

Bangladesh Family Planning Programme

What women and girls want matters

Ipas, in association with The Daily Star, organised a roundtable titled “Bangladesh Family Planning Programme: What women and girls want matters” on July 10, 2023. Here we publish a summary of the discussion.



Dr Sayed Rubayet, Country Director, Ipas Bangladesh

According to recent census data, 45.4 million women in Bangladesh fall within the reproductive age category. The Family Planning Program should target this population, including both married and unmarried women.

The Total Fertility Rate (TFR) in Bangladesh reached 2.3 in 2011, slightly more than the government's target of 2.1. However, it has remained stagnant as per the survey findings of the past four Bangladesh Demographic and Health Surveys (BDHS). Family planning methods are essential to reach the target TFR, and the contraceptive prevalence rate (CPR) is a key indicator. The CPR has gradually increased from 8% to 64% since early 70s to 2022. Birth spacing has also been successful, with an average of 5 years between children, but the rate of teenage pregnancy, although reduced to 24%, requires further improvement.

In Rajshahi and Rangpur, the Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (CPR) for modern methods is 61%. Yet, the rates of early marriage (57%) and early pregnancy (31%) remain high. On the other hand, Sylhet has lower rates of early marriage and early pregnancy, despite a CPR of only 44%. This highlights that addressing early child marriage requires more than just family planning programmes. Therefore, the family planning programme should prioritise early pregnancy prevention, while all national programmes should focus on preventing early marriage as well.

After the age of 40, traditional family planning methods are used by 31% of married women, increasing to 36% for the 45-49 age group. Unintended pregnancies in this age group pose risks and can lead to maternal mortality. Equal attention should be given to both elderly women and adolescents in the reproductive age group.

Among the 64% of women who use contraceptive methods, the majority rely on short-acting and hormone-dependent options. Despite national encouragement for Long-Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC) methods such as implants and Intrauterine devices (IUDs), only 3% of women opt for these services. Raising awareness about LARC and permanent methods is crucial.

Women enter their reproductive age early and often reach their desired number of children at a young age. Until they turn 49, they have to depend on pills and endure the side effects of hormonal methods. Encouraging the use of IUDs or permanent methods can promote overall well-being, including reproductive health.

In the past, decisions on family planning were predominantly made by males. However, a significant shift has occurred over the past two decades, with 78% of couples now making joint decisions. The family planning programmes' communication strategy should target both husbands and wives to generate greater demand.

Furthermore, the media landscape is rapidly evolving. It is crucial to embrace mobile phones and social media platforms for the family planning programme.



Golam Mortaza, Editor, The Daily Star Bangla

Family planning programmes should actively target men to increase awareness and engagement. Social media has become an essential component of effective campaigns, yet there is a lack of research on its optimal utilisation in Bangladesh. Conducting further research on leveraging social media as a tool to raise awareness and disseminate the message of family planning to larger populations is crucial.



Dr. Mohammad Mainul Islam, Professor & Former Chairman, Department of Population Sciences, University of Dhaka

The BDHS 2022 highlights that pills are the most popular contraceptive method at 27%, followed by injectables at 11% and female sterilization at 5%. However, male sterilization remains low at <1. Furthermore, the discontinuation rate for condoms is higher compared to other contraceptives. It is essential to ensure male participation in family planning and raise their awareness about the situation.

Recent urban health surveys indicate a rise of approximately 6% in teenage pregnancies in non-slum areas. Family planning efforts should focus not only on slum areas but also on other vulnerable groups residing outside these areas in urban regions.

Bangladesh's favorable demographic situation with a working-age majority demands focus on health, education, governance, and



employment. To fully harness the benefits of the demographic dividend, efforts to reduce child marriage are crucial. This will empower women, increase their participation, and contribute to the country's economic growth.



Professor Dr Ferdousi Begum, Immediate Past President, Obstetrical and Gynaecological Society of Bangladesh (OGSB)

Adolescents, accounting for a quarter of our population, lack awareness of the risks associated with early marriage, to unplanned pregnancies. It is crucial to emphasise the importance of contraceptive usage, address challenges of discontinuation and method switching, and improve utilisation rates. To address these issues, OGSB has partnered with IPAS and the Directorate General of Family Planning to provide training to general practitioners. Targeted areas such as Gazipur, Mirpur, and Kamrangirchor have been identified for training general practitioners, enhancing their knowledge of contraceptive pills and related SRH services. Our objective is to educate and empower general practitioners nationwide. Strengthening the numbers and capabilities of midwives is essential for effective pregnancy, childbirth, postpartum, and post-abortion family planning. The OGSB offers specialised services, training, and mentorship to midwives, ensuring their effective application of knowledge and skills. These efforts require collaboration from all the relevant stakeholders.



Mohammad Bellal Hossain, PhD, Professor, Department of Population Sciences, University of Dhaka

Bangladesh serves as a global model for family planning, with the private sector contributing to 60% and the public sector to 36% of contraceptive services. Understanding the decline in the public sector's involvement is crucial.

Rangpur and Rajshahi exhibit different Total Fertility Rates (TFRs) of 2.5 and 2 respectively, both with a contraceptive usage rate of 61%. Investigating the factors behind these variations is necessary for progress.

The 2022 census projects a population growth rate of 1.22%, estimating a population of 207 million by 2061. Considering this projected increase is essential for future planning. By emphasising need-based family planning program intervention, we can aim for a stable population. It is crucial to ensure adequate education, women's empowerment, decision-making rights, employment opportunities, and economic empowerment to facilitate fertility control even with lower contraceptive usage.



Dr. Sharmin Mizan, Deputy Project Director (Service Delivery) Urban Primary Health Care Services Delivery Project II, Local Govt Division, MOLGRDC&C

The Urban Primary Health Care Services Delivery Project offers a comprehensive range of reproductive services, including reproductive health care, maternal health care, menstrual regulation, post-abortion care, and post-delivery care. These services are provided alongside other important healthcare services, such as communicable and non-communicable disease prevention, in our one-stop service centers. Additionally, family planning services are available for those in need. We rely on the Directorate General of Family Planning under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare for commodities and supplies. IPAS plays a crucial role in supporting us through effective training and active collaboration in 30 centers located in Dhaka.



Dr. Abu Sayed Mohammad Hasan, Programme Specialist-SRH, UNFPA Bangladesh

The health sector must take greater responsibility in preventing child marriage, with the Ministry of Health

and Family Welfare playing a significant role by effectively utilising field workers and implementing accelerated programmes. We need to address pressure on child marriage, education dropouts, the increasing prevalence of pre-marital sex to prevent unwanted pregnancies, and unsafe abortions that can lead to complications and infertility.

Efforts in family planning have shown progress over the past four decades, but recent advancements have been insufficient, requiring a reevaluation of our strategies to address emerging health issues. Initiatives involving religious leaders, Kазis, and marriage registrars have successfully delayed pregnancies after child marriage, but expanding these measures has proven challenging.



S M Shaikat, Executive Director, SERAC Bangladesh

The invisibility of unmarried adolescents within our overall system is concerning, given the staggering number of 36 million adolescents in our country. Surprisingly, we only have approximately 1,253 family planning centers. Outreach programs have proven to be more effective than center-based approaches, reaching 67,000 adolescents over the past 1.5 years. However, it is alarming that 15% of them are unaware of the available family welfare centers providing services for adolescents. The SBB messages on family planning to address the adolescent group need to be disseminated through proper channel.

The family planning department predominantly focuses on rural areas, but it is crucial to address the needs of urban areas as well. In the slum areas of Dhaka, for example, many female adolescents have not received the urgently needed services.



Moinuddin Haider, Associate Scientist, icddr,b

A significant portion of our research in the areas of population, family planning, and health is donor-driven, rather than meeting our own needs. Although the government does allocate funds for research in this field, limited time frames hinder meaningful studies. It is imperative to prioritize more need-driven research by securing government funding, engaging program implementers, and fostering collaboration among government agencies.



Samia Afrin, Project Director, Nari Pokkho

In our field experience, we have observed that women are often encouraged to adopt specific family planning methods without providing them adequate information about the potential variations in side effects, considering the hormonal nature of these methods and their individual responses. To genuinely uphold women's rights, it is imperative that we recognize their autonomy over their own bodies and provide them a range of family planning options.



Md. Mahbub ul Alam, Project Director, Shukhi Jibon, Country Director, Pathfinder International

The current framework for family planning predominantly emphasises population control rather than prioritising the improvement of maternal health. The primary goals revolve around reducing the total fertility rate (TFR) and contraceptive prevalence rate (CPR), and once these targets are near to be achieved, there tends to be a perception that our mission is complete. We need to put efforts equally and focus on relocating resources to regions like Khulna and Rangpur where TFR increased according to the BDHS 2022 survey report.

To address these challenges, it is crucial to shift our perspective and prioritize women's rights within family planning programmes. Rather than solely focusing on population

control, we need to adopt a holistic approach that aims to improve the reproductive health of women. This requires going beyond numerical targets and instead emphasizing comprehensive care and sustained support throughout a woman's reproductive journey.



Zahirul Islam, Health Advisor, Swedish International Development Agency

Ensuring the availability of a diverse array of family planning services is vital to enable individuals to choose the methods that best suit their needs. It is equally crucial to emphasize the importance of localised planning efforts that take into account specific community needs and preferences.

Sweden, a leader in sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR), has collaborated with UNFPA for family planning, midwifery, and primary healthcare. However, the number of programs and funding in this SRHR field is declining. Challenges also arise due to donor reservations, such as the USAID's funding restrictions on medical termination of pregnancy (MR). Despite these challenges, we must strive to achieve our targets in the family planning programme.



Dr Shafiqul Islam, Health & Population Advisor, British High Commission

We must develop a new visionary statement for family planning, expanding the role of the Directorate General of Family Planning (DGFP) to prioritize SRHR services, MNCH, gender equity, and women empowerment. This broader approach will help us overcome barriers in the last mile.

To improve our efforts, I propose targeted innovation with increased resource allocation. Currently, our health budget and allocation for family planning are inadequate, hindering our progress. Establishing a separate social media presence or expert group to reach diverse target groups and allocating a research budget of 10 crore taka per year for five years would facilitate policy formulation. Collaboration between DGFP and DGHS is vital to achieve our family planning targets. Lastly, effective coordination among all programs is crucial.



Farhana Jesmin, Senior Technical Advisor, SGBV, Ipas Bangladesh

We must address the multi-dimensional challenges faced by girls who experience child marriage, as they often lack access to education and empowerment opportunities. Collecting the opinions of women and girls opinion can ensure practical and innovative solutions. Research can help us understand why we struggle to incorporate women's perspectives, leading to more successful innovation outcomes. Currently, the government has acknowledged the importance of women and girls in the context of Family Planning 2030 (FP2030) and operational plans (OP) under the Strategic Investment Plan (SIP). Including women and girls throughout program stages will lead to significant results.



Dr Mahmudur Rahman, Director (MCH Services) & LD (MCRAH), Directorate General of Family Planning

We are currently focusing on providing maternal and child health (MCH)-based family planning support, while also striving to integrate comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) services into the family planning programme. In the 5th sector plan, we have also planned to include family planning services for elderly women.

Most family planning services are currently provided through private facilities under the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), with limited access for the Directorate General of Family Planning (DGFP). There should be

a discussion on the roles of DGFP and DGHS in delivering comprehensive family planning services, especially in urban areas.

While we often mention “hard-to-reach” and “low-performing” areas, it is crucial to acknowledge the existence of “never-to-reach” areas, particularly in the Chittagong Hill Tracts region.

Regarding access to family planning methods for unmarried adolescents, I disagree with the notion that they lack access. All family planning methods are available in the market, and we have achieved significant progress in terms of universal access to contraceptives.

Lastly, I would like to emphasize the importance of three types of counselling: pre-marital counselling, pre-conception counselling, and post-partum family planning counselling. It is essential to ensure these three counselling services for everyone.



Dr Nurun Nahar Begum, Line Director (CCSDP), Directorate General of Family Planning

Our first challenge is to promote a rights-based approach to family planning by empowering girls and women to make decisions regarding their own lives, including family planning. We are working towards employing counselors at every stage of our interventions to ensure their support.

Additionally, it is crucial to clearly communicate and campaign about the availability of family planning and sexual and reproductive health services at health centers where these services are provided, facilitating easy access for the population.

In Bangladesh, an open market for short-term family planning methods such as oral pills and condoms has made these services easily accessible. Similarly, if we can establish an open market for permanent methods like IUDs and implants and disseminate information about them, it will greatly benefit the population.

During our discussion, we received valuable recommendations that will aid in the implementation of our upcoming Health, Population, and Nutrition Sector Programme.



Tanjim Ferdous, In-charge of NGOs and Foreign Missions at the Business Development Team, The Daily Star & Moderator of the session

Today's discussion centers primarily on adolescent girls, emphasizing their sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). It also discusses matters related to family planning, encompassing socio-political dimensions. Within the realm of family planning, we will explore the agency of women in decision-making processes and strategies for empowering them, the value of incorporating women's perspectives when selecting contraception methods, and the importance of promoting health awareness.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Family planning should be viewed from rights perspective.
- Ensure comprehensive family planning services for all women in the reproductive age group, irrespective of marital status and age.
- Raising awareness about Long-Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC) and other permanent methods is crucial.
- Develop inclusive family planning strategy that actively engage and target males, in addition to focusing on females.
- Establish social behavioral change communication strategy with social media cells to effectively disseminate family planning messages to a wider audience. Prioritise early pregnancy prevention efforts and encourage all national-level programmes to address and prevent child marriages.
- Increase funding and support for need-driven research on population, family planning, and health.
- Ensure the inclusion of unmarried adolescents in family planning programmes.
- Address the family planning needs in urban areas.
- Embrace mobile and social media platforms as effective channels for family planning communications.
- Provide comprehensive family planning training to frontline healthcare workers, including midwives, at the grassroots level, while also incorporating family planning education into all medical curricula.



The Daily Star



Opportunities and Challenges to Inclusive Education for Children with Disabilities in Bangladesh

Centre for Disability in Development (CDD) and Liliane Fonds, in association with The Daily Star, organised a roundtable discussion titled “Opportunities and Challenges to Inclusive Education for Children with Disabilities in Bangladesh” on May 25, 2023. Here we publish a summary of the discussion.



A.H.M Noman Khan,
Executive Director, Centre for Disability in Development (CDD)

We find ourselves easily discussing inclusive education now, but just two decades ago, the idea of children with disabilities pursuing studies seemed unimaginable. The concept of inclusive education faced significant resistance, with skepticism surrounding the notion of blind children studying alongside their non-disabled peers in educational settings.

In 2001, I conducted a comprehensive research study as the principal researcher in collaboration with the Ministry of Primary Education and the Department of Primary Education to explore the education of Children with Disabilities. The study revealed that only 4% of children with disabilities were involved in any form of education, leaving the remaining 96% outside the education system. Currently, the enrollment rate has significantly increased with approximately 25% of Children with Disabilities are enrolled in schools.

Nevertheless, challenges persist in this sector. While there was once momentum to include disabled children in the education system, with various organizations organizing seminars and initiatives, the movement has recently dwindled, posing a challenge that needs to be overcome. Moreover, the COVID-19 period further exacerbated the difficulties faced by all students, particularly Children with Disabilities.

I hope this discussion serves as a foundation upon which we can work in the future because inclusive education is imperative for the development of a society.



S.M Ali Hasnain Fatme,
Project Manager, Centre for Disability in Development (CDD)

CDD's child empowerment project encompasses two strategies. The first strategy involves child development, where the focus is on addressing children's impairments, functionality, and self-confidence. The second strategy aims to establish an enabling environment by reducing environmental barriers that hinder the participation of Children with Disabilities. This project targets children and youngsters aged 0-25 with disabilities, along with their family members, residing in 25 sub-districts and 16 districts. These areas were selected based on the high concentration of poverty and disadvantaged populations. CDD is implementing these initiatives in collaboration with its 20 partner organizations.

The initial step involved identifying the under-25 children and young people with disabilities, followed by providing various long-term support systems to facilitate their holistic development. These supports primarily focus on the five components of Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR): health, education, livelihood, social integration, and empowerment.



Md. Jahangir Alam,
Thematic Expert, Centre for Disability in Development (CDD)

Between 2021 and 2022, the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) conducted a national survey of person with disabilities to count the number of person with disabilities. However, there were limitations in publicizing the survey, resulting in an undercounting of individuals with disabilities. According to the survey report, 2.8 percent of the population are person with disabilities. Disturbingly, the report reveals that only 23.1 percent of Children with Disabilities enrolled in primary education from 1st grade to 5th grade. At the secondary education level, the completion rate drops to 18.33 percent, indicating a 5 percent dropout rate from primary to secondary education. The situation worsens when it comes to higher studies, with a mere 1.57 percent of Children with Disabilities completing their education after 12th grade. The data also highlights the disparity between male (62%) and female (49%) Children with Disabilities, with females being less benefited. Moreover, rural areas have fewer educational facilities for Children with Disabilities compared to urban areas, with nearly 41 percent of Children with Disabilities having no access to any educational facilities.

Unfortunately, there is a lack of adequate infrastructure and facilities for persons with disabilities. To truly ensure equitable quality inclusive education, we must enhance our capacity to effectively communicate with student with disabilities, leading to greater



benefits for them. Achieving this will ensure that this significant population does not lag behind and can become a valuable workforce, contributing to the development of a digital and smart Bangladesh.

Strengthening special and integrated educational institutions and fully implementing the integrated education approach are crucial steps towards accelerating the progress of inclusive education efforts.



Roos Sprangers,
Inclusive Education Advisor, Liliane Foundation (LF)

It is great that worldwide policies are now focusing on inclusive education for all children, but we should not compromise on the quality of education. The Liliane Foundation has found that the most impact can be made by supporting Children with Disabilities from a younger age. The education system should prioritize inclusive and play-based early childhood education, as it has the potential to influence development and support caregivers.

To ensure a strong start in inclusive primary education, it is important that Children with Disabilities receive both rehabilitation and education interventions simultaneously. It is essential to focus on how we can retain the expertise and quality of education professionals during the transition from specialized and integrated education provisions to more inclusive systems. If the focus solely shifts to inclusive education, there is a risk that centers of expertise in special education or integrated education lose their funding and, subsequently, their expertise and care centers way before quality inclusive education is realized for all.

The study “Breaking Down Barriers” conducted by the Liliane Foundation reveals that school leaders who are committed to support, play a crucial role in achieving inclusive quality education. These intrinsically motivated leaders should serve as role models and inspire others to join as a team of committed educators, together with all stakeholders in the community.



Nazmul Bari, *Director, CDD*

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Children with Disabilities have faced significant challenges in accessing digital platforms and other necessary facilities.

It is crucial that we all prepare for such unforeseen risks in the future to prevent further hindrances for them. The dropout rate among Children with Disabilities has been high, and the return to school has not been effectively facilitated. It is imperative to take comprehensive efforts involving persons with disabilities, their families, organizations of persons with disabilities, mainstream education stakeholders, and most importantly the government to ensure effective inclusion and retention of Children with Disabilities in education. We need to ensure specific rehabilitation services and materials for children with disabilities, which are necessary for their inclusion in education. Practical issues such as transportation and the lack of accessible toileting facilities contribute to the dropout problem among Children with Disabilities in schools.



Tahmina Khan Mojlish,
Manager-Inclusive Education, Save the Children

Save the Children has implemented an integrated approach encompassing health, economic, and educational perspectives to ensure that Children with Disabilities have access to education opportunities along with

healthcare facilities, while also promoting financial stability.

Education for Children with Disabilities is now compulsory and free of cost, offering valuable opportunities for their development. However, the current curriculum, which follows a uniform evaluation system, falls short of achieving the desired standards.

Although ramps have been installed in most government schools, they often lack maintenance or proper connecting roads. Additionally, the lack of access to classrooms on higher floors poses challenges for students, as many schools are reluctant to modify their decisions to accommodate their needs. Toilet facilities also present difficulties for Children with Disabilities, highlighting the need for focused efforts in these areas.

Addressing teacher training is another crucial aspect. While teachers are accepting students with disabilities, they often lack the necessary training to effectively support them. Save the Children has developed guidelines and practical examples for teachers to handle situations involving students with disabilities, aiming to bridge this gap.

Attitudes within the community also pose challenges, as parents may not recognize their child's disabilities, community members may doubt their potential, and peers may lack interest in engaging with them. Save the Children has created games and provided instructions to address these issues, accompanied by short biographical sketches of successful individuals such as Einstein, Rowan Atkinson (known as Mr Bean), Helen Keller, and Frida Kahlo. These efforts have yielded tremendous results in changing perceptions among parents and community members.



Ahmed Toufiqur Rahman,
Deputy Director, Inclusive Citizenship, Friendship Bangladesh

We have been actively engaged in serving the Char areas for an extended period. Upon arrival,

we observed a severe lack of infrastructure, limited educational institutions, and a scarcity of teachers for general education. The challenge became even more significant when we sought to provide education for Children with Disabilities. Transporting students from the Char areas to the mainland posed significant difficulties, as many households there earn a daily income of only 40-60 Taka. Although wheelchairs are distributed at the district level, they are not suitable for use in Char areas. Hence, the ongoing challenge lies in ensuring inclusive education reaches these hard-to-reach areas.

