



17 killed as bus plunges into pond

Survivors point fingers at driver for careless driving

SUSHANTA GHOSH and KM HABIBUR RAHMAN

The traffic on the road was quite light and the bus was moving at a speed of 40 to 50mph. It was meant to be a regular morning ride from Bhandaria to Barishal.

When the driver started striking conversations with the bus's supervisor and some passengers, no one on the bus knew about the nightmare that would befall them soon.

The driver kept talking to the supervisor, often looking at him sideways or over his shoulder. At one point, he lost control over the wheel and the bus skidded off the road and into a pond in Jhalakathi.

That was how survivors and eyewitnesses described the accident that killed at least 17 people, including three children, and injured 35 others in Chhatrakanda area yesterday.

They also said the bus was overloaded with passengers, which might have contributed to the crash.

The Barishal-bound bus of Bashar Smriti Paribahan, which was carrying over 60 passengers against its capacity of 52, left Pirojpur's Bhandaria around 9:00am and fell into the roadside pond on the Barishal-Khulna highway around 10:00am.

"I saw the driver was talking to the supervisor constantly. Suddenly, the bus came off the road and crashed. All the passengers were trapped inside the bus. As it was overloaded, the bus drowned instantly. I could somehow manage to scramble out of the bus," Md Momin, a survivor, told this correspondent at the scene of the accident.

A pall of gloom hovered over the entire area when the bodies were being recovered.

"My cousin Piara Begum was going to Barishal with Sumaiya, her 6-year-old daughter, to visit a doctor. When

The Barishal-bound bus of Bashar Smriti Paribahan was carrying over 60 passengers against its capacity of 52.



Villagers lend a hand to pull a bus out of a pond in Chhatrakanda area of Jhalakathi. The Barishal-bound bus of Bashar Smriti Paribahan, which started from Pirojpur's Bhandaria upazila, fell into the roadside pond on the Barishal-Khulna highway around 10:00am yesterday, leaving 17 passengers dead and 35 others injured.

PHOTO: KM HABIBUR RAHMAN

DENGUE OUTBREAK

Pathology labs swamped

Babies suffer for lack of staff competent enough to collect their blood samples

MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN

Mahmuda Akter stood in line with her sick one-year-old in her arms for a dengue test at the capital's Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital around 10:00am yesterday.

However, she had to wait three more hours just to submit her child's blood sample.

"I was at least able to submit the sample. Many people who brought their babies had to leave without submitting [blood samples]," Mahmuda told The Daily Star on her way back from the dengue sample collection booth around 2:00pm.

She said she was sent to a room on the third floor thrice before they could find someone competent enough to collect the blood from the child.

"The process was quite frustrating.

It's unfortunate that no special arrangements were made for babies in the face of such a huge rush of patients."

On the other hand, hospital authorities said they have been struggling to cope with the overwhelming rush for tests, which has been going on for the past month as dengue cases have been on the rise almost every day.

In Bangladesh, the number of dengue cases usually starts rising in June and reaches its peak in November. However, the cases began rising in May this year.

Since January, 30,685 patients have been hospitalised with dengue, including 2,242 yesterday.

Of them, 167 have died, including 11 yesterday, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

As the number of cases has

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Hasina not afraid of any threat

Quader tells AL rally

STAR REPORT

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is not afraid of any visa policy or threat.

"She will never bow down to anyone," he said while addressing the AL's "peace and progress" rally as chief guest at Noakhali's Kabirhat upazila.

Quader, also the road, transport and bridges minister, said Sheikh Hasina's main strength is the country's people, so threats of violence or visa policy or sanctions will not work on her.

He said it is not possible to overthrow the AL

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ROAD ACCIDENTS

Casualties keep mounting for indiscipline

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Indiscipline continues to reign supreme on the roads, taking a heavy toll on lives and properties, as the government's steps to address the malaise remain perfunctory, experts said.

The issue reared its ugly head again yesterday after a "negligently driven" Barishal-bound bus veered off the road and fell into a waterbody in Jhalakathi Sadar upazila -- claiming 17 lives and injuring 35.

Before this accident, there were 2,865 road crashes this year until Friday, killing 2,737 and injuring 4,201, according to data from the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority.

The actual number of fatalities is higher, according to reports from non-government organisations working for road safety.

"The accident takes place for overspeeding, overtaking and overconfidence," said Mozammel Haque, deputy inspector general (operation) of Highway Police.

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NON-PARTISAN GOVT

It'll all be settled on the streets

Says Fakhrul; BNP to hold grand rally in capital July 27

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

There will be no elections without a non-partisan government and the issue will be settled on the streets, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said yesterday.

The party will hold a grand rally in the capital on July 27 to press home its one-point demand for the resignation of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and holding the next national polls under a neutral government.

"False cases are being filed to suppress the opposition party. They [the government] are hatching a plot to keep the opposition away from the election through intimidation. But there will be no election unless it's held under neutral government ... The issue will be settled on the streets," Fakhrul told a youth rally at the Suhrawardy Udyan in the capital.

PHOTO ON PAGE 12

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» A tale of survival and loss -- PAGE 5

» 'They will never return home' -- PAGE 5



Bangladesh batter Fargana Hoque Pinky lets out a loud cheer after reaching a historic maiden ODI hundred – a first for any Bangladeshi in the format in women's cricket – during their series-deciding third match against India at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. The thrilling match ended in a tie as the series was shared 1-1.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Tigresses tie series in a dramatic fashion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Incredible scenes unfolded at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur yesterday as Bangladesh managed to tie the third and final ODI against India.

With India requiring just one run to win off four deliveries to go past Bangladesh's 225, pacer Marufa Akter channeled her fiery determination to remove the final batter, Meghna Singh. Captain Nigar Sultana Joty safely gloved the ball and an ecstatic celebration ensued for the hosts.

