



P11
'Hungry'
Djokovic fired
up for more
glory



P10
Souls at 50:
The many
incarnations
of a band



P7
French riots
unwelcome,
perilous crisis
for Macron



P6
'Shurongo' paves
way for Afran
Nisho's promising
film career

Private sector borrowing less from abroad

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The private sector's external debt declined by about \$2 billion in the first three months of the year, in a sign of the shrinking appetite for foreign loans in the face of unfavourable terms.

At the end of March, the private sector's external debt obligations stood at \$22.18 billion, down from \$24.31 billion recorded three months earlier, according to data from the Bangladesh Bank.

Given the lower interest rates in much of the Western world, the private sector was resorting to borrowing more and more from abroad.

Their foreign borrowing began to shoot up in 2021 when central banks around the world kept the interest rates low to kickstart their economies from the pandemic-induced slowdown.

At the end of 2020, the private sector's external debt obligations stood at \$14.76 billion. Over the next year and a half, it hit a peak of \$25.95 billion.

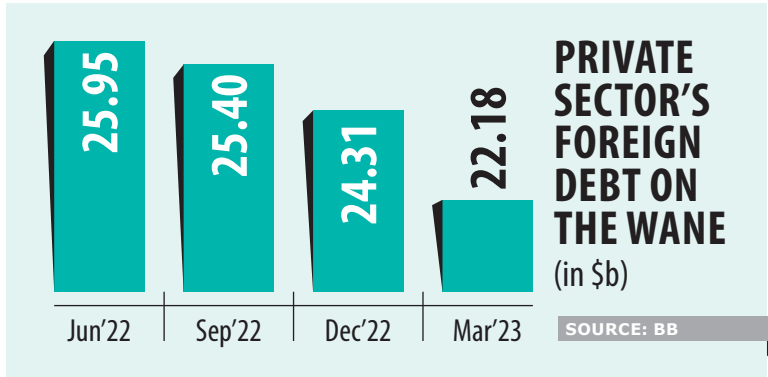
It began to decline in the third quarter of 2022 as central banks around the world started to increase interest rates to tame inflation.

But Bangladesh's private sector began to face another issue: with the view to preserving the strained dollar stockpile, the government tightly controlled the dollar outflows, which led to one too many deferred letters of credit settlement.

"Our reputation was badly damaged," said Zahid Hussain, a former lead economist of the World Bank's Dhaka office.

This also prompted the global rating agency Moody's in December last year to downgrade the rating of Bangladesh's financial sector.

"This has made financing access very difficult for the private sector," he said.



Meanwhile, the interest rate has increased much abroad; and given the risks carried by the Bangladeshi borrowers due to Moody's downgrade and the reputational damage, the interest rate for them is even higher.

Coupled with the steep depreciation of the taka, foreign loans would not make much cost-effective option for the private sector.

The central bank has also put a cap on the interest rate for the private sector's foreign commercial borrowing and that cap is lower than the going rate in the international market, according to Hussain.

At the end of March, the private sector's short-term foreign loans stood at \$14.1 billion, down from \$16.42 billion at the end of December 2022.

The long-term loans though increased by \$204.97 million to \$8.1 billion at the end of the first quarter of 2023.

But the private sector's reduced foreign borrowing does not mean that the pressure on the foreign reserves and the exchange rate will subside.

"It is because both the financial and current accounts of the balance of payment are in deficit. If the current account is in deficit, it can be financed with the surplus in the financial account, and there would be no pressure on reserves or the foreign exchange market," Hussain said.

"When both are in deficit, commercial banks will have to draw on their foreign exchange accounts and the BB will have to use its reserves," he added.



Saiful Islam plays with his toddler on a bed of Mugda Medical College Hospital yesterday. He has been in the hospital with dengue for 11 days. The number of deaths this year from the mosquito-borne disease is now 52, according to government data.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Militants using jails to recruit operatives

SHARIFUL ISLAM, MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Taking advantage of gaps in surveillance, incarcerated militant leaders have been forming new outfits and recruiting members inside and outside prisons.

Besides, pro-al Qaeda militant outfit Ansar Al Islam and several other islamist groups have been recruiting members online for the last few months, counterterrorism officials say.

The Neo JMB members inspired by the so-called Islamic State (IS) are planning to form a new outfit in collaboration with members of Ansar al Islam, and Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), two officials of the counterterrorism unit of police have said requesting anonymity.

By intercepting communications, the officers have learnt that Neo JMB leader Saiful Islam Khaled, now on death row at Kashimpur High Security Prison for the 2016 Holey Artisan café attack, used Telegram app on a smartphone to contact Bangladeshi IS militants in Afghanistan's Khorasan province and asked for financial support to reorganise the militant group in Bangladesh.

Ansar al Islam member Irfan, and JMB members Hasib, Ekran, and Khaled — all inmates at Kashimpur — held a meeting in mid-June and talked about their plans, said the officers of Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit of police.

The Neo JMB was behind the Holey Artisan attack in which 20 hostages, including 17 foreigners, were killed on July 1, 2016. Two police officers also lost their lives during the standoff.

Besides, five attackers and an employee of the restaurant died during Operation Thunderbolt which brought an end to the nerve-racking 12-hour hostage crisis.

Formation of the Jamatul Ansar Fil Hindal Sharqiya, which has been in the news in recent months, was also initiated at a meeting of inmates led by Abu Sayed, a top Hujji leader also on death row at the prison for the August 21, 2004, grenade attack. Ansar Al Islam members Mainul Islam who used to go by the aliases Mahin and Roxy, and Jony were at the meeting.

The Sharqiya came to light after several

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

NATURAL RESOURCES

Basic info on extraction deals scanty

Says US state dept in fiscal transparency report 2023

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh needs to make basic information about its natural resource extraction awards publicly available, said a recent report by the US State Department.

At present, it is not consistently made publicly available, according to the 2023 Fiscal Transparency Report.

The report, which was published on June 27, assessed the fiscal transparency of the governments that receive US assistance to help ensure "US taxpayer funds are used appropriately". In 2022, 140 countries and the Palestinian authority received US assistance.

As per the report, 44 countries including Bangladesh did not make significant progress in meeting the minimum requirements of fiscal transparency.

Among the South Asian countries, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka met the minimum requirements. Maldives made significant progress in meeting the minimum requirements, while Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan failed to. Bhutan was not assessed for the report.


The 2023 fiscal transparency review process evaluated

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



The mighty Jamuna devours the Solimabad Paschim Govt Primary School in Nagarpur upazila of Tangail yesterday. Around 200 children used to go to this school. Story on page 5.

PHOTO: STAR



Uttara University

Excellence in Higher Education and Research

We have moved to permanent campus!

Departments of UU

CSE BUSINESS LAW EEE MATH

CIVIL TEXTILE ENGLISH BANGLA FASHION DESIGN

ISLAMIC STUDIES EDUCATION PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Permanent Campus:
Plot - 5, Dhour Road, Turag, Uttara, Dhaka-1230
www.uttarauniversity.edu.bd

UN deputy secretary general meets Hasina

UNB, Dhaka

United Nations Deputy Secretary General Amina J Mohammed yesterday paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Gono Bhaban.

In the meeting, various issues including SDG, climate change, Rohingya, impacts of the Covid-19 and Russia-Ukraine war on the global economy came up for discussion.

PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim briefed newsmen after the meeting.

The prime minister said her government has been taking various timely measures to ensure food security amid the international food crisis.

She said her government has been working to bring all the fallow land

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

BOTCHED C-SECTION Central Hospital refutes Sangjukta's allegations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Central Hospital authorities yesterday denied the allegations brought by physician Sangjukta Saha who claimed the hospital admitted pregnant Mahbuba Rahman Akhi in her absence and received a commission from her for every childbirth.

In a press release regarding the death of Akhi and her baby, they claimed that Sangjukta had a group of on-call doctors who she used to assign on a roster to take care of her patients.

On June 18, Akhi died seven days after the death of her newborn following the alleged botched C-section on June 10 at the Central Hospital. After the tragic incident, Sangjukta and the hospital authorities traded blames.

In yesterday's press release, the hospital authorities said Shahzadi, one of Sangjukta's on-call doctors, was at the hospital until 11:00pm as instructed by Sangjukta, though Shahzadi did not have duty on that night at the hospital.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Militants using jails to recruit operatives

FROM PAGE 1

young men were reported missing in Cumilla last year.

Echoing the two officers, a Rab officer has said recruitment by Ansar Al Islam, formerly known as Ansar Ullah Bangla Team, on Facebook, Twitter, and Telegram is now a matter of concern.

The recruiters identify potential targets on social media and contact them through encrypted messaging apps that make it difficult for law enforcers to monitor their activities.

The group has "sleeper cells" in which the members do not know each other's real identity and their leaders operate anonymously.

They use unique codes for their identity, said a CTTC officer. "Even if one of them gets arrested, law enforcers cannot track down the others."

Besides, militants use VPN that prevent law enforcers from intercepting the communications.

"Ansar Al Islam wants to make a terrorist attack. It is gaining strength by recruiting new members. They may become a major headache in

future," said an officer.

AFM Al Kibria, deputy commissioner (Cyber Crime Investigation Division) at the CTTC, has said his team is trying to get timely information in the coming days through the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) between Bangladesh and other countries.

The recruiters identify potential targets on social media and contact them through encrypted messaging apps that make it difficult for law enforcers to monitor activities.

Contacted on June 27, CTTC chief Asaduzzaman said, "Although it appears that militancy is under control, the militants are attempting

Basic info on extraction

FROM PAGE 1

whether the government publicly disclosed key budget documents, including expenditures broken down by ministry and revenues broken down by source and type.

The review process also evaluated whether the government had a supreme audit institution that meets international standards of independence and audits the government's annual financial statements and whether such audits are made publicly available.

It also assessed whether the process for awarding licences and contracts for natural resource extraction is outlined in law or regulation and followed in practice and whether basic information on such awards is publicly available.

While the Bangladesh government made its executive budget proposal publicly available, it did not make its end-of-year report publicly available within a reasonable period, it said.

The budget documents were not prepared according to the internationally accepted principles but provided a reasonably complete picture of the government's planned expenditures and revenue, including natural resource revenues.

However, the government did not break down expenditures to support executive offices.

The publicly available budget documents included financial allocations to and earnings from state-owned enterprises.

Although the government's supreme audit institution reviews the

to reorganise."

Deradicalisation procedures will be launched in prisons soon, he added.

CTTC Deputy Commissioner SM Nazmul Haque said officers are engaged in "cyber patrolling" to monitor online activities of militants and prevent recruitments.

Maj Gen (retd) ANM Muniruzzaman, security analyst and president of Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies (BIPSS), said police alone cannot combat militancy.

Militancy will never be controlled until the means of radicalisation are eradicated, but Bangladesh does not have any counter-radicalisation strategy, he said.

When something happens somewhere, militants get killed or end up in prisons through an operation. But their activities in the prisons are not properly monitored, he said.

Prisons are becoming militant-making factories partly because they are at double the capacity, he said, adding that militants must be separated and deradicalised.

OIL TANKER BLAST Same vessel sank 6 months ago in the Meghna One body found; search on for missing three

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

The oil tanker that exploded in Jhalakathi on Saturday afternoon, was involved in another accident just 6 months ago as it sank in the Meghna river after colliding with a bulkhead.

An investigation report after the incident found that the tanker's safety equipment, especially the radar system, was not working properly. It recommended fixing the issues before putting it in service again.

Just months after that, the tanker, Sagar Nandini-2, exploded on the Sugandha river seriously injuring five people out of 9 on board. They are taking treatment in the burn unit at Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital.

Of the missing 4 people, rescuers today recovered the body of Ridoy, a crew of the oil tanker, at 2:00pm from the engine room, said Mohammad Salim, a joint director of BIWTA, yesterday.

He said a rescue operation was continuing for the missing three: the tanker's supervisor Masud Rahman Belal, driver Sarwar and staff Ruhul Amin Khan.

Two divers have been deployed, he added.

The tanker, with seven lakh litres of diesel and four lakh litres of petrol, was anchored near the ferry terminal of the town. It was set to unload its cargo, sources said.

The cargo brought from Chattagram belonged to Padma Oil Company.

One of the injured crew said the explosion was so powerful that it sent the bridge of the tanker flying into the river.

A probe committee has been formed to find out the cause of the explosion.

The BIWTA official said the unloading of cargo from the tanker was ongoing since morning.

The vessel is not likely to capsize, he said.

For Sagar Nandini-2, it was the second major accident in 6 months.

On December 25, last year, it capsized in the Meghna river in Bhola with 1.1 million litres of oil after colliding with a bulkhead on its way to the Padma Oil Company depot in Chandpur.

Salvaging after seven days, it was then repaired in a dock and put back in service, said Salim.

In January, an investigation report said that the tanker lacked adequate safety measures. It recommended that the ship must fix those issues before it can be put in service again," said BIWTA Additional Director of the Department of Naval Conservation and Management Abdur Rahim.

Asked whether the recommendations of the report were carried out, Salim, BIWTA joint director, said, "We couldn't check as the bridge of the tanker was blown away in the explosion."

It couldn't be confirmed whether the tanker got a clearance certificate after the repair work.

21,000 Wagner mercenaries killed in Ukraine: Zelensky

CNN ONLINE

At least 21,000 Wagner mercenaries have been killed fighting in Ukraine, according to President Volodymyr Zelensky.

The Ukrainian leader said the private military company had suffered "enormous losses," particularly in eastern Ukraine where its "most powerful group" was fighting.

"Our troops killed 21,000 Wagnerites in eastern Ukraine alone," Zelensky told reporters in Kyiv on Saturday, adding that another 80,000 Wagner fighters had been wounded.

"These were enormous losses for the Wagner PMC," said Zelensky, who characterised its fighters as a "motivated staff of the Russian army" and mostly convicts who "had nothing to lose."

CNN could not independently verify the claim by Zelensky, made during a press conference with Spanish media to coincide with a visit to Kyiv by Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez.

The trip by Sanchez is his third visit to Ukraine. It comes as Spain takes over the rotating Presidency of the Council of the European Union and follows news that CIA Director William Burns also recently traveled to Ukraine to meet with Zelensky and Ukrainian intelligence officials.

Zelensky's claims about Wagner's losses comes just a week after the private military company's boss Yevgeny Prigozhin led his men in an abortive rebellion against Moscow.

The future of the Wagner Group is now unclear, with the deal brokered by Lukashenko requiring Prigozhin to move to Belarus and his fighters given the option of either signing up to the Russian military or enforcement agencies, returning to their families and friends, or also going to Belarus.

4 struck dead by lightning

STAR REPORT

At least four people were killed and several injured after they were struck by lightning in three districts yesterday.

In Jamalpur, two died and two sustained injuries after being struck by lightning in Sadar upazila.

The deceased are Mofajjol Ali, 55, of Jamalpur municipality, and Abdul Khalek, of Sadar upazila, reports our district correspondent.

