

Won't lease out St Martin's to stay in power

Says PM; 'election on time according to constitution'

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said if she says she will lease out Saint Martin's Island or the country to someone, there will be no problem for her to stay in power.

But, she said, she is the daughter of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and doesn't want to come to power by selling any resource of this country.

Hasina made the comments while addressing a press conference at the Gono Bhaban over the outcomes of her recent visits to Switzerland and Qatar.

She also said she wonders if the opposition BNP wants to assume power by giving a guarantee to sell the island.

"The BNP came to power in 2001 by giving an undertaking to sell gas. Now they want to sell the country. Or do they want to assume power through an undertaking to sell Saint Martin's Island?" the PM asked.

She said she would not allow anyone to play with the fate of the people. "We'll not allow any acts like carrying out terrorist activities in any place or attacking anyone by using our land."

"We believe in peace. We believe in peaceful cooperation."

Hasina added that Bangladesh was not involved in any fights with Myanmar even after some 11 lakh Myanmar refugees took shelter here.

She said her government believes in the policy of "friendship to all and malice towards none" and that is why Bangladesh is still continuing negotiations with Myanmar on the issue.



"We'll not allow any acts like carrying out terrorist activities in any place or attacking anyone by using our land."



"We also want the mystery behind the killings to be unravelled as soon as possible."

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal said on Feb 9 this year



Journalist couple Sagar Sarowar and Meherun Runi were murdered on February 11, 2012 at their rented flat in the capital's West Rajabazar

MARCH 19, 2012

1st date for probe report submission

MAY 22, 2023

100th date for probe report submission

MAY 22, 2023

147th hearing

JUNE 22, 2023

Next date of hearing

THE NEVER-ENDING PROBE

Sher-e-Bangla Nagar police investigated the case from February 12 to 15, 2012

Detective Branch conducted investigation from February 16 to April 18, 2012

Rab started probe on April 19, 2012. The elite force is still investigating the case

ACCUSED IN JAIL

Kamrul Hasan alias Arun, Abu Sayeed, Rafiqul Islam, Bakul Miah, Masum Mintu and Anamul Haque alias Humayun Kabir

ACCUSED ON BAIL

Palash Rudra Paul and Tanveer Rahman Khan

100 times and counting

Deadline for submission of probe report keeps getting deferred; court holds hearing today

WASIM BIN HABIB and EMRUL HASAN BAPPI

Time has stood still for the probe into the murders of journalist couple Sagar Sarowar and Meherun Runi.

Ever since they were killed on a fateful February night in 2012, the investigating agency was changed twice, the investigation officer was changed five times, and the home ministry saw changes at its helm twice.

But no headway has been made in cracking the mystery in over a decade.

From March 19, 2012 to present, Rab has sought deferral of the deadline to submit its findings to courts 98 times and the two previous agencies did it twice. In total, the deadline has been put off 100 times.

But right after the murder, Sahara Khatun,

the home minister at the time, vowed to catch the killers within 48 hours. That 48 hours have now rolled into over 99,000 hours, but the promise remains unfulfilled.

Meanwhile, the families' agonising wait for justice lingers on.

The family members now express doubts about the sincerity and willingness of the government to solve the murder mystery.

"All we can say is that we are utterly frustrated. We don't see any prospect of getting justice during this government's tenure," said Runi's brother Nowsher Alam Roman, who filed the double murder case with Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station on February 12, 2012.

There is a lack of willingness on the government's part to ensure justice, he told

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Bank directors can stay on for 12 years

Provision sneaked in last minute before bank company bill passed in JS; opposition MPs walk out

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bank Company (Amendment) Bill 2023 was passed in parliament yesterday amid a huge outcry and a walkout by the main opposition, Jatiya Party, due to a last-minute contentious addition.

The last-minute addition to the bill was the increase in the bank directors' tenure from nine years to 12 years, a move that would tighten their grip on the financial institutions.

The version of the bill that was placed in parliament by Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal on June 8 did not seek to amend the tenure of the board members from nine to 12 years. Neither did the parliamentary standing committee on the finance ministry make any such suggestion.

The provision was included after ruling party MP Ahsanul Huq Titu made the proposal. A pandemonium broke in the House as the opposition MPs started shouting against the provision without a microphone.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Liton, Anwar cruise to victory

STAR REPORT

The ruling Awami League candidates secured massive victories in the mayoral polls to Rajshahi and Sylhet city corporations yesterday.

In Rajshahi, AL's AHM Khairuzzaman Liton bagged 1,60,290 votes, while his closest rival from Islami Andolan Bangladesh, Murshid Alam, got 13,483.

And in Sylhet, AL's Anwaruzzaman Chowdhury bagged 1,19,991 votes, while his nearest competitor Jatiya Party's Nazrul Islam got 50,862.

With this, veteran politician Liton, also an AL presidium member, has been reelected mayor for a second consecutive term. He was first elected mayor in 2008.

On the other hand, Anwaruzzaman, who is the joint general secretary of the UK AL, will serve as Sylhet city mayor for the first time.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



Liton



Anwar



তরুণ শিল্পোদ্যোক্তা

জনাব আহসানুল আলম

ইসলামী ব্যাংক বাংলাদেশ লিমিটেড-এর
বোর্ড অব ডাইরেক্টরস-এর চেয়ারম্যান নির্বাচিত হওয়ায়

শুভেচ্ছা ও অভিনন্দন

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ইউনিয়ন ব্যাংক লিঃ এর পক্ষ থেকে
আন্তরিক শুভেচ্ছা ও শুভকামনা।

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Measures taken to relieve pressure on forex: PM

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina told parliament yesterday that her government has taken a number of measures, such as discouraging unnecessary imports and encouraging remittance inflow, to relieve pressure on reserves.

The premier said this in reply to a question from ruling Awami League MP Shahiduzzaman Sarker.

With Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury in the chair, the question-answer session began.

In a scripted answer, Hasina said that the foreign exchange reserve was \$32.94 billion in FY 2017-18.

She said that due to inflationary pressures and post-Covid demand growth, imports increased in FY 2021-2022, creating some pressure on Bangladesh's trade balance.

"As a result, although foreign exchange reserves reached an all-time high of \$48.06 billion in August 2022, it subsequently began to decline to cope with this pressure," she added.

Hasina, the leader of the House, said the rate of decline in reserves increases when the central bank starts using foreign exchange reserves to maintain the value of taka against the US dollar in order to control inflation.

"According to the latest statistics dated May 31, the amount of reserves is \$29.87 billion –with the help of which the import expenses of more than four months can be met," she also said.

In reply to another query from AL MP Noor Uddin Chowdhury, the PM highlighted various projects and future plans in the communication sector.

These include the construction of a 40km-long Dhaka East-West Elevated Expressway, construction of 258km of subways in Dhaka city, construction of an 86km-long Dhaka Inner Elevated Circular Road in the city and construction of a 2.25km-long bridge over Meghna river on Bhulta-Araihajar-Bancharampur-Nabinagar road in Dhaka and Brahmanbaria districts.

In response to another question from AL MP Mahfuzur Rahman, Hasina said that about 55,000 hectares of unused land have already been brought under cultivation.

As a result of the adoption and implementation of the government's agriculture-friendly policies, the production of rice, maize, potatoes, vegetables, fruits, and other crops is continuously increasing, she added.

Bangladesh has risen to the third position in rice production in the world.



Supporters of two local Awami League leaders running for councillor engage in a clash in front of Keshabpur Government Primary School in Rajshahi during yesterday's city election. PHOTO: COLLECTED

Biden won't 'lecture' Modi on human rights

Says White House as Indian PM begins US visit

REUTERS, Washington

US President Joe Biden was set to welcome India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday for two days of talks that the White House sees as bolstering "one of the defining partnerships of our age," despite ongoing concerns about human rights.

Washington wants India to be a strategic counterweight to China while Modi is seeking to raise the influence that his country, now the world's most populous, has on the world stage.

Biden and Modi are expected to announce a variety of agreements related to defense cooperation and sales, artificial intelligence, quantum computing and investments in India by Micron Technology and other US companies.

Biden is expected to bring up US concerns about democratic backsliding in India, but he will not lecture Modi on the subject, White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan told reporters.

When the US sees challenges to press, religious or other freedoms, "we make our views known," Sullivan said. He added: "We do so in a way where we don't seek to lecture or assert that we don't have challenges ourselves."

"Ultimately, the question of where politics and the question of democratic institutions go in India is going to be determined within India by Indians. It's not going to be determined by the United States," Sullivan said.

Biden, Modi are expected to announce a variety of deals related to defense cooperation, AI and investments in India.

Modi has been to the United States five times since becoming prime minister in 2014, but the trip will be his first with the full diplomatic status of a state visit, despite concerns over what is seen as a deteriorating human rights situation under his Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party.

Biden is under pressure by his fellow Democrats to bring up human rights with Modi. Modi is being warmly greeted by US CEOs, including at a Friday reception. Yesterday, he met with Tesla's TSLA.O Elon Musk in New York.

Both Biden and Modi are grappling with Beijing's flexing its muscle in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond.

"This visit is not about China. But the question of China's role in the military domain, the technology domain, the economic domain will be on the agenda," Sullivan said.

Modi was set to visit the National Science Foundation with first lady Jill Biden yesterday and have a private dinner with the president at the White House.

Modi will be welcomed with a colourful arrival ceremony on the White House South Lawn today. Biden and Modi will hold Oval Office talks and attend a state dinner in Modi's honor tonight.

No joint press conference was planned. White House national security spokesperson John Kirby said work was still ongoing on this subject.

"Across the board, I think you'll see a combination of deep strategic discussions and practical progress, tangible progress in every single dimension of the relationship, all of it reflecting and reinforce the fact that this from our perspective will be one of the defining partnerships of our age," Sullivan said.

Action to be taken against extorters

DMP chief wants safety of cattle trucks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Strict action will be taken if the trucks transporting cattle are subjected to extortion ahead of the upcoming Eid-ul-Azha, DMP Commissioner Khandker Ghulam Faruq has warned.

The warning came in a meeting held at Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) headquarters today.

In the coordination meeting, different issues – the safety of cattle huts, prevention of counterfeit currency, maintaining law and order, and traffic management – were discussed. DMP Commissioner Faruq presided over the meeting.

He emphasised the importance of avoiding public nuisance by not keeping cows outside the market premises or on the roads. He also set June 25 as the earliest date for taking cattle to the market.

The commissioner advised traders to display banners on their trucks indicating the destination market for police assistance. Moreover, he assured that DMP would provide a secure escort system for transporting traders' money during cattle sales.

Cop jailed for life in narcotics case

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

A Thakurgaon court today sentenced two people, including a police sub-inspector, to life imprisonment in a 2019 narcotics case.

The convicts are former Pirganj Police Station SI Helal Uddin Pramanik, 42, and Manik Das, 35, of Thakurgaon Sadar, said court sources.

District and Sessions Judge Md Mamunur Rashid handed down the verdict in presence of Helal while Manik was absconding.

The court also fined the duo Tk 12 lakh each, which they must pay or face another year in prison.

The court also fined them Tk 20,000 each in another section of the case.

According to the prosecution, a detective branch (DB) of police conducted a drive in the Old Dak Bangalow area in Pirganj upazila and recovered 8,000 yaba pills and 2kg of ganja from their possession on June 23, 2019.

MFS agent dies five days after attack

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

A trader who suffered injuries in an attack by hijackers in Jamalpur on June 15 died at a Dhaka hospital on Tuesday night.

The deceased Mintu Mia, 52, of Balapathalia Fakirbari of Sharilpur union, was a mobile financial services (MFS) agent at Godashimla market.

The victim's wife, Sinha Yesmin Shila, filed a murder case with the Sadar Police Station yesterday.

Police then arrested three accused and produced them before a court with a five-day remand prayer. The court sent the accused to jail.

The arrestees are Mamun Fokir, Rajon Fokir, and Maruf Hossain of Godashimla.

Shah Newaz, officer in-charge of Sadar Police Station, said Mintu was returning to his residence around 11:00pm on June 15 after closing his shop.

On his way home, a group of unidentified criminals robbed him of Tk 2 lakh in cash and struck him in the head, leaving him critically injured.

He died undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital around 10:00pm on Thursday.

100 times and counting

FROM PAGE 1

The Daily Star.

Sagar Sarowar was a news editor at Maasranga TV and his wife Meherun Runi was a senior reporter at ATN Bangla. They were killed in the early hours of February 11, 2012, at their rented flat in the capital's West Rajabazar.

Their only child Mahir Sarowar Megh, only five at the time, was in the apartment.

EMPTY PROMISES

The extent of brutality shocked the nation. The autopsy reports said they died of wounds inflicted by sharp weapons.

In the days following the murders, police officers, detectives and ministers turned up at the couple's residence and promised justice without delay. Sahara Khatun's successor Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, who was made the home minister in September 2012, set a deadline of October 10 to unravel the mystery.

But the promises and deadlines were seemingly intended to pacify the resentment among the general public and the journalist community.

Over the years, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan continued to repeat the same rhetoric. Just two days before the 11th anniversary of the murders, he said, "We want the mystery behind the killings to be unravelled as soon as possible."

Runi's brother Nowsher considers the statement an empty promise.

"Why couldn't they make headway in the last 11 years despite the available evidence and the involvement of several law enforcement agencies?" he asked.

The government either doesn't want it solved or it wants to shelve the case to protect some influential individuals involved in the crime, he said.

Even his mother Nur Nahar Mirza died last year without seeing justice for her daughter and son-in-law.

After the case was filed, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station was tasked with the investigation, which was handed over to the Detective Branch of police three days later on February

16, 2012. The case was transferred to the Rab in April 2012.

A Dhaka court is scheduled to hold a hearing on the case today.

Rab Additional SP Khandaker Md Shafiqul Alam is the sixth investigation officer in the case. He was given the job on July 7, 2019. He submitted a

it should admit it and hand the investigation over to another agency, he added.

"We will not give up our movement until justice is delivered," Nomani said.

Noted rights activist Nur Khan said a successful investigation is not possible without the willingness

The killers will be nabbed within 48 hours.
The then home minister Sahara Khatun on Feb 12, 2012

Significant development has been made in the probe and a positive news would come soon.
The then inspector general of police Hassan Mahmood Khandker on Feb 13, 2012

The probe has made enough progress. I hope it will be possible to solve the Sagar-Runi murder mystery by October 10.
The then home minister Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir on Sep 25, 2012

of the state and the investigating agencies.

Contacted, Commander Khandaker Al Moin, director (media) of Rab, said buccal swabs of 25 suspects were sent to the Independent Forensic Service laboratory of the USA for DNA tests. Further investigation is going on regarding the DNA reports.

"Rab is conducting the investigation with utmost importance as per the directives of the learned court to ensure that no innocent person is punished and the real culprits are identified and brought to book," Moin added.

Won't lease out St Martin's to stay in power

FROM PAGE 1

Hasina visited Qatar from May 22 to 25 to attend the Qatar Economic Forum 2023 and Switzerland from June 13 to 16 to join the "World of Work Summit: Social Justice for All," a summit of ILO.

Replying to a question on the election-time government, she said there is no constitutional scope to hand over power to an unelected government.

The premier mentioned that there is a judgment of the higher court that an elected head of government shall be replaced only by another elected head of government. And the constitution was also amended accordingly.

"Everybody knows it. Why are they trying to create a crisis even after knowing it all well? What is the motive? It means they are doing it to destroy the democratic process," Hasina said.

She said the motive for creating a constitutional crisis is to halt the ongoing democratic process and

socio-economic progress, which has been continuing for the last 14 years.

Now it is up to the people whether they want the continuation of democratic trends, economic progress and their welfare or whether they want again the situation Bangladesh faced during the last caretaker government rule, she said.

Noting that the BNP and some other parties have taken to the streets, the PM wondered what their problem is and what the sources of their finances are.

She said the upcoming general election will be held on time as per the constitution and the electoral laws.

In reply to another query, Hasina said Bangladesh will join BRICS to reduce dependency on a single bloc.

"We'll join BRICS as we were engaged in the preparation of its formation. But we could not be one of its founding members. Now we've sought to be its member. We want

so as we won't remain dependent on any single bloc."

She said Bangladesh doesn't want to remain dependent only on dollars; rather, it wants to purchase goods with other currencies as well.

The government is trying to contain inflation to ease the sufferings of the people, the PM said when asked about inflation and illegal hoarding of goods,

She said the government is taking actions against those involved in hoarding, which led to price hikes of commodities.

Replying to another question, Hasina said the government has decided to provide free foods to 10 million people ahead of Eid-ul-Azha.

Regarding a campaign over repression on the minorities, she said a propaganda has started in this regard, which may intensify further ahead of the next election.

The PM asked the people not to pay heed to the propaganda, mentioning that communal harmony exists in Bangladesh.

US school test scores haven't recovered since pandemic

AFP, Washington

American 13-year-olds continue to struggle academically in the wake of the pandemic, especially in mathematics, according to official data out yesterday.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), a project that has been monitoring test scores since 1969, tested students in late 2022, finding reading and math scores significantly dropped compared to late 2019.