In some instances, teachers initially show interest in students with disabilities but gradually lose motivation. It is crucial to change the mindset of parents, the community, and peers. Otherwise, students with disabilities may become frustrated and lose interest in education. There is a misconception that Bangladesh is entirely flat, with all areas sharing the same geographical characteristics, which is incorrect. Additionally, considering the diverse cultures, we encountered language barriers while working in hill areas, highlighting the importance of addressing language issues for inclusive education.



Nasrin Jahan, *Founder & Executive Director, Disabled Child Foundation (DCF)*

When discussing inclusive education, it is important to acknowledge the current scenario. At the primary education level, the presence of students with disabilities accounts for 23 percent, while in secondary education, it drops to 18 percent, and at the higher secondary level, it remains below two percent. It is worth

noting that only individuals with mild disabilities have been able to access these educational opportunities, leaving those with severe disabilities lagging behind, unable to integrate into mainstream education.

While efforts have been made, such as the production of Braille books, there is still a lack of consideration for individuals with visual impairments in terms of providing lessons through images in textbooks. Inclusive education is a gradual process, and although there are laws in place, practical steps need to be taken to ensure its implementation from the grassroots level.



Amrita Rejina Rozario,
Country Director, Sightsavers

We have implemented home-based education to ensure that no one is excluded from educational opportunities. Inclusive education faces a significant challenge in terms of teachers' training. To tackle this issue, we collaborate with the government to provide training to master trainers, ensuring the sustainability of our intervention.

Together with our partners, we have made efforts to incorporate disability inclusiveness into the school-level improvement plan (SLIP). A robust monitoring system should be established to ensure the effective implementation of the SLIP.

At the pre-primary level, it is crucial to provide the necessary materials and services to Children with Disabilities in order to reduce their dropout rate.

Accessibility is a key issue encompassing various factors such as transportation and school infrastructure. To achieve inclusive education for Children with Disabilities, we must prioritize ensuring their accessibility.



Mohua Paul, *Co-Founder and Chairperson, Access Bangladesh Foundation*

I want to draw attention to the hardships faced by Shamima, a third-year honors student.

Throughout her academic journey, she has endured tremendous suffering due to the lack of accessible infrastructure in educational institutions. I witnessed her mother carrying her to classrooms located on the second or third floor, with no support from the school in addressing this issue. The absence of accessible toilet facilities meant she couldn't even drink water during school hours. Therefore, it is crucial to prioritize accessibility as a means to enhance inclusive education for Children with Disabilities.

Additionally, we must ensure caregiver support for Children with Disabilities, and educational institutions should actively participate in this effort. Changing the mindset of teachers and members of school management committees is also essential to bring about the necessary improvements.



Saeeda Anis Prew, *Chief of Party, USAID Shobai Miley Shikhi Project*

Inclusive education alone cannot address all the challenges faced by Children with Disabilities. We are now focusing on implementing a universal design for learning that encompasses classrooms, communities, homes, and even government offices. It is important to approach accessibility from a different perspective, considering that each individual has their own unique learning abilities and preferences. Our project follows a three-pronged approach. Firstly, we work within schools, collaborating with teachers and improving the classroom environment. Secondly, we engage with families and communities through courtyard meetings, particularly involving mothers. Lastly, we aim to enhance

government capacity to ensure the delivery of inclusive education.

One significant aspect we are addressing is the lack of data and research, which leaves a gap in our targeting efforts. Through our program, we will collect vast amounts of information from schools, families, and communities. It is crucial to make evidence-based decisions and fill this data gap.



Alodia Santos,
Organizational Development Adviser, Liliane Foundation (LF)

I want to highlight three points. One, we see the efforts of the government in terms

of moving the needle not just for inclusive education but also for overall inclusive development for Children with Disabilities. More data is also being collected which is important to know where the biggest needs are. Second, in Bangladesh, there is a thriving civil society that is very committed to community development and reaching the most vulnerable children. We are very happy and grateful for the continuous partnership that we have with our strategic partner CDD and also the local partner organizations. Finally, community-based rehabilitation provides a holistic way of moving forward with Children with Disabilities. It puts community actors at the driver's seat and also bridges the gaps between policies and practices.



Tanjim Ferdous, *In-charge of NGO and Foreign Missions at the Business Development Team, The Daily Star, & Moderator of the session*

Recent statistics bring attention to the fact that 2-3% of the total population in Bangladesh have some form of physical disability. There is a shifting perception that this group of individuals with disabilities can contribute to activities that drive the economic force. The term “person with special abilities” is now being embraced, highlighting the notion that every person possesses some form of ability, including those with disabilities. Today's discussion revolves around the effectiveness of the inclusive education system in unlocking and harnessing these potentials through appropriate education and training for Children with Disabilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- » Ensure that physical infrastructure, resources, and services are designed and provided in a way that accommodates the needs of Children with Disabilities.
- » Collect quality data from schools, families, and communities to better understand the needs and challenges faced by Children with Disabilities, and use this evidence to inform programme design and implementation.
- » Focus on strengthening government capacity to deliver on the promise of inclusive education.
- » Conduct awareness campaigns to educate parents, communities, and peers about the importance of inclusive education and the rights of Children with Disabilities.
- » Strengthen specialised educational institutions.
- » Provide comprehensive training to teachers in the Char areas to equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary to effectively teach and support students with disabilities.
- » When designing inclusive education programs for Children with Disabilities, it is essential to recognize and address the distinct geographical, cultural, and linguistic diversity present in various regions of Bangladesh.
- » Take comprehensive measures to reintegrate students with disabilities who may have dropped out of education due to the recent pandemic.
- » Improve transportation facilities to ensure easy access for Children with Disabilities to educational centers.
- » Pay attention to the availability of proper toilet facilities in educational institutions catering to Children with Disabilities
- » Emphasize the importance of inclusive and play-based early childhood education, as it can significantly influence the development of children with disabilities.
- » Focus on retaining the expertise and quality of education professionals during the transition from specialized and integrated education provisions to more inclusive systems.

- Emphasize planned urbanization to ensure sustainable development and minimize pollution impacts.
- Strengthen collaboration and awareness programs across sectors to effectively address air pollution issues.
- Ensure the active operation of treatment plants in industries to effectively control and manage pollution.
- Implement cleaner technologies and enforce stricter standards for brick kilns to reduce emissions and pollution.
- Allocate an economic zone specifically for Gazipur to facilitate planned industrial development/
- Focus on addressing traffic congestion and improving road infrastructure to reduce vehicle emissions.
- Conduct mobile patrols and impose penalties on offenders violating air pollution regulations to deter non-compliance.
- Align air pollution standards with the guidelines set by the World Health Organization (WHO) for better air quality.
- Encourage environmental journalism to be more vigilant and prioritize public interest in reporting on air pollution issues.
- Ensure timely completion of mega development projects to minimize prolonged pollution impacts during construction phases.

Thinking beyond sanitation Transitioning to a sustainable urban water cycle

SNV Bangladesh in association with the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Bangladesh and The Daily Star, organised a roundtable titled “Thinking beyond sanitation: Transitioning to a sustainable urban water cycle” on February 23, 2023. Here we publish a summary of the discussion.



Ismène R.A.C. Stalpers,
Country Director, SNV
Bangladesh

Managing urban water cycles sustainably is a complex undertaking, particularly in light of climate change and population growth. Cities that lack adequate sanitation and drainage systems are especially at risk, heightening the urgency of a circular approach that reduces vulnerabilities to water-related risks and climate change. To this end, city authorities, service providers, and other stakeholders must embrace an urban water cycle perspective.

To help tackle this challenge, SNV has launched an innovative project titled “Transitioning to Urban Water Cycles in Bangladesh”, which was designed in collaboration with the Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) and local government engineering departments. The project recognises the vital importance of financing sanitation and preserving resource quality and aims to engage the private sector in achieving city sustainability. However, realising the potential benefits of public-private partnerships requires careful planning and execution to maximise their impact.



Professor Dr Muhammed Alamgir, Member, University Grants Commission, Ex-Vice Chancellor, KUET & Keynote speaker

Urbanisation and industrialisation have significant impacts on the micro climate, surface water dynamics, groundwater discharge, stream geomorphology, biogeochemistry, and stream ecology. These changes can lead to water quantity and quality problems, such as increased sedimentation, nutrient loading, and pollution, which ultimately disrupt watershed functions, creating a scarcity of clean water.

In addition, Bangladesh is experiencing the effects of climate change, such as salinity intrusion, rising temperatures, natural disasters, and sea-level rise, which further exacerbate water availability and quality issues. Nevertheless, rapid urbanisation is necessary for economic growth. Therefore, sustainable urban development is essential for long term socio-economic progress.

To achieve this goal, it is essential to recognise the importance of clean and reliable water resources. Transitioning to a sustainable urban water cycle system is the key to ensuring this, but it requires long-term planning and government support to implement it effectively in urban areas.

We should learn from current best practices and encourage experimentation with innovative pilot programmes. Because there is no single solution, it is critical to learn by doing and embrace a holistic approach that combines infrastructure, innovation, appropriate water and sanitation system design, and expanded implementation of watershed services management. Policy paradigms must be considered while formulating such an approach. It is essential to think ahead, think again, and think across.



Shahidul Islam, Sector Leader – Water, SNV

To promote sustainable urban water cycle systems, we must move beyond solely focusing on sanitation and consider all factors that impact it. In addition to waste and urban drainage management, we must address faecal sludge and solid waste management to prepare cities for floods and droughts.

Ensuring the sustainability of these services requires significant investment and active participation from private sectors. Public-private partnerships play a crucial role in scaling up these initiatives at the national level.

Our priority is to build the capacity of municipalities and the national government to deliver inclusive services. We must work with the urban poor, focus on financial viability, and expand service coverage.



Folkert G. J. de Jager, First Secretary, The Royal Netherlands Embassy in Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, collaboration between knowledge, government, and business exists, but policies in the watershed and integrated water management sectors remain largely government-dominated. To overcome this challenge, the government must work in partnership with the public, private sectors, and academia.

To cement the progress achieved in the past decades, we must work together and actively collaborate with the private sector. The influence of the private sector on water management in Bangladesh is set to



increase, and partnerships with the private sector are essential. A strong private sector in Bangladesh will also open up opportunities for Dutch businesses to invest in the future.

Dutch expertise on water management is not a one-size-fits-all solution. Instead, we must work together, learn from each other, and collaborate to achieve sustainable water management in Bangladesh.



A.H.M Khalequr Rahman, Executive Engineer, Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE)

Ensuring water security in urban areas requires a multifaceted approach, including the development of alternative water sources. To this end, rainwater harvesting and wastewater reuse must be actively promoted for non-portable uses such as gardening and water flushing.

The DPHE has already initiated a project focused solely on rainwater harvesting in coastal districts and is investing in collaborating on new water treatment technologies to increase the availability of freshwater in urban areas and reduce dependence on groundwater sources.

To ensure the safety of water, a climate-resilient water safety plan is being implemented in various municipalities with the support of WHO.

Moreover, the DPHE recognises the importance of a highly skilled workforce in effectively managing water resources and is emphasising the skill development of urban water practitioners and technicians in Bangladesh.



Dr Abdullah Al-Muyeed, Chief Operating Officer, CWIS-FSM Support Cell of DPHE

Developing standard modules and training programs is necessary to achieve the goal of a Smart Bangladesh by 2041. We must prioritize data management, IMIS integration, and digital service delivery by municipalities and city corporations, with indicators such as the number of people receiving water, populations served by faecal sludge treatment, and constructed treatment facilities. The focus should be on establishing indicators such as the number of toilets not polluting the environment, rather than the number of toilets constructed. Therefore, we need to prioritize supply service management and not only focus on meeting the demand-supply.



Professor Dr Mahbuba Nasreen, Pro-vice-chancellor (Academic), Bangladesh Open University

We must adopt an intersectional approach that considers the needs of all people, as all challenges are interrelated with water. This approach must not only consider the needs of men and women but also those of transgender individuals and people living in difficult and hazardous conditions or areas prone to climate risks.

While discussions on sustainable urban water cycle, SNV has brought attention to faecal and solid waste management and drainage systems in urban settings, highlighting a new phenomenon. Time poverty is an issue here. Additionally, exclusion from water management decisions in our country is often gendered.

I want to suggest implementing a tariff system for different categories of people to have access to water in the urban water sector.



Mahfuzul Haque, PhD, Former Secretary, Government of Bangladesh

The Delta Plan is an innovative initiative for Bangladesh but concerns persist regarding whether we possess adequate resources to implement it effectively. The plan is designed to be in alignment with the needs and aspirations of local communities, thereby eschewing the traditional donor driven approach. Instead,

it places people at the center of the plan's objectives.

Urban floods are a direct result of human activities, such as the clogging of drains by polyethylene waste. By ensuring that drains are regularly cleaned and that polyethylene waste is appropriately disposed of, we can effectively mitigate these floods.



Md Azmul Haque, Secretary, Khulna City Corporation

The influx of people from outside of Khulna due to climate-induced disasters has contributed to an increase in slum populations, exacerbating the absence of a city plan. While Khulna Development Authority (KDA) is working on a plan, we face difficulties in executing it thoroughly. Khulna WASA, Khulna City Corporation, and KDA are collaborating, but coordination remains a challenge. Fortunately, SNV has made significant strides in Khulna, particularly with sewage treatment and faecal sludge management. The success of these efforts will play a pivotal role in the future of the urban water cycle.

Our roads are narrow, and our water source is limited, further complicating matters. To address these issues, we are currently partnering with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) on a project. However, the salinity of the Madhumoti river has emerged as a new concern.



Nur Azizur Rahman, Chief Engineer, Sylhet City Corporation

Sylhet city has experienced unusual rainfall due to climate change, unplanned urbanisation, and changes in rainfall intensity and patterns. As a result of the limited road width, constructing a full-sized drain proved to be challenging. However, we are actively working with the Institute of Water Modelling to identify potential solutions that can help alleviate the waterlogging problem in our area.

The local government ministry has recently declared that the Sylhet City Corporation will be responsible for water supply. Over the next ten years, we plan to collect water from the Kushiyara river and develop a comprehensive master plan for water supply. Due to Sylhet's high earthquake risk, extracting groundwater is challenging, so surface water is a more viable option.



Syed Monirul Islam, Mayor, Shibganj Municipality

Creating awareness among our people is essential, but unfortunately, our efforts are not always supported. Despite our daily cleaning efforts, people continue to dispose of waste in inappropriate ways, such as throwing polythene and used bottles into drains. Although our seminars and symposiums are generally well received, people tend to forget about them soon after. As a result, our city is prone to heavy waterlogging. To address this issue, the government has launched the Delta Plan in collaboration with local communities, and we are working to ensure its success in the long term.

We need to take steps to treat the water in our drainage system properly to alleviate pollution problems. We should aim to treat wastewater before it enters the drainage system to prevent contamination.



Md Rezaul Karim Swapan, Mayor, Lalmonirhat Municipality

Every shop owner has been provided with dustbins to store their waste. This is because a large amount of garbage, such as polythene, is produced in the city. The collected garbage is then taken by van pullers. However, the recycling of this garbage remains a challenge, particularly with regards to used polythene.

Additionally, there is no drainage water treatment plan in place, which leads to polluted water being released into

agricultural fields. It is important to create a low-cost, water treatment process that can be implemented locally to help address this issue.



Alok Kumar Majumder, Country Coordinator, WASH Alliance International (WAI), Simavi

To achieve a sustainable urban water cycle, three essential issues require urgent attention: promoting behavioral change in households in slum areas, implementing domestic water recycling, and reducing pollution. Additionally, the allocation of budgetary funds for the Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) sector must be increased and efficiently distributed to achieve our goals.

In Bangladesh, women make up a majority of the population, and their participation is crucial to achieving our goals. However, their help is often overlooked, and they are not given a space in decision-making processes. In order to fully reap the benefits of our investments, it is essential to involve women at the grassroots level in decision-making processes.



Zillur Rahman, Project Manager, BRAC

Fresh water is a scarce resource in Bangladesh, accounting for less than 1% of the country's water resource, and is therefore highly valuable. The cost of implementing modern technologies to manage water resources is often too high, and there are four key challenges that need to be addressed: too little water, too much water during floods, water pollution, and high costs.

In rural areas, people previously did not have to purchase water, but now those living in coastal areas such as Khulna, Bagerhaat, and Shatkhira are forced to buy fresh water treated with reverse osmosis. Rural citizens cannot afford to buy such expensive water, and as a result, they are forced to use contaminated water that carries harmful diseases like arsenic.



Riad Mahmud, Country Director, Bangladesh and Nepal, Max Foundation

The urban water cycle relies on groundwater as its source, but this is often polluted with microplastics and other contaminants, making government and private sector involvement critical to ensure safe water. Once the water is utilised, wastewater or drainage water is produced, which is typically disposed of in rivers without proper quality control or waste removal. This can have a negative impact on river canals and crop fields, as microplastics, heavy metals, and other pollutants are returned to the food chain. The government alone cannot manage the cycle from source to disposal, and private sector involvement is necessary.

The government should focus not only on infrastructure capacity building but also on financial capacity building, including funding flow and investment opportunities for foreign countries. Upgrading policies to ensure the process of returning money to foreign investors should be a priority for policymakers, along with digitalization, which is often overlooked.



Shamima Akhter, Head of Corporate Affairs, Partnerships and Communications, Unilever

Although the Effluent Treatment Plant (ETP) policy has been in place in Bangladesh for a while, the concern is whether it is being implemented properly.

Unilever is implementing a zero-discharge policy and working towards achieving zero liquid discharge.

Effective water replenishment techniques are crucial in areas where water is scarce. As a member of the Managed Aquifer Recharge committee, we are working with the

government to ensure proper tracking and reporting of water replenishment efforts by companies.

Raising awareness is also essential to promote responsible water use among consumers. Unilever is collaborating with a2i to develop a data-driven programme called the Water Innovation Challenge, recognising the importance of data in driving behavioral change.



Saber Hossain Chowdhury, Member of Parliament and Chairman, Parliamentary Standing Committee on Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

The government of Bangladesh recognises the importance of private and public partnerships and encourages their collaboration. However, attracting the private sector to invest in adaptation projects can be challenging due to the low returns on investment. Despite this, exploring options to mobilise private sector finance should be a priority.

One major challenge in managing water resources in Bangladesh is the lack of a water use intensity matrix, which makes it difficult to accurately identify how much water is being used by industries and consumers. Additionally, food production is a significant water-intensive activity, globally accounting for almost two-thirds of all water consumption.

It is impossible to achieve a sustainable Bangladesh without sustainable water governance and management. A sustainable mindset should be mainstreamed in policymaking, and there should be incentives and strict enforcement against those who break rules to encourage behaviour change. Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is a novel legislation that could be implemented in Bangladesh to ensure that producers are held accountable for the lifetime use of their goods and any harm they cause to the environment.

Currently, Bangladesh's economy operates under a linear model of “take, make, and waste,” which is unsustainable. The focus should be on shifting to a circular economy model that prioritises sustainability.

When it comes to changing behaviour, a one-size-fits-all approach is not suitable. Instead, municipalities and smaller communities should be given more focus. In Chattogram, 70% of waste is being collected, and Dhaka is close to reaching 60%. However, the overall waste collection rate in Bangladesh is only 50%, which is a cause for concern in terms of public health. Proper segregation of waste at the source is crucial for effective waste management.



Tanjim Ferdous, In Charge of NGOs and Foreign Missions at the Business Development Team, The Daily Star

The purpose of today's roundtable was to introduce a sustainable approach to urban water management that will strengthen partnerships and achieve sustainable urban services. We explored how different urban sanitation approaches can contribute to making urban water cycles sustainable, as well as the climate and gender sensitivity issues associated with these approaches. It is my hope that this discussion will significantly contribute to improving urban water management in Bangladesh.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Achieving sustainable urban water cycle systems in cities requires a long-term planning and increased budget allocation for the sector ensuring equitable distribution.
- Establishing public-private partnerships can be a vital means of scaling up sustainable urban water cycle systems.
- IMIS to strengthen governance, regulation, enforcement, and monitoring capacity of the municipal authorities.
- Support cities for the preparedness for city-level floods and droughts to reduce water-related risks and hazards.
- An intersectoral approach could be adopted to address water issues.
- Implement a pro-poor tariff structure for urban water, sanitation and waste management services to promote conservation and equitable access.
- Adopt Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) policy to encourage producers to ensure circularity of treatment, reuse, and recycling the wastes.
- Promote health and safety of the waste workers to effectively manage urban services to make the urban water cycle sustainable.



A MEGA LEAP for transport

Govt to open 7 projects in Sept-Oct; AL to showcase them in campaign for general elections; expert urges building capacity for operations



DHAKA ELEVATED EXPRESSWAY (PARTIAL)

Possible opening in September
TOTAL COST: Tk **13,857.57** crore
DURATION: July 2011-June 2024



METRO RAIL (MRT-6 SECOND PHASE)

Possible opening in late October
TOTAL COST: Tk **33,472** crore
DURATION: July 2012-Dec 2025



BANGABANDHU TUNNEL

Possible opening in September
TOTAL COST: Tk **10,690** crore
DURATION: Nov 2015-Dec 2023



DHAKA-BHANGA-JASHORE RAIL LINE (PARTIAL)

Possible opening in September
TOTAL COST: Tk **39,246.80** crore
DURATION: Jan 2016-June 2024



DHAKA AIRPORT'S THIRD TERMINAL (PARTIAL)

Possible opening in October
TOTAL COST: Tk **21,399** crore
DURATION: July 2016-June 2025



CHATTOGRAM-COX'S BAZAR RAIL LINE

Possible opening in late September or early October
TOTAL COST: Tk **18,034.48** crore
DURATION: July 2010-Jun 2024



KHULNA-MONGLA RAIL LINE

Possible opening in September
TOTAL COST: Tk **4,260.88** crore
DURATION: Dec 2010-Oct 2024

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Transport in Bangladesh is going to have a huge boost when seven mega projects open to the public in the next two to three months.

