



Over Tk 13,110cr anomalies in Janata Bank

Finds CAG audit from 2015 to 2020

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

State-owned Janata Bank indulged in 31 counts of "serious financial irregularities" from 2015 to 2020 involving Tk 13,110.8 crore, which is 22.85 percent of the lender's liabilities, found a recent audit.

The infamous AnonTex Group, which faces allegations of forgery and money laundering, accounts for 44.3 percent of the sum, found the audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General of Bangladesh conducted over a two-and-a-half-month period.

The audit found serious weaknesses in the bank's internal control system and gross non-compliance with rules and regulations, according to the audit report, which was submitted to parliament last week.

The irregularities include non-compliance with the terms for loan sanctioning and collection, circulars from the Bangladesh Bank's Banking Regulation and Policy Department (BRPD), the Bank Company Act 1991 and the lender's own credit risk management and loan sanctioning policies.

Neither did it adhere to the guidelines for Foreign Exchange Transactions nor to the terms agreed for performance improvement in the memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed with the BB.

The bank lent huge amounts without adequate collateral, increased

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Rickshaws in almost waist-deep water on Green Road in the capital. Many streets and alleys in the city went under water after heavy rain yesterday. Those who went out had to wade through dirty water.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Heavy rain inundates parts of city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different neighbourhoods in the capital went under knee- to waist-deep water after heavy rain yesterday.

Yesterday, the last day of the Eid holidays, started off with clear skies. But intermittent rain in the morning followed by an hour-long deluge in the afternoon flooded many streets.

Streets in Sayedabad, Panthapath, Rampura, Mirpur, Badda, Malibagh, Khilgaon and Rajarbagh went under knee-deep water.

The Meteorological Department reported that Dhaka received 91mm of rain in the last 24 hours.

Sofikul Islam, a resident of Sayedabad, said, "The Eid holidays are coming to an end, and offices will reopen tomorrow [Sunday]. Due to the rain, I couldn't take my children out for the last two days. The rain has somewhat dampened the joy of Eid for children this year."

Sultana Khatun of Rampura said there was knee-deep water in front of her house. "It's impossible to leave the house," she said.

Moqbul Hossain, public relations officer and spokesperson for Dhaka North City Corporation, said their quick response team helped drain water from the main roads since Wednesday. The DNCC has deployed five pumps in Kalyanpur, he said.

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7 YEARS OF HOLEY ARTISAN ATTACK

Revisiting the horror

WASIM BIN HABIB

It was just another Ramadan evening at the Holey Artisan Bakery on July 1, 2016.

The Western-style café in the posh neighbourhood of Gulshan-2 had a thin crowd after the break of the day's fast. But guests started arriving at the two-storey eatery, a favourite for expatriates and Bangladeshis alike.

The number kept rising as the diners ordered pizzas, pastries, and coffee. The restaurant became busier around 8:00pm. A group of Italians and another group of Japanese were among the foreigners who were seated at tables; a few Bangladeshis were also dining.

None, however, had any idea the horrors awaiting them.

The diners heard a loud noise that resembled a firecracker around 8:45pm. Five young people with weapons like

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Caught in the eye of the storm

Leader of a SWAT team recounts what transpired in the first phase of the rescue operation

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

The silence was unusual for a place otherwise bustling with activities. It reminded one of the calm before a storm, of ominous signs of danger. Even then, nobody in their wildest imagination could measure the devastation and bloodshed it would lead to.

That's how SM Jahangir Hasan, team leader of a Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) unit, describes the eerie atmosphere that reigned in the surrounding areas of Gulshan's Holey Artisan bakery on the evening of July 1.

After some armed men exchanged fires with a police patrol team, he was asked to lead



SM Jahangir Hasan

his seven-member team into the premises of the Gulshan restaurant. As the team's responsibility was to gather and relay information, he felt compelled to venture inside.

To the right stood the Lake View Clinic building while on the left was the Holey Artisan Bakery cafe. The only sound that broke the silence occasionally was a faint voice coming from the side of the clinic. "Please save me. Please take me from here," the voice whispered.

Jahangir was the first to step inside the Holey Artisan premises after armed militants carried out a brutal militant attack on the Gulshan

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Cast ballots for AL in next polls

PM urges people

UNB, Gopalganj

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday sought vote for "boat", the electoral symbol of the ruling Awami League, in the upcoming general election.

"Awami League earned the country's independence, ensured its economic emancipation and socio-economic development, and arranged food, clothes and accommodation for the people of the country. So, vote for 'boat' in the next election," she said.

The premier made the call while exchanging Eid greetings with the leaders of the AL and its associate bodies, and local public representatives at the office of the party's Kotalipara upazila unit in Gopalganj.

The next national election is likely to be held late this year or early next year.

Hasina, also the AL president, said her goal is to change the fate of the people of the country. "Our goals are to ensure education and healthcare services of the

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
In the Name of Allah,
The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful

7th Death Anniversary
FARAAZ AYAAZ HOSSAIN
April 15, 1996 - July 1, 2016

Seven years have passed since you left us, and not a day has gone by that we haven't thought of you. Though you left us in grief when you chose to stand by your friends and sacrificed your life to protect them, we hold our heads high today knowing you were our own.

You make us immensely proud when we witness your powerful legacy of courage, friendship, and humanity for the world. You are no longer just our Chotoo, today you are Bangladesh's, and you are the world's.

You live on as a symbol of courage and continue to serve as our moral compass to this day.

Though you are no longer with us, your memory, and bravery live on to impact the world.

To all who have stood by us, we thank you for your love, and support. Please keep our beloved Faraaz in your prayers and may Allah (SWT) grant him the highest place in Jannatul Firdaus.

Shahnaz Rahman and Family

Green chilli sells for Tk 700 a kg! Goes out of reach for many

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and MUNTAKIM SAAD

When consumers are struggling to deal with the soaring prices of essentials, the retail price of green chilli has hit a record high of Tk 700 a kg in the capital's kitchen markets.

Wholesalers at Karwan Bazar sold chilli for Tk 500 a kg yesterday.

Just about a month ago, retailers in the capital sold green chilli for Tk 100 to Tk 120 a kg.

Traders blamed supply dearth and damage to crops from bad weather for the abnormal hike in prices.

To cool down the prices, the government permitted import of green chilli ahead of Eid. But the move is yet to make any impact on prices.

The Daily Star yesterday found that traders and vendors in some areas of the capital stopped selling green chilli to avoid altercations with consumers.

Expressing frustration, Md Russel, a vegetables vendor in Gulistan, said he had to visit Karwan Bazar yesterday only to purchase green chilli for his shop. Before that, he went to Shyambazar but could not buy chilli from wholesalers who asked Tk 700 for each kg.

"I bought five kgs of green chilli for Tk 2,500 at Karwan Bazar. To make a profit, I will have to sell it for at least Tk 700 per kg."

Suruzzaman, a restaurant owner at Banglamotor, said his eatery requires three kgs of green chilli every day. After hearing about acute shortage of supply in the capital, he bought half a kg of green chilli for Tk 400 from Murapara Bazar in Sonargaon while returning to the capital from his hometown Narayanganj yesterday.

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BUSINESS

NOTICE

Star Business has not been published today as economic activities are yet to gain momentum following Eid-ul-Azha holidays. Business pages will come out from tomorrow.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
In the Name of Allah,
The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful

3rd Death Anniversary
LATIFUR RAHMAN
28 August 1945 - 1 July 2020

Three years since you left us, and you remain as our guiding light. Your strong values of ethics and integrity are still woven into every moment.

You were the pillar of our family and to all those around you. You remain a shining example of honesty, patriotism, and excellence in every sphere of life. We may miss your physical presence, but you live on in all our hearts.

You live on in all your strength and as a symbol of ethics.

Though you are no longer with us, your memory, and glorious legacy continues.

To all who have stood by us, we thank you for your love, and support. Please keep our beloved Latifur Rahman in your prayers and may Allah (SWT) grant him the highest place in Jannatul Firdaus.

Shahnaz Rahman and Family

Constable stabbed to death by 'muggers'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A police constable was stabbed to death by unidentified assailants in the capitals' Farmgate area before daybreak yesterday.

Moniruzzaman Talukder, 41, who was with the Tejgaon division of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, was attacked when he had just returned to the city after spending Eid in his hometown.

HM Azimul Haque, a deputy commissioner of DMP, said the attack might have been an incident of mugging.



Moniruzzaman Talukder

A p u r b a Hasan, officer-in-charge of Tejgaon Police Station, said the victim was walking to a traffic police office near Tejgaon Railway Station when, according to witnesses, two men attacked him.



Japanese Ambassador to Bangladesh Iwama Kiminori, centre, places a wreath at the erstwhile Holey Artisan cafe in the capital's Gulshan to pay respect to the victims of the grisly militant attack on the eatery seven years ago.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

25 killed after bus catches fire in India

AFP, Mumbai

At least 25 people were killed and eight others injured in western India when a bus crashed and caught fire on an expressway early yesterday.

The bus was travelling to the city of Pune when it hit a pole and overturned after midnight, causing its diesel tank to catch fire, senior police officer Baburao Mahamuni told AFP.

"There were about 30 to 35 people in the bus. Twenty-five people have died and eight others are injured," he said.

The injured have been admitted to a hospital near the site of the crash in Maharashtra state, about 400 kilometres (250 miles) east of India's financial capital Mumbai.

The driver and conductor of the bus were taken into custody for questioning, state rural development minister Girish Mahajan told reporters.

"The driver is saying the tyre of the bus burst, after which it hit a pole. But it seems he had dozed off. We will have to see what actually happened," he said.

Mahajan added that the bodies had been charred beyond recognition and forensic teams were on their way to help in identification of the victims.

One of the survivors of the accident

said he got out of the burning vehicle via a window.

"The passenger seated next to me and I managed to escape by breaking the rear window," he told the Press Trust of India (PTI) news agency.

"But not everyone could do it." A witness to the crash told PTI he unsuccessfully tried to help rescue passengers stuck inside the burning bus.

"We saw people getting burnt alive," he said. "The fire was so intense that we could not do anything."

Police said they had launched an inquiry into the crash.

"The priority at this moment is to identify the bodies and hand them over to their family members," local media quoted police superintendent Sunil Kadasane as saying.

Images published in local media showed the bus engulfed in flames and later the charred remains of the vehicle overturned on the highway.

Three children were among the dead, a police officer told reporters.

"Deeply saddened by the devastating bus mishap in Buldhana," Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Twitter.

"My thoughts and prayers are with the families of those who lost their lives. May the injured recover soon."

SHAHIDUL'S DEATH ILO, US call for thorough investigation

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The International Labour Organization (ILO) and the US want an independent investigation into the recent killing of labour leader Shahidul Islam in Gazipur.

"We call for a thorough and independent investigation and for the protection and advancement of union leaders' human and labour rights," said the Bureau of International Labour Affairs in a tweet on Thursday.

The tweet condemned the murder of Shahidul, 50, president of Gazipur unit of Bangladesh Garment and Industrial Workers Federation, who was beaten to death right after he left a meeting at a factory where he had been negotiating to get its workers their arrears on the night of June 25.

In a separate statement, the ILO on Friday encouraged the authorities to do their utmost to bring those responsible for this crime to justice and to ensure a peaceful industrial relations environment for workers and employers to engage in joint problem-solving.

Freedom fighter beaten to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

A freedom fighter was beaten to death in Jamalpur's Islampur yesterday by his neighbour over a quarrel about draining accumulated rainwater from his yard.

Sader Ali, 70, was a former teacher at Islamia Fazil Madrasa Islampur.

The incident took place in Rouharkanda village, Partshi union.

Quoting locals, Majedur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Islampur Police Station, said Sadek Ali got into an argument with his neighbour Dukhu Mia when he was removing accumulated rainwater from his yard.

At one stage, Dukhu Mia and his men attacked Sadek Ali, leaving him seriously injured.

Later, locals rescued him and took him to the Islampur Upazila Health Complex, where an on-duty doctor declared him dead.

Police detained three people for interrogation, said the OC.

UNGA SYRIA VOTE Momen clarifies Dhaka's abstention

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh abstained from voting on the UN resolution on the disappearance of 130,000 Syrians as it did not want to make it a "political issue".

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen told this to The Daily Star yesterday after an event at the Foreign Service Academy in the capital.

A foreign ministry official said Bangladesh's general principle is to abstain from voting on any country-specific resolution, except for those on Myanmar as Bangladesh becomes directly affected by Myanmar's actions related to Rohingya.

Bangladesh and India are among the 62 countries which abstained from voting on the resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly on June 29 on a mechanism to help the families of the 130,000 Syrians know the whereabouts of their relatives and loved ones.

Police shoot buffalo, hit bystander instead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Police, while trying to capture a buffalo that had gone wild in Narayanganj's Araihaazur on Friday, mistakenly shot a young man, who is now receiving treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Md Shanto, 24, of the Duptara area of Araihaazur, was not critically injured, claimed police.

Shanto was shot on the morning of the second day of Eid and subsequently taken to the hospital by police.

According to police and locals, the buffalo escaped from a cattle market the night before Eid and was causing havoc in the area. It had even injured two people.

On Friday morning, police went to the area, found the buffalo, and shot at it.

Araihaazur Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC) Imdadul Islam Tayyab said, "Police fired at the buffalo, but hit the young man in his stomach by mistake."

Revisiting the horror

FROM PAGE 1

operations. The mastermind of the attack -- Tamim Ahmed Chowdhury, a Bangladeshi-origin Canadian -- was killed during one such drive on August 27, 2016.

Tamim spearheaded the Neo JMB after coming to Bangladesh in 2013 and took charge as its chief in 2015. On July 11 that year, his group joined mainstream JMB leader Sarwar Jahan Manik's group. Sarwar was also killed in a drive on October 8, 2016.

Since the café attack, law enforcers carried out more than two dozen anti-militancy operations at dens where at least 79 militants were killed and a huge quantity of explosives were destroyed or seized.

Amidst the cruelty that shook the country to its core, a young man -- aged only 20 -- stood out as an example of courage, friendship, and humanity.

Following the massacre, a case was filed with Gulshan police under the Anti-Terrorism Act.

On November 27, 2019, the Anti-Terrorism Special Tribunal in Dhaka sentenced seven militants to death for their involvement in the attack, terming it a disgraceful attack aimed at assassinating the non-communal character of Bangladesh.

"Through this disgraceful attack, an attempt was made to assassinate the non-communal character of Bangladesh. Foreigners here suffered from a sense of insecurity. The positive image of Bangladesh, known for peace and harmony, was tarnished a bit," said the court in its verdict.

The High Court has started hearing of the death reference and appeals of the case in May this year. The hearing is expected to be completed in the next few months, and the HC will then deliver a judgment.

Law enforcers succeeded in busting a number of militant dens through counter-terrorism

Caught in the eye of the storm

FROM PAGE 1

that this was not an ordinary criminal attack but the work of well-trained terrorists," Jahangir continues.

Feeling a surge of fear, Jahangir realised they were trapped in a perilous situation as several high-ranking police officers followed the SWAT team.

On the evening of July 1, the then DMP Commissioner Asaduzzaman Mia was attending a programme in Gulshan. When the shooting incident was reported instantly within the force, he, along with a team of additional commissioners, joint commissioners and deputy commissioners, rushed to the spot and trailed behind the SWAT team to get a clear picture of what was going on.

Jahangir promptly gestured for everyone to retreat, lowering his weapon and raising his hands in the air.

"I spoke loudly to the senior police officers, urging them to exit. I said that we could engage with the armed men inside the café later, hoping that those inside could hear me," he explains.

The high-ranking officers began to retreat slowly. Jahangir's team divided into two groups and ensured their safe evacuation.

The unimaginable struck them soon after. A grenade lay in their path. Jahangir and his team figured it out later that the grenade was somehow dislodged from a flower tub where it was originally planted.

Green chilli sells for Tk 700 a kg!

FROM PAGE 1

Al Amin, a vegetable vendor at Karwan Bazar, said he bought green chilli for Tk 360 a kg on Friday night and sold it for Tk 400.

