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TRADE, CONNECTIVITY IN SA \$1.03b WB project to boost national income by 16pc

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The World Bank has launched a \$1.03 billion inter-country connectivity project in the South Asia region that will lead to an increase in national income by over 16 percent in Bangladesh.

At present, Bangladesh and Nepal are the participants of the flagship regional programme titled Accelerating Transport and Trade Connectivity in Eastern South Asia (ACCESS).

Of the \$1.03 billion allocated for the programme, Bangladesh will get \$753.45 million and Nepal \$275 million. The project was launched yesterday in Bangladesh, two days after it was unveiled in Nepal.

"This project is part of a flagship regional programme aimed at increasing the efficiency and resilience of transport and trade – not just in Bangladesh – but across the eastern South Asia region," said Guangzhe Chen, the WB's vice-president for infrastructure, at the event.

In the second phase of the programme, the WB will give \$100 million to Bhutan. The lender is in discussions with India to get the largest country in the region on board.

Trade and regional transport connectivity in South Asia is critical, especially for Bangladesh.

The forthcoming graduation from least-developed country status is a testament to its development success, Chen said, adding that LDC graduation will help it attract



Plants grow on a diesel electric multiple unit (DEMU) train left out in the open at Chattogram city's Pahartali railway workshop. Many of these China-made trains have broken down over the years and they cannot be repaired locally. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Summit to set up third floating LNG terminal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Summit Group is set to establish the country's third floating storage and regasification unit (FSRU) in Maheshkhali of Cox's Bazar, a development that will increase the country's capacity to process imported liquefied natural gas by as much as 60 percent.

LNG that arrives from abroad needs to be converted back to the gaseous state to be used as fuel, power generation, heating, cooking etc. That can be done at FSRUs, which are multi-function vessels that combine LNG storage and built-in regasification systems onboard a ship or barge.

At present, there are two FSRUs that have the capacity each to regasify about 500 million cubic feet of gas (mmcf) a day. This is not enough to

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investment and spur economic activity.

However, it will also bring challenges caused by the phasing out of preferential market access, which could lead to an annual reduction in exports by as much as 11 percent. Bangladesh will therefore need to find new drivers of exports and growth.

The intra-regional trade could offer a new, and largely unexploited avenue for growth.

In South Asia, regional trade is about 5 percent of total trade. This compares poorly with East Asia, where intra-regional trade accounts for 50 percent of total trade. Each country in the region has unexploited potential for regional trade; for Bangladesh, the unexploited potential is estimated at 93 percent.

This low level of intra-regional trade reflects the high cost of connectivity.

Bangladesh and other countries in the region trade on better terms with distant economies than with their neighbours.

For example, the WB's Connecting to Thrive report found that it is less expensive for a company in Bangladesh to trade with a company in Germany than with a company next door in India.

Enhanced trade and transport connectivity can bestow significant gains for Bangladesh.

Estimates by the WB suggest that Bangladesh's exports

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China lauds Hasina's remarks on US sanctions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina spoke not just about "the strong position of the Bangladeshi people, but also the mind of large part of the international community, especially the developing world" when she talked about the US sanctions on Rab, a spokesperson of the Chinese foreign ministry said yesterday.

Wang Wenbin, the spokesperson, said this at a regular briefing while replying to a question about PM's recent remarks about the US sanctions and her comment that Bangladesh should stop buying from countries that impose sanctions.

"We have noted the recent remarks by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Indeed, while turning a blind eye to its own racial discrimination, gun violence and drug proliferation problems,

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JASMINE'S DEATH IN CUSTODY It tarnished the image of country, govt, Rab

Rab DG tells JS body

RASHIDUL HASAN

Rab Director General M Khurshid Hossain has said Jasmine's "murder" in Naogaon has tarnished the image of the country, the government and the force.

He also said "the thing was done from the (local) camp; the battalion or the headquarters knew nothing about it".

The minutes of a meeting of the parliamentary standing committee on the home ministry quote the Rab chief as making the remarks.

The meeting was held on April 4, and its minutes were approved at another meeting of the JS body yesterday.

According to the meeting minutes, the Rab DG said, "The organisation [Rab] will not bear the responsibility of any person, regardless of who committed the crime in this incident. The government will not take any responsibility. Appropriate legal action will be taken no matter who the culprits are."

The Daily Star has a copy of the minutes.

Sultana Jasmine, 38, a land office employee in Naogaon, died at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) on March 24 while in Rab custody.

Rab officers told the doctors that Jasmine had suffered a fall.

Rab-5 picked her up on March 22 when she was on her way to Chandipur Union Land Office where she was an office assistant.

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Help ensure free, fair polls in Bangladesh

6 US Congress members write to Blinken

STAR REPORT

Six members of US Congress have written to Secretary of State Antony J Blinken, asking to know what steps the US government is taking to help ensure free and fair national elections in Bangladesh.

In the letter, they expressed concern about the "deterioration of human rights" in Bangladesh as elections approach in January 2024.

"We urge the State Department and other US agencies to continue to call for accountability for serious violations committed by law enforcement agencies, including the recently sanctioned Rapid Action Battalion, a paramilitary unit of the Bangladesh Police created in 2004," the letter reads.

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'LETTING JAMAAT RETURN' Will be suicidal for the nation

Say freedom fighters, families of martyrs, war crimes researchers

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The government's decision to allow Jamaat-e-Islami back in active politics, instead of bringing it to book for its 1971 role, will be suicidal for the ruling Awami League and above all, the country, said freedom fighters, families of the martyrs and war crimes researchers.

The government is abandoning the spirit of the Liberation War by taking such a decision just to stay in power, they alleged.

These observations came against the backdrop of Jamaat holding a rally in the capital after a decade with permission from the police. The party's previous public rally was held in February 2013 following the first verdict by a war crimes tribunal.

Jamaat's registration as a political party was declared illegal by the High Court in 2013 and the Election Commission cancelled its registration in October 2018.

Families of the Liberation War martyrs and war crimes trial campaigners have long been demanding Jamaat be tried as a party for committing crimes against humanity in 1971. Even the war crimes investigators found proof against the party and recommend that charges be pressed against it.

Law Minister Anisul Huq on many occasions had said that the government would amend the International Crimes (tribunals) Act-1973 to try

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BNP to go for one-point movement from July

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLA

The BNP plans to go for a one-point movement from next month demanding resignation of the government and national election under a non-partisan interim administration.

The opposition party will make an announcement in this regard from a public rally in the capital next month, said party sources.

The BNP standing committee, the party's policy-making body, in a meeting on Monday prepared a draft on the one-point movement.

BNP leaders said the final decision on the timing of the announcement and the movement programmes will be made on Friday after another meeting of the standing committee.

The party on Wednesday held meetings with its partners in the anti-government movement.

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Workers unloading cattle from a truck at the capital's Gabtoli cattle market yesterday. With the Eid-ul-Azha only about two weeks away, the supply of sacrificial animals to the city's biggest permanent cattle market is growing.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

CRIMINOLOGY DEPT AT DU Dogged by irregularities

Students write to VC, get 'threatened by teachers'

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and SIRAJUL ISLAM RUBEL

The Criminology Department of Dhaka University is apparently plagued by so many irregularities that students wrote to the vice-chancellor and even pleaded before the High Court for remedy.

The students alleged that the teachers do not hold the required number of classes, deliberately delay publishing sessional marks, and fail to submit evaluated answer scripts on time, resulting in the delay of results publication and graduation.

They alleged that some teachers indulge in favouritism while giving grades.

Two letters, one anonymously, were sent to the VC and pro-VC but they got no solution to their problems.

Rather, their letters resulted in the criminology department forming two committees, comprised of teachers the students have complaints against, to probe who wrote the anonymous letter and why four students bypassed the department and reached out to the pro-VC.

Those who wrote one of the letters have now alleged that they have been threatened with consequences by the teachers.

The anonymous letter to Pro-VC Prof ASM Maksud Kamal in December brought a slew of allegations against the teachers. The Daily Star spoke to eight students who said that the letter spoke the truth.

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Invest in social justice to build just societies across globe

PM urges international community at World of Work Summit in Geneva

UNB, Geneva

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged the international community to invest in social justice in order to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies across the world.

“We can achieve lasting peace and sustainable development on the foundation of social justice. We must invest in social justice in our efforts to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies worldwide,” she said.

The premier was addressing the plenary session of the two-day “World of Work Summit: Social Justice for All” in Geneva, which is a high-level forum for global voices to address the need for increased, coordinated and coherent action in support of social justice.

The ILO’s summit has brought together over a dozen heads of state and government, high-level representatives from the United Nations, other international organisations, and employers’ and workers’ organisations.

Hasina said Bangladesh continues to play a leading role in ensuring safe, orderly and regular migration.

“We urge the international community to pay heed to climate change impacts on human mobility and overall work environment,” she said in her speech delivered in Bengali.

The PM said this summit, with the launch of the Global Coalition, has created an opportunity to place social justice at the heart of all international development agenda, including SDGs.

“Our government will actively consider joining the Global Coalition through further discussions with our social partners at the national level,” she said.

In this context, she placed a five-point suggestion for the Global Coalition.



BNP leaders and activists at a rally in Chattogram city’s Kazir Dewri area yesterday. Party Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir addressed the programme titled “Youth rally for saving the country”. Jubo Dal and Swechchhasebak Dal of Chattogram organised the event. Story on page 5.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

PALESTINE-ISRAEL TENSIONS China willing to help foster peacemaking

Xi tells Palestinian leader in Beijing

REUTERS, Beijing

China is willing to play a positive role to help the Palestinians achieve internal reconciliation and promote peace talks with Israel, Chinese President Xi Jinping told his Palestinian counterpart in Beijing yesterday.

“The fundamental solution to the Palestinian issue lies in the establishment of an independent Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital,” Xi said, according to Chinese state media.

Palestinians seek statehood in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem, territories occupied by Israel in the 1967 Middle East war. Israel withdrew soldiers and settlers from Gaza in 2005 but continues to expand settlements in the West Bank and calls Jerusalem its eternal, indivisible capital.

Peace talks that were brokered by the United States collapsed in 2014, with no revival on the horizon.

“We have always firmly supported the just cause of the Palestinian people to restore their legitimate national rights,” Xi told Abbas at a welcoming ceremony at Beijing’s Great Hall of the People.

Xi and Abbas also announced the two

sides had agreed to establish a strategic partnership and signed a number of bilateral cooperation documents.

Those include an economic and technological cooperation pact, a deal on mutual visa exemption for diplomatic passports, and a friendship between the Chinese city of Wuhan and Ramallah, seat of the Palestinian government in the occupied West Bank.

China has had historically good ties with the Palestinians and since Abbas’ last visit in 2017 has consistently talked up its capabilities in mediation, although with little to show in this regard until it brokered a surprise deal between Iran and Saudi Arabia to restore diplomatic relations in March.

Abbas is in Beijing on a three-day visit in which he hoped to demonstrate Chinese support for a Palestinian state, after failing to meet with US officials while in New York for the United Nations General Assembly last year.

Xi reiterated Chinese support for the Palestinian Authority becoming a full member of the United Nations and said Beijing would continue to stand up for the Palestinian side in multilateral forums, state media reported.

Bangladesh may join BRICS in August: Momen

UNB, Geneva

Bangladesh is likely to become a member of the BRICS alliance in August this year, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen said yesterday.

He said this while briefing reporters about the outcome of the meeting between Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and South African President Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa at the Bilateral Meeting Room of Palais de Nations in Geneva.

“Their conference will be held in August in South Africa and the prime minister would go there,” he said.

BRICS now has five members—Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa.

In the future, they will add eight more countries as members.

They have invited Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Indonesia.

“This will be another area of our financing. It will be good for us, as we need money,” he said.

The prime minister requested that South Africa open a mission in Bangladesh to enhance bilateral cooperation.

Earlier, the President of Malta, Dr George Vella, also called on the prime minister at the same venue.

\$1.03b WB project to boost national income by 16pc

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to India could increase by 182 percent from the current levels if the countries implement a free trade agreement.

Improving transport connectivity between the two countries could increase exports even further, yielding a 297 percent increase in Bangladesh’s exports to India.

“The economic benefits from removing all border frictions on the movement of trucks between countries would be vast,” Chen said.

The WB estimates that full transport integration between Bangladesh and India, where exports and imports would be cleared at the destination, could lead to an increase in national income by over 16 percent in Bangladesh, contributing to job creation and poverty reduction, he added.

The \$753.45 million given to Bangladesh will go towards projects to be implemented by the Bangladesh Land Port Authority, the National Board of Revenue and the Road and Highways Department for completion by 2029.

One of the components involves upgrading the 43-kilometre two-lane Sylhet Charkai Sheola road to a climate-resilient four-lane road,

connecting the Sheola land port with the Dhaka Sylhet Highway and in so doing, cutting down the travel time by 30 percent.

The programme will support digital systems, infrastructure and more streamlined processes at Benapole, Bhomra, and Burimari land ports, the three largest land ports in Bangladesh handling approximately 80 percent of land-based trade.

There is little communication (electronic or otherwise) between the customs and the Bangladesh Land Port Authority on what goods are present at any given time at the land ports.

Arriving goods for import are normally discharged from trucks and unless they are perishable, are stored in warehouses under the jurisdiction of the BLPA before customs clearance begins.

This has created a system of “border men” that collect documents from truck drivers on the Indian side of the border before arrival and “proxy” customs and freight (C&F) agents standing in line to ensure that the slot is kept while the C&F agents interact with the NBR or other government agencies elsewhere.

Such human facilitation highlights

the need for improved processes, which the project will address.

The project will support the development and improvement of IT-enabled services for trade, to reduce touch points and human interaction, enhance transparency and reduce congestion and truck idling, resulting in faster border clearance time and greater cargo throughput.

Electronic tracking of truck entry and exit, electronic queuing and smart parking would be installed.

It will also support the modernisation of the Chattogram customs house, which handles 90 percent of all import/export declarations in Bangladesh and services more than 45,700 unique traders per year.

The rapidly growing trade volumes have overburdened the Custom House, Chattogram, which was initially constructed in 1920.

Subsequently, the project will entail constructing a state-of-the-art green-building certified, resilient Custom House Chattogram with enhanced capacity to process rapidly growing trade volumes with required infrastructure, collaborative laboratory and other facilities including facilities for women.

It tarnished the image of country, govt, Rab

FROM PAGE 1

A day after her detention, she was sued under the Digital Security Act in Rajshahi “for syphoning off money from job seekers using a Facebook account”.

Her son Shahed Hossain Saikat, a student of Chattogram University, had then said, “She died due to torture in Rab custody. She has an injury mark on her head.” Family members had also said she was in perfect health.

RMCH Director Brig Gen FM Shamiim Ahmed had said Jasmine was brought in by a Rab team in a critical condition. A CT scan found multiple intracranial bleeds in her head.

Enamul Haque, the local government director of Rajshahi divisional commissioner’s office, filed a DSA case with Rajpara Police Station in Rajshahi city against Jasmine.

The case was recorded more than 31 hours after Jasmine had been picked up by Rab and when she was unresponsive

in a hospital bed.

Enamul alleged that he had been receiving complaints from people who were defrauded through his Facebook account, which was hacked in 2017. This continued when he was serving in Natore, Chapainawabganj, and Rajshahi.

He said he filed general diaries with police stations in Natore and Chapainawabganj. After joining Rajshahi divisional office in November last year, he sought Rab’s help after receiving similar complaints.

According to the meeting minutes, Rab DG M Khurshid Hossain said, “The joint secretary [Enamul Haque] whose name came up his Facebook ID was used to harass him. Two years ago, he filed two general diaries against the woman [Jasmine].”

At that, Awami League lawmaker Benajir Ahmed, chairman of the committee, said it’s already an embarrassing situation because of the

sanctions imposed on Rab.

