

ROOPPUR LOAN REPAYMENT US sanctions complicate payment in yuan

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The government's bid to pay off Russia's dues -- of about \$330 million -- for the Rooppur power plant using the Chinese yuan has run into fresh complications after the last round of sanctions by the US on Russia.

Earlier on April 12, the US imposed sanctions on over 120 targets, including JSC Nauchno-Issledovatel'skyi Konstruktorsky Institut Montazhnoy Tekhnologii Atomstroy (NIKIMT), the engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) contractor of the Rooppur power plant.

The current dues for the Rooppur power plant -- which is for a \$500 million loan agreed upon in 2013 for the project's primary work -- are to NIKIMT.

Last week, in an internal meeting, Bangladesh Bank officials weighed on the risks of sending payment instructions via SWIFT to China for the sanctioned entity, The Daily Star has learnt from officials familiar with the discussions.

The BB officials deemed the transaction to be dicey as it might land the country afoul of the US and conveyed as much to the Economic Relations Division, the government wing that deals with foreign loans.

"No final decision has been taken, but we won't do anything that is prohibited or underhand," Md Abdul Bashar, acting BB spokesman, told The Daily Star on June 14.

At present, the dues for the Rooppur power plant are kept in an escrow account, a kind of trust fund managed by a third party.

Bangladesh has a correspondent account in the Bank of China.

"If there is any threat, they will let us know. If they agree to take payment, we will pay," Bashar added.

The US sanctions on NIKIMT were announced during the four-day meeting with the Russian delegation led by Georgii Chizhenkhob, deputy director of Russia's finance ministry's department of public debt and sovereign financial assets, where the preliminary agreement to pay in yuan was struck.

The meetings were held in Dhaka from April 10 to April 13, The Daily Star has learnt from finance ministry officials involved with the proceedings.

At the meeting, the Bangladeshi side led by ERD Secretary Sharifa Khan let the Russian delegation know that it would not be possible to make payments in roubles, the Soviet nation's currency.

As per the loan agreements signed with Russia for the power plant, Bangladesh is to repay the loan in dollars.



"No final decision has been taken, but we won't do anything that is prohibited or underhand."

Md Abdul Bashar,
Acting BB spokesman



Taskin Ahmed
stole the show on Day 4 of Bangladesh's one-off Test against Afghanistan in Mirpur yesterday. The ace pacer took four for 37 in the second innings, dismantling the visitors for 115 to ensure a thumping 546-run win -- the Tigers' biggest margin victory in terms of runs in Tests.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Mirpur livens up to pace barrage

AL AMIN

The Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur saw a few records tumble in Bangladesh's massive 546-run win against Afghanistan on the fourth day of the one-off Test yesterday.

While the victory margin was the biggest in terms of runs, the Tigers' pacers taking more wickets than the spinners was an even more refreshing record at Mirpur, which has been recognised as a tweakers' paradise.

The pace trio of Ebadot Hossain, Shoriful Islam and Taskin Ahmed combined to take 14 of the Afghans' 19 wickets that fell in two innings. Afghan pacers took seven Bangladeshi wickets out of 14 to fall in two innings, one more than their spinners while the other one was a run-out.

The last Afghan batter in the second innings, Zahir Khan, retired hurt after being struck by a nasty

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JOURNO NADIM MURDER UP chairman the mastermind

Says Rab; he is among 13 suspects held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League leader Mahmudul Alam Babu, also a UP chairman in Jamalpur, masterminded the murder of journalist Golam Rabbani Nadim because of a personal vendetta against him over news reports.

"It was a planned murder. Nadim's reports on the chairman involving a woman and different anomalies angered the chairman which led to the murder," said Rab Legal and Media Wing Director Commander Khandaker Al Moin.

Babu led the attack staying near



the scene, he told a press conference at the Rab Media Centre in the capital's Karwan Bazar yesterday evening.

He said Babu, chairman of Sadhupara Union Parishad in Jamalpur's Bakshiganj upazila, used his "terror gang" for the attack and murder.

Rab detained Babu, 50, and two of his associates - Moniruzzaman Monir alias Monirul, 35, and Zakirul Islam, 31, - from Chilahati union in Panchagarh's Debiganj upazila yesterday morning. In the afternoon, another Rab team

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Weak planning to blame for power crisis
Say speakers at webinar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government's failure to implement a sustainable primary fuel supply plan is the main reason for the energy crisis in the country, not the Ukraine-Russia war, speakers said at a webinar yesterday.

Other reasons for the crisis include awarding power plants without any tender and paying excessive capacity charges, they said. As most of the power plants run on imported fuel, there has been pressure on the foreign reserve because the economy has yet to cope up with the increased demand for fuel, they added.

"If the energy crisis was a result of the Ukraine-Russia war, it should have been met by now as all fuel prices in the international market have returned to the pre-war era level," said Ali Riaz, distinguished professor at the Department of Politics and Government, Illinois State University, US.

Forum for Bangladesh Studies organised the webinar titled "Ongoing power crisis: how it was created? What is the solution?"

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Bangladesh may come up in Modi-Biden talks

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
New Delhi

One of the issues Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to take up during his talks with US President Joe Biden in Washington next week is the South Asian neighbourhood, particularly Bangladesh where general elections are due early next year.

High-level diplomatic sources in New Delhi said that India will likely raise the issue of the Maldives, where too polls are due soon.

The new US visa policy for Bangladesh ahead

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1

Man dies in police custody

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A 50-year-old man died in police custody while being treated at the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases on Friday evening.

Family members of Alal Uddin, caretaker of a building at the capital's Baania Bandh, said Alal was in good health when he was picked up by detectives on June 6 and he had died of torture.

But police said they arrested Alal on June 10.

Faruk Hossain, deputy commissioner (media) of Dhaka Metropolitan

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Some children in this group, admitted to the capital's Mugda hospital with dengue, were discharged yesterday. During their road to recovery, they became friends. Photo shows them hanging out on a balcony of the hospital. Story on Page 3.

PHOTO:
ANSIUR RAHMAN

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ
In the Name of Allah,
The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful

Qulhwani
Arshad Waliur Rahman
October 2, 1965 - June 16, 2023



Our beloved Arshad Waliur Rahman left us all last Friday, June 16, 2023. Inna lillahi wa inna ilahi raji'un. It was beyond our imagination that he would leave us so suddenly, creating a huge void in our lives that will never be filled.

To everyone, he was known as Arshad Waliur Rahman, but to us he was our beloved Reaz. The only son, the only brother and the only maternal uncle to his nephews, although he is no longer with us physically, he will live on in our hearts forever.

We are grateful to all those who have contacted us, stayed by our side after his passing, and expressed sympathies and condolences for our bereavement. Let us pray to Almighty Allah (SWT) that He grants Jannatul Firdaus to our beloved Reaz.

We request your kind presence at the qulhwani and milad mahfil to be held tomorrow, Monday, June 19, 2023 after Asr prayer (5:30 pm) at House # NE (J)-4, Road # 83, Gulshan-2, Dhaka-1212.

Shahnaz Rahman & Family

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Pacific Jeans Ltd has been awarded with the prestigious "National Productivity & Quality Excellence Award 2021" in Large Industry Category of RMG sector as the best company (1st position). Syed Mohammed Tanvir, Managing Director of Pacific Jeans received the award. We express our heartfelt gratitude to the Ministry of Industry for this prestigious recognition.

PACIFIC JEANS

Mango prices plummet due to oversupply
Farmers say storage facilities could have helped them

RABIUL HASAN, Chapainawabganj

Traders and customers from across the country are flocking to the mango markets of Chapainawabganj - known as the mango capital of Bangladesh. The long and frequent heatwaves during this season have caused almost all varieties of mango to ripen ahead of schedule.

Despite the abundant harvest of the popular summer fruit this year, farmers are not making good profit due to low prices and high cost of production. This correspondent found mango prices to be much lower this year than that of last year during a visit to the Kansat mango market - the largest in the country.

Brajendra Nath Saha, a mango trader from Ranbari-Chapnur, said Khirsapal mangoes were

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

Hasina flies commercial, talks to passengers

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday surprised passengers as she boarded a regular commercial flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines on her way back home from an official visit to Geneva, Switzerland.

She roamed around the flight deck and exchanged pleasantries with the passengers.

Passengers on the fully packed commercial flight of Biman were pleasantly surprised when she went to their seats and greeted them.

"Many of them were surprised and astonished having their prime minister sitting just next to their seats on the flight," PM's speechwriter M Nazrul Islam told UNB.

Hasina spoke to children with great affection and took several of them on her lap. She also obliged their requests for photographs.

Some of the passengers expressed their opinions to the premier on various issues, including the country's development in the last 14 and a half years.

Hasina returned home from Geneva, Switzerland, after attending the "World of Work Summit: Social Justice for All" held on June 14-15.

A regular flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines carrying the PM and her entourage landed at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka at 01:55am.

Army soldier dies after IED explosion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A soldier died at Chattogram Combined Military Hospital (CMH) yesterday, a day after he was injured in explosions of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) planted by the group Kuki Chin National Front (KNF) in a remote village in Bandarban's Ruma upazila, said a statement of the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) Directorate.

The deceased was identified as Monnal Hossain Raju, 21.

The IEDs went off around 1:30pm on Friday when a patrol team reached Chhilopari Para, 400 metres off its Temporary Operating Base, on its way to Painum Para to distribute drinking water and oral saline among the people.

Soldiers Monnal and Md Rezaul, 24, suffered serious injuries to various parts of their bodies. They were taken to the Chattogram CMH, the ISPR statement said.

Army Chief General SM Shafiuuddin Ahmed expressed deep shock at the death of the soldier. He also offered sympathy to the bereaved family members.

US sanctions complicate payment in yuan

FROM PAGE 1
That became unfeasible after Russia invaded Ukraine in February last year as some of the largest banks of the Soviet nation were expelled from the SWIFT financial system, which handles the vast majority of cross-border payments.

The Bank for Development and Foreign Economic Affairs (VEB), a Russian state-owned institution handling transactions for the Rooppur project, was among those expelled.

After that, Russia has been pushing for payment in roubles from Bangladesh.

Under the current monetary policy, Bangladesh can only deal with the SDR currency of the International Monetary Fund, Khan told the Russian delegation at the meetings.

"Bangladesh is not in a position to repay the Russian credits for the Rooppur project in rouble," she said, while pushing for yuan as the preferred option for payments.

In 2016, the IMF added the yuan to the basket of currencies that make up the Special Drawing Right (SDR).

Russia agreed to the proposition.

Weak planning to blame for power crisis

FROM PAGE 1
Prof Ali Riaz said there was a lack of integrated planning in the energy and power sector.

"The planning was not participatory. Experts had been talking for long about the problems of their planning, but nobody bothered," he said.

In 2010, the Quick Enhancement of Electricity and Energy Supply (Special Provision) Act was introduced. A clause in the act gives the government an indemnity to award rental and quick rental power plants without any tendering process. This was a necessary move to address massive power cuts in the context of the early 2010s. But in 2021, the Act, along with the indemnity, was extended till 2026.

Referring to the Act, Prof Riaz said, "A short-term indemnity solution should not be a perpetual process."

Energy expert Mohammad Tamim said though the government claims

The exchange rate applied for the payments would be the USD/CNY Central Parity Rate quoted by the China Foreign Exchange Trade System 10 business days before the actual date of payment.

Bangladesh will send advice to the Bank of China for transferring the yuan equivalent of dollars due calculated at the applicable exchange rate to the correspondent Russian bank account.

Also at the meeting, the dispute regarding the commitment fee for the \$1.38 billion Russian loan for the project was settled.

Before the start of a year, the two sides agree on an amount that Russia would disburse in the forthcoming year for use on the project. If Bangladesh cannot use the amount during the course of the year, a commitment fee amounting to 0.5 percent of the unutilised amount must be paid.

At the meeting, the Bangladesh side furnished evidence that the EPC contractor's estimates of fund that would be needed in the forthcoming years was "highly inflated", so the annual credit amounts could not be used in full.

But, it was decided that the interest rate would be capped at 4 percent.

Materials Engineering Faculty at Buet.

Referring to government-to-government deals on importing fuel and LNG, he said these deals were not signed following due process. "As a result, there is scope of overpricing."

In his keynote paper, researcher Faiz Ahmad Taiyeb focused on the country's electricity generation on April 12, when the country recorded its highest generation in recent times—15,154MW.

"Even on April 12, there was 776MW load-shedding. On that day, of the 153 power plants, only 35 percent ran at its full capacity," he said, adding that 31.4 percent faced engine related problems, 22.2 percent faced fuel shortage and 7.8 percent were under regular maintenance.

"That means the substandard power plants, which have engine related problems, also contribute to power crisis," he added.

For instance, in 2019, 48.91 percent of the funds could be used, and in 2022, just 39.15 percent.

"As a result, Bangladesh has been paying huge amounts of commitment fees for the past years and which will potentially grow further from year to year. This is the most pertinent issue for Bangladesh," Khan said at the meeting.

It was then decided that the commitment fee would be capped at \$0.25 million and will be applicable for outstanding and future dues.

Also at the meeting, the interest rate that would be applied was settled.

When the loan agreement was signed, the six-month LIBOR rate was used as the interest rate. LIBOR has been replaced by SOFR in June 2023.

The new interest rate would be the six-month term SOFR, fixed spread adjustment equal to 0.42826 percent and a margin of 1.75 percent.

The six-month term SOFR rate at present is about 5.3 percent, so Bangladesh would have to pay a hefty interest.

For the records, the home side did not field a single pacer in the 19th Test match at the venue in November 2018 that they won by an innings and 184 runs against the West Indies, thanks to Mehdy Hasan Miraz's match haul of 12 wickets including 7-58 in the first innings.