Yesterday, he had to buy for Tk 500 a kg and sell it for Tk 600.

A day labourer from East Tejuri Bazar wanted to buy green chilli worth Tk 10 from Al Amin. But the vendor refused to sell such a small amount. The labourer finally bought 10 chillies for Tk 20.

Ashraful Alam, a wholesaler at Karwan Bazar, said that he usually

sells 500 kgs of green chilli every day. But on Friday, he managed to buy 100 kgs for Tk 350 per kg and sold it for Tk 360 per kg.

The next day, he had to purchase green chilli for Tk 550 a kg from Modhukhali Bazar in Faridpur. He was selling his Friday's unsold stock of 40 kgs yesterday.

Traders said green chilli is brought to Dhaka mainly from Faridpur, Rajshahi, and Rangpur. Previously, the bulk of the supply used to come from Nilphamari, Bogura, and Manikganj.

Yesterday, retailers in Manikganj

"One of my team members, Sub-Inspector Sujon Kundo, spotted it and motioned to me," Jahangir recounts. Jahangir instantly instructed Sujon to defuse the grenade.

Sujon, known for his bravery, bent over the explosive and instructed others to move away from him. Unfortunately, the grenade's pin got removed, resulting in a deafening explosion.

The explosion caused severe injuries to Jahangir and his entire team. Sujon bore the brunt of the blast and was left critically wounded. "We were all left in a state of shock and disbelief, overwhelmed by the impact of the blast and shrapnel," Jahangir recalls.

At least 11 to 12 other officers were injured by the explosion. Among them were Rabiul Karim, an assistant commissioner of the detective branch, and Salahuddin Ahmed, an officer-in-charge.

Tears welled up in Jahangir's eyes as he spoke of Rabiul, his batchmate. Rabiul suffered a lung injury while Salahuddin was struck in the neck. Both of them succumbed to their injuries within half an hour after they were taken to the hospital.

Some high-ranking officers were also wounded in the blast. Medical teams were summoned and all the injured were swiftly transported to the hospital.

Taking refuge in a nearby building's garage, Jahangir accompanied the DMP commissioner, who also was in a state of shock.

In the following hours, senior officers convened meetings and strategised their response to the crisis. After discussions with the prime minister, a para-commando team was deployed to conduct the rescue operation.

Eventually, after a gruelling 12-hour operation, the commandos gained control of the building, putting an end to the siege. Memories fade. But the night of July 1 has not evaporated from Jahangir's mind even a bit. It comes back to him and leaves him shaken every now and then.

Although he finds the events that transpired to be horrendous, he feels lucky that he made it through the night. He also feels a sense of pride that he could play his part as a police officer on that night.

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Militancy not fully eradicated but under control

Says DMP chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner Khandaker Golam Faruq yesterday said although militancy has not been completely eradicated from the country, it is under control.

"We must remain vigilant as the latent seeds of militancy may still exist," he said during a conversation with reporters after paying tribute to the two policemen who were killed in the attack at the Holey Artisan Café.

Recalling the tragic events of July 1, 2016, Faruq mentioned that foreign nationals were held hostage and killed by militants in the café, resulting in the sacrifice of two brave policemen during the rescue operation.

Faruq highlighted that in 2015-16, various militant attacks were

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Prime Minister and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina along with her family members places a wreath at the mausoleum of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in Tungipara of Gopalganj yesterday.

PHOTO: PMO

A light shines amid darkness

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Most of us would go the mile for our friends, but sometimes the question becomes -- how long is that mile?

What if the mile meant giving up your life? What if you were given an easy way out, an easy way to walk out, abandoning your friends? Perhaps your friends are also asking you to walk away, they are saying they will be okay?

Let us complicate matters further -- what if your mother was waiting for you outside, as you know in your heart that she surely must be?

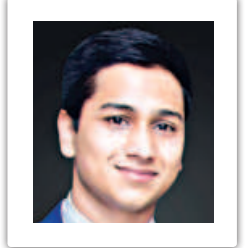
One can never know if these were the questions hounding

Faraaz Ayaaz Hossain on that fateful night in 2016 when militants stormed the Holey Artisan Bakery in Gulshan and killed everyone in sight. Their main targets were foreigners and non-Muslims.

Faraaz, 20, son of Simeen Hossain and Waquer Hossain, and a student of Emory University in Atlanta, USA, was given the option of walking out because he was a Bangladeshi Muslim but he had to leave his friends Abinta Kabir and Tarishi Jain behind.

How long is the mile you ask? Faraaz answered it in that moment -- for our friends, there is no

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



Focus on development not politics

Momen urges aid agencies; UN deputy under secy in town

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen yesterday said the development agencies should not focus on politics but on development as it faces major challenges amid the Ukraine-Russia war.

"It is regrettable that many of our development partners and institutions remain busy with politics. I told them all development agencies should focus on development issues, not on politics," he said after a meeting with UN Deputy Secretary General Amina J Mohammed at the Foreign Service Academy.

Momen said he shared this message to the UN official, who came to Bangladesh yesterday afternoon on her second leg of visit after China.

Amina called on

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Dhaka cleaned up promptly

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The combined efforts of Dhaka's city corporations and residents managed to clean the capital within the three days of Eid.

Residents were encouraged to maintain proper disposal and clean surroundings with bleach, and they were seen following the instructions in many areas.

Besides, many were satisfied with the city corporations' prompt steps.

"After sacrificing our cattle, we cleaned the area and left the waste at the roadside, which was then collected by conservancy workers quickly," said Faruk Ahmed, a resident of Mirpur-2.

"After the sacrifice, we personally cleaned the area. The city corporation also helped us clean the waste," said Monwar Hossain of Tikatuli.

Earlier, the two mayors announced that they would ensure that the city would be completely cleaned.

DSCC has cleaned up 18,852.65 tonnes of animal and cattle market waste in the last three



City corporation workers collecting waste from a roadside in the English Road area of the Old Dhaka during Eid.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

days till yesterday, while DNCC cleaned up 22,387 tonnes during the same period, according to the corporations' public relations departments.

The city residents demonstrated a heightened sense of responsibility towards managing sacrificial waste this year,

surpassing previous years' efforts. The city corporations provided polybags to sanitation workers for the collection of waste from sacrificial animals. Individuals who did not receive polybags from the city corporation proactively purchased bags themselves

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GONO ODHIKAR Amid row, Reza Kibria removed as convener

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Gono Odhikar Parishad yesterday removed Reza Kibria from his role as convener and replaced him with Rashed Khan, who served as the joint convener, despite objections from several party leaders.

"The decision of impeaching the convener was taken as the two-third members of the central committee supported the proposal..." reads a press release of the organisation signed by its office secretary Shakil Uzzaman.

The party also decided to hold its first ever council on July 10.

However, Reza Kibria did not attend the meeting citing security concerns and "to avoid chaos".

According to meeting and party sources, member secretary Nurul Haque Nur first brought up the subject

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Committee formed to probe anomalies by Capt Sazid

RASHIDUL HASAN

Biman Bangladesh Airlines has formed a high-powered investigation committee and fact-finding team to identify anomalies and irregularities by Capt Sazid Ahmed of training division during 2021-2023.

In a circular, the national flag carrier said recent reports in the media have highlighted issues such as allegations of nepotism, financial discrepancies,



The committee will also investigate the allegations of nepotism raised against Captain Sazid in all newspapers and media forum.

and intentional delay in crew training, which has resulted in defamation of the airline's image in international and local media forums.

"Given the seriousness of these allegations and the potential negative impact on our airline's operations, it is imperative that a thorough investigation be conducted to ascertain the veracity of these claims and identify any lapses or wrongdoings," reads the circular.

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LOWER COURTS

Case disposal rate increases to 30pc

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The case disposal rate at lower courts has increased to 22.03 percent last year and to 30 percent in the first quarter of the current year compared to the rate of disposal in 2019.

The subordinate courts across the country have disposed of a total 3,53,375 cases in the first quarter (January to March) of the current year while a total 3,52,448 cases were filed.

It means that 100.26 percent cases were settled in comparison to the rate of filing of new cases, according to a statement recently issued by the Supreme Court administration.

It said the lower court judges have disposed of a total 13,78,522 cases since January to December last year while a total of 14,70,957 cases were lodged, which means that the rate of disposal was 93.72 percent compared to the filing last year.

The courts could not carry out their normal functions in 2020 and 2021 due Covid-19 pandemic.

The rates of case disposals have increased at the subordinate courts because of different steps and monitoring systems initiated by Chief Justice Hasan

Foez Siddique, SC's Appellate Division Registrar Mohammad Saifur Rahman told The Daily Star.

He said the chief justice has earlier assigned eight High Court judges to monitor the performances of lower courts in eight divisions.

Although the rate of case disposal has increased in recent years, a huge backlog of around 42 lakh cases is pending with the courts across the country, including the Appellate and HC divisions, causing immeasurable sufferings to the litigants.

Besides, the chief justice himself monitors and supervises their activities and issues necessary directives.

Saifur said more than 1,200 judges have been recruited to the subordinate courts in the last 10 years and recruitment of 100 new judges is under process.

After their recruitments are completed,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8



With three passengers in the back, two more next to the driver's seat and two others standing on the side bars, a CNG-run auto-rickshaw plies the Dhaka-Mawa expressway. Such an illegal and risky move on such a busy highway poses a serious risk of accident. The photo was taken in Keraniganj recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

A light shines amid darkness

FROM PAGE 3
mile that is too long to traverse.

When the terrorists refused to let his friends go, Faraaz chose to stay by their side, according to witnesses who were inside the café during the siege. After nearly 12 hours of the standoff, special forces of the army succeeded in breaking the siege. The bodies of 20 victims, including Faraaz, Tarishi and Abinta, were found inside the café.

Faraaz was a junior at Emory, slated to graduate in 2018. At the 2018

commencement ceremony, Emory paid tribute to him by naming an award after him.

"This award has been renamed to honor Faraaz Hossain, who would have been a member of your class but died tragically and heroically, defending his friends in a terrorist attack in Bangladesh," the university announced during the ceremonies. "The Core Values award is therefore particularly poignant to us and is presented to a senior who embodies our most noble principles."

PepsiCo Inc in 2016 launched the annual "Faraaz Hossain Courage Award" to be given out for the next 20 years with a cash endowment of \$200,000. It recognises bravery in the face of adversity, and encourages

youth under 35 to take on courageous roles.

The Harmony Foundation of India in November 2016 posthumously conferred on Faraaz the Mother Teresa Memorial International Award for Social Justice.

"Let us cross borders with the courage they showed in their lives," said President of Emory University Claire Sterk at a programme organised by the university's Oxford College community following the tragic deaths of Faraaz and Abinta.

As the massacre is remembered today, so is the story of Faraaz, whose courage and loyalty in the face of death shows a promise of becoming an urban tale that will be told about this city for decades to come.

Building

FROM PAGE 5
DSCC Chief Executive Officer Mizanur Rahman, who is supervising the situation, said the road adjacent to the building has been closed as a precautionary measure.

Kamrul Hasan Kamal, inspector (investigation) of Bangshal Police Station, told The Daily Star that the balcony of the outpost had collapsed.

"No one was hurt from the incident," he said.

"We immediately evacuated the officials from the building and all of them have taken shelter in the tin shed building nearby," he said.

Kamal said the building is risky. "We will notify the higher authorities to take decisions on the issue," he added.

Dhaka cleaned

FROM PAGE 3
and collected the waste. Some residents even voluntarily took it upon themselves to clean the bloodstains left behind by the animals.

Furthermore, the city corporation authorities emphasised the positive role of rainwater during and after Eid in facilitating proper waste disposal, preventing the occurrence of large-scale blockages.

DNCC Mayor Md Atiqul Islam, while visiting different areas, said they cleaned all animal waste on the first day of Eid.

Atiqul said around 11,000 conservancy workers were cleaning DNCC areas. Cleaning the

city was possible due to the cooperation of city dwellers, he added.

DSCC Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh on Thursday said their 9,000 garbage management workers have been working since Eid day.

Despite all the efforts, however, animal waste was still seen at some places on the third day of Eid.

The locations – including Dinanath Sen Road of Gendaria, Dayanath intersection, Bongshal Road and Sutrapur's Kagajitola area – were still in bad condition, as cattle markets were set up on the roads, said locals. Bad smells emanating from the piles had spread throughout the area.

Invest more

FROM PAGE 5
global brands, tanners need to have LWG certification. In Bangladesh, however, only two companies have such certification.

At present, Bangladesh can export tanned skins only to China as the country has not been able to obtain the LWG certification for a lack of compliance.

The LWG is a not-for-profit membership organisation working to create meaningful change across the global leather supply chain.

Ahmed thinks if an eco-friendly leather estate can be built, Bangladesh will be able to export leather and leather goods worth \$12 billion by 2030.

Overall exports from leather and leather products, the second-biggest export-earning sector after garments, inched up 0.42 percent to \$1.12 billion in July-May of 2022-23, showed data from the Export Promotion Bureau.

Receipts stood at \$1.11 billion during the same period a year earlier.

Bangladesh's share in the export market of leather and leather products in the world is 3 percent, according to the BTA.

The government has already spent Tk 1,080 crore to establish the estate and another Tk 1,000 crore was needed to make the facility fully functional, said Mustak Ahmed, managing director of Dhaka Tannery Industrial Estate Waste Treatment Plant Company, recently.

Md Sakhawat Ullah, general secretary of the BTA, said total tax incidence is not helpful in the leather industry; so it should be rationalised.

He said there was a need to provide the bonded warehouse facility, which allows exporters to bring in raw materials duty-free to manufacture products for international markets.

102nd anniv

FROM PAGE 5
DU pro-VC (Academic) Prof ASM Maksud Kamal, pro-VC (Administration) Prof Dr Muhammad Samad, Treasurer Prof Dr Mamtaz Uddin Ahmed, and DU teachers' association general secretary Prof Zeenat Huda, attended the discussion, among others.

Stretching across 600 acres of land, Dhaka University, regarded as the country's highest echelon for academic excellence, started its journey on July 1, 1921 with 12 departments, three faculties, 60 teachers, 877 students, and three dormitories.

The university now comprises of 83 departments, 13 faculties, 12 institutes, 56 research bureaus and centres, 1,992 teachers and 37,018 students.

However, he cautioned the emergence of new militant outfits, such as Jama'atul Ansar Fil Hindal Sharqiya, which have been targeted by the police and Rapid Action Battalion for arrest and prosecution.

Case disposal

FROM PAGE 3
the rates of case disposals will increase further, he added. Although the rate of case disposal has increased in recent years, a huge backlog of around 42 lakh cases is pending with the courts across the country, including the Appellate and HC divisions, causing immeasurable sufferings to the litigants.

The number of such backlogs is growing higher since the number of filing of cases is increasing day by day due to the huge population in the country, said SC sources.

An SC study report said 41,96,603 cases were pending with all the courts after 15,71,617 were filed and 14,71,402 were disposed of till December 31 last year.

Of those, 19,928 cases were pending with the Appellate Division, 5,16,674 with the HC Division and 36,50,001 with the lower courts till that day.

Without finance and technology, SDGs cannot be achieved at all, he added. Addressing the seminar, Amina J Mohammed said conflicts in different parts of the world and refugee crises have caused a huge blow to the SDGs.

Bangladesh has set good examples by improving the food system and technological development for food security, but climate change and lack of international support remain as huge challenges.

She emphasised investing heavily on quality education and transition to green technology from fossil fuels.

"Human rights should be at the centre of all the activities," she said. Speakers stressed on inclusive development and public-private partnership and improved governance for effective development.

"Financing and technology should be given

Committee formed to probe

FROM PAGE 3
The national airliner, therefore, formed an independent investigation committee and fact-finding team to examine the different related areas.

Capt Tanvir Khurshid, chief of technical, was made the convener of the probe body while Anwarul Haque, deputy manager security, was made member-secretary.

