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Digital debacle

Govt move to digitalise rural post offices falls flat, finds CAG audit

REJAU KARIM BYRON and MAHMUDUL HASAN

In 2012, the government took on a Tk 541 crore project to convert 8,500 post offices in rural areas to e-centres for the communities.

Six years after its completion, the project appears to have completely failed to achieve its objectives, according to a report of the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General of Bangladesh prepared by making in person visits to 900 such centres over a five-and-a-half-month period.

The Post e-Centre for Rural Community project aimed to deliver services including internet, e-governance, e-commerce, e-education, e-agriculture, faster disbursement of remittances and allowances.

"All these services had been mentioned in the development project proposal [DPP] only to get the project approval. The overall analysis shows that government funds had

been wasted ...," said the CAG report. No measures were taken to promote the services among the rural population; only photocopying and printing are done there.

Mustafa Jabbar, who has been serving as posts and telecom minister since December 2018, acknowledged the inadequate planning when the project was undertaken.

The initiatives that were taken before 2018 to establish digital post offices were without a proper plan, he told The Daily Star.

"So, we have set up a digital service design lab with the assistance of a2i and conducted a survey suggested by the lab. With the survey, we are trying to identify what type of services should the rural post offices offer."

A DPP is being prepared to digitalise the post offices, Jabbar added.

About Tk 380.68 crore was spent on



Water Development Board workers lining the Jamuna with geo bags -- made of woven polyester and polypropylene fabrics and filled with sand and/or soil to build shore-protection structures -- to stop river erosion at Chitulia village and beyond in Tangail's Bhuapur upazila. According to locals, erosion has been going on for around two months. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: SHEIKH ENAMUL HAQ

UNIVERSAL PENSION

Govt forms Nat'l Pension Authority

Scheme likely to be launched by August

REJAU KARIM BYRON

The government has formed a two-member National Pension Authority (NPA) to execute the Universal Pension Scheme formulated to provide pension services for the common people.

Kabirul Ezdani Khan, additional secretary of the finance division, has been made the executive chairman of the NPA and Golam Mostofa, another additional secretary of the division, has been made the executive member. The Daily Star has learnt from people familiar with the proceedings.

The authority will initially begin its activities with them. The two will serve the NPA in an additional capacity. The scheme is likely to take off at the end of this month or next month. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is expected to inaugurate it.

To properly implement the scheme, several rules will be formulated under the relevant law.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

EU DELEGATION

A visit crucial to ensuring polls observers

PORIMOL PALMA

The assessment of the EU exploratory mission, which will visit Bangladesh for two weeks starting July 9, could determine the international acceptability of the next parliamentary election, analysts have said.

The EU is sending the mission to observe the pre-polls atmosphere, and the response will determine whether it would send a team to observe the election. The initiative, the first of this kind with regard to the upcoming polls, in turn would inspire other foreign countries and entities to follow suit -- which would ultimately mean stronger election monitoring.

EU Ambassador to Bangladesh Charles Whiteley said the six-member EU delegation will talk to all the stakeholders -- government, political parties, Election Commission, security officials, the civil society and media. It is an independent professional exercise and not a political EU mission.

"They [the delegates] like any observation mission, have to decide if it is feasible, useful and advisable to deploy a full EU observation mission," he told The Daily Star.

After the mission submits its report, the EU High Representative Josep Borrell will decide if the election observers will be coming to Bangladesh, he added.

M Humayun Kabir, president of Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI), said the EU did not send observers for 2018 polls and the international community was highly critical of the last two elections. Therefore, this election and the coming of the international observers is very important.

He added that international acceptability of the election is extremely important for the country, given the economic and diplomatic challenges in the post-LDC Bangladesh, especially in the changing global geopolitical environment following the Russia-Ukraine war.

Kabir further said trade facilities like the EU's GSP Plus, once the GSP is over, is partly dependent on a free and fair election.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Govt created atmosphere of 'fear, panic' by using DSA

Opposition MPs say in JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party and Gonoforum MPs in parliament yesterday came down heavily on the government for harassing people and journalists using the Digital Security Act and said that it has created an atmosphere of "fear and panic".

The MPs said this while taking part in a discussion on the "Agency to Innovate (A2i) Bill-2023".

The lawmakers said people and journalists are being abused as the law has been weaponised.

JP MP Pir Fazlur Rahman said the digital security law is being used to harass journalists. People are also being made victims and tortured for expressing their opinions. Influential quarters are using this law. People's right to freedom of speech is being taken away. This law needs to be amended urgently, if not repealed, he said.

Gonoforum MP Mokabbir Khan said, "If we cannot prevent the misuse of digital technology, the law will be of no use. Again, if the law is misused, the goal cannot be achieved. We saw this with the Digital Security Act ... Around 7,001 cases were filed under this law until January 2023. The journalist community has suffered the most due to this law."

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

NORTHERN DISTRICTS

Low-lying areas flooded as rivers swell up

STAR REPORT

Low-lying areas in several northern and northeastern districts are inundated as rivers continue to swell.

The Jamuna and the Padma rivers may continue to swell until Friday morning, according to a bulletin of the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) released at 9:00am yesterday.

The water the Teesta crossed the danger level yesterday morning, inundating villages in low-lying areas in Lalmonirhat. FFWC forecasts that the flood will not persist for long.

From 6:00am, Teesta water has been flowing 3cm above the danger level at Dalia Point in Lalmonirhat's Hatibandha upazila, officials said, adding that the Dharla was also swelling.

"The ongoing flood situation in the Sunamganj and Netrokona district may remain unchanged and the Dhalai river may cross danger level at Kamalganj point for a short period in the next 24 hours," the bulletin said.

Except for the Khowai, the Someswari and the Dhalai rivers, water levels of major rivers in the north-eastern region of the country are falling, and the trend may continue for 48 hours, said the bulletin.

"Teesta water is rising due to an onrush of water from upstream. All the 44 gates of the Teesta Barrage have been kept open to reduce the pressure of water from upstream," said Shunil Kumar,

executive engineer of Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB).

Abdar Hossain, a 64-year-old farmer in Khuniyagachh area of Lalmonirhat, said, "Many of our crop fields and seedbeds have gone under water."

In Moulvibazar's Kamalganj, homes of around 250 families got flooded as the Dhalai river submerged Chandipur, Uttar Alepur, Panishala, Kamalganj Thana Road, and Kamalganj Government High School.

"The Dhalai River may continue rising if it rains further," said Javed Iqbal, executive engineer of BWDB.

In Kurigram, water levels in the Brahmaputra, the Dudhkumar, the Gangadhar, the Teesta and the Dharla rivers are rising, officials said.

In Bogura's Sariakandi, officials said the Jamuna may inundate low-lying areas anytime.

Meanwhile, flood waters continued to recede in Sunamganj although the Surma river was still flowing above the danger level in Chhatak, said BWDB Executive Engineer Mamun Hawlader, adding that the situation is not likely to worsen in the district.

In Netrokona, food waters kept receding yesterday, even though the Someswari was still flowing above the danger level, officials said.

[Our correspondents from Lalmonirhat, Moulvibazar, Bogura, Sylhet and Mymensingh contributed to the report]



With patients continuously pouring in, the dengue ward of Mugda Medical College and Hospital has reached its bed capacity. As a result, patients are having to sleep and be treated on the floor. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

METRO RAIL

Test run from Agargaon to Motijheel in two days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Metro rail authorities will conduct a test run of the trains on the Agargaon-Motijheel section in a day or two (Friday or Saturday), according to officials.

"We will be able to say the exact date and time of the performance test of trains tomorrow [Thursday]. So far, our target is to start the test on Friday or Saturday," MAN Siddique, managing director of Dhaka Mass Transit Company Ltd, told The Daily Star last night.

"Currently, we are carrying out a physical verification of the rail track. We hope to complete it by Thursday evening. Then we will be able to

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

MORE NEWS	Inflation outpaces wage growth	Padma Bridge: automatic toll collection starts on trial basis	265 incidents of violence against women, children in June
	PAGE B1	PAGE 3	PAGE 5

LOGO CHANGE NOTIFICATION

In order to enhance individualised recognition and dissemination of the university's name and fame, and to further improve the overall brand image of the university, the logo has been adjusted as follows



From now on Uttara University will use the new logo and the old logo is gradually being phased out. Thanks for your long-term support and attention.

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SHAHIDUL MURDER

Will be watching the case carefully

Says US envoy Haas

UNB, Dhaka

The US has condemned the murder of labour leader Shahidul Islam and called on Bangladesh authorities to investigate the crime thoroughly and hold the perpetrators accountable.

US Ambassador to Bangladesh Peter Haas made the call yesterday.

Ambassador Haas visited the headquarters of the Bangladesh Garments and Industrial Workers Federation to express condolences over labour leader Shahidul Islam's death.

The US said it supports the rights of workers everywhere to organise and bargain collectively without fear of violence or retribution.

"We will be watching the case carefully to make sure that there is accountability," Haas said.

He said they hope that there will be a complete investigation into the murder and those responsible will be held accountable.

Shahidul was the president of the Gazipur unit of Bangladesh Garments and Industrial Workers Federation.

His colleagues alleged that local criminals attacked him for speaking in favour of clearing workers' arrears.



A platform of Kamalapur Railway Station full of people after an intercity train arrived yesterday. Eid holidaymakers are returning to the capital after celebrating the festival with their near and dear ones outside Dhaka.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Bogura's yogurt among 4 products gets GI tag

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

The Department of Patents, Deigns and Trademarks (DPDT) has granted Geographical Indication certificates to Chapainawabganj's Langra and Ashwina mangoes, Bogura's yogurt, and Sherpur's spaddy variety Tulsimala.

"GI certificates were granted to the four products last month. One more will be given the certificate this month," Md Zillur Rahman, deputy registrar of the DPDT, told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said Kachagolla of Natore, Black Bengal goat of Bangladesh, Tiler Khaja of Kustia, Rasmalai of Cumilla, Agar Attar and Agar Wood Chips of Moulvibazar, and Haribhanga mangoes of Rangpur will receive GI registration if there are no complaints about the issuance of certificates after publications of GI journals.

Zillur said they received applications from the respective districts about the four products and after scrutinising those, the DPDT published journals in April.

As no complaints were received after the publication of the journals, the applicants were granted the GI certificates after payment of registration fees.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

MANIPUR VIOLENCE

Indian security forces foil weapon loot attempt

One killed, several injured

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Indian security forces prevented an attempted loot of weapons by suspected armed militants from an army camp during a skirmish that left one person dead in Khangabok in Thoubal district of ethnic riot-hit Manipur state on Tuesday, ANI reported yesterday.

Quoting a statement by the Spear Corps of the Indian Army, ANI said while one individual involved in the attempted loot was killed, several others sustained injuries during the incident.

The Spear Corps took to Twitter and said, "An attempt to loot weapons from an India Reserve Battalion at Khangabok in Thoubal district of Manipur was successfully thwarted by security forces today. One rioter was killed while a few others were injured during the failed attempt."

According to the statement, the situation was brought under control by the deployment of additional units from the Assam Rifles and Rapid Action Force. The reinforcements successfully managed to address the roadblocks set up by a mob, thereby ensuring the restoration of normalcy.

It said the mob had set up roadblocks to prevent the movement of reinforcements. However, additional columns of Assam Rifles and Rapid Action Force were able to induct reinforcements and the situation was brought under control by "synergised efforts of security forces."

Meanwhile, nearly all schools remained shut in Manipur despite a government order to reopen them yesterday in a bid to restore normalcy.

Students, teachers and support staff did not show up at schools in the morning, said a state education department official. Four private schools opened but all government-run schools were still closed, he added.

"There is a sense of fear and insecurity among the people and hence we decided against sending our children to school," said Ibotombi Singh, a businessman from the state capital Imphal.

The state government, run by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's political party, had ordered schools to reopen from yesterday for children aged between five and 14 even as sporadic fighting between ethnic groups continued in the hilly state that borders Myanmar.

Food hoarders can be jailed for life

JS passes bill

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Food hoarders can be imprisoned for up to 14 years.

Keeping this provisions, a new law titled "Production, Storage, Transfer, Transportation, Supply, Distribution and Marketing of Food Products (Prevention of Prejudicial Activity) Bill, 2023," was passed in parliament yesterday.

Hoarding will be a non-bailable offence. Marketing of food products under fictitious names will also be consider a criminal offence.

Food Minister Sadhan Chandra Majumder placed the bill, which was passed by voice votes.

JP MP Kazi Firoz Rashid said, "It is a terrible law."

Anyone can be arrested under this law at any time. A festival of bribery will begin in the country. As a result of this law, fear will spread among the farmers of the country. Farmers often stock grains with the hope of getting better prices. They will also be affected by this law.

The food minister said it is easy to identify the real hoarders. There is no danger of enforcement of this law on farmers. This will be further clarified in the rules made under this act.

Mother, son stabbed to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cumilla

A homemaker and her eight-year-old son died after they were stabbed in their sleep at home in Cumilla's Chaudagram upazila early yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Nipa Akter, 27, wife of Anwar Hossain, an expatriate in Dubai, and their son Ali Ahsan Mujahid.

Nipa's father Jalal Ahmed alleged that Anwar had a longstanding dispute over land with his brother Mir Hossain. Mir's sons are behind the killings, he claimed.

Police detained Mir's two sons, including Mainul, from Pachora village in Chaudagram after talking to Nipa's family.

Jalal said they suspect that the killers entered Nipa's home and hid in the toilet sometime on Tuesday night after the mother and her son went to a relative's house around 9:00pm.

The killers stabbed the two around 2:30am. Hearing screams, neighbours rushed to the scene and took the two to the Chaudagram Upazila Health Complex where doctors declared Nipa dead, Jalal added.

Mujahid died on the way to a hospital in Dhaka.

The bodies were handed over to the victims' family members after autopsies at Cumilla Medical College morgue.

Man dies after being 'tortured, shot by BSF'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

A Bangladeshi man died on Tuesday night after allegedly being tortured and shot by the Indian Border Security Force along the Sukani border in Panchagarh's Tentulia upazila.

Sujan Rana, 30, was from Dangapara village in the upazila, said Officer-in-Charge of Tentulia Police Station Abu Sayed Chowdhury.

According to family members and locals, Sujan was shot by the BSF after being brutally tortured early Tuesday. He was left on the Bangladesh side in a critical condition, they added.

Locals rescued him and took him to a clinic. He died when he was being taken to Rangpur Medical College Hospital.

Thakurgaon journo fined under DSA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A Rajshahi court yesterday fined a Thakurgaon journalist Tk 1 lakh in a Digital Security Act case for defaming physically challenged people on Facebook.

In the verdict, judge Md Ziaur Rahman also said if the convict Abdul Latif Litu fails to pay the fine, he would have to serve three months in jail.

Litu works for Bangladesh Protidin.

On September 2021, Litu in a Facebook post addressed a physically challenged official without naming and used offensive and defamatory words against him.

Later, Md Zahidur Rahman, president of Rajshahi chapter of Badhon Protibondhi Shangstha, filed a case against him with the Cyber Tribunal under the DSA.

Govt created

FROM PAGE 1

He also said that in the last four and a half years, this law has been applied to suppress dissent and free thought or criticism of the ruling party. The freedom of expression of journalists has been severely curtailed due to this law. This law has given unlimited powers to the police, he added.

Mokabbir also mentioned the harassment of Prothom Alo journalist Samsuzzaman under this law.

"... The law minister is talking about amending it in the face of strong objections from civil society, human rights activists and journalists. Hopefully, the law minister will take an initiative in this regard quickly," he said.

AZI BILL

The Agency to Innovate (AZI) Bill 2023 was passed in parliament to form an agency to encourage innovation in the information technology sector.

The autonomous agency will be formed with a 15-member board of directors and the ICT minister will be the chairman of the board.

A visit crucial

FROM PAGE 1

US State Department Counsellor Derek Chollet, during his visit to Dhaka this February, said the "erosion of democracy" limits its ability to cooperate with any country, including Bangladesh.

On May 24, the US declared a policy saying those involved in vote rigging and intimidation will be denied US visa. Earlier in 2021, the Biden Administration imposed sanctions on RAB and some of its officials, while it also did not invite Bangladesh to the Democracy Summit.

The US and EU are the major destinations for Bangladesh's exports that bring home much-needed foreign currencies.

Humayun Kabir also said the controversies centring the last two elections have had negative implications for Bangladesh as a democracy, as well as in terms of good governance.

Digital debacle

FROM PAGE 1

purchasing desktops, laptops, photo printers, laser printers, scanners, modems, headphones, webcams, solar power systems, POS machines, finger vein machines, chairs and tables.

About 20 percent of the e-centres were never inaugurated, so the equipment there had never been used.

About Tk 18.83 crore was spent to purchase 8,450 computer tables, 8,450 computer chairs and 16,900 visitor chairs.

No furniture was found in 630 of the 900 centres visited by the CAG team.

"That means, 70 percent of furniture has been lost," the report said.

The CAG auditors also found Tk 7.81 crore was wasted by purchasing devices not required.

At almost every centre, the colour printers are falling apart due to lack of use as people are not aware of their availability at the e-centres.

Similarly, the 8,500 webcams were

purchased even though the laptops have built-in webcams. Scanners were purchased separately when photo printers could do the job.

"The webcams and scanners are left unused."

Some 500 external hard drives were purchased although the hard drives in computers had enough storage.

And due to the purchase of low-quality laptops, one or two devices were found damaged in every centre. Solar panels were damaged within a year of installation, according to the report.

But no such service delivery was observed, according to the report.