In the 15th Test at Mirpur in October 2016, the Tigers fielded one pacer in Kamrul Islam Rabbi. He bowled only three overs in the first innings and also in the match in that famous win against England by 108 runs, where off-spinner Miraz took 12 wickets—six in each innings.

The introduction of pace bowlers by Bangladesh at Mirpur has often been regarded as more academic than from serious concern about dictating the game. In the last 10 Test matches at the venue, the match against Ireland in April this year was the first

time Bangladesh fielded three pacers in a Test. And that too was without much purpose.

In that context, when the curators as Mirpur presented a green-top on Wednesday morning, the opening day of the one-off Test, many were apprehensive considering their years of experience.

However, the wicket was refreshingly sporting for both the batsman and bowlers, especially for the seamers who enjoyed rare field days under the sun.

The bounce, seam movement and nice carry behind the wicket also dispelled the age-old notion that Mirpur could never be a good wicket for pacers.

However, it was all about a bold decision from the team management that cricket experts hailed as a step forward for Bangladesh in building a good pace attack so that the Tigers could be more competitive away from home.

Dhaka jail's chief hangman walks out of prison

FROM PAGE 12

lessened by a little more than 10 years according to regulations. And since Shahjahan never had any visitors, the prison authority decided to pay his fines of Tk 10,000 for the two cases.

"Shahjahan will walk out from the jail tomorrow (Sunday) around 10:00am. He spent a large part of his life in jail. He is happy that he will be released but at the same time he is concerned too as he has no home to go to," Ghosh said.

He said that the prison authorities would try to rehabilitate Shahjahan so that he can live the rest of his life decently.

Never having married, the septuagenarian has lost his parents but still wishes to visit his village home when he gets out. "He (Shahjahan) told us that he wants to spend the rest of his life in his ancestral village."



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina exchanges pleasantries with surprised passengers of a commercial Biman flight on her way back home from Geneva.

PHOTO: PID

'Russia has more nuclear weapons than NATO'

Putin warns; African leaders arrive in St Petersburg; Moscow says repelled drones targeting oil refinery; 2 killed in missile attack in Ukraine's Kharkiv

AGENCIES

Russian President Vladimir Putin has warned there is a "serious danger" of NATO being drawn further into the Ukraine war if members of the alliance continue to supply military weaponry to Kyiv.

"NATO, of course, is being drawn into the war in Ukraine, what are we talking here," Putin said at the St Petersburg International Economic Forum on Friday, reports CNN.

During his speech to the forum, Putin also suggested Russia's large number of nuclear weapons would "guarantee" its security — noting that Russia had more such weapons than NATO countries.

Meanwhile, Putin yesterday told African leaders that Russia welcomed their balanced approach to the conflict in Ukraine and was open to discussions, according to Reuters.

"We are open to a constructive dialogue with all those who want peace based on the principles of justice and consideration of the legitimate interests of the parties." —Putin

Putin said.

Elsewhere, Russian air defence units repelled a Ukrainian drone attack overnight on a pumping station on the Druzhba oil pipeline in the Bryansk region adjoining Ukraine, the region's governor said yesterday.

In St Petersburg, the leaders from South Africa, Senegal, Egypt, Zambia, Uganda, Congo Republic and the Comoro Islands were meeting Putin at the government's 18th century Konstantinovsky Palace after visiting Kyiv on Friday.

Russia has one stockpile of around 6,250 nuclear warheads as of January 2021, according to the Arms Control Association. The US has more than 5,500 while two other NATO member states, Britain and France, have about 220 and 290 nuclear warheads, respectively, CNN reports.

"Nuclear weapons are created to guarantee our security in the broader sense and the existence of the Russian state," Putin said in his speech on Friday.

"But first of all, there is no need and secondly the very fact of talking about it reduces the possibility of the threshold for using these weapons being reduced."

but since then the Russian military has frequently shelled the area, destroying critical infrastructure and injuring and killing residents.

In Ukraine, Kharkiv regional governor Oleh Synehubov said a Russian missile strike on a small Ukrainian village in the east killed two people yesterday.

Ukraine liberated many villages and towns in the Kharkiv region last autumn

3 held over attempted rape on moving bus

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Police arrested three bus staffers for attempting to rape a garment worker in a moving bus on Dhaka-Mymensingh highway in Mymensingh's Bhaluka upazila on Friday night.

The arrestees — bus driver Rakib Mia, 21, his helper Arif Mia, 20, and supervisor Ananda Das, 19 — were interrogated at Bhaluka Police Station.

Md Kamal Hossain, officer-in-charge of the police station, said the 45-year-old woman was returning home in Bhaluka upazila town from work at a garment factory in Gazipur's Mawna.

As the bus reached Seedstore area in Bhaluka around 11:00pm, all passengers except the woman got off. The vehicle started moving again. All of a sudden, the bus staffers attempted to rape her, the OC told The Daily Star quoting the victim.

The woman tried to resist the staffers and screamed for help. At one stage, she jumped off the moving bus. She sustained injuries to her head.

Hearing her screams, some locals rushed to the scene and took the victim to a local hospital.

On information, a patrol team of Bhaluka police seized the bus and detained the three with the help of locals.

The woman was moved to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital early yesterday.

Later, the brother of the victim filed a case with Bhaluka Police Station accusing the three of attempted rape.

Student found dead at BM College

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

Police yesterday recovered the hanging body of a student of Government Brojomohun College from an abandoned room near its Flight Sergeant Fazlul Haque Hall in Barishal city.

The deceased, Mainul Islam, was a fourth-year student of social science. He hailed from Barishal's Muladi upazila.

The college principal, Mohammad Golam Kibria, said he called in police after some students reported a bad smell coming from an abandoned tin-shed room in front of the dormitory.

Police later recovered the body of the student.

Mainul Islam, sub-inspector of Kotwali Police Station, said he went to the abandoned room and found the body hanging from the ceiling.

"There were no injury marks on the body. It seemed to me that the student died by suicide," he added.

One killed in clash

A CORRESPONDENT, Chandpur

A Juba League activist was killed in a clash between two factions of the ruling Awami League in Chandpur's Matlab upazila yesterday.

The deceased is Mobarak Hossain, 48. His son Imran Hossain, 18, also sustained bullet injuries in the clash.

The victim's elder brother Amir Hossain said Mohonpur union unit AL organised a rally in the upazila's Mathavanga area around 3:00pm.

Followers of Mohonpur union parishad chairman Kazi Mizan carried out the attack, triggering the clash between the two groups, he alleged.

Chandpur's additional superintendent of police Sudipta Roy confirmed the incident and said a person was arrested from the spot in connection with the incident.

Mango prices

FROM PAGE 1

selling for Tk 2,200-3,000 per maund, down from Tk 2,500-4,000 last year and Langra mangoes were selling for Tk 1,200-2,000 per maund, down from Tk 2,500-4,000 the previous year.

Badsha Ali, a trader from Sonamasjid, said Amropoli mangoes were selling for Tk 2,000-2,400, down from Tk 3,000-3,200 last year and different kinds of Guti mango varieties were selling for Tk 700-1,200 per maund, compared to Tk 800-2,000 the previous year.

Imam Ali, a trader at the town's Puratola Bazar mango market, said prices this year are lower than usual because of an abundance of the fruit and a lack of refrigeration facilities in this hot weather.

Munjur Alam, secretary of the Chapainawabganj Krishi Association, said, "Mango production has become more expensive as a result of rising costs for irrigation, labour, and transportation, as well as fertilisers, pesticides, and fungicides."

"The heatwaves have made things worse for mango farmers and they won't have any profits left this year because of the low prices," he added.

Farmers and orchard owners said the summer fruits have all ripened roughly around the same time thanks to the prolonged heatwaves this season. A large number of mangoes of different kinds have hit the local markets owing to good production. Consequently, prices are lower this year compared to that of last year.

Aminul Islam, a mango orchard owner in the town's Alinagar, said, "Because mango prices are lower than they were

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JOURNALIST NADIM MURDER

Call for justice gets louder

STAR REPORT

A barrage of protest programmes were held and condemnations continued to pour in yesterday demanding punishment for the killers of journalist Golam Rabbani Nadim.

Different journalists' organisations based in Dhaka and other regions of the country, rights bodies and teachers' associations held human chains, rallies and issued statements protesting the murder.

In a statement, Ain o Salish Kendra said such an incident is a threat towards the freedom of the press.

"The impact of such incidents is far reaching, which narrows the role of the media in establishing accountability and good governance. It is unfortunate that in the last two decades, not a single trial of the killings of journalists was completed nor the punishment of anyone was ensured," reads the statement.

The platform demanded ensuring punishment of the killers to prevent recurrence of such incidents.

Meanwhile, Information Minister Hasan Mahmud yesterday said the government will do whatever it takes to bring the killers to book.

"Already the prime suspect and other culprits have been arrested. Everything will be done to ensure capital punishment. We will also have to remain alert so that such incidents do not happen in future,"

Hasan Mahmud told reporters at an orientation programme of a university in Chattogram.

In the capital, two journalists' forums — Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists and Dhaka Union of Journalists — organised a protest rally in front of Jatiya Press Club demanding exemplary punishment for the killers of Nadim within a shortest possible time.

Addressing the event, Omar Faruk, president of a faction of BFUJ, said, "Nadim's killing was pre-planned. I don't think that only the chairman is involved. The real culprits will be found if the law enforcers investigate properly."

Former president of BFUJ Manjurul

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Dengue spike rings alarm

Experts fear higher death rate, urge caution

MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN

Bangladesh is grappling with a sudden rise in dengue cases this year, as the country has already recorded 4,427 cases and 33 deaths since the beginning of 2023.

During the same period in 2022, the total number of cases stood at 690, with no reported fatalities, according to the data from the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Worryingly, within just 17 days of June, the country has already reported 2,570 new dengue cases and 20 deaths, according to the DGHS.

In the last 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, two dengue patients died and 477 were hospitalised.

Keeping the statistics in mind, experts speculated that the country may witness an even worse outbreak of Aedes mosquito-borne disease this year as the presence of mosquito has increased in the early days of summer.

This has also sparked concerns among health authorities and people alike.

"It is highly likely that both the dengue cases and deaths will break

the all-time record in August-September," Kabirul Bashar, professor and entomologist at Jahangirnagar University, told The Daily Star yesterday.

the favourable conditions for the breeding and proliferation of Aedes mosquitoes," he said.

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.

The latest outbreak, meanwhile, highlights the similar failure, which was also echoed by Health Minister Zahid Maleque last week.

At an event on Wednesday, he said there may be gaps in the city corporations' efforts to control the spread of Aedes mosquitoes, resulting in deterioration of the dengue situation.

Referring to a field investigation last year, Prof Bashar said the favourable conditions for the breeding of mosquitoes have increased notably due to the massive construction works and water stagnation.

"So, the dengue outbreak continued even after January, and it started galloping as soon as the rainy season started in June," Prof Bashar said. "These are the leading causes, but climate change and unpredictable weather patterns have also been impacting the

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He highlighted multiple reasons behind his speculation.

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SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

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Arshad Waliur Rahman's qulkhwani tomorrow

STAR REPORT

The qulkhwani and milad mahfil of Arshad Waliur Rahman will be held tomorrow after the Asr prayers at House-NE (J)-4, Road-83, Gulshan-2, Dhaka.

Arshad, a member of the board of directors of Transcom Group, died at his home in the capital's Gulshan on Friday morning. He was 58.

He was the eldest son of late Latifur Rahman, founder chairman of Transcom Group.

His family members have requested all relatives and well-wishers to attend the prayers for the salvation of the departed soul.

NATIONAL ELECTION

Fair polls not possible under this govt
Says GM Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party Chairman GM Quader yesterday said that free, fair and impartial elections are not possible under the present government and this has been proven time and again.

"People also feel that the city corporation elections held so far were not conducted properly," GM Quader, also deputy leader of the opposition in parliament, said.

He was addressing a views exchange meeting with the leaders of Jatiya Sangskritik Party at the JP chairman's Banani office.

GM Quader said the deliberate use of EVMs is destroying the transparency of elections. Many have complained that EVMs are being tampered with, people are being brought from outside and placed inside the booths.

He also said people from different agencies are being used to create a sense of fear among people during the elections. The ruling party's people are intimidating the supporters of the rival candidates, not even

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Standing Committee member Nazrul Islam Khan termed Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader's comment that many BNP leaders are preparing to join the next election under a partisan government a "sheer lie".

"We all want to participate in the elections, but not under this government, under a non-partisan neutral government," he said.

Speaking at a discussion, the BNP leader said their party has long been boycotting the local government elections and a few leaders who joined the polls have been expelled from the party.

Nazrul said the ruling party leaders are making reckless comments about BNP and its leaders.

Shaheed Pinku Smriti Parishad arranged the discussion at Dhaka Reporters Unity, marking the 43rd death anniversary of Rajshahi Medical College unit Jatiyatabdhi Chhatra Dal leader Mainul Ahsan Pinku.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Will join polls but only under neutral govt
Says BNP leader Nazrul Islam

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SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

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Journalists all over the country continue to protest the murder of their peer Golam Rabbani Nadim. Yesterday, they held rallies and human chains, and brought out processions demanding exemplary punishment for the killers. The photo was taken in the capital.

PHOTO: STAR

Uttara to Tongi College Gate flyover opens to public



PHOTO: STAR

The newly-constructed flyover from Uttara to Tongi College Gate area under the Bus Rapid Transit project was opened to public yesterday. Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader inaugurated the 4.5km section of the project at an event in Tongi in the morning.

After inspecting the flyover, the minister said about 91 percent of the work of the entire BRT project has been completed, and 95 percent of the work on the elevated section from the House Building in Uttara to Cherag Ali College Gate in Tongi has been finished.

The entire project will be completed by September or October this year, he added.

The BRT project, extending from Dhaka's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport to Joydevpur in Gazipur, has been under construction for nearly 11 years, leading to inconveniences and public criticism due to the extended duration.