The projects include the country's first underwater tunnel and elevated expressway.

The Dhaka-Bhanga and Khulna-Mongla rail lines, the Bangabandhu Tunnel under the Karnaphuli, and a major part of the Dhaka Elevated Expressway are expected to open in September.

The Chattogram Cox's Bazar rail line would be opened either in late September or early October.

In October, the opening of the second phase of metro rail line-6 (from Agargaon to Motijheel) and the partial launch of the third terminal of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport are expected.

All these are opening just months before the national election, and the ruling party is sure to showcase these across the country as evidence of its achievements.

However, not all of them will

be fully functional on launch day as some work, including hiring manpower to run them, will remain incomplete. The three rail projects require over 3,000 employees and none of them have been hired yet.

Sources claim that the project authorities picked the time for the openings based on two things. They wanted to avoid August as the Awami League stays away from celebrations in the month of national mourning. They did not want to leave it too late since an election-time government may have a small cabinet.

The projects will significantly enhance transport and communications.

Transport expert Prof Hadiuzzaman said once these projects are opened, the country's capacity to transport people and goods will multiply. They will ultimately reduce cost and travel time.

Cost and deadline overruns in most of the projects wasted public money, but the projects will deliver economic and financial benefits for a long time, he said.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

AL, BNP to march city streets today, tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With the national polls around six months away, the Awami League and the BNP are going to hold programmes and counter-programmes today and tomorrow to show off their strength on the streets.

The BNP will today march from Gabtoli to Jatrahari from 10:00am to 4:00pm in the capital and bring out processions in other cities and districts to realise its one-point demand for polls under a non-party interim government.

Sources in the BNP said instructions were given to all Dhaka north and South city units to ensure huge gatherings.

To counter BNP's programme, ruling Awami League will bring out what it termed "a march for peace and development" in the capital.

At 3:00pm today, Dhaka city (South) AL will bring out a procession from Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh, that will end at Dhanmondi 32. AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader will join the programme.

The unit is planning to gather over a lakh people in the event.

Besides, all city and districts units under Rajshahi, Chattogram, Barishal and Sylhet will bring out processions on the same time.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



Hero Alom, an independent candidate in the Dhaka-17 by-polls, was assaulted by some people wearing AL's electoral badges while visiting the Bidyaniketan School and College polling centre in the capital's Banani yesterday afternoon. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Attack on Hero Alom, 12pc turnout mark Arafat's win

STAR REPORT

Awami League candidate Mohammad Ali Arafat won the Dhaka-17 by-election yesterday which was marred by an attack on independent runner Hero Alom and a few stray incidents of irregularities.

Arafat bagged 28,816 votes and his nearest contestant, independent Ashraf Hossain Alom, widely known as Hero Alom, secured 5,609, said Returning Officer Monir Hossain Khan while announcing the unofficial results around 9:00pm.

The turnout was 11.51 percent.



Mohammad Ali Arafat

Six other candidates, including main opposition Jatiya Party's Sikdar Anisur Rahman, lost their security deposits as they failed to bag one-eighth of the total ballots cast.

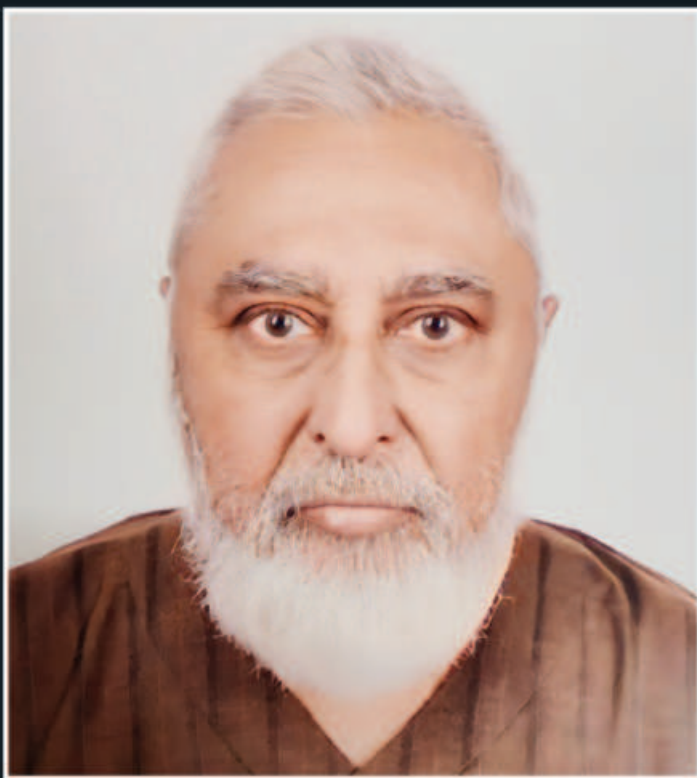
Fake votes were cast in at least one polling centre while "dummy polling agents" were there in many others. Many agents couldn't even tell for

whom they were working.

Halfway through the polling, independent candidate Md Tarikul Islam announced quitting the by-election alleging that there was no environment

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

We Deeply Mourn



Mahmud Hossain Choudhury

18 March 1939 – 13 July 2023

ONE Bank Family deeply mourns the sad demise of Mr. Mahmud Hossain Choudhury, First Chairman of ONE Bank Limited. He breathed his last on Thursday, 13 July, 2023 (Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Ilaihi Razi'un. Truly, to Allah we belong and truly to Him we shall return).

Mr. Mahmud Hossain Choudhury secured First-Class First position in B.Sc. (Engineering) from Ahsanullah Engineering College, now known as BUET, in 1960. He pursued a very colorful career in Bangladesh's Telecommunications sector and retired as the Chairman of the TNT Board in 1997. His Extraordinary Role earned him prestigious "Sher-e- Bangla Award" and "Deshbandhu Award." He embodied wisdom and resilience. He was an avid reader of diverse genres with a particular fondness for detective stories and novels.

We pray for the salvation of the departed soul. We also extend profound condolence to the bereaved family and remember him with much honor and fondness.



ONE Bank
LIMITED

BUSINESS

Will Bangladesh benefit from trade in rupee?

Bangladesh and India began settling cross-border trades in the Indian rupee last week, a development that has been hailed as a landmark for the growing bilateral commerce.

Initially, the scope of making import payments would be limited to the equivalent of Bangladesh's export earnings of around \$2 billion from India. This means it might not immediately provide a fillip to Bangladesh's foreign currency reserve, whose level fell by about 30 percent in the past one year owing to higher import bills against lower-than-expected export and remittance earnings.

STORY ON B1

11 districts get new SPs ahead of polls

Eight of them first-timer in the role

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eleven districts got new superintendents of police yesterday, just around six months before the national election.

Eight of them have been appointed as SPs for the first time, while SPs of three districts have been transferred.

The home ministry issued a notification in this regard.

In another notification, the ministry transferred 13 SP-ranked officers, including the SPs of the 11 districts, to different units. Last month, 13 districts got new SPs.

Earlier this month, the government appointed new deputy commissioners in 28 districts.

The DCs of districts generally play the role of returning officers in the national polls, while SPs are responsible for ensuring law and order during and before the elections.

There are discussions in the political arena that the government is appointing their trusted officials ahead of the general election.

Sources said there will be more changes ahead of the polls.

As per the notifications, signed by Senior Assistant Secretary Md Mahabur Rahman Sheikh of the home ministry's Public Security Division, Special Superintendent of Police of Special Branch Md Azim-Ul-Ahsan has been appointed as Jhenidah SP, Assistant Inspector General Md Monzur Rahman of Police Headquarters Moulvibazar SP, Tourist Police SP Shaikat Shaheen Bandarban SP, SSP of Criminal Investigation Department Mukta Dhar Khagrachhari SP, DMP's Deputy Commissioner Uttam Prashad Pathak Thakurgaon SP, SSP of SBM Abul Kalam Azad Rajbari SP, DMP's DC Abul Hasnat Khan Bagerhat SP, and DMP's DC Mohammad Tarek Bin Rashid Laxmipur SP.

Besides, Bandarban SP Md Tariqul Islam has been transferred to Natore, Sherpur SP Md Kamruzzaman to Jamalpur, and Natore SP Md Saifur Rahman to Rajshahi district.

In a major reshuffle in the police force on Sunday, 16 deputy inspector generals and 35 additional deputy inspector generals were transferred.

There are discussions in the political arena that the government is appointing their trusted officials ahead of the general election.

MONEY LAUNDERING

GK Shamim
jailed for
10 yrs

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced expelled Jubo League leader Golam Kibria Shamim, widely known as GK Shamim, to 10 years in imprisonment in a case filed over laundering Tk 195 crore to Singapore and Malaysia.

His seven bodyguards – Md Delwar Hossain, Md Murad Hossain, Md Jahidul Islam, Md Shahidul Islam, Md Kamal Hossain, Md Samsad Hossain, and Md Aminul Islam – were each sentenced to four years in jail for assisting GK Shamim, a top contractor of government projects, in acquiring the laundered money.

The court also fined

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



FLOOD SITUATION IN NORTH

Some areas remain inundated

People in char areas are hit by food shortage

STAR REPORT

Flood water has started receding in five districts, leaving people in the areas in distress as their houses and crop fields remain inundated.

Those who took shelter at flood centres have started returning home to find their houses damaged.

With the grazing fields still submerged, rearing cattle has become a challenge.

Meanwhile, the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) in its bulletin at 9:00 am yesterday said, “Water of all the major rivers in the north-eastern region of the country is receding, which is likely to continue throughout the next 24 hours.”

Our correspondents from different districts have reported on the sufferings of the flood-hit people.

“We took shelter on the causeway. We starved ourselves and lived in makeshift polythene tents for three days. After returning home on Sunday, we found our house and furniture badly damaged by flood water,” said Afas Ali, 65, of Char Harinchara village in Lalmonirhat

Sadar upazila.

“We have two cows and four goats. As all the grasslands have gone under water, we cannot find anything to feed the cattle,” said Hazrat Ali, 57, a resident of Char Falimari village in the same upazila.

Almost 250 families of Char Falimari village are facing similar problems, said Hazrat.

According to sources in Lalmonirhat and Kurigram administrations, some 16,000 families of 90 char areas have been affected by the floods and fishes of 65 ponds have been washed away in Lalmonirhat; and 15,000 families of 185 chars have been affected in Kurigram along with fishes of 412 ponds being washed away.

“We received around five kilograms of rice as relief. But it is highly inadequate. We are suffering from food crisis,” said a flood-victim Ebadul Islam, 45, at Kisamot Satnai char of Nilphamari’s Dimla upazila.

In Sirajganj, low-lying areas are still submerged even though the Jamuna has been flowing below danger levels since yesterday.

“Water levels of Jamuna River started decreasing since the early

hours of Monday. But it may rise again next week,” said Ranajit Kumar, sub-divisional engineer of Bangladesh Water Development Board in Sirajganj.

Many people are marooned by flood water there.

Sirajganj District Relief and Rehabilitation Officer (DRRO) Md Akhter Hossain said they were preparing a list of flood-hit people for carrying out relief works.

Tara Pramaink, 50, of the Pakhir char of Bogura’s Sariakandi upazila, said, “Our area has remained inundated for the last five days. Both we and our cattle are facing food crisis.”

In Tangail, crops and vegetable fields in some low-lying areas such as Bhanpur, Kalihati, Sadar, Nagarpur and Mirzapur upazilas remained inundated till yesterday.

The officials concerned in the flood-hit districts said they have already distributed dry foods among the flood-victims, who would also be provided with financial assistance.

[Our correspondents from Lalmonirhat, Pabna, Bogura, Nilphamari and Tangail contributed to the report]

Zahangir,
Zaida meet
Hasina

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

Gazipur City Corporation Mayor Zaida Khatun sought Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina’s directives on running the city and asked the PM to look after her son former GCC mayor Zahangir Alam yesterday.

The two met the PM at the PMO around 3:30pm.

Hasina assured the mayor of taking care of Zahangir, sources said.

The Awami League nominated Azmat Ullah Khan for GCC mayor in May. Zahangir also filed nominations for himself and his mother to run for mayor as independents.

After the EC scrapped his nomination, he started campaigning for Zaida who eventually won.

Zahangir became GCC mayor in 2018. He was expelled from the Awami League and suspended as mayor in November, 2021, after a video clip of him went viral.

3 sent to jail for rape

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinaipur

A Rangpur court yesterday sent three people to jail for raping a woman and filming the act in Rangpur city’s Haragachh area.

Gonesh Roy, 35, Ershad Ali, 27, and Ratan Mia, 27, were arrested on Sunday.

According to Komal Mohanta, sub-inspector of Haragachh Police Station, the three broke into the woman’s house in Sonalipara village Sunday night.

Finding her home alone, Ershad and Gonesh raped her while Ratan filmed the act.

As the housewife screamed for help, locals rushed in and caught the three. Later that night, they were handed over to Haragachh Police Station.

The victim’s husband filed a case against the three on the same night.

80,000 yaba pills seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Police yesterday arrested a young man with 80,000 yaba pills from the Dhaka-Chattogram Highway in Narayanganj’s Kanchpur area.

Md Aktaruzzaman alias Dilshan, 25, from Nilphamari Sadar, is a member of a drug racket and has several narcotics cases filed against him, said police.

Acting on a tip-off, police conducted a drive on the east side of the Kanchpur Bridge area and detained Dilshan with the contraband drugs that he was carrying from Chattogram to Dhaka, Golam Mostofa Russel, district superintendent of police, told a press conference.

A case will be filed in this connection, said Ahsan Ullah, inspector of Sonargaon Police Station.

2 kids drown in pond

UNB, HABIGANJ

Two children drowned in a local pond at Dalgaon village in Madhabpur upazila of Habiganj yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Arif, 5, son of Zahirul and Karima, 7, daughter of Najir Mia of the village.

Mujibur Rahman, in charge of Mantala Police Camp, said Arif and Karima drowned while playing near the waterbody around 10:30am.

After noticing that their children were missing, their parents started searching for them and found their dead bodies floating in the local pond, he added.

A pall of gloom descended on the area following the death of the two children.

‘Drug dealer’ arrested
with 2kg heroin

BSS, Rajshahi

Rab detained a suspected drug dealer with 2kg heroin in Chapainawabganj Sadar upazila early yesterday.

Badiqul Islam, 55, of Char Kodalkati village, was apprehended from his home.

He along with the seized contraband was handed over to Chapainawabganj Sadar Police Station.

A narcotics case was filed in this connection.

A mega leap for transport

FROM PAGE 1

“These projects will bring revolutionary changes in the country’s transport and communication sector if effective operations with skilled manpower and modern technology can be ensured,” he told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said operations of the new infrastructure, including tunnel and expressway, are complicated and the transport agencies do not have the capacity to handle them effectively.

“The capacity of the agencies has to be increased manifold ...,” he added.

Six projects are being implemented with either loans from the ADB, India, China, and Japan, and the expressway is being built with foreign investments. All seven projects, however, saw cost and deadline overruns.

BANGABANDHU TUNNEL

Work on the 9.1km Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Tunnel under the Karnaphuli is almost done.

“We are planning to open the tunnel in September ensuring all safety and security,” said Monjur Hossain, executive director of Bangladesh Bridge Authority, the implementing agency of the project.

Work on installing under-vehicle scanners is expected to be completed by this month, the last major works before the opening, he told this newspaper on July 13.

The BBA has already hired a contractor for running and maintaining the tunnel and fixed tolls for vehicles.

The tunnel, the first of its kind in South Asia, will ease communications between Dhaka, Chattogram and Cox’s Bazar.

After revisions, the cost of the project rose to Tk 10,690 crore from Tk 8,446.64 crore. The project is being completed just under two years behind schedule.

DHAKA ELEVATED EXPRESSWAY

A major part of the Dhaka Elevated Expressway, the first of its kind in Bangladesh, will be opened in September, about 12 years after the project was launched.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will inaugurate the 11km section from the airport to Farmgate, Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader said on July 8.

Around 90 percent of the work for the airport to Farmgate section is done, said Project Director AHMS Akhtar.

The remaining 8.73km will be opened next year.

The project, implemented under Public Private Partnership model, is expected to ease congestion in Dhaka city.

Even though the PM inaugurated the construction work in 2011, the formal construction work began on January 1, 2020, when the 25 years of concession period for the contractor started.

In January 2011, the BBA signed a deal with a Thai company to build the expressway at a cost of Tk 8,703 crore. The deal was later revised and the cost rose to Tk 8,940 crore.

The government is to spend another Tk 4,917.57 crore on land acquisition and other work.

DHAKA-BHANGA-JASHORE RAIL LINE

The 169km rail line from Dhaka to Jashore via Padma Bridge will significantly improve rail connectivity with the southwest.

“We have a target to open the Dhaka-Bhanga section within September ...,” Project Director Afzal Hossain told this correspondent yesterday.

He said the Dhaka-Mawa section was 80 percent and the Mawa-Bhanga section was 95 percent complete until June.

The Prime Minister’s Office has asked Bangladesh Railway to complete the section by September 1, sources said.

Afzal said they would be able to open Mawa, Padma (Janjira), and Shibchar stations, out of the eight new stations between Dhaka and Bhanga, in September.

The rail line down to Jashore is expected to be built by June next year. The line will halve travel time from Dhaka.

KHULNA-MONGLA RAIL LINE

The 64.75km broad-gauge rail line between Khulna and Mongla is expected to give a big boost to internal and regional railway connectivity.

“We hope to complete the work by August and it would be ready for opening in September,” a project

official said.

BR is finishing the project almost a decade behind schedule.

Even though it was initiated in 2010, the physical work began around six years after approval, driving up the project cost to Tk 4,260.88 crore from Tk 1,721.39 crore.

The line will connect Mongla Port with the rest of the country and neighbouring nations boosting trade.

CHATTOTGRAM-COX’S BAZAR RAIL LINE

The dual-gauge line from Chattogram to Cox’s Bazar will connect the tourist town with the rest of the country by rail. Dhaka to Cox’s Bazar train service is being planned.

“We hope to open the 100km line by late September or early October,” Project Director Mofizur Rahman told this newspaper on July 10.

He, however, said three, out of nine new stations, may not be completed by then and that they expect all work to be done by December.

The government in 2010 had decided to lay a metre-gauge rail line from Chattogram to Gundhum in Cox’s Bazar spending Tk 1,852.35 crore. It later changed its mind and decided to have the dual-gauge line down to Cox’s Bazar town. The cost shot up to Tk 18,034.47 crore.

DHAKA METRO RAIL

The second phase—from Agargaon to Motiheel—of the country’s first metro rail will be opened in late October, Quader said on July 7, when the test runs on the line started.

Initially, Farmgate, Secretariat (Jatiya Press Club), and Motiheel stations will be opened.

The 21.26km Uttara to Kamalapur line is being implemented at a cost of Tk 33,472 crores.

HSIA 3RD TERMINAL

The terminal’s interior is now being built and, as of June, around 77 percent of the work is done.

The terminal, being implemented under a Tk 21,399 crore project, will be fully functional by 2024.

The authorities are opening the terminal partially in October this year.

Once opened, the airport will be able to deal with 20 million passengers a year from the existing 8 million.

Attack on Hero Alom, 12pc turnout mark

FROM PAGE 1

for fair polls.

Supporters of Arafat, wearing badges of “boat”, the AL’s electoral symbol, were seen inside many polling stations and their entrances to centres.

Police barred a few journalists from carrying out their duties inside polling booths in at least two centres.

Apart from these incidents, the election was by and large peaceful. Voting began at 8:00am and continued till 4:00pm.

Reporters and photojournalists of The Daily Star visited at least 64 out of total 124 polling stations.

The Dhaka-17 (Gulshan, Banani, Cantonment and Bhasantek) parliamentary seat fell vacant following the death of AL lawmaker Akbar Hossain Pathan, an actor popularly known as Farooque, in May.

ATTACK ON HERO ALOM

Supporters of the AL candidate, wearing badges of “boat”, assaulted Hero Alom after forcing him to leave the polling centre at Banani Bidyaniketan School and College in Banani around 3:20pm.

Before heading towards the polling booths, the independent runner took selfies with some fans at the school playground. All of a sudden, 50 to 60 people wearing badges of “boat” came towards Hero Alom and said that it was not a place to shoot TikTok videos.

As the situation worsened, police escorted him towards the main gate of the polling centre.

As Alom was about to leave the place, the ruling party men shoved him from behind and beat him up.

Police said they detained four people.

Returning Officer Monir Hossain Khan later told reporters that Alom went to the polling centre with 50-60 people and the law enforcers took him out to maintain law and order.

“We will probe the incident after collecting footage and take action against those responsible,” he added.

Earlier, Alom expressed doubt about fair polls alleging that his agents were driven out of different polling centres.