Meanwhile, Singh and Jemimah Rodrigues, stranded at the non-striker's end on 33, were clearly

unhappy over the umpire's decision.

Earlier, the visitors' dissatisfaction over some of the umpiring decisions had reached the tipping point as India skipper, Harmanpreet Kaur, was given out leg before.

A visibly furious Kaur had hit the stumps with the bat after getting out and exchanged a few angry words with the umpires on her return towards the dressing room.

Kaur could not hold her anger even during the post-match presentation ceremony. She lashed out on the standard of the umpiring, in a manner which came as a surprise to a rather small crowd in Mirpur.

The India captain was on a venting spree. "Lastly, our High Commissioner

from India is also there and I hope you could have invited him here [at the presentation podium], but that is also fine," she said.

Things went from bad to worse during the official photo session, where the two teams posed with the trophy. Kaur had blurted out, saying, "Where are the umpires? Call them."

The India skipper even channeled her frustration towards her Bangladeshi counterpart, Nigar Sultana Joty. "You guys didn't win, it's the umpires," Kaur said.

Going back to the chase, India were in a spot of bother on 32 for two but opener Smriti Mandhana (59) and Harleen Deol held the ship

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

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Commander of ARSA, five members held in Teknaf

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

The Rapid Action Battalion arrested six members of the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), including one of its top commanders of the military wing.

A team of Rab-15 and the intelligence wing of Rab headquarters conducted a raid at a remote hill in the Shamlapur area under Teknaf upazila Friday night and made the arrest, said Khandaker Al Moin, Rab's legal and media wing director, while briefing the media in Cox's Bazar yesterday.

They arrested Hafiz Nur Mohammad, 28, a top commander of ARSA's armed group, along with firearms, the Rab official said.

ARSA men are involved in crimes, including murder, rape, abduction, and extortion, on a regular basis in Kutupalang Rohingya camps and its surrounding areas, he added.

Following Hafiz's information, five

ARSA men are involved in crimes, including murder, rape, abduction, and extortion, on a regular basis in Kutupalang Rohingya camps and its surrounding areas.

more ARSA members were arrested in Shamlapur and Baharchhara areas with arms and ammunition, he added.

All of the arrestees are leaders and active members of ARSA, Moin said.

The other arrestees are Hossain Johor, 30 and Md Faruq, 23 of Camp 15, Monir Ahmed, 36, Noor Islam, 29 and Md Yasin 21 of Camp 16, Rab said.

Hafiz led a criminal gang comprising 30-35 members and committed crimes including murder, rape, abduction, and extortion in Kutupalang camp and its adjacent areas.

The arrestees smuggled arms from the neighbouring country through remote bordering areas and used to supply those to local criminal groups, Moin said.

The ARSA members used to extort locals with threats of murder and abduction. If their demands were not met, they abducted people or even killed them and hid the bodies in the hills, he added.

Hafiz joined ARSA in 2016 as a section commander and maintained contacts with Ostad Khaled, the chief of the ARSA military wing, he added.

He came to Bangladesh in 2017 and initially took over the responsibility as a head community leader of Camp 8, and gradually became one of the top military commanders of ARSA at Kutupalang camp, he said.



Demonstrators with black clothes covering their mouths shout slogans during a protest over sexual violence against women in the ongoing ethnic violence in India's north-eastern state of Manipur, in Chennai, yesterday. Story on page 12.

PHOTO: AFP

‘World in uncharted territory’ Say scientists as climate-related natural disasters sweeping across globe

AGENCIES

With record-breaking heatwaves stretching across the northern hemisphere and climate-related natural disasters sweeping across the globe, scientists have warned that the world has entered “an uncharted territory” due to accelerating global warming.

This month broke some climate records – the hottest day on record, the hottest June on record globally, extreme marine heatwaves, record-low Antarctic sea-ice.

Tens of millions of people in the northern hemisphere have been suffering through intense heat this summer as the world appears headed for its hottest July on record.

As temperature records tumble, experts have pointed the finger at climate change driven by the burning of fossil fuels, saying global warming is playing a key role in destructive weather.

Already 11 days into its heatwave, Greece's national weather institute warned reprieve was still days away, setting this up to be the longest hot spell the country has ever seen.

Across the southern United States, about 80 million Americans will swelter in temperatures of 41C and above this weekend, the National Weather Service (NWS) said.

July 2023 is on track to be the

hottest absolute month – not only since records began, but also in “hundreds, if not thousands, of years,” leading Nasa climatologist Gavin Schmidt said.

The effects cannot be attributed solely to the El Nino weather pattern, which “has really only just emerged” and isn't expected to strengthen until later on in the year.

As temperature records tumble, experts have pointed the finger at climate change driven by the burning of fossil fuels, saying global warming is playing a key role in destructive weather.

El Nino is associated with the warming of ocean surface temperatures in the central and eastern Pacific Ocean.

Schmidt said the trend of extreme heat was expected to persist, “and the reason why we think that's going to continue is because we continue to put greenhouse gasses into the atmosphere”.

In Europe, Italy put 23 cities on red alert as it reckoned with another day of scorching temperatures yesterday, with no sign of relief from the wave of extreme heat, wildfires and flooding that has wreaked havoc from the United States to China.

The heat wave has hit southern Europe

during the peak summer tourist season, breaking records - including in Rome - and bringing warnings about an increased risk of deaths.

In South Korea, heavy rain has pummelled central and southern regions since last week. Fourteen deaths occurred in an underpass in the city of Cheongju, where more than a dozen vehicles were submerged on Saturday when a river levee collapsed. In the southeastern province of North Gyeongsang, 22 people died, many from landslides and swirling torrents.