Quader acknowledged the need for more consideration before initiating such projects, stating, "It would have been better if more

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

EID-UL-AZHA

CCC to set up nine makeshift cattle markets

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

Although Chattogram City Corporation sought permission to set up 23 temporary cattle markets in the city ahead of Eid-ul-Azha, the district administration allowed them for nine.

To set up such makeshift markets, a total of 14 conditions have to be followed, said Rakib Hasan, additional district magistrate, Chatogram.

To ensure safety and security and health guidelines, and avoiding public nuisance are among them, said sources.

In addition, cattle would be available at CCC's three permanent cattle markets, meaning that the port city residents would be able to buy sacrificial animals from 12 cattle markets this year.

Contacted, CCC chief revenue officer Mohammad Nazrul Islam said the markets will be leased out in a short time.

"We have already floated tenders in this regard," he said.

The cattle markets usually start 10 days

before Eid, he said. "This year, the market will begin on June 20 and will remain open till the day before Eid day."

The nine makeshift cattle markets are Nur Nagar Housing Estate field in Bakalia, Khejurtola Embankment field at Patenga, TSP field at Patenga's Hossain Ahmed Para, Muslimabad filed at Patenga, Wazedia Intersection in Panchlaish, Outer Ring Road CDA soil field, Godown field at Halishahar Barapoli, the field adjacent to Saltgola Railway Crossing and the TK Group's vacant field south of Butterfly Park in South Patenga.

The three permanent cattle markets are Sagarika Bazar, Bibirhat Bazar and Postarpur Goat Haat.

Contacted, Dr Md Alamgir, Chattogram district livestock officer, said a total of 30 veterinary medical teams have been formed to deploy at the cattle markets to confirm the health condition of the sacrificial animals.



Reviving barren

FROM PAGE 5

depending on the variety. Farmers and enthusiasts from various regions are flocking to Ali's garden, purchasing grape seedlings and even utilising courier services to deliver them.

Ruhul Amin said, "Ali's innovative approach and keen understanding of modern farming techniques have contributed to his success."

INSPIRING OTHERS

The success story of farmer Hasem Ali has sparked a wave of motivation among local farmers to venture into grape cultivation.

Noor Islam, a vegetable trader at Nageshwari Bazar, said he had purchased grapes from Ali and received positive feedback from buyers. The quality of Ali's grapes has created a surge in demand, leading Islam to believe that if more farmers take up grape

cultivation, it would be possible to meet the local market's demand with locally grown produce.

Abdul Hamid, a local farmer aged 65, expressed his astonishment at witnessing grapes being grown in his own village. Hamid purchased five grape seedlings from Ali and planted them on his homestead. He aspires to establish a grape orchard.

"We are in talks with prime minister's Private Industries and Investment Adviser Salman F Rahman and DSCC Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh to receive, allocate and distribute the funds in a proper manner. We plan to stop collecting funds after this month," said Helal Uddin, president of the association.

Traders stare

FROM PAGE 5

"A total of Tk 6,12,19,355 were deposited from various sources in the fund. We are waiting for the prime minister's fund to arrive but we are uncertain about the its time of arrival," he added.

"However, things will get better when we receive the funds," he said.

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Miscreants

FROM PAGE 5

The incidents mostly happened at Mainamoti and Lalmai stations.

Ahmed Ali, senior sub-assistant engineer of signal at Cumilla Railway Station, said, "As the motors were stolen from 25 automatic signal points, the track changing systems are not functioning."

"Now it is being maintained manually which takes extra time and labour. These motors were imported. So, it is not easy get those," the railway official added.

Masud Alam, officer-in-charge of Laksam Railway Police Station, said, "We have received an official complaint [in connection with the theft] and are investigating it."

Dengue spike rings alarm

FROM PAGE 3

dengue outbreak slowly."

HIGHER DEATH SPECULATED

According to the researchers, dengue fever is caused by the dengue virus, which belongs to the Flaviviridae family. There are four distinct serotypes of the dengue virus: DEN-1, DEN-2, DEN-3, and DEN-4.

These serotypes are closely related but differ slightly in their genetic makeup, leading to variations in their antigenic properties.

"We already have the outbreak caused by the three previous serotypes. If the Den-4 has started circulating, then it is concerning," Munshi said.

Echoing Prof Bashir, he also said, "If there are many cases this year, we will witness a higher death

rate too. Because, many people will get a second-time infection due to the massive outbreak last year."

To stay safe, he urged people to contact a physician if they exhibit dengue symptoms including high fever (40°C/104°F), severe headache, joint and muscle pain, rash, and mild bleeding.

"If fever persists for 4-5 days, people should get a dengue test as per the advice from a physician," he advised.

He also urged people not to be worried.

"Dengue treatment is possible by staying at home as per the suggestion from the physician. Also, drinking adequate liquid food -- fruit juice, water, and saline -- is a must," he added.

Call for justice gets louder

FROM PAGE 3

Ahsan Bulbul urged the owners of the organisations, for those Nadim used to work, to stand by the side of the bereaved family.

Jatiyatabdhi Shikkhak Forum, a platform of pro-BNP teachers of Jahangirnagar University, issued a statement protesting the killing.

"Question has arrived whether justice will be served in the killing of Nadim as justice was not ensured in many sensational murders including the killings of journalist couple Sagar-Runni," reads their statement.

Bakshiganj upazila Press Club also formed a human chain from which local journalists threatened to call for a tougher movement if the killers of Nadim did not get capital punishment.

From another human

chain in port city, Chattogram Union of Journalists said the murder of Nadim has pointed fingers to the growing insecurity faced by journalists across the country.

In protest, Munshiganj Press Club organised a human chain from which they demanded formulation of a law to ensure safety of journalists.

Covering their faces with black clothes, Electronic Media Journalists Association, a platform of television journalists of Sylhet, observed a sit-in programme.

Leaders of the forum said since journalists report against all wrongdoers, oppressors or corrupt people for the sake of welfare of the state and society, it becomes a threat for them.

They also demanded bringing of the case under special tribunal for swift

completion of trial.

Noakhali journalists also held a human chain on Noakhali Press Club premises. Also, journalists of Chapainawabganj formed a human chain in front of the district press club.

Besides, journalist organisations in Gazipur, Tangail, Jashore, Brahmanbaria, Bogura, Sirajganj, Pabna, Cumilla, Bhola, Barishal, Rajshahi, Narsingdi, Rangpur, Gopalganj and Chandpur also protested the murder.

Golam Rabbani Nadim, 42, a Jamalpur-based journalist, was attacked by unidentified miscreants in Bakshiganj Bazar area while he was returning home around 10:00pm on Wednesday.

Leaders of the forum alleged that followers of Mahmudul Alam Babu, chairman of Sadhurpara Union Parishad, carried out the attack.

Green, clean and smart Sylhet

FROM PAGE 5

former mayor Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran in the 2013 and 2018 elections.

As a mayor, Kamran served the city from 2002 to 2013 and Ariful since 2013.

Sylhet has been suffering from an increased waterlogging problem for over two decades, and the 2022 flood almost disabled the urban life for weeks. With rainfall from Wednesday morning, many parts of the city are inundated and the issue is being discussed among people.

For the last 10 years, the government spent more than Tk 1,000 crore to prevent waterlogging but

the result is disappointing.

Ariful is widely being criticised as he made the promise to solve the waterlogging woes in the 2013 and 2018 elections, and failed in this regard.

Anwaruzzaman in his manifesto similarly promised to solve waterlogging, recover nine natural canals of the city and construct a dyke by the Surma river to prevent flooding. Meanwhile, his promise of a green, clean and environment-friendly city is being praised by the residents as he is pledging to plant more trees and save waterbodies and hillocks.

Fair polls not possible

FROM PAGE 3

allowing them to enter the polling centres.

"We are still in the election. Because we had promised that we will participate in all the elections till the national polls. Through the city corporation elections, we will be able to evaluate

our strength. On the other hand, country's people can see how the election system really is," he said.

The JP chief said the country needs an accountable government, which can only be ensured through fair elections. There is no sustainable and people-oriented

development without an accountable government.

"Without an accountable government, it is not possible to stop corruption, looting and money laundering. Therefore, we are doing politics to establish an accountable government through free and fair elections," GM Quader added.

Will join polls

FROM PAGE 3

Nazrul said most political parties in Bangladesh now believe that a fair and acceptable election is not possible under the Awami League government.

He also said how the national election will be fair under the Awami League government when it cannot hold the local body polls in a fair and credible manner. "So, the next national election must be held under a non-partisan government."

Nazrul said the AI government has indulged in so many misdeeds, torture, persecution, corruption and plundering that it is now afraid to quit power.

"As a regular commuter, I can't emphasise enough how smoother and faster my journeys have become. The convenience and time savings are incredible," said Sneha Khan, a private job holder.

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The bidders must submit **earnest money @ 2.5%** of the quoted price in the form of Pay Order issued from any scheduled bank drawn in favor of North South University along with their offer. The sealed offer must be submitted on **July 18, 2023** by 2.15 p.m. at the office of the undersigned. The offers will be opened at 2:30 p.m. on the same day. Representatives of the participating bidders may remain present at the time of opening the bids. NSU authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without showing any reason.

Director, Internal Affairs

NORTH SOUTH UNIVERSITY

Bashundhara, Dhaka-1229

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E-mail to: procurement@northsouth.edu, www.northsouth.edu



All it needed was 11mm rain from noon to 3:00pm that submerged many of the low-lying areas in the port city yesterday. Due to waterlogging, many vehicles got stuck on the road while water entered the ground floors of residents and markets, causing immense sufferings to people. This photo was taken in Sholashahar Gate-2 area.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

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Position: Human Resources Assistant, FSN - 08
The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Bangladesh is seeking applications from qualified Bangladeshi nationals for the position of Human Resources Assistant, FSN - 08 in the Executive Office (EXO).
Location: USAID/Bangladesh, Deadline for application submission: July 6, 2023
For a complete job description, required qualifications and detailed information on how to apply please visit USAID/Bangladesh website: <http://www.usaid.gov/bangladesh/work-with-us/careers-and-positions>

D-78

BANGABAZAR FIRE

Traders stare at a bleak future

4,000 owners, 15,000 workers yet to be compensated

DIPAN NANDY and SAJJAD HOSSAIN

Around 4,000 owners and 15,000 shop workers, that were affected by the devastating fire at the capital's Bangabazar about a couple of months ago, are still waiting for their financial compensation.

Traders said the incident led to a damage of Tk 1,000 crore. However, according to Dhaka South City Corporation's probe committee, the fire damaged 3,845 shops at Bangabazar Shopping Complex and adjacent markets, while the total loss was Tk 303 crore.

To combat the crisis, Bangabazar Shop Owners' Association had created a fund on April 4. However, no progress has been seen when it comes to distributing the funds as no decision has been made in this regard yet, even with Eid-ul-Azha being just around the corner.

Most of the shop owners were unable to give any bonuses last Eid. Considering the current situation, their employees have to face the same fate this time too, fear traders.

"We cannot continue running our business without financial assistance as we have already incurred significant

losses. On top of that, we have to repay loans. We need the compensation as soon as possible," said Rakib Hossain, owner of MashaAllah Enterprise.

Mohsin, the owner of Allahr Dan Garments, has been suffering living in a menace since the incident. "I came here 15 years ago with an empty pocket and eyes full of dreams. After working day and night for five years, I had finally started my own business to support my wife and children, only to watch it burn down to ashes during the accident. The compensation is our only hope," he said.

Zahirul Islam, general secretary of the association, said while they have collected funds from various sources, they are yet to distribute any money among the affected traders or issue checkbooks.

Following the fire, an aid provided by the prime minister has already reached the affected workers. However, the traders are yet to receive their aid and thus, are struggling to cope up with paying salaries, allowances and bonuses, informed Zahirul Islam, the general secretary of the association.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



PHOTO: TITU DAS

Following the city polls, the cleaning staff of the Barishal City Corporation are busy removing laminated posters that were put up by various candidates and their supporters as a part of their electoral campaigns. The photo was taken on the city's Sadar Road yesterday.

'Miscreants stole 25 railway signal motors'

Allege authorities in Cumilla

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cumilla

The railway authorities have alleged that 25 signal motors used for changing track were stolen from May to June in Cumilla.

As a result, the automatic signal system worth Tk 4 crore is not functioning, said Liakat Ali Khan, senior sub assistant engineer of Cumilla Railway Station.

According to the authorities at five railway stations, there were 67 automatic signal systems between Laksham and Akhaura railway junction; of them the motors at 25 signal points were stolen.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

PRAYER TIMING
JUNE 18
Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4:05 12:45 5:00 6:50 8:15
JAMAAT 4:40 1:15 5:15 6:55 8:45
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

The candidates keep getting richer

Shujan presents report of affidavits submitted to EC; Liton tops the list

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

Awami League's mayoral candidate AHM Khairuzzaman Liton emerged as the highest-earning contestant among the three mayoral contenders for the Rajshahi City Corporation polls, with his annual income increasing by over Tk 6 crore in five years.

However, an analysis of the candidates' affidavits submitted to the Election Commission revealed that the two other highest-earning contestants -- Md Rajab Ali and Md Shahadat Ali Shahu -- surpassed Liton in accumulating wealth from 2018-2023.

Dilip Kumar Sarkar, central coordinator of Sushashoner Jonno Nagarik (Shujan), presented the analysis report during a press conference held at a city hotel yesterday.

Liton, the incumbent mayor, declared an annual income of Tk 6,081 crore and amassed wealth worth Tk 7,90,44,089 (since 2018). In 2018, his annual income was Tk 78,32,208.

On the other hand, Shahadat Ali Shahu, an incumbent councillor candidate, with an annual income of Tk 1,18,28,699, accumulated the highest wealth worth Tk

8,64,26,412 within this time.

Meanwhile, Md Rajab Ali, another incumbent councillor candidate, had the second-highest annual income of Tk 4,00,67,745 among the candidates and amassed a wealth worth Tk 8,53,04,298.