The injured are Shahjahan and Dulu Sheikh of Baniabazar area.

In Mymensingh, an elderly farmer was killed in a lightning strike in Haluaghat upazila.

The victim was identified as Md Intaz Ali, 70, of Beeldora village, reports our local correspondent.

In Natore, a youth was killed after being struck by lightning while playing football at Misripara Adarsh High School ground in Bagatipara.

The deceased is Borhan Uddin, of Abdulpur village of Lalpur upazila.

Woman killed under train

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A train ran over a woman near the Boral Bridge Railway Station in Bhangura upazila of Pabna last morning.

Salma Begum, 26 of Moshjidpara village, was sitting on the rail line near the Boral bridge station at about 8:30am when Dhaka-bound Bonolota Express ran over her, said Sub-Inspector of Sirajganj GRP Police Station Md Abdul Mazed.

GRP police recovered the body from the spot and sent it to Sirajganj General Hospital morgue for autopsy, he added.

Locals however claimed that the victim might have died by suicide.

Asked about the matter, the GRP SI however said police are investigating the incident.

"According to the information from the locals, we come to know that the victim was sitting on a rail line when the train was crossing the track. We are investigating, whether she committed suicide or was unmindful when the train approached."

3 siblings die in boat capsized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Maulvibazar

Three siblings died in a boat capsized in Gobindpur village in Sunamganj Sadar upazila yesterday afternoon.

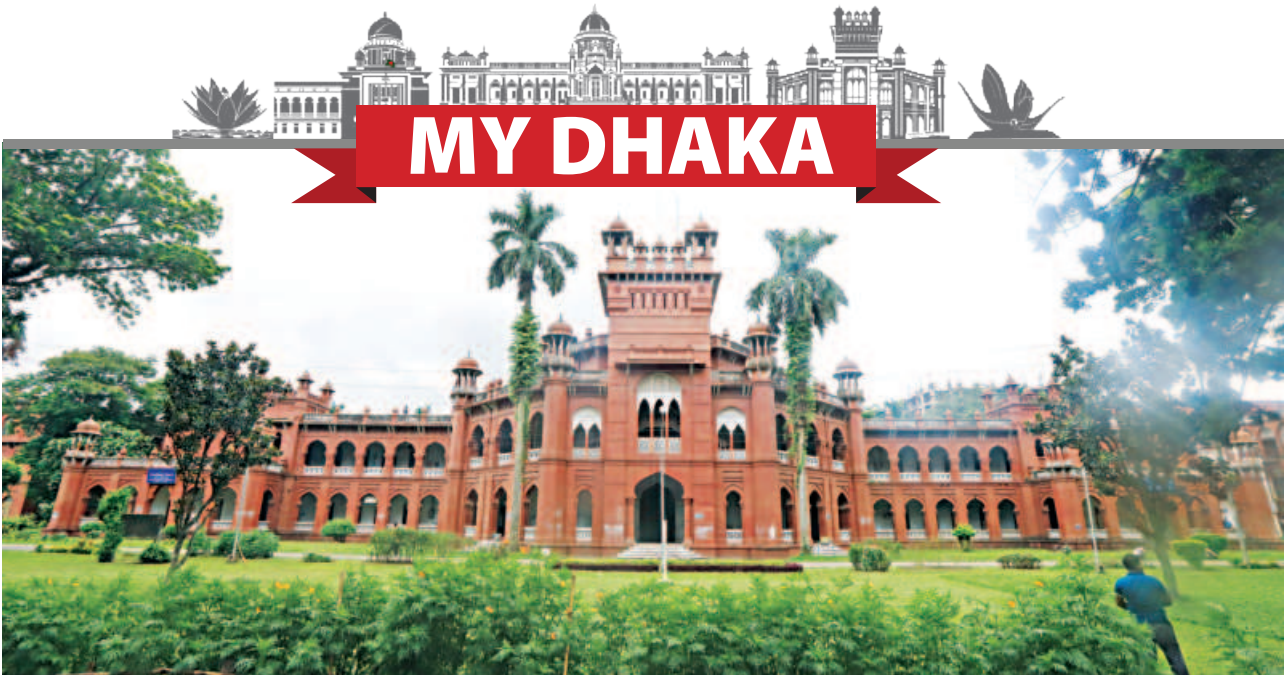
The deceased are Farzana 13, Marzana, 8, and Robin, 4, said police.

Suhel Mia, a day labourer of Gobindpur village, sent away his four children on a small boat as flood water entered the house, but it sank on the way.

The elder son managed to swim ashore but his siblings drowned, said Local Union Parishad Chairman Abdul Wadud.

Later villagers and fire service personnel recovered the bodies, said Sunamganj Sadar Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC) Ikhtiar Uddin Chowdhury.

Dhaka University is revered as the highest educational institution in Bangladesh. The place is deemed magical and its students often long for the campus even after completing their graduation. On 1 July 2023, it was DU's 102nd birthday. With her birthday in mind, here is a call back to my days at Dhaka University and everything it has taught me other than my major.



SK ENAMUL HAQ

What DU taught me

ASHIF AHMED RUDRO

THE POWER OF THOUGHT

It is often said that true education is not memorising information but learning how to use that information. True education is learning how to think. That is what I learned from Dhaka University. The place inspired me to think.

The things that I learned in classes, I spent less time memorising them and more time thinking about them and their application. Most students here debate about relevant issues over their breakfast or a cup of tea.

ADAPT TO DHAKA

When I came to Dhaka, I was still in my teen years and the place was completely new to me. I was having a really difficult time adjusting to the city because as they say, I was a little boy from a village and I knew nothing. If you are in a city where you will be living for the next few years, it is imperative to adapt to that city. But being an introvert, it was challenging.

But this place, the campus, and the people here; there was something in them.

They accepted me, and they taught me

how to survive. They taught me to live in a city like Dhaka and for that, I am forever grateful.

KINDNESS

My university taught me that kindness is not a flaw but a virtue. Here I saw people being kind to each other as often as possible.

The kindness to stray animals is something that can be seen on the

campus regularly. Every part of the campus has stray dogs and cats and they are not afraid of people because the students feed them, pet them, and even provide treatment when needed. As a result, the animals are not afraid of people. My tendency to reach out to stray animals was elevated here.

REPEL PREJUDICE

Prejudice is something that spreads toxicity and learning to repel prejudice is a virtue. One must never judge a book by its cover and one should not judge a person based on his appearance and outfit.

Dhaka University taught me there are so many talented people all around me that making any assumption about anyone without knowing for certain is a vice, one I learned to overcome.

The place also introduced me to people from different ethnicity and once I came to know them, we became good friends. I know for a fact that had I not been present at this campus for this experience, I would have held prejudice against some of them. I'm glad that this campus taught me how to overcome prejudice and I am a better person for it.

LARGEST ONLINE BRANCH NETWORK

LARGEST PRIVATE COMMERCIAL BANK

FIRST BANGALEE BANK

Sharia'h based Islamic Banking
through 501 Branches & 162 Sub Branchesপূবালী ব্যাংক লিমিটেড
PUBALI BANK LIMITEDTake your remittance
Smile with your gift

ESTABLISHED IN 1959

64 YEARS IN BANKING

Excellence in Remittance Service

Walking beside her people

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

After instructing all the lawmakers to visit their respective constituencies, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina decided to lead by example.

The premier, who is also the parliamentary member from Gopalganj-3, went to Kotalipara and Tungipara on Saturday for a two-day tour of her constituency.

Once there, the prime minister left the confines of her heavily guarded position and ventured into the heart of her birthplace.

The premier embraced the role of an ordinary MP, freely interacting with the people she serves.

Unfazed by the rain, Hasina walked across the streets of her birthplace, engaging with party supporters and citizens alike.

One of her entourage briefed The Daily Star about her activities during her visit.

Her visit started with Kotalipara, where her first stop was the upazila AL office.

The PM inaugurated the newly built office and planted neem, bokul and mango trees as hundreds of her party's grassroots leaders and activists watched on.

While it rained heavily outside, the PM sat down to eat with her party members in a pandal set out to seat around 5,000.

Her security personnel tried to intervene and offered her food that was specially prepared for her, but Hasina turned them down and called for the same food that the rest of the attendees were eating -- polao, mutton rezala, mixed vegetables and semai.

Hasina made a pitstop at her father's tomb in Tungipara before heading towards a canal being dredged in her area.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



Flanked by security personnel, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina walks towards the upazila Awami League office from her Tungipara residence yesterday. The premier returned to the capital in the afternoon wrapping up her two-day visit to Gopalganj.

PHOTO: PTI

Dengue claims two more lives

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two more dengue patients died while 509 were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning.

The total number of deaths in dengue rose to 52 this year, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Meanwhile, the total number of dengue case



this year rose to 8,757 of whom 2,276 are from outside Dhaka.

Some 1,388 dengue patients are still undergoing treatment while 7,317 have been released from hospitals.

The total number of deaths in dengue was 281 last year while the total number of cases was 62,382, according to the DGHS.

Experts have urged the authorities concerned to conduct extensive drives identifying clusters of Aedes mosquitoes as soon as possible.



Majed Sardar Road, Sikkatuli.



Kazi Alauddin Road, Bangshal.



Kazi Alauddin Road, Bangshal.

MONSOON MISERY

Waterlogging dampens Eid celebrations, inflicts suffering on Dhaka dwellers

HELEMUL ALAM and DIPAN NANDY

On July 1, the last day of the Eid holidays, the intermittent rain in the morning followed by an hour-long downpour in the afternoon submerged several neighbourhoods of Dhaka in knee- to waist-deep water, effectively washing away tall claims of monsoon preparedness by the city corporations.

The Meteorological Department reported that Dhaka witnessed 91mm of rainfall on the day.

The capital, which had been celebrating Eid, was left in a state of dismay as streets in various areas, including Sayedabad, Panthapath, Rampura, Mirpur, Badda, Malibagh, Khilgaon, and Rajarbagh, transformed into murky waterways.

The situation persisted over the previous two days, leaving the Eid festivities dampened, with many other



Shishu-Matri Sashta Institute, Matuail.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



Majed Sardar Road, Sikkatuli.

locations, such as Alauddin Road, Shikkatuli, Kayettuli, Nazirabazar, Matuail, and Rayerbag enduring prolonged waterlogging.

STORIES OF SUFFERINGS

Waterlogging at the Shishu-Matri Sashta Institute in Matuail caused immense sufferings for patients and their attendants. They had to wade through ankle-to-knee deep water to go to the hospital.

Locals also blamed poor drainage system for this recurring issue.

A distressed mother of a newborn shared her ordeal, stating that she had to visit the hospital for the past three days, braving knee-deep water.

Meanwhile as the rain subsided,

residents like Johirul Islam found the roads in Nazirabazar completely submerged.

Harun-ur Rashid, commuting from the New Market area, encountered waterlogged streets that disrupted normal vehicular movement.

Rashida Khanom from East Jurain highlighted the inundation of various roads in the area.

Asked, Adil Mohammad Khan, former general secretary of Bangladesh Institute of Planners, emphasised the urgent need to improve the drainage system in Old Dhaka, where concrete-covered areas exacerbate the waterlogging problem.

"Improving the drainage capacity could significantly reduce the suffering caused by waterlogging," he said.

According to the Met Department, Mymensingh faced the highest 124mm rainfall in the last 24 hours till 6:00am yesterday, while Dhaka experienced 80mm rainfall during this time.

Light to moderate rain/thunder showers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely to occur at most places over Rangpur, Rajshahi, Mymensingh and Sylhet divisions while moderately heavy to very heavy rainfall may happen at many places over Khulna, Dhaka, Barishal and Chattogram in the next 24 hours starting from 9:00am yesterday, it said.

THE CITY CORPORATIONS' TAKE

In May, DSCC Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh announced that they had invested Tk 225 crore in constructing infrastructure at 136 locations to prevent waterlogging, assuring that roads would not go underwater after rainfall.

When asked about the assurance, DSCC spokesperson Md Abu Naser attributed the current waterlogging situation to continuous rain, stating that water was not receding normally due to increased water levels in catchment areas like Hatirjheel.

"Besides, residents dump plastic bottles and solid garbage into drains, which further blocks the drainage system," he said.

Nonetheless, he assured that their team was swiftly responding to reports and successfully minimising the duration of waterlogging.

Contacted, Selim Reza, the chief executive officer of Dhaka North City Corporation, acknowledged the impact of heavy rainfall in the past three days, admitting that some measures did not work as intended.

"But our team worked hard to remove water at the earliest. So, waterlogging did not last long," he claimed.

Monir was stabbed by muggers

Say police on constable's death, arrest four persons

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police constable Moniruzzaman Talukder was attacked and stabbed by muggers in the Farmgate area early Saturday, said police yesterday.

Moniruzzaman was pronounced dead shortly after the attack.

The detective branch (DB) of police made the disclosure following the arrest of four people from different areas of the capital on Saturday night.

Md Golam Sobur, deputy commissioner of the Tejgaon Division of DB police, confirmed the development to The Daily Star yesterday morning.

"We have arrested four and one of them admitted to his involvement in the attack. We are still conducting operations to arrest others," he said.

On Saturday, 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.

Apurba 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.

The first call reporting the 41-year-old constable's injuries was made at 4:15am on Saturday, said Anower Sattar, inspector (media) of the national emergency service.

A police team then rushed to the scene and took him to Shaheed

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

PRAYER
TIMING
JULY 3

Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
4:10	12:45	5:00	6:55	8:17
JAMAAT 4:45	1:15	5:15	7:00	8:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

It's time polluters paid for damage, loss inflicted on other countries

Says UN special rapporteur on climate change

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

While climate change impacts are depriving millions of Bangladeshis of many fundamental rights, the international response to it is inadequate, said UN Special Rapporteur Ian Fry.

Fry, the UN special rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change, who visited Bangladesh on September 4-15 last year submitted a report to the 53rd session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva on June 28.

He made linkages between the loss and damage caused by climate change and the implications for human rights including the right to life, health, food, housing, water and sanitation, cultural life, education and work.

He said cyclones have been a major cause of death in Bangladesh. In 2007, Cyclone Sidr claimed 3,406 lives, while cyclone Aila in 2009



Ian Fry

Climate change is primarily caused by the pollution from large industrialised economies, but the countries that contribute least to global warming face the brunt of it.

claimed 190 lives and cyclone Roanu in 2016 resulted in the loss of 26 lives.

On the other hand, sea-level rise is causing salinisation of farmland and freshwater supplies. People living near the coast are forced to drink this salty, contaminated water, resulting in various health effects, including cardiovascular diseases.

Fry said rural women are facing reproductive health issues due to salination and the price of safe drinking water. "Women are experiencing irregular menstruation and, as a result, they are frequently having miscarriages at between 5 and 6 months of pregnancy," Fry said.

Also, right to food is being affected by shifting precipitation patterns, higher temperatures, extreme weather events, droughts, floods, erosion of land and salinization, the report said.