Average math scores have risen significantly since the assessments first began, but have now dropped to levels last seen in 1990, with declines more pronounced among lower-performing students.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and cooperation from you [city dwellers]," he added.

He hoped that the city dwellers would stand by him to speed up the city's development.

In Sylhet, Anwaruzzaman said, "I seek cooperation from the city dwellers. I will work to implement the pledges that I made in my electoral manifesto.

"I want to dedicate my victory to the city dwellers. Today's victory has proved that none can defeat Awami League if it remains united," he said.

Four candidates ran for mayor in Rajshahi while eight vied for the mayor's post in Sylhet.

(Anwar Ali and Md Abbas from Rajshahi, and Dwoha Chowdhury and Ashik Abdullah Apu from Sylhet contributed to this report.)

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Clockwise from right, voters of the Rajshahi city polls use a PVC banner to shelter themselves from the rain while waiting for their turns. Complexities in the EVM led to further chaos among voters amidst the drizzle. Meanwhile, the voters of Sylhet city polls suffered the same fate as they also had to wait in long queues to cast the ballots. The photos were taken yesterday.



PHOTOS: AMRAN HOSSAIN, SHEIKH NASIR

Coast Guard to be built as a modern force

Says PM; commissions 5 vessels

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said Bangladesh Coast Guard will be developed as a modern and time-fitting force to carry out its growing responsibility. The premier was addressing the commissioning ceremony of five locally made state-of-the-art vessels of Coast Guard at BCG Patenga Berth in Chattogram through a videoconferencing from her official residence Gono Bhaban in the capital.

The five vessels are two inshore patrol vessels named "BCGS Apurba Bangla" and "BCGS Joy Bangla", two tugboats "BCGT Pratyay" and "BCGT Pramatta" and a floating crane "BCGFC Shakti".

The vessels were built by state-owned Dockyard and Engineering Works Limited in Narayanganj, while two tugboats and the floating crane by the Khulna Shipyard.

Hasina also said her government added 154 modern and faster ships and vessels of various sizes to the Coast Guard fleet in the last 14 years since 2009.



Contrasting turnout, slow-paced voting

ASHIK ABDULLAH APU and DWOHA CHOWDHURY, from Sylhet

The Sylhet City Corporation elections held yesterday witnessed a mix of contrasting elements as the turnout of voters in the old areas was disappointing, while a festive atmosphere engulfed the newly-included ones, contributing to an overall increase in voter participation.

Despite a few isolated scuffles between supporters of councillor candidates, the polling situation remained largely peaceful throughout the day. However, there were allegations of slow-paced voting in many places.

At around 11:30am, supporters of rival councillor aspirants Abzad Hossen Amzad and Abul Kalam Layek locked into an altercation at the Blue Bird High School Centre, after both the groups attempted to influence people to vote for their respective candidates.

Another incident unfolded at the Lawai Government Primary School Centre, where supporters of three councillor candidates engaged in a heated scuffle after two of the candidates reportedly prolonged their stay inside the polling booths, raising suspicions among their rivals.

The situation at the centre further intensified when the presiding officer, Partha Jyoti Dey, revoke access to a polling agent affiliated with one of the councillor candidates, as the agent attempted to influence voters by entering the secrecy of the polling booth.



SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Woman sent to jail for entering secret booth

STAR REPORT

A woman was sentenced to three days in jail for repeatedly entering the secret booth with female voters during the Rajshahi City Corporation polls yesterday.

Election Commissioner Rasheda Sultana said they were monitoring the polls through CCTV from Dhaka.

The woman was seen entering the secret booth at Talaimari Darul Ulum Alim Madrasa centre in Rajshahi city multiple times with other female voters.

After identifying the woman, they instructed the presiding officer to take necessary actions, the election commissioner told The Daily Star.

As a mobile court went to the centre, police placed her before the court.

It then sentenced her to three-day in prison, Rasheda Sultana further said.

EVM delays cause chaos, sufferings

ANWAR ALI and MD ABBAS, from Rajshahi

There were reports of chaos and delay due to the complexities caused by Electronic Voting Machines during yesterday's Rajshahi City Corporation elections.

The voter turnout was moderate as the polling began at 8:00am. Their presence started to drop when it started raining around 11:30am.

The rain stopped around noon and the turnout increased a bit afterwards. No significant changes were seen till the end of voting at 4:00pm.

Meanwhile, supporters of two councillor candidates clashed interrupting the voting for over an hour at Keshabpur Government Primary School centre.

The clash started around noon when supporters of councillor candidate Ashrafur Islam attacked an election camp of his rival candidate Ruhul Amin in front of the centre.

The attackers blamed Ruhul Amin's men of damaging one of their election camps near Rajshahi PTI and both the groups clashed

using lethal weapons and hurled brick chips at each other.

The presiding officer at the centre claimed the voting never stopped, but there was a lack of voters for some time.

Later, the law enforcers brought the situation under control.

Most of the streets leading to the vote centres were occupied by the ruling party members who wore badges of "boat" symbol and they were seen asking voters to vote for them.

In front of some centres, the supporters of councillor candidates were seen shouting slogans.

Awami League mayor candidate AHM Khairuzzaman Liton along with his family members voted at Rajshahi Satellite Town High School centre.

"Had the BNP participated in the elections, they would have gained insight into public opinion regarding their support," he told journalists afterwards.

Meanwhile, these

correspondents visited at least 11 centres where numerous voters claimed that they were unable to cast their votes due to the complexities associated with EVM usage.

Voter Nazma Begum alleged that she could not cast her vote as she discovered her vote was cast before she could arrive at the centre at BSSIR Laboratory High School.

"When I went to the presiding officer to lodge a complaint, a police officer asked me to remain silent. When another woman [who witnessed her ordeal] started speaking out, the police officer threatened her of arrest," Nazma of Maskatadighi area said.

Later, the presiding officer advised her to go to the Election Commission with her complaint.

When approached by The Daily Star, presiding officer Kazi Raihan denied that Nazma's vote was already cast. "She could not cast



SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

Rajshahi, Sylhet polls free, fair

Says CEC Awal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Habibul Awal yesterday said the election to the Rajshahi and Sylhet city corporations were held in a peaceful manner, without any major untoward incidents.

The CEC said this while talking with reporters after the elections at his office in Dhaka.

He said the estimated voter turnout at Sylhet city polls was around 46 percent while it was around 52-55 percent in Rajshahi city election.

"Voters have exercised their franchise without any kind of obstacle," he said. The elections were held in free and fair manner, and amid festivity, he added.

The EC conducted five city polls since May 25. "My overall observation is that the five city elections were good. The recent elections will encourage people to vote in the upcoming national polls," the CEC added.

Petition filed to quash charges framed against Dr Yunus

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A petition has been filed with the High Court, seeking quashing of charges framed against Nobel laureate Dr Muhammad Yunus in a case lodged over violation of labour laws.

Abdullah Al Mamun, lawyer of Dr Yunus, filed the petition on Monday. Citing the petition, he said the case was filed illegally, the labour court took cognizance of the case illegally and framed charges in the case illegally as his clients have not committed any criminal offence.

Besides, an inspector of the Inspection of Factories and Establishments Department, who filed the case, has no jurisdiction to lodge such a case.

Only the chief inspector of this department has such jurisdiction, he said.



50,000 river grabbers in 64 districts

State minister for shipping tells JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A comprehensive draft list of river grabbers has been compiled, exposing the identities of over 50,000 individuals involved in illegal encroachments on rivers nationwide, said State Minister for Shipping, Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury at the parliament yesterday.

The district-wise list of these grabbers has been made available on the website of the National River Conservation Commission (NRCC), he added.

He also said a significant progress has been made in freeing several rivers, including the Buriganga and Shitalakhya, from encroachment by removing a substantial number of illegal occupants.

Efforts to evict the remaining grabbers are currently underway, with deputy commissioners having already reported the eviction of more than 15,000 encroachers to the NRCC, he said.

Meanwhile, Health Minister Zahid Maleque disclosed that the licenses of 45 allopathic drug companies had been revoked between 2009 and 2023. This information was provided in response to a question posed by ruling Awami League MP Didarul Alam.

In terms of HIV cases in Bangladesh, HMaleque, addressing a query from AL MP Didarul Alam, stated that there are currently 9,708 diagnosed HIV patients in the country.

Among them, 6,075 individuals are receiving treatment, while 1,820 have succumbed to the disease.



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

MARBLE MARVELS... Against the scenic backdrop of the Buriganga river bank, the laughter of children fills the air as they engage in a timeless game of marbles. They create a kaleidoscope of colours, with each marble holding a world of possibilities as they skillfully manoeuvre them with their hands -- transforming simple spheres into elements of joy and friendship. This photo was taken in Kamrangirchar area recently.

President flies to KSA tomorrow to perform hajj

BSS, Dhaka

President Mohammed Shahabuddin will fly to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) tomorrow to perform the holy hajj as a royal guest of the Saudi government. President's press secretary Joyнал Abedin confirmed the matter to the news agency yesterday. A VVIP aircraft of Biman Bangladesh Airlines, carrying the president along with his spouse Dr Rebecca Sultana and entourage members will leave Dhaka airport at 2:30pm on the day, he added.

The head of the state, according to programme schedule, will land at Jeddah at about 6:30pm (Bangladesh Time). He will reside at AL Safa Royal Palace there, said the press secretary.

After performing the all Hajj procedures, President Shahabuddin will travel to Madinah. Wrapping up his 10-day visit to the KSA, the president is scheduled to leave Madinah for Dhaka on July 2.

PRAYER
TIMING

JUNE 22

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4-05	12-45	5-00	6-52	8-17
JAMAA 4-40	1-15	5-15	6-55	8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



International Day of Yoga was observed with much enthusiasm across the country yesterday. As part of the event, the Indian High Commission organised a programme at the Shaheed Suhrawardy Indoor Stadium in the capital's Mirpur. The event featured yoga performances led by yoga practitioners and experts.

PHOTO: COURTESY

CCC announces Tk 1,887cr budget

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Chattogram City Corporation yesterday announced a proposed budget of Tk 1,887.28 crore for the 2023-24. Mayor Rezaul Karim Chowdhury announced the budget at KB Abdus Sattar Auditorium of the Nagar Bhaban. This time, CCC has set a target of earning maximum from their own sources to implement the proposed budget. CCC expects to earn TK 950.58 crore from their internal sources like holding tax, income

from properties and others sources. Among different internal sources of earning, CCC has set target of earning a holding tax revenue of about Tk 446 crore. Of the proposed budget, CCC expects to get around Tk 894 crore as development grant and Tk 37.70 crore from other sources. Additionally, Tk 942.50 crore has been allocated for the development activities of the city, Tk 310.70 crore for salaries and allowances, Tk 5 crore for mosquito eradication programmes and Tk 25 crore for addressing waterlogging.

Contrasting turnout

FROM PAGE 3

In 2021, the city of Sylhet underwent a significant expansion, increasing its area from the original 26.50 square kilometres to 79.50 square kilometres. The residents of these newly-incorporated areas exercised their right to vote as city dwellers for the first time, leading to a surge of enthusiasm and participation in the city polls.

The campaigns by the councillor candidates played a pivotal role in driving the high turnout witnessed in the 14 newly-formed wards. The Daily Star visited nine polling centres located in these recently-established wards, where massive crowds of voters had gathered hours before the polling officially commenced.

However, contrasting scenes were observed at certain polling centres. For instance, at Anandaniketan, two hours into polling, there was no visible queue, and only 142 votes out of a total of

3,536 had been cast by that time. Similarly, in the female centre of Shahjalal Adarsha Girls School, approximately 200 votes out of 1,833 were cast by 1:30pm, while the male centre recorded 326 votes out of 2,087, constituting around 16 percent of the total votes.

At the Dakshin Surma Nasiba Khatun Girls School Centre, only 28 percent of votes had been cast by 3:00pm.

Voters in centres experiencing large crowds had to endure longer waiting times, exceeding the usual expectations.

Presiding officers attributed these delays to the lack of knowledge among voters about the process itself. Rumena Akther, a voter at Shahapur Government Primary School Centre in ward-39, recounted waiting for long three and a half hours to cast her vote. Similarly, Rajab Ali and Bachchu Mia from ward-34 stood in line for three hours at Krishna Govinda High School

Centre.

Mohammad Alauddin, the presiding officer of the female centre at Debpur Government Primary School, mentioned that it was taking around 10 to 15 minutes to cast a single vote due to a lack of familiarity with electronic voting machines (EVMs).

By 11:45am, out of a total of 2,940 voters at the centre, only 249 votes had been cast.

At the male centre in Rashidia Dakhil Madrasha in Tukurbazar, 197 votes out of 1,957 were cast by 10:00am, while the female centre recorded only 122 votes out of 2,106. Both presiding officers, Joydip Das and Jahangir Alam, attributed the slow voting pace to a lack of awareness among the voters.

Md Shahnewaz, the presiding officer of the female centre at Amberkhana Girls High School in ward-4, also echoed the same. By 10:00am, out of total 2,293 voters, only 84 votes had been cast at the centre.

EVM delays cause

FROM PAGE 3

her vote as her fingerprint did not match," he said.

Shahina, who brought her physically challenged sister Sohina at Atkoshi Government Primary School, had to return home without voting.

"I waited at a same spot in a queue for one hour as the voting was being delayed. We had to go back as my sister became sick," she said.

At the same centre, several voters said they had to suffer due to delay in the EVM machines. Besides, voters were seen struggling to enter the booths amid huge gathering.

In a booth, 34 out of 311 voters managed to cast their vote in three hours till 11:00am while there were voters in long queues waiting to vote.

Md Badiuzzaman, the presiding officer, recorded a 15 percent vote cast out of total 3,108 votes till 10:00am while the centre was crammed by the voters.

Jatiya Party's mayor candidate Saiful Islam Swapan who voted at that centre alleged the election officials were taking one hour for 15 votes.

"We were complaining about using EVMs from the beginning, and our apprehensions turned out to be true," he said, expressing his satisfaction with the overall voting process.

Several voters from wards 7, 9, 14, 18, and 29 also came forward with similar experiences while using EVMs.

Additionally, a significant number of voters claimed that they had to wait for one to two hours in queues before being able to cast votes.

Md Abdul Mannan, a voter from Budhpara Government Primary School, said he arrived at the polling station at 9:00am but was only able to cast his vote at 11:10am. He faced difficulties as he had no prior experience with using EVMs.

At some vote centres in areas of Uposhohor Housing Estate, thin presence of voters was noticed while in other

areas like Mothurdanga and Budhpara where low-income groups live, the voters' turnout was comparatively high.

Furthermore, during the visit to various polling centers, the correspondents did not observe any agents representing mayoral candidates except for the boat symbol.

When questioned about absence of their agents, the JP candidate explained that they were able to provide agents at not more than seven centres.

Presence of plainclothes security men around the centres were much higher. They were seen questioning voters who were raising voices against the delay and EVM complexities.

At Atkoshi Government Primary School, when a woman was approaching a group of journalists with a complain that she was forced to cast her vote for a candidate not of her choice, one of the security men took her away and asked journalists to stay behind.

The newspaper also captured a video of the security man taking her away.

Victim files

FROM PAGE 5

Meanwhile, many students said ragging incidents happened repeatedly at the university as the administration failed to take stern action against the accused involved.

Proctor Azad said he received a written complaint from the victim. They were looking into the matter, he said, adding that the victim withdrew his complaint as the issue was settled.

On February 12 this year, a first-year female student of the Finance and Banking department at IU was reportedly tortured and intimidated by BCL's IU unit vice-president Sanjida Chowdhury Ontora and her associates in Deshratna Sheikh Hasina Hall on the university campus.

The incident stirred massive protests at the university and other educational institutions across the country.

Invitation for submitting Monitoring survey in Jamuna river (OTM)

PACIFIC CONSULTANTS CO., LTD. in Japan now invites proposals to provide the survey services on Monitoring survey in Jamuna river on "Project for Planning Capacity Enhancement and Establishment of a Technology Adaptation Cycle on Comprehensive Nodi (River) Management" conducted by JICA. The service period is scheduled from July 2023 to March 2024. All interested agencies/companies should request "haruka.suzuki@tk.pacific.co.jp" this email address by 3 July 2023 to collect the detail Terms of Reference and proposal documents. The necessary documents should be submitted by 5pm on 3 July 2023.

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

ফ্র্যাট বিজ্ঞান
বনানীতে প্রাইম লোকেশনে
লেকের পাশে ১৯১০ বর্গফুটের
ফ্র্যাট বিজ্ঞান করা হবে।
যোগাযোগঃ
০১৮৬৭-৭৭৭৬৮২, ০১৭১১-১৭৩৮৫১

Awarded PhD

INTI Int. University, Malaysia
awarded PhD to Ln Md
Munjur Hossain Babu.
We wish him the best.
Well-wishers of Babu D-79

Over 30,000 marooned

FROM PAGE 5

Abdul Gafur, chairman of Kurigram Sadar said people were moving to safer places by boat from the union.

"Many houses got submerged. In a few days, the water may engulf all houses in the island areas," he said.

Abdullah Al Mamun, executive engineer of WDB in Kurigram, said rain coupled with onrush waters from the upstream could raise the water above danger level anytime.