‘DUMMY AGENTS’

At least 80 polling agents, other than those of the AL nominee, were unable to identify their candidates.

The Daily Star correspondents visited 65 polling centres yesterday.

Some “agents” claimed that their local

“elder brothers” hired them to discharge duties as polling agents.

Morium, a polling agent at booth-5 at the Banani Model School polling centre initially told this newspaper that she didn’t know which candidate she was representing.

After a brief pause, she said that she was working for “Mr Labu”.

As she was told that there was no candidate named Labu, Morium responded, “Labu brought me here.”

Later, the polling agent for the AL candidate asked Morium to say that she was representing Jatiya Party candidate Sikdar Anisur Rahman.

Like Morium, many other polling agents struggled to name the candidates they were working for when correspondents of this newspaper asked them.

After seeking help from the polling agents of the AL nominee, they claimed to be the agents of either the JP or the Jaker Party nominee.

At the polling centre at Manarat International School and College, a man was seen inside booth-2. He introduced himself as Humayun Kabir, a leader of Swechchhasebak League, the volunteer wing of the AL.

Enquired by this newspaper about what he was doing inside the booth, he kept mum.

A polling agent, who was sitting next to Humayun, claimed that the latter was an agent of Hero Alom.

Asked which candidate he was representing and what was the candidate’s electoral symbol, Humayun could not say.

He went out of the polling booth and asked another man whether he knew whose polling agent he was.

“You are an agent of Hero Alom,” said the man wearing a “boat” badge.

LOW TURNOUT

There was a significant difference between posh and poor neighbourhoods in terms of turnout.

Polling centres in Cantonment and Gulshan areas saw a thin presence of voters. Polling officials were seen waiting idly for voters.

At the four polling booths in Adamjee Cantonment College, only 182 out of total 11,257 votes were cast by 1:15pm.

A similar picture was seen at BAF Shaheen College, where only 100 out of 3,394 ballots were cast till 3:30pm.

However, at the polling centre at

Jamia Mohammadia Islamia Karail T&T Colony Madrasa, located at the heart of Karail slum, the voters’ presence was comparatively higher.

At least 1,001 votes out of total 10,147 were cast till noon.

FAKE VOTES

At least 100 people who are not voters of Dhaka-17 casted ballots at the Jamia Mohammadia Islamia Karail T&T Colony Madrasa polling centre, a correspondent of this paper saw. They were seen with a list of voters who had not cast their ballots.

During their two-hour stay towards the end of voting at the centre, the correspondent also saw the same persons voting several times.

Many also took photos of their casting fake votes for “boat”.

The Daily Star found a large number of AL supporters gathering in front of the polling centres.

EC’S REACTION

Election Commissioner Md Alamgir yesterday termed the attack on Hero Alom “unfortunate and unexpected”.

Briefing reporters at the EC after the by-election, he said the voting was free, fair, and peaceful.

“The by-election took place in 124 polling centres. You can’t say that the by-election was not free and fair only by analysing the incident that occurred in one centre,” he added.

‘WON’T RUN AGAIN’

Speaking at a press conference at his home in the capital, Alom said he won’t take part in any election under the incumbent government.

“If the polling environment turns out to be like this, if the candidates are attacked, then there is no need to participate in any upcoming elections,” he said after returning home from hospital.

He said the attack on an independent candidate has proved that no fair election can be held under the incumbent government.

He also alleged rigging of votes, but didn’t provide details.

‘ATTACK UNACCEPTABLE’

AL candidate Arafat said, “I think it [the attack] is very much unacceptable. I think a quarter tried to make the election controversial. I urge the Election Commission and the law enforcement agencies to bring the attackers, no matter who they are, to book following a fair investigation.”

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Saree made from banana plant fibre gifted to PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday received Kolaboti sarees and handicrafts, all made from banana plant fibre.

Bandarban Deputy Commissioner Yasmin Parveen Tibriji handed over three such sarees and two jewellery boxes to the PM at the cabinet room of the Prime Minister's Office.

The Kolaboti sarees were first created by Radhavati Devi, a member of the Manipuri community in Moulvibazar, using the fibre of banana plant.

Anjali Devi and Dutta Singh, weavers from Bandarban, made the three sarees that were gifted to the prime minister. Besides, a special Machang model of a residential shelter in hilly areas, district brand calendar and brand book were also presented to the prime minister by the deputy commissioner.



Holding a Kolaboti saree made from banana plant fibre, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina poses for a photograph at the cabinet room of the Prime Minister's Office yesterday. Anjali Devi and Dutta Singh, weavers from Bandarban, made three such sarees and handicrafts, which were gifted to the premier by Bandarban Deputy Commissioner Yasmin Parveen Tibriji.

PHOTO: PID

'MY VILLAGE MY TOWN'
Bringing urban facilities to the rural areas
Six govt-funded projects to be placed at Ecneec today

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and JAMIL MAHMUD

The government is going to undertake a project under which modern urban facilities will reach 15 villages under 15 upazilas of as many districts.

The "My village-my town: Pilot village development" project will be implemented as per the ruling party's electoral pledge to bring modern urban facilities to the country's rural areas.

"Gradually, all of the country's villages will be brought under modern urban facilities," as per the planning commission's remarks mentioned in the project proposal.

Proposals of the project and five other projects, all of which will be financed from the government's own fund, will be placed before the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecneec) meeting today for approval.

The six projects will cost an estimated Tk 8,750 crore.

The six projects are "My village-my town: Pilot village development", "Building Sylhet Medical University", "To reclaim water flow of the Jhenai, Ghaghat, Bangshi and Nagda rivers, ensuring water flow in the dry season, river route development and flood management", "Distribution of water of the Padma river in the Barind

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Student stabbed to death by 'muggers'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A college student died after being stabbed allegedly by muggers in Dhaka's Dhanmondi area on Sunday night.

The deceased, 18-year-old Adnan Sayed Rakib, was an HSC candidate studying in Ideal College in Dhanmondi.

The incident took place around 10:30pm near the playground of Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club, police said.

Adnan along with his friend went to the area from his house on Green Road to have a cup of tea.

Some other youths arrived at the spot and demanded that the two friends hand over their valuables, and at one stage stabbed Adnan in the throat, said Sub-inspector Alamgir Hossain of Dhanmondi Police Station, quoting the friend.

After the muggers

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

18-40 age group the worst-affected

DMCH overwhelmed by dengue patients

HELEMUL ALAM

Sazedur Rahman, 40, a resident of Gaibandha, had been suffering from fever since the last week of June.

He was admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital two days ago after receiving treatment at Gaibandha Sadar hospital and a city hospital in Abdullahpur.

"After coming here, the patient is getting better," said Shah Alam, a close relative of Sazzad.

"We went to the Sadar hospital initially but he was there for one night as they referred him to Dhaka for better treatment. We then took him to a hospital in Dhaka's Abdullahpur where doctors gave him 10 different kinds of tests. Later, we decided to bring him to DMCH as his condition was not improving," said Sazzad.

Like Sazedur, a huge number of dengue patients, a good number of whom are from outside Dhaka, are undergoing treatment at the hospital. Many of them are being

treated on the hospital floors and corridors.

Around 300-400 patients come to DMCH's medicine wards every day, 70 to 80 percent of whom are



11,213 (highest) of the 22,467 infected and 47 (highest) of the deceased belong to the age group 18-40. Of the other patients, 3,576 are aged 10-18; 3,547 between 40 and 60; 919 between 60 and 80; and 81 over 80 years.

dengue patients, informed a on-duty doctor, preferring anonymity.

"We do not send back patients who are in a critical condition. However, patients, who are

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

YUNUS PETITIONS
Hearing deferred till July 23

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday deferred till July 23 the hearing of three leave to appeal petitions filed by Nobel laureate Muhammad challenging a High Court verdict that justified the decision of imposing tax on the money gifted by him to his three charitable trusts.

A four-member bench of the SC headed by Chief Justice Hasan Foez Siddique passed the order following a time prayer moved by Md Taufique Hossain, advocate on record for Yunus in this case.

On May 31, the HC delivered the verdict saying that the decision of imposing tax on the money gifted by Yunus to his three charitable trusts is legal.

The HC verdict means that Yunus will have to pay around Tk 12 crore as tax on the money he donated

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

'Remove legal handcuffs off ACC'
TIB asks govt to amend Money Laundering Prevention Rules 2019

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) has asked the government to amend the Money Laundering Prevention Rules 2019 immediately to restore the Anti-Corruption Commission's power to investigate money laundering related offences.

The 2019 amendment not only curtailed ACC's power but also protected money launderers, believes TIB.

The government should reinstate the ACC's power to investigate money laundering related offences that include documents forgery, laundering local and foreign currencies, tax evasion and anomalies in stock market.

IFTEKHARUZZAMAN
TIB Executive Director

In a statement yesterday, TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman said the ACC was established with a specific aim but through several legal and administrative reforms its power is curtailed.

The role of the ACC, which is a specialised organisation, is inevitable to prevent money

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

WATERBUS CAPSIZE
Six held from bulk carrier

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police have detained six persons from the sand-laden bulk carrier that hit and sank a waterbus in the Buriganga near Keraniganj on Sunday night, killing at least three passengers.

"We detained them from the bulk carrier. We are now verifying who among them were staffers of the vessel," Sub-inspector Rezaul Karim of Sadarghat River Police told The Daily Star.

A case will be filed in this regard, he added.

Rescue ship MV Rustom dragged up the waterbus from the riverbed around 8:00am yesterday, 12 hours after it sank.


Fire official recovered three bodies from the waterbus on Sunday night.

PRAYER
TIMING

JULY 18

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4-15	12-45	5-00	6-55	8-17
JAMAAT 4-50	1-15	5-15	7-00	8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



DHAKA AIRPORT
26kg gold paste found in aircraft

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 26 kilogrammes of gold in paste form was recovered from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka yesterday morning.

A joint team of customs and National Security Intelligence carried out the drive on an Emirates aircraft, flight EK 584, that arrived from Dubai and recovered the gold paste from under 11 seats, said Md Imtiaz Hassan, joint commissioner of Dhaka Customs House.

The gold paste was in 98 egg-shaped balls wrapped in scotch tape. The gold is worth around Tk 30 crore, he told The Daily Star.

None was detained as the gold was found abandoned, the customs official said.

Meanwhile, customs officials detained three people in another drive last evening and recovered three gold bars and some ornaments totaling 3.6kg from their possession.



PHOTO: COLLECTED



Commuters on Airport Road had to face long tailbacks throughout yesterday. Even though such a situation has become a norm in the area, the by-polls to Dhaka-17 exacerbated people's sufferings.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Classify child Bringing urban

FROM PAGE 5
such work suffer from physical and mental torture, leading a miserable life.”
“Until a law prohibits the employment of child domestic workers and recognises it as hazardous, children’s rights will not be achieved,” Uchiyama added.

Shabnaz Zaherin, child protection specialist of Unicef Bangladesh, Saidul Islam, program officer of International Labor Organization, Nasima Akhter Jolly, secretary of National Girls’ Advocacy Forum, and Mohsinul Karim, chief reporter of Daily Observer, also spoke at the event.

Hearing

FROM PAGE 3
to his trusts, Attorney General AM Amin Uddin told reporters on that day.
He said around Tk 15 crore tax was imposed on the donated money in different years and Prof Yunus has deposited over Tk 3 crore to the office concerned before challenging the decisions.

Meanwhile yesterday, a HC bench started hearing on a petition filed by Yunus challenging a labour court order that framed charges against him and three other top officials of Grameen Telecom for allegedly violating labour law.

Yunus is the chairman of Grameen Telecom while the other accused Ashraful Hasan is the managing director, and Nur Jahan Begum and Mohammad Shahjahan are directors.

Student

FROM PAGE 3
fled, Adnan was taken to a nearby private hospital where doctors declared him dead, the SI added.

On information, police sent the body to Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy early yesterday. Parvez Islam, officer-in-charge of Dhanmondi Police Station, said they are investigating the murder and trying to arrest the killers.

FROM PAGE 3
region through double-lifting method and expansion of irrigation”, “Building new food storages and related facilities in different strategic areas of the country”, and “Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Film City (Phase-II)”.
According to the document prepared for today’s Ecneec meeting, the estimated cost for the “My village-my town” pilot project will be Tk 800 crore.

It will be implemented by the LGED and Department of Public Health Engineering under the LGD by June 2026.
Besides, the Sylhet Medical University, to be built in Sylhet’s South Surma upazila, will be built at an estimated cost of Tk 2,036.41 crore. It will be implemented by June 2027.

For the Jhenai, Ghaghat, Bangshi and Nagda rivers project, the government will spend an estimated Tk 4,168.16 crore while the project will be completed by BIWTA by December 2026.
The project areas fall under different upazilas of Rangpur, Gaibandha, Nilphamari, Manikganj, Jamalpur, Dhaka, Gazipur, Tangail, and Sherpur districts.

Meanwhile, by implementing the Padma river water distribution and irrigation in the Barind tract project, the government aims at expanding irrigation to 10,250 hectares of arable lands in the region.

By implementing the project, farmers will be able to harvest crops on arable land three times a year, instead of one. This will ensure production of an additional 1.4 lakh tonnes of crops each year.

The estimated cost for the project is Tk 548.05 crore and the implementation authority is Barind Multipurpose Development Authority.

The project areas are Godagari, Tanore and Poba upazilas of Rajshahi districts while it will be implemented by June 2026.

Also, the government will undertake a project to build 196 new food storages in 131 upazilas (including three city corporations) under 53 districts of eight divisions.

The estimated cost of the project will be Tk 814.5 crore and the implementing authority will be the Directorate General of Food. The project will be implemented by June 2026.

Besides, the “Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Film City (Phase II)” project will be implemented at a cost of Tk 379.91 in Gazipur by December 2024.

At today’s Ecneec meeting, proposals for a total of 17 revised and new projects are likely to be placed for approval.

18-40 age

FROM PAGE 3
Five children aged under five years have died so far. The mortality numbers are seven for patients aged 5-10; 12 for 10-18; 27 for 40-60; 14 for 60-80; and 2 for patients aged 80 years and older.

Brig Gen Md Nazmul Haque, director of DMCH, said 228 dengue patients were treated in the hospital yesterday. The highest number of dengue patients treated in a single day (281) was also recorded this year.

Despite treating 1,200 to 1,300 patients in a single day, the medical wards only have 780 seats, he mentioned.
He also suggested individuals to promptly get tested upon the earliest onset of fever.

Patients with fever should get tested immediately irrespective of whether there are symptoms associated with dengue, including body ache, he added.

Cabinet okays draft nat’l tariff policy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The cabinet yesterday approved the draft National Tariff Policy aiming to make Bangladeshi products more competitive in the international market.

Cabinet Secretary Mahbub Hossain informed this at a press briefing at Secretariat.

The approval came from the meeting chaired by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the PMO.

The cabinet also okayed the draft of Sylhet Medical University (Amendment) Act, 2023 to change its name as Bangamata Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib Medical University, Sylhet.

It also approved the draft of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (Amendment) Act, 2023 in a bid to extend the tenure of its vice chancellor, pro-vice chancellor, and treasurer to four years.

Besides, the cabinet approved the proposal of ratification of the agreement on the New Development Bank, a multilateral bank established by the BRICS states. Bangladesh needs to ratify the agreement as it joined the bank, he said.

AL can not even

FROM PAGE 5

went to a polling station as a candidate. There was hardly any presence of voters. But the AL cadres drove his away from there. They also beat him up.

“We have only one demand: resignation of the government,” he said. “Time has come to liberate the people of Bangladesh... the youth must come

forward to oust this regime,” he said.

“We fought the Liberation War not for this Bangladesh. The young generation has to play a leading role in protecting the country. Khaleda Zia became prime minister three times through struggle. She is still struggling to protect the country,” said Fakhrul.

Bring it back

FROM PAGE 5

Habibun Nahar, deputy minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Ministry, stressed the importance of awareness raising initiatives to control air pollution.

“Even though we need mega projects, they also contribute to the air pollution,” she said.

Syeda Rizwana Hasan, chief executive of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association, said, “Accountability from the administration has to be ensured. DoE can set a roadmap on ways to bring down the PM2.5 level and other such pollutants by

adopting short and long-term strategies.”

“DoE does limited work. However, that too is hindered by other government agencies,” she added.

Prof Adil Mohammed Khan, executive director of Institute for Planning and Development, said “DoE’s new standards legitimise pollution. They must bring back the previous standard.”

Sharif Jamil, coordinator of Waterkeepers Bangladesh, and professors Akther Mahmud and Muhammad Ali Naqi also spoke at the event.

Remove legal

FROM PAGE 3

laundering but the ACC could not play its role due to the Money Laundering Prevention Rules 2019.

“We’ve learnt from reliable sources that an initiative has been taken to amend the rules following ACC’s proposal, which is a positive thing,” he said. The government should reinstate the ACC’s power to investigate money laundering related offences that include documents forgery, laundering local and foreign currencies, tax evasion and anomalies in stock market, he demanded.

The ACC was given power to investigate 27 types of offences related to money laundering in the Money Laundering Prevention Act, 2012.

Its power, however, was later curtailed in the Money Laundering Prevention Rules 2019. As per the rules, the ACC can only investigate money laundering related to “bribery and corruption”.

NSU hosts freshers’ orientation

CITY DESK

North South University hosted its summer semester orientation programme on July 16.

Over 2,600 students have enrolled for bachelor’s programme in 16 departments in four schools (streams). Among them, 66 were awarded merit-based scholarships for their outstanding performance in the admission tests.

The university has also admitted 40 students under their freedom fighter quota. The students admitted under this quota have access to free education throughout their programmes.

The semester-based orientation programme aims to introduce freshers to the university’s culture and approach.

Javed Munir Ahmed, chairman of the university’s trustee board, attended the event as the chief guest. Board member Yasmin Kamal was present as the special guest. The ceremony was presided over by Vice-Chancellor Prof Atiqul Islam.



গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার									
অধ্যক্ষের কার্যালয়									
কুষ্টিয়া মেডিকেল কলেজ, কুষ্টিয়া									
Email: kustiamc@ac.dghs.gov.bd									
নং-এস.১৪.৫০.০০.০৪৫.০১.০০০.২১-৩৬৬৯									
আউটসোর্সিং পদ্ধতিতে জনবল সরবরাহের দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি									
কুষ্টিয়া মেডিকেল কলেজ, কুষ্টিয়ার ২০২৩-২০২৪ অর্থ বছরের জন আউটসোর্সিং (Out Sourcing) এর মাধ্যমে “সেবা গ্রহণ নীতিমালা, ২০১৮” এর অওতায়ে সেবা গ্রহণের নিমিত্তে প্রকৃতি বিধিতে নির্ধারিত পদ্ধতিতে জনবল সরবরাহকারী ঠিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নির্বাচন হইতে নিম্নোক্তকৃত নামে দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাইবে।									
১	মহাপাশ/অধিকার	শাস্ত্রা শিক্ষা ও পরিবার কল্যাণ বিভাগ, শাস্ত্রা ও পরিবার কল্যাণ মহাপাশ/শাস্ত্রা শিক্ষা অধিদপ্তর।							
২	কাজের নাম	আউটসোর্সিং পদ্ধতিতে জনবল সরবরাহের নিমিত্তে ঠিকাদার নির্দেশ।							
৩	দরপত্রের সূত্র নং ও তারিখ	শাস্ত্রা নং- ৫৯.০০.০০০০.১০৯.১১.০৪৫.২০-৬৬৭ তারিখ ০৪/০৭/২০২৩খ্রিঃ							
৪	দরপত্র গ্রহণের তারিখ	পরিচালক গ্রহণের তারিখ।							
৫	সময় পদ্ধতি	উন্মুক্ত পদ্ধতি (ও.টি.এম.)							
৬	বাস্তব ও প্রকৃত জনবল	জনবল বাস্তব।							
৭	দরপত্র সিদ্ধিউল্লিখিত বিবরণের স্থান, তারিখ এবং সময়	পরিচালক গ্রহণের পর হইতে কুষ্টিয়া মেডিকেল কলেজ, কুষ্টিয়ার অফিস শাখা হতে ০৬/০৮/২০২৩খ্রিঃ তারিখ পর্যন্ত অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে ট্রেনারী চলাচলের মাধ্যমে ১০০০/- (এক হাজার) টাকা কোর নং-১-২৭১১-০০০০-২০৬৬-তে জমাদানপত্রের মূলকপিয়ার প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিজস্ব পায়ে আবেদনের মাধ্যমে দরপত্র সিদ্ধিউল্লিখিত স্থানেই করিতে হবে।							
৮	দরপত্রের মেয়াদ	২০২৩-২০২৪ অর্থ বছরের ০৬/০৮/২০২৪খ্রিঃ পর্যন্ত।							
৯	দরপত্র জামানতের পরিমাণ	দরপত্রের সহিত যে কোন ব্যক্তিগত ব্যাংক হতে “অধ্যক্ষ, কুষ্টিয়া মেডিকেল কলেজ, কুষ্টিয়া” এর অনুমতিতে ২,৩০,০০০/- (দুই লক্ষ বিশ হাজার) টাকা (সেফট্রেন্স) পে-অর্ডার/চেকের ড্রাক্রী মাধ্যমে দাখিল করিতে হবে।							
১০	প্রতিষ্ঠানের যোগাযোগ ও জনবল সরবরাহের অভিভাবকা	(ক) জনবল সরবরাহকারী ঠিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠান হিসাবে যাদনামান নরায়নকৃত ট্রেনারী চলাচল (খ) জাতীয় প্রতিষ্ঠানসহ জনবল সরবরাহের জাতীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, যাদনামান ও অধ্যক্ষের পরিচালিত যাদনামান সনাক্তপত্র (গ) দরপত্র প্রতিষ্ঠানের বিপরীত এক বা একাধিক বছর সরকারী/আধা-সরকারী/পারিভ্রাণিত প্রতিষ্ঠানে কাজ করত অভিভাবকা করিতে হবে।							
১১	দরপত্র দাখিলের স্থান, তারিখ ও সময়	কুষ্টিয়া মেডিকেল কলেজ, কুষ্টিয়ার “অধ্যক্ষ”-এর অফিস নকশে করিতে হবে ০৭/০৮/২০২৩খ্রিঃ তারিখ সকাল ১০.০০ ঘটিকা হইতে বেলা ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত দাখিল করা যাবে।							
১২	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ, সময় ও স্থান	০৭/০৮/২০২৩খ্রিঃ তারিখ বেলা ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা অধ্যক্ষ এর কার্যালয়, কুষ্টিয়া মেডিকেল কলেজ, কুষ্টিয়া (দরপত্রাধিকারের সময়ে যদি বেলা উপস্থিত থাকেন।)							
ক্রম নং	দরপত্রের নাম	দরপত্রের সংখ্যা	পুরুষ/মহিলা	ক্যাটাগরি	সর্বোচ্চ বেতন	রাজস্ব/অর্থ	শিক্ষার যোগ্যতা	অভিভাবকা	
১	ইন্ডেন্ট্রিশিয়ান	০১	পুরুষ	১	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	ক) অইম শৌখী পাল এবং (খ) কোন বীকৃত ইনসিটিউট হতে সফ্টওয়্যার নিয়ন্ত্রক (ও.টি.এম.) মাধ্যমে ট্রেনারী চলাচল সম্পন্ন করিতে হবে।	যাদনামান আউটসোর্সিং নীতিমালা অনুযায়ী।	
২	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	০১	পুরুষ	২	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	ক) অইম শৌখী পাল এবং (খ) কোন বীকৃত ইনসিটিউট হতে সফ্টওয়্যার নিয়ন্ত্রক (ও.টি.এম.) মাধ্যমে ট্রেনারী চলাচল সম্পন্ন করিতে হবে।		
৩	বাস্তব ও প্রকৃত জনবল	০১	পুরুষ/মহিলা	৪	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল		
৪	সহকারী বাস্তব ও প্রকৃত জনবল	০১	পুরুষ/মহিলা	৫	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল		
৫	সহকারী বাস্তব ও প্রকৃত জনবল	০১	পুরুষ/মহিলা	৬	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল		
৬	সহকারী বাস্তব ও প্রকৃত জনবল	০৫	পুরুষ/মহিলা	৭	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	কোন বীকৃত যোগ্য হতে এসএসসি পাল।		
৭	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	০৬	পুরুষ	৮	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
৮	পরিচালক/অভিভাবকা	০৬	পুরুষ/মহিলা	৯	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
৯	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	০৭	পুরুষ	১০	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
১০	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	০৮	পুরুষ	১১	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
১১	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	০৯	পুরুষ	১২	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
১২	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	০১	পুরুষ	১৩	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
১৩	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	০২	পুরুষ/মহিলা	১৪	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
১৪	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	০৩	পুরুষ/মহিলা	১৫	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
১৫	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	০৪	পুরুষ/মহিলা	১৬	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
১৬	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	০৫	পুরুষ/মহিলা	১৭	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
১৭	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	০৬	পুরুষ/মহিলা	১৮	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
১৮	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	০৭	পুরুষ/মহিলা	১৯	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
১৯	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	০৮	পুরুষ/মহিলা	২০	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
২০	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	০৯	পুরুষ/মহিলা	২১	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
২১	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	১০	পুরুষ/মহিলা	২২	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
২২	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	১১	পুরুষ/মহিলা	২৩	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
২৩	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	১২	পুরুষ/মহিলা	২৪	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
২৪	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	১৩	পুরুষ/মহিলা	২৫	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
২৫	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	১৪	পুরুষ/মহিলা	২৬	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
২৬	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	১৫	পুরুষ/মহিলা	২৭	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
২৭	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	১৬	পুরুষ/মহিলা	২৮	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
২৮	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	১৭	পুরুষ/মহিলা	২৯	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
২৯	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	১৮	পুরুষ/মহিলা	৩০	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
৩০	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	১৯	পুরুষ/মহিলা	৩১	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
৩১	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	২০	পুরুষ/মহিলা	৩২	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
৩২	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	২১	পুরুষ/মহিলা	৩৩	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
৩৩	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	২২	পুরুষ/মহিলা	৩৪	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
৩৪	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	২৩	পুরুষ/মহিলা	৩৫	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
৩৫	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	২৪	পুরুষ/মহিলা	৩৬	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
৩৬	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	২৫	পুরুষ/মহিলা	৩৭	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
৩৭	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	২৬	পুরুষ/মহিলা	৩৮	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
৩৮	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	২৭	পুরুষ/মহিলা	৩৯	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
৩৯	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	২৮	পুরুষ/মহিলা	৪০	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
৪০	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	২৯	পুরুষ/মহিলা	৪১	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
৪১	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	৩০	পুরুষ/মহিলা	৪২	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
৪২	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	৩১	পুরুষ/মহিলা	৪৩	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
৪৩	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	৩২	পুরুষ/মহিলা	৪৪	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
৪৪	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	৩৩	পুরুষ/মহিলা	৪৫	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
৪৫	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	৩৪	পুরুষ/মহিলা	৪৬	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
৪৬	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	৩৫	পুরুষ/মহিলা	৪৭	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
৪৭	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	৩৬	পুরুষ/মহিলা	৪৮	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
৪৮	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	৩৭	পুরুষ/মহিলা	৪৯	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
৪৯	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	৩৮	পুরুষ/মহিলা	৫০	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
৫০	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	৩৯	পুরুষ/মহিলা	৫১	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
৫১	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	৪০	পুরুষ/মহিলা	৫২	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
৫২	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	৪১	পুরুষ/মহিলা	৫৩	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
৫৩	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	৪২	পুরুষ/মহিলা	৫৪	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
৫৪	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	৪৩	পুরুষ/মহিলা	৫৫	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
৫৫	সিস্টেমের ইন্সটিটিউট	৪৪	পুরুষ/মহিলা	৫৬	১৬৩০০/-	১৮-৫৯ বছর	অইম শৌখী পাল।		
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‘AL can not even tolerate Hero Alam’

Fakhrul reiterates demand for govt resignation at Khulna rally

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Khulna

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday said the attack on Hero Alam, an independent candidate in the by-election to Dhaka-17 constituency, was a mockery of democracy.

“It has demonstrated how Awami League has become politically bankrupt. They can’t even tolerate Hero Alam,” he added.

Fakhrul said this while addressing a youth rally in Khulna city’s Sonali Bank Chattar area.

He said the incident has also manifested once again that no fair and impartial election can be held under Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her government.

Fakhrul said Alam
SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir addressing a youth rally in Khulna city's Sonali Bank Chattar area yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Bring it back to previous standards

Speakers tell event on air quality guidelines

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The standard for Particulate Matter (PM 2.5) and Sulphur oxides (SOx) and nitrogen oxides (NOx) emissions has to be restored to their previous indexes, demanded environmentalists at a seminar yesterday.

They made the remarks at a seminar organised by Centre for Atmospheric Pollution Study (CAPS) of Stamford University and Bangladesh Institute of Planners at the BIP auditorium.

According to Ahmed Kamruzzaman Majumder, founding chairman of CAPS under Environmental Science Department at Stamford University, Dhaka ranked as the most polluted city two times in a row in 2019 and 2020.

Around 1.23 lakh people died of air pollution in 2017, shows a Health Effects Institute of US study.

“Earlier, per cubic metre of air would be termed unhealthy if it had over 15 microgrammes of PM 2.5. However, according to the Air Pollution Control Rules-2022, the government has set the standard to 35 microgrammes, more than double of the previous ones. However, WHO has termed the presence of over 5 microgrammes of the substance unhealthy,” he said during his keynote presentation.

He also suggested keeping the standard for sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxide, which is now 200 microgrammes per cubic metre in line with WHO’s standard (40 microgrammes per cubic metre).

The speakers also blamed the extensive use of fossil fuels as one of the reasons for deteriorating air quality.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Classify child domestic work as hazardous

Experts urge govt at seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Children engaged in domestic work face exploitation, oppression, and sexual abuse, and are deprived of their basic needs, said speakers at a seminar yesterday.

The seminar titled “Progress and legal reality of listing domestic work in the list of vulnerable child labour” was jointly organised by Action for Social Development (ASD), Shapla Nir, and Educo Bangladesh at the seminar room of the National Human Rights Commission.

Speaking as the chief guest, Kamal Uddin Ahmed, chairman of the National Human Rights

Commission, said, “Ninety percent of children engaged in domestic work are subjected to various forms of harassment. Stopping this requires collective action.”

“The Human Rights Commission is strongly committed to taking effective measures in this regard. We will communicate the urgency of listing domestic work as hazardous child labour to the authorities concerned,” he added.

Tomoko Uchiyama, country director of Shapla Nir, said, “Domestic work is not included in the list of hazardous child labour.

As a result, children engaged in

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

40pc adults still illiterate

Shows BBS survey on literacy rate

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 40 percent of adults in Bangladesh are still illiterate, according to Bangladesh Bureau of Statistic’s Literacy Assessment Survey 2023 report.

The survey shows 60.77 percent of people aged 15 years and above are literate. Of them, 62.84 percent are male and 58.24 percent female.

BBS revealed the survey at a programme held yesterday at BBS auditorium in the capital’s Agargon.

Anyone who can read, understand, interpret, communicate, and count verbally and in writing is considered literate, explained BBS officials.

Presenting the survey, project director Mostafa Ashrafuzzaman said the number of such people in urban areas is higher (71.06 percent) than that of rural residents (56.12 percent).

A 100-mark test was conducted to calculate the rate. A person is considered functionally literate if they manage to score a minimum of 50 marks, he mentioned.

The rate is 72.97 percent among the younger citizens, aged 7-14 years. Of them, the literacy rate of girls is 76.42 percent, 6.75 percent higher than that of boys, according to the report.

On the other hand, the number of people with functional literacy aged 11-45 this time increased by a good margin to 73.69 percent

(80.35 in urban areas and 65.6 in rural areas), compared to 53.70 percent in 2011.

The picture is the same for all the age groups, according to the survey report.

However, the rate stands at 62.92 for people aged 7 years and older.

The survey was conducted in all districts between January 1, 2021 and June 30, this year.

The survey shows 60.77 percent of people aged 15 years and above are literate. Of them, 62.84 percent are male and 58.24 percent female. The rate is 72.97 percent among the younger citizens, aged 7-14 years. Of them, the literacy rate of girls is 76.42 percent, 6.75 percent higher than that of boys.

Presenting as the chief guest, Planning Minister MA Mannan said, “We improved by a good margin. The girls have been doing better, which is a good sign for the country. But we need to significantly increase the rate to achieve the SDGs,” he added.

Shahnaz Arefin, secretary to Statistics and Informatics Division; Matiar Rahman, director general of BBS; and Uttam Kumar Das, director of Training Division, Directorate of Primary Education, also spoke at the event.

Korean, Swiss envoys present credentials to the president

UNB, Dhaka

Newly-appointed South Korean and Swiss ambassadors to Bangladesh Park Young Sik and Reto Renggli presented his credentials to President Mohammed Shahabuddin at the Bangabhaban yesterday.

President’s Press secretary Joynal Abedin briefed reporters afterwards.

Welcoming the new South Korean envoy, the president said South Korea is one of the major foreign investors in Bangladesh.

He urged South Korean businesses to come with bigger investment in Bangladesh taking advantage of its investment-friendly environment.

The South Korean ambassador said his country is keen to increase bilateral trade and investment with Bangladesh.

He stressed on the exchange of visits by high-level delegations from the public and private sectors of the two countries.

At another ceremony, Swiss envoy Renggli said, “The two countries have cultivated and grown a solid, robust and diversified partnership in a whole range of areas over the last five decades. It will be my privilege to contribute to the further growth of bilateral ties.”

Renggli had previously served as director of the trade office of Swiss industries in Taiwan and as consul general of Switzerland in Hong Kong as well as Edinburgh.

Shahabuddin mentioned about Swiss support and cooperation as a development partner of Bangladesh in the last five years. He said the bi-lateral relations between the two countries will now turn to trade, investment and economic partnership.



PHOTO: STAR



বাংলাদেশ নির্বাচন কমিশন নির্বাচন কমিশন সচিবালয়

নং-১৭.০০.০০০০.০২৫.৫০.০০৩.২২ (অংশ-১)-৭১১

তারিখঃ ১৬ জুলাই, ২০২৩ খ্রিষ্টাব্দ

রাজনৈতিক দল নিবন্ধন বিধিমালা, ২০০৮ এর বিধি ৭ (২) এর অধীন বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা সর্বসাধারণের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাইতেছে যে, বাংলাদেশ জাতীয়তাবাদী আন্দোলন- বি এন এম কে, ঠিকানাঃ বাড়ী নং এইচ-২৩, শহীদ বীর উত্তম জিয়াউর রহমান সড়ক/নিউ এয়ারপোর্ট রোড, মহাখালী, থানা-বনানী, ঢাকা-১২১২, Representation of the People Order, 1972 (PO No. 155 of 1972) এর Chapter VIA এর আওতায় রাজনৈতিক দল হিসেবে নিবন্ধনের জন্য দলের আহবায়ক, ডঃ আব্দুর রহমান এবং সদস্য সচিব মেজর মুহাঃ হানিফ (অবঃ) নির্বাচন কমিশনের নিকট একটি দরখাস্ত পেশ করিয়াছেন। উহাদের প্রার্থিত প্রতীক “নোঙ্গর”।

উক্ত রাজনৈতিক দলের নিবন্ধনের বিষয়ে কাহারও কোন আপত্তি থাকিলে প্রয়োজনীয় দলিলাদিসহ উহার কারণ উল্লেখপূর্বক ২৬ জুলাই, ২০২৩ তারিখের মধ্যে নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর নিকট লিখিতভাবে জানাইবার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হইল।

মোঃ জাহাঙ্গীর আলম

সচিব

নির্বাচন কমিশন সচিবালয়

জিডি-১১২২



বাংলাদেশ নির্বাচন কমিশন নির্বাচন কমিশন সচিবালয়

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তারিখঃ ১৬ জুলাই, ২০২৩ খ্রিষ্টাব্দ

রাজনৈতিক দল নিবন্ধন বিধিমালা, ২০০৮ এর বিধি ৭ (২) এর অধীন বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা সর্বসাধারণের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাইতেছে যে, বাংলাদেশ সুপ্রিম পার্টি (বি.এস.পি) কে, ঠিকানাঃ ৮২ শাহ আলীবাগ (চতুর্থ তলা) মিরপুর-১, ঢাকা-১২১৬, Representation of the People Order, 1972 (PO No. 155 of 1972) এর Chapter VIA এর আওতায় রাজনৈতিক দল হিসেবে নিবন্ধনের জন্য দলের চেয়ারম্যান, শাহাজাদা সৈয়দ সাইফুদ্দীন আহমদ এবং ভারপ্রাপ্ত মহাসচিব বীর মুক্তিযোদ্ধা মোঃ আব্দুল আজিজ সরকার নির্বাচন কমিশনের নিকট একটি দরখাস্ত পেশ করিয়াছেন। উহাদের প্রার্থিত প্রতীক “একতারা”।

উক্ত রাজনৈতিক দলের নিবন্ধনের বিষয়ে কাহারও কোন আপত্তি থাকিলে প্রয়োজনীয় দলিলাদিসহ উহার কারণ উল্লেখপূর্বক ২৬ জুলাই, ২০২৩ তারিখের মধ্যে নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর নিকট লিখিতভাবে জানাইবার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হইল।

মোঃ জাহাঙ্গীর আলম

সচিব

নির্বাচন কমিশন সচিবালয়

জিডি-১১২১

ENTERTAINMENT’S RISING STARS

JUBORAJ SHAMIM’S ‘ADIM’
A triumph of independent filmmaking

“Jaya Apa was very eager to watch the film since its release. However, she couldn’t watch the film in the theatres, but she still attended the film screening in BUET. It’s an achievement for me that I was able to create an urge to watch my film in them”

ANTARA RAISA

When filmmaker Juboraj Shamim embarked on his crowdfunded project *Adim*, he was driven by the conviction that genuine work finds its own path.

“When you do something right and from your heart, your work finds its own course. I was confident about my work, that if I did it the way I envisioned, it would definitely make some waves and it did,” shared Juboraj Shamim.

Confident in his vision, he poured his heart into the film, anticipating its impact. However, disappointment loomed when *Adim* was not selected for prestigious film festivals in Venice and Locarno.

Reflecting on those moments, Shamim admitted, “I questioned whether my film would meet the expectations of the audience. I also had doubts about its release in Bangladesh. Fortunately, everything fell into place, and now the film is thriving.”

Since its release on May 26, *Adim* has been making waves in the industry, garnering praise from noted artistes such as Jaya Ahsan, Nasir Uddin Khan, Imtiaz Barshon, Ashna Habib Bhabna, and Matia Banu Shuku. The film has also received accolades at international film festivals, including the Silver Saint George (Special Jury Award) and Netpack Jury awards at the 44th Moscow International Film Festival.

Shamim expressed his gratitude for the interest shown by renowned stars like Jaya Ahsan and Nurul Alam Atique, highlighting that every film has its specific audience.

“Jaya Apa was very eager to watch the film since its release. However, she couldn’t watch the film in the theatres, but she still attended the film screening in BUET. It’s an achievement



PHOTOS: COURTESY



for me that I was able to create an urge to watch my film in them,” he added.

While mainstream cineplexes discontinued screenings for commercial reasons, Shamim remained undeterred. He opted for an alternative approach, ensuring that audiences from different districts could still experience the movie.

Amidst the positive wave the Bangladeshi film industry is experiencing, Shamim shared his thoughts on the recent Eid releases. Although he hasn’t watched any of the films, he acknowledged the buzz surrounding *Priyotoma* and *Shurongo*.

“Personally, I don’t think I have the ability or talent to make such big-budget commercial films, but I think the industry needs films of different genres. Not all films will be commercial hits, but we have to remember that because of these commercial films, our cinema halls are being rejuvenated,” he said.

Unfazed by the commercial underperformance of *Adim*, Shamim emphasised that he consciously chose this path. “I knew this film wouldn’t attract a large audience or be a commercial hit. My focus was on authenticity and originality. While it may not be commercially successful, it has transcended boundaries and ignited discussions. I am content with the outcome, and truth be told, I believe I will recoup the film’s budget.”

Furthermore, Shamim announced his intention to return the film’s profits to its shareholders.

Adim delves into the lives of slum dwellers, poignantly depicting their relentless struggle for survival and dignity, amidst poverty and deprivation. Shot exclusively in a Tongi slum, the film features a predominantly non-professional cast, adding a layer of authenticity to their portrayals.

As *Adim* continues to amaze the audiences and defy expectations, Juboraj Shamim’s unwavering dedication to authentic storytelling has earned him a place in the industry’s spotlight.



Syed Abdul Hadi
honoured with Bulbul
Ahmed Award

The Bulbul Ahmed Award was established by the Bulbul Ahmed Foundation Trust (BAFT) in fond memory of the renowned actor of the same name, who passed away on July 15, 2010.

Renowned musician Syed Abdul Hadi has been chosen as the recipient of this year’s ‘Mohanayak Bulbul Ahmed Smriti Shommanona 2023’ award by the Bulbul Ahmed Foundation. Currently residing abroad, he will be presented with the prestigious honour upon his return to the country.

Expressing his gratitude, Abdul Hadi stated to the media, “Receiving any award is a tremendous honour and a mark of respect. Bulbul Ahmed was a beloved figure to all of us, and I feel good to be recognised with an award in his memory.”

Actor, singer and
style icon Jane
Birkin dies at 76

Jane Birkin, the British-born actor and singer known for her iconic style and social activism in France, has passed away at the age of 76. Birkin, famous for her musical collaborations with French singer Serge Gainsbourg, including the controversial song *Je t’aime moi non plus*, captivated audiences with her ethereal voice and became a symbol of French chic in the 1960s and 1970s.

Birkin’s death was mourned by fans outside her home in Paris, who remembered her as a poet, singer, and artist.



NEWS

GK Shamim jailed
for 10 yrs

FROM PAGE 2

them Tk 3.83 crore each, in default of which they will have to suffer one more year in jail.

Judge Md Nazrul Islam of the Special Court-10 of Dhaka handed down the sentence with GK Shamim and seven others present in the courtroom.

In the judgment, the judge said the prosecution was able to prove the charges against GK Shamim and others “undoubtedly” and they were given punishment for committing such offences.

Earlier, the prosecution and the defence had completed their arguments and the judge so far recorded statements of 23 prosecution witnesses, including the complainant of the case.

Criminal Investigation Department (CID) submitted a chargesheet against the accused on August 4, 2020.