In northern India, flash floods, landslides and accidents related to heavy rainfall have killed more than 100 people since the onset of the monsoon season on June 1, where rainfall is 41 percent above average.

It is hard to immediately link these events to climate change because. Studies are under way, but scientists already fear some worst-case scenarios are unfolding.

“I'm not aware of a similar period when all parts of the climate system were in record-breaking or abnormal territory,” Thomas Smith, an environmental geographer at London School of Economics, told BBC.

“The Earth is in uncharted territory” now due to global warming from burning fossil fuels, as well as heat from the first El Niño - a warming natural weather system - since 2018, says Imperial College London climate science lecturer Dr Paulo Ceppi.

Man held for derogatory remarks against PM

UNB, Thakurgaon

A man was arrested yesterday in a case filed under the Digital Security Act in Thakurgaon for making “derogatory remarks” about Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and followers of Awami League on Facebook.

Amanullah Aman, a 28-year-old quack (untrained doctor found in villages) from Amgaon union of Haripur upazila, undermined PM Hasina and Awami League followers in a Facebook post on July 18, said the case statement,

Enraged by the post, Mizanur Rahman, a member of the advisory council of the upazila unit Awami League, filed the case under DSA.

The post was deliberately uploaded to create unrest in the country and topple the government, said the statement.

Haripur Police Station Inspector (Investigation) Sahidur Rahman, said, primarily, evidence was found of derogatory remarks against the PM and AL party men.

BNP, Chhatra Dal men held in sabotage case

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Detective Branch of police early yesterday arrested two BNP and Chhatra Dal men in a sabotage case filed in Narayanganj Sadar.

The arrestees are – Jahid Hasan, office secretary of BNP's Fatullah union unit, and Sagar Siddiki, vice president of Chhatra Dal's Narayanganj district unit, said DB police inspector Al-Mamun of Narayanganj police.

The case was filed by police in December last year. Meanwhile, condemning the arrest, Golam Faruk Khokon, general secretary of BNP's Narayanganj district unit, said, “The government of Awami League is using the police to stop BNP as they did before. He demanded the quick release of the activists.”

11 Jamaat-Shibir men held from Kuakata hotel

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Police yesterday arrested 11 Jamaat Shibir men were arrested from a hotel in Patuakhali's Kuakata upazila.

The arrested are Faridul Haque, 56, Mozammel Haque, 75, Farooq Hossain, 57, Azizur Rahman, 38, Hannan, 50, Arif Hossain Howlader, 24, Zahidul Islam, 46, Rafiqul Islam, 54, Enamul Haque Sardar, 37, Abdul Halim Howlader, 64, and Haroon-or-Rashid, 57. They are all from Jhalokathi.

Among around 50 men and women, they were attending a secret meeting for the purpose of carrying out sabotage against the country, said police.

Another 40 Jamaat-Shibir men escaped from the spot, said Kalapara Circle Additional Superintendent of Police Bimal Krishna Mallik.

Mohipur Police Station Officer-in-Charge Ferdouse Alam said including leaflets, Jihad books, and some mobile sets were seized from them.

“Legal action is being taken against them.”

It'll all be settled on the streets

FROM PAGE 1

He, however, didn't mention the name of the rally venue.

The BNP leader urged people from all walks of life to join the rally to strengthen their one-point movement.

He alleged that the government is appointing deputy commissioners and superintendents of police, who are loyal to the government, in different districts to manipulate election results.

“But this will not be possible this time as 36 political parties have been demanding that the polls be held under a caretaker government.”

The rally was organised by BNP's three associate bodies -- Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal, Chhatra Dal, and Swechchhasebak Dal -- to “engage the young generation in street movement”.

The rally began around 90 minutes late as the stage, crowded with party leaders and activists, collapsed.

The incident happened when Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal President Sultan Salahuddin Tuku was inaugurating the rally around 1:50pm. Later, a stage was set up on a pickup.

Wearing colourful caps and carrying banners, festoons and placards, young leaders and activists from various parts of Dhaka and nearby districts started gathering at the rally venue in the morning.

A large number of law enforcers were deployed in and around the venue.

Before yesterday's rally, BNP's associate bodies held five youth rallies in Chattogram, Bogura, Khulna, Barishal and Sylhet.

17 killed as bus plunges into pond

FROM PAGE 1

the accident occurred, Sumaiya fell from his mother's lap and drowned,” said Newaj, a resident of Kathalia upazila in Jhalakathi.

Piara, however, survived.

“I, along with my elder brother Shaheen Mollah and father Salam Mollah, was going to Barishal riding on the bus. When the bus fell into the pond, I broke a window and came out of it. But my father and brother could not. They died,” said Russel, a brick kiln worker from Bhandaria upazila.

Talking about the crash, Animesh Mandol, Motor Vehicle Inspector of BRTA in Jhalakathi, said, “The accident occurred due to the driver's sheer carelessness.”

However, the bus's fitness and road permit documents were updated. The bus was registered in the name of Abul Kalam Akon, a resident of

Jhalakathi, Mandol added.

Echoing Mandol, two other survivors, Aysha Siddika and Manir Mollik, said the accident would not have happened if the driver was careful and looking at the road ahead.

The driver, Mohon, managed to flee the scene.

It could not be confirmed immediately whether the driver had a valid driving license, Ma124ndol informed.All the 17 passengers died on the spot, said Barishal Divisional Commissioner Md Shawkat Ali. The wounded are receiving treatment at different hospitals, he added.

According to Jhalakathi Sadar Thana officials, identities of the deceased are: Tarek Rahman, 45; Abdus Salam Molla, 60; Sahin Molla, 25; Sumaiya, 6; Abdullah, 8; Rahima Begum, 60; Abul Kalam Howlader; Ripamoni, 2; Airin Aktar, 22; Nayon,16; Rabeya Begum, 80;

Casualties keep mounting for indiscipline

FROM PAGE 1

Talking on the phone is another reason for the accidents; some use headphones to hoodwink law enforcers, he said.