"Sand-filled geo bags are being dumped at critical points to stave off erosion."

Meanwhile, WDB is trying to save a primary school in Bogura's Sariaikandi upazila from erosion triggered by swelling rivers.

The Jamuna river has been swelling over the past

few days, threatening the school in Chaluabari union of Sariaikandi.

Nazmul Haque, executive engineer of WDB, said they were trying to protect the school by dumping geo bags near the establishment.

The water in the Jamuna is flowing 50cm below the danger level at Mothurapara point in the upazila, WDB officials said.

Shawkat Ali Sarkar, chairman of Chaluabari Union Parishad in Bogura, said people in the union were at a loss due to the erosion.

The swelling of the Jamuna river inundated five villages including Norpara, Norshongda, Manikputul, Rowmari and Goalerchar, in Jamalpur's Sarishabari upazila.

[Our Bogura, Jamalpur and Lalmonirhat correspondents contributed to this report]

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
(Re-Tender)

Date: 22 June 2023Reference # C0/BD10-IBG/2023/022

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is an intergovernmental organization established in 1951 and is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits both migrants and society.

In the framework of "Supporting the EU-Bangladesh Standard Operating Procedures for the Identification and dignified Return of Persons Without an Authorization to Stay [Extended Phase-II]" the IOM Bids Evaluation and Awards Committee ("BEAC") now invites interested Bidders to submit their "Proposal" for Supply, Installation and Configuration of items as listed below.

Sl. No.	Item Description	Quantity	Unit	Pre-Proposal Meeting	Submission Deadline
1	Supply, Installation and Configuration of Hardware, Data Migration & Database Replication for the implementation of RCMS- AFIS source database in Special Branch of Bangladesh Police	1	Lot	6 July 2023 Time: 11:00am Through MS Teams	23 July 2023 Time: on or before 4:30PM (GMT+6).

A complete set of Bidding Documents for the lot is available for Interested Bidders at IOM Mission in Bangladesh, House 13/A, Road 136, Gulshan 1, Dhaka 1212, Bangladesh and IOM website (<https://bangladesh.iom.int/procurement>) from 22 June 2023 to 23 July 2023.

A Pre-proposal meeting will be held on 6 July 2023, at 11:00am [Bangladesh Standard Time, UTC/GMT +6] virtually over online (Microsoft Teams) platform. The conference link is specified in the Request for Proposal (RFP) document.

IOM reserves the right to accept or reject any bids, and to cancel the procurement process and reject all bids at any time prior to award of Contract, without obligation to inform the affected Bidder/s of the ground for IOM action.

Very truly yours,
BEAC Chairperson

NATIONAL CREDIT AND COMMERCE BANK LIMITED
COMMON SERVICES DIVISION
Head Office: NCC Bank Bhaban, 13/1-2, Toyenbee Circular Road
Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000, Phone: 223390053
PABX: 223381901-4, 223383981-2, Ext-117

NOTICE OF INVITING QUOTATIONS

Sealed quotations are hereby invited by National Credit and Commerce Bank Limited (the Bank) from reputed Companies/local Agents/Suppliers/Authorized Distributors/Service Providers for the below mentioned requirements under the terms and conditions mentioned detail in the Request for Quotation (RFQ) documents.

Items Description	Price of the tender document	Sale start date	Sale end date	Date and time for Tender Submission
Item-1: Supplying Desktop PC (CPU+Monitor), Laptop, Printer, Scanner & Microsoft Licenses to NCC Bank Limited.	Tk. 5,000/- (Five Thousand) only for each item separately in the form of Payment Order (non-refundable) favoring National Credit and Commerce Bank Limited by any scheduled bank of Bangladesh	June 22, 2023	July 10, 2023	July 12, 2023 on/before 2:00 PM
Item-2: Supply, installation, implementation & configuration of Servers & Database License to NCC Bank Limited at NCC Bank Data Center (DC) and Near Data Center (NDC).				

The schedule containing detailed Terms & Conditions may be collected from the Common Services Division, Level-5, NCC Bank Ltd. Head Office, Dhaka and submit the same under sealed envelope to the Tender Box placed at Common Services Division (CSD). Manipulation or any kind of unusual approach or failure to submit offer within the stipulated time frame will be treated as "Disqualified" for the bidding. Tender will be opened on July 12, 2023 at 2:30 PM in presence of the bidders or their representatives (if any). The Bank authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposal without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Vice President &
Head of Common Services Division

Bangladesh Shishu Hospital and Institute
Sher-e Bangla Nagar
Dhaka-1207

Ref. No. (G)/e-GP/BSHI/2022-2023/14Date: 21/06/2023

e-Tender Notice

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of the following goods:

S.L	Description of goods	Tender ID	Publication date & time	Last selling date & time	Closing date & time
01	Supply, fitting, fixing, commissioning and functioning of medical equipment Genetic Analyzer ABI 3500 (Sequencing) Machine.	843507	22/06/2023 10:00	12/07/2023 16:00	13/07/2023 12:00

- This is an online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.
- To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required.
- Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) and e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Prof. (Dr.) Md. Jahangir Alam
Director
Bangladesh Shishu Hospital and Institute

GD-1033

Over 30,000 marooned in the north

Flood situation may deteriorate, warns WDB

STAR REPORT

Over 30,000 people in Kurigram and Lalmonirhat find themselves marooned as the ongoing flood continues to submerge low-lying areas of this region.

At least 26 rivers in the northern region, including the Brahmaputra, the Teesta, the Dharla, the Dudhkumar, and the Gangadhar, started swelling towards danger level.

The Water Development Board (WDB) said the water may cross danger levels anytime.

Some 35 islands on the bank of the Brahmaputra in Kurigram and 15 islands on the bank of the Teesta in Lalmonirhat were inundated in floodwater yesterday.

Kurigram Deputy Commissioner Saidul Arif said around 25,000 people remained waterlogged in 35 islands of the district.

A full-fledged flood may be in the making as the rivers are swelling, he said.

"We have all-out preparations to deal with the potential situation," he added.

Meanwhile, Lalmonirhat Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Ullah said around 5,000 people remained stranded in 15 islands of the district.

The authorities were taking preparations to protect lives and properties in case of a flood, he added.

Talking to The Daily Star on Wednesday afternoon,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



PHOTO: STAR, COLLECTED
Vast areas in Kurigram have been inundated after a flood control dyke at Bamondanga union in the district's Nageshwari upazila collapsed as the mighty Dudhkumar swells. Inset, a large number of sand-filled geo bags being piled up to protect a school in Bogura's Sariakandi upazila.

Dengue claims two more lives

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two more dengue patients died while 360 others were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning.

The total number of deaths in dengue rose to 38 this year, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) while the number of dengue cases rose to 5,924.

Some 1,300 patients are still undergoing treatment while 4,586 were released from hospitals; of them.

Meanwhile, DSCC yesterday fined owners of various structures Tk 75,000 in Dhanmondi, North South Road, Bongshal, Lalbagh, Wapda Colony and Muradpur.

Mobile courts of DSCC visited 205 houses and structures and found Aedes mosquito larvae at 11 houses and under-construction buildings.

Besides, DNCC Mayor Md Atiqul Islam urged all to remain cautious and aware.



Plastic takes a toll on Sundarbans

Experts point fingers at tourists, tour operators

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Plastic pollution caused by irresponsible tourist behaviour is wreaking havoc on Sundarbans ecosystems, according to speakers at a seminar yesterday.

The event, titled "Plastic Pollution in Forest and Other Natural Ecosystem: Way Forward," was jointly organised by the Arannayk Foundation and the Institution of Foresters Bangladesh in Dhaka.

During the seminar, Amir Hosain Chowdhury, chief conservator of the Forest Department, highlighted the detrimental effects of plastic waste thrown away by tourists, which eventually breaks down into microplastics.

"This process reduces the fertility of the forest floor and impedes seed germination," he said.

He specifically pointed out trawler-based tour operators as major contributors to plastic pollution in the Sundarbans, blaming their excessive use of single-use plastic.

To address this issue, Chowdhury emphasised the need for responsible tourism and collaboration with tour operators to promote sustainable practices.

Iqbal Abdullah Harun,



PHOTO: COLLECTED



Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Environment, stressed the importance of adopting a circular economy that promotes plastic recycling and gradually eliminates its use altogether. He also mentioned plans for a green growth strategy aimed at fostering environmentally friendly development.

"It's important to educate future generations to reduce plastic consumption," he said.

Farhina Ahmed, secretary of the Environment Ministry, highlighted the necessity of implementing a producer's responsibility act to

tackle the plastic menace effectively. Rakibul Hasan Mukul, executive director of the Arannayk Foundation, delivered the opening speech, while Shahriar Hossain, secretary general of the Environment and Social Development Organization, presented the keynote address, illustrating the destructive impact of plastic on forest and river ecosystems.

The event was chaired by Ishtiaq Uddin Ahmad, president of the Institution of Foresters Bangladesh.

Other notable speakers included Prof Ahmed Kamruzzaman Mojumder, chairman of the Environmental Science Department at Stamford University, and Apu Nazrul, a tour entrepreneur.

BCL 'TORTURE' AT ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY

Victim files complaint, then withdraws

UNB, Islamic University

A student of Islamic University in Kushtia has alleged that he was tortured and humiliated by a group of Chhatra League activists at Lalon Shah Hall of the university early Tuesday.

Yash Rohan is a first-year student at the development studies department of the university.

He lodged a written complaint on Tuesday afternoon with the university Proctor Prof M Shahadat Hossain Azad and student advisor Prof Shelina Nasrin, seeking punishment

for the accused involved in the torture incident.

According to the written complaint, Rohan was staying in the "gono room" of the dormitory since admission.

A group of BCL's IU unit activists, including fine arts department's second-year students Afif Hasan and Tonmoy Biswas, called him to room-136 of the hall early Tuesday, Rohan said.

They are apparently supporters of BCL's IU unit general secretary Nasim Ahmed Joy, according to the complaint.

Afif, Tonmoy and others, at one stage, assaulted him, the complaint added.

Rohan, however, withdrew the complaint yesterday.

Despite repeated attempts, he could not be reached over the phone for his comment.

BCL IU unit general secretary Nasim Ahmed Joy said he settled the issue between his supporters and Rohan.

Following the "intervention", Rohan withdrew his complaint, Joy told the news agency.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, নাটোর।

পুনঃ দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

১	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	:	সমাজকল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়
২	এজেন্সী	:	সমাজসেবা অধিদফতর, ঢাকা
৩	সম্প্রদায়িক সম্প্রদায়ের নাম	:	মহাপরিচালক, সমাজসেবা অধিদফতর, ঢাকা এর পক্ষে জেলা প্রশাসক, নাটোর।
৪	সম্প্রদায়িক সম্প্রদায়ের জেলা	:	নাটোর।
৫	যে কাছের দরপত্র	:	সমাজসেবা অধিদফতর পরিচালিত সরকারি শিশু পরিবার ও সমন্বিত দূর্টি প্রতিবন্ধী শিক্ষা কার্যক্রম, নাটোর এর নিবাসীদের ২০২৩-২৪ অর্থ বছরের জন্য খাদ্য ও খাদ্যাদ্যুদ্বৈক, শিক্ষা, প্রশিক্ষণ, স্বাস্থ্য, প্রসাধনী, অন্যান্য এবং বিবিধ মালামাল সরবরাহ।
৬	দরপত্রের নম্বর ও তারিখ	:	নম্বর: ৪১.০১.৬৬০০.০০০.০৭.০০১.২৩. ১৭৪ তারিখ: ২১/০৬/২০২৩ খ্রিঃ।
৭	দরপত্র প্রচারের তারিখ	:	২২/০৬/২০২৩ খ্রিঃ।
৮	সম্প্রদায়িক সম্প্রদায়ের পদ্ধতি	:	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (ও.টি.এম)
৯	বাজেট এবং তহবিলের উৎস	:	রাজস্ব বাজেট (জিওবি)
১০	দরপত্রের প্যাকেজ নং	:	ক, খ, গ, ঙ = ৪টি
১১	দরপত্রের প্যাকেজের নাম	:	সমাজসেবা অধিদফতর পরিচালিত সরকারি শিশু পরিবার ও সমন্বিত দূর্টি প্রতিবন্ধী শিক্ষা কার্যক্রম, নাটোর এর নিবাসীদের ২০২৩-২৪ অর্থ বছরের জন্য 'ক'-এমপ (খাদ্য ও খাদ্যাদ্যুদ্বৈক (পচন ও অপচনশীল), 'খ'-এমপ (শিক্ষা, প্রশিক্ষণ, স্বাস্থ্য, পোষাক-পরিচ্ছদ, প্রসাধনী ও অন্যান্য), 'গ'-এমপ (খাদ্য ও খাদ্যাদ্যুদ্বৈক (পচন ও অপচনশীল), শিক্ষা, স্বাস্থ্য, পোষাক-পরিচ্ছদ, প্রসাধনী ও অন্যান্য), 'ঙ'-এমপ (বিবিধ মালামাল)।
১২	দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	:	০৫/০৭/২০২৩, ২য় পুনঃ ১৯/০৭/২০২৩, ৩য় পুনঃ ০২/০৮/২০২৩ তারিখ অফিস চলাকালিন।
১৩	দরপত্র দাখিলের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	:	০৬/০৭/২০২৩, ২য় পুনঃ ২০/০৭/২০২৩, ৩য় পুনঃ ০৩/০৮/২০২৩ তারিখ দুপুর ১২:০০ টা পর্যন্ত
১৪	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	:	০৬/০৭/২০২৩, ২য় পুনঃ ২০/০৭/২০২৩, ৩য় পুনঃ ০৩/০৮/২০২৩ বেলা ১:০০টা।
১৫	কার্যালয়ের নাম ও ঠিকানা	:	সংশ্লিষ্ট প্রতিষ্ঠান।
ক. মূল দরপত্র দলিল বিক্রয়			
প্রতিষ্ঠানের নাম	:		প্রতিষ্ঠানের ঠিকানা
১৫.১	সরকারি শিশু পরিবার	:	বনবেশখরিয়া, নাটোর।
১৫.২	সমন্বিত দূর্টি প্রতিবন্ধী শিক্ষা কার্যক্রম	:	বনবেশখরিয়া, নাটোর।
খ. দরপত্র দলিল গ্রহণ			
গ. দরপত্র দলিল খোলা			জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, নাটোর।
১৬	দরপত্র দাতার যোগ্যতা	:	১. বৈধ সরকারহকরী প্রতিষ্ঠান ২. সিডিউল ক্রয়ের ট্রেজারী চালানের মূল্যকপি, পূর্বে অনুরূপ কাজ করার অভিজ্ঞতার সনদপত্র, হালনাগাদ ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, ব্যাংক স্বচ্ছলতার সনদ, আয়কর সনদ (২০২২-২৩), ভাট সিবিবন্ধনপত্রের অধিকারী হতে হবে।
১৭	দরপত্র সিডিউলের মূল্য	:	দরপত্র সিডিউলের মূল্য ট্রেজারী চালানের মাধ্যমে কোড নং ১-২৯৩১-০০০০-২৩৬৬ তে (অফেরতযোগ্য) জমা দিতে হবে।
১৮	গ্রুপ	সংক্ষিপ্ত বিবরণ	সিডিউলের মূল্য
ক	খাদ্য ও খাদ্যাদ্যুদ্বৈক (পচন ও অপচনশীল)।	৫০০/-	সিডিউলে দেয়া আছে
খ	শিক্ষা, স্বাস্থ্য, পোষাক, প্রসাধনী ও অন্যান্য।	৫০০/-	ঐ
গ	খাদ্য ও খাদ্যাদ্যুদ্বৈক (পচন ও অপচনশীল) শিক্ষা, স্বাস্থ্য, পোষাক, প্রসাধনী ও অন্যান্য।	২০০/-	ঐ
ঙ	বিবিধ মালামাল	২০০/-	ঐ
			দূর্টি প্রতিষ্ঠানের ক্ষেত্রে প্রযোজ্য

১৯. দরপত্র আহবানকারী কর্মকর্তার নাম ও পদবী : আবু নাছের হুঁঞা, জেলা প্রশাসক, নাটোর।

২০. দরপত্র আহবানকারী কর্মকর্তার ঠিকানা : জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, নাটোর।

২১. দরপত্র আহবানকারী কর্মকর্তার সাথে যোগাযোগের নম্বর : ০২৫৮৮৮৭৩৭৪১।

২২. শর্তাবলী :

ক. পিপিএ-২০০৬ এবং পিপিআর-২০০৮ (সংশোধনসহ) এ প্রদত্ত পণ্য ক্রয় সাক্ষ্য পদ্ধতি যথাযথভাবে অনুসরণ করা হবে।

খ. গৃহীত দরদাতার দিল্লি হতে উদ্ধৃত নম্বর ১০% পারফরমেন্স সিকিউরিটি অর্থ প্রাপ্তি সাপেক্ষে কার্যদেয় প্রদান করা হবে।

গ. 'ঙ' গ্রুপের ক্ষেত্রে বরাদ্দ প্রাপ্তি সাপেক্ষে কার্যদেয় দেয়া হবে।

ঘ. কর্তৃপক্ষ করণ দর্শনো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ অথবা সকল দরপত্র বাতিলের ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।

ঙ. দরপত্র ক্রয়ের তারিখ হতে দরপত্র খোলার তারিখের নির্ধারিত সময় পর্যন্ত দরপত্র দাখিল করা যাবে।

চ. পুনঃ দরপত্র আহবানের ক্ষেত্রে আর কোন বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রদান করা হবে না। এই বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে উল্লিখিত সময় যোতাবেক কার্যদি সম্পন্ন হবে।

ছ. বিশেষ নির্দেশনা : বিস্তারিত তথ্য দরপত্র দলিলে বর্ণিত আছে।

আবু নাছের হুঁঞা
জেলা প্রশাসক
নাটোর।

GD- 1034

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Chattogram City Corporation
Nagar Bhaban, Tigerpass, Chattogram
www.ccc.org.bd

শেখ হাসিনার মূলনীতি
এম শহরের উন্নতি

Memo No. 46.11.1600.002.36.23.38

Dated: 18/06/2023

e-Tender Notice

This is an online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents of following packages from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank branches up to particular date and time specification the tender notice.