Capt Intekhab Hossain, deputy chief of Flight Safety; and Leakat Hossain, deputy general manager, Route & Fuel, are the two members of the committee. One representative from Bangladesh Airlines' Pilot Association will act as an observer in the five-member investigation team.

The committee should thoroughly investigate the alleged lapses within the training division, which have

resulted in delays in crew training. It is important to identify any systemic issues and recommend necessary improvements.

The committee will probe allegations of nepotism against Captain Sazid in all newspapers and media forum. Any instances of favouritism that compromise the integrity of the airline should be identified.

Undersigned by Capt Siddiqur Rahman, director (flight operations), Biman, the committee was also asked to assess the validity of the allegations regarding the defamatory of Biman's image in the media and determine the extent of any financial implications, if any.

Earlier on March 8, Biman removed Capt Sazid from the post of chief of training. He is working as a line pilot of Boeing 777.

Biman authorities came up with the decision following several allegations against him including misuse of power, undue favour to his wife Sadia Ahmed and others, and disparities with female cockpit crews.

On March 6, Biman formed a three-member committee to probe the alleged irregularities in hiring pilots and paying for hiring unqualified Boeing 777 pilots. In the terms of reference of the committee, it was said that the probe body will also investigate the alleged forgery by Sadia Ahmed, a first officer of Boeing 777, in her HSC certificate.

Biman formed the probe body in response to a report of The Daily Star published on March 1 titled "Biman paying for hiring unqualified Boeing 777 pilots."

Militancy not fully eradicated

FROM PAGE 3
carried out as part of domestic and international conspiracies to impede the development and progress of Bangladesh.

"Following the Holey Artisan attack, our development partners halted their projects and left the country out of fear," he said.

The DMP chief said the resolute stance of the police

and the people, led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, was against the militants.

"This demonstrated to our development partners that we are determined to uproot militancy. As a result, they returned, and our journey of development continued," he added.

"While militancy has not been eradicated, we can confidently state that it is under control," he said.

Asked about the presence of militant groups like JMB and Neo JMB, Faruq responded that there is no activity of the militancy outfits.

However, he cautioned the emergence of new militant outfits, such as Jama'atul Ansar Fil Hindal Sharqiya, which have been targeted by the police and Rapid Action Battalion for arrest and prosecution.

Amid row, Reza Kibria removed

FROM PAGE 3
of Kibria's impeachment at the meeting.

Hasan Al Mamun, a joint convener of the party, responded by saying that in order to remove anyone from the central executive committee, at least 81 members must vote in favour of the removal; however, only 45 people are present.

Nur and the faction loyal to him allegedly rejected Hasan's stance and said the present members will verbally answer "Yes" or "No" to the question of removing the convener, in presence of everyone.

Mamun then proposed to hold a secret voting, a

proposal which Nur also refused and eventually decided to remove Reza Kibria.

On June 25, Nur loyalists, sent a letter to Reza Kibria proposing a no confidence motion against him, which contained signatures of one-third of the members of the central committee.

As per the charter of Parishad, the president shall convene an emergency meeting of the Central Executive Council within one week upon receiving the proposal. If the president does not call this meeting, the proposal must be resolved by calling another summon meeting and the no-

confidence motion will be passed against the accused person, if two-thirds of the total number of members vote in favour of that.

Talking to The Daily Star, Hasan Al Mamun said, "No voting took place to decide on Reza Kibria's impeachment. The member secretary autocratically took the decision defying the party charter."

Nur and Kibria could not be reached for comments despite repeated attempts.

Contacted, Shakil Uzzman, office secretary of the party, claimed that they held online voting and 85 members voted in favour of removing Kibria.

Focus on development not politics

FROM PAGE 3
Momen at the FSA and then attended as special guest a seminar – "Road to Sustainable Development Goals Summit 2023" – organised by the foreign ministry.

Talking to the journalists, Momen said the opposition BNP is complaining to the foreigners as the party does not have confidence in people. "Elections will be held in time. We guarantee free and fair elections. There is no need to discuss it further," he said.

Momen said they are asking people to boycott those who complain to foreigners and cause harm to national interests.

Momen said Amina Mohammed is in Dhaka to discuss how to accelerate the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and climate change before a summit on the agenda in September.

She will be visiting the climate vulnerable areas

in Khulna today to see the ground impacts of climate change. Momen said every year 6.6 lakh Bangladeshis are being displaced and losing jobs due to salinity intrusion and water logging.

"They are facing such realities because of the faults of the rich countries that emit huge greenhouse gases and cause global warming," he said.

B a n g l a d e s h ' s contribution to carbon emission is only 0.47 percent. Therefore, Bangladesh, like other affected countries, wants the rich countries to share the burden.

As per the goal 17 of the SDGs, the developed countries will provide finance and technology for achieving the SDGs. The developed nations pledged to provide 0.7 percent of their GDP to the climate affected countries, but only six kept their promise.

"Financing and technology should be given

by the developed countries, so far, their response is very poor," Momen said.

Without finance and technology, SDGs cannot be achieved at all, he added. Addressing the seminar, Amina J Mohammed said conflicts in different parts of the world and refugee crises have caused a huge blow to the SDGs.

Bangladesh has set good examples by improving the food system and technological development for food security, but climate change and lack of international support remain as huge challenges.

She emphasised investing heavily on quality education and transition to green technology from fossil fuels.

"Human rights should be at the centre of all the activities," she said. Speakers stressed on inclusive development and public-private partnership and improved governance for effective development.

"Financing and technology should be given

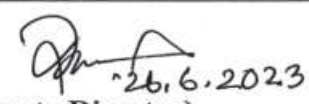
বাংলাদেশ কমার্স ব্যাংক লিমিটেড
সকল প্রকার আমানত, আর্থনীয়
স্বীকৃত জামানতবিনহীন বিনিয়োগ,
উদ্যোগ, কৃষি ঋণ সুবিধা ও ডেভিড
কার্ড সহ আধুনিক ব্যাংকিং সেবার
আপনার বিশ্বস্ত সহযোগী।
বিসিবি

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Ministry of Agriculture
Cotton Development Board
Khamarbari, Farmgate, Dhaka-1215

Memo No-12.07.0000.111.99.257.23- 238 Date: 26.06.2023

Request for Expressions of Interest (EOI)
for selection of a firm/ company for supplying manpower
for Cotton Development Board (National)

General Information		
1. Ministry/ Division	Ministry of Agriculture	
2. Agency	Cotton Development Board	
3. Name of Procuring Entity	Deputy Director (HQ), Cotton Development Board, Khamarbari, Farmgate, Dhaka-1215	
4. Procuring Entity Code	430026	
5. Procuring Entity District	Dhaka	
6. Expression of Interest for	Selection of Firm/ Company for supplying outsourcing manpower for Cotton Development Board	
7. EOI Ref No. and date	12.07.0000.111.99.257.23- 238 Date: 26.06.2023	
Key Information		
8. Procurement Method	Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS)	
Funding Information		
9. Budget and Source of Funds	GoB (Revenue Budget)	
10. Development Partners (if applicable)	N/A	
Particular Information		
11. Project/ Programme Code	NA	
12. Project/ Programme Name	NA	
13. EOI Closing Date and Time	17/07/2023 up to 3.00 pm	
Information for Applicants		
14. Brief Description of the Manpower	Name of the service	No. of service provider
	Pump driver/ Fitter	01
	Electrician	03
	Laboratory attendant	02
	Security guard	19
	Cattle keeper	02
	Gardener	02
	Cleaner	01
Total		30
15. Experience, Resource & Delivery Capacity Required (Criteria for shortlisting)	1. The firm/ company should fulfill the following requirements: a) Proven experience of undertaking similar assignment. b) Firm/ company has sufficient experienced core professionals having specialization on HRM c) Required documents: The company must furnish the following updated documents with the tender schedule: a. Company Registration b. VAT registration certificate c. Updated Income Tax certificate d. Bank Solvency Certificate e. DIFE (Department of Inspection for factories and Establishment) certificate f. Experience certificates from clients for similar service d) Logistics support including computer hardware, software licenses and other testing tools, training facilities, transport and office space.	
	2. Other relevant legal and commercial documents must be enclosed with EOI in support of qualification and experience.	
17. Other Details	1. Place of assignment: May be inside or outside Dhaka at the CDB revenue office locations.	
	2. Expected time of contract is 12 months which will be renewed annually upon satisfactory work completion certificate from the CDB authority subject to the availability of the budget.	
	3. The consulting firm shall submit 2 (two) copies of Expression of Interest (EOI) (One original and one copy); clearly marked "EOI for selection of Firm/ Company for supplying outsourcing manpower for Cotton Development Board" to the Deputy Director (HQ), Cotton Development Board, Khamarbari, Farmgate, Dhaka-1215 on or before 17/07/2023 upto 11.00 am.	
	4. Copy of the indicative TOR may be collected from the office of the Deputy Director (HQ) or through email: zalibd03@gmail.com or by visiting www.cdb.gov.bd	
18. Association with foreign firms or Joint Venture (JV)	Association with foreign firms/ companies or Joint Venture (JV) is not acceptable.	
Procuring Entity Details		
19. Name of the Official Inviting EOI	Zafar Ali	
20. Designation of the Official Inviting EOI	Deputy Director (HQ)	
21. Address of the Official Inviting EOI	Cotton Development Board, Khamarbari, Farmgate, Dhaka-1215	
22. Contact Details of the Official Inviting EOI	Tel. No.	e-mail
	02-55028576	zalibd03@gmail.com
23. The Procuring Entity reserves the right to accept or reject any/ all EOI's without showing any reason.		


(Deputy Director)
Cotton Development Board,
Khamarbari, Farmgate, Dhaka-1215
Ph. 02-55028576

Dengue claims three more lives

UNB, Dhaka

Three more people died from dengue in the 24 hours till yesterday morning.

With the new number, the official death toll from dengue rose to 50 this year, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

During the period, 270 more patients were hospitalised with the viral fever, DGHS said.

Of the new patients, 178 were admitted to hospitals in Dhaka.

A total of 1,405 patients, including 944 in the capital, are now receiving treatment at hospitals across the country.

So far, the DGHS has recorded 8,248 dengue cases and 6,793 recoveries this year.

The country logged 281 dengue deaths in 2022 – the highest on record after 179 deaths recorded in 2019. Also, it recorded 62,423 dengue cases and 61,971 recoveries last year.



CELEBRATING EID... Taking a break from monotony, children were seen enjoying Eid with their parents at different amusement parks and tourist places around the country. While some chose to book a trip on a carousel, others enjoyed the day making friends with animals at the zoo. Meanwhile, many others decided to take a dip in the sea or relish the rain. The photos were taken from National Zoo in the capital's Mirpur, Chattogram's Patenga Beach and Sylhet's Sada Pathar area.

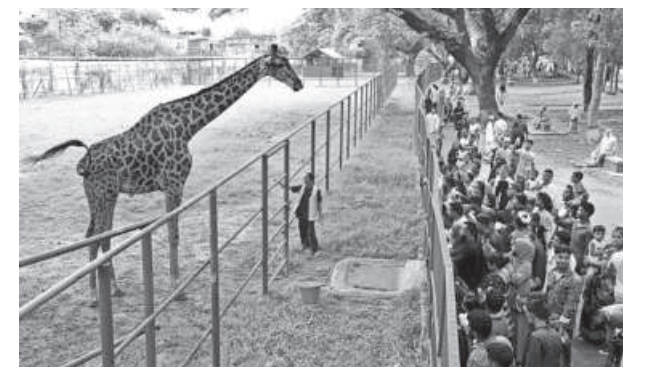


PHOTO: PRABIR DAS, SHEIKH NASIR, RAJIB RAIHAN

150 people get free health check-ups

Faraaz Hossain Foundation holds medical camp in Bogura

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

A daylong free health check-up camp for underprivileged people was organised in Bogura yesterday.

Faraaz Hossain Foundation organised the camp at Bogura's PepsiCo plant in Fuldighi area from 10:00am to 3:00pm.

Around 150 unprivileged men, women and children from Bogura Tinmatha, Shakpalarmor and Medical College areas received free treatment and medicine there.

The camp was held commemorating Faraaz Ayaaz Hossain.

Faraaz has become an epitome of supreme sacrifice for the cause of humanity. His refusal to leave his friends during the militant attack at Gulshan's Holy Artisan Bakery on July 1, 2016 was not only an act of bravery that the world saluted but also set the burning example of



Doctors conduct medical check-up of Bogura residents, as part of a camp organised by Faraaz Hossain Foundation yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

what a pristine youthful mind can do when it comes to choosing the right path at the expense of mere mortality.

Yesterday, Masum Hossain, 40, a rickshaw-puller, came to the camp from Shakpala area. He said, "My 8-year-old son was suffering from fever for the last five days... I came to know that a free medical camp was arranged here with specialist doctors. So, I brought my child here and the doctor treated him cordially. They also provide us with free medicine."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

Invest more to make CETP fully functional

SAVAR TANNERY ESTATE

Tanners association urges govt



PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Tannery workers processing rawhide at a depot.

STAR REPORT

The government should invest more to make the central effluent treatment plant (CETP) at the Savar Tannery Industrial Estate fully functional, said Shaheen Ahamed, chairman of the Bangladesh Tanners Association, yesterday.

The estate has been set up to help the country's tannery industrial estate get rid of pollution stemming from rawhide processing. But it has not made significant progress to put in place a fully functional liquid and solid waste management system, a salt purification system, and a common chromium recovery unit even though the work to construct the estate started in 2003 and tanners were moved to Savar from the capital's Hazaribagh in 2017.

Currently, the CETP has the capacity to treat 25,000 to 30,000 cubic metres of liquid waste against

the peak demand of 45,000 cubic metres usually seen during Eid-ul-Azha.

"Leather exporters have not been able to capture a major share of the international market as the promise of setting up an environment-friendly industrial estate has not been materialised yet," Ahamed said during a press conference at a hotel in the capital.

In the absence of proper waste management, tannery owners are not getting the Leather Working Group (LWG) certification despite investing Tk 7,000 crore to Tk 8,000 crore, according to the chief of the trade body.

"If we get the LWG certificate, the price of leather will be almost three times higher than the current selling rate in the international market."

In order to sell leather and leather products at good prices among large

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

Woman's body found hanging

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The hanging body of a woman was found in Chattogram's Hathazari upazila on the day of Eid-ul-Azha.

The deceased was identified as Sumi Akter, 19, of Gumanmardan union.

Parents of the deceased alleged that their daughter was killed by her in-laws, and are now trying to pass the murder off as a suicide.

Sumi got married to one Tajul Islam, resident of the same upazila, in July last year.

Tajul is currently staying in Qatar.

Mena Akter, Sumi's mother, told The Daily Star, "My daughter called me an hour before her death. She was crying... she said the family continues to harass her."

Contacted, Farid Mia, Sumi's father-in-law, said they found her body hanging from a ceiling fan on the day of Eid and rushed her to a hospital, where the duty doctor declared her dead.

Meanwhile, Siraj Mia, the victim's father, filed a case with Hathazari Police Station early yesterday, accusing Sumi's father-in-law, mother-in-law and brother-in-law of abetting suicide.

"We are investigating the matter," said Moniruzzaman, officer-in-charge of the police station.

It will be a people's movement: Fakhru

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir yesterday said the current regime will be forced to concede to their demand for holding the next election under a non-party government as their party is going to launch a different type of movement involving the masses.

Talking to reporters at the BNP Chairperson's Gulshan office, he, however, assured that they will not announce programmes like hartal and blockade to avoid street violence.

"It'll undoubtedly be a little different from the previous movements and the involvement of people will also increase," he said.

He said they are confident that there will be huge involvement of people, especially the youth, in their one-point anti-government movement.

He claimed that their party's recent youth rallies in different cities and districts evoked overwhelming response.

We don't do politics to appease foreign masters: Quader

BSS, Dhaka

Awami League General Secretary and Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday said unlike BNP, the AL or Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina does not do politics to satisfy foreign masters.