In 2022, the people of Bangladesh faced challenges in relation to rainfall, which was delayed and insufficient. Usually, rainfall averages 400mm a year but, in 2022, there was less than 200mm. A delay in rainfall affects crop production. Of the 8.5 million hectares of arable land in coastal areas, 20 percent is affected by saline intrusion, Fry said.

Also, Bangladesh has more than 10 million persons displaced by climate change and an estimated 2,000 persons are moving to Dhaka every day, according to the Mayors Migration Council.

Fry said loss and damage relate to the impacts of climate change that are beyond the adaptation capability of a country. According to the World Bank, Bangladesh suffers an annual average loss

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Getting paid to do nothing?

BJMC executives retaining positions three years after mill closure, while around 70,000 employees laid off

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

Crescent Jute Mills, located at Khalishpur in Khulna district was the second largest jute mills in terms of area and production capacity. Three years ago, the massive 113 acres premises of the mill used to remain vibrant with thousands of workers and officials.

However, like all other state-run jute mills, this mill was shut down in 2020, leaving more than 2,000 workers jobless.

Many locals also got affected indirectly by this move. Abdul Malek, owner of a local grocery store, said, “Three years ago, I never imagined that I would not get any customers. The labour quarters are empty now. There are only mill officials here who



sometimes come to my shop. I have been struggling to run my business.”

In fact, the once vibrant neighbourhood has become a deserted place as most of the workers who lost their jobs in 2020 left Khalishpur. However, around 300 of its officials are still living on the factory premises.

Unlike the labourers, they are getting full benefits from the government, such as regular salaries, accommodation in officers' quarters and various other amenities.

Former workers who still live in the area said these officials are getting salary for doing nothing. However, BJMC claimed that these officials are guarding valuable assets of the corporation.

Golam Kabir, chairman of BJMC, said, “We have engaged all of our officials in maintaining the property and monitoring the tender process. So far, we have published four tenders to reopen the mills.”

“Our officials are protecting more than 1,300 acres of real estate and numerous infrastructure. The claim that they are being paid without any job is baseless,” he added.

In fact, BJMC has been maintaining hundreds of workers who, with all the factories closed, apparently do not have any job to do.

For instance, there are 10 officials

in the production section at the BJMC headquarters.

When this correspondent visited BJMC headquarters at Motijheel at 11:00am on Monday, six of the officials were absent.

The situation was the same for their marketing department. There are around 25 officials in the department but only a handful of them were present in the office.

When this was pointed out to the chairman, he said, “As there is no production, our officials mostly do various administrative tasks. Some of us work with the procurement department as well.”

At present, BJMC's total manpower is 2,517 officers and employees. When all the factories were closed indefinitely in 2020, BJMC sacked more than 70,000 workers (permanent and temporary) overnight on the grounds of recurring financial loss but retained all of its officers and administrative staff.

Many of them are based in the mills, zonal offices and training centres. The corporation has been spending crores to maintain this massive workforce.

In the last fiscal, BJMC spent Tk 140 crore for officials' salaries. BJMC suffered a financial loss of more than Tk 250 crore and most of its budget went into paying off salary, maintaining the closed mills, estates and machineries.

PRESENT STATE OF FORMER WORKERS

While the officials are enjoying a well-paid and carefree life, more than 15,000 workers are yet to receive their due salaries and benefits from BJMC, even three years after the lay off.

BJMC has not paid a single penny to 11,000 temporary workers of five jute mills – Khalishpur Jute Mill, Daulatpur Jute Mill, Jatio Jute Mill, RR Jute Mill and KFD Jute Mill.

Around 4,000 permanent workers of different jute mills also did not get their due benefits and salaries due to spelling mistakes in their credentials and pending court cases against them.

Many workers are spending miserable lives in the slums near the jute mills with the hope that someday they will get their money.

Abdur Rashid, one such worker of Khalishpur Jute Mill, said, “I have worked seven years at the mill. I was supposed to become a permanent worker. Now for the last three years, I have been pulling a rented rickshaw-van and sometimes I work as a day labourer.”

“When I go to the mill, the officials say our money has been blocked by the ministry and it will be released before Eid. But, that Eid never came for me,” he said.

Again, many workers are also waiting with the hope that one day the government will reopen the mills and re-employ the former workers as the minister for jute and textile promised in 2020.

Md Nurul Amin, a worker of Daulatpur Jute Mills, said, “Many workers who received money from BJMC spent much of it to survive in this inflation. We have the skills to work in a jute mills; we do not know any other trade.”

“The hope that one day the mills will re-open and we shall get back to our work is the only thing that still keeps us alive,” added Amin.

CONCERNS OVER BJMC'S ROLE

Experts and labour leaders have expressed concern over BJMC's indifference towards workers and their role in reopening the mills.

3 years since ‘black day’

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

On July 2, three years ago, the closure of 26 jute mills operated by the Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation marked the end of the country's state-run jute sector, leading to the layoff of approximately 25,000 workers.

The day is recognised as Black Day by the Combined Citizen Council, a platform dedicated to protecting the interests of sacked mill workers.

The organisation has been commemorating this day with various programmes since its inception. Yesterday, at 4:00pm, they organised a protest rally in the Khalishpur industrial area, amplifying their demands and concerns.

The leaders of the council expressed their disappointment with the government's unfulfilled promises regarding the payment of dues to the laid-off workers.



PHOTO: STAR

Despite assurances that all dues would be settled within two months of the mill closures, numerous workers, including those from Khalishpur Jute Mill in Khulna, Daulatpur Jute Mill, Jatiya Jute Mill in Sirajganj, KFD in Chattogram, and RR Jute Mill, are yet to receive their outstanding amounts, they said.

Kudrat-i Khuda, convener of the council, said the closure of state-owned jute mills in Bangladesh came at a time when there was an increased global demand for jute and jute products.

“At the time of closing, the government said they would reopen the mills under state ownership soon. But they did not keep their word,” he stated.

Joint Convener of Citizens' Council and Khulna District Convener of Bangladesh Socialist Party-Basad Janardan Dutta Nantu, Khulna District Convener of Mass Solidarity Movement Munir Chowdhury Sohail, Khulna District President of Samajtantrik Mahila Forum Kohinur Akter Kona, and labour leaders spoke at the rally.

The events were not limited to Khalishpur alone, as nationwide protest marches and meetings were held in other locations, including in Milgate, Fultala Eastern Gate, and Jessore Rajghat areas.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Jamuna erosion intensifies in Tangail

Devours homes, schools, croplands; hundreds left homeless

MIRZA SHAKIL, Tangail

Erosion by the river Jamuna took a serious turn in the last few days, rendering several hundreds of families homeless, and devouring vast tracts of croplands and structures in Tangail's Sadar, Bhuanpur, and Nagarpur upazilas.

The erosion victims are now living under the open sky in neighbouring riverbeds or have moved to safer places with whatever they could salvage.

Solimabad Pashchim Government Primary School in Nagarpur was devoured by the river early yesterday, disrupting the academic activities of over 200 students.

“A couple of months ago, we urged the authorities to take necessary steps to save the school. However, only a few GEO bags were dumped at the eleventh hour, which was not of much help,” said Abdus Samad, the school's headmaster.

Nagarpur UNO Oahidujaman said the GEO bags left by the Water Development Board could not save the school due to the severity of erosion.

“We are trying to relocate the school temporarily so that it can resume its activities. I have



discussed the matter with the public representatives,” he added.

With the rising water levels, the river has affected four unions in Nagarpur. The worst affected areas are Khash Ghunipara, Paishka

Maijhail, Char Solimabad and Bhuter More in Solimabad union; Nishchitpur, Kati Nishchitpur, and Bak Katari under Doiptor union; and Marma, Uladab, Shahjani and Balarampur in Dhuburia union.

According to locals, they have been facing this situation for the last few years with the authorities turning a blind eye to this problem. They also demanded an embankment, but to no avail.

Sazzad Hossain, executive engineer of WDB in Tangail, said, “We have plans to resolve the issue permanently under an ongoing project of the WDB in Sirajganj.”

Meanwhile, fresh erosion has hit the affected areas hard in Bhuanpur in the last few days.

The most affected ones are Govindasi, Kostapara, Bhalkutia, Patulipaa, Chituliapara and Khanurbari area under Govindasi union; Nikrail Matikata, Sirajkandi,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7



Erosion victims wait for reliefs and rescue operations under the open sky as the Jamuna swells.

PHOTO: STAR

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

রেশন টেকার-২০২৩-২০২৪ (১)

বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ
পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়
মাদারীপুর

পুনরায় দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

২০২৩-২০২৪ অর্থ বৎসরে ১ম কোয়ার্টারে (জুলাই/২০২৩ হইতে সেপ্টেম্বর/২০২৩ পর্যন্ত) রেশন সামগ্রী ক্রয়ের নিমিত্তে দি পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট এ্যাক্ট/২০০৬ ও দি পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধি/২০০৮ (সর্বশেষ সংশোধনসহ) অনুসারে নিম্নবর্ণিত শর্ত সাপেক্ষে সীলমোহরকৃত খামে পুনরায় দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাইতেছে।

১। মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	:	স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রণালয়/জননিরাপত্তা বিভাগ।
২। সংস্থা	:	বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ।
৩। ক্রয়/সজ্জাহের স্বত্বাধিকারীর নাম ও জেলা	:	পুলিশ সুপার, মাদারীপুর।
৪। দরপত্রের সূত্র নম্বর ও তারিখ	:	০১। পুলিশ হেডকোয়ার্টার্স স্মারক নং-৪৪.০১.০০০০.৪৩৬.০১.০৬১.২৩/৬০৩, তারিখঃ ২৬/০৬/২০২৩খ্রিঃ। ০২। পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয় মাদারীপুর এর স্মারক নং-২৩৭৭/ই, তারিখঃ ২৬/০৬/২০২৩খ্রিঃ।
৫। দরপত্র পদ্ধতি	:	উন্মুক্ত।
৬। বাজেট ও অর্থনৈতিক খাত	:	রাজস্ব খাত। বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ বাজেট
৭। দরপত্র জারীর তারিখ	:	২৬/০৬/২০২৩খ্রিঃ।
৮। দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের সর্বশেষ তারিখ ও সময়	:	১০/০৭/২০২৩খ্রিঃ অফিস চলাকালিন পর্যন্ত।
৯। দরপত্র দাখিলের সর্বশেষ তারিখ ও সময়	:	১১/০৭/২০২৩খ্রিঃ ১২.০০ ঘটিকা।
১০। দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	:	১১/০৭/২০২৩খ্রিঃ ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা।
১১। দরপত্র সম্পাদনকারী অফিস ও ঠিকানা	:	পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, মাদারীপুর।
১২। দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের স্থান	:	(ক) ডিআইজি, ঢাকা রেঞ্জ, ঢাকা এর কার্যালয়। (খ) পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, মাদারীপুর জেলা। (গ) পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, শরীয়তপুর জেলা। (ঘ) পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, গোপালগঞ্জ জেলা।
১৩। দরপত্র দাখিলের স্থান	:	পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, মাদারীপুর।
১৪। দরপত্র খোলার স্থান	:	পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, মাদারীপুর।
১৫। দরপত্র মূল্যায়নের তারিখ ও সময়	:	১২/০৭/২০২৩খ্রিঃ ১১.০০ ঘটিকা।
১৬। দরপত্রদাতার প্রাথমিক যোগ্যতা বা দরপত্রের সহিত যে সকল তথ্য দাখিল করিতে হইবে	:	হালনাগাদ ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, ভ্যাট নিবন্ধন সনদ, আয়কর সনদ, ব্যাংক স্বচ্ছলতার সনদ, জাতীয়তার সনদ, মালিকানার এফিডেভিট, প্রতিষ্ঠানের প্যাডে কালা তালিকাভুক্ত নয় মর্মে অঙ্গীকারনামা, প্রতিষ্ঠানের প্যাডে নমুনা স্বাক্ষর, সংশ্লিষ্ট সরবরাহ সংক্রান্ত অভিজ্ঞতার সনদ (সকল সনদের সত্যায়িত কপি) দাখিল করিতে হইবে।
১৭। আর্থিক স্বচ্ছলতা	:	দরপত্র জারীর তারিখ হইতে দরপত্র দাখিলের তারিখ পর্যন্ত সময়ের মধ্যে ব্যাংক হইতে ইস্যুকৃত Liquid Asset (ব্যাংক স্থিতির) বিবরণী দাখিল করিতে হইবে।
১৮। ব্যক্তি বা প্রতিষ্ঠানের স্বত্বাধিকারীর স্বাক্ষরযুক্ত প্যাডে আবেদনপূর্বক অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত দরপত্র সিডিউল ক্রয় করিতে হইবে।	:	
১৯। দরপত্র মূল্যায়ন কমিটি কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতীত যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ/বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।	:	
২০। সরকারি সিদ্ধান্তের প্রেক্ষিতে দরপত্রে উল্লেখিত কোন তারিখ সরকারি বন্ধ হইলে নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারি কর্তৃক নির্ধারিত তারিখে কার্যক্রম সম্পন্ন করা হইবে।	:	
২১। সকল কাজের তৈল/চিনি নমুনা সিডিউলের সাথে দাখিল করতে হবে।	:	
২২। কাজের বিবরণঃ	:	

ক্রঃ নং	মালামালের/কাজের বিবরণ	মালের পরিমাণ	জামানতের পরিমাণ	সিডিউলের মূল্য	কার্যকাল
০১	২০২৩-২০২৪ অর্থ সালের ১ম কোয়ার্টারে সরাসরি তৈল রেশনভোগীদের জন্য (০.৫০০/১/২/৩/৫/৮ লিটারের বোতল সরবরাহ (বিএসটিআই অনুমোদিত) সরবরাহকারী ঠিকাদার নিয়োগ	২৬,৫০০ লিঃ	১,৭০,০০০/-	১০০০/-	২০২৩-২০২৪ (জুলাই/২০২৩ হইতে সেপ্টেম্বর/২০২৩ পর্যন্ত)
০২	২০২৩-২০২৪ অর্থ সালের ১ম কোয়ার্টারে চিনি ক্রয়ের জন্য সরবরাহকারী ঠিকাদার নিয়োগ	১৭,৭০০ কেজি	৭৫,০০০/-	১০০০/-	

০৩/০৭/২৩

মোঃ মাসুদ আলম, বিপিএম-বার, পিপিএম

রিপি নং-৮১০৮১২১৬৯২

পুলিশ সুপার, মাদারীপুর

ফোনঃ ৬১৪৯৪, ফ্যাক্সঃ ৬১১০৮

ই-মেইলঃ spmadaripur@police.gov.bd

জিডি-১০৬৬

‘Shurongo’ paves way for Afran Nisho’s promising film career

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Long before its release, *Shurongo* raised expectations of people primarily due to Nisho’s presence, and Raihan Rafi’s stellar track record.