SI No.	Package No.	Name of the sub-project	Tender ID	Tender document last selling/ downloading date & time	Tender closing & opening date & time
1	LGCRPP/Chatto gram/ 2022- 23/W-07	Development of Footpath at Kathgor Junction to Tunnel Moor at 41 Ward (South patenga).	847561	17-Jul-2023 12:00	17-Jul-2023 14:00
2	LGCRPP/Chatto gram/ 2022- 23/W-08	Development of Footpath at Saltgola Moor to Kathgor Moor at 38, 39 and 40 No. Ward.	846404	17-Jul-2023 12:00	17-Jul-2023 14:00

Further information and No. Wards are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>).

CCC/PRD-194/22-23
Size-5"x4 Col

GD-1035

Engr. Md. Ashiquel Islam
Executive Engineer
on Behalf of
Chief Engineer
Chattogram City Corporation



Digital Bokulpur



Kar Biye Ke Kore



Ami Dur Hote Tomare Dekhechhi



Kom Khorochi Biye

Shooting for Eid dramas at full pace

Shootings are going on at full pace, targeting the upcoming Eid-ul-Azha. The stars on television are hopeful about their projects, as they share their experience with The Daily Star.



Hothath Biye

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Eid-ul Azha is not too far away, and makers are rushing to finish their productions lots. The shooting of these special projects are ongoing in the capital's Uttara, Gazipur's Pubail and Manikganj, among other places.

Renowned television director Ejaz Munna has already completed the shooting of a seven-episode Eid drama. The serial has been written by Brindaban Das. The project was shot in a village in Pubail, which stars Chanchal Chowdhury, Shahnaz Khushi, Nadia Ahmed and others. The project is a rural drama.

Speaking about the tele-fiction, titled **Ami Dur Hote Tomare Dekhechhi**, Chanchal Chowdhury said, "To be honest, there are a lot more people who watch Eid dramas. Directors make reductions with that in mind, and we act accordingly."

Director Shakal Ahmed has directed an hour-long television project with Mosharraf Karim for this year's Eid, titled **Arai Talaq**. It also stars Tania Brishty and Pran Roy, among others.

Speaking about **Arai Talaq**, Mosharraf Karim said, "It is a completely entertainment-based project. I played the role of a village member. However, the plot is completely unconventional."

Maidul Rakib has directed the production called **Living Legend**. The show will be aired on NTV.

Sujit Biswas's directorial tele-fiction, **Kipta Shoshur Pakna Jamai**, stars AKM Hasan and Oliul Haque Rumi in the lead roles.

Saidur Rahman Russell has created a one-hour tele-fiction for Eid, which stars Nazia Haque Orsha and Shohel Mondol in the lead roles. Speaking about the production, which has been titled **Kopal**, Orsha said, "The story of **Kopal** is different. I enjoyed acting in it a lot. Everyone will love this exceptional project."



Kopal

Director Kaisar Ahmed has helmed a seven-part Eid series titled, **Digital Bokulpur**. AKM Hasan, Farzana Chobi and Nadia Ahmed, among others, have acted in it. **Digital Bokulpur** was shot in a village in Manikganj.

Two of Rafat Majumdar Rinku's directorial ventures will be aired this year's Eid. One is called **Jaal** and the other has been titled, **Katush Kutush Qurbani**. Tawsef Mahbub plays an important role in it. M A Salam also plays a special character.

Mamun Chowdhury Ripon has directed a drama called **Hands Up**, which stars Naresh Bhuiyan, Shamol Mawla, Shirin Alam and MA Salam.

Rubel Anush has also directed a tele-fiction called **Bhai**, which stars Irfan Sajjad, Yash Rohan and Tanha Tasnia Islam.

Salahuddin Lavlu has directed a drama called **Kar Biye Ke Kore**, where he will also be seen acting.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Salahuddin Lavlu said, "This time too, I have directed a drama that follows the story of a remote village. The audience

will get both entertainment and a social message through this project."

Director Shamim Zaman has made two Eid dramas, starring Mosharraf Karim. One of them is called **Shami**, while other has been titled, **Jhigrate Protibeshi**. One of the reductions will be aired on Maasranga TV during Eid, while the other will be aired on Banglavisian.

Biye is another project that has been directed by Alam Anwar and stars Niloy Alamgir, Himi, Rimu Roja Khandaker, and a few others.

Sohel Hasan has directed a drama called **Hotath Biye**, which will be aired on NTV. The project stars Mosharraf Karim and Jannatul Sumaiya Heme.



Anurag

At the same time, Shakal Ahmed is shooting another project in Pubail. A bunch of actors are also busy shooting for Eid reductions that are yet to be finalised. Apart from this, Labu Kamal is shooting two dramas titled, **Ostitto** and **Chhayapath** in Pubail, where Farzana Chobi will be playing a lead role.

NEWS

Chettri hat-trick

FROM PAGE 12

a flying start with a 3-1 win over Nepal. The Kuwaitis cruised to a 3-0 lead, with Khaled Haijah opening the scoring before Shabaib Al Khaldi and Mohammad Abdullah adding to the tally. Nepal's Anjan Bista pulled one back late in the game but there was no coming back for the Himalayan nation.

Rescuers race

FROM PAGE 12

ROVs and a surface vessel are being used to locate the source of the noise, he said.

"This is an incredibly complex site," Mauger said, noting that metal and other objects under the water made it difficult to determine the source."

The 21-foot (6.4-meter) submersible Titan, operated by US-based OceanGate Expeditions, began its descent at 8:00 am (1200 GMT) on Sunday, according to the US Coast Guard. It lost contact with its parent surface vessel soon after that during what should have been a two-hour dive to the Titanic.

Biman willfully

FROM PAGE 12

Apart from salaries, Biman will be bearing all costs for the staffers, including a daily "on corporate service" allowance that ranges between \$287 and \$381 for each for 37 days depending on the grade of an officer, according to Biman's outstation allowance chart.

After The Daily Star's previous report on this issue, the Ministry of Civil Aviation had sent a letter to Biman on May 28, bringing the media report to their attention and instructing them to ensure that nobody is being sent unnecessarily.

Twenty-four officials have already gone to Saudi Arabia, said Biman sources.

Biman is sending at least 33 officials from its customer service department, eight officials from the engineering and material management department, 28 sales and marketing officials, and two administration and HR officials.

The carrier has also hired Elaf Aviation for sales and marketing in KSA and its job includes having sales offices, counters, a 24-hour call centre, staff to man these fronts.

This newspaper could not reach State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Mahbub Ali and Civil Aviation Secretary Mokammel Hossain for comments as they did not respond to calls yesterday.

Akhi was under care of Sangjukta

FROM PAGE 12

Mamunur said.

"She did not inform the hospital authorities about her leaving. We came to know about it around 4:00am [on June 10]."

The manager also claimed that Akhi was first taken to Titas Upazila Health Complex in Cumilla. "She was probably advised to undergo a C-section by the doctors there. But she was taken to our hospital for normal delivery."

However, Akhi's husband Yakub dismissed the claim.

"We didn't find any physician at the Titas Upazila Health Complex. We returned home as the attending nurses there found everything normal after examining my wife," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

"We expected treatment from Dr Sangjukta Saha and we were assured of it. Dr Shahzadi and Dr Muna in their confessional statements to a Dhaka court said they just followed the instruction of Dr Sangjukta Saha while treating my wife," he said.

He said though he sued only those who were directly involved in taking care of his wife, neither Sangjukta nor the hospital authorities can avoid their responsibilities.

Earlier, the hospital authorities postponed yesterday's press conference on the deaths of Akhi and her newborn, saying that they would hold the briefing after their

investigation ends.

"Due to legal bindings, we cannot hold the press conference until the probe is completed. The investigation committee has sought seven more days. We have asked them to finish the probe in next four days," MA Quasem, vice-president of the board of directors at Central Hospital, told this newspaper yesterday morning.

He said the were preparing replies to Sangjukta's false claims.

Akhi died on June 18, eight days after the death of her newborn baby.

Doctors who conducted an autopsy primarily found that she died due to excessive bleeding.

On June 14, her husband Yakub filed a case with Dhanmondi Police Station, accusing the doctors concerned and the hospital of botched C section and fraud.

Two attending doctors -- Shahzadi Mustarshida Sultana and Muna Shaha -- were sent to jail by a Dhaka Metropolitan Court the following day. They are among the six physicians and supporting staffers accused in the case.

At a press conference on Tuesday, Sangjukta blamed the hospital authorities for the deaths of Akhi and her newborn baby. Sangjukta also said Zamir was an employee of the hospital, not her assistant.

This newspaper could not reach Sangjukta for comments as she did not answer the phone. Zamir's phone was also found switched off.

Ex-DIG Mizan sentenced to 14 years

FROM PAGE 12

will be cut from his sentence, said the judge.

Mizanur, Mahmudul and Mahbubur were present at the court during the delivery of the judgment yesterday.

Ratna was tried in absentia. Her punishment will be effective from the day of her arrest or surrender, said the judge.

Ratna, Mahmudul and Mahbubur were also fined Tk 50,000 each, in default of which they will have to serve three more months each in jail. The trio was jailed for three years each for abetting Mizanur and were

sentenced to four years each for laundering money. But they will have to serve total four years behind bars as the sentences will run concurrently.

Earlier, the court recorded statements of the 27 prosecution witnesses, including the complainant of the case.

On July 1, 2019, the High Court handed over Mizanur to Shahbagh police upon his surrender.

After an investigation, the ACC submitted the charge sheet against the four accused on January 30, 2020.

On October 20 that year, the judge framed charges against the four.

Be wary of the geopolitical traps

FROM PAGE 12

new opportunities."

Bangladesh's deeper engagement with future BRICS members such as Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, the UAE and South American countries can be of great benefit, he said.

In the long run, BRICS intends to introduce a common currency and push for de-dollarisation.

"The US would not like it," said Kabir, also a former ambassador.

The neutral position of South Africa and Brazil is also not liked by the West.

"These are some issues that we need to keep in mind. There might be a message that Bangladesh is moving

close to China. So, we need to make our message clear so there is no misunderstanding," he added.

Joining the BRICS in the wake of an economic downturn is a welcome move, especially for South-South cooperation, said Selim Raihan, a professor at the University of Dhaka's economics department.

"It is also important as Bangladesh will be needing huge investment, export diversification and funding for development activities."

Though China and India -- two major Asian economies of BRICS -- are Bangladesh's largest trading partners, Bangladesh's exports to

these two countries are much lower in comparison to imports.

"They are also making big investments in other countries, but not in Bangladesh," said Raihan, also the executive director of the South Asian Network on Economic Modelling.

Whether BRICS can help obtain funding, investments and export diversification should be the driving factors for Bangladesh.

"Dhaka needs to be careful that it is not in any geopolitical trap. For that, we need to have a national consensus -- maintain a balanced relationship with all countries."

Bank directors can stay on for 12 years

FROM PAGE 1

Political interference should be stopped in banks, said Jatiya Party MP Fakhru Imam.

"Banks should be freed from the hands of vested quarters and looters," he said.

The directors are the masterminds behind bank looting, said another Jatiya Party MP Mujibul Haque.

"It seems that it has been brought on as per the recommendation of many bank managers who are working to convince the finance minister. We strongly oppose this proposal to make the director's term 12 years," he said.

Pointing to the donation of bank owners to the Prime Minister's Fund, another opposition MP Kazi Feroz Rashid said that they are only giving this money to the PM to publish large pictures on the first and last pages of newspapers.

"The law was brought to provide benefits to bank owners. They misuse people's money. When they catch a cold, they go to Singapore with bank money," he said, while sarcastically calling for bank directors' terms to be for life.

Private banks now dictate the Bangladesh Bank, he added.

"They decide who will be the governor of Bangladesh Bank, who will be the deputy governor. The government has become hostage to the bankers," he added.

The government has brought this amendment to keep their favourite

directors in the posts, said Pir Fazlur Rahman, another opposition MP.

Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury said Titu should be allowed to place the amendment proposal.

The amendment proposal was placed as per the rules of procedure of parliament, she said.

"No new clause has been added to the bill. Nor has any such new clause been added. It is not irrelevant," Chaudhury added.

Imam wanted to speak but she did not give him the microphone.

"This is my ruling. You have nothing more to say about this," she added, giving the floor to the finance minister.

The opposition MPs continued voicing their objection, which prompted Chaudhury to interrupt Kamal to say: "We will not do anything beyond the rules."

But the protests continued.

At that time, the speaker gave the microphone to Rashid.

Addressing the finance minister, Rashid said: "Did you accept the life term extension that we talked about? One director will remain forever. Are you accepting that?"

Haque also gave a similar statement. There was a deadlock in the parliament for some time.

Later, the Speaker gave the microphone to the finance minister again. But he did not speak. The Speaker then called for voting on the

amendment proposal. The amended bill was passed by voice vote.

At this time, the JP MPs walked out of the House. There were 15 of them, according to Haque, secretary general of the Jatiya Party, who spoke with reporters after the walkout.

The bill mentioned that after completing 12 years in the position of director, an individual has to wait for three years to return to the post.

According to the proposed law, not more than three directors of a bank can be from the same family, down from four at present.

Besides, the draft law also proposed strict measures in terms of borrowing by board members from banks as submission of collateral was made mandatory for them.

Humans affected

FROM PAGE 12

considered different scenarios of groundwater redistribution.

"Earth's rotational pole actually changes a lot. Our study shows that among climate-related causes, the redistribution of groundwater actually has the largest impact on the drift of the rotational pole," said study co-author Ki-Weon Seo, a geophysicist at Seoul National University in South Korea.

The model was found to be off by 78.5cm (31 inches) or 4.3cm (1.7 inches) of drift per year when considering 2,150 gigatons of groundwater redistribution.

Biden labels Xi a ‘dictator’

China lashes back

REUTERS, Kentfield

China hit back yesterday after US President Joe Biden referred to President Xi Jinping as a “dictator”, saying the remarks were absurd and a provocation, in an unexpected spat immediately following efforts by both sides to lower tensions.

Biden’s comments came just a day after top US Secretary of State Antony Blinken visited Beijing to stabilize bilateral relations that China says are at their lowest point since formal ties were established.

Attending a fundraiser in California, Biden said Xi was very embarrassed when a suspected Chinese spy balloon was blown off course over US airspace early this year, making a personal comment on the Chinese leader when Blinken said on Monday the “chapter” should be closed.



Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is pictured on screens as he speaks to participants at the 9th International Day of Yoga event on the north lawn at United Nations headquarters in New York City, New York, US yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

WEST BANK

Israelis attack Palestinian towns

Burn cars, buildings

REUTERS, Ramallah

Israeli settlers attacked Palestinian towns in the occupied West Bank overnight on Tuesday, torching buildings and cars in apparent retaliation for the killing by Hamas of four Israelis near a settlement the day before, residents and officials said.

Yaqoub Oweis, chairman of the village council of Al-Lubban Al-Sharqeya, said a large group of settlers attacked while Israeli soldiers and police stood by as they burned a petrol station, orchards, a cement factory and dozens of cars.

“The attack was unprecedented and abnormal,” he said. “There was heavy gunfire but we couldn’t distinguish whether it came from settlers or the soldiers because of the darkness.” Attacks were also reported in other West Bank towns.

The latest round of violence underlined the volatility of Israeli-occupied territory, where for over a year military has been conducting regular sweeps leading to repeated clashes.

Palestinians complained repeatedly of attacks by settlers in the West Bank, an issue that has also drawn mounting international concern.

Ukraine offensive ‘slower than desired’

Says Zelensky; Putin sees ‘lull’; West pledges billions to Kyiv at rebuilding conference

REUTERS, Kyiv

President Volodymyr Zelensky said yesterday that progress in Ukraine’s counteroffensive against Russian forces was “slower than desired” but that Kyiv would not be pressured into speeding it up as its troops advance through dangerous minefields.

“Some people believe this is a Hollywood movie and expect results now. It’s not,” Britain’s BBC quoted him as saying in an interview. “What’s at stake is people’s lives.”

