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Unfit buses rule city streets

22pc of them running without fitness clearance

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

More than one in five buses of private operators running in the capital have no valid fitness certificates.

According to the data from the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority, 3,974 buses of 75 companies have the required route permits for operating in Dhaka city, but 871 of the buses, 21.92 percent, do not have fitness clearances.

The Daily Star has obtained a document, containing the data, that was placed before a meeting at the headquarters of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) on May 5 where many bus owners were present.

In reality, over 120 operators run more than 5,000 buses in the capital. And many of the vehicles do not have route permits and they ply the city streets allegedly by bribing, say transport sector insiders.

On October 13 last year, Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh said over 1,600 unauthorised buses were operating in the city despite an ongoing drive against such buses.

The issue of unauthorised buses was discussed last month at the meeting of the coordination committee tasked with bus route rationalisation and operating buses under companies.

The government in 2019 formed a committee to rationalise bus routes and have a limited number of bus service providers. So far it has managed to launch the system in three of the 42 reshaped routes.

Member secretary of the committee, Shabiha Pervin, also executive director of Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority, said Hanif Paribahan, which was supposed to operate on route-23, expressed disinterest as many unauthorised buses were running there, meeting minutes show.



A man filling a jar with Wasa water in unhygienic conditions near Tejgaon level crossing. He takes Tk 5 for filling up a jar. Later, the jar water is sold at tea stalls and restaurants in the capital in the name of filtered water. The photo was taken on Wednesday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

- ✓ 3,974 buses under 75 companies are approved
- ✓ 871 buses do not have fitness clearance
- ✓ Transport owners say 5,000 buses ply city streets
- ✓ Many buses in city have no route permit



Route 23 starts from Ghatarchar and ends at Chattogram Road via Shyamoli, College Gate, Asad Gate, Kalabagan, Science Lab, Shahbagh, Jatiya Press Club, Gulistan, Dainik Bangla, Kamalapur, Dhalpur, Jatrabari, Shanir Akhra, Rayerbagh, Matuail, and Signboard.

Transport expert Prof Hadiuzzaman said unfit vehicles are risky for other fit vehicles too.

The former director of the Accident Research Institute at Buet said pedestrians in Dhaka are more vulnerable and such unfit vehicles increase their risk. The vehicles are causing serious environmental pollution, he told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said drivers of unauthorised vehicles know that they have a strong clout that allows them to run illegal vehicles and that is why they drive vehicles more recklessly.

Khondaker Enayet Ullah, general secretary of the Dhaka Road Transport Owners' Association, admitted that there were buses on the streets without fitness certificates.

"But how will the association know which buses have no fitness clearances? The BRTA has the data and it can take action against those," he told this newspaper.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

LOAD SHEDDING Situation improves as mercury falls

Electricity demand drops; rain brings relief from heat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

People had a bit of relief yesterday after light rain in places across the country, including the capital, brought down temperatures amid the heatwave leading to lower electricity demand and less frequent power cuts.

There was no improvement in power generation. As of 9.00pm yesterday, the average load shedding was 1,500MW per hour against the demand of 15,200MW. The highest generation per hour was 14,655MW.

There was no load shedding in Dhaka after day peak at noon.

The average load shedding was between 2,500MW and 3,000MW over the last couple of weeks.

At least 51 power plants are facing fuel shortages.

Power supply from India's Adani Power Plant was disrupted for at least 13 hours after a part of its transmission line in Chapainawabganj tripped and caused more power cuts between Wednesday afternoon and early yesterday.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Income tax bill targets wealth stashed abroad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

People with properties abroad stand to face a penalty equal to their fair market value if the tax office can detect those, as per the Income Tax Bill 2023.

Drafted in Bangla, the bill, which was placed in the parliament yesterday by Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal, will replace the existing Income Tax Ordinance 1984.

The tax officials will also be able to run enquiries at home and abroad if they have logical grounds to believe that the individuals are stashing their wealth outside of Bangladesh.

Not just that, the National Board of Revenue will be able to realise unpaid taxes by selling the properties abroad even if the assets are owned by another person on behalf of the taxpayer.

The proposed law authorises the NBR to take appropriate actions as it thinks fit and makes it mandatory for those with properties abroad to file assets and liabilities statements.

On paper, the proposed law can deter money laundering. Whether it succeeds depends on the supporting measures taken to make the law robust.

The law has been framed to ease the process of doing business and cut the number of returns that companies need to file from 29 to 12, Kamal said.

"The bill seeks to reduce the discretionary powers of tax officials as much as possible."

The proposed law has incorporated international best practices to ease tax compliance and file tax returns, Kamal said, adding that it will also thwart prevent tax avoidance from taking place through various types of arrangement.

Filing tax returns and proof of submission would become mandatory for availing 43 government services, up from 38 at present.

The draft law has expanded the scope of submission of income tax returns under self-assessment.

Taxpayers will not need to seek additional time should they fail to file returns beyond November 30. But they will face a penalty, said a senior official of the NBR.

The simplified refund process will enhance trust in the tax system since the tax refund will be credited directly

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

BUSINESS

Bill placed in JS to loosen family grip on banks

A maximum of three persons from a single family would be able to become directors of a commercial bank from the existing four, according to the Bank Company (Amendment) Bill 2023.

The draft act has also defined habitual defaulters and set punitive measures against delinquent borrowers, the first such measure in the banking history.

Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal placed the bill in parliament yesterday.

STORY ON B1

PESTICIDE POISONING No one should lose children this way

Says father of 2 victims; MD, chairman of pest control firm remanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

"I want exemplary punishment of the people who are responsible," said Mobarak Hossain yesterday, who lost his two sons allegedly from pesticide poisoning.

The boys died after a pest control service provider used unauthorised pesticides in their house in Bashundhara Residential Area on Friday, Mobarak said.

Shayan Mobarat Zahin, 15, a student of class-VIII, and Shahir Mobarat Zayan, 9, a class-III student, died while undergoing treatment at a city hospital on Sunday.

"No parents should lose their children this way," he said with his voice choking.

"I just want to make sure that the criminals are not spared," Mobarak said, blaming the owners of DCS Organisation Ltd, the pest control service, for the deaths.

"The owners are responsible, not the workers. We always see workers being made scapegoats," he said.

Connected through a video call, SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

EC to make nat'l polls free, fair

It'll ensure no govt agency will file any case to harass anyone, law minister tells JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a bid to hold the upcoming general election in a free and fair manner, the Election Commission has decided to ensure that no government agency will file any case to harass anyone, Law Minister Anisul Huq said yesterday.

The commission will send a proposal to the government so that all the political parties can carry out election campaigns unhindered. Besides, immediate actions will be taken as per the law if a candidate or their supporters launch attacks on rival candidates and their followers, or their homes and businesses, he said.

In reply to a question from Gonoforum MP Mukabbir Khan from Sylhet-2, the minister said, "The Election Commission has taken up the challenge to hold the election in a transparent, free, fair and peaceful manner."

In his scripted question, Mukabbir asked the minister whether the EC has any special plan to hold the 12th national polls in a free, neutral and acceptable atmosphere, without "showing allegiance to the government like the previous commissions did".

Anisul Huq, in his scripted answer, said since there is an obligation to hold the national election by January next year, the EC has taken up an action plan to this end.

The minister talked about measures that the EC has decided to take to overcome the challenges of holding a free and fair election.

Illegal arms will be recovered and legal arms will have to be deposited to the authorities concerned before the polls, he said while describing the measures.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

In order to keep the election process transparent, the commission has decided to publish all the activities related to the election on its website for everyone and to invite local and foreign observers.

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SECURITY, TRADE US eyeing enhanced co-op with Bangladesh

UNB, Dhaka

The United States has reiterated that they are keen to enhance relationship and cooperation with Bangladesh in key areas, including security and trade.

"Last year we celebrated an anniversary as it relates to our bilateral relationship with Bangladesh, and this year in 2023 we look forward to deepening that relationship, and there are a number of areas in which we intend to deepen that cooperation," Principal Deputy Spokesperson at US State Department, Vedant Patel, said.

Responding to a question during a regular briefing at the US Department of State on June 7, he said that in addition to security cooperation, there is potential for enhanced cooperation on climate, trade and many other issues.

"So of course, this is an issue that continues to be of importance to us. I have spoken about this a great deal to some of your colleagues. One of them, of course, is the opportunity for security cooperation with Bangladesh," Patel said when asked about boosting US engagement in counterterrorism in Bangladesh.

Rohingyas demand repatriation to Myanmar

Stage protests at Cox's Bazar refugee camps

REUTERS, Dhaka

Tens of thousands of Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar protested yesterday, demanding to be repatriated to Myanmar, so that they could leave the squalid camps they have lived in since fleeing a brutal military crackdown in their homeland in 2017.

More than a million Rohingyas have been crammed into the camps in southeastern Bangladesh, the world's largest refugee settlement. Most fled the crackdown by Myanmar's military almost six years ago, although some have been there for longer.

During yesterday's demonstrations across the sprawling camps, refugees, young and old, waved placards and chanted slogans.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

Although we live in Dhaka, how many of us can say how the city looks and feels in reality? We have a set of imageries inscribed in our heads, images of chaos and traffic jams, and we cannot come out of that. In fact, when we are in the car and our attention tethered to our cell phones, we hardly raise our heads to appreciate the city or what we are passing by.

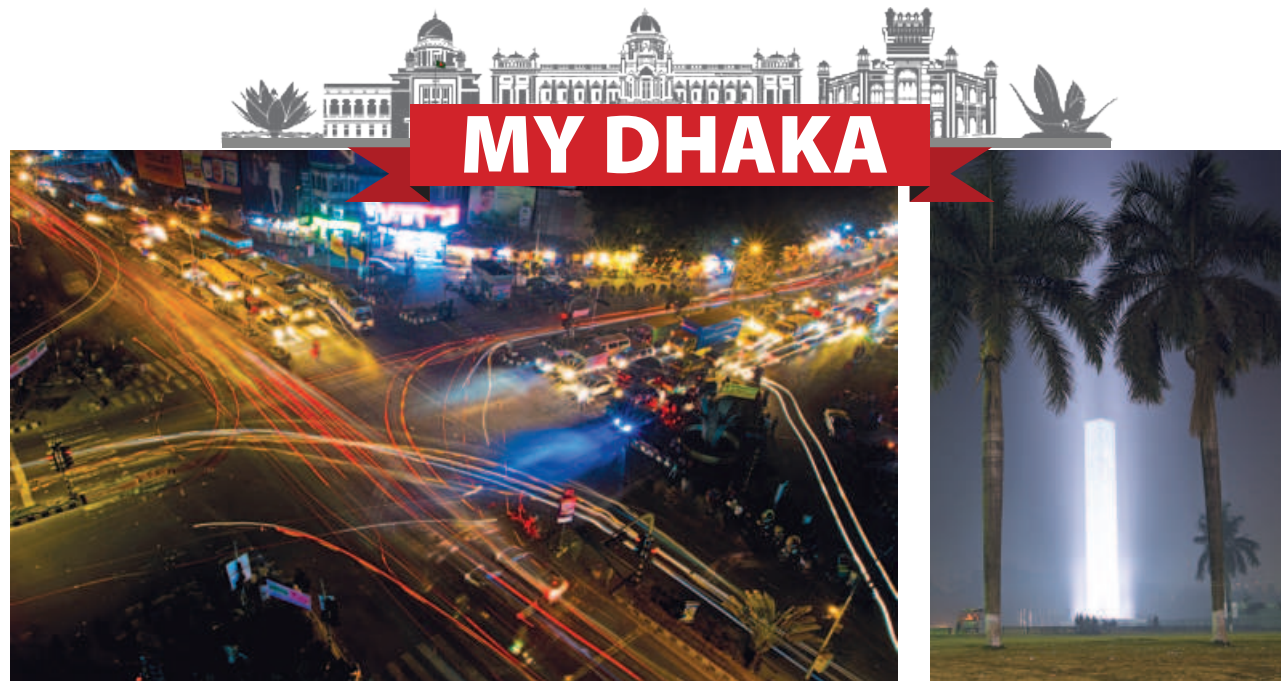


PHOTO: STAR

Getting to know THE CITY ALL OVER AGAIN

RBR

It is said that to know a city well you must walk the lanes and by lanes; only then do you notice the landmarks, take in the sights and sounds of the city, and take pleasure in observing the signature colours of the cityscape.

Walking, riding a rickshaw or a motorcycle, a car or a bus — each mode of transport presents the city from a different angle.

I decided to explore the truth about finding the city by walking, the only difference being, I decided to take a ride on a Vespa.

I hopped on a trendy, orange Vespa with my friend and we started for now what is a shabby part of Dhaka — Shantinagar. Once, it was my neighbourhood and I remember it as a quaint, middle-class community. I was in fact looking for a tea stall selling loose tea leaves in the famous Shantinagar Bazar. They had the best loose orange pekoe tea and I want a kilo of that. Of course, the shop was no more there, the old house where I lived is now a multi-storied building. The narrow lane which was my playground once, or the beautiful pond enclosing Shantinagar,



reality, we rode to Hare Road, the most serene street in the city. Riding the Vespa, I was enjoying journey as we zoomed through Ramna Park, Kakrail, past the High Court area, and stopped at the Teacher-Student Centre (TSC) of Dhaka University.

is now filled with tens of high-rise buildings choking the place to doom.

To erase the hard

As we walked through the big gate, we instantly heard a group of young friends singing a peppy hit by Anjan Dutta "Chakri Ta Ami Peye Gechi Bela Suncho". I felt jubilant hearing them sing. Their young, happy faces and carefree spirits were contagious, I found my magical Dhaka right there!

And a cup of sugary tea with a splash of fresh orange was all I needed to be reminded that it takes nothing to be happy in Dhaka.

EC to make

FROM PAGE 1

The EC will implement the recommendations — which go in line with the constitution and electoral laws — that the majority of eminent citizens and political parties have made in view-exchanging meetings, according to the minister.

Adequate members of law enforcement agencies will be deployed to maintain a normal atmosphere in polling centres and constituencies while executive and judicial magistrates will be appointed to strictly enforce the electoral code of conduct and take legal action against any violators, he said.

The EC will treat all candidates equally, he said, adding that necessary amendments will be made to the Representation of the People Order and also the electoral code of conduct.

The other measures include holding meetings with the heads of various ministries, divisions, departments and law enforcement agencies, which are involved in holding the election, and giving directives so that they carry out their responsibilities sincerely and impartially during the election.

In order to keep the election process transparent, the commission has decided to publish all the activities related to the election on its website for everyone and to invite local and foreign observers.

The EC has decided to provide scopes for electronic and print media to gather information freely, he said.

The law minister said the EC is determined to ensure that the election results are acceptable to all voters and most of the political parties.

The EC will appoint qualified officers from the commission as returning officers and presiding officers.

Besides, it will take action against election officers if there are proofs of their bias, the minister said.

Unfit buses rule city streets

FROM PAGE 1

He said owners of some 1,500 buses sought route permits a few years ago and the regional transport committee had even recommended the permits be issued.

But the coordination committee in 2019 decided not to issue route permits anymore, which made the 1,500 buses illegal, he said.

He refused to comment on the allegation that the illegal buses were running by paying bribes.

Most city buses operate on "trip system", in which the owners receive a certain amount of money for a set number of trips the drivers make. The drivers and their helpers get to keep all money earned from any trips beyond the set number. This system promotes racing on the streets, one bus cutting off another, buses blocking streets to

prevent being overtaken by another bus, and picking up of passengers here and there, experts said.

This is why transport experts had recommended rationalisation of bus routes and bringing all public buses under a fixed number of companies for better regulation.

Late DNCC Mayor Annisul Huq had taken the initiative. Later, the government in September 2018 formed a committee, led by the DSCC mayor, to introduce the system and rationalise the routes.

The authorities preliminarily decided to have 22 companies running 42 routes.

On December 26, 2021, the new system was launched with Nagar Paribahan on one route. In October last year, Nagar Paribahan started operating on two more routes.

No one should lose children this way

FROM PAGE 1

he was speaking at a press conference arranged by the Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

The detective branch of the DMP held the programme at the DMP media centre to disclose the arrests of Ashrafuzzaman, chairman of the company, and its Managing Director Forhadul Amin.

Police said they were arrested from Tangail and Brahmanbaria.

A Dhaka court yesterday placed the two on a three-day remand each in a case filed over the deaths of the two children.

In the remand prayer, Md Rafiqul Islam, a sub-inspector of Bhatara Police Station and also the investigation officer of the case, said the two children died due to their gross negligence. They need to be remanded to find out the vital clues related to the deaths.

In the press release, Mobarak said the toxic chemicals used by the company were not suitable for controlling pests in homes.

"The pesticides applied at their home are usually used at warehouses of garment factories, seed storages and at non-residential areas," Harun Or Rashid, chief of the detective branch of DMP, said citing industrial experts.