“If two GDs had been filed before, they should have been resolved. If everyone had carried out their respective duties at the right time, no problems would have arisen,” he added.

The committee chief advised everyone to be more responsible.

After the discussion, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal said appropriate measures will be taken regarding the Naogaon incident.

Gonoforum lawmaker Sultan Mohammad Mansur, also a member of the JS watchdog, told the meeting that the issue of Jasmine Sultana is very embarrassing.

Referring to Jasmine’s death, Jatiya Party MP Pir Fazlur Rahman, another member of the committee, said, “Rab’s senior officials may be sincere but excesses are seen at the field level. How could this happen? Such incidents are overshadowing many of the

government’s achievements.”

Contacted, Rab DG M Khurshid Hossain said he would not make any comments and advised this correspondent to talk to the director of the Rab’s legal and media wing.

Commander Khandaker Al Moin, director of the legal and media wing, said a high-powered committee is investigating the incident on instructions from the High Court.

The committee will probe whether anyone in Rab was involved in this incident. And the court will give instructions about the next course of action.

“We have no scope to comment on this matter at this stage of investigation,” he also said.

Asked about the comments of the Rab DG as were in the meeting minutes, he said the “officer who has noted down the comments might have made a mistake”.

Will be suicidal for the nation

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parties but neither the act has been amended nor the charges have been pressed so far.

Shahriar Kabir, president of Ekattorer Ghatik Dal Nirmul Committee, said Jamaat must be banned, otherwise Bangladesh will be destroyed and eventually be turned into Afghanistan.

“The government’s policymakers and the Awami League have to realise this,” he told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said the US government considers Jamaat as a moderate Islamist party. “The government might have allowed Jamaat to hold the programme after coming under pressure from the US.”

“Allowing Jamaat to conduct political activities will be suicidal not only for the Awami League and the government, but also for the country,” he observed.

Shahriar said Jamaat was involved in the 1971 genocide and was subsequently banned after the Liberation War. The international crimes tribunals in several verdicts also held the party responsible for the atrocities.

War crimes researcher Mofidul Hoque said different verdicts by war crimes tribunals had observations regarding Jamaat’s criminal role in 1971.

Keeping the issue of trying Jamaat pending for a long time has created a crisis again, he told this newspaper.

“Trial of Jamaat as a party is not a political issue, it is rather a legal, moral, ethical and historical issue. So, Jamaat should be brought to justice immediately,” said Mofidul, also a trustee of the Liberation War Museum.

He demanded the government make necessary amendments to the

International Crimes (Tribunals) Act immediately for holding trial of organisations.

Asif Munier, president of Projonmo ‘71, a platform of children of the martyrs of Liberation War, said, “Our organisation has a clear stance – no person or party involved in the killing of our fathers [intellectuals] would be allowed to hold state power.”

Allowing Jamaat to hold a programme is alarming for Projonmo ‘71 and it will continue protesting against such a move, said Asif, son of martyred intellectual Prof Munier Chowdhury.

Communist Party of Bangladesh President Shah Alam said the government’s approval for Jamaat’s political programme was not suitable for the political party that led the Liberation War.

He alleged that the activities of the government proved that it was trying to ensure the participation of the anti-Liberation War forces in the next general election.

“People of the country is not taking this move cordially. It is like abandoning the spirit of Liberation War,” said Shah Alam, also a valiant freedom fighter.

Asked about the allegation that the AL was improving its ties with Jamaat to put pressure on the BNP, AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader said the BNP has brought them to the field.

“Because they won’t join the general election, but would resort to violence. The Jamaat is the BNP’s ally in violence,” he told reporters after attending a programme at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre yesterday.

China lauds Hasina’s remarks

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a certain country has long been interfering in the internal affairs of Bangladesh and many other developing countries under the pretext of democracy and human rights,” he said.

Wang Wenbin further said China and Bangladesh have been traditionally friendly neighbours and that China firmly supports Bangladesh in “safeguarding its sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, upholding independent domestic

Plant 10 trees for each one you chop down: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday said 10 trees must be planted for every tree cut.

“In public interest, a few trees can be felled after receiving permission from the authorities. But new trees must be planted to substitute the felled ones. Trees cannot be cut in wholesale in any situation,” said the HC bench of Justice Abu Taher Md Saifur Rahman and Justice AKM Rabiul Hassan.

The bench made the statement while hearing a suomoto rule over the incident of felling 30 palm trees Patuakhali’s Kolapara for constructing a road.

The court said this to Md Mamunur Rashid, project director of Climate Tolerance Rural Infrastructure who appeared before the bench in compliance with its earlier directive.

1.15 lakh yaba pills seized from minibus

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox’s Bazar

The Department of Narcotics Control seized 1,15,000 pieces of yaba pills from a minibus in Cox’s Bazar early yesterday.

The minibus was rented out to an international NGO, which worked at the Rohingya refugee camps, said DNC’s Teknaf (special zone) unit Assistant Director Md Sirajul Mostafa.

Driver Md Sahed, 20, who is an employee of the rental company, was detained on his way back to Cox’s Bazar when DNC officials conducted a drive in Teknaf’s Kekepara area.

A case was filed with Teknaf Police Station in this connection, the official added.

Two killed in Dhaka, Jashore road crashes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least two people died in road accidents in Dhaka and Jashore yesterday.

In Dhaka, a rickshaw puller was killed after a lorry hit his three-wheeler in Jatrabari area.

Al Amin, 21, lived in Narayanganj’s Siddhirganj upazila.

He died on the spot after the lorry hit the battery-run rickshaw around 1:30am at Chourasta area, said Mofizul Alam, officer-in-charge of Jatrabari Police Station.

Police seized the lorry and detained its driver, he added.

In Jashore, a trader was killed and another seriously injured when a truck overturned onto a roadside tea stall.

The deceased Nazir Ahmed, 53, was a shopkeeper. The injured was identified as Indro, 34, said Nawapara Highway Police OC Hamid Uddin.

The OC said a truck was heading towards Khulna from Benapole. When the truck reached the Chanchra Bablatala area, the driver lost control of the vehicle while trying to avoid hitting a three-wheeler, and the truck overturned and fell onto the tea stall.

The truck was seized but its driver managed to flee.

[Our correspondent from Jashore contributed to the report]

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Govt working to make polls free and fair

Hasina tells JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The present government has taken necessary measures, including full support to the Election Commission to make the upcoming national elections transparent, fearless and acceptable to all, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina told the parliament yesterday.

“Our government is determined to make the national elections free, fair and impartial. No election held during our government’s tenure has been put in question. We have set a high standard in organising elections,” said the premier.

Hasina said this in reply to a tabled question from the ruling Awami League lawmaker Kazim Uddin from Mymensingh-II.

In his question, the AL MP wanted to know whether the government has taken any special steps to make the upcoming national elections fair and free.

With Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury in the chair, the question-answer session of the premier, who is currently visiting Switzerland, was tabled.

Hasina in her written reply outlined various measures and pledged for

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at a meeting with President of the Swiss Confederation Alain Berset at Palais des Nations in Geneva yesterday. At the meeting, Hasina urged Berset to encourage his country's businesses to invest more in Bangladesh taking advantage of new opportunities. Afterwards, the two countries signed a memorandum of understanding to enhance skills training capacity and knowledge sharing partnership. The deal -- Knowledge Partnership and Skill Enhancement -- seeks to widen opportunities in Bangladesh to export skilled manpower, specifically from medical and IT sectors to Switzerland. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and President Alain Berset were present at the signing ceremony.

PHOTO: PID

Animal waste to be cleaned on Eid day

Says LGRD minister; sacrifice must be in designated spots

UNB, Dhaka

Like previous years, animal waste will be removed by the evening on Eid day, said Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives Minister Md Tazul Islam yesterday.

Besides, animals will have to be sacrificed at designated places, he said while speaking at a meeting at the conference room of the Local Government Division at the Secretariat.

Efforts have been made to ensure that there will be no pollution from sacrificial animal waste, the minister added.

He also said building owners in all city corporations and municipalities will get a 10 percent rebate on the holding tax for rooftop gardening.

“The decision has been taken to bring down the temperature,” said the minister.

At the meeting, mayors of Dhaka city corporations, Barishal and Sylhet were present.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court yesterday cleared the way for Dhaka North City Corporation to set up cattle markets at Aftabnagar in Dhaka ahead of upcoming Eid-ul Azha.

Bodies of woman, daughter recovered

Police recovered the bodies of a woman and her 10-year-old daughter from Dhaka's Badda area early yesterday.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The deceased are Mahmuda Haque Bristy, 33, and her daughter Sanja Marwa, 10.

Law enforcers recovered the bodies from Badda's Farazy Hospital around 3:00am and sent them to Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy, said Sadek Mia, sub-inspector of Badda Police Station.

They also detained Bristy's husband Md Selim, 40, from the hospital after the victims' relatives accused him of killing the two.

Selim and other relatives took the bodies to Farazy Hospital, the SI added.

Sohel Sikder, Bristy's uncle, said Selim called her family members around 2:00am and said his wife and daughter drank poison at their Merul Badda house.

“I rushed there and found them lying unconscious. Selim was in the room and neighbours were taking care of their nine-month-old son,” he said. Soheli alleged that the relationship between the couple turned sour following Selim's extramarital affairs.

Release all DSA arrestees including Khadija before Eid

Demand 30 socio-cultural organisations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

More than 30 social and cultural organisations have issued a joint statement demanding the immediate release of all people arrested and detained under the controversial Digital Security Act (DSA), including Khadijatul Kubra, a second-year student of political science at Jagannath University.

The statement was issued under the banner of

Khadijatul Kubra, 17, has been in jail for the past eight months since the charge sheet was submitted and her repeated requests for bail have been denied.

“Protesting Socio-Cultural Organisations”, and signed by Kankan Nag, secretary of the publicity and information technology division of Bangladesh Udichi Shilpigoshiti.

The statement termed the DSA an anti-people and oppressive law and called for its immediate abolishment. It also highlighted the case of 17-year-old Khadijatul, who was charged under the DSA in 2020. Despite being a minor, the police registered the case by falsely presenting her as an adult.

She has been in jail for the past eight months since the charge sheet was submitted and her repeated requests for bail have been denied due to the objections of the state.

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A step towards alleviating poverty

MJF launches UNDP, EU-funded project in CHT



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) yesterday launched the “Partnership for Resilient Livelihoods in the Chattogram Hill Tracts (CHT) Region” project, aiming to alleviate poverty and enhance the lives of extremely low-income households in the area.

As many as 98,000 people in Rangamati, Bandarban and Khagrachhari will directly be benefitted from the project, funded by the European Union and technical support from UNDP Bangladesh.

Around 52 percent of CHT's population lives below the poverty line, while the national rate is 18.7 percent.

The EU has donated a budget of EUR 8 million (USD 8.65 million) for the 2023-26 project, which will work under three components, including resilient livelihoods, nutrition, and social protection and advocacy, according to MJF officials.

During her opening speech, Shaheen Anam, MJF executive director, underscored the significance of the project in addressing the escalating poverty, child malnutrition and drinkable water crisis in the CHT region.

“In this context, the PRLC project will play a vital role. But we all have to work with integrity to achieve our goals,” she said.

Speaking as chief guest, Bir Bahadur U Shwe Sing, minister of CHT affairs, said, “The government is dedicatedly working in CHT to alleviate poverty and improve livelihoods. We deeply appreciate our development partners working alongside

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‘Budget must be more pro-women’

Mahila Parishad calls for more allocation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Preventing child marriage and girl dropouts, which necessitate more investments, received little attention in this year's budget, said speakers at a press conference yesterday.

In addition, they advocated for the establishment of a monitoring and implementation system as well as an inspection during the implementation of the gender budget, so that the budgetary allocations could be evaluated annually.

“Social norms continue to exclude women, and gender budgets are insufficient to accelerate women's independence. Funding should be increased for initiatives that promote the advancement of women.”

DR FAUZIA MOSLEM
President of Mahila Parishad

The event titled “Gender sensitivity of the announced national budget” was organised by Bangladesh Mahila Parishad at the capital's Jatiya Press Club.

Maleka Banu, general secretary of BMP, said, “The gender budget does not include significant funding for women. This year, the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs retains only 0.6 percent of the total gender budget. The allocated funds should be used to reduce the inequality

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Bapa gets new leadership

Paribesh Andolon elected their new acting president and general secretary in its 152nd meeting yesterday.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

They were elected in a meeting convened to decide the next course of action after resignation of Sultana Kamal, former president, and Sharif Jamil, former general secretary of Bapa.

Prof Nur Mohammad Talukdar was elected acting president and Alamgir Kabir the acting general secretary.



Two pedestrians call out a biker after he hops onto a walkway with his motorbike to avoid being stuck in traffic near the Banglamotor signal. This scenario has become quite common in the capital due to significant increase in the number of bikes. This photo was taken yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

DENGUE FEVER

1 dead, 201 hospitalised

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

One more dengue patient died while 201 others were hospitalised in the 24 hours till yesterday morning.

So far, 28 people have died from dengue this year, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

With the new cases, the total number of cases rose to 3,802. According to the DGHS, 806 dengue patients are still undergoing treatment at different hospitals.

Total number of deaths in dengue was 281 last year while the total number of cases was 62,382, of which 23,162 were from outside Dhaka, DGHS data shows.



BATTLING CHILD LABOUR

Govt, civil society need to collaborate

Speakers tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The lack of effective implementation of laws related to child rights is causing insufficient safeguarding for children engaged in work, said Aroma Dutta, vice chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on social welfare ministry, in a dialogue yesterday.

“To address this grave concern, both the government and civil society must collaborate to formulate a concrete plan of action,” she said at the dialogue jointly organised by Action for Social Development, Shapla Neer, and Educo Bangladesh in the capital.


Speakers said child domestic workers endure physical and emotional abuse, as they lack fixed working hours, nutritious food, proper medical support, and access to education.

Furthermore, they are denied their civil rights, exacerbating their vulnerability and perpetuating a cycle of exploitation.

Lawmaker Aroma Dutta called for compulsory primary education for these children to ensure

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

PRAYER
TIMING



JUNE 15

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

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

ATTACK ON IAB CHIEF IN BARISHAL Kuakata AL leader resigns in protest

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

In one of those instances when irony takes over the centre stage in the realm of politics, a Patuakhali Awami League leader yesterday resigned for an attack, allegedly carried out by fellow party activists on mayoral candidate and chief of Islami Andolan Bangladesh (IAB) Faizul Karim during the Barishal City polls on June 12.

Shah Alam Howladar, municipal Awami League organisational secretary, announced his resignation in a press conference held at Kuakata Press Club.

As a former councillor of Kuakata municipality and a resident of ward-3, Howladar had been an AL activist for three decades. "I was shocked at the recent attack on Mufti Muhammad Faizul Karim. I found the assault perpetrated by leaders and activists of Awami League deeply disturbing, leading me to question my



Shah Alam

continued association with the party," he said.

While Howladar's decision to part ways with the ruling party stems from his moral and religious convictions, it appears that there may be additional factors contributing to the saga.

Howladar expressed his displeasure with the actions of Abdul Berek Molla, current president of Kuakata municipal Awami League and former mayor of Kuakata municipality.

When asked about his future political affiliations, Howladar responded that no concrete decisions had been made yet.

Meanwhile, Abdul Berek Molla countered Howladar's claims by stating that no formal resignation letter has been submitted by him thus far.

"He (Howladar) had been increasingly involved with the Islamic movement in recent months. This implies a shift in his political priorities," he added.

Rain falls

FROM PAGE 5

the market (Raja Mansion) gets inundated due to the overflow of drains, and no one takes responsibility for addressing the situation," he said.

According to official documents, the city corporation had already spent Tk 313 crore on two projects by December 2019, aimed at resolving the persistent waterlogging problem. Additionally, a project with a budget of Tk 1,228 crore is currently underway and is expected to be completed by this December.