On November 10 of the same year, the same court framed charges against GK Shamim and his seven bodyguards in the case.

Abu Sayeed, an additional special superintendent of CID’s organised economic crime unit and the investigating officer of the case, said in the charge sheet that Shamim has Tk 337.3 crore in 180 fixed deposit accounts with different banks, two houses in the capital and 52 kathas of land worth Tk 41 crore.

Shamim amassed the wealth through tender manipulation at government departments and extortion at bus terminals and cattle markets, the charge further added.

On September 20, 2019, Rab arrested Shamim on charges of extortion and tender manipulation. His bodyguards were also arrested then.

Later, Rab filed three cases against Shamim with Gulshan Police Station.

On September 25 last year, another Dhaka tribunal sentenced GK Shamim and his seven bodyguards to life in prison in an arms case.

Questions raised over

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secretary is Maj (ret’d) Md Hanif. Both of them are former BNP leaders.

Hanif resigned from BNP’s executive committee in June 2021. Rahman was elected MP with BNP ticket from Barguna-1 in 1996, but later left the party.

BNM Spokesperson and Joint Convener Sarowar Hossain left BNP in 2019.

He denied that their party is involved in any conspiracy.

“The allegation against BNM that it is hatching conspiracy to split BNP is completely false,” he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Asked whether the ruling party is backing them, he said, “Not at all. It is absolutely false.”

BNM insiders said that at least nine out of the 33 central leaders are retired army officers.

The Daily Star visited the BNM office on the capital’s Airport Road around noon yesterday, when there was no one but an office bearer. Locals said the office was rented only recently.

BSP was formed in 2019 and is member of newly floated Islamic Liberal Alliance. According to media reports, BSP organised different programmes last year, where ruling AL MPs and party leaders including Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya and former AL MP Aqa Khan joined either as chief guest or as special guest.

Dhaka University Vice Chancellor Prof M Akhtaruzzaman inaugurated a reception in June this year, after party Chairman Sheikh Shajada Syed Saifuddin Ahmed Maizbhandari got an honorary doctorate degree from Morocco.

Saifuddin Ahmed is also nephew of Syed Najibul Bashar Maizbhandari, chairman of Bangladesh Tarikat Federation, a government ally.

Mohammad Ibrahim Miah, office secretary of the BSP, said that they lean towards the ruling party.

“Leaders of different political parties attend our social programmes,” he told The Daily Star at the party office in Mirpur-1 yesterday.

Meanwhile, Nagarik Oikya Convener Mahmudur Rahman Manna also questioned the EC’s decision to pick these two parties.

“The Election Commission has no impartiality. The constitutional body has now become an affiliate of the ruling party,” he told a press

conference at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

Nurul Haque Nur, president of a faction of Gono Odhikar Parishad, was also present at the programme.

He claimed that there were directives from different agencies on the EC not to allow any party other than these two to get registered. He made similar claims on Sunday.

Election Commissioner Md Alamgir said they do not make decisions based on agency reports.

“In a democratic country, anyone can make a complaint, they have the right to do that. The people of this country should judge how true that claim is,” he told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said that BNM and BSP are set to get registration as they have fulfilled the criteria set by the law.

EU should send

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associated with “terrorist acts” should be banned.

Before the meeting with reporters, the EU delegation had a separate meeting with four editors at the same venue.

The reporters encouraged the delegation to support sending election observers regardless of what the next parliamentary polls may look like.

Daily Jugantor Chief of Correspondents Masud Karim, Channel i Special Correspondent Pantho Rahman, Jamuna Television Special Correspondent Mahfuz Mishu, UNB Special Correspondent AKM Moinuddin and Channel 24 Senior Reporter Morshed Hassib Hasan were present at the meeting.

The visiting delegation started working in Bangladesh on July 2 to assess the situation on the ground ahead of the national election, scheduled to be held in late December this year or early January next year.

The EU delegation, led by Riccardo Chelleri, has held over 70 meetings so far. The team is scheduled to leave Bangladesh on July 23.

A technical team of the EU mission will further discuss the relevant issues with the Election Commission on July 18-19.

The main objective of the mission is to assess the “advisability, usefulness and feasibility” of a possible EU Election Observation Mission for the upcoming parliamentary election, according to the EU mission in Dhaka.

AL, BNP to march city streets today

FROM PAGE 1

The next day, opposition BNP will also march from Uttara’s Abdullahpur to Bahadur Shah Park in the Old Dhaka from 10:00am to 4:00pm.

Party sources said the road march programmes are for ensuring participation of the common people, adding that the fresh programmes will be announced after observing the marches.

On the other hand, AL leaders and activists will start marching from Satrasta intersection of Tejgaon to Mohakhali at 3:00pm.

They will also bring out processions in cities and districts under Rangpur, Dhaka, Khulna and Mymensingh divisions.

At its rally on July 12, the BNP announced that it would march in all city and district headquarters on July

18-19. Later, the AL decided to counter its archrival BNP’s programmes.

Besides the processions, leaders and activists of 24 thanas and 75 wards under Dhaka south unit AL and 26 thanas, 63 wards and one union under Dhaka north unit AL will be at the party offices concerned from the morning on both days and they will be on the lookout for anyone trying to create any unwanted situation.

Patients suffer as doctors go on strike

FROM PAGE 12

on June 15 over an alleged mistake that led to the deaths of Mahbuba Rahman Akhi, 25, and her newborn at the capital’s Central Hospital on June 10.

Mahbuba’s husband Yakub Ali Sumon filed the case with Dhanmondi Police Station and also filed a complaint with Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council.

Due to the strike, doctors did not provide the patients with any consultation services.

Although the outpatient services at some diagnostic centers in Dhaka were continuing, our correspondents from Rajshahi, Mymensingh, Cox’s Bazar, and Shariatpur reported that these services were suspended in those districts.

While visiting 10 private hospitals and diagnostic centers in Dhaka’s Green Road area yesterday afternoon, it was seen that most of them had a lighter patient rush. However, people who came to the hospitals were seen struggling to get services.

On the other hand, patients from facilities with their doctors on strike went to the public hospitals for treatment.

Sources at Bangladesh Shishu Hospital and Institute and Dhaka Medical College Hospital, which are already struggling to accommodate dengue victims, saw a huge rush of new patients, adding to pressure on them.

Suruz Matubbor brought his severely ill wife to a neurologist at Dhaka’s LabAid Hospital from Madaripur yesterday.

With no doctor available at the outpatient department, he asked people at the Healthcare Desk if there

was any alternative option.

“My wife is severely ill. But they [the hospital authorities] said there will be no doctor even tomorrow. I don’t know where to take her,” he told The Daily Star.

Sabbir Ahmed, who brought his father for a brain stroke follow-up, meanwhile, said that his father’s blood was collected for a test that was earlier advised by a doctor. “So we didn’t face any problem.”

Chowdhury Meher-E-Khuda (Dip), Public Relations Officer of LabAid Group, said, “We have our own salaried doctors for diagnostic services. So, we were able to continue those. But doctors at the private chambers suspended their consultation services at the outpatient department.”

Indoor hospital operations, however, continued as usual, he said.

The situations were similar at the nearby Central Hospital, Green Life Hospital, Comfort Diagnostic Center, and SIBL Diagnostic Center.

Meanwhile, our Rajshahi correspondent reported that the strike has mounted pressure on the Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

RMCH Director Brig Gen FM Shamim Ahmed said the pressure was mainly on the pathology department, where they had to hire seven staffers on an adhoc basis to manage the issue.

Aklima Begum, who took her pregnant daughter to Rajshahi from Kushtia, said, “I don’t know what I should do now. Transport expenses are high. I can’t afford another visit this week.”

Our Mymensingh correspondent reported that many patients were suffering due to the strike.

Mujibur came to Chevron Clinical Laboratory, a private clinic in Cox’s Bazar town, to see a heart specialist for his 80-year-old grandfather.

But he had to return home as the doctor, along with others, were on strike.

Our correspondents from Shariatpur, Dinaipur, Narayanganj and Tangail also reported a similar situation.

Be careful

FROM PAGE 12

statements made by BNP about the Awami League.

The recent media hype about a report on imbalanced power deals made by the Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division featured in the discussion. The PM said that it will be investigated who are the vested quarters and the media who want to harm the government, the sources said.

The planning ministry’s evaluation department, the IMED, released a report on May 25, stating that the power sector was developed on a “model of looting”.

After media ran reports, the IMED silently changed its stance, dropping four pages from the report that criticised the power sector business models.

A state minister lamented that files are rarely passed on to him and are approved without his knowledge.

In response, the premier rebuked him and said if he keeps going to office in the afternoon, and shows up to work only twice a week, this is inevitable, the sources added.

She instructed the ministers to give up such habits and run their ministries with leadership.

‘A daydream’ N Korean leader’s sister dismisses talks with US

AFP, Seoul

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un’s powerful sister dismissed the idea of talks with the United States as “a daydream” yesterday, the eve of the first US-South Korean meeting on nuclear deterrence.

North Korea fired its most powerful ballistic missile yet last week, the solid-fuel Hwasong-18 intercontinental ballistic missile, the latest of a string of launches this year.

Seoul and Washington have ramped up defence cooperation in response to the North’s weapons tests, staging joint military exercises with advanced stealth jets and US strategic assets.

They will hold their inaugural meeting of the Nuclear Consultative Group (NCG) in Seoul today, which, according to the presidential office in Seoul, is aimed at “bolstering nuclear deterrence against North Korea”.

CHINA TALKS US envoy calls for ‘urgent action’ on climate

AFP, Beijing

US climate envoy John Kerry held four hours of talks with his Chinese counterpart in Beijing yesterday, calling for “urgent action” as the two countries revived stalled diplomacy on reducing planet-warming emissions.

Climate talks between the two biggest greenhouse gas emitters came to a halt last year after Nancy Pelosi, then-speaker of the US House of Representatives, enraged Beijing by visiting self-ruled Taiwan, which China considers to be part of its territory.

Kerry, a former secretary of state, has enjoyed comparatively cordial relations with China despite Washington and Beijing locking horns over Taiwan and other issues.

Kerry met his Chinese counterpart Xie Zhenhua in Beijing yesterday, with two men speaking for around four hours, CCTV said.

Both countries “must take urgent action on a number of fronts, especially the challenges of coal and methane pollution,” Kerry wrote in a tweet after the talks. “The climate crisis demands that the world’s two largest economies work together to limit the Earth’s warming,” Kerry tweeted.

Mexico intercepts 500 migrants in two days

REUTERS, Mexico City

Mexican authorities on Sunday said they intercepted over 500 migrants in two days in the eastern state of Veracruz as authorities crack down on the transportation of migrants toward the United States in unsafe conditions.

Authorities found 206 migrants abandoned in a tractor-trailer on Saturday in the town of Puente Nacional, Veracruz, a source at the National Migration Institute (INM) said.

The town’s mayor Roberto Montiel wrote on Facebook that “over 180” migrants were found, including women and children, with some of the migrants presenting signs of dehydration.

Earlier on Sunday, the INM reported in a statement that authorities had intercepted 303 migrants in two operations on Friday morning in Veracruz.

At first, authorities found 107 migrants without regular migration status, including 20 minors, in a tractor trailer after it was pulled over on highway.

Six people were arrested for alleged roles in transporting the migrants, who hailed from Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua, the INM’s statement said.

Also on Friday, authorities found 196 migrants, including 19 unaccompanied minors, packed into an improperly parked tractor-trailer detected on a road close to the city of Fortín de las Flores.

Five of the migrants were adults from Guatemala and another five adults from India, the INM statement said, without providing further details.



This video grab taken and released yesterday by the Russian Investigative Committee shows investigators working on the Kerch bridge -- linking Crimea to Russia -- which was heavily damaged following an attack. Russia yesterday said a Ukrainian attack on the bridge linking Moscow-annexed Crimea to the Russian mainland killed a civilian couple and wounded their child.

PHOTO: AFP

Record number of Chinese warships SPOTTED IN WATERS Says Taiwan; analysts say China’s ruling Communist Party continues intimidation campaign against Taipei

CNN ONLINE

A record 16 Chinese warships were spotted in waters around Taiwan in a 24-hour period late last week, the island’s Defense Ministry reported, in what analysts said was the latest sign of an intimidation campaign against Taipei by China’s ruling Communist Party.

The People’s Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) activity in the 24 hours ending at 6:00 am local time Saturday followed exercises earlier last week that saw dozens of Chinese warplanes fly past the median line of the Taiwan Strait and into the key regions of Taiwan’s air defense identification zone (ADIZ).

Over 72 hours in the middle of last week, 73 PLA aircraft either crossed the Taiwan Strait’s median line – an informal demarcation point that Beijing does not recognize but until recently largely respected – or entered the southeastern or southwestern parts of the island’s ADIZ.

During that same period, nine PLA vessels were reported in waters around Taiwan in three consecutive days.

The 16 Chinese ships around Taiwan on Friday into Saturday was the most since the island’s Defense Ministry began providing daily updates of PLA activity around the island in August 2022.

“It is a growing military effort,” Carl Schuster, a Hawaii-based analyst and former director of

operations at the US Pacific Command’s Joint Intelligence Center, told CNN yesterday.

The military operations indicate Beijing’s efforts are twofold, he said.

One, constant PLA activities around the island present its defenders with a range of possible attack routes to design defenses for, and two, to “practice, rehearse and train for the ‘moment’ should it come,” Schuster said.



That moment would be a possible Chinese invasion of Taiwan.

China’s ruling Communist Party claims the self-governing democracy as its territory despite never having controlled it, and has spent decades trying to isolate it diplomatically.

Beijing has not ruled out using force to take control of the island.

Chinese state media on Sunday touted the naval activity, noting the PLAN “breaking the record for the number of vessels deployed in its drills in the region,” in a story in Global Times.

“Analysts said Sunday that the recent intensive exercises

demonstrate the PLA’s capabilities in encircling the island,” the Global Times story said.

Neither Taiwan’s Defense Ministry nor the Global Times article gave details on what PLA warships were in waters around Taiwan.

But Chinese state-run media said the PLA exercises “likely featured amphibious landing training” and the story was

topped with a picture of a PLAN amphibious assault ship it said was taken “during a maritime real-combat training exercise recently.”

Schuster said he expects the PLA to keep increasing the pressure on Taiwan. “We will see more such exercises and next year’s will more complex and larger in terms of units involved and extent of their activities,” he said.

Meanwhile, China yesterday reacted with anger to a planned visit next month to the United States by “separatist” Taiwan presidential frontrunner Vice President William Lai, as the government in Taipei said it saw no reason to overreact to mere transit stops.

PITA’S 2ND PM BID Thai alliance reaffirms backing

REUTERS, Bangkok

An eight-party alliance seeking to form Thailand’s next government reaffirmed its backing for Pita Limjaroenrat to become premier, Pita said yesterday, despite his defeat last week in a parliamentary vote.

Pita, leader of election winners Move Forward, failed in his initial bid to win the requisite support of more than half of the combined lower house and military-appointed upper house or Senate. The legislature will hold another vote tomorrow.

After a meeting with the alliance, Pita said he was confident the Senate could not block his re-nomination for PM.

However, he added if he could not secure more votes from Senate in his second bid, he would let ally Pheu Thai party “take action”.

At the weekend, he raised the prospect of a political ally leading the new government if he fails to become prime minister.

Pheu Thai won the second-largest share of votes in the May 14 election.

Only 13 senators backed 42-year-old Pita in last week’s vote, with the rest voting against him or abstaining, which his party said indicated some were acting under duress.

Heatwaves scorch the globe

US fights numerous wildfires; China logs 52.2 Celsius

AFP, Rome

Temperatures reached new highs yesterday as heatwaves scorched parts of the Northern Hemisphere, triggering health warnings and fanning wildfires in the latest stark reminder of the effects of global warming.

From North America to Europe and Asia, people gulped water and sought shelter from the sweltering heat, with the mercury expected to reach new highs in several places in the next few days.

Europe, the globe’s fastest-warming continent, was bracing for its hottest-ever temperature this week on Italy’s islands of Sicily and Sardinia, where a high of 48 degrees Celsius (118 degrees Fahrenheit) is predicted, according to the European Space Agency.

China reported a new high for mid-July in the northwest of the country, where temperature reached 52.2C in the Xinjiang region’s village of Sanbao, breaking the previous high of 50.6C set six years ago.

In Cyprus, a 90-year-old man died as a result of heatstroke and three other seniors were hospitalised, health officials said.

In Japan, heatstroke alerts were issued in 32 out of the country’s 47 prefectures.

In western and southern states in the US, which are used to high temperatures, more than 80 million people were under advisories as a “widespread and oppressive” heatwave roasted the region. Southern California was fighting numerous wildfires, including one in Riverside County that has burned more than 7,500 acres (3,000 hectares) and prompted evacuation orders.

‘INAPPROPRIATE’ AFFAIR Singapore House Speaker, MP resign

AFP, Singapore

Singapore’s parliament Speaker and a woman MP yesterday resigned over an “inappropriate” affair, plunging the ruling party into further turmoil following a rare high-level corruption probe involving a cabinet minister. Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said he accepted the resignations of Speaker Tan Chuan Jin and MP Cheng Li Hui to “maintain the high standards of propriety and personal conduct” of the People’s Action Party (PAP). He said they were in an “inappropriate relationship” that continued even after he had told them to stop in February. The political drama was the latest development to rock the PAP, which has ruled Singapore uninterrupted for 64 years.

South Korea flood death toll rises to 40

REUTERS, Seoul



South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol yesterday blamed authorities’ failure to follow disaster response rules as the death toll from days of torrential rain rose to 40, including a dozen people found dead in a submerged underpass.

Deluges have pummelled central and southern regions since Thursday as the rainy season that started in late June reaches its peak. The interior ministry has also reported nine people missing and 34 injured across the nation. Twelve deaths occurred in a tunnel in Cheongju, 110km south of Seoul, where 16 vehicles were swamped by a flash flood on Saturday after a river levee collapsed.

Iran shuts education centre over ‘inciting riots’

AFP, Tehran

Iranian authorities have shuttered an educational centre accused of “inciting riots” during last year’s mass demonstrations triggered by the death in custody of a young woman, state media reported yesterday.

Nationwide protests rocked Iran following the September death of a 22-year-old Iranian Kurd, Mahsa Amini, in police custody after her arrest over violating the Islamic republic’s strict dress code.

“We prepared and issued a warrant for the closure of Gaj centre following the directive of the minister of education,” state news agency IRNA quoted Ahmad Mahmoudzadeh, head of Iran’s non-governmental schools, as saying.

Mahmoudzadeh said Gaj had “incited riots” during a Persian literature exam for students, without elaborating.



A woman looks out over “rice field art” - using seven colours of planted rice - of artwork from famous Japanese woodblock artist Shiko Munakata (1903-1975) to mark his 120th birth anniversary; and the oil painting “Girl with a Pearl Earring” by Dutch painter Johannes Vermeer (1632-1675); in the village of Inakadate, Aomori Prefecture, Japan yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Declare emergency over dengue surge

Lack of comprehensive, sustained efforts to control it may prove disastrous

In Bangladesh, often what's more problematic than a problem is our approach to that problem. This is once again the case as we face an unprecedented dengue surge. The numbers of dengue cases and deaths this year have already risen to 20,878 and 106, respectively, way ahead of the peak season, which is typically between August and October. This has triggered fears that this year will be far more catastrophic than 2019 – when 1,01,354 people were infected and 179 died – if appropriate action is not taken.

This is where the bigger problem lies: can the authorities, even after all the disturbing news coming from overwhelmed hospitals, address the situation in the manner that it deserves? Health officials, at a press conference on Sunday, claimed that the situation had not yet reached the level of a public health emergency. Experts, however, disagree, pointing to the fact that dengue has already spread to all but one district in the country. What more do the authorities need to change their approach to the crisis? Waiting for the situation to worsen further before declaring an emergency could prove disastrous.

Such a declaration means acknowledging the gravity of the situation, and will also send a proper signal to the people. It should, in effect, allow for better mobilisation of resources, central coordination, and a quick and unified response. So far, the government's approach has been characterised by sporadic and reactive measures. This is no longer enough, nor is just fogging or spraying. It doesn't also help that government initiatives usually stop when the disease subsides. The fact is, dengue is now a year-round threat – thanks to climate change, unplanned urbanisation, high population density, and a generally unhygienic environment in our cities. So we need to counter it with a year-round, comprehensive response. The absence of such a response, particularly during the November-March period, has allowed the Aedes population to grow disproportionately, setting the stage for the current crisis.

Going forward, the government must establish an integrated vector management system that includes round-the-year monitoring of Aedes mosquitoes and sentinel surveillance, thus enabling targeted and proactive actions. Unfortunately, the formulation of a national vector control policy has been delayed for far too long, despite frequent urgings by experts. The government must expedite the approval of the policy and ensure its proper implementation. Additionally, it must centralise and adequately record dengue patients across all hospitals and clinics so that we have a more accurate picture of the situation.

There is a lot more that needs to be done, but what's most crucial is that the government, city corporations, health authorities, and citizens all come together in the fight against dengue. It is time for proactive, sustained, and integrated efforts to prevent further spread of the disease and keep it contained in the future.

Are we just sitting ducks for hackers?