If anyone uses those pesticides at home, no one should enter there for 72 to 96 hours. After that, the doors and windows have to be kept open for about 24 hours, he said.

He also said the owners or the employees did not provide the proper guidance to the family.

According to Mobarak, the employees of the company asked them to enter the house after two to three hours. The family members, however, took extra precautions and returned to the house after about 10 hours.

"The owner's greed for money and untrained workers are responsible for the deaths. They did not even give them proper briefings on safety," Harun said.

The DB official said they will

investigate if the company had the approval for using these toxic substances.

He also said police will also investigate how harmful these toxic substances are and from where they collected them.

Situation improves as mercury falls

FROM PAGE 1
Production from the Adani plant may increase this week as its second unit has started production on trial.

The temperature in Dhaka yesterday dropped between 30.7 and 37.5 degrees Celsius. The capital saw the mercury climb up to 38.7 degrees Celsius the day before.

However, Rajshahi had the highest temperature yesterday, 41.5 degrees Celsius, according to the Bangladesh Meteorological Department.

Sharmin Akter, a resident of the capital's Ramna area, said, "We are finally relieved as it has started to rain."

Hyena attacks

FROM PAGE 12

Infectious Disease Hospital as the injury was caused by a wild animal.

Md Rafiqul Islam, director of the zoo, however, said family members of the boy got close to the cage crossing the first safety barrier. They ignored the notice advising not to cross it, he said.

He said after the hyena attack, the zoo's security personnel and the boy's family could only free the boy from the jaws of the animal after it severed the hand.

The tragedy would not have happened if they did not cross the first safety barrier, he said.

He claimed that the zoo authorities

No bar for Salahuddin

FROM PAGE 12
March 10, 2015.

He was found in Shillong of India's northeastern state of Meghalaya on May 11, according to Meghalaya police. He was arrested for trespassing.

A lower court framed charges against him in the case on July 22, 2015, and acquitted him in 2018.

On May 8, Salahuddin asked the assistant high commission of Bangladesh in Guwahati for a travel permit as his passport in 2016 and he couldn't renew it as he was in India.

EXPLANATION ON MURAL
Delhi has responded to Dhaka's query about the mural of Ashoka empire, installed in India's new parliament building, that triggered controversy in some of the neighbouring countries.

"We came to know from the Indian authorities that the mural installed on the parliament building is the depiction of Samrat Ashoka's empire, the one whose governance was accountable, transparent and people's development-centric. It was symbolic," Rafiqul said.

"Its main thought was historic old India reflecting Ashoka's empire. It was, however, described by some media as Akhand Bharat. The issue is

HSC exams to start August 17

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

This year's Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) and equivalent examinations will start from August 17. According to the schedule published yesterday, students will sit for the Bangla first paper on the first day.

The exams will continue till September 25, read a press release, signed by Prof Md Abul Bashar, controller of examinations of Dhaka Education Board.

Babul's father, brother get bail in DSA case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka tribunal yesterday granted bail to former superintendent of police Babul Akhter's father Abdul Wadud Mia and brother Habibur Rahman Labu till July 25 after their surrender before it in a case filed by the PBI chief under the Digital Security Act.

Meanwhile, Judge AM Julfiker Hayat of Dhaka Cyber Tribunal directed the jail authorities to produce Babul, now in jail, before it on July 25, the next scheduled date.

Another accused journalist Elias Hossain is still at large.

The tribunal will decide the next scheduled date whether it will accept the charges against the accused in the case.

Bangladesh avoids being 'red-listed' by Saudi Arabia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh avoided being put on the "red list" by Saudi Arabia as private hajj agencies completed visa processing of 85 percent hajj pilgrims before the June 7 deadline set by Riyadh.

Saudi Arabia also said the Bangladesh Hajj Office will have to bear all the responsibilities if it fails to meet the target.

The religious affairs ministry on June 6 in a notice informed all 603 private hajj agencies about it and instructed them to take necessary measures.

In a notice released yesterday, the religious affairs ministry said 85 percent visas of hajj pilgrims have been completed within the deadline.

Hajj Agencies Association of Bangladesh (HAAB) President M Shahadat Hossain Taslim said there was no more complication regarding the issuance of visas.

UN probes Israel expulsion of human rights lawyer

AFP, Geneva

UN investigators said yesterday they were gathering evidence that could potentially be used in future prosecutions of those involved in Israel's expulsion of a French-Palestinian human rights lawyer.

A high-level team of United Nations investigators said it was preserving a list of possible perpetrators behind Salah Hamouri's forced deportation, including the El-Al airline used for the expulsion and its staff.

deploy security guards around cages of ferocious animals.

Asked why the guards did not prevent the family from crossing the barrier, he said the authorities have launched investigations to find whether there was any negligence on the part of the security guards.

The director said three separate committees have been formed by his office, department of livestock services and the livestock ministry in this regard.

Saif came to the zoo with his mother, maternal grandparents, and three others from their Gazipur house. His father Sumon Mia is a garment worker.

under observation," he said.

IORA MEETING

Rafiqul said the biennial meeting of Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) Committee of Senior Officials will be held in Sylhet on June 13-14.

A total of 62 officials from 23 IORA member states will be attending the meeting to discuss regional cooperation in the areas of maritime security, trade and investment, fisheries management, disaster risk management, tourism and cultural exchange, science and technology, blue economy and women empowerment.

Income tax bill

FROM PAGE 1

to the taxpayer's bank account, said Snehasish Barua, director of SMAC Advisory Service.

The bill though calls for a higher rate for tax deducted at source (TDS). This will push up the cost for businesses since most of the TDS is considered as minimum tax, he said.

The bill has been sent to the parliamentary standing committee on the finance ministry for security. The committee has been asked to submit its report within five working days.

KARWAN BAZAR KITCHEN MARKET

Traders still reluctant to move

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Traders of Karwan Bazar are reluctant to shift to Jatrabari and Gabtali as they believe the areas are unsuitable for running their business.

They made the comments at a discussion yesterday held at TCB auditorium, demanding that authorities concerned ensure better facilities at the Karwan Bazar instead of shifting them to the new locations.

However, Dhaka North City Corporation Mayor Md Atiqul Islam, who chaired the discussion, said the kitchen market must be shifted to the new locations, which will soon turn into a safe, modern market.

"It cannot be run in the middle of the capital, it should remain at the city's periphery," he said.

"No one will be jobless, rather their security will improve if they go there where there is sufficient space," he said.

The mayor formed an 11-member committee, incorporating three councillors, traders, and city corporation officials, to present the status quo regarding the issue within the next 15 days.

He said it's his obligation to shift the market as it's the prime minister's directive and the project was approved by Ecneec.

"Karwan Bazar market is risky, it may collapse anytime, and you will have to take responsibility," he added.

Atiqul said his office received a letter from the Dhaka divisional commissioner's office to remove eight risky markets immediately and following this they put up signboards there. But those were removed.

"Who will take responsibility if any accident occurs?" he asked.

"It is important to give security of life and goods to both sellers and customers and we will have to work together for this," the mayor said.

"You may say its design is faulty but sit with me and give me your suggestions. We will address it. However, the buildings have already been constructed," he said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



An aerial view of the Karwan Bazar market. Even though the city corporation is planning to relocate the kitchen market to Jatrabari and Gabtali, traders there are unwilling to move. They believe the relocation will seriously hinder their business.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Two more die of dengue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two people died of dengue and 134 others were hospitalised across the country in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning.

The total number of deaths in dengue rose to 21 this year, according to the Directorate General of Health Services.

With the new cases, the total number of dengue this year rose to 2,854, of whom 735 are from outside Dhaka.

Some 506 dengue patients are still undergoing treatment at hospitals while a total of 2,327 dengue patients were released from hospitals during the period.

The total number of deaths in dengue was 281 last year while the total number of cases was 62,382, of whom 23,162 were outside Dhaka, according to the DGHS.



Integrate Qawmi education into the mainstream

Speakers tell discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Education Minister Dipu Moni yesterday said integrating Qawmi education into the mainstream education system through updating their curriculum and making it time-fitting is necessary to help its students succeed in contemporary society.

She said Qawmi madrasas do not adhere to the national curriculum, which poses a challenge in terms of reflecting national aspects. So, it is crucial to integrate them into mainstream education.

Addressing a programme, titled "Madrasa education needs to be modernised", Dipu Moni said, it is important for Qawmi madrasa to incorporate elements of our culture, tradition, and language, which are integral parts of mainstream education.

It is important for Qawmi madrasa to incorporate elements of our culture, tradition, and language, which are integral parts of mainstream education.

DIPU MONI
Education Minister

Qawmi graduates are yet to be the perfect human resources, as we cannot utilise them in job sectors. They should be taken under the mainstream education.

MUHAMMED ZAFAR IQBAL
Author and educationist

Ekattorer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee organised the discussion at Engineers Institution in the capital.

Addressing the programme as chief guest, Dipu Moni said, "Our historical facts are being distorted under the guise of religious education in many institutions, which is unacceptable."

"However, enforcing the national curriculum on Qawmi madrasas is not the solution. We need to discuss the issues with the Qawmi madrasa authorities and make proper changes to the curriculum, if they demand," she added.

The minister also said it is the responsibility of the state to support and ensure that the madrasas are not left behind.

Author and educationist Prof Muhammed Zafar Iqbal said all educational streams must be brought under the watch of the government. "Qawmi graduates are yet to be the perfect human resources, as we cannot utilise them in job sectors. They should be taken under the mainstream education," he added.

Speaking at the programme, educationist Shyamoli Nasrin Chowdhury said, "We need to prepare a proper education system to include madrasa students to a skilled population."

While presenting an article, writer and activist Maulana Hasan Rafiq said the government should take immediate measures to modernise the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Facebook now a market for fake notes

Say police; dealers take to social media platform to advertise, sell counterfeit currency

RAFUL ISLAM

"We have original, glazing print and a perfect product with security thread and watermarks that are almost undetectable in bare eyes," reads a part of an advertisement recently posted on Facebook to sell fake notes.

A Facebook user named "Jal Takar Dealer", in the same post also mentioned they deliver counterfeit notes across the country.

However, this user is not a lone "dealer". Law enforcers said they have identified at least 50 Facebook users, pages or groups, where such advertisements are frequent, namely Jal Taka, Jal Taka Bikrir Dealer, Jal Taka Asol Dealer, A great (Jal Taka), Jal Taka Bikri Kori, Jal Takar Babossa.

On June 4, a potential buyer of fake notes, Mohammad Rokibul Ahmed Rakib (according to his Facebook ID) commented on the said post and asked for a contact number, to which, the dealer replied with a number.

This correspondent called the number on Sunday night when the seller brazenly said he would supply fake notes anywhere in Dhaka or other districts without any hassle.

"You can pay cash on delivery. However, you don't need to pay in advance. Just the delivery charge would do -- Tk 180 inside Dhaka and Tk 300 for elsewhere," he said.

Other advertisers often take 50 percent of the payment in advance. They ask the potential buyers to contact them on Facebook Messenger or the WhatsApp number shared with their posts.

Some of these accounts have several thousand friends. The pages have over 2,000 followers, while there are over 3,000 members in a Facebook group used for selling fake notes.

The sellers share photos and videos of the fake notes in their posts. They also share screenshots, featuring satisfied customers, thanking them for delivering the package without any hassle.

When this correspondent went undercover to contact these dealers on messenger apps, one of them claimed that he used the notes himself and confirmed that it cannot be detected without machines.

The seller also shared a screenshot of his communication with other customers. He demanded 50 percent of the payment in advance before sending the fake notes via courier service.



PHOTO: FACEBOOK GRAB

There are countless profiles on Facebook like this one that claim to sell fake notes.

The sellers advertise selling 1,00,000 fake notes of Tk 1,000 -- ranging from Tk 12,000 to Tk 20,000 -- based on the quality. The same amount of Tk 500 notes was being sold at a range from Tk 14,000 to Tk 20,000. Several were seen advertising fake notes of Tk 20, saying this note is easy to inject into the market as people usually do not bother to check it.

Law enforcers said that most of the online fake note sellers are frauds, as after getting the delivery charge or partial payment, they stop all communication with potential buyers on multiple occasions.

Police arrested at least five people involved with the online sale of fake notes.

"If the offline fake note sellers join hands with the online sellers, the situation may turn alarming," said a mid-ranked official of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, seeking anonymity.

Mashhur Rahman, deputy commissioner (DB) of Lalbagh Division, led several drives against

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

'Invest in our oil, gas sectors'

President urges UK entrepreneurs; new envoy presents credentials

BSS, Dhaka

President Mohammed Shahabuddin yesterday urged the UK investors to invest in various sectors, including oil and gas, in Bangladesh.

He came up with the call after receiving the credentials from the new British High Commissioner-Designate to Bangladesh Sarah Cooke at an event after she was ceremonially welcomed at Bangabhaban.

Welcoming the new envoy, the president said, "The UK is playing an important role in the economic and technical development of Bangladesh."

The high commissioner lauded the socio-economic development of Bangladesh. She said her country would always stand by Bangladesh in its continued development and progress.

Cooke sought the cooperation of the president in fulfilling her duties.

The president assured the envoy of his full support in fulfilling her responsibilities in Dhaka to further strengthen Bangladesh's relationship with the UK.

Earlier, on her arrival at Bangabhaban, a smartly turned-out contingent of the horse-mounted President Guard Regiment gave the envoy a guard of honour as part of the ceremony.



PHOTO: BSS

Mango special train service starts

STAR REPORT

The "Mango Special Train", loaded with the seasonal delicacies, started its service yesterday.

Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujan inaugurated the service around 11:00am with the train leaving for Dhaka from Chapainawabganj.

One train will be operated every day from Rohanpur Railway Station at 4:00pm and will leave Chapainawabganj Railway Station at 6:00pm.

The train will reach Dhaka through Rajshahi and other stations, sources said.

In 2020 amid the Covid-19 pandemic, the government started the initiative to help mango growers transport their fruits.

On May 16, Deputy Commissioner of Chapainawabganj AKM Galib Khan said BR will launch Mango Special Train from May 20.

Asked about the delay, a top BR official, requesting anonymity, said a number of important issues including inauguration of Chilahati Express by PM on June 4, activities related to the handover ceremony of 20 Indian locomotives on May 23, left little time for launching the service this year.



11.84pc pass DU 'Ga' unit entry test

DU CORRESPONDENT

The admission test results of "Ga" unit held under the business faculty of Dhaka University for 2022-2023 session were published yesterday with pass rate of 11.84 percent.

The results showed 4,526 students passed the examination, while 38,235 admission seekers vied for 1,050 seats.

The results can be viewed on www.admission.eis.du.ac.bd or via SMS.



PRAYER TIMING
JUNE 9
Fazr Juma Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4:05 12:30 5:00 6:45 8:15
JAMAAT 4:40 1:15 5:15 6:50 8:45
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



An excavator demolishing an illegal structure on the bank of DIT pond at Gendaria in the capital yesterday. Rajuk, in a drive, knocked down around 100 such structures to free the waterbody.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

100 structures along DIT pond knocked down

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rajdhani Unnayan Katripakkha (Rajuk) yesterday demolished around 100 structures from the bank of the DIT pond in the capital's Gandaria area.

Rajuk removed the illegal structures during a day-long drive, following Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh's declaration to remove the structures.

Heavy police deployment was seen in the area to avert untoward situations during the drive.

An officer, who was on the spot, told The Daily Star that they removed around 100 structures, except a two-storey building.

"As the building owner

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Sabira Rouf passes away

CITY DESK

Sabira Rouf, mother of Dr Eaysmin Ara Lekha, vice-chancellor of Uttara University, passed away on June 7. She was 86.

She breathed her last at 1:05pm in the Intensive Care Unit of Dhaka United Hospital.

Kazi Mohiuddin, registrar of Uttara University, and the university family have expressed their deep grief and condolences.

100 structures

FROM PAGE 3

sought time to remove the belongings, we will knock down the building tomorrow," he said, requesting anonymity.

Recently, local influential people were attempting to fill the century-old pond, triggering protests from environmentalists, who held several programmes to thwart the move.

Meanwhile, the High Court imposed a three-month status quo on any construction and filling of the pond in response to the writ petition filed by Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela).

Traders still

FROM PAGE 3

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal said no one will be removed forcibly but the kitchen market will have to be shifted.

A decision will have to be taken jointly, he said.

He requested the mayor to construct a multistoried market for the market at the Karwan Bazar.

"Due to the urgency of the situation, many things are being constructed, and if the government decides not to allow any trucks here, you will be in trouble," he said.

Local Government and Rural Development Minister Md Tazul Islam said a discussion is necessary on the issue as it is complex and its solution is quite important.