A total of 8,500 Teletalk modems had been purchased for the e-centres to provide internet services to rural communities. But those modems remained unused.

The e-centres were supposed to be manned by individuals with the view to turning them into small entrepreneurs.

But those manning the e-centres

were found unable to help rural people with services. They were also found to be involved in various other professions and are unable to give enough time to the e-centres.

The e-centres also failed to provide mobile banking and remittance services and safety net disbursement.

Under the project, 17,000 POS machines and 10,000 finger vein machines were purchased to provide more reliable and speedy disbursement of allowances under the social safety net.

Only one centre was found to be providing the allowance during the visit.

In its response, the audited organisation said no unnecessary devices were purchased and all devices that were purchased, following the approved DPP, are being used in the centres.

Besides, some of the e-centres could not be opened due to a lack of people to man them.

The CAG auditors did not accept the explanations.

Canada, allies take Iran to ICJ over downed jet

AFP, The Hague

Canada, Britain, Sweden and Ukraine have taken Iran to the International Court of Justice to seek damages for families of passengers on a jetliner downed by Tehran in 2020, the tribunal said yesterday.

The case at the UN's top court says Iran "violated a series of obligations" under a convention on civil aviation by shooting down Ukraine International Airlines flight PS752 after take-off from Tehran.

All 176 people on board were killed. Three days after the January 8, 2020

crash, Iran admitted that its military had targeted the Kyiv-bound Boeing 737-800 plane by mistake.

Canada, Britain, Sweden and Ukraine -- which had a number of citizens on board -- said last month they would go to the Hague-based court to seek reparations on behalf of victims' families.

Their filing at the tribunal says Iran breached a 1971 multilateral treaty on threats to civil aviation, and that attempts to seek binding arbitration with Iran had failed.

They asked the court to "order full reparation for all injury caused" and

to make Iran pay "full compensation to the applicants for the material and moral damages suffered by the victims and their families".

Iran should also return the belongings of the victims and publicly acknowledge its "internationally wrongful acts".

In June, Iran took Canada to the ICJ accusing Ottawa of allowing victims of alleged terror attacks to claim damages from Tehran.

Tehran's case claims that Ottawa, which listed the Islamic Republic as a sponsor of terrorism in 2012, had violated Iran's state immunity.

Govt forms Nat'l Pension Authority

FROM PAGE 1

One of the rules will pertain to how the beneficiaries will deposit instalments and register themselves with the authority.

Software is being developed for the smooth operation of the scheme.

Like savings certificates, beneficiaries of the universal pension scheme will be able to register themselves at banks. The scheme will initially be available through state-owned Sonali Bank.

The government is considering introducing four types of schemes: private sector jobholders, expatriate Bangladeshis, informal sector workers and the destitute.

For the destitute, the government might come up with a subsidy.

In January, the government enacted the Universal Pension Management Act, of 2023. There will be a 16-member governing body headed by the finance minister.

Secretaries of different ministries, the Bangladesh Bank governor, the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission chairman and the presidents of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce

& Industries, Bangladesh Employers Federation and Bangladesh Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry will be its members.

Under the proposed scheme, a beneficiary can enjoy pension benefits subject to the payment of a subscription fee up to the age of 60 if the person enrolls between 18 and 50 years of age.

Those who enrol after their 50th birthday will have to pay the subscription fee for at least 10 years.

If the pensioner dies before hitting 75, their nominee will be entitled to the pension.

If the subscriber dies before paying the subscription fee for at least 10 years, the deposited money will be returned to the nominee with the profit.

A subscriber will be able to withdraw a maximum of 50 percent of the deposited amount as a loan.

Contributions to the pension fund will be treated as investments and tax rebates can be availed against it. Besides, the amount received as a monthly pension will be exempted from income tax.

Test run from Agargaon to Motijheel

FROM PAGE 1

give you a fixed time of the performance test."

Last month, Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader announced that the metro rail route from Agargaon to Motijheel will be open to public from October this year -- two months ahead of the pre-announced schedule.

The Uttara-Agargaon section of the country's first metro-rail line, formally known as MRT Line 6, was opened in December last year.

Since then, the demand of the Agargaon-Motijheel section has increased as the major catchment area runs through Mirpur to Motijheel.

At that time, it was announced that the Agargaon-Motijheel section would open in December, while the Motijheel-Kamalapur one would open in June 2025.

But at a June 18 programme, Quader said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will inaugurate the Agargaon-Motijheel section in October.

At the programme, MAN Siddique gave details about the project's progress and preparation.

He said the metro rail's performance test on the Agargaon-Motijheel section will begin in July, followed by the integrity test in September.

Then, in October, they will conduct a passenger-free trial run before launching the formal operation, he added.

Till June this year, the section saw 95.20 percent progress, shows the DMTC monthly progress report.

The government is implementing the fast-track project to build the 21.26km elevated metro line, which will have 17 stations, from Uttara to Kamalapur at a cost of Tk 33,472 crore.

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Armed forces always stand by people: PM

STAR REPORT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said members of the armed forces always stand by the people at home and abroad alongside discharging their professional duties.

The premier said this while addressing a programme marking the 48th founding anniversary of President Guard Regiment (PGR) at its headquarters in Dhaka Cantonment, reports BSS.

The PM appreciated the members of the PGR for professionalism, dedication and dutifulness.

Earlier, the premier went around different tables and exchanged pleasantries with the PGR members after arriving at the venue.

She handed over gifts to the family members of the PGR personnel who lost their lives and sustained severe injuries while on duty, reports UNB.

PM's Security Affairs Adviser Major General (rtd) SEE PAGE 4 COL 7



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina signing the visitors' book at the President Guard Regiment headquarters in Dhaka Cantonment yesterday, marking the regiment's 48th founding anniversary. Chief of Army Staff General SM Shafiuddin Ahmed (left) and PGR Commander Brigadier General Mohammad Khaled Kamal accompanied her on the occasion.

PHOTO: PID

HIGHLIGHTING ACHIEVEMENTS AL to hold month- long events in Sept

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ahead of the upcoming national election, the ruling Awami League will conduct a month-long programme to highlight the government's "successes and achievements" in the last fifteen and a half years before people.

The decision was taken in a joint meeting held by AL's Dhaka city (north and south) units and its associate organisations at the party's Gullistan headquarters in the capital.

Programme schedule for the mourning month of August was also decided at the meeting, two AL central leaders told The Daily Star.

Wishing anonymity, an Awami League joint general secretary also said, "We will carry out our countrywide mass campaigns only after the month of mourning is over."

Besides, the ruling party leaders asked the presidents and general secretaries of its three associate fronts to immediately form their full-fledged committees.

Prior to the meeting, AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader said BNP is now busy with complaining to foreigners.

"The election is three or four months away... But the BNP and its like-minded parties are not going to the voters, instead they are looking at the foreigners... They are daydreaming," said Quader.

He said this while briefing reporters at the AL party office.

Mentionable, Awami League has been holding "counter programmes" for the last couple of months since BNP started its series of anti-government rallies from December 10 last year.

MJF condemns torture of house help Demands fair probe, punishment for perpetrators

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Manusher Jonno Foundation yesterday directed the authorities concerned to take legal action against perpetrators, following the torture of an 11-year-old house help in Sylhet.

The organisation, in a statement, called for an impartial investigation into the incident and demanded appropriate punishment for the accused.

According to the organisation, four more such cases occurred between January and May this year. All the victims were aged between 7 and 11 years.

Despite the identification of the perpetrators being evident, there is almost no instance of their conviction, the statement read.

MJF strongly urged SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

BOTCHED C-SECTION

HC asks Dr Mili to surrender in four weeks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday refused to grant anticipatory bail to Central Hospital's physician Begum Maksuda Farida Akhter Mili in a case filed on charge of negligence of duty during a C-section that led to the deaths of a newborn and her mother.

The newborn of Mahbuba Akter Akhi died while she was undergoing C-section in the hospital on June 10. Akhi, 25, who was taken to LabAid Hospital and had been on life support there, died on June 18.

The HC also ordered Maksuda to surrender before the chief metropolitan magistrate's court in Dhaka in four weeks.

The HC also asked the law enforcers not to harass or arrest her (Maksuda) during this time.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

COMBATING DENGUE

More proactive measures needed

Say health minister, DSCC mayor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As the number of dengue patients continues to rise rapidly, and fatalities soar, authorities are urging each other for more proactive measures.

Health Minister Zahid Maleque, addressing a programme yesterday, called upon all relevant authorities, including city corporations, to intensify efforts in eliminating the breeding grounds of Aedes mosquitoes.

"I would urge those responsible for mosquito control to enhance their activities as many [people] are dying; many are being infected. We have kept providing healthcare service; [but] hospitals are reaching capacity."

DSCC Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh, in another event, voiced his concerns and asked the DGHS to focus more on reducing mortality rates.

"The quality and scope of medical services should be increased more. The pre-treatment facilities should be ensured so that a patient does not go into critical condition. Only then the death rates will be reduced."

Meanwhile, the mounting number of dengue cases and fatalities remains a grave concern. According to DGHS, one dengue patient died while 584 were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning.

On Tuesday, the country witnessed the highest number of dengue deaths this year, with five fatalities. The total number of deaths in dengue rose to 62 while number of cases stands at 10,482.

Experts continue to urge the authorities to conduct drives identifying hot spots of Aedes mosquitoes as soon as possible.

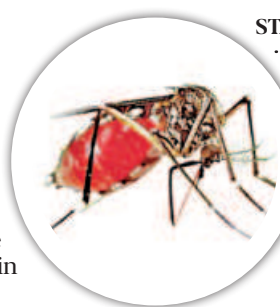
Meanwhile, the DSCC mayor urged people to assist them in combating dengue. "If you give us information, our mosquito control workers will reach there within 15 minutes."

Taposh acknowledged that dengue had emerged earlier than expected this year, even during scorching heat, and emphasised the need to expand dengue control activities.

Saying that dengue cannot be eradicated entirely, the mayor said, "If you compare the data and statistics with developed countries, then you will see that we are in a good position."

DNCC deploys drones

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Dhaka North City Corporation has deployed drones to identify mosquito breeding sites, especially on rooftop gardens of houses.

DNCC Chief

Executive Officer Selim Reza launched the survey programme in Mohammadpur area around 11:00am yesterday morning to identify accumulated water on rooftops.

He said a month-long programme to expedite the ongoing fight against Aedes mosquitoes will start on July 8.

Over the next four days, five separate drones will be utilised to survey the rooftops of every house.

Reza explained that due to the close proximity of houses in the city, conducting surveys by physically visiting each roof is not feasible.

"Instead, by utilising drones, it becomes possible to survey rooftops within an approximately two-kilometre area from a single location and the rooftops of houses across the entire city will be surveyed using the five drones," he added.

Curtailing EC's power will hinder democratic process Shujan on RPO amendment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The latest amendment to the Representation of the People Order, reducing the Election Commission's power to cancel polls, will "put fair elections and democratic process at risk", said Shushashoner Jonno Nagorik (Shujan) yesterday.

In a statement, the civil society platform also said the amendment passed by the parliament on Tuesday will make the commission "a powerless institution to conduct free and fair elections".

"So far, the Election Commission has not achieved the trust of all political parties and organisations. Through this amendment to the RPO, it will fall in more crisis," the statement read.

Expressing concern over the move, Shujan strongly "opposed" such initiatives and called on authorities to return the power of EC to stop voting at any time after announcement of election schedule.

Currently, the EC can postpone an election at any stage if it thinks that it will not be able to hold a lawful election due to irregularities or malpractices after announcement of election schedule.

The amended RPO stipulates that the EC can suspend the results of only those (one or more) polling stations where irregularities have been reported. It can cancel the results and hold new elections at those centres concerned following investigations.

Another provision of the amended RPO allows SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



Dayaganj City Corporation Market, which houses shops and residents, has been in a dilapidated condition for a long time. According to locals, the building needs urgent repairs but the authorities concerned continue to turn a blind eye to the situation. Inset, plasters have fallen off the building's ceiling in many places, which locals said have already injured a few.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

2 killed in Tangail road accident

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Two people were killed and four injured as a bus hit a CNG-run auto-rickshaw at Dhanbari in Tangail yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Halim, 32, and Wazed, 40, of Jamalpur's Sarishabari upazila.

The incident took place on the Jamalpur-Tangail highway at Chattarkandi around 7:30am when the Dhaka-bound bus hit the auto-rickshaw, leaving two passengers of the auto-rickshaw dead on the spot, said OC Idris Ali of Dhanbari Police Station.

Al Amin, medical officer of Dhanbari Upazila Health Complex, said three of the injured were sent to Tangail General Hospital for better treatment.



A cyclist covers his nose as he passes through a gust of dust on the Railway Foursore Road in Khulna city. The air pollution, due to the uncarpeted road, often blurs visibility of commuters in the area, escalating chance of accidents. PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

HC asks Dr Mili

FROM PAGE 3

The bench of Justice Md Zakir Hossain and Justice Biswajit Debnath passed the order following a petition filed by the accused physician seeking anticipatory bail in the case, Deputy Attorney General Sujit Chatterjee Bappi told The Daily Star.

Maksuda submitted the bail petition last month to the HC through her lawyers, saying that she was not present in the hospital on June 10 and was not involved in the procure of the C-section of Akhi.

She appeared before the HC bench during the hearing.

Akhi's husband Yakub Ali filed the case with Dhanmondi Police Station on June 14 accusing the

doctors and the hospital authorities of not providing proper treatment during the C-section.

A Dhaka court on June 15 sent two physicians - Shahzadi Mustarshida Sultana and Muna Shaha to jail in the case.

Curtailing

FROM PAGE 3

candidates to settle small loans and pay due telephone, gas, electricity, water, and other government service bills until the day before the submission of their nomination papers. Currently, these loans and bills can be settled seven days before filing of the nomination forms.

"The High Court has also empowered the Election Commission to cancel the election results until the gazette is published. We do not understand why this amendment was proposed by the Election Commission despite the HC verdict. Is it staged?", Shujan asked.

It said there was a provision to pay micro-loans and utility bills on the day before filing nomination papers. "This will encourage loan defaulters to participate in the elections," it added.

Meanwhile, Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Habibur Awal refused to make any comments regarding RPO amendment, saying, "It will not be wise to make any comment before the president gave his assent to the bills."

The 12th National Election is likely to be held in late December this year or early January next year. Representation of the People Order, 1972 is the law which regulates the election to the Jatiya Sangsad.

Automatic toll

FROM PAGE 3

"This programme has started on an experimental basis from Wednesday morning. It will make the toll collection on the Padma Bridge faster and easier. For now, this toll collection programme will continue on a trial basis. A registration booth for the smart toll system will be here. Those who want to register can register from here."

He also said, "There will be a touch booth. If anyone has a card, they can use the card. Every booth has cash and debit card facility."

An ETCS registration booth has been set up on the east side of Padma Bridge Uttar Police Station at the Mawa end, reports UNB.

MJF condemns

FROM PAGE 3

the authorities to take immediate measures to prevent abuse against children and ensure justice by effectively implementing the Domestic Workers Protection and Welfare Policy and the Children Act.

The victim, currently under treatment at the One-Stop Crisis Centre in Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital, was tortured over a year by a nurse of that hospital.

Why victim

FROM PAGE 5

He said Agroraj, son of Rupon Shikder and Joyanti Dey Purnima, was going back home from school at Napora Bazar in Banskhali area on February 16. A bus of S Alam Bus Service ran him over on the highway. Following the accident, his left leg had to be amputated.

At a press conference in Chattogram Press Club on April 12, Agroraj's mother said her son had to lose one of his legs after being hit by the bus, reports UNB.

Her husband is a carpenter and they have already spent Tk 7 lakh for the child's treatment and now they are unable to pay the rest, she said.

Later, they filed a petition with the HC seeking compensation.

Armed forces always

FROM PAGE 3

Tarique Ahmed Siddique, Chief of Army Staff General SM Shaifuddin Ahmed and President's Military Secretary Major General SM Salahuddin Islam were on the dais. PGR Commander Brigadier General Mohammad Khaled Kamal delivered the welcome speech.

'BRAIN DRAIN HARD TO STOP'

At a question answer session at parliament yesterday, the premier said stopping "brain drain" in this era of globalisation is a difficult task but her government has kept it at a "controlled level".

She said this in reply to a query from Awami League MP Habibur Rahman from Sylhet-3.

In a scripted answer,

the PM said due to the development of the country's ICT sector, along with the high-speed internet connection, people are now working comfortably.

She said the creation of employment in all sectors and establishment of new universities are preventing brain drain from Bangladesh.

Pointing that the prevention of brain drain is important to continue the momentum of development and modernisation, Hasina said skilled and innovative people usually go abroad due to lack of desired facilities and infrastructural environment here.

She said the government is making efforts to prevent it by creating a favourable environment.

NORTH SOUTH UNIVERSITY Center of Excellence in Higher Education

Amendment to tender notice for purchasing email account and cloud storage capacity for NSU against tender no. NSU/22-23-T13.

- A.** Interested bidders may collect schedule of tender from South east Bank Ltd. Bashundhara Branch, Dhaka from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on all working days till **July 19, 2023** instead of July 11, 2023.
- B.** The sealed offer must be submitted on **July 20, 2023** by 2.15 p.m. instead of July 12, 2023.