Protecting personal information of citizens must be a priority for the government

Worrying details about digital data security – or the shocking lack thereof – in different government organisations have been coming out over the past week or so, making us wonder whether the authorities really appreciate the importance of cybersecurity. Most recently, a report published by *Prothom Alo* has revealed the extent to which a number of government websites and servers are vulnerable to breaches. Even calling it a “breach” may be a stretch, as a simple Google search by anyone can apparently bring up personal details of citizens stored on some websites! This is not just a grave security concern, it is also a gross violation of privacy.

The above report mentioned one instance of fraud caused by such digital vulnerability. In 2022, a number of government officials who received grants from the Bangladesh Employees Welfare Board (BEWB) were duped by fraudsters, who stole money from their banks. The fraudsters were able to do that because those officials' personal information was openly listed on the BEWB website. We are unable to understand how, in this day and age, no one involved with the maintenance of the BEWB website thought of this possibility.

There's more. On July 9 this year, this daily reported a massive leak of personal information from the Office of the Registrar General, Birth & Death Registration (BDRIS). A few days later, it again reported that the infamous ransomware group BlackCat had hacked into the Bangladesh Krishi Bank's server in June, and downloaded 170GB data including financial records as well as employees' passport and NID information. In both cases, when the organisations concerned were warned about the breaches, they reportedly ignored them.

This surely cannot be the attitude of government offices and authorities in charge of the safety and well-being of citizens. With the increased digitalisation of our lives, the risk of cybercrimes is only bound to increase. Professionals dealing with digital data management and security should be able to anticipate all possible security risks and prepare accordingly. While we recognise the government's efforts to digitalise its services, we must reiterate that since this requires storing personal information of citizens, the government websites and servers ought to be equipped with adequate security measures so that the data stays protected. To stop any potential leaks, IT experts have also advised the Election Commission to monitor all its partners who avail services from the NID server round the clock. The bottom line is, the authorities across the public system should employ preventive measures so that no breaches and leaks take place in the first place.

Stability without democracy can't sustain growth



MACRO MIRROR

Dr Fahmida Khatun
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FAHMIDA KHATUN

In the run-up to the national election, the international community is showing increasing interest in Bangladesh, which is due to the prevailing geopolitical landscape as well as its prospect of becoming a larger economy in the coming years. The country is going to graduate from the Least Developed Country (LDC) to the Developing Country category in 2026 by fulfilling the criteria based on per capita income, human asset index, and economic vulnerability index. It is currently implementing Sustainable Development Goals and has made progress in many areas compared to its peers.

Bangladesh's economic success has been due to its relatively steady growth compared to many developing countries. In the pre-Covid era, the average growth of the economy was over six percent for about a decade. But starting in early 2020 and after the Ukraine war in February 2022, the economy experienced some dampening, leading to slower growth. Still, while in FY2020 the GDP growth was 3.45 percent, it went up to 6.03 percent during FY2023. With accelerated growth, there has also been social progress. The poverty rate has declined, and so have child and maternal mortality, while life expectancy has increased. Bangladesh now aspires to be an upper middle-income country by 2031 and a developed country by 2041.

Often, the growth story is linked to the so-called stability narrative. It is claimed that since there are no political disturbances from opposition parties, the government could succeed in navigating the country forward.

Ironically, under the shadow of stability, the quality of economics and politics has been compromised. Economic growth has not been coupled with the expected outcomes. Urgent issues such as job creation for the youth, domestic resource mobilisation, efficient public expenditure, and higher private investment need more attention. Inequality continues to rise. The latest Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) 2022 reveals that the Gini coefficient has increased. This implies that the rise in per capita income has not been distributed evenly across the population. And shocks such as the pandemic, natural disasters and inflationary pressure continue to push poor and low-income households further behind.



VISUAL: TEENI AND TUNI

The manifestation of inequality is the fast-growing number of the superrich in Bangladesh. Wealth creation is good but only with an even distribution. Moreover, not all of this wealth is earned, as the wealthy include loan defaulters, beneficiaries of undue government support, and rentseekers.

Higher growth has also not created enough jobs. The Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2022 indicates that average unemployment has declined from 4.2 percent in 2016-17 to 3.6 percent in 2022. But the definition of unemployment is based on the conventional definition of the International Labour Organization's (ILO) unrealistic benchmark, which considers a person employed if that person has worked even an hour in a week. Moreover, unemployment among the young population is much higher than the national average. The LFS 2022 has not revealed the youth unemployment rate yet. However, the youth unemployment rate was 10.6 percent in the LFS 2016-17.

Despite stability, private investment has not been energised for long. And stability has not reduced unpredictability. On average, private investment has been hovering around 24 percent of GDP, which is inadequate for a growing economy. Due to low domestic private investment, there is slow foreign direct investment (FDI). Despite the fact that the government

progress has generally been slow. Ease of doing business must be ensured by improving infrastructure, removing red tapism, ensuring policy clarity, adopting technology, and improving human resource quality.

Stability has protected the nexus between capital and political power. Massive conflicts of interest prevail in the system since many policymakers have stakes in fiscal, monetary, trade and other sectoral policies. Many in the periphery of political power have also been rehabilitated and rewarded. Hence, they do not want any changes (or disturbances) in this stability. Of course, democracy would require accounting of all unearned money and transparency of public expenditure.

The unique location in the Bay of Bengal, coupled with its economic rise, has increased Bangladesh's importance in the region. Our stability has been supported by some international partners. As such, Bangladesh has been conducting a balancing act between two competing countries, China and India, quite well. Both China and India are important trading partners and have provided us with loans of various sizes. Naturally, they have an active interest in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh's geographical position has also increased its geostrategic significance for the US as the latter aims to contain Chinese influence in the

Indo-Pacific region. The current US position is to deal with Bangladesh-related issues through the prism of India. Stability is important for the US, too, but not at the cost of democracy. The US has made this clear in its recent policies, which have been geared towards promoting democracy in Bangladesh.

Additionally, the EU Election

Exploratory Mission is currently visiting Bangladesh. They will undertake an assessment of the political environment and electoral framework, in close partnership and consultation with all stakeholders.

These developed countries are important stakeholders as Bangladesh's economy is connected to them through trade, remittances, investment, education, science and technology, and much more. Therefore, it is natural that they would have a keen interest in Bangladesh's politics and election administration.

But, ideally, this should not have been the case. Bangladesh should have been capable of holding an acceptable, high-quality national election on its own. Unfortunately, the credibility of the past two general elections has been questioned. The stability of power has probably been consolidated, but democracy has weakened. A transition to democracy and the nurturing of the democratic process will be painful and difficult. And the upcoming polls will be a test for Bangladesh to prove its capability and willingness to hold a high-quality election that will not be questioned within or outside the country. A democratic culture is crucial for sustaining the economic growth the country has achieved so far, and for distributing the benefits of this growth among all citizens of the country.

Driving sustainable development in the era of polycrisis

Armida Alisjahbana
is under-secretary-general of the UN and executive secretary of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

Woochong Um
is managing director-general of the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

Kanni Wignaraja
is United Nations assistant secretary-general and director of the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific of the UNDP.

ARMIDA ALISJAHBANA, WOOCHEONG UM and KANNI WIGNARAJA

We are living in an era of a polycrisis. The lingering effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, the climate emergency, and the Russian invasion of Ukraine continue to send shockwaves through Asia and the Pacific, disrupting global supply chains, depleting public finances, and driving up energy and food prices. Our region's poorest and most vulnerable populations are the most affected, with their economic, educational, employment, and health outcomes being threatened. Traditional approaches to development are no longer enough.

If we examine pressure points within the region's food, finance and energy systems, we see opportunities that leverage their interconnections to build back resilience in these systems, so they can better support the people they serve.

The ESCAP-ADB-UNDP 2023 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Partnership report sheds light on how countries in Asia and the Pacific have experienced the fragility of this “connected ecosystem” firsthand.

High energy prices, for example, have pushed up key input prices in agriculture, affecting a significant proportion of the regional workforce, adversely disrupting the region's food production and supply chains and putting at risk the livelihoods of millions of people.

It is clear that the region's economic sectors are not only highly susceptible to shocks but are also interdependent. When one sector is threatened, the entire system and countless livelihoods hang in the balance. Isolated, single-sector solutions are therefore inadequate. We need to embrace the concept of “nexus thinking.”

Nexus thinking recognises the complex, systemic nature of global and local development issues and the need to integrate data and knowledge, plans and policies, and institutions and practice to achieve the SDGs. They are highly interrelated and, thus, we need to address challenges at multiple levels, focusing on identifying synergies and breaking silos.

Developing more robust,

coordinated, and integrated solutions demands nexus thinking. By recognising and studying the specific interconnections between energy, food, and finance systems, we can develop policies and practices that address crosscutting challenges in an integrated manner. In an era marked by polycrisis, this approach – though not as easy to deliver – yields

When one sector is threatened, the entire system and countless livelihoods hang in the balance. Isolated, single-sector solutions are therefore inadequate. We need to embrace the concept of “nexus thinking.”

more effective and comprehensive policy responses that address both immediate needs and long-term goals.

Our report identifies several countries in the region that have already taken successful strides towards implementing nexus thinking through solutions and good practice. Bangladesh, India, and the Philippines, for example, have embraced smart and low-carbon farming approaches, while

Singapore has fostered a public-private partnership for the development of renewables. In Thailand and Pakistan, agritech companies are supporting small-scale farmers in accessing finance. These initiatives stand out not only for their ability to introduce crosscutting solutions, but also for their meaningful engagement of diverse stakeholders across sectors and constituencies.

Cross-sectoral public-private partnerships can serve as a valuable tool in nexus thinking as they allow for a broader perspective on the risk and opportunity landscape that goes well beyond one sector.

Regional and multilateral collaboration also play a pivotal role in nexus thinking. Stronger partnerships between countries are indispensable for safeguarding the resilience of our region's food, energy, and finance systems. Such collaborations remove barriers to cross-border trade, increase access to knowledge and technologies, and accelerate the just energy transition. Technical and financial support through multilateral platforms is also crucial for piloting and then replicating new policies and institutional arrangements, as well as scaling innovative solutions throughout the region.

We must recognise that emerging from a polycrisis requires these large-scale transformative approaches, if we are to get the SDGs back on track in Asia and the Pacific.

‘If an election is not participatory, it is neither free nor fair’

Brig Gen (retd) M Sakhawat Hossain, former election commissioner and senior fellow at the South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG) of North South University (NSU), talks about the latest amendment to the Representation of the People Order (RPO) and what the Election Commission’s role should be in the coming months, in an interview with Mohiuddin Alamgir of The Daily Star.

The latest RPO amendment has allegedly curtailed the Election Commission’s power to suspend voting and withhold results. What is your take on the issue?

There are some laws that are in black and white and do not require any interpretations. In 2008, during the tenure of ATM Shamsul Huda, an amendment of Section 90A of the RPO was made so that the commission could stop or withhold polls in some centres or in an entire constituency during the election process (after the announcement of the election schedule), in case of any violence, or if an environment is created where there can be no free and fair election.

This provision has been in place since 2008, and even the incumbent EC has utilised it. Now the commission says that they proposed the amendment for clarification of the law. With the new change, the EC would be able to suspend the election only on the polling day.

The amendment also bars the EC from cancelling election results and allows it to withhold polling only at specific centres where irregularities occur. So, they tied their hands.

The EC has also added 91AA, a new sub-section, to the RPO, which says the EC cannot take any actions between the announcement of unofficial results by returning officers and the publication of the gazette notification. As far as I know, the EC desires the power to withhold results of parts of or an entire constituency if there are any complaints and a subsequent probe. But, after the amendment, they have the power to withhold election results only for specific centres and not an entire constituency.

Is the amendment actually needed ahead of this important national election, when the last two elections – in 2014 and 2018 – already faced much questioning?

Besides what the RPO grants, the EC also has the inherent power to make decisions. I don’t understand what the need was for such an amendment to the RPO. Since 2008, three Election Commissions performed their duties without facing any problems.

Many election experts point out that, according to the RPO, ‘election’ means the election of a member to a seat held under this order. Some say the definition of election in the RPO is not clear. What do you think?

This definition should be changed. An election means the entire

period from the announcement of the election schedule to the announcement of the result.

How much of an impact will such a curtailing of power have on polls, including the next general election?

The international spotlight is trained on our upcoming general election. Those who monitor the election process can see whether there is any intimidation from the government pre- and post-polls. If they find that the government has changed the law to get the election atmosphere to be in its favour, the monitors might cite it as an element of intimidation.

After this amendment, if the commission thinks that they will need to investigate and suspend the election due to violence or anything else, it will not be able to do so under the RPO. But the EC will still be able to investigate and suspend an



FILE PHOTO: STAR

M Sakhawat Hossain

election using its inherent power.

Of course, if it makes use of its inherent power (in line with Article 119 of the constitution), many might go to court against the EC’s decision of suspending elections.

About six months away from the next general polls, is the EC on the right track?

It is known to all that people hardly have confidence in the EC. The incumbent commission has tried to earn people’s confidence back. But they have been showing some weakness since the Gaibandha-5 by-polls. A candidate of the Barishal City Corporation election was beaten on polling day. But we did not see the suspension of polling at that centre, what was investigated, or if anyone was found responsible.

Even in connection with election irregularities during the

Gaibandha-5 by-polls, many were found to be involved and their information had been forwarded to the concerned departments, but we don’t know anything further. No action was taken against any candidates. It’s like the EC is going one step forward and two steps back.

The Election Commission should be transparent to voters, who should be briefed about what has happened. The EC is not a ministry. Even if one person is punished, that should be presented as an example and a warning.

Election commissioners often say that it is not their job to ensure all political parties’ participation in the national polls. What do you think?

Legally, no. But morally, yes. The EC doesn’t have a legal obligation to ensure that all parties participate in the elections. The only legal instrument that the EC has is that they can scrap the registration of a political party if they don’t take part in two consecutive national polls.

Political parties are one of the major stakeholders in elections. The commission should have constant liaison with all political parties. If the EC wants to hold an inclusive election, it will need to make an all-out effort to ensure that.

There are two parties in Bangladesh, Awami League and BNP, that have the strength to field formidable candidates in all 300 parliamentary seats.

Only sending out a letter that says when the EC will hold talks with a party is not enough. I believe election commissioners must maintain acquaintance with leaders of different political parties. This kind of personal liaison works. Therefore, they have a moral responsibility to try to hold unofficial talks with the parties.

But we don’t see any such efforts, as the EC has taken a stance that it is not their responsibility to bring all political parties to the election.

What are the challenges for the EC in holding the next general polls in a free, fair, participatory, and acceptable manner?

Usually, holding a parliamentary election is a challenge. But this time it is more challenging, when the whole world is watching us and they all want a free and fair election in Bangladesh. Besides, people’s confidence in elections and the EC is being eroded. The EC has to work hard. If an election is not participatory, it is neither free nor fair.

MANDELA DAY

He exemplified the power of resistance against oppression



Sayeeda Fatima is a quality assurance analyst based in Canada.

SAYEEDA FATIMA

“I learnt that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear,” Nelson Mandela, a beacon of resilience and fortitude, once said. Every year on July 18, people around the world come together to commemorate Mandela Day and pay homage to the remarkable life and enduring legacy of Nelson Mandela. This celebration serves as a clarion call for us to reflect upon Mandela’s timeless values and principles, and to proactively make a positive impact within our own communities.

In November 2009, the United Nations officially designated this day as UN Mandela Day. The day’s central focus is honouring Madiba’s memory by engaging in community service and promoting sustainable projects that leave a lasting imprint. But Mandela Day transcends being merely a commemoration of Madiba’s life and legacy; it has evolved into a formidable global movement dedicated to honouring his life’s work and fostering positive change on a global scale.

In an era where inequality continues to proliferate in society, particularly in vulnerable communities, Mandela Day assumes even greater significance. The power lies in recognising the needs of those around us, taking action, and making a tangible difference in their lives.

Year after year, we celebrate this day to illuminate the impact of a man who indubitably transformed the course of the 20th century, leaving an indelible imprint on the 21st. This occasion provides an opportunity for all of us to rekindle our connection with the values that inspired Nelson Mandela: unyielding determination, an unwavering commitment to justice, the safeguarding of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and an unwavering belief in the equality and dignity of every

individual. Nelson Mandela’s enduring legacy endows him with the status of a great statesman and an unwavering advocate for equality – the architect of peace in South Africa.

During tumultuous times, Nelson Mandela exemplifies the power of resistance against oppression, the triumph of justice over inequality, the supremacy of dignity over humiliation, and the healing force of forgiveness over hatred. As our world forges ahead with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, striving to overcome new adversities, we must remember the invaluable lessons imparted by Mandela’s extraordinary life and the unwavering humanism that guided him. As he famously proclaimed, “To be free is not merely to cast off one’s chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.”

Nelson Mandela was born on July 18, 1918, in Transkei, South Africa. Hailing from the Thembu royal family in Mvezo, South Africa, he pursued a legal education at the University of Fort Hare and the University of Witwatersrand, eventually practising law in Johannesburg. It was there that he immersed himself in anti-colonial and African nationalist politics, emerging as one of the most prominent anti-Apartheid activists in South Africa. In 1963, he was imprisoned for his leadership role in the liberation movement against Apartheid and his unwavering commitment to the inherent right of individuals to live in freedom.

Assigned the prisoner number 466 in 1964, Nelson Mandela was confined to Robben Island, situated off the coast of Cape Town. Within the walls of Robben Island, prisoners were known not by their names, but by their numbers and the year of their imprisonment – thus, 46664 became Nelson Mandela’s defining identifier. His eventual release in 1990 became a turning point in South Africa’s political landscape, fuelling crucial debates and catalysing the country’s

transformation into a multi-racial democracy.

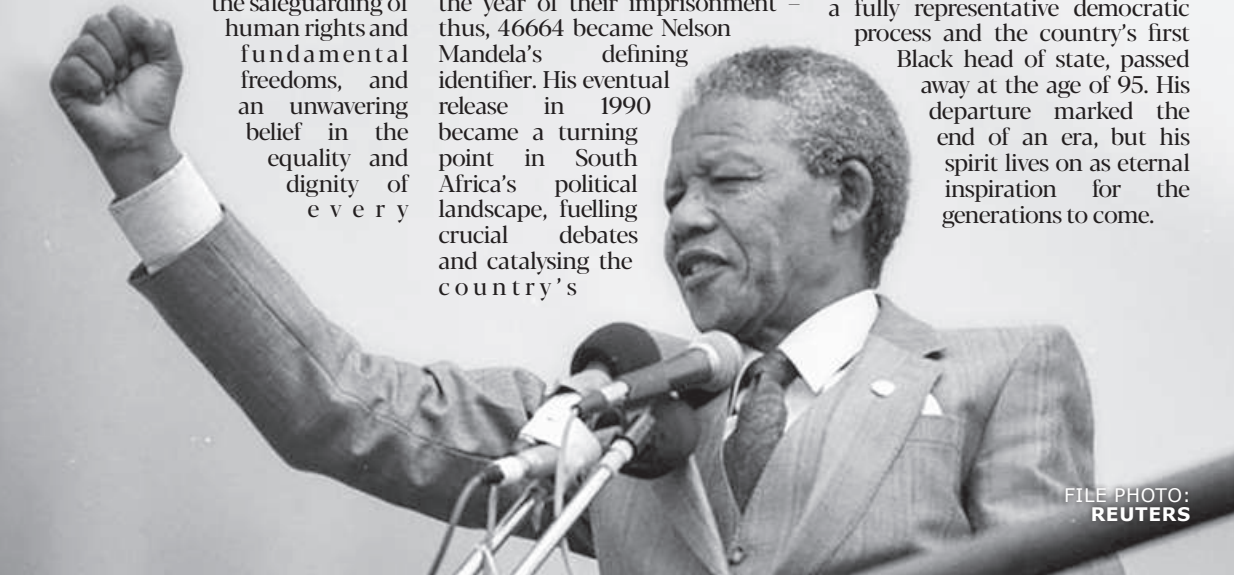
Following his release, Nelson Mandela continued to champion racial reconciliation in his country and supported initiatives aimed at healing a divided nation. In recognition of his tireless efforts, he was elected as South Africa’s president in 1994, serving until 1999. Furthermore, in 1993, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize alongside former South African president Frederik Willem de Klerk. Mandela’s post-presidency endeavours led to the formation of the Elders in 2007, an independent group comprising global leaders who leverage their wisdom and experience to advance peace, alleviate human suffering, and champion the shared interests of humanity.

Even before assuming the presidency, Mandela was deeply entrenched in anti-Apartheid activities. In 1962, he was arrested and imprisoned, and following the Rivonia Trial, he received a life sentence for his involvement in plotting the overthrow of the state. Over the course of his 27-year confinement, Mandela endured hardships in various prisons, including Robben Island, Pollsmoor Prison, and Victor Verster Prison. Despite such adversities, he remained unwavering in his commitment to the cause of freedom, spending many of those years alongside fellow freedom fighters.

Even in his official retirement, Nelson Mandela continued to lend his voice to pressing humanitarian issues and campaigned tirelessly for peace, children’s rights, and the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Nelson Mandela was the recipient of more than 260 awards throughout his lifetime, and numerous statues and civic tributes have been erected in his honour, such as the one at Nelson Mandela Square in Johannesburg, South Africa. Over the years, postage stamps and various musical tributes have also been dedicated to Mandela, serving as enduring reminders of his immense contributions.