“Roads will remain unsafe until proper enforcement of the law is ensured,” said Ilias Kanchan, a prominent road safety crusader, referring to the Jhalakhati bus accident.

There is a serious lack of enforcement of the law by the Highway Police, said Moazzem Hossain, professor at Buet's department of civil engineering.

On his recent road trip to Barishal and Kuakata, he found the buses were going at a faster speed than his sports utility vehicle (SUV) on the highway. Heavy vehicles like buses and lorries are supposed to drive slower than light vehicles like cars or SUVs.

“The buses were overtaking everywhere -- they even got into speeding competitions on the expressway. They do this to get more

passengers. This is dangerous and shows that there is no discipline on the road.”

The bus drivers do not have the necessary training too, said Hossain, also the former director of Buet's Accident Research Institute.

“All these are known facts. So, the authority cannot avoid their responsibility here.”

In recent times, the road infrastructure has gone through major upgrades but the driving population has not upgraded their skill accordingly.

“So the government cannot claim that they were ensuring the protection of people's lives.”

The government can deploy vehicle inspectors at every major bus terminal and check whether the bus has fitness or whether the driver has the necessary document before departing.

“This method can prevent road accidents but the authority is not interested,” he added.

As many as 564,739 vehicles were due for regular fitness checks but did not take the clearance as of April 30, shows BRTA data. Of them, 20,362 were buses, 11,245 minibuses, 61,339 trucks and 6,767 taxicabs, shows the document.

Haque of Highway Police said it is not possible to stop the accidents only by enforcement.

“We are taking action and filling cases whenever any anomaly comes to notice. There is a need for raising road safety awareness. Drivers, as well as the passengers, need to stop rush driving,” he said, adding that vehicles without fitness should be barred from roads.

Road accidents are taking place as people are driving faster for the smoother roads built by the government in recent times, said ABM Amin Ullah Nuri, secretary of road transport and highways division.

“There should be a social movement against this -- we are working on it.”

Pathology labs swamped

FROM PAGE 1

continued shooting up, the DGHS has cut the fees for dengue tests to Tk 50 from Tk 100 at all the public hospitals.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Zahangir Alam, senior medical technologist and pathology unit in-charge at SSMCH, said, “The number of patients coming for tests has increased three to four folds. Consequently, we've been grappling with the overwhelming rush due to an inadequate number of medical technologists.

“Collecting blood samples of babies is a delicate task. We have only one technologist to perform this. As he remains engaged in other tasks every day, there is a delay.”

He further said they usually receive some 400-500 blood samples daily for different tests. But the number has now increased to 1,400-1,500 -- mostly for dengue.

To handle the samples, only five permanent and four outsources medical technologists work the day shifts there. For the afternoons and nights, only one technologist is assigned to each shift.

Tigresses tie series in a dramatic fashion

FROM PAGE 1

and almost took the game away from the home side, adding 107 runs for the third-wicket stand.

The match turned on its head, however, with two brilliant run-out dismissals, one of which involved Deol who scored a team-high 77, followed by three wickets in the span of five deliveries.

The visitors lost their last six wickets for 34 runs in what was a sensational turnaround from Bangladesh to draw the game and also the series -- part of the ICC Women's Championship -- at 1-1.

Earlier, the home side justified their decision to bat first. The Tigresses

posted their second-highest ODI total of 225 for four after Fargana Hoque Pinky became the first Bangladeshi woman to score a hundred in the fifty-over format.

Pinky along with Shamima Sultana added 93 runs for the opening wicket, laying the platform before the latter departed after scoring 52 off 78 balls.

Aided by Joty (24) and Sobhana Mostary (23 not out), Pinky kept ticking the scoreboard and made sure Bangladesh post a fighting total. Before getting run-out in the last ball of the innings, she struck seven boundaries to tally a magnificent 107 off 160 deliveries.

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Qualified officers deserve promotion in the army: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked the Bangladesh Army Selection Board-2023 to choose qualified and prudent officers for promotion in the army through a neutral evaluation.

"You should do it considering professional competence, drawing comparative evaluation in logical and scientific ways. Besides, you need to pay attention to whether the officers have the skills of giving command or the ability to take quick decisions (in special situations)," she said.

The prime minister said this while addressing a meeting of the selection board at Senakunja in Dhaka Cantonment.

She hoped that the selection board will perform the duty with honesty, justice and proper judgement to choose qualified officers for promotion.

"Consider their experience in the field and the ability to take instant decisions... We want you to promote the officers for your future leadership (in Bangladesh Army) through neutral evaluation," she said.

Describing the army as vigilant sentinels of the country's independence

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



Chief of Army Staff General SM Shafiuddin Ahmed greets Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina after the premier arrived at Senakunja in Dhaka Cantonment to attend the opening ceremony of Army Selection Board (First Phase)-2023 yesterday.

PHOTO: BSS

'Land dispute led to the killing'

Say police on trader Ekhlash
murder; five held, killers
were hired for Tk 20 lakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police arrested five people, including "Leather Monir", for the murder of a land trader Ekhlash.

Monir Hossain, who once worked as a day labourer, is now the owner of four tanneries and has amassed a huge fortune. He is also a land grabber and broker, DB chief Muhammad Harun Or Rashid told reporters at a press briefing at the DMP media centre in Karwan Bazar yesterday.

The four other arrestees are -- Jhantu Molla, Monir's manager; Abdur Rahman alias Rahman Kallu and Faisal, killers hired by Monir; and Md Eshak, who coordinated the murder.