The analysis noted that in the 2018 election, none of the candidates, including Liton, Shahu, and Rajab, had an annual income exceeding Tk 1 crore.

Among the other mayoral candidates, Murshid Alam from Islami Andolok Bangladesh earned Tk 12 lakh annually, which is almost 66 times less than Liton's income. Saiful Islam Swapna from Jatiya Party earned Tk 4.30 lakh, and Latif Anwar from Jaker Party earned Tk 1.52 lakh annually.

The analysis also listed several councillor candidates with six-digit incomes, including Akteruzzaman, Jane Alam Khan, and Shariful Islam Babu.

For the women's reserved seats, the highest-earning councillor candidates are Shamsunnahar, Bilkis Banu, Ferdousi, Sirin Ara Khutun, and Mamta Mahal.

The list of wealthy councillor candidates extended further, with names like Abu Bakar

Kinu, Abbas Ali Sardar, and Nazma Khutun.

Out of the total 162 candidates running for mayor and 40 councillor positions, the analysis found that 124 had an annual income of less than Tk 5 lakh. While this represents a slight decrease compared to the 2018 election, where the ratio was 82.02 percent, it still indicates a significant presence of low-income candidates in the upcoming election.

The analysis also noted an increasing trend of candidates with financial resources participating in the elections, which raises concerns about the influence of money in the democratic process.

However, the report highlighted that the process of declaring wealth is flawed, and the candidates' actual wealth is likely to be much higher than what is shown in their affidavits.

Additionally, the analysis revealed an increase in the percentage of candidates burdened with debts.

Liton, the mayoral candidate, had liabilities amounting to Tk 20.80 lakh, and several councillor candidates, including those for women's reserved seats, had liabilities exceeding Tk 1 crore.

In terms of criminal records, the number of candidates with pending cases has decreased compared to the previous election. Currently,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Green, clean and smart Sylhet

Anwaruzzaman unveils 21-point election manifesto

DWIWA CHOWDHURY

With a vision for a sustainable, environmentally friendly, and technologically advanced Sylhet city, the Awami League's mayoral candidate Anwaruzzaman Chowdhury yesterday unveiled his 21-point election manifesto.

The manifesto, titled "Green-Smart Sylhet, Swapna Purno, Amrav Sylhet," was unveiled at a city hotel in the presence of journalists, as well as central and local leaders from the Awami League.

It puts forward a range of promises aimed at improving various aspects of life in Sylhet city. These include increased disaster awareness and preparedness to ensure the safety of residents, as well as the establishment of parks and playgrounds to promote recreation and a healthier lifestyle.

The manifesto also highlights the importance of human development and vows to address social crimes to create a more secure and harmonious community.

Recognising the significance of education and culture, Anwaruzzaman emphasised creating a city that is friendly and supportive towards these areas.

Besides, his manifesto aims to foster an environment that is conducive to the growth of businesses, ensuring economic prosperity and

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

REVIVING BARREN LAND through grape farming

Farmer Hasem Ali's success story

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Farmer Hasem Ali, 50, from Ajoatar village in Kurigram's Phulbari upazila, has transformed his once barren highland into a thriving grape orchard, becoming a beacon of hope for farmers facing similar challenges.

Inheriting two and a half bigha of land from his father, Ali faced numerous obstacles in his quest to make it productive. Lacking the necessary prerequisites for its location in a challenging terrain, the land proved unsuitable for conventional crops, leaving Ali disheartened as his efforts seemed in vain.

However, two years ago, Ali decided to take a leap of faith. He procured 250 grape seedlings, representing 40 different varieties from across the globe. Local bank officer Ruhul Amin came forward and provided him with the much-needed financial support to become a partner in his venture.

Initially skeptical about the foreign fruit's adaptability to the local soil, Ali's doubts were soon dispelled as nature began to work its magic. Today, a smile adorns Ali's face as his once desolate land bears fruits. The light yellowish, tender, and juicy grapes, with a distinctive flavour, have captivated the local market, where they are now in high demand.

"Out of the 250 grape trees planted in my garden, 20 have already yielded fruit," said Ali, sparking his optimism for a bountiful



harvest from the majority of the trees very soon.

Over the past two weeks, Ali has sold 50 kilos of grapes to a local fruit trader at a rate of Tk 300 per kilo. Additionally, there are another 40-45 kilos of grapes ready for sale this week, he said.

However, Ali's achievements extend beyond grape production. Alongside his grape orchard, he has also planted a diverse array of indigenous and foreign fruit trees in his garden. Inspired by instructional videos on YouTube, he ventured into grape cultivation and is now sharing his knowledge with fellow farmers, acting as a

mentor and teaching them his techniques.

Ali anticipates a significant increase in grape production, projecting a yield of approximately 3,000 kilos from his garden next year.

Achieving such impressive results has not come without its costs. Ali said he had to spend around Tk 11 lakh to set up and maintain the grape orchard. He expressed his gratitude towards Ruhul Amin for his financial support.

Currently, he is selling an average of 100 grape seedlings daily, with prices ranging from Tk 300 to Tk 1,500 per seedling.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

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Memo. No: 25.36.1500.111.3917(35/3)

Date: 15-06-2023

e-Tender Notice

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>). Package information is available in tender notice under e-GP System Portal. This is an online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. Detailed description of the tender are as follows:

Tender ID	Name of work	Last Selling Date and Time	Closing Date and Time
844666	Construction of office building of officer-in-charge, staff dormitory, nursery shed with seed storage and greenhouse with earthwork, boundary wall, approach road, small culvert etc at Patiya, Chattogram.	09 July-2023 16:00	10 July-2023 12:00

Further information and guidelines is available in the e-GP System portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@e-procure.gov.bd)

Rahul Guha
Executive Engineer

Chattogram PWD Division-1
Phone-02333356028

E-mail: ee_ctg1@pwd.gov.bd

GD-1022



From the soft-touch steering wheel to a gear selector embellished with crystal accents, no expense is spared to create an atmosphere of unmatched luxury. The seats, designed with precision, offer sumptuous padding with meticulous contouring to ensure optimal comfort and support.

R. A. HAQ

Flagship vehicles are the epitome of automotive excellence - offering a combination of speed, luxury, and striking aesthetics. These extraordinary cars represent the pinnacle of an automaker's capabilities, showcasing their expertise, craftsmanship, and unwavering commitment to delivering an unforgettable driving experience.

Size
Flagship models boast an extended wheelbase and striking design elements, such as the front grille, air intake, and wheels that amplify their road presence. Every inch of their larger frame serves a purpose, providing ample space for a luxurious cabin and accommodating the most indulgent features. Additionally, generous dimensions accommodate powerful engines and cargo capacity, catering to the needs of drivers who seek both



opulence and practicality.

Materials

Flagships embrace the use of premium materials that elevate their appearance to new heights. Chrome trims, carbon fibre body panels, and other exquisite details adorn the exterior. Inside, the cabin is elegant and refined. Intricately stitched bovine leather adorns the interior, while wood and metal accents replace commonplace plastic. From the soft-touch steering wheel to a gear selector embellished with crystal accents, no expense is spared to create an atmosphere of unmatched luxury.

The seats, designed with precision, offer sumptuous padding with meticulous contouring to ensure optimal comfort and support. Behind the doors, sound deadening shields the cabin from outside noise.

Technology

Flagships are at the forefront of automotive technology, incorporating cutting-edge innovations that redefine

the driving experience. They usually feature a large dashboard display containing a digital instrument cluster, alongside an infotainment system. The experience is further enhanced by a premium surround sound system, heated and massaging seats, voice commands, and even personal tablets. Delve deeper, and you'll discover a robust climate control system with

sensors, parking sensors, 360 degree 3D cameras, and automatic headlights work together to prevent accidents. Flagships also incorporate advanced features like automatic braking, collision warning, lane departure assist, and semi-autonomous driving. In the unfortunate event of a collision, passive safety features come into play. Crash safety structures and crumple

to emission regulations and advancing technology, their potency remains unchallenged. Contemporary models often feature a turbocharged six-cylinder engine complemented by one or two electric motors, delivering a minimum of around 300 Hp and sprinting to triple-digit speeds in around six seconds. But performance is not limited to straight-line acceleration. Engineers meticulously optimise chassis balance, aiming for a 50/50 weight distribution and a low centre of gravity. Strategic bracing struts minimise chassis flex, while advanced active suspension systems handle road irregularities with utmost finesse. Robust brakes, equipped with cutting edge ABS technology and often utilising carbon ceramics, ensure precise and responsive braking, bringing these beasts to a swift and controlled stop.

Customisation

Each flagship car is crafted to cater to individual tastes. Automakers offer an extensive range of customisation options, allowing potential buyers to tailor every aspect of their vehicle. From engine choices to interior materials and limited edition paint schemes, the possibilities are endless. The end result is a truly unique and exclusive vehicle that reflects its owner's distinct personality. In the realm of flagship cars, no two are exactly alike, thus further enhancing their allure and exclusivity.



adjustable zone settings, as well as a panoramic sunroof and subtle lighting that create an enchanting ambience. The exterior reveals an array of cameras and sensors, enabling 360-degree 3D cameras and intelligent cruise control capabilities. The key fob, with its own screen, allows you to control various aspects of the car without setting foot inside.

Safety

Safety is paramount in flagship models, as automakers strive to set new standards. Technologies like blind spot

zones are designed to absorb the majority of the impact energy, while an array of airbags, including front, side, and curtain airbags, ensure the utmost protection for occupants. Checking a car's NCAP rating provides a reliable measure, with ratings between 4.5 to 5 stars considered exemplary, but any flagship should have a score of 5.

Performance

Despite their imposing size, flagships are designed to perform. While traditional V8 and V12 engines have given way to hybrid powertrains due



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INTERNATIONAL

Mali calls for immediate end of UN mission

REUTERS, New York

Mali's interim military authorities on Friday asked for a United Nations peacekeeping force to leave "without delay", citing a "crisis of confidence" between Malian authorities and the decade-long UN mission known as MINUSMA.

It marks a major turning point for the West African country, which has struggled to stem an Islamist insurgency that took root following an uprising in 2012. MINUSMA was deployed by the UN Security Council in 2013 to support foreign and local efforts to restore stability.

Frustrations over the growing insecurity spurred two coups in 2020 and 2021 and the ruling junta has been increasingly at loggerheads with MINUSMA.

"Unfortunately, MINUSMA seems to have become a part of the problem in fuelling inter-community tensions," Malian Foreign Minister Abdoulaye Diop told the 15-member council.

"This situation is begetting mistrust among the Malian population and also causing a crisis of confidence between Malian authorities and MINUSMA," he said. "The Malian government asks for the withdrawal, without delay, of MINUSMA."

Security Council members must adopt a resolution to extend MINUSMA's mandate by June 30. A resolution requires at least nine votes in favour and no vetoes by Russia, China, the United States, Britain or France to pass.

UN special envoy to Mali, El-Ghassim Wane, said a decision on the future of MINUSMA was up to the council. "Clearly peacekeeping operations operate on the basis of consent from the host country and absent that consent operating in a specific country would be extremely challenging, if not impossible," he said.



A child runs as she holds a Ukrainian flag in front of the destroyed building of a cultural centre, hit in a missile strike, during a graduation ceremony of art students, in the town of Derhachi, Kharkiv region yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

AIR STRIKES IN SUDANESE CAPITAL 17, including 5 children killed

REUTERS, Dubai/ Cairo

Air strikes killed civilians and pummeled multiple parts of the Sudanese capital yesterday, residents said, as mediators pushed the warring factions towards a new ceasefire.

The Khartoum health ministry confirmed a report by local volunteers yesterday that 17 people including five children were killed in the Mayo area of southern Khartoum and 25 homes destroyed.

The strike was the latest in a series of air and artillery attacks on the poor and densely populated district of the city where most residents are unable to afford the cost of leaving.

Fighting between the Sudanese army and paramilitary Rapid Support Forces is entering its third month with neither side gaining a clear advantage.

The war has displaced 2.2 million Sudanese and killed hundreds, and has sent the war-weary Darfur region into a "humanitarian calamity," the United Nations has said.

The army has the advantage of air power in Khartoum and its neighboring cities Omdurman and Bahri, while the RSF has embedded itself in residential neighborhoods. On Friday and yesterday

the army appeared to ramp up air strikes, hitting several residential neighborhoods.

In a speech posted by the army on Friday, top general Yassir Al-Atta warned people to stay away from homes the RSF had occupied. "Because at this point, we will attack them anywhere," he said to cheers. "Between us and these rebels are bullets," he said, appearing to dismiss mediation attempts.

Late on Friday, the local resistance committee said 13 people had been killed by shelling in al-Lammab in western Khartoum, calling the neighborhood an "operations zone".

The RSF yesterday said it brought down an army warplane in the Nile, west of Khartoum.

Air strikes in central and southern Omdurman continued from Friday into yesterday, impacting homes and killing one person, according to the local committee in the Beit al-Mal neighborhood.

Residents said three members of a family were killed in the Sharq el-Nil district after an air strike on Friday.

In El-Geneina, in West Darfur, more than 270,000 have fled across the border to Chad, after more than 1,000 people were killed by attacks that residents and the United States have blamed on the RSF and allied militias.



Man dies in police custody

FROM PAGE 1

Police, said Alal already had problems in his leg when the Detective Branch of police detained him.

He added that police took Alal to the National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopaedic Rehabilitation [NITOR] as per a court order.

He added that Alal was moved to the NICVD from NITOR after his blood pressure shot up.

Police detained him in connection with the murder of a woman on June 6 at the building where he worked, his cousins Reaz Uddin and Zahidul Islam said, adding that Alal was working at the building when he was picked by the DB men. Reaz said he was there when the officers took him on June 6.

Reaz and Zahid both said Alal's body bore injury marks on the right arm and leg.