Director, Internal Affairs
NORTH SOUTH UNIVERSITY
Bashundhara, Dhaka-1229
Phone : +88-02-55668200, Ext. 1204, Fax: +88-02-55668202
E-mail to: procurement@northsouth.edu, www.northsouth.edu

RFP Ref. No.: LRPS-BAN-2023-9183859

Request for Proposal (RFP): To establish Long Term Arrangement (LTA) for both corrective and preventive maintenance services for UCC Units, WIC rooms and RTMD installed for vaccine storage at district levels initially for 2 years with a provision to extend for 1 year.

UNICEF Bangladesh is inviting interested companies with a strong record and credibility of providing the above-required service. To receive the detailed scope of work and procedure to submit the bid response, please email to supplybangladesh@unicef.org

The deadline to submit the proposal is **Monday, 31 July 2023; Time: 11:00 Hrs.**

Please note UNICEF does not charge any fee at any stage of the solicitation process.

www.unicef.org/bangladesh

unicef for every child



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

NOTICE OF INVITING QUOTATION

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

Items Description	Price of the tender document	Sale start date	Sale end date	Date and time for Tender Submission
Supply, installation, implementation & configuration of CISCO APIC Controllers, CISCO ISE (Identity Services Engine), CISCO Distribution Switches and CISCO Floor Access Switches to NCC Bank Limited at NCC Bank Data Center (DC) and Near Data Center (NDC).	Tk. 5,000/- (Five Thousand) only in the form of Payment Order (non-refundable) favoring National Credit and Commerce Bank Limited by any scheduled bank of Bangladesh	July 06, 2023	July 20, 2023	July 24, 2023 on/before 2:00 PM

The schedule containing detailed Terms & Conditions may be collected from the Common Services Division, Level-5, NCC Bank Ltd. Head Office, Dhaka and submit the same under sealed envelope to the Tender Box placed at Common Services Division (CSD). Manipulation or any kind of unusual approach or failure to submit offer within the stipulated time frame will be treated as "Disqualified" for the bidding. Tender will be opened on July 24, 2023 at 2:30 PM in presence of the bidders or their representatives (if any). The Bank authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposal without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Head of Common Services Division

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলীর কার্যালয়, সওজ
সড়ক বিভাগ, দিনাজপুর
টেলিফোন ও ফ্যাক্স নং-০৫৩১-৬৫১৪১
ই-মেইল: rhddin@gmail.com

স্মারক নং-৩৫.০১.২৭৬৪.৪১৩.৩৮.০১৯.২৩.১১৯৮

তারিখ: ৪/৭/২০২৩খ্রি

সীমিত দরপত্র পদ্ধতিতে ঠিকাদার তালিকাভুক্ত/লাইসেন্স নবায়ন বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, সড়ক বিভাগ, দিনাজপুর কর্তৃক পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা-২০০৮ এর আলোকে সড়ক ও জনপথ অধিদপ্তরের পরিচালন (রাজস্ব) বাজেটের আওতায় সীমিত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি প্রয়োগের মাধ্যমে প্রতিক্ষেত্রে ৫০.০০ (পঞ্চাশ) লক্ষ টাকা পর্যন্ত প্রাক্কলিত মূল্যের অভ্যন্তরীণ কার্য (NCT-Works) সম্পাদনের লক্ষ্যে ২০২৩-২০২৪ অর্থবছরের জন্য ঠিকাদার তালিকাভুক্ত/নবায়ন করা হবে। সিপিটিইউ কর্তৃক নির্ধারিত আবেদন ফরম অত্র দপ্তর হতে আগামী ১৮/০৭/২০২৩খ্রি হতে ২৭/০৯/২০২৩খ্রি পর্যন্ত অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে সরবরাহ করা হবে। ১০০০.০০ (এক হাজার) টাকার অফেরতযোগ্য পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/চালান নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, সড়ক বিভাগ, দিনাজপুর অনুকূলে জমা প্রদান করে অথবা মানি রিসিটের মাধ্যমে ১০০০.০০ (এক হাজার) টাকা পরিশোধ করে আশ্রয়ী ব্যক্তি/প্রতিষ্ঠান নির্ধারিত আবেদনপত্র (ডকুমেন্ট) সংগ্রহ করতে পারবেন। নির্ধারিত আবেদনপত্র (ডকুমেন্ট) সঠিকভাবে পূরণপূর্বক প্রয়োজনীয় কাগজপত্রসহ আগামী ৩১ আগষ্ট '২০২৩খ্রি তারিখ বিকাল ৫.০০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে অত্র দপ্তরে জমা প্রদান করতে হবে। সীমিত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি প্রয়োগের ক্ষেত্রে পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা-২০০৮ এর বিধি ৬৩ অনুসরণযোগ্য এবং এ তালিকাভুক্তকরণ দরপত্র আহ্বান/কাজ প্রদানের নিশ্চয়তা বিধান করে না।

উল্লেখ্য যে, ইতপূর্বে অত্র দপ্তরের তালিকাভুক্ত ঠিকাদারগণ ২০২৩-২০২৪ অর্থবছরে লাইসেন্স নবায়ন ফি বাবদ টাকা-২,০০০/- (টাকা দুই হাজার মাত্র)+১৫% ভ্যাটসহ বিনা জরিমানায় আগামী ২৭/০৯/২০২৩খ্রি তারিখের মধ্যে অত্র দপ্তরে জমাপূর্বক লাইসেন্স নবায়ন করার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হল।

৪/৭/২০২৩

নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, সওজ
সড়ক বিভাগ, দিনাজপুর

জিডি-১০৭৭

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

"শেখ হাসিনার নির্দেশ
জনস্বাস্থ্য সচিব বাংলাদেশ"

Office of the Conservator of Forests

Social Forest Circle, Bogura

Request for Expression of Interest (EOI) for Selection of Consulting Firm

01. Ministry/Division	Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
02. Agency	Bangladesh Forest Department.
03. Procuring entity name	Project Director & Conservator of Forests, Social Forest Circle, Bogura
04. Procuring entity district	Bogura
05. Expression of Interest for Selection of	Consulting firm for Feasibility Study for Forest Ecosystem Conservation and Eco-tourism Development of Greater Dinajpur and Rangpur Region
06. EOI Ref. No.	Package No: Service-01 (S01)
07. Date	26 June, 2023
08. Procurement method	Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS) (National)
09. Budget & source of funds	GoB
10. Project/program code	--
11. Project/program name	Feasibility Study for Forest Ecosystem Conservation and Eco-tourism Development of Greater Dinajpur and Rangpur Region.
12. EOI closing date & time	17 July, 2023, 4:00pm
13. Brief description of the assignment	Selection of consulting firm for Feasibility Study on "Feasibility Study for Forest Ecosystem Conservation and Eco-tourism Development of Greater Dinajpur and Rangpur Region". The assignment will include: 1. Conduct feasibility study to identify the environmental, physical and economic feasibility of Forest Ecosystem Conservation and Eco-tourism Development activities in Greater Dinajpur and Rangpur Region. 2. This includes assessment of existing facilities of detail feasibility study for Forest Ecosystem Conservation and Eco-tourism Development of Greater Dinajpur and Rangpur Region and subsequent preparation of preliminary design, cost estimation etc. 3. The consulting firm will consider the following issues during feasibility study: (a) Document the existing management practices of Social Forest Division, Dinajpur and Social Forest Division, Rangpur. (b) Document eco-tourism facilities in Greater Dinajpur and Rangpur Region. 4. Other relevant services mentioned in the Terms of Reference (TOR). 5. Assess the feasibility of Forest Ecosystem Conservation and Eco-tourism Development activities in Greater Dinajpur and Rangpur Region with special preference to socio-economic activities such as poverty alleviation of local people, employment generation etc. (c) Prepare appropriate/suitable designs for the development of eco-tourism related infrastructures based on feasibility study; (d) Assess the financial requirements and environmental impact of infrastructure development; (e) Prepare DPP for Forest Ecosystem Conservation and Eco-tourism Development project.
14. Experiences, resources and delivery capacity required	Interested consulting firm must fulfill the following qualification, experience and requirements on which the EOI will be evaluated (Based on shortlisting Criteria): ● The Consulting Firm should have updated valid registration from the Concerned Authorities as Proprietorship/Partnership/Private Limited Company. ● At least 05 (Five) years of working experience with detailed lists of similar works as Consulting Firm related to design, documentation, feasibility study and preparation of DPP. ● At least one similar nature (Related with Forest Ecosystem Conservation/Eco-tourism Development) of work carried out within last three financial years and the project cost is not less than 01 (one) crore in a single work-order in any government, semi-government, autonomous or reputed private organization at national/international level. ● Firm should have adequate manpower and experts with experience and laboratory facilities with necessary equipment. ● The Firm(s) must have the sufficient amount of liquid assets i.e. working capacity of credit line(s) supported by competent document. Bank Statement for last six months/bank solvency certificate. ● The firm must have up-to-date Audit report of previous 3 (three) years. The Firm must have submitted yearly turnover report documents. ● Up-to-date trade license, VAT and IT certificates. The interested consulting firm must be able to make available the following professionals: Team Leader, Forestry expert, Civil Engineer, Architect, Mechanical Engineer, Environmental Study/EIA Specialist, Sociologist/Socioeconomic assessment specialist, Hydrologist, DPP Consultant (FS Report with Project Preparation works), Economist, Junior Consultant (Civil Engineering), Junior Consultant (FS Report with Project Preparation work), Landscape Designer, GIS Specialist, Surveyor. ● Key and Non-Experts will not be evaluated at the shortlisting stage.
15. Other information	● The firm will be selected in accordance with the rule and regulation of the Public Procurement Act, 2006 and Public Procurement Rules, 2008 and these will be considered as parts and parcel of terms & conditions and Contract. JVCA is allowed as per PPA-2006 & PPR-2008. But all the firms must be Bangladeshi firms. In the case of a Joint venture, all the partners shall be liable jointly and severally for the entire contract. It is preferable to limit the maximum number of firms within 3 (three) in an association including the Lead firm. ● Interested firm(s) should obtain detailed TOR and 'prescribed form' from the website of Social Forest Circle, Bogura (http://forest.raishahidiv.gov.bd), Bangladesh Forest Department (http://www.bforest.gov.bd), CPTU (https://cptu.gov.bd), further information (if required) from the office of the undersigned from 9:00am to 3:00pm (except holidays); ● Interested firms should provide the necessary documents that will attest that they are qualified to perform the services. Firms will have to submit 1 (one) original and 1 (one) copy of EOIs (with a soft copy in a CDDVD) and forwarding letter in a sealed envelope labeled with "EOI for Selection of consulting firm of Feasibility Study for Forest Ecosystem Conservation and Eco-tourism Development of Greater Dinajpur and Rangpur Region".
16. Name of official inviting EOI	Mohammad Aminul Islam.
17. Designation of official inviting EOI	Project Director, Project on Feasibility Study for Forest Ecosystem Conservation and Eco-tourism Development of Greater Dinajpur and Rangpur Region.
18. Address of official inviting EOI	Office of the Conservator of Forests, Social Forest Circle, Bogura.
19. Contact details of official inviting EOI	Phone (Office): 02589900182, Mobile 01999006197; Email: cfbogura@gmail.com ; Web: (http://forest.raishahidiv.gov.bd), (http://www.bforest.gov.bd).
20. Special instruction	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept any or reject any/all applications without assigning any reason.

24/06/2023

Mohammad Aminul Islam
Project Director &
Conservator of Forests
Social Forest Circle, Bogura

GD-1074



Locals of Ranikhai union in Sylhet's Companiganj suffer as the road leading to Purbo Borni community clinic remains submerged following frequent rains. Many low-lying areas in some northern and northeastern districts have inundated as rivers in the region continue to swell. The photo was taken yesterday. PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, CHILDREN 265 incidents in June

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 265 incidents of violence against women and children were recorded in June this year, according to a Bangladesh Mahila Parishad report.

The number was 301 the month before. The report titled "Statistics of Violence Against Women and Girl Child: June, 2023" was made public at their website yesterday.

It is based on reports published in 13 national dailies. Around 29 females were subjected to physical abuse in June, up from 16 in the previous month.

The report further stated that 18 women were subjected to physical torture and violence. The number was 12 in the previous month.

During this period, one girl child had to endure similar torture. Besides, 50 women were killed and 13 (eight women and five children) were gangraped, two of whom died following the incidents.

The number of harassment cases was seven, down from 16 in the preceding month, two of whom died by suicide.

The report also recorded five attempted and one early marriage cases. Three similar attempts were recorded in May.

Besides, three females, including two adolescents, were victims of cybercrime, while seven suffered other kinds of abuse during this period.

LOSING LEG IN BUS ACCIDENT Why victim should not be compensated: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday issued a rule asking the respondents to explain why they should not be directed to give Tk 5 core as compensation to five-year-old Agroraj Shikder, who lost his left leg after a bus of S Alam Bus Service ran him over in Chattogram in February this year.

Secretaries at the ministries of home and finance; deputy commissioner of Chattogram; executive engineer of district roads and highway in Chattogram; managing director of S Alam Bus Service and others have been asked to respond to the rule within four weeks.

The bench of Justice SM Kuddus Zaman and Justice AKM Rabiul Hassan issued the rule following a petition filed by the victim, said his lawyer Tusar Roy.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Taking Tk 1.69cr bribe for police jobs

ACC files case against SP, 6 others

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ACC yesterday filed a case against superintendent of police Subrata Kumar Halder and six others, accusing them of accepting bribes from job aspirants in hopes of securing police positions in Madaripur.

The case, filed by ACC Deputy Director Hafizul Islam with its integrated district office of Madaripur, sheds light on an incident that occurred in 2019 during Subrata's tenure as the SP of Madaripur.

Subarata currently provides basic training to newcomers at the Bangladesh Police Academy.

Other accused are suspended constables -- Nuruzzaman Sumon and Jahidul Islam, former medical assistant of Madaripur District

Hospital Pias Bala, former sub-inspector Golam Raman, and a civilian.

The police had issued a circular on May 28, 2019, to recruit 9,680 constables, with Madaripur having a circular for 54 constable positions.

Subrata headed a three-member committee responsible for the recruitment process. Out of 993 applicants, 364 passed the physical test, and the written examination took place on June 23, 2019.

A tip-off prompted authorities to intervene, leading to the recovery of approximately Tk 73.5 lakh, which had been given as bribes.

ACC found special symbols (-) at the bottom right corner of the first page of the exam papers belonging to 32 candidates.

These symbols indicated that

extra marks had been awarded specifically in the English segment of the answer sheets. Subrata prepared and evaluated the English segments.

His complicity was further established during a departmental enquiry conducted by the police.

The incident first came to fore when Tk 52 lakh was recovered by authorities from the residence of Golam Rahman.

During primary interrogation, the authorities found proof that Subrata's bodyguard Nuruzzaman, aided by Pias Bala and Jahidul, had collected Tk 1.69 crore from the aspirants.

One of the candidates later confessed that he paid Nuruzzaman Tk 10 lakh at the residence of Golam Rahman.

Investigations are underway to recover the remaining amount, said sources within ACC and police.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ
নৌ পুলিশ হেডকোয়ার্টার্স
পুলিশ প্রাজা কনকর্ড, টাওয়ার-১, ফ্লোর-১২, প্রট-২, সড়ক-১১৪, গুলশান-১, ঢাকা

পুনঃ উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

প্রচলিত পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট আইন ও বিধিমালা মোতাবেক ২০২৩-২০২৪ অর্থ সালে নৌ পুলিশ, ঢাকার খাদদ্রব্য সগ্রাহ (অর্থনৈতিক কোড-৩২৫৪১০২) যাতে চিনি সরবরাহের জন্য প্রকৃত যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতাসম্পন্ন ব্যবসায়ী/টিকাদার/সরবরাহকারী/প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হতে সীলমোহরকৃত খামে কাজের নাম উল্লেখপূর্বক প্রতিযোগিতামূলক উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পুনঃ আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

১. মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	স্বর্ণ মন্ত্রণালয়				
২. সংস্থা	বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ				
৩. দরপত্র সম্পাদনকারীর প্রধান	অতিরিক্ত আইজিপি নৌ পুলিশ, বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ, ঢাকা				
৪. কি কারণে দরপত্র আহ্বান	খাদদ্রব্য সগ্রাহ (অর্থনৈতিক কোড-৩২৫৪১০২) যাতে চিনি সরবরাহ				
৫. দরপত্রের সূত্র নং	নৌ পুলিশ স্মারক নং-নৌ/প্রশাসন (প্রকিউরমেন্ট)-১১৩৫/২০২৩-২৪/২০৩				
৬. তারিখ	০৫/০৭/২০২৩খ্রিঃ				
কাজের বিবরণঃ					
৭. দরপত্র পদ্ধতি	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র (OTM)				
অর্থের উৎসঃ					
৮. বাজেট ও অর্থনৈতিক বাত	রাজস্ব বাত (জিওবি), পুলিশ হেডকোয়ার্টার্স হতে গ্রান্ড বাজেট সাপেক্ষে				
তথ্যাদিঃ					
৯. দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশের তারিখ	০৬/০৭/২০২৩খ্রিঃ				
১০. দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ	১৬/০৭/২০২৩খ্রিঃ অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত (ছুটির দিন ব্যতীত)				
১১. দরপত্র জমা প্রদানের সর্বশেষ তারিখ ও সময়	১৭/০৭/২০২৩খ্রিঃ ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত				
১২. দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	১৭/০৭/২০২৩খ্রিঃ ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা				
অফিসের নাম ও ঠিকানাঃ					
১৩. দরপত্র ডকুমেন্ট/সিডিউল বিক্রয়কারী অফিস	১) পুলিশ সুপার, এ্যাডমিন এন্ড ফাইন্যান্স, নৌ পুলিশ, পুলিশ প্রাজা কনকর্ড, টাওয়ার-১, ফ্লোর-১২, গুলশান-১, ঢাকা ২) পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, ঢাকা জেলা।				
১৪. দরপত্র গ্রহণকারী অফিস	পুলিশ সুপার, এ্যাডমিন এন্ড ফাইন্যান্স, নৌ পুলিশ, পুলিশ প্রাজা কনকর্ড, টাওয়ার-১, ফ্লোর-১২, গুলশান-১, ঢাকা				
১৫. দরপত্র খোলার স্থান	পুলিশ সুপার, এ্যাডমিন এন্ড ফাইন্যান্স, নৌ পুলিশ, পুলিশ প্রাজা কনকর্ড, টাওয়ার-১, ফ্লোর-১২, গুলশান-১, ঢাকা				
১৬. প্রি-টেন্ডার সভার স্থান, তারিখ ও সময়	১৩/০৭/২০২৩খ্রিঃ বেলা ১১.০০ ঘটিকা, পুলিশ প্রাজা কনকর্ড, টাওয়ার-১, ফ্লোর-১২, গুলশান-১, ঢাকা				
দরপত্র প্রাপ্তি সম্পর্কিত তথ্যঃ					
১৭. দরপত্রের যোগ্যতা	১। হালনাগাদ ট্রেড লাইসেন্স ২। আয়কর সনদ ৩। ডাট রেজিস্ট্রেশন সনদ ৪। ব্যাংক সলভেন্সি সনদ ৫। অভিজ্ঞতা সনদপত্র ৬। নাগরিকত্ব সনদপত্র এবং অন্যান্য যোগ্যতা যা টেন্ডার ডকুমেন্ট/সিডিউল এ উল্লেখ আছে।				
১৮. খাতসমূহের বিবরণ					
ক্রম	আইটেম	পরিমাণ	দরপত্রের মূল্য (টাকা)	নিরাপত্তা জামানত (টাকা)	কাজ সম্পন্ন করার সময়
০১	চিনি সরবরাহ, ১ম কোয়ার্টার (অর্থনৈতিক কোড- ৩২৫৪১০২)	চাহিদা মোতাবেক	৮০০	৩০,০০০	কার্যাদেশ মোতাবেক
দরপত্র সম্পাদনকারীর বিবরণঃ					
১৯. দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার নাম	জনাব মাসুদা আক্তার				
২০. দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার পদবী	পুলিশ সুপার (এ্যাডমিন এন্ড ফাইন্যান্স), নৌ পুলিশ হেডকোয়ার্টার্স, ঢাকা				
২১. দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার ঠিকানা	পুলিশ প্রাজা কনকর্ড, টাওয়ার-১, ফ্লোর-১২, প্রট-২, সড়ক-১১৪, গুলশান-১, ঢাকা				
২২. দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার যোগাযোগের মাধ্যম	ফোন-০২-৪৮৮১১৬১৩, ফোন-০২-৫৫০৪৫৪০৬				
২৩. বিশেষ শর্তাবলীঃ					
ক) নির্দিষ্ট সময়ের পর আর কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ করা হবে না					
খ) করণ দশনো ব্যক্তিকে কর্তৃপক্ষ থেকে দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন					
গ) দরপত্র কার্যক্রম প্রচলিত পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট আইন ও বিধিমালা মোতাবেক পরিচালিত হবে					
ঘ) অনিবার্য কারণে যদি নির্দিষ্ট তারিখে দরপত্র খোলা না হয় তা হলে পরবর্তী কার্যদিবসে একই স্থান ও সময়ে দরপত্র উন্মুক্ত করা হবে					

Apologise for 1971 atrocities

Salman F Rahman asks Pakistan president

UNB, Dhaka

In a chance meeting with his old acquaintance Pakistan President Arif Alvi in Saudi Arabia after the hajj, Prime Minister's Private Industries and Investment Adviser Salman F Rahman relayed the message that Pakistan needs to apologise for the atrocities committed in 1971.

He conveyed the message to the president when they met in Madinah last Thursday, according to a press release from the adviser's office on Tuesday. This was after both had already tweeted about their encounter.

President Md Shahabuddin was also a part of the gathering.

"Had a pleasant meeting with Pakistan's President Arif Alvi... We last met when I was 12. This meeting reminded me of many childhood memories. I told him that an apology from Pakistan is needed for what happened in 1971 to improve relations between the two countries..." Salman tweeted on Monday.

Arif said he had a "good conversation" with Bangladesh president. Calling Salman a "childhood friend", he said, "This meeting of the two friends took place after 60 years."

PRAYER TIMING

JULY 6

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 4-10 12-45 5-00 6-55 8-17

JAMAAT 4-45 1-15 5-15 7-00 8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Bangladesh Police
Police Headquarters, Dhaka

Invitation for Local Tender

Memo No. 44.01.0000.431.31.002.2023-1638 Date: 05 July, 2023

Sealed tenders are hereby invited from the Manufacturers/Suppliers/Local Agents in their official letterhead pad for purchase of the following items for Bangladesh Police. Manufacturers/Suppliers/Local Agents must read and fill up the tender documents cautiously, so that the offered package complies with the tender documents. Conditional or alternative offer shall not be evaluated.

1. Ministry/Division	Ministry of Home Affairs.
2. Agency	Bangladesh Police, Police Headquarters, Dhaka.
3. Head of procuring entity name	Inspector General, Bangladesh Police.
4. Invitation for	Purchase of goods (Automobile Spare Parts).
5. Invitation Reference No.	Memo No-44.01.0000.431.31.002.2023/01 (2023-2024) FY.
6. Date	05 July, 2023.

KEY INFORMATION

7. Procurement method	Open Tender Method (OTM).
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FUNDING INFORMATION

8. Budget and source of fund	GOB (Revenue).
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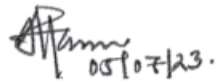
PARTICULAR INFORMATION

9. Tender package No.	Package 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 & 12.
10. Tender package name	Supply of Automobile Spare Parts.
11. Tender publication date	06 July, 2023.
12. Tender last selling date	02 August, 2023.
13. Tender closing date and time	03 August, 2023 at 12.00pm.
14. Tender opening date and time	03 August, 2023 at 12.30pm.
15. Name & address of the office(s)	Police Headquarters, Phoenix Road, Fulbaria, Dhaka-1000.
Selling tender document	MT & Workshop Section, Police Headquarters, Dhaka.
Receiving tender document	AIG (MT & Workshop), 3rd Floor, NCCOM Building, Police Headquarters, Dhaka.
Opening tender document	AIG (MT & Workshop), 3rd Floor, NCCOM Building, Police Headquarters, Dhaka.
16. Place/date/time of pre-tender meeting (optional)	18 July, 2023 at 15.00pm, 3rd Floor, NCCOM Building, Police Headquarters, Dhaka.
17. Eligibility of tenderer	(i) Up-to-date trade license (ii) Up-to-date income tax clearance certificate (iii) Up-to-date VAT registration certificate (iv) Other documents described in the tender document (must be submitted).
18. Brief description of goods	Automobile Spare Parts (Including Tyre & Battery).

Package No.	Description of spare parts/goods	Price of tender document	Tender security amount in (BDT)	Completion time
(1)	Spare Parts of Mitsubishi Pajero Jeep, L-300 Microbus, L-200 Pick-up, Fuso Rosa Minibus. (Lot 1 to 5)	1000/-	5,00,000/-	For the financial year 2023-2024 & till next supplier will be selected as per tender contract
(2)	Nissan Patrol Jeep, Mitsubishi Pajero Jeep (Patrol), Daihatsu Terios Jeep & Mitsubishi Out Lander Jeep. (Lot 1 to 5)	1000/-	5,00,000/-	
(3)	Spare Parts of Toyota V8 Land Cruiser Jeep, Fortuner Jeep, Hi-Ace Microbus, Hi-lux Pick-up, Dyna Truck. (Lot 1 to 5)	1000/-	5,00,000/-	
(4)	Spare Parts of Nissan Civilian Minibus, Urban Microbus, Nissan Pick-up, Isuzu Ambulance, Isuzu Truck, Isuzu Pick-up & Ford Pick-up. (Lot 1 to 5)	1000/-	2,00,000/-	
(5)	Spare Parts of Mitsubishi Galant Car, Lancer Car, Toyota GLI Car, Proton Car, Nissan Car & Hyundai Sonata Car. (Lot 1 to 5)	1000/-	2,00,000/-	
(6)	Spare Parts of Tata Truck, Bus, Water & Fuel Tanker and Ashok Leyland Truck. (Lot 1 to 4)	1000/-	5,00,000/-	
(7)	Spare Parts of Fork Lift, Wrecker and Riot Van/Water Canon. (Lot 1 to 5)	1000/-	2,00,000/-	
(8)	Spare Parts of Yuejin Truck, Eicher Jumbo Truck, Taima Truck/Tanker, Kamaz Truck, Hyundai/veco Garbage & Sewerage Van. (Lot 1 to 5)	1000/-	2,00,000/-	
(9)	Tyre & Battery. (Lot 1 to 2)	1000/-	5,00,000/-	
(10)	Servicing & Vulcanizing, Welding, Tailoring, Electric & Auto Electric, Painting Goods & Items. (Lot 1 to 5)	1000/-	2,00,000/-	
(11)	Spare Parts of Armored Personnel Carrier (APC) & Crowd Control Vehicle. (Lot 1 to 5)	1000/-	10,00,000/-	
(12)	Spare Parts of Motorcycle. (Lot 1 to 5)	1000/-	2,00,000/-	

PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS

19. Name of official inviting tender	Md. Abu Hasan, BPM-Sheba.
20. Designation of the official inviting tender	AIG (MT & Workshop), Bangladesh Police.
21. Address of official inviting tender	AIG (MT & Workshop), Bangladesh Police, Police Headquarters, Dhaka.
22. Contact details of official inviting tender	Tel: 02-55101708, Email: aigmt_w@police.gov.bd
23. Important conditions:	
a.	Bangladesh Police will sign a framework agreement with successful tenderer(s) for supply of goods. Purchase order will depend on the demand of FPU Mission & PHQ's MT Section as well as the availability of budget.
b.	Tender will be evaluated on item basis.
c.	Other terms and conditions are mentioned in tender documents.
d.	The Procuring Entity reserves the right to reject all tenders or annul the tender proceeding any time without causing any reason.
e.	If it is not possible to receive or open the tender on the schedule date for any unavoidable circumstance, the same will be received/opened on the next working date at the same time and same venue.
f.	The procurement will be done according to the Public Procurement Act-2006 & Public Procurement Regulation-2008.



Md. Abu Hasan, BPM-Sheba
AIG (MT & Workshop)
For-Inspector General, Bangladesh Police
Police Headquarters, Dhaka
Tel: 02-55101708
E-mail: aigmt_w@police.gov.bd

GD-1075

Will release new album soon: Arnob

“Coke Studio is not about individuality; rather, it’s a collective effort to create good music. I have never believed in competition and always look to encourage participation.”

ASHLEY SHOFTORSHI SAMADDAR

Shayan Chowdhury Arnob, a popular name on the list of Bengali music lovers, has not failed when it comes to keeping up with his fans’ expectations.

In recent years, he has grown to be what many would call a magician, playing and experimenting with new tunes and beats, all of which trace back to the traditional roots of this subcontinent.

With his concert, *Magical Night* just around the corner, The Daily Star caught up with the musician to learn more about performances that are yet to reach his listeners in the upcoming days.

Let’s talk about your journey in Coke Studio Bangla. Where does the ‘Magic’ come from?

Coke Studio Bangla has always welcomed experimentation, and that is where the magic comes



PHOTOS: SHAHREAR KABIR HEEMEL

from. The journey so far has been very rewarding, I must admit, as trying out new things and making mistakes are two actions that leave us with a lot of new knowledge.

Trying out new combinations and fusing old roots with new branches is challenging. However, the thrill this challenge brings is intriguing and very empowering.

There are ups and downs in every chapter of life, and this journey is no different. But there is beauty when a bunch of musicians create chaotic harmony. And that’s what fuels the magic, I believe.

You will soon be performing in ‘Magical Night’, where you will be seen live alongside Anupam Roy, Taalpatar Shepai, Meghdol, and the famous Hatirpool Sessions. What should the audience expect from you today?

We have been rehearsing so that we don’t let down our listeners, but I also look to keep a special request segment where I will sing what my audience wants me to.

I really don’t want to disappoint them.

Should the audience gear up for more Arnob-Anupam collaboration?

Can’t really say. We had made plans before, but time was never in our favour, so nothing was made official. However, let’s see what this meeting at the concert leaves us with!

Give us a sneak-peek of what’s coming next on Coke Studio Bangla.

Well, the next track, will be another experimental number where two artistes from polarised musical images will bring forth

the fusion of a serious musical practice and pop.

Also, Coke Studio is not about individuality; rather, it’s a collective effort to create good music. I have never believed in competition and always look to encourage participation.

We all have our own different sounds and that’s fun, but together we can cater to a wider audience.

What other ventures are you currently working on?

I have been working on an album, for quite some time and hope to release it soon. It will comprise of 10 new tracks, mostly solos, with lyrics driven by celebrated poets.

However, I have something special in mind for this project, and hope the wait will be justified once it is released.



Pori Moni’s ‘Maa’ screening again



Pori Moni made headlines when she announced that she will be playing the role of mother in Aranyo Anawer’s movie *Maa*. The film was also premiered in Cannes, but unfortunately couldn’t run as much in theaters.

Fans who want to see the film again, can do so soon. From today till July 8, the film will be shown twice a day at the Bangladesh Shishu Academy auditorium, one at 5:30 PM and the other at 8 PM.

The tickets have been priced between BDT 200 and 250, available directly at the academy counter or can be purchased online in advance.

Aamir Khan and Rajkumar Hirani reunite after 10 years



A decade after their last collaboration, *PK*, noted actor Aamir Khan and famed director Rajkumar Hirani are back together for a new, untitled biopic. Previously, the duo had also collaborated on the Bollywood super-hit film *3 Idiots*, released in 2009.

According to media sources, Rajkumar Hirani has already shared the story of the new production—which is said to be a biopic—with Aamir Khan. Moreover, the two are expected to start working on the new film after the director wraps up his upcoming film, *Dunki*, starring Shah Rukh Khan and Taapsee Pannu.

COUNTRYWIDE

HABIGANJ LANDSLIDE

Lone makeshift bridge breaks down

MINTU DESHIWARA

Sudden collapse of a makeshift bamboo bridge over Satchhari Canal, connecting Tripura village with Habiganj’s Chunarughat upazila headquarters, due to landslide caused by flash flood has left several families of the village in immense sufferings.

Villagers said the makeshift bridge in the only means of communication for 22 indigenous families, who use the bridge frequently to go to their destinations including the upazila headquarters for different purposes.

Meanwhile, due to the sudden collapses of the bridge many residents of the village are now compelled to their destinations for their daily works by wading through the flood water, locals said.

During a visit to the area this correspondent saw all kinds of movement through the bridge has been completely snapped due to sudden collapse of the important bridge.

Local indigenous villagers said the makeshift bamboo bridge broke down and washed away on Tuesday due to onrush of water caused by continuous rainfall in the last couple of days.

Despite submitting written applications to different departments including the district administration,

nothing has been done so far to construct a permanent bridge over the canal, they alleged.

Besides, after the old bridge washed away last year, the upazila parishad built the recently collapse bamboo-made bridge to facilitate movement of members of the 22 families living in the village.

Locals said people living in the village started to face landslide since 2018 and one by one at least four families have lost their homesteads since then.

Chitta Debbarma, headman of the village, said houses of four family have already been washed away due to landslides caused by onrush of water in the last few years.

Last year, the old makeshift bridge collapsed due to sudden landslide, he said, adding that although the upazila administration later constructed this wooden-structured bamboo bridge, that too washed away on Tuesday.

Contacted, Chunarughat Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Siddhartha Bhowmik said they built the bamboo bridge at a cost of around Tk 2.5 lakh last year, but it collapsed again.

If the guide walls of the bridge are not constructed, it will collapse again, he said, adding that they have sent letter to the Water Development Board (WDB) to take necessary step in this regard.

Ex-Biman GM, 29 others charged in DSA case

FROM PAGE 12

helper Javed Hoassain and employees Harun Or Rashid and Jakir Hossain collected and sold the question paper. Employees Jahid Hasan and Somazu alias Sobahan distributed them, the charge sheet said.

The investigator also found the involvement of ground-handling equipment operators Mohsin Ali, Mizanur

Rahman, Faruque Hossain, Nazrul Islam, and Firoz Alam, scheduling supervisor Mahub Alam Sharif, security guard Ayyub Uddin, traffic helpers Al-Amin, Abdul Malek, and Alamgir Hossain, drivers Abdullah Sheikh and Sazzadul Islam, Biman employees Tapash Kumar Mondol, Biman Flight Catering Centre employee Sultan Hossain, Bangladesh Betar’s driver Faruk Hossain, and

individuals Murad Sheikh alias Mostafizur Rahman, Jewel Mia and Razib Mollah in the crime.

Among the 30 accused, Mahub Ali, Awlad, Jahangir, Masud, Jahid, Anamul, Harun, Mahfuzul, Somaju, Jakir and Javed are in jail and they have made

confessional statements before magistrates.

The 19 others, including Major Taiz, are absconding and the investigator, in the

charge sheet, appealed to the court to issue arrest warrants against them.