The DB said Monir had been trying to acquire Ekhlash' land for some time. When Ekhlash refused to sell, Monir decided to kill him.

Monir paid Kallu and Faisal Tk 20 lakh to kill Ekhlash. They were given an advance of Tk 11 lakh. They murdered Ekhlash the night before Eid-ul-Azha, the DB official said.

Monir fled to Kolkata and his manager

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



Birth anniv of Tajuddin Ahmad today

BSS, Dhaka

Today is the 98th birth anniversary of Tajuddin Ahmad, the first prime minister of Bangladesh.

He was born in Dardaria village of Kapasia upazila in Gazipur.

One of the architects of the country's independence, Tajuddin was involved in politics from his student life. He played a key role in all the anti-communalism movements after 1947 and the Language Movement in 1952.

A key figure in formation of Awami League in 1949, Tajuddin played a significant role in forming the six-point demand in 1966. He became the general secretary of AL that year.

He formed the government for Bangladesh in the most critical moment in 1971 in the absence of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. He was also the finance and planning minister in the independent Bangladesh.

On November 3, 1975, Tajuddin Ahmad was killed in jail with three other national leaders of the country.

To mark the day, a discussion titled "Bangataj Tajuddin Ahmed in inspiring youths: checked life and works" will be held at Jatiya Press Club.

Bangataj Sasthyaseba Sangstha (BTSS) will also be launched on the occasion. Tajuddin's son Tanjim Ahmed Sohel Taj will join the event as the chief guest while BTSS managing board chairman Ershadur Rahman will chair it.

'80pc population to live in cities by 2041'

Study says this may increase risk of urban disasters

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 80 percent of the country's population will live in the cities by 2041, which could lead to an increased risk of urban disasters, according to a study.

The study, "Disaster Risk of Bangladesh", jointly conducted by Buet professors Raquib Ahsan and Shakil Akther, was revealed at a roundtable discussion yesterday.

The event, titled "Actions for urban disaster risk reduction: Dhaka perspective", was jointly organised by Bangladesh Institute of Planners (BIP), Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk), and Urban Development Journalist Forum, at Dhaka's Planners Town in Bangla Motor.

The study blamed a serious lack of coordination between several key authorities, including the disaster management and relief, housing and public works ministries, Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority, Dhaka Electric Supply Company, Bangladesh Bidyut Unnayan Board, Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company, and Dhaka north and south city corporations, for the increasing risk of urban disasters.

The aforementioned authorities were supposed to make contingency plans separately, and then integrate them nationally. However, none of them fulfilled this requirement, said Prof Raquib, of the Department of Civil Engineering, while presenting the study.

Shakil Akther of the Department of Urban and Regional Planning was also present during the discussion.

The study presented eight recommendations to address these issues and mitigate the risk of such disasters.

The remedies include implementation of an earthquake contingency plan prepared by city corporations, enforcement of building codes, and the



The study presented eight recommendations to address these issues and mitigate the risk of such disasters. The remedies include implementation of an earthquake contingency plan prepared by city corporations, enforcement of building codes, and the establishment of a professional council.

establishment of a professional council with various types of registrations.

Attending as chief guest, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen expressed concern over the prevalent practice among citizens of building excessive walls. He emphasised the need to discontinue this practice as it often hinders the timely entry of emergency personnel during crises.

Momen also stressed the importance of playgrounds, ponds, and water bodies, which can play a significant role in mitigating the impact of disasters, such as earthquakes and fires, thereby safeguarding communities and saving lives.

Present as special guest, Kazi Wasi Uddin, secretary

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

Will continue movement until govt quits Ganatantra Mancha to hold rally Thursday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ganatantra Mancha yesterday announced to hold a rally on Thursday as part of their simultaneous movement with BNP to realise their one-point demand for the resignation of the present government and election under a neutral one.

Meanwhile, BNP also announced a similar programme at a "youth rally" of the party's three associate bodies at Suhrawardy Udyan in the afternoon.

Saiful Haque, coordinator of Ganatantra Mancha and general secretary of Biplobi Worker's Party, made the announcement at a press conference at the central office of the alliance on Topkhana Road.

In a written statement, he said, "The government should step down immediately and pave the way for a free and fair election."

ASM Abdur Rab, president of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD), said, "Most of the political parties are now becoming united to oust this government. We will not

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

RUBEL MURDER We've identified the killers: DB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The suspects involved in the murder of Shahjahanpur Jubo League leader Oliullah Rubel have been identified, said Muhammad Harun Or Rashid, additional commissioner of the Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police yesterday.

Police have the names of those who were involved in the incident and they will be arrested soon, Harun said at a press briefing at the DMP media centre.

When asked if Rubel's murder is linked to the murder of Awami League leader Jahidul Islam Tipu, Harun said both the incidents took place in the Shahjahanpur area. "We will be able to know more once the suspects are arrested," he added.

A group of armed assailants on early Friday hacked Oliullah Rubel, 36, a candidate for the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

AL meeting deferred to Aug 6

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The special extended meeting of the ruling Awami League has been deferred for a week, said a press release of the party yesterday.

It was slated for July 30, but will now be held on August 6 at 10:30pm at AL chief Sheikh Hasina's official residence Gono Bhaban.

AL leaders and elected representatives down to the thana level will take part in the meeting called by the party chief. It will be the biggest meeting of AL leaders in recent times.

The press release signed by Office Secretary Biplob Barua said the members of AL's national committee; central executive committee; advisory council; presidents and general secretaries of district, city, upazila, thana, and municipality units; party lawmakers; party-nominated chairmen of district councils and upazila parishads; AL-backed mayors of city corporations and municipalities; and presidents will attend the meeting.