"My brother Alal was in good health when the DB took him. Then all of a sudden we were informed that he had died at the cardiovascular diseases hospital. When we went to the hospital, we were told that his body had been sent to the National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopaedic Rehabilitation [NITOR]," Reaz Uddin told The Daily Star.

The authorities at National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD) said Alal was admitted to the NITOR on June 10.

According to the death certificate, Alal was admitted to NITOR following a court order with injuries to his right ankle.

The body was sent to Dhaka Medical College morgue yesterday evening for autopsy.

The first was a one-on-one meeting between Bangladesh High Commissioner to India Md Mustafizur Rahman and Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar in New Delhi just a few days after the US had announced its new visa policy for Bangladesh on May 24. The second was held between Bangladesh Foreign Minister Abdul Momen and Jaishankar on the sidelines of the G20 Development Ministers meeting in Varanasi last week.

Sources said Jaishankar assured Momen that India will take up the issue of Bangladesh during Modi's conversations with the US leaders.

BNP leader lands

FROM PAGE 12

a slogan - "This time, the fight is to kill Sheikh Hasina and finish off Awami League," said the document.

Rawshan Ali of Sirajganj DB said they detained Rashedul and later handed him over to the police.

In May, Rajshahi district unit BNP Convener Abu Sayeed Chand reportedly made a death threat against Hasina and was arrested later. He is behind bars now.

DU struggles to spend

FROM PAGE 12

Requesting to be unnamed, a university official said the allocation DU gets has to be used within a fiscal year. Those who failed to finish the research work within that specific fiscal year cannot withdraw the total amount. Besides, some teachers abandoned their research projects halfway for foreign studies, the official added.

Prof Birman Chandra Barua, of DU's Pali and Buddhist Studies, who has recently done a research work with the university allocation, said if a teacher wants to conduct a research, they have to submit a proposal on their topic first. The teacher can start the work only after the university authorities approve the proposal.

"The process is time consuming. As we start the work late, the work cannot be completed in due time. So, a teacher cannot get the full allocated fund for a research," said Prof Birman.

Talking to this correspondent, Prof Mamta Uddin Ahmed, treasurer of Dhaka University, said researchers and the authorities of the research centre are not serious. "If they demand money on time from us, we can use the full allocation."

"Although our research allocation is really insufficient, we cannot use it in full. It is regretful matter. If this situation goes on, we get less allocation that we now get. We are worried over the issue," he added.

A senior teacher and administrator of the university told The Daily Star, wishing to be unnamed, said some teachers' disinterest in conducting research became evident when a section of teachers opposed the university's decision, made last year, of mandating PhD degrees to get promoted as associate professors and professors.

Former teachers of the university, who have been demanding an increase in research allocation for a long time, expressed disappointment over the unused research grants.

Prof ABM Faroque, former teacher of DU's pharmacy department and an eminent researcher, said, "It is the failure of the university authorities that they could not use the funds properly. We have to be self-critical. Even many

of them who got the grants did not utilise these properly."

Prof Abul Kashem Fazlul Haque, former teacher of DU's Bangla department, told this newspaper that many of the university teachers, who are carrying out research work, opted for research with NGO funds as the amount is bigger than UGC allocation.

UGC member Prof Dil Afroza Begum said they know that Dhaka University cannot spend all the allocated funds. "If this situation continues, we will bring down the grants."

Prof Mohammad Tanzimuddin Khan, of Dhaka university's international relations department, said a research-oriented academic and administrative structure makes teachers more dedicated to research.

He said the objectives of universities are to find out new things through research which will help the universities notch up in global university ranking. Universities in Latin America even are doing much better in research.

"We failed to define the character of Dhaka university as a university. Enough research is not being done here and experts on different subjects are not made."

"For this, we cite the foreign scholars while writing books or research reports," Tanzimuddin added.

Hajj agency owner

FROM PAGE 12

Anas Travels and Tours, Al-Amin International Travel Agents, and Khidmah Overseas.

Nazrul Islam, officer-in-charge of Shyampur Police Station, yesterday told reporters that police were looking for the swindlers.

M Shahadat Hossain Taslim, president of Hajj Agencies Association of Bangladesh, said people in rural areas often give money and passports to travel agents without asking for a receipt. This makes it easier for the agents to cheat people.

People willing to perform hajj should always make payments at the agency office and ask for a receipt, he added.

"We are trying our best to send the people who got cheated to Saudi Arabia to perform hajj," he added.

UP chairman the mastermind

FROM PAGE 1

picked up Rezaul Karim, 26, from Dupchanchia upazila of Bogura.

The detainees were later brought to Dhaka.

The Rab director said that 10-12 people took part in the attack on Nadim, Jamalpur district correspondent of Banglanelines24.com and also the Bakshiganj upazila correspondent of Ekattor TV.

He said Nadim, 42, was on his way back home in Pathati area of Bakshiganj Bazar around 10:00pm on Wednesday. Babu and his goons ambushed him at a quiet place.

When Nadim along with his colleague reached there on a motorcycle, Rezaul pushed the journalist off the bike and Monir hit him first, Al Moin added.

The incident was caught on a nearby CCTV camera.

Later, some of Babu's men came running from behind, dragged the journalist to a alley and started beating him, said the Rab official.

The attackers also beat up Nadim's colleague when he tried to save the journalist. As some locals came forward hearing Nadim screaming, Babu and his men fled.

The journalist died of his wounds at Mymensingh Medical College Hospital on Thursday.

The Rab director said Nadim recently wrote several reports on Babu's misdeeds. This enraged Babu who threatened the journalist and also filed a case against him under the Digital Security Act.

The Cyber Tribunal of Mymensingh dismissed the case. As Nadim wrote on Facebook about the dismissal of the case, Babu became more angry and planned to teach Nadim a lesson.

Following the incident, Babu hid at a distant relative's house in Panchagarh's Debiganj upazila to avoid arrest.

The Rab official said Babu is accused in several cases filed with different police stations of Jamalpur. Yesterday, Nadim's wife Monira

DHAKA SUNDAY JUNE 18, 2023
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7

MYANMAR POLITICAL SITUATION

'No sign of improvement'

Say Blinken, Singapore foreign minister after meet

REUTERS, Washington

There has been no sign of improvement in the political situation in Myanmar since the 2021 coup, Singapore Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan said on Friday following a meeting in Washington with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who said he shared his counterpart's pessimism.

Balakrishnan told a press conference a lack of progress meant it was not the time to re-engage at a high-level with Myanmar's junta, but said current ASEAN chair Indonesia was engaging with "a wide spectrum of stakeholders" on Myanmar, a reference to talks involving opponents of the coup.

"You do need everyone ultimately to sit down and negotiate. I don't know how long it will take. The last time it took 25 years for some form of democratic transition to occur in Myanmar. I hope it won't take that long," he said, adding that he remained "pessimistic".

Blinken said he agreed with his Singaporean counterpart and that Washington supports ASEAN's efforts on Myanmar.

"It's very important that we continue - all of us - to sustain the appropriate pressure on the junta and look for ways, of course, to engage the opposition," he said.

The United States has issued sanctions against Myanmar's military and its companies, and urged other countries to stop weapons sales to the junta.

IRAN-KSA DETENTE

Saudi foreign minister arrives in Tehran

REUTERS

Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan arrived in Iran yesterday amid a rapprochement between the two Middle East arch foes, Iranian state TV said.

Iran and Saudi Arabia agreed in March, in a deal brokered by China, to end a diplomatic rift and reestablish relations following years of hostility that had endangered regional stability including in Yemen, Syria and Lebanon.

Iran officially reopened its embassy in Saudi Arabia on June 7.

The kingdom broke ties with Iran in 2016 after protesters attacked the Saudi embassy in Tehran in retaliation for Riyadh's execution of a prominent Shiite cleric.

Bin Farhan is due to meet with Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and his Iranian counterpart Hossein Amirabdollahian.

Iran has recently been trying to mend its strained ties with several Gulf Arab states.

Saudi Arabia's rapprochement with Iran has left Israel largely alone. The UAE, which was the first Gulf Arab country to sign a normalisation agreement with Israel in 2020, resumed formal relations with Iran last year.

Begum filed a murder case with Bakshiganj Police Station, accusing 22 named and 20-25 unnamed persons. Babu was named as the prime accused, said Sohel Rana, officer-in-charge of the police station.

The other accused include Babu's son Fahim Faisal Rifat, 22, joint convener of Bakshiganj upazila Chhakra League, Rakibullah Rakib, 28, upazila AL assistant publicity secretary, and Gazi Aman Ali, 55, member of Sadhurpara Union Parishad.

According to the case statement, Babu masterminded Nadim's murder for his reports on the former's corruption and anomalies.

The OC said that they arrested nine accused and the Rab picked up four more, including Babu.

Babu, his son Rifat, and Rakib were suspended from the AL and Chhakra League yesterday for violating discipline of the organisations.

We can have our own visa policy: Quader

FROM PAGE 12
underway in collaboration with the World Bank.

Regarding the BRT project, he said, "This project has progressed quite far considering the timeframe. However, there is a doubt about its completion. It would have been better if the project was thoroughly evaluated before its initiation in Gazipur."

He expressed worries that the road infrastructure projects could exacerbate traffic congestion and adversely affect the entire capital.

The minister assured that the BRT project would be completed by September or October. He said preparations are underway for its inauguration.

"The metro rail project is also progressing, with the goal of reaching Motijheel by September or October," Quader added.

Shishu Park closure is hurting children

Authorities must expedite the process to reopen the park

For over four decades, Shishu Park, the country's first amusement park for children, had been a source of joy and cherished memories for countless children and families. Located in the heart of Dhaka, it offered affordable entertainment options in a city where such opportunities are still scarce. It is, therefore, hard to accept the park's prolonged closure dating back to January 2019. According to a report, the closure, primarily attributed to modernisation efforts, has since turned into a saga of overlapping purposes, bureaucratic red tape, and budgetary complications, with the authorities unable to provide a tentative date of reopening even after four and a half years.

The question is, why is this being allowed to drag on? It is perhaps not surprising when you think of the plight of parks, zoos and other outdoor recreation facilities managed by urban authorities across the country. We have often come across similar reports of prolonged closures in the name of modernisation. Even those that are open to the public are often poorly run, with allegations of mismanagement and antisocial activities routinely heard of. The Ramna Park recently made news for still imposing a pandemic-time entry restriction during certain hours, when apparently only "sirs" can enter it. The picture that emerges from this state of affairs is deeply troubling, especially in a city with few public spaces and facilities left for recreation. Although there are some private amusement parks for children in Dhaka, those are often prohibitively expensive for low-income families.

Shishu Park is now the site of several development works simultaneously, thus complicating and lengthening their execution. While the DSCC's plan for its modernisation through the installation of 15 new rides is yet to take off, works on an underground parking lot within the park as well as an underpass – implemented by the Department of Public Works – are at various stages of development. Given the glacial pace at which all this is happening, DSCC thinks it may take another three years for its own project to be completed once it receives approval.

What this means is that the gates of this beloved and affordable amusement park will remain locked indefinitely. This is totally unacceptable. We urge the authorities to expedite the park modernisation work. Not doing so is an injustice to the children who are growing up without the joy and wonder that Shishu Park once offered.

An ex-MP's abuse of power

How did he get away with it for so long?

We are appalled at the blatant abuse of power of a former MP of Narsingdi that extended to misappropriation of fertiliser meant for the benefit of farmers as well as allegedly grabbing land of helpless people. Reportedly, a suit has been filed in court by the state-run Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC), and the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has launched an investigation following a *suo moto* rule by a High Court bench. We cannot help but wonder whether such large-scale corruption involving around 71,801 tonnes of imported chemical fertiliser would have been exposed had those organisations or the High Court not taken a stand against it.

As revealed through a report by this paper, the former lawmaker, with the help of his henchmen, had also been involved in allegedly coercing people to sell their land at prices much lower than the market rates, and building boundary walls and occupying the land if they refused to comply. In fact, he was so powerful that many victims were too scared to file a case, fearing repercussions. It was also revealed that nearly 50 people from different areas of the Palash upazila brought allegations of land grabbing against him.

The fact that such abuse of power could have gone on for so many years and on such a scale points to the impunity that many ruling party leaders enjoy in their constituencies. In this particular case, the former lawmaker used his position as president of Bangladesh Fertiliser Association to get major contracts to transport the imported fertiliser, a large part of which he allegedly misappropriated. Was it not a conflict of interest for someone to head an organisation responsible for supplying fertiliser to farmers to also have a business that would financially benefit from getting contracts to transport it?

We hope that the ACC probe results in starting the process of bringing him to justice. In addition, we urge the authorities to initiate a thorough investigation into the land grabbing allegations that will result in the return of the lands to their rightful owners.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

letters@thedadlystar.net

What every parent should know

The Cambridge Dictionary defines overparenting as "too much involvement by parents in the lives of their children, so that they try to help with or control everything that happens to the child." If we look around, we will see many such parents, who always try to solve their children's problems.

It is only through letting children face their own challenges, and pursue their own dreams, that we can allow them to grow. Every parent should be aware of this.

SM Imranul Islam Rajon, Dhaka

EDITORIAL

How to explain Jamaat's return to the political scene?

THE STREET VIEW

Mohammad Al Masum Molla
is chief reporter at The Daily Star.

Mohammad Al-Masum Molla



Jamaat-e-Islami, one of the largest fundamentalist parties in Bangladesh, was recently allowed to hold a public meeting in Dhaka after almost a decade. The official permission from police to hold the rally has led to numerous questions and, pending any clear answers, much speculation.

A day after the rally, ministers and senior leaders of the ruling Awami League came out with various statements seeking to give some explanation. Perhaps the most important remark was made by the Minister of Agriculture Abdur Razzak, who said that allowing Jamaat to hold a rally in Dhaka was a "political decision." That term alone raises questions across at least two fronts: what prompted Awami League to take such a decision, and what does the government want to achieve through this "political decision?"