Mosharraf Hossain, treasurer of Karwan Bazar Khudra Kacha Bazar Samiti, said around four crore people are directly or indirectly involved with the market and will be affected due to the shifting.

Hazi Abdul Hakim Bulbul, secretary of Number-1 DIT Market, said late mayor Anisul Huq assured them of bringing four markets in a particular area in Karwan Bazar but the decision fell flat due to his demise.

"We will sacrifice our lives if necessary, but we will not move," said Lokman Hossain, a Kitchen Market Beboshaye Samity leader.



Law enforcers intercept BNP leaders and activists in front of Notre Dame College yesterday as they were trying to go to the WAPDA Bhawan on Toyenbee Road to submit a memorandum to the officials concerned, protesting the recent power outages across the country. Later, police allowed some of the party members to hand over the memorandum.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

NID correction to be made easy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission has moved to ease the hassle for people in correcting information on National ID Cards.

EC officials prepared a draft Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) which will make it easier for fixing NID corrections. It has re-designated officers' jobs and proposed increasing the powers of field officers of the EC to correct NID information.

The SOP also made the jobs of officials specific.

The draft SOP was placed before a meeting of election commissioners chaired by Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Habibur Awal yesterday.

"The meeting in principle approved the SOP, and they would finalise it after holding further discussions," NID Wing Director General A K M Humayun Kabir said after the meeting.

Earlier in late May, the draft of the SOP was finalised proposing 20 additional regional officers should be given the authority to categorise the applications for correcting NID cards.

At present, the process is done centrally.

The draft of the SOP also proposed that district election officers will be able to correct the mistakes of names of parents of NID card holders. Currently, regional election officers are authorised to bring such changes.

District election officers will be able to take decisions about applications seeking a change of date of birth for a maximum of seven years, while additional district election officers will be able to settle applications seeking a change of date of birth for a maximum of five years.

Additional district election officers will be able to take decisions about applications regarding change of marital status, names of spouses as well as religion. Till now, additional district election officers had no authority regarding the correction of NID cards.

The SOP proposed that the regional election officer will be able to take decisions regarding applications seeking a change of the full name of the national identity card holder. Currently, the Director General of the NID wing can take such a decision.

Ctg-10 by-polls July 30

UNB, Dhaka

By-polls to Chattogram-10 constituency will be held on July 30. The Election Commission announced the schedule yesterday.

EC Secretary Md Zahangir Alam briefed reporters after a meeting at the EC secretariat.

The last date for submission of nomination paper is July 4.

The last date for withdrawal of the candidature is July 12 while symbol allocation will be on July 13. The Parliament Secretariat on June 4 declared Chattogram-10 (Double Mooring-Halishahar-Khulshi-Katalgani) vacant following the death of Awami League lawmaker Afsarul Amin.



Chaos at AL rally

No talks with BNP at the moment, says Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two factions of Awami League yesterday threw chairs at each other twice during a rally organised marking the historic Six-point Day in front of its headquarters in the capital's Gulistan.

Zahangir Alam, a member of ward-57 unit AL, was injured in the incident and received primary treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Eyewitnesses said chaos ensued at the rally venue when Nurul Amin Ruhul, vice president of Dhaka City (south) unit AL, started his speech around 4:00pm.

At one point, the activists started throwing chairs prompting Ruhul to stop his speech. He then requested everyone to calm down.

After pacifying the situation, when he resumed his speech around 4:30pm, chaos ensued again as the AL men started throwing chairs.

The situation also created panic among the activists.

At that time, the AL leaders from the stage started saying that the followers of BNP-Jamaat may enter the rally and create chaos, so that everyone should be

alert to prevent it from happening.

Awami League presidium members Quamrul Islam, Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, Joint General Secretary Mahubul Alam Hanif then intervened and pacified the crowd.

Meanwhile, AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader at the rally said the party is not considering talks with the BNP for the time being.

"Time will tell whether we would consider holding dialogues. We can remember what happened last time. We held dialogues with them twice, but what was the outcome? Nothing," said Quader.

Quader said the BNP has fallen into a trap after repeatedly complaining for sanction. "They got visa [restriction] policy instead of sanctions. There is nothing to worry about the visa policy."

He also said caretaker government will not return, it is a dead issue.

Quader, also the road, transport and bridges minister, said, "The foreign friends want neutral elections. They want free and fair elections. Our leader [AL chief Sheikh Hasina] has assured both locals and foreigners that she will ensure a free and fair election."

Facebook

FROM PAGE 3

fake currency producers. During these drives, many manufacturers were arrested and several counterfeit note factories were busted in the last couple of years.

Speaking with this correspondent, Mashur said a section of people is involved in fake note trade offline. However, most online fake note sellers are frauds.

"Buyers of these notes are also criminals and they have no provision to lodge a complaint with police after they are cheated in the deal they struck with the fake note sellers," he said.

Mashur, however, said law enforcers are on a high alert regarding such advertisements on social media.

Concealing yaba

FROM PAGE 5

the drives said the female mules would wear these petticoats to supply the pills to the wholesale dealers in the northern districts, including Rangpur, Thakurgaon and Panchagarh.

For carrying each consignment, a mule used to get Tk 10,000 to Tk 15,000, he added.

Md Shahjahan, hailing from Thakurgaon, used to bring yaba pills from traders in Cox's Bazar after dealers in the northern districts placed their demands. He used truck drivers to carry the consignments to the capital from Teknaf, hiding them inside goods and spare truck wheels.

Shahjahan has already two cases against him under the Narcotics Control Act.

"The arrestees admitted that for every 10,000 pills, a truck driver used to get Tk

1,00,000 to Tk 1,50,000," Mehedi told The Daily Star yesterday.

He also said Alamgir, hailing from Chattogram, admitted that he used to earn Tk 1,00,000 to Tk 2,00,000 on each trip.

Integrate

FROM PAGE 3

Qawmi madrasa syllabus and look into creating more job opportunities for their graduates. In the article, suggestions were also made to prohibit political activities, ensure the safety and security of the students and regulate the activities of all madrasas across the country.

Maulana Yakub Badsha and Forhad Hossain Fahad, also spoke at the programme, moderated by Asif Munir of Nirmul Committee with historian Prof Muntassir Mamoon in the chair.

Forced to live a miserable life

FROM PAGE 5

Post-graduate trainee physicians are medical school graduates who pursue further specialised training in a specific medical field for 2-5 years to achieve higher degrees.

Their role is to provide direct patient care under the supervision of attending physicians, gain practical experience and

refine their clinical skills.

According to the organisers, there are around 8,500 non-government post-graduate trainee physicians in all medical colleges, universities and specialised institutes in the country. They are not allowed to engage in private practice and are supposed to be on duty round the clock.

"We have no choice but

to live a very miserable life. We need adequate financial support to fully concentrate on our training and service patients without any stress," said Suhag.

Speaking at the event as the chief guest, Prof Major (Retd) Abdul Ohab Minar said, "All the professional physicians' organisations should come forward to press home this demand."

Contacted, Prof Sharafuddin Ahmed, vice chancellor of BSMMU, said, "I have discussed the issue with the health minister a week ago. He said he would take steps after discussing it with the prime minister."

The VC also said he has proposed to distribute the allocation to the respective institutions where the post-graduate physicians study.

Polls-time govt

FROM PAGE 5

government. The current government will serve as the election-time government as it is the norm around the world," he said.

"When BNP was in power, the country used to generate 3,600 MW of electricity. Now we have the capacity to generate 18,000 to 20,000 MW of power. And when BNP was in power, only 40 percent

of the people were under electricity coverage. Now 100 percent of the people are," the minister added.

Urging patience, the minister said the current power crisis due to fuel shortage will improve soon.

"The state minister for power said that this problem, caused by global recession and war, is temporary and it will be eased in 15-20 days," he added.

HC justifies three

FROM PAGE 5

Shahidul Karim and Justice S M Kuddus Zaman delivered the verdict after rejecting two petitions challenging the legality of Sections 9, 13, and 14 of the Vested Property Return Act, 2001.

He also said all the cases regarding the vested properties will be dealt with by the designated tribunals and such cases pending

with other civil courts will become abated as per the law and the HC verdict.

A larger bench of the HC comprising Justice Naima Haider, Justice Shahidul Karim and Justice S M Kuddus Zaman delivered the verdict after rejecting two petitions.

Details of the HC verdict could not be known as its full text was not released yet.

Who gets BNP votes?

FROM PAGE 5

the election. We have even discouraged them from going to the polling stations. Those who defied the party's decision have been expelled. We do not have any involvement with the election."

Despite that, 18 leaders who hold various positions in the BNP and its associate body are participating in the election. Therefore, it can be inferred that at least a small number of BNP voters will likely cast their votes in favour of these candidates.

Senior BNP leaders have claimed that there are approximately one lakh BNP voters in the city.

Additionally, Jatiya Party candidate Iqbal Hossain Tapos, brother of Jubo Dal leader Taslim Uddin, shares ideological similarities with BNP, which is why the JP candidate hopes to get a significant number of the BNP votes.

On the contrary, Mufti Karim, the candidate from Islami Andolan Bangladesh (IAB), has taken a proactive approach by engaging with BNP-minded voters on a personal level and remains hopeful of securing BNP votes.

Sources said the floating voters with ideologies similar to IAB are likely to rally behind the IAB

candidate. Besides, a section of Awami League leaders has been spreading rumours that some AL supporters may end up voting for the IAB candidate.

Meanwhile, amid the final phase of the campaign, accusations of electoral code violations have become common among the candidates, with each promising various development initiatives.

IAB CANDIDATE UNVEILS 17-POINT MANIFESTO
Mufti Karim yesterday unveiled a 17-point election manifesto at a city restaurant. The manifesto includes initiatives such as

implementing stringent measures against food adulteration, ensuring access to safe drinking water, guaranteeing food security for all residents, elevating living standards for city dwellers and beggars, ensuring affordable housing and employment opportunities, reducing holding tax and license fees, facilitating easy access to citizen services, establishing dedicated markets for hawkers, improving the road infrastructure, constructing embankments to prevent river erosion and promoting a greener environment within the city.

The land will be Rented
At Barotopa, Mauna under Sreepur, Gazipur a large vacant land area suitable for Industrial use will be rented.
Contact: 01312078785, 01793515222

Flat To-Let
At Gulshan-1, Road No.120, House-19, 2314 Sft. 3Bed, 3Bath, 2Veranda, Drawing, Dining & Kitchen.
Cont: 01726-208922

FLAT FOR SALE
Uttara, Sector- 3 : 3200 sft
Uttara, Sector- 6 : 2400 sft
Bashundhara - G : 2900 sft
REHAB MEMBER (4 Bed, Corner plot)
01713377885, 01713377886

Invitation for submitting Monitoring survey in Jamuna river (OTM)

PACIFIC CONSULTANTS CO., LTD. in Japan now invites proposals to provide the survey services on Monitoring survey in Jamuna river on Project for Planning Capacity Enhancement and Establishment of a Technology Adaptation Cycle on Comprehensive Nodi (River) Management conducted by JICA. The service period is scheduled from July 2023 to March 2024. All interested agencies/companies should request "haruka.suzuki@tk.pacific.co.jp" this email address by 18 June 2023 to collect the detail Terms of Reference and proposal documents. The quotation should be submitted by 5pm on 18 June 2023.

Yuasa Takashi, Deputy Team Leader of JICA Expert Team
PACIFIC CONSULTANTS CO., LTD
BWBDB Pani Bhaban Room 710, 72 Green Road, Dhaka-1205
(TEL: 01309385080) 9th June 2023

Land Purchase @ Gulshan/Baridhara
Wants to buy minimum 8 katha upto 20 katha (more/less) at any prime location of Gulshan/Baridhara diplomatic zone by EXPATRIATE BANGLADESHI. Any commission or service charge is not required from the seller. Only genuine owners are requested to contact. 01711-521084

Car for Sale
Kia Sportage: Color-Red, Model/Reg:2018, Serial-18, Tiptop condition, sunroof, alloy rim, 1999 CC, 13,880 Km. Road 11, Building 5, Block G, Banani, Dhaka.
Cell: 01729094674, 01750728612
https://bikroy.com/en/ad/kia-sportage-2018-for-sale-dhaka-4

FOR SALE
3-STORIED INDEPENDENT HOUSE ON 10 KATHA IN TRI-STATE. ONLY GENUINE BUYERS CALL 01327413961

Concealing yaba in tyres, petticoats

DNC arrests syndicate coordinator, carrier with 25,000 pills

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Department of Narcotics Control has arrested a key coordinator of a drug syndicate and a carrier who used to smuggle consignments of yaba pills to Dhaka from Cox's Bazar.

The carrier then distributed the pills to dealers in northern districts using female drug mules.

DNC officials first arrested carrier Md Alamgir, 40, a truck driver by profession, from the capital's Gopibagh on Wednesday with 10,000 pieces of Yaba concealed in the spare wheel's tube of a truck in which he was carrying the consignment.

Following information divulged from Alamgir, DNC officials arrested Md Shahjahan, 26, from Savar's Hemayetpur area. Later, raiding his rented residence, the officials seized 15,000 yaba pills concealed in two petticoats.

DNC disclosed it in a press briefing at its headquarters in Dhaka yesterday.

DNC assistant director (Dhaka metro north) Md Mehedi Hasan who led

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



The sweltering heat has also been affecting animals. To get some respite, a herd of buffaloes takes a dip in the cool waters of a pond yesterday. This photo was taken in Sylhet's Gowainghat upazila.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

HC justifies three sections of Vested Property Return Act

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday justified three sections of the Vested Property Return Act, 2001 regarding government's authority to prepare list of vested property, relevant tribunals' jurisdiction to dispose of cases relating to such properties and deputy commissioners' power to maintain and leasing those properties.

The court said the sections 9, 13, and 14 of the act are not contradictory to the constitution and fundamental rights of the citizens.

Following the HC verdict, the government can prepare list of the vested property, only the vested property related tribunals will dispose of the cases involving such properties and deputy commissioners will have the authority to maintain and lease out those properties, senior advocate Manzill Murshid, counsel for the land ministry, told The Daily Star. A larger bench of the HC comprising Justice Naima Haider, Justice

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

BGB-BSF talks in New Delhi from June 11

STAR REPORT

The border guards of Bangladesh and India will hold their bi-annual border-level talks in New Delhi from June 11 when Dhaka is expected to flag its concerns over continued incidents of border killing.

A 15-member delegation of the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) will be led by its Director General Maj Gen AKM Nazmul Hasan, while the BSF delegation by DG Sujoy Lal Thaisen at the four-day talks.

The Bangladesh team is expected to reach Delhi on Saturday, reports our New Delhi correspondent.

The two sides are also likely to deliberate on a set of issues related to cross-border crimes and measures to create better synergy between their security agencies.

This will be the 53rd edition of the BGB-BSF talks. The previous meeting was held in Dhaka in July last year.

BARISHAL CITY POLLS

Who gets BNP votes?

SUSHANTA GHOSH and MD ABBAS

As BNP, a party with a substantial voter base, is not participating in the upcoming Barishal City Corporation election, a pertinent question arises surrounding which candidate will get the support of the BNP loyalists.

According to locals, it is unlikely that any single candidate will secure the majority of BNP votes in the election. However, speculations suggest that the candidate who manages to get a higher proportion of the BNP votes will emerge victorious.

In the 2013 BCC election, BNP candidate Ahsan Habib Kamal got 40 percent of the total votes and was elected mayor, defeating the Awami League candidate Shawkat Hossain.

However, locals and civil society members do not consider the 2018 election valid due to massive irregularities that marred the election.

Independent mayoral candidate Md Kamrul Ahsan Rupan, son of former

mayor Ahsan Habib, is running as an independent candidate and was expelled from the BNP for defying party decisions by contesting the polls, despite not holding any party position. He has sought votes from BNP supporters during his election campaign, presenting himself as a member of the BNP family.

Rupan has been holding meetings since last week with veteran BNP leaders of the Barishal city unit, including former mayor Mujibur Rahman Sarwar and Ebaudul Haque Chan, and is seeking votes by garnering sympathy through these connections.

While talking to The Daily Star, Md Moniruzzaman Faruk, president of the city unit BNP, said BNP is not interested in this election and will discourage its supporters from going to the polling stations to cast their votes.

Bilkis Akter Shirin, central organising secretary (Barishal Division) of BNP, said, "We have repeatedly urged our party members not to participate in

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



Rain or shine, waterlogging has become a constant crisis for residents of Baraipara area in the port city. As a result, locals continue to suffer while traversing on the roads. This photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RAJIB RATHAN

Polls-time govt to be led by Hasina

Says information minister

UNB, Dhaka

The next national elections will be held under the current government with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the helm, said Information Minister Hasan Mahmud yesterday.

He said this while talking as the chief guest at a seminar organised by Dhaka University's Oceanography department on the occasion of World Ocean Day at DU.