"Sheikh Hasina-led government is joining BRICS (alliance) for the welfare of the people. Neither Awami League nor Sheikh Hasina does politics to appease foreign masters as BNP does. Awami League does politics for the betterment of the people," he said.

The minister said this in a statement sent to the media condemning the "politically motivated and misleading statements made by BNP leaders".

Quader said the statement of BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru about joining the BRICS is nothing but an expression of his ignorance.

Man dies falling off building in Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man died after falling off the third floor of an under-construction building at Gendaria in the capital on Friday.

The deceased, identified as Md Mahmud, 40, was the site manager of the under-construction structure.

He was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where the duty doctor declared him dead around 7:00pm.



PRAYER TIMING
JULY 2
Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-10 12-45 5-00 6-55 8-17
JAMAAT 4-45 1-15 5-15 7-00 8-45
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Marking the 102nd founding anniversary of Dhaka University, a procession, led by the university's former and existing students, teachers and staff, was brought out on the campus yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

102nd anniv of DU celebrated

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University, the oldest university in the country, celebrated its 102nd founding anniversary yesterday.

DU Vice Chancellor Prof Akhtaruzzaman inaugurated the day-long programme at 10:00am by hoisting the national and university flags at the Teacher-Student Centre.

The inauguration concluded after the VC released balloons and cut a cake, marking the occasion.

A procession, led by the university's former and existing students, teachers and staff rallied around the campus, starting at Memory Eternal.

This was followed by a discussion at TSC auditorium at 10:30am. The event was chaired by the VC.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

Building housing police outpost tilts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A two-storey building, which houses Bangshal police outpost, in the capital tilted to one side Friday afternoon forcing authorities to relocate the inhabitants to a nearby building.

Abu Naser, the spokesperson for the Dhaka South City Corporation, said the police personnel who were present at the outpost have been relocated to a nearby tin-shed building. This prompt action was taken to ensure their safety.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



PHOTO: STAR

The balcony of this building, which houses a police outpost, collapsed in Bangshal on Friday.

'Priyotoma' leads, 'Shurongo' impresses, 'Prohelika' stands firm

A great Eid for films

Directed by Himel Ashraf, Shakib Khan starrer "Priyotoma" has been released across 107 cinema halls across Bangladesh.

ZAHID AKBAR

This Eid saw five film releases across 171 halls, single-screen and multiplexes included. The films that were released are, *Priyotoma*, *Shurongo*, *Prohelika*, *Casino* and *Laal Shari*. Since the release day till Eid day-3, *Priyotoma* has been leading the Eid race throughout the country, followed by *Shurongo* and *Prohelika*.

Directed by Himel Ashraf, Shakib Khan starrer *Priyotoma* has been released across 107 cinema halls across Bangladesh. The film had gone houseful since its release day and is still continuing to do so. It has been doing especially well on single-screens,



Afran Nisho at a showing of "Shurongo".



Bubly attends the premiere of "Prohelika".

with no tickets left in multiplexes. The film is dominating both the screens with audiences even turning back due to lack of tickets.

On the other hand, released in 28 halls this Eid, is Afran Nisho's *Shurongo*. Marking his debut on the silver screen, the film has been directed by Raihan Rafi. Initially, the film had 18 shows across all branches of Star Cineplex which has now increased to 30 shows due to audiences' demand. The audience is wholeheartedly accepting Nisho's step into the silver screen.

Chayanika Chowdhury's directorial *Prohelika*, has also been doing well in multiplexes. Although every show is going houseful, the film has only been released across eight cinema halls. It has been estimated that the Mahfuz-Bubly starrer will bring in more audiences in the coming weeks.

Shobnom Bubly's other film, *Casino*, has also been released in 16 halls across the country. Directed by Saikat Nasir, the film has been going houseful in many theatres, expecting to be released in more halls in the coming week. Nirab Hossain plays the male lead in it.

"*Priyotoma* has been doing really well here, despite the weather. We're happy that people are flocking to see the film and suspect that it will increase in the upcoming weeks,"

said Tofazzal Hossain, manager of Jessore's Monihar hall.

Mymensingh's Chhayabani hall's Saikul Islam spoke to The Daily Star, "People are ignoring the rain to see *Priyotoma*, this is amazing. At this rate, the shows will increase and it will even outperform *Leader: Amie Bangladesh*."

Star Cineplex's senior manager Mesbah Uddin Ahmed also shared similar observations, praising the audience turnout for *Priyotoma* and *Shurongo*. He then further added, "We always want Bangla movies to do well. We usually investigate which Bangla film is doing well in different branches of Star Cineplex. That doesn't mean that we're not eager to bring in more Bangla films. If the films do well, we will offer more shows. Similarly, among Eid releases, *Prohelika* and *Casino* have also been performing splendidly."

Priyotoma director Himel Ashraf had been taken aback by the adoration it has received. He informed The Daily Star, "Everyday, the film has almost 450 shows across the country. Yesterday, almost 350 halls were houseful. That was excluding the people who had watched the film standing or sitting on tools."

"One show in Madhumita or Monihar cinema hall equals five shows in any multiplex," he said, adding that his film was an ordinary man's film, a film for everyone.

Renowned actress Mita Chowdhury no more



She passed away on June 29 at her residence in London at 8 pm. The news was confirmed by her daughter, Naveen.

She had been suffering from cancer, and was undergoing chemotherapy. Mita Chowdhury began her career as an actress during her school years at the age of nine. She had been acting since 1968, and participated in many television dramas and theatre works.

Starting with the play *Story of King Minus*, which was a parody of the Greek myth of *King Midas*, she became an iconic figure in the drama and theatre world of Bangladesh. Throughout her acting career, she starred in films like *Made in Bangladesh*, *Maya Boishommo* and *Ghulam*.



Oscar-winning actor Alan Arkin dies at 89

Alan Arkin, a versatile and prolific American actor who thrived in both comic and dramatic roles and won an Oscar for playing a heroin-using grandfather in the 2006 film *Little Miss Sunshine*, has died at 89, Variety reported on Friday, citing a statement from his family.

Arkin appeared in scores of films, was nominated for an Academy Award four times and won a Tony Award, Broadway's top honors, in 1963 for his first major stage role in Carl Reiner's *Enter Laughing*.

NEWS

DSA continues to stifle freedom

FROM PAGE 12
MSF criticised the arrests made in these cases and highlighted the lack of fair trials and evidence.

The organisation argued that the arbitrary abuse of this law serves as a tool to prevent and intimidate individuals from expressing their opinions and silences everyone.

Abuse of digital security laws, blocking the exercise of constitutional rights to investigative journalism and expression, continues, said MSF. It unequivocally demanded the immediate repeal of the Digital Security Act, the report added.

The report also drew attention to the alarming mistreatment of journalists.

In June alone, at least 11 journalists faced harassment, threats, torture, and even murder while carrying out their professional duties. The tragic killing of journalist Golam Rabbani in Jamalpur was specifically mentioned.

MSF emphasised that obstructing the work of journalists not only goes against ethical norms but also curtails their constitutional right to freedom of expression.

Furthermore, MSF expressed concern regarding the rising number of deaths in custody.

In the previous month, 16 individuals lost their lives while under the custody of prisons, while an additional two died while in the custody of law enforcement agencies.

In May, 11 prisoners died while in jail.

The report shared the distressing case of lawyer Runa Laila, who suffered severe physical abuse in Gazipur Women's Central Jail over Tk 7,400. Habildars Fatema and Nasima led the incident, it said.

The MSF report additionally highlighted the death of Alal Dewan, a caretaker of a house in Turag, while in police custody.

Moreover, during June, a total of 29 unidentified bodies, including two teenagers, 11 women, three elderly individuals, two middle-aged individuals, and 11 young people, were discovered in various parts of the country.

Fatima Yasmin appointed

FROM PAGE 12
of the finance division, will be one of six vice-presidents at ADB.

Her appointment at ADB was made through a competitive process, said a finance ministry official.

This will be the first instance of a Bangladeshi finance secretary, and also a female Bangladeshi official, joining a high-ranked position in ADB.

She will be responsible for managing the newly created Sectors Group and the Climate Change and Sustainable Development Department under ADB's new operating model.

She has more than 32 years of broad development experience, including in macroeconomic management, public sector and fiscal policy reform, and trade and poverty reduction in government and international organisations.

Fatima, a career civil servant and the first female finance secretary

Papia tortures woman

FROM PAGE 12
When she regained her senses, she was beaten up again until she went listless.

The victim's whole body has large patches of blue-purple bruises, saw our correspondent. She is currently on oxygen support to help her breathing.

ATTEMPTED COVERUP?
Karim alleged that he went to visit his sister last on June 22 and waited for three hours after which he was told he would not be allowed to meet Runa.

He still waited around and talked to inmates coming out of the jail on bail. They told him what had happened to his sister.

He went to the prison again the next day and the jail authorities refused to let him see his sister again. They referred him to the Deputy Jailor Jannatul Tayeb.

"I asked her about my sister but she said that nothing happened to her. She, however, refused to let me see her," wrote Karim.

Tayeb agreed to let Karim talk to Runa over the phone and later in the day, he got a call from a woman claiming to be Runa. "It was not my sister. The deputy jailor was trying to deceive me," wrote Karim in the complaint.

of the country joined the finance division as senior secretary in July last year.

Prior to this position, she served as secretary of the Economic Relations Division, vice chairman of the Export Promotion Bureau, and director general of the Institute of Public Finance.

She joined the Bangladesh Civil Service in 1991.

She worked for various ministries including the Finance Division and Economic Relations Division of the finance ministry, and ministries of agriculture, women and children affairs, and defence.

She also worked for ERD for a substantial period with the World Bank, United Nations, Asian Development Bank, and Islamic Development Bank.

Outside government, she worked for Asian Development Bank, European Union, and the UN's International Jute Organisation.

He submitted the recorded call as evidence.

Karim then filed the complaint with the DC stating, "They may have even killed my sister inside the prison."

Two days after his complaint on June 27, Runa was given bail and she got out on June 28.

Runa had to be hospitalised immediately, her family said.

When asked about Papia, Senior Jail Superintendent (acting) Obaidur Rahman of Kashimpur Women's Central Jail said, "The woman secretly sneaked in Tk 7,400 into the prison. When the matter was found by habildars Fatema Begum, the victim misbehaved with her. Some of the other inmates got angry and slapped her. Later she was given first aid. Those who slapped her have been punished according to jail rules."

Obaidur said "A three-member investigation committee has been formed to probe the incident of torture."

The DC of Gazipur said Additional District Magistrate Humayun Kabir has been asked to probe the matter.

Papia and her husband are accused of laundering Tk 3.23 crore. The couple was arrested at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in September 2020 while trying to leave the country.

Brilliant Bangladesh go down fighting

FROM PAGE 12
against their vastly superior opponents till the final whistle. And had luck been on their side, they might have taken the game into the shootout.

The country's football, which is now a pale shadow of its past vibrant self, hardly draws a crowd. Even when the national team features in any international event, not many take the trouble to tune in to a TV set after having watched those lackluster performances and chronic defeats for years.

Against this backdrop and the financial scandal that recently rocked the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF), the stunning performance of the men's team in Bengaluru, the capital and largest city of the southern Indian state of Karnataka, showed some light at the end of the tunnel.

The profile of the SAFF Championship – an age-old battle for the South Asian nations – improved greatly this time around with the introduction of two Middle Eastern nations.

It also gave teams like Bangladesh an opportunity to rub their shoulders against quality oppositions. Kuwait, who played in the 1982 World Cup, are currently ranked 141st in the FIFA rankings. Lebanon are ranked 102nd. Among the South Asian nations, India, which won the SAFF Championship a record eight times, have the best FIFA ranking at 100th.

Bangladesh are 192nd in the latest

FIFA rankings, but they performed far better throughout the tournament than those rankings suggest.

The charges Javier Cabrera improved with every passing game since their Group B opener against Lebanon which they lost 2-0. They kept the Lebanese at bay till the 80th minute before a fatal defensive error cost them the game.

Their next two group-stage games against fellow South Asian rivals Maldives and Bhutan were spectacular come-from-behind scripts that ended in identical 3-1 wins.

And their semifinal against Kuwait was just not another game between David and Goliath.

Kuwait might have had the better share of possession and had more shots at goal, but the game was never a lop-sided affair.

Bangladesh could have taken the lead in the second minute of the pulsating encounter had young forward Sheikh Morsalin not fired the ball straight at the Kuwait goalkeeper from a one-on-one situation.

A skilled and technically superior Kuwait side pressed hard for a goal in the first half, but most of their attacks were negotiated by a stubborn Bangladesh defence. And anything that crossed that defensive wall was taken care of by an ever-alert Anisur Rahman Zico, who stood under the bar like a rock. Kuwait made five changes in the first 45 minutes in

a desperate attempt to make the breakthrough but to no avail.

Bangladesh got a golden opportunity to end the evening's duck in the second half, but Rakib Hossain's beefy right-footer from an acute angle bounced off the cross-bar.

After an absorbing 90 minutes, Kuwait got the all-important goal when their overlapping right-back Abdullah Albroushi found enough space to gallop down the right-hand box before drilling a low right-footer into the far corner of the net.

But Bangladesh were not ready to die without a fight. They pushed hard in the last 15 minutes for an equaliser but were denied by the Kuwait custodian Abd Al Rahman Kameel, who somehow parried off a low drive from Rakib in the dying minutes to set up Tuesday's final against defending champions India, who beat Lebanon 4-2 in tiebreaker in the second semifinal later in the day.

It was Bangladesh's third meeting with Kuwait. The last time the two teams met way back in the 1986 Soul Asian Games, Kuwait cantered to a 4-0 win against a Bangladesh team that had many star players of that time when domestic football was very popular.

For the record, Saturday's defeat was Bangladesh's third in a row against Kuwait. But even in defeat, this performance will arguably go down as one of the best in the annals of the country's football history.

Third death anniversary of Latifur Rahman

FROM PAGE 12
director of Mediaworld, the company that owns The Daily Star, and chairman of Mediastar, which owns Prothom Alo. The newspapers are the leading English and Bangla dailies in the country.

A respected figure in the global business community, Latifur single-handedly built Transcom Group, one of the biggest and highly respected business houses in the country, with his hard work, perseverance, and entrepreneurial skills.

Born in Jalpaiguri on August 28, 1945, he began his education at St Francis School and then went to St Edmund's School, Shillong, in 1956. He also studied at St Xavier's College in Kolkata.

In 1966, he started working as a trainee at his family-owned W Rahman Jute Mills in Chandpur. The jute mill was the first to be owned by a Bangalee in the erstwhile East

Pakistan.

He became an executive and worked there until 1971. But the government nationalised the mill in 1972 and Latifur found himself in a very difficult situation. The family also owned some tea estates in north-eastern Bangladesh but after the independence the price of produce was less than the production cost.

But he did not give up hope. The same year, Latifur came across a Swiss company and started a trading business. There was no looking back after that.

He established Transcom Group in 1981. It is now one of the country's largest conglomerates, with operations in the areas of manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, electronics, beverages, media, consumer, food, and insurance.

Latifur was a member of executive board of ICC-Paris, Bangladesh Better Business Forum, Advisory Committee on World Trade Organisation, and

Brac's governing body, and the VP of ICC Bangladesh.

He was also president of the MCCI, Dhaka for seven terms and of Bangladesh Employers' Federation.

Latifur was also chairman of the Bangladesh government's Trade Body Reforms Committee and a member of Bangladesh Bank's executive board.

The business icon was an honouree of "Oslo Business for Peace Award 2012" and was awarded Business Executive of the Year 2001 by the American Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh. He was also honoured with the "Saarc Outstanding Leader" award and Lifetime Achievement Award.

Latifur Rahman and Shahnaz Rahman's children are Simeen Hossain, Shahzhen Huq, (late) Shazneen Rahman, and late Arshad Waliur Rahman.

A prayer for his departed soul was held at his Gulshan home yesterday.

UNSC ends peacekeeping mission in Mali

AFP, United Nations

The UN Security Council has ended a decade-old peacekeeping mission in Mali, whose military junta has aligned with Russia and demanded the withdrawal of the international force battling jihadists.