Jamaat has faced a myriad of challenges since the BNP-led alliance, which included Jamaat, handed over power to a caretaker government in 2006. This was followed by a period of serious political clashes.

Over the next two years, amid a state of emergency, Jamaat's principal ally BNP's political capital appeared to have eroded substantially, so much so that Awami League won a landslide victory in 2008. The war crimes trials that soon followed saw the top leadership of Jamaat get executed for their crimes against Bangladesh and its people in 1971. Many of its leaders were also arrested between 2013 and 2015, when the BNP-Jamaat alliance staged a fierce campaign to thwart the elections.

Since 2013, Jamaat had not been allowed to hold any rallies. In fact, whenever they attempted to stage any kind of public demonstration, their leaders were summarily detained by law enforcers with clear indication from the government that they would not be accorded such liberties. But after the announcement of the US visa policy, it seems Jamaat has been the only party that has been able to seize the opportunity to benefit from it.

There have been rumours that Jamaat had an "understanding" with the government, based upon which they were allowed to hold the rally. Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader, however, said that BNP had brought Jamaat out to the streets to carry out arson attacks – essentially evading the fact that it was his government that let Jamaat hold this particular rally.



Leaders and activists of Jamaat-e-Islami gathering at the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh, in the capital ahead of their rally.

Some members of Jamaat have been found guilty of committing war crimes. The organisation, as well as many of its leaders, had actively engaged against Bangladesh's liberation forces in 1971. The party also has a solid track record of carrying out arson attacks. So, why has the government suddenly become softer on the party?

The BNP, which was blamed for forming an alliance with a controversial party like Jamaat, had dissolved its grand alliance of 20 parties apparently just to rid itself of any links with Jamaat. Although not in any alliance officially, there have been reports that Jamaat and BNP resumed talks to simultaneously launch a one-point movement. So far, that seems to hold true, considering the kind of noises Jamaat is making – they want election under a caretaker government system.

Political commentators believe that the government has a political equation in mind. If BNP boycotts the polls, then the government will try to bring Jamaat into the election under a different name to make the election seem inclusive and participatory. Leaders of Jamaat have already applied to the Election Commission for registering a new political party, and there is a rumour that the Bangladesh

too," they said," Quader said at a party event. It is becoming increasingly clear that this time, getting re-elected would be challenging for the ruling party and it would not be possible to repeat what happened in 2014 or 2018.

If BNP and other political parties do not join the polls, the credibility of the election will be questioned to an extent that it might get branded as largely illegitimate. That leads to the obvious question as to whether the government is trying to bring Jamaat back into electoral politics to change this scenario. Many might dismiss this idea as mere conjecture, but Jamaat's intimacy with the ruling party is nothing new.

When BNP boycotted the 1986 elections during the regime of military dictator HM Ershad, it was the Awami League and Jamaat that joined the polls and gave it legitimacy. Awami League and Jamaat waged a joint movement against the BNP government in 1995-96, demanding the introduction of the caretaker government system, which led to a constitutional amendment as well. If Awami League had found it expedient to join hands with Jamaat then, it may find it expedient to do so again.

There is also a strong suggestion

that the government's hands are tied and it was compelled to give permission to Jamaat in light of the US visa policy. Many believe that through this, the government wants to show that it is not obstructing any of its political opponents. Jamaat, on the other hand, needed to show that it was still present, and it most likely leveraged the benefit of the US policy.

It must have been desperate to make a show. That is also important when one is playing the game of electoral politics.

In Jamaat's absence, the Bangladesh Islamic Andolok appears to have taken over its vote bank, although both parties have distinct ideologies. But as far as Jamaat is concerned, their vote bank is being seriously eroded.

Founded by the controversial Islamist scholar Abul Ala Moududi in 1941, Jamaat had been banned twice in Pakistan – in 1959 and 1964 – for its communal role. During the Liberation War, the party had directly taken a stance against independence and provided the bulwark of Razakar, Al-Badr and Al-Shams militia and the notorious Peace Committee that collaborated with the Pakistani army to commit war crimes.

In 2013, Jamaat's registration as a political party was declared illegal by the High Court. Acting on the verdict, the Election Commission cancelled its registration in October 2018. But the government did not take any move to ban the party over these years. So, Awami League's intentions regarding Jamaat are still dubious at best. Jamaat, on the other hand, being politically savvy as always, has picked just the right time to indicate that it is ready to be courted.

Looking back on India's triple train crash and the safety of rail travel



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PALLAB BHATTACHARYA

The triple train accident in Balasore in the eastern Indian state of Odisha on June 2 was considered the worst in three decades involving India's largest public transport system that ferries nearly eight billion people annually. The accident left 290 people dead and more than 1,100 injured. The statistics point to the persisting issues of concern India needs to address as it goes about expanding and upgrading its rail infrastructure and services.

The accident between the speeding Shalimar-Chennai Coromandel Express and the Bengaluru-Howrah Express carrying nearly 2,000 people brought forth many questions about the state of India's rail infrastructure, particularly its safety aspect. Was it due to faulty signalling system or human error? There are two parallel investigations which are going on – one by the Commissioner of Railway Safety and the other by premier investigating agency Central Bureau of Investigation with the latter probing if there has

been any tampering with the signalling system as claimed by Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw. Was Balasore accident a toxic mix of mechanical failures and human error? Perhaps, we will get a correct picture only after the two probes. But this should in no way deflect the attention – and greater attention for that matter – from a key area begging to be addressed – safety of rail travel.

India's rail infrastructure was largely set up and left behind by British colonial rulers. The Indian government has an ambitious plan to tone up that infrastructure and Rs 2.4 lakh crore has been allocated for capital expenditure in the FY23-24 national budget. The Indian railway has seen a dramatic increase in its capital outlays. As such, currently funds are less of a hindrance to upgrade the rail infrastructure including safety measures. However, putting funds to optimal use remains an area of worry. According to a report by India's top auditor Comptroller

and Auditor General (CAG) which has oversight over all government departments, money allocated for track renewal works were not fully utilised between 2018-19 and 2019-20. Clearly, the work of upgradation and maintenance work of rail tracks and signalling brooks no further delay.

The graph of rail accidents in India has shown a declining trend over several years. Out of 1,127 derailments between 2017 and 2021, 289 were linked to track renewal. The number of "consequential" train accidents has declined from 74 in 2017-18 to 20 in 2020-21. According to one estimate, derailments constituted 75 percent of "consequential" train accidents and collisions another five percent between 2016-17 and 2020-21. It is unfortunate that divisions should be created by terming accidents as "inconsequential" or "consequential" because every life matters and even one death should be of major concern.

Maintenance of tracks and the rolling stock are areas the Indian railway authorities can ill afford to ignore. Safety measures, including installation of anti-collision systems in trains are expanding but not at the desired pace. Both the CAG and the parliamentary standing committee on railways have flagged concerns over railway safety. They had brought out three reports showing that railways fell short of safety standards between

December 2016 and March of this year. The government had set up a dedicated fund in 2017-18 to carry out safety-related work. In March 2023, the parliamentary committee pointed out that not once had the annual funding been spent fully. What is more disconcerting is a CAG report on derailments showed that the dedicated fund allocation had begun to see an increasing proportion diverted to a "non-priority" area. The Balasore incident should be an eye-opener to the urgent need for the much-needed upgrade of safety mechanism and constant vigil on this.

The Balasore accident has set off a debate whether the government was giving more priority to semi-high speed passenger trains like Vande Bharat, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's favourite project, announced in 2021. What has been forgotten or ignored is that semi-high speed trains, rail safety and track upgradation are not mutually exclusive. It is not a case of either or. All should run simultaneously but with different degree of emphasis because the issue of safety in all trains remains paramount.

The two separate probes into the Balasore accident should fix responsibilities but that exercise has to be part of a comprehensive review of the path to modernise the country's railways and its safety. It should not be a case of a train to nowhere.



Pedestrians pass New York's One World Trade Center with the background of acrid smoke from wildfires in Quebec, Canada.

PHOTO: AFP

We are approaching a tectonic moment for our planet



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QUAMRUL HAIDER

At the 21st Conference of Parties (COP 21) held in Paris, 196 nations agreed to keep the rise in the average global temperature to 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels while endeavouring to limit it to 1.5 degrees by the year 2100. After adoption of the agreement on December 12, 2015, the then Secretary General of the UN Ban Ki Moon said, "Today's Summit has shown that we can rise to the climate challenge."

Did we really "rise to the climate challenge"? No, we did not because the promises made by the participating nations at COP 21 exist mostly on paper. In the meantime, our planet is continuing to warm at an "unprecedented rate" without showing any signs of abating. The concentration of planet-warming carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is on the rise and have reached an all-time high this year, representing an accumulation "not seen for millions of years." As of June 8, 2023, the concentration was 423.62 parts per million, a 5.7 percent increase over the 2015 level.

Today, Siberia, once a relatively cooler part of our planet, is sweltering with temperatures close to 40 degrees. Several countries in Asia, including Bangladesh, Thailand, Laos and Vietnam have already seen record-shattering temperatures between 40 and 45 degrees. The noxious smoke from the out-of-control forest fires in Québec – an upshot of global warming – choked people living in and around New York City, which is about 500 km away, with an Air Quality Index in the hazardous zone, surpassing 300 (on a 500 point scale) on June 7.

While these and other extreme weather-related events are wreaking havoc worldwide, "climate politicians" are busy preparing the agenda for the next annual road show, COP 28, to be held in December of this year in Dubai. Will the attending heads of governments or their representatives again make empty promises and lull us with false hopes? We hope not, although in all the previous conferences, world leaders, save a few, agreed on the science of climate change, yet failed to develop a collective approach to tackle the problem.

And now the bombshell news. According to a report by the World Meteorological Organization published on June 7, 2023, we are facing the harsh reality that there is a 66 percent likelihood of

global temperatures breaching the 1.5-degree threshold set at COP 21 for the first time by 2027. Yes, 2027, not 2100, as agreed upon in 2015. However, as the breach will be boosted by a transition to an El Niño climate pattern, the rise is expected to be temporary, but with increasing frequency.

Nevertheless, will our planet be doomed if the temperature rises by 1.5 degrees? Besides an utter failure of the binding treaty hammered out at COP-21, breaching 1.5 degrees will be a tectonic moment for the planet with far-reaching repercussions for its inhabitants.

So far, a change of 1.1 degree in average global temperature since 1880 has inflicted irreversible damage to our environment. It

According to a report by the World Meteorological Organization published on June 7, 2023, we are facing the harsh reality that there is a 66 percent likelihood of global temperatures breaching the 1.5-degree threshold set at COP-21 for the first time by 2027. Yes, 2027, not 2100, as agreed upon in 2015. However, as the breach will be boosted by a transition to an El Niño climate pattern, the rise is expected to be temporary, but with increasing frequency.

has jeopardised our health, our economy, our agriculture, our food and energy security, among other things. More importantly, it is threatening our civilisation and the future of our children. Hence, a 1.5-degree rise will cause even more damage and push our planet into a new, more dangerous climate domain.

The effects will not be uniform across the planet. Some regions will heat up faster than other regions. Due to an accelerated positive feedback loop known as Arctic Amplification, polar regions will experience warming at a much faster rate than other regions. In a study published in the journal Communications

Earth & Environment, researchers report that the Arctic is heating up roughly four times faster than the entire planet.

Hotter polar regions will mean more melting of ice sheets, resulting in greater habitat loss for polar bears, whales, seals and other cold weather animals. Moreover, loss of ice will exacerbate the rate at which sea levels are rising.

More permafrost and glaciers, holding and keeping deadly bacteria frozen, will melt. Once the hibernating bacteria come to life, they will attack humans with vengeance. This will lead to increased disease and potentially more pandemics.

A 1.5-degree of warming will be disastrous for coastal and small island nations. Because of rising sea levels, coastal communities will lose their homes and habitats. Even cities away from the coasts will see frequent flooding. We have already seen thousand-year flooding events around the world in recent years.

Both days and nights will be unusually hot. Heat waves will be longer, more intense and air will be unbreathable, thereby posing a serious threat to survival, particularly for people living along the tropics, as well as in areas arching across the equator.

Deserts will grow in size and become hotter. Many nations, otherwise drought-free, will become more prone to droughts and water shortages. Consequently, crop yields will be lower, leading to famine. Furthermore, the vicious cycle of heating and deforestation will turn regions with rainforests into Savannah-like regions.

Frequency and magnitude of extreme weather events, such as raging storms – latest one is cyclone Biparjoy, devastating floods and ferocious wildfires will increase. More water will evaporate from the oceans, which in turn will make the heaviest rains and snowfalls even heavier in many parts of the world.

Higher temperatures will cause many species to become extinct. Triggered by temperature-induced bleaching, almost all tropical coral reefs, which act as nurseries for many fish, will be severely degraded.

These are some out of the many dire climate-related consequences that will adversely affect our planet if the temperature rises by 1.5 degrees. It is beyond the scope of this article to mention all of the consequences.

Finally, to hold the rise of global temperature to a safer limit, preferably below 1.5 degrees, we have to act with great urgency. Voluntary measures alone by concerned individuals will not save us. We need swift, robust actions instead of political dithering by countries that are largely responsible for global warming. Otherwise, the writing on the wall is clear. Catastrophe is looming on the horizon.

Reflections on America's marketing of war



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and International Business
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Corpus Christi.

ABUWAHEEDUZZAMAN

During the mid-1980s, I was an MBA student at George Washington University. I used to take a transfer bus at a stop next to the White House to go to school. Lafayette Park, opposite the White House, was an open free speech area for demonstrators and protestors. It was also the residence of a few homeless inhabitants. The security perimeter of the White House was much smaller; and it was not as strict as it is now. It is still a free speech area.