Anwaruzzaman Chowdhury, the Awami League mayoral candidate for the upcoming Sylhet city polls on June 21, criticised the lack of planning behind the city corporation's projects.

This reporter couldn't reach Mayor Ariful Haque Choudhury and SCC Chief Engineer Nur Azizur Rahman for comments despite repeated attempts.

Improve

FROM PAGE 5

and resources on the indifference of political leaders and government officials.

SK Moniruzzaman, director general of NGO Affairs Bureau at the Prime Minister's Office, also spoke at the event.

In another session, speakers emphasised the involvement of the private sector and media in disaster risk management. They stressed on coordination between the National Emergency Operation Center and the Private Sector Emergency Operation Center to ensure comprehensive disaster preparedness.

AM Nashir Uddin, consortium manager of ActionAid Bangladesh, presented the keynote at the event.

Mijanur Rahman, director general of the Department of Disaster Management, was also present, among others.

Budget must

FROM PAGE 3

between men and women through gender aware budgeting."

Therefore, the main concerns should be how the budget would eliminate gender discrimination, how women can be developed as an effective human resources in today's IT-based world, what role the gender sensitive budget will play in ending violence against women, she added.

Speakers also highlighted the fact that this year there are only 16 gender budget indicators, reducing the likelihood of addressing the situation of women in our country in depth.

Dr Fauzia Moslem, president of BMP, said, "A strong women's movement is required for women's

empowerment, equality, and the elimination of discrimination. The women's movement brought gender budgeting to light. Social norms continue to exclude women, and gender budgets are insufficient to accelerate women's independence. Funding should be increased for initiatives that promote the advancement of women."

In response to journalists' questions, the speakers said budget analysis is dependent on a few obvious indicators. The data offered in the gender budget needs to be examined internally. Efforts to alter general gender norms and make the curriculum gender-inclusive must be prioritised, they added.

Govt working

FROM PAGE 3

holding the next parliamentary polls in a free and fair manner.

"Whenever Awami League formed the government, fair, free and impartial elections were held. We provided all our assistance to the Election Commission for it to perform its duties independently," she said.

The premier said the EC is stronger than ever and is impartial and administratively and financially independent.

The EC will act independently following its constitutional obligations and shall do everything necessary to conduct fair polls, she said.

"We are inviting local, foreign observers to observe the polls. Anyone who wants to send an observer can do so," she said.

"Awami League believes in the people's mandate. The people will decide who will run the country. Our government is committed to ensuring people's power," she said.

"Our government will make all the necessary rules to fulfil the purpose of the Election Commission Act 2022 under the direction of the president," she added.

Hasina said, "All the national elections, by-elections have been completely impartial, free and fair. The Election Commission has completed these elections independently with full power."

"The controversial elections like the one held in 1996 during BNP's tenure have never happened during the Awami League government. It will never happen," she added.

They do not believe in spirit of Liberation War: SCBA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Those who formed a new alliance called "United Lawyers Front" don't believe in the spirit of Liberation War, said SCBA, which is dominated by pro-Awami League lawyers, yesterday.

A section of lawyers led by BNP leader Zainul Abedin and Gono Forum leader Subrata Chowdhury on June 12 formed a new platform of lawyers.

"The pro-BNP and Jamaat lawyers have formed a committee named United Lawyers Front... They want to create anarchy by being aligned with BNP," said SCBA secretary Md Abdun Nur Dulal at a press conference.

16 members of pickpocket gang held in Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police claimed to have arrested a gang of 16 pickpockets in the capital on Tuesday.

Of the arrestees, nine were women and seven men.

Deputy Commissioner Moshir Rahman, during a press conference held at the DMP media centre yesterday, disclosed the information.

He said Lalbagh division of the Detective Branch (DB) arrested them from Azimpur and Gulistan areas. Police also seized 40 cellphones from them.

Moshir said on April 17, the wife of an additional district judge lost her

phone while traveling by rickshaw from New Market to Eden Mohila College. Similarly, on May 2, the wife of a journalist found that mobile phone and cash were missing from her bag while she was taking her child to a school in Azimpur.

During investigation, the DB managed to recover the phones and also found out about the gang.

"They wore burqas and pretended to be unsuspecting individuals carrying small children in their laps," he added.

The stolen phones were sold for Tk 2,000 to Tk 4,000. The official said they are looking for the rest of the gang members.

Release all DSA

FROM PAGE 3

The statement questioned how the DSA is being applied to minors and asserted that the state should not be allowed to destroy the academic life of a student through such a draconian law.

The joint statement emphasises that not only Khadijatul but also numerous people across the country are currently incarcerated after being arrested under the DSA.

The organisations demanded their immediate release and contended that the DSA curtails the freedom of speech and expression of the people, which contradicts the fundamental principles of the Constitution.

Furthermore, the statement asserted that the DSA has become a tool to harass and suppress dissent from various segments of society, including media, teachers, students, and artists.

It denounced the draconian law, stating that they have no place in an independent sovereign state. "The government is guilty of using the undemocratic and restrictive DSA to suppress the voices of the press by arresting and intimidating journalists and free-thinkers from diverse backgrounds," it read.

The statement further alleged that under the pretext of protecting religious sentiments, communal forces are being sheltered while free-thinking and pro-scientific-minded people are subjected to arrest and harassment.

"These undemocratic laws and repressive measures run counter to the Declaration of Independence, equality, social justice, and human dignity. We demand the immediate abolishment of all restrictive laws, including the DSA," it added.

A step towards

FROM PAGE 3

the government to achieve our goals in the CHT region."

However, he emphasised the importance of efficiently utilising the funds by ensuring that the majority of the resources are directly allocated to the beneficiaries.

At the event, four beneficiaries of the UNDP's support in the past two decades described how their lives and livelihood were improved.

"It will help to implement the sustainable development goals," said Mashiur Rahman NDC, secretary of the ministry.

"We did not get the right price for our products due to the absence of any marketing system. UNDP has helped us overcome it," said Aklima Khanam, a beneficiary from Rangamati, while sharing her perspective.

Speaking as a special guest, Charles Whiteley, European Union ambassador to Bangladesh, said the project will have special attention

to livelihood promotion for the extremely poor, expansion of nutrition services, community mobilisation, and market development.

"Issues like gender equity, women empowerment, and disability inclusion will be the core of the project," he said.

Van Nguyen, deputy resident representative of UNDP Bangladesh, highlighted their collaboration with the Ministry of CHT Affairs for the capacity building of CHT institutions and communities during the last two decades.

"The EU was one of the major contributors to UNDP's project funding in the region," she said.

"The project will work very closely with the ministry, CHT Regional Council, and Hill District Councils... We hope that the project will be able to make a positive change in the CHT," she added.

The event was presided over by Nirupa Dewan, MJF's governing board member.

Govt, civil


FROM PAGE 3

their holistic development and brighter prospects.

During the welcome speech, Tomoko Uchiyama, country director of Shapla Neer, highlighted the alarming reality of children as young as 5 to 10 years old engaged in domestic work, despite it being strictly prohibited for children below 14. She called for collective action from the government, media, and private organisations to eradicate child labour.

Addressing the event, Shamsul Haque Tuku, chairman of the Parliamentary Caucus on Child Rights, said comprehensive efforts should be made to protect children in all sectors.

MA Karim, executive director of Action for Social Development, drew attention to the critical importance of implementing effective policies for the protection of children.



বাংলাদেশ ফার্মেসী কাউন্সিল

রাহাত টাওয়ার (৫ম তলা), ১৪ শিংক রোড, পশ্চিম বাংলারমিটার, ঢাকা

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স্মারক নং: পিসিবি/২০২৩-৬১৮০

তারিখ: ১৪ জুন ২০২৩ খ্রিস্টাব্দ

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বাংলাদেশ ফার্মেসী কাউন্সিলের স্থায়ী শূন্য পদের বিপরীতে জাতীয় বেতনস্কেল, ২০১৫ অনুসারে নিম্নোক্ত বেতন স্কেলে সরাসরি জনবল নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে পদের পার্শ্বে বর্ণিত শর্তে বাংলাদেশের প্রকৃত নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে আবেদনপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

ক্রমিক নং	পদের নাম	পদের সংখ্যা	জাতীয় বেতনস্কেল	শিক্ষণত যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা
১।	সহকারী পরিচালক	০৪	৯ম স্কেল	(ক) কোন বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে ব্যালেন্স অব ফার্মেসিতে (বি. ফার্ম) অন্যান্য দ্বিতীয় শ্রেণি বা সমমানের সিজিপিএ-গ্রাড এবং (খ) বাংলাদেশ ফার্মেসী কাউন্সিল হতে 'এ' ক্যাটাগরিতে রেজিস্ট্রেশনপ্রাপ্ত।
২।	সহকারী নিবন্ধক	০১	৯ম স্কেল	(ক) কোন বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে ব্যালেন্স অব ফার্মেসিতে (বি. ফার্ম) অন্যান্য দ্বিতীয় শ্রেণি বা সমমানের সিজিপিএ-গ্রাড এবং (খ) বাংলাদেশ ফার্মেসী কাউন্সিল হতে 'এ' ক্যাটাগরিতে রেজিস্ট্রেশনপ্রাপ্ত।
৩।	সহকারী পরীক্ষা নিবন্ধক	০১	৯ম স্কেল	(ক) কোন বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে ব্যালেন্স অব ফার্মেসিতে (বি. ফার্ম) অন্যান্য দ্বিতীয় শ্রেণি বা সমমানের সিজিপিএ-গ্রাড এবং (খ) বাংলাদেশ ফার্মেসী কাউন্সিল হতে 'এ' ক্যাটাগরিতে রেজিস্ট্রেশনপ্রাপ্ত।
৪।	সহকারী পরিচালক (অতিরিক্ত)	০১	৯ম স্কেল	(ক) কোন বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে ব্যালেন্স অব ফার্মেসিতে (বি. ফার্ম) অন্যান্য দ্বিতীয় শ্রেণি বা সমমানের সিজিপিএ-গ্রাড এবং (খ) প্রোগ্রামিং-এর জন্য অবশ্যই Standard Aptitude Test (SAT) এ উত্তীর্ণ হতে হবে এবং (গ) যে কোন বীকৃত পেশাভিত্তিক কম্পিউটার সোসাইটির সহযোগী সদস্য (Associate Membership) হতে হবে।
৫।	অতিরিক্ত কর্মকর্তা	০৩	১০ম স্কেল	(ক) কোন বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে কম্পিউটার সায়েন্স/কম্পিউটার সায়েন্স এন্ড ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং/ইনফরমেশন এন্ড কমিউনিকেশন টেকনোলজি বিষয়ে অন্যান্য ২য় শ্রেণি বা সমমানের সিজিপিএ-সহ ০৪ (চার) বছর মেয়াদী ডিপ্লোমা এবং (খ) সফলভাবে Standard Aptitude Test (SAT) এ উত্তীর্ণ হতে হবে।
৬।	উচ্চমান সহকারী কাম-ক্যাশিয়ার	০১	১৩তম স্কেল	(ক) কোন বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে বাণিজ্য শাস্ত্র অন্যান্য ২য় শ্রেণী বা সমমানের সিজিপিএ-তে স্নাতক (সম্মান) বা সমমানের ডিগ্রি (খ) হিসাবরক্ষণ কাজে অন্তত ০৩ (তিন) বছরের বাস্তব অভিজ্ঞতা এবং (গ) কম্পিউটার প্রশিক্ষণপ্রাপ্ত।
৭।	অফিস সহকারী কাম-কম্পিউটার অপারেটর	০৩	১৬তম স্কেল	(ক) কোন বীকৃত বোর্ড হতে উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক বা সমমান পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ এবং (খ) কম্পিউটার কম্পোজের গতি সর্বনিম্ন প্রতি মিনিটে বাংলায় ২০ ও ইংরেজিতে ২০ শব্দ থাকতে হবে।
৮।	ডেসপল সহকারী	০১	১৯তম স্কেল	(ক) কোন বীকৃত বোর্ড হতে মাধ্যমিক বা সমমান পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ এবং (খ) বৈধ ড্রাইভিং লাইসেন্সসহ মটরসাইকেল চালানার অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে।
৯।	অফিস সহায়ক	০৩	২০তম স্কেল	(ক) কোন বীকৃত বোর্ড হতে মাধ্যমিক বা সমমান পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ।

শর্তাবলি

আবেদন ফরম পূরণ এবং পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের ক্ষেত্রে নিম্নবর্ণিত শর্তাবলি অবশ্যই অনুসরণ করতে হবে:

- প্রার্থী বাংলাদেশী (১৫.০৬.২০২৩ তারিখে)
- সামান্য প্রার্থীর বয়সসীমা ১৮-৩০ বছর।
- ৩য় মুক্তিযোদ্ধা ও শরণার্থী মুক্তিযোদ্ধার পুত্র-কন্যার এবং শারীরিক প্রতিবন্ধীদের ক্ষেত্রে বয়সসীমা ১৮-৩২ বছর।
- বয়স গ্রহণের ক্ষেত্রে কোন প্রকার অধিভুক্তি গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে না।
- সকল পদের জন্য লিখিত, বাস্তবিক (ক্রমিক নং ৪, ৫ ও ৭ এ বর্ণিত পদের জন্য প্রযোজ্য) ও মৌখিক পরীক্ষা গ্রহণ করা হবে। লিখিত ও বাস্তবিক পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ প্রার্থীরাই কেবল মৌখিক পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের যোগ্য বলে বিবেচিত হবেন।
- প্রার্থীর যোগ্যতা যাচাই:
 - লিখিত/মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় ছবিযুক্ত মূল প্রবেশপত্র সাথে আনতে হবে।
 - মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় সকল সনদ/প্রত্যয়ন/অনাপত্তিপত্রের মূল কপি প্রদর্শন করতে হবে।
 - সংশ্লিষ্ট জেলায় স্থায়ী বাসিন্দা হিসেবে ইউনিয়ন পরিষদ/পৌরসভা/সিটি কর্পোরেশন কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত সনদ দাখিল করতে হবে।
 - কাজের পরিচয়পত্র/অন্য সনদের সত্যায়িত কপি দাখিল করতে হবে।
 - প্রার্থী প্রার্থীর প্রার্থীর কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত চারিত্রিক সনদপত্র দাখিল করতে হবে।
 - দেওয়ার আবেদনকারী প্রার্থীদের যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের নিকট হতে সনদ/প্রত্যয়ন/অনাপত্তিপত্র দাখিল করতে হবে।
 - বিভাগীয় ও সরকারি, আধা-সরকারি ও স্বায়ত্তশাসিত প্রতিষ্ঠানে চাকরিতে প্রার্থীকে মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় সংশ্লিষ্ট কর্তৃপক্ষের অনাপত্তিপত্রের মূল কপি প্রদর্শন করতে হবে।
- প্রার্থী কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত কোন তথ্য বা দাবিকৃত কাগজপত্র জাল, মিথ্যা বা বিভ্রান্তি উপস্থিতি ন্যূনতম যোগ্যতার সাথে অসমাপ্তস্বত্ব তথ্য প্রদান করলে কিংবা পরীক্ষার নকল বা অসদুপায় অবলম্বন করলে সংশ্লিষ্ট প্রার্থীর প্রার্থীতা বাতিল করা হবে এবং তার বিরুদ্ধে যথাযথ আইনানুগ ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হবে। জাল তথ্য/জাল কাগজপত্র প্রদর্শিত হলে পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ যে কোন প্রার্থীর প্রার্থীতা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করেন।
- সরকারি, আধা-সরকারি ও স্বায়ত্তশাসিত প্রতিষ্ঠানে কর্মরত প্রার্থীদের অবশ্যই যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের অনুমতিক্রমে আবেদন করতে হবে। সকল চাকরিতে প্রার্থীকে মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় নিয়োগকারী কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত অনাপত্তিপত্রের মূল কপি জমা দিতে হবে। এক্ষেত্রে কোন অসমাপ্ত কপি গ্রহণ করা হবে না।
- অসত্য/ভ্রান্তিপূর্ণ/অসম্পূর্ণ আবেদনপত্র কোন কারণ দর্শনা ব্যতিরেকে বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে। প্রার্থী কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত কোন তথ্য, নিয়োগ কার্যক্রমে যে কোন পর্বেতে বা নিয়োগদানের পরেও অসত্য/ভ্রান্তিপূর্ণ প্রমাণিত হলে আবেদনপত্র নির্বাচন বা নিয়োগ সরাসরি বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে।
- আবেদনপত্র গ্রহণ ও বাতিল করার ক্ষেত্রে কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্তই চূড়ান্ত বলে গণ্য হবে।
- নিয়োগকারী কর্তৃপক্ষ বিভাগে উপস্থিতি পদের সংখ্যা/প্রাপ্তি, বিভাগে বর্ণিত শর্ত কোন শর্ত বা অনুচ্ছেদ সংশোধন/পরিবর্তন/পরিমার্জন বা নিয়োগ প্রদানের সিদ্ধান্ত বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।
- নিয়োগের জন্য প্রার্থী নির্বাচনের ক্ষেত্রে লিখিত, বাস্তবিক (প্রযোজ্য ক্ষেত্রে) ও মৌখিক পরীক্ষা অন্তর্ভুক্ত হবে। কেবল লিখিত ও বাস্তবিক (প্রযোজ্য ক্ষেত্রে) পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ প্রার্থীরাই মৌখিক পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের জন্য বিবেচিত হবেন।
- নিয়োগের ক্ষেত্রে কাউন্সিলের বিনামূল্যে সকল বিধি-বিধান এবং পরবর্তীতে প্রকৃতসকল বিধি-বিধান কোনরূপ সংশোধন হলে তা অনুসরণ করা হবে।
- যে কোন তদবির প্রার্থীর যোগ্যতা বলে বিবেচিত হবে। কোন প্রার্থী তথ্য গোপন করে চাকরি গ্রহণ করলে নিয়োগপত্র বাতিলসহ তার বিরুদ্ধে আইনানুগ ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হবে।
- আবেদনপত্রের সাথে ১-৪ নং ক্রমিকের পদের জন্য ৬০০/- (ছয়শত) টাকা, ৫ নং ক্রমিকের পদের জন্য ৫০০/- (পাঁচশত) টাকা, ৬-৭ নং ক্রমিকের পদের জন্য ২০০/- (দুইশত) টাকা এবং ৮-৯ নং ক্রমিকের পদের জন্য ১০০/- (একশত) টাকার (অফেরতযোগ্য) ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার 'বাংলাদেশ ফার্মেসী কাউন্সিল' বরাবর জমা দিতে হবে।
- ঘোষণাপত্র (Declaration) এ করে ঘোষণা দিতে হবে যে, প্রার্থী কর্তৃক আবেদনপত্রের প্রদত্ত সকল তথ্য সত্যিকার এবং সত্য। প্রদত্ত তথ্য অসত্য বা মিথ্যা প্রমাণিত হলে অথবা কোন যোগ্যতা ধরা পড়লে বা কোন প্রত্যয়ন বা দৃষ্টান্তের আলোকে প্রার্থীকে নিয়োগ করা হবে না।
- নিয়োগের ক্ষেত্রে প্রার্থীকে নিয়োগের ক্ষেত্রে লিখিত, বাস্তবিক (প্রযোজ্য ক্ষেত্রে) ও মৌখিক পরীক্ষা অন্তর্ভুক্ত হবে। কেবল লিখিত ও বাস্তবিক (প্রযোজ্য ক্ষেত্রে) পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ প্রার্থীরাই মৌখিক পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের জন্য বিবেচিত হবেন।
- নিয়োগের ক্ষেত্রে কাউন্সিলের বিনামূল্যে সকল বিধি-বিধান এবং পরবর্তীতে প্রকৃতসকল বিধি-বিধান কোনরূপ সংশোধন হলে তা অনুসরণ করা হবে।
- যে কোন তদবির প্রার্থীর যোগ্যতা বলে বিবেচিত হবে। কোন প্রার্থী তথ্য গোপন করে চাকরি গ্রহণ করলে নিয়োগপত্র বাতিলসহ তার বিরুদ্ধে আইনানুগ ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হবে।
- আবেদনপত্রের সাথে ১-৪ নং ক্রমিকের পদের জন্য ৬০০/- (ছয়শত) টাকা, ৫ নং ক্রমিকের পদের জন্য ৫০০/- (পাঁচশত) টাকা, ৬-৭ নং ক্রমিকের পদের জন্য ২০০/- (দুইশত) টাকা এবং ৮-৯ নং ক্রমিকের পদের জন্য ১০০/- (একশত) টাকার (অফেরতযোগ্য) ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার 'বাংলাদেশ ফার্মেসী কাউন্সিল' বরাবর জমা দিতে হবে।
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- নিয়োগের ক্ষেত্রে প্রার্থীকে নিয়োগের ক্ষেত্রে লিখিত, বাস্তবিক (প্রযোজ্য ক্ষেত্রে) ও মৌখিক পরীক্ষা অন্তর্ভুক্ত হবে। কেবল লিখিত ও বাস্তবিক (প্রযোজ্য ক্ষেত্রে) পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ প্রার্থীরাই মৌখিক পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের জন্য বিবেচিত হবেন।
- নিয়োগের ক্ষেত্রে কাউন্সিলের বিনামূল্যে সকল বিধি-বিধান এবং পরবর্তীতে প্রকৃতসকল বিধি-বিধান কোনরূপ সংশোধন হলে তা অনুসরণ করা হবে।
- যে কোন তদবির প্রার্থীর যোগ্যতা বলে বিবেচিত হবে। কোন প্রার্থী তথ্য গোপন করে চাকরি গ্রহণ করলে নিয়োগপত্র বাতিলসহ তার বিরুদ্ধে আইনানুগ ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হবে।
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- নিয়োগের ক্ষেত্রে প্রার্থীকে নিয়োগের ক্ষেত্রে লিখিত, বাস্তবিক (প্রযোজ্য ক্ষেত্রে) ও মৌখিক পরীক্ষা অন্তর্ভুক্ত হবে। কেবল লিখিত ও বাস্তবিক (প্রযোজ্য ক্ষেত্রে) পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ প্রার্থীরাই মৌখিক পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের জন্য বিবেচিত হবেন।
- নিয়োগের ক্ষেত্রে কাউন্সিলের বিনামূল্যে সকল বিধি-বিধান এবং পরবর্তীতে প্রকৃতসকল বিধি-বিধান কোনরূপ সংশোধন হলে তা অনুসরণ করা হবে।
- যে কোন তদবির প্রার্থীর যোগ্যতা বলে বিবেচিত হবে। কোন প্রার্থী তথ্য গোপন করে চাকরি গ্রহণ করলে নিয়োগপত্র বাতিলসহ তার বিরুদ্ধে আইনানুগ ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হবে।
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DESIGN: ANTARA RAISA

Actors who reinvented themselves through OTT

ANTARA RAISA

OTT platforms have taken the Bangladeshi entertainment industry by storm, redefining how stories are told and experienced. In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, these digital platforms emerged as beacons of creative freedom, offering an expansive universe of borderless content and thematic diversity.

Ahead of the coveted *Blender's Choice-The Daily Star OTT and Digital Content Awards 2022*, we take a look at some of the

Mosharraf Karim is known as the 'King of television'. However, his portrayal as OC Harun in Ashfaq Nipun's *Mohanagar* and *Mohanagar 2* was mindblowing, to say the least. He broke boundaries for what an actor can and cannot do in visual medium.

Chanchal Chowdhury's journey in acting is a textbook for people who want to learn, from his raw emotional performances in theatre to the scintillating 'mystery man' in Syed Shawk's *Karagar*. However, his true renaissance came in *Takdeer*, by the same director.

Alfaz Hossain, a maestro in the craft, broke broke from his conventional romantic roles to embrace darker and mysterious

characters, like in the web series *Ladies and Gentlemen* and *Pett Kata Shaw*.

Intekhab Dinar, a stellar but underappreciated actor, found his footing in the OTT industry. He dedicated his success in the platforms to 'actors with less views'.

Ahead of the exciting Blender's Choice-The Daily Star OTT and Digital Content Awards 2022, we take a look at established actors who found new footing on OTT and other digital platforms. Through sheer hard work and dedication, they adapted to new mediums.

5-time National Award winner Fazlur Rahman Babu has also made his presence felt in *Mohanagar 2* and *Khachar Bhit* Ochin Pakhi.

Farzana Chobi, known for her television dramas, ventured into the world of OTT with the web

film *Tan*, released in Chorki. Her performances in *Tan*, then *Niswas* and the recently released web film *Friday* have received significant attention from the audience.

FS Nayeem has been a household name in the Bangladeshi television industry for years. But, it was his comeback with the web series *Karagar* in 2022 that he truly showcased his brilliance as an actor. He then followed it up with *Overtrump*.

Rafiath Rashid Mithila, a multi-talented individual, ventured into the world of OTT through the Hoichoi original web series *Ekattor*. Directed by Tanim Noor, she continued to mesmerise audiences with her exceptional performances in *Contract* and *Unoloukik*. She recently captured the audience's attention with her masterful portrayal of 'Shayla' in Chorki's original web series *Myself Allen Swapan*.

Mostafa Monwar possesses an uncanny ability to inhabit his characters on screen. Though not in leading roles, his unique portrayals in web series like *Ekattor*, *Unoloukik*, and *Jaago Bahey* set him apart from his peers, leaving a lasting impact on the audience's hearts and minds.

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NEWS

Summit to set up third floating LNG terminal

FROM PAGE 1

meet the country's daily demand for gas of about 4,000mmcf.

As much as 3,000mmcf gas is being supplied a day, with about 750-850mmcf coming from the two existing FSRUs, according to Petrobangla data. The rest comes from the local gas fields.

Subsequently, a proposal was sent by the ministry of power, energy and mineral resources to build a third FSRU, which was approved yesterday by the cabinet committee on economic affairs.

The approval was taken under the controversial Quick Enhancement of Electricity and Energy Supply (Special Provision) Act 2010, which was amended in 2021, according to

the meeting minutes.

The new terminal, which would be Summit's second FSRU, will have the capacity to regasify 600 mmcf of gas a day.

In 2026, the demand for gas will increase further and the government has no option but to import more LNG, said two Petrobangla officials.

The new FSRU would be needed to process the additional LNG coming in, they said, citing the LNG deal signed with Qatar recently to further their point. A similar deal will be signed with Oman soon.

However, experts questioned the rationale of entering into long-term LNG deals without exploring more local gas. The rising dependence on expensive imported gas may hit the

economy in future.

The energy division should give priority to gas exploration, said Badrul Imam, honorary professor of Dhaka University's Geology Department.

"The dependence on gas imports will not ensure energy security," he added.

The country started importing LNG in late 2018. Since then, the country has imported 283 LNG cargoes from Qatar and Oman under two long-term contracts and 37 cargoes from the international spot market.

Yesterday's meeting also approved a proposal for procuring 33.6 lakh MMbtu of LNG at a cost of Tk 574.65 crore from the US's Excelerate Energy LP. The per unit cost will be \$13.9.

Abductors release

FROM PAGE 12

"In [sic] my previous appeal, as I was told that there were some serious interruptions in the negotiation process," he said.

"Pressurise the media to deal with those who are interrupting our quick release process and communicate with UN management to expedite the process of our negotiation.

"I want to mention here that while we were abducted, we were abducted as UN staff, not as citizens of any specific country or Asian country."

He said that he was ill and his colleagues needed immediate hospitalisation. "Otherwise, any of us can succumb to the illness."

The demands being made by the terrorist organisation include ransom.

Sufiul works as a field security coordination officer (head) of the UN Department of Safety and Security in Aden, Yemen. He retired from Bangladesh Army as a lieutenant colonel in 2005.

This is the second time his family has seen him since the abduction.

"My mother was inconsolable," Sufiul's son Sakeef Anam told The Daily Star.

Shanto, Joy pummel Afghanistan Rift in JP resurfaces

FROM PAGE 12

as replays showed the ball taking the slightest outside edge.

Perhaps Afghanistan expected conditions to be more suitable for bowlers on the opening day, but they lacked discipline.

The visitors were expected to threaten more with the new ball, but Shanto's brisk knock was assertive from the beginning. Two drives in the third over signalled his confidence and fluency and in the first session alone, he hit 11 fours on his way to 64.

On the other hand, Afghanistan's bowlers showed their inexperience in the longest format as their line and length wavered frequently. Either they bowled too full or too short and oftentimes with a lot of room. Boundaries flowed as a result and the Shanto-Joy duo ensured Bangladesh reached lunch at 116 for one after just 24 overs, scoring at 4.83 runs per over. The 100-run partnership had come off 126 deliveries.

In the second session, the Afghan attack toiled further. No-balls and overthrows were part and parcel of their bowling effort. Left-arm wrist spinner Zahir Khan alone bowled eight no-balls on the day.

Meanwhile, Shanto began to find the boundaries even more frequently. The sumptuous drives and hand

speed coming in to pull anything short was a trademark of Shanto's knock as he reached his maiden ton on Bangladesh soil and his third Test ton off just 118 deliveries.

At the other end, Joy too grew in confidence but his lapse in concentration saw him guiding Rahmat Shah to the slip cordon and departing for 76.

The partnership produced 212 runs, the second-highest second-wicket stand for Bangladesh in Tests. Mominul Haque struggled early, not looking very comfortable, as spinners started getting more purchase. The former Test skipper then nicked a short delivery from Masood after Tea down his leg side and departed after scoring 15.

Shanto carried on with his free-flowing knock and got the rub of the green when he was bowled off a no-ball by Masood but he eventually perished to Amir Hamza after a 176-ball 146, holed out at deep mid-wicket.

The third session proved to be the most productive for Afghanistan as they landed Liton Das's scalp, out after scoring 9. There was some uncertainty in the Bangladesh ranks but Mushfiqur Rahim and Mehedi Hasan Miraz ensured it was the hosts' day with a 72-run unbroken stand to take Bangladesh to 362 for five, posed for a big first innings total on Day Two.

BNP to go for one-point

FROM PAGE 1

The leaders of the BNP's like-minded parties suggested waging a one-point movement at the earliest possible time.

The leaders demonstrated the possible anti-government demonstrations, but most of them opined that they should not observe programmes like strikes and blockades as those would have a negative impact on the movement, said the sources.

The BNP observed different anti-government programmes for about six months to press home its 10-point demand.

The anti-government movement will be intensified from next month, a senior BNP leader told The Daily Star.

The party standing committee on Monday discussed the outline of a joint declaration on the simultaneous movement. The declaration will be made by the BNP and its like-minded political parties.

Most of the leaders suggested that the declaration should be suspended if the BNP's partners cannot reach a consensus.

The BNP and Ganatantra Mancha have differences of opinions on amending Article 70 of the constitution, the election process of a bicameral parliament, the power of lawmakers and the activities of an election-time government.

BNP leaders said as the party

Rift in JP resurfaces

FROM PAGE 12

Golam Sarwar Milon and former MP MA Gofran, among others, were present at the time.

Asked whether Raushan has the jurisdiction to nominate the party's candidate, Golam Moshi said as the JP patron, she has the power to take every party decision.

"That's why she has the authority to nominate the party's candidate," he said.

As per a High Court judgement, the leader of the party representing JP will have the right over the electoral symbol of plough, Moshi added.