"BNP's demand for a caretaker government has not received any support from anyone globally. So now they are talking about a 'neutral' government instead of a caretaker



SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

'Forced to live a miserable life'

Non-govt post graduate trainee physicians demand Tk 50,000 stipend

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Non-government postgraduate resident trainee physicians yesterday demanded an increase in their monthly stipend from Tk 20,000 to Tk 50,000, since they believe their current salary is insufficient to cover their living expenses.

They presented their demands at a press conference held in the capital's Jatiya Press Club.

"Government physicians, with the same qualification receive a monthly salary of Tk 42,000, more than twice the salary we receive for the same duties," said Dr Habibur Rahman Suhag, a non-government resident surgeon at Chattogram Medical College.

By default, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical College (BSMMU) pays the allowance on behalf of the government.

"We did not receive any response from BSMMU authorities in the last two days. We will enforce a strike if the demands are not met by June 12," Suhag added.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer

Department of Public Health Engineering

Bagerhat District

Phone:02477751554,Email:dphebagerhat@gmail.com



Re-Request for Expression of Interest (EOI)

For the Procurement of 'Supervision Consultant at Bagerhat district

Memo No- 46.03.0100.061.14.162.16-545

Date:07/06/2023

The Fourth Primary Education Development Program (PEDP-4) is the continuation of Government's approach after PEDP3 in thriving the excellence of children through the fulfillment of several distinct milestones including construction of need-based infrastructures for sanitation and water supply. The program is supported by the Government of Bangladesh as well as Development Partners (DPs).

Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) under the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives (MLGRD&C) is involved in PEDP-4 in the capacity of implementation partner of Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) to provide the water supply and sanitation facilities in the primary schools of Bangladesh. For the smooth implementation of the program in district level, DPHE Bagerhat district now invites eligible individuals to indicate his/her interest in providing the services as 'Supervision Consultant'. Interested Individual should provide information demonstrating that s/he has the required qualifications and relevant experience to perform the Services as follows:

Package No	Name of the Position	Required Qualification & Experience	Consultant's Assignment
SCD_47	Supervision Consultant	<p>a) Educational Qualification :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering with 02 years' experience or Diploma in Civil Engineering with 05 years' experience. <p>b) Experience :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 02 years' specific job experience in planning, design and supervision of building construction and installation of water sources. Have in-depth knowledge in MS Office and prepare all sorts of report and presentation both in Bangla and English associated with project implementation. Familiarity with updated Government rules & regulations such as PPA-2006, PPR-2008, Delegation of Financial Power (DOFP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervising and providing technical supports for the construction of water supply and sanitation infrastructures of the Govt. Primary Schools and DPE related offices. Preparing technical specifications, BOQ and detailed estimate of works as per requirement. Regular construction monitoring at different construction stages of WASH Block i.e., foundation casting/ column/ roof/ beam/ slab etc. Similar monitoring is applicable for Water Sources. Resolve any site related construction issues. Co-ordination with school, DPE local offices, DPHE local offices and DPHE HQ.

The competent applicant is invited to provide information indicating that s/he is qualified to perform the services (complete CV along with description of similar assignments, experience in similar conditions, general qualifications and financial proposal).

The Consultant will be selected and contracted as per the "Selection of Individual Consultant (SIC)" method as described in PPR-2008. Consultant having ongoing contract with any other government project or consultant already engaged in other district for the same assignment will not be considered for shortlisting.

The assignment will be effective from the date of joining to June/2025 or as the program completion period. Interested applicants may obtain the detailed Terms of Reference (ToR) upon request from the address provided below either by e-mail or in person during the office hours (09-00AM to 05-00PM). The ToRs are also available at the DPHE website (<http://www.dphe.gov.bd>).

Expression of Interest must be delivered in a written form to the address below by e-mail: dphebagerhat@gmail.com by 4.00 pm (BST), June 21, 2023 and clearly marked "Request for Expression of Interest", package number, name of the position applied for and name and address of the individual.

The authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all of the EOIs or cancel the EOI process at any stage without assigning any reason whatsoever and without incurring any liability to the affected applicants.

For further information and clarification, intending applicant may contact at the address given below during office hours (09-00 AM to 05-00 PM).

(Jayanta Mallick)

Executive Engineer

Department of Public Health Engineering
Bagerhat District

Phone:02477751554,Email:dphebagerhat@gmail.com

12 YEARS OF Mousumi Hamid

Artiste steps into her 13th year in showbiz

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Recently, Mousumi Hamid completed 12 years in the showbiz arena and stepped into her 13th year in the industry. The actor has demonstrated her acting talent in three mediums: television, film, and OTT. Her numerous projects across all these mediums have earned her a lot of praise from the audience.

Currently, she is awaiting the release of *1971 Shei Shob Din*, *Noya Manush*, and *Japito Jibon*. In a candid conversation with The Daily Star, the actress opens up about her upcoming projects and more.

What has been your biggest achievements over the last 12 years in showbiz?

I wanted to be an actress who gets to explore the life of an artiste. I wanted people to know me through my projects and I feel I may have achieved that through my work. It feels like it was only yesterday when I first stepped into showbiz. It is hard to believe that I have completed 12 years in this industry. I am really happy I was able to captivate the audience through my work in TV, movies and OTT. My whole life revolves around acting.

How was the experience of working with Hridi Haq in '1971 Shei Shob Din'? *1971 Shei Shob Din* revolves around the theme of the Liberation War. Hridi Haq has done a brilliant job and I am

really happy that I got to act with such wonderful artistes. I felt a great sense of satisfaction while working in this film. My role in the film was that of a university-going student. Through this film, audiences will get to experience the feel of 1971.

You have played numerous characters over the years. Did any of them touch your heart?

Many characters have stayed with me long after I finished filming.

For example, my character Lipa from the web-series, *Guti*, lingered around with me long after we finished the production.

What kind of characters do you aspire to play in the future?

I want to see myself in fresh and challenging roles. There are many roles that I have yet to portray. Playing many personalities allows an artiste to discover themselves.

How do you perceive the life of an artiste?

The life of an artiste is rewarding. You get to experience people's love and respect, which is definitely a positive point. At the same time, however, there are some difficulties as well, as the life of an artiste is essentially lonely. At one point, no one stays with you and you are all alone.



PHOTO: SHAHREAR KABIR HEEMEL

BTS' Jimin reveals surprise MV for 'Dear ARMY'



On Wednesday, Park Jimin of BTS released a special live clip of *Dear ARMY* for the 2023 BTS Festa. It's a hidden track from his solo album *Face*.

The song was released as part of the ongoing 2023 BTS Festa, which commemorates the K-pop group's debut anniversary. They are celebrating ten years in the profession this year. Every year, in the weeks leading up to their June anniversary, the band produces new stuff for their fans, ranging from songs to themes.

Wrestling legend 'The Iron Sheik' passes away

Wrestling icon, Hossein Khosrow Ali Vaziri, better known as The Iron Sheik, has passed away at the age of 81. Sheik's own Twitter account announced the news on Wednesday, saying he passed away peacefully.

Sheik was one of the most recognizable names in professional wrestling. He performed for the WWF, Jim Crockett Promotions, the National Wrestling Alliance, World Class Championship Wrestling, and hundreds of other independent areas.

He is best known for his feud with Hulk Hogan. Sheik was inducted into the WWE Hall of Fame as a member of the 2005 Class.



COUNTRYWIDE

Shafique finds success in SHARIFA FARMING

SHYKH SERAJ

Many farmers across the country are now becoming interested in commercial cultivation of different fruits and crops.

Even two decades ago, we saw different seasonal fruits were grown in a particular district or region.

But, day by day that picture is changing. Currently farmers are producing various local and foreign fruits like mango, guava, malta, litchi, orange, dragon and many other varieties almost everywhere.

Sharifa (custard apple) fruit have been added to this list recently.

According to the agriculture department, only a few entrepreneurs are currently engaged in cultivating the fruit on a commercial basis.

Still, Sharifa is being cultivated in about 100 acres of land across the country.

Among the few entrepreneurs, Shafique Mondol of Manikdighi village in Jhenidah's Kotchandpur upazila started Sharifa farming nearly a decade ago.

In 2014, Shafique planted 500 Sharifa saplings on three bigha land, aiming to replace the traditional fruits.

In 2017, the first yield of Sharifa fruit made him confident and since then he never looked back.

When I went to Shafique's Sharifa

orchard, the wholesale market price of the fruit was Tk 350 per kg.

Besides, Shafique also has five bigha malta, five bigha dragon and a 10 bigha guava orchard.

Dear readers, Sharifa is not a new fruit. However, many people are now building orchards of different fruits, keeping the commercial importance in mind.

Shafique's Sharifa orchard has been quite successful as he makes a formidable profit by selling the delicious fruit.

Now he is earning several lakhs of taka every year.

Moreover, his success is inspiring many youths of the area to start Sharifa farming on commercial basis.

Shafique said demand for the tasty and nutritious fruit Sharifa is increasing day by day.

While talking, a college teacher, who came to see the orchard, said being inspired by Shafique's success he has prepared two bighas of land for Sharifa farming.

Nutritional needs will be fulfilled to a great extent if expansion of this fruit plantation continues across the country, I firmly believe. Shafique's success will also inspire many.

But in that case, interested entrepreneurs must get into it with a good understanding of farming management, care and market.

Messi ends Barca homecoming saga

FROM PAGE 12

Miami for just 25 million dollars.

The Argentine has reportedly also been offered a share of the revenue generated by new subscribers to MLS Season Pass, the league's streaming package, and entered a profit-sharing agreement with Adidas which would involve the player receiving a cut of any increase in Adidas' profits resulting from his involvement in MLS.

Barcelona had been forced to let Messi go in 2021 due to financial constraints stemming from their inflated wage bill and those same issues kept the Catalan club from securing a fairytale return by giving Messi the assurances that he sought.

Any move to Catalonia would have taken a lot longer, considering that the club were about 200 million euros over La Liga's salary cap and remain unable to register new contracts. Barcelona would have to sell several players just to get their books balanced well enough to offer Messi a contract that would likely pay him a fraction of what he stands to earn now. Whether they would have been able to do so remains up for debate, although they started making headway by announcing several departures.

"I really wanted and was very excited about being able to return [to Barcelona]. But on the other hand, after experiencing what I experienced and the way I left, I didn't want to be in the same situation again: waiting to see what would happen and leaving my future in someone else's hands," Messi admitted. "I was accused of a lot of

things during my career at Barcelona and I was a little bit tired of it, I didn't want to go through all of that again. When the time came when I had to leave, La Liga had agreed for the club to register me but in the end, it wasn't to be. I was afraid that the same thing might happen, and I would be left in the lurch.

"I wanted to make my own decision and that was partly why I decided against going back to Barca. I would have been delighted to if it had been possible, but it wasn't," he continued.

The Inter move dealt a great blow to Barcelona fans in Bangladesh as well, who hoped that Messi, following his 2022 World Cup triumph, would finish his career at what the player himself described as 'the club of his life'.

Barcelona president Joan Laporta gauged the public's pulse and decided to play to the same tune. On several occasions, he catered to the dream return for Messi, but would always leave out the details of how the club would manage the Argentine's signing.

"After winning the World Cup and not being able to go to Barca, it was time to go to the U.S. league to experience football in a different way and enjoy the day-to-day," Messi said.

"Obviously with the same responsibility and desire to want to win and to always do things well. But with more peace of mind." "If it had been a question of money, I would have gone to Saudi Arabia or elsewhere where they offered me a lot of money," Messi said.

Barcelona said in a statement that Messi's father and agent had informed the club on

Monday of his decision to move to America instead of returning to Spain.

Barcelona coach Xavi Hernandez said Thursday he understood Lionel Messi's desire to avoid the "pressure" of a return to the Catalan giants this summer. "He hasn't had a good time in these two years (in Paris) and now he doesn't want that type of pressure," Xavi said on Twitter.

Wasa MD asks people to use less water

FROM PAGE 12

Rampura, Banasree, Madartek, West Nandipara under zone-6 are worse off, said Taqsem.

Besides, the people of Uttara sector-1 and sector-13 under zone-9 and Mirpur under zone-10 are also suffering. "We couldn't operate the deep tube wells of these zones continuously," he said.

The Wasa MD added that they could not properly supply water via tankers as it requires power to fill the tankers.

Suggesting people to use less water, Taqsem said, "Instead of using running water during this crisis, use water from containers. It will help stop overuse." He said they are mulling to supply water through rationing if the situation deteriorates further.

AL activists 'swoop on'

FROM PAGE 12

conference at Pabna Press Club and alleged that AL men attacked their peaceful programme.

Locals and witnesses said Pabna Zila Parishad member Nazrul Islam Sohel, also a local AL leader, led the attack.

Contacted, Sohel denied the allegation and said BNP activists attacked them when they were holding a "peace procession" in the town.

Rezaur Rahim Lal, Pabna AL president, told The Daily Star that he knew nothing about the incident as he was in Dhaka yesterday.

Kripa Shindhu Bala, officer-in-charge of Pabna Sadar Police Station, said he was not aware of the incident and nobody filed any complaint.

In Bogura, BNP's similar programme was foiled by police.

Locals and witnesses said several thousand BNP activists were marching towards the Northern Electricity Supply Company office in Khokon Park area of the town around 12:00pm.

But police intercepted

them when the procession reached near the office, leading to an altercation between police and BNP activists.

The BNP men then blocked Satmatha-Jaleshwaritala road and demonstrated.

Later, police allowed some senior BNP leaders to enter the NESCO office and submit their memorandum demanding uninterrupted electricity supply.

"We are holding a peaceful programme for the sake of public interest. But police obstructed us," said Ali Azgar Talukdar Hena, general secretary of Bogura BNP.

Sarafat Islam, additional superintendent of Bogura police, said power office is an important government establishment and no one has the rights to lay siege to it.

In Gazipur and Manikganj, the BNP held sit-ins and submitted memorandums to the officials concerned.

[Our Pabna, Bogura, Gazipur and Manikganj correspondents contributed to this report.]

Rohingyas demand

FROM PAGE 2

"No more refugee life. No verification. No scrutiny. No interview. We want quick repatriation through UNHCR data card. We want to go back to our motherland," the placards read.

Rohingya community leader Mohammad Jashim said he was keen to return to Myanmar but wanted his citizenship rights guaranteed.

"We are the citizens of Myanmar by birth. We want to go back home with all our rights, including citizenship, free movement, livelihood, safety, and security," he told Reuters, saying the refugees hoped for United Nations' help in this regard. Myanmar's military had

until recently shown little inclination to take back any Rohingya people, who have for years been regarded as foreign interlopers in Myanmar and denied citizenship and subjected to abuse.

Attempts to begin repatriation in 2018 and 2019 failed as the refugees, fearing prosecution, refused to go back.

Densely populated Bangladesh says refugees' repatriation to Myanmar is the only solution to the crisis.

International aid agencies' funding for the refugees has dwindled. The World Food Programme recently cut the monthly food allocation to \$8 per person from \$10 earlier.



PHOTO: HRIDOYE MATTO MANUSH

Shafique at his Sharifa orchard in Jhenidah's Kotchandpur upazila.

37 Chinese warplanes cross into Taiwan's ADIZ

Taipei activates air defence systems

REUTERS, Taipei

Taiwan yesterday activated its defence systems after reporting 37 Chinese military aircraft flying into the island's air defence zone, some of which then flew into the western Pacific, in Beijing's latest mass air incursion.

China, which views democratically governed Taiwan as its own territory, has over the past three years regularly flown its air force into the skies near the island, though not into Taiwan's territorial air space.

Taiwan's defence ministry said that from 5:00 am it had detected 37 Chinese air force planes, including J-11 and J-16 fighters as well as nuclear-capable H-6 bombers, flying into the southwestern corner of its air defence identification zone, or ADIZ.

The ADIZ is a broader area Taiwan monitors and patrols to give its forces more time to respond to threats.

Some of the Chinese aircraft flew to Taiwan's southeast and crossed into the western Pacific to perform "air surveillance and long distance navigation training", the ministry said in a statement.



Taiwan sent its aircraft and ships to keep watch and activated land-based missile systems, it added, using its standard wording for how it responds to such Chinese activity.

China's defence ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

China completed a second phase of joint air patrols with Russia over the Western Pacific on Wednesday, following flights on the previous day over the Sea of Japan and East China Sea, prompting concern in Japan over its national security.

Laura Rosenberger, chair of the American Institute in Taiwan, which manages the unofficial relationship between Washington and Taipei, is visiting Taiwan this week.

On Monday, she told Taiwan media that the United States had an enduring interest in preserving stability in the Taiwan Strait and the United States would continue to arm the island, a source of constant friction in Sino-U.S. ties.