War was not a serious issue at that time. A middle-aged lady used to sit there every day with placards seeking world peace and protesting against war. She was kind of a landmark in the park. No one bothered her and she bothered nobody. Despite the shabby looks of the park, the atmosphere was admirable. It was an attestation to the coexistence of diverse views, a testimony to America's freedom.

As a hegemonic superpower, America's primary concern has been its leadership position in the world; especially, economic leadership in global trade and investment. During the mid-1980s, when trade deficit with Japan increased to \$60 billion, Americans were troubled. Japan bashing was common in popular press, very similar to what China is experiencing now. Japan was also praised for its system of governance, economic competitiveness, Confucian ethics, respect for hierarchy, and collectivism.

Historically, we have observed that in order to: (a) protect the empire, (b) retain economic competence, and (c) preserve territorial gains, hegemonic powers have maintained strong militaries. Paul Kennedy underscores this relationship in his *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* (1987). America is pursuing what empires have done traditionally. It is maintaining a presence in 750 military facilities in 80 countries/territories of the world. Foreign military bases are one of the pillars of the "American War Industry" (often described as the military-industrial-complex) whose size and power are unmatched by any other country. Comparatively, Russia has 21 and China has only one military base outside their countries.

The US war industry relies on a large number of private enterprises mostly funded by public money. It thrives on conflicts. Peace is an antithesis to war. Since World War II, America has fought quite a few wars in various parts of the world. None of these wars were fought on American soil. Foreign bases have provided strategic and tactical support to those international engagements. During the past three decades, it fought three major wars in Kuwait, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Ukraine is its latest engagement. Let us examine how the principles of marketing were applied to sell wars to the American public.

From a marketing perspective, a war must have a value-proposition, a principal argument backed by moral reasoning, teleological or utilitarian.

Citizens must be convinced that war is necessary and beneficial to the nation. A tangible product benefit, an observable material outcome, helps the persuasion process. In my opinion, this was missing in the Vietnam war.

The fight for democracy or anti-communist arguments did not sell very well. The engagement was long drawn; there was no end in sight; cost was very high; and the number of body bags made the situation worse. Pictures of death, destruction, and suffering in the media undermined the government's moral reasoning. The naked girl (she lives in Canada now) running away from the American napalm bomb was hard to accept. The nation was divided. The US government was fighting two wars, one in Vietnam and the other at home against the protesters that included many returning soldiers.

Perhaps, the American government and the war industry learned their lesson in Vietnam. The Kuwait war was packaged. The government of Kuwait hired marketing/public relation companies to build support. Kuwait

dismembered human corpses that accompanied the bombing would have been horrific. They were sanitised in the media. American army had a walk-over with low casualty. Today, Iraq is barely functioning as a nation state with three autonomous regions. America has control over the Iraqi oil (again, a tangible outcome). America has built a large military base near Baghdad to keep control.

The Afghan war was a little complex. When the Russians (Soviet Union) left, the Western media was in full praise of the Mujahideen. The Afghans were also very thankful to the West. A post-war US reconstruction programme (a minuscule Marshall Plan) could have saved the nation and America could have gotten a great ally in the region. That did not happen. The withdrawal of the West created a vacuum. Slowly, the country slipped into a state of lawlessness. Later, the western intervention made the situation worse. Helpless Afghans returned to their faith, this time fighting against the Americans. Faith gave them the moral reasoning needed to continue the war. They controlled the countryside and had the determination ("will to fight", a critical component in war) to win. Geography and terrain were helpful. I think the West should take this new Afghan favourably and not fall into the same trap.

No one knows how and when the Ukraine war is going to end. On June 2, 2023, in Helsinki City Hall,



Smoke covers the presidential palace compound in Baghdad on March 21, 2003 during a massive US-led air raid on the Iraqi capital.

PHOTO: AFP

and the Gulf States shared the cost of war. US media gave favourable coverage. It was a short, decisive war. US casualty was low. There was voluntary and involuntary media control; we did not see Vietnam-style media coverage. Kuwait was liberated. America regained control over Kuwaiti oil. American public could see a tangible utilitarian outcome of the war. President Bush (41st) kept his promise (a limited objective), he did not remove Saddam Hussein. His post-war approval rating was 91 percent.

The Iraq war was marketed with a "weapons of mass destruction (WMD)" argument with Saddam Hussein portrayed as the villain. When WMD was not found, the narrative changed – "the world is better off without Saddam Hussein" was sold. America won the war with a "shock and awe" bombing campaign. American public did not see the evaporation of Iraqi neighbourhoods. Pictures of burnt,

Anthony Blinken, US Secretary of State stated that, "Russia is estimated to have suffered more than 100,000 casualties in the last six months alone, as Putin sends wave after wave of Russians into a meat grinder of his own making." Numbers could differ, but one could make the same argument against the Ukrainian government. Both governments are feeding the so-called meat grinder and the US government is allowing it to continue.

Are we observing a repetition of Vietnam in Ukraine? The value proposition of the war is not well defined; death and destruction are hard to take; there is no end in sight; and the cost is staggering. Funding a stalemate can only benefit the war industry. Without serious protest in the US, this war is not going to end. It may even result in a nuclear war. Lafayette Park will have to play its historic role with loud protests. That may advance diplomacy to the forefront.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Strong winds
- 6 Party dip
- 11 Like gymnasts
- 12 Court event
- 13 Dialing
- 15 Cain's mother
- 16 Decline
- 17 "— a Small World"
- 18 Make good as new
- 20 Take a load off
- 21 Sphere
- 22 "— Lisa"
- 23 Suit pieces
- 26 Worker with a pick
- 27 Swiss peaks
- 28 Grumpy friend
- 29 Horse-shoe shape
- 30 Instruments made from gourds
- 34 Director DuVernay
- 35 Termite's kin
- 36 Carnival city
- 37 Faking being knocked out
- 40 Piano piece
- 41 Dike's kin
- 42 Train stop
- 43 Garden starters
- 45 "Rats!"
- 46 Painter Edouard
- 51 Want badly
- 52 Felt unwell
- 53 Shoe parts
- 54 Manning
- 55 Security system parts

- 6 Theater fixture
- 7 Pendulum path
- 8 Intermediary
- 9 Soup cracker
- 10 Elite athlete
- 14 Attire
- 19 Young ones
- 22 Layered mineral
- 23 Cleared out
- 24 Raise
- 25 Get louder
- 26 Human beings
- 27 "Rats!"
- 28 "Rats!"
- 29 Painter Edouard
- 30 Want badly
- 31 Felt unwell
- 32 Shoe parts
- 33 Manning
- 34 Courtroom vow
- 35 Fixed charge



YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS



WRITE FOR US, SEND US YOUR OPINION PIECES TO
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Revisiting the role of USG in detecting hepatic steatosis: contemporary insights and debates



STAR HEALTH DESK

The American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases (AASLD) has released a practice guidance document addressing the clinical assessment and management of non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD), which can progress to fibrosis and cirrhosis. NAFLD encompasses both non-alcoholic fatty liver (NAFL) and non-alcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH), with the latter involving inflammation. The condition is commonly associated with obesity, type 2 diabetes, hypertension, dyslipidaemia, and insulin resistance.

The document highlights that standard B mode ultrasound is not recommended for identifying hepatic steatosis due to its low sensitivity. Instead, primary care clinicians should screen patients at risk for NAFLD using the fibrosis-4 (FIB-4) index, which incorporates patient age, aspartate aminotransferase (AST), alanine aminotransferase (ALT), and platelet count.

Diet and exercise, along with weight reduction for overweight individuals, are emphasised as the foundation of treatment for NAFLD. Patients are also advised to abstain from alcohol.

In a recent study published in the American Journal of Gastroenterology (AJG), researchers disputed the recommendation against using ultrasound for diagnosing hepatic steatosis, suggesting that contemporary ultrasound equipment has acceptable sensitivity. The study involved 5,000 patients across multiple centres and found that ultrasound had a sensitivity of 89% and specificity of 81% for detecting any degree of steatosis. While the debate on ultrasound usage continues, the AASLD guidance remains cautious due to older data.

Overall, this practice guidance document serves as a comprehensive resource for primary care clinicians and specialists, offering detailed insights into the assessment and management of NAFLD. It emphasises the importance of early detection, lifestyle modifications, and appropriate referrals to specialists for further evaluation and intervention.

INSIGHTS FROM DR LUI'S EXPERT DISCUSSION

Understanding liver functions, lifestyle choices & treatment options for liver health

STAR HEALTH DESK

Dr Lui Hock Foong is a gastroenterologist and liver transplant specialist practising at Gleneagles Hospital in Singapore. With a focus on digestive disorders and liver diseases, Dr Lui offers comprehensive care to patients with both common and complex conditions.



In a recent interview with The Daily Star, Dr Lui shed light on the functions of the liver and discussed various aspects of liver health and treatment options. Dr Lui emphasised that the liver acts as a multifunctional factory, carrying out vital processes such as manufacturing proteins, warehousing essential substances, and detoxifying waste products.

When it comes to maintaining a healthy liver, Dr Lui highlighted three key lifestyle factors. Firstly, striking a balance between exercise and food intake is crucial. Excess energy from food, regardless of its source, can be converted into fat and stored in the liver, potentially leading to fatty liver disease. Secondly, excessive alcohol consumption can also harm the liver, making it important to moderate alcohol intake. Finally, minimising exposure to viruses, such as Hepatitis C, is essential for liver health.

Dr Lui noted that fatty liver disease has become a significant problem worldwide, surpassing viral liver diseases in some regions. While medications are still being developed to combat fatty liver disease, lifestyle changes remain the primary treatment approach. Increasing physical activity and reducing excessive fat intake can help the liver utilise stored fat as energy. Dr Lui emphasised that reversing fatty liver is possible in the early and moderate stages, but once it progresses to advanced stages, such as cirrhosis, the damage becomes irreversible.

To detect fatty liver, Dr Lui recommended initial screening with blood tests and ultrasound. If further evaluation is needed, more precise tests like FibroScan or MRI-based techniques can provide additional insights without resorting to invasive biopsies. Regular check-ups every six months, including blood tests and monitoring weight, are advised for individuals at risk.

In cases where liver disease has progressed to an advanced stage and medical treatments are no longer effective, liver transplantation may be necessary. Dr Lui stressed that liver transplantation is a complex surgery but has a success rate of over 95%. Transplant recipients need to be aware that lifelong medication is required to prevent rejection and that suitable donors must have a healthy liver, preferably of the same blood group.

Dr Lui highlighted the advancements in liver transplantation, making the procedure safer and more successful than ever before. He emphasised the importance of awareness and regular check-ups to catch liver diseases early, when they are more treatable.

In conclusion, Dr Lui's insights provide valuable information on liver health, lifestyle choices, and available treatment options. By understanding the functions of the liver and taking proactive steps to maintain its health, individuals can protect themselves against liver diseases and potentially prevent irreversible damage.

How blood sugar levels affect your body

Our bodies depend on blood sugar. Understanding how blood sugar levels affect your body is important for diet and lifestyle decisions, whether you have diabetes or not.

STAR HEALTH DESK

High: causes you to pee more

Your kidneys must work overtime to process all the additional sugar in your blood. When they are unable to keep up, your body eliminates it, along with the water that your body requires.

High: causes thirst

Your body takes water from its own tissues to get rid of the additional sugar. Because you need that fluid to create energy, transmit nutrients, and eliminate waste, your brain flips a switch to notify you that you are thirsty and should drink more.

High: dry mouth

As your body drains moisture from your mouth, it may become dry and cracked at the corners. Infection is more common when you have less saliva and more sugar in your blood. Your gums may swell, and white spots may appear on your tongue and inside your cheeks (this is known as oral thrush). Drinking more water or chewing sugar-free gum can help.

High: skin issues

To get rid of excess blood sugar, your body draws water from all around. This might result in dry, itchy, cracked skin, particularly on your legs, elbows, feet, and hands. High glucose levels might also cause nerve damage over time. Diabetic neuropathy is the medical term for this condition. Without treatment, they can worsen and result in the loss of a toe, foot, or part of your leg.

High: vision issues

Your body may drain fluid from your eye lenses, making it difficult to focus. Furthermore, excessive blood sugar levels might harm the

blood vessels in the rear of the eye (retina). This can result in long-term visual loss, if not blindness.

High: fatigue

When you have type 2 diabetes and your blood sugar levels are consistently high, you become less responsive to insulin, which aids in the transport of energy to your cells. Tiredness might result from a lack of fuel. Type 1 diabetes might induce weariness because your body cannot produce its own insulin. Physicians can assist you by giving medicine and recommending lifestyle adjustments.

High: digestive issues

If you have high blood sugar for an extended period, it might harm the vagus nerve, which helps move food through your stomach and intestines. You might lose weight if you are not as hungry. You may experience acid reflux, cramping, vomiting, and severe constipation.

Low: sweaty

When your blood sugar drops too low, your body releases hormones that cause you to sweat profusely. When your glucose levels drop too low, it is usually one of the first things you notice. Doctors can assist you in tracking your levels and attempting to keep them within a

healthy range through medication, exercise, and eating habits.

Low: shakiness

Low glucose levels can disrupt your central nervous system, which regulates your movement. When this happens, your body releases chemicals such as adrenaline to help restore your levels. However, those same substances may cause your hands and other body parts to quiver or tremble.

Blood sugar levels impact our bodies and health. High and low blood sugar can damage organs and systems, causing major health issues. You may regulate your blood sugar levels and lower your risk of chronic diseases like diabetes by leading a healthy lifestyle, eating a balanced diet, exercising regularly, and following medical advice. Knowing how blood sugar levels affect your body empowers you to live a better, happier life.



Low birthweight is independently linked to increased risk of type 2 diabetes

Two recent studies published in the journal Diabetologia have found that lower birthweight is an independent risk factor for type 2 diabetes (T2D) and is associated with a distinct presentation of the disease.