Nisho’s long-awaited silver screen appearance didn’t disappoint his fans, who have been eagerly waiting to watch him where he arguably belongs. Despite heavy rain, most shows in multiplexes went houseful. Due to the skyrocketing demand of the audience, *Shurongo* made an all-time record at Star Cineplex, having 33 shows every day.

It is expected that the film will have more halls on the second day.

There was debate amongst people regarding whether *Shurongo* could do well in cinema halls. After all, the transition of television stars to the big screen doesn’t always go smoothly. In just four days of its release, the equation culminated towards the scenario where people welcomed him with all their hearts.

Although over the last two decades, there were many small screen stars who came to films, but failed to make any difference in their film career. Chanchal Chowdhury is one exception, who became synonymous with hit movies.

Nisho’s journey seems to prelude to another such event. Moreover, a film’s commercial success can be judged after one month of its release. The way fans are showering their love, is showing a positive sign that *Shurongo* will be tagged as a commercially hit movie.

Tama Mirza played Moyna, alongside Nisho as Masud



People flocked to see their favourite television star on the big screen.

in the film. Their chemistry spellbound the audience to the extent that they are being called by their characters’ name already.

Raihan Rafi told The Daily Star that all of the tickets for the next four days are already sold out. “This is extremely great news for us, and the Bangladeshi film industry. Our cinema is growing,” said Rafi. He also informed that not just multiplexes, *Shurongo* is going houseful in the single screens outside Dhaka as well.

Nisho and Tama are also excited with the news. They are grateful to the audience for showing support and loving their work.

Shurongo will be making waves outside the country too. It will be released in the USA, Canada, India, Australia, and the Middle East very soon.

Rafi shared that on July 7, *Shurongo* will be released in 6 cities of Australia, while it will release on July 21 in Canada and in the USA on July 28.

Ranveer Singh to replace SRK in ‘Don 3’?



Following the success of *Pathaan*, speculations regarding Shah Rukh Khan reprising his iconic role as Don in the third installment of the series began circulating online. However, recent developments have left some moviegoers disappointed, as reports suggest that it will be Ranveer Singh who will lead the way in *Don 3*, directed by Farhan Akhtar.

According to the latest update, Ranveer will carry forward the legacy of this action-packed series. An official announcement confirming this exciting news is expected to be made next week, coinciding with Ranveer’s birthday on July 6.



Rihanna makes history on Spotify

Rihanna recently reached a big career milestone by being the first female artist to have ten songs with over one billion Spotify plays.

Rihanna happily announced her achievement on Instagram, captioning her photo with a playful nod to her success despite the fact that she hasn’t released new album in a long time. The singer’s cultural impact is clear, as she effortlessly breaks records without releasing new music.

Rihanna’s last full-length album was released in 2016. Despite the fact that she has appeared on multiple tracks and contributed to movie soundtracks, they are looking forward to hearing fresh original music from her.

COUNTRYWIDE

ILLEGAL AUTO-RICKSHAW STAND

A nuisance for students, pedestrians

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

An illegal stand for CNG-run auto-rickshaws in front of Mominunnesa Government Mohila College in Mymensingh city has been a nuisance for hundreds of students and pedestrians for long.

As a result, the important road, which connects Muktagachha upazila with the metropolitan city, often witnesses serious gridlock.

Many city dwellers alleged that although a syndicate has been continuing the business for nearly 20 years, none has come forward to stop the menace for the better interest of the college and people living in the nearby areas.

Several hundred auto-rickshaws from the stand carries hundreds of passengers to different areas of Mymensingh, Jamalpur and Tangail.

Drivers keep a major portion of the important road as well as footpaths on its either sides occupied most of the time, locals said.

Razia Moni, an honours student

of the institution, said they face serious trouble while coming to and from the college as the entire footpath on both sides of the road are kept occupied by auto-rickshaws, microbuses and private cars.

Thousands of city dwellers including many students use the road as Mymensingh Circuit House, District Public Library, Town Hall and several other educational institutions like Shaheed Syed Nazrul Islam College, Government Ananda Mohan College, Muslim Girls’ School are located close to the women’s college, another student Suborna Sathi said.

Sources at the college said it is very difficult to conduct any educational activities due to serious sound pollution during working hours.

One of the teachers of the college, seeking anonymity, said the matter was raised at the district law and order meetings on several occasions, but to no avail.

Prof Mohammad Abu Taher, principal of Mominunnesa Government Mohila College,

said they have urged the district administration, police and city corporation authorities to take necessary steps to remove the illegal stand from the area, but no measure has been taken yet due to unknown reason.

Moreover, despite widespread public protest against illegal parking on roads, none has taken any fruitful step to mitigate the sufferings, he added.

While talking to this correspondent, Nurul Amin Kalam, secretary of Mymensingh Nagarik Andolon, demanded immediate removal of the illegal auto-rickshaw stand to avoid perennial traffic congestion.

Rakibul Islam, president of Zila CNG and Mahendra Malik Samity, said they have been running the auto-rickshaw stand after taking verbal permission from the city corporation and police. Contacted, Aminul Islam, assistant secretary at Mymensingh City Corporation, said decision has been taken to shift the stand to a suitable place, but they are yet to implement it.



This illegal stand for auto-rickshaws, located just in front of Mominunnesa Government Mohila College in Mymensingh city, has been a nuisance for the city dwellers.

PHOTO: STAR

Emi Martinez due today

FROM PAGE 12

number of events over the next 48 hours, at 4:10pm in the afternoon.

The Aston Villa No. 1 will meet Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office in the afternoon after a programme at the office of NEXT Ventures, a digital business group, in the morning.

“The trip will be very short. He will attend a programme at the office of NEXT Ventures and then will go to meet the PM at her office before

leaving the country in the afternoon. There will be no public appearance,” Dutta told The Daily Star over phone.

There will, however, be a few selected guests apart from the Next Ventures officials, at the morning event.

At a press conference at the NEXT Ventures office on Sunday, its CEO Syed Abdullah Zayed said, “We already have a collaboration with Emi Martinez. He will be going to Kolkata, and therefore has accepted

Central Hospital

FROM PAGE 2

Doctor Muna who received Akhi at the hospital was quoted in the statement that she heard Sangjukta telling Shahzadi to take care of a patient coming from Cumilla. When the patient arrived, Shahzadi instructed others to conduct Cardiococography (CTG), the statement said.

After discussing it with the family, Shahzadi went for a normal delivery. As the patient’s condition started deteriorating, she was taken into the operating theatre for a C-section conducted by Shahzadi.

After discussing it with the family, Shahzadi went for a normal delivery. As the patient’s condition started deteriorating, she was taken into the operating theatre for a C-section conducted by Shahzadi.

On July 10, the patient was taken to the CCU of LabAid Hospital where she died after eight days.

Denying the allegation that the hospital had her admitted assuring

our invitation. But unfortunately he will not participate in any public event here due to his short visit and 38-hour journey.”

According to the company officials, the Argentina goalkeeper will participate in activities such as photoshoots and short interviews at the programme. A limited number of celebrities including former national cricket team captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza will be present, they informed.

the availability of Sangjukta, the release said Akhi’s husband did not contact any staffer of the hospital. They contacted Jeny, assistant physician, and Md Zamir, personal assistant to Sangjukta, before they headed for Central Hospital from Cumilla.

In response to the allegation of getting a cut of Tk 70,000 from each delivery done by Sangjukta, the press release said there is no such deal between her and the hospital and each patient’s bill mentions the breakdown.

AL to consider holding talks

FROM PAGE 1

the people. We have been holding peace rallies and we will remain vigilant on the streets until the election,” he added.

The AL general secretary reiterated that the upcoming election will be held under the incumbent government in line with the constitution. “There is no reason to think that we will be under someone

else’s control. The election will not be held on the terms prescribed by someone,” he added.

During a recent meeting of the AL-led 14-party alliance, veteran politician Amir Hossain Amu suggested that the door for talks with the BNP was open. But he later retracted his statement.

At the time, Quader ruled out any immediate prospects of a dialogue

between the rival parties.

AL chief Sheikh Hasina also cast doubts on the possibility of a dialogue with the BNP on several occasions.

Responding to a question on whether the election will be participatory if the BNP does not take part, Quader said, “I have said that the election will be inclusive. I still hope the BNP will participate as we want competitive polls.”

UN deputy secretary general meets Hasina

FROM PAGE 2

under cultivation to ward off the crisis.

The premier stressed the need for cultivation of food and vegetables even on rooftops.

She said her government has been given topmost priority on research in the agriculture sector.

The premier said they have already developed saline- and flood-tolerant rice varieties and are working to

improve those further.

About the Rohingya issue, she said they have given Rohingyas shelter in Bangladesh on humanitarian grounds.

“But, they have become a big burden for us. It has created social problems,” she continued.

Amina J Mohammed said 52 countries are now on the verge of crisis due to the fallout of the pandemic and Russia-Ukraine war.

“We have to face the crisis together.

It is a big challenge for the developing nations,” she said.

She praised the contribution of Bangladeshi peacekeepers in maintaining world peace.

PM’s ambassador-at-large Mohammad Ziauddin, PM’s Principal Secretary Md Tofazzel Hossain Miah and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations Muhammad Abdul Muhith were present at the time.

Ukraine war ‘corrosive’ for Putin, ‘opportunity’ for CIA

Says spy chief; Russia targets Kyiv in overnight drone attack

AFP, Washington

Russia's war in Ukraine has had a "corrosive" effect on Russian President Vladimir Putin, CIA Director William Burns said Saturday, with discontent over the conflict creating a "once-in-a-generation opportunity" for the spy agency.

Speaking at the Ditchley Foundation in the UK, Burns called Putin's invasion of Ukraine "the most immediate and acute geopolitical challenge to international order today."

Meanwhile, Russia has attacked Kyiv in an overnight drone attack after a 12 day break, Ukrainian officials said yesterday, with air defence forces destroying all targets.

"Another enemy air attack on Kyiv," Sergiy Popko, head of the Kyiv city military administration, said on social media. He said it was the first drone attack on the Ukrainian capital in 12 days.

"All enemy targets in the airspace around Kyiv were detected and destroyed," Popko said.

The CIA director's address came one week after the head of Wagner mercenary group Yevgeny Prigozhin led his forces in a brief mutiny against Russia's military command.

Prigozhin accused Russia of targeting his forces with deadly missile strikes in Ukraine and launched broadsides against Moscow's narrative of the conflict: saying it was started "for the self promotion of a bunch of bastards" and that Russia's troops were retreating in Ukraine's east and south.

"The impact of those words and those actions will play out for some time, a vivid reminder of the corrosive effect of Putin's war on his own society and his own regime," Burns said.

He called the war a "strategic failure" for Moscow that has exposed military weaknesses, hurt the economy and spurred a bigger and stronger NATO.

"Disaffection with the war will continue to gnaw away at the Russian leadership ... That disaffection creates a once-in-a-generation opportunity for us at CIA," he said.

"We're not letting it go to waste," he added, noting the CIA recently posted on Telegram to let Russians know how to reach the CIA via the dark web.

"We had 2.5 million views in the first week, and we're very much open for business."

Burns did not mention a recent trip to Ukraine.



A French firefighter works to extinguish a burning motorbike during the fifth day of protests following the death of Nahel, a 17-year-old teenager killed by a French police officer in Nanterre during a traffic stop, in Paris, France, July 2, 2023. PHOTO: REUTERS

Fighting shakes Khartoum Displaced Sudanese combat disease

AFP, Khartoum

Fierce fighting between the forces of rival generals shook the Sudanese capital Khartoum yesterday as disease and malnutrition threatened the rising number of displaced.

A Khartoum resident said he was shaken from sleep by "violent fighting in which various weapons were used". Another said he was awakened by warplanes.

Battles since mid-April between forces loyal to army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) have killed nearly 3,000 people.

Another 2.2 million have been forced from their homes inside the country while almost 645,000 have fled across borders for safety, according to the International Organization for Migration.

"The situation is grave," the medical charity Doctors Without Borders (MSF) said in a statement detailing the hardships of displaced Sudanese stuck in nine camps in White Nile State which borders South Sudan.

The death toll is believed to be much higher than recorded, as WHO says about two-thirds of health facilities are "out of service" in combat-affected areas.

"There are suspected cases of measles, and malnutrition among children has become a vital health emergency."

"From June 6 to 7 we treated 223 children with suspected measles, 72 were hospitalised and 13 have died," MSF said.

French riots an unwelcome, perilous crisis for Macron

AFP, Paris

The riots in France sparked by the police killing of a teenager represent a deeply unwelcome and perilous crisis for President Emmanuel Macron, just as he was looking to press ahead with his second mandate.

The violence erupted just after Macron finally saw off half a year of protests over his controversial pension reform, which dominated the domestic agenda for most of this year.

But the images of shops ransacked and buses burned across the country also risk hurting Macron's international standing at a time he wants to play an instrumental role in ending the Russian invasion of Ukraine and be seen as Europe's number one powerbroker.

In a hugely embarrassing development for Macron, the rioting has forced him to cancel a state visit to Germany that was due to start this weekend and was to have been the first such trip by a French head of state in 23 years.

The postponement is doubly awkward for the Elysee as Macron had earlier this year put off a planned state visit by the UK's King Charles III -- which would have been his first foreign trip as monarch -- due to the often-violent pensions protests.

He also cut short his attendance at an EU summit in Brussels this week, rushing back to Paris to chair a crisis meeting without giving a press conference.

After a first term that became dominated by combating the anti-government Yellow Vests protests and then the Covid-19 pandemic, the centrist's second term again risks being marked by troubleshooting rather than implementing policy.

The rioting "is very bad news for the president", who had been hoping for a

smooth ride into the summer capped by a cabinet reshuffle to re-energise the government and move on from the pensions crisis, said Bruno Cautres, researcher at the Political Research Centre of Sciences Po university.

"People are amazed to see how our country is confronted by tensions, violence and crises, one after the other," he added, warning: "No leader can take the risk of having another conflagration like this in a



few months."

The riots broke out this week just as Macron was finishing a major three-day trip to the southern city of Marseille where he had sought to push an agenda of getting to grips with urban problems in France's most disadvantaged areas.

He was also mocked in foreign media, which accused him of attending the farewell concert of Elton John in Paris on Wednesday hours before some of the worst rioting in recent days erupted.

"With Covid, the Yellow Vests and the war on Ukraine, nothing has spared him,"

a source close to Macron told AFP, asking not to be named.

Macron, whose ruling party lost its overall majority in parliament in the 2022 legislative elections, needs to tread a fine line domestically.

He is acutely aware that far-right figurehead Marine Le Pen has her eyes on taking the Elysee in 2027 elections -- which would wreck his legacy even if he cannot stand in those polls -- and has nudged the government to the right on security matters.

The eyes of the world -- astonished to see near-apocalyptic images taken outside tourist cities like Paris and Lyon -- are also on France as Paris gears up to host the Olympics in just over a year.