Bowing to the principle that peacekeepers need the consent of the host government, the Security Council on Friday voted unanimously to start immediately winding down the mission despite fears by Western powers of new instability in the troubled African nation.

The vote came two weeks after Malian Foreign Minister Abdoulaye Diop stunned the Security Council by calling the major UN operation known as Minusma a "failure" and urging its end.

Mali's relations with the United Nations have deteriorated sharply since a 2020 coup brought to power a military regime that also severed defense cooperation with France, the former colonial power.

The junta instead has rallied behind Moscow and brought in the Wagner Group, the ruthless mercenaries involved in a mutiny against Russian President Vladimir Putin last week.

Under the resolution led by France, the peacekeepers were supposed to cease their main activity from yesterday and focus on departure, although they will still be empowered to protect against "imminent threats of violence to civilians" through September.

Minusma has been the most costly mission for the UN, at \$1.2 billion a year, and 174 peacekeepers have died since its creation in 2013.



A burning barricade is seen as unrest continues for the fourth night following the death of a 17-year-old teenager killed by a French police officer during a traffic stop, in Nanterre, Paris suburb, France, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

US had no role in Russia mutiny

US media say CIA director called Kremlin to avoid misunderstanding

AGENCIES

CIA Director William Burns called Russian spy chief Sergei Naryshkin after last week's aborted mutiny in Russia to assure the Kremlin that the United States had no role in it, the New York Times and the Wall Street Journal reported on Friday.

Burns' phone call with Naryshkin, the head of Russia's SVR foreign intelligence service, took place this week and was the highest-level contact between the two governments since the attempted mutiny, the Wall Street Journal said.

The boss of Russia's Wagner mercenary group, Yevgeny Prigozhin, shocked the world by leading last week's armed revolt, only to abruptly call it off as his

fighters approached Moscow.

President Joe Biden said on Monday the brief uprising by Russian mercenaries against the Kremlin was part of a struggle within the Russian system and that the United States and its allies were not involved in it.

Meanwhile, a US official confirmed to AFP Friday that William Burns recently traveled to Ukraine where he met with intelligence counterparts and President Volodymyr Zelensky.

The trip — not reported at the time — comes as Kyiv's brigades pursue a counteroffensive in their nation's east and south against Russian forces, launched earlier this month after weeks of anticipation.

During his trip Burns reaffirmed "the US commitment to sharing intelligence to help Ukraine defend against Russian aggression," the US official said.

According to The Washington Post, which first reported the visit, Ukrainian officials shared plans to claw back Russian-occupied territory and begin ceasefire negotiations by the end of the year.

Burns "traveled to Ukraine as he has done regularly since the beginning of Russia's recent aggression more than a year ago," the US official said. The Post reported that the visit occurred in June.

The trip took place before the 24-hour insurrection by the leader of the Wagner private

military company, Yevgeny Prigozhin, according to the official.

The mutiny, which was widely seen as the biggest threat to Kremlin authority in decades, "was not a topic of discussion," the official added.

On Tuesday the United States announced a fresh \$500 million package of arms to bolster the counteroffensive, including armored vehicles, precision munitions and mine-clearing equipment.

However, the country's military commander-in-chief Valery Zaluzhny said Ukraine's counteroffensive plans are hobbled by the lack of adequate firepower, from modern fighter jets to artillery ammunition.

'Rebels attack China convoy' in Myanmar

AFP, Yangon

The Myanmar junta yesterday accused an armed ethnic group of attacking a vehicle convoy containing Chinese military personnel who were travelling to a meeting on border security, a claim the rebels denied. Myanmar has been in chaos since the military ousted democratically-elected civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi from office in a 2021 coup. On Tuesday, a vehicle convoy containing Chinese military representatives and Myanmar counterparts headed to Myitkyina in northern Kachin state came under fire. "We can confirm that (Kachin Independence Army) members attacked the convoy," junta spokesman Zaw Min Tun said in an audio message. The junta said no one was wounded or killed in the incident. But the KIA denied responsibility.

US rejoins UNESCO

AFP, Paris

The United States on Friday rejoined UNESCO, which it had quit during the Trump administration, despite opposition from Russia and China. Former president Donald Trump announced in 2017 that he was pulling the United States out of UNESCO, accusing the body of bias against Israel. The decision took effect in 2018. An extraordinary session of the UN body's General Assembly on Friday voted overwhelmingly for the return of the United States. A total of 132 members voted in favour, 10 against while 15 abstained.

Bolsonaro barred from public office

AFP, Brasilia

Brazil's far-right ex-president Jair Bolsonaro vowed Friday to appeal a court ruling barring him from public office for eight years over unfounded attacks he had made against the country's voting system. The ruling renders the 68-year-old ineligible to stand in the next presidential election in 2026 — opening the contest for a new leader for Brazil's political right. Bolsonaro was tried by the Superior Electoral Tribunal (TSE) over claims he made in a televised meeting with foreign diplomats in July 2022, during which he claimed electronic voting machines in use since 1996 compromised election transparency. He gave no proof for the claims he made just three months ahead of his election defeat to leftist Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

Over Tk 13,110cr anomalies in Janata Bank

FROM PAGE 1

the large loan amounts beyond the permissible limit and waived interest by violating rules.

"The audit report reflects the need for the authorities to focus on strengthening the internal control system of the audited branches, complying with the prevailing rules and regulations in collection and expenditure of government funds," it said.

It called on the bank management to ensure the same types of irregularities are not repeated and its recommendations are implemented.

Foremost amongst the irregularities is the rescheduling of AnonTex Group's loans amounting to Tk 5,243.6 crore by violating the terms of the MoU the bank had struck with the central bank as well the BRPD circular by the bank's Janata Bhaban corporate branch in Motijheel.

For rescheduling the amount, the bank took just a 1 percent down payment from AnonTex instead of the minimum 2 percent.

"It was not right to reschedule loans that have become classified due to forgery and money laundering," said the audit report.

The branch also extended generous letter of credit (LC) facilities to six subsidiaries of AnonTex Group from 2015 to 2020 despite the client's failure to clear their previous dues. Not just that, it even honoured AnonTex's LCs by creating demand loans. Those loans have defaulted too. And yet, its six subsidiaries got further LC benefits.

The amount outstanding is Tk 558.9 crore.

In its response, the bank said that it cleared AnonTex's LCs with its own funds to preserve the bank's reputation among banks abroad.

AnonTex did not receive any new LC facility after February 2018, the bank said.

Then its Sadharan Bima Bhaban corporate branch in Chattogram extended credit beyond the permissible amount to S Alam Refined Sugar Industries, a subsidiary of the controversial S Alam Group, without the head office's approval, which violates rules. The outstanding amount is Tk 1,248.3 crore.

The audit also unearthed irregularities involving Tk 1,070.7 crore by the branch pertaining to another S Alam subsidiary. The branch adjusted the liabilities of Global Trading Limited with amounts from its sister concerns S Alam Cold Roll Steels and S Alam Vegetable Oil Mills Ltd, in a breach of central bank rules. It also provided credit to Global Trading beyond the permissible limit.

The Kemal Attaturk branch extended back-to-back LC facilities against fake export bills. The exports never happened, so demand loans were created. Those loans had defaulted and the bank rescheduled the loans, which stood at Tk 267.5 crore, without taking any collateral.

The bank's Motijheel branch extended fresh LCs to BR Spinning Mills from January 2015 to June 2020 despite the company's failure to export goods multiple times. The amounts were never cleared, leaving Janata owing Tk 806.4 crore from the textile manufacturer.

The bank also owes Tk 168.2 crore from Doreen Garments, thanks to its local office extending huge amounts of back-to-back LCs against exports that were never shipped.

The local office also extended a range of credit to Al-Madina Tannery without proper due diligence. The amounts had defaulted but the

branch showed them as regular without taking the compromise amount, which violates the BPRD circular. Janata now owes Tk 102.1 crore from the tannery.

The bank has dues of Tk 111.6 crore, thanks to its Khulna corporate branch extending loans beyond the limit five times in seven years, rescheduling those and extending the moratorium facility multiple times.

The branch also rescheduled loans of three concerns of Lockpur Group without taking adequate collateral, which violates BB rules. The amount outstanding is Tk 120.4 crore.

Cambodian PM kicks off campaign in one-sided election

AFP, Phnom Penh

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen kicked off a three-week election campaign yesterday, with his party poised to sweep the one-sided contest after the top challenger was barred from taking part.

Cambodians will vote on July 23 in an election widely seen as a sham after authorities denied registration to the Candlelight Party — considered the only viable rival to Hun Sen's Cambodian People's Party.

Hun Sen — who has ruled Cambodia for 38 years — told a sea of tens of thousands of supporters dressed in party T-shirts and hats that his government would build more roads and schools while boosting wages and economic growth.

development.

Hasina asked them to pray for her so that she can serve the people.

The PM departed Kotalipara for Tungipara in the afternoon.

At Tungipara, the premier paid tributes to Bangabandhu by placing a wreath at his mausoleum. She also offered lateha and joined a munajat there.

The AL president is scheduled to exchange greetings with local party leaders and activists, public representatives and ordinary people in Tungipara today morning.

She is expected to return to Dhaka today.

Cast ballots for AL in next polls

FROM PAGE 1

people and make socio-economic and infrastructural development."

The PM said she must fulfill the goals for which her father Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman made the country independent.

She said her government has improved the country's image across the world. She blasted those who don't notice any development.

Earlier, Hasina opened the newly constructed office of Kotalipara upazila AL.

The PM arrived at Kotalipara by road at 11:27am.


Earlier, she left the Gono Bhaban in the capital for Gopalganj on a two-day visit to her home district.



PM's ICT Affairs Adviser Sajeeb Wazed accompanied her.

With colourful posters, banners and placards adorning many roads, Gopalganj district wore a festive look yesterday.



During the exchange of Eid greetings, many local AL leaders and public representatives thanked the PM for giving them the opportunity to share their feelings with her.

They also wished her victory in the next parliamentary polls for the sake of the country's further



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How successful have we been in countering terrorism?

The 'soft approach' has not been applied effectively

This July 1 marks the seventh anniversary of the worst terrorist attack that Bangladesh has ever witnessed, which left 20 people dead including nine Italians, seven Japanese, three Bangladeshis, and one Indian. Later, two police officers and two civilians died during the standoff. The brutality of the attack left Bangladesh shaken, shocked, and utterly devastated psychologically and later economically.

Since that horrific day, the government has been relentless in trying to combat militancy with an iron hand. The series of raids on militant dens and arrests of some of the most notorious leaders proved to be effective in diminishing the power of these deranged zealots. Most of the militants were young men, educated and from well-off families. Yet the masterminds of the Holey Artisan attack managed to brainwash them into carrying out such barbaric acts.

The government's hard approach has initially borne fruit in terms of keeping militant attacks at bay after many were killed or arrested. Seven of the individuals who were involved in planning the attack have been sentenced to death by the lower court. The High Court is now hearing the case for disposal.

But what about the soft approach to curbing militancy, which is to counter the distorted ideology that these terror outfits are based on? Has the government been successful in preventing young men from joining militant outfits? What do we really know of the mobilisation of militant groups in the country?

Unfortunately, we are practically shooting in the dark when it comes to the softer approaches of counterterrorism. Since the Holey Artisan attack, many suspected militants have been sent to jail. With no effective de-radicalisation programme in operation, prisons have now become dens of militant regrouping and brainwashing. Many militants have come out on bail or have served their time and are now free. From 2005 till 2021, around 597 militant suspects were let out on bail with nine of them missing, as per a report by *The Daily Star* quoting the police. Moreover, many of the 334 JMB militants convicted in the 93 cases filed over the simultaneous bomb blasts in 2005 served their ten-year sentence, and are now free men. Are we to believe that all these individuals have given up their radical ideology and are now peaceful, law-abiding citizens? Have the police or counterterrorism units kept tabs on their activities?

Recent reports have revealed that new militant groups are on the rise with some members coming from former militant groups that were once thought to have been dissolved. The Anti-Terrorism Unit, Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime unit, and the security forces are fighting militancy, but militant outfits are still gaining members, training in remote areas, and accumulating arms. With the national elections not far away, we cannot help but be worried about what these outfits have been up to, and what influence they have been exerting on young, impressionable minds.

The elaborate de-radicalisation programmes initiated by the government did not see adequate results, as they fizzled out or were stuck in bureaucratic tangles. The government must immediately target prison inmates. As suggested by security experts, religious clerics can be sent to the jails to give proper interpretation of Islam, a religion that promotes peace and tolerance. Teachers should be engaged to educate the inmates and help them reconnect with their families. Counselling must be a major part of de-radicalisation programmes in order for the inmates to cope with their mental health problems.

At the same time, counter-terrorism efforts must target young people who are the major targets of terrorist outfits. Sensitising them to social values, patriotism, and the spirit of our Liberation War, as well as engaging them in productive activities such as sports, debating and social work can provide alternative ideals to follow. For this, community involvement is essential.

Militancy and terrorism flourish when there is acute disgruntlement and a sense of despair in society. The government must take into account the socio-economic and political reasons that provide fodder for militancy. It must provide a sense of social justice, fairness and economic stability for all citizens in order to convince individuals vulnerable to militant ideology to abandon thoughts of hatred and violence towards the perceived enemy, and to embrace the ideals of acceptance of the other and empathy for fellow human beings.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

letters@thedailystar.net

This is not how Eid should be celebrated

With every year, I am starting to dislike how Qurbani Eid is being celebrated more and more in Bangladesh. Nowadays, it has become a display of extravagance for many. Ironically, in my area, the people who are known to be the most corrupt seem most eager to participate in such display. They are occupying public spaces, the roads in front of their house boundaries, for example, and setting up shades for their cattle, even though there is ample space to keep them within their own house boundaries. They are occupying the foot paths, and causing inconvenience to others, just so that they can compete with other corrupt individuals to see who managed to buy the bigger and more expensive cattle.

When their lackeys distribute the meat to the poor, they do so without any empathy or compassion for the downtrodden. They simply throw it towards them as if they are not even humans.

These types of things are totally contrary to the spirit of this Eid. Do these people understand that treating people who are not as well off economically as them in such a way demonstrate their own moral bankruptcy? And that when they are trying to outcompete each other in such immature way, they are showing the entire world their own sense of inferiority?

What I find most disappointing is that this time of the year is supposed to remind us of the importance of sacrifice, and how we need to make sacrifices through our whole life for the betterment of society as a whole. Yet, we are wasting away this opportunity to inflate our own egos.

Sohelia Zaman, Dhanmondi

BANK DIRECTORS' TENURE EXTENSION

What it means for the banking sector



Kallol Mustafa is an engineer and writer who focuses on power, energy, environment and development economics.

KALLOL MUSTAFA

Since the establishment of private banks in Bangladesh in the early eighties, various types of irregularities and corruption have been reported. Matiur Rahman and Syed Azizul Haque in their book titled, *Dhonik Gosthir Lootpater Kahini* (Shuchona Publisher, 1987), documented how the initial capital required for the establishment of the private banks was collected by taking loans from government banks in the name of industrial investment: "After the government's decision to establish banks under private ownership, 12 of the country's wealthy groups applied for permission, of which 9 were approved and then 6 banks were established. Fifteen directors of these 6 privately owned banks borrowed 125 crores from the state-owned banks in their name or their businesses till 1982. While the total capital of all privately owned banks is only 48 crores."

At that time, there were allegations of looting huge amounts of money in the name of loans against the directors of private banks. Matiur Rahman and Syed Azizul Haque reported that within just 15 months after its establishment, the National Bank Ltd was in great crisis due to mismanagement, irregularities, taking illegal benefits and exerting undue interference in the banking activities by the entrepreneurs/directors. At that time, 10 directors took Tk 34 crore loan from the bank anonymously. These events are also described in the book entitled, *Shamolik Shashoner Doshoke*, written by economist Anu Muhammad.