On October 21 last year, Biman was to hold a recruitment exam. The test was suspended around two hours prior to its start since the question paper had been leaked.

Following the incident, DB Sub-Inspector Shoriful Islam filed a case with Biman Bandar Police Station under the Digital

Security Act on October 26 that year.

Taiz was removed in January this year after his name surfaced in connection with the leak. He was sent back to Bangladesh Army.

In November last year, the national flag carrier submitted a report to the ministry pointing fingers at Taiz on several issues, including his involvement in the question paper leak.

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Planning Minister MA Mannan placed the bill in parliament, which was sent to the JS standing committee on the planning ministry for further scrutiny.

The JS watchdog was asked to submit its report to the House in 60 working days.

Yesterday, Bangladesh Public Procurement Authority Bill-2023 was

complexity, he added.

Another JP lawmaker Kazi Firoz Rashid said no ordinary businesspeople was able to work under the PPP. All those who are working under PPP initiatives are tycoons.

Responding to the lawmakers’ criticism, the liberation war affairs minister said, “We expected that the opposition would appreciate the fact that the power would lie with the government rather than with the PPP authority.

Instead, the lawmakers said that the authorities should be empowered and the government should be disempowered. This cannot happen in the parliamentary system.”

Mozammel said the amendment has been brought because no authority can be given the ultimate power or independence bypassing the government.

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“The clinic began operation in January. We applied for a licence and a team from the health directorate visited the clinic. We were waiting to get the licence, but it was taking time. Still, it was our fault that we were running the clinic without a licence as per the rule.”

Govt clips the PPP authority’s independence

FROM PAGE 12

sudden though the prime minister is the chairman of the PPP authority’s governing body.

Gonoforum lawmaker Mokabbir Khan said the bill would impose government’s control by reducing the power of the PPP authority.

“Now they [PPP authority] will need permission for making financial decisions.”

He said private investors would feel discouraged if this amendment is made.

The lawmaker said the largest investments under PPP initiatives were made in the power sector. Thousands of crores of taka are being looted from this sector in the name of capacity charge and a law like the Indemnity Act has been enacted to protect the looters, he alleged.

JP MP Pir Fazlur Rahman said the government’s control over the PPP authority would be increased through the amendment. This will increase the bureaucratic

complexity, he added.

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Afghans seal series

FROM PAGE 12

the supporters -- who had braved the inclement weather and stayed late to cheer on the Tigers -- disappointed.

With no scoreboard pressure, Bangladesh bowlers were unable to force any mistake from the Afghan batters, who were steady and patient in their chase. Star all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan gave the Tigers the breakthrough in the 16th over when he removed Gurbaz (22 off 45), but by that time the visitors had already assumed control of the game by adding 54

runs on the board. Zadran remained unbeaten on 41.

Earlier, on a bleak day for batters, skipper Tamim Iqbal (13 off 21) succumbed to Fazalhaq Farooqi, who has now taken the prized scalp of the Bangladesh captain on all the four occasions the two faced each other.

Towhid Hridoy stood out as the youngster notched his third fifty in his seventh ODI to help the Tigers avert humiliation. Hridoy’s 69-ball 51 was the only thing holding together the Tigers’ innings that lacked partnerships.

Pregnant woman dies

FROM PAGE 12

As the news spread in the neighbourhood, locals along with the victim’s family members started damaging the clinic’s premises.

Police then rushed to the spot and calmed the situation, Masud said, adding that no case had

been filed over the incident.

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This makeshift bridge over Satchhari Canal in Habiganj’s Chunarughat upazila collapses on Tuesday due to landslide caused by continuous rainfall in the last couple of days.

PHOTO: STAR

No final decision yet on grain deal

Says Russia; UN 'worried'; Moscow claims one killed, 41 hurt in east Ukraine attack

AGENCIES
Russia said yesterday that it has not taken a final decision about whether to extend the Ukraine grain deal which is due to expire on July 17.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters that no official decision had been announced yet on whether to renew the deal, which allows for the safe export of grain from Ukraine.

"We have not yet officially announced the decision, we will announce it in a timely manner," Peskov said. Russia has consistently said it sees no grounds to renew the agreement beyond July 17 because of obstacles to its own exports of grain and fertiliser. But Peskov said there was still time for the West to address those issues.

"There is still time to fulfil that part of the agreements that concerns our country. Until now, this part has not been completed, and, accordingly, at the moment, unfortunately, there are no particular grounds for extending this deal," he said.

Under the deal, Russia guaranteed the safety of grain ships heading to and from Ukrainian ports through waters it controls.

The United Nations said yesterday that it was "worried" about the survival of the grain exports deal for Ukraine, reports AFP.

"No doubt we are worried because the two agreements signed in Istanbul are very important for food security and for the developing countries in the global south," Rebeca Grynspan, head of the UN's trade and development agency UNCTAD, told reporters in Geneva.

Meanwhile, Russia said yesterday that one person was killed and another 41 injured, including two children, by Ukrainian fire in



the east Ukraine town of Makiivka, controlled by Russian forces.

Donetsk region has been partially occupied by Kremlin-backed separatists and its complete capture is Russia's primary military objective in Ukraine. But the territory is also the focus of Ukrainian counter-offensive launched several weeks ago.

"Forty-one people have been injured due to shelling, including two children. One person has died from their wounds," Vladislav Klyucharov, Russian-appointed head of the city's administration, said.



South Korean protesters hold a banner reading "We oppose the dumping of Japan's contaminated water into the sea" during a protest against Japan's plan to release treated Fukushima water, on a road near the Japanese embassy in Seoul yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

Iran maintains crackdowns

Says UN probe over Mahsa Amini protests

AFP, Geneva

Iran is still meting out harsh punishments on people suspected of involvement in mass protests, including "chilling" executions, a United Nations fact-finding mission said yesterday.

Iran was rocked by demonstrations sparked by the September 16 death of Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old Iranian Kurd who had been arrested for allegedly violating the strict dress rule for women based on Islamic sharia law.

At a special session in November, the UN Human Rights Council voted to create a high-level investigation into the deadly crackdown.

Reporting to the council, Sara Hossain, chair of the independent international fact-finding mission, said that 10 months on, the Amini family's "right to truth and justice remains unfulfilled".

"The lack of transparency around the investigations into her death is further evidenced by the arrest and continued detention of the two women journalists, Nilufar Hamed and Elahe Mohammadi, who first reported on the event," she added.

Iran has said that 22,000 people have been pardoned in connection with the protests — which "suggests that many more were detained or charged", Hossain said.

Myanmar SC hears Suu Kyi's appeals to cut jail term

REUTERS

Myanmar's Supreme Court yesterday heard the latest in a series of appeals by former leader Aung San Suu Kyi against a slew of convictions, a source familiar with the case said, as she seeks to reduce her 33 years of jail time. The 78-year-old Nobel peace laureate has been convicted of offences ranging from incitement and election fraud to corruption since the military arrested her during a February 2021 coup against her elected government. Representatives of Suu Kyi, who was not herself present, made arguments in court yesterday about her conviction for a breach of the official secrets act and electoral fraud, said a source who sought anonymity as the matter is sensitive. The court is expected to take up to two months to deliver its ruling.

Rain kills 15 in southwest China

REUTERS, Beijing

Torrential rain has killed 15 people in the southwestern Chinese city of Chongqing, media reported yesterday, as President Xi Jinping called for greater efforts to protect the public from extreme weather. Heavy downpours have unleashed devastating floods and deadly mudslides in recent weeks, while hail storms and unusually high temperatures, which many people suspect is the result of global warming, have brought misery to many parts of the country. In the city of Chongqing, floods have forced thousands from their homes, bridges have been destroyed, and homes and cars washed away.



Britain's Prince William, Catherine, Princess of Wales, King Charles III and Queen Camilla look at the Crown of Scotland during the National Service of Thanksgiving and Dedication for King Charles III and Queen Camilla, and the presentation of the Honours of Scotland, at St Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

Migration 'only option' for many in LatAm

Says WFP regional chief

AFP, Brussels

Many people in Latin America see migration as "the only option they have" after enduring successive crises of climate change, Covid and spiking food prices, the World Food Programme's head for the region told AFP.

"It's a hemispheric migration," the official for the United Nations organisation, Lola Castro, said in an interview in Brussels.

"People are transiting everywhere in the continent... all the way to the border with the US and Mexico, everywhere is affected by migration, and the governments are telling us 'What do we do with all these masses of people transiting?'"

The pressures, particularly food insecurity, prompted Castro to plead that Latin America "not be forgotten" when its leaders get together with EU counterparts in a joint summit in Brussels July 17-18. Haiti is of particular concern for the World Food Programme, mainly because of unchecked gangs, Castro said.

"The situation has deteriorated enormously," she said, adding that "there are 200 gangs and they have taken over the city of Port-au-Prince," Haiti's capital.

The danger they pose is preventing Haitians going to work or school or taking food to market, she said.

"It is really like a population taken hostage," she said.

Global temperature breaks record for second day: NOAA

AFP, Paris

Global average temperature leaped to a record high for the second day in a row yesterday, according to preliminary readings by US meteorologists.

The average daily air temperature on the Earth's surface reached 17.18 degrees Celsius (62.92 Fahrenheit), according to data compiled by an organisation attached to the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) yesterday.

That far outstripped even the previous day's record measurement, a fresh sign of the impact of climate change driven by the burning of fossil fuels.

The global average temperature reached 17 degrees Celsius for the first time on Monday, according to data from NOAA's National Centers for Environmental Prediction, whose records go back to 1979.

That topped the previous daily record of 16.92 Celsius dating to July 24, 2022.

For comparison, the world's average air temperature, which fluctuates between 12 Celsius and just under 17 Celsius on any given day over the year, averaged 16.2

degrees at the beginning of July from 1979 to 2000.

This reported record has yet to be corroborated by other measurements, but could be broken again as the northern hemisphere's summer begins.

The EU climate monitoring unit Copernicus confirmed in a statement to AFP yesterday that Monday had been the hottest day in its dataset going back to 1940.

It could not yet confirm the data for Tuesday.

The average global temperature typically continues to rise until the end of July or early August.

Even last month, average global temperatures were the warmest Copernicus had ever recorded for the start of June.

Temperatures are likely to rise even further above historical averages over the next year with the onset of an El Nino weather phenomenon in the Pacific Ocean, which the World Meteorological Organization confirmed on Monday is now underway.

In addition, human activity — mainly the burning of fossil fuels — is continuing to emit roughly 40 billion tonnes of planet-warming CO2 into the atmosphere every year.



Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Bangladesh Police
Police Headquarters, Dhaka

Invitation for Local Tender

Date: 05 July, 2023

Memo No. 44.01.0000.431.26.002.2023-1642

Sealed tenders are hereby invited from the qualified tenderer in their official letterhead pad for purchase of the following items for Bangladesh Police. Tenderer must read and fill up the tender documents cautiously, so that the offered package complies with the tender documents. Conditional or alternative offer shall not be evaluated.

1.	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Home Affairs/Bangladesh Police.
2.	Agency	Bangladesh Police, Police Headquarters, Dhaka.
3.	Head of procuring entity name	Inspector General, Bangladesh Police.
4.	Invitation for	Tender for Procurement of Service (Vehicle Repair and Maintenance work).
5.	Invitation Ref. No. & date	44.01.0000.431.26.002.2023/03 (2023-2024) FY Date-05 July, 2023.

KEY INFORMATION

6.	Procurement method	Open Tender Method (OTM).
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FUNDING INFORMATION

7.	Budget and source of funds	Revenue Budget of 2023-2024, GOB.
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PARTICULAR INFORMATION

8.	Tender package name & No.	Vehicle Repair and Maintenance Works.
9.	Tender publication date	06 July, 2023.
10.	Tender last selling date	19 July, 2023.
11.	Tender closing date and time	20 July, 2023 at 12.00pm.
12.	Tender opening date and time	20 July, 2023 at 12.30pm.
13.	Name & address of the office(s) selling, receiving and opening tender document	Police Headquarters, 6, Phoenix Road, Fulbaria, Dhaka-1000.
	Selling tender document	MT & Workshop Section, Police Headquarters, Dhaka.
	Receiving tender document	AIG (MT & Workshop), 4th Floor, NCCOM Building, Police Headquarters, Dhaka.
	Opening tender document	AIG (MT & Workshop), 4th Floor, NCCOM Building, Police Headquarters, Dhaka.
14.	Place/date/time of pre-tender meeting (optional)	17 July, 2023 at 15.00pm, 4th Floor, NCCOM Building, Police Headquarters, Dhaka.

INFORMATION FOR TENDERER

15.	Eligibility of tenderer	(i) Up-to-date trade license (ii) Up-to-date income tax clearance certificate (iii) Up-to-date VAT registration certificate (iv) Other documents described in the tender document (must be submitted).
16.	Brief description of service or works	Vehicle Repair and Maintenance.

17.	Package No.	Description of service	Price of tender document	Tender security amount (Tk.)	Completion time
	01	Jeep, Car, Microbus & Pickup Repair and Maintenance	1000.00	100000.00	For the financial year 2023-2024 & till next tenderer is selected as per tender contracts
	02	Bus, Minibus, Truck (1.5 to 5 ton) Repair and Maintenance	1000.00	100000.00	
	03	APC, Water Cannon, Crowd Control Vehicle, Wrecker, Fork Lift, Water/Fuel Tanker Repair and Maintenance	1000.00	100000.00	
	04	Motor cycle Repair and Maintenance	1000.00	100000.00	

PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS

18.	Name of official inviting tender	Md. Abu Hasan, BPM-Sheba.
19.	Designation of official inviting tender	AIG (MT & Workshop), Bangladesh Police, Police Headquarters, Dhaka.
20.	Address of official inviting tender	AIG (MT & Workshop), Bangladesh Police, Police Headquarters, Dhaka.
21.	Contact details of official inviting tender	Tel: 02-55101708, Email: aigmt_w@police.gov.bd
22.	(1) Suppliers will be selected on the basis of item wise (unit price) evaluation. (2) Selected tenderer will supply the service under a Frame Work Contract for required quantities. (3) The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason thereof. (4) Other conditions are mentioned at Tender Document. (5) The procurement will be done according to the Public Procurement Act-2006 & Public Procurement Regulation-2008.	

Md. Abu Hasan, BPM-Sheba
AIG (MT & Workshop)
For-Inspector General, Bangladesh Police
Police Headquarters, Dhaka
Tel: 02-55101708
E-mail: aigmt_w@police.gov.bd

GD-1076

Govt decision to curtail EC's power

A further blow to the possibility of elections being free and fair

The passing of the Representation of the People Order (Amendment) Bill, 2023 in parliament is an extremely worrying development. At a time when we are all looking forward to a free and fair election – which is presupposed by the independence of the Election Commission – the passage of the bill, which will reduce the power of the EC to cancel polls, will only dampen the possibility of it being free and fair. On the face of it, the message is obvious: the rule has been passed to restrain the EC.

Already as it exists through law and practice, the EC is hamstrung in many ways. For example, even though the law says that during elections, the administration is supposed to work under the EC, this is only on paper; in reality, it does not happen at all. The chief election commissioner himself has spoken about it. And it has been widely reported on and discussed as well. Now, the EC's hands have been further tied legally.

Specifically, there are two aspects in the amendment that are worrying. The first is the curtailment of the EC's power to suspend polls. The law minister has justified the move by saying that suspending polls in an entire constituency over disturbances in some polling stations is "undemocratic." But what happens if irregularities occur in the majority of polling centres? Will the EC have to stamp its approval just because voting could happen without irregularities in some centres? The amendment takes the same problem to the other extreme. Moreover, the law minister's claim seems to give the impression that the EC would just whimsically suspend polls. Surely, under ideal circumstances, the EC would suspend polls only if it deemed it absolutely necessary.

The second issue is the curtailment of the EC's mandate to suspend polls from during the election period – which is typically about 40 days from when the election schedule is announced to the election day – to only on the "polling day." So, from around 40 days, the EC's power to suspend polls has been reduced to only one day and that also only in the troubled centres. But what happens if large-scale irregularities happen before the officially declared election day, which has blatantly taken place before?

Again, these are clear indications that the bill has been passed to constrain the EC's operating capacity. Given the history of our elections and timidity of ECs and their commissioners, it has made the prospect of free and fair elections further improbable.

Resolve the dispute over MRT Line-5

RHD and DMTCL must work in coordination, give priority to public interest

We are concerned to learn about the dispute between the Roads and Highways Department (RHD) and the Dhaka Mass Transit Company Ltd (DMTCL) over the construction of a metro line on the Dhaka-Aricha route. Reportedly, the DMTCL is set to implement the 20km Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) Line-5 project (northern route) – which will connect Hemayetpur and Vatara via Gabtoli, Mirpur, and Gulshan – without considering the reservations raised by the RHD authorities. The RHD engineers fear that if the project is implemented with its current design, the Dhaka-Aricha highway may experience long tailbacks and increased road crashes. Moreover, it will also obstruct the future expansion plan of the highway conceived by the RHD. However, the metro rail authorities have claimed that they prepared the detailed design of the proposed line considering all technical aspects and the RHD's future plans about the highway. Such contradictions between the statements of the two agencies under the same ministry is problematic.

Reportedly, the RHD had raised their concerns about the project design back in 2021. At that time, they had particularly asked the DMTCL to bring some changes to the design of the route between Hemayetpur and Aminbazar, asking them to move the line either to the south or take the line underground. But the DMTCL authorities did not pay heed to the proposal. Such lack of coordination between the two agencies is unacceptable, and only reflects the lack of a comprehensive plan for the infrastructural development projects centring Dhaka and its adjacent areas, as transport expert have said.