'Won't let BNP create unrest' Say BCL leaders, activists

DU CORRESPONDENT

Chhatra League leaders and activists yesterday said they have no plans to obstruct BNP or its associate organisations from continuing their political activities. "But if they try to create chaos, we will prevent them," said Tanbir Hasan Shaikat, general secretary of BCL Dhaka University unit.

Referring to the recent Mirpur Bangla College incident, DUBCL President Mazharul Kabir Shayan said, "We have seen that BNP's men carried out an attack on Govt Mirpur Bangla College students... We are on alert so that no one can create anarchy on the campus."

Earlier in the day, BCL activists took positions at different places on the campus to prevent, what they said, BNP youth activists from creating chaos inside the campus.

They gathered at Hakim Chhattar and other places, hardly a few hundred metres away from BNP's youth rally, which was held at Suhrawardy Udyan in the afternoon.



Power transformers are kept out in the open occupying a part of old Central Jail on Nazimuddin Road following damages or repair works. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

PRAYER
TIMING

JULY 23



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

A bridge for them, by them

Students take it upon themselves to build bamboo structure over canal



Alor Dishari, a student-led organisation, constructed this makeshift bridge on Bilashchhora canal to ensure commuting for hundreds of students in Dhobighat area of Sreemangal's Kalighat union.

PHOTO: STAR

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

“The school is about 2.5 kilometres from my house. But I only have to walk for about half a kilometre to reach it, and don't even have to take off my shoes while crossing the canal on foot,” said Nigom Tanti, a fifth grader at Kalighat Government Primary School.

Alor Dishari, a student-run social organisation, has built a makeshift bridge on the Bilashchhora canal to ensure safe commuting for hundreds of students like Nigom, at Dhobighat area in Sreemangal's Kalighat union of Moulvibazar.

The canal becomes quite risky during the monsoon as the water level rises, shared Shitol Kaluar and Himu Kairi, six graders of the same school.

According to locals, they have been demanding a bridge and a road connecting it to the main road for the last two decades.

However, the union parishad failed to initiate a project due to a lack of funds, said Pranesh Goala, union parishad chairman.

“The bridge has to be a hundred feet long, but we don't have enough funds to construct it. We need the authorities to step in and help us,” he added.

On one side of the canal are the

tea estates, markets, temples, and mosques, while schools, central roads, and government offices are located on the other side of the waterbody.

The 100-foot bridge, operational since Sunday, is structured on a frame made of tree trunks and bamboo donated by locals, mostly tea-estate workers, from their gardens.

“Some donated bamboo and logs from their gardens, while some gave us ropes. A total of 45 student volunteers took turns and completed the works within a couple of weeks,” said Paritosh Kumar Tanti, president of Alor Dishari.

During a recent visit to the area, this correspondent saw hundreds of children, especially in uniforms, running over the bridge in joy. While the bridge may become risky if not replaced by a stronger structure, the make-shift construction has made the lives of the locals a lot easier.

“We have solved the problem temporarily, but it is necessary that the authorities take up a project in this regard as soon as possible,” added Paritosh.



A tale of survival

FROM PAGE 5

bus, which was heading towards Jhalakathi from Bhandaria of Pirojpur.

When this correspondent spoke to Momen, the bus was being pulled out from the waterbody.

There were family members running around and asking law enforcement and fire service officials about their loved ones.

“It all happened in just a couple of seconds... I remember as the bus was plunging I kept telling my wife – save me, the bus is drowning.”

“The bus went seven to eight feet into the water within minutes...,” Momen said.

Once in the water, Momen said, he was desperately trying to break the window next to his seat. “But I could not. I tried to keep calm but it

was impossible to do so... I saw an open window near my seat and swam out of the bus through that,” he added.

However, Mamun's tale of survival is filled with grief as well.

“While I was escaping the bus through the window, I saw a child in front of me struggling... he was stuck... I tried to pull him towards me but could not. I tried again, but it might have been the seat handle or something... I could not save him,” said Momen as tears rolled down his eyes.

“I could not hold my breath any longer... I had to leave him...,” he could not finish the sentence as if he had run out of words to describe the tragedy that unfolded in front of him inside the bus.

“I have to live with this loss for the rest of my life.”

Land dispute

FROM PAGE 3

Jhantu Molla left for Thailand after the murder. Due to tannery business related matters, they had to come back to the country. Jhantu was arrested from the airport area while Monir was arrested in Benapole, according to DB.

The DB said Monir, also known as Company Monir, is a well-known figure in the Hazariabagh area of Dhaka.

He has been involved in several criminal cases in the past including murder and land grabbing. He was arrested in 2002 and 2015, but was released due to political influence.

Monir started working in a tannery factory in the 1980s. Under the patronage of top terrorist Imon, Monir started buying and selling raw leather. He also became involved in land acquisition and land brokerage.

Police press charges

FROM PAGE 5

The hacking took place during the upgradation work of bdris.gov.bd, the official server for birth and death registrations.

The officials of CCC ward-40 (North Patenga), ward-41 (South Patenga) and ward-16 filed the three cases on June 9, 2021 under the Digital Security Act.

Asif Mohiuddin, additional deputy commissioner (crime and operation) of CT, told The Daily Star, “Khalid and Khairul knew each other. As a programmer, Khalid knew about the previous server's details and took the advantage of that information.”

SI Shapan Kumar Sarkar said, “We found Khalid's details but are yet to arrest him. Although he left the Birth Register General Office in 2016, he kept the password and user ID; through those, he had issued a good number of birth certificates by taking money via local agents.”

Meanwhile, the CT has been investigating three more cases filed with Khulshi, Patenga and Akbar Shah police stations over similar issues.

through the user IDs and passwords of the offices of different wards of the port city between January 8 and January 22, said sources.

Qualified

FROM PAGE 3

and sovereignty, the PM said Bangladesh does not want to engage in a war with anyone as it believes in peace.