What is the current situation? After four decades of the establishment of private banks in the country, the situation has not improved, rather the looting of several crores of taka has been turned into the looting of hundreds and thousands of crores. The recent incidents like the losses of Farmers Bank and National Bank due to irregularities and corruption of the owners, LC fraud of Tk 16,000 crores in Social Islami Bank and the scam of taking loans worth Tk 30,000 crores from Islami Bank by the owner through illegal means are part of this continuum.

Banks are not like other private family-owned businesses. A paid-up capital of Tk 500 crore is required to establish a bank. After that, thousands of ordinary people deposit their savings in that bank. By investing only Tk 500 crore, the bank owners are able to control the deposits of thousands of crores of taka, decide



VISUAL: STAR

where to invest it, and who to lend it to. So, to accumulate a huge amount of money by investing very little, one first acquires a bank license using political connections and then embezzles the deposited money under the guise of loans.

According to the policy of Bangladesh Bank, no bank director can borrow more than 50 percent of his total shares from his own bank. To overcome this "disadvantage," they either take loans from their own banks anonymously through relatives or by opening paper companies, or they loot loans from other public and private banks through mutual understanding and collusion. According to Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal's disclosure at a question-answer session in the parliament in September 2020, directors of various banks took loans amounting to Tk 173,230.89 crore from their own as well as other banks which is around 12 percent of the total outstanding loans. But it is not clear how much of that loan is defaulted and how much is restructured or written off because the directors themselves exercise all kinds of authority from loan approval to loan restructuring or write-off.

Despite the mega serial of bank scams in the public and private banks in Bangladesh, instead of establishing proper governance and transparency, the opportunity of looting thousands of crores of taka by the bank directors has been widened through various legal and policy support. Amid intense

The government had also increased the tenure of bank directors from 6 years to 9 years before the 2018 elections.

This time, amid the strong objections of the opposition party, the amendment to the Bank Company Act has been passed by the National Parliament to increase the term of bank directors from 9 years to 12 years before the election as per the proposal of the bank owners. As a result, those who sat in the bank as directors in 2018, will not have any obstacle to remain as directors until 2030.

As reported by *The Daily Star*, the version of the bill that was first placed in the parliament by Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal previously did not seek to amend the tenure of the bank directors. Neither did the parliamentary standing committee on the finance ministry make any such suggestion. The provision to extend the director's tenure was snuck in at the last minute after ruling party MP Ahsanul Huq Titu made the proposal, and the amended bill was passed by voice vote without further discussion or vetting by the concerned agencies like the Bangladesh Bank, the parliamentary standing committee on the finance ministry, the cabinet division and so on. The amendment passed in this way without any due diligence is a stark reminder of the lack of democratic accountability in the country. According to *Prothom Alo*, the written proposal of the Bangladesh Association of Banks

Politics of Banking in the Philippines, and argued that the banking sector is a prism through which the political-economic character of a country can be clearly understood. His study highlighted the larger patterns at work within the political economy of the country – how a predatory oligarchy extracted privilege from a patrimonial state, and how developmental policy objectives were continually choked out by a clamour of particularistic demands made by those who currently enjoy proximity to the political machinery. Likewise, in Bangladesh, no institutional good governance has been developed in the banking sector like all other sectors of the country which allows the political elite to extract undue benefits from the states. The central bank's allocation of valuable privileges – whether they be bank licenses, government deposits, emergency bailouts, or loans – are not made on the basis of objective rules considering the benefit of the economy. The favour or disfavour of those power holders is a major determinant of the relative success or failure of particular banks.

The extension of the tenure of bank directors in the latest amendment of the Bank Company Act is part of this mechanism of patronising the private bank owners at the expense of national interest which will ultimately widen the scope of plundering the people's money deposited in the banks by the bank owners themselves.

Symbols of ethics and courage

Zarail Ayaat Hossain is Head of Strategy and Transformation at Transcom Group.

ZARAIL AYAAT HOSSAIN

Legacy is best exemplified by the way others speak of someone, after they have passed away. I am constantly reminded by both my grandfather, Mr Latifur Rahman, and my brother Faraaz, that a life well lived defines itself by the way those around you remember you once you are no longer among them.

Although we miss both *Nana Bhai* and *Chotoo* immensely, they both remain as symbols of ethics and courage, every day. The way they are remembered not just by us, their family, but by those we meet throughout our lives, remember the two of them in the most glowing light. This is their legacy.

Three years since *Nana Bhai* passed away, his example of ethics shines brighter every day. He began building Transcom 50 years ago, he built it to last for generations. However, his success goes beyond business, he was most proud of the father, husband and grandfather he was. At the core of everything he did was an unwavering sense of integrity and honesty. It is not just Transcom, which he has



Latifur Rahman with his grandson Faraaz.

PHOTO: COURTESY

set on a path to outlast generations, but a value system which will forever remain core to his legacy. His mark on this world in the form of both business and his family, live on. The lessons he taught, the examples he set and the vision he had remains as a guiding light. Everything continues to and will unfold the way he intended it to; that is how he lives on among us.

Seven years and Faraaz is still not forgotten as a loving son, brother, grandson, friend and for his courage. The outpour of love for Faraaz from

across the world has not lessened after all of these years. A life lost at the age of 20, but a life that stands taller far beyond those years. He continues to bring the hearts he touched together; to this day we are immensely proud to be known as Faraaz's mother, grandmother and brother. Just yesterday a fellow classmate from Emory flew down to Dhaka just to pay respect to Faraaz before July 1, bringing along beautiful memories, notes and pictures from his days as a college student. His legacy outlives

him as he continues to serve as a moral compass for all those who loved him, an example of standing up for what is right, especially in the darkest times. We miss him terribly, yet stories of Faraaz as a jovial boy, to the story of his sacrifice on the night of the attack, bring a sense of pride just remembering the exceptional young man he was. He leaves an impression with not just us who loved him, but also those who have come into our lives after he left us. His act of bravery shines brighter ever today and continues to connect the hearts of those who loved him along with those who came to know him after his passing.

While *Nana Bhai* left a void when he passed away, and Faraaz's life ended suddenly at such a tender age, they live on in our hearts. Memories with them never fail to bring smiles to our faces, nor do they fail to teach us on how to live a meaningful life.

Life is filled with inexplicable circumstances, but I can't help but believe that some of them have a touch of destiny to it. *Nana Bhai* and *Chotoo* had a special bond, which they shared with nobody else but each other. They passed away on the same day, July 1, just four years apart and it is without a doubt that together they watch over those they loved while being symbols of ethics and courage.

The man whose commitment to ethics was unbending

Nihad Kabir is barrister-at-law, a senior advocate of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh and senior partner at Syed Ishtiaq Ahmed and Associates. She is the chairperson of the BUILD Trust (Business Initiative Leading Development), and was president of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dhaka from 2017-2021.

NIHAD KABIR

With the loss of Latifur Rahman (Shamim *mama* to me) in 2020, we not only lost one of the foremost business icons of Bangladesh, but the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dhaka (MCCI) also lost one of its longest-serving and distinguished former presidents. I personally lost an uncle and a mentor. Over decades of hard work and ethical business practices, Mr Rahman established the Transcom Group as a major group of industries in the country. His enterprises have provided employment to thousands of persons. He served for seven years (three tenures) as president of MCCI, Dhaka. In that role, he was unfailing in trying to develop and entrench ethical business practices in the country, mentor young businesspeople, and forever be an ambassador of all that was good in the Bangladeshi business industry. His enterprises brought global recognition for excellence in business in the country. Among many recognitions, he received the Oslo Business for Peace Award from the Business for Peace Foundation, Oslo in 2012, one of the highest international awards for ethical business.

Latifur Rahman was deeply patriotic, proud of the fact that neither he nor his children had any passports other than that for Bangladesh, and that all his business was concentrated in Bangladesh. His public service was exemplary; but in many ways never publicised, as were his business successes. He was unfailingly courteous and debonair, but never failed to exercise his razor-sharp acumen (tempered with fairness) in his business dealings. In his personal relationships, he was kind and gentle. He overcame

two indescribable tragedies in his personal life – first when he lost his daughter Shazneen and then his grandson Faraaz – with the utmost dignity and grace, which characterised him always. My mother, Mrs Laila Kabir, and he (both former presidents of MCCI and cousins born in Jalpaiguri, who made their homes and lives in their beloved ancestral land of Bangladesh) were immensely fond of each other. He was the one who cajoled me out of my shell (as a young lawyer who was hiding in the comfort of her law chamber) to venture into the world of business, since I had specialised in corporate and commercial law. My participation in MCCI is mostly

A short few years after I qualified as a lawyer, he cornered me one day and said, “Mama, why don’t I see you in all these seminars and workshops? All sorts of lawyers go there, but I never see you.” I was a bit nonplussed, to say the least. My idea of practising law then was being dragged to court every morning by my late senior Syed Ishtiaq Ahmed, working in chambers till 10 pm, and then doing the same the next day. It was only at Shamim mama’s gentle but insistent persuasion that I began to show up at the many business- and economy-related workshops and seminars. He told me it was good to work hard, but one also had to be seen in public as a professional.



Latifur Rahman (1945-2020).

PHOTO: STAR

due to these two persons, but much more due to Mr Latifur Rahman’s direct encouragement. I have missed him dearly since his departure for the eternal. MCCI, and in fact the entire business community, continues to miss his guidance and presence.

A short few years after I qualified as a lawyer, he cornered me one day and said, “Mama, why don’t I see you in all these seminars and workshops? All sorts of lawyers go there, but I never see you.” I was a bit nonplussed, to say the least. My idea of practising law then was being dragged to court every morning by my late senior Syed Ishtiaq Ahmed, working in chambers till 10 pm, and then doing the same the next day. It was only at Shamim *mama*’s gentle but insistent persuasion that I began to show up at the many business-

and economy-related workshops and seminars. He told me it was good to work hard, but one also had to be seen in public as a professional.

So, here I am 30 odd years on, so deeply connected with MCCI – where he was the president for 7 years – besides being a senior advocate of the Supreme Court.

My first recollections of Shamim *mama* are from family weddings and suchlike, of a rather well dressed and dignified man of a somewhat reserved manner, who would always greet my mother with a hug and a sweet smile, call her *apa*, and she would refer to him using “*tui*”, while many others would be treating him much more circumspectly. *Ammu* would proudly say, “Shamim, *amar bhai*, Jalpaiguri.”

So, for him to single me out was not something I had quite expected. I

understand now that I was most certainly not the only person he gently prodded forward to test uncharted territories. He mentored many people and helped them find their places in the world.

I first became a member of the MCCI committee when he was the president. I got my obligatory introductory lecture from him, and have always borne those words in my mind and tried to follow them: of never allowing MCCI to be used for any one member or for anyone’s personal benefit. I must admit, I broke the hallowed hundred-and-something-year-old MCCI tradition by quietly taking some photographs of Shamim *mama* in the MCCI committee room – and I am very glad I had done so, because I was able to send them to his daughter, Simeen,

after he passed.

Whenever he would see me slacking off at the end of the table, playing with my new iPhone or daydreaming about something, he would gently draw my attention back by calling upon me for an opinion on whatever was being discussed. He did that with the other senior members at the table, too! It was another lesson in being consummately civilised while demanding that attention be paid to the matter at hand. He gave me a lot of confidence in myself, and taught me so much by example about being a good person, and how to bear unbearable losses with stoicism and dignity.

I last spoke to him during the last meeting of the selection committee for the Faraaz Hossain Bravery Award 2019. He was in his country home in Cheora, and sounded well. Several of us had planned to go there and see him. But, unfortunately, it was not to be. As coincidence would have it, in the early hours after *fajr* on July 1, 2020, I was scrolling through photographs on my iPad when I found a photograph I had taken on August 8, 2015 in the MCCI Lounge of Shamim *mama* and my mother – both looking well, both with mischievous smiles on their faces, with Shamim *mama*’s arm around my mother, holding her close. I saved the photo to my favourites folder to show to *Amma*, unaware that, within hours, he would be no more. That debonair, stylish, gentle, and kind man with the razor-sharp intellect and no-nonsense manner, the man with the utmost civility and unbending commitment to ethics as his hallmark, was no more.

Indeed, Latifur Rahman was one of a kind. But when we speak of people who have left their marks on us, we always say that there will be no one like him again. Yet, I think that if his legacy really means so much to us, we need to take the young people of this country (in whom he had so much faith) and try to shape them into thousands of Latifur Rahmans, so that his beloved Bangladesh would have persons replicating his single-minded dedication to the betterment of the country.

The bittersweet dream of Dhaka’s metro rail



Afia Jahin is a member of the editorial team at The Daily Star.

AFIA JAHIN

It may have been late 2017 or early 2018 when I first encountered a physical manifestation of the metro rail project in Dhaka. Leaving my part-time job at Mirpur II that evening, I realised that there were four-foot-high road dividers blocking my way to the other side of the busy main road. One of my co-workers, feisty as she was, simply climbed up onto the divider and stood on it for a bit before hopping down to the other side.

But my amusement and curiosity surrounding this megaproject soon turned to frustration and bitterness.

The incessant breaking up of Begum Rokeya Sarani, narrowing it down to barely one lane on each side, and the footpaths being walled off by even more dividers, did not really boast “development.” Instead, everyone and their non-Mirpur acquaintances began bashing the area for being dusty and having broken roads that were quite impossible to drive on. But no one seemed to realise that Mirpur itself had never been the problem. Not that Mirpur was perfect before the metro rail construction began; still, it was, for the most part, liveable. But once the piers had dug their rods in, most of Mirpur truly turned into a dysfunctional stretch of impassable, unwalkable urban hellscape.

Over the next five or so years, the project took shape; the 16.2km viaduct and the hundreds of piers underneath it materialised. On the ground, we all began wearing face masks (yes, pre-Covid) to protect our lungs from construction debris. Going to work from my Mirpur 12 home, I used to feel guilty for “making” the rickshaw puller pedal his vehicle across the shattered asphalt (I wouldn’t call it a “main road” at that point). Even the fares for auto-rickshaw trips along that road shot up considerably. The distance isn’t much, but the state of the once-tolerable

road slowed down all vehicles, almost doubling the duration of any commute.

In all this time, being eager about the metro rail experience was the furthest thing from my mind. I, like all locals, was too occupied with struggling to navigate what little “road” and “footpath” the construction of the Dhaka Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) Line-6 had left us with. There simply was no time to look up, and no scope to be excited at the prospect of something that might never even be actualised.

Of course, I have been proven wrong.

Most of the roads have been mended, some have even been widened, and the first instalment of the metro rail in our capital has been a reality for nearly seven months now. So, having tried and tested the service semi-thoroughly, I can finally convey a passenger’s take on this latest mammoth addition to Bangladesh’s public transport sector.

Once you get to your nearest station, depending on your physical abilities, you can take the stairs, an escalator, or the lift up to the lobby. There, you can get a ticket to your destination from either the manned ticket counter or from one of the self-service ticketing machines. My favourite thing about the latter is that it provides you with change for your payment. Once you have your ticket, you can swipe it at one of the automated gates and make your way towards your platform (marked clearly by overhead signs). Here, too, you have the options of stairs, an escalator, and a lift to go up to the platform. The wait time for each train ranges between 5 and 15 minutes, depending on the time of the day. There are concrete benches available, but most passengers prefer to stand and wait in buzzing anticipation (I’m

not exaggerating). Except for peak hours, the train doors usually stay open for around 10 seconds, within which all must exit or board the train.

As the train screeches along the rails, one cannot help but marvel at the experience of being a passenger on the Dhaka metro. The carriages are amply air-conditioned. And, even when standing up while holding loosely

and 3) the weekly day-off has been switched from Tuesday to Friday. Since the beginning, and even now, many passengers (especially during off-peak hours) have viewed a commute on the metro rail as a family outing. While this is amusing to observe, I believe switching the off day from a weekday to what is the weekly holiday for most people will help change this practice.