Before submitting the nomination paper of Kazi Mamun, A JP delegation led by Ranga, who was removed from all posts of JP in September last year, met CEC Kazi Habibul Awal at his office at the election commission secretariat.

Despite repeated attempts, The Daily Star could not reach GM Quader, also deputy leader of the opposition, and JP Secretary General Mujibul Haque Chunnun for comments.

The upcoming by-election in the Dhaka-17 constituency is scheduled to be held on July 17.

According to the election schedule, the last date for submitting nomination papers is today, while the date for scrutinising nomination papers is June 18. The last date for withdrawal of candidacy is June 25.

is leading the anti-government movement, its partners must have trust in the party. Otherwise, the BNP will go for the one-point movement with other like-minded political parties.

Yesterday, the BNP held meetings with the 12-party alliance and Jatiyatabadi Samamana Jote at the party chairperson's Gulshan office in the capital to discuss the one-point movement.

BNP leaders at Monday's meeting said the government was under serious pressure after the announcement of the new US visa policy, and the pressure would mount if it barred the opposition party from taking to the streets, said meeting sources.

RARE CHINA TRIP

Blinken to seek to ‘responsibly manage’ ties

AFP, Washington

Secretary of State Antony Blinken will seek to reduce the chances of miscalculation on a rare visit to Beijing, officials said, but both sides expect long-term tensions to fester.

The State Department confirmed that Blinken will travel this weekend to Beijing on the first trip by a top US diplomat in nearly five years, rescheduling a visit that was scrapped in February as the United States detected what it said was a Chinese spy balloon.

Ahead of the trip, Blinken spoke by telephone to Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang and stressed “the importance of maintaining open lines of communication to responsibly manage” the relationship, State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said.

Relations between the world’s two largest economies have tanked in recent years over Taiwan, trade and human rights, among a litany of other issues.

Daniel Kritenbrink, the top State Department official for East Asia, said that the United States was “realistic” about what Blinken could achieve.

“We’re not going to Beijing with the intent of having some sort of breakthrough

or transformation,” Kritenbrink told reporters.

Instead, Blinken is coming with a “sincere desire to manage our competition in the most responsible way possible.”

The United States hopes the trip “will, at a minimum, reduce the risk of miscalculation so that we do not veer into potential conflict.”

US policymakers across party lines have spoken of China as the foremost US competitor, even as President Joe Biden also focuses on countering Russia over Ukraine invasion.

“We know efforts to shape or reform China over several decades have failed,” said Kurt Campbell, who leads Asia policy at the White House.

“We expect China to be around -- to be a major player -- on the world stage for the rest of our lifetimes,” he told reporters.

Campbell said the United States also expected more “provocative steps” by China over Taiwan, the self-governing democracy claimed by Beijing.

China has accused the United States of stirring up trouble in Taiwan through arms sales and visits by senior lawmakers -- allegations rejected by Washington, which says it seeks to preserve the status quo by helping Taipei defend itself.



Migrants arrive at the port of Kalamata, following a rescue operation, after their boat capsized at open sea, in Kalamata, Greece yesterday. At least 79 migrants drowned early yesterday and more were feared missing after their overloaded boat capsized and sank off Greece, in one of Europe’s deadliest shipwrecks this year.

PHOTO: REUTERS

India, Pakistan brace for cyclone today

More than 100,000 people evacuated

REUTERS, Mumbai

Roads will be inundated along parts of India’s western coast and thatched houses were likely to be destroyed, the country’s weather department said yesterday, a day before a fierce cyclone was expected to make landfall in Gujarat and southern parts of Pakistan.

More than 100,000 people in India and Pakistan have been evacuated from the path of the cyclone.

Classified as a very severe cyclonic storm, Biparjoy was situated about 280 km (174 miles) from Jakhau Port in Gujarat and was expected to make landfall around this evening.

“It will touch Kutch Saurashtra coast (in Gujarat) adjoining the Pakistan coast between Mandvi and Karachi and near Jakhau port on June 15 from 4:00 pm to 8:00 pm in India (1030-1430 GMT),” Manorama Mohanty, the Gujarat director of the India Meteorological Department (IMD), told reporters.

“As of now, our forecast is it will cross as a very severe cyclonic storm. After crossing, its intensity will fall and become a cyclonic storm and depression.”

Meteorologists said the cyclone packed winds with maximum sustained speeds of 125-135 km (78-84 miles) per hour, gusting up to 150 km (93 miles) per hour.

US pushing India to seal big armed drone buy for Modi visit

Sources say Indian PM, Biden are also expected to discuss co-production of munitions while Modi is in Washington

REUTERS, Washington/New Delhi

Ahead of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s state visit to Washington, the Biden administration is pushing New Delhi to cut through its own red tape and advance a deal for dozens of US-made armed drones, two people familiar with the matter said.

India has long expressed interest in buying large armed drones from the United States. But bureaucratic stumbling blocks have hampered a hoped-for deal for SeaGuardian drones that could be worth \$2 billion to \$3 billion for years.

US negotiators are counting on Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s White House visit on June 22 to break the log jam.

Since the date for Modi’s visit was fixed, the US State Department, Pentagon and White House have asked India to be able to “show” progress on the deal for as many as 30 armable MQ-9B SeaGuardian drones made by General Atomics, two sources said.

Modi and Biden are also expected to discuss co-production of munitions and ground vehicles, like armored personnel carriers, while Modi is in Washington, the sources said.

Spokespeople for the White House, Department of State and the Pentagon declined to comment on the negotiations.

US President Joe Biden has made deepening ties with India a cornerstone of his policy to counter China’s growing

influence, placing special attention this year on collaboration between the world’s two largest democracies on advanced military technologies, despite their lack of a formal security alliance.

New Delhi, which often prizes its non-alignment in conflicts between great powers abroad, has frustrated Washington by maintaining some defense and economic ties with Russia after the invasion of Ukraine.



Breaking India’s bureaucratic log jam on drones hinges on an internal meeting to generate an “Acceptance of Necessity” document, an Indian precursor to a formal “Letter of Request” which kicks off the foreign military sale process. As of Tuesday, the sources did not know if the New Delhi had generated the necessary internal document.

“That’s gonna be a decision that the government of India needs to make,” said

a senior Biden administration official. “We think it would be good for them to go through with the purchase of MQ-9s. But those decisions are sort of more in the hands of India than they are of us.”

The topic was expected to be on the agenda as Biden’s national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, arrived in New Delhi on Tuesday to finalize preparations ahead of Modi’s visit.

As of last week, India’s defense ministry had still not made up its mind about the number of drones it wants to buy, according to a person familiar with the discussions. Earlier, the number was pegged at 30, but that was later revised to 24, and then further down to 18 last month. Sources cautioned that none of the numbers were final.

India is also seeking components of the equipment to be domestically manufactured, something that could complicate any deal.

The Quad grouping of countries - the United States, India, Australia and Japan - all operate, or have operated, the MQ-9B SeaGuardian. Currently, India is leasing MQ-9Bs as part of an intelligence-gathering operation.

India’s chequered track record with Muslim minorities, political opposition and independent journalism under Modi is unlikely to feature on the agenda when Biden hosts the Indian leader to Washington next week, according to observers of US-India relations.

Russian strikes kill 6 in Ukraine

Kyiv reports small advances

REUTERS, Kyiv

Russian missile attacks killed three people in the Black Sea city of Odesa and three in the Donetsk region of eastern Ukraine yesterday, as Kyiv reported small advances in its counteroffensive against Russian forces. The three killed in Odesa were in a retail chain warehouse that was set ablaze during an attack that damaged a business centre, an educational institution, a residential complex, food establishments and shops, Ukraine’s military said. Video and photographs posted online by a local official showed multi-storey buildings with parts of their walls missing and windows blown out, and firefighters battling flames in what appeared be a warehouse.

FUTURE AI RULES

EU lawmakers approve plan

AFP, Strasbourg

EU lawmakers yesterday voted to adopt a key text forming the basis of a future law regulating artificial intelligence systems like ChatGPT, while aiming to foster innovation in the technology. Negotiations on the final law were set to begin later yesterday between the European Parliament and the EU’s 27 member countries. If Brussels hits its ambitious target of reaching an agreement by the end of the year, it would be the world’s first law regulating AI. Although the EU’s plans date back to 2021, the draft rules took on greater urgency when ChatGPT exploded onto the scene last year.

Dogged by irregularities

FROM PAGE 1

The letter said teacher of the department Prof Zia Rahman took only three online classes in nine months of the first semester for master’s degree.

Teachers are required by rules to give two 90-minute lectures and hold a 60-minute discussion or tutorial class every week and no more than 40 percent of the classes can be online.

Prof Zia imparted the three lessons on a course that is similar but different to the one the students were studying, read the letter, which this paper has a copy of.

It said the students realised this error when they tried to register for the exams and were told by officials that they don’t have the course.

“We contacted the department immediately,” said a student.

Prof Zia, also the dean of the social sciences faculty, had to hold several classes over a month to finish teaching the course. This delayed the exams by a month, said students.

The letter alleged that Prof Zia and Associate Prof Khandaker Farzana Rahman do not publish sessional results on time, which they are required to do within two weeks of an exam.

Sessional results are scores on students’ attendance, mid-term exams, assignments, and presentations.

It said department Chairman Associate Prof Shaharia Afrin held most classes online and Assistant Prof ABM Najmus Sakib indulged in favouritism in giving grades.

Four 4th year students on December 26 wrote to the VC and pro-VC asking that their answer scripts for the 7th semester final exams be re-evaluated by an independent exam committee.

The students -- Sakin Tanvir, Mehbeez Binte Matiur, Shozayet Ahmed Bhuiyan, and Tahnan Mahjabin Adhora -- wrote the letter after learning that they got poor scores on a course taught by Prof Zia.

On January 18, they also learnt that they got 2 out of 20 on a mid-term test on Prof Zia’s course.

The four wrote to the pro-VC and VC again on June 1 demanding the same.

Pro-VC Prof Maksud said, “After receiving the letters, I asked the authorities concerned [exam controller] to take steps. I cannot take action regarding the other letter as it was anonymous.”

He said the exam controller’s office told him that it would not be possible due to technicalities.

Two of the four students filed a writ with the HC seeking the halt of the provisional certificate issuance for their batch and an order for the university to probe within two months.

An HC bench has issued a rule in their favour.

Pro-VC Maksud said he learnt that some teachers in the department do not publish mid-term results on time and submit answer scripts two to three months after the deadline.

After the teachers learnt about the anonymous letter and the demand for re-evaluation of answer scripts, they held a meeting with students on January 19.

A group of the students afterwards wrote to the department chairman demanding the writers of the anonymous letter be identified and punished.

At an academic committee meeting of the department on January 25, two committees were formed with four teachers. The anonymous letter had complaints against three of the members.

One committee summoned the four students on February 7 and at least two of the students alleged that the probe body threatened to take action against them bringing allegations of plagiarism.

“We are now worried about our future,” said a student, seeking anonymity. Shozayet Ahmed Bhuiyan said, “If they [the university] had the will to re-evaluate the scripts, they would have investigated the issue and taken action. But instead of doing so, we are being harassed by the department committee.”

TEACHERS’ SAY

On not taking classes, Prof Zia told this newspaper, “This is an utter lie. The so-called allegations you are referring to are based on a fake letter that was issued with no names nor signatures.”

In his written reply, he said he did not teach students the wrong course. “I was given responsibility for two courses; one in the first semester and the other in the second. There was just an issue of beginning the 2nd course first but the minute I was informed that it had to be the other course, classes were taken accordingly.”

“My students were extremely cooperative about this as well. Both courses were completed on time, and the students did well in both too.”

Prof Zia said the four students got the marks according to their performance and that the same four had got nine out of 10 in another assessment.

He pointed out that

roughly 20 other students performed poorly in the exam but the others made no complaints.

Someone provoked them to file the complaint, he said, adding, “This is the dirty reality of university politics and this is perhaps what happens when teachers use students to attack their own colleagues.”

Talking about students’ allegations of intimidation, Chairman of the department Shaharia and Associate Professor Najmus said they did not have any intention to threaten students.

“It is really a problem if the discussion is presented before you in a fabricated way,” Shaharia said.

She said their committee could not find out who sent the anonymous letter. Asked about re-evaluation of the exam results, she said, “As they went to higher authorities, the department cannot say anything about it.”

Asked about allegations of taking more classes online than allowed, she said she took the online classes following university rules and after consultations with students.

Najmus refuted allegations of favouritism against him.

Former chairman of the department Farzana admitted that she had

on occasion missed the deadlines for publishing sessional results and said many other teachers of the university miss the deadlines.

DU Vice-Chancellor Prof Akhtaruzzaman said he did not know about the committees formed by the criminology department.

Asked if students could reach out to him bypassing course teachers, the department chairman, and student advisers, he said students who have grievances can reach out to the VC.

When told that the department formed a committee to probe why the students bypassed the department and went to the VC and pro-VC, Prof Akhtaruzzaman said, “Such acts [forming the committees] are unacceptable.

“It is very unusual to consider such complaints of students as a crime. We are here to ensure justice. Students have nothing to fear,” he added.

Pro-VC Maksud said, “All decisions of departments and the university should be student-friendly. If any students become frightened about any decision of the authorities, it is tantamount to harassment of the students.”

Help ensure free, fair polls

FROM PAGE 1

Clear and repeated statements and actions by US officials can help ensure that the Bangladeshi government complies with its human rights obligations, said the Congress members.

“This is especially important in preparation for the upcoming elections, as there have already been mass arrests and violence against opposition parties which could tarnish the results and deepen social conflict.”

The six -- William R Keating, James P McGovern, Barbara Lee, Jim Costa, Dina Titus and Jamie Raskin -- wrote the letter on June 8 and Keating posted the letter in his official Twitter handle.

They welcomed the US visa restrictions and sanctions against the Rab and seven of its current and former officials. “Unfortunately, despite these actions, repression in Bangladesh has not ceased.”

The December 2021 US sanctions empowered many in Bangladeshi society to speak out about the human rights violations they have witnessed, documented, or experienced at the hands of various law enforcement agencies, the letter reads.

In response, the Bangladeshi government has intensified reprisals

against civil society organisations, human rights defenders, victims of human rights violations, and their families.”

They also said they understand that Bangladesh is an important US partner and appreciate its willingness to host around one million Rohingya refugee. “At the same time, the decision not to invite Bangladesh to the 2023 Summit of Democracy was a clear signal that the State Department recognises the country’s democratic and human rights challenges ahead of scheduled 2024 elections.”

Earlier, six other US congressmen wrote to US President Joe Biden, calling for urgent actions to stop the “human rights abuses” by the Bangladesh government and give the people of Bangladesh the best possible chance for free and fair parliamentary elections.

The six congressmen are Scott Perry, Barry Moore, Warren Davidson, Bob Good, Tim Burchett and Keith Self.

On June 12, six members of the European Parliament asked the EU High Representative Joseph Borrell to contribute to ensuring free, fair, and impartial general elections in Bangladesh, “possibly under a poll-time neutral caretaker government”.

Assaults on anti-graft efforts must cease

Proposed restriction on ACC’s access to suspects’ tax files is unacceptable

The proposed Income Tax Bill 2023, which contains a section that restricts officials of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) from accessing tax files of suspects under investigation without a court order, serves as yet another threat to the fight against corruption in Bangladesh. This provision, if enacted, would unnecessarily complicate and lengthen investigations, potentially allowing corrupt individuals to exploit legal loopholes and evade justice. While speaking to *The Daily Star*, some ACC officials have rightly expressed their frustration, saying they don’t know for whose benefit is the anti-graft body’s investigative power being curtailed.

That is precisely our question as well. Tax returns play an important role in uncovering illegal wealth and serve as crucial evidence in investigations. Under the current system, the ACC initiates an investigation upon receiving a complaint regarding illegal wealth. ACC officers obtain tax returns from the National Board of Revenue and cross check the information provided in the wealth statement of suspects. They also verify the details of movable and immovable properties through records from banks and other relevant organisations. If any irregularities are detected, they proceed to file cases. But the proposed restriction seems to benefit the very individuals the ACC is tasked with investigating, thus undermining its ability to tackle corruption.