In dealing with the riots Macron has been eager to balance anger over the police killing -- which he called "unforgivable" -- with stern calls for order including pleas to parents to keep their children home.

"He will be judged on his ability to ease tensions. For him the danger is to appear weak and irresolute," said Jean Garrigues, a historian specialising in political history.

But Macron has so far stopped short of declaring a state of emergency in the areas affected -- which would give police greater powers -- as urged by the right.

The Le Monde daily said he had tried to "stop the cycle of urban violence by greatly stepping up the means (used by the police) and using political communication, while stopping short of declaring a state of emergency".

Taking a hard line on the outburst of urban rioting in 2005 after the deaths of two youths who were being chased by police proved hugely beneficial for then-interior minister Nicolas Sarkozy, who would later claim the presidency.

"A policy of firmness could also pay off for Emmanuel Macron," said Garrigues.

BALUCHISTAN ATTACK Pakistan Taliban kill 4 police

AFP, Quetta

Four security officers were killed in a shootout in Pakistan's southwestern Balochistan province yesterday, officials said, in an attack claimed by the Pakistan Taliban.

About a dozen gunmen attacked policemen and paramilitary Frontier Constabulary officers at a highway checkpoint in Zhob district, prompting a two-hour gunbattle.

"Four of the security officials, including three policemen and one Frontier Corps officer, were killed in the attack. One of the suspected attackers has also been killed but not yet identified," Zhob's commissioner, Saeed Umrani, told AFP.

Three others were wounded.

The Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) later claimed the attack in a statement, identifying the attacker shot dead by police.

The TTP is separate from Afghanistan's Taliban but shares a similar ideology.

Attacks, mostly targeting security forces, have been on the rise again since the Afghan Taliban seized control in Kabul in 2021 and a shaky ceasefire between the TTP and Islamabad ended in November last year.

2 die in Baltimore shooting

AFP, Washington

At least two people were killed and 28 wounded in a mass shooting at a street party early yesterday in the US city of Baltimore, police said.

Police received multiple calls about a shooting in the city's Brooklyn neighborhood just after 12:30 am yesterday (0430 GMT), Acting Police Commissioner Rich Worley told a press conference.

"Upon officers' arrival we located multiple victims suffering from gunshot wounds," Worley said.

One 18-year-old woman was found dead at the scene in the East Coast port city, and a 20-year-old man died after being taken to hospital, a police statement said.

The wounded were being treated at area hospitals, he added, with three of them in critical condition.

Twitter restricts number of posts users can read

AFP, New York

Elon Musk announced Saturday that Twitter would temporarily restrict how many tweets users could read per day, in a move meant to tamp down on the use of the site's data by artificial intelligence companies.

The platform is limiting verified accounts to reading 10,000 tweets a day. Non-verified users -- the free accounts that make up the majority of users -- are limited to reading 1,000 tweets per day.

New unverified accounts would be limited to 500 tweets.

NETHERLAND'S INVOLVEMENT IN SLAVERY King makes historic apology

AFP, Amsterdam

Dutch King Willem-Alexander issued a historic royal apology Saturday for the Netherlands' involvement in slavery, saying he felt "personally and intensely" affected.

His speech before thousands of descendants of slaves from the South American nation of Suriname and the Caribbean islands of Aruba, Bonaire and Curacao got a positive reception.

"Today I'm standing here in front of you as your king and as part of the government. Today I am apologising personally," Willem-Alexander said to loud cheers.

Prigozhin's Russian media group shuts

REUTERS

Yevgeny Prigozhin's media holding group is to shut down, the director of one of its outlets said.

Patriot Media, whose most prominent outlet was the RIA FAN news site, had taken a strongly nationalist, pro-Kremlin editorial line, while also providing positive coverage of Prigozhin and his Wagner Group.

"I am announcing our decision to close down and to leave the country's information space," RIA FAN director Yevgeny Zubarev said in a video clip posted late on Saturday on the holding's social media accounts.



Former US President and 2024 Presidential hopeful Donald Trump speaks during a campaign rally in Pickens, South Carolina, on Saturday. PHOTO: AFP

Wilful defaulters bleeding banks dry

Is the government ever going to stop them?

We applaud the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of Bangladesh for its recent audit of state-owned Janata Bank that revealed 31 counts of “serious irregularities” from 2015 to 2020 involving Tk 13,110.8 crore. It is not common to find state-owned institutions coming under scrutiny by another state-owned body, but the CAG has been consistent in carrying out audits of various public institutions revealing an alarming picture of financial irregularities.

Its latest findings about Janata Bank, presented in parliament last week, are indeed shocking. Almost half of the gigantic amount can be attributed to a company that has allegations of forgery and money laundering against it. The bank issued huge loans to various companies disregarding loan sanctioning and collection terms, Bangladesh Bank’s rules, the terms of the Bank Company Act 1991, and even its own lending policies. Companies were allowed to take out loans without providing adequate collateral, crossing the permissible limit and even getting interests waved in clear violation of the rules. The CAG report contains numerous examples of this irrational indulgence to controversial business groups and their subsidiaries, including granting loans amounting to a few thousand crore takas. Even back-to-back LC facilities were given against fake export bills with the amounts never being paid back by the enterprise.

Banks are being systematically drained by wilful loan defaulters connected to power, whether it is a director of the bank or a debtor with political connections. It is frightening to know that in the first three months of this year, banks have been burdened with Tk 10,964 crore of default loans. Non-performing loans (NPLs) stood at Tk 131,621 crore by the end of March. According to Bangladesh Bank, almost half of the defaulted loans were with nine state banks.

As economists have frequently underscored, such widespread irregularities have resulted in the financial sector getting progressively weaker. Violators of banking norms and regulations are hardly ever punished, and are allowed to continue to default on loans with impunity. Bangladesh’s second-highest ranking in terms of a bad loan ratio in South Asia is, therefore, unsurprising.

So, while the CAG is to be commended for unearthing the details of banking irregularities, we must acknowledge that the ongoing haemorrhaging of banks will not stop until there is a strong political will to install good governance in the banks and punish wilful defaulters instead of rewarding them.

Market regulation at its worst

Abnormal surge in green chilli prices lays bare poor planning and regulation

The abnormal surge in green chilli prices in recent days has once again exposed the failure of market regulators to keep prices of essentials stable and protect the interests of ordinary consumers. On Saturday, retail prices of green chilli jumped to an unprecedented Tk 700 per kg – a steep increase from just Tk 100 to Tk 120 per kg a month ago – while wholesalers at Karwan Bazar sold it for Tk 500 per kg. This marked the culmination of a rapid price escalation centred around the Eid holiday, when chilli is usually in high demand, in a trend that exploits temporary disruptions in food supply to inflate prices.

Although retail prices of chilli fell by Tk 200 to Tk 250 per kg on Sunday, thanks to reports of the impending arrival of imported chilli, the damage has already been done. The spike in chilli prices has caused significant distress to consumers already struggling with a massive cost-of-living crisis. We are told that a further decline in chilli prices is expected within a few days. We must ask, however, why the situation has been allowed to deteriorate to the point that it did. True, weather-induced crop damage is largely to blame for the dearth of supply and resultant price increases, but it was nothing unpredictable. It could be, and should have been, offset with timely imports and stern measures against price manipulators. That the authorities still failed to intervene points to their lack of sincerity.

This is totally unacceptable. We have seen such scenarios in the past as well. We have seen how the absence of effective oversight mechanisms and proactive measures to address supply shortages left consumers at the mercy of unscrupulous market players. The inability to predict and address such situations is a fundamental flaw in our market regulatory system, which should aim to protect consumers from being exploited. We urge the authorities to acknowledge this failure, and take immediate steps to rectify it. Without proactive measures, consumers will continue to be victims of such contingencies.

New Message

To

Subject

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

Write to us: letters@thedailystar.net

How Bangladesh can benefit by joining BRICS



THE OVERTON WINDOW

Eresh Omar Jamal is assistant editor at The Daily Star. His Twitter handle is @EreshOmarJamal

ERESH OMAR JAMAL

According to an official of the foreign ministry, Bangladesh will apply to join the BRICS alliance, and the process to formally seek its membership is already underway. Earlier, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen said Bangladesh would welcome if BRICS formally invited it to join the grouping of five member-states – Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa – having previously hinted that Bangladesh is likely to become a member of the bloc in August this year.

BRIC was initially formed in 2006. The only member it formally admitted since then was South Africa in 2010. In April this year, South Africa’s BRICS ambassador Anil Sooklal told Bloomberg that a long list of nations were now looking to join the bloc. The list includes 13 countries, with an additional six countries that have informally requested to be part of BRICS. The group of known newcomers includes Saudi Arabia, Iran, Argentina, the UAE, Bangladesh, Algeria, Egypt, Bahrain, Indonesia, Syria, two nations from East Africa and one from West Africa.

According to Dr Salem Nasser, professor of international law at Brazil’s FGV Direito SP University, these requests show that there are “ongoing changes in the balance of world power.” Although Nasser does not believe that through joining BRICS these countries will be aligning themselves with China or closing the door on collaboration with the West, “BRICS represents a new pole of economic and political power which” can “compete with North American hegemony,” he says.

With the geopolitical fractures happening on the global stage, some analysts believe that the existing BRICS member countries are now more willing than ever to admit other countries into the bloc. As a preliminary step towards that, BRICS has allowed more countries to join its New Development Bank (NDB) – formerly referred to as the BRICS Development Bank – in recent years, including Bangladesh in 2021. In the last week of May this year, Saudi Arabia held talks to join the bank as its ninth member. Although new members like Egypt and Bangladesh represent major emerging markets and economies, Saudi Arabia, like the UAE, would



Bangladesh formally requested to join BRICS following a meeting between Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and South African President Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa in Geneva, Switzerland on June 14, 2023.

FILE PHOTO: PTO

represent another rich shareholder in the NDB. And this is sure to increase the NDB’s financial capacity to assist the member countries.

The NDB has lent \$33 billion for more than 96 projects in the five founding member countries. The main reasons why the BRICS members are looking to expand membership into the NDB could be political. However, according to Cobus van Staden, a senior researcher at the South African Institute of International Affairs, “interest among developing countries to join the (NDB) is driven by dual dynamics.” First, because of the “lack of development financing options open to the Global South, particularly for concessional financing aimed at infrastructure development.” The lack of concessional options has forced these countries towards market-rated lending, which has “significantly contributed to the current debt crisis in the Global South.” Secondly, a small minority of “developing countries has complicated relationships with Western powers, especially in relation to sanctions.” For them, “the NDB represents a potential source of financing and influence outside of forums dominated by Western norms

Bangladesh with an additional source of financing. However, how we use any resources that we get will ultimately dictate the extent of that benefit, or even loss.

Consequently, Bangladesh’s decision to join BRICS could lead to greater foreign investments into the country given the increased stature Bangladesh will enjoy by being part of a hugely influential group of developing economies. It will also help our country to diversify foreign relations and currency.

Regarding local currency financing, the NDB stands out from the IMF and the World Bank, which primarily use the US dollar as the dominant currency for international transactions. The NDB offers loans in multiple currencies, including the US dollar, euro, Chinese yuan, and other local currencies. Its new chief, former Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff, recently announced that the bank is gradually shifting away from the US dollar. She pledged that in the future, at least 30 percent of loans would be provided in the local currencies of member countries with the aim of diversifying currencies, reducing the bloc’s reliance on the dollar, and

Aside from these, there are many other benefits Bangladesh could get by joining the BRICS bloc. But what is important to keep in mind is that, should Bangladesh’s membership get accepted, it is likely to increase the country’s importance and voice on the global stage. This will require Bangladesh to be more proactive on global issues and also when it comes to setting global agendas. Bangladesh needs to be ready for that.

We need to honestly assess whether our state institutions have matured enough to be able to negotiate and absorb any economic and financial benefits Bangladesh could get from being a part of BRICS. Given our poor track record of negotiating favourable deals in our national interests with foreign countries – instead, our political class usually makes deals that benefit it directly, alongside foreign businesses – how Bangladesh can benefit from BRICS is uncertain.

The bloc may soon become a big club, with plenty of big global players, and with that may come the need to make big decisions and work around big challenges. Bangladesh has a lot to do to position itself cleverly so it can handle them carefully.

Stories and impacts of Padma Bridge



Dr Mohammad Zaman was a member of Jica and Mainsell-Aecom Team and led the Social and Environmental Management Planning for the Padma Bridge project. His recent edited book (with co editor Hafiza Khatun) is titled ‘Development-Induced Displacement and Resettlement in Bangladesh: Case Studies and Practices.’

MOHAMMAD ZAMAN

I read with interest a piece published recently in *The Daily Star* on the first anniversary of the Padma Multipurpose Bridge (PMB) opening. The country was euphoric this time last year due to the inauguration of this bridge by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Although it is too early to judge its full impacts and benefits, there are already many positive stories on how the PMB has transformed the country – thanks to the bridge’s immediate impact on transport and faster connectivity to the Barishal and Khulna regions in the southwest.

The Padma Bridge entered the planning stage following the completion of the Jamuna Bridge in 1998. A pre-feasibility study was conducted in 2000 by Rendel, Palmer and Tritton, followed by a full-fledged feasibility study (FS) by Nippon Koei in 2003-2005, funded by Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica). Four potential sites (Paturia-Goalundo, Mawa-Janjira, Dohar-Charbhadrason, and Chandpur-Bhedargani) were considered during the FS, and the Mawa-Janjira site was recommended by the Jica team. The detailed final technical design of the Padma Bridge (2008-2010) was funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

The double-deck multipurpose

bridge designed by New Zealand-based firm Mainsell-Aecom was a real accomplishment and an “engineering feat.” However, long before the project construction was to begin, the co-financiers (ADB, JICA, and the World Bank) withdrew their funding commitments due to a dispute with the government of Bangladesh over alleged corruption in the selection of contractors and management consultants. The situation led to serious political controversy, with allegations and counter-allegations between the government and the World Bank. Finally, in 2013, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina strongly stated that the bridge would be built by Bangladesh without any external assistance. Accordingly, construction of the main bridge and other components commenced in November 2014. With pride and confidence, the bridge was opened to the public on June 25, 2022.

The 6.15km-long Padma Multipurpose Bridge – the longest in South Asia – established a fixed, reliable, and safe crossing over the Padma River from Mawa to Janjira and to the southwest region, reducing four hours of ferry commute to merely a 10-minute ride over the bridge. The bridge connects the southwestern

region (which has over 35 million people) with the capital of Dhaka, boosting business and the movement of export goods between the Mongla seaport and the rest of the country.

The improved transport network has now reduced the hauling time of vehicles and enhanced economic activity, boosting the national GDP, according to one estimate, to roughly one percent annually. Further, as a result of the new link and increased accessibility, the country’s southwest now experiences higher levels of economic activity, increased mobility, migration, and new employment opportunities, with impacts of poverty reduction in the region.