On December 5, 2013, Nelson Mandela, the first president of South Africa to be elected through a fully representative democratic process and the country’s first Black head of state, passed away at the age of 95. His departure marked the end of an era, but his spirit lives on as eternal inspiration for the generations to come.



FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

Government Peoples Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Director
Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital, Sylhet.

Ref: SOMCH/Diet/e-Gp/2023/1531

Date: 17/07/2023

Re e-Tender Notice

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline/ Hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-tender, please register on e-GP system portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>). For more details, please contract support desk contract numbers.

e-Tender are invited in e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by Director sylhet M A G Osmani Medical college Hospital, Sylhet for the Procurement of;

Tender Id	Name of Goods	Tender/Proposal Last Selling Date & Time	Tender/Proposal Closing Date & Time	Tender/Proposal Opening Date & Time
853016	Procurement of Diet Group # 01 (Rice, Dal, Ect)	27 July 2023 11.00	27 July 2023 13.00	27 July 2023 13.00
853032	Procurement of Diet Group # 02 (Fruits and Vegetable etc.)	27 July 2023 11.00	27 July 2023 13.00	27 July 2023 13.00
853045	Procurement of Diet Group # 03 (Fish, Meat, Egg etc.)	31 July 2023 11.00	31 July 2023 13.00	31 July 2023 13.00
853054	Procurement of Diet Group # 04 (Bread & Biscuit etc.)	27 July 2023 11.00	27 July 2023 13.00	27 July 2023 13.00
853794	Procurement of Diet Group # 05 (Milk & others)	27 July 2023 11.00	27 July 2023 13.00	27 July 2023 13.00

e-Tender details can be downloaded on e-GP system portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for pursuer.

e-Tender will be accepted only as stated in above list accepted tenders will be opened online immediate as stated in above list.

Director
Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College
Hospital, Sylhet.
E-mail: magomch@hosp-dghs.gov.bd

Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh
District Primary Education Office
Bogura

Web : www.dpe.bogra.gov.bd

Phone : 02589902852, Mobile: 01718788870

Memo No. DPEO/BOG/2023-2024/1769

Date: 16.07.2023

e-Tender Notice No. 01/2023-2024

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of the following scheme listed below:

Sl No	Package No & Tender ID	Name of work	Procurement Method	Tender Last selling (date & time)	Tender Opening (date & time)
1.	NBIDGPS-1/G1/-0155	Furniture Supply for 100 Nos Class Room and 07 Nos. Teachers Room of Selected 23 Nos of Govt. Primary School at different location of Bogura District.	OTM	02.08.2023 16:00	03.08.2023 13:00
2	NBIDGPS-1/G1/-0156	Furniture Supply for 85 Nos Class Room and 07 Nos. Teachers Room of Selected 20 Nos of Govt. Primary School at different location of Bogura District.	OTM	02.08.2023 16:00	03.08.2023 13:00

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP system portal have to be deposited online through any registered Banks branches up to as Mention in Table . Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal and e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

(Md, Asaduzzaman Chowdhury)
District Primary Education Officer
Bogura.
Email : dpeobogra@gmail.com

Do-or-die for Bangladesh A

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh A face a must-win contest against their Afghan counterparts in Colombo today, with a spot in the semifinals of the ACC Emerging Asia Cup 2023 on the line.

Courtesy of possessing the highest run-rate, +1.731, in Group A, a victory would guarantee a place in the last-four for the Saif Hassan-led side -- who bounced back to shrug Oman A off after beginning the campaign on the wrong foot against the hosts, Sri Lanka A.

A loss, however, could likely see them crash out of the competition unless Oman A manage to stun Sri Lanka A in the other fixture today. In that case, run-rate would decide who accompany table-toppers Afghanistan A in the next round.

For Bangladesh A so far, opener Tanzid Hasan Tamim impressed with back-to-back fifties. Pacer Tanzim Hasan Sakib starred in the second match with a four-for while off-spinner Sheikh Mahedi was economical. Bangladesh would have to be wary of the threat from Riaz Hassan, whose 82-run knock helped his side narrowly beat the home side.

Pakistan fight back in Galle

AFP, Galle

An unbeaten century stand between Saud Shakeel and Agha Salman rescued Pakistan from a precarious 101-5 on the second day of the rain-hit opening Test on Monday.

In response to Sri Lanka's 312, Pakistan reached 221-5 when rain stopped play with the tourists still 91 runs behind.

Sri Lanka's left-arm spinner Prabath Jayasuriya took three wickets, including skipper Babar Azam.

Sri Lanka batsman Dhananjaya de Silva had earlier made 122 to hand the hosts a respectable total.

Pakistan faltered in their reply before Shakeel, on 69, and Salman, on 61, put on 120 runs to steady the innings and thwart the Sri Lankan spinners.

The left- and right-hand batting combination of Shakeel and Salman mixed the right dose of caution and aggression, with 12 boundaries and a six between them.

The pair showed maturity in tackling the spinners by using their feet to get to the pitch of the ball, with Pakistan scoring at nearly five runs an over.

Sri Lanka had come out roaring when pace bowler Kasun Rajitha got Imam-ul-Haq out for one and Jayasuriya sent back Abdullah Shafique for 19. Shan Masood smashed 39 off 30 balls but fell lbw to Ramesh Mendis. Azam fell when he got an inside edge onto his pads and the ball looped to wicketkeeper Sadeera Samarawickrama.



Argentine superstar Lionel Messi is presented before an expectant crowd by Major League Soccer side Inter Miami's owners -- David Beckham, Jose R. Mas and Jorge Mas -- at DRV PNK Stadium in Fort Lauderdale in Florida on Sunday. "We are going to have a good time and great things are going to happen. Thank you very much, thank you all for this day," the 2022 FIFA World Cup winner said at the programme.

PHOTO: AFP

Tigers looking to carry key tenets from T20I success

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's woes in the T20I format are well-known but under Shakib Al Hasan, the team have revitalised their performances in the recent few series, culminating in their latest series win against Afghanistan.

The team's tactical flexibility has been one of the key tenets of the Shakib era and the focus shifts back to ODI cricket with the Asia Cup around the corner before the marquee event, the World Cup.

Death bowling has improved alongside effort with the new ball. The likes of Taskin Ahmed, Hasan Mahmud, Shoriful Islam, Ebadot Hossain, and Mustafizur Rahman have shared and swapped roles, giving the idea that adaptability to various scenario-specific roles have been established as an important factor.

With the bat, Tawhid Hridoy and others have answered the team's demands. Shamim Hossain appears to be more confident in his abilities while skipper Shakib has been able to set a tone for the rest. Moreover, with focus on fitness, the sharpness on the field has also reached new heights.

The Asia Cup is the next hurdle and the Tigers would begin camp on July 29th to prepare for the event. Shakib believed the confidence from the T20Is can be taken to the ODI format since the movement from one format to the other had been the norm in the recent past. Players such as Hridoy had been able to make their case in domestic tournaments such as the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) before making the jump to the ODI side following

their appearance in the England T20I series.

"Most of the players who have played are in ODIs or vice versa and it is possible to carry that confidence since we will be facing this opponent in



Asia Cup and World Cup's first game. It will be a big confidence boost for them," Shakib said after his team's series win on Sunday.

Shakib had also outlined the importance of flexibility, citing, "if everyone can bat everywhere, they won't find it difficult to adapt when facing a tough situation. The same goes for the bowlers."

Transition of ideas from one format to another is a difficult proposition. Given the ODI unit's success in the recent past, they had the tag of a settled unit. However, two series defeats against England and Afghanistan have also posed questions regarding the modus operandi for the Asia Cup and World Cup.

The settled team concept may just see variations and Asia Cup could be the litmus test. Since the captaincy question still remains at large, it would be Chandika Hathurusingha's challenge to keep the ODI outfit evolving.

Mushfiqur Rahim's placement at number six has already paid dividends. The theme of flexibility gained new grounds, one that could also seep into the ODI side, when Afif Hossain came in to open the innings against Afghanistan in the second T20I.

"Some players in the national team have established positions. It's difficult to come in to the side in such positions. The players should get mentally ready to show their ability wherever opportunities come," chief selector Minhajul Abedin told the media yesterday regarding Afif's batting position.

He added that fitness would also be a major factor and "the conditioning camp will help with fitness related issues."

"The Asia Cup is very important and we're hoping we will have everyone fit and can select the best team," Minhajul remarked.

Checking out players in different positions while prioritising key tenets of recent success would highlight the positivity of Bangladesh's plans going forward.

Anderson recalled for fourth Test

AFP, Manchester

England have recalled 40-year-old James Anderson for the fourth Ashes Test against Australia, which begins at Old Trafford on Wednesday.

Ollie Robinson makes way in the only change from the side that won the third Test to reduce Australia's series lead to 2-1 with two to play.

Moeen Ali will bat at number three, as he did in the second innings at Headingley, allowing Harry Brook to remain at number five.

Anderson, who has the third highest number of Test wickets of all-time, was dropped for the third Test after taking just three wickets for 226 runs in the first two matches of the series.

England need to win both remaining Tests to win the Ashes for the first time since 2015.

U-19s win series against SA

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh U-19 team clinched the series against South Africa U-19s 3-2 with a three-wicket win in the series-deciding fifth one-dayer at Shahid Kamruzzaman Stadium in Rajshahi yesterday.

Pacer Rizan Hossain bagged early wickets removing both South Africa openers before Rafiuzzaman Rafi, the architect of the victory in the fourth one-dayer, bagged two wickets.



David Teeger held the innings together with a 89-ball 63 while contributions from skipper Juan James (32) and Liam Alder (20 off 8) took South Africa U-19s to 210 all out. Bangladesh skipper Mahfuzur Rabbay was the pick of the bowlers with three wickets for 43 runs.

In reply, opener Adil Bin Siddik notched a 70-ball 58 while stringing together a 87-run stand for the third wicket with Ariful Islam, who scored 68 off 76. Left-arm spinner Liam Alder bagged four wickets while Juan scalped three as South Africa made the young Tigers sweat. In the end, Mahfuzur and Rafi held on taking Bangladesh to victory with three wickets and 2.5 overs to spare.



FC Barcelona's newly signed German midfielder Ilkay Gundogan poses for pictures with his newborn son and his wife Sara Arfaoui during his official presentation at the Joan Gamper training ground in Sant Joan Despi on Monday. Gundogan said he expects to take the role of a mentor for the team's young squad.

PHOTO: AFP



Members of the Bangladesh women's football team receive a cheque of Tk 5 lac for winning the 2022 SAFF Women's Championship from Shykh Seraj and Afzal Hossain, the high-ups of the Impress-Mattra Consortium, during a programme at a hotel in the capital on Monday. The programme was organised to announce the media rights for the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023, which kicks off in Australia and New Zealand on Thursday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Alcaraz attempts to keep lid on great expectations

AFP, London

Carlos Alcaraz is determined to quash any suggestions that his epic Wimbledon final win over Novak Djokovic represents the dawn of a new era despite all indications that tennis has witnessed a generational shift.

On Sunday, the 20-year-old became the tournament's youngest champion since Boris Becker in 1986.

His rollercoaster 1-6, 7-6 (8/6), 6-1, 3-6, 6-4 victory prevented 36-year-old Djokovic from becoming its oldest champion.

It also thwarted Djokovic's dream of equalling Roger Federer's best of eight titles at the All England Club and matching Margaret Court's record of 24 Grand Slam titles.

Alcaraz though is remaining cautious. "I don't feel that I have confirmed something that we all expected," said the world number one.

"I try to avoid what people say, what people expect because in the end it's a pressure that I put on myself."

When he claimed a maiden Slam at

the US Open last year, Alcaraz became the youngest champion of a men's major since his storied compatriot Rafael Nadal at the 2005 French Open.

He was also the youngest man to ascend to the world number one ranking. Alcaraz is now just the fifth man in



the modern era to win multiple titles at the majors before turning 21 after Mats Wilander, Bjorn Borg, Becker and Rafael Nadal.

Alcaraz is now the only other player with more than one major in that time span.

Djokovic believes the young Spaniard

has successfully harnessed elements from his game as well as those of Federer and Nadal.

"I think he's got basically the best of all three worlds," said Djokovic who hadn't lost on Centre Court since 2013 until Sunday.

"People have been talking in the past 12 months or so about his game consisting of certain elements from Roger, Rafa, and myself. I would agree with that."

Alcaraz said he had "grown up" since that horror show in Paris last month.

"It's great for the new generation to see me beating him and make them think they are capable of doing it as well," said Alcaraz.

With Federer already retired and 37-year-old Nadal sitting out the rest of the year, maybe never to return, all eyes will be on Alcaraz whose coach Juan Carlos Ferrero once predicted could win 30 Grand Slams.

"Who's going to match this kid for the next few years?" 1987 Wimbledon champion Pat Cash told the BBC.

"It's hard to see anybody."



PVT HOSPITALS, DIAGNOSTICS

Patients suffer as doctors go on strike

Release of 2 physicians held over ‘botched’ C-section demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Services for outpatients were suspended as doctors at private hospitals, clinics and diagnostic centres began their two-day strike yesterday to demand the release of two physicians.

The two doctors in question were allegedly involved in the botched C-section that resulted in the death of a mother and her newborn in the capital last month.

Outpatients seeking help at the private health facilities had to suffer throughout the day.

The medical officials on strike said they will decide the next course of action at a meeting tomorrow as the two-day strike ends today.

The Obstetrical and Gynaecological Society of Bangladesh (OGSB) enforced the strike that was joined in by doctors from other specialities.

On Sunday, the OGSB held a countrywide human chain.

All public hospitals and emergency departments at private healthcare facilities, however, were kept out of the strike's purview.

The two doctors involved in the C-section – Dr Shahzadi Mustarshida Sultana and Dr Muna Shaha – were arrested

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PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Though Mugda Medical College Hospital continues to suffer from a crisis of beds, it admitted the highest number of patients yesterday since the dengue outbreak began this year. Most of the patients, all of whom are having to be on temporary “beds” on the floor, were children. Despite struggling to cope with the pressure, doctors at the hospital were seen trying their best in terms of accommodation and treatment.

Be careful what you say PM asks ministers



PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina directed ministers to practice restraint while making statements.

She said when speaking from a position of authority, they must speak responsibly.

Hasina asked them to return to their constituencies and publicise the development work done by the government, said sources present at an informal discussion held after the weekly cabinet meeting yesterday.

She also instructed them to forcefully counter the

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EU should send its observers for polls

Journos tells EU team, discuss media freedom

UNB, Dhaka

The Election Exploratory Mission of the European Union yesterday wanted to know from reporters about professional challenges the media might face while covering the next general election in Bangladesh.

The issue of media freedom came up for discussion when the EU delegation met a small group of senior reporters at the EU embassy in the capital.

The reporters shared their experiences with the EU mission about covering previous elections and the possible challenges that journalists may face in remote areas.

During the discussion, a reporter wanted to know why Jamaat-e-Islami was invited to a discussion given the fact that the European Parliament in a resolution in 2014 urged the BNP to “cut ties” with Jamaat and said that political parties

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REGISTRATION OF 2 PARTIES

Questions raised over EC’s picks

One offshoot of BNP, the other ally of Islamist parties with ties to AL

ASIFUR RAHMAN and ARAFAT RAHAMAN

A day after the Election Commission primarily cleared little-known Bangladesh Nationalist Movement (BNM) and Bangladesh Supreme Party (BSP) for registration as political parties, it now emerged that BNM is a party formed by some former BNP leaders while BSP is an ally of some Islamist parties having ties with the ruling Awami League.

Before the EC's announcement on Sunday that these two parties met the criteria for registration with the commission, neither party was really known to the political circle.

“Who are they? I’ve never heard of them before. The question is why is the Election Commission registering two unknown parties, excluding the parties that are rather active?” said Shushashoner Jonno Nagorik (Shujan) Secretary Badiul Alam Majumdar yesterday.

Leaders of different political parties also alleged yesterday that the EC “picked them on the advice of government agencies”.

“It’s an agency job. The party will

Before the EC’s announcement on Sunday that these two parties met the criteria for registration with the EC, neither party was really known to the political circle.

get registration to create a rift in the BNP,” said Mustafizur Rahman Iran, chairman of Labour Party, which did not get registration.

He was speaking at a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club, jointly organised by nine parties whose applications for registration with the EC were rejected.

A BNP standing committee member told The Daily Star yesterday that they smelt a rat in EC’s decision.

“It’s part of the [government’s] conspiracy to split BNP,” he said, wishing anonymity.

BNM was formed in July 2021. Its convener is Abdur Rahman and member

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Russia halts Black Sea grain deal

UN chief warns millions will ‘pay the price’; Erdogan says talks continue

REUTERS, Moscow

Russia yesterday halted participation in the year-old UN-brokered deal that lets Ukraine export grain through the Black Sea, spreading a sense of dread in poorer countries where people fear price rises will put food out of reach.

Hours earlier, a blast knocked out Russia’s bridge to Crimea in what Moscow called a strike by Ukrainian sea drones. Russia said two civilians were killed and their daughter wounded in what Moscow cast as a terrorist attack on the road bridge, a major artery for Russian troops fighting in Ukraine.

The Kremlin said there was no link between the attack and its decision to suspend the grain deal, over what it called a failure to meet its demands to implement a parallel agreement easing rules for its own food and fertilizer exports.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres signalled that Russia’s withdrawal meant that the related pact to facilitate Russia’s grain and fertilizer exports was also terminated.

“Hundreds of millions of people face hunger and consumers are confronting a global cost-of-living crisis. They will pay the price,” Guterres told reporters in New York.

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan, the grain deal’s sponsor, said he still believed Putin wanted it to continue. The Russian and Turkish foreign ministers were set to talk later yesterday, he told reporters. “I hope that with this discussion, we can make some progress and continue on our way without a pause,” Erdogan said.

Meanwhile, Russian President Vladimir Putin blamed Ukraine for a “senseless” and “cruel” attack on the Crimea bridge, and vowed to respond to what he called a “terrorist” act early yesterday morning.

Aussie sailor, dog rescued after two months lost at sea

AFP, Sydney



An Australian sailor and his dog have been rescued after two months adrift in the Pacific Ocean, surviving the ordeal by drinking rainwater and snacking on raw fish.

Tim Shaddock and his dog Bella set off in a catamaran from Mexico’s seaside city of La Paz in April, and planned to sail about 6,000 kilometres (3,700 miles) before dropping anchor in tropical French Polynesia.

But they soon found themselves stranded in the vast Pacific Ocean after rough seas damaged the vessel and knocked out its electronics.

In an unlikely rescue reminiscent of the Tom Hanks movie “Cast Away”, the bedraggled amateur yachtsman was plucked from the water two months later by a Mexican tuna trawler.

“I’ve just got fishing gear,” he told one of his rescuers, in a video obtained by Australia’s Nine News.

Sporting a shaggy beard, 51-year-old Shaddock was visibly gaunt after surviving on the spartan seafood diet – but said he otherwise felt “in very good health”.

“I have been through a very difficult ordeal at sea,” he said in a separate video, obtained by Nine News. “I’m just needing rest and good food because I’ve been alone at sea a long time.”

Shaddock and Bella would soon be ferried back to Mexico, according to the outlet.



The approach road to Chanduail Bridge in Netrakona’s Kalmakanda upazila has subsided. Locals said unplanned construction of a new bridge nearby over the Zia canal led to the damage to the road. LGED officials, however, blamed plying of overloaded trucks on the road for the damage. Farmers are worried that their crops may go under water if this section of the road is washed away. The photo was taken on Saturday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

MORE NEWS

Bad news for wheat market as Russia pulls out of grain deal
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18-40 age group the worst-affected by dengue
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BANGLADESH-INDIA FRIENDSHIP POWER COMPANY (PVT.) LIMITED
(A JOINT VENTURE COMPANY OF BPDB AND NTPC LTD.)
BORAK UNIQUE HEIGHTS (LEVEL-17), 117 KAZI NAZRUL ISLAM AVENUE, ESKATON GARDEN, DHAKA-1000

Memo No.: BIFPCL/Hospital Project Consultant/EOI/950
Date: 18/07/2023

**REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)
FOR ENLISTMENT OF APPLICANTS
FOR
ENGAGEMENT OF A HOSPITAL PROJECT CONSULTANT FOR 25 BED MAITREE HOSPITAL
FOR
2x660 MW MAITREE SUPER THERMAL POWER PROJECT AT RAMPAL, DISTRICT - BAGERHAT, BANGLADESH**

BIFPCL is constructing a 2x660 MW coal-based power project at Rampal, Bagerhat district of Khulna division. BIFPCL intends to enlist competent individual as “Hospital Project Consultant” for its upcoming 25 bed Hospital at Rampal, Bagerhat. The individual qualified through this EOI shall only be invited to participate further in RFP process. For Qualifying Requirement, EOI document and other information, please visit our website at www.bifpcl.com or contact Chief Procurement Officer, BIFPCL, Level-17, Unique Heights, 117 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Eskaton Garden, Dhaka-1000, Tel. Nos. +88-0258314264, email: cpo@bifpcl.com. Interested individual may submit the Applications for Enlistment (Hard copy/through e-mail) on or before **02/08/2023** at 16:00 Hrs. at aforesaid address.

If the EOI opening day is declared as holiday by the Govt. of the People’s Republic Day of Bangladesh, EOI will be opened in the next working day.

Md. Ziaur Rahman
Chief Procurement Officer (CPO), BIFPCL