“A peaceful environment is a prerequisite for development,” she said.

The PM said the army has been playing a praiseworthy role by standing beside the people during any disaster and critical period. “Our patriotic army always stands by the people of the country,” she said.

She said the independence and sovereignty of a country cannot be protected without public trust and confidence. “The people have trust and confidence in our army,” she said.

4 killed

FROM PAGE 5

taken to Rajshahi Medical College and Hospital.

Bholahat Police Station OC Selim Reza said the accident occurred around 7:45am when the Bholahat-bound pickup from Shibganj collided with the oncoming Shibganj-bound three-wheeler.

The injured were rushed to the upazila health complex. Both the vehicles were seized and the bodies were handed over to the victims' families, said the OC.

বাংলাদেশ কমার্স ব্যাংক লিমিটেড
ট্রী অনলাইন ব্যাংকিং, গ্রয়োজনীয়
সকল সুবিধা সম্বলিত আপস ভিত্তিক
অনলাইন ব্যাংকিং, ইন্টারনেটে
ব্যাংকিং, ডেবিট ও ক্রেডিট কার্ড
সেবার আপদার বিশ্বস্ত সহযোগী।
বিসিবি

বাগদাদ-ঢাকা কার্পেট ফ্যাক্টরী
(বাংলাদেশ পাবলিক কর্পোরেশনের একটি প্রতিষ্ঠান)
উত্তর কাটাশী, চট্টগ্রাম
দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি
বাগদাদ-ঢাকা কার্পেট ফ্যাক্টরীর শ্রমিক কর্মচারী বিভিন্ন-এর উত্তর ও পশ্চিম পার্শ্বের ফাঁকা
মোট ২.৯৭ একর ভাড়া (একটি ভোবাসহ) বছর ভিত্তিক নবায়ন ব্যাপক ৩ বছরের জন্য
লিজ/ভাড়া প্রদান করার নিমিত্ত দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে। দরপত্র সিডিউল আশাধী
১২/০৮/২০২৩ তারিখ বিকাল ৪.০০ ঘট পর্যন্ত (১) মিল কার্যালয়ের হিসাব শাখা, (২)
বিল্ডিংএমসি আঞ্চলিক কার্যালয়, আরাবান, চট্টগ্রাম হতে ১০০০/- (এক হাজার) টাকা জমা
সাপেক্ষ পাওয়া যাবে এবং উক্তকৃত কার্যালয় সমূহে রক্ষিত টেন্ডার বোর্ডে আশাধী
১৩/০৮/২০২৩ তারিখ দুপুর ১২.০০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে জমা দেয়া যাবে। ১৩/০৮/২০২৩
তারিখ দুপুর ১২.০০ ঘটিকার সময় দরদাতাদের উপস্থিতিতে (যদি কেউ উপস্থিত থাকেন)
টেন্ডার বাত্র খোলা হবে। উক্ত মূল্যের উপর ৪% আনুমানিক (ফেরতযোগ্য) হিসেবে জমা
দিতে হবে। দরপত্র সিডিউলে বিস্তারিত উল্লেখ থাকবে।
জিডি-১১৪০

Pothole-riddled roads a nightmare for commuters

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narsingdi

Various roads in Narsingdi remain in a dilapidated condition for a long time due to a lack of repair, increasing sufferings of commuters.

The roads from Narsingdi College to Velanagar under Sadar upazila, and Hasnabad Bazar to Monipura Bazar in Raipura upazila, stretching about five kilometres, have been damaged.

Besides, a road in Amtoli area under Belabo upazila and more than 100-150 spots across the district, which would add up to at least 8-9km, have remained unfit for vehicular movement, said locals.

About 30,000-40,000 people use these roads to commute and transport vegetables and other necessary items to and from Dhaka, according to sources.

Numerous trucks, buses, three-wheelers and rickshaw-vans regularly ply the roads, they said.

Over 100 ditches and potholes have developed on the roads that pose a risk of accidents. The situation gets worse during the monsoon when rainwater accumulates in those craters.

Around 15 people, including rickshaw-pullers and drivers of vehicles, shared their experiences with this correspondent on different occasions.

“The road from Narsingdi College to Bhelanagar area is in a very poor state. Accidents are a regular occurrence on this road. It is difficult to pull the rickshaw on such roads,” said Kazal Mia, 28, a rickshaw puller.

The connecting roads to the local market in Gatebazar area are also severely damaged, informed Abdur Rahman, a 56-year-old farmer from the Sadar's Purnapara area.

“Transport workers are often reluctant to make trips on this road, and the ones who are interested demand high fare,” he said.

Patients, who have to go to the Sadar hospital via Monipura Bazar or Hasnabad Bazar are the worst sufferers, said Shahadat, a government employee and resident of Raipura's Hasnabad.

Acknowledging the facts, Tofazzal Hossain, senior assistant of Local Government and Engineering Department in Narsingdi, said they will repair the roads in the municipality area. The other roads in the district will be repaired by the upazila engineer office, he added.



Over 100 ditches and potholes have developed on the roads in Narsingdi town that pose a risk of accidents. The situation gets worse during the monsoon when rainwater accumulates in those craters.

PHOTO: STAR

80pc population

FROM PAGE 3

of Ministry of Housing and Public Works, highlighted the joint initiatives undertaken by the ministry, city corporations, and Rajuk to reduce the risk of manmade disasters.

He also spoke of efforts that are being taken to identify earth-quake prone structures. “However, the process is delayed due to a lack of staffers,” he said.

Anisur Rahman Miah, chairman of Rajuk, said efforts are underway to publish a map of risky buildings in the capital.

About risky buildings in Dhaka, he said, “We are working to appoint a third-party panel, comprising experts from different sectors, to assess the validity of these risks. The project is being drafted and will be presented to the authorities soon.”