His adversary, Russian President Vladimir Putin, said Moscow had observed a “lull” in Ukraine’s counteroffensive, which began early this month. Although Ukraine still had some offensive potential, Kyiv understood it had “no chance”, Putin said in televised remarks.

Ukraine says its long-awaited first counteroffensive for seven months has reclaimed eight villages so far.

But its forces so far have yet to push their way to main defensive lines that Russia has had months to prepare. Kyiv is believed to have set aside 12 brigades of thousands of troops each for assault, most of which have yet to join the fight.

Reuters has visited some villages recaptured by Ukrainian forces and confirmed an advance of several kilometres. Moscow says it has been resisting the Ukrainian advances since early June.

The BBC quoted Zelensky as saying the military push was not going easily because 200,000 sq km of Ukrainian territory had been mined by Russian forces.

“Whatever some might want, including attempts to pressure us, with all due respect, we will advance on the battlefield the way we deem best,” he added.

After a flurry of early gains, Kyiv has claimed to have captured only one additional village over the past week, the hamlet of Pyatikhatky.



Officials said yesterday forces in the south were mostly consolidating earlier gains, while troops in the east were holding off Russian attacks.

“They had partial success over the past day, they have consolidated at the boundaries that were reached and they have evened up the front line,” Deputy Defence Minister Hanna Maliar said.

Zelensky’s interview with Britain’s public broadcaster was timed to coincide with a conference in London where allies pledged billions of dollars in economic and

reconstruction aid.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said the EU would provide Ukraine with 50 billion euros for 2024-27, while US Secretary of State Antony Blinken offered \$1.3 billion in additional aid.

Meanwhile, President Putin said yesterday that Russia’s new generation of Sarmat intercontinental ballistic missiles, which are capable of carrying 10 or more nuclear warheads, would soon be deployed for combat duty.

In a speech to new graduates of military academies, Putin stressed the importance of Russia’s “triad” of nuclear forces that can be launched from land, sea or air.

“The most important task here is the development of the nuclear triad, which is a key guarantee of Russia’s military security and global stability,” he said.

“Already about half of the units and formations of the Strategic Missile Forces are equipped with the latest Yars systems, and the troops are being re-equipped with modern missile systems with the Avangard hypersonic warhead.”

The first Sarmat launchers will be put on combat duty “in the near future”, Putin said.

European Union governments yesterday agreed on another package of sanctions against Russia over its invasion of Ukraine, aimed mainly at stopping third countries and companies from circumventing the existing EU measures.

NORTHERN INDIA

Crematorium fills up as heatwave scorches town

REUTERS, Ballia

A Hindu priest in northern India says the number of bodies brought to a crematorium by the River Ganges has doubled in the past week as a heatwave ravages parts of the country.

“The situation here changed in the last four to five days. It reached 25 to 30 bodies and people were here day and night in the heat,” said the priest, Rajesh Pandey.

The chief medical superintendent for Ballia confirmed a surge in admissions at the main district hospital and said robe was underway to determine cause of deaths.

“The patients who came here already had some comorbid conditions and were in terminal stages,” Yadav said.

The Indian Express newspaper reported that the hospital has recorded at least 80 deaths since June 15 as temperatures soared to nearly 45 degrees Celsius in the region, before clouds brought some respite yesterday.

The deaths in Ballia have triggered a row as the government of its home state, Uttar Pradesh, replaced a district health official for saying that they were due to the heat.

POST-COUP MYANMAR

US slaps sanctions on defense ministry, banks

REUTERS, Washington

The United States has levelled sanctions against Myanmar’s Ministry of Defense and two banks used by the Southeast Asian country’s military junta to purchase arms and other goods in foreign currencies, according to the Treasury website yesterday.

The banks were named as the Myanmar Foreign Trade Bank (MFTB) and Myanma Investment and Commercial Bank (MICB), which receive and transmit foreign currencies for Myanmar’s government, including state-owned enterprises that raise much of the junta’s revenues.

Myanmar is mired in violence and instability stemming from a military coup and lethal suppression of pro-democracy protests, during which hundreds of people have been killed and many thousands arrested, with widespread allegations of arbitrary detention, forced disappearances and torture.

Experts say the sanctions on the banks, while short of targeting gas projects that are a major source of revenue for the military that seized control of Myanmar in February 2021, could have an impact on the junta’s ability to fund its war against ethnic groups and insurgencies.

A February report by EarthRights International said the two banks were “Myanmar government’s foreign currency treasuries” and were now under junta control.



NORTH ATLANTIC OCEAN

Temperatures soaring off charts

CNN ONLINE

Temperatures in parts of the North Atlantic Ocean are soaring off the charts, with an “exceptional” marine heat wave happening off the coasts of the United Kingdom and Ireland, sparking concerns about impacts on marine life. Parts of the North Sea are experiencing a category 4 marine heat wave – defined as “extreme” – according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. In some areas, water temperatures are up to 5 degrees Celsius (9 Fahrenheit) hotter than usual. Global oceans have been exceptionally warm for months. April and May saw the highest ocean surface temperatures for those two months since records began in 1850.

Chinese carrier passes through Taiwan strait

REUTERS, Taipei



A Chinese aircraft carrier group led by the vessel Shandong sailed through the sensitive Taiwan Strait yesterday, Taiwan’s defence ministry said, amid heightened military tension over the island Beijing claims as its own territory. The ministry said the Shandong, commissioned in 2019,

had sailed in a southerly direction through the western part of the strait, and it had dispatched “appropriate forces” to monitor the Chinese activities. The aircraft carrier participated in Chinese military drills around Taiwan in April. In March last year, it sailed through the Taiwan Strait, just hours before the leaders of China and the US were due to talk.

SUDAN CONFLICT

Fighting surges as truce ends

REUTERS, Dubai

Heavy clashes broke out between rival military factions in several parts of Sudan’s capital yesterday as a 72-hour ceasefire that saw several reports of violations expired, witnesses said.

Shortly before the truce ended at 6:00 am (0400 GMT) fighting was reported in all three of the cities that make up the wider capital around the confluence of the Nile: Khartoum, Bahri and Omdurman.

Sudan’s army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) have been battling each other for more than two months, wreaking destruction on the capital, triggering widespread violence in the western region of Darfur and causing more than 2.5 million people to flee their homes.

Witnesses said army aircraft carried out air strikes in Bahri and the RSF responded with anti-aircraft fire. They reported artillery fire and heavy clashes in Omdurman and ground fighting in southern Khartoum.

Residents also reported clashes near an army camp in South Kordofan State, where a large rebel force that is not clearly aligned with either of the factions fighting in Khartoum has been mobilising.

The ceasefire was the latest of several truce deals brokered by Saudi Arabia and the US at talks in Jeddah.

As with previous ceasefires, there were reports of violations by both sides. Late on Tuesday, both factions blamed the other for a large fire at the intelligence headquarters, which is housed in a defence compound in central Khartoum that has been fought over since the fighting erupted on April 15.



Afghan women gather around aid parcels containing food items which they received as a part of aid, distributed by the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre in Herat, Afghanistan yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

HONDURAS PRISON

46 women dead in gang violence

REUTERS, Tegucigalpa

A prison riot in a Honduran women’s prison Tuesday has left at least 46 dead in what the government called a gang led attack in retaliation to its efforts to crack down on corruption in penal facilities.

Authorities are working to identify the bodies at the Centro Femenino de Adaptacion Social, a 900-person women’s penitentiary around 20 kilometers (12 miles) from capital city Tegucigalpa, Yuri Mora, spokesperson for public prosecutor’s office, told Reuters.

Most of those killed were burned to death, while others were shot, Mora said. Another seven people were being treated at a state hospital, said a hospital spokesperson.

President Xiomara Castro said the riot had been planned by gang members with guards’ knowledge.

Don't fall for quick fixes in bank sector

Relaxing loan repayment is unlikely to work if habitual defaulters continue to be tolerated

We are apprehensive about whether the reintroduction of relaxed loan repayment facilities by Bangladesh Bank will really help genuine borrowers/businessmen or it will end up encouraging habitual loan defaulters, the possibility of which cannot be ruled out. Despite similar concessions being granted between 2020 and 2022, the level of non-performing loans (NPLs) in the country has not gone down. On the contrary, as per a World Bank report released in May, Bangladesh now has the second-highest ratio of NPLs in all of South Asia, which is not an achievement to be proud of. This begs the question: is the central bank then trying to bring down defaulted loan figures artificially?

The justification given for the new measure is the increased difficulty faced by borrowers in repaying their loans due to rising global raw material prices and transportation costs resulting from the Russia-Ukraine conflict. While it is important to acknowledge the challenges faced by legitimate borrowers, it is equally crucial to ensure that such concessions are not extended to wilful defaulters – who often exploit systemic loopholes to access loans and delay/forgo repayment – as well as to resist the temptation of quick fixes.

Under the new rule, borrowers will be allowed to repay only 50 percent of their instalments payable for the April-June period of 2023. This, according to experts, could exacerbate liquidity pressure in the banking sector, as lenders will not receive their funds during this period. Moreover, it might discourage good borrowers from fulfilling their repayment obligations. By going for temporary solutions rather than fixing longstanding problems of governance, the central bank risks creating a cycle of dependence that is detrimental to the sector's overall health. But most importantly, such measures might further enable habitual loan defaulters. As a columnist has recently said, it is "the culture of favouring looters or not punishing any of them for financial turpitude [that] has accelerated the renaissance of default loans."

The culture of default loans is indeed one of the biggest challenges facing our economy, aside from money laundering, and our policymakers must be careful that they don't end up perpetuating these problems. Therefore, the authorities should reconsider the relaxed repayment facility as it will neither bring down our NPL ratio nor help the banks or legitimate businessmen in the long run.

Rohingya in dire need of support

Decline in funding from donors is deeply concerning

We are shocked at the continuous decline in funding for the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. According to the latest report of the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG), Bangladesh sought USD 875.9 million from international donors this year, but received only USD 224.3 million in the first six months. With the dwindling aid, it will be extremely difficult to meet the refugees' basic needs, let alone other secondary needs. Experts have already warned that the Rohingya may have to face food insecurity and malnutrition if the international community does not come up with adequate funding.

Since 2017, under a Joint Response Plan (JRP), the international community has been providing financial assistance to the Rohingya refugees living mostly in camps in Cox's Bazar. But unfortunately, the allocation has been steadily declining. In fact, Bangladesh has never received the promised/required funds in their entirety. Reportedly, the fund for humanitarian assistance ranged between 72 and 75 percent of the total requirement in the first three years since 2017. It came down significantly in the following years. And this year, with only 26 percent of the promised aid received, the situation is quite dire.

The question is, how will a country like Bangladesh feed over a million extra people and meet their other pressing needs without adequate funding from the international community? The UNHCR Deputy High Commissioner Kelly T. Clements has already expressed his concern about the declining funds, saying even the basic needs of the Rohingya remain unfulfilled. If the situation does not change for the better, it may force many among the refugees to seek to leave camps and engage in criminal activities, raising serious security concerns for local authorities.

Bangladesh has been quite generous in its role as a host. However, amid its current economic crisis, it will not be possible for us to bear this burden if the world does not come forward with sustained and adequate humanitarian assistance. We, therefore, urge donors to keep providing the necessary funds for the Rohingya until their safe and dignified repatriation to their homeland.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

letters@thedailystar.net

People's suffering during monsoon

The rainy season has finally arrived as a blessing for the Dhaka residents. People were eagerly waiting for the rain as the sweltering summer heat was making their lives unbearable. But, as it seems, rain will make their lives miserable, too, as already different city authorities have started digging the roads for various purposes. It is also not difficult to guess that the city residents will have to experience waterlogging soon in different parts of the city.

We urge the authorities to better coordinate their work this time so that people do not have to suffer unnecessarily.

Shafiqul Islam
Farmgate, Dhaka

Monetary policy has been set free on parole



OPEN SKY
Dr Birupaksha Paul
is a professor of economics at the State University of New York at Cortland in the US.

BIRUPAKSHA PAUL

While the government's latest monetary policy for the first half of fiscal year 2023-24 shows an attempt to be rational for the market, it lacks vigour to solve inflation and the dollar crisis. It deserves credit for bailing the lending rate cap – which prevailed for more than three years in defiance of economic reasonings – out of jail. For the first time in years, the exchange rate will be allowed to float on the basis of market supply and demand. Apparently, the Bangladesh Bank has embarked on a journey towards a free market economy after earning a release order from the finance ministry. But the freedom is conditional and more complicated – hence, the policy will be less effective in controlling inflation.

The apex business body in the country was strongly against removing the lending rate cap, and it said so incessantly. The reason is clear. Businesses can grab funds at zero real interest if the cap prevails. Technically, the real interest rate (borrowing rate minus inflation) was negative one percent since they could borrow at nine percent at a time when inflation hovered over 10 percent. Effectively, banks were giving them an extra one percent bonus if they took any loans. What a golden age of profit bonanza business tycoons enjoyed for more than a year, emboldened by the stubborn endorsement of the finance ministry.

Apparently, the Bangladesh Bank has been more independent to influence the lending rate after removing the cap, but this move has essentially legitimised the finance ministry's authority to influence the lending rate by incorporating the Treasury Bill (T-Bill) rate in determining the rates. Of course, this is an instance of financial innovation, and innovations are always welcome to help the nation escape from its poor performance in the global innovation index. But this is practically a trick to engage the ministry in Bangladesh Bank's decision-making and indulgence to fiscal incapacity which does not see any light at the end of the tunnel. Why?

By removing the lending rate cap, the central bank has introduced SMART – the six-month moving average of the rates on Treasury Bills – which is now running at 7.1 percent.



VISUAL: **SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR**

The government issues T-Bills – short-term money market instruments with 182 days' maturity – to fill up its budget deficit. The central bank arranges the auction among big banks and primary dealers where banks will buy the bills at a competitive yield rate while the government will try to give a rate as low as possible to minimise its burden. Bangladesh Bank has set the maximum lending rate for banks with a 3 percent margin above the T-Bill rate, making it 10.1 percent for now, for example. Banks can now lend funds at or below 10 percent at a time when inflation is 10 percent, making the real cost of borrowing funds just zero. This is not a sincere step to combat inflation.

SMART is an unsmart move for indulging manipulation, political pressure, staggered decision making – which will all create more uncertainty for investors and banks. Bangladesh Bank will announce SMART monthly, and banks will allow their borrowers to ask for loans based on those ever-changing SMART, augmenting more bureaucracy and uncertainty in the domain of investment. This was unwarranted at a time when other central banks are simplifying lending rules and helping people understand

its demand for cash is high, it must accept higher T-Bill rates and vice versa. If rates on selling long-term treasury bonds are comparatively profitable, the government will switch to selling more bonds and less bills. So, the ministry has the power of playing games with different rates. Bangladesh Bank's role here is to act as a mediator for the ministry's wish. Now lending rates, which were supposed to be solely decided by the central bank based on market observations, have been shifted to the control of the finance ministry. Is it a smart move towards central bank independence?

It would be smart to create a corridor for lending rates based on the repo rate which the central bank controls like any other central bank. Then lending rates would have been under the guardianship of the central bank, not the finance ministry. Bangladesh Bank could have declared a margin of, say, 6 percent above the repo rate of 6.5 percent, making the lending rate to be 12.5 percent maximum. Similarly, the deposit rate floor could have been 2 percent below the repo rate – the same as the reverse repo rate. Then the whole spectrum of interest rates would go up and down based on the judicious movement of the main policy rate

T-Bill in the US and this is true for other well-functioning economies as well, Bangladesh is heading towards a direction where T-Bill rates will one day influence the central bank rates. The new central bank leadership has endorsed that legitimacy without deeply thinking about its long-term consequences.

Announcing that the exchange rate will be market based lends more suspicion than certainty. Central bank officials commented that the dollar's value at Tk 108 is fairly a market price. If that is true, why does the rate fail to bring adequate remittances by discouraging the hundi business? Why are the reserves dwindling without any sign of correction? Why are some importers ready to offer even Tk 115 to bring their goods from overseas? Simply put, the rate controlled by Bangladesh Foreign Exchange Dealers' Association (BAFEDA) is defective, where the dollar is still undervalued, making the dollar crisis worse. Is a BAFEDA type controlling organisation needed if the exchange rate is really set to float?

The apparent freedom in Bangladesh Bank's monetary policy has a lot of black holes and the question arises whether it is the same old wine in a new bottle.

Of rankings and Bangladeshi universities



M Shakhaowat Hossain
is director in charge of the Institutional Ranking Cell and senior lecturer of English literature at North South University (NSU).

M SHAKHAOWAT HOSSAIN

Ranking universities by comprehensive and internationally accepted organisations serve the purpose of academic improvement, institutional accountability, and students' enhanced experiences. For the last few years, global university rankings, especially the ones conducted by Times Higher Education (THE) and Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), have positively impacted the academic sphere in Bangladesh. Not that ranking as a system has been introduced within these few years only – both THE and QS have been publishing ranks of global universities for decades now.

THE and QS both have many different ranking categories, and they publish the results of these categories throughout the year. THE will publish this year's Asia University Rankings at the end of June, and its World University Rankings in September. On the other hand, QS will publish its World University Rankings at the end of June, but the Asia University Rankings in November. Some ranking categories include world university ranking, regional ranking, employability ranking, subject ranking, sustainability ranking, impact ranking, etc.