Those affected by the construction of the bridge and its other components (that is, approach viaducts, river-training work, 14km of approach roads, bridge-end facilities, toll plazas, service areas, offices, etc) were properly resettled and rehabilitated in four resettlement sites in Mawa and Janjira. The resettlement plan was designed following the “good practices” of the Jamuna Bridge experience. Monetary compensation was made as per the replacement cost for land and other assets prior to displacement. The displaced households had options of either moving to resettlement sites or taking “self-managed” resettlement packages with all the applicable compensation and benefits. Close to 2,000 households opted for self-managed resettlement and moved to existing villages in Mawa and Janjira areas.

Four resettlement sites were built with provisions for house plots for over 2,400 households, and including civic amenities such as internal roads, water

supply, electricity, schools, a market area, and waste management systems. The resettlers in the four sites are largely from the affected villages along the bank, where they had experienced multiple displacements in the past due to annual endemic erosion. In contrast, they now live in secure, semi-urban townships with access to employment and other social development support – particularly assistance for poor women and vulnerable groups, and training and livelihood programmes by a reputed non-government organisation (NGO) hired by Bangladesh Bridge Authority (BBA). In sum, Padma Bridge established a “development approach” to resettlement management, benefitting those affected by the project.

The benefits and potentials of the Padma Bridge megaproject are yet to be realised. Currently, only the four-lane divided motorway on the upper deck is operational. The dual-gauge rail line on the lower deck will be completed soon. The fibre optic cable and the gas pipeline on the bridge, separate but parallel power transmission line, the railway stations in Mawa and Janjira, and the eco-tourism centre on the Janjira side will ultimately fundamentally transform the region, making the Padma Bridge a real transportation “hub” and a key driver for economic growth and social change. Furthermore, the fixed link has opened up a real possibility for expanding Dhaka city to Mawa and to the southwest across the Padma Bridge to Shariatpur and Madaripur, which should be carefully studied by the government. To me, the future of Dhaka as a liveable city lies across the Padma Bridge.

A hazy pre-election atmosphere



THE STREET VIEW

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

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Eid has always been a singular occasion for mass campaigns. Aspiring electoral candidates seize the opportunity to meet their voters in their constituencies amid festivities. And given the tradition of long campaigns leading up to national elections, it would not have been unusual to see candidates gearing up for their outreach programmes during the holidays as this Eid was the last time that candidates would find most of their voters home en masse.

But the hype has been absent. Other than a few pre-recorded voice messages that elicited little more than irritation, the initiatives taken this time paled in comparison to the previous occasions. Although not a voter in either district, this correspondent received two messages from the lawmakers of Sirajganj and Lakshmipur. As such, one could say that attempts to reach out to the electorate this time have been quite insignificant.

On the other front, the BNP has already made it clear that it would not join the upcoming parliamentary election under the incumbent government. The ruling Awami League has also made it clear that the election would be held according to the constitution, meaning it would not step down. This sort of uncertainty is not new in Bangladeshi politics where parties appear to be entrenched in their positions due to mistrust. On the last two occasions, the government proceeded with the elections regardless of BNP's position or protests. This time, however, it seems different.

The Awami League appeared to be more sure-footed about the elections and did not appear to mind so much that the BNP might not join the elections. But things may have changed since the evening of May 24, when it was announced that the United States would restrict visas to any Bangladeshi citizens believed to be responsible for or complicit in undermining democratic election processes in the country.

Initially, the announcement was warmly welcomed all around – by the ruling Awami League, Jatiya Party, main opposition in parliament, and BNP, main opposition camp on the streets. Arch-rivals Awami League and BNP both claimed that the measure was aimed at the other and that they had nothing to worry about. Shortly, however, the ruling

BNP has made it clear that it won't join the upcoming parliamentary election under the incumbent government. Awami League has also made it clear that the election would be held according to the constitution, meaning it won't step down. This sort of uncertainty is not new in Bangladeshi politics where parties appear to be entrenched in their positions due to mistrust.



This photo from 2018 shows a press busy printing election posters.

FILE PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

party distanced itself from that position, especially with the ruling party leaders vocally protesting the measure as nothing but an attempt to oust the incumbent government.

Through its visa restrictions, the US has made it clear that it wants to see a free and fair election in Bangladesh and that basic freedoms and rights needed for a democratic environment are upheld. This announcement, in a way, seemed inevitable if one considers that Bangladesh was not even invited to the democracy summits for two consecutive times. The latest measure might be a planned attempt to pressure the government to ensure a free and fair election at the end of this year.

What's even more interesting

is that when the ruling party members started criticising the US, Bangladesh's development partner China came up with a statement following a question-and-answer session of the Chinese foreign ministry. Without directly mentioning the US, the Chinese statement said "a certain country has long been interfering in the internal affairs of Bangladesh and many other developing countries under the pretext of democracy and human rights."

The statement further read, "We firmly support Bangladesh in safeguarding its sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, upholding independent domestic and foreign policies, and pursuing a development path

that suits its national realities. We stand ready to work together with Bangladesh and other countries to oppose all forms of hegemonism and power politics, uphold the UN-centred international system, the international order underpinned by international law and the basic norms governing international relations based on the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, and build a community with a shared future for mankind."

This reaction clearly indicates that rivalry between China and the US has now touched upon Bangladesh. This is a rather ominous sign, especially when our foreign policy is "friendship to all, malice to none."

While the attitude of the US and China regarding the next general

election in Bangladesh may seem clear, we are yet to know what India's position is. We know that our neighbour wholeheartedly supported the 2014 election in which 153 lawmakers were elected uncontested. We have also seen them support the 2018 election. India is yet to make any official comment, but various Indian media outlets have given their interpretations. Most of the explanation focuses on supporting the Awami League regime and some articles also mention what the ruling party should do. But the necessity of holding a free and fair election where people's hopes and aspirations will be projected received little attention. Obviously, India will consider its geopolitical interests, especially regarding the security situation in the Seven Sisters.

Eid is over and people are returning to the cities. BNP has already warned that it would go for its one-point movement to materialise the demand for an election under a non-partisan interim government. A three-member high-powered US delegation is also expected to visit Bangladesh later in July. Media reports suggest that the US officials are likely to hold talks with political parties and civil society members.

While we have politicians, civil society members and other stakeholders, it seems that the next election is largely dependent on the attitudes of the big powers. It seems we are waiting to see how the big powers react in the coming days. Some are criticising the US, some China, while others are expressing their reservations about India's attitude.

If any one quarter is to be held responsible for such a turn of events, it would have to be the politicians. Unfortunately, no one is talking about the main stakeholders of the election – the people. Without them, democracy will neither flourish nor be strengthened.

US politics and the Paris finance summit



Jeffrey D Sachs
is a world-renowned economist, academic, and public policy analyst who serves as the director of the Center for Sustainable Development at Columbia University. He is also the author of 'To Move the World: JFK's Quest for Peace.'

JEFFREY D SACHS

Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley and French President Emmanuel Macron invited world leaders to Paris on June 22-23 to reach a new "global pact" to finance the fight against poverty and human-induced climate change. All kudos for the ambition, yet few dollars were put on the table. To an important extent, the continuing global failure to finance the fight against poverty and climate change reflects the failings of US politics, since the US, at least for the moment, remains at the centre of the global financial system.

To understand US politics, we should start with the history of the British empire. As Britain became an imperial power, and then the world's leading power of the 19th century, British philosophy changed to justify Britain's emerging empire. British philosophers championed a powerful state (Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan*), the protection of private wealth over redistribution (John Locke's right to "life, liberty, and property"), markets over government (Adam Smith's "Invisible Hand"), and the futility of aiding the poor (Malthus' law of population).

When humanitarian crises arose in the British empire, such as the Irish famine in the 1840s and the famines in India later in the century, Britain rejected providing food aid and left millions of its subjects to starve, even though food supplies were available to save them. The inaction was in line with a *laissez-faire* philosophy that viewed poverty as inevitable and help for the poor as morally unnecessary and practically futile.

Simply put, Britain's elites had no interest in helping the poor subjects of the empire (or indeed Britain's poor at home). They wanted low taxes and a powerful navy to defend their overseas investments and profits.

The United States learnt its statecraft at the knee of Britain, the mother country of the American colonies. America's founding fathers moulded the new country's political institutions and foreign policies according to British principles, albeit inventing the role of president instead of a monarch. The US overtook Britain in global power in the course of World War II.

The lead author of the US Constitution, James Madison, was an ardent enthusiast of Locke. He was born into slave-owning



The US leaders who attended the Paris finance summit have long-standing commitments to fighting poverty and climate change, yet they cannot deliver the actual US policy.

FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

wealth and was interested in protecting wealth from the masses. Madison feared direct democracy, in which the people participate in politics directly, and championed representative government, in which the people elect representatives who supposedly represent their interests. Madison feared local government because it was too close to the people and too likely to favour wealth redistribution. Madison, therefore, championed a federal government in a far-off capital.

Madison's strategy worked. The US federal government is largely insulated from public opinion. The public majority opposes wars, supports affordable healthcare for all, and champions higher taxes on the rich. The Congress routinely delivers wars, over-priced private healthcare, and tax cuts for the rich.

The US calls itself a democracy but is in fact a plutocracy. (The Economist Intelligence Unit categorises the US as a "flawed democracy.") The rich and corporate lobbies finance the political campaigns, and in return, the government delivers low taxes for the rich, freedom to pollute, and war. Private health companies

dominate healthcare. Wall Street runs the financial system. Big Oil runs the energy system. And the military-industrial lobby runs the foreign policy.

This brings us to the global climate crisis. The most powerful nation in the world has a domestic energy policy still in the hands of Big Oil. It has a foreign policy that aims to preserve US hegemony through wars. And it has a Congress designed to protect the rich from the

demands of the masses, whether to fight poverty or to fight climate change. The US leaders who attended the Paris finance summit, John Kerry (US special presidential envoy for climate) and Janet Yellen (US treasury secretary), are individuals of outstanding ethics and deep and long-standing commitments to fighting poverty and climate change. Yet, they cannot deliver the actual US policy. Congress and the US plutocracy stand in the way.

The leaders at the Paris summit recognised the urgent need for a massive expansion of official development financing from the Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs), meaning the World Bank, the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and others. Yet, to expand their lending by the amounts needed, the MDBs will require more paid-in capital from the US, Europe, and other major economies. Still, the US Congress opposes investing more capital in the MDBs, and the US opposition is (so far) blocking global action.

The Congress opposes more capital for three reasons. First, it would cost the US

a little bit of money, and rich campaign funders aren't interested. Second, it would accelerate the global transition from fossil fuels, and America's Big Oil lobby wants to delay, not accelerate, the transition. Third, it would hand more policy influence to global institutions in which China participates, yet the military-industrial complex wants to fight China, not collaborate with it.

Thus, while developing countries

CROSSWORD

BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**

1 Cats' quarries

5 Made amends

11 Revered one

12 Famed isthmus

13 Transmit

14 Trample

15 They're not too risky

17 Much of N. Amer.

18 Impudent

22 Rash

24 Spinetingling

25 Here, in France

26 "Not — dare!"

27 Vault intersection

30 Career soldier

32 Thus
- 33 Outback bird

34 Lunar events

38 White Rabbit's cry

41 Opera set in Egypt

42 Carter's successor

43 Beef cut

44 Ticks off

45 Pot start
- DOWN**

1 Fall short of

2 Concept

3 Puzzlement

4 Senior

5 Church area

6 Be a snitch

7 Infant outfit

8 Catch some z's

9 Moody music

10 Dapper
- fellow

16 Inlet

19 Abundance

20 Freshener scent

21 Calendar span

22 In the clouds

23 Plot unit

28 Glacial period

29 Sweet drink

30 Island souvenir

31 Gazelle's cousin

35 Eye part

36 Fix a story

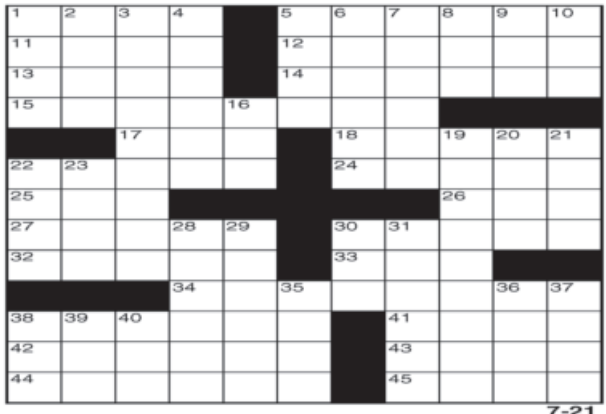
37 Rational

38 Nest egg acct.

39 Fellows

40 Fall back

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



WEDNESDAY'S ANSWERS

C	A	S	E	A	S	T	R	O	S
O	X	E	N	S	Q	U	A	R	E
M	E	L	D	N	U	G	G	E	T
A	L	L	L	E	I	S			
	S	W	O	R	N		F	I	T
A	C	H	E	S		T	H	E	S
B	O	O	T				A	L	E
B	U	R	S	T		I	N	L	E
A	P	T		R	O	C	K	S	
			C	O	Z			H	E
N	A	V	A	J	O		B	O	D
A	P	E	M	A	N		U	R	G
G	R	E	E	N		S	T	E	T



Live recording for the 50th anniversary celebration of Souls, organized by Bangladesh Television Chattogram Center.

COURTESY: SOULS

SOULS AT 50

The many incarnations of a band

Souls is an example of Darwin's 'survival of the fittest' through its resilience and adaptation. In each line-up of Souls, the concept of Souls acted as a platform for leading musicians. This is probably what separates Souls from other bands in Bangladesh. Each line-up brought something new to the table. Each line-up gave an anthem to the generation of the time.

ASRAR CHOWDHURY

BACK TO THE GARDEN

Souls is not the first band in Bangladesh to reach the milestone of 50 years. That honour belongs to Zinga Shilpi Goshty. Zinga started a decade before Souls in 1963. However, Souls is different and, in some ways, a unique Band in Bangladesh.

When mentioning the Souls, you would like to ask like in Wish You Were Here, 'which one's Pink'? In a discussion of the Rolling Stones (1962), Pink Floyd (1965), Genesis (1967), Black Sabbath (1968), King Crimson (1968), Guns and Roses (1985) and other bands, you ask, 'which incarnation of the band'? Like these bands, Souls has gone through multiple line-ups. In fact, Souls has gone through more line-ups than any other band in Bangladesh. A discussion of Souls is a discussion of the many incarnations of the Band. Somehow, in each carnation, across few generations, the band has added something new to its rainbow.

Looking back on Souls will be looking back at one colour of a rainbow in the Band music of Bangladesh. It will also be looking at the 1960s, the decade preceding Souls. That preceding decade and the Liberation War shaped popular music in Bangladesh as we see it today.

AMERICAN PIE, LONG, LONG TIME AGO

The first rock 'n roll single that topped the charts in the USA and the UK was 'Rock Around the Clock' by Bill Haley

ready to start their version of Rock 'n Roll in the form of what would later become band music.

