



RUNAWAY FOOD INFLATION Govt at last springs into action

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

The government is set to take a flurry of measures to increase the supply of basic commodities in the market as it looks to wrest the runaway inflation back to tolerable levels ahead of the polls.

The steps come following instructions from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for immediate measures to bring down inflation.

The Trading Corporation of Bangladesh, the commerce ministry wing responsible for market stabilisation, would be taking on a more proactive role, as per the discussions of the 7th meeting of the taskforce on reviewing the prices of essentials and the market situation yesterday.

From next month, TCB would be distributing 5 kilograms of rice to the 1 crore family cardholders, in addition to the 2 litres of edible oil, 1kg of sugar and 2 kgs of lentils that it currently distributes, said sources in the commerce ministry.

"While this activity plays an important role in the government's social safety net agenda, its role in market intervention is very insignificant," said Commerce Secretary Tapan Kanti Ghosh, who chaired the meeting at his ministry.

Subsequently, the state agency is also exploring the logistics of directly importing commodities for selling to the market, sources in the ministry told The Daily Star.

"There is a lack of proper competition in the market," the meeting attendants said quoting Ghosh.

Referring to a question about the price hike of ginger, Ghosh, during his formal briefing, replied that since ginger imports from China are suspended, there are some crises in the market.

The commerce secretary said the government remains committed to ensuring a balanced and affordable market for essential goods and products.

While TCB does not have the institutional capacity to carry out this role, the move, which would be outside of the government's social safety net schemes, can help cool down the overheated kitchen markets, said ministry sources.

For instance, the price of onions soared 93.33 percent in the local market over the past year, whereas it dropped by 63 percent in the global market.

Similarly, garlic is 92.86 percent dearer in the local market now than a year ago. Garlic price dropped 16 percent in the global market.

The price of whole wheat increased by 12.63 percent, whereas it dropped 35 percent in the global market over the past year, according to a report presented at the meeting on the current supply situation of consumer goods.

Similarly, the price increase of all commodities was found to be

STEPS TO CUSHION POOR FROM FOOD INFLATION

- TCB family cardholders to also get 5kg rice at subsidised rates from next month
- Reduced tax incidence on sugar and edible oil imports sought
- BB to ensure smooth LC opening for essentials
- Ginger to be imported from Myanmar
- Special quota sought from India for six items
- TCB mulling direct import and retailing of commodities

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WHY AREN'T PRICES OF ESSENTIALS FALLING LOCALLY? B1



Election materials being taken to the Baptist Mission Boys' High School polling centre in Barishal city yesterday. The Barishal City Corporation goes to polls today.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

All eyes on Barishal, Khulna out of focus

STAR REPORT

Barishal and Khulna cities go to polls today. In Barishal, competition will be tough between Awami League mayor nominee Abul Khair Abdullah and Islami Andolon Bangladesh's Mufti Syed Faizul, city dwellers said.

But in Khulna, no one is likely to come close to AL mayoral candidate Talukder Abdul Khaleque. However, those running for the post of councillors will face fierce competition, locals said.

Even though the election campaign ended on Saturday, large numbers of ruling AL activists were seen on the streets and some of them were asking people for votes yesterday.

Interestingly, the 18 expelled local BNP leaders running for councillors and several others known as BNP and Jatiya Party men have also been asking people to vote for the AL mayor nominee.

Locals said people of other parties were campaigning for the AL because they wanted to be elected as councillors without crossing the ruling party activists before the polls.

Mortuza Abedin, general secretary of Barishal City JP, who is running for councillor in ward-2, requested people to vote for the AL mayor nominee, they added.

Contacted, Mortuza said no such thing happened.

Locals said expelled BNP leader Shah Aminul Islam from ward-19 also sought vote for "boat", the AL electoral symbol.

Aminul said, "If anyone votes for 'boat', what can I do?"

Nevertheless, internal feud and mistrust among AL supporters remain a concern for the party.

The lack of genuine cooperation from Mayor Serniabat Sadiq Abdullah and his father Abul Hasnat Abdullah is worrying the AL camp, said insiders.

There is an allegation that at least 15 of Sadiq's followers, who are councillor aspirants, have worked against AL mayoral candidate Khair.

Khair kept some of his party men, who are followers of Sadiq, out of his campaign trail.

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BARISHAL CITY

Voters: 276,298

Polling stations: 126

Mayor candidates: 7

Councillor candidates: 116

Councillor candidates (reserved): 42



KHULNA CITY

Voters: 535,529

Polling stations: 289

Mayor candidates: 5

Councillor candidates: 136

Councillor candidates (reserved): 39

POLLING FROM 8:00AM TO 4:00PM

THE POWER TO MINIMIZE THE DEVASTATION OF EARTHQUAKES IS IN YOUR HANDS

Many of us do not follow the Building Codes (BNBC) during construction. As a result, those buildings become highly vulnerable to earthquakes, with significant risks of damage and death. Therefore, it is mandatory to follow the building codes (BNBC) strictly and to conduct health check-ups on existing buildings.



Soybean oil price cut by Tk 10 a litre

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hours after a meeting with the commerce ministry, Bangladesh Vegetable Oil Refiners' and Vanaspati Manufacturers' Association yesterday reduced the price of soybean oil by Tk 10 per litre.

The new price of loose soybean oil is Tk 167 and packet soybean oil is Tk 189.

Meanwhile, the price of palm oil was reduced by Tk 2 per litre, to Tk 133.

The price reduction will come into effect "within a few days", said Tapan Kanti Ghosh, senior secretary to the commerce ministry yesterday.

He made the comment at a press briefing after a meeting of a task force on the analysis of the market



situation and commodity prices at the Secretariat.

"As the price of edible oil is downward in the international market, we will sit again after 15 days to find out if the prices of soybean and palm oil could be reduced further," he said.

Multiple issues were discussed in the meeting, including the prices of soybean oil, onion, ginger and garlic. There was a discussion on the current import situation too, said Tapan.

"We have already reduced the price of onion after the decision to allow imports," he said.

There is a shortage in the supply of ginger as China has stopped exporting the product. As a result, its price shot up in the local market, he said, adding that there was a shortfall in imports of wheat and sugar too.

The sugar price has become stable in the international market. "We hope that it will not increase further. If it does not increase, we will be able to reduce sugar prices," he said.

Asked, Tapan said the price reduction in the international market is not reflected in the local market immediately because of various factors including dollar price, tax rate and fixation of inland transportation cost.

The metropolis boasts a historically significant past, and that past has left several fascinating footprints to explore like temples, churches, and mosques along with the architecture of the Mughal and Colonial periods. This is all well known. However, modern Dhaka can be an equally exciting tour.

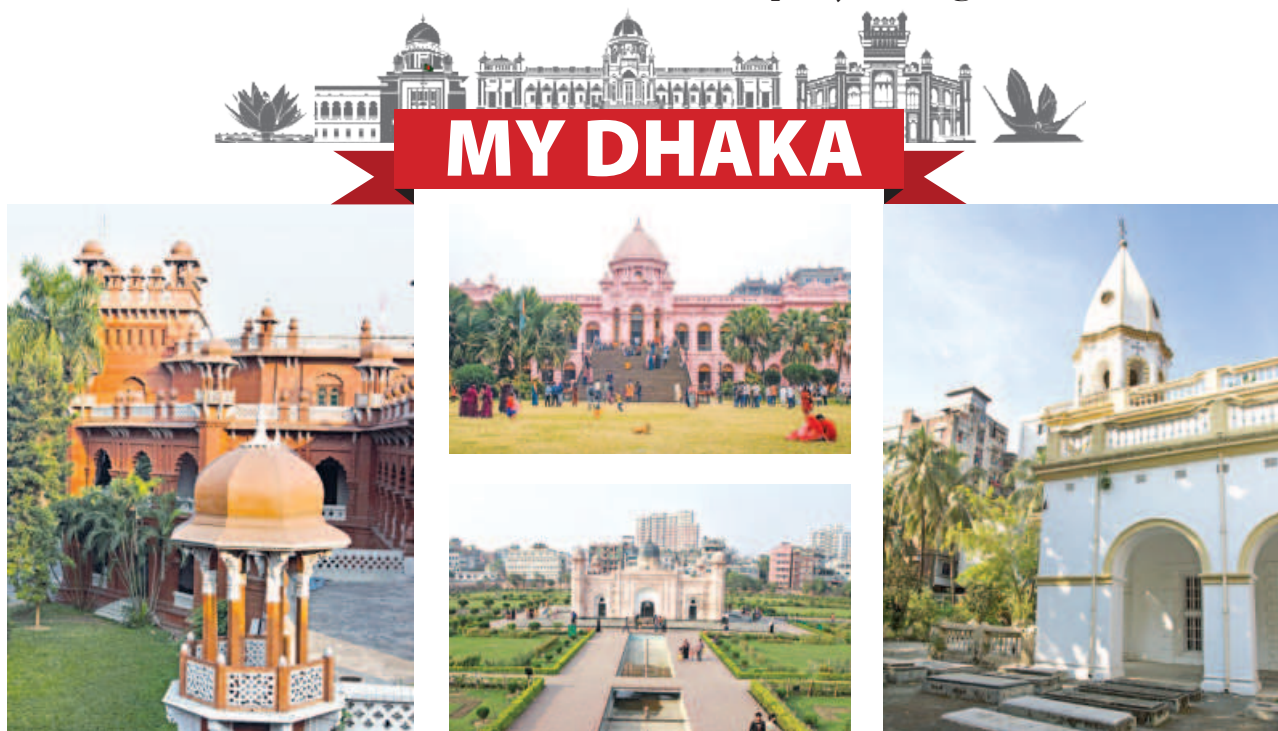


PHOTO: STAR

D H A K A a potential tourist destination?

RBR

"Dhaka is a vibrant and interesting tourist destination," says Rahnuma Salam Khan, deputy director, Bangladesh Tourism Board, with conviction.

There are two distinct sides to the city; one making of the modern contemporary metropolis and the other is the crowded but lively Old Dhaka.

Interested in the Mughal or Colonial periods, tourists can visit Ahsan Manzil, Curzon Hall, or Lalbagh Fort.

The Dhakeshwari National Temple is a beautiful structure that is a must-see during "arti" or offerings at dusks when the beats of the drums and the tinkling bell by the "purohit" or priest make a fascinating picture.

The Armenian Church is another wonderful testimony to the existence of a significant Armenian community in this region in the 17th and 18th centuries. Antiquated and revered, the church makes for an interesting visit for its old gravestones, simple garden, and spiral staircase.

"People who are interested in the history of Bangladesh's independence only have to visit the Liberation War Museum at Agargaon to know in detail how we gained our liberation. The

Central Shaheed Minar tells the strong story of how we fought for our mother language. The Swadhinata Stambha, the monuments around the Dhaka University area, and also our grand Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban pulls tourist crowds. The Bangabandhu Museum and Martyred Intellectuals Memorial is a must-visit to delve deep into our culture.

"We also have an



interesting cultural life with plays, theatres, and concerts taking place regularly during weekends. Our shopping arcades are full of ethnic wear, and specialised stores that carry our heritage weaves in local slow fashion options," says Rahnuma.

Culinary tourism in Dhaka is also an exciting possibility. There are numerous places to eat in Dhaka and each one surpasses the other in specialities. The

options are aplenty – dishes like kebabs and biryanis; chaaps, soups, momos in Mohammadpur street side shops; a typical Bengali dish with fish curry, vegetables, and dal; the list can go on.

For any tourist trying our regional specials, Mejbhan beef of Chattogram or beef with chui jhal of Khulna is also a must if they can brave the hot spices.

"I must insist to taste local sweets like rosgolla and misti doi. Our roadside milk tea is a delight in Dhaka city. The street foods are delicious too; a crispy phuchka with a touch of tamarind sauce or a plate of chotpoti or chickpea stew are all must-dos in Dhaka," she explains.

Dhaka has the potential to become an attractive tourist destination. Despite having all the necessary things that are needed to attract travellers, the city has failed to appeal to an international audience. The reason for this is perhaps that the presentation of these resources in an attractive manner remains a challenge.

In recent times Dhaka has seen a surge of foreign visitors who come here for various reasons. The number will only increase in the near future. We need to take wholehearted attempts to present ourselves in the most tourist-friendly manner and that will possibly create enough interest in the city as a travel destination.

N'ganj oil tanker blast death toll rises to three

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

The death toll from the oil tanker blast in Narayanganj's Shitalakkhya river last week rose to three after another worker succumbed to his injuries early yesterday.

The dead is Rubel, 38, of Phulbagicha village in Bhola's Lalmoan upazila.

He died while undergoing treatment at the Sheikh Hasina National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery at 1:00am yesterday.

Tariqul Islam, resident surgeon of the institute, said Rubel suffered 45 percent burns.

Eight people were injured in an oil tanker explosion in the Shitalakkhya river at Narayanganj's Rugganj on June 4.

Schools reopen after closure over heatwave

STAR REPORT

All primary and secondary schools and madrasas that were closed due to the recent heatwave reopened yesterday.

The Department of Secondary and Higher Education earlier said all classes would start from yesterday, but all educational institutions would have to follow some directives, reports a Bangla daily.

Because of the recent heatwave, teaching at all government primary schools stopped between June 5 and 8.

After this, madrasas too were kept closed between June 6 and 8. Secondary schools were kept closed only on June 8.

Trucker held over crash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rab yesterday arrested the driver of the truck that collided with a pickup van in Sylhet's Dakshin Surma upazila on June 7 and killed 15 construction workers.

Shafiqul Islam, 27, of Sherpur's Moksedpur village, was arrested from Patuakhali district, said Senior ASP Afsan-al Alam, media officer of Rab-9. On June 7, a pickup truck carrying 28 construction workers collided head-on with a Sylhet-bound truck at Qutubpur area in Dakshin Surma around 5:00am.

A case was filed with Dakshin Surma Police Station accusing the unnamed truck and pickup drivers under the Road Transport Act the same day.

Bodies of 2 college students recovered from Padma

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Fire Service and Civil Defence personnel recovered the bodies of two college students from the Padma in Rajshahi yesterday after they went missing in the river a day before.

The dead are Sarwar Saim, 17, and Riyat Khandaker Ghalib, 17, said officials of Rajshahi fire department.

Wahedul Islam, deputy director of Rajshahi's Fire Service and Civil Defence, said Sarwar's body was spotted by local boatmen in the river at Sreerampur T-Band area.

On information, divers later recovered the body around 6:00am.

Meanwhile, Riyat's body was found lying on the river bed, some 20 yards away from the spot from where they went missing, said Abdur Rouf, senior station officer of Rajshahi's Fire Service and Civil Defence.

Govt at last springs into action

FROM PAGE 1

disproportionately higher than that in the global market or found to have gone in the opposite direction in some cases, according to a study of the commerce ministry.

The study findings were presented at the meeting, which was attended by representatives of commodity traders, the revenue authority, the central bank, and the Chittagong Port Authority.

When asked about the price discrepancy, the representatives of the commodity traders blamed it on the depreciation of the taka against the dollar and the multiple exchange rate system that is currently in force.

"For you, the dollar rate is Tk 111, but for us, it is Tk 116," said one of the representatives.

Yesterday, the interbank exchange rate stood at Tk 108.51 for a dollar, according to data from Bangladesh Bank.

Taka depreciated by about 18 percent in the past year, according to data from the central bank.

Subsequently, Ghosh asked the BB representative to take measures to arrest the discrepancy in the exchange rate for commodity importers, said meeting sources.

The commodity traders also tried to pass off the elevated prices on banks' stipulation of 100 percent cash

deposit for opening letters of credit for imports, but the BB representatives shot it down.

The requirement of a 100 percent cash deposit is just for luxury products; for food essentials, a token advance is sought, said central bank officials present at the meeting.

Still, Ghosh asked them to ensure smooth LC openings for commodity importers, according to meeting attendees.

He also asked the representatives of the Chittagong Port Authority to ensure quick unloading of commodities so that the importers do not have to count late fees.

Delays at the port cost the importers late fees, which they factor in their pricing, and also disrupt the supply chain, the traders said.

The representatives of commodity traders also blamed high duty.

For instance, sugar imports face duties ranging from 62 percent to 67 percent.

"This is too much. A Tk 42 duty on a kg of sugar is too high," Ghosh said at the meeting.

For soybean and palm oil, there is an ad valorem duty of 15 percent. The tax incidence for garlic and ginger imports is 10 percent.

Ghosh asked the representatives of the National Board of Revenue to bring down the tax incidence for sugar

and edible oil for the sake of reining in inflation.

Last week, the commerce ministry wrote to the NBR to bring down the duties; another letter was sent after yesterday's meeting as a formal reminder.

Meanwhile, the government also wrote to India seeking to import 15 lakh tonnes of rice, 25 lakh tonnes of wheat, 10 lakh tonnes of sugar, 6 lakh tonnes of onion, 0.50 lakh tonnes of garlic and 1 lakh tonne of ginger on special consideration to meet the shortfall in Bangladesh. The Daily Star has learnt from officials informed of the proceedings.

The commerce ministry now will take all-out initiatives to negotiate with India.

In the letter, Bangladesh requested India to inform ahead of time should the latter plan to impose restrictions on the export of daily essentials.

The ministry also decided that ginger, price of which has increased by as much as four times in recent weeks, would be imported from Myanmar to bring down its prices.

All these initiatives are good and welcome, but their implementation would be tough, said Selim Raihan, a professor of Dhaka University's economics department.

"Whether the initiatives would be successful in taming inflation remains

in question."

In May, inflation hit an 11-year high of 9.94 percent, taking the average inflation in the first 11 months of the fiscal year to 8.95 percent, considerably overshooting the budgetary target of 5.6 percent.

Food inflation stood at 9.24 percent, while in urban areas it was 9.97 percent.

Raihan said, "Inflation has become intolerable. It has been this way in the past year. Why did the government let the inflation get to this stage? Why did the commerce ministry take these initiatives after instructions from the prime minister?"

If things continue this way, it may create social instability, said Raihan, also the executive director of the South Asian Network on Economic Modelling.

Subsequently, TCB must expand its family card programme to more than 1 crore families.

The commerce ministry must also look to diversify its import sources.

"However, prices will not come down automatically if the supply increases since there is market manipulation to consider. Market monitoring is imperative too. Tough measures are needed for these."

And to bring down inflation, the central bank's forthcoming monetary policy will have an important role as it can rein in the demand-side pressure.

League leader Golam Rabbani.

The situation is similar in at least 26 of the 31 wards, said locals.

Quadrat E Khuda, president of Shushashoner Jonno Nagorik (Sujan) in Khulna, said there were chances of violence because of competition among aspirants from the same party.

Returning Officer Mohammad Alauddin yesterday said, "The Election Commission and law enforcement agencies are working to ensure that voters can vote peacefully."

[Mohammad Jamil Khan, Sushanta Ghosh, Md Abbas, Ashik Abdullah Apu and Sajjad Hossain contributed to the report]

Reason for allowing it 'political'

FROM PAGE 1

matter... for political reasons... let's see. It is a political decision... only time will tell."

Razzak said Jamaat is a political party and the High Court verdict was that its charter was in conflict with Bangladesh's constitution, which is not acceptable, reported several news outlets.

Despite this, the party has the support of many and in light of this situation, the government has taken steps. "You wait a little, and see what happens," he told journalists at his office after a meeting with the German envoy.

Information and Broadcasting Minister Hasan Mahmud said, "As Jamaat has not yet been banned and has sought permission for the rally as a political party, they were granted the permission," UNB quoted him as saying at his ministry.

"Every political party has the right to hold rallies, as long as they are not banned," he added.

"We encourage the participation of all political parties in the election. The electoral process extends beyond the election day itself. With only six months until the election, it is customary for political parties to hold meetings in order to create a conducive environment."

He alleged the BNP had instructed Jamaat to issue a statement about resisting the national election. "The statements made during Jamaat's recent rally reflect the BNP's stance," he said.

Asked, Law Minister Anisul Huq first said the home ministry ministry gave the permission and so it would be better able to answer why Jamaat was allowed to stage the rally.

He said the permission for the rally was not in conflict with the government's position to try Jamaat as a political party for its role in the Liberation War.

The amendment to the relevant laws to try Jamaat as a political party was under process and the final draft of the amendment will be placed before the cabinet soon, he said after a meet-the-press event in Dhaka.

He said plenty of evidence had

surfaced against Jamaat during the war crimes trials.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan after a programme in Rajarbagh yesterday said the Awami League's policy regarding Jamaat has not changed.

He said Jamaat is an unregistered party that occasionally holds events at the north gate of Baitul Mukarram, as well as in some indoor venues.

The DMP commissioner gave verbal permission for an indoor gathering. "That does not mean that we changed our position."

On Saturday, Jamaat held the rally at the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh.

The last time Jamaat was allowed to hold a rally was on February 5, 2013, at Shapla Chattar. It had held the rally to protest the trials of its leaders for crimes against humanity.

Following a writ petition, the HC in a landmark verdict on August 1 that year declared illegal the party's registration with the Election Commission.

Jamaat appealed to the apex court challenging the HC verdict in 2013.

The EC scrapped Jamaat's registration in October 2018, making it unable to take part in polls.

China spying from Cuba for years: US

AFP, Washington

China has been operating an intelligence unit in Cuba for years and upgraded it in 2019 in an effort to enhance its presence on the Caribbean island, a White House official said Saturday.

"This is well-documented in the intelligence record," the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said in confirming China's intelligence presence.

US media in recent days had reported that Beijing was planning to set up a spy base on the island, which is located just off American shores.

All eyes on Barishal, Khulna out of focus

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His chief election agent Aljalul Karim said, "We don't want to take risks. That is why we did not include certain partymen in our campaign."

Anwar Hossain, vice-president of Barishal City AL known as a follower of Sadiq, said, "We are not given any responsibility in the election, and we do not know how it is taking place."

Even though Islami Andolon Bangladesh (IAB) mayoral candidate Mufi Syed Faizul's campaign was less vibrant than the AL candidate's, ruling party leaders fear that a large number of BNP and Jamaat supporters will vote for Faizul.

Activists from different parties say around 1 lakh of the city's 2.76 lakh voters are supporters of the BNP and Jamaat.

Requesting anonymity, a ruling party councillor candidate, who is a close aide to Khair, said, "Everyone appears to be working for the Awami League. But who knows what will happen during the polls."

Meanwhile, JP mayoral candidate Iqbal Hossain Tapos yesterday alleged that the AL has made "extensive preparations to steal votes".

IAB's Faizul also alleged that the AL intended to occupy all the 126 polling centres.

Khair said, "These allegations are baseless."

In Khulna, multiple councillor candidates from the ruling party are competing against each other in several wards. Some BNP and Jamaat leaders are also vying for councillor posts as independents.

Three influential local AL leaders – Abdur Razzak, Shahadat Mina, and Moniruzzaman Khan Khokon – are running for the councillor post in ward-1.

In ward-4, there will be tough competition between BNP leader Kabir Hossain Kabu Mollah, Jamaat leader Ashraf Hossain, and Swechhchasebak

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Take the country forward

Hasina tells students

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked the students to groom themselves properly to take the country forward, further raising their heads with dignity on the world stage.

The PM said this while inaugurating the distribution of stipends, tuition fees and awards among insolvent and meritorious students at her office.

She also conferred awards to the most talented students of Bangabandhu Srijanshil Mridha Oneshan 2023 (Bangabandhu Creative Talent Search 2023) and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Scholarship Award-2022.

Hasina asked students to always keep in mind that they belong to a

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina conferring award to a student at an event. The premier inaugurated the distribution of stipends, tuition fees and awards among insolvent and meritorious students at her office yesterday. Education Minister Dipu Moni and Deputy Minister for Education Mohibul Hassan Chowdhury were also present on the occasion.

PHOTO: P10

Antibiotic resistance found in 52pc ICU patients at BSMMU

Speakers tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Antibiotic-resistant bacteria were found in around 52 percent of intensive care unit (ICU) patients at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, said researchers at a seminar yesterday.

The seminar – “Antibiotic Stewardship” – was held on the university campus.

Antibiotic stewardship is the effort to measure and improve how antibiotics are prescribed by clinicians and used by patients.

The ineffectiveness of antibiotics and other antimicrobials to kill microorganisms like bacteria, viruses and parasites is called antimicrobial resistance (AMR), which is killing about 3,500 people worldwide every day, according to a 2022 study.

Antibiotics are classified into three groups – access (prescribed mainly to treat primary level infections), watch (used to terminate bacteria with higher resistance), and reserve (employed to disinfect when all alternatives fail).

“Even the reserve antibiotics are not working when it comes to the ICU patients. To prevent its misuse, we have to ensure that no one is able to buy these medicines without a registered physician’s prescription,” said Prof Dr Sharfuddin Ahmed, vice chancellor of BSMMU and the chief guest of the event.

While presenting a keynote, Dr Jahidul Islam, associate professor of the university’s pharmacology department,

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Dr Yunus exempted from court appearance

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A labour court in Dhaka has exempted Nobel Laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus from personal appearance in a case filed over violating labour laws.

Sheikh Merina Sultana, chairman of the Third Labour Court of Dhaka, on June 6 passed the order, following a petition filed by Yunus, said an employee of the court.

Earlier in the same day, the court framed charges against Grameen Telecom

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Integrate food into urban planning

Say speakers at launch of Dhaka Food Agenda 2041

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With a view to ensure nutritious and safe food access to residents of Dhaka, Gazipur and Narayanganj city areas, the government launched “Dhaka Food Agenda 2041” (DFA 2041) yesterday.

DFA 2041 will address the challenge of providing city’s residents with sufficient, safe, nutritious, and sustainably-sourced food.

The local government division and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations prepared the plan.

The Minister of Local Government, Rural Development, and Co-operatives Md Tazul Islam launched the agenda book as the chief guest.

At the beginning of the event held at BICC, Mustakim Billah



Distinguished guests at the launching of Dhaka Food Agenda 2041 yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Faruqi, additional secretary of LGD, highlighted the stories of one- and half-year-long collaboration among more than 100 organisations behind DFA 2041 preparation.

He thanked Wageningen University and Research in the Netherlands for technical support and Kingdom of the Netherlands financial assistance in this regard.

The food agenda has six key directions and several areas of action.

The key directions are – consumption of healthy and nutritious food, meeting Dhaka’s future food demands, optimising people’s food system, protecting Dhaka’s population from shocks to the food system, feeding Dhaka in a natural way, and the planning and governance of food systems.

The document, which will support policymaking and urban planning, is aligned with the United Nations Food Systems Summit and the Perspective Plan of Bangladesh 2021-2041.

As part of DFA 2041 preparations, FAO has established city working groups and formulated “food charters” for each of the city corporations

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Don’t have plan to narrow Jamuna

WDB tells HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday informed the High Court that it has no plan to narrow the Jamuna river.

There is no such plan under the proposed “Jamuna River Sustainable Management Project-1”, Advocate Arobinda Kumar Roy, lawyer for the Water Development Board, told the court.

He said the project, which has been initiated after consultation with the prime minister’s economic affairs and World Bank officials, for dredging and revention of the river is at the initial stage and it is yet to be approved.

The HC bench of justices Farah Mahbub and Muhammad Mahbub UI Islam said it will pass an order on the petition today. The bench on May 28 ordered the WDB to submit the relevant documents.

Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh submitted the petition based on a report published in Bangla daily Kalbela on March 11, headlined “Jamuna Nadi Chhoto Korar Chinta” (Plan to narrow Jamuna River).

A long way to go for DENGUE ERADICATION

Experts say climate change, stored water, under-construction buildings main reason behind round the year cases

SYMPTOMS

- Fever, severe headache
- Pain behind eyes
- Muscle, joint pain
- Nausea, vomiting, swollen glands
- Unusual weakness, rash

ADVICES

- Take precaution at dawn, dusk, early evening
- Wear loose fit, covered clothing
- Avoid areas with plants, bushes
- Steer clear of stagnant water
- Try to sleep inside a moshari

PREVENTION

- Remove stagnant water
- Use Novaluron pills or oil to preserve basement water
- Wash water drums, buckets regularly
- Introduce round the year monitoring
- Use effective insecticides, dengue control measures



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Two more die of dengue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two dengue patients died while 189 others were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning.

With the new deaths, all in Dhaka, the total number of deaths in dengue rose to 24 this year, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

With the new cases, the total number of cases this year rose to 3,210.

Some 603 dengue patients are still undergoing treatment while 2,583 have been released from hospitals.

The total number of deaths in dengue was 281 last year while the total number of cases was 62,382.

Experts continue to urge the authorities concerned to conduct extensive drives identifying clusters of Aedes mosquitoes as soon as possible.

HELEMUL ALAM

Climate change, multi-story buildings where cars are kept and washed and the huge number of under construction buildings, and preserving water in drums or buckets are some of the main reasons for finding dengue cases around the year, said experts.

Although dengue was a disease associated with monsoon once, the incidence of dengue has been increasing year-round since 2014.

Since the official outbreak of dengue in Bangladesh in 2000,

when 5,551 patients were hospitalised and 93 patients died, Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) data indicate that dengue would typically begin to be diagnosed in June.

Prior to 2014, there were only five dengue cases diagnosed in May of 2001, one each in 2003, 2004, and 2009, and four in 2013 for the same month.

In April, only two dengue patients were hospitalised in 2003, one in 2004 and one in 2005. In March, only

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Our vision is to become a trusted healthcare company to ensure better health for everyone, everywhere

Mofakkhkar Hussain passes away

STAR REPORT
Mofakkhkar Hussain Khan, a renowned academic, passed away at his Baridhara home in Dhaka on June 10, said a press release.

He is survived by two children and five grandchildren.

Mofakkhkar was a researcher in the field of Library and Information Sciences. His PhD thesis turned book, published by Bangla Academy, The Bengali Book won the best book award in 2002. He was also honoured by Bangla Academy in 2018.

In 1986, Dr MH Khan was appointed professor and librarian of University of Dhaka.

Prof Khan has published more than 100 research articles in both national and international levels. Some of his books include Ekushe Granthopongi Sonkolon, A Dictionary of Librarianship, and Dewey for Islam and Bangladesh.

BAUPHAL IN PATUAKHALI
150 trees felled to widen road

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Around 150 palm and date trees were felled in the past week as part of a project to develop a local earthen road in Patuakhali's Bauphal upazila.

The works are being carried out under the food-for-work programme, following the directive of Kamruzzaman Litu Molla, project president and general secretary of the union's Awami League unit.

Upon visiting the spot, this correspondent saw excavators being used for soil cutting, though the work was supposed to be carried away through manual labour.

The machines have already uprooted 92 palm and 51 date trees on both sides of the road.

According to locals, 14 tonnes of wheat was allocated by the local lawmaker for reconstructing this 2,500-foot road (about a kilometre). The price of the wheat stands to be around Tk 5.88 lakh.

Asked, Kamruzzaman



At least 150 trees like this one were felled in Patuakhali's Bauphal upazila recently as part of a road expansion project.

PHOTO: STAR

said, "Some trees had to be felled for the reconstruction of this road. We are already done with the works and the roads are now better."

Nayon Mitra, forest officer of Patuakhali Sadar upazila, said, "Palm and date trees work as a natural earthing, preventing deaths and reducing chances of being electrocuted by lightning. Also, we usually advise to plant these trees by the roadsides as it prevents soil erosion."

"Trees cannot be chopped without permission from the authorities concerned. However, no such permission was sought for this project," informed Badiuzzaman Sohag, forest officer of Bauphal.

Zahidul Islam, chairman of Bauphal union parishad, said he did not know about the issue. "At no cost should environment-friendly trees, such as palm and date, be cut down. I will go to the root of this and take measures."

"Kamruzzaman was asked to rebuild the road, not to chop down trees," said Rajib Biswas, project implementation officer of the upazila.

Contacted, Bayezdur Rahman, acting upazila nirbahi officer and assistant commissioner (land), said, "I did not permit him to cut down the trees and honestly, I don't have the right to. The issue will be investigated and action will be taken against the rule breakers."

9 more lives lost

FROM PAGE 5
village in Ranishankoil upazila; and motorcyclist Md Mostafijur Rahman, 45, of Baliaadangi.

Initially, a Thakurgaon-bound three-wheeler collided with the human haulier from the opposite direction. Soon after the collision, the motorcycle that got on the road from a lane hit the three-wheeler, leaving Alimuddin dead.

Firefighters and police took the injured to a local

health complex. Abul Hossain succumbed to his injuries on way to a hospital while Mostafijur died at M Abdur Rahim Medical College Hospital.

UNB from Natore adds, a motorcyclist and his wife were killed as a train hit their vehicle on Dodangi level crossing in Lokmanpur area of Bagatipara upazila.

The deceased are Mofijul Islam, 45, and his wife Sabina Begum, 40.

Highway turns dumping zone

FROM PAGE 5
kilometres from the municipality, while it is only about half a kilometer away from the spot where the garbage is currently being dumped, informed Olid Mia, president of Madhabpur Press Club.

Non-biodegradable wastes like polythene get into the nearby agricultural lands and waterbodies, causing serious harm to the area's marine life while degrading the quality of

food products, said Tofazzal Sohail, general secretary of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon's Habiganj unit.

Contacted, Habibur Rahman, mayor of Madhabpur municipality, said, "There is no specific place for dumping garbage in the municipality. The DC office has provided us with a place but we have no funds to build it."

Ishrat Jahan, the DC of Habiganj, said, "We have already handed over

an NOC [no objection certificate]. The mayor has to reach out to the LGED office to clear the paperwork. We had a similar issue in Habiganj Sadar upazila but they have already started their work after we gave them permission to use the land."

"Paperwork is lengthy and might take a while. However, there are no barriers to start working," she said.

Integrate food

FROM PAGE 3
in order to integrate food into urban planning.

Speaking as special guest, DNCC Mayor Atiqul Islam urged FAO to continue its activity for the development of all the kitchen markets in Dhaka.

DSCC Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh highlighted that his city corporation will strengthen its efforts to ensure access to safe and healthy food for all city dwellers.

FAO Representative to Bangladesh Robert D Simpson said, "There is an opportunity here for Dhaka to set an example for other cities in Bangladesh, and internationally, with a new collaborative

approach that meets current challenges and looks to the future."

Xavier Bouan, senior technical adviser of DFA 2041 said, "We trust that DFA 2041 will stimulate positive, forward-thinking decision-making and policy formulation."