What makes following these rankings more difficult is that not

all the participating Bangladeshi universities compete for all the categories. But two categories are highly prestigious for any university in Bangladesh or worldwide: World University and Regional (Asia) rankings. To be eligible for inclusion in THE ranking, a university must have over 1,000 publications in impactful journals over the previous five years. However, these two categories assess a university based on its overall performance, including the faculty-student ratio, the balance between male and female faculty members as well as students, the number of international staff and students, the number of published research articles in recognised journals, etc.

In other words, the overall ranking processes of both THE and QS are inclusive and rigorous. Placement in such prestigious categories is testament to the fact that students are developing fundamental problem-solving skills, and that faculty members are research-active and not only teaching. What is more interesting is that these ranking platforms keep introducing new parameters to assess university performances. For example, THE recently introduced the "interdisciplinary research" criterion

and wants to determine a university's commitment to research that incorporates knowledge, technique, and theories of multiple disciplines. The strength of different disciplines is often stronger than a single one. The criteria for assessment keep evolving, challenging the universities to meet the demand of time, thus enhancing all experiences.

The classroom experiences of students and faculty members may improve once these rankings start to make an impact. A classroom attended by students from different corners of the country as well as the world offers a far better experience than a less diversified classroom. Also, imagine a gender-balanced classroom. In such a classroom, the mutual growth of everyone is of significant value. People from diverse backgrounds mutually strengthen everyone's confidence, qualities, and knowledge. The impact of rankings, consequently, attracts students from these diverse corners.

The rankings are also significant in minimising the gulf of difference that exists at present among students and faculty members of different higher educational institutions across Bangladesh. From communication to analytical skills, there are many rooms for improvement. Also, while there is often debate over the accuracy of some rankings, it cannot be denied that they do have an effect and inspire universities to do better regularly. A university with self-approbation for its performances is no longer the trend. The performances of one university may be compared against hundreds of other universities, and thus measured. Such measurement will consistently push that one university to do better. Participating in the accepted ranking

platforms will help us move towards academic symmetry, where students of different institutions will have minimised gaps among themselves, and faculty members from different universities will collaborate and publish innovative research articles, among other things. These rankings also help graduates with getting better jobs.

In his article "University ranking announcement and the morning after" published in October 2022, Professor Shamsad Mortuza rightfully observes the regulations that handicap the growth of private universities. With the cooperation of the University Grants Commission (UGC) in awarding research and travel grants to private university teachers, as well as allowing PhD programmes to be offered by deserving private universities, these institutions may contribute enormously to the world of research and bring even greater academic recognition to the country, next to their public university counterparts. After all, as Professor Mortuza concludes in his article, all of them, of both private and public universities, are citizens of this country and deserve fair and equal treatment.

According to NSU Vice-Chancellor Professor Atiqul Islam, no one wants to be ranked last – everyone wants to reach the top, and reaching the top is a long way to go that requires sincere efforts. These efforts will make the academic environment at our universities healthy. With the participation of more and more Bangladeshi universities in the rankings, he believes the country will be able to showcase that it is not falling behind its comparable neighbouring countries. For the benefits to come, our universities must keep trying to excel in the ranking categories.



A dedicated bicycle lane in Manik Mia Avenue which was inaugurated in 2020 did not receive much response due to frequent encroachment and lack of integrated networks.

FILE PHOTO: STAR

Why Bangladesh needs to invest in bike lanes



Debra Efroymsen is executive director at the Institute of Wellbeing, Bangladesh.

DEBRA EFROYMSON

Inflation is making people's lives harder in many ways, making it increasingly important to find effective ways to help people save money. Better yet, though almost too good to be true, would be if we could help people save money while also tackling other major problems such as air pollution, noise pollution, road crashes, and the climate crisis. Fortunately for us, there is an amazing and surprisingly simple tool available: the bicycle.

When we start to enumerate the economic (and other) benefits of the bicycle, it is easy to keep going and going – pedalling our way to a better and brighter future. High-density, cycle-friendly urban design is good for local economies. Bicycles create virtually no wear and tear for roads, thus resulting in dramatically reduced costs of maintenance. Neighbourhoods of this design also generate far fewer costs for the provision of basic infrastructure (such as water, electricity, sewage).

Cycle parking occupies very little space, and allows roughly five times as many people to access restaurants and shops than if the same space was occupied by cars. When people travel by bicycle, they become part of the surroundings, more able to notice what is around them, and getting off to enter any facility is simpler. This is why people on bicycles actually tend to spend more at local businesses.

When the main mode of transport is the bicycle rather than the car, neighbourhoods are quieter, more

walkable, and have cleaner air, which make them more desirable and increase the local property value. In England, the value of residential property rises by one percent if motor vehicle traffic is reduced by 50 percent. Providing cycle parking at businesses, offices, and elsewhere is much cheaper than creating car parking areas. When children walk or cycle to school, they tend to be more attentive in general and achieve better results, which can result in future economic gains. And this also excludes the need to provide expensive school buses or for families to pay for their children's transport.

When people can move about on bicycles, they are more physically active from childhood well into old age. They stay healthier, saving the government and taxpayers expenses for health care.

Cycling infrastructure is far less expensive to build than roads, flyovers, elevated expressways, and parking garages for cars. For all these reasons and more, the benefit to cost ratio for cycling schemes have been estimated to range from 5:1 to as high as 35:1. That is, for every taka invested in cycling infrastructure, the savings can range from Tk 5 to more than Tk 35. Cycle freight (what we call "rickshaw vans") is cheaper than motorised freight for small payloads over short distances, with cost savings of 39-64 percent compared to a motorised service.

When people can walk and cycle in

cities, they can more easily access public transport, too. Cycling in cities also creates a number of jobs, such as for people working to build cycles, pumping tires, repairing bicycles or offering parking services.

With the world growing hotter, the idea of cycling may seem less and less feasible. But is the alternative any better? To sit stuck in traffic in an air-conditioned car, polluting the air further, emitting carbon dioxide, and contributing directly to heat increase through the working of the engine and AC? Yes, it's harder to cycle when it's really hot. But the way to cool down cities is to have plenty of trees (if car parks did not occupy so much urban space, there would be more scope for planting trees, too). More bicycles and fewer cars could mean more parks, canals, ponds, trees, and dirt – all of which would cool a city. And bicycles generate virtually zero climate emissions anyway.

Why, then, does our government subsidise cars while maintaining high taxes on bicycles? Unfortunately, the lobbying of car, fuel, and road-building corporations – the three-headed monster – is powerful while that of cycle companies is not. That is where our voice comes in: whether or not we ride bicycles, we need to demand something better from our politicians and policymakers. The benefits of cycling extend well beyond the individual cyclist and to the community and the greater society. We all need to advocate for better cycling infrastructure.

As we struggle to cope with inflation on top of all the problems we face in our cities, let's remind ourselves, each other, and particularly our policymakers of the many benefits that would ensue to our economies, our cities, and our lives if we invested more in cycling. It is time to make bicycles affordable and cycling pleasant and safe in our cities.

‘Bangladesh will not feature in Modi-Biden meeting’

Maj Gen (retd) ANM Muniruzzaman, president of the Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies (BIPSS), talks about the agenda of the meeting between Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Joe Biden with Golam Mortoza of The Daily Star.

Indian premier Narendra Modi is visiting the US to meet President Joe Biden. Given that the US has been increasingly putting pressure on Bangladesh in recent times, there have been speculations in the country's political circle that the topic of Bangladesh may be broached by Modi during this meeting. What's your take on this?

The Modi-Biden meeting is crucial for India. We have already gotten a clear idea about what topics may be covered in the meeting, thanks to the available discussions and analyses coming from different sources. India's foreign secretary gave a briefing on Modi's visit and agenda on Monday, where those issues were mentioned as well. None of these analyses and discussions mention Bangladesh as a potential topic in the agenda. If it were the case, the Time Magazine, The Atlantic, and other international media would have mentioned it one way or the other. They would have at least mentioned the neighbouring country or regional issues. But this does not exist anywhere, in any form.

The major focus during the bilateral discussion will be on potential defence cooperation, which is a critical issue for India. Technology transfer and assistance is another important area of discussion. Then comes intelligence exchange. India will try to get a clear understanding by clarifying its needs, as well as about the kind of information it may get from the US.

Also, as members of the Quad alliance, both nations will cover common topics that will definitely include China.

During this discussion, the regional security issue may or may not come up.

For India, regional security is a critical issue. Bangladesh holds an important position for India in this respect.

Regional security is important for India, but Bangladesh is not important here. The more pressing issues are what is happening in the Indo-Pacific region, especially India's border issues with China, and what kind of a situation may arise if a clash does break out at the border with China. I want to rule out the possibility of Bangladesh being mentioned during these discussions altogether.

There are speculations the US wants to establish a military base in St Martin's Island, that China wants to come here, and the US wants to repel China through India. Do these issues not place

Bangladesh in an important position?

Bangladesh is considered a strategically important region or country – there is no doubt about it. However, the possibility of Bangladesh being discussed during a bilateral discussion between two major nations is a far cry. Especially, the relatively short duration of this meeting means there will be many more urgent bilateral issues to be discussed. Apart from those, China and the Indo-Pacific situation may be covered as well.

Just a few days before Modi's visit to Washington, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken visited China. Is there any connection between these two visits?

Blinken's visit had been in the making for a while. China was slow at first in its response, but it eventually set the date. Blinken went on the visit accordingly.

On the other hand, India and the US exchanged three important visits over the last few months. The US national security adviser, defence secretary, and secretary of state visited India in recent months. Several bilateral issues were discussed in those meetings as well. China and Indo-Pacific issues also came up.

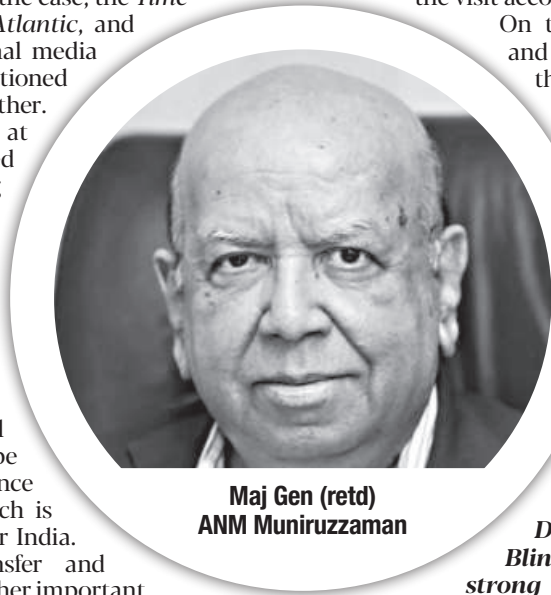
During his visit, Blinken reiterated strong support of the US for "One China" policy. They also clarified that they do not support Taiwan's independence. Is this an echo of the US' long adapted strategy or is there something new in it?

I am seeing something new here because they have clarified this issue again. Many a time, there were concerns that the US was slowly moving forward on the issue of Taiwan's independence. However, it put all such concerns to rest by equivocally declaring that "we do not support the independence of Taiwan."

The China-US relationship is heavily strained at present. In this situation, are Blinken's visit and such a bold statement significant?

Apparently, the US is trying to alleviate the tensions. Both the countries' interests are involved here. What the US has mentioned is that they need to manage their relationship responsibly. The US is trying to minimise the heat with another major powerhouse, and to manage the bilateral relationship responsibly while the Russia-Ukraine war is still ongoing.

Translated from Bangla by Mohammed Ishtiaque Khan.



Maj Gen (retd) ANM Muniruzzaman



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Memo No. BGC/CEDP/2022-23/21

Date: 21/06/2023

e-Tender Notice: 04/2022-2023

e-Tender is invite in the National e-Gp System portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following package;

Sl. No.	Tender ID. No.	Name of Package	Last Date and Time of Tender Security Submission	Tender Closing Date & Time
01	847892	G-5: Procurement of AC for ICT lab and smart classrooms for Bandarban Govt. College, Bandarban Hill District	12-July-2023 13:00 PM	12-July-2023 14:00 PM

This is an on line tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-Gp portal and no offline/hard copy will be accepted.

To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-Gp portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-Gp system portal have to be deposited online through any registered Banks Branches up to 12-July-2023, 1:00 PM

Further information and guideline are available in the National e-Gp System portal and from e-Gp Help Desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).



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GD-1031



Pabna University of Science & Technology
Office of the Project Director, PUST, PABNA.

Memo No: PUST/PD/e-GP/e-Library/23-24

Date : 20/06/2023

e-Tender Notice (FY/2023-24)

e-Tender is invited in the National e-Gp ([http:// www.eprocure.gov.bd](http://www.eprocure.gov.bd)) for the procurement of Following Works of "Pabna University of Science & Technology, Development Project" PUST, Pabna.

Serial No	Tender ID	APP ID	Package No & Invitation Ref. Number	Name of Works	Tender Publication Date & Time	Tender Closing Date & Time	Method
01	848062	190277	PUST/PD/e-GP/e-Library/23-24	Supply Installation and Commissioning of Entry-Exit Control System, Website Development and Additional Civil Works for the e-Library works of Pabna University of Science & Technology, Development Project , FY 2023-2024.	22 Jun, 2023 and 10.30	24 Jul, 2023 and 11.30	OTM

This is an online Tender where only e-Tender will be accepted. To Submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal ([http:// www.eprocure.gov.bd](http://www.eprocure.gov.bd)) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the Nation-al e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered Banks branches. Further information and guideline are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).



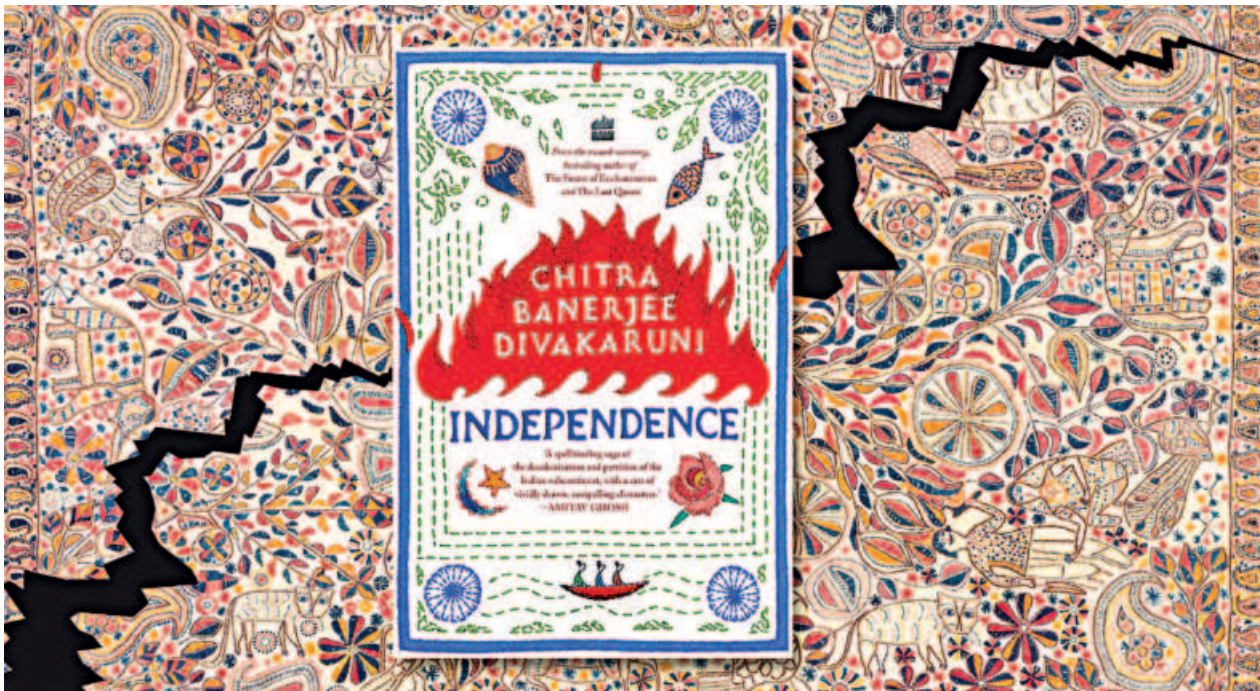
Engineer Lt Colonel G M Azizur Rahman
afwc,psc (Retd)
Project Director
Pabna University of Science & Technology, Development Project.

GD-1032

FICTION REVIEW

A painfully poignant Partition story

‘Independence’ by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni
(HarperCollins India, 2023)



DESIGN: SARAH ANJUM BARI

Divakaruni has a message to send with this novel. To her, independence entails not just liberation or freedom from subjugation, it also means doing the right thing for oneself and to the people around us.

NAJMUS SAKIB

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni has been telling the tales of women—independent and strong, flawed and humane—for a long time now, and *Independence* is no aberration from that normative style of hers. Set primarily during the tumultuous times of the Great Calcutta Killings of 1946, *Independence* tells the stories of three sisters, of the people they love and are loved by, of their trials and tribulations, their hopes and aspirations, and their ultimate loss and gain.