As some have pointed out, it also contradicts article 20(2) of the Constitution, which criminalises unearned income, and even overrides the ACC Act itself, which empowers it to access information from government organisations during corruption inquiries. Why then, we must ask, are the authorities empowering potentially corrupt individuals when they should be empowering the ACC? The latest move comes at a time when its investigative authority stands severely diminished. In the past years, we have seen various efforts, legal and administrative, to curtail the power of the ACC in investigating corruption, especially high-profile cases. We have seen how it has been virtually turned into a “toothless tiger”, its track record marked by woefully low conviction rates and a backlog of unresolved complaints/cases.

The proposed income tax bill is only the latest assault on the ACC and its investigators. And it is totally unacceptable. The fight against corruption requires a strong, independent, and empowered ACC that can hold the corrupt accountable, regardless of their influence and standing. We urge the government to recognise the ramifications of this provision, and drop it from the bill.

Another life lost to political violence

Police must follow due diligence and bring Hafizur’s killers to justice

As shocking as it is to learn that a young working man has been beaten to death in public, what we find equally distressing is the reason behind his violent demise. A report by this daily quoted witnesses saying that several individuals fatally beat 27-year-old Hafizur Rahman – who ran a chicken fry cart near the Mirpur 10 roundabout – on Monday because he did not take part in a Jubo League rally! Allegedly, Hafizur had been “instructed” by local ruling party men to attend the rally, but he decided to run his cart instead. The question is, why would choosing his livelihood over appeasing political leaders cost him his life in a country that is claimed to be democratic and respectful of citizen rights?

Apparently, it is “mandatory” for most street vendors to attend political events held by the AL and its affiliates, according to Hafizur’s brothers, as well as several locals in the area who spoke to this daily. If this is indeed the case, it’s totally unacceptable. With the general election only months away, we strongly suggest that the central AL leadership rein in their unruly grassroots leaders and activists so that they cannot employ such fear tactics. Such politics is not acceptable in a functional democracy, and will not help them in the election.

We also find the police’s role in this incident quite dubious. The case statement that police have filed says a completely different story: that a brawl broke out between Hafizur and some customers over a torn bill, and they attacked him. A younger brother of Hafizur’s, who filed the case, alleged that police prepared the statement and made him sign it. When contacted, the local OC denied the allegation and said the facts would come out during investigation. We sincerely hope that they do, and urge the police to do their due diligence in bringing the true culprits to book. It is the public that they are duty-bound to, and it is the public that they must serve above anyone else.

New Message

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Have things to say? Want your thoughts about current events to be published in The Daily Star? Send us a letter (100 - 300 words) with your name and city!

Write to us: letters@thedailystar.net

Bangladesh’s bumpy digital finance voyage



Shahriar Rahman is editor of Toggle at The Daily Star.

SHAHRIAR RAHMAN

In the ever-evolving realm of global finance, the transition towards cashless societies has emerged as a transformative force, unlocking a myriad of benefits for nations embracing digital currencies. From bustling metropolises to remote corners of the world, countries have witnessed the power of digital finance in fostering economic growth, enhancing financial inclusion, and streamlining transactions. Amidst this global shift, Bangladesh finds itself at a crucial juncture, where the pursuit of a cashless future holds immense potential. However, critical analysis reveals both missed opportunities and challenges in the government’s policies, including the ambitious Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) programme.

The numbers underscore the urgency for change. In Bangladesh, approximately 45 percent of the population lacks access to traditional banking services, resulting in financial exclusion and limited opportunities for economic growth. However, recent advancements in mobile banking and digital payment solutions have shown promising signs. For instance, bKash, a leading mobile financial service provider in the country, had registered over 45 million users by the year 2021, showcasing the growing demand for digital finance in Bangladesh.

Despite these achievements, we face significant hurdles on our path to becoming a cashless society. The CBDC programme, introduced by the Bangladesh Bank, is aimed to digitise the national currency, fostering financial inclusion and facilitating seamless transactions.

The emergence of Central Bank Digital Currencies gained significant attention after several decades, driven by factors such as the decline in cash usage, the rise of cryptocurrencies, and the need for central banks to maintain control over their financial systems.

Currently, more than 114 countries, accounting for over 95 percent of world GDP, have either launched or are considering launching CBDCs. However, a growing number of politicians and central bankers are raising questions about the necessity of CBDCs, particularly in countries with advanced banking and payment systems. Despite this scepticism, CBDCs could still play a crucial role in modernising cross-border payments and influencing the development of new currencies. Their success will



ILLUSTRATION: BIPOB CHAKROBORTY

largely depend on their design. CBDCs that have been fully launched, like the Bahamian sand dollar and Nigeria’s e-naira, share common features such as user holding caps, zero interest rates, and no transaction fees. These measures aim to prevent significant outflows from commercial banks to CBDCs.

However, these early experiments have witnessed limited adoption. For example, China’s e-CNY pilot has faced low uptake due to existing well-established and convenient payment systems like Alipay and WeChat Pay.

Despite these challenges and the modest adoption rates, some governments are offering incentives to promote the use of CBDCs in order to drive adoption and enhance financial inclusion. Nigeria, for instance, provides discounts for e-naira payments, specifically targeting the unbanked population. The programmable nature of CBDCs is considered a unique feature, enabling the implementation of smart contracts and facilitating more efficient control over the economy.

Nevertheless, it is still early in the development of CBDCs, and many possibilities and potential cases of use remain experimental. CBDCs have the

potential to revolutionise cross-border transactions and reduce reliance on the dominant dollar system. However, at present, CBDCs remain in the realm of experimentation, similar to the cryptocurrency industry. Critical evaluation reveals several challenges that undermine the effectiveness and feasibility of the programme.

One of the primary concerns revolves

around infrastructure readiness. Bangladesh’s digital payment ecosystem is still in its nascent stage, with limited coverage and accessibility, particularly in rural areas. According to a report published in 2022 by the World Bank, only 53 percent of the population in Bangladesh has access to a bank account, indicating the need for substantial improvements in digital infrastructure to enable a smooth transition to a cashless system.

Moreover, privacy and security concerns surrounding the CBDC programme must be addressed. As a central bank-issued digital currency, individuals would be required to conduct transactions directly with the central bank, potentially compromising their privacy and raising cybersecurity risks. Safeguarding the integrity and privacy of financial transactions is paramount in order to build public trust and widespread acceptance of digital currencies.

To pave the way for a successful transition, Bangladesh must adopt a multi-faceted approach. Firstly, the government should prioritise strengthening the existing digital payment ecosystem and enhancing financial literacy to promote the

adoption of digital finance solutions such as mobile banking and digital wallets. These initiatives would lay a solid foundation for a cashless future and foster financial inclusion at a broader scale. Additionally, the government should focus on addressing the existing challenges in infrastructure, connectivity, and digital literacy. Investments in technology and telecommunications infrastructure,

particularly in rural areas, will be pivotal in bridging the digital divide and ensuring equal access to financial services for all citizens.

While our CBDC programme may face challenges, alternative strategies can harness the potential of digital currencies. Collaborative efforts with private sector players and international organisations, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, can offer valuable insights and guidance in formulating a comprehensive roadmap for a cashless future.

Bangladesh stands at a critical juncture in its pursuit of a cashless future. While progress has been made through mobile banking and digital payment solutions, there are still significant challenges to overcome. By addressing infrastructure gaps, prioritising privacy and security measures, and fostering financial literacy, we can unlock the power of digital finance to drive financial inclusion, economic growth, and improve the lives of citizens.

The journey towards a cashless society requires concerted efforts, innovative solutions, and a commitment to meeting the evolving needs of the nation.

The circular economy requires nurturing



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

MOSTAFIZ UDDIN

In recent years, global fashion brands have placed growing emphasis on textile recycling, circularity, and the circular economy. The more effectively the industry utilises existing resources, the less strain there will be on finite resources such as virgin cotton and man-made fibres like viscose, which contribute to CO2 emissions. As the world strives to reduce emissions, it is vital that we recognise the seismic changes taking place and their implications for clothing production.

While the private sector in Bangladesh has shown increased interest in textile recycling, we cannot rely solely on their efforts to transition to a circular economy. To truly transform our industry, the government must play an active role, too.

Governments have the power to promote and support textile recycling initiatives in several ways. First and foremost, they could launch awareness campaigns to educate citizens about the importance of textile recycling, the environmental impact of textile waste, and the benefits of recycling. These campaigns can employ various media such as advertisements, workshops, and educational materials distributed

in schools, community centres, and on online platforms.

Financial support is another crucial lever for governments. By providing grants, subsidies and/or tax incentives to businesses and organisations involved in textile recycling, governments can facilitate the establishment or expansion of recycling facilities, the acquisition of necessary equipment, and the development of innovative recycling technologies. In cases where commercial viability is uncertain in the short term, government intervention is even more important.

Infrastructure development is a pressing issue for textile recycling. Governments should invest in the development of recycling infrastructure, including collection centres, sorting facilities, and recycling plants. Some of these investments can be made through public-private partnerships. By establishing a comprehensive and efficient recycling infrastructure, governments can make recycling more accessible for citizens and encourage businesses to participate in the process. The availability of high-quality feedstock is crucial for textile recycling, emphasising the importance of well-located sorting facilities.

Additionally, recycling-related legislation and regulation are areas where only governments can pave the way. Governments can introduce or strengthen laws and regulations related to textile recycling, relax planning restrictions if necessary, and streamline the granting of recycling permits. This can also include mandating the implementation of recycling programmes, setting recycling targets, or imposing landfill bans on textiles.

By establishing and enforcing regulations, the government can create a supportive framework that encourages textile recycling practices. It can also utilise this regulatory framework to gain a competitive advantage over alternative textile recycling regions.

However, it is crucial for our government to collaborate with the RMG industry and fashion brands on textile circularity. This collaboration involves partnering with textile manufacturers, retailers, and other industry stakeholders to promote sustainable practices and encourage the use of recyclable materials. This can be achieved through setting standards for eco-friendly manufacturing processes, encouraging the utilisation of recycled textiles, and fostering partnerships between recyclers and textile producers. Although Bangladesh has already made progress in these areas, there is still a long way to go.

Innovation, research, and development play vital roles in advancing recycling technologies. Governments can invest in research and development efforts focused on

textile recycling by funding research projects, establishing research centres, and encouraging collaborations between academia, industry and government agencies.

Advancements in recycling technologies can lead to more efficient and cost-effective methods of textile recycling. In this regard, government support (such as grant funding and access to loans) becomes crucial. Additionally, the government can consider funding academia to develop courses in recycling research and new circular technologies.

As textile recycling is a global industry, international cooperation is essential for its progress. Our government should actively participate in international initiatives and agreements aimed at promoting textile recycling and reducing global textile waste. By working together with other countries, our government can share best practices, exchange knowledge, and collaborate on research and development efforts across the global textile value chain.

I firmly believe that increased circularity will be one of the most profound changes we will witness in textile manufacturing during my lifetime. It presents a significant opportunity for Bangladesh to take the lead and gain an early adopter advantage in the competitive global economy. However, for garment makers to maximise these opportunities, the Bangladesh government must provide the right legal and commercial environment and develop the necessary infrastructure.



One of the most important indicators of the labour market is the participation rate. FILE PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

An overview of the Labour Force Survey 2022



Dr Sayema Haque Bidisha is professor at the Department of Economics in Dhaka University, and research director at the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (Sanem).

SAYEMA HAQUE BIDISHA

The quarterly Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2022 has been of interest to everyone, particularly to policymakers and researchers, and especially in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic. There is no denying that, for evidence-based research and policy formulation in the country's labour market, it is crucial to have regular data regarding key labour market variables.

One of the most important indicators of the labour market is the participation rate. According to the LFS 2022, though there has been no notable change in the overall male participation rate over the years, the female labour force participation rate (FLFPR) experienced an increase from 36.3 percent in 2016-17 to 42 percent in 2022. This rise in participation rate, though impressive, needs to be analysed in detail as the area-wise FLFPR shows that the rate has increased in rural areas (from 38.6 percent in 2016-17 to as high as 50.9 percent in 2022), but has fallen in urban areas from 31 percent (2016-17) to 23.6 percent (2022). This fall can be partly attributed to the negative impacts of the pandemic on the urban labour market.

With the majority of Bangladeshi women working in the informal sector (91.8 percent, per the LFS 2016-17), it is likely that they have been hit hard during the pandemic. In addition, evidence shows that there has been a gradual fall in the proportionate involvement of women in the ready-made garment (RMG) sector, primarily due to increased automation. This trend has continued into recent years, affecting women's participation in non-agricultural, urban based activities. However, it should also be examined whether part of this fall is related to increased enrolment in education.

The other side of the FLFPR is the rise in the participation rate in rural areas, especially in recent years (a 12.3 percentage point rise between 2016-17 and 2022). This trend cannot be explained that straightforwardly. The most convincing explanation can be related to a more avid role of women as unpaid family workers in rural areas due to a gradual rise in labour migration (both internal and international) of males, with rural farm- and non-farm-based activities now being performed by an increasing number of women. Another explanation could be a gradual expansion of rural-based small and medium enterprises, which is often argued to be a sector with a significant number of female entrepreneurs.

An expansion of microcredit, for which the primary client base is rural women, might have helped women get involved in different small-scale, self-employment activities. Urban to rural reverse migration during the pandemic may be another reason behind the opposing trend of rural and urban participation rates of women. One noteworthy point here is the sector-wise distribution of employment. Though the official gender-wise disaggregated statistics is not available yet, combining information on the two sexes, agriculture-based employment shows a rising trend, and as much as 45.3 percent of the employed

workforce in 2022 (40.6 percent in 2016-17) is found to be in agriculture, while 17 percent and 37.7 percent are in industry and service sectors (20.4 percent and 39 percent in 2016-17), respectively.

Despite the absence of recent gender-disaggregated data, the pattern in area-wise (urban versus rural) FLFPR of the 2022 survey as well as the trend in sector-wise FLFPR till 2016-17 (during 2016-17, 59.7 percent, 16.9 percent, and 23.5 percent women were in agriculture, industry, and service sector jobs, respectively) indicates that the female workforce is gradually becoming more concentrated in the agriculture sector, which is informal by nature and is relatively low-skilled and low-paying (or even not paying at all).

While analysing the trends and patterns of FLFPR, however, we must keep in mind that this participation includes both paid (wage employment and self-employment) and unpaid work (unpaid family work). According to the LFS 2016-17, as many as 29.1 percent of women were found to be engaged in unremunerated work, conducted under the ownership of other household members. Though we do not have corresponding recent data on the types of employment, based on a broad categorisation of employment data, more than half of the employed women (53.62 percent) are reported to be engaged in own-use production of goods, and this figure is as high as 62.6 percent for rural women.

Therefore, despite an increase in the participation rate in recent years, women's involvement in the labour market is still being significantly determined by their traditional roles involving home-based production processes, rather than for marketed paid activities or profit-based entrepreneurial work.

As for men, though there has been a slight decline in both rural and urban areas, the trend and pattern of male labour force participation is consistent with the international figures. However, for the labour market, it is the rate of unemployment rather than the participation rate that is generally a matter of concern. In this regard, another crucial finding of the LFS 2022 is the fall of the unemployment rate to 3.6 percent, from 4.2 percent in 2016-17. This fall has been observed in both rural and urban areas, with the unemployment rate in the former in 2022 found to be 3.4 percent, and the rate for the latter being 4.2 percent. This trend should be analysed in light of the conventional way employment/unemployment is defined: that a person is employed if he/she has worked at least one hour in a seven-day period prior to the survey. The shortcoming of this definition in the context of Bangladesh is that a large mass of people tend to work on a temporary basis, either in return for remuneration or even without any remuneration at family farms. This type of employment is mostly temporary and ad hoc in nature, without sufficient remuneration – and an unemployment rate based on such a definition is likely to underestimate the actual scenario of unemployment in the country.