I KNOW IT'S ONLY ROCK 'N' ROLL

It was not by design, but the birth of band music in this country coincides with Please Please Me, the Beatles debut album that debuted on March 23, 1963.

The first organized band in East Pakistan can be credited to Zinga Goshty from Chattogram. Shafaat Ali of Chattogram College formed the band on March 4, 1963. Zinga was a family band that mostly played traditional music in orchestration. They did, however, have a timeless song in 'Tomari Jeebone'.

In 1964, Fazle Rob, Rafiq Mazhar Islam, Sufi Rashid, and Khaja Sabbir of St Gregory's School formed Iolites. The band named themselves Windy Side of Care in 1967. Chattogram was not too far behind. In 1965, Farid Rashid, Neo Mendes, Noel Mendes, and Shakil of St Placid's School formed Lightnings.

Rambling Stones (featuring Jafar Iqbal and others), Bokolom (featuring Jalal Abedin and others), Fire on Ice (featuring Selim Alam and others) were other bands of the Pakistan era. They performed mainly in Hotels and Clubs in Dhaka and Chattogram. Through radio and TV they reached out.

None of these bands lasted long. Zinga exists, but only in name. In 1969, Rambling Stones disbanded after a fire in their practice pad. Lightnings disbanded after a bomb attack during a programme at Hotel Purbani in 1973.

and Momtazur Rahman Lulu formed a band. They needed a name. Sazed's father, litterateur, Mahbubul Alam, suggested, 'Surela'. Surela's first notable programme was the 1972, 31st Night at Chittagong Club. The band soon found an investor and a manager in Wadud Islam.

Sazed's nephew, Fariadul Islam Chowdhury suggested the name 'The Souls' for the band. A friend, Mainul Alam dropped 'the'. And thus, the story of Souls started in 1973. The first line-up included Sazed (vocals and guitar), Lulu (lead guitar), Rony (drums), and Enayet (accordion). That first line-up would be the first incarnation of many more incarnations.

IN THE BEGINNING, LONG TIME AGO

Tapan, Rudy and Lorenzo soon joined Souls. Rudy and Lorenzo did covers of

the band when he could. The band needed a signature song. That was just around the corner, but not without a price.

As Souls was ready to enter a new stratosphere with their first signature song, 'Mon Shudhu Mon Chhuyechhe' by Naquib Khan in 1978, the band experienced another line-up change. Sazed, Rony and Rouf left Bangladesh. Unlike other bands, a change in their line-up made Souls either more resilient or it brought a new flavour and colour to the band.

1980 was a seminal year. The 1980 line-up included: Tapan (Bangla songs), Nasim (English songs), Bachchu (lead guitar), Shahed (bass guitar), Pilu (drums), and Naquib (organ).

That year, before a concert at Dhaka Medical College, Tapan fell

Corridor-e'. Again, the album created anthems for young people.

The line-up changed again. In 1985, Shahed and Gerard left. Mohammad Ali (bass guitar), and Suhash (keyboardist) joined. The next year, Souls launched their third album, 'Manush Matir Kachhakachi'. Their fourth album, 'East and West' came out in 1988.

1989-90 the band had another change in its line-up. Suhash went abroad. Partha Barua joined as the keyboardist. Over time, Partha would become the link of Souls between the past, the present, and the future.

In 1990, Ayub Bachchu left Souls. Bachchu would go on to form LRB. Naquib formed Renaissance soon after he left.

In spite of so many ups and downs, Souls kept on rolling. They kept on performing. They kept on bringing out albums. Each album, somehow, resonated with some young people of the time. This ensured that Souls would survive from one generation to the next.

INHERITANCE TRACKS

My first encounter with Souls was in 1985. After my SSC, I was having a vacation at Lalkhan Bazar in Chattogram at my Nanu Bari. My Chhoto Mama, Raju, was a musician in his young days. He knew Chattogram bands of pre and post 1971. Raju Mama was also a schoolmate of Mohit Ul Alam (Sazed's elder brother). Because of these connections, music was always a part of my childhood vacations in Chattogram.

One day, two people came to Raju Mama's den. They were Nasim Ali and Ayub Bachchu of Souls. That was the first time I saw two rock stars in flesh and soul. I spent the whole time looking at them, lost for words. Before returning to Dhaka, I got what was then their only albums, 'Super Souls', and 'College-er Corridor-e'. My answer to 'which one's Pink' are these two albums. I belong to that incarnation of Souls. Each song on those two albums are my inheritance tracks.

Years later, I entered my daughter's room. Annapurna was listening to a song. It was 'Byastota' from 'Aaj din katuk gaane'. I told Annapurna, I belong to the first two Souls albums. I was surprised to see my cassettes from 1985 on her table. She spins them sometimes on a cassette player I gifted her when I saw she was falling in love with music.

THANK YOU FOR THE MUSIC

This year, Souls celebrates fifty years. The band is an example of Darwin's 'survival of the fittest' through its resilience and adaptation. In each line-up of Souls, the concept of Souls acted as a platform for leading musicians. This is probably what separates Souls from other bands in Bangladesh. Each line-up brought something new to the table. Each line-up gave an anthem to the generation of the time.

If the concept of Souls as a platform survives, then the Golden Jubilee is Part I. Our children and their children will celebrate Part II, the Centennial Jubilee of Souls in 2073. Souls will be the first band to do so.

Reference:

- 'Bangla-r Rock Metal' by Milu Aman and Haque Faruk. Aajob Prokash. Feb 2023.
- Key discussions with Professor Mohit Ul Alam and Milu Aman.

Asrar Chowdhury is a Professor of Economics at Jahangirnagar University. He has contributed to the Daily Star since 1993. Email: asrarul@juniv.edu



(L) A photo session of Souls in 1974 at Joy Pahar State, Chittagong. Photographer: Taslim Uddin. (R) Souls performing the song "Bhule Gecho Tumi" in 1977 at Hotel Agrabad, Chittagong.

COURTESY: SAZED UL ALAM



and the Comets in 1954. Soon after, Chuck Berry, Fats Domino, Little Richard, Jerry Lee Lewis, Elvis Presley, and Buddy Holly laid the foundations of Rock 'n Roll in the USA. It was through Radio Luxembourg that this brand of music found a young audience in the British Isles and rest of Europe.

By the end of the 1950s, British artistes, influenced by the Americans, slowly started to bring their version of Rock 'n Roll and popular music. These American and British artistes performed in English. Soon American and British artistes would find another young audience in South Asia. This time the portal was the 'Paradise Island' programme on what was then Radio Ceylon.

As the 1960s dawned the 'baby boom' generation of East Pakistan was

Iolites faded away.

Just when the bands of the 1960s started to experiment, the wheels of history were set into motion. 1971 dawned. The nation's young went out to liberate their country. A few of them would return to change band music and popular music in Bangladesh forever. The stage was set for Souls to be born.

HERE COMES THE SUN

The journey of Souls starts from Chittagong Club. A 15-year-old Sazedul Alam returned home on December 20, 1971 just after the Liberation War. He attended the 1971, 31st Night at Chittagong Club. Lightnings performed that night. Lightnings sparked a 'light' in Sazed's mind. Sazed decided to form a band.

In 1972, Sazed, Subrata Barua Rony

English hits. In 1975 Lulu, Rudy and Lorenzo left the band. Shahed, Taju and Naquib joined. The 1975 line-up included: Tapan and Taju on vocal; Sazed on lead guitar; Shahed on bass guitar; Naquib Khan on the organ; Rony on the drums and Newaz on percussion.

There was one shortcoming. Souls was still a local Chattogram based band. This was to change in 1976. Souls participated in the All Bengal Rock Concert competition that year. They bagged three prizes: Top ten, top organ player (Naquib) and top vocalist (Taju). The competition gave the band an opportunity to become a national band. This freed themselves from the realms of Chattogram. The band's performance on Bangladesh Television (BTV) and the Shilpakala Academy earned them critical acclaim. Still, something was missing.

Changing line-ups started to become a regular feature of Souls. Rouf joined in 1977. That year, Taju left, and Rudy returned. Tapan went to Dhaka for studies, but featured with

ill. Naquib stood in for Tapan for Bangla songs. And that was it. Naquib brought a new flavour.

Souls launched their debut album Super Souls in 1980. This album would turn out to be the wildfire the band was dreaming for.

Super Souls personified the band at the time. The album was a collection of eight Bangla and four English songs. Souls could not have asked for more in a debut album. There was no mechanism to determine if a single topped the charts or not. The only way to determine if a song was a hit was to see responses in concerts and the radio waves.

'Super Souls' was like 'A Hard Day's Night' of the Beatles. Each Bangla track: 'Mon Shudhu Mon Chuyechhe', 'Tore Putuler Moto Kore', 'Dorgay Mom Jele', 'Bhule Gechho Tumi', 'Nadi Eshe Poth', 'Amra Je Bhalobashi', 'Shukh Pakhi Ailo Uriya', 'Mukhorito Jeeboner Cholar Pothe' became an anthem of generation 1980.

When songs enter the heart of a generation, some of them will filter on to the next generation. This makes the artiste, or the band survive. That is what started for Souls through 'Super Souls' in 1980.

WHICH ONE'S PINK?

Souls has been like a partnership in cricket. Just when a partnership settles in and looks to last forever, a wicket falls.

In 1982, Souls experienced another change in their line-up. Naquib and Pilu left Chattogram for Dhaka. Gerard replaced Naquib. Rali came in as the rhythm guitarist. Rony returned from abroad and took back his place on the drums from Pilu.

Souls once again showed their resilience. A new line-up was both a challenge and an opportunity to take the band forward. Ayub Bachchu and Nasim Ali started to compose songs. With some unpublished songs of Naquib, Tajul and Jilu, Souls launched their second album in 1982: 'College



(L) J-card of Soul's debut album 'Super Souls'. (R) J-card of the album 'College Corridor-e'



Korean hockey coach in town

SPORTS REPORTER

Kim Yang Kung, a former South Korean hockey player and coach, arrived in Dhaka in the early hours of Sunday to train the Bangladesh national team for the upcoming Asian Games.

The Korean, who coached a team in Hockey Champions Trophy – a franchise hockey league – last year, will take charge of a 31-member squad today to start training at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium for the Asian Games, which will be held in August-September in Hangzhou, China.

“The coach played in Olympics for South Korea in the ‘90s and trained the Korean men’s and women’s teams six-seven years ago. He will be in charge of the team till the Asian Games,” Mahbub Ehsan Rana, joint secretary of Bangladesh Hockey Federation, told The Daily Star yesterday.

A 40-member preliminary squad started the camp on June 15 under three local coaches – Ashikuzzaman, Rasel Khan Bappi and Shahidullah Titu – before nine players were omitted ahead of the Eid break.

The coach will be paid a monthly salary plus benefits of 13,000-15,000 US dollars, which will be arranged from the sports ministry and Bangladesh Olympic Association, Rana claimed.



Josh Hazlewood celebrates as a dejected Ben Stokes (L) hangs his head in disappointment, falling after a heroic 155 during which he took on the Aussie attack single-handedly to bring England close to an unlikely victory on day five of the second Ashes Test at Lord's yesterday. The all-important wicket accelerated England's demise as the visitors took a 2-0 lead in the series with a 43-run victory.

PHOTO: AFP



Can Rybakina enter the elite club?

AGENCIES

Defending women's champion Elena Rybakina will face American Shelby Rogers in the opening round at Wimbledon while top seed Iga Swiatek faces a tough test against China's Zhu Lin. While much of the focus is understandably on top seed Iga Swiatek and number two Aryna Sabalenka, as well as the likes of Coco Gauff and Jabeur, Rybakina will quietly go about her business when she opens play on Centre Court on Tuesday.

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.

Aryna Sabalenka will aim to keep the focus on tennis and not politics on her return to Wimbledon, with the “super emotional” Belarusian saying on Saturday she was relishing the chance to compete in the Grand Slam again. Successfully defending a Wimbledon women's title is no easy task. Only Serena and Venus Williams and Steffi Graf have managed it in the last 30 years.

But anyone dismissing Rybakina's chances of joining that elite club would do well to remember the way she calmly picked her way through the draw last year with the minimum of fuss.

‘Hungry’ Djokovic fired up for more glory

AFP, LONDON

Novak Djokovic says he is still “hungry” for Grand Slam glory as Wimbledon rivals queue up to hail him as the “greatest” and his achievements as “phenomenal”. Having wrapped up a men's record 23rd Grand Slam title at the French Open, Djokovic now targets an eighth Wimbledon title to equal Roger Federer's mark.

The 36-year-old Serb has won the title at the All England Club on the last four occasions.

A fifth successive victory in two weeks' time will take him level with Margaret Court's all-time record of 24 Slams.

He is also bidding to become just the fourth player in history to win eight or more Wimbledon titles after Martina Navratilova (nine), Federer and Helen Wills Moody (eight).

“I still feel hungry for success, for more Grand Slams, more achievements in tennis,” said Djokovic. “As long as there's that drive, I know that I'm able to compete at the highest level.”

Worryingly for his rivals, Djokovic, one of the most polarising figures in sport, shows no sign of slowing down. Eleven of his 23 majors have come since he turned 30.

Victory in what would be his 35th Grand Slam final on July 16 would crown him as the tournament's oldest champion in the Open era.

Djokovic's career-long rival



Murray said winning 23 majors was “phenomenal”. Murray, a former world number one, was the last man to defeat Djokovic on Centre Court when he won the first of his two Wimbledon titles in 2013.

“What he did at the French Open, it was phenomenal.”

At the end of 2010, Djokovic's Grand Slam tally consisted solely of the 2008 Australian Open title.

By comparison, Federer had already won 16 of his 20 career majors while Nadal had racked up nine of his 22. Nine more of Nadal's Slam trophies came in Paris.

Djokovic's third win at Roland Garros last month made him the first man to win all four majors on

at least three occasions.

“I don't know how is it possible? He doesn't have bad days?” asked world number three Daniil Medvedev.

“Actually, he does, like everybody but even on these bad days, he manages to beat the opponent. I don't know how he's doing it. “That's why he's for me the greatest in the history of tennis.”

Should Djokovic successfully defend his Wimbledon title, he will just need to pocket the US Open in September to become the first man since 1969 to claim a calendar Grand Slam. Djokovic had the same opportunity in 2021 but lost the final in New York – to Medvedev.

Tigers’ closed-door session at ZACS

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh went ahead with their training plans in their very first session at Chattogram's Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium behind closed doors yesterday. The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) had informed on Saturday night that the gates would remain closed and no access would be given to ‘facilitate’ the closed-door session.

The Tigers have often asked for closed-door sessions in the recent past, mostly to work on scenarios in practice games. In Sylhet, during a preparation camp before the tour of England to play Ireland, access had been given to the media for a brief prescheduled period. This time there was a complete curtain drawn.

“It was asked from the team and it will be facilitated that way as per requirements,” a source informed The Daily Star, regarding the reason behind having the session behind closed doors.