In April, China held war games around Taiwan following a trip to the United States by Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen.



An explosion is seen in Ramallah, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank yesterday as the Israeli troops demolish the home of a Palestinian accused of carrying out twin bombings in Jerusalem last November that killed two Israelis, including a teenager. PHOTO: REUTERS

FRENCH ALPS

Four children hurt in knife attack

Suspect, a Syrian asylum seeker, arrested

AFP, Annecy

A man armed with a knife stabbed four preschool children and injured two adults by a lake in the French Alps yesterday in an attack that sent shock waves through the country.

A police spokesman said the attacker was a 31-year-old Syrian asylum seeker who carried Swedish identity documents and a Swedish driving license. He entered France legally and was not known to security agencies.

Video of him taken by a bystander in Annecy, a town 30 kilometres (20 miles) south of the Swiss city of Geneva, shows him dressed in a black long-sleeved shirt and shorts while holding a small blade.

Witnesses described the knifeman running around a public park on the banks of Lake Annecy in a frenzy, apparently attacking people at random, before he was shot by police.

"He wanted to attack everyone. I moved away and he lunged at an old man and woman and stabbed the old man," former footballer Anthony Le Tallec, who was running in the park, told the Dauphine Libere newspaper.

The suspect did not appear to have a "terrorist motive", the local prosecutor said.

Line Bonnet-Mathis also said that of the four children injured in the assault, one was aged just 22 months, two were two-year-olds, and the eldest was three.

World warming at record 0.2C per decade

50 top scientists warn in a sweeping climate science update

AFP, Paris

Record-high greenhouse gas emissions and diminishing air pollution have caused an unparalleled acceleration in global warming, 50 top scientists warned yesterday in a sweeping climate science update.

From 2013 to 2022, "human-induced warming has been increasing at an unprecedented rate of over 0.2 degrees Celsius per decade," they reported in a peer-reviewed study aimed at policymakers.

Average annual emissions over the same period hit an all-time high of 54 billion tonnes of CO2 or its equivalent in other gases -- about 1,700 tonnes every second.

World leaders will be confronted with the new data at the critical COP28 climate summit later this year in Dubai, where a "Global Stocktake" at the UN talks will assess progress toward the 2015 Paris Agreement's temperature goals.

The findings would appear to close the door on capping global warming under the Paris treaty's more ambitious 1.5C target, long identified as a guard rail for a relatively climate-safe world, albeit one still roiled by severe impacts.

"Even though we are not yet at 1.5C warming, the carbon budget" -- the amount of greenhouse gases humanity can emit without exceeding that limit -- "will likely be exhausted in only a few years," said lead author Piers Forster, a physics professor at the University of Leeds.

That budget has shrunk by half since the UN's climate science advisory body, the Intergovernmental Panel on

Climate Change (IPCC), gathered data for its most recent benchmark report in 2021, according to the Forster and colleagues, many of whom were core IPCC contributors.

To have even a coin-toss chance of staying under the 1.5C threshold, emissions of carbon dioxide, methane and other drivers of warming generated mostly by burning fossil fuels must not exceed 250 billion tonnes (Gt), they reported.



Bettering the odds to two-thirds or four-fifths would reduce that carbon allowance to only 150 Gt and 100 Gt, respectively -- a two- or three-year lifeline at the current rate of emissions.

Keeping the Paris temperature targets in play would require slashing CO2 pollution at least 40 percent by 2030, and eliminating it entirely by mid-century, the IPCC has calculated.

Ironically, one of the big climate success stories of the last decade has inadvertently hastened the pace of global warming, the new data reveal.

A gradual drop in the use of coal -- significantly more carbon intensive than oil or gas -- to produce power has slowed

the increase in carbon emissions.

But it has also reduced the air pollution that shields Earth from the full force of the Sun's rays.

Particle pollution from all sources dampens warming by about half a degree Celsius, which means -- at least in the short term -- more of that heat will reach the planet's surface as the air becomes cleaner.

Published in the peer-reviewed journal Earth System Science Data, the new study is the first in a series of periodic assessments that will help fill the gaps between IPCC reports, released on average every six years since 1988.

"An annual update of key indicators of global change is critical in helping the international community and countries to keep the urgency of addressing the climate change crisis at the top of the agenda," said co-author and scientist Maisa Rojas Corradi, who is also the environment minister of Chile.

Co-author Valerie Masson-Delmotte, a co-chair of the 2021 IPCC report, said the new data should be a "wake-up call" ahead of the COP28 summit, even if there is evidence that the increase in greenhouse gases has slowed.

"The pace and scale of climate action is not sufficient to limit the escalation of climate-related risks," she said. Researchers also reported a startling rise in temperature increases over land areas -- excluding oceans -- since 2000.

"Land average annual maximum temperatures have warmed by more than half a degree Celsius in the last ten years (1.72C above preindustrial conditions) compared to the first decade of the millennium (1.22C)," the study reported.

'Not good for relationships'

India rebukes Canada over parade float showing Indira Gandhi assassination

REUTERS, New Delhi

India's foreign minister yesterday hit out at Canada for allowing a float in a parade depicting the 1984 assassination of Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi by her bodyguards, perceived to be glorification of violence by Sikh separatists.

"I think there is a larger underlying issue about the space which is given to separatists, to extremists, to people who advocate violence," S. Jaishankar told reporters in New Delhi while commenting about the tableau in a parade.

"I think it is not good for relationships, not good for Canada," he said. Canada's High Commissioner for India also condemned the incident at a parade by Sikh activists in the Canadian city of Brampton.

Video circulated in recent days on the internet showed a tableau from the parade featuring Gandhi wearing a blood-stained white sari with her hands up as turban-clad men pointed guns at her.

Ex-Pak PM gets bail on murder charges

REUTERS, Islamabad

Ousted Pakistani prime minister Imran Khan yesterday secured bail from the Islamabad High Court over new murder charges, blocking his arrest in that case for 14 days, his lawyer said. The ousted prime minister had been arrested on May 9 and held for three days, triggering violent protests by his followers. He is now free on bail in a range of other criminal cases. He had travelled to the capital from his Lahore home to seek bail in the murder case and extend his bail in over a dozen other cases, to avoid a new arrest, said Barrister Gohar Khan. The 70-year-old former cricket hero who became prime minister in 2018 has been embroiled in a confrontation with military since he was ousted in a no-confidence vote last year.

Rohingyas testify on Myanmar crackdown

AFP, Buenos Aires

Members of Myanmar's Rohingya Muslim minority testified in person for the first time on Wednesday in Buenos Aires, as part of an Argentinian judicial investigation into alleged crimes by the Myanmar military, an activist told AFP. The hearing, behind closed doors, was "a historic day for everyone in Burma," as Myanmar is also known, said Maung Tun Khin, president of the British-based Burmese Rohingya Organisation UK. Meanwhile, Myanmar lawyers defending political detainees in junta-run courts are being harassed and even jailed by military authorities, HRW said yesterday.

SUDAN CONFLICT

Fighting rages at military site facility

AFP, Khartoum

Sudanese army soldiers and paramilitaries yesterday fought for control of a military facility in Khartoum where a fire raged at an oil and gas facility, witnesses said. The battles came a day after the powerful paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) announced in a statement they had wrestled "full control" of the Yarmouk weapons manufacturing and arms depot complex. Witnesses speaking to AFP from southern Khartoum said they heard the "sound of gunfire and clashes" around the complex, the most important military industrial facility in the country. The RSF claimed that soldiers had fled the site, leaving behind large quantities of military equipment and vehicles.

Trump target of classified docs probe

AFP, Washington

US prosecutors have told Donald Trump's lawyers that he is the target of a probe into his handling of classified documents after leaving the presidency, in a sign he might be indicted, US media reported Wednesday night. The notice came from the office of special counsel Jack Smith and gives clearest sign yet that prosecutors are moving closer to charging the former president, who has already been indicted in a separate case. The Times, citing "two people" said it was not clear when Trump's team had been told he was a target.



This handout image provided by the BC Wildfire Service on Wednesday, shows smoke from the West Kiskatinaw River and Peavine Creek wildfires in the Dawson Creek Zone, British Columbia, Canada. Smoke from Canadian wildfires shrouded New York in a record-breaking apocalyptic smog as cities along the US East Coast issued air pollution warnings and thousands evacuated their homes in Canada. PHOTO: AFP

Development must be people-centred

Tangail bridge left in ruins for five years requires urgent attention

The sorry state of affairs surrounding a bridge in Tangail serves as yet another reminder of the mismanagement and irregularities plaguing our development projects in general, and the negligence in ensuring quality control measures during construction in particular. According to a report, the 60-foot-long bridge, built five years ago, tilted under pressure from floodwaters just before its inauguration, and has been unusable ever since. This happened because of the use of sub-standard materials, poor workmanship and the lack of follow-through by both the contractor and the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, which had it built as part of a district-wide bridge development project during FY 2016-2017.

The question is, why hasn't it been reconstructed in all these years? Reportedly, after partially demolishing the structure, the contractor abandoned the work, citing the end of the project period. It also received only a fraction of the payment owed, indicating financial irregularities and potential corruption. Whatever happened to prolong the wait for a functional bridge, for the local communities, its consequences have been dire. The lack of a bridge has forced them to undertake longer journeys to reach crucial facilities such as the upazila health complex. Farmers in the area are unable to transport their agricultural produce efficiently, resulting in financial losses. Students are facing difficulties commuting to and from educational institutions, especially during the rainy season.

It was only a matter of logic that the project authorities would finish what they had set out to do, but they chose to ignore it in the absence of any institutional accountability. This is totally unacceptable. In the past, we also have had reports of such infrastructure development projects being stalled halfway due to flawed designs and other reasons. These cases exemplify a broader pattern of development policy characterised by poor planning and execution as well as lack of accountability. This has to change. A development policy cannot be solely focused on short-term gains or political expediency. It must strive for long-term sustainability, with the safety and welfare of citizens at the centre of its focus.

We, therefore, urge the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief to immediately undertake repairs to make the Tangail bridge operational. There is also an urgent need for a comprehensive system of checks and balances in all development projects to ensure that public money is utilised efficiently. Effective supervision is a must for the timely and successful completion of all projects.

Our workers in Maldives deserve better

RMMRU survey reveals cases of poor pay, abuse and discrimination

While the sufferings of Bangladeshi migrant workers abroad are nothing new, a recent study by the Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU) has revealed a picture of hardship for those in the Maldives. Of the 120 current and 250 returnee migrants surveyed by RMMRU, 36 percent reported not being paid for overtime work. Documented workers earn an average monthly income of Tk 37,066 while undocumented ones earn Tk 25,650 – which might come as a surprise to those with a rosy vision of overseas earnings. On top of this, workers faced discrimination and abuse in multiple forms. For instance, around 38 percent of respondents said their employers had taken away their passports, while about half of both undocumented and documented workers faced workplace discrimination. Perhaps the most dehumanising treatment that they reported is physical or verbal abuse, which at least 18 percent of respondents suffered at one point.

Unfortunately, Maldives is not an exception – the plight of low-skilled Bangladeshi workers is quite similar in other destination countries, including Middle East, too. Wage theft, withholding of passports, discrimination, abuse of various kinds, and even threats of deaths are vulnerabilities that workers must contend with on a regular basis. Such injustices taking place in other countries may pose a challenge for us to address them. However, the onus is still on the government to ensure that our workers abroad are not abused or exploited. These people often have to pay a hefty sum to intermediaries (who make up an insidiously corrupt system) to get jobs there. Once there, they often work for inhumane hours for a relatively small amount, and then send whatever they can save back home. Through this uncompromising process, they give a boost to our economy.

It is, therefore, crucial that the government takes better care of our migrant workers, including those in the Maldives. It must ensure regular collaboration with the authorities of destination countries to ensure full compliance of labour rights, so that our workers can be protected from abuse and exploitation.

Free and fair elections for our sake

Not because the new US visa policy insists on it



THE THIRD VIEW

Mahfuz Anam
is the editor and publisher of
The Daily Star.

MAHFUZ ANAM

Honestly, I find the latest visa policy of the United States for Bangladesh to be insulting. Free and fair elections are something we should ensure from our own sense of self-respect. Unfortunately, the truth is we have not done so on the past two occasions.

Now we have been bracketed with Nigeria – a perennially corrupt country whose elite have syphoned off billions for decades, neglecting their poor, which can be termed as “economic crimes against humanity” (a section of our elites have started doing so, too). The country is ethnically in shambles, with the terrorist group Boko Haram perpetrating the most heinous of crimes for years.

On the contrary, we nipped terrorism in the bud after the Holy Artisan tragedy. Our record in fighting poverty has opened many of our critics' eyes, and even US President Joe Biden has termed our economic progress exemplary.

So why is the US, through its visa policy, taking the steps that they are? If we had remained true to the values of our Liberation War – of strengthening democracy, upholding the rights of all, and ensuring good governance – we would not have to

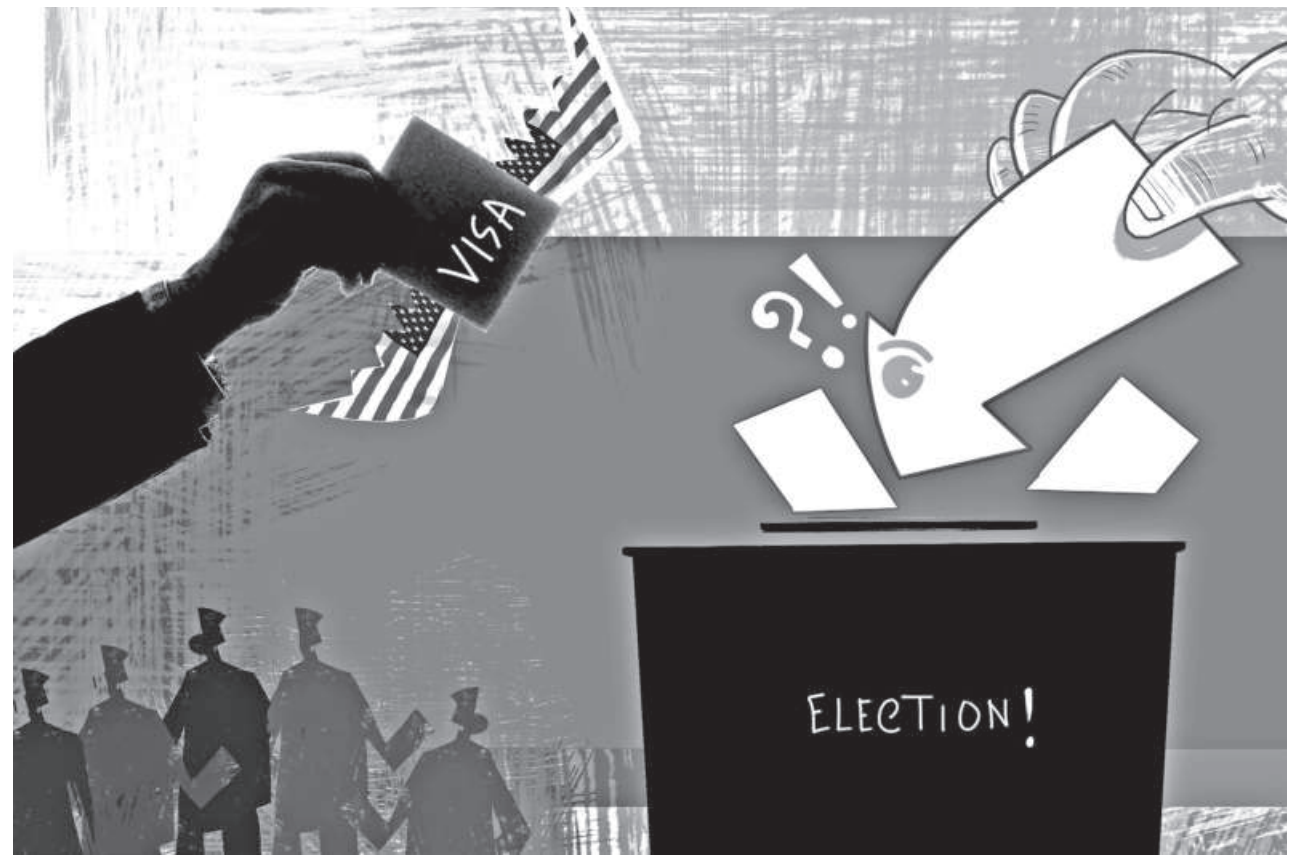


ILLUSTRATION: BIPOLO CHAKROBORTY

So why is the US, through its visa policy, taking the steps that they are? If we had remained true to the values of our Liberation War – of strengthening democracy, upholding the rights of all, and ensuring good governance – we would not have to deal with such policies.

deal with such policies.

The truth is, we have made a shambles of our elections and have weakened most of the accountability structures like the parliament, statutory bodies, legal infrastructure, etc. To ensure loyalty, we have filled vital institutions with political sycophants, and a section of the administration with careerists to whom competence is never a factor and integrity is only a feature of the fools. We have practically handed over the business world to loan defaulters, money launderers, and opportunists. Only deliberate and criminal neglect could have permitted a select few to loot our banks as they have. There are some honourable exceptions, and it is they who have held up our economy.

We made a mockery of democracy by concentrating all powers in the hands of the government, the ruling party and their supporters. Did we not play havoc with our electoral system through 153 “uncontested” MPs in 2014, and with the ballot box stuffing the night before polling in 2018? Just as I write, a law is being proposed to

curtail the powers of the Election Commission. This is all happening while we promise our people and the world that we are committed to free and fair polls. Today, if the international community, at the moment led by the US, casts serious doubt about our election process, can we really blame them? Can we deny that a widespread belief exists among the general public that, without pressure, the upcoming election will be a repeat of what we saw in the last two instances?

Only last year, we celebrated 50 years of Bangladesh-US diplomatic relations with President Biden writing a letter to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, stating, “I am confident our partnership will continue to flourish for the next 50 years and beyond,” adding that the drive, resourcefulness, and innovations of Bangladeshis – rebuilding after the 1971 war and now forging a path of economic growth and development – serve as a model for the rest of the world.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken commended Bangladesh on the occasion for “showing extraordinary humanity” by sheltering one million Rohingya. He also praised Bangladesh for being one of the strongest supporters of UN peacekeeping role, for promoting climate change issues and effectively fighting the pandemic in which the US donated 61 million vaccine doses and \$131 million in assistance. The US remains our biggest destination for RMG exports.

What happened that within a year our bilateral relations came to such a pass that our prime minister did not shy away from stating in an interview with BBC in London on May 16, when asked why the US had imposed sanctions, “I don't know, maybe they don't want me to continue – or the progress we are making in Bangladesh, they cannot accept it. This is my feeling.”

been going on unabated, in spite of protests by the public and vehement criticism in the independent media.

Disappearances were turned into a mockery with ministers making ridiculous public statements, like those who disappeared had actually “run away” from home or were among those “drowned in the Mediterranean Sea” while trying to illegally go to Europe. No attention was paid to the claim of the families that law enforcement officials in plain clothes were seen on the scene.

The US imposed sanctions on the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and some of its serving and former officials, and like magic, such killings almost totally stopped. Instead of taking credit for this effective remedial action, the authorities went on denying any wrongdoing and praising the sanctioned officials and promoting them as models of law enforcement.

The exclusion of Bangladesh from the Democracy Summit hosted by Washington in 2021, in which 110 countries including Pakistan were invited, was a clear indication that something was deeply wrong in our understanding of each other. Inexplicably, when the exclusion was repeated in the second biannual gathering in 2023, we carried on as usual.

The latest blow was a letter written by six US congressmen to President Biden urging him to take “urgent action to stop human rights abuses by the government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina... and to give the people of Bangladesh the best possible chance for free and fair parliamentary elections to be scheduled this fall.” One action that was suggested was extremely disconcerting.

The letter contains serious allegations of abuse, torture, extrajudicial killings, jailing of journalists, disappearance of opponents, and assault or killing of

peaceful demonstrators, etc., many of which are grounded on facts.

But many are not. The allegations that “Since Sheikh Hasina's rise to power, the Hindu population has been halved. Looting and burning of households, destruction of temples and religious idols, murder, rape, and forced religious conversions are causing Hindus to flee Bangladesh.

Sheikh Hasina's government has also persecuted Bangladesh's minority Christian population – burning and looting places of worship, jailing pastors, and breaking up families when religious conversions occur” are simply not true. In no way can the government be accused of committing these “crimes.” We urge the authors of the letters to acknowledge the factual errors and correct them.

However, the main question raised by the US visa policy remains on hand – making the upcoming general election free and fair, which is the universal demand of our people.

Regardless of what the world may or may not say, it is our own sacred duty to hold free and fair elections. This we must do for our own sake, for our people, and for our future. Let us admit that we made a farce of the process earlier, and our people will not accept a repeat of the past. We must do everything to correct our past mistakes. Let us also understand that we live in a globalised world where interdependencies rule, and finer economic calibrations must make space for other considerations.

We must also internalise the meaning of our own slogan “Digital Bangladesh.” As we digitise, the world does too, and often much faster. This means that what we do is known to the world instantly. Just as a slight tremor in some remote corner of the world is known within a second, the slightest vote-rigging in some remote part of Bangladesh, too, becomes global knowledge in no time. Yes, we can shut down social and other media, but information will flow regardless, and all our claims will be tested against facts and our credibility will stand or fall against what that comparison brings out.

So we cannot hide, and we only fool ourselves by thinking that we can. We must truly and sincerely go for free and fair elections. Our future depends on it. We still have time to do so.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send us your letters to letters@thedailystar.net

District-level hospitals must have ICUs

Those of us who live outside the divisional cities of the country often do not get the much-needed healthcare services. This is especially because most district-level hospitals do not have Intensive Care Units (ICU). While some of them have ICUs, those are not operational due to a lack of technical support.

For instance, in the Sirajganj General Hospital in our district, there is a four-bed

ICU unit. But it is not being utilised. And I would like to know why.

Often, there are reports of critically ill patients dying in ambulances while on their way to Dhaka or other divisional centres. What is the point of having this unit if patients are deprived of the service? In the absence of operational ICUs in these hospitals, patients are forced to go to divisional hospitals or rush to the capital for emergency medical

support. We would like to see a change of this situation. We would also be grateful if the health care authorities took an initiative to establish ICUs in all district-level hospitals. It is an essential and life-saving feature which should not be so glaringly absent in smaller healthcare facilities.

Tonima Nasrin Mim
Sirajganj



'The IEPMP serves Japan's interest over Bangladesh'

In light of widespread discussions to overcome the ongoing power crisis, **Hasan Mehedi**, chief executive at Coastal Livelihood and Environmental Action Network (CLEAN) and member secretary of Bangladesh Working Group on Ecology and Development (BWGED), speaks to **Ramisa Rob** of *The Daily Star* regarding the proposed Integrated Energy and Power Master Plan (IEPMP), and why it's a step in the wrong direction in terms of Bangladesh's renewable energy goals.



COLLAGE: SUSHMITA S PREETHA

What is the IEPMP and what are the main concerns about it?

The Institute of Energy Economics, Japan (IEEJ) is currently formulating the Integrated Energy and Power Master Plan (IEPMP) for Bangladesh with assistance from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica). With the ongoing power crisis caused by the dependency on fossil fuels, it is crucial that we prioritise energy from renewables. The makers of this plan claim it to be a "long term plan for affordable and stable fuel supply, and to promote low-carbon energy supply and demand systems," but in reality, it's a climate-conscious facade. Due to the lack of transparency, the stakeholders don't know much about it or understand how problematic it is. We, at CLEAN and BWGED, recently sent a policy brief to the state minister of power and the parliamentary standing committees that we are against the approval of this plan. We have not heard back from them, but this plan is a huge step backwards, and it must be halted.

There are four main concerns about the IEPMP. First, no Bangladeshi experts are involved in it. The Japanese experts overestimated the demand with a linear analysis, calculating it against the GDP. It is a misguided approach as the main consumers of power are the informal sectors of Bangladesh's economy. There has also been no consultation with different sides and sectors of energy users at the regional level. Of the installed capacity in the power sector, the plan proposed 30.7 percent to be fossil fuels (coal and LNG) and 32.8 percent to be the so-called Advanced Technology (liquid hydrogen, ammonia, and carbon capture and storage) by 2050. This will further ensure that Bangladesh remains fully dependent on other nations. Our energy self-sufficiency will be violated if we go through with this. And most importantly, the IEPMP completely contradicts the approved Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan (MCCP), which targets achieving 100 percent of energy from renewables by 2050. The prime minister echoed the target of 40 percent by 2041, during the UN Climate Conference (COP26) in December 2021. But the IEPMP claims to target only 17.1 percent renewables by 2050 - which is overtly unaligned with the MCCP.

What is this "Advanced Technology" that the IEPMP promotes, and why is it not a positive shift away from the dependency on coal-based power plants?

The Advanced Technology is what we call "greenwashing." It uses liquid hydrogen, ammonia and CCS, which, taken together, have not been proven to reduce carbon emissions. In fact, developed nations, namely the US, Canada and the UK, rejected purchasing this unproven technology. We are still a Least Developed Country and we have to think about the affordability of power and energy. This technology will be three to four times more expensive than coal. We will also need a lot of electricity to produce hydrogen itself,

which will take Tk 269 per kg nowadays. So counterproductively, we will be extending the life of coal and fossil gas, and over time, it will cost \$180 billion to import this technology till 2050, which is completely unrealistic.

We have more viable options of transitioning to solar and wind energy, which are proven and significantly cheaper. But it seems that the government is more interested in supporting the Japanese firm Jica, which also funded the 2016 Power System Master Plan, which called for a major rollout of power stations to be



Hasan Mehedi

PHOTO: COURTESY

fueled by imported coal and liquefied natural gas (LNG). Interestingly, LNG and coal energy-fired generation were technologies that Japan was keen to sell. Japan is our largest bilateral partner and Bangladesh is an easy target for Japan to sell the technology that no other developed nation is willing to purchase. The IEPMP is totally business-oriented, does not promote environmental sustainability, and serves the interests of Japan, though it is wrongly projected to be a "national plan" for us. This is why Bangladesh should cancel this unfeasible and harmful plan and put a better policy in place, a plan that is in harmony with the Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan.

When formulating a new viable policy, what are the challenges that we have to overcome, and where should the focus be?

Bangladesh is facing a serious overcapacity problem in the power sector. We should urgently look to replace and phase out fossil-fuel-fired power plants and transition to solar and wind energy, which most importantly do not have capacity charges. We all know the financial burden that capacity charges pose on the economy. Bangladesh has not been able to prioritise the renewable energy targets that have been announced because, in my opinion, there is a lobby among policymakers who want to maintain the 18th-19th century technology of fossil

fuels. But there is also strong interest in the ruling party to shift towards renewable energy, and I personally witnessed it from various members of parliament, too.

Bangladesh has a high capacity for solar power generation, of 20,000-40,000MW of solar power, as stated in the 2021 draft of the National Solar Energy Roadmap. It has not been approved yet due to the powerful fossil fuel lobby. The US-based National Renewable Energy Laboratory performed a recent study, which found that Bangladesh also has a capacity for

30,000MW of onshore wind energy. So the question we should be asking to guide our future plans is quite clear: do we really need LNG and coal?

Not only is it climate-friendly, but solar energy is also very economically feasible. So for example, if we allocate Tk 24,000 crore only for the power sector each year, and just allocate Tk 3,500 crore of that allocation to solar, we can reach the target in the MCCP by 2050. On the other hand, if we allocate the entire Tk 24,000 crore to solar, we can implement a whopping 3,000MW of solar power each year. Solar panel price is going down by 10 percent every year and the battery price is decreasing by 15 percent every year due to technological advancement. We don't have to think about the "base load" of batteries until 2035, and we can start thinking about battery storage through research and modelling. For now, we have to find a way to use the idle power plants that the government has invested in to implement our renewable energy goals. This way, we can phase out the dependency on fossil-fuel-based power plants as well. And we do have to phase them out, as I see that around four to five power plants will reach the end of their lifetimes this year. So when that happens, we need to replace them with solar plants, and by continuing that process, we can gradually progress towards our renewable energy target.



ILLUSTRATION: BIPOLO CHAKROBORTY

The story of my mobile phone addiction

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

RAFFAT BINTE RASHID

I am tethered to my mobile phone as if it's the placenta sustaining life for me. For the better half of the day, I sit at the corner of my bed and continue to either scroll, watch videos, listen to songs, read something, play games, write notes, or check emails on it. This excessive use has caused cervical spondylolysis, as revealed by my recent X-ray report.

Excessive mobile phone use is affecting my attention span, changing my personality, and playing havoc with my sleep - and my overall health. I am aware of it all. Yet I spend eight hours a day on my mobile phone, as calculated by my activity app.

It all began during the Covid-19 lockdown, with watching "harmless" cooking shows, travel stories, and comedy skits. But now, all I devour is nonsensical content. I am processing way too much surface-level information, without delving deep into anything, and we all know that deep thinking is an exercise that is required for an old-age brain like mine.

I am hooked on social media handles for entertainment and what I consume is hogwash content at best. My favourite Instagram hero is Coconut Rice Bear, a fluffy Samoyed dog who can apparently communicate in full sentences with his howls and barks.

The Korean *mukbang* star Hamzy, another favourite of mine, is a skinny, pretty girl, cooking up a storm by stuffing herself with a full-course meal that could feed four people.

I have no clue why these entertain me. My friends have similar stories to share. They, too, spend a better portion of their time consuming such mindless content. They all say that this addiction is the cause of our absentmindedness and brain fog. And I think it's true.

I am always on another imaginary, (apparently happy) plateau that is not in sync with reality. I cannot concentrate on work, and my attention span has been vastly reduced. I am not interested in keeping my home or talking to family - not even giving time to my lonely mother. Instead, I am always

looking for distractions or amusement on social media to keep me happy.

Wondering why I am checking my phone so frequently, I read up on this compulsion of mine. I found out that reels or short videos are created for the sole purpose of entertainment that is addictive. It makes for a distraction from real life.

An easily digestible, upbeat, fun 10- to 15-second video clip gives our brains a hit of dopamine, the neurotransmitter and hormone that our brains love and take in as a reward. As in the case of many addictions, this creates a feedback loop that pushes us to redo the things that give us pleasure. So, when a user does not like a video, they will constantly scroll to achieve the desired reward. This results in a significantly diminished attention span.

I checked with my therapist and came to know that even children are prey to this condition. This is particularly worrying because at the stage of cognitive development (10-14 years of age), all meso-ecological factors like social media can influence a child's personality.

When I see little children hooked on smartphones, I wonder if how right that is. If an adult can get obsessed with the things you can do with this device, what influence will it have on children? I shudder to think of it. In fact, the debate should be about whether children should be allowed phones to play and stay occupied with, even before going to school.

The answer is: not at all. They should get a phone when they can handle it responsibly. It is such a harmful thing that affects their cognitive growth. It distracts the children and youth, decreases their attention span and patience, and makes them hyperactive.

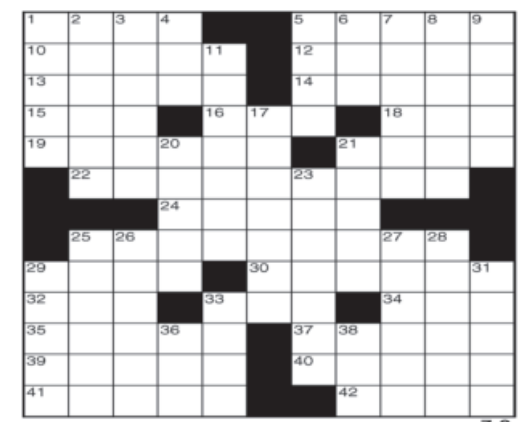
In a desperate attempt to cut the umbilical cord and return to normalcy, I have uninstalled all gaming and social media applications from my mobile phone, and I am trying to use the phone just for making or receiving calls.

One does not need a smartphone to stay abreast of trends, latest information, and important news. I have vowed not to seek cheap entertainment that these social media platforms push me to consume. There are good and bad sides to the whole enchilada called the mobile phone. But from now on, I have made it a point to use my laptop for work, and not my phone. Let's see how that goes!

CROSSWORD

BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 1 Mediocre
 - 5 Ship poles
 - 10 Journeys
 - 12 Caravan carrier
 - 13 Past plump
 - 14 San Antonio sight
 - 15 Fighting
 - 16 "Stand" band
 - 18 Energy
 - 19 Public clerk
 - 21 Rocket part
 - 22 \$ 10 bills
 - 24 Alleviates
 - 25 \$ 100 bills
 - 29 Secluded spot
 - 30 Jordan neighbor
 - 32 Nonsense
 - 33 Small
- DOWN**
- 1 Puts away
 - 2 Jerry of "Law & Order"
 - 3 Rugged range
 - 4 Harvest goddess
 - 5 Racket
 - 6 Bud
 - 7 Warrior woman
 - 8 Negligent
 - 9 Skiing spot
 - 11 Belgrade native
 - 17 Wallet material
 - 20 Clarifying words
 - 21 Polite refusal
 - 23 Satellite of 1962
 - 25 Like some wallpaper
 - 26 Where images focus
 - 27 Science study
 - 28 Be furious
 - 29 Seizes
 - 31 Lusty looks
 - 33 Crony
 - 36 Corrode
 - 38 Ray-gun sound



YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS



WRITE FOR US. SEND US YOUR OPINION PIECES TO dsopinion@gmail.com.

LAW REVIEW

Mediation at the instance of the court

In the social context of Bangladesh, it turns to be more serious when a party drags his opponent to the premises of courts. In most cases, the mindset of the parties becomes so confrontational that they prefer to continue with legal battle in courts to secure win at any cost. Therefore, mediation hardly works as it is not a mandatory first step before litigation.

KAMAL HOSSAIN MEAHI

Dispute resolution through Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) methods received massive legislative support and recognition in Bangladesh in the last two decades. The amendments made in 2003 to the Code of Civil Procedure 1908 created scope for dispute resolution through the process of mediation and arbitration in sections 89A- 89E.

In the similar vein, the legislature has introduced amendments to the Money Loan Court Act 2003. By an amendment in 2010, sections 22-23 were inserted providing scope for mediation in money loan cases at two stages. First, after filing a case and upon submission of written statements by the defendant(s), it is incumbent upon the court to refer the case to mediation. If mediation is unsuccessful at the pre-trial stage, the chance for mediation is also available after conclusion of the trial and before delivery of the judgment. It takes place before pronouncement of the judgment and upon joint prayers by the disputing parties.

The main feature of the amended law is that the mediation takes place during proceedings in court mandatorily. However, it is not made as a mandatory first step prior to the initiation of proceedings. After the commencement of litigation, the parties take an adversarial position which minimises the chance of dispute resolution through consensual means. In the social context of Bangladesh, it turns to be more serious when a party drags his opponent to the premises of courts. In most cases, the mindset of the parties becomes so confrontational that they prefer to continue

with legal battle in courts to secure win at any cost. Therefore, mediation hardly works as it is not a mandatory first step before litigation. Secondly, the amended law has left no option for the court to apply its discretion to decide whether the dispute can be resolved through alternative means to begin with.

In some instances, dispute cannot be resolved through alternative means, for example, when a party alleges fraud against the other or when there exists high level of animosity between the parties or when a



case is so complex that it requires judicial decision. Thirdly, pursuant to a court order, mediation does not take place under any accredited institution dedicated to providing for mediation service.

Finally, the relevant legislations do not contain any provision providing for a limit as to the fees of a mediator. There is no standard guideline or rules fixing the mediator fees based on the complexity of the subject matter or valuation of a case. The absence of such rules

burdens the parties with additional expenses. The situation becomes more complicated when both parties are not equal. The power imbalance between the parties results in a failed mediation.

In light of the discussions above, it can be said that the infrastructure for mediation, at the direction of the court under the amended laws, is not encouraging for ADR users. In a legal proceeding prior to its trial, the disputing parties often view this compulsory mediation as an additional hurdle, an added investment of time and costs with no security of a return. As a result, after the lapse of the statutory period for mediation, the majority of cases return to the normal court system. In the process, it causes further delay in the disposal of cases. And it benefits a party who takes undue advantage of the delay.

In the UK, the Civil Procedure Rules provide support for the use of ADR through case management and sanctions. The court can penalise a party in costs if it unreasonably refuses to attempt ADR, particularly if it is ordered by the court to do so. To support the use of ADR, the Civil Mediation Council has been set up in 2003, which sets standards for training, practice, and also there exists a standard guideline for fees that may be charged for mediation services.

Bangladesh should introduce necessary amendments to the Code of Civil Procedure 1908 and the Money Loan Court Act 2003 to make ADR, in particular mediation, a meaningful practice for dispute resolution.

The Writer is an Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh.



YOUR ADVOCATE

Rights of the minority shareholders

This week Your Advocate is Barrister Omar Khan Joy, Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh. He is the head of the chambers of a renowned law firm, namely, Legal Counsel, which has expertise mainly in commercial law, family law, labour law, land law, constitutional law, criminal law, and IPR.

Query:

I have recently bought some shares at a company. However, my opinions are not being considered as I am only a minority shareholder. Are there any rights for minority shareholders according to relevant laws?

Jahid (Anonymous)

Response:

Thank you for your query. For your information, company matters in Bangladesh are primarily governed by the Companies Act 1994. The rights of the shareholders in a company are according to the number/percentage of shares they possess. Thereby, a shareholder with fewer shares would have lower degree of control and authority over the affairs of the company in contract with shareholders holding larger amount of shares. In simpler words, majority shareholders naturally have more rights to make decisions for and manage the company than minority shareholders as reflected in both the forums of Board of Directors and general meetings of the shareholders. Thus, the decisions taken by the majority can be contrary to the view of the minority shareholder(s). While the majority have more rights and control over the management of the company, the entitlement as a result of their investments comes with higher risks as well.

Section 233 of the Act protects the minority shareholders from actions of the majority that may be 'prejudicial' to one or more shareholders of the company, or, which may discriminate against the interest of any shareholder. However, the protection under section 233 of the Act is conditional. As per section 195 of the Act, the protection under section 233 is subject to the minority shareholder/s holding a minimum of 10% of shares in the company if the company has share capital, and in case the company has no share capital, the minority shareholders having not less than one-fifth the number of a person on the company register of members. Therefore, under the first condition, if a minority shareholder holds, for example, 7% shares, s/he will not be eligible for protection under section 233.

In your case, the first question that arises is whether you were aware of the fact that you would have fewer rights if you become the company's minority shareholder. Companies usually do not vest such decision-making powers to their minority shareholders. It should be articulated in the Articles of Association of the company that you are the shareholder. If there are no decision-making rights, you can bring no claim against the majority for disregarding your opinion in the decision making process/voting. Your right to file a complaint to the court under section 233 only arises if the majority acts in any manner that is prejudicial (harmful) or discriminatory to you, subject to the conditions in section 195 of the Act. If the majority acts in a prejudicial and/or discriminatory manner and one of the section 195 conditions is met, you can make an application under section 233 to the High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh.

However, with the increase in the number of minority shareholders in companies these days, it is best to take preventative measures to protect your rights, such as having a shareholder's agreement or stipulation of further conditions in the Articles of Association prior to subscribing the shares.

I hope my answer will help you find a solution to the issue.

Send us your law related queries to dslawdesk@yahoo.co.uk

RIGHTS WATCH

Restrictions on strike in essential service sectors

MONSUR ABDULLAH

Strikes are common forms of protest performed by employees in various professions, especially workers, to address grievances and demand fair treatment. However, it is important to note that the government of Bangladesh has the authority to impose restrictions on strikes. Two legislations, namely the Essential Services (Maintenance) Act 1952 and the Essential Services (Second) Ordinance 1958, outline the government's power to prohibit strikes.

These legislations provide the government a wide scope of application. However, certain conditions must be met for private employment. The government can declare private employment subject to these legislations if it deems it essential for defence, security, public order, or the maintenance of crucial supplies or services for the people of Bangladesh. Any such declaration is valid for a maximum of six months, unless extended by an order. Under the Essential Services (Maintenance) Act 1952, the government can also restrict employees engaged in such employment from leaving their workplace or specified locations mentioned in the order.

Singly or collectively disobeying any orders at the workplace or inciting others to do so, refusing or neglecting duties, leaving or staying absent from the workplace without reasonable

cause, or disobeying prohibitions on leaving a place without authority permission are considered offences under these legislations. Besides, the Act of 1952 also holds employers accountable. If an employer dismisses an employee without reasonable cause or shuts down the establishment preventing work, this is to be deemed



a breach of law. Furthermore, aiding or encouraging the commission of an offence under this Act is also considered to be a contravention of law.

Offenders proven guilty under this Act may face imprisonment for up to one year and fines of any amount. If the accused is a director, manager,

secretary, or officer of a company or corporate body, he/she can be held equally liable unless he/she can prove their lack of knowledge or demonstrate due diligence in preventing the offence.

Ongoing strike means that employees collectively refrain from working regardless of the orders of the employer or superior officer in protest

(art 34), it allows exceptions for laws imposed to pursue public purposes. Similarly, while art 36 guarantees freedom of movement for the citizens of Bangladesh, reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the public interest are permissible. Therefore, the Essential Services (Maintenance) Act 1952 and the Essential Services (Second) Ordinance 1958 can only be applied in the interest of achieving public objectives. If these legislations are used against public interest, they would violate the constitution.

The government is currently planning to replace these two legislations with a new law. The proposed bill provides a comprehensive list of services classified as essential. It empowers the government to prohibit owners from suspending work due to reasons like raw material shortage or stockpiling of goods or equipment failure, which may lead to layoff. Violating the restrictions outlined in the bill can result in a maximum of six months imprisonment, a fine of Tk 50,000, or both.

The Essential Services Bill 2023 has been sent to the Ministry of Labour and Employment-related Parliamentary Committee for approval. It is hoped that the new law will not undermine the civil, political, and constitutional rights of the citizens.

The Writer is a Student of Law, Bangladesh University of Professionals.

CSGJ monthly lecture on the legal implications for Bangladesh hosting the refugees

On May 27, 2023, Center for the Study of Genocide and Justice (CSGJ) at the Liberation War Museum organised the ninth lecture of its monthly lecture series where Naureen Rahim, a PhD Research Fellow at the Faculty of Law, University of Oslo, gave an extensive talk on the topic 'Bangladesh as Refugee Hosting State: Legal Implications in Dealing with the Rohingyas'.

Before delving into the issue of the present Rohingya refugee crisis persisting in Bangladesh, Ms. Rahim first discussed about the historical narrative of refugees in Bangladesh. She briefly spoke about the plight of the Bengali refugees who fled to India during the 1971 Liberation War and the post-war government's dilemma regarding the Urdu speaking minorities in Bangladesh. According to her, although the Urdu speaking minorities have gradually been granted electoral right and now being treated as citizens, they still face social discrimination. Sharing the research findings from her

ongoing PhD fieldwork, Ms. Rahim opined - with reference to the UNHCR - that aside from the Rohingyas, Bangladesh is also a host to refugees from other nationalities such as Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Regarding Bangladesh's decision not to ratify the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, she stated that no official document contains any justification on the non-ratification. Ms. Rahim highlighted how the limited involvement of South Asian States during the drafting of the 1951 Refugee Convention has led them to reject this Eurocentric refugee recognition practices which was drafted after the second world war to meet the European refugee crisis. However, it remains unclear whether Bangladesh's decision not to ratify the Convention and its Protocol is influenced by this historic narrative or not.

On the contrary, Ms. Rahim is of the opinion that despite not being a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention, Bangladesh is



hosting the Rohingya Refugees with full respect to the international protection regime. She reflected in one judgement of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh (*RMIRU v Government of Bangladesh*, 2017) where the Court observed that although Bangladesh has not ratified the 1951 Convention, this

Convention has by now become customary international law through state practice making it binding upon all countries of the world irrespective of whether a country has signed, acceded or ratified it.

Despite being a non-signatory state to the Refugee Convention, Bangladesh has been

in association with the UNHCR's Executive Committee (ExCom) since 1995 and also with the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) since 2018.

Ms. Rahim also talked about the lack of national law dealing with refugee crisis in Bangladesh. This gives rise to issues regarding how civil and criminal disputes are being resolved within and outside the camp areas. At present, the Constitution of Bangladesh and the Foreigners Act 1946 are the major laws that are being used for dealing with such issues whereas if the dispute concerns eruption of violence within the camp, the authorities apply the Penal Code 1860.

Lastly, Ms. Rahim discussed about the longstanding repatriation problem of the Rohingya refugees drawing upon the recent negotiation between all the concerned parties. Finally, the lecture was concluded with an active Q/A session.

-From CSGJ, Liberation War Museum.

LAW EVENT

'Crazy party' caps West Ham's historic night

REUTERS, Prague

Jarrod Bowen ensured the biggest game of his career had a fairytale finish as he snatched a 90th-minute winner to kick off a "crazy" party as West Ham United clinched their first major European trophy in 58 years.

A tense Europa Conference League final against Fiorentina at Prague's Eden Arena looked like it was heading to extra time when Bowen latched onto a through ball and then outpaced the defenders before firing into the net to secure a 2-1 win.

"I'm so buzzing. We're just going to go mad I think. I'm not going to put a filter on it. I'm not going to give a responsible answer. This party tonight is going to be crazy," he told reporters.

"There was one more chance and we won it," he added to BT Sport.

"We had a dream, we haven't had the best season, myself included, but to give these fans this moment, I'm over the moon. Never (have I felt like this in my life). This is the biggest game of my career. The emotion, there was time for one more chance. I'm just so happy."

The winning goal, after Fiorentina had dominated possession for large portions of the game, sent West Ham manager David Moyes racing down the touchline in celebration.

Players guaranteed \$30k at Women's WC

AFP, Lausanne

Every player at next month's Women's World Cup is guaranteed to earn at least \$30,000, FIFA says, with the winners taking home \$270,000.

Women's football is at an all-time high but there have been concerns from players that its growing popularity is not reflected in what they earn, especially compared to men.

The World Cup in Australia and New Zealand kicks off on July 20 and when it does players from the 32 teams are guaranteed at least \$30,000.

That amount increases depending on how far teams go in the tournament, which concludes on August 20.

The average club salary of women players is \$14,000, according to FIFA, a fraction of what their counterparts in men's football earn.

FIFA says the ring-fencing of money for players is a first and its investment is three times what it was at the Women's World Cup in France four years ago.

"We have taken steps towards greater gender equity in our game at its highest levels," the global players' union FIFPro welcomed the move.

"The legacy of this action is by the players, for the players, of both today and tomorrow."

Djokovic faces Alcaraz in era-defining duel

AFP, Paris

Having battled through 59 encounters with Rafael Nadal over 16 years of epic rivalry, Novak Djokovic faces the Spanish legend's apparent heir Carlos Alcaraz at the French Open in a match laced with era-defining potential.

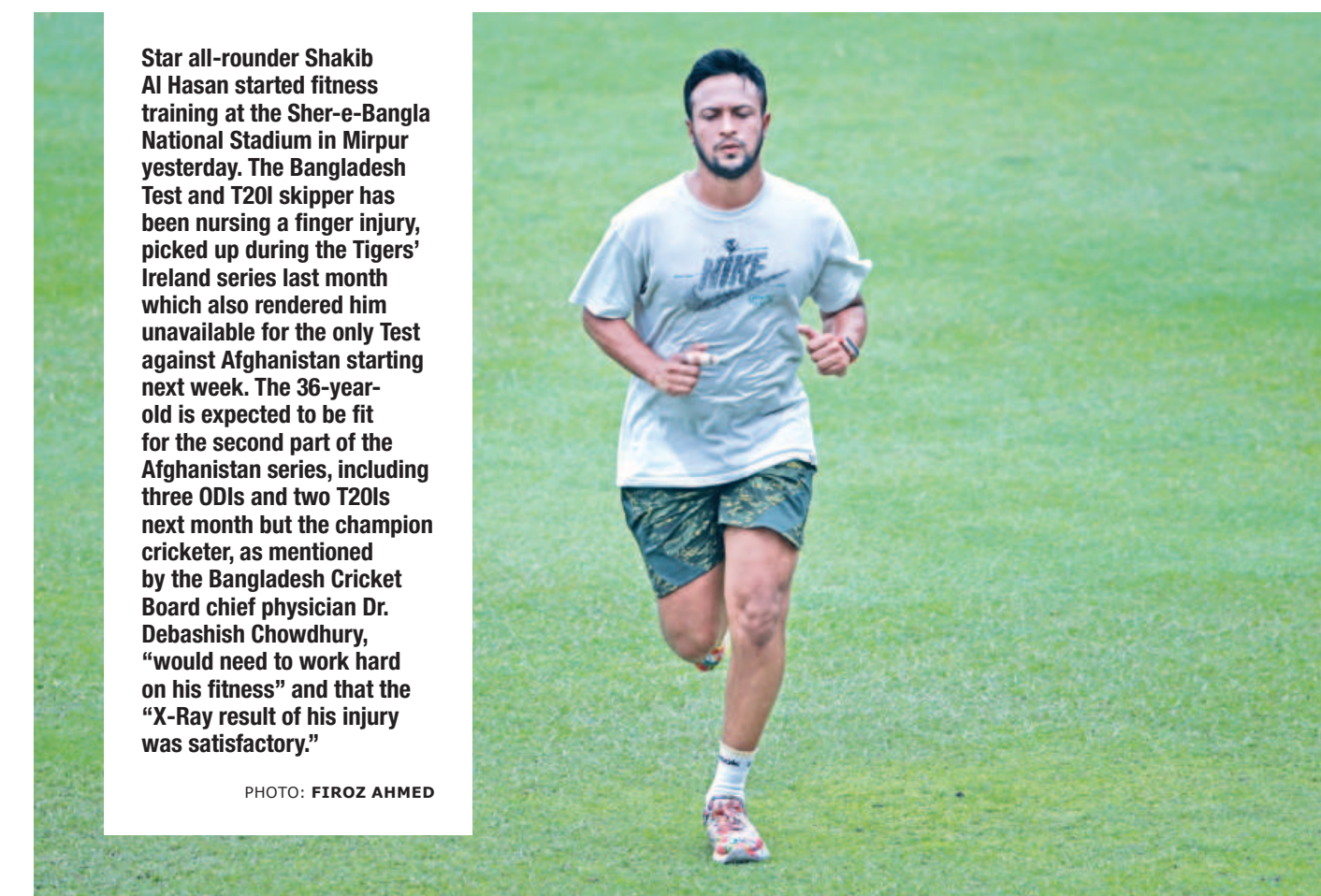
Djokovic will be playing a 45th Grand Slam semifinal on Friday; for Alcaraz, it will be just his second.

With Roger Federer retired and Nadal nursing a hip injury until next year, 36-year-old Djokovic has the responsibility of preserving the legacy of the 'Big Three'.

"It's definitely the biggest challenge for me," said Djokovic, chasing a third French Open title and men's record 23rd Slam which would break the tie he currently shares with Nadal.

Friday's showpiece will be the first time Djokovic and Alcaraz have met at a Grand Slam and only the second time in their careers.

Alcaraz, then still 19, defeated the Serb from a set down in the semifinals of the Madrid Open last year, a day after he had knocked out Nadal on the faster, higher altitude courts of the Spanish capital.



Star all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan started fitness training at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. The Bangladesh Test and T20I skipper has been nursing a finger injury, picked up during the Tigers' Ireland series last month which also rendered him unavailable for the only Test against Afghanistan starting next week. The 36-year-old is expected to be fit for the second part of the Afghanistan series, including three ODIs and two T20Is next month but the champion cricketer, as mentioned by the Bangladesh Cricket Board chief physician Dr. Debashish Chowdhury, "would need to work hard on his fitness" and that the "X-Ray result of his injury was satisfactory."

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Mushfik takes his cue from pacers' resurgence

SPORTS REPORTER

20-year-old Mushfik Hasan's call-up to the national squad for the one-off Test against Afghanistan was a bit surprising, but those who can recall his recent domestic performances will know the right-arm pacer has a knack for troubling batters of calibre. Pacers across the country were terrorising batters in the last National Cricket League but Mushfik's performances appeared to have a statement of intent about them.

"I have learnt from watching him [Shakib]. On the field, he was instructing me about what to do. Whatever I was asking him, he answered according to the situation," Mushfik Hasan said.

He rattled Tamim Iqbal's stumps with a venomous delivery during one NCL game, bringing himself to the limelight. He would then bring down Dhaka Division almost single-handedly, picking up eight wickets in a single innings for 73 runs. His haul



of 25 wickets across six games saw him in the top bracket of the wicket-takers' list that season.

Pace, bounce and a little bit of movement worked in his favour. He also bagged 16 wickets in four Bangladesh Cricket League matches last season, ending third in the wicket-takers' list.

Ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan is not short of awareness and the Test captain, who will be missing the Afghanistan Test due to a finger injury, showed up to training on Thursday and attended the session from the beginning.

When young Mushfik got out of the dressing room, he approached Shakib first to shake his hand, having played alongside the all-rounder in the recent Dhaka Premier

League for Mohammedan. The player informed during a press conference later that Shakib congratulated him and said 'carry on Mushfik'. He also talked about his DPL experience and Shakib's impact, having bagged 10 wickets this season for Mohammedan.

"I have learnt from watching him. On the field, he was instructing me about what to do. Whatever I was asking him, he answered according to the situation," he added.

He identified that his first-class performances had possibly landed him a place in the Test squad and maintained that his 'line, length, accuracy and pace' were his key mechanisms.

In the NCL, he left his captain Akbar Ali impressed

with contributions to a trophy-winning side. Akbar had told The Daily Star after the win that the way Mushfik became the main attacking threat was a big boost to Rangpur Division.

Mushfik also played the recent four-day series against West Indies A in Sylhet and felt he needed to maintain his process.

"I played the A team matches the same way I played NCL and BCL. If I get into the playing eleven for the national side, I will play the same way."

Mushfik, Ebadot Hossain and Taskin Ahmed bowled in the nets of the main Sher-e-Bangla ground yesterday and appeared to have great rapport with the rest of the pacers. It was the other faster bowlers inspiring the young gun. "I get inspired by Bangladesh's pacers. They are helping me out a lot. They work very hard and it's inspiring," he said, adding that he also follows South Africa pacer Kagiso Rabada.

The youngster appears to be taking his cue from the rest and whether he makes the final eleven or not, being a part of the process will help him add to Bangladesh's pace strength. His coaches have told him 'do what is natural.' Pace and aggression is his natural instinct as Mushfik waits in the wings.

Smith hits landmark hundred at the Oval

AGENCIES

Mohammed Siraj led an India fight back as they finally saw the back of Australia centurions Travis Head and Steve Smith on Thursday's second day of the World Test Championship final at the Oval.

India eventually dismissed Australia for 469 after lunch.

After Head's hundred on the opening day, Smith, who relishes English conditions, wasted little time in reaching his hundred, taking just two more balls in Thursday's opening over to reach the landmark by clipping successive Siraj deliveries for legside fours.

The 34-year-old batter joined compatriot Steve



Waugh in having scored seven Test hundreds in England. Among non-England batter, only Australia great Don Bradman, with 11 centuries, has scored more.

It was also Smith's third Test century at The Oval and 31st in total, leaving him 12th on the all-time list.

While the debate continues to rage on who among Virat Kohli and Smith is the best batter in the world and will likely continue to be argued for many years to come, Kohli has no doubt it's the Australian that stands out from the rest.

"When it comes to Test cricket, I don't think anyone is close to him in this generation," Kohli told the ICC.

"His record speaks for itself. To average almost 60 over a span of 85 or 90 games is unbelievable. He is the best Test player of our generation, there is no doubt about it."

Pakistan cleared for SAFF participation

AGENCIES

The Indian government has cleared the Pakistan football team's participation in the SAFF Championship in Bengaluru from June 21 to July 4, the All India Football Federation (AIFF) said on Thursday.

AIFF secretary general Shaji Prabhakaran said India has "done its part" by clearing Pakistan's participation in the eight-nation regional tournament and it's now up to the neighbouring country to complete the formalities.

"Yes, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of External Affairs and Sports Ministry all have cleared (Pakistan's participation)," Prabhakaran told PTI.

"We have done our part. We welcome them (Pakistan). All the participating countries have got visa clearance. They have to do their part of the visa formalities."

India and Pakistan are in the same group and they face each other on June 21 in their campaign opener.

This is the first time in five years that the two neighbouring countries would be playing against each other.



UEFA unveiled a unique display in the Ataturk Olympic Stadium in Istanbul, highlighting their green initiative by using recycled boxes to recreate some of the most iconic stills from past Champions League finals, including Gareth Bale's stunning overhead kick against Liverpool in Kyiv, Lionel Messi kissing his boot after scoring in Rome, Cristiano Ronaldo's header against Chelsea in Moscow and Steven Gerrard celebrating after completing Liverpool's miracle comeback in Istanbul. As the city gears up for Saturday's final, UEFA yesterday also opened the Champions Festival, a build-up to the final which will feature various forms of entertainment and have the glittering prize on display.

PHOTO: UEFA



AL activists 'swoop on' BNP's sit-in

25 party members hurt, claim Pabna BNP leaders

STAR REPORT

At least 25 BNP men were injured in an attack allegedly by ruling Awami League activists in Pabna town yesterday.

The BNP was scheduled to hold sit-ins in front of all district power offices yesterday, protesting "load shedding and corruption in the power sector".

Pabna BNP organised the programme in Boro Bridge area near the local office of Bangladesh Power Development Board.

"At the end of our programme, a group of Awami League men suddenly attacked us," said Masud Khandakar, member secretary of Pabna BNP.

"They beat us with sticks and hurled brick chunks at us. Some 25 to 30 leaders and activists of our party, including Pabna district unit BNP convener Habibur Rahman Habib, were injured," he claimed.

Of them, condition of Md Yeamin, convener of Pabna Swachchhasebak Dal, is critical. He was taken to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital, Masud added.

Later, BNP leaders held a press

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6



Rickshaw passengers try to stay dry during a drizzle yesterday afternoon that brought relief to the city dwellers who were suffering in the sweltering heat. There was light rain in different parts of the country too. The photo was taken near TSC at Dhaka University. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Wasa MD asks people to use less water

Says power cuts disrupting water supply

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Frequent load shedding is causing disruption in supplying water in five out of 10 zones of Dhaka Wasa, its Managing Director Taqsem A Khan said yesterday.

Of the total supply water, about 35 percent comes from surface water and rest are groundwater. Wasa does not face problems in supplying the surface water as there is special arrangements for power in treatment plants, said Taqsem.

Because of power cuts Wasa is in difficulty pumping up groundwater, he added.

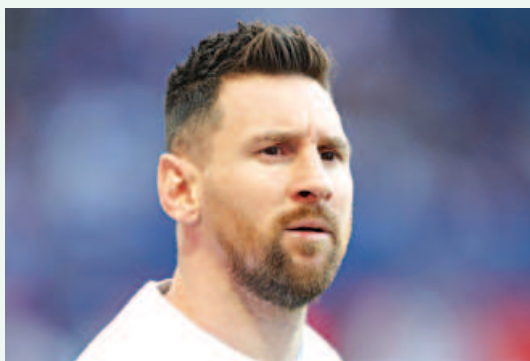
Even though there are generators, Wasa cannot pump sufficient water to meet the city dwellers' demand, he said at a press conference at the Wasa headquarters in Karwan Bazar.

According to the Wasa, people of Baitul Aman Housing, Adabor, both parts of Ring Road, Aziz Mohalla, Tikkapara, Janata Housing, Dhaka Udyan, Shekheretec under zone-3 and Gulshan-2 under zone-5 are facing water crisis.

The dwellers of Fakirapool, Arambagh, Purana Paltan, Shantinagar, Peerergali,

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

Messi ends Barca homecoming saga



SHABAB CHOWDHURY

Lionel Messi on Wednesday put an end to speculation about a romanticised Barcelona return after he announced his intention to join Major League Soccer side Inter Miami as a free agent.

The 35-year-old was also linked with a blockbuster move to Saudi Pro League side Al Hilal, who had reportedly set up a historic deal for the 2022 World Cup winner that would make him the highest-paid athlete in the world with annual wages reportedly close to 500 million dollars.

While he will receive a far lower salary in Miami, the deal will likely include the option to purchase a percentage of an MLS team upon the end of his time as a player, the same kind of stipulation that led to David Beckham buying a portion of Inter

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

UKRAINE DAM DISASTER

Uprooted landmines may pose grave danger

Says Red Cross; about 600 sq km of Kherson under water

REUTERS, Moscow

Landmines uprooted and dispersed by floodwaters surging downstream from the breached Kakhovka dam across swathes of southern Ukraine could pose a grave danger to civilians for decades to come, the Red Cross said.

The vast Soviet-era Kakhovka dam, under Russian control, was breached in the early hours of Tuesday, unleashing floodwaters across a swathe of the warzone and endangering the lives and welfare of tens of thousands of people.

Ukraine blamed Russia for blowing it up. Russia said Ukraine sabotaged the dam at the behest of the West to constrict water supplies to Crimea and to distract from a faltering offensive. Some Russian-backed officials said the dam may have collapsed.

About 600 square kilometres, or 230 square miles, of the Kherson region in southern Ukraine was under water following the destruction of the dam, the regional governor said.

The waters have also washed over countless land mines sown during the 15-month war and nobody now knows where they are: they could still be in the minefields or could be stuck in

the river mud or in fields, gardens and roads across a vast area.

"In the past we knew where the hazards were. Now we don't know. All we know is that they are somewhere downstream," said Erik Tollefsen, head of the Weapon Contamination Unit at the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

"It is with a certain horror that we look at the news coming out," said Tollefsen in an audio clip, adding that World War Two mines found underwater in Denmark in 2015 were still active.

Besides anti-personnel mines, both sides have used vast amounts of artillery shells and anti-tank mines. The exact number of mines in Ukraine is unclear, said Tollefsen. "We just know the numbers are massive," said Tollefsen.

Russian-installed authorities who control part of Kherson region said five people have died in the floods and also warned residents to be vigilant over the mines being washed downstream by the floodwaters.

Moscow and Kyiv also accused each other of shelling the area as rescue workers in rubber dinghies tried to save hundreds of people and animals from the still rising flood waters.

No bar for Salahuddin to return home

Home ministry okays his travel pass

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh's home ministry has approved a travel pass for BNP leader Salahuddin Ahmed, now in India, paving the way for his return home.

"Our home ministry's approval on the matter has already been communicated with our assistant high commission in Guwahati for further actions. The rest will go as per normal procedures," said Rafiqul Islam, acting director general of the foreign ministry's public diplomacy wing, at the weekly briefing yesterday.

Asked when Salahuddin will be back, Rafiqul said it will depend on him. He is free to come anytime.

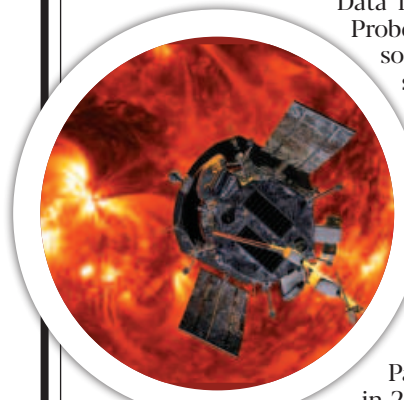
Salahuddin, 57, who was the state minister for communications in the 2001-06 BNP-Jamaat government, had gone missing from Dhaka on

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

First mission to 'touch' sun catches the solar wind

CNN ONLINE

A solar mission that has been spiralling closer to the sun to unravel its secrets has flown near enough to our star's surface to make a key discovery.



Data from the Parker Solar Probe has uncovered the source of solar wind, a stream of energized particles that flow from the corona, or the sun's hot outer atmosphere, toward Earth.

One of the key motivations behind the mission, named for the late astrophysicist Eugene Parker and launched in 2018, was to determine what the wind looks like as it

forms near the sun and how it escapes the star's gravity.

As the probe came within about 13 million miles (20.9 million kilometres) of the sun, its instruments detected fine structures of the solar wind where it generates near the photosphere, or the solar surface, and captured ephemeral details that disappear once the wind is blasted from the corona.

The spacecraft was specially designed to eventually fly within 4 million miles (6.4 million kilometres) above the solar surface, and in late 2021, it became the first mission to "touch" the sun.

MIRPUR ZOO Hyena attacks boy as he sticks hand thru fence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A child suffered severe injuries when a spotted hyena attacked him at the Bangladesh National Zoo in Mirpur yesterday.

Sheuly Begum, mother of the two-year-old Saif, said, while visiting the zoo, her son accidentally slid one of his hands through the fenced cage of hyenas around 10:30am.

Within moments, a hyena bit the boy's right hand, severing it from below the elbow.

"My son was on my lap. At one point, I put him down from my lap while walking around the cage. Suddenly, I heard my boy screaming and saw a hyena running away with a portion of his hand," Sheuly told The Daily Star.

The boy was taken to the National Institute of Traumatology & Orthopaedic Rehabilitation in the capital's Sher-E-Bangla Nagar for treatment.

A doctor of NIOTOR who treated Saif said they referred the boy to the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



A weaver perched on its intricately woven nest hanging from a betel nut tree in Sylhet city's Majortila-Islampur area. Several weavers have built nests on the tree much to the delight of the people in the neighbourhood. Once the magnificent nests of weavers hanging from palm, coconut and betel nut trees were common in rural Bangladesh. Now the birds are not so common.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

MOSQUE BLAST 11 killed during funeral of Afghan governor

More than 30 hurt

REUTERS, Kabul

An explosion inside a mosque in northern Afghanistan yesterday killed at least 11 people during the funeral of the Taliban's provincial deputy governor, who died in an attack earlier this week, officials said.

The Taliban-run Ministry of Interior said that more than 30 people were also injured in the blast in Badakhshan, a province in the far north that shares borders with China and Tajikistan.

A former police commander of northern Baghlan province, Safiullah Samim, was among the dead, according to a statement offering condolences from another police chief, Najibullah Badakhshi.

Ashraf Nael, a resident of Faizabad, said he was in a nearby court building when he heard a blast at around 11:00 am, muffled by the mosque walls, before many ambulances rushed towards the scene.

Islamic State militants claimed responsibility for a car bomb on Tuesday that killed Badakhshan's deputy governor.

The Taliban administration has been carrying out raids against members of Islamic State, which has claimed several major attacks in urban centres.

The Islamic State group has targeted Taliban administration officials, and claimed the killing of the governor of northern Balkh province in an attack in March.