Since the physical work of the Tk 41,239 crore project will start soon, we urge the RHD and DMTCL authorities to discuss the issues and bring the necessary changes to the design of the MRT Line-5 project. The road transport and bridges ministry should also give the two agencies the necessary directives in this regard. After all, what will be the point of building such a megaproject, spending thousands of crores of taka, if it only increases the chaos on this busy highway instead of improving road communication?



Rohingya children stand in a queue at a registration camp in Cox's Bazar.

FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

Has the ICC lost traction on Rohingya genocide case?

Dr CR Abrar is an academic with an interest in human rights issues.

Rezaur Rahman Lenin is an academic activist.

CR ABRAR and REZAUR RAHMAN LENIN

The resolution of the Rohingya crisis appears to have met a dead end. Quite predictably, yet another round of questionable repatriation efforts has stalled. With dwindling financial commitment, agencies tasked to look after the refugees are finding it extremely difficult to make ends meet. Squalid living conditions in camps compounded by restrictions on freedom of movement, reduced supply of rations, deteriorating law and order situation coupled with absence of education, skills development and work opportunities, and protracted uncertainty of repatriation have taken a huge toll on the refugees, both physically and psychologically. While some have resigned to such a reality, others, particularly the young ones, are looking for opportunities to escape the fenced camp life and Bhasan Char. Data from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) shows that in 2022 alone, more than 3,500 Rohingya tried to undertake perilous journeys through the Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea. This is a 360 percent increase from the previous year.

The Rohingya have been subjected to a slow burning genocide over the last 40 years, and despite being recognised as "the most persecuted minority in the world" by the UN, they have been largely forsaken by the international community that is essentially guided by economic and strategic interests while paying lip service to human rights principles and international law. The community's efforts to seek justice and accountability for the perpetrators of genocide and other state crimes appear to have hit a roadblock in recent times.

The International Criminal Court (ICC) is a court of last resort that investigates alleged war crimes, crimes against humanity and other grave offences when nations are unable or unwilling to do so. In an overall grim situation, the request of the last ICC prosecutor on the determination of the jurisdiction pursuant to the Rome Statute (in April 2018) and the subsequent ruling of the ICC's Pre-

Trial Chamber (in September 2018) that it has jurisdiction to hold the Myanmar government to account provided a glimmer of hope to the hapless Rohingya. The judges urged the prosecution not to delay in pursuing their task.

However, contrary to the hype that the ruling had generated among those who champion human rights, justice, accountability and the rule of law, the Rohingya genocide case appears to have taken a back seat in ICC priorities. The issue becomes evident if the treatment of the Rohingya case by the ICC is compared with the court's dealings with the Ukrainian case.

In the Ukrainian case on March 2, 2022, the chief prosecutor of the ICC announced the opening of an investigation of all "past and present allegations of war crimes, crimes against humanity or genocide" committed by Russia in the war in Ukraine, which had begun a week earlier. Days earlier, his office announced that it already had "a reasonable basis to believe crimes... had been committed." Not surprisingly, his move received strong international political support, with 39 countries having referred the Ukraine situation to the office of the prosecutor for investigation.

Within months, the European Commission launched a new project to support the investigation capacities of the ICC by committing 7.25 million euros. In particular, the resource "will help the ICC to scale up its investigation capacity to respond to the ongoing investigations into war crimes committed by Russia in Ukraine." Announcing the support, the high representative/vice-president of the European Commission reiterated, "the International Criminal Court's investigations are crucial to ensure accountability and justice for the heinous crimes committed in Ukraine."

In April 2022, Eurojust (the European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation) and ICC agreed to join forces and for the court to participate in the EU's Joint Investigation Team. The information on possible war crimes and crimes against humanity is currently being collected to enable investigation and adjudication by relevant actors in the future to ensure that those responsible for war crimes and other atrocities are held accountable. There are also moves to further scale up the office's data storage and processing infrastructure and to build up additional analytical and forensic capacity for new types of

evidence, including digital.

On March 17 this year, the ICC issued an arrest warrant against the Russian president and commissioner for children's rights, accusing them of being responsible for war crimes in Ukraine, including the unlawful deportation of children. Within a week, on March 23, the prosecutor general of Ukraine and the registrar of the ICC signed a cooperation agreement on establishing an ICC country office in Ukraine.

There is a stark difference in the ICC's treatment of the above case with that of the Rohingya genocide. While the apex global criminal court has demonstrated its interest and competence in engaging with Ukraine's case, it has exposed its apathy and indifference to the Rohingya case. This is obvious on the following counts:

First, within less than 18 months

Within less than 18 months of the opening of the investigation in Ukraine, the ICC was able to open a field office there, and there is already an arrest warrant. In contrast, nearly four years into the investigation in the Rohingya genocide case, there is no arrest warrant; there is not even a field office opened in Bangladesh.

of the opening of the investigation in Ukraine, the ICC was able to open a field office there, and there is already an arrest warrant. In contrast, nearly four years into the investigation in the Rohingya genocide case, there is no arrest warrant; there is not even a field office opened in Bangladesh.

Second, the new prosecutor is on record that accountability for crimes against/ affecting children is a "priority" to his office. The world is aware that many Rohingya children, including babies and infants, were victims of state crimes in Myanmar. Why, then, are they not a priority to the prosecutor as the Ukrainian children are? Do the Rohingya children not deserve justice?

Third, the prosecutor has called for friendly governments to send investigators, lawyers and military experts to help with the investigation

in Ukraine, and it has been reported that more than 40 experts have been seconded by EU states alone. In contrast, thus far, there is no information available on whether the prosecutor has made requests to governments to send personnel to help with the Rohingya genocide investigation. Can one, therefore, surmise that the Rohingya case is not being treated as a priority like the Ukrainian case?

Fourth, while the prosecutor deserves accolade for his efficiency in requesting an arrest warrant in the Ukrainian case within a relatively short time, he seems to be in no hurry to request an arrest warrant against the murderous Myanmar military leaders. Does he expect the Rohingya refugees to wait indefinitely in Bangladesh in atrocious and harmful conditions, with dwindling international support and an increasingly hostile environment?

Fifth, is the prosecutor cognisant of the facts that: a) rations are now below the international standard; b) camp people are subjected to physical threat and extortion; and c) sexual violence is rife in the camps?

Sixth, given the prosecutor's stated commitment to the rights of children, is he not concerned that: a) half a million Rohingya children are being denied even primary education; b) half a million children are being malnourished as their parents and caregivers are made dependent solely on ever decreasing rations; and c) half a million children are growing up in a place where murders, extortion, and sexual violence are rife and increasing?

Seventh, does the prosecutor share the view that construction of government buildings and settlements on Rohingya land, as well as the destruction of their villages, reveal the Myanmar government's ulterior motives and lack of sincerity in addressing the Rohingya question? Isn't he concerned that plans under consideration by the governments of Bangladesh and Myanmar to repatriate the Rohingya refugees from Cox's Bazar back to internment camps in Myanmar will undermine their rights and impair their security?

And finally, how will the prosecutor protect the witnesses who have spoken to his team when they are back in Myanmar, and how will the prosecutor bring those witnesses to The Hague to give their evidence in a trial?

Surely, the Rohingya deserve appropriate answers to all these important questions from the ICC.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send us your letters to letters@thedailystar.net

At the height of corruption

Corruption in Bangladesh has reached an unprecedented height. I remember seeing media reports of corrupt individuals stealing Tk 5-10 crore from the country's coffers not even 15-20 years ago. But nowadays, only the small fish among the corrupt are ever identified. And even then, we find out these small

fish have stolen thousands of crores of taka. Just imagine how much the big fish are stealing then. All the projects that are being implemented across the country, especially the development megaprojects, must be like gold mines for these corrupt people. Anyone remember the outrageously inflated

prices of pillows and curtains quoted by the authorities for the housing complex of Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant?

What is worse is that these people think of themselves as being above everyone else, as "elites." They are anything but that. In fact, they know their own ineptitude so well that they

cannot even muster up the courage to compete with others fairly in terms of ability, which is why they cheat. We, as a society, must develop a different mindset from them, and choose a different path to rid society of corruption.

Salva Jahan
Banani, Dhaka



ILLUSTRATION: BIPOLOB CHAKROBORTY

‘Nothing will change, everything will be managed’

GM Quader, chairman of Jatiya Party, the main opposition in parliament, discusses the upcoming general election, external pressure, politics and the internal feud in his party, in an exclusive interview with Rashidul Hasan of The Daily Star.

You recently said elections under the present government would not be free and fair. Why do you think so?

After resuming power following the last election, the government highly prioritised one issue: how to win the next polls. This is not unusual – every government wants it. But what they have done so far is not normal. They have politicised everything. They have selected people who are loyal to them to be appointed as returning officers, polling officers, superintendents of police, deputy commissioners, and other officials who will carry out the election activities. They have taken preparations to hold a staged and managed election in line with their strategy. Another thing they have done is not run the country in the traditional manner. They are following the course through which BAKSAL was formed. Usually, in a government, ruling party leaders join the government and serve the people and treat everyone equally, and the administration cooperates with them. In the BAKSAL system, the ruling party rules the country with its own people. These chosen people, be it in the law enforcement agencies or the defence sector, are talking in favour of the Awami League and chanting party slogans. In the present form of government, all decisions to run the country are made by the prime minister.

Besides, through amending the constitution, the ruling party has politicised different pillars of the state, such as parliament. The speaker [of parliament] talks and delivers speeches in the language of AL.

The lower courts are basically under the jurisdiction of the government. They are under the control of the prime minister through the president.

Thus far, the higher court has its own identity due to various reasons, although the government appoints its own people. The government took measures to control it through the 16th Amendment of the constitution, although this was not implemented later.

The rest of the constitutional posts do not have any impact in reality, and the way these posts are being filled are on a partisan basis.

The difference between BAKSAL and the present form of government is that anyone can be a member of BAKSAL.

All the organisations that are supposed to talk about the people and their rights have been taken under the control of AL and its leader. In reality, Awami League Plus has been formed, which is controlling everything in the country – including the elections and the Election Commission.

Therefore, I will say that there is no democracy in Bangladesh at present, if we define democracy to be a system of the people, by the people, for the people. Now, it is the government of AL Plus, by AL Plus, for AL Plus.

The opportunist section of our society is looting the country's wealth in various ways and syphoning it out of the country. This is only possible if the government has no accountability. This system has been put in place for this purpose.

I am not sure whether any big revolution will happen, but we think a government can be changed if a free and fair election is held. If that government wants to engage in any anti-people activity, people have the ability to change that government through their votes.

How is it possible, then, to hold a free and fair election in Bangladesh? According to the constitution, there will be a poll-time government under the incumbent prime minister.

As per the existing system, 100 percent of the power is vested in the prime minister. Therefore, keeping the prime minister in her post and changing all others, including the entire cabinet and parliament, won't bring any results. It is madness to expect that the prime minister will lose an election that will be held under her authority.

The electoral system will have to be out of the purview of the government's power. Back when Sheikh Hasina was the opposition leader, she had demanded to keep the caretaker system for good. But now, we need a new system.

Can you elaborate on this new system?

There may be various options regarding this new system. But I don't want to give away any details. We have some ideas. When we see some fruitful discussions taking place and the government showing interest, we will present our ideas.

Our prescribed system may not be 100 percent correct. We want to discuss it in a forum to find out the best way. And the government will have to join

either willfully or through persuasion or pressure. Until the government agrees, there is no point in sharing such ideas.

Are you talking about something like the caretaker government system?

No, a new system should be introduced in which the government won't be able to influence or control the electoral system.

Once, we fought for the caretaker government. But then we realised the caretaker government system had failed as it could be manipulated and corrupted, so we abandoned it.

We have a new proposal. But first, we believe the government will have to have the mindset of accepting such a proposal.

How would you evaluate the recently held city corporation elections? In most cases, Jatiya Party candidates did very poorly and even lost their security deposits in those elections. But you are also talking about contesting in all 300 constituencies.

If you want me to talk about this right now, I will say that this is not practical, our politics has been subjected to conspiracy many times and a division has been created among us. On different occasions, we were forced to work against our party decisions. Confusion was created among the people about the politics of our party. Our target now is to revamp and re-organise the party with a focus on the weak areas.

We want to do proper politics. Only then will the people be encouraged to join our party. And we will get quality candidates to contest the elections. We are hopeful in this regard.

How do you evaluate the US visa policy, and the letters from EU MPs and US Congressmen?

About the visa policy, I will say that if they seriously implement this, there will be an impact.

It is those loyal to the government who carry out various acts following the instruction of the government to amass illegal wealth. In most cases, they transfer that wealth to the Western world where their children are living and they, too, plan on living there at some stage. If they feel uncomfortable about doing that, many of them may keep away from carrying out the government's orders. Many won't be directly

involved. About the letters of US Congressmen and EU MPs, they have spoken in favour of Bangladesh and portrayed the real picture of the country. The people of Bangladesh will be benefited by these letters.

But isn't that tantamount to interference into the internal affairs of Bangladesh?

Those who are saying that are acknowledging their own fault. Why are those people taking this demand for a free and fair election in our country as a threat? Because they are afraid of getting in trouble if elections are free and fair.

Are you going to form an electoral alliance with the Awami League or BNP?

Election battles in Bangladesh will remain limited between the two big parties until the voting system is changed. And we will have to join one of them. Any third alliance apart from these two will not work here. Given this perspective, we will decide on this matter closer to the election. Until then, I think it is better to keep all the options open.

Internal feud in Jatiya Party, especially between you and Raushan Ershad, has been going on for years. Why is that?

It is not as though there is a division, so there is no question of resolving it. Raushan Ershad has time and again told me that she was not well and did not want to continue in politics. She understands and has told me that the party will not survive without me. The government is actually behind all this and Raushan herself is not doing anything. The government for a long time has been trying to make our party weak and create divisions. And such efforts are still going on. This is actually not benefiting the government; rather, it leads to losses for them.

In which direction is Bangladesh's politics heading?

It is on an uncertain path. This BAKSAL-like government system may continue for a long time as only they will win if the election is held in this manner. There will be no other party and politics in the country. Bangladesh is heading towards an entirely autocratic system. I think it is just not possible for us to create any momentum against it. The government has done two things very effectively: creating fear among the people so that they are afraid to speak up, and a lack of faith in the future. Nothing will change, everything will be the same, everything will be managed.



VISUAL: BRGFX/FREEPIK

Sharenting and how it violates our children's rights



Dr Md Mahmudul Hasan teaches English and postcolonial literature at International Islamic University Malaysia.

MD MAHMUDUL HASAN

The term "sharenting" is believed to have been coined in 2010. It is a portmanteau of (over)sharing and parenting and refers to the practice of parents posting photos and other information about their children on social media platforms. Though widespread and growing, this habit is highly controversial. Many scholars of social media argue that it risks children's long-term safety and may negatively affect the future relationship with their parents. However, the practice is defended on the grounds that sharenting is an "expression of parental pride" and a way of being happy and increasing happiness.

I am a father of three children, but I have never shared their photos, videos or current statuses on Facebook or other publicly accessible social media. In this respect, I belong to the minority group of social media consumers. However, that didn't stop photos of some of my children from appearing on my Facebook feed. Others "tagged" me while posting group photos that include my children. Thus, sadly, their images landed on my Facebook page.

The reason why I dissuaded myself from sharenting was instinctive and influenced by my personal taste. Now, in order to write this essay, I did some research, which vindicated and strengthened my confidence that the harms of sharenting greatly outweigh its benefits.

I believe that I don't have the right to flaunt photos or mementos of my children, and they aren't at the right age to give me their (informed) consent to do so. To me, it is all about online etiquette, respecting my children's privacy, protecting their rights and ensuring their security.

What parents usually share online about their children builds a data structure with which the latter may not be happy once they grow up. When we share information on social media

platforms, we are conscious of the fact that their owners may use it for commercial purposes. But underage children whose information their parents share on various sites are not aware of these commercial motives. Nor do they understand that owners of social media affordances are involved in data profiling and data trading. Perhaps there are (and/or will be) so many other pitfalls and (privacy) loopholes in social media use, about which we know hardly anything.

This leads us to the question that Linda Geddes asks in a *Guardian* (UK) article published on September 21, 2014, "But is it safe, or even ethical, to publish something about someone who can't give their consent? And as the business models of social networking sites change and digital technology develops, could these innocent snapshots someday come back and bite our children on the behind?"

The BBC essay "Sharenting' puts young at risk of online fraud" makes this clearer. Referring to a warning by Barclays Bank (UK), it says that sharenting "will account for two-thirds of identity fraud facing young people by the end of the next decade [2020s] and will cost £667m per year." According to Barclays, parents "fail to realise they are making their children 'fraud targets' in the future, by publishing so much personal information which will remain online."

Even if a particular piece of information is deleted, does deleting really erase that data from the archives of social media platforms? Arguably, deleting digital data does not delete anything.

What is more important to me is that children are human beings, not objects. They have their likes and dislikes, their predilections and prejudices. Parents are carers of their children, not owners. It is the children's right to decide what

information about themselves they would wish to see stored in metadata repositories; and they will do so once they reach the right age.

Most of us are aware of facial recognition technology (FRT) and its uses and abuses. By the time today's underage children become adults, such technology will likely be "far more sophisticated and widespread." Therefore, it will be unsurprising if the algorithm for data mining is advanced to such an extent that one photo of today's toddler will be enough for the ill-intentioned media owners or fraudsters to steal their identities or to compromise their privacy and security.