The first study, conducted in Denmark, analysed data from over 4,500 adults without diabetes at baseline and followed them for an average of 19 years. The researchers observed that T2D incidence increased with age, was higher in males, and decreased with increasing birthweight. Each additional kilogramme of birthweight was associated with a 40% reduced risk of T2D.

The second study, also from Denmark, examined over 6,800 individuals with T2D and found that lower birthweight was linked to a younger age at diagnosis, a lower body mass index (BMI), a smaller waist circumference, and a higher prevalence of comorbidities such as high blood pressure.

These findings indicate that birth weight plays a crucial role in T2D risk, independent of genetic factors and adult obesity.

Health and cancer awareness seminar held

STAR HEALTH REPORT

Club 89 Ltd., Blue Sky Charitable Foundation (BSCF), International Medical Information Centre (IMIC Ltd.), and Farrer Park Hospital in Singapore held a health and cancer awareness seminar on prostate, breast, and gynaecological cancers in Dhaka recently, says a press release.

This session was chaired by Additional Commissioner of Taxes and BSCF Founder and Head Adviser Ayesha Siddiqua Shelley. Dr Lee Fang Jann, Senior Consultant Urologist from Farrer Park Hospital Singapore, discussed the prevention and treatment of prostate enlargement, prostate cancer, UTIs, and kidney stones. Dr Tania Rahman Mitul, Consultant Gynaecologist, Tejgaon Thana Complex Hospital, Dhaka, has presided over the prevention and management of breast and gynaecological cancers.

The seminar updates attendees on better treatment modalities and aids for appropriate medical options.

Ladies, take a note. The cosmetics you use may contain lead!

DR MAHFUZ RAHMAN

Cosmetics, generally known as makeup care products, are used to restore and enhance the appearance of the human body, particularly the face. But recent studies from Bangladesh and India have reported moderate to high amounts of lead in many cosmetics, including lipsticks and religious powders. Dermal exposure to lead does not pose a risk; however, mouth-to-fingers exposure contaminated by the way of touching the skin poses a risk.

Other than lipstick, kajal, kohl, and surma are extensively used traditional eye cosmetics in South Asian countries. In fact, putting black makeup around babies' eyes is a common tradition where parents think these eyeliners might protect the eyes or improve sight. These cosmetics contain galena (lead sulphide) as one of the main components and a minimum of lead oxide. Careless application of kajal, eye rubbing, and lacrimation may cause the absorption of lead through the conjunctiva.

Vermilion (traditionally known as sindoor) is a brilliant scarlet powder used during Hindu religious and cultural ceremonies. Some manufacturers use lead tetroxide (Pb_3O_4) to give sindoor a distinctive red colour. The orange or red pigment is used on both children and adults and is intended for topical use only. There are many manufacturers of sindoor, and not all products labelled sindoor contain lead. Lead may be added as a red pigment.

Recognising that there is no safe level of lead exposure, we need to protect women and children from all levels of exposure. If there is a product that could be contaminated with lead, it is in the public's best interest. There is a possibility of spreading through ingestion or inhalation.

So, ladies, if you are still lead-conscious, consider how you will handle your lips. Next time you pick up that innocuous-looking colour stick from the dressing table, think twice.

The writer is a public health professional.

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SCORES IN BRIEF

BANGLADESH: First innings-382 and Second innings-425-4d

AFGHANISTAN: First innings-146 and Second innings-115 all out in 33 overs (Rahmat 30, Janat 18; Shoriful 3-28, Taskin 4-37, Miraz 1-5, Ebadot 1-22)

RESULT: Bangladesh won by 546 runs.

Player-of-the-match: Najmul Hossain Shanto.



Their [Bangladesh's] pace, I think it's pretty good. They will be able to compete at home and away with the types of seamers that they've got. Also with the accurate spin bowlers [Bangladesh have], they know how to play in their own conditions really well. So, credit to them.

Afghanistan coach
Jonathon Trott



The pace trio of Taskin Ahmed, Ebadot Hossain and Shoriful Islam were all smiles on Saturday, and they had good reason for it. The Bangladesh quicks accounted for a total of 14 wickets in the one-off Test against Afghanistan, which the Tigers won by a record margin of 546 runs on Day 4 in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

'Maturity shown won't be forgotten'

SPORTS REPORTER

When Bangladesh took on New Zealand at Mount Maunganui last year, there was fear and trepidation at the thought of facing the then World Test Champions on their own turf without key stars Shakib Al Hasan and Tamim Iqbal. Bangladesh won that Test, a historic win and a first win of any kind on New Zealand soil. The team, galvanised in the absence of key stars, placed faith in younger stars and has carried on from there.

Bangladesh have now attained their biggest margin win in Tests with a 546-run victory in the one-off Test against Afghanistan at Mirpur yesterday. They did it with Shakib and Tamim again out injured.

"There is no change. The win against New Zealand was the same. Neither Tamim bhai nor Shakib bhai

played in that game. We were a young team and we won playing abroad. When we won outside, we had the belief that when you work hard, the chance of success increases. Now we are desperate for when Tests will come around again," Liton divulged about the mindset of the squad while talking to reporters on Saturday after the win over Afghanistan.

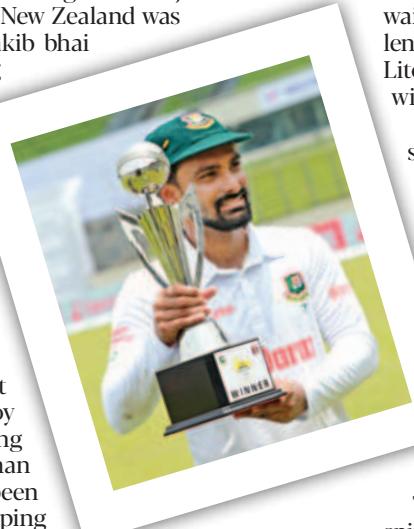
Liton reiterated that the squad had believed that the transitional period could be handled better given the talent in the team. Mahmudul Hasan Joy and Zakir Hasan formed a new opening pair that stood tall against the Afghan challenge. Najmul Hossain Shanto has been in a rich vein of form while pacers are keeping opposition batters on their toes on a regular basis.

"Ultimately, after two-three years you won't get three-four seniors. If we cannot handle it now, it will be difficult if it hits us all of a sudden. If they [Shakib and Tamim] had played, it would have been good. But it is not like we can't come back from situations without them. In the pipeline and in the batting order, we are improving and the new guys are capable," he said.

"Today the team that played was the best (Test) team of Bangladesh and everyone fulfilled their responsibility," Liton added.

Bangladesh have 12 Tests in the next ICC World Test Championship cycle and Liton said the players' maturity was a big asset.

"It's a good feeling to win by this margin and each and every player showed maturity. That maturity doesn't come in one day but by playing continuously. The maturity shown won't be forgotten," he said.



SPORTS REPORTER

Liton Das really enjoyed his captaincy stint. After all, it is not commonplace in Test matches in Bangladesh that one might find five fielders at the slip cordon. Just throw the ball to a pacer, wait for them to create pressure with a nagging length and then expose a batter's technique. Liton felt he had freedom and also enjoyed wicketkeeping on a track with carry for pacers.

"I enjoyed captaincy. The way the bowlers supported especially. From behind the wicket, I saw how the bowlers got the ball to carry with balls going to slip. It was fun to keep. As a captain, it's a good feeling that there is a chance of getting wickets at any time," Liton said at the press conference yesterday.

A big conversation in this just-concluded one-off Test was whether Bangladesh would be willing to give their pacers a suitable hunting ground against Afghanistan given that the Tigers always went with spin to secure home advantage.

The wicket had enough for pacers and spinners in the end, making it a sporting wicket. For so long, the conversation had been about banking on spinners at home. But under Chandika Hathurusingha this time, the Tigers are showing a revitalised mindset in terms of focusing on their tactics by analysing where the opponents' weaknesses lie.

For a long time, pace had been a weakness. The pacers' resurgence now gives the team management more options at home. So, for the first time, a green wicket allowed pacers to discover optimism in home surfaces. 14 wickets were taken by the Bangladesh pace trio in the one-off Test, the highest number of wickets taken by Bangladesh in a Test in Mirpur.

Since Afghanistan's strengths lay with their spin unit and their weakness was batting against quality pace, the decision was an easy one. Liton was asked whether these kinds of wickets would be a top option now.

"It depends on who we are playing. It's not like we will only play on spinning turfs or only seaming wickets. It depends on who we are playing and their strengths and weaknesses. What people say about home advantage, that's what we will be thinking about," he said.

"Obviously when we will go to New Zealand, they won't play three spinners because their weapon is pace bowling. The same way, when a team comes to Asia, for instance in India, they build spinning wickets. When you enter a championship where you need to win, you can take benefits of different kinds," he added.

Hathurusingha has been able to pinpoint the need for pacers to also be able to get help in home conditions so as to strengthen them for away tours. Choosing what qualities to prioritise in the side by analysing the opponents is a mark of Test teams that get success continuously.

The 546 run win, the third biggest Test win ever in world cricket, is a statement win in terms of going forward with Test plans for the future.

"We want to play on good wickets so that both sides are there and to ensure that not only spin will only dominate or vice versa. Look at this wicket, there was help for the spinners here. In future it will be decided," Liton said.

BIGGEST WINS BY RUNS IN TESTS

Margin	Winner	Opponent	Year
675	England	Australia	1928
562	Australia	England	1934
546	Bangladesh	Afghanistan	2023

Afghan ODIs present one last opportunity

SPORTS REPORTER

The upcoming three-match ODI series against Afghanistan has emerged as the last opportunity for selectors as they look to finalise the squad ahead of the Asia Cup and ODI World Cup, slated for later this year.

The return of batters Afif Hossain and Naim Sheikh for the Afghanistan series were both strategic moves as selectors announced a 15 member squad yesterday.

Rony Talukder, who made his ODI debut in England, and Yasir Ali, who did not play a game against Ireland, were dropped while young pacer Mrittunjoy Chowdhury, who made his debut against Ireland, made way for Taskin Ahmed.

Naim, who played just two ODIs and has not been in consideration since 2021, earned his place after a prolific performance during Abahani's charge to the Dhaka Premier League title. The left-hander finished as the tournament's leading run getter, scoring 932 runs in 16 games at an average of 71.96 and a strike rate of 91.64.

He recorded 10 fifties and a hundred.

Afif, who played a ced Yasir, also proved instrumental in the DPL for Abahani, scoring 550 runs at a strike rate of 110.66 in the middle order.

"This is the last series before the Asia Cup and we wanted to see some players. That is why we picked Afif and them played in the domestic circuit and earned their spots back," chief selector Minhajul Abedin said yesterday.

"Mrittunjoy could not retain his place since Taskin returned. We are thinking of Rony in the T20 format. As far as Yasir is concerned, we are not considering him for ODIs for the time being."

Meanwhile, Shakib Al Hasan also made a comeback after missing the last Test against Afghanistan with a finger injury.



Unbeaten on 84 off 176 deliveries and approaching his 15th Test ton, opener Usman Khawaja led Australia to 188 for four, still trailing England's first-innings score by 205 runs, at Tea on Day 2 of the first Ashes Test at Edgbaston yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Will Modric and Co. extend Spain's trophy drought?

AFP, Rotterdam

Luka Modric has been Croatia's driving force on the way to Sunday's Nations League final, where they could earn their first ever major trophy against a Spain team he knows inside out.

Questions surround the veteran midfielder, 37, over his future both in international football and at club level with Real Madrid, with his contract set to end this month.

Before resolving them, Croatia captain Modric is aiming to lead his country to glory in Rotterdam at De Kuip.

The Balkan nation has consistently over-performed on the world stage over the past 25 years, starting with their third place finish at the 1998 World Cup.

They followed that up by reaching the 2018 World Cup final, where they were beaten by France, and again finished third in Qatar last year, eliminating favourites Brazil along the way.

"We have once again become a powerhouse in football, showing that despite all our problems, we have quality and character," said Croatia coach Zlatko Dalic.

"Now we need to stay calm and smart, not rush anywhere, towards that gold. That's my great wish ... bronze, silver and gold."

Modric converted a penalty to help Croatia into the Nations League final with a 4-2 extra time

triumph against hosts Netherlands, one step closer towards that elusive "gold".

There are some reports Modric may retire from international duty after the Nations League but the player said he would decide his future after the tournament.

"I always enjoy playing for the national team, it's not because it could be my last competition or my last match," said Modric.

"Every single match, every training session is a joy. As long as I feel I can help, there's no reason for me not to be here."

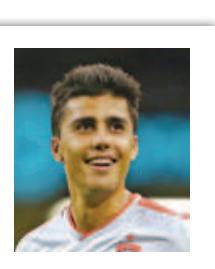
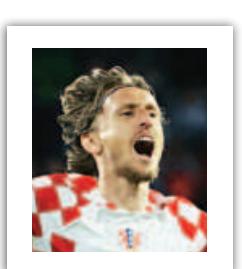
The Croatian midfield maestro pulled the strings for his country, getting the better of Barcelona's Frenkie de Jong, but Manchester City's Rodri will provide an even sterner test.

City's Champions League final hero is the key piece in Luis de la Fuente's La Roja, who are still finding their footing.

Joselu's later winner to help them beat Italy in Enschede calmed the storm around Spain and they can end a trophy drought of over a decade, with their last triumph coming in Euro 2012.

"It will be very important to win again, after all this time, bringing Spain back to the highest point," Rodri told a news conference Saturday.

"It's not just important to win but to create a winning culture, we have to understand that we have a unique opportunity."



Captains of 10 teams came together to experience Zimbabwe's local wildlife at the Wild is Life sanctuary in Harare ahead of the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Qualifier, which is set to begin today. The event will run from 18 June to 9 July and two teams will eventually qualify for this year's World Cup in India. Hosts Zimbabwe take on Nepal while West Indies face United States in the two matches on the opening day.

PHOTO: ICC