This book, though, is not merely a tale of the inner lives of three sisters, it is historical fiction with a delicate mixture of fact, where the Partition of India with all its bloody repercussions on the lives of people living in the fringes takes centre stage.

Independence tells the stories of Priya, Deepa, and Jamini; three daughters of the

inordinately benevolent doctor Nabakumar Ganguly. Jamini is the archetypal village woman who does not want to break societal norms and on the other hand, Priya is the farthest from that archetype. She is the strongest of the three sisters and the soul, the rebellious voice of the novel. Fused with love, compassion and yearning for liberation and independence, Priya embodies a fiercely independent woman. Deepa is somewhere between these two, sometimes more like Priya than her other younger sister Jamini.

Divakaruni's prose is highly descriptive. She has a large repertoire of lush words to paint a scene like an artist painting a portrait of a lady, with incredible details to portray even the tiniest wrinkles of her face. She does not write sentences with clauses after clauses piled with one another like Gabro or Rushdie. Her sentences, rather, are terse and beautiful.

Yet the prose fails to compensate for the

bleakness of her narrative. Her story does not offer a great deal out of the ordinary.

While it is true that Bengali society in the mid 20th century was going through a massive societal upheaval, the opportunities given to women compared to that of men were still not something to be proud of. Perhaps they still are not. But such feminist retellings of the past are necessary in building a better and equal society. Divakaruni's protagonists are often flawed, have travails to tackle imposed by the patriarchal society, but it is the courage of their voices that makes us hope for a better future, where women will not have to go to implausible lengths to attain success in life, success which a man can attain with comparably less travails.

Divakaruni has a message to send with this novel. To her, independence entails not just liberation or freedom from subjugation, it also means doing the right thing for oneself and to the people around us.

Her novel is full of verve and vivacious spirit which is so typical of Divakaruni and yet for all its lustre, it fails to deliver an extraordinary tale. Such beautiful writing could only have been complimented by a more meticulous, less dramatic, and perhaps less colourful narrative steeped in reality.

Erstwhile East and West Bengal today are separated into two entities; one is a country in itself, the other a part of a bigger country, and both created on the fault lines of religion. We have a genealogical connection with our past. However uncomfortable and bloody it might have been, we have to be cognizant of the fact that we are the children of Partition and we have acted—to put it very mildly—not nicely, when we were thrown into an us vs them dichotomy.

As long as there remains a gulf, a chasm between and amongst people, the perennial question will remain—was Partition the price of independence, or was independence the price of Partition?

Najmus Sakib considers himself the protagonist of Dostoevsky's *White Nights*. Reach him on Twitter at @sakib221b.

FEATURE

Riverdale can be anytime and anywhere

The timelessness and adaptability of Archie comics

SHABABA IQBAL

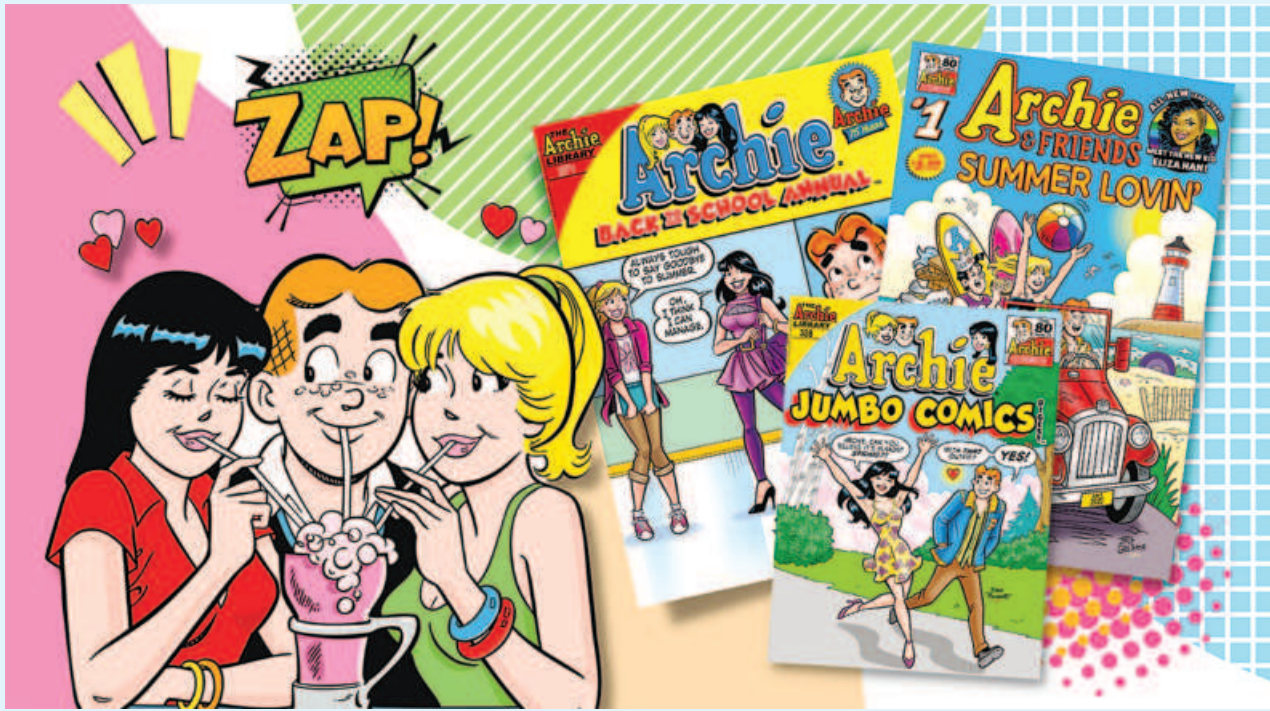
My introduction to *Archie* comics came through my chhoto chacha, who would read them to me in Bangla, taking the time to translate the dialogues. One would think he would be hesitant to do it—these were stories about high schoolers, and I was barely in the first grade. But he is one of the ‘cool’ ones. This is when my fascination began with the beloved comics, which depicted a charmed American life where teenagers didn't need to wear school uniforms, everyone dated freely, and children could hang out without parental supervision. While canonically the characters were older than me, their world seemed fun and real. My curiosity got the better of me, and my chacha took notice.

Incidentally, this was also a time when I watched *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* regularly on our VCD player. In his memoir, *An Unsuitable Boy*, Karan Johar revealed that his primary inspiration behind the 1998 blockbuster romantic drama, particularly the first half, was *Archie* comics.

It was a world of freedom and possibilities that felt beyond the reach of our society. Dating, rebellion against parental authority, and carefree outings were rarely experienced by us when we were teenagers.

With my heart brimming with a newfound sense of accomplishment when I stood first in my class in the third grade, I turned to my dad with a humble request: *Archie* comics. Alas, my yearning was met with a gentle clash of opinions, as my mom believed that my triumph deserved a grander celebration.

I diligently collected every polymer 10 taka note that came my way, carefully stowing them away in a piggy bank. With each passing day, my anticipation grew, as I inched closer to the magical



DESIGN: SARAH ANJUM BARI; PHOTOS: AP, ARCHIE COMICS

sum of 90 taka required to purchase a digest. My boro mama, who was also my tutor from the third to the sixth grade, was deeply moved by my enthusiasm for *Archie* comics. As a heartfelt gesture on my 11th birthday, he presented me with a selection of them, thoughtfully considering the ones that were not already a part of my cherished collection.

Sweet, colourful, and funny, *Archie* comics were one of the only graphic narratives available for people who weren't interested in superheroes and gritty, edgy comics like *Batman*. And unlike other serialised stories, there was no real urgency to read them in sequential order. It didn't matter if you missed one, or many episodes. Not much changed in this universe over the years.

My bookshelves ached under the weight of my collection of, at one point, well over a hundred *Archie* comics, organised meticulously by character and series. I would read them during study breaks, long drives, and flights.

At the heart of *Archie* comics was the unwavering belief in the power of friendship and community. The

characters navigated the ups and downs of adolescence together, supporting one another through thick and thin. They taught us that no matter what challenges we face, we can overcome them with the love and support of those around us.

It was a world of freedom and possibilities that felt beyond the reach of our society. Dating, rebellion against parental authority, and carefree outings were rarely experienced by us when we were teenagers. The characters' escapades and romantic entanglements provided a glimpse into a life unconstrained by traditional Bangladeshi values, allowing us to dream and indulge in the fantasy of a carefree adolescence.

Nevertheless, the comics employed a brand of humour that transcends cultural boundaries.

Archie, Betty, Veronica, Jughead, and their buddies may date from 1941, the year that the publisher *Archie* Comics was founded, but *Riverdale* can exist anywhere as long as it is moderately wealthy and upmarket, thanks to its

barely elaborated past and universal spaces.

The American TV show *Riverdale* brought the beloved characters to life in a modern and edgy adaptation, putting them in a world of cults, secrets, violence, and even superpowers. Like the aforementioned *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai*, the Betty, Archie, and Veronica love triangle has been mirrored in Bollywood films for decades, from *Jo Jeeta Wohi Sikandar* to *Jaane Tu... Ya Jaane Na*. Now, Netflix's *The Archies*, a live-action musical film adaptation of the *Archie* comics directed by Zoya Akhtar, will be set in India.

To me, this adaptation is an exciting opportunity to witness the fusion of Indian and Western cultures through a fresh take on the characters, relationships, and overall storyline—a take that will hopefully add a new layer of richness and diversity to the familiar *Archie* universe.

Shababa Iqbal is a journalism graduate from Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB), who likes Jane Austen's novels and Disney movies. Email: shababa@icloud.com.

NONFICTION REVIEW

Into the intersection of identity and violence

PROTIK BARDHAN

The EDRU Study Group, comprising a team of young researchers, has recently published a unique research journal on the topic of identity and violence. What sets this journal apart is its collaborative nature, involving current students and alumni, under the guidance of professors Abdullah Al Mamun and Maswod Akhter. The initiative aims to foster the research capabilities of the present students of the English department of Rajshahi University by providing mentorship from experienced teachers and alumni.

For the alumni pursuing teaching careers, this group is an ideal platform to enhance their research skills and contribute to the country's scholarly literature. Notably, the researchers have mostly chosen indigenous Bangla literature as their subject of study, despite graduating in English literature. However, the medium of study remains English, offering an opportunity to raise awareness and interest in Bangla and South Asian literature among the English-speaking community.

The journal itself is a special issue of *Praxis*, the journal of the Department of English at Rajshahi University, specifically focusing on the theme of Identity and Violence. The journal explores the intricate relationship between identity and violence through multidisciplinary perspectives, encompassing fields such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, and politics; inspired by Amartya Sen's seminal work titled *Identity and Violence: the Illusion of Destiny* (2006).

The group is currently running another research project on the Partition (1947 & 1971), and the researchers have selected their topics and submitted them to the editors, who are scrutinizing them right now.

The journal begins by providing an overview of the concept of identity, discussing how it is shaped by a variety of factors, including race, ethnicity, gender, class, religion, and sexual orientation. The authors then discuss how identity can be a source of both conflict and violence. They argue that when identity is threatened or challenged, it can lead to anger, resentment, and fear, which can lead to violence.

Professor Abdullah Al Mamun begins his note on violence thus: “In classical/traditional epistemological and ontological discourses, violence . . . and reason are considered as mutually exclusive and violence is perceived as antagonistic to truth, language, and logos.”

But Abdullah Al Mamun repudiates the binary of reason and violence, saying that it is not (and never was) as smooth as it seems to be. Violence has to be understood in a given spatiotemporal matrix, he writes, or analyzed and categorized by understanding its specific aspects in a historical context. More specifically, he charts out some associations—nation and violence, race and violence, gender and violence, religion and violence, class and violence, etc.—under the umbrella of which the young researchers have carried out their exploration while deploying different theoretical frameworks.

Of them, Walter Benjamin has been widely referred to by researchers on the topic. According to Benjamin, “All violence as a means is either lawmaking or law preserving”. However, law-making violence can also be seen as somewhat identical to the concept of Mythic violence as it bears the ambiguity of myth which ultimately leaves this kind of violence to be burdened with “fate”.

Some of the key findings of the journal articles are that identity is a complex and multifaceted concept shaped by a variety of factors including race, ethnicity, gender, class, religion, and sexual orientation. Identity can be a source of both conflict and violence. When identity is threatened or challenged, it can lead to anger, resentment, and fear, which in turn can lead to violence.

Violence is often used as a way to maintain or challenge social hierarchies, and it can be used to oppress or marginalised groups. It is essential to understand the complex relationship between identity and violence to develop effective interventions to prevent violence and promote peace.

In this volume, the researchers have engaged with a variety of texts, including Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent* and *Under the Western Eyes*, Manasamangal Kavvya, Syed Waliullah's *Tree Without Roots*, Tarashankar Bondopadhyay's *Kobi*, the works of Kazi Nazrul Islam, Jibanananda Das, Rudra Muhammad Shahidullah, as well as selected poems by William Blake. Additionally, the volume features an article on *An Introduction* by Kamala Das, the memoirs of Abul Mansur Ahmad, *The Dark Holds No Terror* by Sahahi Deshpande, and of course, on Amartya Sen's seminal work mentioned earlier.

The EDRU Study Group's research journal contributes valuable insights into the intersection of identity and violence, providing a platform for young researchers to enhance their research skills and contribute to the scholarly literature of Bangladesh. By exploring indigenous literature and using English as a medium, the group aims to bridge the gap between different linguistic communities and promote a deeper understanding of Bangla and South Asian literature.

Protik Bardhan is a senior sub editor at Prothom Alo.

DESIGN: SARAH ANJUM BARI

Bangladesh eye at least one point against Lebanon

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh will begin their SAFF Championship campaign in Bengaluru today as the second-lowest ranked team in the competition, taking on Lebanon – the highest ranked team – with hopes of prizing at least one point from the opening Group B game.

The championship got underway yesterday with Kuwait thrashing last edition's finalists Nepal 3-1 in the opening game of Group A and the action shifts to Group B today as Bangladesh and Lebanon square off at 4:00pm before the group's two other teams – Maldives and Bhutan – face off later in the day at the Sree Kanterava Stadium.

Bangladesh, champions in 2003, come into the competition having failed to move past the group stages in the past five editions. However, after registering a 1-0 win over Cambodia in a friendly last week, Javier Cabrera and his charges are optimistic about giving Lebanon, ranked 99th in the world, a run for their money.

"We have had good preparation, good practice and good food too. Tomorrow is our final exam and we want to pass," Bangladesh captain Jamal Bhuiyan told reporters after training yesterday.

The experienced midfielder felt that Bangladesh could still spring an upset against

the team from West Asia despite being the gulf in rankings by capitalising on the opposition's fatigue.

"Lebanon are a very strong side and they are more than 90 places above us [in the FIFA Rankings]. Our target is to win but we will be happy with one point," Jamal said. "They have played four games in the last 12 days. So they will be a bit tired and we will have a slight advantage there."

Despite being one of the pre-event favourites, Lebanon have been unable to give their best in recent times. They finished runners-up to India in the Intercontinental Cup last week, losing to the hosts in the final after drawing against them and against Mongolia in the group stages. Their only win came against Vanuatu in their opening match.

Coach Aleksandar Ilic said in a pre-tournament press meet on Tuesday that Bhutan's main target was to gain experience.

"We are a new team in this tournament and we would like to get the experience of playing against these teams. We also want to see which way we need to work and what we need to change," said the Serbian.

Apart from Lebanon's poor form, history will also encourage Bangladesh today. They have an equal head-to-head record, with the two teams meeting twice during the 2014 FIFA World Cup Qualifiers in 2011. Lebanon won

their home match 4-0 before losing 2-0 at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Although Bangladesh coach Cabrera is not relying on the decade-old result for much, he was adamant his charges



could put up a fight.

"We have no doubts about what we want to do and we can promise that we will compete at 100 per cent," the Spaniard said. "Of course Lebanon are a very strong team and they will do their best to get all three points, but we are for sure ready to fight for at least one point."

Booters 'eager to surprise all'

SPORTS REPORTER

As the stand-in captain, Hasan Al Mamun was the first Bangladeshi footballer to hold the coveted trophy of the SAFF Championship in front of a packed Bangabandhu National Stadium in 2003 after regular captain Rajani Kanta Barman missed the final against Maldives due to suspension.

Hasan, who has been with the national team as the assistant coach for nearly two years, spoke to The Daily Star over phone on the eve of Bangladesh's tournament opener against a vastly superior Lebanon.

"This time around, the inclusion of two guest teams (Lebanon and Kuwait) has made the tournament tough for all. However, [the game against] Maldives remains our main challenge," informed Hasan yesterday.

The 44-year-old went down the memory lane of 2003 and gave his insights on the possibility of the current national team in the ongoing regional football extravaganza.

"You always need to have unity, spirit, form and some other factors to

become champions. During the 2003 SAFF Championship, Bangladesh got huge support from the gallery on home ground, and that was a different scenario.

"There were quality players in that [2003] squad and there are some technically sound players in the current squad, too, but none as skillful as [playmaker midfielder] Arman Mia."

Since the maiden SAFF triumph in their fourth attempt, Bangladesh could play the final of the SAFF Championship only once in next seven editions.