Following the inaugural session, two different panel discussions were held where researchers, media personalities and representatives of different

key stakeholder groups from home and abroad participated. Four other panel discussions will be held followed by the closing ceremony in the afternoon today.

Life sentence

FROM PAGE 5
to build multi-storey commercial buildings and infrastructures after their plans are approved by the Chattogram Development Authority.

In response, Zahirul Alam Dubash, chairman of the CDA, said, "We will no longer approve construction plans on hilly roads."

"Not much effort is seen to save the hills, despite the fact that we do have laws in place and dedicated organisations working actively. Most of the hills in the city's Panchlaish mauza have already been cut. We urge the authorities concerned to quickly prepare a master plan to save the remaining ones," said Syeda Rizwana Hasan, chief executive of Bela.

Participating environmentalists also demanded the formation of a separate cell alongside a hotline number to report such incidents.

Take the country

FROM PAGE 3
victorious nation which gained independence in the Liberation War and the people here do not bow their heads to anyone.

Mentioning that Bangladesh gained enough success in agricultural research, she stressed the need for giving more importance to medical science research.

Referring to the speeches delivered by several students in the event, Hasina said, "I am really optimistic that none can take this country backwards anymore."

Education Minister Dipu Moni and Deputy Minister for Education Mohibul Hassan Chowdhury also spoke on the occasion.

Some 5,360,000 students from the secondary, higher secondary, and graduation (pass) and equivalent institutions are receiving a total of Tk 1,200 crore as stipends and tuition fees.

Besides, 15 talented students of Class-VI-XII, who were scouted through the Bangabandhu Srijanshil Mridha Oneshan 2023, were awarded, while 22 post graduate-level students were conferred with Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Scholarship Award-2022.

They each received a crest, certificate and Tk 2 lakh, while the 22 students, selected for the scholarship award-2022, each received a crest, certificate and Tk 3 lakh.

BUILDING & LAND SALE/LONG TIME RENT
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LEGAL NOTICE
IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH, HIGH COURT DIVISION (STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION), COMPANY MATTER NO. 186 OF 2023 IN THE MATTER OF: An Application under Section 81 of the Companies Act, 1994 AND IN THE MATTER OF: Arifur Rahman, Shareholder Managing Director, Green Planet Resort Ltd. (GPRL) Petitioner -Versus- Respondents Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms and others
Notice is hereby given to all concerned that the Petitioner Arifur Rahman, Shareholder Managing Director, Green Planet Resort Ltd. (GPRL) has filed an Application under Section 81 of the Companies Act, 1994, seeking permission from the Company Bench of the Hon'ble High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh to hold the Annual General Meeting of the Green Planet Resort Ltd. (GPRL) for the years ending (i) 30th June 2019, (ii) 30th June 2020, (iii) 30th June 2021 and (iv) 30th June 2022. That upon preliminary hearing, vide Order dated 29.05.2023, the Hon'ble Justice Mr. Khairul Ahmed Chowdhury has been pleased to admit the said Application and directed the petitioner to file affidavits in compliance of the order within 2 weeks from the date of publication of notices in two national newspapers namely "The Daily Somokal" and "The Daily Star". Any person or persons having interest in the said application may appear either personally or through duly authorized Advocates on the date so fixed. Copy of the said Application may be obtained from the chamber of the undersigned on payment of requisite costs. Yours faithfully, (Mohammad Mehedi Hasan Chowdhury), Barrister-at-Law, Senior Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh

বাংলাদেশ ইনস্টিটিউট অব ইন্টারন্যাশনাল এন্ড স্ট্র্যাটেজিক স্টাডিজ (বিআইআইএসএস)
১/৪৬, পুরাতন এলিফ্যান্ট রোড, রমনা, ঢাকা-১০০০।
নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি
১। বাংলাদেশ ইনস্টিটিউট অব ইন্টারন্যাশনাল এন্ড স্ট্র্যাটেজিক স্টাডিজ (বিআইআইএসএস)-এ নিম্নবর্ণিত পদে লোক নিয়োগের জন্য বাংলাদেশী নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে:

পদ ও বেতন স্কেল	পদ সংখ্যা	বয়স সীমা	শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা
গবেষণা কর্মকর্তা (গ্রেড-৯ম, বেতন স্কেল: টাকা (২২০০০-৫৩০৬০/-) সরকারী নিয়ম অনুযায়ী ও অন্যান্য ভাতাদি।	০১ টি	২৬ জুন ২০২৩ তারিখে বয়স ১৮ হতে ৩০ বছরের মধ্যে হতে হবে।	আন্তর্জাতিক সম্পর্ক (IR) বিষয়ে অনার্স এবং মাস্টার্স পর্যায়ে প্রথম শ্রেণি এবং অন্যান্য পর্যায়ে ন্যূনতম দ্বিতীয় শ্রেণী/বিভাগ থাকতে হবে। অভিজ্ঞ বা পিএইচডি ডিগ্রীধারীদের অগ্রাধিকার দেয়া হবে।

২। প্রার্থীকে বাংলাদেশের নাগরিক এবং শারীরিকভাবে সুস্থ হতে হবে।
৩। দরখাস্তের সাথে নিম্নলিখিত নথি/সার্টিফিকেটসমূহ সংযুক্ত করতে হবে:
(ক) প্রার্থীর পূর্ণ জীবন বৃত্তান্ত, (খ) জন্ম নিবন্ধন সনদপত্র, (গ) জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র (NID)-এর সত্যায়িত ফটোকপি, (ঘ) নাগরিকত্ব সনদপত্র, (ঙ) সকল শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতার সত্যায়িত সনদপত্র, (চ) সদস্য তালিকা সত্যায়িত ০৩ (তিন) কপি পাসপোর্ট আকারের ছবি (ছ) প্রথম শ্রেণির সেজেটেড অফিসারের নিকট হতে চারিত্রিক সনদপত্র।
৪। আবেদনপত্র মহাপরিচালক, বিআইআইএসএস এর বরাবরে আগামী ২৬ জুন ২০২৩ তারিখের মধ্যে নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর নিকট পৌঁছাতে হবে।
৫। প্রাথমিকভাবে বাছাইকৃত প্রার্থীদের লিখিত ও মৌখিক পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের জন্য 'ব' স্বত্বিকানায় পত্র ও এসএমএস মারফত অবহিত করা হবে।
উপ-পরিচালক (প্রশাসন)
GD-1008 বাংলাদেশ ইনস্টিটিউট অব ইন্টারন্যাশনাল এন্ড স্ট্র্যাটেজিক স্টাডিজ

Govt decision
FROM PAGE 5
Energy and Mineral Resources on June 19 demanding a solution to the power and energy crises.
Besides, they will also stage a demonstration on Monday in front of the Jatiya Press Club to protest the attacks on their recent road march towards Dinaipur by the ruling party activists.
Saiful Haque, coordinator of the alliance and general secretary of Bangladesh-er Biplobi Workers Party, announced the programmes.

A long way to go for

FROM PAGE 3
one patient was hospitalised in 2004 and one in January 2005. In 2014, however, these numbers were 15, 7, 2, 0, and 8 from January to May respectively.

Since then, the monthly dengue cases have increased.

This year, the total number of cases is 3,210 (till yesterday), of which 2,022 were from January to May. The number of deaths is 24 so far, while 13 died between January and May, according to DGHS.

Entomologist Prof Kabirul Bashar of Jahangirnagar University, said due to the impact of climate change, Bangladesh's temperature remains favourable for the Aedes mosquito breeding all year round.

A temperature between 20 to 30 degrees Celsius is required for Aedes mosquito breeding.

"We get 20 degrees Celsius temperature even during winter; this is why we are getting dengue cases round the year," he said.

"The number of multi-story buildings and cars have increased significantly since 2014, both of which play a significant role in the spread of dengue during the dry season, as many

people wash their vehicles in parking lots, where stagnant water accumulates," said Bashar.

To combat dengue, under-construction building owners must eliminate stagnant water in the basement. They need to use Novaluron pills or oil to preserve basement water.

He said certain areas of Dhaka have water shortages and store water in buckets or drums, contributing to year-round dengue outbreaks.

Bashar advised those who store water in drums or buckets to wash them weekly with detergent to prevent mosquitoes from breeding.

Entomologist GM Saifur Rahman of National University said the mosquito population has a general tendency to expand progressively.

"The lengthening of our rainy season as a result of global warming is an additional cause of year-round dengue transmission. Last year it rained until November, and this year it rained in January or February, so it wasn't dry for long," he said.

"Seventy to eighty percent of dengue patients are asymptomatic, which remains concealed because their symptoms

cannot be observed. These patients are detectable via Souseveillance," he stated.

Laboratory-based active surveillance systems are required, but there are none in Bangladesh, said Saifur.

"If we had this system, we would be able to analyse their blood immediately after a fever and take effective control measures based on the results," he said.

"The government should at least implement laboratory-based active surveillance systems on a limited scale."

He added effective insecticide, surveillance system, and control measures are necessary to control Aedes mosquitoes properly.

In Kolkata they do their monitoring round the year which is absent in Bangladesh, he said.

"In our country, when a dengue case is discovered in a home, the city corporation's mosquito control team conducts a single anti-mosquito campaign. Eggs or larvae of Aedes mosquitoes must be constantly monitored for at least three months in areas where they are discovered. Since not all Aedes mosquito embryos hatch simultaneously," he added.

Antibiotic resistance found

FROM PAGE 3
said antimicrobial resistance cannot be prevented by doctors alone.

According to his presentation, 55 percent of poultry products, including chicken, are affected by antibiotic-resistant bacteria. Furthermore, 19 types of antibiotics are used in the fisheries and poultry, without proper

prescriptions. "Consuming these food products can easily make the human body resistant to antibiotics, resulting in ineffective treatment and potential fatality," he said.

He also highlighted the importance of implementing the "One Health Approach" to control the AMR.

Dr Md Nazmul Hossain,

associate professor of internal medicine department, echoed the same.

Dr Syeda Anwar, associate professor of microbiology department, stressed on the urgency of introducing antibiotic stewardship at the BSMMU, as there are no new varieties in the pipeline for the future.

Rajshahi City Corporation
Engineering Department
Nagar Bhaban, Rajshahi
Memo No. 46.12.5081.006.07.92.2015.429
Date: 11.06.2023
Invitation for Tenders (IFT)
08/2022-23
e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of the following goods:

Sl. No.	ID No.	Reference No.	Name of works	Tender/proposal document last selling time and date
1.	844916	46.12.5081.006.07.92.2015.430	Supply & installation of Electrical Equipment for Lift installation at Anex Bhaban.	12.30pm on 26-June-2023

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.
To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).
A. B. M. Asaduzzaman Sweet
Executive Engineer (Electrical)
Rajshahi City Corporation
Tel. +880 2588879220
E-mail: sweet_eee86@yahoo.com

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Divisional Engineer-3
Bangladesh Railway, Dhaka
Memo No. 54.01.0000.209.02.007.17
Date: 08/06/2023
Tender Notice (Open Tender Method)
e-Tenders are invited in the National e-GP Portal for following Procurement. Interested tenderers are requested to visit <http://www.eprocure.gov.bd> website for details.

Sl. No.	Tender ID, Ref. No. & Package No.	Name of works	Last selling date and time	Tender publishing & closing date & time
1.	Tender ID- 845555, Ref. DEN- 3/DA/egp17/ 2022-23/3.502.3	Package No. DA-3.502.3: At Locoshed, Dhaka: Construction of 3 Nos. platform at trip inspection pit at Loco shed as per drawing.	26-Jun-2023 16:00	12-Jun-2023 15:00:00 27-Jun-2023 13:00:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. All tenderers are requested to register in e-GP.
S. M. Mahmudur Rahman
Divisional Engineer/3
Bangladesh Railway, Dhaka
এস(২৩) (১৮২)
জিডি-১০০৭

9 more lives lost on roads

STAR REPORT

At least nine people were killed and 19 others injured in road accidents in three districts, according to reports from our correspondents and a news agency.

In Cumilla, four persons were killed and 15 others injured as a covered-van ran over a pickup on Dhaka-Chattogram highway in Lalbag area.

Cumilla Sadar South Police Station Officer-in-Charge Debashis Chowdhury said the pickup was carrying a local football team.

The deceased are pickup driver Morshed, 24, Shahin Alam Saikot, 13, son of Mohon Mia from Lalbag, and Sakib and Faisal from Sadar South upazila.

Locals said the football team was going to participate in a tournament arranged by Cumilla Sadar South Upazila Parishad.

Mohon Mia, father of Saikot, said his son, a class eight student of a local school, went to play the football match at upazila football ground.

UNO Suvashis Gosh said 10 of the injured were admitted to Cumilla Medical College Hospital and the rest to different other hospitals.

Both the driver and helper of the covered-van fled the scene.

In Thakurgaon, three people were killed and four injured in a collision between a three-wheeler, motorbike and human haulier in Thakurgaon yesterday.

The accident happened around 10:30am on Thakurgaon-Baliadangi road at Baliapukur village in Baliadangi upazila, said Baliadangi Police Station Sub-inspector Md Abtus Sobhan.

The deceased are three-wheeler passengers Alimuddin, 65, Abul Hossain, 67, from Chandanchahat Malibasti

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



Gridlocks on the capital's Shantinagar Road have become a regular affair as vehicles and motorbikes continue to park there defying "no parking" signs. Some of the illegally parked vehicles even belong to law enforcers. This photo was taken yesterday. PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Life sentence for razing hill Demands Ctg mayor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Those who are cutting hills should be given life sentence, said Chattogram City Corporation Mayor Rezaul Karim Chowdhury yesterday.

He made the remark at a discussion held to exchange views on ways to prevent hill-cutting in the port city.

The session was organised by Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela) at a city hotel.

"The existing law ensures that the offenders serve two years in prison and are fined Tk 2 lakh, which is a minor punishment for a major crime," he said.

Claiming that Bayezid Link Road could have been built without destroying the hills, he said people of the district do not want development at the cost of their natural treasures.

According to the attendees, influential people are cutting down the city hills

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

MADHABPUR MUNICIPALITY

Highway turns dumping zone



MINTU DESHWARA, back from Habiganj

The Dhaka-Sylhet highway near Madhabpur has been transformed into a dumping ground as municipality trucks have been throwing away and burning waste there indiscriminately for a while now.

The locals are facing serious problems as the unplanned waste disposal is not just causing inconveniences to commuters but has also led to traffic congestion on the road.

People from all walks of life, including students of Maulana Ashad Ali Degree College, are now concerned as no steps are being taken to mend the situation, despite repeated complaints and requests.

"The area used to be very clean until the municipality vans started dumping their collected household waste here about a year ago," said Zahir Uddin, principal of the college.

Visiting the area, this correspondent saw household waste being dumped by the municipality workers. While the stench from the rubbish made the place unhealthy and unbearable, the smoke coming out of the burnt garbage often clouds the highway, making visibility of the road an issue for transport workers and commuters.

According to locals, they, at the recent monthly upazila parishad meeting, demanded for a planned disposal of waste in the area. However, no steps were taken to address their complaint.

"The spot has become a breeding ground for mosquitoes and flies and with the rainy season being just around the corner, the road would turn into a sea of floating waste, and locals and passengers have to peddle through it. There is no dumping ground in the municipality and that is the root cause of this problem," said Humayun Kabir of Upazila Public Health Engineering Department.

The dumping ground allotted by the DC office is just around 1.5

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

RAJSHAHI CITY POLLS

Infighting Liton's only headache

ANWAR ALL, Rajshahi

With BNP absent from the race in the upcoming Rajshahi City Corporation polls the stage seemed set for an easy victory for Awami League candidate AHM Khairuzzaman Liton. However, Liton's camp is now alleging that the real threat to his triumph comes not from external contenders, but from within the ranks of his own party.

Different social media groups and profiles campaigning for Liton have raised allegations about a "vested quarter" within the AL, "making concerted efforts" to defeat their own candidate.

The supporters of the accused faction have dismissed these claims, asserting that these are desperate attempts to stay politically relevant.

Tensions reached a boiling point in Rajshahi as a group of several hundred AL leaders and activists, brandishing sharp weapons, took to the streets in a procession through the Kumarpara area last week. Their resounding slogans, filled with resentment, were aimed directly at Dablu Sarker, the city AL's general secretary.

The catalyst for this unrest lies in Sarker's unsuccessful bid to secure the AL nomination for the mayoral position, said party insiders seeking anonymity.

Leading one of the factions is none other than Liton himself, a powerful figure who also holds a coveted position as an AL presidium member. Backed by a significant number of AL leaders, activists and influential lawmakers such as Enamul Haque of Rajshahi-4 (Bagmara) and Mansur Rahman of Rajshahi-5 (Puthia-Durgapur) constituencies, Liton's support base remains formidable.

However, standing against Liton's faction is a rival group led by State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahrir Alam, joined by lawmakers Omor Faruk Chowdhury, Ayeen Uddin, and

Rajshahi District AL General Secretary Kazi Abdul Wadud Dara, added the sources.

The ongoing feud between Mayor Liton and the city AL general secretary Dablu Sarker can be traced back to the zilla parishad election held in October of last year. Tensions escalated as Liton openly opposed the AL's nominated candidate, Mir Iqbal, who happened to be Sarker's brother-in-law.

Despite Liton's opposition, Mir Iqbal emerged victorious in the election.

However, the dynamics took a dramatic turn earlier this year when a scandalous video featuring Dablu Sarker went viral, diminishing his influence in city politics.

Nurul Islam Sarker Aslam, a prominent figure in Rajshahi AL politics, emphasised that some party members may be spreading conspiracy theories out of fear that Liton's progress could undermine their own positions.

However, Asaduzzaman Asad, the former general secretary of the district AL, said the city's politics are inseparable from Liton, indicating his significance in the political landscape.

Contacted, lawmaker Ayeen Uddin denied any notion of opposing Liton, saying, "Since Liton is nominated by the Awami League, the question of opposition does not arise. I have instructed all my followers to ensure Liton's victory."

Similarly, lawmaker Omor Faruk Chowdhury dismissed the accusations against them, suggesting that only a handful of individuals are attempting to gain favour with Liton by false accusations.

He said there is no strong candidate against Liton, expressing certainty of Liton's triumph.

"In adherence to election rules, I have refrained from joining any of Liton's campaigns, as lawmakers are prohibited from actively campaigning," he said.



Leading one of the factions is none other than Liton himself. Standing against him is a rival group led by State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahrir Alam.

No compromise on caretaker govt Says Fakhrul

UNB, Dhaka



BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday said there will be no compromise on the question of neutral government, and it would be resolved on streets, if necessary.

"The government has started shaking. They make one statement in the morning and another in the evening. The issue of a neutral government will not be subject to negotiation, the decision will be taken on the streets through procession," he said.

Addressing the biennial conference of Gazipur metropolitan BNP as the chief guest, Fakhrul also said Awami League would not be able to get even 10 seats, if there is a caretaker government.

That is why the ruling party's general secretary termed the caretaker government a dead issue, he said.

"But no, the issue of a caretaker government has remained alive. The world wants a free and fair election in Bangladesh," he added.

People lost faith in BNP: Quader

BSS, Dhaka



Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said people have lost their faith in the BNP due to its hypocrisy and deceitful political tactics.

As the BNP played game over the country's democracy, constitution and voting rights of people time and again, they have rejected them, he said.

He said the ruling party has never cheated the people. The Awami League has kept the pledges it made to the people and that is why they have repeatedly voted AL to power, he said.

BNP secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir has been playing the "broken record" over the obsolete caretaker government issue, Quader said.

He said the caretaker government is a live issue

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Rain likely in Dhaka, other divisions

UNB, Dhaka

Meteorological Department has predicted rain or thundershowers in eight divisions, including Dhaka, over 24 hours starting from 9:00am yesterday.

"Rain accompanied by gusty or squally wind are likely to occur at many places under Rangpur, Mymensingh, Chattogram and Sylhet; at a few places in Dhaka, Khulna and Barishal divisions; said a bulletin of Met office.



With Barishal going to the polls today, security has been enhanced in the city. As part of that, law enforcers were seen checking vehicle papers at various points of the city yesterday. PHOTO: TITU DAS

8 promoted to DIG rank

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday promoted eight police officials to the rank of deputy inspector general in the latest reshuffle of the police administration.

The Public Security Division of the home ministry issued a gazette notification in this regard.

The officials are – DIG (current charge) of Railway Police Md Shah Alam, Additional DIG of CID AKM Nahidul Islam, Additional DIG of Special Branch Rakhfar Sultana Khanam, Acting DIG of CID Shaymol Kumar Nath, Joint Commissioner of DMP Md Zakir Hossain Khan, Additional DIG Mohammad Abdullaheel Baki, Joint Commissioner of DMP Biplob Bejoy Talukder and Additional DIG of SB Md Muniruzzaman.

Govt decision to allow Jamaat rally 'surprising' Says Gontontro Moncho

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The leaders of Gonotontro Mancha have raised concerns regarding the government's sudden decision to grant permission for Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami to hold a rally in the capital after 10 years.

They suspect that this move is part of the government's strategy to associate the opposition's anti government movement with Jamaat, thereby misleading both local and foreign allies.

During a press conference held yesterday at Mehraba Plaza in Purnanapattan area, Nagorik Oikya Convener Mahmudur Rahman Manna expressed his surprise over Jamaat's rally permit.

"When Jamaat supporters initially approached authorities to seek permission, they were promptly arrested. However, they were released an hour and a half later. Subsequently, the permission for the rally was granted," he said.

Meanwhile, the platform called for a demonstration towards the Ministry of Power,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

PRAYER TIMING
JUNE 12

Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4-05	12-45	5-00	6-50	8-15
JAMAAT 4-40	1-15	5-15	6-55	8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



AMBASSADOR'S MESSAGE



On this day, 125 years ago, the Philippines embarked on a new chapter in its illustrious history by proclaiming its independence from centuries of colonial rule. This awakening stirred our forefathers from their slumber, fueling the innate patriotic fervor and indomitable spirit of the Filipino people. It not only reinforced their belief in their capacity to stand on their own but also ignited a burning aspiration to build a strong nation founded on freedom and equality.

The theme chosen for this year's Independence Day commemoration, "Kalayaan.Kinabukasan. Kasaysayan" or "Freedom.Future.History," aptly depicts the hard-won victory of our ancestors and their unwavering struggle to ensure that future generations do not endure the same hardships they faced. The Philippines and Bangladesh, both having experienced debilitating oppression and unimaginable challenges under colonization, have emerged as sovereign nations, triumphing against all odds. Today, they peacefully march forward, striving for greater progress and development.

As Bangladesh optimistically transitions to the status of a middle-income country, the Philippines draws inspiration from the unwavering patriotism and pride of the Bangladeshi people. These qualities serve as an inexhaustible source of strength, propelling the Philippines towards growth and prosperity. While both nations face ongoing challenges that test the progress achieved and the hard-won liberties of their people, they can take solace in their historic triumphs against oppression and injustice. The determination of their citizens to rise above challenges and strive for the recognition of their identity, unity, and independence remains unwavering.

Leo Tito L. Ausan, Jr.
*Ambassador of the Republic of the Philippines
to Bangladesh*

Discover the Philippines Be Our Guest

With the World Health Organization's (WHO) declaration that COVID-19 is no longer a global health emergency three years after the outbreak of the virus, there has been a marked and rapid increase in the number of people wanting to make up for time and experiences lost to the pandemic. With the easing of travel restrictions and opening of borders, "revenge travel" has become the online buzzword.

The Philippines, one of the top destinations in Southeast Asia, boasts of a rich biodiversity, numerous heritage towns, rainforests, and pristine tropical beaches, among others. Its position in the Pacific Ocean makes it home to some of the most beautiful beaches in the world. The islands of Boracay and Palawan have been recently awarded and recognized as the top islands in Asia. Boracay, in particular, was voted in 2022 among the World's Best Islands in Conde Nast Traveler's (CNT) Readers' Choice Awards.

The sheer number of Filipinos abroad, including in Bangladesh, are known for our friendliness, hospitality, and pride of culture and country. Leveraging on the presence of Filipinos overseas and the friendships and connections made with foreign nationals where they

are based, the Philippine Government has launched the Bisita, Be My Guest (BBMG) Program, an incentive travel campaign that capitalizes on the sheer number of and famed hospitality and friendliness of Filipinos abroad.

Foreign nationals with Filipino friends and/or who have ties to the Philippines and are travelling to the country within the period 01 January 2023 - 30 April 2024 can participate in the campaign abroad. Filipinos overseas ("sponsors") can register at <https://bbmg.philippines.travel/> to get a unique link, which they can share with their non-Filipino friends traveling to the Philippines and who wish to participate in the program.

Both the Filipino as the sponsor and the foreign national as the "invitee"/visitor have the opportunity to be part of the raffle and win exciting prizes. In addition, participating foreign nationals may avail of a "BBMG Travel Passport" to earn stamps when they visit identified tourist attractions and activities in the following destinations: Ilocos, Cebu, Davao, Bohol, Baguio, Batanes, Bicol, Camiguin, Leyte, Siargao, and the two award-winning Philippine islands, Boracay and Palawan. Participating tourists can

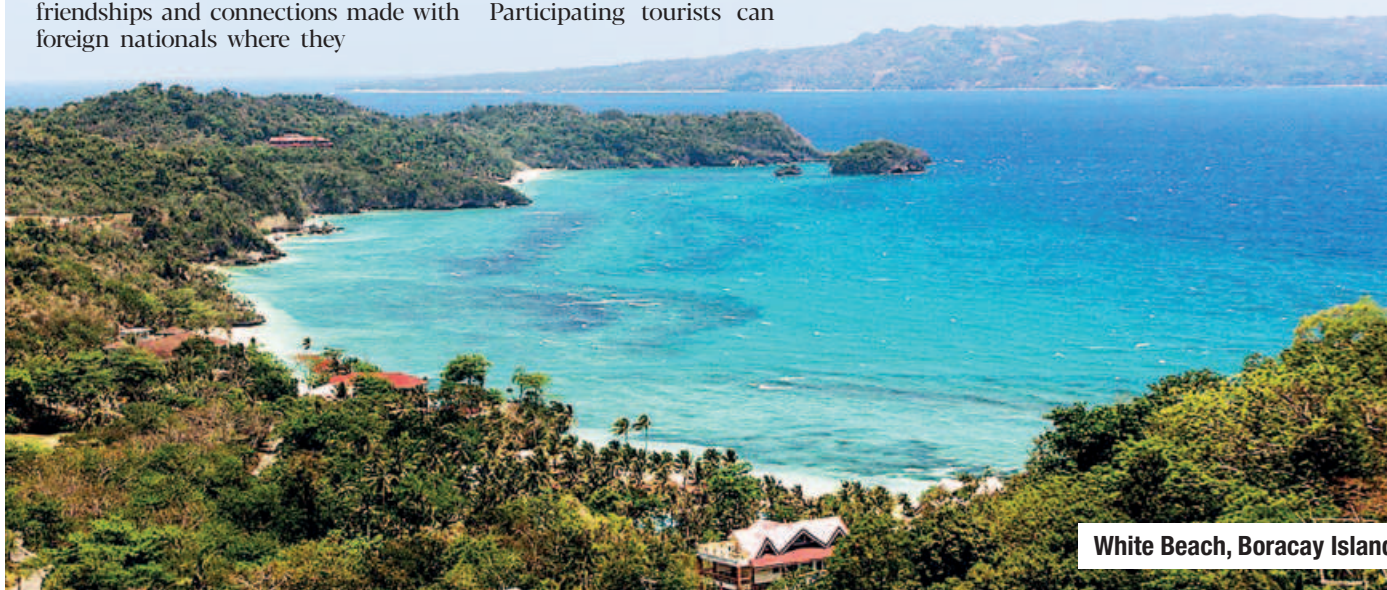
also avail of the BBMG Privilege Card to earn special rates and discounts from accredited tourism enterprises.

Bangladeshis looking for new places to visit during the upcoming holidays should seriously consider visiting the Philippines and have the opportunity to get special discounts and win special prizes through the program. They are encouraged to take the first step to an exciting adventure - tap or re-connect with their Filipino friends, visit and boast of having visited one (or why not both?) of the top islands of the world, and participate in the program.

No Filipino friend/contact yet? Approach one. They are known to be friendly and nice and may invite you to their homes when you visit the Philippines!

For the complete mechanics of the campaign, visit: <https://bbmg.philippines.travel/about/>

Maria Tanya B. Gaurano,
*Third Secretary and Vice Consul,
Embassy of the Philippines in
Bangladesh*



White Beach, Boracay Island.

A salute to courage and freedom



Today, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to all Filipinos on the joyous occasion of the 125th

Independence Day. I pay my respects to the courageous men and women who valiantly fought for the country, and I honor their sacrifices which have paved the way for the freedom. Each soldier is now recognized as a hero.

The resilience of the Filipinos, forged through adversity and symbolized by the archipelago formed from volcanic eruptions 50 million years ago, is truly remarkable. It is this indomitable spirit that empowers them to endure trials, overcome tribulations, and face the horrors of war. We strive to strengthen the bonds with such a formidable nation.

The tourism sector is thriving, witnessing a steady increase in the number of tourists. The Philippines offers incredible business prospects, advancements in medical services, and world-class education, attracting visitors from Bangladesh and beyond, like bees to honey. As we move forward, let us not forget our past but allow the present to pave the way to a bright future. The Philippines, known as the land of the brave and free, holds immense promise.

With our arms linked in a steadfast embrace, we wish the Philippines a long and prosperous journey ahead, fostering a strong and enduring relationship with Bangladesh. On this special day, I extend my well wishes to everyone for a splendid Independence Day celebration.

Md Anisuzzaman
*Director, Bangladesh Philippines
Chamber Of Commerce And
Industry (Bpcci)*

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Philippines

INDEPENDENCE DAY



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INTERNATIONAL

Russia blew up dam to prevent offensive

Says Ukraine; Moscow repels attack on warship in Black Sea

REUTERS, Kyiv

The Khakhovka dam was blown up by Russian forces to prevent Ukrainian troops from advancing in the southern Kherson region, deputy defence minister Hanna Maliar said yesterday.

Ukraine has accused Russian forces of blowing up the dam from inside its associated hydroelectric power station. The site has been under Russian occupation since the early weeks of Russia's invasion in February last year.

Moscow has blamed the destruction of the dam on Ukraine. Each side has accused the other of shelling civilians as rescue efforts are carried out.



Annecey's residents gather to support the victims and their families in Annecey, France yesterday, following the attack by a Syrian refugee who stabbed six people, including four young children. Public prosecutor Line Bonnet announced that the Syrian refugee detained over the stabbings, named as Abdalmasih H, had been charged with "attempted murder".

PHOTO: AFP

THE TAIWAN STRAIT

10 Chinese warplanes cross median line

Taipei sends up fighters, deploys ships to keep watch

REUTERS, Taipei

Taiwan's air force yesterday scrambled into action after spotting 10 Chinese warplanes crossing the sensitive median line of the Taiwan Strait, as the island's defence ministry said four Chinese warships also carried out combat patrols.

Taiwan sent up its own fighters and deployed ships and land-based missile systems to keep watch, it said, using typical wording for how it responds to such Chinese activities.

This is the second time in less than a week that Taiwan has reported renewed

Chinese military activity, after 37 Chinese military aircraft on Thursday flew into the island's air defence zone, some of which then flew into the western Pacific.

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.

In a short statement, Taiwan's defence ministry said that as of 2:00 pm (0600 GMT) yesterday it had detected 24 Chinese air force planes, including J-10, J-11, J-16 and Su-30 fighters, as well as H-6 bombers.

It did not specify where the aircraft flew but said 10 had crossed the median line of the Taiwan Strait, which separates the two sides and had previously served as an unofficial barrier. China says it does not recognise that and has been routinely crossing it since last year.

Four Chinese naval ships were also engaged in "joint combat readiness patrols", the ministry added, without giving details.

China's defence ministry did not immediately respond to requests for comment. It has not commented on Thursday's flights.

PARTY FUNDING PROBE

Scots ex-leader Sturgeon held

REUTERS, London



Former Scottish first minister Nicola Sturgeon was arrested yesterday, the BBC and Sky reported, after Police Scotland said a 52-year-old woman was in custody being questioned as part of its investigation into the Scottish National Party's funding. The police investigation is looking at what happened to more than 600,000 pounds raised by Scottish independence campaigners in 2017, which was supposed to have been ring-fenced but may have been used for other purposes. In April, Sturgeon's husband, Peter Murrell and the party's then treasurer were both arrested and then released without charge pending further investigation as part of the same inquiry. "A 52-year-old woman has today, Sunday 11 June, 2023, been arrested as a suspect in connection with the ongoing investigation into the funding and finances of the Scottish National Party," Police Scotland said in a statement on Twitter. "The woman is in custody and is being questioned by Police Scotland detectives." A spokesperson for the SNP could not immediately be reached for comment. Sturgeon, Scotland's longest serving leader of its semi-autonomous government, caught the political world by surprise when she announced her resignation in February.

POST-CHARGES SPEECH

Trump magnifies attacks on Justice Dept

REUTERS

Former President Donald Trump used the first public appearance since his federal indictment to ratchet up attacks on the Justice Department, accusing prosecutors, without evidence, of a politically motivated campaign to keep him from the White House. Speaking on Saturday at Georgia's state Republican convention, Trump alleged that President Joe Biden, a Democrat, orchestrated the criminal charges in order to undermine his main political rival's presidential campaign, as well as to distract from federal and congressional investigations into Biden's son. There is no evidence to support Trump's allegations.

WIND, HEAVY RAINS
At least 27 killed in Pakistan

AGENCIES

Heavy rains followed by strong winds killed at least 27 people, including eight children, in northwest Pakistan, officials said yesterday.

"At least 12 people were buried alive after the roofs and walls of their houses collapsed," Taimur Ali Khan, a spokesman for the provincial disaster management authority told AFP.

The storms hit four districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province late Saturday, with 15 people killed in Bannu district, including five siblings aged between two and 11.

More than 140 people were injured and more than 200 livestock died, he said. Authorities have declared an emergency in all four of the districts.

Freedom fighter's decade-long fight ends

FROM PAGE 12

Mohammad Kamrul Islam Chowdhury, director of the Department of Social Services, also helped him get the error corrected in his NID card and connected Roy with the relevant officials of the Ministry of Liberation War Affairs.

Finally, on April 10, the ministry issued a circular recognising him as a freedom fighter and announcing his allowance.

Accordingly, Roy has withdrawn Tk 20,000 as allowance for the month of May.

"It would not be possible for me to get the recognition with their [Pappu and Kamrul] cooperation. I am really grateful to them," said Roy, who has been residing in Poschim Boragari Bottoli village in Domar upazila of Nilphamari since 1973.

A joyous atmosphere was found when the correspondent called on Roy at his home on Saturday as his battlefield mates – Monoronjan Roy, Swadesh Roy and Biswanath Roy – came to visit him.

Roy no longer works. But, he has preserved his axe in his living room.

"This axe acted as my saviour during my hard days. Now, I am overwhelmed by boundless joy. I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to the government. I am thankful to those who helped me get the recognition," he said.

No need for UN involvement in nat'l polls

FROM PAGE 12

International monitors need to come and observe the elections to certify them free and fair, he said.

On foreign observers, the foreign ministry will comply with EC's instructions, he added.

The BNP is calling for the restoration of the caretaker government system for the polls likely to be held in December or January. The ruling Awami League says the constitution now has no provision for such a system.

Asked if any friendly countries have suggested any dialogue among the political parties to avoid violence in leading up to the elections, Shahriar Alam said he has not been part of any meeting where such dialogue or any form of polls-time government other than the one in the constitution was proposed.

UN Special Rapporteur's language maligns Dhaka's efforts

The state minister said the comments made by the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar Tom Andrews have "maligned"

Bangladesh's efforts for the safe and dignified repatriation of Rohingyas.

On June 8, Tom Andrews issued a statement saying Bangladesh must "immediately suspend" a pilot repatriation project for Rohingyas to return to Myanmar, insisting that the current conditions in Rakhine State were "anything but conducive" for the safe return of the refugees.

"Whatever he [UN Special Rapporteur] said, the language he used is undermining, disrespecting and maligning our efforts," Shahriar Alam said.

"We will communicate this issue to the UN higher authorities," he said.

He reiterated Bangladesh's commitment to safe and dignified repatriation.

"Our efforts must go on. As part of that, initially, we want to repatriate a small portion of Rohingyas. If those, who are volunteering to return to their motherland, find Myanmar authorities are not keeping their pledges, they may return. We are doing it as a trial, it is not a large-scale repatriation," he said.

Govt may allow trade unions at SEZs

FROM PAGE 12

an agreement with the government on that particular matter.

However, under the EPZ Labour Act, there are provisions of labour welfare associations that have scopes for negotiations with the investors.

"We will ensure that this negotiation process continues. The main thing is that workers can reach out to their employers ... There is not much to do [in this case]. If we allow trade unions, the investors will accuse us of violating the agreement," Shahriar said.

He further said Bangladesh Labour Act is mostly applicable to the export-oriented factories, but eventually, the government will implement the law in the industrial units that manufacture products for domestic market.

In South Asia, Bangladesh has ratified the highest number of ILO conventions, he pointed out.

Last year, Bangladesh presented a road map for labour reforms before

the ILO. Taking into cognisance of the trade partners' observations, the government will bring some amendments to Bangladesh Labour Act, he said.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will visit Switzerland to attend the ILO's "World of Work Summit: Social Justice for All" in Geneva on June 14-15.

Shahriar said, "As Bangladesh is getting out of LDC category, we will have to go for GSP Plus, FTA and PTA. We have started working on it.

"We have a clear pathway for the EU's GSP Plus that will start after the GSP facility ends in 2029. Beyond 2029, we have to have GSP Plus for continued duty-free facility."

Therefore, the ILO is a very important platform for Bangladesh, he said.

"The prime minister's presence in the ILO event in Geneva will establish and reaffirm that we want to be engaged and improve our working environment."

2 Bangladeshis among top 100 Asian scientists

FROM PAGE 12

to the field of sustainability.

She obtained her PhD in zoology (wetland ecology) from the University of Cambridge. She is a board member of the internationally renowned conservation organisation WildTeam, which works to protect the rapidly disappearing natural assets of Bangladesh.

She won the OWSD Elsevier Foundation Award in 2022 for her contributions to conserving aquatic ecosystems and vulnerable species in Bangladesh. She focuses on the risk of plastic pollution in the country's waterways. She is also empowering women from poor and marginalised communities to turn discarded fishing nets into products such as carpets to help create alternative sources of income for women while protecting aquatic habitats.

Senjuti Saha, one of the leading young scientists in Bangladesh who has been championing the cause of equity in global health research,

has been included in the list for her contribution to life sciences.

She was the first in the world to show that the chikungunya virus could cross the blood-brain barrier and cause meningitis in Bangladeshi children.

She has won multiple domestic and international awards for her contribution to medical science research including the Women of Inspiration 2021 Award by Junior Chamber International, Bangladesh and the Webby Award in 2020 for Infectious Disease Detectives (with Chan Zuckerberg Initiative).

Senjuti is also a member of the Polio Transition Independent Monitoring Board, created by the Global Polio Eradication Initiative led by the World Health Organization.

Scientists from China, India, Malaysia, Pakistan, Singapore, Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, Hong Kong, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam have also secured their places on the prestigious list.

Djokovic wins record

FROM PAGE 12

Grand Slam titles. Court's all-time mark of 24 will now be in his sights at Wimbledon next month.

There is little sign of Djokovic slowing down. He is now the oldest French Open champion but 11 of his Slam trophies have now been won after he turned 30.

On Monday, he will reclaim the world number ranking and start his 388th week in top spot.

The sense of Sunday's occasion certainly attracted sports A-listers.

NFL legend Tom Brady watched from the Djokovic box, football stars Kylian Mbappe and Zlatan Ibrahimovic sat side by side in the VIP area which also accommodated former world heavyweight boxing champion Mike Tyson, a regular this weekend.

Djokovic was playing in his seventh French Open final and boasted a 4-0 career record over Ruud, not having lost a single set.

However, the fourth-ranked Norwegian was the more composed of the two at the start, sprinting out of the blocks for a 2-0 lead when Djokovic shanked an overhead.

Ruud, the 2022 runner-up to Nadal, stretched to 3-0 and 4-1 before Djokovic retrieved the break in the seventh game when his opponent buried an easy smash into the net

with an open court begging.

It came at the end of a lung-busting 28-shot rally.

Djokovic missed a break point in the ninth game, tumbling to the red clay as he chased down a Ruud drive.

His frustration boiled over when he angrily accused umpire Damien Dumouisois of rushing the players between changeovers on a heavy, humid afternoon in the French capital.

Fired up, he then raced through the tiebreak, sealing the opener with a running forehand.

Tellingly, that was Djokovic's sixth tiebreak at this French Open and in none of them had he committed a single unforced error in the 55 points contested.

Despite being Djokovic's junior by 12 years, Ruud, who also lost the 2022 US Open final to Carlos Alcaraz, suddenly looked spent.

Djokovic broke for 2-0 in the second set and despite Ruud saving two set points in the eighth game, the Serb moved closer to his dream.

Ruud saved a break point in the third game of the third set before Djokovic was hit with a warning for taking too long between points.

But he wasn't thrown out of his stride. Djokovic broke for love at 6-5 and sealed his place in history when Ruud went wide.

'Nothing wrong' with a nuke deal with West

Says Iran's Khamenei

REUTERS, Dubai

Iran's supreme leader said yesterday that reaching a deal with the West over Tehran's disputed nuclear war was possible if the country's nuclear infrastructure remained intact, state media quoted Ayatollah Ali Khamenei as saying.

"There is nothing wrong with the agreement (with the West), but the infrastructure of our nuclear industry should not be touched," he said, adding that Tehran should continue working with the U.N. nuclear watchdog under the framework of safeguards.

121 money laundering cases filed in 5 years

FROM PAGE 12

suspicious transactions.

The minister said after receiving the intelligence reports from BFIU, the relevant investigative agencies including the ACC, CID, Security Exchange Commission, Directorate of Customs Intelligence and Investigation, Central Intelligence Cell of the National Board of Revenue, and Directorate of Narcotics Control, are carrying out necessary investigations and are taking actions in this regard.

In response to a question from Awami League MP Habibur Rahman, the finance minister said, 5.4 lakh taxpayers of the country have not submitted their income tax returns within the stipulated time in the current fiscal year.

In reply to a query of AL MP Panir Uddin Ahmed, the finance minister said the government has no plans to increase the interest rate on national savings certificates for the benefit of retired government employees.

Meanwhile, State Minister for Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Zunaid Ahmed Palak told parliament that between July 2022 and April this year, the ministry has requested Bangladesh Telecom Regulatory Commission to remove 1,431 links to content on different social media and sent alerts against 120 emergent cyber threats.

In reply to a query from ruling Awami League MP M Abdul Latif, the junior minister said social media – Facebook, TikTok, Messenger, YouTube – are regularly monitored by the government.

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

The EC can't ignore low voter turnout

Absence of main opposition remains the biggest challenge

It has been reported that there is a lack of interest among voters about the Khulna mayoral elections. The primary reason for this apathy is the absence of the main opposition BNP in the polls in a city where the party has had a strong voter base. Without BNP's participation, the mayoral race is seen as a mere formality with no real competition.

Given the track record of past elections, there is much to be concerned about in regards to voter apathy. The six by-polls in February, which took place a year after the formation of the present Election Commission, were marked by a poor voter turnout of about 28 percent. Such abysmal turnout was attributed to the absence of the main opposition BNP and a lack of trust regarding the neutrality of the responsible departments. The last two general elections have also greatly contributed to diminishing voters' enthusiasm, with one being uncontested and the other marred by allegations of widespread vote-rigging.

The EC's refrain of elections being "peaceful and organised" rings hollow when they are not participatory. This time, too, the EC has given assurance that there is adequate security in all polling stations, so that voters can freely vote. The point that the EC seems to be regularly missing is that, unless candidates from the main opposition party participate in the polls, there is little incentive for all voters to turn up at the polling centres. Can the EC continue to shrug off its failure to convince BNP to participate in these mayoral elections that are a precursor to the upcoming parliamentary elections?

We would like to repeat how urgent it is for major electoral reforms in order to ensure free, fair and participatory elections in the country, which is the mandate of the EC. The trend of uncontested elections, violence and intimidation of opposition rallies, harassment and arbitrary arrests of opposition candidates, administrative bias, and the overall failure to ensure a level playing field for all parties have contributed to destroying the election culture of the country. Clearly, the responsibility to change this debilitating trend lies largely with the government and specifically with the EC. Surely, the EC realises that there can be nothing more damning to the electoral process than when people feel their votes no longer matter. We fervently hope that it will make sincere efforts to convince voters to exercise their constitutional right, which is contingent upon convincing the BNP to come back to the drawing board.

We must not give up on jute

Measures must be taken to save the jute industry

It is extremely unfortunate that the country's jute sector, once referred to as the flourishing "golden fibre" of our economy, is now on its deathbed. According to a recent report by this paper, the government has decided to lease out state-run jute mills to textile mills and RMG factories, after failing to lease out more than five of them to private jute mills. Experts and industry leaders have expressed that the move will now mark a "dead end" of the state-run jute industries.

The Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation's terms of reference for lease required a 36 months' rent deposit, which proved too high for some bidders. According to the chairman of Bangladesh Jute Goods Exporters' Association, the conditions were too strict as it entailed high maintenance costs, and refurbishing old, unusable machinery in the state-run mills. If prioritising jute manufacturers were the BJMC's intentions, then why are we at this point now? The BJMC must answer for its poor planning, inefficiency and lack of incentives to diversify and reform the industry that led us to this moment of defeat.

Workers are reportedly seeing this step as a direct betrayal of the promise made by the BJMC, in 2020 before the shutdown, to reopen jute mills with plans for retraining and reemployment. The 50,000 workers who were laid off are in dire conditions, with many of them being denied their overdue wages. The latest decision will ensure that thousands of jute workers, who are only specifically skilled in the sector, will be left permanently unemployed.

Given that there has been a resurgence of interest in jute globally, with the rise of green packaging acts and environmental awareness, we would've expected our jute sector to have another opportunity to rise back on its feet. We are extremely disheartened to see the opposite happening. Why couldn't we revitalise jute, a product that has so much potential and could've played an important role in our economic recovery? We find it difficult to accept the "inevitability" of the situation. We urge the BJMC and the government to prioritise saving the jute sector and its skilled workers.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

letters@thedailystar.net

Address the electricity crisis

In its drive towards digitisation, the government seems to have overlooked the balance between the country's growing population and available resources. The government's hasty decisions to address the country's electricity crisis and achieve self-sufficiency in energy may have jeopardised the nation and its people. There was a time when we used to resent the fact that we lacked the capacity to supply electricity to remote areas of the country. However, now, when we apparently have the capacity, even major cities are suffering due to power outages. During heatwaves, when the need for electricity is at an all time high, the entire population is struggling with incessant load shedding. It is time the government addressed the energy crisis through building a sustainable and accountable system that prioritises the welfare of the citizens.

Abeer, Neha, Prangan, Shoab, Saima, and Hafeez
North South University

Shouldn't the EC be saying how it will make elections free and fair?



Kamal Ahmed is an independent journalist. His Twitter handle is @ahmedkhal

KAMAL AHMED

As the mainstream political parties have been engaged in endless squabbling on how the next general election can be an credibly fair and inclusive one, our law minister, Anisul Huq, has informed Jatiya Sangsad that the Election Commission has already formulated its work plan to make the upcoming election "transparent, free, fair, and peaceful." The law minister further said that the EC wanted to ensure equal opportunities for all parties in the elections and that no government agency would file any case to harass anyone. He informed the lawmakers that the EC had finalised an 11-point decision for the next election.

The decisions he listed are nothing special or unique. The only one that's probably new is the move to appoint more qualified officials from the EC as returning officers. Other decisions – such as preventing attacks on candidates, their supporters, houses and business establishments and taking swift action as per law if such an incident happens, conducting drives to recover illegal weapons, ensuring equal treatment to all candidates, taking disciplinary action against violations of electoral laws and rules as well as bias shown by officials – have been in the rule books for ages.

One may wonder why we haven't heard about these decisions from the Election Commission first, instead of the law minister? Shouldn't decisions about the rules regulating elections and the electoral code of conduct be coming from the EC itself? If the law minister was right that these decisions were the EC's, then they are not part of any legislative business. It rather raises unnecessary suspicion about the government's role in the EC's decision-making process.

Since the law minister's statement about the EC's decisions followed his placing of the Representation of the People (Amendment) Bill, 2023, which has widely been seen as an attempt to



FILE PHOTO

curb the EC's power, it makes critics of the government more suspicious.

Despite the government's claim that the amendment would empower the EC to cancel or postpone voting at one or several polling centres in face of unwarranted circumstances during the election, in reality, if the bill becomes law, the EC would no longer be able to cancel or postpone the election of an entire constituency. The current EC led by Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Habibur Awal, specifically sought such authority following sharp criticism from ministers and leaders of the ruling party after the annulment of Gaibandha-5 by-poll. In fact, though the EC retook votes in the entire constituency, it did not follow the rules of a fresh by-election, which should have required a new schedule

with the law due to malpractices, including coercion, intimidation and pressure. Though replacing the word "election" with "polling" appears to be innocuous, it severely curtails the EC's power in taking drastic actions, like postponing the election in a constituency in the event of serious disturbances or electoral violence during the whole electoral process, except on the polling day.

The proposed amendment alone would leave the EC in a precarious position in which it would be impossible for them to enforce its 11-point decision, which the law minister wanted us all to believe is a recipe for making the upcoming parliamentary election free, fair, and peaceful. The law minister's portrayal of these decisions as the proof of intention and ability of

the EC to deliver a credible and fair election, however, is a mere repetition of the policies, which didn't work in 2014 and 2018, largely due to the government's control and influence over the commission.

There's no reason to believe that the current EC has either the will or the ability to act independently seeing as their appointment has

been plagued with controversies. It gets even more complicated when a partisan government lacks trust from other contending parties, who have been demanding that the next election must be held under a non-party caretaker government.

As we have argued before that setting rules of the game without all parties' consent may prove unwise, there's plenty of time to bridge the gaps in a political solution to the issue of holding a free and fair election. Instead of rushing through legislation and imposing decisions regarding electoral codes arbitrarily, which in reality hampers the democratic process by creating even more distrust, a national conversation should be initiated at the earliest. Without such a dialogue and a consensus, a credible and fair election will not be possible in Bangladesh.

WORLD DAY AGAINST CHILD LABOUR

Shedding light on child labour in educational institutions



Mehedi Hasan Marof is a journalism student at University of Liberal Arts, Bangladesh (ULAB) and research assistant at the Center for Sustainable Development (CSD). His twitter handle is @mehedimarof

MEHEDI HASAN MAROF

Educational institutions are considered lighthouses that guide and nurture the youth of a nation. However, beneath the surface of these esteemed institutions, a dark reality exists – one that involves the exploitation of underage workers. As we observe World Day Against Child Labour, it is imperative that we shed light on this issue.

It is disheartening to find underprivileged children working menial jobs on university campuses across the country. While some may argue that these jobs provide economic support for families living below the poverty line, we must recognise the detrimental impact they have on the future prospects of the nation. The harsh reality is that these young individuals are trapped in a cycle of unending labour, with little respite in sight.

Children or teenagers can be found working in canteens, halls of residence, tea shops, and convenience stores in and around public university campuses. They carry food and drinks to the tables, clean the tables and chairs, clean toilets. These children are often subjected to physical and verbal abuse from general students, student leaders belonging to different political groups, and also from their employers. At private universities, too, child workers are seen cleaning the premises. Such a scenario is a clear deviation from the core purpose of educational institutions, which should prioritise fostering knowledge and

empowering students, rather than burdening underprivileged children with laborious tasks.

Child labour is not a new phenomenon in Bangladesh, a country where a significant number of children are compelled to bear the responsibility of their families. Economic hardships and financial constraints push them into the workforce at a young age. However, it is crucial to emphasise that an educational institution should be a sanctuary free from the atrocities and abuses that these underage workers often face in other sectors.

When we examine the alternative options available to these underprivileged children, the relative safety and stability of working in educational institutions become apparent. However, it is imperative not to turn a blind eye to the underlying issue at hand. Instead of criticising the authorities of these educational institutions for engaging child labourers, we should focus on finding a solution to bring the light of education to these underage workers. Over 21 million Bangladeshis live in extreme poverty, and the vast majority of their children are engaged in some form of labour. If we truly aspire for excellence and aim to lead our country to greater heights, we cannot ignore the plight of these children who work alongside us.

To break this vicious cycle, we need a comprehensive approach that tackles the root causes of child labour. One fundamental step is to address

the issues of poverty and inequality that force families to rely on the labour of their children. Government initiatives, in collaboration with non-governmental organisations and the private sector, should prioritise the creation of economic opportunities and social safety nets to support vulnerable families.

Awareness campaigns, building intent and promoting a thirst for knowledge among children working

Child labour is not a new phenomenon in Bangladesh, a country where a significant number of children are compelled to bear the responsibility of their families. Economic hardships and financial constraints push them into the workforce at a young age.

in educational institutions will be the cornerstone of all solutions. Only then can these children with no secure future be transformed into educated and skilled human resources, making them capable of getting involved in the mainstream development of our country.

I urge those in power to facilitate education for these children working at their universities or colleges, through structural formal learning under the national curriculum. And if that cannot be managed, at least facilitate "non-formal" learning.

Meanwhile, it is essential for

educational institutions to take proactive measures to eradicate this practice altogether from their premises. Robust and strictly enforced policies must be put in place to ensure that children working within educational institutions are not exploited but rather provided with the opportunity to receive an education.

To achieve this, all relevant stakeholders, including institutional authorities, trustees, vice chancellors, the Association of Universities of Bangladesh (AUB), the Association of Private Universities (APUB), NGOs, and the Ministry of Education, must come together and align their objectives. By working in a collaborative manner, they can develop comprehensive programmes and initiatives to address the root causes of child labour in institutions and provide alternative pathways to their education.

There are several NGOs working in Bangladesh for the education of children – Unicef, Save the Children and Teach for Bangladesh, etc – who relentlessly work on eradicating child labour. Added to that, their objective should be to prioritise empowerment of the children with education.

Engaging students of respective institutions can be another vital component to the solution. Student-led initiatives and campaigns can be organised to actively support the education of underprivileged children working at their educational institutions. These initiatives can include mentoring programmes or fundraising activities to cover educational expenses.

By addressing the root causes of child labour in educational institutions, implementing robust policies, and promoting educational opportunities, we can ensure that education truly becomes the guiding light for all children, illuminating their path and of the nation towards a better tomorrow.

Language loss constructs cultural barriers for Bangladeshi-American youth

Anisha Iqbal is a Bangladesh-born student journalist from the Northern Virginia Washington DC area in the US.

ANISHA IQBAL

Bangladeshi immigrant communities face the challenge of cultural preservation in the fast-paced melting pot of America. Through assimilation and isolation, Bangladeshi-American youth now grapple with the obstacles of language loss – a phenomenon that creates a cultural disconnect and strains family relations.

“What most Bangladeshi people don’t realise is that the United States is home to many cultures with people from around the world. In Bangladesh, it’s mostly Bengalee people. When there is more diversity, it becomes more difficult to preserve a culture completely,” said Afnan Salahuddin, a 17-year-old from Maryland.

Language is a cornerstone of culture, carrying a community’s collective history, traditions, and values. However, the increasingly prevalent language divide presents a significant challenge for Bangladeshi American youths. As generations grow up in predominantly English-speaking environments, Bangla struggles to find its place. Adopting English as the primary language of communication in schools, combined with the influence of American culture, has resulted in the erosion of Bangla proficiency among these youth. This loss of language holds profound consequences that impact cultural identity, create an inability to engage in deep conversations, and minimise meaningful connections with family members.

“While at big family gatherings, I sometimes have difficulty finding the right words to express myself in Bangla, so sometimes I choose to stay quiet instead of sharing my thoughts,” said Areebah Jahin, a 20-year-old from Virginia. “In Bangladesh, my American accent is very clear at times, and sometimes my family will make fun of it and

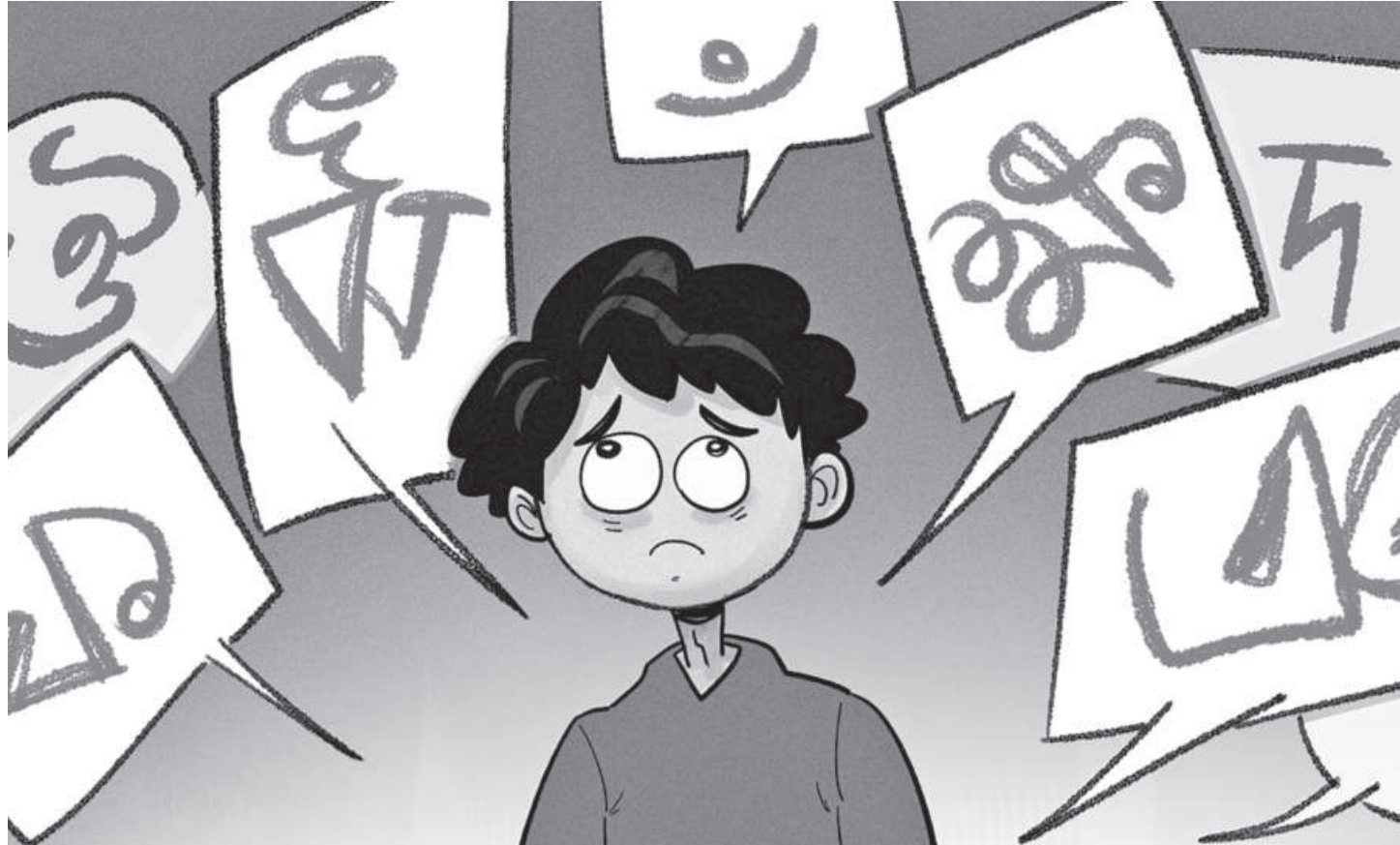


ILLUSTRATION: REHNUMA PROSHOON

unknowingly hurt my feelings, which initially deters me from wanting to speak Bangla even more.”

Amid this language divide, Bangla language schools have emerged as an invaluable resource for those seeking to maintain their linguistic and cultural roots. These schools play a vital role in providing instruction in the Bangla language, fostering a sense of belonging, and preserving Bangladesh’s heritage.

“A few years back, my family and I visited Bangladesh. It’s been a long time since I’ve talked to my relatives in Bangladesh, but I barely talked to them during the visit. I barely knew how to speak Bangla, which was the only

language they knew,” said Obonti Zaman, a 15-year-old from Virginia. “I then started Bangla school, and in only a month, I learned the basics of how to converse in Bangla. When I went to Bangladesh again, I could talk to my family more easily. Of course, I wasn’t perfect, but it did help build a stronger bond between me and my family in Bangladesh. Knowing Bangla has also made me feel more connected to the history and culture of my parents and relatives.”

Zaman takes Bangla language classes at the Bangladesh Center for Community Development, which serves the greater Washington DC metropolitan area. Not only does the school provide basic language/

communication classes, but it also provides opportunities for students to participate in cultural activities such as Bangladeshi dance, music, and performance.

“Learning Bangla and engaging in Bangladeshi dance and singing broadened my knowledge of my culture and made me better understand the traditions in Bangladesh,” said Zaman. “Learning about Bangladeshi holidays and events in Bangla school helped me connect to those different aspects of the culture. Understanding the traditions and culture helped me find a sense of who I am and what my culture is.”

While some Bangladeshi-American youths have been lucky enough to attend Bangla

language schools, others face a more uphill battle with Bangla proficiency. The inability to speak fluently in Bangla can lead to feelings of disconnection and a sense of loss regarding cultural identity, often grappling with how to embrace heritage while simultaneously navigating an English-speaking society.

“My schedule doesn’t allow for me to dedicate time to specifically learn Bangla since I am preoccupied with school and extracurriculars,” said Salahuddin. “Because of that, I feel guilty for my inability to read, write, and speak my mother tongue fluently.”

While fluency in the Bangla language remains an ideal goal, there are alternative paths that Bangladeshi-American youths can take to foster cultural connection despite language limitations. Activities such as celebrating cultural festivals, engaging in traditional customs, and preparing traditional meals can serve as powerful reminders of their heritage. Storytelling, intergenerational dialogues, and engaging with cultural media can also help bridge the language gap and nurture a deeper understanding of their roots.

“Poetry is a significant part of Bangladeshi culture, something I didn’t know until after reading and writing Bangla. I was introduced to so many poems and poets, like Kazi Nazrul Islam and Rabindranath Tagore,” said Nahli Zaman, an 18-year-old from Virginia. “I was already interested in Western poetry, but now I have a whole other branch to discover.”

In a globalised community, preserving language and culture within immigrant communities is more crucial than ever. It is empowering to feel connected to one’s history and heritage through language, and by recognising the impact of language loss, Bangladeshi American youths can navigate the complexities of cultural identity and bridge the language barrier.

“It’s okay not to be connected to Bangladeshi heritage right away. It does take time, especially if you are growing up in a community that doesn’t speak Bangla. But try to introduce yourself to the traditions slowly. You will get there if you have the correct mindset and are willing to embrace your culture,” said Zaman.

The curious case of DONALD TRUMP



Dr. Mostofa Sarwar, professor emeritus at the University of New Orleans, is former dean and vice chancellor of Delgado Community College and former commissioner of the governing board of Regional Transit Authority of New Orleans

MOSTOFA SARWAR

Donald Trump seems to be great at turning a silly affair into a legal nightmare for himself. According to the Presidential Records Act, when a US President ends his term, he is required to return government records from the White House to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). It took one and a half years for Trump to complete this simple task. Some time in May 2021, NARA’s investigators discovered that Trump had not sent all the government records in his possession. NARA knew that at least twelve boxes were missing. They also knew two documents that had previously garnered tremendous media attention during his presidency were missing. One was the “Love Letter” from North Korean President Kim Jong Un, and another was the Hurricane Dorian tracking map that was illegally altered by Trump with a sharpie.



FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

regarding whether Trump had a profit-making motive for hoarding the classified documents. Jack Smith investigated seven countries with whom Trump has business dealings. Federal agents could not find any profit motivation.

Then, what exactly led Trump to obstruct the transfer of sensitive materials? It appears to be his ego – the belief that he can do anything and get away with it. He does not need to follow

He has been indicted with seven counts by the US Department of Justice reportedly under the US criminal code Section 793 for espionage and obstruction of justice. According to Section 793, “Gathering, transmitting or losing defense information... shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than ten years, or both.” This law completely bypasses the question of classification or declassification. The possible defense argument that Trump can declassify documents in his mind or by waving his fingers now stands moot.

In a recent story in Newsweek, Matt Cannon quoted George Conway, a conservative activist, who has argued that being jailed for something “so stupid, pointless and silly” as keeping classified White House documents would be “fitting” for the former president whom he dubbed “a nihilistic moron.”

In spite of all these legal issues, Trump reigns supreme in opinion polls among all possible Republican candidates for the presidential election of 2024. In Five Thirty Eight’s poll (moving average on June 9), Trump garnered whopping 53.8 percent against DeSantis’s 21.3 percent, who is his closest competition.

How can one interpret this strange phenomenon? Trump is already convicted in a civil suit for sexually harassing and defaming a woman. He was arrested in a criminal case for falsifying business expenses relating to hush money payments to a porn star. Now he is indicted for another alleged criminal offence for stealing and hoarding classified documents. But still, he is very popular in the Republican Party.

Is he the re-incarnated Wizard of Oz with modified DNA – a charlatan who can perform a few tricks and conjure up an aura of greatness? It does not matter how many lies he spews, how many crimes he commits, how many women he harasses – he remains the most popular leader of the Republican Party. It is a travesty of common sense.

Several decades of mendacity, cheating, bullying, and getting away with it are finally catching up with Trump. The Mar-a-Lago wizard, perhaps, will be punished in the court of law, but he remains awfully popular among the Republican masses.

Media companies and comedy shows will have a field day on June 13, 2023, when Trump will undergo the process of surrender, arrest, and arraignment at the Federal Courthouse in Miami, Florida. This is the first time a US president or former president will be indicted on a criminal charge.

asking for all classified documents. FBI agents and a DOJ attorney retrieved documents as per the subpoena from Trump’s attorney at Mar-a-Lago in Palm Beach, Florida. But the DOJ determined that Trump unlawfully continued to hoard additional sensitive documents even though his attorney, Evan Corcoran, gave them a signed letter saying that all documents were returned. The DOJ then requested a magistrate judge to issue a legal search warrant which was granted. With the search warrant in hand, federal agents raided Mar-a-Lago and recovered more classified documents.

Later, the DOJ convened a grand jury to figure out whether there were any violations of federal law and a need to indict Trump for committing a crime. Trump tried his best to impede this process. The attorney general appointed Jack Smith as special counsel to investigate this case. Smith is reportedly an efficient prosecutor who keeps a low profile but leaves no stone unturned during investigations.

Although it is not needed for prosecuting cases relating to the Espionage Act, a question arose

any rules. He can fire his gun on Fifth Avenue. Nothing would happen to him.

His niece, Mary Trump, a clinical psychologist, gave a fair analysis of her uncle’s maladies. She indicated that her famous uncle suffers from narcissistic impulses. Trump has displayed an extraordinary sense of self-importance by claiming that he is a “stable genius” who can command an army better than generals in a war, discover the remedy for Covid-19, end the Russia-Ukraine war in less than a day, and solve economic woes in no time. But we know his record as US president proves the opposite. Another trait of narcissistic personality disorder is a lack of empathy for others, and Trump has shown this characteristic by throwing many of his associates under the bus. The latest example is Kayleigh McEnany, who served Trump as his press secretary. His constant lying and cheating is characteristic of charlatans and con artists. He thinks he deserves entitlement and special treatment. His hoarding of classified documents attests to this narcissistic trait and led him to a legal nightmare.

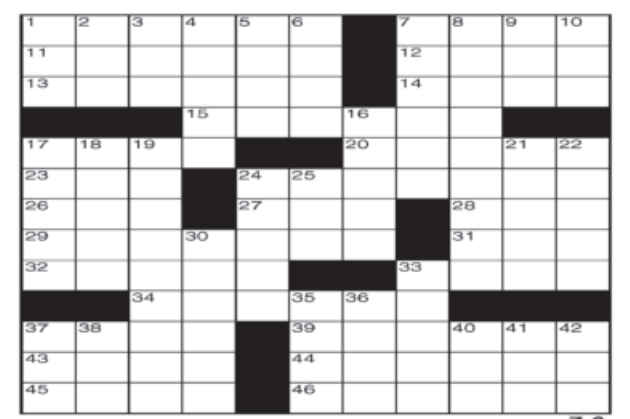
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Officials at NARA sent an email to Trump’s attorneys asking about the remaining government records. They received 15 boxes. Fourteen were filled with classified documents. Trump’s attorney was unable to attest that all documents were returned. NARA referred the case to the Department of Justice (DOJ) which later issued a subpoena to Trump

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
1 Conforms
7 Bloke
11 Chatty bird
12 New Haven school
13 Will subject
14 Got larger
15 Insist
17 Canyon sound
20 Swell
23 In the style of
24 “Cheers” spinoff
26 Knight’s title
27 Auction buy
28 African grazer
29 Touch-down boundary
31 Bunny move
32 Exorbitant
33 RBI or ERA
34 Fly or flea
37 Litter
- members
39 Prepared for
43 Message target
44 Chide
45 Brooklyn team
46 Stockholm setting
- 16 Let up
17 Lets up
18 Singer Black
19 Two fours, in craps
21 Italian seaport
22 Blow one’s top
24 Gymnast’s feats
25 Director Howard
30 Camera accessories
33 Long look
35 Wanes
36 Ship’s staff
37 Scathing review
38 Road hazard
40 Bounder
41 Summer in France
42 Fox hole
- DOWN**
1 Clumsy one
2 German article
3 Curator’s topic
4 Madrid museum
5 Carry
6 Rose part
7 Stellar swan
8 It produces sharp shadows
9 Brewpub order
10 Chapel seat

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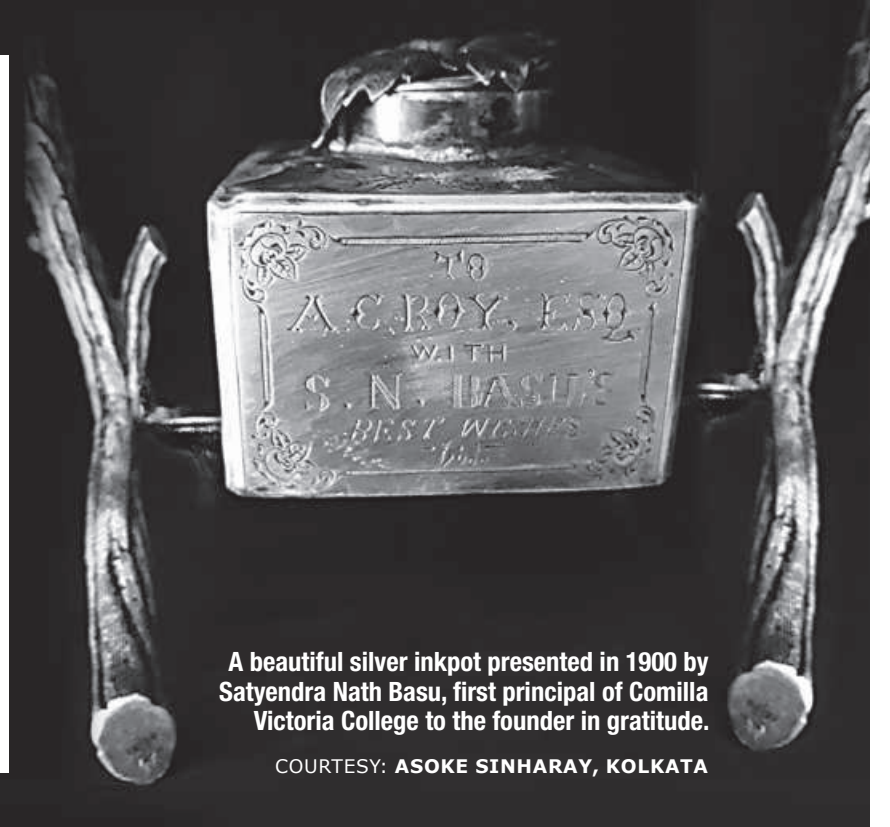


YESTERDAY’S ANSWERS

P	A	P	A	S		P	E	C	A	N
A	L	E	R	T		A	L	O	N	E
C	O	N	C	E	S	S	I	O	N	S
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				B	O	X	E	R		
M	A	Y	A	N		L	O	A	D	S
A	X	I	S			T	R	I	O	
D	E	N	I	M		J	O	K	E	D
				L	O	S	E	R		
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C	O	N	F	E	S	S	I	O	N	S
T	O	T	A	L		A	D	D	U	P
S	N	O	R	T		M	O	S	S	Y



(L) Dr. Aghorenath Chattopadhyaya (1851-1915) of Bikrampur, East Bengal (M) Gopalchandra Lahiri (1858-1936) of Pabna, East Bengal (R) Rai Bahadur Ananda Chandra Roy (1863-1920) of Comilla, East Bengal.



A beautiful silver inkpot presented in 1900 by Satyendra Nath Basu, first principal of Comilla Victoria College to the founder in gratitude.

COURTESY: ASOKE SINHARAY, KOLKATA

LEST WE FORGET

The pioneering educationists from East Bengal

Dr. Aghorenath Chattopadhyaya died at his Lovelock Street residence, Calcutta on 28 January 1915. In his passing a befitting tribute was paid by his eldest daughter Sarojini Naidu, who said that her illustrious father could aptly be characterized as - a dreamer by temperament, a man of intense curiosity, a visionary with bold initiatives coupled by a passion for holistic learning which extended even to the realm of Alchemy. We should take pride in the fact that the ancestral roots of this extraordinary scholar-educationist lie in Bikrampur (now Munshiganj), Dhaka Division, Bangladesh.

WAQAR A KHAN

We would like to recall with gratitude some harbingers of education from East Bengal (now Bangladesh) in the 19th century, who have 'illuminated' the lives of generations by founding modern educational institutions at the primary, secondary and university levels in British India. Long years ago, theirs was a journey fraught with odds and impediments amidst the poverty, ignorance and deprivation of a colonial society. However, these dauntless pioneers were visionaries who took upon themselves the formidable challenges of a noble mission by spreading public education with remarkable tenacity regardless of the lack of ready resources. They managed to build schools and colleges too often by stages with relentless effort, perseverance and dedication with the help of local philanthropists. Their conscience were beholden to the notion of the 'noblesse oblige', that is to say, privilege entails obligation and responsibility. The following are stories of such bravehearts.

Dr. Aghorenath Chattopadhyaya (1851-1915) was a distinguished British Indian educationist, intellectual, scientist and social reformer. He was born in Bhrahmangaon in Kanaksar village of Bikrampur, Dhaka, East Bengal (Bangladesh). He was the first Indian and Bengali to secure a D.Sc. (Doctorate of Science) degree, a rare distinction in those days. He attended the Pogose and Dhaka Collegiate Schools and the prestigious Presidency College, Calcutta. A meritorious student he moved to the University of Edinburgh for higher studies on a Gilchrist scholarship. During his student years in Edinburgh he excelled in his studies and was awarded the Baxter Scholarship and the Hope Prize.

On his return to colonial India, he was specially invited by the Nizam (ruler) of the premier Princely State of Hyderabad, Nawab Mir Mahboob Ali Khan (1866-1911) Kt, Asaf Jah VI, to modernize the education system there. He began by opening an English medium school there. With the Nizam's support he soon founded the Hyderabad College with himself as its first principal. It was later renamed as the Nizam College. He was instrumental in starting a Women's College in those highly conservative days as part of the Osmania University and implemented the progressive Special Marriage Act, a courageous step in Hyderabad State. For his principled stand on important matters of the State in which he sometimes strongly differed with the Nizam, he had to leave Hyderabad twice, regardless of the fact that the ruler always professed a high personal regard for Aghorenath, for his integrity, erudition and sound administrative acumen.

Aghorenath and his wife Varada Sundari Devi were blessed with eight children who included the celebrated Indian poetess and political activist against the Raj, Sarojini Naidu alias 'the Nightingale of India' their eldest daughter, who was the mother of Padmaja Naidu. Their second daughter Mrinalini was a Cambridge graduate who became the principal of the then well-known Sir Gangaram Girls' High School in Lahore before

the partition. The third daughter Sunalini was an accomplished Kathak dancer. Their eldest son Virandranath (also Birendranath) was a dedicated leftist and an avowed political activist against the Raj, so much so, that he was listed in the British Crime register as a wanted revolutionary. He managed to slip away to Europe to carry out his clandestine activities from there. However, during his stay in the Soviet Union, he fell afoul of the political authorities there and became a victim of the pathological Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin's infamous purge of abominable cruelty. He was executed in 1937. The youngest son Harindranath was a social activist, poet and actor who received one of independent India's highest civilian

awards. However, Gopalchandra was a public spirited, dedicated soul imbued with the noble mission of spreading the 'light' of modern education among the young.

Gopalchandra's family profession was that of Jotdaari (semi-feudal wealthy peasants). It is interesting to note that his birth almost coincided with the establishment of the Pabna Zilla School in 1853. Therefore, it is quite possible that he may have attended that school, although there is no provenance. As a meritorious student he later enrolled in Rajshahi College, another renowned institution of the time. He was taken in as a free boarder in the house of a well-known lawyer of Rajshahi named Shrijukto Guruprasad Sen, where he became the

a short period of time and transformed him into an erudite young man.' Later on, Rajanikanta also reverentially dedicated his much acclaimed second book of verse entitled, 'Kalyani' to the memory of his beloved private tutor.

On his return to Pabna town, Gopalchandra Lahiri, embarked on his life's mission of initiating formal institutional education. In March of 1894, he established the 'Pabna Institution' a High English School in the town. However, the school had to be relocated soon due to its unsuitable location in the congested bazar area. Besides, the school had already started to attract a lot of eager students for whose proper accommodation more space was urgently needed. Therefore, with the generous financial help of the enlightened Bhaduri zamindar family of the locality, a new school building was erected on seven bighas of land. In the meantime, Gopalchandra also opened a college in a room of the school to introduce higher learning by producing college graduates. For a while he took on the extra burden of being the headmaster of the school, college and the principal teacher at the same time. Thus, it was the 'Pabna Institution' (school) which finally gave birth in July 1898, to the renowned Government Edward College in Pabna as we know it today. Both the school and college are amongst the oldest educational institutions in Bangladesh. On the death of Gopalchandra Lahiri in 1936, a pall of gloom descended upon Pabna town. Soon the grateful civil administration and people of Pabna, renamed 'Pabna Institution' (school) as the 'Gopalchandra Lahiri Institution' in loving memory of the noble man for his selfless dedication and virtuous contribution towards public education.

The eminent pioneering educationist Rai Bahadur Ananda Chandra Roy (1863-1920) of Comilla, was born in his village home in Gobindapur taluk, Homnabad, Laksham, in Comilla district. His ancestors came from Rajasthan to East Bengal and settled in Comilla in the 18th century. After becoming wealthy traders they became zamindars (feudal landlords). The Roy family soon started to acquire landed property in Comilla town and constructed attractive residential homes, one of which was on forty acres of land in the Kandirpar area near the posh 'Talpukur Par'. Ananda Chandra Roy was the eldest son of his father. On his father's premature death, he had to take over charge of the Zamindari at a tender age. In his lifetime, he judiciously managed to substantially extend the Zamindari and became very wealthy and influential. Apart from the Zamindari, he also invested wisely in the contracting business through his contracting firm. When the plan of the Assam Bengal Railway was being implemented, he was awarded the lucrative contract to build the railroad. He built a beautiful house in the Ranirbazar area of Comilla town for his only daughter Labanyapova. Presently, it is the residence of the District Judge of Comilla.

However, Ananda Chandra Roy is best remembered for the establishment of the Victoria School (1877) and Victoria College (1899) in Comilla town

in late 19th century. His enlightened quest for initiating public education at the primary and secondary levels, was the outcome of his ceaseless efforts. It all began modestly in 1886, when at the age of twenty three he established the 'Roy's Entrance School' with a handful of students, which was subsequently renamed as Comilla Victoria School in commemoration of the Golden Jubilee (50 years of reign) of Queen Victoria in 1877. It is heartening to know that Dinesh Chandra Sen (1866-1939) another outstanding son of East Bengal, born in village Suapur in today's Dhaka district was the Head Master of this school (tenure:1890-97), prior to his attaining all Bengal fame as a famous writer, researcher of Bengali folklore and contribution to Bengali literature for which he was invested with the title of Rai Bahadur. Hiralal Sen born in Manikganj, East Bengal, who is generally regarded as the first Indian filmmaker was Dinesh's cousin, while Samar Sen the prominent Indian poet, litterateur and journalist was his grandson.

At present the Victoria School is known as the Comilla Victoria Collegiate School. The renowned Victoria College eventually grew out of this school in 1899 and, was affiliated up to the F.A. standard at the time. Unfortunately, the school was completed gutted by a big inferno in 1902, and had to be rebuilt by its founder within a short period of time. The Trust Deed of 1904, which practically separated the College from the School was replaced by a new one in 1908. The main reasons for the Trust Deed was for the overall improvement of the College. The expectation of the founder was that the problems faced by the new College would be overcome from grants made available from the Trust Deed. When the New Regulations of the Calcutta University came into force in 1904, the affiliation of the College was restricted to the Intermediate of Arts (I.A.) standard. However, in 1918 when a second building was constructed, the status of the College was raised to the Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) standard and the Intermediate Science classes (I.Sc) were introduced in 1924, soon after the sad demise of the Rai Bahadur in 1920. However, Ananda Chandra Roy died a satisfied man having witnessed in his lifetime that the modest School he once started with only five students, was finally able to produce College graduates with B.A. degrees.

Ananda Chandra Roy established a primary school in his native village of Gobindapur, Laksham in Comilla district. He also donated land for establishing a post office there for public welfare. As an eager patron of religious and cultural activities, he was always forthcoming. As a person he was benevolent, affable, endowed with kindness, but also displayed a strong personality for which he was highly respected by all people. He passed away peacefully on 8 November, 1920 at the age of fifty seven. His last rites were performed at the family cremation grounds in the presence of thousands of mourners irrespective of religion, caste or creed.

Waqar A Khan is the Founder of Bangladesh Forum for Heritage Studies.



A marble bust of the founder adorns the campus of the Victoria College, Comilla

award the Padma Bhushan in 1973.

Dr. Aghorenath Chattopadhyaya died at his Lovelock Street residence, Calcutta on 28 January 1915. In his passing a befitting tribute was paid by his eldest daughter Sarojini Naidu, who said that her illustrious father could aptly be characterized as - a dreamer by temperament, a man of intense curiosity, a visionary with bold initiatives coupled by a passion for holistic learning which extended even to the realm of Alchemy. We should take pride in the fact that the ancestral roots of this extraordinary scholar-educationist lie in Bikrampur (now Munshiganj), Dhaka Division, Bangladesh.

Gopalchandra Lahiri (1858-1936) son of Mahimchandra Lahiri was born in Rokonpur Pargana, in Kacharipara under Gopalpur Mauza, Pabna. In his lifetime he became a renowned pioneer of higher education, particularly at the college level in the district of Pabna. It was an enviable achievement in those difficult days of the colonial era.

private tutor to Rajanikanta Sen, the school going son of Guruprasad. It was the same Rajanikanta Sen (1865-1910) who would later go on to become the famous 'Kantokobi' of Bengal, that is, poet and composer of devotional (Bhakti) as well as patriotic songs. Today, Rajanikanta Sen along with Rabindranath Tagore, Kazi Nazrul Islam, Atul Prasad Sen and Dwijendra Lal Roy (D. L. Roy) are famously regarded as the 'Pancha Orko' or the 'Five Sun' of Bengali Literature and culture.

Gopalchandra Lahiri graduated with a Bachelor's degree (B.A.) in 1881-82 from the Rajshahi College, while lodging with lawyer Guruprasad. In the same year, Rajanikanta too passed his Entrance Exam. The biographer of Rajanikanta, one Naliniranjan Pandit in his book, 'Kantokobi Rajanikanta' paid rich tributes to Gopalchandra Lahiri by saying that, 'his superb teaching skills, holistic approach to education profoundly enhanced the knowledge base of Rajanikanta within

"It wasn't easy. What a team we faced, the way they (Inter) defend and counter-attack. Finals are like this. Emotions and nerves are there. We competed like animals."

Manchester City's Rodri, 2023 Champions League final's Player of the Match.



'Lucky' City create history

City are the 23rd different team – and the sixth from England – to win the European Cup.

Guardiola is just the fourth coach to win the European Cup on three occasions. The 52-year-old won this competition twice with Barcelona and ended a 12-year wait for a third triumph in Istanbul to become the first coach since Sir Alex Ferguson in 1999 to guide an English club to the treble.

City are only the tenth team in history to complete a treble of league, cup and European Cup.

City are the 15th European Cup winners to remain unbeaten throughout their campaign (W8 D5).



SPORTS DESK

The pressure of the Champions League final consumed Manchester City players right from the start while Inter Milan won the hearts of neutrals as they almost ended up painting the continent with their own darker shade of blue on Saturday.

Pep Guardiola's team completed a rare continental treble, courtesy of a superb 68-minute strike by Rodri against the run of play, but their performance did not translate that of an era-defining team, one that was predicted to stroll to European football's most-cherished crown.

And Guardiola did not hesitate to accept the notion. "You have to be lucky ... It was written in the stars. It belongs to us."

City won despite not being true to their identity and playing style; especially in terms of building from the back,

starting with the goalkeeper, which demands patience and courage. In contrast, Inter under Simone Inzaghi showed no impression that they were suffering from the fear of failure on arguably the biggest night in European football.



While City had European silverware long incoming following a sustained period of domestic supremacy, Inter Milan manager Simone Inzaghi had every right to express his pride after seeing his charges in action in Istanbul.

"They showed the whole world how well they stood up to Manchester

City, a side that everyone knows has so much quality," Inzaghi said after the match.

"I hugged my players one by one, as they were extraordinary, just as our fans were and deserved a different result, but I hope they were happy seeing the way the team played tonight."

Throughout the game, Inter kept their shape compact and pressed well in the midfield and final third, as expected from a leading Italian side, but little did it explain why City players in possession kept on committing unforced errors, misplaced passes, and failed to establish their characteristic tempo at any stage.

To their credit, Inter mustered efforts and came agonisingly close to an equaliser and threatened to drag a cagey final into extra time with goalkeeper Ederson making two superb late saves. In the end, one may wonder what the game's outcome might have been had substitute striker Romelu Lukaku's header from point-blank found the net.

SL likely Asia Cup venue for India matches

AFP, COLOMBO

Asia Cup matches involving India could be played in Sri Lanka after the cricketing powerhouse refused to visit arch-rival and official host Pakistan, a board official said Sunday.

The Asian Cricket Council (ACC) is due to make a formal announcement in the coming week after calls for a different venue for India's games in the 50-over tournament in September, a Sri Lankan official said.

Neighbours India and Pakistan have not met on either side's soil in any version of the game since 2012, and only play each other in international tournaments on neutral grounds.

The two cricketing powerhouses have fought three wars since being carved out of the subcontinent's partition in 1947, and are bitter political rivals.

"It is very likely that some of the matches will be in Sri Lanka," the board official said, asking not to be named. "But we have still not officially received confirmation."

Sri Lanka's board had expressed willingness to host some Asia Cup matches, despite an economic crisis which forced it to default on its \$46 billion foreign debt in April last year and seek a bailout from the International Monetary Fund.

The official said it had the capacity to conduct an international tournament, even though the island was still emerging from the economic downturn.

The unprecedented economic crisis led to months of protests and the ouster of president Gotabaya Rajapaksa, who was accused of corruption and mismanagement.

He fled the country and resigned in July 2022.

"Even at the height of the crisis when we didn't have fuel and electricity, we hosted the Australian team," the official said, referring to Australia's tour taking in three T20 matches, five ODIs and three Tests.

The Pakistan Cricket Board had threatened to boycott the World Cup in India, which is due to start in October, if the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) refused to play the Asia Cup in Pakistan a month earlier.

Ruthless Australia 'savour' WTC triumph ahead of Ashes

AGENCIES

Scott Boland sparked a dramatic collapse as a dominant Australia hammered India by 209 runs to win the World Test Championship final at The Oval on Sunday.

India, set a record 444 to win, resumed on 164-3 but they slumped to 234 all out before lunch on the fifth day, losing their last five wickets for a mere 22 runs.

Boland did the initial damage with two wickets in Sunday's seventh over, including the prize scalp of Virat Kohli, on his way to figures of 3-46 in 16 overs.

Off-spinner Nathan Lyon (4-41) then polished off the tail.

Victory meant Australia had now captured the one major



SCORES IN BRIEF

AUSTRALIA

1st Innings- 469 all out (Head 163, Smith 121; Siraj 4-108) and 2nd Innings- 270-8 dec (Carey 66 not out; Jadeja 3-58)

INDIA

1st Innings- 296 all out (Rahane 89, Thakur 51; Cummins 3-83) and 2nd Innings- 234 all out (Sharma 43, Gill 18, Pujara 27, Kohli 49, Rahane 46, Bharat 23; Cummins 1-55, Boland 3-46, Starc 2-77, Lyon 4-41)

RESULT

Australia won by 209 runs. Player-of-the-match: Travis Head

men's cricket title that had previously eluded them.

Defeat left India, beaten by New Zealand in the inaugural 2021 WTC final in Southampton, still searching for their first piece of global silverware in a decade.

"The way Travis and Smith put on that partnership put us at ease," said Australia captain Pat Cummins.

The fast bowler added: "Boland was fantastic, he's now my favourite player, everyone just did their role really well... We'll savour this and then turn our attention to the Ashes."

India skipper Rohit Sharma

"The batting was in shambles today (Sunday). It was just ridiculous what we saw. India have not lasted a session with that batting line-up. I mean, come on!"

Sunil Gavaskar
Former India captain

Concern grows as Tamim's back issue flares up

SPORTS REPORTER

Tamim Iqbal's back issue had resurfaced during the national team camp and he had been rested on Thursday owing to the pain. Three days later on his return to the Tigers' practice yesterday, Tamim's back problem has not shown signs of relenting.

According to team sources, Tamim was not supposed to be undergoing a fielding session yesterday. He, however, joined in with Nic Lee's advice. While leaning for a ball close to the ground from Shane McDermott, Tamim felt the pain in his back. The team physio came running in but the left-hander asked him to talk to the coaching staff present. Tamim's fielding session ended soon as it appeared that the circumstances of the drills changed for him, taking a few high catches instead of ground fielding drills before he left, understandably feeling some discomfort on his back.

Having rested for a bit, Tamim moved in for a net session. Here too, a carefully curated net session followed where he asked throwers to pitch it full. One thrower



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

was changed following an abrupt length ball. Tamim would also play the pacers, Taskin Ahmed and Khaled Ahmed, with the instructions being pretty much the same. He looked comfortable with flowing drives on full deliveries. The back issue was still in force, causing him discomfort on anything slightly short.

When he moved in to play the

spinners, a pull shot off Mehedi Hasan Miraz saw him pull up and grimace in pain while holding his back. In fact, the management wanted to see how things shape up once Tamim undergoes a training session since the back problem resurfaced.

Chief physician of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), Debashish Chowdhury, said, "We asked

Tamim to go through the training session since we needed to know the extent of the pain when he bats. Yes, he had pain in his back and waist yesterday. It doesn't, however, mean that it's possible to say whether he will play or not [against Afghanistan]. We can't say yet whether it is a risk. There are three days left and we will have him under observation till the last day before the match."

Tamim's absence may see Mahmudul Hasan Joy and Zakir Hasan as the prime contenders to open the innings. The duo batted at the nets yesterday with Zakir facing a fiery and energetic spell from Ebadot Hossain in particular. Ebadot once went up in a huge appeal, going right up to the batter and turning to pace-bowling coach, Allan Donald, who was standing in as the umpire and observing the proceedings. After a few seconds, Donald signalled a review, one that is akin to Tamim's current injury concern. Whether it would be a risk to play him in the upcoming Test may just be a late call, depending on the player and the team management.

Cabrera aims to fine-tune tactics

SPORTS REPORTER

Head coach Javier Cabrera will look to have a rehearsal of his tactics for the SAFF Championship when his charges take on Cambodian premier league outfit Tiffy Army FC in a warm-up match in Phnom Penh today.

The men in red and green had their first training session yesterday after reaching the Cambodian capital the day before for a FIFA friendly on Thursday.

The practice match will be a big opportunity for the Spaniard to see how his charges react to his tactics ahead of the SAFF Championship, where he has targeted a semifinal berth.

"We started our preparation from Dhaka and in today's training, the coach showed us the tactics we want to play against Tiffy Army and we are hoping that we will perform according to the plan



and get the expected result," defender Rahmat Mia said in a video message.

Echoing the sentiment, forward Faisal Ahmed Fahim said, "Today we had a good practice where the coach worked made us understand the jobs of the players in the practice match."

Cabrera, too, is pleased that everything is going in a positive direction.

"It is great that we are finally playing one game even though we wanted to play another game against the national team (Cambodia) but they are not available. Tiffy Army FC is a very competitive team of the Cambodia Premier League; they have always been a top-five team and they have several national players and foreign players and I think it is a perfect game to prepare the team for the SAFF Championship," said Cabrera.

WDPL ends with title decider today

SPORTS REPORTER

Defending champions Mohammedan Sporting Club's comfortable seven-wicket win over BKSP yesterday means that the last match of the Dhaka Premier Division Women's Cricket League (WDPL) between Mohammedan and Rupali Bank Krira Parishad today is set to be the title-deciding encounter of the tournament.

With six wins and 13 points in seven games, Mohammedan are currently on top of points table while Rupali Bank, also unbeaten but saw two of their games washed out due to rain, occupy second place with 12 points in as many games.

In yesterday's match, after electing to bowl, Mohammedan bundled out BKSP for just 80 runs in 35.2 overs as Rupali Bank kept losing wickets at regular intervals. Ayesha Rahman picked up three wickets while Suraya Azmin scalp two for the Black and Whites.

Mohammedan, in reply, reached the target with seven wickets in hand and 34.4 overs to spare. Sanjida Islam top-scored with 32 off 48 balls, striking six fours.



Govt may allow trade unions at SEZs

Working to amend Labour Act 2006; PM to attend ILO summit in Geneva on June 14-15

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The government is considering bringing the special economic zones under Bangladesh Labour Act, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam said yesterday.

An amendment to Bangladesh Labour Act-2006 may be passed in the current parliament session to that end.

The SEZs are now governed by Bangladesh EPZ Labour Act.

There are eight export processing zones in the country and those are governed by Bangladesh EPZ Labour Act, while the factories outside the EPZs are run by Bangladesh Labour Act.

As per the EPZ Labour Act, workers don't have the right to form trade unions, but they have labour welfare associations. On the other hand, Bangladesh Labour Act allows trade unions.

The international community, especially the US and the European Union, has been calling for the Bangladesh government to have a uniform labour law and allow trade unions in all factories.

While talking to reporters at his ministry, Shahriar said that allowing trade unions in the EPZs may not be possible at this time as most of the foreign investors have

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Dead fish have been floating in Hatirjheel lake for the last few days due to what many fear is a spike in pollution level. An official of Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha, which is the custodian of Hatirjheel, said the level of pollution might have increased after wastewater from Kathalbagan area drained into the lake during last week's rain.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

No need for UN involvement in nat'l polls

Says Shahriar Alam

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam has said that there is no need for UN involvement in the upcoming national elections as there is no "conflict situation" in the country.

"There is no need. The UN [involvement] comes in the situation of war, civil war, and conflict situation. The situation in Bangladesh was like that many years back, not now," he said yesterday when asked about the UN's possible involvement in the polls.

While talking to journalists at the foreign ministry, he, however, said the ministry would welcome international election observers.

The state minister said the government is committed to holding a free and fair election, but that might not be enough.

SEE PAGE 7 COL 2



Gawsia W Chy



Senjuti Saha

2 Bangladeshis among top 100 Asian scientists

UNB, Dhaka

Two Bangladeshi scientists have made it to the 2023 list of the 100 "best and brightest" Asian scientists for their contribution to research.

Child Health Research Foundation's Senjuti Saha and Dhaka University's Gawsia Wahidunnessa Chowdhury have been included in the eighth edition of the list published by the Singapore-based magazine "Asian Scientist".

This year's list includes researchers and inventors from across a range of scientific disciplines for their groundbreaking achievements to transform the world — from understanding glacial cycles and structural geology to advancing space exploration.

"Asia's researchers continue to dream big and serve marginalised communities. Pushing the boundaries of the unknown, the awardees, with the help of their teams, accomplished huge successes," the Asian Scientist Magazine said in a press release.

Gawsia, a professor of zoology at the University of Dhaka, has been included in the list for her contribution

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Freedom fighter's decade-long fight ends

Nripendra Nath Roy finally gets recognition, allowance

EAM ASADUZZAMAN

After a decade-long battle, Nripendra Nath Roy is now a freedom fighter officially.

The 72-year-old Roy joined the War of Liberation when he was around 20 years old.

Under sub-sector commander Capt Iqbal of sector number 6, he fought in Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, and Nilphamari region until the country was free from the enemy.

His name was also included in the freedom fighters' list compiled in India in 1971 by Bangladesh's first government in exile.

But due to a couple of callous errors made during the process of issuing his national identity (NID) card in 2008, he was deprived of the allowance given to freedom fighters.

For the woodcutter at a sawmill in Nilphamari, this allowance would have made his life a lot better and could have

even saved his wife Shukurani, who died without treatment from a prolonged illness.

"These errors in my NID card brought disaster to my life," said Roy, who hails from Chowki Bhajini village in Debiganj upazila of Panchagarh.

Not only was his year of birth changed to 1960 from 1951, but his nickname Sinial was also added next to his full name on the NID.

Since then, the elderly man has been trying to get the error corrected. He paid numerous visits to different government offices but in vain.

His sufferings came to the notice of different quarters after The Daily Star on March 22, 2021, published a news titled 'Freedom fighter toils away without recognition' describing his tribulations.

A local journalist Rawshan Alam Pappu helped him complete the forensic test needed to change the age for NIDs.

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121 money laundering cases filed in 5 years

Finance minister tells JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Based on intelligence reports of the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU), 121 money laundering cases were filed by various agencies between 2017 and 2022, Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal told parliament yesterday responding to queries.

The finance minister also said after probes conducted by Customs Intelligence and Investigation Directorate of the National Board of Revenue, 15 money laundering cases, involving Tk 367.55 crore, were filed against organisations for breaching bonded warehouse rules.

In a scripted answer, the finance minister said since 2017, the BFIU has sent 1,002 reports to law enforcement agencies after examining 24,977

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1

Wireless power transmitted from space to Earth

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

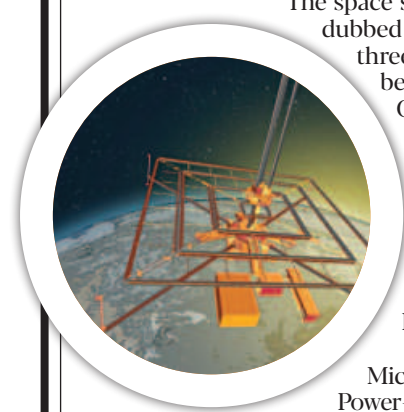
Scientists have successfully demonstrated for the first time that solar power can be wirelessly transmitted in space and also beamed to Earth.

The space solar power prototype, dubbed Maple, is one of three key technologies being tested by the California Institute of Technology's (Caltech) Space Solar Power Project (SSPP), which aims to harvest solar power in space and transmit it to the Earth's surface.

Maple, short for Microwave Array for Power-transfer Low-orbit Experiment, consists of an array of flexible, lightweight microwave power transmitters, built using custom electronic chips, to beam the energy to desired locations.

For successfully achieving its outcome, scientists said such energy transmission arrays need to be lightweight to minimise the amount of fuel needed to send them to space, and flexible so they can be folded up and transported in a rocket.

"Through the experiments we have run so far, we received confirmation that Maple can transmit power successfully to receivers in space. We have also been able to program the array to direct its energy toward Earth, which we detected here at Caltech," Ali Hajimiri, Electrical Engineering professor at Caltech, said in a statement.



Djokovic wins record 23rd Grand Slam

AFP, Paris

Novak Djokovic created history on Sunday when he captured a record-breaking 23rd Grand Slam title with a third French Open triumph, reinforcing his case to be crowned the greatest player of all time.

The 36-year-old Serb brushed off an early wobble to defeat Casper Ruud of Norway 7-6 (7/1), 6-3, 7-5 and snap the tie of 22 Slams he shared with career-long rival Rafael Nadal.

Victory for the third time in Paris, after 2016 and 2021, adds to his 10 Australian Open titles, seven at Wimbledon and three at the US Open.

Djokovic is the first man to win all four majors at least three times and is once again halfway to the first calendar Grand Slam since Rod Laver in 1969.

Only Margaret Court and Serena Williams in women's tennis have managed to rack up 23

SEE PAGE 7 COL 4



Serbia's Novak Djokovic jumps in the air to celebrate his record 23rd Grand Slam title following a 7-6, 6-3, 7-5 win over Norway's Casper Ruud in the final of the French Open at the Court Philippe-Chatrier in Paris on Sunday.

PHOTO: AFP

SUDAN CONFLICT Clashes resume as truce ends

REUTERS, Khartoum

Heavy clashes and artillery fire erupted across Sudan's capital Khartoum yesterday and residents reported air strikes soon after the end of a 24-hour ceasefire that had brought a brief lull to eight weeks of fighting between rival military factions.

Witnesses said the fighting between the army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) was some of the heaviest for weeks, and included ground battles in the densely populated neighbourhood of Haj Youssef in Bahri, one of three adjoining cities, along with Khartoum and Omdurman, that make up the capital around the confluence of the River Nile.

Just after the ceasefire expired at 6 a.m. (0400 GMT) witnesses said clashes and artillery fire resumed in the north of Omdurman. They also reported clashes in southern and central Khartoum, and in Shambat along the Nile in Bahri up to the strategic Halliyya bridge, which crosses to Omdurman.

"The truce made us relax a bit, but the war and fear are returning today," said Musab Saleh, a 38-year-old resident of southern Khartoum.

War between Sudan's army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) broke out on April 15 over tensions linked to an internationally backed plan for a transition towards civilian rule.

The conflict has displaced more than 1.9 million people, triggering a major humanitarian crisis that threatens to spill across a volatile region.

Some 400,000 of those who have fled their homes have crossed into neighbouring countries, about half of them heading north to Egypt.