BCB high-ups have often been concerned about the availability of practice footages from training sessions online where a player working on a specific skillset in order to prepare for an upcoming opponent. Coach Chandika Hathurusingha, who has very specific plans regarding the team, must have been aware of the discomfort the players faced when such videos got out in the media.

“It's [such decisions] left to the coach and he can decide on what he needs. In the future, such arrangements may also be made in Dhaka. Some online platforms have made practice videos available which the players found concerning. Practice is also a private place but things do not always stay private. There were some talks regarding such issues before. The players are not always comfortable since they try new things in practice and scrutinising the details of such sessions is a reason,” a team management source informed.

The session today would, however, be open for the media.

‘Our level should be better than SAFF display’

There is no shame in losing to a superior team when the performance remains incredible enough to win the hearts of fans and neutrals alike. Bangladesh on Saturday reinforced that notion against Kuwait in the 2023 SAFF Championship semi-finals as Bishwanath Ghosh and teammates operated like warriors on the pitch. In an interview with Anisur Rahman of The Daily Star, the 24-year-old revisited his journey in the latest regional tournament, as a professional footballer and more. The excerpts are as follows:

The Daily Star (DS): Your intention behind announcing Tk 5 lakh cash reward?

Bishwanath Ghosh (BG): Actually, I had first announced about giving Tk 5 lakh if we could reach the final but I changed my mind to fix it for the Kuwait match instead. Although this amount of money is not much for the national players, I felt that other players could feel the hunger for victory.

DS: What factors led to such consistent performance?

BG: I don't think there has ever been such deep bonding, commitment and emotion among the players in the last 10 years. Without seeing, you may not believe how players like Jamal [Bhuiyan], Tapu [Barman], [Anisur Rahman] Zico, me, [Faisal Ahmed] Fahim and others, ball-boy Mohsin, assistant coach Hasan Al Mamum were in tears during every team meeting.

We dreamt big and now the same people who once directed abusive words towards us, when we could not meet their expectations, are praising our performance.

DS: How do you evaluate overall performance?

BG: At the end of the day, it's (control over fate) not in our hands. You may say that self-belief, consistency, or fighting attitude are takeaways from the tournament. But as far as I'm concerned, it is nothing but regret.

DS: So near yet so far. Your feelings after the match?

BG: We pushed Kuwait to the limit. To be honest, each player toiled hard throughout. I don't know whether Bangladesh played this way in the last four to five years.

DS: How did you develop your game as a workhorse?

BG: When Raihan Hasan (national player) bhai brought me into football in Tangail, my childhood coach Jamil sir gave the emphasis on running rather than playing with



the ball. During the Danone Nations Cup in 2011, Jamil sir trained the Tangail team for 90 minutes every day for the 15-minute game. He also trained us for 120 minutes every day for the 10-minute game Bangladesh played in South Africa before becoming champions.

From that time on, we achieved endurance at the age of 14 and now I'm used to working really hard. Of course, I get tired at times but the thought of failing to run for the whole 90 minutes fuels me.

DS: You've a tendency to lose temper. Reasons?

BG: I will say it's my bad habit. But I have been learning from my mistakes. To be honest, I can't accept any wrong decisions from the referees, fouls on my teammates without

any reasons because we play for the national and the club team.

DS: What motivated you since your U-12 days?

BG: I got inspired to play football from Raihan bhai and always tried to grab any available opportunity, whether it was in training or while playing for any side. I'm still serious about giving my all at every opportunity.

I don't think there is another national player like me who featured on every national age-group team. Moreover, it is a totally different feeling to represent Bangladesh because it is a matter of pride as everyone can't get this opportunity. We have heard so much about the 1971 Liberation War and we really felt that [spirit] while playing for the national team.

DS: Javier Cabrera said Bangladesh should maintain the latest standard. Your thoughts?

BG: I think Bangladesh are not supposed to sit at the bottom of FIFA rankings. I think our level should be better than what we displayed in the [2023] SAFF Championship. Of course, we have to be careful and sincere to improve our level at international level. If India can do it, then why shouldn't we!

DS: We came to know of your wife's role behind your success.

BG: Initially she did not get much about football, but now she understands a lot. She helped me immensely during the pandemic to maintain my fitness and more. I think she is more aware of my diet, gym and training [regiment] than me. Sometimes when I feel too lazy to go to the gym or do physical activity, she forces me to complete the routine. Also, I think, being in communication with the wife of Indian player Pritam Kotal helps her learn about how to assist me.

Nissanka guides SL to World Cup

REUTERS

Pathum Nissanka scored an unbeaten 101 as Sri Lanka booked their place at the 50-over Cricket World Cup in India with a comprehensive nine wicket victory over hosts Zimbabwe in their qualifier in Bulawayo on Sunday.

Sri Lanka move to eight points in the Super Six stage of the preliminary tournament and cannot finish outside of the top two teams, who both earn a place at finals which will be played from Oct. 5-Nov. 19.

Zimbabwe have six points and remain in contention, but must beat Scotland (four points) in their final game on Tuesday to make sure.

Sri Lanka chose to field first and restricted Zimbabwe to 165 all out in 32.2 overs as off-spinner Maheesh

Theekshana claimed career-best figures of 4-25 and Dilshan Madushanka took 3-15.

Sri Lanka never looked troubled in their reply and reached their target with 101 balls remaining as Nissanka bagged his second ODI century from 102 balls to guide his side to victory.

“It's a big achievement (to qualify for the World Cup) and you know what we have done in the past in World Cups. It is a much-needed thing for Sri Lanka to play on that big stage,” Sri Lanka captain Dasun Shanaka said at the post-match presentation.

Sri Lanka have appeared at every World Cup and were victorious in 1996 as they beat Australia in the final.



THE POWER TO MINIMIZE THE DEVASTATION OF EARTHQUAKES IS IN YOUR HANDS





EARTHQUAKE
AWARENESS DAY 2023



BSRM
building a safer nation



SHAH
CEMENT

THE MOST
LOVED BRAND





BEST BRAND AWARD WINNER EVERY YEAR

SYLHET-TAMABIL HIGHWAY

Expansion work to begin after three years

Land acquisition remains a problem for the Tk 3,583.24cr project

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The work to expand the Sylhet-Tamabil highway to a four-lane one will finally start around three years after the project was approved, with the goal of improving the country's intercity travel and cross-border connectivity.

A Bangladesh-China joint venture firm has been selected for one of the four packages of the Tk 3,583.24-crore project, the physical or civil work of which is expected to begin in September.

But the delay in land acquisition, like many other projects, may hinder the implementation of the project, which is already running behind schedule, said officials of the Roads and Highways Department (RHD), the implementing agency of the project.

In September 2020, the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecne) approved the project for expanding 56.16km of the two-lane Sylhet-Tamabil highway into four lanes with service lanes on both sides.

The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) will provide Tk 2,970.56 crore as a loan, while the government will cover the rest of the cost. The deadline for the project is June 2025.

The Sylhet-Tamabil highway is a part of the Asian Highway-1 which links India's Meghalaya and West Bengal through Tamabil - Sylhet - Kanchpur - Dhaka - Jashore - Benapole.

RHD is implementing another project to expand the Dhaka-Sylhet

The RHD is implementing a separate Tk 7,982-crore project to acquire land and shift utility lines to facilitate the expansion of Dhaka-Sylhet and Sylhet-Tamabil highways.

highway.

The corridor is strategically important for sub-regional connectivity with the seven northeastern states of India, as well as Bhutan, Myanmar, and China, officials said.

FIRST CONTRACT

On June 22, the Cabinet Committee on Government Purchase approved a proposal for hiring a Bangladesh-China joint venture firm for Package-2 of the project.

The companies are Abdul Monem Ltd from Bangladesh and QICH from China. The firm will expand the 21.7km road from Khadim to Bager Bazar area.

The firm will get Tk 891.59 crore and four years to complete the job, meaning the project deadline is likely to be extended by at least two years.

"We expect to sign a contract with the firm this month or early next month so that the work can start in September," Project Director Abu Sayeed Md Nazmul Huda told The Daily Star.

Tender processes for two other packages and for hiring consultants are underway, he said, adding that the consultants are expected to be appointed before the beginning of the civil works.

LAND MAIN OBSTACLE

When asked why the civil works have not started yet, Nazmul said it was because of the delay in land acquisition and the selection of contractors.

He said the tendering process to invite contractors was deferred four times due to Covid-induced lockdowns. Besides, they have not yet been able to acquire any land either.

He went on to say that they have to slow down the tendering process because if they appoint a contractor but fail to provide them with the land on time, they will be liable to pay a penalty.

"The RHD has some land of its own and will begin work on that land immediately, and the remaining land will soon be acquired."

The RHD is implementing a separate Tk 7,982-crore project to acquire land and shift utility lines to facilitate the expansion of both the Dhaka-Sylhet and Sylhet-Tamabil highways.



A car appears to plunge into a water-filled crater on Dhaka-Chattogram highway near the capital's Jatrahari. The road has been posing risks to motorists for months, but the bouts of rain over the last few days have made driving even trickier. The pristine road on the left is the approach road to the tolled Mayor Mohammad Hanif Flyover.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

France riots less intense on 5th night

Fewer arrests made; mayor's home rammed, wife injured

REUTERS, Paris

Rioting across France was less intense overnight, the interior ministry said yesterday, as tens of thousands of police were deployed following the funeral of a teenager of North African descent whose shooting by police has sparked nationwide unrest.

However, rioters ram-raided the home of a Paris suburb mayor, set the car alight, and launched fireworks at his wife and young children.

Vincent Jeanbrun, 39, the centre-right mayor of the southern suburb of L'Hay-les-Roses, was at the town hall when his house was attacked with his wife Melanie and children asleep inside.

The aggressors drove their vehicle at the suburban house but were halted by a low wall ringing the property's outdoor terrace, the local public prosecutor said. They then torched their vehicle.

As Jeanbrun's wife and children, aged 5 and 7, took flight through the back yard, they were targeted with fireworks. Jeanbrun told Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne his wife had had surgery to a broken leg and faced a three-month rehabilitation.

"While attempting to shield them and fleeing the attackers, my wife and one of my

children were hurt," the mayor said.

The local prosecutor told reporters that an investigation into attempted murder had been opened. No suspects have been arrested.

Elsewhere, President Emmanuel Macron postponed a state visit to Germany that was due to begin yesterday to handle the worst crisis for his leadership since the "Yellow Vest" protests paralysed much of France in late 2018.

He was due to meet his ministers last day evening to review the situation, the presidency said, after the prime minister said on Friday the government's "crisis unit" had been activated until further notice.

Nahel's death has fed longstanding complaints of police violence and systemic racism inside law enforcement agencies from rights groups and within the low-income, racially mixed suburbs that ring major cities in France. Authorities deny that.

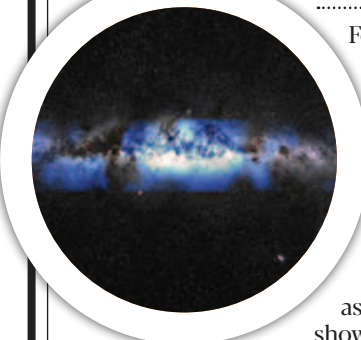
An officer has acknowledged firing a lethal shot, the prosecutor says, telling investigators he wanted to prevent a police chase, fearing he or another person would be hurt. The officer involved is under investigation for voluntary homicide.

The interior ministry said 719 people were arrested last night, fewer than the 1,311 the previous night and 875 on Thursday night.

The interior ministry said 719 people were arrested last night, fewer than the 1,311 the previous night and 875 on Thursday night.

'Ghostly' new portrait of Milky Way revealed

CNN ONLINE



For the first time, astronomers have assembled a glowing portrait of the Milky Way galaxy using cosmic "ghost particles" detected by a telescope embedded in Antarctica's ice.

Over the years, astronomers have showcased stunning images of the Milky Way through

electromagnetic radiation from visible light or radio waves. But this is a new perspective of our galaxy based on particles of matter, rather than energy.

The so-called ghost particles are neutrinos. These tiny, high-energy cosmic particles are often referred to as ghostly because they are extremely vaporous and can pass through any kind of matter without changing.

The research was published Thursday in the journal Science.

"I remember saying, 'At this point in human history, we're the first ones to see our galaxy in anything other than light,'" said study coauthor Naoko Kurahashi Neilson, associate professor of physics at Drexel University, in a statement reflecting on when she and two doctoral students initially saw the image.

Country's first undersea pipeline now in service

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A 110km pipeline to transport crude oil and diesel from a deep-sea mooring, 16km off the Maheshkhali coast, to Eastern Refinery Ltd in Chattogram's Patenga has been commissioned yesterday.

After trial runs, the pipeline was commissioned at 9:00pm, said Md Lokman, Managing Director of Eastern Refinery Limited (ERL).

"We were able to connect the Single Point Mooring (SPM), the floating station of the pipeline, with the MT Horai ship, which has carried 82,000 tons of crude oil from Saudi Arabi, around 4:00pm, Md Lokman said.

With the commissioning of the country's first undersea pipeline, lighter vessels will no longer be required to unload petroleum products from large tankers and carry those to the refinery. This will save time and about Tk 800 crore a year, according to Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation.

Under the Single Point Mooring (SPM) project, two parallel pipelines have been installed -- one for crude oil and the other for diesel.

Md Lokman says the pipeline will cut transportation time by 8 days. It will also not affect unloading oil in bad weather.

According to the BPC, the pipes from the storage facility to the Eastern Refinery are 18 inches in diameter. About 65km of these are under the sea.

BPC, with the funding of the Exim Bank of China, has implemented the project at a cost of Tk 7,124 crore.



French police officers detain a demonstrator in Paris yesterday, five days after a 17-year-old boy was killed by police in Nanterre, a western suburb of Paris. French police arrested 1,311 people across the country during a fourth consecutive night of rioting over the killing of the teenager.

PHOTO: AFP

Govt to maintain austerity to limit expenses

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is continuing its austerity measures and the embargos on operational and development expenses remain almost the same as before for government, semi-government, and autonomous bodies.

The stance was taken last fiscal year amid strained foreign currency reserves, elevated global and domestic inflation, and continued jitters surrounding the Russia-Ukraine war.

In a circular yesterday, the finance ministry said government organisations can spend up to 75 percent of the allocation for electricity and up to 80 percent for fuel.

No vehicles, planes, helicopters, ships, or boats can be purchased by the government, semi-government, autonomous and statutory bodies, state-owned enterprises, financial institutions or under any development projects.

However, 10-year-old motor vehicles can be replaced under operational budget. Expenditure for land acquisition under operational budget will remain restricted but, like in the last fiscal, it will be relaxed for development projects, subject to finance division's approval.

The government restricts foreign trips under operational and development allocations. It will, however, not be applicable for studies under government and foreign financing. Training and inspections financed by foreign organisations and contractors will not be restricted.