The fact of the matter is that, once a parent posts their children's photos (often even prenatal ultrasound images) or mementos on the internet, they immediately lose control of the digital footprint that is generated on systems and laid down in databases. The multitude of "likes" and "shares" that are placed beneath a status update may take it to places beyond our reach. It is not humanly possible to police all the recipients or to prevent them from forwarding it to others. It is foolish of us to expose ourselves to this peril. But to bring our children to such peril is more than foolishness – it is a violation of their rights and of the trust they place in us.

Let me cite another example. The UK's *Daily Mail* on March 11, 2014 ran a story on then UK Prime Minister David Cameron carrying his three-year-old daughter to childcare before rushing to the office to chair a cabinet meeting. Being a father myself, I was touched to see the human side of the prime minister as he was carrying his daughter on his shoulder and walking along the pavement of Whitehall in the morning.

The *Daily Mail* printed a full-page photo that demonstrates this very human side of the UK prime minister. But, while it ran the full-face photo of Cameron, it blurred the image of his daughter's face. This is because Cameron or the newspaper does not have the right to expose her identity to the public. Nor was she of the right age to make such a decision. I believe that was the reason why her face was not shown on the newspaper page.

Like Cameron's daughter, all children on Earth are entitled to this right to privacy, and we must respect it, be it offline or online.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

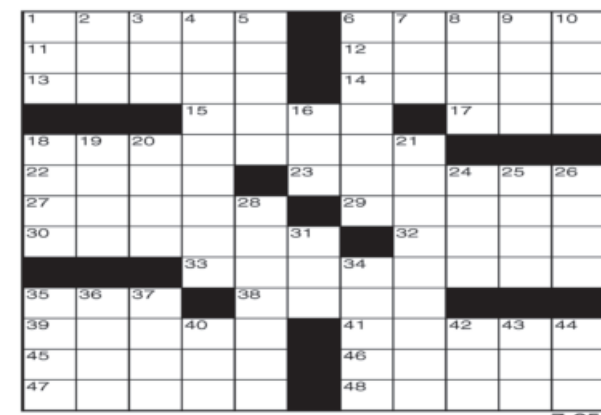
- 1 Learn to cope
- 6 Jazz dance
- 11 Feminine
- 12 Private teacher
- 13 Like draft beer
- 14 Banish
- 15 Calendar span
- 17 Pigpen
- 18 Displaying ostentatiously
- 22 Finished
- 23 Wall paintings
- 27 Does some modeling
- 29 Craze
- 30 Require as a result
- 32 Longings
- 33 Seattle team
- 35 Sandy color
- 38 Mix up
- 39 Throw out

- 41 – four (small cake)
- 45 Pago Pago setting
- 46 "Common Sense" writer
- 47 Easy runs
- 48 Japanese port

DOWN

- 1 In the past
- 2 Clamor
- 3 Gallery fill
- 4 Sites of swings and a sandbox
- 5 Used a keyboard
- 6 Breastbone
- 7 Groom's wear
- 8 Singer Redding
- 9 Shed leathers
- 10 Hunted animal
- 16 Target

- 18 Vatican VIP
- 19 Stratford's river
- 20 Take it easy
- 21 Unclear situations
- 24 Over again
- 25 Chain unit
- 26 Pert talk
- 28 Afternoon breaks
- 31 Back muscle, for short
- 34 Safari sight
- 35 Exam
- 36 Not quite closed
- 37 Nautilus captain
- 40 Barracks bed
- 42 Aunt, in Acapulco
- 43 Pen fill
- 44 Coffee alternative



YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

B	A	S	E	D	A	M	I	S	H
A	S	I	D	E	L	O	T	T	O
T	I	N	E	S	E	T	H	A	N
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M	A	L	T	A	N	I	E	C	E
S	N	E	A	D	G	A	T	E	S

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COVER ILLUSTRATION: SUE WICKINSON, COLLAGE: SARAH ANJUM BARI

FEATURE

'Plants of the Qur'an explores flora dating back 1400 years

JOHN DREW

The first mosque or masjid in Britain was built as long ago as 1761, some 30 years after George Sale's ground-breaking translation of the *Qur'an*. That it was built in Kew Gardens gives the game away. It was designed not as a place of worship but as one of a series of orientalist buildings gracing an extensive royal park.

So what shall we say about an exhibition just opened at Kew Gardens to celebrate the launch of an illustrated book, *Plants of the Qur'an* (Kew Publishing, 2023)? Does it seem strange that a sacred book is being studied for what it can tell us about plant life 1400—and more—years ago?

Dr Shahina Ghazanfar, the author of a series of books on the flora of the Middle East who compiled this compendium, explains: "This is not a religious book but about history and culture. It promotes the pleasure of research and learning, I hope as much for my readers as for myself".

Dr Ghazanfar's researches, part of a long tradition that has sought to elucidate the significance of certain plants named within sacred texts, have been illustrated by Sue Wickison, whose watercolour illustrations feature in the special exhibition.

Both botanists have not only scoured Kew but have traversed the deserts of the Middle East as part of their archaeobotanical research. It has not always been easy to identify which particular plants are those referred to in the sacred texts but they have been able to correct many previous erroneous identifications.

There are some 20 plants mentioned in the *Qur'an* itself, of which 12 are food plants. A further 54 plants are referred to in the Hadith of diverse Islamic scholars. Most but not all are indigenous to the Middle East or South West Asia. Some will be better known in Bangladesh than others.

Many of the plants covered in *Plants of the Qur'an* have been recommended by Prophet Mohammed (Peace be upon Him) and/or his scholarly disciples as part of their concern for a healthy diet and medicinal remedies.

Increasingly these days, such advice is seen as particularly valuable in terms of sustaining the planet.

Of those plants associated with The Prophet himself, one favourite must be the Lote-tree, which (according to most authorities) he encountered during his ascension into the heavens where, we are told, he enjoyed visions beyond our comprehension.

When you are in the bazaar or kitchen, do you know how many of the vegetables and fruits, herbs and spices you see and use, have an ancient lineage, some much, much older than Islam itself? Cooking lentils as a domesticated plant, for example, has been going on for more than 10,000 years, according to the seeds found in archaeological digs.

Lentils were one of the tastier foods the Israelites asked Moses for when they left Egypt, along with green herbs, cucumbers, or snake melons (exact identification can be difficult), garlic and onions. That makes up a familiar enough meal for most of us, especially when you add in the wheat for chapattis that has been cultivated for almost as long as the lentils.

While many of these foods are reputed to have a variety of medicinal effects, they are frequently said to have value for the soul as well as the body. Among herbs, basil (*tulsi*) is as sacred as it is nutritious, used in the religious text of the Hadith as a metaphor for happiness in bringing us closer to God.

The same is true of ginger that originated in Southeast Asia. In the *Qur'an* it is said that it will be mixed in a drink offered as a reward for the righteous as they enjoy heavenly gardens shaded by fruit trees.

As for fruits, one particular species of fig native not to the subcontinent but to the Mediterranean region, *ficus carica* or anjir, is said to have been a gift of God from Paradise. Practically speaking, it is good for haemorrhoids.

We are all familiar with henna (*mehndi*) put on by brides, but it can also be used as a cooling paste for fevers, sunstroke, ulcers, and nose bleeds. Henna has a cosmopolitan provenance, much used by everybody from the ancient

Egyptians and Romans to the Moroccan Jews.

The grape originates in the Caucasus. Residues in jars show there was wine-making 10,000 years ago in Georgia, a winery in Armenia 6,000 years ago. Even in its non-alcoholic form, it is recommended as a refreshment and still has its uses when soured to vinegar. In Paradise there are said to be two gardens of grape vines surrounded by palm trees and cultivated fields.

While we don't see all the fruits of the sacred texts ourselves, some are ingrained in our imagination, none more so than the pomegranate. This fruit, also said to have come to us from Paradise, has become a symbol of it. The Spanish city of Granada, home to the Alhambra, a replica of part of which graced Kew Gardens at the same time as the Mosque, takes its name from it.

Botanic Gardens such as those at Kew are thought to have originated in China and at Kew there is still a tall 18th century pagoda, often restored, decorated with dragons. It would be inappropriate nowadays to re-erect the long-gone Mosque—London is full of them now as properly respected places of worship and my hometown of Cambridge has a wonderful new Eco-Mosque.

My eye is finally caught by a painting of that useful plant, the toothbrush tree: *kampt* (*pilu*). I had supposed this might be the same as the equally useful neem, but it seems it is not. Looking at Sue Wickison's engaging drawings, I am ashamed of the number of plants I could not identify in their original growing condition. Shame to say, I didn't even recognize the fields of turmeric in Bengal for what they were when first I saw them.

Plants of the Qur'an has an epigraph taken from Ibn Khaldun's *Al Muqaddimah*: "Man is essentially ignorant and becomes learned through acquiring knowledge". This compendium of intriguing botanic lore is published by Kew at £25.

John Drew is an occasional contributor to The Daily Star. A collection of his articles is due to be published later this year by ULAB Press.

There are some 20 plants mentioned in the *Qur'an* itself, of which 12 are food plants. A further 54 plants are referred to in the Hadith of diverse Islamic scholars. Most but not all are indigenous to the Middle East or South West Asia. Some will be better known in Bangladesh than others.

FICTION REVIEW

Single wife, double life

'Just Between Us' by Adele Parks (HQ, 2023)

FARAH GHUZNAVI

I usually enjoy Adele Parks' writing, so I am always happy to hear that she has a new book out. But hearing that her newest story would be following the same set of characters as an earlier novel of hers was somewhat unexpected.

After I realised which characters were being referred to, I was delighted at the prospect of reading this new book, *Just Between Us*, since it turned out to be a sequel to a very interesting story of hers that I had read just a few months ago, titled *Woman Last Seen*.

Woman Last Seen is a suspenseful, and at times uncomfortable, read. Based on a very unusual concept, the book finished with an open-ended conclusion, which had left me both intrigued and a little dissatisfied.

The second part of this duology is set firmly in the COVID-19 period, and successfully conveys the sense of confusion and claustrophobia that people across the globe were experiencing at that time. The story picks up on two cases of women who had disappeared in London prior to the onset of the pandemic.

At first glance, the two missing women would appear to have little in common. Kai, after all, was the glamorous trophy wife of a young Dutch millionaire, and Leigh was the devoted wife and mother of a middle-class household, where she lived with Mark and his two children, her young stepsons.

But as the canny police officer in charge, DC Clements, soon finds out, the two women have just about everything in common. Because they are the same person! Kylie (Kai, Leigh) Gillingham has been living a double life, simultaneously juggling very different lifestyles and relationships.

While the premise of the first novel seems bizarre, it was convincingly written. Not to mention that the idea of bigamy is far from new. Similar cases have even been identified in Bangladesh.

So it is not the core concept of the story that is particularly sensational. What is unusual here is the fact that the bigamist is a woman, and that she has managed to pull off such a complicated web of lies so successfully.

When DC Clements misses, by just a few hours, the opportunity to recover the abducted Kylie—who was being held prisoner by an unknown captor in the initial period after she disappeared—the police officer becomes obsessed with finding out what actually happened to the missing woman.

Meanwhile, as the lockdown begins and Kylie's family(ies) are struggling to come to terms with what they have found out about someone that they thought they knew well, a parallel story is unfolding. Stacie Jones and her devoted father are trying to deal with her harrowing diagnosis and its after-effects. But is Stacie's father caring, or controlling? The real question, of course, is not whether the two narratives are linked, but how. Spoiler: the full story here may not be quite what you think it is.

While the plot of *Just Between Us* is perhaps slightly less shocking than *Woman Last Seen*, the storytelling is equally effective. I found the story gripping and the book hard to put down. For anyone looking for an interesting, absorbing, suspenseful read, I would suggest both books in this set, but if you don't read *Woman Last Seen*, it's still worth reading *Just Between Us* as a stand-alone story. The second novel successfully builds on the narrative of the first, but the two books each offer a different set of thrills, and I recommend both.

Farah Ghuznavi is a writer, translator and development worker. Her work has been published in 11 countries across Asia, Africa, Europe and the USA. Writer in Residence with Commonwealth Writers, she published a short story collection titled *Fragments of Riversong* (Daily Star Books, 2013), and edited the *Lifelines* anthology (Zubaan Books, 2012). She is currently working on her new short story collection and is on Instagram @farahghuznavi.



POETRY REVIEW

Shamim Reza creates new frontiers with his new poetry collection

'Selected Poems' by Shamim Reza (ULAB Press, 2022)

SARAZEEN SAIF AHANA

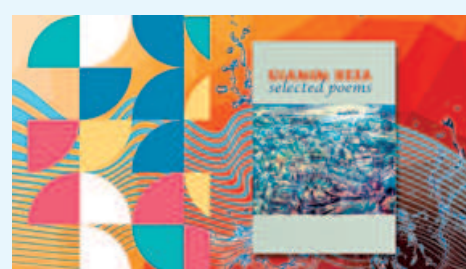
We live in a world of incredible noise. Here in Dhaka, especially, our days and nights are blanketed in layers of noise that pierce through solitude, contemplation, and peace. To find silence here is bliss, a breath of air for those of us who are drowning in the newness of the world. Such silence is what I discovered in *Selected Poems* by Shamim Reza, translated from the Bangla by Dulal Al Monsur and Mahub Siddiquee.

Dr. Shamim Reza is a poet, and the founding director and professor of the Bangabandhu Institute of Comparative Literature and Culture, Jahangirnagar University. Over the last 30 years, he has received multiple national and international literary awards for his work. He is, currently, the vice-president of PEN International,

Bangladesh chapter.

The cover artwork in his new book features SM Sultan's *Crossing* (1953), and the book cover is where this journey begins. A river, chaotic and wild, is flooded by an entire population desperate to cross over. There is not an inch of this artwork that does not contain some form of restlessness—except the sky. Calm, serene, and benevolent, the sky cares little for the human condition. It simply observes, safe in its enormity. This image felt indicative of what Professor Reza's book contains—the ability to make us sit back, in a world where "the hustle" is all that matters, and breathe through verse.

Poetry is one of those few surviving instances of art which demands time, which commands you to cast off the clutter and haze of modern life and just reflect. When



DESIGN: SARAH ANJUM BARI

Professor Reza writes, in Part 3, "Night and the Himalayas", of "Observances"—
Night, can your earth-scientists tell
How much earth and stones it takes for a
Himalaya to be formed?
—it truly feels like the cool breeze gentling
this unquiet city. For a single, dazzling
moment, you are transported far from the

pressure, demand, noise and cacophony of modernity, and returned to the coolness of earth, the soft light of starlight and the magic of seeing the enormity of the Himalayas rise before you. No longer does the weight of the world rest on your shoulders. You are faced with the power and authority of nature, and you are made comfortingly insignificant, like a small child made safe in her mother's embrace.

In his Preface to the book, John Fardon writes, "Nature is embedded in [Professor Reza's] poetry, but it is not merely descriptive, but creates a mysterious, romantic, almost magical connection." These words ring perfectly and beautifully true, as Professor Reza takes the reader in what feels like an odyssey of sensation. From the rivers and fields that make up this land, to Lalon and

his music haunting the shadows of trees, love won and lost, the divine and infinite variety of pain and victory, from identity and desire, from the love of mothers to the love of nature, there is little that is said and a lot that is felt in this single volume.

There are too many verses of wonder in this book of poetry to be quoted, far too much beauty to fall in love with in a single day. Meaning abounds, but emotions reign here, and there is space to love and live and breathe. Poetry is never about meanings. Poetry is about feelings, and how a poem makes one feel is the measure of that poem's worth. If that is true, then this is a literary dragon's hoard, and it is beyond priceless.

Sarazeen Saif Ahana is an adjunct faculty member at Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB), where she teaches English and dreams in verse.

'Will try to reduce silly mistakes'

SPORTS REPORTER from Chattogram

Following recent series wins and a dismantling of Afghanistan in the lone Test just last month, Bangladesh suffered a shock to the system yesterday with a 17-run defeat per DLS in the first ODI against Afghanistan at Chattogram's Zahir Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium.

Towhid Hridoy played a matured knock, hitting a 69-ball 51 while losing partners in the middle-order, and the Tigers eventually managed 169 for nine in 43 overs in a rain-curtailed game. The batters had a below-par day with most in the top-order getting out to casual shots but Hridoy believed that they can rectify their errors.

Shakib Al Hasan and Hridoy contributed 37 for the fourth wicket, but once the former departed to a loose shot, no big partnerships developed. Hridoy felt conditions were



After stalwarts Tamim Iqbal, Shakib Al Hasan and Mushfiqur Rahim failed to make an impact with the bat, it fell onto youngsters Towhid Hridoy and Afif Hossain to give something to defend to the Bangladesh bowlers in the first ODI against Afghanistan at the Zahir Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram on Wednesday. However, only Hridoy succeeded in that regard, scoring his third ODI fifty to help Bangladesh set the Afghans a modest target.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

'Best in region' Zico oozes self-belief

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh goalkeeper Anisur Rahman Zico was pleasantly surprised to have won the best goalkeeper award despite his team being eliminated from the semifinals of the recently concluded SAFF Championship.

However, the Bashundhara Kings goalkeeper -- who was excellent throughout the eight-team competition as Bangladesh played in the last four of the regional competition for the first time in 14 years -- said he was confident of bagging the award had Bangladesh qualified for the final of the competition.

"The other day, I was telling someone I would win the trophy if Bangladesh were in the final," Zico told The Daily Star over phone last night.