The heat was unbearable, of course, and so was the slowness of self-service as people are still getting used to the automated ticketing system. However, a couple of the ticket machines also began shutting down or restarting, adding to passengers’ suffering, most of whom, like myself, were office-goers who were impatient to get home after a long and tiring workday.

too. For example, there is the issue of male passengers boarding the all-female carriage. The first carriage of each train is reserved for women, with a sign at the platform pointing this out. Still, I have seen men knowingly or unknowingly boarding this carriage on all of my journeys. What is disappointing is that, after their error is pointed out, while some men scuttle into the next carriage (via the gangway doors), others outright refuse to leave. Even threats of being fined, courtesy of the train operator, fall on ears that have been deafened by an all-encompassing sense of entitlement.

Another issue which I hope the authorities will look into is the relatively high fare. For instance, one could easily take a hot, crowded, haphazardly-driven bus to their destination for a much lower fee than what the same distance would cost them on the metro – the comfort and swiftness of which may not be worth the price to many citizens. Ideally, in order to encourage the maximum number of people to use the train (and ultimately reduce traffic congestion on the roads), the fare for any given distance should be lower than what it would be on any other mode of transport.

There are, of course, many positives to outweigh the few negatives. Besides the aforementioned, there are also a good number of security personnel and other staff present across each station to not only prevent anything unsafe or untoward, but to also guide passengers through their commute. And, notwithstanding the horrible situation everywhere else in the city, the level of accessibility in the stations is decent enough.

All in all, it will still take some more changes before I fully warm up to the Dhaka metro rail – and can fully put behind myself the woes we all went through while the megaproject was heavily under construction. With the Agargaon-Motijheel link set to open in October, I remain eager to see how big of a positive impact the MRT-6 line can bring about for the otherwise dreadful daily commutes of the Dhakaites. I only hope we will never require professional “pushers” to fit passengers into metro rail carriages, like they do on Tokyo’s subway trains.



The metro rail is an object of need – not of recreation.

PHOTO: MARUF AREFIN MIM

onto a handrail, one is guaranteed a non-turbulent journey. Before exiting the station at your destination through another set of automated gates, you will need to slip your single-use ticket into a slot, or swipe your multiple-use pass, to signal the end of your commute.

The first time I rode the metro, it took me around seven minutes to get from Pallabi to Agargaon. That’s 6.4km in just as many minutes. Needless to say, I was all but converted to a fan of the Dhaka metro rail that day.

However, three key changes have been brought to the service since my first commute: 1) the train now stops at all of the stations between Uttara North and Agargaon; 2) it operates at night time, too, from 8am till 8pm;

The metro rail, after all, is an object of need – not of recreation.

The other two changes, however, have notably altered my initial contentment with the metro’s service.

For one, the duration of my commute from Pallabi to Agargaon during the late morning has stretched significantly – from less than seven minutes to around 15 minutes or more (excluding wait time for the train). Waiting in line at the exit as people try to get through the three automated gates also adds to this time. And the situation gets even more challenging at night.

My first time using the service after sundown last week, I was shocked to find at least 200 people crowded in front of the ticket counter and machines at the Agargaon station.

After finally acquiring my ticket (and one for a lady from another line, as the machine she was waiting to get to had broken down), I noticed that even the women’s carriage, which is relatively unpopulated at other times, was packed. And, instead of the usual 10 seconds, the gates of the train remained open for a good few minutes.

All this made me realise that, given the increasing number of people using the metro rail, it is time for regular commuters to acquire multiple-use rapid passes. This will shorten the commute time for all passengers, as there will be fewer people crowding the ticket counters, and rapid pass holders can directly board trains as they arrive.

Of course, some ailments which exist in all our public transport are carried into the Dhaka metro rail,

Scientists discovered new protective variants against gout

Gout is a type of arthritis that causes intense joint pain, redness, swelling, and tenderness, usually in the big toe. It occurs due to the buildup of uric acid, which forms sharp crystals in the joints. Recurrent gout attacks can be debilitating, so it is important to seek medical help.

Researchers have been studying the genetic factors that contribute to gout susceptibility. They have identified several genes involved in uric acid levels and metabolism. One gene called URAT1 has been found to play a significant role in gout risk.

The researchers discovered both common and rare variants in the URAT1 gene that provided protection against gout. They found that some of these variants affected the function of the URAT1 protein, which is responsible for uric acid reabsorption.

Interestingly, individuals with these rare variants had lower levels of uric acid in their blood, reducing their risk of developing gout. Even when they had another gene associated with gout, called ABCG2, having the URAT1 variants offered protection.

This study is significant because it reveals new rare genetic variants associated with lower gout risk. Understanding these genetic factors could lead to better treatments and personalised approaches for managing gout in the future.

Overall, this research provides valuable insights into the genetic basis of gout and offers hope for improved prevention and treatment strategies in the future.



The future of major depressive disorder treatment

STAR HEALTH DESK

Over the past two decades, significant progress has been made in the treatment options for major depressive disorder (MDD). It is now recognised that depression varies from person to person, and efforts are being made to identify and diagnose the specific neurochemical imbalances in individuals in order to tailor treatment accordingly.

Advances have been made in evidence-based treatments, particularly in drug therapy. More selective and specialised antidepressants, such as citalopram, escitalopram, fluoxetine, and sertraline, have been developed, offering improved efficacy and fewer side effects. Combining drug therapy with psychotherapy, specifically cognitive-behavioural and psychodynamic therapy, has been shown to be the most effective approach.

In cases where depression is resistant to standard treatments, electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) can be used. ECT has become more precise and safer, with fewer side effects. It is typically reserved for individuals with severe, drug-resistant depression who exhibit bipolar characteristics.

Two newer treatment options that show promise for treating major depression are ketamine therapy and psychedelic drugs. Ketamine therapy, which involves resetting brain nodes and network connectivity, has provided long-lasting relief for some patients. While it is not the first choice due to its profound effects on the brain, it is being considered as an option for severe treatment-resistant depression, with ongoing discussions about its use earlier in treatment.

There is building evidence for the use of psychedelics like psilocybin

(from mushrooms) and LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide) in treating major depression. Microdoses or millidoses of these drugs, either alone or in combination with antidepressants, have been shown to be effective in improving symptoms and function. However, the use of psychedelics is still stigmatised and regulated, and finding the right microdose and schedule requires skilled clinical expertise.

Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS) is another promising treatment option. By passing a weak

specific brain areas to regulate symptoms of depression. Advances in the field, supported by the BRAIN Initiative, an NIH programme aimed at revolutionising our understanding of the human brain have led to a better understanding of how to precisely target the brain, potentially yielding better results. DBS has shown promise in resetting network activities in the brain, leading to long-lasting effects and significant improvements in patients' outlook and quality of life. However, DBS carries risks, including infection, haemorrhage, and misplacement of electrodes, and insurance coverage can be inconsistent.

Looking ahead, minimal or non-invasive DBS is seen as the future of treatment.

Exciting advancements are being explored, such as the nonsurgical implantation of electrodes via small transmitters and stimulators that can be delivered through the bloodstream, inhaled, or swallowed. Minimally invasive approaches, involving fluid electrodes inserted through a small hole in the scalp and guided electromagnetically to the brain, are also being investigated. These developments hold the potential to revolutionise depression treatment in the next 5-10 years.

In summary, over the last two decades, significant strides have been made in the treatment of major depressive disorder. Advances in drug therapy, combined with psychotherapy, have improved outcomes. Newer treatments like ketamine therapy, psychedelics, TMS, and DBS offer hope for individuals with treatment-resistant depression. Further research and development are needed to optimise these treatments and pave the way for future innovations in depression care.



magnetic current through the skull, TMS can alter the brain's electrical activity and reduce depression symptoms. Repetitive TMS has shown significant effectiveness in certain forms of treatment-resistant depression, often with rapid and durable responses. It can be used alone or in combination with psychotherapy or drug treatment, although its effects may diminish over time.

Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS), a newer and emerging treatment, involves implanting electrodes in



“Cascade of widening inequity” accelerating the global diabetes crisis

A new series of articles published in The Lancet and The Lancet Diabetes and Endocrinology sheds light on the alarming rise of diabetes worldwide and the disparities in its impact. According to the research, diabetes is becoming increasingly prevalent and is expected to affect over 1.3 billion people by 2050.

The series emphasises how geographic disparities and structural racism faced by minority ethnic groups in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) contribute to the rising rates of diabetes. By 2045, more than three-quarters of adults with diabetes will reside in LMICs, but fewer than 1 in 10 will receive proper guideline-based care. In high-income countries like the USA, diabetes rates are disproportionately higher among minority ethnic groups due to structural racism.

The research reveals that marginalised communities have limited access to essential diabetes medications, resulting in worse blood sugar control, lower quality of life, and reduced life expectancy. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated these disparities, with people with diabetes, especially those from ethnic minority groups, being more susceptible to severe infection and death.

To address these inequalities, the authors emphasise the importance of real-world interventions and high-quality research. They call for interventions that involve the affected communities and tackle the structural and social determinants of health. Examples of successful interventions include improving insulin access in sub-Saharan Africa and implementing community healthcare worker programmes in the USA.

The series underscores the urgent need for action to transform diabetes care and outcomes for marginalised populations worldwide. Without concerted efforts to address disparities in diabetes, the health of future generations will be at risk. The authors urge increased research funding and the development of effective measures to achieve equitable diabetes care and outcomes.

Understanding and addressing excessive hair fall among teens

DR ABDULLAHEL AMAAN & DR KHAINOOR ZAHAN

Now a days, one of the common issues teenagers go through is excessive hair fall. Hair fall can be a bit of a concern for teens, especially teenage girls. Normally, a person can lose as many as 100 hairs a day. These hairs grow back from the same origin later on. If the hair fall is greater than that, then it needs to be evaluated.

However, excessive hair loss can happen for various reasons. A specific nutritional deficiency is one of the commonest causes. Teens are sometimes cautious regarding their weight gain and eat a smaller amount of food, sometimes missing a balanced diet. Regular intake of enough protein, vitamins (A, B, especially biotin, C, D, and E), and several minerals (Iron, Zinc) are essential to supporting hair growth. Foods rich in these components are egg yolk, liver, nuts, seeds, bananas, sweet potatoes, mushrooms, broccoli, etc.

Thyroid hormone disorders are also associated with excessive hair loss. This can interfere with hair production and cause hair loss.

Excessive hair fall can be a feature of underlying polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS). The ovaries produce the hormones oestrogen and progesterone, as well as a minimal amount of the male hormone, androgen. When suffering from PCOS, the ovaries produce an excessive amount of androgens, which results in excessive hair fall.

Certain fungal infections on the scalp may cause hair loss. This may occur from covering damp hair for a longer period of time. The symptoms include hair loss in patches with an itchy or red scalp.

Hair beautification can sometimes be responsible for excessive hair fall if used excessively. Repeated use of chemicals (hair colour, bleach), straightening, or perms can cause damage to the hair, causing it to break off or fall out. The use of too much heat from the iron or hot blow-drying also causes damage to the hair.

Sulphur-containing chemicals are sometimes used in shampoos to have a nice, bubbly lather, but they also strip the oils from the scalp, causing hair to dry out, breaking down the protein essential for hair health, halting growth, and causing hair to break. Sodium chloride is also used in shampoos as a thickener, which can cause a dry, itchy scalp and encourage hair loss.

Another type of hair loss that goes with hair styling is traction alopecia. Wearing a hairstyle that pulls the hair too tightly can permanently damage the hair follicles if it is used for a long time. Pain after doing the hairstyle is a sign of too much traction on the hair. Styling hair while it is wet can also cause it to stretch and break.

Trichotillomania is a psychological disorder in which people repeatedly pull their hair out, often leaving bald patches. People with trichotillomania usually need help from a therapist or other mental health professional before they can stop pulling their hair out.

Sudden stressful events like undergoing surgery, going through a traumatic event, or having a serious illness or high fever can temporarily cause the shedding of large amounts of hair. It is also a reversible condition after solving the stress.

Eating a balanced diet, drying hair naturally, limiting the use of blow dryers at high heat, avoiding too tight hairstyles, being gentle when combing, brushing, or washing hair, not rubbing hair too vigorously, and careful use of chemicals (hair straighteners, hair colour) can be helpful for avoiding excessive hair fall among teens. When used, shampoo and hair gel should be removed properly as their prolonged persistence can clog pores, which in turn restricts the scalp's oxygen supply, leading to increased hair fall.

Dr Abdullahel Amaan is a Paediatrician (E-mail: abdullahelamaan@gmail.com) and Dr Khainoor Zahan is a Public Health Specialist (E-mail: khainoorzahan@gmail.com).

Multilateral development banks and WHO launch new investment platform to strengthen primary health care services

STAR HEALTH DESK




Three multilateral development banks, in collaboration with the World Health Organisation (WHO), have established the Health Impact Investment Platform to invest in and enhance primary healthcare services in low- and low-middle-income countries (LICs and LMICs).

Launched during the Summit for a New Global Financing Pact in Paris, the platform will provide an initial €1.5 billion in concessional loans and grants to expand the coverage and effectiveness of primary healthcare services, particularly for vulnerable and underserved populations. WHO will serve as the policy coordinator, ensuring that financing decisions align with national health priorities and strategies.


The platform's secretariat will assist governments in developing national health plans and prioritising investments in primary healthcare. Moreover, the platform aims to stimulate broader investments in primary healthcare in support of government health strategies.

The partner development banks are committed to supporting countries in strengthening their primary healthcare services to promote community health and enhance resilience against future health crises. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, WHO estimated that LICs and LMICs needed to significantly increase their health spending, requiring an additional combined annual investment of US\$371 billion by 2030 to achieve the health-related SDGs.


The Health Impact Investment Platform aims to catalyse and coordinate broader financing flows through national investment plans for primary healthcare. The platform's establishment builds on successful cooperation between countries, multilateral organisations, and development banks during the pandemic, as exemplified by collaborative efforts in Angola, Ethiopia, and Rwanda to strengthen health systems through technical assistance, grants, and advantageous investments.


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Our Sister Concerns

Heartbreak leaves booters speechless

SPORTS REPORTER FROM BENGALURU

Before taking to the ground for the warm-up session at the Kanteerava Stadium in Bengaluru ahead of the SAFF Championship semifinal against Kuwait, Bangladesh right back Bishwanath Ghosh announced that he would distribute Tk 5 lakh among his teammates as a bonus if they could make it to the final for the first time in 18 years.

The defender's announcement was intended to charge up and motivate his teammates against a strong Kuwait team and Bangladesh showed their character throughout the match, even as the game rolled into extra time. However, Kuwait ultimately broke Bangladeshi hearts by scoring the winner in stoppage time of the first half of extra time after the regulation time ended goalless.

Bishwanath, who was outstanding throughout the match, would have been among the happiest if he was compelled to disburse that hefty bonus from his pocket, but he and the likes of Rakib Hossain, Suman Reza, Rabiul Hasan and Mohammad Ibrahim had no choice but to burst into tears at the final whistle.

The disappointment even led to a little scuffle among the two side's players and officials, centring on a conversation between Tariq Raihan Kazi and Kuwait's Mahdi Dashi and Bangladesh team manager Amer Khan was shown a red card by Indian referee John Crystal as a consequence.

As the dejected booters headed to the dressing room with heavy hearts, the Indian spectators cheered the Bangladeshi players for their fighting performance, with the men in red and green responding in kind with rounds of applause.

On the way to the team bus, Bishwanath said: "We always returned home with consolation [prizes] but this time we had a big dream. We always told our teammates that if we kept faith in each other, then it was possible to cross the Kuwait hurdle. But the wind was not with us. Besides, many decisions from the referee went against us."

Tariq Kazi could utter one just sentence, saying: "Nothing to say at the moment."

Sheikh Morsalin, who squandered the easiest chance of the game in the second minute, added: "There was a great chance to make history but we could not do it. We put up a good performance and created chances but we were unlucky. Pray for us so that we can do better in the future."

Tapu Barman stated bluntly: "The referee killed us, we don't have anything to say."

When queried about the refereeing, coach Javier Cabrera responded: "We are not surprised by what happened. We have been seeing this during the tournament. This is what we were expecting and it happened."



