusts.

The bench of Justice Muhammad Khurshid Alam Sarkar and Justice Sardar Md Rashed Jahangir gave the verdict after dismissing three applications filed by Yunus challenging the tax liability imposed on the money gifted by him to the trusts.

Details of the verdict could not be known as its full text has not been released yet.

According to the case documents, Yunus donated Tk 76.73 crore to three trusts – "Professor Muhammad Yunus Trust", "Yunus Family Trust" and "Yunus Centre" – in the tax years 2011-2012 and 2013-2014.

The commissioner of taxes imposed a "gift tax" worth Tk 15.4 crore on the donated money.

Yunus filed appeals with the Tax Appellate Tribunal challenging the imposition of taxes on the donated money. However, the Tax Appellate Tribunal upheld the decision of the Deputy Commissioner of Taxes (DCT). Before filing the appeals, he deposited over Tk 3 crore to the tax office.

After hearing the applications, the HC on April 2, 2015 stayed the operation of the government notifications issued for realising the demanded tax. Recently the attorney general's office took an initiative for holding hearing on the applications.

Accordingly, the HC held hearing on the matters yesterday.

PRAYER TIMING		JUNE 1	
Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-05	12-45	5-00	6-45 8-15
JAMAAT 4-40	1-15	5-15	6-50 8-45
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION			

Dengue danger clear and present

Cases cross 1,000 mark in May, breaking previous records

HELEMUL ALAM

The number of dengue patients crossed the 1,000 mark in May this year, which is five times higher than the same month in 2019. In 2019, the country saw over 1,00,000 dengue patients, the highest in the country since its first outbreak in Bangladesh in 2000.

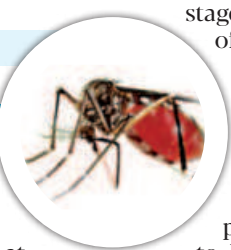
According to the DGHS, the number of dengue cases in May was 163, 273, 10, 193, 52 and 114 in 2022, 2021, 2020, 2019, 2018 and 2017 respectively. This year, the number rose to 1,036. A total of 13 patients have died after being infected with the mosquito-borne disease.

Stressing the need for hot spot management, entomologist Prof Kabirul Bashar of Jahangirnagar University said the authorities will have to conduct drives in the areas from where dengue patients are coming. Killing adult mosquitoes is now very important as mosquitoes in those areas are infected with dengue virus, he added.

"Raising awareness and anti-mosquito drives are crucial. Getting tested for dengue and staying inside a mosquito net after catching fever are also compulsory measures," he added. "Apart from the city corporations, it is the role

of every citizen to be aware of dengue mosquitoes. They must check their houses and yards at least once a week to check for any stagnant source of water. Moreover, those who get affected

Year	Number of Cases in May
2023	1,036
2022	163
2021	273
2020	10
2019	193
2018	52
2017	114



a second time must be hospitalised, as they are more vulnerable."

According to DGHS, at least 95 dengue patients were hospitalised across the country in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning. The total number of dengue patients rose to 2,022.

HM Nazmul Ahsan, associate professor at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital, said, "Dengue is still under control but it may spread further if necessary measures are not taken immediately. Windows and doors

must remain shut in the morning and evening as Aedes mosquitoes normally bite during these times. Mosquito repellents can prove to be beneficial."

Nazmul also mentioned some symptoms and said when the signs are noticed, the patient must be hospitalised. These signs include severe stomach pain, vomiting, breathing problems, blood in nose, gums, vomit or stools, weakness and a significant decrease in platelet counts, he said.

"A patient can reach a critical stage within 24 to 48 hours of showing these signs. Immediate treatment can cure most patients in this stage. Patients with heart, kidney, and liver complications, cancer patients and pregnant women have to be taken under special supervision by the hospitals," said Nazmul.

Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh yesterday said it is not possible to control dengue by only applying insecticide.

Addressing a programme at Basabo, he said they are distributing leaflets to all households to make people aware of the menace.

Govt bans first-class travel for employees

STAR REPORT

The government has issued a directive banning first-class travel for all government employees till further notice under expenditure rationalisation initiatives.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina signed a directive in this regard on Tuesday.

Earlier, responding to a question at the parliament, Hasina said her government has taken all possible initiatives necessary to keep the country's economy vibrant despite the global economic recession caused by the Ukraine-Russia war and the pandemic.

The premier highlighted various measures including government expenditure rationalisation, social protection, subsidies in electricity, energy and agriculture sectors, export incentives taken by her government.

In November last year, the government banned foreign travels of all public employees until further notice in an austerity measure. Some of the restrictions on expenditure, however, were relaxed in March this year.

GRAFT CASE

Deposition on amid chaos at courtroom

COURT CORRESPONDENT

One more prosecution witness gave his deposition before a Dhaka court in a graft case filed against BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman and his wife Zubaida Rahman yesterday.

The witness gave his deposition amid chaos as a faction of pro-BNP lawyers tried to foil the trial proceedings. They gathered in front of the packed courtroom and shouted slogans. But prosecution lawyers drove them away, assistant Public Prosecutor Hemayet Uddin Khan told The Daily Star.

The pro-BNP lawyers later held a rally on the court premises around 3:00pm, shouting slogans for the withdrawal of the "false" case.

Meanwhile, Judge Md Asaduzzaman of Dhaka Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court recorded the statement of Md Shah Alam, deputy administrative officer of Dhaka deputy commissioner office.

On Tuesday, two prosecution witnesses gave statements amid chaos at the court. Like yesterday, a group of pro-BNP lawyers entered the courtroom and demanded suspension of recording depositions. The court resumed recording depositions around 6:00pm after the law enforcers drove away the pro-BNP lawyers from the courtroom.

On September 26, 2007, ACC filed the case with Kafrul Police Station against the two and Zubaida's mother 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.



Tarique



Zubaida

TURAG BANKS Eight illegal structures demolished

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority yesterday demolished eight illegal structures on the bank of Turag in Dhaka's Birulia.

The establishments -- warehouses of Maliha and Metro Courier -- occupied 5 acres of land, said AKM Arif Uddin, a director (land and estate) of BIWTA.

The unauthorised construction on the riverbank obstructed the river's natural flow, said BIWTA officials. The eviction drive took place from 10:00am to 5:00pm.

AKM Arif Uddin said as part of the ongoing efforts, the authority is planning to construct walkways along the riverbank.

Polls can't be fair under AL govt

Alleges Fakhru

UNB, Dhaka



BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir yesterday said it is now a fact that elections can never be free, fair and credible under the current Awami League government.

Addressing the biennial general meeting of a faction of Dhaka Union of Journalists at Jatiya Press Club, he also said if the election is not participatory, it will not be accepted as per the country's constitution.

He alleged the government has already snatched the people's freedom of expression and voting rights to cement its power.

Fakhru also said it is now recognised in the world that there is no place for independent journalism in Bangladesh.

As Bangladesh is now completely in the hands of an authoritarian ruler, he said freedom of the press, the main pillar of democracy, has been regulated here by the regime to meet their needs.

"They (govt) are hindering people's freedom to dissent and the right to vote by applying excessive force to establish a one-party rule," he added.



Ignoring a sign that reads "No Parking", an array of cars can be seen parked on a road near the Dainik Bangla intersection in the capital's Motijheel area. This photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

constant threat'

Civil society leaders tell Oikya Parishad discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With the unprecedented rise of communalism in the country, religious minorities are under the threat of violence and conflict from different vested quarters, said minority leaders at a discussion yesterday.

The discussion, titled "National Election 2024: Rights of Religious-Ethnic Minority People", was organised by Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Oikya Parishad at the seminar room of the Institution of Engineers.

Participating in the discussion, rights activist Sultana Kamal said,

"Bangladesh has been communalised under the patronage of the state. It does not matter whether Jamaat has been banned or not, as the ruling Awami League itself is currently implementing Jamaat's agenda."

Eminent economist Debapriya Bhattacharya said the country has become even more communal despite the pro-liberation forces being in power for the last one and-a-half decades.

Shahriar Kabir, president of Ekattorer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee, said, "Awami League has isolated itself from the spirit of the Liberation War. They have

now joined hands with Hefazat-e-Islam, betraying the constitution and the spirit of the Liberation War."

Rights activist Khushi Kabir said, "Under the current political climate, the demand for the abolition of Islam as the state religion should be strongly raised."

Rana Dasgupta, general secretary of the Oikya Parishad, said, "In the previous national and local-level elections, we have seen people from the minority communities being targeted for violence. Despite drawing attention to this issue in the past from all political circles, including the Election

Commission, no one has done anything in this regard." Cultural activist Ramendu Majumdar said, "I think communalism has increased tenfold since the Pakistan era. I don't think I will live to see a secular Bangladesh." Trustees of Liberation War Museum Dr Sarwar Ali and Mofidul Haque, Barrister Tania Amir, Educationalist Prof Mezbah Kamal, Dhaka University Teachers Association President Prof Nizamul Hoque Bhuiyan also spoke at the discussion, presided over by Nim Chandra Bhowmik, president of the Oikya Parishad.

In the previous national and local-level elections, we have seen minorities being targeted for violence. Despite drawing attention to this issue, no one has done anything about it.

GS of Oikya Parishad

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Poster pollution plagues Khulna

FROM PAGE 5
Khaleque asked the EC
to allow them to use
laminated plastics during

a meeting held at Khulna's Shilpakala Auditorium on Tuesday.

University's Department of Environmental Sciences.

"Even city corporation officials are worried over

Abdul Aziz, chief conservancy officer of KCC, said posters are collected and sorted before they are dumped in Batiaghata's Thikrabadh area. "We sell the plastic materials via a tender after the polls. However, peeling off the plastics from the papers is a difficult task," he added.

Mahfuzur Rahman Mukul, divisional coordinator of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association, said, "It is disappointing to see future leaders making such calls just for the sake of campaigning."

KCC's Returning Officer Md Alauddin said, "We are yet to fine anyone but we have issued multiple warnings in this regard."

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Bangladesh Agro-Processors' Association (BAPA)

বাগ্মা/নির্বাচন ২০২৩-২০২৪/৮(১)/২০২৩/১৮৮


তারিখঃ ৩০/০৫/২০২৩

বাংলাদেশ এগ্রো-প্রসেসরস' এসোসিয়েশন (বাগ্মা)-এর ২০২৩-২০২৪ মেয়াদে দ্বি-বার্ষিক নির্বাচনী তফসিল ঘোষণা

বাংলাদেশ এগ্রো-প্রসেসরস' এসোসিয়েশন (বাগ্মা)-এর সম্মতি সাধারণ সদস্যগণের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, এই এসোসিয়েশনের ২০২৩-২০২৪ দ্বি-বার্ষিক মেয়াদে কার্যনির্বাহী কমিটির নির্বাচন আগামী ০২ সেপ্টেম্বর ২০২৩ তারিখ রোজ শনিবার নাভানা নিউবেরি ট্রেস, ফ্লাট # ডি-৬, ৭ম তলা, ৪/১/এ সোবহানবাগ, ধাকমন্ডি, ঢাকায় নিম্নবর্ণিত তফসিল (নির্বাচন সিডিউল) অনুযায়ী অনুষ্ঠিত হচ্ছে।

ক্র. নং	বিবরণ	তারিখ	দিন ও সময়
০১	নির্বাচন তফসিল ঘোষণা।	৩০-০৫-২০২৩	মঙ্গলবার
০২	ভোটার তালিকায় ভোটারের নাম অন্তর্ভুক্তির জন্য সদস্যগণের ৩০শে জুন ২০২৩ পর্যন্ত বার্ষিক ফি সহ এসোসিয়েশনের সকল বকেয়া পাওনা পরিশোধের শেষ তারিখ।	০৪-০৭-২০২৩	মঙ্গলবার, বিকাল ৫.০০টা পর্যন্ত
০৩	প্রাথমিক ভোটার তালিকা প্রকাশের তারিখ (নোটিশ বোর্ডে প্রকাশিত হবে)।	১৩-০৭-২০২৩	বৃহস্পতিবার, বিকাল ৫.০০টা
০৪	প্রাথমিক ভোটার তালিকার উপর আপত্তি থাকলে নির্বাচন আপীল বোর্ডের নিকট আপত্তি দাখিলের শেষ তারিখ।	১৮-০৭-২০২৩	মঙ্গলবার, বিকাল ৫.০০টা পর্যন্ত
০৫	নির্বাচন আপীল বোর্ড কর্তৃক আপত্তি স্তন্যী ও নিষ্পত্তির শেষ তারিখ।	২০-০৭-২০২৩	বৃহস্পতিবার, বিকাল ৫.০০টায়
০৬	নির্বাচন বোর্ড কর্তৃক চূড়ান্ত ভোটার তালিকা প্রকাশ (নোটিশ বোর্ডে প্রকাশিত হবে)।	২৩-০৭-২০২৩	রবিবার, বিকাল ৫.০০টায়
০৭	নির্বাচন বোর্ডের নিকট হতে নির্বাচন প্রার্থীর মনোনয়নপত্র সংগ্রহ।	বিতরণ ২৯-০৭-২০২৩ ২০২৩ হইতে	শনিবার, সকাল ১০.০০ টা হতে বুধবার, বিকাল ৪.০০টা পর্যন্ত
০৮	মনোনয়নপত্র দাখিলের শেষ তারিখ।	০২-০৮-২০২৩	শনিবার, বিকাল ৪.০০টায়
০৯	নির্বাচন বোর্ড কর্তৃক মনোনয়ন পত্র বাছাই ও বৈধ প্রার্থীর তালিকা প্রকাশের তারিখ (নোটিশ বোর্ডে প্রকাশিত হবে)।	০৫-০৮-২০২৩	মঙ্গলবার, বিকাল ৪.০০টা পর্যন্ত
১০	মনোনয়ন পত্র বাতিল সম্পর্কিত আপত্তি নির্বাচন আপীল বোর্ডের নিকট দাখিলের শেষ তারিখ।	০৮-০৮-২০২৩	বৃহস্পতিবার, বিকাল ৪.০০টায়
১১	নির্বাচন আপীল বোর্ড কর্তৃক মনোনয়নপত্র বাতিল সম্পর্কে দাখিলকৃত আপত্তির স্তন্যী ও নিষ্পত্তির শেষ তারিখ।	১০-০৮-২০২৩	বৃহস্পতিবার, বিকাল ৪.০০টায়
১২	বৈধ প্রার্থীদের তালিকা প্রকাশের শেষ তারিখ।	১২-০৮-২০২৩	শনিবার, বিকাল ৫.০০টায়
১৩	প্রাথমিক প্রস্তাবায়ের শেষ তারিখ।	১৭-০৮-২০২৩	বৃহস্পতিবার, বিকাল ৪.০০টা পর্যন্ত
১৪	প্রার্থীর চূড়ান্ত তালিকা প্রকাশ (নোটিশ বোর্ডে প্রকাশিত হবে)।	১৮-০৮-২০২৩	শনিবার, বিকাল ৫.০০টায়
১৫	নির্বাচন অনুষ্ঠানের তারিখ ও ফলাফল নাভানা নিউবেরি ট্রেস, ফ্লাট # ডি-৬, ৪/১/এ সোবহানবাগ, ঢাকা এসোসিয়েশনের কার্যালয়। (প্রয়োজনে স্থান পরিবর্তন হতে পারে)	০২-০৯-২০২৩	শনিবার, সকাল ১০.০০ টা হতে বিকাল ৪.০০ টা পর্যন্ত
১৬	ভোট গণনা ও ফলাফল প্রকাশ।	০২-০৯-২০২৩	শনিবার, ভোট গণনা শেষে ফলাফল প্রকাশ
১৭	কর্মকর্তা (সভাপতি, সচিব সহ-সভাপতি, সহ-সভাপতি, সাধারণ সম্পাদক ও কোষাধ্যক্ষ) পদের জন্য মনোনয়নপত্র সংগ্রহ।	০৩-০৯-২০২৩	রবিবার, সকাল ১০.০০ হতে দুপুর ২.০০ টা পর্যন্ত
১৮	কর্মকর্তা পদের জন্য মনোনয়নপত্র দাখিলের শেষ তারিখ।	০৩-০৯-২০২৩	রবিবার, সকাল ৪.০০ টা পর্যন্ত
১৯	মনোনয়নপত্র বাছাই ও চূড়ান্ত-প্রার্থীর তালিকা প্রকাশ (এসোসিয়েশনের নোটিশ বোর্ডে)।	০৩-০৯-২০২৩	রবিবার, বিকাল ৫.০০ টায়
২০	নির্বাচিত কার্যনির্বাহী সদস্যগণের ভোটে কর্মকর্তা নির্বাচন।	০৪-০৯-২০২৩	সোমবার, দুপুর ১.০০ টায়
২১	কর্মকর্তা নির্বাচনের ফলাফল ঘোষণা (এসোসিয়েশনের নোটিশ বোর্ডে)।	০৪-০৯-২০২৩	সোমবার, ভোট গণনা শেষে ফলাফল ঘোষণা
২২	নির্বাচন ফলাফল সংক্রান্ত আপত্তি থাকলে নির্বাচন আপীল বোর্ডের নিকট দাখিল।	০৭-০৯-২০২৩	বৃহস্পতিবার, বিকাল ৫.০০টা পর্যন্ত
২৩	নির্বাচন ফলাফল সংক্রান্ত আপত্তি নির্বাচন আপীল বোর্ড কর্তৃক স্তন্যী ও নিষ্পত্তি।	০৯-০৯-২০২৩	শনিবার, বিকাল ৩.০০ টায়
২৪	নির্বাচন বোর্ড কর্তৃক চূড়ান্ত ফলাফল প্রকাশ।	১০-০৯-২০২৩	রবিবার, বিকাল ৫.০০টায়।


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	<p>Memo No. 53.23.0000.001.03.054.23-4653 Date: 01.06.23</p>	
<p align="center">REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (ReOI) (CONSULTING SERVICES - FIRMS SELECTION)</p>		
<p>Country: Bangladesh Name of Project: Recovery and Advancement of Informal Sector Employment (RAISE) Credit No: 6841-BD Assignment Title: Selection of a consulting firm for developing curriculum & module for different sectoral (Construction, Light Engineering, Leather, and RMG) Business Management Training. Reference No: PKSF/RAISE/S-02 The Government of Bangladesh has received finance from the World Bank and implementing an economic inclusion program through the Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF) for low-income, less-educated urban youth, for low-income microentrepreneurs and self-employed in urban areas whose livelihoods have been impacted by COVID-19. PKSF intends to provide business management and entrepreneurship development training to the young micro-entrepreneurs in the selected urban and peri-urban communities within the selected areas of Bangladesh. In order to develop capacities of MEs in managing their businesses, technical skills development training (4 hours X 6 days = 24 hours) will be provided in a participatory modality throughout the Bangladesh. This assignment focuses on four broad sectors namely-(1) Ready-made Garments (RMG) (2) Leather Goods and Footwear, (3) Construction and (4) Light Engineering sectors. I. The selected firm will perform the following duties and responsibilities as per ToR, mentionably- a) Determine key skills gaps that the training would address; b) Conduct regular meeting with the PMU, number of partner organizations and contextualize the relevant curricula for Bangladesh and the target population; c) Develop competency standards and manuals based on the Competency Based Learning Materials (CBLM) method and conduct several workshops; d) Develop a ToF module, facilitation guideline and conduct ToF to orient the PMU-PKSF and PIU staffs; II. The shortlisting criteria are: a) Nature of the core business and general experience of the Firm; b) Experience in similar assignments of compatible size, complexity and technical specialty in required areas; c) Financial Soundness, staffing and logistics of the firm; Consultants are requested to submit the following supporting documents in support of the above-mentioned criteria: 1. Up to Date Relevant Legal Papers of the Firm's including Trade license, TIN, VAT, Income Tax Assessment Certificate/ Acknowledgement; 2. JV Agreement/Letter of Intent (if applicable)</p>	<p>along with the proposed JV agreement [Maximum of two (2)]; 3. Firm's brochure including staffing and logistics (Such as: permanent employees, expert pool, office nos. and space, office equipment, manpower, and other available resources); 4. Strong financial capability will be required (Need to submit ONLY signed Income statement and Balance sheet from last 3 years' audit report); 5. Any relevant licenses, certification, and accreditation 6. All other items necessary to substantiate satisfaction of the shortlisting criteria listed above and/or included in the TOR; However, Key experts will not be evaluated at the shortlisting stage. III. The attention of interested IT/Consulting firms is drawn to Section III, paragraphs-3.14, 3.16 and 3.17 of the World Bank's "Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers" November 2020 ("Procurement Regulations"), setting forth with the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest. IV. Consultants may associate with other firms (Maximum two) to enhance their qualifications but should indicate clearly whether the association is in the form of a Joint Venture and/or a Sub-consultancy. In the case of a joint venture, all the partners in the joint venture shall be jointly and severally liable for the entire contract, if selected. V. A Consultant will be selected in accordance with the Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS) method set out in the procurement regulations. VI. Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours, 0900 to 1600 hours. The detailed Term of Reference (TOR) for the assignment can be downloaded from www.pksf.org.bd website or can be obtained upon request from the address below or either by e-mail or in person during the office hours (Local Time: 09:00 to 16:00 hours). VII. Expression of Interest (EOI) must be delivered in a written form (One original and one soft copy in a pen-drive or CD) to the address below (in-person, or by mail) by 15 June 2023 on or before 14:00 hours (UTC+6 hours). VIII. The Procuring Entity (PE) reserves the right to accept or reject any or all EOI's without assigning any reason whatsoever.</p>	
<p align="right">AQM Golam Mawla Deputy Managing Director-2, PKSF Email: raise.procurement@gmail.com</p>		

SYLHET CITY POLLS

One mayor,
7 councillor
candidates get
back candidacy

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

One independent mayor candidate and seven councillor candidates of Sylhet City Corporation polls, whose nominations were initially cancelled for breaching electoral code, got their candidacies back.

However, two more independent mayor candidates – Md Abdul Mannan Khan and Jahid Uddin Chowdhury – and two councillor candidates' appeals were dismissed.

After hearing the appeals on Tuesday, Sylhet Divisional Commissioner Dr Muhammad Mosharraf Hossain decided on the nominations, confirmed Jakariya, additional divisional commissioner (revenue) and director of local government.

The mayor candidate Md Shahjahan Miah regained his candidacy.

Councillor candidates of reserved women's seats – Shyamali Sarkar, Tahmina Begum and Kamrun Nahar Chowdhury – got their candidacies back.

Of the regular councillor candidates, Md Fakhrul Islam, Abu Sadek Mohammad Khairul Islam Chowdhury, Md Rafiqul Islam and Md Shahab Uddin regained their candidacies.

SCC polls is slated for June 21. Nominations of candidates were received by May 23 and selection from the nominations was completed on May 25.

Candidates will start campaigning after symbol distribution on June 2.



Despite directives from the Election Commission, candidates and their supporters keep on using plastic laminated posters to campaign for the upcoming Khulna city polls, ignoring the environmental impact of the non-biodegradable substance. The photo was taken near Boyra police lines yesterday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Poster pollution
plagues KhulnaExperts, officials raise concern over plastic
menace, environmental impact

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

Despite advocating in favour of creating a green city, the mayoral and councillor candidates have covered Khulna's all 31 wards with plastic laminated posters ahead of the Khulna city polls, which are scheduled for June 12.

Defying strict directives from the Election Commission against using plastics to cover the posters, all 180 candidates, including five mayoral candidates, have decided to laminate their posters to keep them intact from rain and dust.

According to the candidates, around 15 to 18 lakh posters were printed after the symbols were allocated on May 26.

Upon visiting the wards, this correspondent saw how the entire area has donned a cape of plastic-covered posters. Hundreds of laminated posters with smiling photos of the candidates were hanging from different places, even near the Khulna police lines area.

A majority of the councillor candidates and Awami League's mayoral pick Talukder Abdul

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

4 die in road crashes

STAR REPORT

At least four people died in road accidents in Panchagarh and Jhenidah yesterday.

In Panchagarh's Debiganj upazila, Touhidul Islam, 35, Sheikh, 48, Saleque, 35, and Almas Ali, 56 – all residents of Titopara – died after their bike hit a tractor parked on the Debiganj-Boda road.

In Jhenidah's Kaliganj upazila, Roni Islam, 32, run over by a lorry while he was talking on the phone near Mobarakganj Sugar Mills, said police.

He was declared dead at the upazila health complex.



SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC)

BARC Complex, Farmgate
Dhaka – 1215, Bangladesh

Vacancy Announcement

SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC) is inviting application from Bangladeshi nation for the position of Senior Program Officer (Publication).

Details shall be available at SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC) and in website: <http://www.sac.org.bd>.

All Applications should reach to Director, SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC), BARC Complex, Farmgate, Dhaka-1215, Bangladesh not later than **20th June 2023**.

Canvassing of any form will disqualify the candidate.

All rights reserved by the authority.

Director, SAC

GD-955

জেলা পরিষদ কার্যালয়
খুলনা
www.zpkhulna.com

শেখ হাসিনার মূলনীতি
গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি

স্মারক নম্বর: জেপস/প্রকৌঃ/তিন-০৭/৫৯/২০২২-২০২৩/১০৫ তারিখ: ৩১/৫/২০২৩

e-Tender Notice No. 02/2022-23

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following Tender ID & Packages.

SL No.	Tender ID No.	Package No. & name of works	Tender last selling date & time	Tender closing & opening date & time
1.	833351	e-GP/ZPK/2022-23/W-12 Construction of Khulna Zila Parishad Jam-E-Mosque under Khulna Sadar, Khulna.	25/06/2023, 16:00	26/06/2023, 12:00

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 registered bank's branches up to **16.00, Date: 25 Jun-2023**.

Further information, scheme details and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

[N.B-Details Notice Board]

M. A. Aleya Khatun
31-05-23
Aleya Khatun
Assistant Engineer
Zila Parishad, Khulna

GD-958

Govt. of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Bangladesh Jute Research Institute
Manik Mia Avenue, Dhaka-1207
www.bjri.gov.bd
Phone: 58151241, E-mail: dg@bjri.gov.bd

Ref. no. 12.23.2680.006.07.121.19. 3835 Date: 31-05-2023

e-Tender Notice

e-Tender is invited in the national e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement as below:

SL No.	Tender ID	Procurement Method	Name of Works	Tender Publication Date & Time	Tender last selling Date & Time
1	840483	OTM	Procurement of Laboratory equipment	31-May-2023 16:00	11-Jun-2023 16:00

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. Interested Persons/Firms can see details in the website: <http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>

(Dr. S. M. Mahub Ali)
31/05/2023
Director (Admin & Finance)
BJRI, Dhaka

GD-962

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
কাস্টমস, এক্সাইজ ও ভ্যাট কমিশনারেট, চট্টগ্রাম
সরকারী কার্যভবন-০৯, আগ্রাবাদ, চট্টগ্রাম-৮১০০

নথি নং: ০৮.০১.২০০০.২০২.৫৪.০১.২০২৩.৩৪৫২ তারিখ: জ্যৈষ্ঠ ১৪৩০ বঙ্গাব্দ
৩১ মে ২০২৩ খ্রিষ্টাব্দ

সংশোধিত বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, কাস্টমস, এক্সাইজ ও ভ্যাট কমিশনারেট চট্টগ্রামের ১১-২০তম গ্রেডের জনবল নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে সিপাই পদে আবেদনকারীদের শারীরিক যোগ্যতা যাচাই পরীক্ষা নিম্নোক্ত ছক মোতাবেক অনুষ্ঠিত হবে।

ক্রঃনং	পরীক্ষার তারিখ	সময়	রোল নং	পরীক্ষার স্থান
১	০৫-০৬-২০২৩ খ্রিঃ	সকাল	২০০০০০০১- ২০০০৩৩৫০	কাস্টমস, এক্সাইজ ও ভ্যাট ট্রেনিং একাডেমি, সাগরিকা রোড, চট্টগ্রাম
২	০৬-০৬-২০২৩ খ্রিঃ	০৯:০০	২০০০৩৩৫১- ২০০০৬৭০০	
৩	০৭-০৬-২০২৩ খ্রিঃ	ঘটিকা	২০০০৬৭০১- ২০০১০০৫৯	

০২। উক্ত ছক মোতাবেক নির্দিষ্ট তারিখ ও সময়ে সংশ্লিষ্ট রোল নম্বরের প্রার্থীদের প্রবেশ পত্রের রশ্মিন প্রিন্ট নিয়ে কাস্টমস, এক্সাইজ ও ভ্যাট ট্রেনিং একাডেমি, সাগরিকা রোড, চট্টগ্রামের মাঠে সকাল ০৯.০০ ঘটিকায় উপস্থিত হওয়ার জন্য নির্দেশ প্রদান করা হলো।

০৩। শূন্য শারীরিক পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ আবেদনকারীরা ০৯ জুন, ২০২৩ খ্রিঃ তারিখ সকাল ১০:০০ ঘটিকায় অনুষ্ঠিতব্য লিখিত পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণ করতে পারবে।

(মোহাম্মদ মাহমুদুল হাসান)
31-5-23
অতিরিক্ত কমিশনার ও সভাপতি
বিভাগীয় নিবচন কমিটি
ফোন নং: ০২৩৩৩৩২১৪৩২

GD-961



(From L-R) Mamunur Rashid, Abul Hayat, Aruna Biswas, Jeetu Ahsan, Mahfuz Ahmed

PHOTOS: STAR AND COLLECTED

‘He was a director who elevated numerous stars’

Artistes remember Mohan Khan

Renowned writer-director Mohan Khan, was a powerful presence in the entertainment industry. Over the years, he directed over five hundred projects. Many famed artistes began their journey in showbiz by working in his projects. Sadly, the director had been unwell for quite some time now. On May 30, he passed away.



Mohan Khan

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Remembering his legacy, many artistes came forward to share a few words about the late director with The Daily Star.

He was always there whenever I needed him: Mamunur Rashid

Mohan Khan was one of my favourite people. He was always there for me whenever I needed him. In addition to being an excellent writer and director, he was also an accomplished organiser. After working together for so many years, Mohan Khan became a person very close to my heart. With his departure, the one thing I believe is that he left us too soon.

His passing has saddened me and our industry greatly. Even now, his smiling face flashes before my eyes again and again.

He was a family man: Abul Hayat

Mohan Khan was a family man and treated everyone like his family. The two of us were very close. I am really saddened to hear the news of his passing. I knew him for many years. Even though, in recent years, we did not work together as much, we were still in touch. It's really sad that he left us so soon. Now, all we can do is pray for him. May the Almighty bless him.

He was a star director who elevated numerous artistes: Aruna Biswas

I have done quite a few projects with Mohan Khan. Amongst the numerous people we meet in our lives, it's truly hard to find someone who is always lively and happy. He was just that—always happy and smiling. I have never seen him sad in all the years that I have known him. Above all else, he was a family man, who deeply cared about his wife and children. For him, family always came first.

Mohan Khan was an excellent director and writer. He held a unique fondness for the sea, which is why for many of us, being on his projects meant going close to the sea.

He was a star director who elevated numerous artistes. My son and Mohan's son go to the same school, which is why we became close friends. We have many memories together. I still remember how we used to gather at his house during Pahela Baishakh for *adda*, and *kacchi*. But from today on, those beautiful events will only be memories.

I would fondly call him Mohan kaka: Jeetu Ahsan

I have known Mohan Khan since 1988. We first met during the production of BTV's *Jonaki Jole*. I worked in his tele-fiction *Bhalobasha*

Ek Nodir Nam. I used to fondly call him Mohon *kaka*. Since then, I have worked on a lot of his projects and have shared countless, beautiful memories with him.

His projects always took us close to the sea—to Cox's Bazar. Now, when I visit Cox's Bazar in the future, I will always miss him whenever I am there. He was someone who always kept everyone happy and smiling during shooting.

Mohan bhai, please forgive me: Mahfuz Ahmed
I met Mohan bhai way before my acting career, when I was a student at Dhaka University and used to write for various newspapers. At that time, Mohan bhai was also a student of Dhaka University and had also been a journalist for some time. After we met, we bonded over time. He even called me and gave me a job at a newspaper.

He had it all, he was good-looking and smart with a beautiful heart. Moreover, Mohan bhai always had this unique charm that made everyone around him feel happy and closer to him.

My memories with Mohan bhai are flashing before my eyes, and I am left thinking—you have left us so soon, Mohan bhai. Were you really in such a hurry?

I have no way to console myself. I shared such a long and beautiful friendship with him, yet I haven't tried to meet up with him for so many years. I could not meet him, even in his last days. Have we all turned so selfish? Otherwise, we would've at least called him now and then.

I should've kept in touch with him, all these years. I don't know if he will forgive me, I am saying this now, Mohan bhai, please forgive me.

COUNTRYWIDE

Magura litchi growers, traders eye good profit

AZIBOR RAHMAN

Litchi growers and traders in Magura are expecting good profits this season due to high yield and better prices of their produce.

Local litchi growers said the yield is quite high this year due to favourable weather condition and hope to earn a good profit then the previous years.

Harvesting of the mouth-watering fruit started from April 15 and will continue till mid-June.

Currently they are passing busy time in harvesting the Bombay variety, growers said.

According to Magura Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE), around 640 hectares of land in four upazilas of the district have been brought under litchi cultivation this year, while the target was around 8,975 tonnes.

Alongside the Bombay variety, different local varieties of litchis are being produced at Hazrapur, Sachani, Lautara, Baromile, Ramnagar, Dariapur and Nandalalpur villages in Magura Sadar upazila.

A number of farmers said as the soil of the district is suitable for litchi cultivation litchi orchards need little care all the year round.

They applied compost fertilizer and phosphate and got a good production

due to favourable weather this year.

Farmer Moslem Sardar of Hazrapur village said he has a total of 125 litchi trees in his orchard.

Fortunately, as there was no natural disaster like storm or untimely rainfall this season he got about 14,000 to 15,000 litchis from each tree, which was only 6,000 to 6,500 last year, Moslem said.

Ohid Hossain, a litchi trader from Sachani village said Magura's litchi is very tasty and it has a good demand in other parts of the country, especially in the capital.

Every year, wholesalers from different districts across the country come to the district to buy litchi and sale those to different markets, Ohid said, adding that he bought four separate orchards at Sachini and Hazrapur villages for Tk 2 lakh.

Rokeya Khatun, a female worker, said she earns Tk 500 daily by sorting litchi at a local orchard.

Magura DAE Deputy Director Sufi Mohammad Rafikuzzaman said farmers got good yield of litchi as there was no storm or pest attack this season.

He said harvesting of litchi and its trade creates a short-term job opportunity for nearly 25,000 workers, including girls and housewives.

Noab demands withdrawal of tax

FROM PAGE 2

Currently, newsprint is subject to a 5 percent import duty, along with an additional 15 percent VAT, 5 percent Advance Income Tax, and 5 percent Advance Tax and with costs of insurance, bank charges, and transportation fees added, the cost of newsprint becomes 30 percent more.

Given the state of the newspaper industry, it is crucial that these duties are withdrawn.

Noab also demanded that corporate tax on newspapers be set between 10 and 15 percent, and that raw materials be exempted from being taxed at source.

It believes that it is necessary to allocate a portion of government incentives to the newspaper industry in order to save it.

Not EC's job to make anyone

FROM PAGE 12

of negligence or remain silent even after noticing irregularities.

The CEC said election officials should ensure that no unauthorised person are present at the polling booths, adding that the commission would monitor the election from its office in the capital via CCTV cameras.

Awal said no presiding officers should feel that they are alone at the polling centres. "People get frightened when you are alone in any crisis. The Election Commission and the administration are with you always."

He also urged the polls officials not to take their jobs lightly. "Use your authority while working as election officials."



A man checks the destruction of parts of a house reportedly attacked by Israeli settlers, in the West Bank village of Jalud, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Army suspends ceasefire

FROM PAGE 12

"despite repeated violations" by the army.

Sudan has a history of political upheaval, coups and conflicts, but violence has usually hit regions far from Khartoum. This time, fighting has centred on the capital, an urban sprawl at the confluence of the Blue and White Nile rivers and home to millions of people.

Commenting on the Sudanese army's withdrawal from the Jeddah talks, Mohamed El Hacen Lebat, African Union spokesperson on the crisis in Sudan, said: "It is not surprising. It happens often. We hope the mediator will succeed to bring both parties for working on expected ceasefire."

The capital has seen widespread looting and frequent power and water supply cuts. Most hospitals have stopped functioning.

Before the ceasefire deal was renewed, an army source said the army had demanded the RSF withdraw from civilian homes and hospitals as a condition for an extension.

After the five-day extension was agreed, talks continued on the truce terms.

The truce has been brokered and is being remotely monitored by Saudi Arabia and the United States. They say it has been violated by both sides, although the truce has still allowed the delivery of aid to an estimated 2 million people.

Demand for recognition on agenda

FROM PAGE 12

It said the 1971 genocide in Bangladesh was planned and perpetrated by the Pakistan military aided by their Bihari and Bangalee collaborators. It is one of the world's gravest mass atrocities witnessed after the World War II, reports our diplomatic correspondent.

Three million people were killed, over 2 lakh women were sexually and physically violated, and 10 million people were forced to cross the border into India, leaving behind their ancestral homes and worldly possessions just to save their lives and dignity of their women. Also, over 20 million citizens were internally displaced in search of safety.

The statement said the act of evil committed by the Pakistan military was a foolish attempt to change the Bangalee race. The Pakistan army used organised and systematic rape as a weapon of war.

Also, the Pakistan army and its collaborators, namely Razakars, Al-Badr and Al-Shams, under orders from the army high command, systematically killed intellectuals and professionals of Bangladesh. This spiteful and evil act stood out amongst the mass indiscriminate killings of civilians. This act was designed to cripple the country intellectually.

The statement referred to the historic documents and academic

research in support of the demand and a bipartisan resolution tabled in the US House of Representative last year, calling for the recognition of the 1971 genocide in Bangladesh.

It called upon the UN General Assembly and other international entities to formally recognise the Bangladesh genocide of 1971 to give justice to the victims of the atrocities and bring the perpetrators to justice.

"We believe that only through confronting the past with sincerity and truth, rising above narrow political interests, we can acknowledge our shared humanity and join hands for a safer, peaceful world."



Workers sort litchi at an orchard in Hazrapur area of Magura Sadar upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

India is not what the media shows

Says Rahul Gandhi

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has accused India's BJP government of "threatening" the people and "misusing" the country's probe agencies, and attacked the Indian media for projecting a narrative that suits the saffron party.

Speaking at an Indian diaspora event in Santa Clara, California, on Tuesday, Gandhi claimed the BJP and the RSS are controlling all the instruments of politics in India.

"The BJP is threatening people and misusing government agencies. The Bharat Jodo Yatra started because all the instruments that we needed to connect with the people were controlled by the BJP-RSS," he said.

"We were also finding that in some way, it had become quite difficult to act politically. And that's why we decided to walk from the southernmost tip of India to Srinagar," he said.

Rahul Gandhi alleged India is not what is being shown in the media which likes to promote a political narrative that is far from reality, claiming there is a "huge distortion".

"It was very clear to me in the Yatra that it's in the media's interest to project these things, it helps the BJP. So, don't think that everything you see in the media is the truth," he said.

EXPULSION OF INDIAN JOURNOS

China says it took 'appropriate' action

REUTERS, Beijing

China said yesterday it had taken "appropriate" action in response to India's unfair treatment of Chinese journalists, in the latest episode to highlight tense relations between the big Asian neighbours.

The Wall Street Journal reported on Tuesday that China and India had ejected nearly all of each other's journalists in recent weeks.

Citing people familiar with the matter, the newspaper said India had this month declined to renew the visas of the last two Chinese state media journalists in India.

Meanwhile, at least two Indian reporters had not been granted visas to return to China and a third was told that his accreditation had been revoked. A Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson, asked about the report, said Chinese reporters had been treated unfairly in India for years.

"What I can tell you is that for a long time, Chinese journalists have suffered unfair and discriminatory treatment in India, and in 2017, the Indian side shortened the visa validity of Chinese journalists to three months or even one month for no reason," the spokesperson, Mao Ning, told a briefing.

UN COURT VERDICT

Milosevic aides handed longer jail terms

AFP, The Hague

A UN court sentenced two of late Serbian president Slobodan Milosevic's spy chiefs to 15 years in jail on appeal yesterday in the last major Hague war crimes trial from the 1990s Bosnian conflict.

Judges rejected appeals by former state security service boss Jovica Stanisic and his deputy Franko Simatovic against their 2021 convictions, and added three years to their original sentences of 12 years.

EVEREST 'DEATH ZONE' RESCUE

Nepali sherpa saves Malaysian climber

REUTERS, Kathmandu

A Malaysian climber narrowly survived after a Nepali sherpa guide hauled him down from below the summit of Mount Everest in a "very rare" high altitude rescue, a government official said yesterday.

Gelje Sherpa, 30, was guiding a Chinese client to the 8,849 metre (29,032 feet) Everest summit on May 18 when he saw the Malaysian climber clinging to a rope and shivering from extreme cold in the area called the "death zone", where temperatures can dip to minus 30 degrees Celsius (86F) or lower.

Gelje hauled the climber 600 metres (1,900 feet) down from the Balcony area

to the South Col, over a period of about six hours, where Nima Tahi Sherpa, another guide, joined the rescue.

"We wrapped the climber in a sleeping mat, dragged him on the snow or carried him in turns on our backs to camp III," Gelje said.

A helicopter using a long line then lifted him from the 7,162-metre (23,500 feet) high Camp III down to base camp.

"It is almost impossible to rescue climbers at that altitude," Department of Tourism official Bigyan Koirala told Reuters. "It is a very rare operation."

Gelje said he convinced his Chinese client to give up his summit attempt and descend the mountain, saying it was important for him to rescue the climber.



Activists of the All Tribal Students Union Manipur (ATSUM) hold placards during a protest amid ongoing ethnic violence in India's northeastern Manipur state, in New Delhi, India yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

SOUTH CHINA SEA FIGHTER JET INCIDENT

Beijing blames US 'provocation'

AFP, Beijing

Beijing yesterday blamed US "provocation" for an incident last week in which a Chinese plane crossed in front of an American surveillance aircraft over the South China Sea.

The incident comes at a time of frayed ties between Washington and Beijing over issues including Taiwan, which China regards as its territory, and the shooting down of an alleged Chinese spy balloon that flew over the United States this year.

"The United States' long-term and frequent sending of ships and planes to conduct close surveillance on China seriously harms China's national sovereignty and security," foreign ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said when asked about the latest incident.

"This kind of provocative, dangerous

activity is the cause of the security issues on the seas," Mao said, calling on Washington to "immediately stop this form of dangerous provocation".

"China will continue to take all necessary steps to resolutely protect its own sovereignty and security," she said.

US military said on Tuesday a Chinese fighter pilot performed an "unnecessarily aggressive maneuver" near an American surveillance aircraft operating over South China Sea last week.

Video footage released by US military shows a Chinese fighter plane crossing in front of American aircraft.

The Chinese plane "flew directly in front of and within 400 feet of the nose of the RC-135, forcing the US aircraft to fly through its wake turbulence" on Friday, the Indo-Pacific Command said in a statement.

Bail for ex-Pak PM extended until June 19

REUTERS, Karachi

The bail for Pakistan's former prime minister Imran Khan has been extended until June 19 in the Al Qadir Trust graft case, his lawyer said yesterday.

Khan's May 9 arrest sparked widespread protests by his supporters, raising fresh worries about the stability of the nuclear-armed country as it struggles with its worst economic crisis in decades. He has denied any wrongdoing.

He was freed on bail on May 12 for an initial two weeks. Yesterday, he got a three-day bail extension from a high court and later a further extension from trial court until June 19.

COOPERATION TALKS

Top Chinese intel official visits Myanmar

AFP, Yangon


A top Chinese intelligence official has visited Myanmar to discuss military "cooperation" with the junta, Myanmar state media reported yesterday, the latest high-profile delegation sent by Beijing to its internationally isolated ally. Myanmar has been in turmoil since a 2021 coup that sparked renewed clashes with ethnic rebels and the formation of dozens of "People's Defence Forces" now battling the junta. It is the first publicly reported visit by a military official from China, a major ally and arms supplier of the junta, since the coup. Major-General Yang Yang, acting director-general of the Intelligence Bureau of the Joint Staff Department of China's Central Military Commission, met the junta's number two official, Soe Win, for talks on "cooperation between the two armies", state media said. The two also discussed "cooperation in peace, tranquillity and development programmes for border areas" at the Tuesday meeting, according to state-run newspaper Global New Light of Myanmar.

North Korea 'spy satellite' crashes into sea

AFP, Seoul

North Korea attempted to launch a spy satellite yesterday but it crashed into the sea after a rocket failure, with the South Korean military retrieving part of the likely wreckage in a potential intelligence bonanza. North Korea does not have a functioning satellite in space and leader Kim Jong Un has made developing a military spy satellite a top priority for his regime, despite UN resolutions banning its use of such technology. Pyongyang had said in the build-up to the launch attempt that the satellite would be vital to monitoring the military movements of the United States and its allies. But the rocket lost thrust and plunged into the sea with its satellite payload, the official Korean Central News Agency reported. It added that authorities would investigate the "serious defects" revealed by the launch and conduct another test as soon as possible.





Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF)
PKSF Bhaban, E-4/B, Agargaon Administrative Area, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Dhaka-1207, Bangladesh
Tel: 02222218331-33 & 02222218335-39; Fax: 02222218341 & 02222218343 Website: www.pksf.org.bd

Request for Expression of Interest (REOI)
For Selection of Individual Consultant

Memo No: 53.23.0000.001.03.053.23-4650
EOI Ref No: PKSF/SEP/S-15.2

Date: 01 June 2023


Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF) has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the Sustainable Enterprise Project (SEP), and intends to apply part of the proceeds for consulting services (**Package: PKSF/SEP/S-15.2 - Selection of consultant for documentation of the best practices and lessons learned in the Sustainable Enterprise Project (SEP)**) by an individual consultant (national). The scope of work and the qualification and experience required for the assignment are detailed in the Terms of Reference (TOR).

The Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF) now invites eligible applicants to express their interest and provide information regarding their qualification (complete CV as per the prescribed format) to perform the service. A consultant will be selected in accordance with the *Individual Consultant Selection (ICS)* method set out in the World Bank Procurement Regulations. The evaluation criteria are Educational qualification, Relevant work experience, Development partner funded project experience, Journal publications, and Capacity to handle assignments. It is expected that the service will be commenced in July 2023 and continued over a period of 06 (six) months. A lump-sum contract will be signed with the awarded consultant.

Interested consultants are required to submit their applications in accordance with the standard CV format. A copy of the TOR and the CV format can be downloaded from the website (www.pksf.org.bd/tender) or obtained from the PKSF office within 10.00 AM to 03.00 PM. EOI shall be submitted by **14 June 2023 at 02.00 PM** at the PKSF office in a sealed envelope to the undersigned and clearly marked **"Expression of Interest (EOI) for the selection of consultant for documentation of the best practices and lessons learned in the Sustainable Enterprise Project (SEP) (Package: PKSF/SEP/S-15.2)"**. All the necessary documents in support of educational qualifications, experiences, and other criteria mentioned in the TOR have to be submitted with the EOI.

PKSF reserves the right to reject any or all applications at any time without assigning any reason whatsoever.

AQM Golam Mawla
Deputy Managing Director-2, PKSF



PALLI KARMA-SAHAYAK FOUNDATION (PKSF)
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Memo No. 53.23.0000.001.03.055.23-4656

Date: 01.06.2023

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (REOI)
(CONSULTING SERVICES - FIRMS SELECTION)

Country: Bangladesh
Name of Project: Recovery and Advancement of Informal Sector Employment (RAISE)
Credit No: 6841-BD
Assignment Title: Selection of a consulting firm for developing curriculum & module for different sectoral (Agriculture, CMSME, Hospitality, ICT) Business Management Training.
Reference No: PKSF/RAISE/S-03

The Government of Bangladesh has received finance from the World Bank and implementing an economic inclusion program through the Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF) for low-income, less-educated urban youth, for low-income microentrepreneurs and self-employed in urban areas whose livelihoods have been impacted by COVID-19. In order to develop capacities of Project Implementation Unit (PIU) and project participants of the RAISE in designing & managing different Business Management Training in proposed 26 courses under four sectors including Agriculture, Cottage Mini small and medium enterprise (CM-SME), Information and communication Technology (ICT), Tourism and Hospitality sector enterprises effectively and make sustainable business relationships among the actors.

I. The consulting firm will perform duties and responsibilities as per ToR, mentionably -

- Review the project objectives, operation guideline of the project provided by Project Management Unit (PMU), secondary information, curriculum and existing modules of the 26 trades and identify needs of the target participants;
- Conduct kicks off meeting with PMU and share the initial manual development methodology;
- Share the draft process, content and methodology before finalizing the design of the manuals;
- Incorporate the feedback and ensure regular coordination with RAISE PMU;
- Conduct FGD, KII, field test, validation workshop in mentioned 4 sectors with the assistance of the Partner Organizations (PO) of PKSF.

II. The shortlisting criteria are:

- Nature of the core business and general experience of the Firm;
- Experience in similar assignments of compatible size, complexity and technical specialty in required areas;
- Financial Soundness, staffing and logistics of the firm;

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

- Up to Date Relevant Legal Papers of the Firm's including Trade license, TIN, VAT, Income Tax Assessment Certificate/Acknowledgement;

- JV Agreement/Letter of Intent (if applicable) along with the proposed JV agreement [Maximum of two (2)];
- Firm's brochure including staffing and logistics (Such as: permanent employees, expert pool, office nos. and space, office equipment, manpower, and other available resources);
- Strong financial capability will be required (Need to submit ONLY signed Income statement and Balance sheet from last 3 years' audit report);
- Any relevant licenses, certification, and accreditation
- All other items necessary to substantiate satisfaction of the shortlisting criteria listed above and/or included in the TOR; However, Key experts will not be evaluated at the shortlisting stage.
- The attention of interested IT/Consulting firms is drawn to Section III, paragraphs-3.14, 3.16 and 3.17 of the World Bank's "Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers" November 2020 ("Procurement Regulations"), setting forth with the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest.
- Consultants may associate with other firms to enhance their qualifications, but should indicate clearly whether the association is in the form of a Joint Venture and/or a Sub-consultancy. In the case of a joint venture, all the partners in the joint venture shall be jointly and severally liable for the entire contract, if selected.
- A Consultant will be selected in accordance with the Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS) method set out in the procurement regulations.
- Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours, 0900 to 1600 hours. The detailed Terms of Reference (TOR) for the assignment can be downloaded from www.pksf.org.bd website or can be obtained upon request from the address below or either by e-mail or in person during the office hours (Local Time: 09:00 to 15:30 hours).
- Expression of Interest (EOI) must be delivered in a written form to the address below (in-person, or by mail) by **15 June 2023 on or before 14:00 hours** (UTC+6 hours).
- The Procuring Entity (PE) reserves the right to accept or reject any or all EOIs without assigning any reason whatsoever.

A huge blow for our economy

Govt must critically examine Moody's credit downgrade and respond properly

We're alarmed to learn that the US-based global credit rating agency Moody's Investors Service has downgraded Bangladesh's sovereign rating by one notch from Ba3 to B1. The disclosure, coming as it does just before the unveiling of Bangladesh's national budget for FY23-24, represents a huge threat to its post-Covid economic aspirations with the experts calling it "one of the worst incidents" in the recent history of our economy. And it couldn't have come at a worse time.

In simple terms, the downgrade – the first since Moody's began rating Bangladesh in 2010 – means a blow to our creditworthiness. Not only will it tarnish the country's image abroad but it will also have tangible effects on local businesses. Businesses will likely face higher borrowing costs for loans from foreign sources, while foreign investors may be wary of the increased credit risk associated with investing in Bangladesh. The fallout may extend beyond loans and investments as well. The cost of doing business may go up as banks may increase charges for import payments, known as letters of credit (LCs). Moreover, local banks may face tougher negotiations with global lenders regarding commissions and charges for settling foreign exchange transactions.

The question is, what prompted the downgrade? Reportedly, Moody's assessment is that Bangladesh's heightened external vulnerability and liquidity risks are persistent, as are its institutional weaknesses. "Despite some easing, ongoing dollar scarcity and deterioration in foreign exchange reserves indicate continued pressures on Bangladesh's external position, exacerbating imports constraints and as a result energy shortages," it said. Additionally, the government's failure to fully reverse import control measures and unconventional policies, such as a multiple exchange rate regime and interest rate caps, is contributing to market distortions, according to a report issued by the agency. Persistently low revenue generation and rising interest payments have also resulted in weakening fiscal metrics, especially debt affordability.

In the coming days, there will be a lot of discussion about the downgrade and its implications. But as things stand, this is indeed a wake-up call for Bangladesh. To get back up from the downgrade or prevent further downgrades, it is imperative that the government takes this seriously and restores confidence by addressing our economic vulnerabilities through effective policy measures. The future trajectory of our economy will hinge a lot on how it responds to this latest threat.

What's the point of having hajj teams?

Govt must prevent selection of unqualified staff for hajj operations

It is astonishing how corrupt practices continue to mar just about any government operation. As a report by this daily has revealed, of the 218 officials that the religious affairs ministry is sending to Saudi Arabia to assist Bangladeshi medical and technical teams during the upcoming hajj, at least 200 have neither any technical training nor a background in medicine. Instead, you have cooks, cleaners, chauffeurs, bodyguards, staff connected with high-up officials, office assistants, and administrative officers. Clearly, they are unqualified to perform the listed roles of their respective teams: to provide assistance at health clinics, ensure prompt services for patients, assist the hajj technical team, and find missing pilgrims.

Unfortunately, government programmes for hajj have been repeatedly subjected to such corruption and favouritism in the past. For instance, under the government's subsidised hajj programme last year, more than half of the 254 pilgrims were found to be associated with the ruling party. How fair is it to spend a huge chunk of public money for the hajj of solvent, politically connected people? This year, Biman is reportedly set to spend crores to send 100 of its officials to Saudi Arabia in the name of assisting pilgrims, as it did before too. Again, we cannot help but ask: is such a delegation at all necessary when Biman already has several fully-fledged offices in Saudi Arabia for this job?

In light of the latest report, it is clear that the selection of hajj delegates was not done based on their capability to serve pilgrims. It is more than likely that they bought or powered their way into the teams, and it is the ordinary pilgrims and taxpaying citizens who will have to bear the cost of their transgressions and that of ministry high-ups. This is totally unacceptable. We urge the government to hold to account those overseeing hajj operations for their mismanagement and irregularities. It must properly investigate all such cases of corrupt selection and recruitment as well as the role of ministry officials behind it.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

letters@thedailystar.net

The rise of concert business

After a long time, the concert business in Bangladesh is seeing a remarkable surge, bringing about a significant impact on our culture and economy. In recent years, the number and scale of concerts, featuring both local and international artists, have soared. These events contribute to job creation, boost tourism, and nurture the entertainment industry. The enthusiasm among Bangladeshis for live music experiences highlights a strong demand for concerts. To harness this potential, policymakers must recognise and support concert events. Investments in concert venues, sound systems, etc will attract renowned international acts and enhance our country's appeal as a concert destination.

Md Julhash Rahman Akash
North South University, Dhaka

To end inequality, stop pandering to plunderers



THE OVERTON WINDOW

Eresh Omar Jamal
is assistant editor at The Daily Star. His Twitter handle is @EreshOmarJamal

ERESH OMAR JAMAL

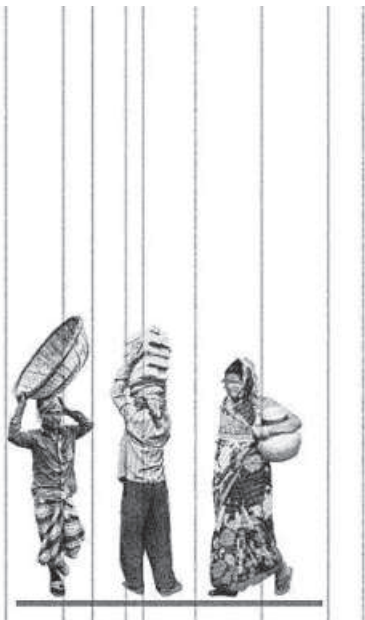
There is a genuine concern among Bangladeshi experts that at a time when the country is experiencing some of the toughest economic challenges in years – persistent high inflation, unemployment (particularly among the educated youth), etc – fulfilling the IMF's loan conditions without making the necessary policy adjustments could fuel inequality. As per the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics' (BBS) recently published Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) 2022, the Gini Coefficient has gone up to 0.499. In the HIES 2010, the Gini Coefficient was 0.458, and rose to 0.482 in HIES 2016 – indicating that over the past decade and more, inequality has been on the rise.

Numerous studies over the years, including the ones carried out by the IMF, have consistently shown that inequality tends to rise during IMF programmes or as a result of its conditions. That is not to say that the policy reforms prescribed by the IMF for Bangladesh are wrong or unnecessary. On the contrary, most local experts agree that the majority of reform measures built into the IMF loan were long overdue.

For example, experts have been calling for the government to use a flexible interest rate – allowing the rate to adjust with the market – which the IMF has also recommended. However, due to the prevailing circumstances, they have also called on the government to provide specialised and subsidised credit schemes for the disadvantaged, such as those involved in agriculture, small and medium businesses, and others.

Another delicate matter that the government needs to handle tactfully is the IMF's condition of reducing tax exemptions. One would assume that the primary reason why this is necessary was the government's limited fiscal space, driven largely by Bangladesh's woeful tax-GDP ratio.

Bangladesh has one of the lowest tax-GDP ratios in South Asia – at 7.9 percent, whereas the ideal benchmark is 15 percent. The country needs to collect an additional tax revenue of Tk 250,600 crore to raise it to 15 percent.



VISUAL: REHNUMA PROSHOON

The State of Tax Justice 2020 report calculated that Bangladesh is losing more than \$703 million every year because of tax abuses committed by multinational corporations and private individuals. Multinational corporations alone cost the country \$674 million annually. This year, the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) estimated that Bangladesh was losing potential taxes from as low as Tk 41,800 crore to as high as Tk 223,000 crore yearly because of tax evasion. The amount of tax losses rises when tax avoidance is taken into account (between Tk 55,800 crore and Tk 292,500 crore), and much of this happening with the "unethical support from tax practitioners."

Aside from the fact that many people do not pay income tax, data from the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms and the NBR shows that 45,000 out of 213,000 registered companies and firms filed returns, meaning only one in five registered businesses pays tax. Hence, the CPD advised the government to "withdraw all kinds of non-transparent tax-related provisions, including provision for whitening black money" (which contradict tax transparency efforts)

corruption involved in government aid programmes.

A number of studies over the years have uncovered how nepotism, corruption, and political bias in enlistment have weakened the safety net plans intended to help the poor and other vulnerable groups. For instance, a World Bank report in 2016 found that about 60 percent of safety net programme beneficiaries did not qualify as being vulnerable.

More recently, a CPD survey found that almost 30 percent of old age allowance beneficiaries and 33 percent of widows allowance beneficiaries were not eligible for the grant. And this is happening while 3.3 million elderly people and 2.5 million widows who are eligible for the benefits remain outside of the programme. Thus, about Tk 1,500 crore is wasted in only two schemes. What is even more reprehensible is the fact that eligible beneficiaries are made to pay Tk 2,653 on average in bribes for the benefits. The survey further alleged that the authorities, despite knowing about the irregularities, have done nothing to stop them.

The complete lack of conscience one has to have to deny the elderly and widows from accessing such facilities

did admit this earlier, as well as the fact that vested groups had gotten themselves in an advantageous position, which is leading to the poor being deprived. But what is worrying is that he himself questioned whether his government was capable of taking action against these groups as that might put the government in trouble.

This brings us to the crux of the matter. At this point in time, addressing many of our economic problems is proving to be difficult not mainly for economic reasons, but because of political ones. And they are largely to blame for why and how we have gotten here as well. So, we can debate all we want over how wise or unwise the government's budget allocation (and implementation over the next fiscal year) will be. But should it continue to fail to address the issue of inequality, it is high time we recognised that the failure is not a result of innocent mistakes or miscalculated economic policies, but the government's willingness to pander to the wishes of special interest groups who are plundering the wealth being produced by the hard-working (majority of) people of this country.

BOOK REVIEW

Can a city be smart without adequate finance?



Dr Nawshad Ahmed,
a former UN official, is
an economist and urban
planner.

NAWSHAD AHMED

Although Dhaka and Kolkata, two major South Asian cities, are just 240 kilometres apart and share a common history and culture, not many comparative studies on these cities have been undertaken so far. Kolkata is the second largest city in India, while Dhaka is the largest city in Bangladesh. A book titled *How Smart are Cities without Adequate Finances?* attempted to improve our understanding about financing patterns of these two South Asian cities. Three university professors from Bangladesh and India – Simanti Bandyopadhyay, Firdousi Naher and Aishna Sharma – have compared recent city-level financial trends in Dhaka and Kolkata, which is not only refreshing, but can also lead to further research in the future. Bangladesh and India's West Bengal share a common history, heritage, socio-cultural norms and environment. Both Dhaka and Kolkata are densely populated and face similar challenges in delivering civic services to its citizens. Therefore, comparing the two local governments' financial situations makes perfect sense.

A city needs to meet a number of fundamental criteria to become "smart," the catchword used internationally these days to characterise urban areas in terms of their use of information and communication technology, operational efficiency, financial

prudence, cost-effective service delivery, time-saving public transportation system, and aesthetic and environment-friendly development, all done under a progressive urban planning philosophy. Smart cities should also aim to promote social inclusion and community engagement to ensure poverty alleviation, gender equality and resilient societies.

The authors of the book made an effort to look at the "smartness" of cities through the lens of financial sufficiency. The urban development context in both Bangladesh and India are truly comparable due to their poor basic services like housing, water supply, sanitation, waste management, roads and drains, etc, and therefore, according to the authors, "ensuring a sound infrastructure is the foundation for any smart urban agglomeration to emerge and this, in turn, hinges on the financial health of urban local bodies." Both in Dhaka and Kolkata, air and water pollution levels are alarming, and water supply, sanitation and solid waste management are poor.

While we recognise the importance of smart cities, there is very little empirical evidence on how they function. As such, the book raises a pertinent question on development of sustainable cities in South Asia. The authors point out that "most urban local bodies in developing economies

suffer from insufficient generation of revenues and/or lack of financial power to invest in even the basic infrastructure."

The financial health of Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC), Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) and Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) are compared in the book. The urban local government bodies have legally defined areas of revenue generation, budgeting and expenditure for development of infrastructure and services, operation and maintenance. It also includes detailed historical, demographic and socioeconomic background of both Dhaka and Kolkata and the evolution of the local government structure in the two countries.

The comparative analysis of the two cities in terms of legal mandates for revenue generation and expenditure decisions, tax and non-tax collection situation, and urban economic strength are the most noteworthy aspects of the book.

The book argues that low revenue collection in Dhaka and Kolkata affect their level of expenditure, which is less than one percent of GDP, despite both cities contributing highly to their respective economies. Data from DNCC and DSCC shows that own revenue constitutes the bulk of total resources – 87 percent in DNCC and 79 percent in DSCC between 2012-13 and 2018-19. The government grant is relatively low, which comes from the Annual Development Programme (ADP). Property tax, called "holding tax" in Bangladesh, constitutes about 45 percent of total own revenues from both city corporations. There are some variations in per capita own revenue between the two city corporations, with DNCC doing better than DSCC. However, without further analysis, it

is not possible to say what causes this variation – whether it is due to high tax effort of the DNCC or due to its higher property value.

In Kolkata Municipal Corporation, own revenue constitutes 51 percent of total resources which comes from government grant, compared to DNCC and DSCC. But compared to Dhaka, Kolkata's per capita own revenue and property tax revenue collection are higher. Again, KMC's per person expenditure is \$70 higher than the per person average expenditures in DNCC and DSCC.

The book tried to estimate own revenue to Gross City Product (GCP) ratios in both DNCC and DSCC. Using own revenue generated in 2017-18 in DNCC and DSCC at current prices, the own revenue to GCP ratio turned out to be only 0.3 percent in DNCC and 0.28 percent in DSCC. On the other hand, the GCP ratio in KMC has been 1.3 percent or higher in recent years. This implies that compared to the KMC, the DNCC and DSCC have higher potential for own revenue generation in future if property tax assessment can be improved, assessment to collection efficiency is raised, and non-tax revenue sources fully exploited.

If the DNCC and DSCC take note of the book's findings and make sincere efforts, they can increase tax revenue and utilise additional resources for better public service delivery. This will encourage city dwellers to pay taxes regularly and at higher rates. The book makes an excellent contribution towards filling an information gap in local resource mobilisation in the two most resourceful metropolitan cities in South Asia.



VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

Three questions for the new budget



Dr Rashed Al Mahmud Titumir is professor and chairman of the Department of Development Studies at Dhaka University.

RASHED AL MAHMUD TITUMIR

The nation is engrossed in politics during the budgetary season, perhaps with the understanding that the course of politics shapes economic outcomes. Since the budget is a political process, the rules of the budgetary game are set within that continuum. Nonetheless, the new budget begs three questions which are dominating public parleys.

Will the cost of living go down?

People have been suffering greatly in recent times due to the soaring prices of all kinds of food and non-food items – be it oil, soap, clothing, educational materials or transportation. As a result, the majority of the population in low- and limited-income brackets are having to cut down on expenses to run their families.

The government said prices had to be “adjusted” due to the global situation against the backdrop of the pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war, and that the prices would be revised as the situation “normalised.” For example, the government at one go hiked the prices of all types of fuels by 42.5-51.7 percent in August last year. But when oil prices were hovering between \$70 and \$80 per barrel in the international market for a long time, there was no sign of downward price adjustment in the domestic market as the government had promised. In fact, prices of major commodities – soybean oil, palm oil, sugar, wheat flour, onion, lentils, etc – fell significantly in the international market, but there has been no relief for consumers in Bangladesh. In addition, we are also hostage to price-fixing by a powerful rentier nexus of intermediaries who enforce exorbitant differences between the farm gate and the retail prices in absence of regulatory oversight.

If the budgetary proposals raise taxes on essentials, how would the ordinary people, who are already plagued by the cost-of-living crisis, bear the burden? Rather than increasing the base and reducing the loopholes of income tax, if higher value-added tax (VAT), which applies across the board, is imposed on daily items, how would most people survive? Besides, if the import duty on food items is raised, would the next budget not make the cost of living more excruciating?

Businesses, particularly small and micro-enterprises, too are adversely impacted by price hikes. For example, domestic yarn has become costlier due to the rise in gas and electricity prices. On the advice of the Bangladesh Bank, banks have fixed the exchange rate, yet the price of the US dollar is rising against the taka every day, though within that stipulated range, escalating the cost of commodities.

If the proposed budget imposes further tax on, say, construction materials like rod, cement, bricks, etc, which saw a 40 percent increase already, how would that impact the existing stagnant private investment? According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), private investment has fallen by 0.88 percentage points to 23.64 percent of GDP in FY2022-23, after remaining almost stagnant for at least seven years. Investment also fell due to negative growth in imports of capital equipment, stemming from the inability to open letters of credit (LCs) due to the dollar crisis. If the situation does not improve quickly, new job creation will stall, and inflationary pressure will not let up either.

Will the budget stave off cash shortage?

Low-income households are in shortage of money. According to the BBS, wages have grown at a lower rate than inflation every month for over a year. The wage growth rate was 7.23 percent in April this year, against the inflation rate of 9.24 percent. The weighted wage rate is determined by 145 low skill occupations of the poor and lower middle class, illustrating the pressure being put on these income groups. Savings, income and employment of the lower-middle and middle classes have been hit hard, pushing them into poverty. About nine percent (i.e. more than 15 million) of the people below the poverty line in Bangladesh are newly poor, per Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) data. In the

absence of employment in the formal sector, they were forced into self-employment; the rate of self-employment among the poor grew to 38.56 percent in 2022 from 33.60 percent in 2019.

Similarly, the pace of poverty reduction has slowed down, despite questions about the BBS definition of poverty used in the survey. According to the BBS, poverty has decreased by an average of 0.93 percentage points per annum over the last six years (2016-2022). Between 2010 and 2016, poverty declined by 1.3 percentage points, on average, every year.

Biased policies are the main cause of inequality of income and wealth. The Gini coefficient reached 0.499 in 2022 from 0.482 in 2016 and 0.458 in 2010, demonstrating a continuous upward trend over the last 12 years.

Would the government bring any change in its faulty and fragmented social safety net programmes, marred by inclusion and exclusion errors, to institute a life cycle-based universal social security system to supply cash to the people in need, adhering to the constitutional mandate?

The shortage of dollar and central bank restrictions to reduce pressure on the dollar have reduced imports of key raw materials. As a result, during July-March, LCs for the import of industrial capital machinery shrunk by 56 percent and imports of industrial raw materials dropped by 30 percent.

If the budgetary proposals raise taxes on essentials, how would the ordinary people, who are already plagued by the cost-of-living crisis, bear the burden? Rather than increasing the base and reducing the loopholes of income tax, if higher value-added tax (VAT), which applies across the board, is imposed on daily items, how would most people survive?

How would the budgetary proposals be harmonised with the monetary policy for setting up industries, business expansion and renovation initiatives, which have also dwindled due to want of cash?

The government is in dearth of money. For example, only 41.65 percent of the Annual Development Programme (ADP) was implemented in the first nine months of FY2023. The government is struggling to pay for imported fuel due to the dollar crisis, while the forex reserves are also dangerously low. The Bangladesh Power Development Board is under pressure to reduce the cost, including the huge capacity charges, which resulted from collusive contracts. While the budgetary question of shoring up cash for not defaulting on payments remains, there are fears that the clientele may intensify bargains for budgetary resources with the banking resources increasingly drying out, amid the banking sector exhibiting the highest rate of default after the crisis-ridden Sri Lanka.

What about the runaway debt?

The government's loan from the central bank is increasing at an abnormal rate. In the last five years, the government's borrowing from the central bank has grown by 927 percent. In just seven years, the total foreign debt more than doubled to reach \$95.23 billion, rising from \$41.17 billion in 2015-16. Foreign debt in the private sector also peaked to around \$26 billion till June 2022. Forex reserves may continue to shrink in the near future due to the large deficit in the financial account of balance of payments. Would the budgetary proposals be prudent enough to make a dent in the payment of principal and interest, which is almost 20 percent of the operating expenditure?

The only option is to increase income tax and reduce tax exemptions and tax avoidance. The nation is eagerly waiting for actions on tax evasion and exemptions, including import duty, as research has shown that most money is laundered through import and export. Or will the government opt out for the easiest route of taxing the voiceless, low-income groups, while giving concessions to the rich, as has been speculated by the media?

John Maynard Keynes, in his 1923 essay “A Tract on Monetary Reform,” wrote, “The long run is a misleading guide to current affairs. In the long run, we are all dead.” Perhaps he had in mind the adage, “A stitch in time saves nine.”

The fascinating orchid: Yesterday and today



Hasina Ahmad is a retired administrator of a US university and a member of the American Orchid Society.

HASINA AHMAD

In the world of plants, orchids have a history more sensational than others. People made dangerous voyages to far-off lands in sail boats to look for orchids and procure them when possible. Orchid hunters fought with the natives, sometimes other orchid hunters, at times were killed by others or became casualties of natural forces. But they did not give up. Such was the obsession with orchids.

Orchidelirium or orchid mania in the 19th century England was no less a craze than the tulip mania in 17th century Holland. Even today, orchid enthusiasts make long and difficult journeys just to see orchids in their natural habitats. Orchids are even celebrated in novels. The rare ghost orchid is the subject of Susan Orlean's *The Orchid Thief*, a book that served as the source materials of the Academy Award-winning movie *Adaptation*. To the best of my knowledge, no novel has ever been written or a movie made whose central theme was a flower, except perhaps the Black Tulip, which was based on a book with the same name written by Alexandre Dumas.

Orchid enthusiasm in the modern era began in England in the early 19th century, when British naturalist William John Swainson sent a bunch of orchid tubers from Brazil which he had used as weeds to package other plant specimens. But to everybody's utter surprise, these tubers grew and blossomed with beautiful flowers unknown to everyone at the time. This was also an era when colonialism was at its peak, providing colonial powers rights to the natural resources of their colonies to which they had easy and exclusive access. Queen Victoria appointed Frederick Sander as the official Royal Orchid Grower. This proves that even the royalty supported the plundering of the natural resources of their colonies which included their plants.

In England, it became the craze to grow tropical orchids in the greenhouses of the upper classes. Orchid hunters and poachers were hired and sent from England to countries as far away as Indonesia. In her book *The Orchid Thief*, Susan Orleans indicated that in 1901, eight orchid hunters went on an expedition to the Philippines. Within a month, one of them had been eaten by a tiger, another had been drenched with oil and burnt alive, five had vanished into thin air, and only one had managed to stay alive. The lone survivor of this

dangerous mission ended with a huge haul of Phalaenopsis, also known as moth orchids, and probably made a huge fortune through his looted plants.

Hired orchid hunters shipped millions of orchids back to England. But the delicate orchids could not withstand the saline environment of the sea voyage for so long, and most would perish. In fact, it is estimated that less than one percent of the plant cargo would reach the destination alive. As a result of this plundering, and uprooting from their natural habitat, some orchid species became extinct. While some orchid hunters

CITES is a global agreement among governments to regulate or ban international trade in threatened flora and fauna. Unfortunately, CITES could not stop some orchid sellers and enthusiasts from collecting the native orchids from the wild and endangering their future.

undoubtedly cared about the beauty of nature, the uniqueness of orchids, and scientific advancement, most were after material profits and personal fame.

It is absolutely true that the magnificent orchids have always been a source of fascination and intrigue for plant lovers since their discovery (they are found everywhere except in Antarctica). But prices and the challenges of cultivation had kept orchids largely in the domain of the elite classes and out of the reach of the middle class. This changed dramatically when hybridisation became common around the mid-20th century. The hybridisation of orchids decreased the prices substantially, and middle-class enthusiasts had the opportunity to buy and grow these beautiful flowers in their homes.

Though the nurseries and even the supermarkets are flooded with hybrid orchids at very accessible prices today, the native orchids remain the objects of expedition and subject

of research among orchid growers. The mystery around orchids, their unique habitat, sensual growth habit and rarity intrigued and challenged orchid lovers. In some cases, owning and growing rare orchids in the personal greenhouses became an obsession. Consequently, rare species still remain prized and pricey.

In order to stop illegal international trade of wildlife, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), became effective in July 1975. CITES is a global agreement among governments to regulate or ban international trade in threatened flora and fauna. Unfortunately, CITES could not stop some orchid sellers and enthusiasts from collecting the native orchids from the wild and endangering their future.

In developed countries, native orchids are protected by appropriate laws and can be sold only by the government designated nurseries. But uprooting the native orchids is a regular event in the developing countries where these plants are not adequately protected by the relevant authorities. Bangladesh is no exception in this regard. Currently, Bangladesh has approximately 150 or so orchid species that naturally grow in the wild. According to research published some three years ago, in the *International Journal of Ecology and Environmental Sciences*, 32 orchid species native to Bangladesh have become unavailable within its borders. In addition, some orchids are listed as endangered species and if not protected, there is a chance they may become extinct in the near future. There are two main reasons for this situation. First is rampant deforestation. Most orchids grow on bigger trees and simply cannot survive when the host trees are cut down. Second, there is widespread poaching of native and rare orchids.

Our native orchids are amazingly beautiful and they thrive in their natural habitat, where they get adequate sunlight, rain, and air. It is very difficult to grow orchid species in the artificial environment at home and there is a strong possibility that these orchid species would eventually perish. The sooner we understand that uprooting our orchids from their natural habitat is a direct threat to their future existence, the better it is for our native orchids.

We need awareness among people and stricter laws to avoid these dire consequences and save our native plants. We often discuss climate change, carbon emissions, air and water pollution. But we must not forget that it is our foremost duty to protect and save our natural resources, our animals and, most importantly, our forests and native plants. This is a collective responsibility that we must all share, and to which citizens and policymakers must be fully committed.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার	
বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ পুলিশ টেলিকম সংস্থা পুলিশ টেলিকম ভবন, রাজারবাগ, ঢাকা	
স্মারক নং-পুলিশ টেলিকম/এটেসি/২৭৬২/বোতাব	তারিখঃ ৩০/০৫/২০২৩খ্রিঃ
টিকাদার তালিকাভুক্তি/নবায়নকরণ বিজ্ঞপ্তি	
২০২৩-২০২৪ অর্থ বছরে “পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট আইন-২০০৬”, “পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট (সংশোধন) আইন-২০০৯” এর বিধি ৫২ এবং “পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট (সংশোধন) আইন, ২০১৬” মোতাবেক পুলিশ টেলিকম সংস্থা কর্তৃক বিভিন্ন পূর্ত মোরামত এবং ভবন ও অবকাঠামো নির্মাণ প্রকল্প বাস্তবায়নের নিমিত্তে টিকাদার তালিকাভুক্তি/নবায়নকরণের জন্য আগ্রহী ও সংশ্লিষ্ট কাজে অভিজ্ঞতাসম্পন্ন টিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের দিকট হতে নিম্নবর্ণিত ছকে শর্ত সাপেক্ষে সরখার আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছেঃ	
০১। মন্ত্রণালয়	স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রণালয়।
০২। অধিদপ্তর	বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ।
০৩। সপ্তাহকারী সূত্রা প্রধান	অতিরিক্ত আইজি, বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ, পুলিশ টেলিকম সংস্থা, রাজারবাগ, ঢাকা।
০৪। দরপত্র আহ্বানের উদ্দেশ্য	টিকাদার তালিকাভুক্তি/নবায়নকরণ।
০৫। ক্রম প্রক্রিয়া	সীমিত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (L.T.M)।
০৬। বাজেট এবং অর্থের উৎস	রাজস্ব বাজেটের আওতাধীন পূর্ত মোরামত এবং ভবন ও অবকাঠামো নির্মাণ।
০৭। আবেদনপত্র ক্রয়ের তারিখ ও স্থান	০৪/০৬/২০২৩খ্রিঃ হতে ১১/০৬/২০২৩খ্রিঃ অবধি চন্দ্রাবতী সড়ক পথ পুলিশ টেলিকম ভবন, রাজারবাগ, ঢাকা।
০৮। আবেদন জমা প্রদানের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	১২/০৬/২০২৩খ্রিঃ ১১.০০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে পুলিশ টেলিকম ভবন, রাজারবাগ, ঢাকার কার্যালয়ে বসিফত বাস্তু জমা প্রদান করতে হবে। নির্ধারিত তারিখ ও সময়ের পর কোন আবেদনপত্র গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে না।
০৯। আবেদনপত্র খোলার তারিখ, সময় ও স্থান	১২/০৬/২০২৩খ্রিঃ ১১.০০ ঘটিকা, পুলিশ টেলিকম ভবন, কনফারেন্স রুম-২য় তলা, রাজারবাগ, ঢাকা (আবেদনকারীদের সম্মুখে, যদি কেহ উপস্থিত থাকেন)।
১০। আবেদনকারীর যোগ্যতা	(ক) সিটি কর্পোরেশন/ইউনিয়ন পরিষদ কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত হালনাগাদ ট্রেড লাইসেন্স (খ) ভ্যাট রেজিস্ট্রেশন সাটিফিকেট (গ) হালনাগাদ আয়কর সাটিফিকেট (ঘ) হালনাগাদ ব্যাংক সলভেন্সি সাটিফিকেট ন্যূনতম ১০ (দশ লক্ষ) টাকা (ছ) লাইসেন্স/২১ পর্যন্ত ব্যাংক ডেটমেন্ট (জ) জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র/ভোটার আইডি কার্ড/শাসনিক সাটিফিকেট (চ) ০২ (দুই) রপ্তি রপ্তি অফিস (ছ) এলজিইডি/পল্লী বিকাশ/জনস্বাস্থ্য প্রকৌশল/সরকারি সংস্থার টিকাদারী লাইসেন্স (জ) গত দুই বছরে যে কোন সরকারি সংস্থায় সর্বমোট ন্যূনতম ১০ (দশ লক্ষ) টাকা অর্থ বা এর অধিক পূর্ত নির্মাণ ও মোরামত কাজ সম্পাদন সাটিফিকেট (ঝ) এলজিইডি/জেলা পরিষদ/পল্লী বিকাশ/জনস্বাস্থ্য প্রকৌশল অধিদপ্তর অথবা সরকারি যে কোন প্রতিষ্ঠানে পূর্ত নির্মাণ ও মোরামত (নির্ভাল, স্যানিটারী, বৈদ্যুতিক, গ্যাস, লিফট ও জেনারেটর স্থাপন/মোরামত/সার্ভিসিং) কাজ সম্পাদনের অভিজ্ঞতা (বেসরকারী কাজের অভিজ্ঞতা গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে না)। সকল কাগজপত্র প্রথম শ্রেণীর পেজেটেড কর্কট কর্তৃক সত্যায়িত করে নাম সন্নিবিষ্ট সীলসহ আবেদনপত্রের সাথে সংযুক্ত করতে হবে।
১১। কাজের সফলকৃত বিবরণ	ক. পূর্ত মোরামত। খ. পূর্ত নির্মাণ। গ. লিফট ও জেনারেটর স্থাপন/মোরামত/সার্ভিসিং।
১২। আবেদন ফর্মের মূল্য	৫০০/- (পাঁচশত) টাকা (অফেরতযোগ্য)।
১৩। টিকাদার তালিকাভুক্তি ফি	৫,০০০/- (পাঁচ হাজার) টাকা এবং এর ১৫% ভ্যাট (অফেরতযোগ্য)।
১৪। তালিকাভুক্ত টিকাদার নবায়ন ফি	২,০০০/- (দুই হাজার) টাকা এবং এর ১৫% ভ্যাট (অফেরতযোগ্য)।
সপ্তাহকারী সূত্রা বিবরণীঃ	
১৫। দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী অফিসারের নাম	ড. চৌধুরী মোঃ যাবেব সাদেক।
১৬। দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী অফিসারের পদবী	পুলিশ সুপার (আইডমিন অ্যান্ড ফাইন্যান্স)।
১৭। দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী অফিসারের ঠিকানা	পুলিশ টেলিকম সংস্থা, রাজারবাগ, ঢাকা-১২১৭।
১৮। দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী অফিসারের মোবাইল, ফ্যাক্স ও ই-মেইল	মোবাইল ০১৩২০-০২০০৩৯, ফ্যাক্স ৮৩০১৪০৪।
১৯। মন্তব্য	কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণে দর্শনে বাতিলের কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।
ড. চৌধুরী মোঃ যাবেব সাদেক বিসি-৭৯০৬১২১৭০২ পুলিশ সুপার (আইডমিন অ্যান্ড ফাইন্যান্স) পুলিশ টেলিকম সংস্থা, রাজারবাগ, ঢাকা মোবাইল ০১৩২০-০২০০৩৯, ফ্যাক্স ৮৩০১৪০৪	
জিডি-৯৫৭	

Celebrating World Milk Day 2023

Recognizing the nutritional, societal, and environmental importance of the dairy sector

While it is crucial to undertake initiatives aimed at increasing milk production and diversifying the dairy industry, it is equally important to prioritize sustainable practices that minimize the environmental impact of the sector.

TANVIR AHMED CHOWDHURY

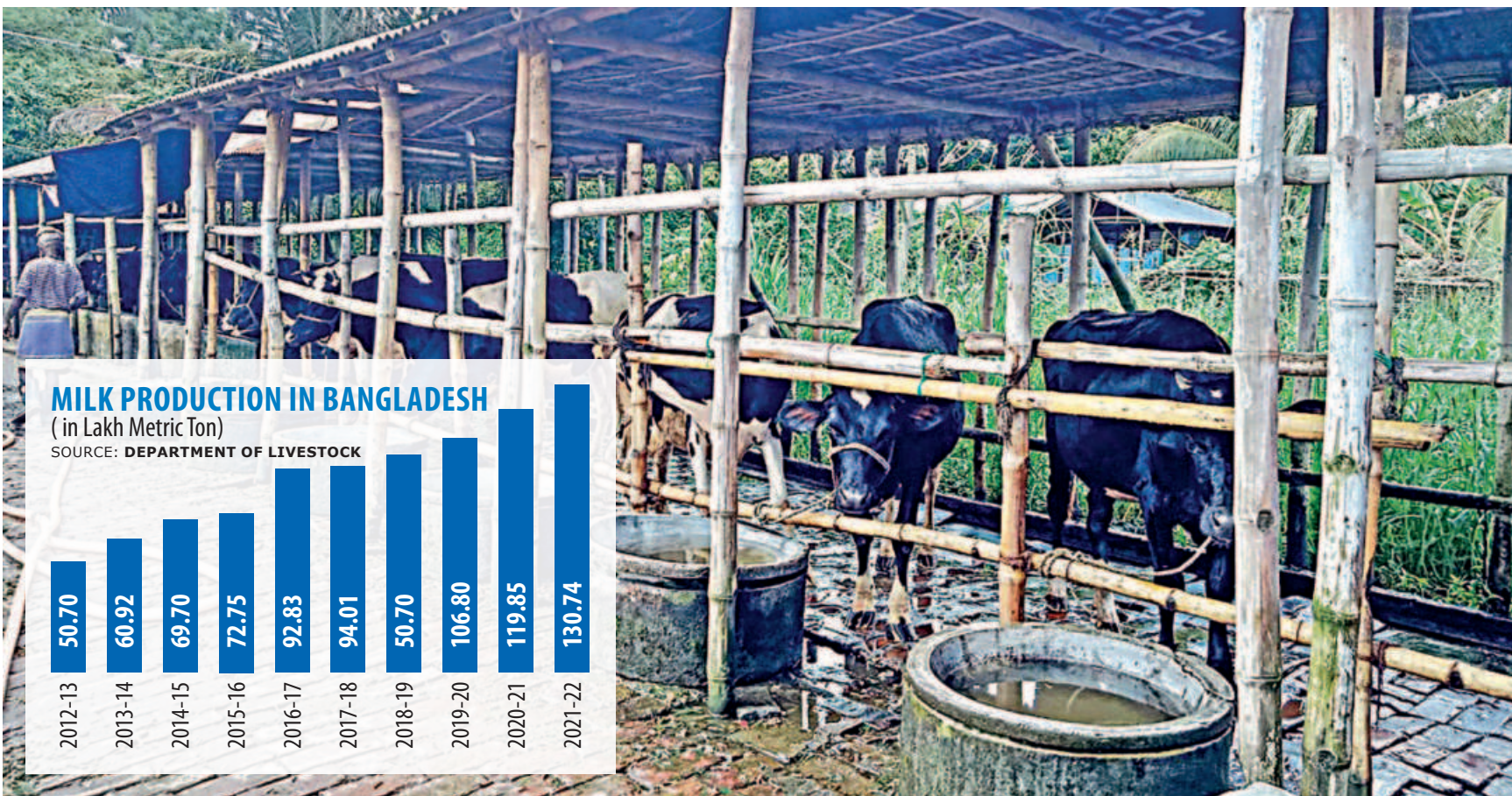
Milk not only nourishes the world but also generates social and economic impacts, making it an essential component of our collective well-being. On the occasion of World Milk Day, we gather to celebrate the invaluable role of the dairy sector in our lives. This global event, established by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in 2001, serves as a reminder of the profound impact that milk and dairy products have on our nutritional well-being, societal fabric, and environmental sustainability.

Bangladeshis have a strong affinity for milk and dairy products due to several reasons deeply rooted in their culture, dietary preferences, and nutritional awareness.

First and foremost, milk is widely recognized as a rich source of essential nutrients, particularly calcium, protein, and vitamins. As a result, consuming milk and dairy products is viewed as an effective way to maintain good health, especially for children and individuals with growing bodies and developing bones. The nutritional benefits associated with milk have made it an integral part of the Bangladeshi diet.

Moreover, dairy products are frequently incorporated into traditional Bengali cuisine, enhancing the flavor and richness of various dishes. Milk is commonly used in preparing popular desserts like *kheer* (rice pudding) and *mishiti* (sweets), which are cherished treats during festivals and special occasions. The creamy texture and distinct taste of dairy products have become an integral part of the culinary heritage and traditional flavors of Bangladesh.

Additionally, the dairy sector plays a significant role in the rural economy of Bangladesh, where agriculture and livestock rearing are prominent. Many Bangladeshis are involved in dairy farming, either as small-scale farmers or as part of cooperative societies. According to the latest Department of Livestock Services (DLS) data, there are 8-10 lakh small and big dairy farms across the country, and more than 2 crore people are involved in the sector.



The dairy industry provides a source of income and livelihood for these people, contributing to the socio-economic development of rural communities.

Furthermore, increasing awareness about the health benefits of milk and dairy products has influenced consumer preferences in Bangladesh. People are more conscious of maintaining a balanced diet and incorporating nutrient-rich foods into their meals.

Recognizing this shift in consumer behavior, popular dairy brands have responded by making their products more affordable and appealing. For instance, Saleh Uz Zaman, Head of Public Relations and Communications at Arla Foods Bangladesh, highlights their efforts: "We introduced Dano Daily Pushi in sachets so that people can easily afford a glass of milk every day."

“By focusing on empathy to drive

our operations in Bangladesh, we have successfully seen DANO being used daily in 1/3rd of the households in Bangladesh," he added.

Despite the expansion of milk production across the country, it still falls short of fully meeting the national demand. The estimated annual demand for milk in Bangladesh is 156.68 lakh tonnes, while the country produced 130.74 lakh tonnes in the FY2021/22. As a result, the current availability of milk per capita is 208.61 ml per day, which is below the recommended minimum daily intake of 250 ml. This reveals a significant opportunity to increase milk production in the country and bridge the existing gap between demand and supply.

While it is crucial to undertake initiatives aimed at increasing milk

production and diversifying the dairy industry, it is equally important to prioritize sustainable practices that minimize the environmental impact of the sector. The commitment of the industry to responsible production and efficient supply chain management is vital for ensuring a resilient and environmentally friendly future.

Encouragingly, Bangladesh has been witnessing a growing adoption of sustainable farming practices, improved resource management, and innovative technologies within the dairy sector. These efforts focus on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, conserving water resources, and safeguarding biodiversity.

Saleh Uz Zaman, representing Arla Foods Bangladesh, emphasizes their commitment to meeting the local market's requirements while

maintaining sustainable practices. They have joined hands with Pran Dairy to promote a market-driven and sustainable approach to dairy production. This collaboration aims to enhance milk productivity, improve quality, and boost the economic output of the local dairy value chain in Bangladesh.

In 2023, World Milk Day aims to emphasize how the dairy industry can actively work to reduce its environmental impact while simultaneously providing nutritious food options and sustaining livelihoods. By aligning efforts towards sustainable practices and fostering collaborations within the dairy industry, Bangladesh can ensure a prosperous future that balances the growing demand for milk with environmental stewardship and socioeconomic progress.

Will the spark reignite Mohammedan?

ATIQUE ANAM

Mohammedan have done the seemingly impossible, beating heavily-favoured Abahani in the final of the Federation Cup on Tuesday to end a barren run stretching nine years. It has evoked widespread euphoria among the club's supporters and former players, with some referring to the success as a turning point in the fortunes of the most decorated football club in the country.

Ever since Kamrul Islam scored the winning spot-kick at the Shaheed Dhirendranath Dutta Stadium in Cumilla, a festive vibe has engulfed the club. Players and coaching staff returned to the capital late that night to a heroes' welcome from the club officials, who arranged a small party, which continued well into Wednesday afternoon.

Despite the financial trouble dragging Mohammedan back in recent times, the club's management announced a Tk 40 lakh bonus for the team while its football committee chairman Ghulam Mohammad Alamgir announced an added bonus of Tk five lakh for captain Souleymane Diabate and Tk two lakh each for the two goalkeepers -- Sujon Hossain and Ahsan Habib.

Imtiaz Sultan Jonny, a famed defender for the Black and Whites in the '80s, reflected on how big the achievement is, after the victory. "We ended Bashundhara



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Kings' unbeaten streak and then became champions by beating Abahani, so it's a big deal," Jonny told reporters. "We will have to win the league now and this title will surely motivate."

The victory is evidence of the progress that the club has made under the new committee following the casino scandal in 2019. Rumman Bin Wali Sabbir, a magical playmaker during the '80s and '90s, recalled the resurgence: "After the casino scandal, the ex-players have taken the responsibility of the club under late Badal Roy's leadership and we are moving

ahead step by step."

While Alfaz Ahmed has turned the tide since taking over as coach midway through the season, continuing the good work may prove to be a far more difficult task.

It may be noted that although Mohammedan failed to win a single league title since the start of the professional league in 2007, they won a number of cup titles, including two out of the three Super Cups between 2007 and 2014. Even lesser clubs like Arambagh and Farashganj have won Independence Cup during that time, but a league triumph is

a different ball game altogether.

To challenge for the league title against big spenders such as Bashundhara Kings and Abahani, the team will need long-term investment, depth and quality in its squad, a good environment and other facilities, many of which Mohammedan may be lacking at present.

Alfaz, who has steered the team to fourth position in the league with four games remaining, said he needed reinforcements to turn this team into a force that could challenge for the league title next year.

"I haven't signed a new contract with the club yet. If the club wants to keep me and if I stay with the club, I'll definitely want to have a squad capable of putting up a title fight," the former national forward told The Daily Star yesterday.

"I hope the club management realises that too and forms a strong squad for next season. There will need to be more investment and planning and I will need a few new players too," the 49-year-old added.

Despite losing much of its relevance in the recent past, the latest Abahani-Mohammedan derby showed that it can still reignite the passion among fans like the good old days. And fans of both clubs along with the neutrals will hope that Mohammedan do return as a force in domestic football once again to bring back the appeal of domestic football.

NZC delegates visit prospective venue SICS

SPORTS REPORTER

Representatives from New Zealand Cricket (NZC) arrived in the country and visited Sylhet yesterday to examine facilities for both the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium and the Outer Stadium where Bangladesh A are playing West Indies A.

New Zealand will play an ODI series in Bangladesh before the World Cup and talks are going on between the two boards on the scheduling and logistics. Security consultant Reg Dickason, Head of security Greg Mann, Evan Jones of Players' Association and the team's logistics manager Riaan Muller for the upcoming tour, were part of the NZC delegation.

Crick Operations deputy chairman Shahriar Nafees accommodated the visitors in Sylhet. The picturesque city recently hosted Ireland and could get more action going forward.

"We haven't finalised a venue yet but Sylhet might be one of the venues. Since there are no doubts about Chattogram and Dhaka venues, and as there is a prospect of venue addition, they visited Sylhet. We haven't decided which format it may host," Shahriar told The Daily Star yesterday.

Sylhet had been bargaining for more exposure and hosting New Zealand would see a big international men's team play in the city for the first time.

'I believe attack is the best defence'

After playing domestic football for 25 years before calling time on his career in 2013, Alfaz Ahmed remains one of the most recognisable names in Bangladesh football. The former national forward has returned to the spotlight after masterminding Mohammedan's epic triumph against archrivals Abahani in the Federation Cup final on Tuesday. The 49-year-old, who has been with Mohammedan for three seasons, spoke to **The Daily Star's Anisur Rahman** about the final and other topics. The excerpts are below:

The Daily Star (DS): You were seen running with the players during the victory lap after the Federation Cup final, reminiscent of your playing days at Mohammedan...

Alfaz Ahmed (AA): I could not control myself [laughs] because I was also so excited after the nerve-wracking final. I could not stop myself. I was really happy after winning such an exciting final.

DS: After the final, you said the substitutions in the second half made the difference. What was lacking in the first half?

AA: In the first half, Abahani's wingbacks put pressure on our defence by overlapping at every opportunity. So, I sent on three fresh players, including two wingers in an attempt to stop their wingbacks and those changes worked well. Midfielder Alamgir Rana also did his job very well by building up from the back. Some good moves changed the direction of the final.

DS: What is your coaching philosophy?

AA: My philosophy is to play attacking football because I believe attack is the best defence. In the attacking third, you can beat the opposing defenders if it is three-on-three or four-on-four. I try to keep more attackers in the attacking third. Former Mohammedan coach Sean Lane is



my coaching idol.

DS: This squad hardly impressed before you took charge. How did transform a mediocre team into champions?

AA: In the first leg of the BPL, Mohammedan played a 4-3-3 with three defensive midfielders, with the idea being to not concede and attack on the break. But since I took the responsibility, I made some changes to the formation, with three types of midfielders -- defensive, playmaking and attacking. We also tried to keep our wingers engaged in both attack and defence throughout the match.

DS: Do you believe the exciting final can lead to a revival in the Mohammedan-Abahani rivalry?

AA: Of course, it is possible. Mohammedan were performing well and gained steam after beating Bashundhara Kings. I think if the management forms a good squad in the coming days, then the rivalry between Mohammedan and Abahani can be revived.

DS: It is being said that the difference between national players and those outside the national set-up is negligible. What do you think about that?

AA: It is true that there is hardly any difference between national players and those outside the national team. Foreign players usually make the difference in matches in Bangladesh.

DS: Did you get an opportunity to work independently?

AA: I made decisions independently, but I want to thank manager Imtiaz Ahmed Nakib and goalkeeping coach Sayed Hasan Kanon bhai, who provided me with good observations. The inclusion of assistant coach Abdul Kaiyum Sentu ahead of the second leg also boosted the coaching staff.

DS: What are your future plans?

AA: I am Mohammedan's coach for now, but I haven't been promised anything about next season. If I am given the responsibility, then I will place my plan to the management.

Hosts in disarray against Windies A

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh A were in a state of disarray in Sylhet as they slumped to 157 for seven at the close of the second day in the third four-day game against West Indies A in response to the visitors' first-innings total of 445.

There were ominous signs ahead of the one-off Test against Afghanistan next month, with batters such as Mominul Haque, Yasir Ali and Nurul Hasan Sohan failing to make their presence felt.

The home side's bowlers did not have the best of outings either, finding little help in the wicket. Despite the lack of turn on offer, Nasum Ahmed scalped a filer while pacers Mushfik Hasan and Shoriful Islam bagged two each.

Following the exchange, openers Mahmudul Hasan Joy and Zakir Hasan negotiated eight overs before the former was caught behind after making nine off 27 balls.

From there, the slump began. Mominul departed after scoring five before Zakir was run out for 29. Saif Hassan's innings lasted 68 deliveries during a team-high 32 while Sohan produced 28.

It took some rear-guard action from pacer Tanzim Hasan Sakib and Nasum, unbeaten on 17 and seven respectively, to get through to the end of play with the A side now staring a defeat, still 228 runs behind.

"We haven't batted well at all. The wicket is good and did not offer much help [to the bowlers] with little seam movement on offer. We just didn't bat well," selector Habibul Bashar told The Daily Star yesterday.

'Strength of Navy SEAL needed to win French Open'

AFP, Paris

Stefanos Tsitsipas believes he'll need to have the mental and physical strength of an elite, battle-hardened special forces commando to break through to a maiden Grand Slam title.

The Greek world number five came agonisingly close to winning the French Open in 2021 when he surrendered a two-sets lead to lose in five to Novak Djokovic.

It's a memory which still haunts him, especially after losing to the Serbian superstar again in January in the final of the Australian Open.

"There are a few guys that can play good under pressure, especially in big, tight moments, and you have to have the mental strength of a Navy SEAL to pull it through," said Tsitsipas, hailing the crack US special forces unit.

Tsitsipas made the French Open last 32 for the fourth year in succession on Wednesday with a 6-3, 7-6 (7/4), 6-2 victory over Spain's Roberto Carballes Baena.

As well as making two Grand Slam finals, the 24-year-old has fallen at the semi-finals on four occasions -- twice to bitter rival Daniil Medvedev (2020 and 2021 Australian Open) and to Djokovic (2020 French Open) and Rafael Nadal (2019 Australian Open).

In his quest, he has resorted to consulting Rafael's Nadal autobiography because he "kind of shows you that anyone can do it." "You have to have the physique of a marathon runner, the lungs of a marathon runner. You have to have the power of a football player," added Tsitsipas when asked what constitutes a Grand Slam champion.



'Kohli is the first to arrive in training and the last to leave'



AGENCIES

Australia fast bowler Josh Hazlewood has put India batter Virat Kohli in high acclaim revealing how the 34-year-old helps set examples for the others through his work ethic.

The fierce rivalry between India and Australia has produced some stellar cricket over the years but the spirit of the game often is brought out when both sides acknowledge the pedigree of the stars they have at their disposal.

India and Australia will face each other in the final of the World Test Championship 2021-23 at The Oval in England on June 7 as fans eagerly wait for five days of pulsating red-ball cricket.

Hazlewood, whose IPL campaign was cut short due to a side injury, is hoping to bowl in full tilt as Australia gear up for the final.

"I think it's probably how hard he works (that stands out)," Hazlewood told the ICC.

"His fitness first of all - and then his skill work and batting and fielding in particular.

"He is always out there (training) first and leaves last ... and the intensity he trains at all the time is at such a high level it drags everyone else along for the ride. That can leak on to the other players and improve them as well."

The Australian, whose IPL campaign has more five-wicket hauls in Tests against India (five) than any other nation and his record in England is just as impressive with a total of 36 wickets from eight matches at an imposing average of 23.58.

Hazlewood also made his Test debut against India - at The Gabba in Brisbane in 2014 - and has played more Tests against the Asian side (15) than any other team.



England batting stalwart Joe Root plays football with teammates during a training session yesterday ahead of the one-off Test against Ireland, starting today at Lord's. With a home Ashes series fast approaching, England will be looking to use this Test as a vital part of their preparations for the clash against Australia.

PHOTO: REUTERS



BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION Landslide kills three workers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Three workers were killed and four others injured after a landslide buried them at an under-construction bridge site in Faridpur yesterday morning.

The dead are Ontor, 27, Julhas, 28, of Faridpur Sadar, and Javed, 29, of Bagerhat district, said police.

The incident took place around 11:30am at Jamaddar village in Sadarpur upazila, said Subrata Goldar, officer-in-charge of Sadarpur Police Station.

According to locals, despite warnings, the contractor kept piles of soil on the banks of the canal. Due to rain, some of the soil slid back into the canal hampering the piling work.

The accident happened when the soil on the banks fell on the workers who were removing it from the canal bed, the OC said.

The injured were taken to a local hospital for treatment, he added.

Some workers and locals said they have urged the contractor to move the soil from the bank fearing an accident. But the contractor didn't pay hid.

M/S Asif Imtiaz Enterprise is carrying out the construction work.

This correspondent could not reach Asif Imtiaz, the proprietor of the enterprise, after repeated attempts over the phone.



Excavation by the Dhaka South City Corporation has given a new lease of life to this section of the old channel of the Buriganga in the capital's Kamrangirchar. The channel was completely blocked. The city corporation plans to beautify the channel.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

1971 GENOCIDE Demand for recognition on agenda of UN session

STAR REPORT

The UN Human Rights Council has included the demand for international recognition of genocide committed by the Pakistani forces and their associates against the Bangalees during the Liberation War of Bangladesh.

The demand has been included as agenda item 3 of the UN Human Rights Council's 53rd session from June 19 to July 14.

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres received the statement issued by the Bangladeshi diaspora organisation, Stichting BASUG (Bangladesh Support Group), with special consultative status of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the UN along with Aamra Ekattor, Projonmo '71, European Bangladesh Forum, and Seraji Foundation.

The statement, which reiterated the demand for the "International Recognition of the 1971 genocide", was circulated in accordance with ECOSOC resolution 1996/31 on May 29.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Not EC's job to make anyone win or lose

CEC tells election officials in Khulna city

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Habibul Awal yesterday said it is not the responsibility of the commission to make any candidates win or lose.

While briefing officials of Khulna City Corporation polls, he said the EC's job is to ensure that voters can cast their votes freely.

"Who is winning or losing the polls is never an issue of the commission. We will need to ensure that no voters face obstruction while he or she is exercising voting rights," the CEC said at the event at Khulna Government Girls' College auditorium ahead of the city polls on June 12.

He asked police and the local administration to make sure that every voter can go to the polling centres and vote without fear.

The CEC said elections should be held in a way that there remains no distrust among people. People have to believe polls will be free and fair.

He said the biggest responsibility of elections is on presiding officers. "You should take necessary steps so that things like scuffles cannot break out at polling centres and law and order remains under control."

"You have the legal power if any such situation arises. When you think voters cannot exercise their voting rights properly, you can stop the voting at polling centres temporarily and permanently," he said.

He also warned that the commission would take actions against election officials if they show any kind



Kazi Habibul Awal

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

Sadiq's men on campaign trail, but only barely

AL nominee getting half-hearted support from them

ASHIK ABDULLAH APU with SUSHANTA GHOSH

Awami League central leaders' bid to get the current Barishal mayor's men to join the campaign trail of the party's mayor nominee Abul Khair Abdullah is not delivering the desired outcome.

Amid pressure from party high-ups, supporters of Mayor Serniabat Sadiq Abdullah began a half-hearted and disunited campaign for Abul Khair, who is Sadiq's uncle, on Tuesday, the fifth day of electioneering.

The city goes to polls on June 12.

The way Sadiq's followers have been acting at the campaign for Khair has been uninspiring and disjointed. They even printed and distributed their own leaflets just for show, said sources in both factions.

Locals and party insiders said Sadiq's followers campaigned for just about an hour yesterday. On Tuesday, they distributed leaflets that were different from the ones from Khair's camp.

On Tuesday and yesterday, Sadiq's followers campaigned for the sake of campaigning, they said.

Khair's loyalists alleged that the faction loyal to Sadiq was electioneering because their arms have been twisted.

Alfzalul Karim, chief polling agent of Khair, told The Daily Star, "It took around a month and a half to hold the extended meeting [for making the factions work together]. Why? Thanks to them [supporters of Sadiq] for finally joining the campaign. They only distributed leaflets in Sadar Road area but they had no activity in the wards."

During a views exchange meeting with Jubo League leaders on Tuesday, Khair said, "Forty days have passed but still I have not gotten cooperation from many ... got resistance from many. Ignoring the instructions of our leader Sheikh Hasina would be suicidal [for them]."

Faizul Haque Faiz, the Sadiq-led faction's point

person for Khair's campaign, said they campaigned in areas close to their offices and could not go far due to the hot and humid weather.

Echoing Faiz, Sadiq's ally Talukdar Mohammad Yunus, general secretary of Barishal district AL, said, "We have already given leaflets for distribution in the wards."

According to locals, banners asking for votes for "boat", the AL's electoral symbol, could not be seen in wards that have pro-Sadiq councillors.

Kohinur Begum, a councillor aspirant for wards 7, 8, and 9 reserved for women, even alleged that Sadiq loyalists wearing badges of the "boat" were seeking votes for the Islami Andolon Bangladesh mayor nominee.

During a visit to wards 2, 7, 8, and 17, activists belonging to the Sadiq-led faction were hardly seen campaigning.

Sources in Khair's camp told this newspaper that they do not expect Sadiq's followers to campaign wholeheartedly and they have already taken up an alternative campaign strategy.

"We have formed ward-based monitoring committees to see if the activists are carrying out their responsibilities properly," said Alfzalul.

Leaders and workers of Barishal AL fear disaster on election day as the two factions are not working together.

Ever since the AL on April 15 picked Khair, Mayor Sadiq has been trying to keep his firm grip on Barishal as Khair has been gaining strength, locals and AL insiders said.

This has led to tension and confrontation. There was an attack on Khair's followers on the night of May 14 and Sadiq's men were arrested the next day.

Neither Khair nor Sadiq attended Friday's extended meeting held to get their factions to work together.



Two factions of Chhatra League activists throw chairs at each other as they fight over who would chant slogans at a rally near Chattogram Zilla Parishad Market. Four or five were injured at the event organised by the 14-party combine yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

107m-year-old Pterosaur bones found in Australia



CNN ONLINE

Pterosaurs, the world's oldest flying reptiles, once flew in Australia's skies as far back as 107 million years ago, according to a study published yesterday.

Palaeontologists came to that conclusion after examining two pieces of prehistoric bone extracted from Dinosaur Cove – a fossil-bearing site in the Australian state of Victoria – more than three decades ago.

The samples turned out to be the oldest remains of pterosaurs ever recovered from the country, according to the study published in science journal History Biology yesterday.

The giant creature was the first vertebrate to evolve the ability of flight and lived alongside dinosaurs during the Mesozoic Era which started 252 million years ago.

Experts from the Perth-based Curtin University and Museums Victoria, in Melbourne, examined bones from two individuals, including a wing bone belonging to the first juvenile pterosaur ever reported in Australia.

A piece of pelvis bone was found to have come from a pterosaur with a wingspan exceeding two metres (6.5 ft). Some pterosaurs had wingspans of more than 10 metres (33 ft).

SUDAN CONFLICT

Army suspends ceasefire talks with rival force

REUTERS, Jeddah

Sudan's army suspended talks with a rival paramilitary force yesterday over a ceasefire and aid access, raising fears the six-week-old conflict will push Africa's third largest nation deeper into a humanitarian crisis.

The general command of the armed forces said in a statement it suspended talks in the Saudi city of Jeddah, accusing the other side of a lack of commitment in implementing any terms of the agreement and a continuous violation of the ceasefire.

The negotiations with the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), which began in early May, had produced a declaration of commitments to protect civilians and two short-term ceasefire deals, although those deals were repeatedly violated.

Residents had reported heavy clashes in southern Khartoum and in Omdurman across the River Nile until late on Tuesday.

The army, which relies on airpower and artillery, and the RSF, a more lightly armed force but a tough adversary in Khartoum street battles, had agreed to extend a week-long ceasefire deal by five days just before its Monday expiry.

Army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, a career military officer, and RSF General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, a former militia commander known as Hemedti, have been locked in a battle for power since April 15. Neither side seems to have an edge.

"We do not want to use lethal force. We still haven't used our maximum strength ... We don't want to destroy the country," Burhan said in a military video released on Tuesday, speaking to cheering forces at a military base with a gun slung on his back.

"But if the enemy does not obey and does not respond we will be forced to use the strongest force we have," he said.

The RSF said in a statement late on Tuesday it was committed to the ceasefire

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