"But I was told that I won the trophy on Tuesday night. I felt really good about it. Even since I started playing at the top level, I had the belief that I would one day become the best in this region. I have always looked up to Aminul (Haque) bhai and always wanted to be the best like him," said Zico, who idolises international goalkeepers like Manuel Neuer and Emiliano Martinez.

Zico made some incredible saves as Bangladesh took the semifinal against Kuwait deep into extra time, only to lose by the odd goal deep on the



"I don't know what the issues regarding this but being footballers and not having the chance to talk with such a goalkeeper like Emiliano [Martinez] is certainly a matter of regret."

stroke of extra-time interval. Zico, who has made countless saves from the spot in domestic football, felt he could have carried Bangladesh to the final had the match gone into penalties.

"I have made quite a few saves from penalties in domestic football," the man from Cox's Bazar said. "So, I had the belief that I could save two or three shots had the match proceeded to a shootout."

There have been some criticism, especially on social media, regarding the form and fitness of the 25-year-old goalkeeper in recent times. Zico's performance and the accolade has apparently silenced all the critics, for the time being. The Bangladesh No. 1, though, is not distracted by those criticisms as he said his target is to take Bangladesh higher.

"I've always wanted to see Bangladesh winning the SAFF title. It didn't happen this time but hopefully we will play in the final next time," Zico added.

While Bangladesh earned huge praise from all quarters for their valiant performance, the team did not get the deserving reception. To make matters worse, they were denied the opportunity to say hello to Martinez at the airport as the Argentine departed for Kolkata on Monday.

"I don't know what the issues regarding this but being footballers and not having the chance to talk with such a goalkeeper like Emiliano is certainly a matter of regret," Zico concluded.

SCORES IN BRIEF

Bangladesh: 169/9 in 43 overs (Hridoy 51, Liton 26; Farooqi 3-24, Rashid 2-21)
Afghanistan: 83/2 in 21.4 overs (Zadran 41 not out, Shakib 1-9, Taskin 1-26)
Result: Afghanistan won by 17 runs (DLS method)
Player-of-the-match: Fazalhaq Farooqi

Not the way it should be

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI from Chattogram

Bangladesh ODI skipper Tamim Iqbal said he knew there was a risk involved in playing the first ODI of the Afghanistan series, as he was not feeling a 'hundred per cent'. His decision was to learn how much he was able to cope with facing the challenge of playing Afghanistan in an international game while worrying about injury concerns.

However, someone from the team management should have told him that this was not the way to go.

News in the local media has said that the team management were left unhappy with what Tamim said regarding his fitness status. BCB president Nazmul Hassan had been quoted as saying that this was not just some game someone was playing in their neighbourhood. The gravity of the scenario comes from the fact that whether someone is feeling right or not cannot be ascertained from playing an international game, regardless of whether that individual is captain or not.

Tamim, made himself 'available' for the game and, according to team management sources, his selection became 'automatic' since he is the captain of the side. Tamim has been suffering from back pain, which had ruled him out of the Afghanistan Test last month. When he returned to training, he showed signs of pain and his participation for the first game of the series was in doubt before he came to a press conference on Tuesday.

At this point, his participation in the rest of the series may still be in doubt if the pain resurfaces. The confusion over whether the captain will be available for a series is an issue that the Tigers have suffered from a lot in recent times. Tamim had been ruled out of the India series last

year due to an injury too.

While injuries are part and parcel of a cricketer's career, according to sources, there are doubts about the circumstances of his injury. That does not paint Tamim's absences in a good light. If he is feeling pain, there needs to be a concrete decision regarding his treatment, or whether he indeed needs a permanent solution.

Such a situation puts the team

can get. Ahead of a World Cup, however, the injury scenario is affecting the team culture as professional commitment is paramount to preparations for a World Cup.

It was learned that Tamim passed the fitness Test ahead of the first ODI against Afghanistan yesterday. The team management would have had a difficult proposition on their hands otherwise with the skipper wanting to play.



management in doubt about securing his services in important series and it is not at all a healthy atmosphere if the captain's services are in doubt.

Tamim came out to bat against Afghanistan, looking apt. He was slow to a pull shot but his trademark cover drive and cut shot were exhibited to good effect before he departed to Fazalhaq Farooqi after a 21-ball 13.

A fit Tamim is the best news the Tigers

The team management may have reportedly been left unhappy, but they have not been clear on what the correct conduct should be. It only breeds secrecy and the need for more secrecy. They are also responsible for risking Tamim if he indeed is playing through injury while setting a bad example for the rest of the players with the message that someone can use an international game to find out if they can play on.

Bairstow row casts shadow over third Ashes Test

AFP, London

Australia can expect to face a fired-up England and a furious crowd in the third Ashes Test at Headingley starting Thursday as the row over Jonny Bairstow's divisive dismissal at Lord's rumbles on.

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and Australian counterpart Anthony Albanese have even traded verbal bouncers over the issue, which started when Bairstow was given out stumped by opposing wicketkeeper Alex Carey during what the England batsman thought was a break in play.

Bairstow's exit, in a match Australia won by 43 runs to go 2-0 up in the five-match Ashes despite England captain Ben Stokes's stunning 155, sparked a chorus of boos at a normally sedate Lord's and led to three MCC members being suspended for allegedly abusing visiting players in the pavilion.

To add fuel to the fire, the third Test is taking place at Bairstow's Yorkshire home ground, with increased security measures expected at Headingley



-- traditionally one of English cricket's most raucous venues.

England captain Ben Stokes insisted Wednesday it was time "everyone moved on" from Jonny Bairstow's controversial dismissal. Steve Smith, stripped of the Australia captaincy and given a year-long ban for his part in the Sandpapergate incident, now heads into his 100th Test following a fine hundred at Lord's.

Long the target for taunts from English crowds the star batsman

insisted: "It doesn't bother me."

"Everyone is entitled to their opinion. I know the person I am, I know how I want to go about things. I am out here playing my game and for my country."

Pat Cummins, bidding to become the first Australia skipper in 22 years to win an Ashes series in England, said the fall-out from Bairstow's dismissal could galvanise the tourists as much as the home team.

"These kind of moments can

really strengthen a side," he said. "He (Carey) has been fantastic behind the wickets. We'll look after him."

Only an Australia side inspired by batting great Don Bradman have come from 2-0 down to win a Test series, taking the 1936/37 Ashes 3-2.

However, the corresponding Headingley Ashes clash four years ago saw Stokes's stunning unbeaten hundred guide England to a remarkable one-wicket win and coach Brendon McCullum said: "We believe that we can still come back in this series." Yet for all the angst over Bairstow's exit, England's poor position owes more to their failure to exploit helpful bowling conditions after winning the toss at Lord's and a first-innings collapse from 188-1 to 325 all out that featured several reckless shots.

England have left out all-time leading wicket-taker James Anderson in one of three changes to their side for a must-win third Ashes Test a, with express quick Mark Wood, seam bowling all-rounder Chris Woakes and spinner Moeen Ali recalled.



PHOTO: EAM ASADUZZAMAN

Ruman Sana and Diya Siddiqui -- the two best archers of the country -- tied the knot at a community centre in Nilphamari town yesterday. The two archers, who represent Bangladesh as a pair in recurve mixed events, took their relationship to a new level after years of courtship. Officials, coaches and players of Bangladesh Archery Federation were present at the wedding to bless the new couple.



Govt clips the PPP authority's independence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Parliament yesterday passed Bangladesh Public-Private Partnership (amendment) Bill-2023 curtailing the power of the Public-Private Partnership Authority.

The bill, which was placed in the House by Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Haq, was passed by voice vote despite strong protest from opposition MPs.

The bill empowers the government to appoint the chief executive officer of the PPP authority, which is currently done by its board of governors.

The existing law states that the PPP authority shall be impartial and independent in exercising financial and administrative powers and carrying out its functions. But the word "independent" has been dropped through the amendment.

The Bangladesh Public-Private Partnership Act-2015 was enacted to create a partnership between the government and the private sector by attracting local and foreign investments.

Taking part in the discussion on the bill, Jatiya Party MP Fakhru Imam said the PPP authority's power would be curtailed through amending the law. He questioned why this will be done all of a

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Motor bikers park on the pavement of Satmasjid Road obstructing pedestrians near Dhanmondi-9/A yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Pregnant woman dies at illegal pvt clinic in Ctg

Family alleges wrong treatment; clinic shut

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A woman died after she was given an anaesthetic injection for a Caesarean section at an unlicensed private clinic in Fatikchhari, Chattogram.

After 22-year-old Zannatul Mawa died around 8:00pm on Tuesday, her grieving family members and locals vandalised Sheba Clinic, said Kazi Masud, the officer in charge of Fatikchhari Police Station.

The clinic is now under lock and key and will face legal action, Ilias Chowdhury, the civil surgeon in Chattogram, told The Daily Star.

Since the clinic is unregistered, it is deemed an illegal entity, he said.

Asked why no action was taken against the clinic earlier, he said the authorities were not aware of it.

Zannatul, who was the wife of Roman Uddin from the Manikpur area of Fatikchhari, was admitted to the clinic on Tuesday morning.

Shortly after being taken to the operation theatre, the clinic's employees informed her family members that she had died of a cardiac arrest, locals said, adding that the doctors and nurses had fled by the time.

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RELOCATING KAMALAPUR ICD Forever stuck in quagmire

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

It has been 16 years since an initiative to relocate the oversaturated Kamalapur Inland Container Depot (ICD) to Gazipur's Dhirasram was taken but the project is yet to see the light of day.

After the 2007 initiative, three feasibility studies by Chattogram Port Authority (CPA), the Public-Private Partnership Authority (PPPA), and Bangladesh Railway (BR) were carried out but things hardly moved since then.

The BR tried to get things moving and in March 2021 submitted to the Planning Commission a Development Project Proposal (DPP) for land acquisition for the ICD. Several meetings were held over the last three years but the project was not approved.

Meanwhile, a top official of the Planning Commission is now asking the BR to change the location selected for the new ICD, railway sources said.

It appears the only hope for the project is with the Prime Minister's Office, which has called a meeting today to discuss the Dhirasram ICD and Kamalapur Multimodal Transport Hub, they said.

Shahidul Islam, additional director general (infrastructure) of BR, told The Daily Star last night, "The meeting is to discuss the current status, progress made, and related issues."

Secretaries of the railways and shipping ministries and the Planning Division; member (physical infrastructure division) of the Planning Commission; the chief executive office of the PPPA; and director general of BR are supposed to attend the meeting, with the prime minister's principal secretary in the chair.

"If the site has to be changed, then a new feasibility study has to be done which would take three more years. We can't afford any more delays for the ICD."

A BR official

THE DELAYS

The CPA in 2007 carried out a feasibility study with funding from the World Bank to build an ICD at Dhirasram.

But it was later decided that the PPP model would be used and the PPPA carried out a feasibility study, which was completed in 2017.

The project was listed for implementation under government-to-government PPP model with Japan but was dropped from the list in December 2019.

The BR in 2019 did its feasibility study with funds from the Asian Development Bank. The study recommended that the ICD be built near Dhirasram Railway Station for better connectivity with Chattogram and because Gazipur is an industrial hub.

BR sources said 70 percent of the containers handled by the CPA are destined for Dhaka but the BR can carry only 10 percent of them due to the handling capacity constraints of the Kamalapur ICD.

The railway authorities had planned to carry half the containers headed for Dhaka but the Kamalapur ICD is not capable. Besides, heavy vehicles are restricted in Dhaka city during the day, which causes delivery delays, BR sources said.

The planned transport hub at Kamalapur also prevents the BR from increasing capacity at the ICD.

Considering all these, the BR drew a detailed design for the ICD at Dhirasram and the rail links and submitted the DPP for acquiring land in March 2021.

Following the directives of the Planning Commission, the BR changed the DPP several times. A team from the Planning Commission, led by a joint secretary, visited the proposed site in November last year and gave the go ahead for land acquisition, according to documents.

A total of Tk 3,402 crore would be needed for acquiring 230.94 acres. Before this, a meeting at the Prime Minister's Office in June last year decided that the structures of the ICD would be built under a separate project funded by the ADB and its operations can be handled under PPP.

The BR held meetings with the ADB and the lender committed to provide \$289.82 million, BR sources said.

But the BR is now in a pickle after a top official of the Planning Commission verbally asked it to build the ICD somewhere other than Dhirasram.

"If the site has to be changed, then a new feasibility study has to be done which would take three more years. We can't afford any more delays for the ICD," a top BR official told The Daily Star seeking anonymity.

QUESTION LEAK Ex-Biman GM, 29 others charged in DSA case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Ex-Biman official Major Taiz Ibne Anowar, 25 employees of the carrier, and four others have been charged in a Digital Security Act case filed in connection with the leak of question paper for a recruitment exam.

Investigation officer Alamgir Hossain Patwary, an inspector of the Detective Branch of police, submitted the charge sheet before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka on Sunday.

According to the charge sheet, Taiz, a former general manager of the ground service equipment department and deputy general manager of the security department, and ground-handling equipment operators Jahangir Alam, Mohammad Masud, and Mahub Ali led the leaking of the question paper and the sale of it.

Ground-handling equipment operators Mahfuzul Alam and Anamul Haque, office aide Awlad Hossain, workshop

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Israel's army ends West Bank raid

Bombs Gaza Strip; Palestinian death toll rises to 12; funerals take place in Jenin

AFP, Jenin

Israel's army yesterday declared the end of a large-scale military operation in the occupied West Bank that killed 12 Palestinians and one Israeli soldier over the previous two days.

The raid, involving hundreds of forces, drone strikes and armoured bulldozers, targeted the northern West Bank city of Jenin, a centre for multiple armed Palestinian groups.

Amid the days of violence, a Palestinian attacker in Tel Aviv on Tuesday wounded seven Israelis, two seriously, in a car ramming and stabbing attack before an armed civilian shot him dead.

And overnight, Israel carried out air strikes on targets inside the blockaded Gaza Strip in response to rocket fire from the Palestinian coastal enclave, with no deaths reported.

As the army pulled out of Jenin from late Tuesday, much of the crowded city was left charred and in rubble from the incursion which displaced at least 3,000 residents.

Its adjacent refugee camp, a tiny area home to 18,000 people, has long been a stronghold of militant groups

including Islamic Jihad and Hamas.

"The operation is officially over and the soldiers have left the Jenin area," said an army spokesman yesterday after columns of armoured vehicles were seen withdrawing.

In Jenin yesterday, thousands of mourners joined a funeral procession for the slain Palestinians, an AFP correspondent reported.

Militants fired in the air as the bodies were carried through the streets, which were covered in debris from the violence. "In our souls and blood, we will sacrifice for you, martyr," the crowd chanted.

Jenin residents inspected the widespread destruction in the camp, where gaping holes were torn into buildings, cars were crushed and the ground was littered with bullet casings and broken glass.

Israel's right-wing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has labelled Jenin and its refugee camp a "terrorist nest", and the army said it had seized arms and explosives depots and militant logistic sites.

The Palestinians labelled the escalation "open war against the people of Jenin".

Saturn's rings shine in new Webb telescope photo

CNN ONLINE

Astronomers have discovered surprising details about Saturn's atmosphere, using a new image captured by NASA's James Webb Space Telescope.

In the image, Saturn itself appears extremely dark due to the near-total absorption of sunlight by methane gas. The rings, however, remain bright, creating the "unusual appearance" of the planet in this photo, according to NASA.

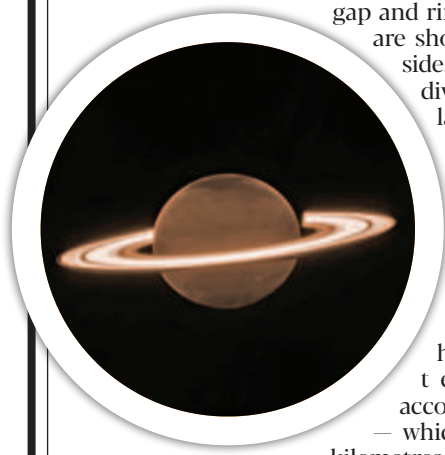
Saturn's moons Dione, Enceladus and Tethys dot the left side, while the Cassini division, Encke gap and rings A, B, C and F

are shown on the right side. The Cassini division is the largest of the gaps in Saturn's ring system.

The near-infrared observations of the ringed planet are a first for the highly sensitive telescope, according to NASA

— which, at 15 million kilometres (nearly 932,000 miles) from Earth, observes the universe with wavelengths of light longer than those of other space telescopes.

The image was taken with Webb's Near-Infrared Camera, known as NIRCam, as part of a Webb program that involves several exceptionally deep exposures of Saturn, according to NASA. These exposures test Webb's ability to spot faint moons around the planet and its rings, since any newly discovered moons could help scientists better understand Saturn's present and past systems.



Children look on as they sit along a staircase by the rubble and broken furniture of a destroyed flat in a building in the occupied West Bank city of Jenin yesterday, after the Israeli army declared the end of a two-day military operation in the area.

PHOTO: AFP

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Afghans seal series opener

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A dominating all-round display from Afghanistan saw the visitors win the rain-interrupted first of the three-match ODI series against hosts Bangladesh by 17 runs via DLS at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram yesterday.

Opensers Rahmanullah Gurbaz and Ibrahim Zadran provided Afghanistan a solid start after the visitors restricted Bangladesh to a modest total of 169 for nine after the game was reduced to 43 overs.

Afghanistan were cruising in their chase, scoring 83 for two in 21.4 overs before rain halted the play for the third time. The match could not be further resumed as the visitors, who were ahead of the par score by 17 runs at the time of the last rain interruption, won the contest to leave