"In that period, Bangladesh were in the race for the Championship and everyone respected Bangladesh. The tournament was so competitive but luck did not favour us. This squad has also been performing well but the results did not reflect.

Having failed to progress past the group stage in previous five editions as well, hopes remain slim for the men in red and green but Hasan, however, is optimistic of Bangladesh's chances this time.

"There are a lot of new players in the squad... I think they are ready for the tournament and eager to surprise all.

"This team also have a good chance to do well because our midfield is very organised and the backline is also quite good. Our plan revolves around Tapu [Barman] and Jamal [Bhuiyan] who can understand the game-model better than others in their positions."

Reality check for Brazil

AGENCIES

Brazil's 4-2 loss to Senegal in a friendly in Lisbon on Tuesday must have served as a reality check as the next time South America's national teams will be in action in September during the World Cup 2026 qualifiers.

Once again, Brazil were under the command of caretaker coach Ramon Menezes, whose day job is to take charge of the under-20s.

It was the first time Brazil have conceded more than two goals since the 2014 World Cup -- a 3-0 defeat to Netherlands in the third-place playoff, which came after the disastrous 7-1 thrashing to Germany in the semifinals.

The problem is that Menezes looks slated to be in charge for the first six rounds of the 2026 qualifiers as Brazil, according to local media, are willing to wait until his contract runs out in a year's time.

In Qatar, under, Tite it was hard for the opposition to create chances against Brazil; in Lisbon it was absurdly easy. The match highlighted the importance of a coach to provide balance and defensive organisation to a team which has no lack of talent.

Maybe it is time for the record five-time World Champions to decide on their coach in order to avoid such mishaps during the World Cup qualifiers.

Soumya watched closely in white-ball session

SPORTS REPORTER

As Soumya Sarkar whacked one of his trademark lofted drives down the ground during Bangladesh's practice session yesterday, spin coach Rangana Herath and a few others scattered to get out of the way.

It was a bit surprising to see the left-hander train in the national team's white-ball set-up considering he has been out of sight for a while. But perhaps he is not yet out of Chandika Hathurusingha's mind.

Soumya's recent form perhaps does not merit a comeback, but oftentimes, and more so in the context of Bangladesh cricket, ability shown on the international stage can leave an impact that can change a player's fortune.

Soumya was included in the squad for the upcoming Emerging Teams Asia Cup along with a few other stars from the national set-up. Reading between the lines, the idea is likely to see their performances during the tournament in Sri Lanka. Along with Soumya, Mosaddek Hossain and Mahedi Hasan too trained with the national team yesterday.

So close to the ODI World Cup, Soumya's presence in the nets and the Tigers' search for an option at number seven, even in the capacity of a backup, does allude to an opportunity being presented to the left-hander.



The 30-year-old is being cued for a middle-order role at the upcoming Emerging Teams Asia Cup, a source close to the team has claimed. Ahead of the World Cup, there could be a chance to stake a claim as per the team's requirements.

Following a spicy periscope shot from Soumya, Hathurusingha, paying close attention, called him in for a discussion. It was these kinds of shots which made

Soumya's name in international cricket during his previous forays.

"He didn't work on anything specific, but he was batting with Hathurusingha as per the schedule," a team management source said.

The head coach had said before the Ireland series in May that if Soumya "starts scoring, he will have a chance like everyone else in Bangladesh".

Soumya also bowled in the nets, with one particular delivery managing to even beat Tamim Iqbal all ends up. Mehedi Hasan Miraz was asked following the practice session how Hathurusingha was bolstering the confidence of Soumya and other contenders for the number seven slot.

Miraz identified that clarity of instructions and freedom of the players were the basics. "He always gives freedom to all the players. He especially tells those in the dressing room to play their natural game. If someone makes a mistake, then he tells us that maybe this or that particular aspect could be done in another way. But he doesn't tell them a lot of things because he is giving freedom. That's why the players are never confused," he said.

The tonic of confidence worked on Soumya before and it could be another masterstroke from the Sri Lankan if Soumya can produce performances and stake a claim following a bad patch.

CR7 cherishes 'special day'

AGENCIES

Captain Cristiano Ronaldo marked his landmark 200th appearance with a late winner as Portugal beat Iceland 1-0 on Tuesday to maintain their perfect start to Euro 2024 qualifying.

Ronaldo, who made his debut for Portugal in 2003, received a Guinness World Record certificate to mark the occasion prior to kick off.

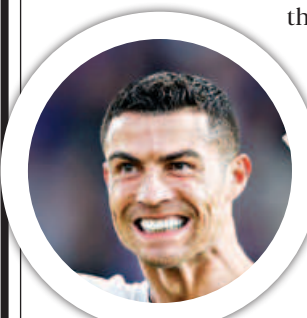
"So happy," Ronaldo told uefa.com after the match. "It's the kind of moment you never expect, to reach 200 caps. For me it's an unbelievable achievement.

"To be in the Guinness World Records is amazing and to score the winning goal is even more special. So I have to say thank you to the stadium, to Iceland, the people, the fans, the stadium for having this kind of party for me.

"Also to the Portugal national team, the federation. I'm so happy. It's a special day, I have to say thank you to all of them. They made my day. They made my night."

The 38-year-old striker steered in from close range in the 89th minute for his record-extending 123rd goal in international football in Reykjavik.

The Portugal captain has now scored five goals in Euro qualifying and is still playing a key role for the national team, despite a disappointing end to the World Cup last year.



England's Bazball, Aussie grit and a treat of Test cricket

AGENCIES

In the end England's audacious 'Bazball' flamboyance was trumped by some true Australian grit after five days of cut and thrust Ashes cricket that was as addictive as anything seen before.

England captain Ben Stokes had kept faith with the free-wheeling style of cricket concocted by Brendon McCullum, which had delivered 11 wins from 13 Tests.

And for much of an enthralling encounter at Edgbaston it worked a treat, with Australia at times seemingly bamboozled by the curve balls continually thrown their way.

Stokes ripped up the textbook with his field placings and gave his batters licence to express themselves, none more so than Joe Root whose reverse ramps lit up a frenetic day four which ended with some orthodox Stuart Broad seam magic.

Yet, when the dust has settled on a match resembling a glossy show-reel for the five-day format, Australia's often cautious approach prevailed thanks to a match-winning 55-run ninth-wicket partnership between Pat Cummins and Nathan Lyon at

a spellbound Edgbaston late on Tuesday.

It would be churlish to question England's tactics, whether it be Stokes' decision to declare their first innings on 393 for eight near the end of a barnstorming first day, or some of the dismissals on Monday as they batted with joyous abandon.

The first ball of the match on Friday was speared to the boundary by Zak Crawley and England's master batter Root began Monday's action trying a reverse scoop despite his side precariously-placed on 28 for two, just 35 ahead.

He repeated the shot to hit Scott Boland for a four and a six in consecutive balls and was eventually dismissed via a stumping for the first time in his 131 tests, charging down the track to try and blast Lyon into the stands.

In days gone by such a reckless approach would have been frowned upon, but in the world of 'Bazball' it is the way the cookie crumbles. You win some, you lose some.

Inevitably, with Australia winning by such a narrow margin, the fact that the visitors did not have to bowl England out twice to win a Test



match will be analysed to death.

But despite going 1-0 down in the series and putting a dent on England's hopes of winning back the Ashes urn, Stokes insists he will not have it any other way, which should be music to the ears of

fans of Test cricket.

"Everyone would have been on the edge of their seat here and everyone at home will have been glued to their TV. That's what we want to be remembered as a team," Stokes said.

"That's the thing about not being

a results driven team. We stuck to our ethos and did not get side-tracked by the whole arena of the Ashes"

Meanwhile, Cummins' claim that Australia won't be altering their style or tempo of play was especially pointed, given the criticism he and his men copped from day one of the Ashes opener against a rampant England.

With a win-loss Test match record that now stands at 13-3 from 21 matches since the preceding Ashes contest in Australia almost two years ago, Cummins shrugs off suggestions his men might be better served if they played a bit more like England.

"I think win or lose, we're pretty comfortable on how we go about it. We've been really good for the last 20 Test matches over a couple of years. Winning is nice, but I think we're at our best when we play at our own pace and our own tempo," said Cummins.

Without any doubt, in the end, the way rival skipper's contrasting styles unfolded the beauty of Test cricket would be savoured by the avid fans of the game in the era of shorter version cricket.



"As a youngster... I didn't have too many shots, so I learnt how to bat a long time from a young age. [Day five] was tough because I just wanted to take it deep. Little Uzzie inside of me was saying, 'You can expand now, you can get into second or third gear now'. But I was like, 'No, no... take it as far deep as you can'."

USMAN KHAWAJA, PLAYER OF THE MATCH

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2022

‘HELPING PILGRIMS’ IN KSA

Biman willfully
paying twice
for same job

ZYMA ISLAM and RASHIDUL HASAN

Biman Bangladesh Airlines will be spending about Tk 12.9 crores (\$1.18 million) to send 100 officials to Saudi Arabia to “assist Bangladeshi hajis” despite having a ground handling services agent who is supposed to do everything for about two-thirds of that cost.

Biman’s contract with the agent, Saudi Ground Services (SGS) Company, states that they are supposed to spring into action the minute an aircraft lands on the tarmac.

“Arrange for [limited to knocking of door only] opening aircraft passenger door,” states the contract. Then they are supposed to direct the passengers from the aircraft, provide them with transfer and connection services, transport them from the aircraft to the terminals and even provide the buses for the job.

They will document baggage information, offload baggage, handle it in the sorting area, deliver it to the claim area, and even handle crew’s baggage. They will also handle all lost, damaged or delayed baggage.

While the hajis being escorted out, they will clean the plane including scrubbing out stains, clear out the toilet tanks, wipe each surface spotless, replenish water tanks, replace seat covers, disinfect and deodorise the air.

Once the plane is ready for departure again, they will check in passengers, including even minute details like giving them upgrades and arranging for lounge facilities for those eligible.

The contract says that the SGS must provide the personnel needed to do these jobs, and even provide specially trained personnel for assisting unaccompanied minors, the elderly and those with health conditions.

They will perform all communication with aircraft, airport buildings and Biman, and liaison with all relevant people in Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia.

To do all these tasks with their own staff, the SGS is being given Tk 2.3 to Tk 2.5 lakh per flight depending on whether it is a transit flight or a turnaround flight.

For a total of 330 flights before and after the hajj, Biman will be paying on average Tk 8 crores to the ground handling services agent.

This figure could vary slightly for services requiring additional charges like flight delays, flights between 10:00pm and 6:00am, and miscellaneous things like provision of ground power units.

Asked about this, Biman Managing Director and CEO Shafiul Azim previously told The Daily Star that the employees of the national carrier have to do everything, including carrying the pilgrims’ luggage to and from hotels and the large Zamzam water containers during their departure from Saudi Arabia.

There are a lot more work that need to be done within a short time after a Biman flight lands there, he said.

“In case of an hour’s delay [for departure], the Saudi authorities will impose a hefty fine.”

Shafiul also mentioned that Biman last year sent 119 officials to Saudi Arabia when it carried around 30,000 hajj pilgrims. “This year, Biman will carry around 62,000 pilgrims.”

According to the SGS’s contract, the agency is supposed to do everything, including carrying the Zamzam water containers. However, Biman can also fire the agency if it fails to do the jobs satisfactorily.

The contract clearly states that the SGS is supposed to provide all personnel required to do these jobs.

Biman got SGS to provide it with iqamah to take the staffers to Saudi Arabia as SGS employees. The Daily Star has a copy of the iqamah or “temporary work visa”.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



YOUNG AND RECKLESS... Without helmet or pads, this rollerblader puts himself and others at risk as he races on a busy street in the capital, squeezing his way through traffic on the Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

MOVE TO JOIN BRICS

Be wary of the
geopolitical traps

Experts urge the government

PORIMOL PALMA

Bangladesh’s move to join the BRICS can provide a boost to trade and investment in the post-LDC world but the authorities should be wary of any geopolitical traps, said experts.

Since 2021, Bangladesh has been a member of the New Development Bank established by BRICS – an alliance of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa since 2001 – as an alternative to the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, both of which have a strong Western influence.

However, the issue of Bangladesh joining the BRICS came under the spotlight recently when Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina called on South African President Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa in Geneva on June 14. South Africa is the current president of BRICS.

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen then told the media that Ramaphosa invited Bangladesh to join the BRICS, which is now expanding its membership.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, he clarified that Bangladesh has not yet formally applied for the membership, but expressed the desire to join it when the South African president extended the invitation.

Bangladesh virtually attended a meeting of the BRICS recently as a guest and Hasina will attend this year’s BRICS summit to be held in August in South Africa.

“We need economic development. We need funds, trade and investment. We need them for the development of our people. Therefore, we think BRICS can be a good platform,” Momen said.

Bangladesh can also have its policymaking authority as a BRICS member, he said.

Asked about public perception that Bangladesh is joining BRICS as the relations with the US have somewhat strained following visa policy and sanctions on RAB, Momen said: “Some may think that way but it is not right. We maintain and will maintain relations with all. That is our foreign policy.”

The BRICS group has China and India, both major trading partners of Bangladesh, said M Humayun Kabir, president of the Bangladesh Enterprise Institute.

“These two countries have a lot of issues in their relationship. So, it is not very clear yet how we can benefit from the fact that we are in BRICS in the near future. However, in the midterm and long run, we will have

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Chettri hat-trick gives
India flying
start

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sunil Chhetri

scored a hat-trick as India thrashed Pakistan 4-0 in the second match on the opening day of the SAFF Championship in Bengaluru after Kuwait handed Nepal a 3-1 defeat yesterday.

India captain Chhetri opened the scoring in the 10th minute, profiting from a howler from the Pakistan goalkeeper before adding two more goals from the spot. Substitute forward Udanta Singh added a fourth to complete the rout in the heated affair at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium.

The hat-trick took Chhetri’s international tally to 90 goals from 138 matches as he moved to fourth position in goalscorers’ chart in men’s international football, only behind Cristiano Ronaldo (123), Ali Daei (109) and Lionel Messi (103).

Earlier, Kuwait, one of the two invited teams in this competition, got off to

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ILLEGAL WEALTH

Ex-DIG Mizan
sentenced to
14 years

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced sacked deputy inspector general (DIG) of police Mizanur Rahman to 14 years in prison for amassing over Tk 3.28 crore beyond known sources of income and concealing information on his wealth of Tk 3.27 crore in his wealth statement.

Judge Monjurul Imam of the Special Judge’s Court-6 of Dhaka handed down the sentence in a case filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission on June 24, 2019. Mizanur was among the four accused in the case.

The former DIG’s wife Sohelia Anar Ratna, nephew Mahmudul Hasan, a suspended sub-inspector of police, and his brother Mahbubur Rahman were also jailed for seven years each for abetting Mizanur.

The judge also directed the authorities concerned to confiscate moveable and immovable properties of the four accused.

The former police official was sentenced to three years in jail for concealing information on his wealth, and was given six years for acquiring wealth illegally and five years for laundering money. But he will have to serve total six years in jail as the sentences will run concurrently.

Mizanur was also fined Tk1.5 lakh, in default of which he will have to serve nine more months behind bars.

The time already served by the accused in jail

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Mizanur Rahman

LOST TITANIC SUB

Rescuers race
to find origin
of undersea
noises

REUTERS

Rescue teams were racing yesterday to trace the origin of sounds heard from the depths of the North Atlantic in a search for a tourist submersible with five people on board that vanished on its descent to the century-old wreck of the Titanic.

The US Coast Guard said remotely operated vehicle (ROV) searches were deployed in the area where Canadian aircraft detected the undersea noises on Tuesday, as the clock ticked in the last 24 hours of the missing craft’s presumed air supply.

“The sonobuoys detected noise in the water. We don’t know the source of that noise,” US Coast Guard Rear Admiral John Mauger told CBS yesterday. Two

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AT THE ONSET OF RAINY SEASON... A boatyard in Gazaria, Bhola, buzzes with activity. Workers here earn Tk 1,000 per day building boats. The cost of a boat depends on its size, and a quality boat can cost anywhere from Tk 80,000 to Tk 1 lakh. Boats are made here all year round and sold all over the country.

PHOTO: MONIR UDDIN ANIK

Humans affected
Earth’s rotation

Scientists say

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Humans may have altered the Earth’s rotation significantly between 1993 and 2010 alone by pumping large quantities of water out of the ground and moving it elsewhere.

Alarming levels of groundwater extraction have tilted the Earth nearly 80cm (31.5 inches) east during this period, found research published in the journal Geophysical Research Letters.

Previous studies have shown that the position of the Earth’s axis – or its rotational pole – changes relative to the crust, with the planet spinning a little differently as water is moved around.

Scientists have estimated using climate models that humans pumped 2,150 gigatons of groundwater – equivalent to over 6mm (0.24 inches) of sea level rise from 1993-2010.

While water’s ability to change the Earth’s rotation was first discovered in 2016, the specific contribution of groundwater to these rotational changes has remained elusive.

The new study modelled the observed changes in the drift of the planet’s rotational pole and the movement of water.

It first assessed the impact of only ice sheets and glaciers and then

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