Therefore, it is crucial to

have alternative definitions of unemployment (often termed as under employment) – based on hours of employment, desire for additional work, etc for future policy formulation. In addition, for effective policy formulation, in addition to hours of work, quality of work, especially the wage earned by the employed person, should be taken into consideration. Given the overwhelming degree of informality, for assessing the labour market scenario, it is also essential that the trend of informality is analysed.

While analysing the labour market data, one crucial aspect that we need to examine is that of the labour market profile of youths. Given that Bangladesh is going through a demographic transition, with the youth (15-29 years old) constituting 36.53 percent of the total labour force, it is important that our policy focus is on utilising this demographic dividend. However, according to LFS 2016-17 data, the rate of youth unemployment (10.6 percent) was higher than the national average (4.2 percent). Though we still do not have the corresponding information from the latest LFS, we need to deal with the twin challenges of youth unemployment and youth NEET (youths not in employment, education, and training) for the optimal utilisation of our favourable demographic profile.

In order to attain the country's development goals, it is crucial for there to be timely availability of data on the labour market, preferably on an annual basis. Due to a problem of applicability with the conventional data on unemployment, the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) should also publish data on alternative definitions of unemployment based on hours of work, weekly earnings, desire for additional work, etc, for effective policy formulation. Internal as well as international migration are an important issue, so the LFS needs to incorporate detailed information on migrants. For certain information, such as wages, hours of work, education (especially classification of tertiary education according to types of educational institutions), greater disaggregation of information is required. Besides, for certain important sectors (such as RMG), a separate section containing sector-specific relevant questions would be useful.

It is also essential to invest in skills and education while focusing more on the quality of education. With increased automation of industries and the importance of 4IR-related technologies, greater focus is needed on updating the existing curricula of training programmes, providing relevant skills training and, more importantly, dealing with the challenges of skills mismatch. Needless to say, TVET programmes must be at the core of the strategies while dealing with the challenges facing the labour market.

In addition to policy initiatives, to properly prepare our labour force for the growing needs of the market, on the one hand it is crucial to stimulate private sector investment, while on the other hand it is imperative to provide monetary and non-monetary incentives to small-scale entrepreneurs. To remove the bottlenecks in boosting female employment, the prime focus must be on dealing with certain inherent constraints like child marriage, women's safety and security in the public sphere, along with policy interventions towards dealing with the challenges related to gender-centric norms.

Why do we fail to utilise our RTI Act?

Shamsul Bari and Ruhi Naz are chairman and assistant director (RTI), respectively, of Research Initiatives, Bangladesh, RIB. Email: rib@citech-bd.com

SHAMSUL BARI and RUHI NAZ

Upon the adoption of Bangladesh's Right to Information (RTI) Act in 2009, many had considered it the most revolutionary law of the land. But 14 years on, no large-scale scandals have been unearthed, no earth-shattering investigative journalism has shed light on major corruption. The NGOs, journalists, and civil society members who most celebrated the entry of the law hardly pay it any attention. The avowed objective of the RTI Act of "increasing transparency and accountability of public offices, decreasing corruption of the same and establishing good governance" remains a pipe dream.

In a country with such a politically-oriented population, why has RTI not caught on? Clearly this is one law that allows citizens to play a meaningful role in monitoring the

Official Secrets Act.

Most people do not realise that the RTI Act was meant to open up a large portion of such undisclosed information so that citizens could use them to monitor the work of the government. The law not only created an opportunity for people, but also a responsibility for them to play a critical role "so that good governance shall be established".

The situation was compounded by the fact that there was little debate in the country on the pros and cons of the law, either in Parliament or outside, before it was enacted. Neither the population nor the public officials tasked with responding to people's information requests fathomed the revolutionary nature of the changes foreseen in the law.

Unlocking government records and opening them up for public scrutiny is clearly the basic goal of the law. The best way to promote a real understanding of this would be to project the law as an instrument to facilitate citizens' access to government records, rather than "information" in general.

Moving on, the term "public

– such as national sovereignty and integrity, public safety and security, foreign relations, individual privacy, fiduciary relationship, etc – are generally accepted as justified in public interest, they are often used as excuses by DOs who cite them as reasons for nondisclosure without providing any justification.

The few ordinary citizens who take the trouble to use the RTI law as a civic responsibility have little expertise or capacity to challenge such decisions through appeal and complaint procedures. Even the Information Commission often lacks the capacity to justify its decisions in favour of nondisclosure with proper reasoning. And yet, in most countries where the law is well entrenched, it is mandatory to give full justification of denial. For instance, a decision of the Central Information Commissions of India clearly stated: "If no specific reasoning is given to justify denial, the information must be provided."

Another problem frustrating users is the general predilection of many DOs to avoid their responsibility by claiming that the information requested is missing. Faced with such



VISUAL: TEENI AND TUNI

work of the government and other public authorities, and keep them under surveillance. Are citizens held back by fear of retaliation from the authorities for seeking sensitive information, lack of understanding about the law and its intricate facets, distrust of the authorities to open up to the public? Or is it the frustrations of many users of the law who find their counterparts in the administration abusing its provisions to deny them information? Clearly, it is a combination of all these factors.

Some of the stumbling blocks in the use of RTI are confusion, uncertainty, misunderstanding, even doubts and anxiety – whether among users of the law, public officials, or in the Information Commission itself.

The term "information" itself is the source of much confusion. In a country with a long history of colonial and authoritarian rule, "information" normally connotes government edicts, rules, regulations, and some general knowledge on matters governments wish the people to know in order to regulate and control them. These are mostly "open" information, created and disseminated by the government itself through various measures. Beyond such ordinary information, there lies a vast range of information related to matters of governance, often of a sensitive nature, which the authorities have kept "hidden" from the people through laws like the

authority", from whom citizens are to seek information, also creates confusion. Many do not realise that this is not limited to the executive branch only, but also extends to the legislative and judiciary arms of government; yet, few requests have been addressed to the latter bodies. In most RTI-mature countries, these sectors are equally the target of citizens' inquiry and surveillance. Attention towards them will increase the range for citizens to apply the law.

As a general rule of thumb, all institutions, bodies, or offices which benefit from and/or use public funds are to be considered as "public authority", including NGOs receiving foreign funds. Even some private entities can be brought into the RTI fold if the government exercises some control over them.

Private banks, for example, which report to the Bangladesh Bank could be asked to share that information with the public. Even private restaurants are subjected to RTI enquiry in countries where the law requires periodic government inspection of their premises to ensure they are complying with hygiene and health standards.

But what about dealing with rejection of RTI requests or being denied information? Public Information Officers (called "DOs" in Bangladesh) tend to reject RTI requests on grounds that they fall under the exemption clauses provided in the Act. While the grounds for nondisclosure

denial, information seekers have been known to abandon their pursuits altogether.

As maintenance of public records is mandatory under the law, any delinquency in this regard should lead to serious administrative measures against those guilty. According to one decision of the Central Information Commission of India: "By practice, 'missing file' cannot be read into as exception in addition to exceptions prescribed by RTI Act. It amounts to breach of Public Records Act, 1993 and punishable with imprisonment up to a term of five years or with fine or both." The challenge is to enforce this clear response.

In order for the RTI Act to succeed, what is crucial is active collaboration among citizen groups, for whose empowerment the law was enacted in the first place. These groups include all civil society groups (including RTI activists and enthusiasts), NGOs, journalists, academics, and relevant professional groups. They must unite to address the challenges, to deal with the misuse and abuse of the provisions of the law – through intervention of the judiciary where necessary – and to help the small community of its earnest users who are ill-equipped and struggling against all odds to keep the transparency ball rolling. It is time to energise the RTI forum and ensure regular interaction between the civil society and the Information Commission to address critical roadblocks.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 Fissure

5 Elizabethan collar

9 Some messages

11 Violinst Stern

13 Book part

14 Caesar's land

15 Roofing supply

16 Sound systems

18 Crop loppers

20 Wish undone

21 1998 De Niro movie

22 Casino acts

23 Once called

24 Okra unit

25 Lanner

27 Mocker art

29 Bulldog backer

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leader

32 Small songbird

34 Numerical prefix

35 Hide-aways

38 Pride members

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40 Tennis's Roddick

41 Crumb carriers

DOWN

1 Takes ten

2 Damage

3 Used car listing possibility

4 Pewter component

5 Ceremonies

6 Manual reader

7 Senior's transit perk

8 Bizarre

10 Caron of "Gigi"

12 Lawyer's workload

17 Toe count

19 Patella, e.g.

24 Burger topper

25 Rock genre

26 "Twelfth Night" heroine

27 Golf goal

28 Copy

30 Velvety flower

31 Dangers

33 Hit the runway

37 Lawyer's org.

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TUESDAY'S ANSWERS

VALE PAIRTS
AGAVE ARTIE
LINEN REEVE
ELK DREAMUP
TEAMUP ILE
ARMS ZED
SATE ABET
PAL DAVE
OLD BEAMUP
STEAMUP APE
TINGE AROSE
ENTER RARER
REESE PITS



THE SUV GUIDE

Choosing the perfect one for your adventures

When it comes to vehicle construction, there are two common methods. Unibody construction integrates the load-bearing frame into the bodywork, resulting in a lighter and stronger structure.

R A HAQ
Traditionally, SUVs (Sport Utility Vehicles) are tall-roofed, high-riding, rugged, and utilitarian off-road vehicles designed to navigate tough terrains. SUVs were introduced in Bangladesh through Japan's reconditioned car market, with nameplates like 'Pajero' and 'Prado' becoming synonymous with the SUV concept. Many perceive these cars as status symbols rather than rugged off-road machines, but, with the rise of crossovers and SUV-like vehicles, it's easy to lose sight of what truly sets an SUV apart. In this guide, we'll help you navigate the essential qualities to consider when buying an SUV.

FRAME, NOT PLATFORM
When it comes to vehicle construction, there are two common methods. Unibody construction integrates the load-bearing frame into the bodywork, resulting in a lighter and stronger structure. On the other hand, SUVs predominantly employ the body-on-

frame design, featuring a separate passenger body and load-bearing frame. This design grants SUVs a higher ride height and exceptional load-carrying capabilities, making them perfect for off-road adventures. However, it's worth noting that frame-based SUVs may offer less crash protection and have a higher risk of rollover due to their higher centre of gravity.

SOFT, NOT STIFF
In addition to the increased ride height, SUVs often feature suspension setups capable of a wide range of motion. Double wishbone and multi-link suspensions with dampers are common in cars such as the Haval H9, typically sitting on thick-walled tires with deep treads for better traction over dirt and rocks. However, unless the suspension features an active management system, the extra suspension movement tends to translate poorly on paved roads, resulting in a 'floaty' driving experience. Such systems can only be found in top-tier SUVs like the BMW X7.

4WD, NOT AWD
While the terms 4WD and AWD are often used interchangeably, they have distinct functions. 4WD systems excel in off-road driving, equipped with low-range crawl gears and traction-enhancing differential locks. However, the added weight and complexity of these components can impact fuel consumption. On the other hand, AWD systems enhance traction on general road surfaces, improving grip and reducing wheelspin. AWD setups prioritise handling and typically limit power distribution to specific wheels, making them less capable off-road.

THE ALL-IMPORTANT LEG SPACE
One of the most noticeable features of SUVs is their size. With three rows of seating, most SUVs can accommodate up to seven passengers and two of these rows can be folded down to create a substantial cargo space. However, it's important to check the leg space in the third row, as some automakers may

sacrifice comfort for additional seating capacity.

LUXURY AND TECHNOLOGY
As SUVs gained popularity among the upper class, automakers began incorporating luxury features into these once-utilitarian vehicles. Leather or leather alternative upholstery offers both luxury and practicality, resisting dirt and mud. Modern SUVs also come equipped with advanced technologies, including off-road driving aids like smart inclinometers and depth sensors, and everyday features like blind spot sensors, parking assistance systems, and 360-degree cameras.

CONSIDERATIONS
While SUVs excel in their intended role, their drawbacks should also be considered. These vehicles are larger, consume more fuel, and come with a higher price tag. The sheer size and complexity of SUVs can be a daily and long-term challenge, especially if you don't plan on utilising their off-road

capabilities to the fullest. Luckily, modern crossovers offer features such as upright proportions, elevated seating positions, and ample cabin and cargo space without compromising fuel efficiency and safety.

If you require passenger and cargo capacity, models like the 'Dynamic' Mitsubishi Xpander is a good option. The Suzuki XL6 provides seating for seven on top of versatile cargo configurations. Budget-friendly options like the Chery Tiggo 8 Pro and DFSK Glory deliver the size, luxury, and road presence at a fraction of the cost of traditional SUVs.

If you need an off-road excursion, the Mitsubishi Outlander, equipped with four-wheel drive and a 3-row configuration, offers moderate off-road capabilities suitable for most adventures, unless your daily commute involves rock climbing. Finally, if you just want the bold look and the ride height of an SUV, there is also the Mitsubishi Eclipse Cross.

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Trott laments bowling effort

SPORTS REPORTER

Afghanistan head coach Jonathan Trott rued the wayward bowling effort from his side, which allowed Bangladesh to be at the drivers' seat at the end of the first day of the one-off Test in Mirpur yesterday.

Afghanistan bowlers gave away too many extras, including 15 no balls, one of which gave Najmul Hossain Shanto a reprieve when he was on 143.

"I don't think we bowled as well as we should have. I think there's a bit in the wicket. We saw that when we got the ball in the right areas consistently for long enough, we created chances. All the things we need to do well in Test cricket, to do things relentlessly and to be accurate and precise. It was a good lesson for the guys," Trott told a post-day press conference.

Trott, however, was looking to turn things around on Day 2.

"Get five wickets for 10 runs, and then get 500. It would be nice (to get them bowled out before Lunch). We have the new ball again in one over. Then hopefully Nijat and the seamers can bowl well tomorrow. The guys learned about the extreme heat today," the Englishman said.



Najmul Hossain Shanto (L) raises his bat as Mahmudul Hasan Joy looks on during the opening day of the one-off Test against Afghanistan at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. The two batters put on a 212-run second-wicket stand before (bottom) an unbeaten 72-run stand between Mushfiqur Rahim and Mehedi Hasan Miraz for the sixth wicket made sure the hosts ended the day on top.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Tigers to begin new WTC cycle against Kiwis

SPORTS REPORTER

Australia will begin their ICC World Test Championship (WTC) defence with a five-match Ashes series against England after winning the second edition with an emphatic 209-run victory over India in the final at The Oval.

Meanwhile, the 2023-2025 WTC cycle will see Bangladesh play six series, three at home and three away from home.

All of Bangladesh's matches in the third cycle of the WTC will be two-match series. India, Australia and England will play five-match series while Pakistan, the West Indies New Zealand, India, England and Australia will play three-match series.

Bangladesh will host New Zealand, South Africa and Sri Lanka before travelling to assignments against India, the West Indies and Pakistan.

The Tigers will begin the new WTC cycle in November-December when they host New Zealand.

Bangladesh were able to win just one from 12 matches in the last cycle, finishing bottom of the table with 16 points. But it was still an improvement on the maiden WTC cycle, when the Tigers were unable to at all.

New Zealand won the first WTC before Australia clinched the last one. India finished runners-up on both occasions.

Shanto identified 'what needs to be done'

SPORTS REPORTER

"No, I am happy with whatever I have done," a nonchalant Najmul Hossain Shanto said at yesterday's press conference when asked if he was feeling the pangs of missing out on what could very well have been an even bigger innings. The question placed by the media about there being some sort of 'disappointment' stemmed from the ease with which Shanto asserted himself against Afghanistan yesterday.