(Clockwise from L) Rakib Hossain provided the spark in the attacking third while Anisur Rahman Zico proved to be a wall for Bangladesh in their heroic display against Kuwait in their SAFF Championship semifinal at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium in Bengaluru yesterday. The men in red and green eventually left the pitch in tears but with heads held high.

PHOTO: SAFF

This should be Bangladesh's level: Cabrera

ANISUR RAHMAN FROM BENGALURU

Bangladesh came into the SAFF Championship with little hope of making it to the semifinals, a stage they had failed to reach over the past five editions of the regional football extravaganza, and their poor performances in some recent friendlies cast further doubt on their ability to make it out of the group stage.

However, Javier Cabrera's charges exited with their heads held high after putting up brave and consistent performances in all four matches. That self-belief was born in a brave showing in the first match against the tournament's top-ranked side, Lebanon, before being further reinforced by two come-from-behind wins against Maldives and Bhutan.

The team then ensured a lasting impression of their capabilities against Kuwait, who appeared lucky to have found a winner with an extra-time strike.

Cabrera, however, was struggling to accept the loss given the way his team performed over the course of 120 minutes. But he iterated that this should be the standard and the challenge would be to maintain it in the coming days.

"It is tough to accept the defeat. The performance and consistency of the team has absolutely been incredible. They were better today and created chances to qualify for the final," the Spaniard said at the post-match briefing at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium.

"This should be Bangladesh's level from now on. We should not perform below



this level. We have to match this standard. There were tough moments, but I am very proud of the team's performance in the SAFF Championship," the 38-year-old added.

Bangladesh could have taken the lead in the second minute had Sheikh Morsalin not shot straight at the Kuwaiti goalkeeper after getting a square pass from Rakib Hossain, who himself was later denied by the crosspiece and then goalkeeper Abdul Rahman Marzouq.

"We created chances against a team

which is the number one team in the tournament. They topped their group and are unbeaten in seven-eight games. Nobody was expecting to do well today, but we were about to qualify for the final. Over the 90 minutes, we had a first-minute chance. We were not able to push them more in the second half, but I don't think they got more chances. There is absolutely nothing to tell to the players except to take positives from the game," added Cabrera, who outshone previous coaches like Nikola Ilievski, Maruful Haque, Lodewijk De Kruij, Jamie Day and Oscar Bruzon by taking Bangladesh to the semifinals of the SAFF Championship.

The coach believed a good mix of senior players and young guns had resulted in the consistent showings, opining one player could not be singled out for praise. Cabrera had picked nearly 10 players who did not play in the 2021 SAFF Championship, some of whom had little international exposure before the regional championship.

The Spaniard added that they had one full training session related to defensive adjustments and the backline showed character, resilience and competence as they foiled Kuwait's forward forays.

"We deserved the win. Maybe the opposing coach will say the same. We made three-four adjustments yesterday and had one session to adjust. It is unbelievable the way they executed. It was amazing. I think we deserved to win, so I am disappointed. But proud of their performance," Cabrera said.

Windies denied World Cup spot for first time

AFP, HARARE

The West Indies failed to qualify for the Cricket World Cup for the first time as the two-time champions slumped to a seven-wicket thumping by Scotland at the qualifying event on Saturday.

The Caribbean side, needing a win to keep their slim qualification hopes alive, were bowled out for 181 in their 50 overs before Scotland chased down the target with 6.3 overs to spare in Harare.

Shai Hope's men have zero points with only two matches remaining in the Super Six stage in Zimbabwe after previous defeats by the hosts and the Netherlands.

The global one-day showpiece, which will be held in India from October 5 until November 19, will be notable for the absence of one of the sport's traditional powerhouses. The West Indies had previously played at every World Cup, winning the first two editions in 1975 and 1979.

Scotland exacted revenge for an agonising and controversial loss by the West Indies at the previous World Cup Qualifier in 2018 which saw them miss out on the main tournament with a first one-day international win over their opponents.

They now sit just two points behind Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka, with the top two to qualify for the 10-team event, ahead of their final two games against Zimbabwe on Tuesday and the Dutch two days later.



'Want to be the type who plays well on grass'

REUTERS

World number one Iga Swiatek is on a mission to improve her modest record on grasscourts and said on Saturday that she had gone back to basics in the buildup to Wimbledon, which starts on Monday.

Swiatek won the U.S. Open in 2022 and last month secured her second consecutive French Open crown. But while the 22-year-old has had success on hardcourts and clay, she is yet to win a tournament on grass and has yet to get past the round of 16 at Wimbledon.

The Pole's overall win-loss record on the slick surface is 9-5, and she acknowledged that she had to do better to be counted among the game's great players.

"I believe the best players, they can play on all surfaces. I want to become that kind of player who can play well on grass as well and feel comfortable there," Swiatek, who meets China's Zhu Lin in the first round, told reporters.

"I'm doing my best to just work on my skills. Last year I feel like we've done a pretty good job with my coach in terms of my touch and getting back slices and also playing the slice."



Joe Root surpassed Alastair Cook and became the highest outfield catcher of all time for England in Test cricket with 176 catches to his name when he took a one-handed stunner at short leg to dismiss Australia's Travis Head on Day 4 of the second Ashes Test at Lord's on Saturday. Like Head, most of the Australia batters fell prey to short deliveries by the English seamers as the hosts staged a strong fightback. However, Australia still managed to score 279, setting England a daunting victory target of 371 runs.

PHOTO: AFP

Tigers approach July ODIs with WC in mind

SPORTS REPORTER

Following a record win in the lone Test, Bangladesh will be looking to replicate their fine run in the upcoming white-ball contests against Afghanistan as the Tigers reached Chattogram ahead of the three-match ODI series yesterday.

Meanwhile, Hashmatullah Shahidi and his troops also reached the port city after landing in Bangladesh yesterday. The visitors are expected to give a tough fight with a full-strength side following the return of star cricketers – the likes of Rashid Khan, Mujeeb Ur Rahman, and Mohammad Nabi.

Some Bangladesh players trained yesterday while Afghanistan are set to resume training today ahead of the first ODI, scheduled on July 5. The Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury stadium will also stage the second and third ODI on July 8 and 11, respectively.

As Bangladesh will begin their ICC ODI World Cup campaign against Afghanistan in Dharamsala later this year, the upcoming ODI series emerged as a great platform for the Tigers to prepare and chalk out their game-plan ahead of the mega event.

The ODI series against Afghanistan and the upcoming Asia Cup is expected to be the last two series before the World Cup. According to selector Habibul Bashar, it will be important for the Tigers to take the momentum beside them before heading for the mega event.



"I think the significance of the upcoming series and also the Asia Cup is how we gain the momentum before heading for the World Cup. It is important to have good form as a team since we are well aware of the structure of the tournament, where every team will play against each other. Obviously, we will have our own game plan, considering the opponent," Bashar told The Daily Star yesterday.

According to the former captain,

there is not much to adjust as a unit for the Tigers considering the Indian conditions which is pretty similar to Bangladesh.

Meanwhile, Bashar said that the upcoming series against Afghanistan will not be too crucial in terms of selection for the upcoming World Cup, since there is not much to tinker in the squad.

However, there will be eyes on the likes of Naim Sheikh and Afif Hossain who made a comeback in the ODI side for the Afghanistan series and it will be important for them to showcase their worth and become strong contenders to make it to the final World Cup squad.

"We don't see too many places where we can make changes. Probably there are one or two areas where we can give our final thought. However, it's not that the upcoming Afghanistan series or the Asia Cup will play a big role in that."

The return of Shakib Al Hasan from a finger injury will strengthen the team. However, the persistent injury concern of skipper Tamim Iqbal will also remain crucial from Bangladesh's point of view, and the team management will surely want the captain to lead from the front both on and off the field.

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'Papia tortures woman in prison'

Says victim's brother in complaint against the ex-Jubo Mohila League leader

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Gazipur*

Incarcerated former Jubo Mohila League leader Shamima Nur Papia along with jail guards and some inmates allegedly tortured a woman in prison, leaving her in a critical condition.

The victim's brother made the allegations in a complaint filed with the Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Gazipur on June 25.

Victim Runa Laila, 38, is now in Gazipur Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmad Medical College Hospital. The authorities of Kashimpur Women's Central Jail also denied her adequate treatment following the incident, claimed Runa's family.

They said the authorities tried to hide the incident and even made a woman call Runa's brother pretending to be her.

Runa's brother Abdul Karim in his complaint said he learnt that Runa had Tk 7,700 on her which was found during a search. In order to take the money from her, Papia, along with habildars Fatema Begum and Nasima Akhtar, and inmates Sonali, Anandika, Abantika and Najma took her sister to a place where there is no CCTV coverage and tortured her.

Karim said during the torture, his sister defecated, started vomiting blood and eventually lost consciousness.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2



Kuwait's Abdullah Ammar Albloushi celebrates his decisive goal during extra time of a 1-0 win over Bangladesh in their SAFF Championship semifinal at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium in Bengaluru yesterday. (Inset) Bangladesh coach Javier Cabrera consoles defender Bishwanath Ghosh as the other players and coaching staff reflect on the heartbreaking defeat.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Brilliant Bangladesh go down fighting

AL-AMIN

When the Bangladesh football team set off for Bengaluru around a fortnight ago to play the 2023 SAFF Championship, not many had expected them to cross the group-stage hurdle.

But the men in red and green belied all the pre-tournament connotations with a stunning performance before going down fighting against Kuwait in a captivating semifinal at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium yesterday.

Bangladesh might have lost the game 1-0, conceding the only goal deep into the first-half of extra time after the regulation 90 minutes had failed to break the deadlock, but the result hardly reflected how gamely Bangladesh fought

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



4 go missing as oil tanker explodes

Divers from fire service carry out search in Sugandha river

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four people suffered burn injuries and four others are missing after an oil tanker exploded on the Sugandha river in Jhalakathi yesterday afternoon.

There were nine people on board, and one of them was rescued unharmed, firefighters said.

The tanker, Sagar Nandini-2, with seven lakh litres of diesel and four lakh litres of petrol, was anchored near the ferry terminal of the town around 2:00pm when it suddenly went up in flames, witnesses said.

The cargo brought from Chattogram belonged to Padma Oil Company, said Shariful Islam, a marketing officer of the company.

The tanker exploded just before it was supposed to unload the cargo at a storage facility, he added.

Injured crew members Mainul Islam Hridoy, 25, Sakil Ahmed, 23, Faridul Islam Patoary, 60, and Ikbal Hossain, 27, were admitted to the burn unit at Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital.

The identities of the missing crew members could not be known, firefighters said.

Liton Ahmed, deputy assistant director of fire service in Barishal, said six teams of firefighters from Jhalakathi and nearby upazilas brought the fire under control after two hours and rescued the injured men.

It was too early to say what caused the explosion, he added.

The man rescued unharmed is in police custody, he said, adding that firefighters will continue to look for the missing men.

Sakil, one of the injured crew members, said the blast was so powerful that it sent the bridge of the tanker flying.

Third death anniversary of Latifur Rahman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Yesterday was the third death anniversary of Latifur Rahman, the CEO and founding chairman of Transcom Group.

Soft-spoken and humble, the visionary and ethical businessman passed away in his sleep on July 1, 2020, at his paternal home in Cumilla after suffering from lung diseases for a long time.

His passing coincided with the death anniversary of his grandson Faraaz Ayaz Hossain. The student of Emory University in Atlanta, US, was brutally killed by militants during the July 1 attack on the Holey Artisan Bakery in Gulshan in 2016.

Latifur was the founding

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Fatima Yasmin appointed as vice-president of the ADB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finance Secretary Fatima Yasmin has been appointed the first Bangladeshi vice-president of the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

The multilateral lender headquartered in Manila, Philippines announced her appointment in a press release on Wednesday.

Fatima will serve as the vice-president for Sectors and Themes at ADB for a period of three years. She is expected to join ADB in late August.

She will also be responsible for the Climate Change and Sustainable Development Department under ADB's new operating model.

Fatima, currently serving as senior secretary

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

Riots over teen's killing rock France

Macron halts Germany trip as fourth night of unrest hits major cities; more than 2,000 arrested; over 200 police injured

REUTERS, Paris

French police arrested more than 1,300 people during a fourth night of rioting ahead of the funeral of teenager Nahel M, whose shooting by police sparked the unrest that yesterday prompted President Emmanuel Macron to postpone a trip to Germany.

Macron's government deployed 45,000 police officers as well as armoured vehicles overnight to tackle the worst crisis to face his leadership since the "Yellow Vest" protests which brought much of France to a standstill in late 2018.

The French president postponed a state visit to Germany that was due to begin today due to the ongoing unrest.

France's interior ministry said on Twitter that 1,311 people had been arrested overnight, compared with 875 the previous night, although it added the violence was "lower in intensity".

Nahel, a 17-year-old of Algerian and Moroccan descent, was shot by a police officer during a traffic stop on Tuesday in the Paris suburb of Nanterre.

Several hundred people lined up to enter Nanterre's grand mosque, which was guarded by volunteers in yellow vests, while a few dozen bystanders watched from across the street.

Some of the mourners, their arms crossed, said "God is Greatest" in Arabic, as they spanned the boulevard in prayer.

Salsabil, a young woman of Arab descent, told Reuters that she had come to express support for Nahel's family.

"I think it's important we all stand together," she said.

Nahel, a 17-year-old of Algerian and Moroccan descent, was shot by a police officer during a traffic stop on Tuesday in the Paris suburb of Nanterre.

Marie, 60, said she had lived in Nanterre for 50 years and there had always been problems with the police. "This absolutely needs to stop. The government is completely disconnected from our reality," she said.

The shooting of the teenager, caught on video, has reignited longstanding complaints by poor and racially mixed urban communities of police violence and racism. Macron had denied there is systemic racism in French law enforcement agencies.

Ancient Greek altar unearthed on Italian island



REUTERS, Rome

An ancient Greek altar for family worship dating back more than 2,000 years has been found in the archaeological site of Segesta on the Italian island of Sicily, local authorities said on Friday.

Sicily's regional government said the altar was probably in use at the height of Hellenic cultural influence, just before the rise of the Roman empire in the first century before Christ (BC).

It had been buried for centuries by a few centimetres of earth and vegetation in the area of the Southern Acropolis at the Segesta site, which is in the western part of the island.

"The Segesta site never ceases to amaze us," said Sicily's regional culture minister Francesco Paolo Scarpinato.

"Excavations continue to bring to light... pieces that add new perspectives and interpretations to a site where multiple civilizations are stratified," he said in a statement.

Segesta, renowned for its 5th-century-BC temple, was an ancient Greek city nestled between mountains.

Apart from the altar, archaeologists also dug out a similar-shaped relic that they believe may have been a support for a sculpture. Both finds are perfectly preserved, the regional government said.

DSA continues to stifle freedom of expression

MSF says 7 DSA cases filed in June

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite concerns expressed by national and international bodies, seven cases were filed under the controversial Digital Security Act (DSA) last month, according to the Manabdhikar Shongskriti Foundation (MSF), a human rights organisation.

Two people were arrested in connection with the cases. In a report released on Friday, signed by MSF founder Sultana Kamal, the rights body called for the repeal of the DSA.

The report is based on news items published by 18 media outlets, which were verified by human rights activists.

Among the cases, two were filed last month for "tarnishing the image" of the country or making "defamatory remarks" against Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina via social media posts, shares, and comments.

Another two cases were filed in Chattogram for the unauthorised use of Information Minister Hasan Mahmud's personal information. In the cases, seven individuals who run YouTube channel called "Nagarik TV" and its affiliated Facebook page were accused of "disseminating information unlawfully".

Furthermore, two cases were filed for posting "critical content" on religion and religious figures, and one case was filed for "spreading false information" on Facebook.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



Leftover pieces of rawhide are being dumped along the Dhaleshwari river just outside the tannery estate in Savar's Hemayetpur. The rawhide will eventually end up in the river, polluting the water body. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN