



**Kyrgyzstan:
A tale of an
eagle and
a bond**



**'Spain morale
sky-high
after Italy win'**



**A fire kindles
inside
Konal**



**1 million
children
displaced in
Sudan war: UN**

BUDGETARY ALLOCATION Education gets far less than it requires

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

Due to meagre allocation for the education sector, Bangladesh will face growing challenges to graduate from the least developed country status, say economists and educationists.

The proposed allocation of 1.76 percent of the Gross Domestic Product for the education ministries in the 2023-24 fiscal is the lowest in the past 15 years. It is way less than UNESCO's recommendation of four to six percent allocation of the GDP for the sector.

Bangladesh's average education expenditure as a percentage of GDP from 2016 to 2022 was the 5th lowest among 41 least developed countries, according to data presented by the Centre for Policy Dialogue in its post-budget discussion.

Economists say that with this decreasing trend, the country will not achieve the 8th Five Year plan to elevate its allocation for education to three percent of GDP by the 2024-2025 fiscal.

"It comes as a shock that Bangladesh's education budget is one of the lowest among the LDCs," says Fahmida Khatun, executive director of the CPD.

"More economic efficiency will be needed after graduation from the

- Allocation for education 1.76pc of GDP in FY2023-24, lowest in 15 years
- Bangladesh's average education expenditure 5th lowest among 41 LDCs between 2016 & 2022
- Between 2016 & 2022, only Somalia, Haiti, South Sudan, Central African Republic were behind Bangladesh
- In 2021, Bhutan spent on education 7pc of GDP, Pakistan 2.4pc and Bangladesh 2.01pc

LDC status. We will not get that efficiency with the current standard of education," she adds.

Since 2009-10, when the Awami League-led 14-party alliance placed its first budget, the sector's allocation has hovered around two percent of GDP. During this period, the government allocated the highest 2.49 percent of GDP in 2016-17. The allocation has since fallen gradually over the past seven years and hit rock bottom in the budget for the 2023-24 fiscal, which is the last budget of the incumbent government's current tenure.

For the next fiscal, the government has allocated Tk 80,000 crore for the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, the Secondary and Higher Education Division, and the Technical and Madrasa Education Division.

In his budget speech for the next fiscal, Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal gave emphasis on enhancing the quality of education at all levels.

"Today's children will make our dream of a developed-prosperous-smart Bangladesh a reality. Therefore, we want to enable students to face all upcoming challenges mainly arising from the fourth industrial revolution and climate change, and move forward. Our aim is to provide science-based, technology-based, skill-enhancing, and creativity-supportive education that will instil in them the spirit of delivering services...," he said.

Educationalists, however, say that they did not find any direction from the finance minister about how these targets will be fulfilled.

Rasheda K Choudhury, executive director of Campaign for Popular Education, says that education campaigners have been calling for increasing the budget for a long time but they don't see any reflection of their demands.

"The education budget shows a dismal picture. The budget speech

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Construction work on the metro rail line stretching from Agargaon to Motijheel is going on. The government plans to open the Agargaon-Motijheel route of the metro rail by November. This is a part of Dhaka's first metro rail -- the 20km-long MRT-6 -- from Uttara to Motijheel. The photo was taken in the capital's Farmgate area last week.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

Barishal city quietly changes hands

New faces taking control of toll collection

SUSHANTA GHOSH and
MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN, from Barishal

Incumbent Barishal Mayor Serniabat Sadiq Abdullah is losing all his grip over the city after a new mayor was elected last week.

Over the last five years, between Tk 30 crore and Tk 35 crore had been collected annually mainly from the transport sector, according to different estimates.

Followers of Abul Khair Abdullah, who won the city corporation election on Monday with 87,808 votes, started taking control of the city soon after the ruling Awami League nominated him for mayor two months ago.

Jahangir Hossain, president of Barishal city AL, however, told The Daily Star that no leader or activist of the party was ever involved in "illegal toll collection".

He refused to make comments when asked specifically about Sadiq's and Khair's men.

Sadiq did not answer the calls made by these correspondents.

Talking to reporters, mayor-elect Khair recently said, "I will not tolerate irregularities... I will rather try to solve the crises that were created earlier."

Muhammad Rubel, who drives a battery-run auto-rickshaw, said until about a month ago, everyone operating such rickshaws had to pay Tk 20 every day to the mayor's men.

The city corporation in March gave each driver a token.

But several city corporation officials requesting anonymity said the money collected from the battery-run auto-rickshaws over the years was not deposited to the corporation's account.

Abdur Rahim, a traffic inspector of Barishal Metropolitan Police (BMP), said there are around 12,000 auto-rickshaws in the city.

According to an estimate, the total amount collected from auto-rickshaws may reach Tk 8.76 crore a year. The toll collection stopped after the ruling AL decided not to nominate Sadiq.

Transport sector insiders say owners of each CNG-run three-wheeler used to pay the owners' association Tk 500 a month.

The president of the association, Dulal Mia, is known as a close aide to Sadiq. People in the sector say most of the money collected in the name of the association used to be taken by Dulal. This activity also came to an end in mid-April.

Contacted, Dulal said his association collected the money for workers' welfare.

BMP traffic officials say there are around 3,200 different types of fossil fuel-powered three-wheelers in the city.

Transport association leaders estimate that

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

'I want my son back'

Says slain journo Nadim's mother; eyewitness claims suspects UP chairman, his son were at the scene

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

Grief descended on the entire Goruhati village where slain journalist Golam Rabbani Nadim lived.

Around 9:00am yesterday, his body was on his house yard in Jamalpur's Bakshiganj upazila. His family was lamenting.

"I want my son back. I cannot live without him. The chairman [of local union parishad] killed my son," said his



mother Aleya Begum.

Nadim's three children were numb.

His widow Monira Begum said, "The chairman was angry with my husband. He killed my husband. We want justice."

Journalists yesterday formed human chains in different districts and demanded punishment of Nadim's killers.

Nadim, 42, the Jamalpur district correspondent of Banglanews24.com and Bakshiganj upazila correspondent of Ekattor TV, died on Thursday, a day after he was attacked allegedly by some supporters of the local UP chairman.

The victim's family and colleagues claimed that Mahmudul Alam, chairman of Sadhurpara Union Parishad, and his supporters killed the journalist for publishing a report that went against the chairman.

Nadim's report was run by Banglanews24.com.

Mahmudul could not be found as of filing of the report around 10:30pm yesterday.

EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT

Local journalist Muzahid Babu is an eyewitness to the attack on Nadim on Wednesday night.

"Around 10:00pm, Nadim and I were returning home on two motorbikes. When we were near Bakshiganj College, someone hit Nadim from the back with stick and he fell on the ground," said Muzahid.

Instantly, some 10 to 12 people, armed with sticks and iron rods, dragged Nadim to a nearby alley.

"The chairman's son Rifat was among them. Rifat also threatened me with life, if I tried to save Nadim," Muzahid told The Daily Star yesterday.

"I saw the chairman, Mahmudul, standing behind an under construction wall in the alley. After the attackers took Nadim to the alley, the chairman's son broke the wall, took a brick and hit Nadim's head with it," said Muzahid.

"I informed Lalon Miah [Nadim's cousin and a journalist] of the incident, who rushed to the spot. Lalon and I then entered the alley and found Nadim lying on the ground. By this time, the assailants left the scene," he added.

"We took Nadim to a hospital," he added.

WHO IS MAHMUDUL?

Locals alleged that Mahmudul, also general secretary of Sadhurpara union unit Awami League, unleashed a regime of terror in Bakshiganj as he runs criminal activities like drug trading and extortion.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Tigers sensing victory

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It was another day of sheer domination and individual milestones with Bangladesh sensing a victory by the end of the third day's play as Afghanistan prepare to resume the fourth day on 45 for two in chase of a record 662-run target in the lone Test at Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

The gloomy weather over the last hour of the day reflected the environment gripping the visiting dressing room, especially after skipper Hashmatullah Shahidi was struck on the helmet by a Taskin Ahmed bouncer and forced to leave ground in their second innings.

Shoriful Islam and Taskin provided early breakthroughs, removing Afghan openers Ibrahim Zadran and Abdul Malik respectively in the first two overs of the second innings.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



It was yet another dominating display by Bangladesh on Day 3 of their one-off Test against Afghanistan in Mirpur yesterday, with Najmul Hossain Shanto and Mominul Haque's centuries being the major highlights. Shanto became only the second Bangladeshi to score two centuries in a Test after Mominul, who also reached the three-figure mark on Friday after 26 innings.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

343 BNP men sued over clash in Noakhali

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

A case was filed yesterday against 343 leaders and activists of BNP and its affiliated organisations over a clash in Companiganj upazila of Noakhali.

On Thursday, at least four BNP men and a ruling party man were injured in the clash between BNP and Awami League men.

In the case, 93 leaders and activists of BNP were named and 250 unidentified people were accused, Sadekur Rahman, officer-in-charge (OC) of Companiganj Police Station, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Upazila Swechchhasebak League Joint General Secretary Md Alamgir Hossain filed the case on Thursday night.

Md Fakhrul Islam, a member of Companiganj upazila BNP, is the main accused in the case. The others accused include Mahmudur Rahman Ripon, secretary of upazila BNP, Obaidul Haque Rafel, convener of Basurhat Municipal Jubo Dal, Nurul Alam Shikdar, convener of upazila BNP, Abdul Matin Liton, president of Basurhat Municipal BNP, among others.

The BNP leaders said the case was filed to harass their leaders and activists.

According to the plaintiff's statement, the clash between BNP activists took place in Basurhat Bazar on Thursday afternoon over internal conflicts within the party.

Hasna Jasim Uddin Moudud, a member of the BNP Standing Committee and wife of Moudud Ahmed, dismissed the claims and stated that the ruling party members attacked them without any provocation.

Noakhali BNP General Secretary Abdur Rahman claimed that their members had been assaulted by ruling party supporters and now a case has been filed against them.

"It's unfair. The home minister had said in parliament a few days ago that no case would be filed against the opposition party leaders before the elections, but the case was filed without any verification," he said, adding that the BNP activists are fleeing their homes fearing arrests.

Two cops suspended for 'torturing businessmen'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two officers of Padma Bridge South Police Station have been suspended over allegation of torturing two businessmen in custody.

The official order of suspension was issued from the police headquarters on June 15 and it reached the office of the police superintendent

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addresses a civic reception accorded to her by expatriate Bangladeshis at the Hilton hotel in Geneva on Thursday.

PHOTO: PID

CLIMATE CHANGE DISASTER UN chief slams 'pitiful' world response

AFP, United Nations

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said Thursday the world is racing toward a climate change disaster, dismissing the current global response as woefully inadequate.

Climate policies currently adopted will lead to average temperatures 2.8 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial times by the end of the century, nearly twice the UN goal of a 1.5 degree rise, Guterres said.

"That spells catastrophe. Yet the collective response remains pitiful," Guterres told a press conference.

"We are hurtling towards disaster, eyes wide open – with far too many willing to bet it all on wishful thinking, unproven technologies and silver bullet solutions. It's time to wake up and step up," said the UN chief.

He said the fossil fuel industry must undertake not just a transition but full-blown transformation as it moves toward clean energy "and away from a product incompatible with human survival."

Guterres added: "Countries are far off-track in meeting climate promises and commitments. I see a lack of ambition. A lack of trust. A lack of support. A lack of cooperation. And an abundance of problems around clarity and credibility."

Guterres, who is hosting a climate summit

in New York in September, said the 1.5 degree goal is "still possible," if the fight against climate change is accelerated.

"All of this action must be global. It must be immediate. And it must start with the polluted heart of the climate crisis: the fossil fuel industry," he warned.

"Let's face facts. The problem is not simply fossil fuel emissions. It's fossil fuels – period."

Guterres also called out the oil and gas industry's \$4 trillion net income last year.

"Yet for every dollar it spends on oil and gas drilling and exploration, only 4 cents went to clean energy and carbon capture – combined."

"Trading the future for thirty pieces of silver is immoral," he cautioned.

Scientists say global warming is exacerbating adverse weather, with many countries experiencing deadly heatwaves and temperatures hitting records across Asia in recent weeks.

Temperatures in Beijing hit a record for mid-June of 39.4 degrees Celsius (103 Fahrenheit) yesterday, China's meteorological authority said, warning the public to stay indoors.

"At around 2:30 pm on June 16, the temperature at Beijing's Nanjiao observatory hit 39.4 degrees Celsius, breaking the record high for mid-June," the China Meteorological Administration (CMA) wrote in a social media post.

Rohingya youth killed at Bhasan Char, 2 arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two Rohingya youths were arrested yesterday for killing another Rohingya youth at Bhasan Char.

Victim Jahid Hossain, 15, was killed on June 8 and police recovered his body on June 12.

His throat and wrists were slit with sharp weapons, reported media outlets.

Police found the identity of the dead by making public announcement in the camp and Rohingya woman Mustakima identified the deceased as her brother Jahid.

Mustakima filed a murder case with Bhasan Char Police Station.

The police managed to recover the smartphone of Jahid from Rohingya refugee Md Abdullah.

Based on his information, the police arrested two Rohingya youths who, according to the police, murdered Jahid over previous enmity. The police also recovered a dagger which they believe is the murder weapon.

Three bodies wash ashore in three days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A decomposing body of a man was found floating near St Martin's Island in Cox's Bazar yesterday morning.

His identity could not be known, said Abul Halim, officer-in-charge of Teknaf Police Station, adding that the body was sent to the district Sadar Hospital morgue for an autopsy.

With this, three bodies washed ashore in Cox's Bazar in last three days. The body of a woman was found at Teknaf's Sabrang beach on Wednesday and a man's body in Ukhiya's Inani beach on Thursday, police said.

Rafiqul Islam, an additional superintendent of Cox's Bazar police, said they are probing the incidents.

"Phone numbers of Myanmar and Malaysia were found with the woman," he said, suspecting the three might have died on the sea on their way to Malaysia.

4.5 magnitude quake jolts Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An earthquake of 4.5 magnitude jolted Bangladesh yesterday morning, according to Bangladesh Meteorological Department.

The quake was felt in several parts of the country, including Dhaka at 10:46am, Meteorologist Rubayet Kabir of BMD told The Daily Star.

The epicentre of the quake was Golapganj of Sylhet, the BMD official said.

3.80 lakh yaba pills recovered in Teknaf

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

BGB members recovered 3.80 lakh yaba tablets near the Naf river from Cox's Bazar's Teknaf upazila early yesterday.

Acting on a tip-off, a BGB team conducted a drive in Ashikania area and recovered the yaba pills from three sacks, said Lt Col Md Mohiuddin Ahmed, commanding officer of BGB 2 Battalion.

However, the drug smugglers could not be arrested as they fled the scene, sensing the presence of the BGB team.

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

Five hurt as SUST students clash with locals

OUR CORRESPONDENT, SYLHET

At least five people including students were injured after clashes broke out between students of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (SUST) and the locals in Sylhet's Akhalia area yesterday evening.

The clash erupted around 5:00pm as a group of locals got into an altercation with a security guard of the university after being barred from entering the campus.

Police went to the spot and brought the situation under control by 6:30pm.

Saiful Alam Rukon, officer-in-charge of Jalalabad Police Station, said, "The students have gathered inside the campus and locals have taken up positions in different points around the campus. Additional police have been deployed in the area."

Education gets far less than it requires

FROM PAGE 1

is wonderfully crafted, everything is there. It talks about smart citizens, skilled manpower with values, and ensuring the quality of education. But what is absent in it is the direction about how all of this will happen," she adds.

The CPD in its post budget presentation, titled "An Analysis of the National Budget for FY2023-24", said that on an average, at least 35 LDCs spent two percent or more of their GDP on education from 2016 to 2022. In the same period, Bangladesh's

2.6 percent, Rwanda 3.3 percent, Senegal and Ethiopia 5.1 percent and Sierra Leone 6.7 percent, according to the CPD.

Meanwhile, data released by World Bank shows that Bangladesh's average education expenditure as a percentage of GDP is less than that of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

The global lender data also shows that Bhutan spent on education 7.0 percent of GDP in 2021, India spent 4.5 percent in 2020, Pakistan 2.4 percent in 2021, Maldives 5.8 percent in 2020, Nepal 4.2 percent in 2020, Sri Lanka

by students due to long-term closures of educational institutions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Fahmida says that the government provides less allocation for education as its priorities lie in physical infrastructure.

Tigers sensing

FROM PAGE 1

Prior to that, it was Najmul Hossain Shanto who stole the show with his second century of the match, while Mominul Haque came to the fore with his first Test century in 26 months as the hosts battled till the first hour of the third session yesterday and racked up their highest target in Test cricket.

Shanto continued his brilliant form to notch up his fourth Test hundred, becoming only the second Bangladeshi batter to score centuries in both innings of a Test match after Mominul Haque.

However, he fell to bowling of Zahir Khan after scoring 124 off 151 deliveries and although many assumed the hosts would declare after Mominul reached his century, the Tigers kept grinding.

Bangladesh head coach Chandika Hathurusingha had said in a chat with broadcasters before the start of the third day that his side would bat for a long period, perhaps considering this as an ideal platform to give the batters some much-needed exposure in a Test.

Bangladesh eventually declared on 425 for four, with Mominul unbeaten on 121 off 145 balls, a knock that featured twelve fours and six, while Liton Das scored his maiden fifty as Test captain and was not out on 66.

Earlier, after resuming on 134 for one, Shanto and Zakir Hasan's 173-run second-wicket stand came to an end after the latter was unfortunately run out after scoring 71 off 95 balls. Mushfiqur Rahim departed cheaply after scoring eight as he mistimed a reverse sweep before Mominul and Liton decided to work the Afghan bowlers to the breaking point.

Barishal city quietly changes hands

FROM PAGE 1

around Tk 1.92 crore is collected from owners of these vehicles every year.

On the city's waterways, a group used to make each operator of the 150 speedboats pay Tk 100 a day. This means around Tk 54 lakh was collected from them a year.

Shekhor Chandra Das, a local AL leader from ward-10, used to collect the money, locals said. Shekhor said he had never taken any money illegally.

Drivers of over 200 rental microbuses had to pay a close aide to Sadiq Tk 100 every day. The amount collected from them every year could

be as much as Tk 73 lakh. This also stopped when Sadiq did not get the AL ticket.

A former Chhatra League leader who is a follower of Sadiq, used to collect Tk 1,000 a month from each of the around 400 buses that used the Nathullabad terminal. Transport companies setting up ticket booths had to pay him between Tk 20 and Tk 30 lakh, said at least a dozen bus operators.

Currently, Aftab Hossain, president of Barishal district Sramik League and a close aide to Khair, is in control of the business.

Aftab maintains that he has nothing to do with toll collection.

Each of the Buses that use Rupatali terminal pays Tk 500 each day.

A Sramik League leader who is a close aide to Khair now controls the terminal, but two months ago, a follower of Sadiq held sway.

Fish sellers say they have to pay Tk 3.5 for the sale of each kg of Hilsa, and Tk 2.5 for other fish.

There are around 200 wholesale fish traders in the city where tonnes of fish are sold every day.

Asked about these, BMP Commissioner Saiful Islam said, "We will definitely take action if anyone files a complaint."

NAGORNO-KARABAKH Armenia accuses Azerbaijan of 'ethnic cleansing'

AFP, Yerevan

Armenia yesterday accused Azerbaijan of pursuing a policy of "ethnic cleansing" in the Armenian-populated region of Nagorno-Karabakh, at the centre of a decades-long territorial dispute between the Caucasus arch-foes.

On April 23, Azerbaijan set up a border checkpoint at the entrance to the Lachin corridor, the only road linking Armenia to the separatist region.

The move followed a months-long roadblock by Azerbaijani environmental activists, which Yerevan claims has led to a humanitarian crisis in the mountainous enclave that had experienced shortages of food and fuel.

Azerbaijan insisted civilian transport was running unimpeded through the Lachin corridor.

Yesterday, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said that the "humanitarian situation in Karabakh has extremely worsened" after Baku blocked the traffic through the road on Thursday.

average education expenditure was 1.8 percent of GDP. And only Somalia with 0.2 percent, Haiti with 1.5 percent, South Sudan with 1.5 percent and Central African Republic with 1.8 percent, remain behind Bangladesh.

Somalia, South Sudan and Central African Republic are African countries that are riven by conflicts. In these countries, economic and social development continues to be hindered by political instability and increasing violence. On the other hand, gang violence has been paralysing the Caribbean country Haiti, fuelling the resurgence of cholera and extreme levels of food insecurity.

Among the LDC countries, Myanmar spends on education 2.1 percent of GDP, Congo and Uganda 2.2 percent, Chad 2.5 percent, Cambodia

1.9 percent in 2019 and Afghanistan 2.9 percent in 2019.

Prof Abu Eusuf, director of Dhaka University's Centre on Budget and Policy, said that education has a relation to the creation of employability. With such meagre allocation, it is hardly possible that education can contribute to the employment sector. "Currently, We are producing graduates but we are not producing productive graduates," he said.

"We don't see any steps to enhance the skills of job seekers. Overall, the research sector did not get due importance in the budget," he added.

Both Rasheda and Eusuf have pointed out that the finance minister did not give any specific allocations to address the issue of learning loss faced

'I want my son back'

FROM PAGE 1

He misused political power. He had blessings from the law enforcers and administration as one of his relatives is a former senior police official, they said.

"Mahmudul was a carpenter around two decades ago. But he made a huge amount of money through illegal activities. His relative, the ex-police official, is the main source of his power," said Humayan Kabir, former chairman of the union.

Lalon said, "Mahmudul was a BNP activist before he joined the Awami League in 2011. He became the general secretary of the union unit Awami League and even managed to get the party ticket for union parishad chairman."

Seeking anonymity, a resident of Aiyermari village in Sadhurpara union, said, "I wanted to sell a piece of land a few years ago. But the chairman prevented me from selling the land to a person. He rather put pressure on me to sell him the land at a low price."

A farmer of Dhatura village said, "My son did not want to be involved in politics. But the chairman forced him to work with his group. The

chairman even implicated my son in a false case to keep my son under his control."

Baki Billah, president of Jamalpur AL, said he was not aware of Mahmudul's involvement in the BNP.

Contacted, Mohammad Sohel Rana, officer-in-charge of Bakshiganj Police Station, said Mahmudul was on the run.

"We are trying to detain him. But we don't know whether he was involved in any other criminal activities," he told The Daily Star.

So far, police have detained six people in connection with the murder. The detainees include the chairman's nephew Rezaul and Bakshiganj upazila unit AL Deputy Office Secretary Rakibullah, police said.

Nasir Uddin Ahmed, superintendent of Jamalpur police, visited Nadim's home yesterday evening and asked his family members to file a case.

Meanwhile, Commander Khandaker Al Moin, spokesperson for Rab, yesterday at a press briefing in Dhaka said they were working to detain the killers of journalist Nadim, reports BSS.

JOURNO NADIM MURDER

‘Bring killers to book’

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Numerous rights organisations, journalists’ associations and political entities yesterday staged demonstration in the capital and other regions of the country protesting the murder of journalist Golam Rabbani Nadim.

They demanded immediate arrest, trial and punishment for those involved in the killing.

Besides, they also urged the authorities to ensure safety and security of journalists.

Bangladesh Chhatra Union formed a human chain near Raju Memorial Sculpture on Dhaka University campus demanding speedy trial of the culprits.

The organisation’s President Ragib Nayeem, General Secretary Rakibul Rony and Organising Secretary Tamzid Haider Chanchol, among others, spoke at the event.

The speakers said they did not need a government that failed to ensure a journalist’s security.

A section of journalists in Savar, under the banner of Ashulia Press Club, formed a human chain in Baipail area near Nabinagar-Chandra Highway.

Khagrachhari Journalists’ Union also formed a human chain in front of the central Shaheed Minar of the district. Khagrachhari Press Club and Khagrachhari TV Journalists’ Association expressed their solidarity.

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), in its statement, expressed grave concern and anger at the incident.

“Killing of Golam Rabbani is the latest example of repression and atrocity on journalists. The TIB is urging the government to create an example of goodwill in ensuring the protection of journalists by conducting a fair probe into the incident of Golam Rabbani killing and punishing the perpetrators who are directly and indirectly involved in the incident,” the statement read.

Manabdhikar Shongskriti Foundation also released a statement in this connection.

The incidents of attacks on journalists and media have become so frequent that it is regrettable, the statement read.

Dhaka Union of Journalists President Omar Faruk and Secretary General Deep Azad, on behalf of their union, strongly protested and condemned the attack on



Golam Rabbani Nadim



Bangladesh Chhatra Union forms a human chain near Raju Memorial Sculpture on Dhaka University campus yesterday, protesting the murder of journalist Nadim. Many other rights organisations and journalists’ associations also protested the incident across the country. PHOTO: STAR

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



PHOTO: PTD

Reduce subsidies on fisheries

Urges WTO chief at meeting with prime minister

UNB, Geneva

The World Trade Organization (WTO) has asked Bangladesh to reduce the subsidies on fisheries.

The request came from Dr Okonjo Iwela, director general of WTO, on Thursday when she called on visiting Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the meeting room of Hotel President in Geneva.

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen briefed the reporters about the meeting.

He quoted the WTO director general as saying that her organisation would like to sign an agreement with Bangladesh in this regard.

“We said we will consider this (the issue of subsidy),” said Momen, adding that Bangladesh does not give heavy subsidies on fisheries though.

The WTO chief mentioned about the dispute settlement body of the organisation, which has remained inactive for a couple of years.

Dr Iwela requested the prime minister to raise the issue when she goes to the G-20 meeting to be held in next September in New Delhi and other international forums, according to Momen.

The WTO chief also asked Bangladesh to diversify its export basket.

Regarding fishing in deep sea, Hasina said Bangladesh lacks in capabilities in this sector. The prime minister said she has already talked with the Maldives and Japan in this regard.

Earlier, Qatar’s Labour Minister Dr Ali Bin Samik Al Marri called the prime minister at the same venue.

He said there are some 3.70 lakh Bangladeshis working in his country and they are satisfied with their performance.

“Qatar has expressed their interest to take more manpower from Bangladesh. They will ink an agreement in this regard,” Momen said.

39 more get hospitalised with dengue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 39 dengue patients were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning.

With this, the total number of dengue cases this year rose to 4,126, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Some 962 dengue patients are still undergoing treatment. A total of 3,135 dengue patients were released from hospitals. So far, 29 people have died of dengue this year. The number of deaths in dengue was 281 last year while the number of cases was 62,382, of which 23,162 were outside Dhaka.



A family forced to leave the Ramna Park as it will close down for around two hours in the middle of the day. Inset, the notice on the gate. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

RAMNA PARK

Why is there a time restriction?

Ramna Park, also known as the “green heart” of Dhaka and maintained by the Public Works Department (PWD), remains closed to people during certain hours of the day, even though Covid-related restrictions have been lifted from other parks.

“It does not make sense that all other parks in the capital are open all the time, but Ramna Park is still closed for certain hours of the day,” said Jahirul Haque, a public university teacher.

According to a notice stuck to the gate of the park, it is open to people from 6:30am to 12:30pm and then from 2:00pm to 8:00pm. During a recent visit to the park, this

In Dhaka, the scarcity of public places remains one of the major problems, yet people are not being able to utilise the capital’s largest park to the fullest.

ADIL MOHAMMED KHAN
Urban Expert

correspondent witnessed a concerning situation, where families and individuals seeking entry had congregated near the park’s entrance.

Despite their requests, the guards denied them entry.

Many individuals waiting at the gate shared their experiences with this correspondent.

For example, Jahanara Khatun travelled from Narayanganj to Dhaka for a medical

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

NATIONAL ELECTION

Visa restriction or sanction can’t stop polls: Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said the national election of Bangladesh cannot be stopped by sanction or visa restriction.

“We do not interfere in affairs of other countries and do not want interference of foreign countries in our election. We have an independent Election Commission,” said Quader.

The Awami League general secretary said this while addressing a peace rally held at Adarsha High School Ground at Mirpur-10 in the capital.



Quader speaking at a rally in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Our movement has now become people’s movement: Fakhrul

UNB, Dhaka

The government will not be able to hold on to power anymore as the people of the country have awakened, said BNP secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday.

He was speaking at a rally organised by the Sirajganj district unit of the party at Islamia College.

Demands for the removal of cases against Begum Khaleda Zia and other BNP leaders including Iqbal Hasan Mahamud Tuku were also raised from the rally.

Fakhrul began his speech by condemning what he



Mirza Fakhrul addressing a rally in Sirajganj yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

claimed were false charges against BNP leaders as a means to stifle the opposition and send them to jail.

“There is no rule of law in our nation, which has left citizens feeling unsafe both within and outside their homes,” added Alamgir, underscoring the need for change.

“That’s why our movement to oust the government has become the movement of the people,” he added.

Meanwhile, BNP senior leader Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain at a programme yesterday said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina tried to hide the reality by telling the international community that Bangladesh’s economy has a dignified position now.

“The truth can never be suppressed for long with hollow words. As we know the economy of Bangladesh, the whole world also knows it,” he said

Speaking at a discussion, the BNP leader said the government is “begging” foreign loans from different countries and international lending agencies to run the country while import is being halted for lack of

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

BNP looking for excuses to quit polls: info minister

BSS, Dhaka

Awami League Joint General Secretary Hasan Mahmud yesterday said his party wants BNP’s full-strength participation in the national election but they are looking for excuses to avoid the polls.

The information minister was replying to a question while exchanging views with journalists at his Minto Road official residence in Dhaka.

About BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul’s comment that the government is hatching conspiracy to oust the BNP, he said, “We want that the next general election to be held in a free and fair manner with participation of all parties.”

“But the irony is that BNP always flees from polls. Mirza Fakhrul and Ruhul Kabir Rizvi are making such comments to create excuses,” he said.

He said BNP’s target is not to take part in elections rather they want to foil the polls and make it questionable. How many people take part in an election is more important than the number of participating parties, he said.

‘Adorn-a-Rickshaw’ contest held



DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Filipinos in Bangladesh showcased their creativity by participating in an “Adorn-a-Rickshaw” contest yesterday, paying tribute to the iconic vehicle, as part of the Philippine festivals.

The decorated rickshaws took center stage during the Kalayaan (Independence) parade, led by Philippine Ambassador Leo Tito L Ausan Jr, which brought together around 200 people at the Baridhara Diplomatic Zone.

In the contest, the Philippine Society in Bangladesh (PSB) claimed the first prize for their

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



With only four days remaining for Sylhet City Corporation polls, AL mayoral candidate Anwaruzzaman Chowdhury (left), and JP candidate Nazrul Islam (right), are actively engaging with voters, making pledges, and conducting rallies and programmes. The photos were taken yesterday.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

As elections near, promises get bigger

DWOHA CHOWDHURY, Sylhet

With only four days remaining for Sylhet City Corporation polls scheduled for June 21, seven mayoral candidates are leaving no stones unturned in their campaign efforts, despite the occasional rainfall.

Although no candidates have officially declared their election manifesto, they are actively engaging with voters, making promises, and conducting rallies and programmes.

Among the contenders, Anwaruzzaman Chowdhury, the Awami League nominee, and Nazrul Islam, the Jatiya Party nominee, have emerged as the leading candidates.

The cityscape is covered with posters showcasing these candidates, and their parties' leaders and activists are campaigning and distributing leaflets filled with promises.

The boycott of the Islami Andolon Bangladesh nominee Mahmudul Hasan, has altered the dynamics of the competition. The remaining candidates, including Jahirul Alam of Jaker Party and independent candidates Salah Uddin

Rimon, Abdul Hanif Kutu, Shah Jahan Miah, and Mostaque Ahmed Rouf Mostafa, appear to be relatively inactive in the field of competition.

Anwaruzzaman appeared content with the electoral environment, while Nazrul Islam expressed concerns regarding the fairness of the election.



During a press conference held at his electoral camp on Wednesday, Nazrul voiced his apprehensions over a statement made by the chief election commissioner following the recent BCC polls.

He alleged that there is a conspiracy against him, favouring the Awami League candidate, and claimed that his electoral campaign was being obstructed by members of the ruling party.

Nazrul further accused the returning officer of failing to address his complaints regarding violations of the electoral code of conduct by the AL candidate.

In response to these allegations, Anwaruzzaman said, "There is no time to comment on his baseless allegations. I prefer

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

IAB protests attack on Faizul

Holds rallies in Dhaka, Barishal, Bogura

STAR REPORT

The leaders and activists of the Islami Andolan Bangladesh yesterday held rallies in Dhaka, Barishal, and Bogura protesting the attack on party second in command Syed Faizul Karim during the Barishal City Corporation polls.

In the capital, IAB held a protest rally in front of Baitul Mukarram National Mosque after Juma prayers.

Sayed Mosaddek Billah, a presidium member of the party, several other central leaders and hundreds of their activists joined the protest, reports UNB.

Meanwhile, in Barishal, the city and district units of the IAB held a protest rally in front of the Ashwini Kumar Town Hall.

Another protest rally was brought out in Bogura in accordance with the central decision to address their demands.

From the rallies, the leaders of the party demanded resignation of the incumbent chief election commissioner and the government.

They also announced that the party would not participate in the upcoming general elections unless a national government is formed.

IAB mayoral candidate

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

PRAYER TIMING		JUNE 17	
Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-05		12-45	5-00
JAMAAT 4-40		1-15	5-15
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION		6-55	8-45

Will the voters show up?

Making Rajshahi polls participatory AL's major challenge

ANWAR ALI

In the absence of BNP and Islami Andolon Bangladesh, the upcoming Rajshahi City Corporation election is now revolving around a single question: will the voters show up at the polls?

Seeking to ensure voters' presence on the election day on June 21, the Awami League candidate AHM Khairuzzaman Liton is relying heavily on the efforts of councillor candidates who are campaigning throughout the city day and night, not only for their own aspirations, but also to inspire the voters to vote on election day, in order to present the polls as participatory.

Meanwhile, the Election Commission remains hopeful.

"Some parties have boycotted the election, but a mentionable number of councillor candidates

are contesting. We hope the voters will go to the polling centres," EC Rashida Sultana said in Rajshahi yesterday.

She was attending a day-long training programme for the presiding officers at the city's Nanking Darbar Hall.

Meanwhile, Liton is also visiting door-to-door. He has assigned the newly formed Rajshahi AL committees to persuade voters to participate in the upcoming election.

Speaking with The Daily Star, Liton expressed his commitment to achieving a 70 percent turnout in the upcoming election.

"Historically, voters from low- and middle-income groups have displayed a greater interest in participating on election day. My campaign team is focused on mobilising these specific demographics to ensure a high voter turnout," he added.

Mohammad Ali Kamal, acting president of city AL, said, "Even before the official commencement of the election campaign, the Awami League has conducted over 80 meetings with various professional groups, trade organisations, and development associations."

"During these meetings, we have encouraged all attendees to visit the designated vote centres."

Kamal, who is also the convener of Liton's election campaign committee, mentioned that party's women activists are also actively engaging in door-to-door visits to further promote voter turnout.

Nurul Islam Sarker Aslam, a key member of Liton's campaign committee,

said, "The challenging weather conditions may discourage voters at some places, where voters may need to walk more than one kilometre to reach their designated polling stations."

WEAKER RIVALS

The mayoral election features other candidates besides Liton, namely Saiful Islam Swapan from the Jatiya Party and Latif Anwar from the Jaker Party.

However, Liton's dominance in the campaign is evident when comparing various aspects of their activities.

Liton's campaign utilises approximately 40 loudspeakers to convey their message, while Swapan and Anwar have been using only four loudspeakers each.

Furthermore, Liton has established over 30 election camps whereas Swapan has six and Anwar has just one.

The city streets are filled with an abundance of posters and banners promoting Liton, while the campaign materials for the other mayoral candidates are scarce in comparison.

It is worth noting that although Murshid Alam, the candidate from Islami Andolan Bangladesh, has a valid candidacy, he announced his decision to boycott the polls following an attack on the party chief during the Barishal City Corporation election.

While the BNP is not participating in the election, 16 BNP members are still contesting for councillor posts in Rajshahi. Additionally, nine candidates from Jamaat are also taking part in the election.

The voting will be held on June 21 at 155 vote centres, 80 of which are being considered as "important" by the EC and law enforcers.



Awami League candidates are not only campaigning for their own aspirations, but also to inspire voters to vote on the election day. As part of that, AL held a colourful procession in the city's Kadirganj Mor area yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: STAR



PHOTO: STAR

'We don't want artificial lake inside forest'

Members of Garo community tell rally

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

The members of the Garo community in Tangail pledged yesterday that they would not allow anyone to dig an artificial lake on their traditional farmlands.

Protesting against the forest department's plan to create an artificial lake for tourists on agricultural land in Madhupur forest, they voiced concerns about the detrimental impact it would have on their livelihoods.

The safety of local women and children might be compromised for increased tourist movements, they added.

The forest department plans to dig an artificial lake on 12-bigha land near Dokhala rest house in Amtoly area of Madhupur National Park to attract more tourists.

The rally was held under the banner of "Adivasi Bikkhubddo Janata" at Dokhala, where the Garo community leaders said Abdur Razzaque, agriculture minister and local lawmaker, recently expressed his determination to dig the lake, ignoring the objections of locals.

"We condemn the minister's statement. We want to warn him that we will resist any attempts to dig the lake here," said the speakers.

Former president of Joyenshahi Adivasi Unnayan Parishad and veteran Garo leader Ajay A- Mree, its incumbent president Eugene Nokrek, Bangladesh Garo Student Organisation's President John Jetra, Adivasi Chhatra Sangram Parishad's General Secretary Alik Mree, among others, spoke at the rally.

Four held with 9.6kg gold in Ctg

STAR REPORT

Police yesterday detained four members of a family from a bus in Chattogram city and recovered 9.6kg of gold from them.

The detainees -- Alak Dhar, 25, Narayan Dhar, 38, Julie Dhar, 35, and Gita Dhar, 38 -- are from Bashkhal upazila of Chattogram, said Dulal Mahmud, officer-in-charge of Karnaphuli Police Station.

Acting on a tip-off, a police team halted the bus coming from Cox's Bazar in Shah Amanat Bridge area around 9:30am and recovered the gold from the four people, he said.

3 killed, 4 hurt in road accidents

STAR REPORT

At least three people were killed and four were injured in road accidents across the country in the last two days.

In Chapainawabganj, a woman was killed in a road accident in Shibtala area yesterday.

The deceased is Suchitra Rani, 65, resident of Malo Para in the town.

Quoting locals, OC Sazzad Hossain of the Sadar Police Station said the accident occurred around 9:15am, when a truck hit Suchitra while she was standing near the highway.

Police recovered the body and sent it to a local hospital. The truck driver fled the scene.

Meanwhile, a cattle trader was killed and four others were injured in a road accident on Mirdangi-Nekmarad road in Ranishankoil upazila yesterday.

The deceased is Toriqlul Islam, 35. Quoting locals, OC Gulfamul Islam of Ranishankoil Police Station said several traders were bringing cattle to Lahirihat in Baliadangi upazila from Moheshpur village on a Nasiman (locally improvised vehicle).

As the vehicle reached Mirdangi village, it fell in a road side ditch.

The injured are receiving treatment at a local hospital. A case was filed as well.

On Thursday night, Farid-uz-Zaman Rifat, a student of Bangladesh Agricultural University in Mymensingh, was killed in a road accident in Paboi area on Purbadhala-Durgapur road in Netrakona's Purbadhala upazila.

The 22-year-old was a student of veterinary science.

Quoting locals and family members,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

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LA MANDARIN

P#30, R#9/A
Dhanmondi R/A

2078 - 3186 Sq. Ft.

MEHERUNNESSA VILLA

P#56, R#08, B#D
Banani R/A

1993 Sq. Ft.

ASSURANCE MARZUQ

P#15, Suhrawardy Avenue
Baridhara, Dhaka

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*1 Sq. Ft. = 0.0220 Sq. M.

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SUDAN CONFLICT

One million children displaced

Says Unicef, warns many more at ‘grave risk’

AFP, Khartoum

The conflict in Sudan has displaced more than one million children including 270,000 in the Darfur region, the United Nations children’s agency said, warning many more were at “grave risk”.

Fighting has raged in Sudan since mid-April between army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and his former deputy Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, who commands the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF).

As well as the more than one million displaced, at least 330 children have been killed and more than 1,900 others wounded, Unicef said in a statement on Thursday. “Many more are at grave risk”.

Mandeep O’Brien, Unicef



representative in Sudan, said: “The future of Sudan is at stake, and we cannot accept the continued loss and suffering of its children.

“Children are trapped in an unrelenting nightmare, bearing the heaviest burden of a violent crisis they had no hand in creating -- caught in the crossfire, injured, abused, displaced and subjected to disease and malnutrition,” he added.

Unicef said an estimated 13 million children were in “dire need” of humanitarian assistance.

The UN agency said it was ready to assist them but called for “safe, unrestricted access and guaranteed security to all areas where children are in desperate need”.

It said the situation in the western region of Darfur -- where 270,000 children are said to have been displaced by the fighting -- was especially concerning.

“The situation in West and Central Darfur, in particular, is characterised by active fighting, severe insecurity and looting of humanitarian supplies and facilities,” said Unicef.

“The lack of safe water has left hundreds of thousands of children at risk of dehydration, diarrhoea, and malnutrition,” it added.



Residents watch as a car drowns in an inundated street at the coastal town of Mandvi in Gujarat, India yesterday as Cyclone Biparjoy makes landfall. The cyclone tore down power poles and uprooted trees after pummelling the Indian coastline, but the storm was weaker than feared and there were only two confirmed deaths.

PHOTO: AFP

SHIPWRECK OFF GREECE

Hope fades for survivors

9 Egyptians arrested on suspicion of people smuggling

AFP, Athens

Greek rescuers yesterday scanned the Ionian Sea by air and boat for survivors of a migrant boat sinking, as hope faded of finding more people alive two days after the disaster.

On Wednesday, a fishing boat overloaded with migrants capsized and sank, killing at least 78 people, off the Peloponnese. Some 104 people had been found alive.

The exact number of people aboard the boat is unknown, with one survivor telling hospital doctors in Kalamata he had seen 100 children in the boat’s hold, broadcaster ERT reported.

“Hopes of finding survivors are fading each minute after this tragic sinking, but the search must continue,” Stella Nanou, a spokeswoman for the UN refugee agency UNHCR, told AFP.

“According to broadcast images and accounts of some of the survivors, hundreds of people were aboard” she said.

The Greek coast guard said that rescuers scoured the sea through the night.

A helicopter, a frigate and three boats were scanning the waters yesterday, a coastguard spokeswoman told AFP.

Police on Thursday arrested nine Egyptians



on suspicion of people smuggling -- one of them the captain of the boat carrying the migrants.

They were detained at the port of Kalamata, where the survivors are being cared for, said Greek news agency ANA.

The survivors, mainly from Syria, Egypt and Pakistan, were being housed in a Kalamata warehouse.

Greece, Italy and Spain are among the main landing points for tens of thousands of people who seek to reach Europe as they flee conflict and poverty in the Middle East, Asia and Africa.

The United Nations yesterday called for in-depth investigations into the boat sinking off Greece.

The UN agencies for refugees and migrants called in a joint statement for “urgent and decisive action to prevent further deaths at sea following the latest tragedy in the Mediterranean, the worst in several years”.

They insisted states had an obligation to come together to address the dangerous gaps in search and rescue operations in the Mediterranean, pointing out that “the duty to rescue people in distress at sea without delay is a fundamental rule of international maritime law”. The UN rights office meanwhile called for “thorough” investigations into the “horrific tragedy”.

Five foreign militants killed in J&K

Say Indian police

REUTERS, Srinagar

Indian police said security forces killed five foreign militants early yesterday in a gunfight in Kashmir along the Line of Control (LOC), the defacto border with Pakistan in the Himalayan region.

A joint team of Indian army and police prevented infiltration across the border by the militants, police said.

“Five foreign militants were killed in the operation in Jumagund area near the LOC. The search operation in the area is going on,” said Vijay Kumar, the chief of Indian police in Kashmir. He did not specify their nationalities.

Ashok Yadav, a senior Indian security official deployed for the security of the border, said last week that the melting of snow in the mountains might open traditional infiltration routes along the LOC.

‘I place my hopes on the American people’

China’s Xi tells Bill Gates

REUTERS, Beijing

Xi Jinping called Bill Gates “an old friend” and said he hoped they could carry out activities together beneficial to both China and the United States, in the Chinese president’s first meeting with a foreign entrepreneur in years. In a meeting at Beijing’s Diaoyutai state guesthouse yesterday, where China’s leaders have historically received senior foreign guests, Xi told the Microsoft co-founder and philanthropist that he was very happy to see him after three years and described Gates as the first American friend he had met this year. “I often say the foundation of US-China relations lies with its people. I place my hopes on the American people,” a video published by state broadcaster CCTV showed Xi as saying. “With the current global situation, we can carry out various activities beneficial to our two countries and people, activities that benefit humanity as a whole,” he said. Gates, who arrived in Beijing on Wednesday, told Xi that he was “honoured” to have the chance to meet. “We’ve always had great conversations and we’ll have lot of important topics to discuss today... so it’s very exciting to be back.”



Junta-backed media slams ‘rotten’ UN

AFP, Yangon

Myanmar state media condemned the United Nations as “rotten” yesterday, days after the UN special envoy for the country stepped down and the world body slammed curbs on aid for cyclone survivors. Myanmar has been in turmoil since the military seized power in February 2021, ending a brief democratic experiment and sparking clashes across the country with ethnic rebel groups and anti-coup fighters. The military has criticised attempts by the UN and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations bloc to establish dialogue between the junta and its opponents, whom it has vowed to “annihilate”. The state-backed Global New Light of Myanmar published an opinion piece yesterday entitled “The Picture of Irrelevance”, accompanied by a photo of the UN headquarters in New York. “Inside, it is infested with egos. Its core is rotten,” the piece said. “The arrogance, ignorance and self interest have so polluted their minds that they are either in denial of how irrelevance (sic) their existence has become... or just simply incompetent and incapable of seeing the reality.” UN special envoy for Myanmar Noeleen Heyzer stepped down this week after an 18-month tenure in which she was criticised by both the junta and its opponents. The Singaporean sociologist was tasked with urging the military to engage in political dialogue with opposing groups, and end a bloody crackdown it launched after toppling the government of Aung San Suu Kyi.

First Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 12

the facts and administer justice with fairness and a deep respect for the rule of law.”

She faced pushback from some Senate Republicans after she gave inconsistent answers on whether she made comments at 2015 event at Princeton University saying that police killings of unarmed Black men “every day.”

She later in a letter to the Senate Judiciary Committee panel said that “Such a statement is inconsistent with my deep respect for law enforcement.”

Nusrat clerked for a judge on the nearby Southern District of New York trial court as well as the US Second Circuit Court of Appeals, which reviews cases from the New York, Connecticut and Vermont federal courts.

Biden also appointed the first Muslim judge in US history, US District Judge Zahid Quraishi. The Senate confirmed him to the New Jersey federal trial court in 2021.

DGHS closes OT

FROM PAGE 12

against six named and several unnamed persons over wrong treatment and fraud. Among the accused are three doctors.

The accused lied to the patient and her family that gynecologist Sanjukta Saha, consultant of Mahbuba, was at the hospital during the C-section, reads the complaint.

Yesterday, the DGHS also banned Sanjukta from providing consultation services to patients at the hospital until further notice.

It also instructed the hospital authorities to bear all treatment expenses of Mahbuba, compensate the patient’s family as per law, and send all documents related to the complaint to the DGHS and the Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council.

The health directorate warned the hospital of strict legal actions if the order was not carried out.

This newspaper could not reach the deputy director of Central Hospital for comments as he did not respond to calls.

Vast cyber espionage campaign linked to China

Says Google subsidiary Mandiant

AFP, Washington

Online attackers with clear links to China are behind a vast cyber espionage campaign known to be conducted by a China-nexus threat actor since the mass exploitation of Microsoft Exchange in early 2021,” said Mandiant chief technology officer Charles Carmakal.

The cyberattackers compromised the computer defenses of hundreds of organizations, in some cases stealing “emails of prominent employees dealing in matters of interest to the Chinese government,” Carmakal added.

Mandiant reported having “high confidence” that a group referred to as UNC4841 was behind the wide-ranging espionage campaign “in support of the People’s Republic of China”.

The hackers targeted victims in at least 16 different countries, striking organizations in the public and private sectors worldwide, the report said.

The targeting focused on issues of high policy importance to the Chinese government, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region and Taiwan, according to the report.

Victims included foreign ministries, research organizations, and foreign trade missions based in Hong Kong and Taiwan, Mandiant said in its findings.

The attacks involved email messages booby-trapped with malicious code and exploited a vulnerability in Barracuda software for screening such missives to make sure they are safe, according to the

report.

The cyber espionage activity was detected in May and is believed to have started as early as October of last year.

“We continue to see evidence of ongoing malware activity” on some systems that were compromised, Barracuda Networks told AFP.

The 2021 hack of Microsoft Exchange, which security researchers attributed to a Beijing-backed group, affected at least 30,000 organizations in the United States including businesses and local governments.

Washington has frequently accused Beijing of cyberattacks against US targets, with the issue contributing to a deterioration in relations between the two powers in recent years.

China has consistently denied the claims, and has railed against alleged US cyber espionage, last year accusing the US National Security Agency of carrying out “tens of thousands of malicious attacks on network targets in China”.

Two cops suspended

FROM PAGE 2

of Shariatpur yesterday evening, reported several media outlets.

According to the order, Sheikh Mohammad Mostafizur Rahman, former officer in charge of Padma Bridge South Police Station has been attached to Chattogram range and Suruj Uddin Ahmed former inspector (investigation) of the same police station has been attached to Barisal range.

These two officers along with additional police superintendent for the Naria circle, Russell Monir have been accused of torturing two businessmen in custody and forcing their family to pay Tk 72 lakh.

Female Jubo Dal

FROM PAGE 12

was returning home on a CNG-run auto-rickshaw after taking part in the rally. Some locals spotted her wearing a BNP cap and informed the police.

“She was not named in the first information report of the case as an accused. But she was found involved in subversive activities during the investigation of the case,” he told The Daily Star.

Asked about the identities of the locals who handed Nadia over to police, the OC said he didn’t know them.

Masud Karim Rana, convener of the Mirsarai Chhatra League convening committee, said he was not aware of the harassment of the Jubo Dal activist.

Shahidul Islam Chowdhury, convener of Mirsarai upazila BNP, said, “Chhatra League men harassed Nadia after intercepting the CNG-run three-wheeler she was travelling in and later handed her over to police.”

“Though she was not accused in any case, police detained her and sent her to a court showing her arrested in a sabotage case,” he said.

The BNP leader protested the incident and demanded her immediate release.

Ukraine offensive

FROM PAGE 12

two explosions. Mayor Vitali Klitschko also reported explosions in the central Podil district.

Ukraine’s air force said it had downed six “Kinzhals” ballistic missiles, six cruise missiles and two drones. City authorities said they had received no reports of deaths or serious damage so far, but police said there were an unspecified number of casualties.

Senior Russian officials said yesterday the Black Sea grain deal could not be extended under current circumstances but that Moscow was working to ensure that poorer countries would not suffer food shortages when it ends.

The deal, brokered by the UN and Turkey in July 2022, allowed Ukraine to resume sea-borne grain exports to help tackle a global food crisis.

Polls will be held on time

FROM PAGE 1

term of the current Awami League government.

The country’s main opposition BNP has vowed to boycott the vote saying it will be rigged in favour of the incumbent, an allegation denied by the government.

The opposition party instead demands that Hasina’s government resigns to pave the way for a neutral administration to hold the polls. The government rejects it as unconstitutional.

PM Hasina said that as BNP knew very well that they would not get any votes from people for their evil deeds, they are now looking for ways to back out from the election process.

“Generally they are the party of thieves and vote rigging, and it is not possible for them to come to power without vote dacoity,” she said.

She mentioned that in the past they grabbed state power by accepting external pressure to sell the resources of the country.

“So people do not want them anymore and for that reason, they do not get votes from the people, so they are searching for holes to backtrack from the election,” she said.

Regarding the BNP’s repeated threat to topple the government, Hasina, who is also the chief of the ruling Awami League, said that her government is not that much weak.

“There was a commotion regarding December 10 that they will oust the government (on that day). But we can’t be toppled as we have people with us, our power is our people,” she said.

Talking about the demand of the BNP to form a caretaker government during the election period, she said a totally independent election commission has been established.

“BNP is still raising their demand for the caretaker government,” she said.

“Has BNP now become insane or a child?” Hasina asked referring to what BNP leader Khaleda Zia once said as the country’s prime minister in response to then-opposition Awami League’s demand for a caretaker government to hold the election in the 1990s.

“By bringing those thieves

to power, by bringing the anti-independence force to power, by bringing murderers, we will not allow Bangladesh to bow down to others,” she asserted.

She said that to cover up their own weakness BNP now spreading various types of propaganda and making dirty tricks.

“Will those who killed people in broad daylight, looted public money, committed corruption and were convicted in corruption cases, now go to power? The main thing is whether they will go to elections by selecting that convicted person as their leader,” she said in obvious reference to BNP vice chairman Tareq Zia, now living in London.

Referring to the sacrifices of Awami League leaders and activists for the establishment of democracy, the prime minister said, “The democratic trend that has been established in Bangladesh today is the result of our movement. My party leaders and workers have given their lives for this. And I narrowly survived a grenade attack.”

Highlighting the benefits of the continuation of democracy Hasina said, “The country has changed because the democratic trend has been unhindered, today the country has developed, today Bangladesh has occupied a dignified seat in the world.”

Reiterating her determination to build a smart Bangladesh, Hasina said that the country will move forward with the status it has got today.

“We will build the hunger poverty-free, advanced and prosperous smart golden Bangla of the father of the nation by 2041.”

Appreciating the role of expatriates in any crisis in Bangladesh, the prime minister said that remittances sent by expatriates play a huge role in the country’s economy.

She urged the expatriates to send money through legal channels instead of through Hundi.

She advised those interested in going abroad to be aware and careful about brokers.

At the same time, Hasina urged them to register and go abroad in a legal way.

A fire kindles inside KONAL

SHARMIN JOYA

She has done hundreds of songs for playback, and received the National Award for it. This Eid, her song *Surma Surma* from *Leader Amie Bangladesh* delivered a rare mainstream hit, helping the Shakib Khan starrer to become even more successful in theatres across the country. Somnur Monir Konal, popularly known as Konal, has grabbed the proverbial brass ring after winning *Channel i Shera Kontho*, and had a career most reality show participants can only dream of.

"Just after four days of being crowned as the *Channel i Shera Kontho* on December 24, I gave my voice for a film on the 28th for the first time," says Konal, who has recently voiced *Megher Nouka* from *Prohelika*, which will release this upcoming Eid-ul-Azha.

"When I came from Kuwait nearly two decades ago, I never imagined that I will receive such appreciation and acknowledgement from the audience which I have always dreamed of," says Konal, who has now completed 14 years in the industry.

She is always ready to opt for new challenges. "Recently, I have performed in a Malaysian University, at their orientation programme, where I had to sing a Malaysian song. It was challenging for me, yet I enjoyed taking it up. I had very short time, to memorise the song in the language and practice it."

"I am lucky that people know me by my original songs, and it is evident that their love for me is unconditional. Only true artistes get such love," smiles Konal.

Having good lyrics is the first thing that Konal considers when accepting a song. "I never take any song that contains lyrics that does not go with my personality."

In her personal life, Konal is married to prominent entertainment journalist Monzur Kader Zia. Konal shares she often faces prejudice due to the fact. "Every day, everywhere, people feel that I get too many benefits, but the reality is quite the opposite. I have to prove myself even more, because of the prejudice, because to some people, everything I achieve has some unseen force behind it".

It is, however, evident that no matter what, Konal will keep flying like the songbird that she is, in *Surma Surma* skies.



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

OUT AND ABOUT IN DHAKA



**Weekly Open Sessions
(Board Games)**
June 17 | 4 pm
Panaderia Gulshan



**Theaterian presents
"Death of a Salesman"**
June 17 | 7 pm
Bangladesh Mohila Samity



Anecdotes of Lust
June 18 | 4 pm – 8 pm
Kala Kendra

WHAT'S PLAYING

Monalisa Dominic Fike

Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse has taken the entertainment world by storm with not only its mesmerising visuals but for its banger soundtrack as well. Alt Indie musician Dominic Fike penned the song *Monalisa* for the movie, spinning a magical narrative of young love and infatuation. *Monalisa* portrays the back and forth between two individuals

who adore each other, especially the narrator. The 3 minute 20 second track perfectly fits the scene it plays behind, with two teens who are in pursuit of each other. The 27-year-old musician rose to fame with releasing his songs on SoundCloud, later signing onto Columbia Records. Fike has also collaborated with the likes of Alt hip-hop band Brockhampton, Halsey and Paul McCartney.



TRENDY STREAMS

Netflix

Never Have I Ever



Hoichoi

Nostoneer



Disney plus

The Villains of Valley View



Hulu

Cruel Summer



Amazon Prime

I am a Virgo



STYLE STATEMENT

SIAM AHMED

Siam Ahmed's fresh and breezy look is perfect for the sweltering summer heat. His rugged beard and curly hair paired with round sunglasses gave a whole new dimension to his chic fashion sense. The *Antarjal* actor accessorised the look with a suave pendent and a classy white tee, along with his Hawaiian shirt.



Ensure justice for Nadim’s murder

The country is becoming increasingly unsafe for journalists

We are horrified by the ruthlessness with which Golam Rabbani Nadim, the Jamalpur district correspondent of Banglanews24.com and Bakshiganj upazila correspondent of Ekattor TV, was beaten to death, allegedly by supporters of a union parishad chairman in Jamalpur’s Bakshiganj upazila. A video clip of the attack, which has been circulated on social media, provides a chilling account of the incident during which men armed with steel bars and rods hit him indiscriminately, and corroborates the statement of another journalist accompanying him at the time. According to Nadim’s family, he was being harassed and threatened by the UP chairman, Mahmudul Alam, prior to the attack; the latter had even filed a case under the Digital Security Act (DSA) for reporting on a press conference in which a woman had claimed that the chairman had married her in secret.

The attack on Nadim took place on the same day that the chairman came to know that the DSA case had been dismissed by the tribunal, which reportedly enraged him. Given the timing and circumstances surrounding the attack, a credible investigation must be made into the involvement of the UP chairman, who is also the general secretary of Jamalpur Sadhurpara union unit of Awami League. The law enforcement agencies must identify and arrest all the perpetrators in the meantime without further delay.

We are alarmed at how unsafe the country has become for journalists who are simply doing their job of holding truth to power. Over the years, there have been increasing instances of attacks, threats, intimidation and even murders of journalists, and it is the correspondents outside of Dhaka who remain most at risk. Unfortunately, in most cases, there is no justice for the violence inflicted upon them, particularly when people in positions of power are involved. The Unesco Observatory of Killed Journalists lists a total of 26 journalists killed in Bangladesh between 2004 and 2022, but notes that only 16.67 percent of the cases it was tracking had thus far been resolved. The high-profile murder of journalist couple Sagar and Runi remains unresolved even after 11 years, with submission of the probe report deferred for the 100th time, giving us a disturbing glimpse into the impunity enjoyed by perpetrators in this country.

Meanwhile, the space for investigative journalism and freedom of expression are shrinking at an alarming rate, as evidenced by the growing number of cases filed under the DSA against journalists. Such institutionalisation of intolerance can only add to the growing insecurity faced by news correspondents across the country. We urge the authorities to ensure justice for Nadim’s murder, irrespective of the identity or party affiliation of the perpetrators. No journalist in this country should have to put their life at risk for doing their job.

Why are we failing to save our children? Urgent action needed to curb rising child mortality rate

We are gravely concerned about the unexpected rise in the infant mortality rate in Bangladesh. According to a new government study, deaths of children under five increased to 31 per thousand last year from 28 in 2021, 2020 and 2019. And deaths of children under one increased to 25 per thousand from 22 per thousand. Despite making significant strides over the past decades, this recent increase in child mortality marks a step backwards in achieving our Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of reducing under-five mortality to at least as low as 25 per thousand live births. The health ministry has also set a target to reduce under-five mortality to 20 by 2035. Experts say the latest figures highlight a lingering gap in child healthcare services in the country, which requires urgent attention and action from healthcare officials.

Though reasons behind the rise were not analysed in the latest study, the project director noted that in 2021, pneumonia was the leading cause of infant death, along with jaundice, diarrhoea, malnutrition, acute respiratory infection, and drowning. Experts stated that over 24,000 children in the nation die from pneumonia each year, which can be prevented through an integrated development of the healthcare system. Regarding malnutrition, another recent study in May also showed that 50 percent of children are consuming unhealthy, processed foods. And according to WHO and Unicef, as many as 38 children die every day from drowning, which can be prevented by low-cost solutions such as awareness programmes in local communities.

With such staggering statistics but available solutions, it is now time for policymakers to open their eyes and take a comprehensive approach to address the reported causes of children’s deaths in the nation. We urge the officials to take the latest study seriously and launch the required interventions in child healthcare facilities, which also accounts for the socioeconomic inequity in infant survival. Studies have shown that a household’s income status and the region’s administrative division are potential risk factors of infant deaths. Officials must recraft a more holistic strategy, with community-based facilities and awareness programmes to promote healthier lives for all our children.



BLOWIN’ IN THE WIND

Dr Shamsad Mortuza is a professor of English at Dhaka University.

SHAMSAD MORTUZA

In a world infested with media gurus, I don’t think any professional job search coach could have suggested what Mukta Sultana did. The young woman, who reached the maximum age limit for applying for a public job last year, appeared on Facebook Live last month and burnt all her academic certificates. The graduate from Eden Women’s College had to work part-time to support not only her studies, but also her family, as she had her breadwinner father early in life.

Mukta moved to Dhaka from Kishoreganj to avert early marriage, as she wanted to be independent. Working alongside her studies affected her academic performance, according to a TV interview that she gave following her certificate burning social media spectacle. Mukta achieved her master’s degree in 2019 and failed to get any job. The entry-level jobs in the private sector would hardly cover her travel and food expenses. She started preparing for government jobs, but the window to get one closed down last year, when she turned 30 years old. Mukta’s interview was watched by our ICT State Minister Zunaid Ahmed Palak, who took the initiative to offer her a job at a digital literacy project.

It is good to see a public official with a heart. The state minister had the option of being angry and coming after Mukta with a punishment under the Digital Security Act (DSA) for trying to “tarnish the government’s image.” He could have instructed the education boards concerned to cancel her degrees altogether. Mukta took a calculated risk in her attempt to draw attention to the ongoing movement by a section of students demanding an extension of the age limit to apply for public service jobs to 35 years. They argue that with 30 as an entry benchmark, many graduates don’t get enough time to prepare and apply after graduation. The delay in result publication and session jams further shrink the job application window. The protesters also demanded an extension of the retirement age limit and a reduction of application fees.



VISUAL: STAR

The fate of the protesters who tried to bring attention to their causes by waylaying Dhaka’s Shabbagh intersection was not as pearly as Mukta’s. They were baton-charged and dispersed by the police. Mukta, in a follow-up interview, sympathised with her comrades and said that she had mentioned their demands to the state minister during her meeting. While I am happy for Mukta, I feel there are many more humane stories out there that need our sympathetic hearing.

I received an email from a reader of my column, who said he had been selected for a job at Rupali Bank almost two years ago. Post his employment, his family arranged for his marriage. But in the last two years, the appointment process has not been completed. His wife’s family is now suspicious of his “claim” of getting a bank job and threatening a divorce. Any sympathetic intervention can probably save the future of this young couple.

Then again, addressing a humane

calculate the retirement benefits of an employer. While the employees feel that by 62, they have already served their offices enough to earn the perks to enjoy the rest of their lives. Conversely, in our country, we see that an employer still has a lot to give to their institutions at the time of their retirement at 60. They lobby for extensions. Some of them use their public offices to avail of various training opportunities to prepare for the post-retirement phase. The generous scholarship given to in-service, mid-career officers to pursue higher degrees abroad is a case in point. I have not come across any impact report on the government’s huge expenses related to these career development initiatives.

Prolonging the stay of an employee in service impedes fresh graduates from joining the workforce. This gives us a perspective of the other side of the conundrum where job-seekers such as Mukta are located. The presence of senior workers in the system creates further complications as they hamper the promotion of officers who are

10,000 a month. If the state minister had not given her the job, she would have been forced to take a job at a garment factory just to survive.

The mismatch between degrees sought and jobs available is another contentious but related issue. While public jobs are given through knowledge-oriented tests, which demand rote learning, private jobs demand people and professional skills. Mukta’s failure to get a job in the private sector can be due to multiple reasons. She is nevertheless a strong, independent woman who just needed an opportunity to prove herself. The state minister has given her one. Indeed, as Thomas Gray puts it, there are “many a gem of purest ray serene” that are found in “the dark unfathom’d caves of ocean” and “full many a flower” that is “born to blush unseen” in the desert. Our sympathies should extend beyond social media spectacles and bring all these job-seekers under a strategic inclusionary project. And we will need more than a state minister to work together to make that happen.

The mystery of Nord Stream blast



Dr Sayeed Ahmed is a consulting engineer and the CEO of Bayside Analytix, a technology-focused strategy and management consulting organisation.

SAYEED AHMED

Anyone with a remote interest in international affairs couldn’t miss the September 26, 2022 explosions that blew up sections of the Nord Stream 1 and 2 (NS 1 and NS 2) undersea pipelines carrying gas from Russia to Germany. Both NS 1 and NS 2 run under the Baltic Sea through international waters. Three explosions occurred within the Swedish Exclusive Economic Zone while a fourth was within the Danish Zone. Both prime ministers took this as an incident of sabotage. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen went as far as warning that attacks on “European energy infrastructure” were “unacceptable.” The Kremlin also didn’t rule out sabotage as the cause of the explosion.

Notwithstanding his promise on February 7, 2022 – at a joint news conference with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz at the White House – to “bring an end” to the pipeline, US President Joe Biden wasted no time in terming the incident as “a deliberate act of sabotage,” adding that American divers would find out what had happened.

On October 14, the German Federal Police released the first photos of the sites taken with underwater drones and reported that only an explosion could explain the extent of the damage. It blew four sections of the pipelines up, two on each, the report added. Initially, Sweden, Denmark and Germany agreed to investigate the case jointly, but that plan fell apart for unknown reasons.

Several European officials blamed Russia, and so did Ukraine and Poland, for the attack. The matter remained a mystery while new theories kept emerging.

On February 8 this year, American investigative journalist Seymour Hersh, who had revealed the My Lai massacre during the Vietnam War and won the 1970 Pulitzer Prize for it, published on his Substack page the details of how the US Navy’s deep-sea divers carried out

published an investigative documentary pointing to the suspicious movement of Russian ships at the explosion site that could perform similar underwater operations.

On June 6, *The Washington Post* reported that the CIA, with information from a European intelligence agency, had briefed President Biden about Ukraine’s plans for the attacks at least three months before the incident. Two days later, President Volodymyr Zelensky denied any involvement, quoted by a German newspaper as saying, “We know nothing about it, 100 percent.”

While the information war and the blame game continue, a brief look at some relevant facts might be worthwhile.

Both the NS 1 (operational since 2011) and NS 2 (completed in 2021 and was expected to become operational in 2022) was going to increase German

Washington would like to see.

There is another crucial fact: Yamal, a large gas field in Siberia that started shipping LNG in 2017. Availability of such a sizable reserve of Russian LNG became a threat to the US shale gas revolution. The success of Yamal LNG led to Gydan LNG development on the Gydan Peninsula in northern Siberia with a capacity of 20 million tonnes per year at a competitive price. With it, Russia’s LNG export capacity could reach 140 million tonnes per year by 2035, potentially killing all competition from the US suppliers. Now with the Nord Stream pipelines out of operation, at least temporarily, and Europe deeply divided on economic cooperation with Russia, the threat from Siberian gas has been thwarted.

The German public and the media have always been critical of American meddling in their internal affairs. Its foreign minister in 2021 spoke for many when he bluntly stated, “Nord Stream 2 is none of US business.” But as Russia invaded Ukraine, that scenario has changed into one where American meddling is almost unavoidable, if not welcome.

For Europe, the Nord Stream incident symbolises a point of no return as it has killed any possibility of closer cooperation with Russia, while the rest of the world is trying to absorb the shock from increasing oil prices.

The nature of the information war is also noteworthy. Hersh’s story elaborating the US Navy’s involvement hardly got any mention in the mainstream media. However, the Nordic documentary that found a Russian ship’s suspicious movement received wide coverage. Meanwhile, increasing energy prices have pushed 141 million people into extreme poverty globally, reported CNN citing a report by the journal *Nature Energy*.

Does anyone care?

For Europe, the Nord Stream incident symbolises a point of no return as it has killed any possibility of closer cooperation with Russia, while the rest of the world is trying to absorb the shock from increasing oil prices. And the nature of the information war is also noteworthy.

the attack. The White House quickly denied it, terming it “utterly false.” Many others were also critical of Hersh’s claims, but he stood by his story.

On March 8, German media reported, citing investigators’ findings, that five individuals carried out the attack with a yacht hired by a Ukrainian-owned company in Poland. Russian President Vladimir Putin, however, rejected the account, saying “only state level” actors could accomplish such a complex operation.

On May 3, Nordic public broadcasters

dependence on Russian energy supply and strengthen Russian-German relations. That could have been a catalyst for further expansion of trade and cultural exchanges leading to a new security architecture, potentially making NATO’s security umbrella increasingly irrelevant. Naturally, the US was against such close cooperation between Europe’s leading economy and Russia and slapped a series of sanctions against companies taking part in these construction works. A strong Europe is the last thing



Quality education serves the interests of students, but also the interests of society. FILE PHOTO: STAR

SHIKKHAR SHAMAJIK DAYITTO

A novel approach to sustainable quality education

Dr Jasimuz Zaman
is a former professor of chemical engineering at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet). He has co-authored 'Quality Education for Rural Bangladesh,' a book based on his work in the schools as a full-time volunteer in an NGO.

JASIMUZ ZAMAN

Bangladesh has achieved remarkable progress in educational “quantity,” but there are widespread concerns among parents and society in general about the quality of education, particularly in the rural areas. Quality education is a requirement for “Smart Bangladesh,” and it will be an irremediable loss if the country fails to educate its young generation in order to reap the benefits of a demographic dividend that will slip away in the 2030s.

An extensive project that this author carried out in 50 schools across the country under an NGO over the last 12 years demonstrated that significant advancements in quality education are possible even within the current constraints and limitations. The project achieved remarkable success in these schools in areas such as English language skills, maths Olympiad, ICT, debate, sports, and cultural programmes. The use of learning-centred methods in classroom teaching and participation in different co-curricular activities allowed students to enhance their learning and develop skills in critical thinking, problem-solving, teamwork, and leadership, as well as in strengthening character. The results showed that the schools can deliver quality education if they are provided with guidance, logistics, and some level of material and non-material support.

Unfortunately, once the external source of intervention – our NGO – was removed, the fruits of success dissipated. Our expectation that success would generate momentum in the community to team up with the school for continued quality was not met. The community applauded the initial success, but failed to support the school in continuing its pursuit of quality education. In the absence of encouragement and support from the community, the school gradually reverted to its usual mode of operation. Other successful projects met a similar fate and saw a regression back to a culture of dependence on external bodies. Sustainability of the successful approach remained elusive.

That is when the idea of *Shikkhar Shamajik Dayitto* (SSD) – the social responsibility of education – to foster active involvement of all stakeholders in the foundation of quality education programmes – took shape.

The idea is based in a society-wide consensus that quality education is a common good – a right not only for children, but for every member of the community. While children have the right to a good education, they also have the responsibility

to work for it. Teachers have the responsibility to impart quality education, but they have the right to ask for the needed resources. Parents have the right to expect quality education for their children, but they also have the responsibility to provide the needed opportunities to their children and to support the school's efforts to provide quality education. Community members, community leaders, and public representatives have the right to expect schools to deliver quality education, but they need to support the schools in doing so.

Quality education serves the interests of students, but also the interests of society. It is therefore a personal as well as a social responsibility of students to work hard to achieve quality education. Parents, for their part, need to support their children, thus serving their own interests as well as the interests of the community. Providing good teaching enhances

The idea of Shikkhar Shamajik Dayitto is based in a society-wide consensus that quality education is a common good – a right not only for children, but for every member of the community. While children have the right to a good education, they also have the responsibility to work for it.

the prestige of teachers, but it is also their personal and social responsibility. A good school enhances the prestige and social standing of the community and its leaders, and so they have a responsibility to ensure that the school has the resources to deliver quality education.

The convergence of the rights, responsibilities, and interests of all stakeholders creates a win-win situation for all and is the cornerstone for internalising the SSD concept.

The resulting commitment is expressed in an action plan (which may be expressed in the form of a *shamajik ongikar*, or a social contract), specifying the roles and responsibilities of the school and the community, respectively, with a clear mechanism for successful implementation. A small group including school management committee members, teachers, parents, and community representatives may be formed with the task of ensuring that all commitments and responsibilities specified in the *shamajik ongikar* are executed effectively.

In the broad spectrum of education, government support is certainly a must-have, but such

support alone cannot meet all requirements. Experience in many countries including our own shows that a school performs its task much better when parents and the community engage with it.

In the SSD approach, the community takes up the role of providing additionally needed resources for quality education. Quality is accomplished through the combined efforts of the school (students, teachers, and school management committee members) and the community. If success is achieved, the cooperative relationship can continue and sustainability becomes a natural part of the outcome. The SSD entity (such as an NGO) provides needed training, logistics, and evaluation, as well as recalibration of the SSD exercise based on evaluation.

This author started two pilot projects being executed by two NGOs to implement quality education programmes using the SSD approach. It is expected that more NGOs will be motivated to adopt the SSD concept that promises continuation of the quality programme in a self-reliant manner by the community and the school, even after a project is completed.

The work plan developed for SSD integrates the concept with the quality education programme developed and refined by this author. However, the SSD concept can also be integrated with any quality education programme of any organisation. What they need is concurrence on partnership and the design of the programmes to harmonise their goals with their capabilities.

For an NGO operating with an education project, the introduction of the SSD concept entails little additional costs. The NGO typically seeks to create awareness in the immediate community, in addition to the direct beneficiaries of the project. The SSD concept aims to accelerate the awareness campaign by augmenting it with a social contract and creating the possibility of self-reliant continuation by the beneficiaries.

The concept being so versatile deserves national attention. A national awareness campaign to spread it from the upazila level to the district, divisional, and national levels may be undertaken. An organisation (e.g. the “SSD Foundation”) may be formed to support its implementation in education projects by different organisations.

An attempt to achieve quality education in about 25,000 schools across Bangladesh with a massive injection of resources by the government would take time and create inefficiencies. Working with the SSD concept with the available resources, each community can take care of its own schools while making the task more focused, efficient, and achievable. As a result, the country as a whole would take a major leap forward in achieving quality education in a shorter period of time and in a more efficient manner.

What is the fracas on the Barishal uni question paper really about?



Shuprova Tasneem is a journalist. Her Twitter handle is @ShuprovaTasneem

SHUPROVA TASNEEM

“You may have my body, but you will never have my heart/soul” – it’s difficult not to cringe at the gendered language used in what may be one of the most popular storylines that regularly make an appearance in Bangla films. Dhallywood is hardly famous for its feminist commentary – too many of its productions centre on the heroine’s “honour,” to be saved by the male hero, and the “shame” that the villain of the story is trying to bring upon her – and the fact that attempted rape scenes are normalised enough to become pop culture references in Bangladesh definitely says something about us as a society.

This dialogue, however, recently created a social media storm by cropping up in a more unusual place: a question paper for Bangladesh Studies in the University of Barishal, where students were asked to examine it in the “light of British hegemony in the Indian subcontinent.” The first part of the question also asked students to examine the concept of

British Empire and the freedom of thought and revolutionary ideologies during the colonial era, could lead to a creative and critical discussion of the concept of hegemony.

While I’m not a fan of this specific quote, and I would have preferred if the question somehow allowed the student to deconstruct the toxic masculine standards behind it as well, I do appreciate the critical thinking it encourages. It is no secret that the academic culture in Bangladesh is suffering. We have seen cases of academics engaging in plagiarism in some of the most reputed universities in the country. We all know the school system is still heavily reliant on rote memorisation, and commercial guidebooks and notebooks that help students memorise their curriculum and sit for their exams have only muddled the waters further. In such an environment, any question that makes students think out of the box should be welcomed. And who knows, perhaps the discussion of British hegemony has even inspired some

In recent times, wielding a pen (or its modern equivalent) has had consequences for many – from writers and journalists to academics and even teenage social media users, mostly under the auspices of the Digital Security Act (DSA). Over the years, we have seen quite a few examples of academics being vilified, investigated, suspended and even forced to leave for saying the “wrong” thing. Avoidance of “sensitive” topics – basically self-censorship – is now a common denominator of academic and media circles. In line with the textbooks, this policing of thought has not only come from the state, but from educational institutions and from the media itself. Remember the embarrassing brinjal episode, when journalists on a local television network publicly lambasted a researcher for daring to suggest their beloved vegetable may contain certain carcinogenic elements?

Of course, it’s possible that we have all unnecessarily inflated and given traction to what is, at the end of the day, quite an inconsequential story (myself included!). But this whole “vulgar vs critical” question papers saga also gives us a rather fascinating look into how we view the acceptability of certain words and ideas. Would some people have thought this question to be more acceptable if it were issued by a department of media studies? Why are words that are widely acceptable in popular media suddenly unacceptable when



ILLUSTRATION: REHNUMA PROSHOON

the politics of majoritarianism and the “divide and rule” policy of the British Raj.

Much of the attention that this question received was limited to ridicule, and quite a bit of it was outrage or disappointment at the state of education in the country, with many asking why such a “vulgar” statement should make it into higher education question papers. Different media outlets sniffed out the opportunity for clickbait and immediately named and shamed the associate professor responsible for setting the question, and also reached out to other members of the university administration for their opinions. Another, smaller group of netizens – mostly university students, graduates and educators – voiced their support, arguing that the parallels that could be drawn between the heroine’s *deho*, *mon* and *chinta*, and the plunder of resources by the

students to venture into discussing patriarchal structures or gendered discourse as well.

The criticism of this particular question may seem like harmless jibing at first, but when we regard it in the current context of academic freedom (or lack thereof), there are more sinister undertones here. It is impossible to ignore the irony of a question on hegemony triggering debate on what should or should not be said in our academic institutions. From what I understand, when political theorists talk about hegemony, they mean the power exercised by the ruling class to dominate, not through coercion, but by consent – by convincing the dominated that everything is being done in their best interests. And this consent is manufactured through different structures, including educational institutions and the media.

they reach more high-brow avenues like higher education institutions? Would others be less interested in defending it if they did not feel a more general threat to academic freedom and critical thought? Is it possible to defend an academic’s right to set interesting questions while also expressing discomfort at the rather uncritical phrasing of said questions?

Perhaps the issue here isn’t really what should or should not be said in question papers, but that we have failed to realise that we might be doing someone else’s dirty work for them by policing each other’s words. If one day our secular writers can disappear from the pages of our textbooks and Facebook statuses can land us in jail, and the next day academics no longer have the right to conduct research or set questions as they see fit, where do we go from here?

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 Felt concern
6 Title paper
10 Find darling
11 “The King”
13 Prepare for another war
14 Owen of “Inside Man”
15 Ancient
16 Lupino of film
18 Ho of Hawaii
19 Popular reads
22 Game official
23 In the past
24 Joke teller
27 Memory units
28 Leave out
29 Caribbean, for one
30 Spots for bottles
35 Conclude

36 Skirt edge
37 Trip around the track
38 TV’s O’Donnell
40 Skate-boarding jump
42 Soft leather
43 Racket
44 Halt
45 Muscularly fit

DOWN

1 Chocolate imitation
2 “Skyfall” singer
3 Map lines
4 Mess up
5 Moderately sweet
6 Car sticker
7 Building wing
8 Plain to see

9 Marital split
12 Hearing and smell, for two
17 Rock’s—Leppard
20 Hackneyed
21 Faithful
24 Cringes in fear
25 Foreboding
26 Way of thinking
27 Triple Crown leg
29 Take in
31 Canary sound
32 Bold poker bet
33 Job reward
34 Velocity
39 Altar words
41 Old card game

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

7-11

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YESTERDAY’S ANSWERS

B	E	L	A		C	R	A	B	
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2023 SAFF CHAMPIONSHIP

Unmatched thrill awaits

SAFF, or more precisely the sponsors Sports Partners International, just took a leaf out of CONMEBOL's book and opened its borders by inviting teams from behind the region, with Lebanon and Kuwait -- two members from the West Asian Football Federation -- happily accepting the proposal.

ATIQUE ANAM

The passion and excitement that the South Asian Football Championship and its precursor, the South Asian Games football event, used to evoke has somewhat faded over the last two decades.

While the rising popularity of cricket in South Asian countries has played its part in the receding appeal of football's biggest event, the dominance of India has turned the outcome into somewhat of a foregone conclusion.

India, the biggest country of the region in terms of both area and population, has dominated the event so much over the course of time that it has, at times, had the luxury to field a youth team and still managed to win the trophy. India cannot be blamed if it did take the competition a bit lightly at times, given that it had not much to gain from here, while its ambition lay in being competitive against the top teams of the continent.

The men in blue have won the regional event eight out of 13 times, with Maldives the only other team to have won it multiple times. Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan, the latter no longer part of the regional football bloc, have won it once while three of the permanent members of the South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) -- Pakistan, Nepal and Bhutan -- are still searching for that elusive silverware.

Afghanistan's inclusion in the federation in 2003 added some lustre to the event as the central Asian nation went on to become powerhouse, but their switch to the Central Asian Football Federation after 2015 robbed the championship, once again, of the much-needed competition. Afghanistan's departure also posed a serious challenge to the organisers, who had to draw two groups of unequal number of members, in case all seven members decided to participate, for the apex biennial football competition of the region.

And if any of those seven members decided



to opt out or were barred due to a FIFA suspension, for instance Pakistan's absence from 2014 to 2021 and Sri Lanka's in 2023, the organisers had to make do with two groups of three teams each. Needless to say, six teams in two groups made for a poorer competition from both sponsors and spectators' points of view, which is what prompted the sponsors to look for two outsiders this time around.

Inviting teams from outside regional blocs is nothing new in the footballing world. CONMEBOL, being the forerunner in this case, had set the trend of inviting two teams from other confederations since 1993. SAFF, or more precisely the sponsors Sports Partners International, just took a leaf out of CONMEBOL's book and opened its borders by inviting teams from behind the region, with Lebanon and Kuwait -- two members from

the West Asian Football Federation -- happily accepting the proposal.

India, the host nation of the upcoming edition and biggest draw for the sponsors, played the facilitator's role in this expansionary policy, something which the SAFF and its sponsors hope to continue with and profit from in future as well.

With Lebanon the top-ranked team (99) ahead of India (101) and Kuwait in third (143), the 14th edition of the SAFF Championship promises to be the most competitive and entertaining one in the history of the competition. And as each of the South Asian teams get at least three games in the group stage with one against a presumably superior team from West Asia, this should be a great learning experience for all six of them regardless of the results.

‘Challenging but semi berth would be fantastic’

Rajani Kanta Barman is a bright star in the country’s footballing sky, having captained Bangladesh in their maiden SAFF Championship title in 2003 – the only one till date. Rajani was also part of the Bangladesh team that bagged gold in 1999 South Asian Games. The ever-reliable defender called time as a professional footballer in 2016 and was involved in a brief coaching stint afterwards. In an exclusive interview with Sabbir Hossain of The Daily Star, Rajani looked back on the successful 2003 campaign, gave his views on the current state of the national team, and what the upcoming SAFF Championship might have in store for Bangladesh. The excerpts are as follows:

The Daily Star (DS): Looking back now, how do you recall the memory of the 2003 SAFF triumph?

Rajani Kanta Barman (RKB): Memories of 2003, I believe, float in the eyes of every Bangladeshi -- not just me. The football enthusiasts who had travelled to the stadium to witness that final were thrilled by the result.

DS: Being the hosts, were Bangladesh the favourites in that event?

RKB: Not favourites, we began the tournament as underdogs but we were under immense pressure as we were the hosts. However, as our team had all senior players at the time, we could withstand the pressure and our performance corresponded to the number of spectators. The fans, who were also seen to gather in tens of thousands outside the stadium, played an important role.

DS: How pivotal was coach George Kottan's impact at the time?

RKB: A coach is a team's guardian and we used to think of him as one. He used to look after us like how parents look after their children, and we thoroughly followed his instructions. In our group, he allowed a loving bond to flourish.



DS: What distinguished that winning squad from others?

RKB: Coach Kottan made entertainment arrangements for us to prevent pressure from rising. We had this routine where we would visit Ramna Park early on matchdays. In addition, we were closely bonded, there was mutual respect and admiration between players, and all that reflected onto the field. Everyone was mentally prepared to step up and act when required. You don't become champions

merely by training.

DS: Since 2003, eight more SAFF editions were held but we could not taste ultimate glory. How do you view the fact that we have failed to go past the group stage in last five outings?

RKB: There was a time when we didn't even consider Bhutan, whereas we were only thinking about how many goals we were going to score against them. But we now lose to Bhutan as well -- what could be more heartbreaking than this?

In India, there are high-quality football leagues. So, I will not discuss them. The unfortunate reality is that all countries

are progressing. However, we are moving backwards. There is no point in blaming the players now.

Those in positions of authority, however ... you (media) are watching everything and these are being written about, anyway.

DS: Why are we repeatedly failing? Do we lack quality?

RKB: We don't lack anything. We possess the skills and qualities but the players need to be properly nurtured. In our era, there was no regular league. The league from one year was carried over to the next. However, we players made the most of it. Now since leagues are held annually, our football players also receive large sums of money. However, where other countries are systematically advancing, we are lagging behind.

DS: From June 21, another SAFF Championship will take place. What chance do you think Bangladesh have in the competition?

RKB: Bhutan, Lebanon, and Maldives are part of Bangladesh's group. We have a 50-50 chance of beating Bhutan since they are a fighting team now. Lebanon is well ahead, so discussing them is pointless. Maldives have also made great strides. So, it would be a fantastic result for us if we could reach the semifinals, but it will be really challenging. Having said that, my heart wants Bangladesh to compete in the final.

FIXTURES		
<div><div><div>Group: A</div><div>India, Kuwait, Nepal, Pakistan</div></div><div><div>Group: B</div><div>Lebanon, Maldives, Bhutan, Bangladesh</div></div></div>		
DATE	MATCH	TIME (BST)
21 June	Kuwait vs Nepal	4:00 pm
	India vs Pakistan	8:00 pm
22 June	Lebanon vs Bangladesh	4:00 pm
	Maldives vs Bhutan	8:00 pm
24 June	Pakistan vs Kuwait	4:00 pm
	Nepal vs India	8:00 pm
25 June	Bangladesh vs Maldives	4:00 pm
	Bhutan vs Lebanon	8:00 pm
27 June	Nepal vs Pakistan	4:00 pm
	India vs Kuwait	8:00 pm
28 June	Lebanon vs Maldives	4:00 pm
	Bangladesh vs Bhutan	8:00 pm
1 June	Semifinal-1	4:00 pm
	Semifinal-2	8:00 pm
4 June	Final	8:00 pm

ROLL OF HONOUR		
YEAR	CHAMPIONS	RUNNERS-UP
1993	India	Sri Lanka
1995	Sri Lanka	India
1997	India	Maldives
1999	India	Bangladesh
2003	Bangladesh	Maldives
2005	India	Bangladesh
2008	Maldives	India
2009	India	Maldives
2011	India	Afghanistan
2013	Afghanistan	India
2015	India	Afghanistan
2018	Maldives	India
2021	India	Nepal
2023	?	?

OVERALL TOP SCORERS		
NAME	COUNTRY	GOALS
Sunil Chhetri	India	18
Ali Ashfaq	Maldives	13
Bhaichung Bhutia	India	12
Ibrahim Fazeel	Maldives	10
Ahmed Thariq	Maldives	10

BANGLADESH'S TOP SCORERS IN SAFF CHAMPIONSHIPS		
PLAYER	GOALS	
Rokonuzzaman Kanchan	5	
Zahid Hasan Emily	5	
Ariful Kabir Farhad	4	
Enamul Haque	4	
Tapu Barman	4	
Alfaz Ahmed	3	

EDITION-WISE BANGLADESH'S STANDINGS		
YEAR	POSITION	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
1993	Did not play	4
1995	3rd	5
1997	5th	6
1999	2nd	6
2003	1st	8
2005	2nd	8
2008	6th	8
2009	3rd	8
2011	7th	8
2013	7th	8
2015	5th	7
2018	5th	7
2021	4th	5

Mominul finds strength in ‘limitations’

SPORTS REPORTER

Mominul Haque brought up his ton by unleashing a ramp shot with ease. Bat raised, Mominul Haque twirled around. 786 days had passed since his bat had been raised to recognise a century. 26 months and 26 innings had passed between the ton in Pallekele against Sri Lanka and the ton he struck against Afghanistan in Mirpur yesterday.

The ramp shot is only let loose by players brimming with confidence. Mominul had taken some time to get to that mental state. If an uppercut is a show of versatility, Mominul was deriving inner strength from his limitations as a batter.

Square of the wicket on the off-side and flicks and drives through mid-on and mid-wicket were his most productive shots during the innings. The shots that he knew he could play with comfort came out strongly. The one thing that stayed with him was letting the ball come into his body or just close enough to play the deliveries.

Curbing instincts was about maintaining his processes. “I played the way I always play Test cricket. There was not much change technically since you can’t change something in a week or two and apply it in a Test. I

SCORES IN BRIEF	Bangladesh vs Afghanistan Only Test, Day 3 Bangladesh: First innings-382 all out in 86 overs (Joy 76, Shanto 146; Masood 5-79 and Second innings-425 for four declared in 80 overs (Shanto 124, Mominul 121	not out; Zahir 2-112)
	Afghanistan: 146 all out in 39 overs (Zazai 36, Ebadot 4-47, Taijul 2-7) and Second innings- 45 for two in 11 overs (Shahidi 13 retired hurt, Rahmat 10 not out; Shoriful 1-6, Taskin 1-28)	

stayed within my strengths,” Mominul said at the press conference later yesterday.

When Tests come as sporadically as they do for Bangladesh and when you are a one-format player passionate about Tests, getting into a groove can be difficult.


Mominul was finding advantages from disadvantageous scenarios because the A team match against their West Indies counterparts was the only competitive action he got before this Test.

“The advantage for those who play Tests regularly is that they have limitations. You won’t see them playing all around the wicket. They play two to three shots and that’s what they focus on for a whole year. If that player knows his strengths or weaknesses, where to attack, and where the easy options are, then it becomes easier to practice those things. It doesn’t mean you will be successful playing Tests after five months. But the chance of you being successful can increase.

“I feel that when I get a long time, I get time to prepare. Then you can prepare with visualisation and meditation. It works for me but may not for someone else,” he added.

Mominul cited that the time when he struggled for form was ‘terrible. “I think the last one (gap of 26 innings without century) was more painful,” he felt.

But the shots flowed once he got his groove. When this reporter asked the left hander if he reckoned that limitations in shot-making was turning out to be a strength, he replied: “Yes, because I tried to integrate my limitations to find my strengths. That’s how I learned to succeed.”



Bangladesh’s 661-run second-innings lead is their highest ever in Tests. The Tigers’ previous highest lead was 476 runs against Zimbabwe in 2021.

It was only the fourth time that Bangladesh scored more than 800 runs combining the two innings of a Test match.

Najmul Hossain Shanto became only the second Bangladeshi batter to score hundreds in both the innings of a Test match after Mominul Haque.

With two hundreds in the Test, Shanto now holds the record for scoring most runs in a Test in Mirpur with 270 runs, surpassing Pakistan’s Azhar Ali, who scored a total of 251 in 2015.

Mominul, who already had the most Test hundreds for Bangladesh, added one more on Friday as he reached his 12th Test ton. Mushfiqur Rahim and Tamim Iqbal are jointly at the second place with ten hundreds.

Mominul’s unbeaten 121 in the second innings was his first ton after 26 months and 26 innings.

Bangladesh scored at 5.31 runs in the 80 overs they batted in the second innings. This is the Tigers’ highest in any innings in which they batted at least 20 overs.



“

We have been following our road map to the Asia Cup. This Bangladesh side is among the best in its history. We have the best opportunity to do something that Bangladesh have not done before.

Bangladesh head coach Chandika Hathurusingha on the Tigers’ chances in the upcoming Asia Cup.

Bangladesh’s top-order batter Najmul Hossain Shanto appears to have shed the inconsistent label, scoring twin centuries in the one-off Test against Afghanistan in Mirpur. His 124-run knock in the second innings on Friday helped set a mammoth 662-run target -- a Bangladesh record in Tests.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Shanto’s challenge to continue purple patch

SPORTS REPORTER

Najmul Hossain Shanto struck his second ton inside three days, picking up his fourth Test ton and in the process becoming just the second Bangladeshi to score centuries in both innings of a Test match. Shanto achieved the feat with Mominul Haque batting at the other end, the batter who was first to record the feat. Their lean patches may have certain similarities, but for Shanto it was all about delivering after a show of faith and letting his bat do the talking for him.

“When life gives you lemons, make lemonade,” Shanto posted on Facebook on Thursday. He portrayed that confidence after coming in to bat on Friday on an overnight score of 54, as he has done throughout the year, starting with the Bangladesh Premier League. He averages over 50 in all the formats this year.

Mominul, who watched on from close quarters, wanted Shanto to carry on in the same vein.

Bangladesh dominated a lot of series in the recent past at home. Maybe those were ODIs and T20Is but they switched it on. All the teams that come here know that it is going to be tough and perhaps not as easy as it was in the past.

Afghanistan coach Jonathon Trott

“In the first innings, when he got the hundred, we all wanted him to get the hundred in the second innings as well,” Mominul said.

“We have to thank him for contributing with two tons for the team. It’s a big thing,” Mominul remarked.

Shanto shows little reservation in dispatching bad deliveries and his range of shots meant that anything short, wide or too full got taken for runs. “It feels like it’s easy when you watch Shanto’s innings. I



After beating hosts Cambodia 1-0 in a friendly on Thursday, Bangladesh players Aminur Rahman, Anisur Rahman, Mehedi Hasan and Isa Faisal relax in the lounge at the Phnom Penh airport ahead of their flight to Bengaluru yesterday for the SAFF Championship. Captain Jamal Bhuiyan felt the win would boost confidence for the big assignment in India. “We won two matches, which has boosted our confidence. These were test matches and it’s a good thing we won both. But we will have to play better. We will now work on our next opponents, Lebanon,” the captain said. Bangladesh will play their first match of the SAFF Championship against Lebanon on June 22.

PHOTO: BFF



On the opening day of the first Ashes Test, England lost five wickets inside 40 overs, with the most curious being the dismissal of Harry Brook. A delivery from Nathan Lyon clipped his thigh-pad before flying high into the air over the batter’s head. Befuddling fielders and the batter alike, the ball dropped on Brook’s leg and went on to hit the stumps. England were on 240 for five at Tea.

PHOTO: AFP

‘Spain morale sky-high after Italy win’

AFP, Enschede

Spain coach Luis de la Fuente said his team’s morale was “sky high” after they beat Italy on Thursday to reach the Nations League final against Croatia.

La Roja snatched a late winner through Joselu after Italy’s Ciro Immobile cancelled out Yeremy Pino’s opening goal.

The coach had been criticised heavily after his first two matches in March, the second of which was a defeat by Scotland.

“I feel) satisfaction and pride, I think we played an extremely



high-level game,” De la Fuente told reporters.

“We followed what we had prepared to the letter. We’re happy and our morale is sky-high.”

The coach handed Robin Le Normand his debut after the French-born defender obtained Spanish

nationality in May, and the Real Sociedad player impressed despite conceding an early penalty for handball.

“We have seen him so many times, I was very calm, he’s shown he’s top draw, he’s cool-headed, he’s another player for the cause and the future of Spanish football,” said De la Fuente.

Italy coach Roberto Mancini said he wished he had approached the second half with more attacking intent.

The coach stuck to the 3-5-2 formation he opted for at the start and watched his team fade as Spain took control.



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ROHINGYA REPATRIATION Dhaka seeks ASEAN’s role

UNB, Dhaka

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md Shahriar Alam has underscored an active role of the regional countries including ASEAN for the safe and sustainable repatriation of the Rohingyas to Myanmar.

He also laid emphasis on efforts to end the armed conflicts and ensure a peaceful transition to civilian administration through elections in Myanmar.

The state minister shared the views at the two-day Oslo Forum hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway in association with the Geneva-based Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue on June 13-14 in Oslo, Norway.

The event drew retreats for over 100 international mediators and experts in sharing their perspectives and assessing the state of mediation and peacemaking against a backdrop of rising geopolitical tensions and rivalry, increasing conflict and the growing impact of climate change, social media and other factors that fuel conflicts.

The Forum held an open discussion on diplomatic developments in geopolitical hotspots, particularly war in Ukraine, Sudan, Yemen, and other conflict areas, including Myanmar, Afghanistan, Somalia, Ethiopia, and ways to prevent, interrupt or end conflicts, said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Friday.

The Oslo Forum 2023 was opened by Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store and attended by, among others, Foreign Ministers of Norway, Indonesia and Colombia, and the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court.

Shahriar attended the event at the invitation of Norwegian Foreign Minister Anniken Huitfeldt.

Shahriar also held bilateral meetings in Oslo with the Norwegian Minister of Fisheries and Ocean Policy Bjørnar Selnes Skjæran and State Secretary of Foreign Affairs Erling Rimestad.



Rods carried by a truck extends far beyond its flatbed, creating risks for other road users. The photo was taken during the rush hour near New Supermarket in the capital last week.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Transcom Group Director Arshad Waliur no more



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transcom Group Director Arshad Waliur Rahman passed away at his home in the capital's Gulshan yesterday morning.

He was 58. Waliur was the eldest son of late Latifur Rahman, founder and former chairman of Transcom Group.

His namaz-e-janaza was held at Gulshan Azad Mosque after Asr prayers.

He was buried at the Banani Graveyard.

Born on October 2, 1965, Waliur is survived by his mother, two sisters, and a host of relatives and well-wishers.

First Bangladesh origin American becomes US federal judge

REUTERS

The US Senate on Thursday narrowly confirmed civil rights lawyer Nusrat Choudhury to the US District Court for the Eastern District of New York, making her the first Bangladeshi-American and female Muslim federal judge in the United States.

Nusrat, the legal director of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Illinois, was confirmed on a 50-49 vote. She will also be the first Bangladeshi-American federal judge.

Nusrat previously spent most of her professional career with the national ACLU, where she worked on racial justice and national security issues. She was deputy director of the organisation's racial justice program from 2018 until 2020. US President Joe Biden nominated her to the federal bench in January 2022.

Top Senate Democrat Chuck Schumer in a statement said that Nusrat's "experience as a talented and dedicated civil rights litigator has prepared her to serve with integrity and professionalism on the federal bench, and she will follow



Nusrat Chy

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Ukraine offensive stands 'no chance'

Says Putin; Kyiv claims Russia taking heavy losses in south, resisting near Bakhmut

AGENCIES

Russian President Vladimir Putin yesterday said Ukraine's counteroffensive would fail as Kyiv's troops sought to advance in several directions, including the southeastern region of Zaporizhzhia.

"I think that Ukraine's armed forces stand no chance here, as well as in other directions – I have no doubt about that," Putin told an annual economic forum in Saint Petersburg. He confirmed Russia had sent nuclear arms to its ally Belarus which borders Ukraine.

AFP and representatives of other countries the Kremlin deems "unfriendly" were not accredited to cover the forum. Putin claimed Ukraine's armed forces were suffering "heavy losses".

"In some places Ukrainian units are managing to reach the first line (of defence), in other places they are failing," he said. "They are using the so-called strategic reserves," he added.

Putin said Ukrainian forces did not achieve their objectives in any section of the front, adding: "That's the important thing."

Ukraine would soon run out of its own military equipment, making it totally reliant on hardware supplied by the West which would undermine its ability to fight for long, he said.

Advancing Ukrainian troops are facing "desperate resistance" from Russian forces around the eastern city of Bakhmut, and are inflicting big losses on Russian troops in the south, Ukrainian military chiefs said yesterday.

Colonel General Oleksandr Syrskyi, who is in charge of Ukrainian ground forces, said the situation in the east was tense and Russia was bringing its best divisions into the Bakhmut sector with backup from artillery and aircraft.

Meanwhile, at least two explosions rocked Kyiv yesterday and air raid sirens blared as African leaders began a peace mission, hoping to mediate between Ukraine and Russia.

The peace delegation, including leaders from South Africa, Senegal, Zambia, the Comoros and Egypt, met Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky later yesterday, before talks with Putin in St Petersburg today. But, Zelensky ruled out talks with Russia.

A Reuters journalist in central Kyiv heard

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

BOTCHED C-SECTION DGHS closes OT at Central Hospital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Directorate General of Health Services has ordered surgeries be suspended at the capital's Central Hospital as the services at its intensive care unit and emergency department are not satisfactory.

The order was issued yesterday after a DGHS team inspected the hospital, Sheikh Daud Adnan, director (hospitals and clinics) at the DGHS, told The Daily Star.

The development came a day after a Dhaka court sent two physicians of the hospital to jail in a case filed by a patient's husband over the death of their newborn baby following a C-section at the hospital on June 9.

Mahbuba Akter Akhi, who underwent the C-section, was later put on life support in another hospital nearby.

On Wednesday, Yakub Ali, the husband of Mahbuba, filed a case with Dhanmondi Police Station

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Cave fossils unearth human migrations

CNN ONLINE



Humans originated in Africa, but when exactly our earliest ancestors left the continent and how they spread around the world has been intensely debated by archaeologists.

Two fossils unearthed in a cave in northern Laos suggest that Homo sapiens, our own species, was living in the region some 86,000 years ago,

according to a new study. The finding challenges the prevailing idea that humans' path across the globe was linear and took place in a single wave about 50,000 to 60,000 years ago.

"Chances are that this early migration was unsuccessful, but this does not distract from the fact that H. sapiens had arrived in this region by this time which is a remarkable achievement," said study author Kira Westaway, an Associate Professor at Macquarie University in Australia, via email.

DNA analysis of present day human populations has supported the hypothesis that early modern humans left Africa around 50,000 to 60,000 years ago, and archaeologists have thought our early ancestors likely followed coastlines and islands through southeast Asia toward Australia.

Female Jubo Dal activist harassed by 'BCL men'

Police show her arrested in old case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT,

Ctg

A female Jubo Dal activist was allegedly harassed by some Chhatra League men in Chattogram's Mirsarai upazila on Wednesday night when she was returning home after attending a youth rally in the port city.

Nadia Nusrat was subsequently handed over to police by the Chhatra League men, alleged a local BNP leader.

Police on Thursday showed her arrested in a case filed in December last year over subversive activities. A Chattogram court later sent her to jail.

The news of her arrest came to light yesterday morning after her political colleagues protested the incident on social media.

Jahid Hossen, officer-in-charge of Joraganj Police Station, said Nadia

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



A delegation of African leaders visits a site of a mass grave, in the town of Bucha, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, outside of Kyiv yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

ETHNIC TENSIONS Minister's home set ablaze in Manipur

REUTERS, Guwahati

A federal Indian minister's house was set on fire by a mob in the remote northeastern state of Manipur, which has been hit by clashes between members of rival ethnic groups for over a month, officials said yesterday.

Junior foreign minister R K Ranjan Singh's office confirmed that a mob vandalised and set fire to his house in the Manipur capital Imphal.

"Fortunately none of the caretakers or family members were injured in the attack on the house," said an aide to Singh in New Delhi.

Singh is a federal minister in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government. Modi's ruling party also governs the state of Manipur.

"I am shocked. The law and order situation in Manipur has totally failed," Singh told ANI, Reuters TV partner in India.

The attack comes after weeks of violent clashes between members of the Kuki ethnic group, who mostly live in the hills, and Meiteis, the dominant community in the low lands of the state.

Singh is from the Meitei community. No group has taken the responsibility for the latest attack.

Clashes between the two communities erupted on May 3, sparked by resentment over economic benefits and quotas for easy access to government jobs and education reserved for the Kukis.

Meiteis account for half of Manipur's population and extending limited affirmative action quotas to them would mean they would get a greater share in education and government jobs reserved for Kukis and others.

Latest federal home ministry records showed 83 people have been killed and over 60,000 residents displaced since May in the violence.



This is how we remember Shishu park, filled with joy and laughter of visitors.
FILE PHOTO



Children having fun on a swing ride inside the Shishu Park.
FILE PHOTO



Now, this merry-go-round which used to be the centre of children's attention is barricaded with tin.



One of the rides now lies abandoned inside the park.

Shishu Park: once bustling, now fading from memory

Dhaka's major outdoor recreational place closed for four and a half years for renovation, no tentative date of reopening

DIPAN NANDY

*"Amader deshta showpnopuri,
Sathi moder phulpuri
Phulpuri, lai pori, lai pori, neel pori
sobar sathe bhaab kori"*

The ever-memorable song starts playing while children, sitting on the metallic horsebacks, delightfully start going round and round – this is a memory many Dhaka residents can still relate to. This song, and most importantly the place associated with it, is none other than Shishu Park, the country's first amusement park for children.

Established in 1979, the public amusement facility has been the go-to place, especially for middle and low-income families, during weekends and other holidays in a city where low-cost options for kids' entertainment are few and far between. Shishu (children) Park has also been a prominent centre of recreation for families coming from every nook and corner of the country.

However, the park remains closed for four and half years and counting. No one knows when the popular children's entertainment destination in the heart of Dhaka will be reopened.

The government suspended the facility for modernisation and development works in January 2019. However, no development works have been done so far due to the delay in the construction of an underground parking lot and complications regarding budget allocation, leading to frustration among citizens and urban experts.

Shakibur Rahman, who has been living in Dhaka for the last four decades, said he passed his childhood with frequent visits to Shishu Park and the National Zoo in

Mirpur with his parents.

"We all have some memories and nostalgia associated with this park," said 60-year-old Rahman.

Recalling his merry-go-round rides on a metallic horse and swaying to the famous background song, Rahman said it has been etched in his memory and many others forever.

"It is disappointing that I could not take my family there as the park has remained closed for years. It is an injustice for a generation who are growing up now," said Rahman, who lives in Kalyanpur.

Rashid Al Amin, who was born and brought up in a village bordering the Kurigram district, shared a similar feeling.

"The first time I visited Dhaka was when I was 10. My uncle took me to Shishu Park at that time. It was one of the best days of my life. But I'm yet to get the opportunity to take my daughter to this Park," said 35-year-old Al Amin, who now lives in Dhanmondi.

Although there are many private amusement parks in Dhaka, they are expensive for a middle-income person like him, he mentioned.

Adil Mohammed Khan, urban planner and a professor at Jahangirnagar University, said the long closure of the Shishu Park is depriving an entire generation of children of outdoor entertainment – something that is crucial for their mental and physical development.

"Dhaka has very limited space for children, and Shishu Park is one of them. The fact that it has been closed for almost half a decade is completely unacceptable. The more concerning issue is, even the authorities do not have a clear idea about when the amusement park will reopen after renovation," asserted Khan.

Mazibur Rahman, curator of the

AT A GLANCE

- Country's first children's amusement park
- Established in 1979, it was a venture by Parjatan
- DCC started to maintain it since 1983
- DSCC took charge after the split of DCC into two in Nov 2011
- The 15-acre park was named after former president Ziaur Rahman
- The name was changed to Hossain Shaheed Suhrawardy Shishu Park on Dec 30, 2021

National Zoo, told The Daily Star that due to the closure of Shishu Park, the number of visitors to the zoo has increased.

"To treat the visiting children with some more additional amusement, we have launched two rides," said Rahman.

THE ONGOING WORK

The Department of Public Works is currently working on the underground car parking inside the park under the Tk 397 crore Swadhinata Stambha (Phase 3) project. Of the amount, Tk 65 crore has been allocated for the park's development.

After extending the deadline for the project several times, it has been set for June 2024. Project officials say the construction works of the underground parking is underway. The roofing of the parking with a capacity of 500 cars has been completed. Its physical progress is 97 percent as of December 2022, according to

the Liberation War affairs ministry.

At the same time, work on the underpass is still ongoing. Its physical progress is 80 percent, according to the ministry officials.

During a recent visit to the park, this correspondent saw that the construction works of underground parking have taken up almost all of the park's area. The roof of the parking lot is about four feet above the ground.

However, there is no information or images of the blueprint or design.

The entire area is surrounded by tin fences. This correspondent tried to peek through an open space between the fences and saw that most of the rides, that used to exist inside the park, were gone. However, two rides were kept surrounded by eight-foot-high tins. The jet plane gifted by the Air Force has been left in the bushes on the west side of the park, with vines and dust being scattered on it.

WHY THE DELAY

When asked about updates on the project, Habibul Islam, project director of the Swadhinata Stambha (Phase 3), said, "The project is being initiated by the Ministry of Liberation War... I cannot talk about it over the phone. However, the project [Shishu Park] will now be maintained by Dhaka South City Corporation."

Officials of DSCC, who are the custodian of the children's park, said they cannot start the modernisation works until the construction of the parking lot is completed.

"The construction is expected to take another year to complete, after which, DSCC's mechanical department will work on the park's modernisation under a separate project," said DSCC spokesperson Abu Naser.

DSCC sought a much higher allocation from the LGRD ministry to replace the old and risky set of rides in the park. The ministry asked the corporation to submit a separate project proposal one and a half years ago, he added.

Accordingly, DSCC prepared a development project proposal of Tk 604 crore. It is currently in the process of approval by the Department of Materials and Infrastructure of the Planning Commission, said Anisur Rahman, superintendent engineer (mechanical circle) of DSCC.

"We are waiting for the approval of the Planning Commission and then the vetting from the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council. It would take three years to complete the park's development works after the project is approved," he added.

According to the DSCC sources, 15 new rides will be installed inside the park, namely Mine Coaster, Disk'O Mega 40, Super Air Race, Tea Cup 9, Flying Carrouseles, Endeavour, Galleon, 12D Theatre, Climbing Car, Bumper Car, Magic Bikes, Trampoline Bed, Super Happy Swing, Merry Go Round and Water Mania.

The country's first children's amusement park, named after ex-president Ziaur Rahman, was a venture by Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation. The former Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) took jurisdiction of the 15-acre park in 1983. Later, DSCC took charge of the facility after the corporation split into two parts in November 2011.

However, with four and a half years gone, the once bustling entrance of the park is now gathering dust. The only notable DSCC move so far has been changing its name to Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy Shishu Park on December 30, 2021.



The Shishu Park now wears a deserted look. This public amusement facility, a go-to place for Dhaka residents, has been closed for four and half years due to development works. This photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

FICTION

Will-o'-the-Wisp-



DESIGN: MAISHA SYEDA

The sky to the west and overhead is mired in darkness; but to the east, light is gleaming out like a jasper stone, as clear as crystal. Dark as night, to a gray, to the palest of pink, and finally, there in the center, a pinprick of a diamond flash. It is what the two huddling figures have come to see.

HASAN MARUF

The old man slammed the door back, shook his grandson, and blurted out in a rush, "Get up Jerry, you're burning daylight!"

"Daylight? It's as dark as midnight, Grandpa!"

"Hurry, get dressed, we haven't got long. The snow outside is clover bud so dress warm."

"You mean, we are heading out this morning?"

"Maybe. The weather's looking about to glow as musky moss rose. Be a fleeting angel, or we'll miss it. Here, wear your long johns and double socks."

Grunting and struggling into clothes, still half asleep, Jerry finally reaches down, grabs the zipper on his boots, pulls them up, and buckles the strap across the top. "Ok, I'm ready."

"Good. No time for breakfast. Let's get."

Through the kitchen, the past smells of baking cookies mixed with the aroma of fresh brewing coffee. Out the back door, they rush into a crisp New England morning. Down the flagstone path with the topsy-turvy stone in the middle, and out the gate, scuttling into a fresh field of snow, so cold and so dry every

step squeaks as they step. A slight nor-easterly breeze brings the tingle of salt, ocean, and distant fishing boats.

Almost running they hasten their steps, Jerry keeping close to his grandfather, helping the old man where he was unsteady, running ahead when the way was clear, but never more than a few feet ahead.

"Today Grandpa? You sure?", Jerry says, blowing steam into the air so cold he can feel the inside of his nose crinkle and crackle.

Panting, breathing like the bellows of the frogs, Grandpa says, "Maybe. Never can tell. Lots of things are needed to make it happen. Doesn't work sometimes on even the best days." He nods towards the point. "Over there. Your grandma and I saw it the first time. Been back umpteenth times and only seen it a few, and all those with her."

Both, the elder aided by the younger, dash to the point of land and stare to the east.

"Don't blink Jerry. Don't blink."

"I know, I know," says the impatience of youth. "You have got to use your peripheral vision."

"That's right, use your peripheral vision," the old man snarls and finally stops on the

pinnacle of the point gazing to the east. Jerry idles up next to him, and the old man places his hand on the boy's shoulder. Feeling the warmth of his grandson, even through all the winter clothing, he hugs Jerry close, feeling the quivering of a grandson about to share what his grandfather has yearned to see for so long. Maybe today, maybe...

Softly, so softly Grandpa says, "Wait for it ... Wait for it ..."

The sky to the west and overhead is mired in darkness; but to the east, light is gleaming out like a jasper stone, as clear as crystal. No, no, do not look at it. Look slightly to the side, or slightly down, and there hovering on the absolute edge, is the barest visible line of a brightening eastern horizon. Slowly that curve brightens and becomes a line. Dark as night, to a gray, to the palest of pink, and finally, there in the center, a pinprick of a diamond flash. It is what the two huddling figures have come to see.

"Wow," Jerry says, awestruck as a flash of green erupts from the emerging sun and then is gone, faster than a flash. "Wow."

John, feeling the bewilderment of his grandson, finally beholds what he has not seen, finally feels what he has not felt in a hundred trips to this point.

Fairy tales do come true, for with the true love of his grandson's touch, the magic he has sought for so long is before him. His Helen, illuminated in that brief flash of green, stands before him, as he had forgotten her, and nippily vanishes in that green glow. The memory, refreshed by that brief flash of green, lingers, and he feels the marvel he and Helen felt every time they saw the flash. The wonderment he had forgotten until Jerry's eager anticipation awakened that long forgotten feeling.

"Holy shh-cow, Grandpa, do it again."

"I wish I could, grandson, I wish I could... Maybe another morning, on another day, when the conditions are just right, we'll see green again."

Another few moments, and slowly the two turned and walked back down the point. Back onto the snow squeaking with cold, and back to the warmth of home.

Hasan Maruf teaches English in DPS STS School, Dhaka. What influences him to lift the pen is not only his adoration for creative writing, but a need to seek spiritual salvation.

POETRY

Heathen

AFNAN BINTEY HELAL

Spirit breaks at home along with love mingled with innocence.
Love births something contrary!
Breeding ground it is, breeding bottled anger, unforgiving solace.
Hath it not been hard caging vexed anger?

Halt a pace, hold that lot,
Hone the edges of their hollow thought.
I am a heathen of the method of followed flow
A criminal to sobriety
A pagan at the law

Where do they draw the lines?
Their lines blur into reality and drip onto the hearts.
It is malady that is a sweet melody to them!

Afnan Bintey Helal is a graduate of English Literature and Linguistics from the East West University.



DESIGN: MAISHA SYEDA

FEATURE

BEGUM ROKEYA AND BEGUM SUFIA

An enduring “mother-daughter” bond

MOHAMMAD A QUAYUM

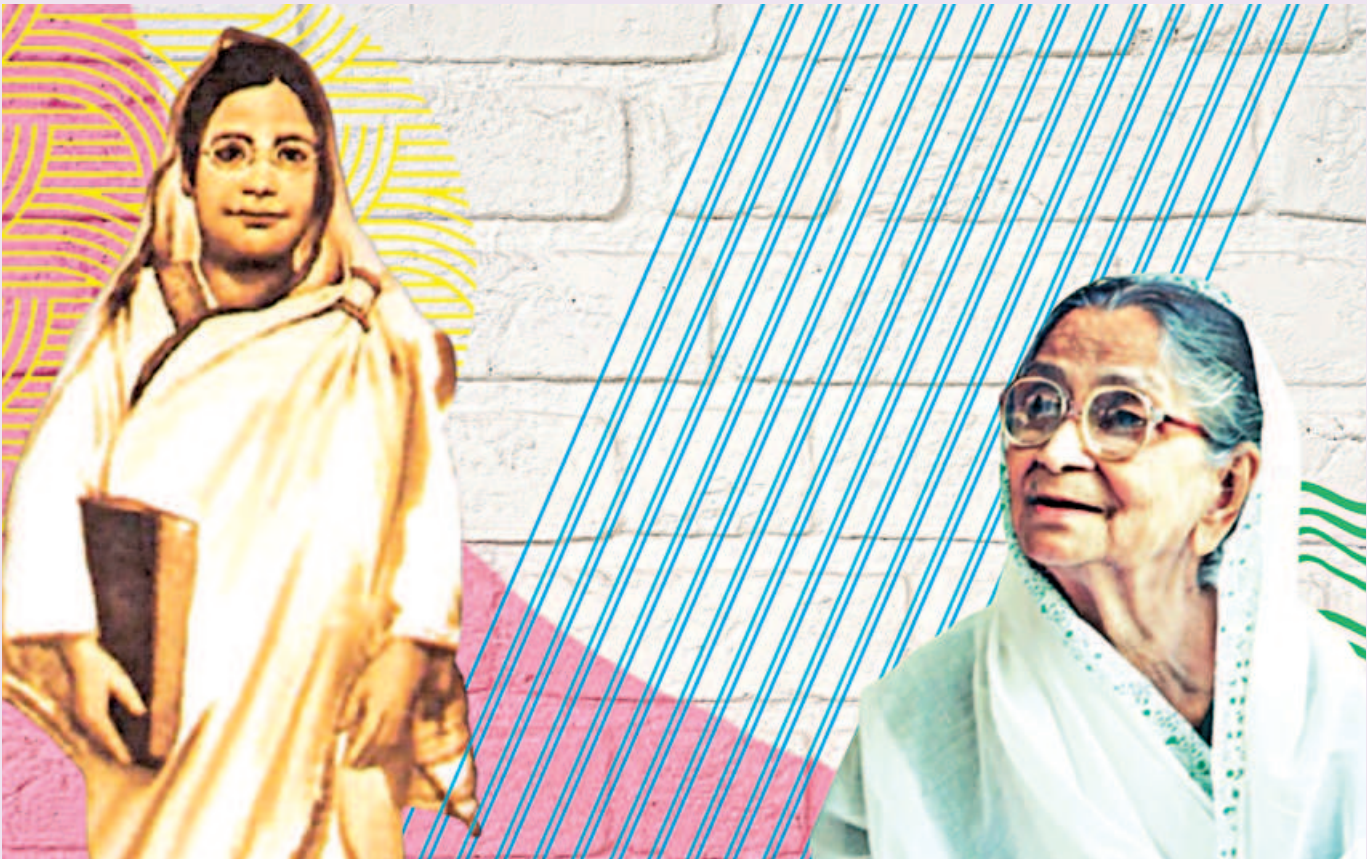
Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain (1880-1932) and Begum Sufia Kamal (1911-1999), two icons in Bangla literature and culture, were not kins but kindred spirits. Their relationship grew from strength to strength through their interactions and shared commitments to humanitarian principles and practices, especially the emancipation of women, which can best be imagined and encapsulated in a mother-daughter trope.

Certain apparent parallels in their lives likely triggered this lasting relationship of mutual love and admiration. Both Rokeya and Sufia were born in aristocratic Muslim families and raised in a privileged but patriarchal and Urdu-speaking environment. Moreover, the duo were deprived of formal education in childhood and became victims of gender segregation and child marriage. Although prohibited from attending school, both became educators in adult life: Rokeya founded a school for Muslim girls in Calcutta in 1911, and Sufia taught at the Calcutta Corporation Free Primary School for Girls from 1933 to 1941.

Rokeya was married off as the second wife of an English-educated Deputy Magistrate, Syed Sakhawat Hossain, at the age of 16 (1896); Sufia was married to her cousin, Nehal Hossain, a student of law, at age 12 (1923). Thankfully, both their husbands were benevolent and liberal, opening the doors for their future success as writers and activists. They supported and even inspired their wives to write in Bangla, although Urdu was their family language—an exception that no doubt helped tilt the language preference of Bengali Muslim women from Urdu to Bangla.

Sufia first met Rokeya at her maternal aunt's home in Calcutta at age eight, where she had gone with her mother to visit her ailing elder brother. One day Rokeya casually dropped by the aunt's house as part of her routine visit to Muslim households in search of students. She struggled to find students for her school as Muslims were dogmatic and hostile to women's education. Therefore, when she saw little Sufia, she implored her mother to enroll the young girl at her school.

Sufia was hugely excited by this prospect and instantly expressed willingness to become Rokeya's student. However, Sufia's mother could not accept Rokeya's overture as they were visitors only and would soon have to return to their village home in



DESIGN: SARAH ANJUM BARI

Shyestabad, Barisal. Nevertheless, before their return, they toured the school, much to Sufia's excitement. Rokeya was a trailblazer in Muslim women's education; therefore, her presence must have cast a spell on the precocious Sufia, such that she could recall the details of this chance meeting with the luminary in her memoir, *Ekale Amader Kaal*, published about 70 years later (1988).

The second time Sufia met Rokeya was in 1928, when she moved to Calcutta with her husband. Though an adolescent, she probably still harboured the desire to study at Rokeya's school, as getting a formal education was Sufia's lifelong dream. But realising that it was impractical and wishful thinking, she decided to work as a volunteer in Rokeya's two organisations for the education and welfare of children and women: Anjuman-i-Khawatin-i-Islam, founded in 1916, and the Bengal chapter of All India Women's Conference, established in 1919.

These two organisations were groundbreaking initiatives by Rokeya to help the abused, oppressed and distressed

women of all cultures and religions in British India—be they divorced and, therefore, unwarranted Catholic White women; indigent and illiterate Muslim women; women who had lost their caste in Hinduism for whatever frivolous reason; or the most ostracised, vilified and persecuted of all, the Untouchables (Dalits) in Hinduism. Sufia reminisces in her memoir how Rokeya would repeatedly advise her not to discriminate against any woman or child, whatever their background, and to treat everyone with equal respect and dignity as fellow human beings. This noble, humanitarian and philanthropic outlook of Rokeya made her the embodiment of all that Sufia aspired to be, so she began to regard her as a role model and mother figure.

Sufia was already a published writer and activist before becoming Rokeya's "intern" and "warrior" in her two altruistic networks. She published her first short story, "Sainik Bodhu," in 1923 and her first poem, "Basanti," in 1925. Her reform activities, some of them intuitively, began

even earlier.

For example, although prohibited from school education, the "bad girl" maverick hoodwinked the family to challenge this patriarchal norm, albeit unknowingly, by attending school with her brother for some time disguised as a boy. She also continued to read Bangla magazines, including Tagore's Prabasi, in contravention of their family custom and the wishes of her elders. In 1925, she joined "Matri Mangal" as the first Muslim member of an organisation in Barisal run by Hindus and Brahmos for the welfare of women and children. She also met the nationalist leader Mahatma Gandhi the same year, disguised as a Hindu woman. Such activities suggest that, like Rokeya, Sufia was bold, dynamic, far-sighted and determined, even in childhood and adolescence, to change society by making it a level playing field.

Sufia worked with Rokeya for about four years until Rokeya's sudden death in 1932. The same year Sufia also lost her first husband to tuberculosis (she married Kamaluddin Ahmad in 1939). These two

tragic incidents rattled her so profoundly that she confessed to writer Mahbubul Alam that she contemplated suicide.

However, during this short period of their association, Rokeya instilled the skills and values that Sufia cherished all her life. She taught her that as a feminist reformist, one must shun religious and cultural parochialism and be inclusive and cosmopolitan: help all abused and exploited women without prejudice.

She also taught her to be a practical idealist: be committed to the vision and mission but act so that they could attain their goal without riling the majority in society. On the subject of purdah, her advice was to be circumspect, as the extremists would exploit any potential irreverence. And as for the religious extremists, her recommendation was stoic indifference and silent persistence without rising to their bait. These are some of the strategies Sufia held in high regard and adopted in later life.

Rokeya's influence on Sufia's life and imagination was deep-seated, and she never downplayed it. Instead, she did everything to lionise Rokeya and project her true greatness as a writer and women's rights advocate. Sufia's reverence for Rokeya is evident in how she tried to nurture her memory in the hearts and minds of the Bengali people. For example, in 1946, Sufia initiated a kindergarten school with friends at Park Circus, Calcutta, calling it "Rokeya Memorial School." In 1949, she launched a new magazine as co-editor and titled it after the fictional character of Rokeya's "Sultana's Dream," the *Weekly Sultana*.

In 1950, she named her newly born daughter (now an Advocate and human rights activist) "Sultana," also after this fictional character. In 1960, she led a memorandum committee to name Dhaka University's first women's hostel "Rokeya Hall." In 1970, Sufia dedicated her eighth volume of poetry, *Mrititkar Ghran*, to Begum Rokeya. She also played a crucial role with the Bangladesh Mahila Parishad in establishing a Memorial for Rokeya in her native village of Pairabad, Rangpur.

She devoted almost one-third of her memoir to affirming her love and admiration for her mentor, who, by grooming her for four years, brought Sufia's blossoming talents to full bloom.

Mohammad A Quayum is a professor at the College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, Flinders University, Adelaide.



Kyrgyzstan

A tale of an eagle and a bond



(L) Imam Sarahsi Bishkek Central Mosque. (R) The Ata Beyit Memorial Complex is a memorial site and cemetery near Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. Ata Beyit, means “Grave of our Fathers” in the Kyrgyz language.



kilometres and prey upon rabbits, mountain goats, and even wolves. The process requires meticulous preparation and several years of training. The master must treat the eagle with respect and care, as any aggression or mistreatment could cause the eagle to flee, never to return.

The master communicates with the eagle through speaking, signing, and humming, imprinting their voice on the eagle's memory. During training and even afterwards, the eagle's eyes are covered with a head musk to maintain its calm and dependence.

We embarked on a 200 km journey southeast of Bishkek, arriving in the Issyk Kul region in the afternoon. The eagle man was scheduled to meet us near Lake Orto Rokoy.

Around 4:00pm, he appeared, accompanied by his golden eagle. The eagle man had travelled 90 kilometres from his village to join us by the lake. His brothers accompanied him, along with a dog, a stuffed fox, and a domesticated rabbit.

It was a breathtaking day, with the

sapphire lake reflecting an equally blue sky and surrounded by dry, grey mountain peaks.

Without delay, the eagle man led us further into the mountains. His brother carried the eagle about half a mile away from us and released it. With a whistle, the eagle soared. Its target was the rabbit released earlier by the eagle man.

In no time, the eagle captured its prey. This demonstration showcased the eagle's natural hunting prowess.

After the hunt, a trained eagle waits for its master to arrive on the scene. As the master gives a reward, usually a piece of meat, the eagle releases its hunt from its powerful claws, which have a grip strength of over 500 psi. That's strong enough to break any bones.



We captured countless photos and a few video clips, savouring the awe-inspiring moment. The time came for us to settle the previously agreed amount with the eagle man. As a gesture of appreciation, I added a little extra and instructed our driver to convey that it was intended for the eagle. The eagle turned out to be a three-year-old female with an expected lifespan of twenty-five years.

However, the eagle man would not keep her beyond ten to fifteen years. Releasing captive eagles into nature is a tradition. Before release, the master trains the eagle to survive in the wild. On the day of liberation, the master may even sacrifice a large animal in the mountains as a gift to their loyal companion.

On that day, we bore witness to the profound bond between the master and the eagle.

As we embarked on our return journey, an extraordinary occurrence transpired. As mentioned at the beginning, we paused. The eagle man approached us, offering two feathers from his golden eagle. It was a heartfelt token of his affection. Though we lacked a common language, we understood that a connection had been forged.

Now, whenever I glance at those feathers adorning my living room, they transport me back to that cherished time. They serve as a reminder of a man in a distant land, whom I may never see again, but whose memory shall forever endure.



The writer and his wife at Ala Archa National Park, Kyrgyzstan with a few other young Russian tourists.

Rezaul Bahar and Sarmin Shahariath, married since 2005, are avid travellers. So far they have travelled 94 countries across seven continents.



Want to share your travel experiences with us? Please send your stories to holiday@thedailystar.net

REZAUL BAHAR

The eagle man was waving at us; he wanted to tell us something. Our Kyrgyz driver was eager to start the 200 kilometres return journey to Bishkek after a day-long trip. However, we stopped to listen to what he had to say, and what we got remained the highlight of the tour.

Sarmin and I have been travelling around the world for the last 15 years. For the two of us, it has become the way of life, perhaps a path to happiness as a couple.

While we had visited Central Asia before, this marked our first time in Kyrgyzstan. Arriving from Uzbekistan in late March, we found ourselves in this landlocked nation bordered by Kazakhstan to the north, Uzbekistan to the west, Tajikistan to the south, and China to the east. Like its neighbouring countries, Kyrgyzstan gained independence following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

The majority of its lower-middle-class populace resides near urban areas, yet a brave few choose to inhabit the vast mountain ranges that encompass over 90 percent of the country's territory.

The allure of Central Asia's authentic lifestyle compelled me to return time and again. The world has changed dramatically; settlers with easy access to the seas have long since transformed the Americas, Europe, Australia, and much of Asia. Only a few places, like landlocked

Central Asia and Africa, remain relatively untouched.

Before arriving in Bishkek, we meticulously planned our journey with a local driver and guide named Begaly. Together, we explored Uzbekistan's cities, national parks, lakes, monuments, and historical sites. However, one of the most incredible experiences we encountered was entirely unplanned.

Begaly informed us that he could arrange an eagle hunting show, and after hearing a few details, we agreed.

For over ten thousand years, humans have relied on animals to fulfil various needs. Our superior intelligence has allowed us to harness their speed, power, and unique abilities for our benefit.

Eagles, with their remarkable eyesight nearly eight times sharper than ours, have played a significant role in hunting. Capturing and training these majestic creatures is a centuries-old tradition in Central Asia. Nomadic people, who call the high valleys of Central Asia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, and western China their home, have preserved this eagle hunting tradition.

Today, this tradition is regulated by state and local governments.

Capturing and training a golden eagle is no easy feat. These magnificent birds maintain a home territory of approximately 200 square



PHOTOS: REZAUL BAHAR

University decides to stack students on top of each other to maximise enrolment

Students have reacted with disdain and disbelief at this decision. Hussell Graind Seth, a third-year business major, complained, “I am six feet and four inches tall. Where am I supposed to find a four feet eight inch university student? I like hanging out with younger shorter people but not for studying!”

JEAN PAUL SATIRE

In an unprecedented move, Bidirectional University, the country's top private university, has decided to implement a stacking policy to maximise the number of students enrolled in the university.

The decision comes after students have been complaining for months about severe crowding in the university campus. University authorities, after ignoring the complaints with a deaf ear, have finally shifted their stance and decided to inflict even more discomfort on the lives of beleaguered students by doubling the number of students from the upcoming semester.

Professor Vincent Adultman, Dean of the university's Efficient School of Business Efficiency, spoke at a press conference to explain the mechanisms of this new decision.

“To make this possible, we will be introducing a new General Education course called ‘Teamwork and Co-ordination’, which will be a four-year long mandatory credited course where each student will pair up with a fellow student to carry them on their shoulders and walk around campus. We will install double decker desks in class so partnered students can sit on top of one another. Not only will this double enrolment and teach students the meaning of teamwork, it will also make them physically active,” he said.

Asked whether students will at least be allowed to pick their own partners for this programme, Professor Adultman said, “No, absolutely not. If given the chance, students will only partner up with their friends, or worse, girlfriends and boyfriends, and use this as a chance to engage in antisocial activities. We will use state-of-the-art AI technology to pair students with academically like-minded individuals. We will also make sure no pair of



students crosses the combined height of 11 feet because that's how high our ceilings are.”

Students have reacted with disdain and disbelief at this decision. Hussell Graind Seth, a third-year business major, complained, “I am six feet and four inches tall. Where am I supposed to find a four feet eight inch university student? I like hanging out with younger shorter people but not for studying!”

Picchi Parker, a fourth-year biophysics major, said, “I have a shoulder injury from when I was swinging from one building to another to save Marium Jannat's life the other day. Plus, my part-time job requires me to suddenly

ditch class and go out by myself, this will not be possible any more with this new system.”

When the concerns were brought to Professor Adultman in the press conference, he said, “This is just a small group of troublemaking students. Most students are excited at the prospect of sharing this amazing campus of two entire three-storey buildings with even more students. In fact, we have started a training programme for students to get used to carrying around people on their shoulders. It has a nominal registration fee of Tk 10,000 and it's going to be mandatory for all students.”

PRESS RELEASE

Citizens unite against oppression by rickshaw-pullers

SATIREDAY DESK

Have you been exposed to the most common and egregious form of oppression on Dhaka streets?

Have these oppressors looked you dead in the eye, pausing only to wipe the sweat from their own eyes, and attempted to fleece you?

Have you been embarrassed that they talked back to you in front of your girlfriend?

If your answer to any or all of the above is yes, Citizens Unite against Rickshaw-puller Oppression is the group for you.

We meet every Thursday to offer support to fellow sufferers who have had to bear the brunt of the blatantly exploitative behaviour of rickshaw-pullers.

The following are statements of some of our existing members:

“I was looking for a rickshaw from Karwan Bazar to Dhanmondi-8, and I was already in a bad mood because it was very hot. At the end of the journey, the rickshaw-puller asked for Tk 80! Can you



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

believe it? Tk 80! I nearly dropped my S23 Ultra.”

- Jabbar Gabbar

“My girlfriend and I were going through the alleys of Dhanmondi because she wanted a romantic rickshaw ride to KFC. All good, but halfway through the ride through tree-shaded, lake-hugged roads, a motorcycle cut us off and the blasted puller swerved violently, causing my girlfriend and myself to have to step down from the rickshaw before it fell.

“So, I did what any red-blooded boyfriend would do. I waited for the rickshaw-puller to get off the ground and shouted at him. Imagine my surprise when he actually let go of a string of expletives. Needless to say, my day was ruined. She wasn't too impressed that I was told off by a rickshaw-puller ... it didn't matter that I slapped him thrice.”

Salim Halim

“So I was coming back home to Banani from Gulshan, and I paid the rickshaw-puller the Tk 60 he wanted. I never argue with them, and I even thought about giving him Tk 10 extra as it was raining. But then he told me a sob story about how his daughter was ill and he had to muster up Tk 1,500 for treatment. I mean, can't you even come home without being defrauded! And he even worked up the fake tears. Come on!”

- Hasan Pashan

If you are interested to join the group, we can arrange rickshaws to bring you to the meeting place. Don't worry, if they get up to any hanky panky, you will have arrived at the right place with the right people to deal with them.

Interview: Hatirjheel resident becomes most run over person in history

NUTBOLTU

“The first time was in 2019 when I was a rising TikTokker. Our production crew was shooting a classy remake of Hritik's hit dance move from Krish. Instead of Krish, we had a crash. A motorbike rider, also filing a TikTok landed on me.”

This is how it started for record holder Mamun Faridi (aka ManMoon Bhai), known as the most run-over person in history. In 2019, he stepped out with a smartphone and his friend into the creative playground of Hatirjheel. Some inconsiderate people use it as a shortcut from Kawran Bazar to Badda and that causes all the accidents. He was in the middle of the road when he got run down by a motorbike. ManMoon suffered a broken leg, two smashed collarbones and a slightly bruised ego because yet another TikTokker had filmed ManMoon's accident with him being sandwiched between the bike and the bike.

After being discharged from the hospital, ManMoon went to the spot again to shoot a few selfies with his new cast that he painted green to match his hair. This time he was run over by a refrigerator delivery truck. Lying on the



PHOTO: KAMRAN AYDINOV

road with another broken leg, he vowed to get his TikTok career off the ground. “I will become a star or die trying. The streets are my playground.”

Next three years passed with minor hits. One includes being run over by an ice cream cart while crossing the road. Another happened because he would wear his surgical mask over his forehead during Covid. Brisk winds along the empty Hatirjheel roads at that time pulled his mask down and he ran under a parked truck. The truck then rolled over him as the handbrake was faulty. Since then he was hit by 37 various cars, trucks, rickshaw vans and a drone. “This will not stop me. Like my name, I will go to the moon because I am a star.”

Two weeks ago he was awarded the record holder of the most run over man in history. “Even Jackie Chan doesn't have as many broken bones as I do,” he stated gleefully while biting into his gold medal.

Unfortunately, he tried making a reel in his usual playground to show off his new medal. One car driver was blinded by the midday sun glinting off the medal and he slammed into ManMoon. This hit was too big. He was buried nearby with many social media groups attending to honour him virtually including the famous ‘Boys Who Cry Passionately on Musically’ group. As a last unintentional tribute, a truck driver lost control and ran over his grave. A fitting end to a hero.

DISCLAIMER

This is a satirical page and should be considered as such. Any resemblance between the published contents here and actual events or individuals, etc. is purely coincidental. The articles and photos published on this page or the views expressed here are the author's own and do not reflect the editorial policy or view of The Daily Star.

Mango people can no longer afford homes, only avocado people can

FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT: PANTSON FAR

“I just got married and realised I have to live on my own to avoid my life becoming a Hindi soap. But my salary as a Marketing Marketer only allows me to rent one bedroom and half a bathroom.”

Tahmid Ahmed, 26, whose name statistically is the same as 37 percent of marketing executives, did not expect to fall into a typical housing dilemma. He had hopes. “I even had dreams,” he exclaimed sorrowfully.

Recent spike in inflation post-Covid sent prices of apartments shooting through the roof. Many middle-class families commonly known as moderately mango people, have been saving for years to buy an apartment and stop paying outrageous rent to landlords.

“I had dreams, you know. Dreams of raising the rent every two years like a true middle-class hero,” stated Rozina Akhter crying pitifully.

In light of this, a new term has been coined to describes the affluent who own multiple apartments and at least five cars:

Recent spike in inflation post-Covid sent prices of apartments shooting through the roof. Many middle-class families commonly known as moderately mango people, have been saving for years to buy an apartment and stop paying outrageous rent to landlords.

avocado people. At a little over Tk 2,000 per kg, avocados are the new symbol of affluence and growth.

“While the housing cost is sadly getting out of control for many, what we should really focus on is to create a club to honour the avocado people for keeping the flow of cash fluid,” said Belal Chowdhury, owner of the newly launched restaurant called L'Avocado where water takes three days to serve because it is flown in every time you order.



PHOTO: MYSALL ARMENDARIZ