The drives, flicks and pulls in front of square all came out during a mammoth innings of 146. Only the way his innings ended, holed out at deep mid-wicket trying to go for a big shot, could be termed as disappointing. However, there was nothing disappointing about the way Shanto has been answering his critics recently.

Since the start of the year, he has averaged over 50 in all three formats and came up with important knocks in the England T20Is at home during a 3-0 clean sweep. He clinched his maiden ODI ton in a sumptuous chase against Ireland in England just recently. Form-wise, he is Bangladesh's best batter and in the one-off Test, the challenge was to overcome heat, exhaustion and keep grinding for bigger knocks.

He defeated those first two challenges and made it look easy even though he himself did not feel so. He denied the insinuation as clearly as he dispatched some of the Afghanistan bowlers to the boundary yesterday. He talked about batting to a clear plan and on the field, it showed in the clarity of his strokeplay.



SCORES IN BRIEF
Bangladesh vs Afghanistan
Only Test, Day 1
Bangladesh: 362 for five in 79 overs (Shanto 146, Joy 76; Miraz 43 not out, Mushfiqur 41 not out; Masood 2-67, Hamza 1-85)

"No, I didn't feel it was easy out there. I tried to execute according to the plan I was batting to. I had a clear mind about what I needed to do. Maybe it seemed easy to you, but from the beginning I faced difficulties," he said.

Having been deemed unfit for the national team by a large portion of fans for so long, Shanto assumed that his hard work and belief that was born from hours

in the nets were paying off.

"There is no difference [between the bad times and the good times], I always believed in my practice pattern and hard work and identifying what needed to be done. I had the belief that I was going in the right direction and I was giving effort in practice. When you are not scoring, a bad feeling comes about, but I didn't overthink, or worry about the outcomes. It's very true for me. I didn't focus on the negatives. The main thing was focusing on where I was lacking. I didn't get results then, but now it is coming and I would like to continue," he said.

Shanto had paced himself for a flowing knock from the off. His intent and aggression also took the greenish pitch out of the visitors' minds. Afghanistan's bowlers may have lacked discipline, but Shanto argued that he has not faced a weak opposition in international cricket till now.

"Whatever international cricket I have played, no opposition felt weak. It was difficult to score against every side," he said when it was suggested the Afghanistan attack appeared weak compared to current international standards. "Their spinners bowled some good overs. All the credit goes to our batters for the way they negotiated the spinners."

It was Shanto's maiden ton on home soil and, if there was any disappointment, it is Shanto himself who has to work things out. "It's true the innings could have been bigger and when an opportunity comes, I will look to make such innings even bigger," he said.

Cabrera looks for 'perfect preparation'

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh head coach Javier Cabrera will make his last attempt to figure out the right combination and fine-tune playing eleven before the upcoming SAFF Championship when his charges take on hosts Cambodia in Phnom Penh today.

The FIFA friendly match will get underway at 6:00pm BST.

"We are getting ready for the SAFF Championship here. We know we have tough competition tomorrow (today) but we are excited because it's going to be a great atmosphere against the quality of Cambodia. It will be a perfect preparation for us," Cabrera told reporters at a pre-match conference yesterday.

The Spaniard added that his charges would play the same way as they did against Cambodia last September, where a Rakib Hossain strike separated the two sides in a FIFA friendly encounter.

Captain Jamal Bhuiyan echoed his coach's sentiment, saying, "Our main target is the SAFF Championship. We played a warm-up match against a local team, which was a good test for us but tomorrow (today) is the main test. I'm sure it will be a good match because Cambodia have some quality players. We are looking forward to the match."

Cabrera will now have more options to assess as defenders Bishwanath Ghosh and Isa Faisal joined the squad after the first warm-up match. The 37-year-old Spaniard will definitely want to stabilise his backline through today's match.



Australia coach wants to stop Messi

AFP, Beijing

Australia said Wednesday they have maximum respect for Lionel Messi but will do everything they can to stop him when they meet Argentina in a Beijing friendly.

The two sides clash in the Chinese capital on Thursday in a re-run of their last-16 clash at the World Cup, where skipper Messi scored and terrorised the Socceroos in a 2-1 win. Messi and Argentina went on to win the World Cup.

"Regarding Lionel Messi, how could you not respect someone who's done what he's done in football?" Australia coach Graham Arnold told reporters at the 68,000-capacity Workers' Stadium.

"Of course we respect him, but at the same time we're looking to stop him and make sure our focus is on our performance, make sure that we get out there and play right, and put in a great performance against the world champions."

The 35-year-old Messi said last week that he will join MLS side Inter Miami following the end of his two-year deal with Paris Saint-Germain.

Tickets for Thursday's game have sold out rapidly despite soaring prices, with Chinese fans desperate to see Messi in the flesh.

What went wrong with India second time around?

ASRAR CHOWDHURY

When India won the toss and chose to bowl in the final of the World Test Championship against Australia at the Oval in London on June 7, it was the right decision at the right moment. Australia would have done the same. At Stumps on Day 1, with Australia at 327/3, the familiar question started to ring bells: are India going to lose another ICC knockout? In hindsight, the answer is now known.

India did not reach the two Test finals in 2021 and 2023 on fluke. They reached on merit. They defeated Australia, England and South Africa in their backyards. They made comebacks to make their supporters and opponents know that they are no pushovers.

The IPL was not a contributing factor. In 2023 India did not have time to adapt in between the IPL and the Test final. In 2021, they had sufficient time to adapt. Yet they lost in both finals.

What went wrong with India?

The scorecards of the two finals

show an interesting pattern. It was almost the same team, both times around. Rohit Sharma, Shubman Gil, Cheteshwar Pujara, Virat Kohli, Ajinkya Rahane, Ravindra Jadeja and Mohammed Shami were in both the finals.

India's first problem was that their top-order failed to give their bowlers something to defend in both the finals.

India's second innings collapses is where they went wrong. In 2021, India lost Kohli at 3/71. The team was bundled out for 170 and lost the final. In 2023, India lost Pujara at 3/93 going into stumps on Day 4 at 164/3. The final morning is history. Another second

innings collapse and another loss in the final.

Did India start Day 5 with a wrong approach? Yes and No.

The pitch was still good for batting. India's run-rate was not that bad. It was possible to chase the target. This is where India probably got it wrong. They set out to chase the target.

Day 5 was in India's hand. India needed to bide time and take the

game deep. The deeper India could have gone, the more a draw would have become possible. The trophy could have been shared between India and Australia. An ICC trophy has been shared in the past. The 2002 Champions Trophy was shared between India and Sri Lanka.

By chasing, India committed the cardinal sin of Test cricket. India let Australia breathe. Once Australia can breathe in a Test, Australia will make a comeback.

What can India do now?

India need to go back to the Ranji Trophy. That is where all their greatest Tests players have come from. India need to seriously explore why they collapsed on the second innings in both the finals.

The month of June cannot be accepted as a reason. India last won an ICC Trophy on June 24, 2013, defeating England in the Champions Trophy in England and Wales. India also first won an ICC Trophy on June 25, 1983, when Kapil's Devils conquered the West Indies, again in England and Wales.

A nation's glory in sport lies in its silverware. India will soon enter a second decade with no new silverware. It is time for India to ask, what goes wrong?



Organisers and participants pose for a photograph after an event titled 'Celebrating 10 years of Goal in Bangladesh' at The Daily Star Centre yesterday. Goal, a flagship programme within Futuremakers by Standard Chartered, teaches life-skills based on education through sports for the low-income girls within the age bracket of 12-18 years and enhances their confidence, communication and leadership quality. In Bangladesh, approximately 50,000 adolescent girls have been reached in the last 10 years and Goal aims to empower and equip them with knowledge and skills they need to be integral economic leaders in their families, communities and societies.

PHOTO: STAR



Govt rolls out Tk 4,988cr road safety project

World Bank to provide Tk 3,759.82cr; RHD, BRTA, police, DGHS to jointly implement it by June 2028

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The largest-ever road safety project in Bangladesh was launched yesterday aiming to reduce fatalities and injuries from road crashes.

The World Bank and the government are funding the Tk 4,988.14 crore project, which was approved by the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council on April 18.

Of the sum, the WB -- for whom this will be the first dedicated road safety project in South Asia -- will provide Tk 3,759.82 crore. The government will provide the remaining sum.

The Roads and Highways Department, Bangladesh Road Transport Authority, Bangladesh Police and Directorate General of Health Services will jointly implement the project from May 2023 to June 2028.

The project began at a time when road safety has taken a central stage with thousands of people getting killed and injured every year mainly due to lack of proper monitoring and enforcement of laws.

At least 4,68 people were killed and 769 others injured in 496 road crashes across the country in May, according to Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity, a passenger welfare platform.

Different bodies exist in Bangladesh to ensure road safety, but they are not empowered and lack effective coordination to get expected outcomes, the WB said in its appraisal report.

The organisations are also not held accountable. Besides, the fund allocated for road safety action plans is insufficient, not prioritised and

Different bodies exist in Bangladesh to ensure road safety, but they are not empowered and lack effective coordination to get expected outcomes: WB

has never been institutionalised, it said.

The project will pilot comprehensive road safety measures, including improved engineering designs, road signs and markings, pedestrian facilities, speed enforcement and emergency care from Gazipur to Elenga and Natore-Nawabganj highways.

The measures will help reduce road traffic deaths by more than 30 percent on the two highways, the WB said.

The project will also undertake road safety pilots in selected urban areas and district roads. It will improve post-crash care, which is critical in saving lives, and will also set up an ambulance service via a toll-free number and upgraded emergency care services in selected district hospitals, and upazila health complexes along the two national highway corridors.

"Road safety affects us all. Road crashes are the fourth leading cause of children's death in Bangladesh and youths are disproportionately affected," said Abdoulaye Seck, the WB's country director for Bangladesh and Bhutan, at the launch event held at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the capital.

Road fatalities and injuries are personal and family tragedies and they undermine a country's growth and human development. For Bangladesh, improving road safety is a key development priority, he said.

"Through this project and other ongoing initiatives, the World Bank is helping Bangladesh make roads safer for its people," he added.

Although the incumbent government made a significant development in the transport sector, the road accidents put them in an uncomfortable situation, said Obaidul Quader, the road transport and bridges minister.

This project will help Bangladesh achieve the Sustainable Development Goals on road safety by 2030.

The WB's decision to cancel the loan for Padma Bridge was a misunderstanding, which is over now, he said, adding that the Washington-based multilateral lender's funding for the project and budget support is a testament to that.

ABM Amin Ullah Nuri, secretary of the road transport and highways division, Sharifa Khan, secretary of the economic relations division, and chiefs of the implementing agencies of the project also spoke.



Bangladesh opener Najmul Hossain Shanto blows a kiss as he celebrates his brilliant century on the opening day of the one-off Test against Afghanistan at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

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DHAKA-17 BY-POLLS

Rift in JP resurfaces

Quader, Raushan nominate separate candidates

RASHIDUL HASAN

Fresh rifts have surfaced between Jatiya Party Chairman GM Quader and the party's Chief Patron Raushan Ershad as they nominated two separate leaders to contest in the Dhaka-17 by-election.

GM Quader yesterday nominated Maj (retd) Sikdar Anisur Rahman while Raushan, also leader of the opposition in parliament, nominated Kazi Mamun to contest in the by-polls.

Flanked by leaders of Raushan's faction, Kazi Mamun yesterday submitted his nomination papers before the Dhaka Senior Election Officer Md Munir Hossain at the Election Commission office in Agargaon.

Opposition Chief Whip Mashiur Rahman Ranga, Raushan's political secretary Golam Moshi, former state minister

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79 migrants drown as boat sinks off Greece

104 rescued; hundreds more feared dead or missing

REUTERS, Athens

At least 79 migrants drowned early yesterday and hundreds more were feared dead or missing after their overloaded boat capsized and sank in open seas off Greece, in one of Europe's deadliest shipping disasters.

As a painstaking search for survivors continued, a European rescue support charity said it believed around 750 people were on board the 20-30 metre-long (65-100 foot) vessel. Greek authorities said it was too soon to speculate on the number.

Alarm Phone, which operates a trans-European network supporting rescue operations, said it received alerts from people on board a ship in distress off Greece late on Tuesday, subsequently losing contact.

"According to the people, there were 750 people on board... We now hear reports of a shipwreck and fear they are true," it said on Twitter.

The UN's International Organization for Migration said in a tweet that initial reports suggested up to 400 people were on the boat.

Greek authorities said it was unclear how many the vessel was carrying when it went under, and that 104 people had been rescued by midday.

"It is not safe to give a number. We do not know how many people were in the hold," coast guard spokesperson Nikos Alexiou told Greece's MEGA TV. "...There were too many people on the outer deck. It was full."

The boat's occupants had refused an offer of help late on Tuesday, the coast guard added.

Rare dwarf star crystallising into 'diamond' found

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Astronomers have found a rare white dwarf star about 104 light-years away whose core appears to be transforming into an ultra-dense "cosmic diamond."



When some stars, such as the Sun, near the end of their life, they become what is known as a white dwarf.

A white dwarf is very hot when it forms, but since it has no source of energy, it cools down, radiating energy, and some such stars may gradually harden and crystallise.

Astronomers, including those from the University of Southern Queensland in Australia, have now found one such white dwarf which has cooled down, and its core may be transforming into a "cosmic diamond."

In a yet-to-be peer-reviewed study, posted in the arXiv preprint server, scientists describe a white dwarf star about 104 light years away, which is primarily made of carbon and metallic oxygen.

"In this work, we present the discovery of a new Sirius-like quadruple system at 32 parsecs distance, composed of a crystallizing white dwarf companion to the previously known triple HD 190412," scientists wrote in the study, accepted for publication in the Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society.

Mother, daughter stabbed to death at Noakhali home

Cops say spat over money led to double murder

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

A woman and her daughter were stabbed to death at their residence in Noakhali town yesterday.

Police suspect a monetary dispute to be the motive behind the double murder.

The victims were Nur Nahar Begum, 40, wife of Fazle Azim, and her daughter Fatema Azim Priyonti, 17, who sat for this year's SSC exams.

The incident took place around 10:30am at Guptanko Barlington area.

Police arrested Altaf Hossain, 28, after locals handed him over to them. He was an expatriate working in Oman who returned home a week ago.

During primary interrogation, Altaf admitted to committing the double murder and a case was filed against him.

Altaf told police that he and Nur Nahar got acquainted over the phone, which later turned into an affair.

He also said that Nur Nahar told him to return to Bangladesh and that she would give him Tk 2.5 lakh for running a business here, said Md Shahidul Islam, superintendent of Noakhali police, at a press briefing yesterday evening.

Altaf returned a week ago and since then he has been demanding money

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A market of Dhaka North City Corporation in front of the Gabtoli cattle market is being demolished to build an approach road to the under-construction bridge over the Turag river at Gabtoli. The Roads and Highways Department, which knocked the market down, is constructing the bridge.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Abductors release 2nd video of Sufiul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A second video clip of a Bangladeshi UN official, reportedly abducted by Al-Qaeda in Yemen, has allegedly been released by the terrorist outfit as "proof of life".



Sufiul Anam

The clip was picked up by SITE Intelligence Group, which monitors the online activities of organisations like Al-Qaeda.

AKM Sufiul Anam has been held hostage since February 2022.

The first video clip of Sufiul was released on September 7 last year, where he stated that he was abducted by Al-Qaeda.

In the video picked up by the media yesterday, Sufiul reiterated that he was abducted on February 11, 2022, along with four of his Yemeni staffers.

"Today is the third June, 2023," said Sufiul in the clip. Throughout the video, he was reading out a written script.

"I appeal to the UN secretary-general and our colleagues at work for quick response to the demands made by AQAP [Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula] before I face serious and terrible consequences," he read.

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