We've identified

FROM PAGE 3

general secretary post of JL's ward-12 unit under Shahjahanpur, when he was returning home after work, family members said.

Rubel, also a former office secretary of Shahjahanpur unit of Chhatra League, was in the business of providing internet service and supplying water.

Police collected CCTV footage of the incident which showed two assailants chasing already wounded Rubel on the street.

The victim's wife in the case statement mentioned that it was a planned murder.

Meanwhile, Rab has arrested two people involved in the murder from Uttara. The Rab didn't disclose their identities. They will brief the media today.

Meanwhile, the DB will also hold a press briefing over the murder.

Have enacted laws

FROM PAGE 3

in 2012,” he said.

The minister said these while addressing an event titled “Gender-Based Violence Bench Book Launch” at a city hotel as the chief guest.

USAID's Promoting Peace and Justice Activity in Bangladesh organised the event, said a press release.

Two bench books named “Judicial Bench Book on Addressing Gender-Based Violence in Bangladesh” and “Bangladesh Judicial Bench Book on the Prevention of Operations Against Women and Children Act, 2000” were launched on the occasion, the release added.

Anisul said these laws stand as formidable pillars in the fight against violence and gender-based discrimination, ensuring

that the rights and dignity of all citizens are respected and protected.


Furthermore, to guarantee the effective implementation of these vital legal instruments, the government has established a network of 101 specialised “Prevention of Suppression against Women and Children Tribunal”, he added.

Will continue

FROM PAGE 3

go to the polls under this government.”

Mahmudur Rahman Manna, convener of Nagorik Oikya, said, “People do not want an election under ‘illegal’ government. We have started our movement on the streets to restore democracy. We will continue our movement until this government resigns.”



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TENDER NOTICE

Eastern Bank Limited invites sealed bids from bona fide/eligible suppliers for following services/items:

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Lot 2: Datacenter Gap Analysis, Gap Remediation Consultancy and Certification.

Lot 3: Network Equipment for Datacenter

Interested bidders are requested to collect the RFP document electronically by sending an email from their official email address to bidit@ebi-bd.com mentioning item name, the name of the company, authorized contact person, mailing address, telephone & mobile phone numbers on or before **Thursday, 27 July 2023**.

Bids prepared in accordance with the instructions contained in the RFP document must be submitted in **two separate envelopes, clearly marking 'Technical' and 'Financial'** on the envelopes to the Office of the Chairman, Purchase Committee, Head Office, Eastern Bank Limited, 100 Gulshan Avenue, Dhaka-1212 on or before **Monday, 14 August 2023**.

Tenderers are allowed to bid for all lots or any lot separately. Any bid not submitted separately against each lot will be rejected. However, common documents need not to be submitted for each lot. Submission with one lot is enough.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer

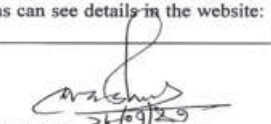
DPHE, Pirojpur District, Pirojpur.

www.dphe.pirojpur.gov.bd

Invitation for e-Tender notice

1	Ministry / Division	Local Government Division.
2	Implementing Agency	Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE).
3	Project/ Program Name	Revenue Budget.
4	e-Tender IDs (with Package Number)	854412 (Rev/Pir/RMSE, 2022-23), 854710 (Rev/Pir/Road, 2022-23), 854723 (MBTW/2729) and 854727 (MBTW/2734).
5	Description of works	(Rev/Pir/RMSE, 2022-23): Estimate for Repair and Maintenance of the Sanitary and others Works at EE, DPHE Office, Pirojpur in FY 2022-23. (Rev/Pir/Road, 2022-23): Road maintenance of the Executive Engineer office and construction of connecting road for newly constructed Lab Building of DPHE in Pirojpur District FY 2022-23. (MBTW/2729): Installation of 64 Nos DTFW with 6 No. Hand Pump at Sadar (10 Nos), Indurkani (12 Nos), Bhandaria (19 Nos), Mathbaria (03) and Najirpur (20 Nos) in Pirojpur District under Revenue Budget on Priority Basis in Houses Built for Landless and Homeless Families on the Occasion of Mujib Centenary in FY 2022-23 (4 th Phase). (MBTW/2734): Installation of 127 Nos Shallow Tubewell (STW) with 6 No. Hand Pump at Nazirpur (29 Nos), Bhandaria (35 Nos), Mathbaria (28 Nos), Indurkani (31 Nos), and Sadar upazila (04 Nos) in Pirojpur District under Revenue Budget on Priority Basis in Houses Built for Landless and Homeless Families on the Occasion of Mujib Centenary in FY 2022-23 (4 th Phase).
6	Name & Designation of official Inviting Tender	Md. Moin Uddin Ahmed, Executive Engineer, DPHE, Pirojpur District.
7	This is online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the national e-GP Web Portal and no offline/ hard copies will be accepted. Interested persons/ firms can see details in the website: www.eprocure.gov.bd	

GD- 1138



Md. Moin Uddin Ahmed
Executive Engineer
DPHE Pirojpur District.

JHALAKATHI BUS ACCIDENT

A tale of survival and loss

STAR REPORT

“The bus was about five to ten minutes away from my destination... I was telling my wife over the phone to wait near the Gabkhan bridge where I will get off.”

“I was about to hang up the phone, suddenly I heard a loud noise as if something exploded... Perhaps it was a tyre as the bus tilted and before I could realise what was happening the vehicle plunged into a roadside waterbody.”

Md Momen, a passenger of the ill-fated bus that fell into a roadside waterbody in Jhalakathi Sadar upazila yesterday morning, told this newspaper.

Momen was sitting by the road staring at the waterbody surrounded by people and rescue personnel.

He was still shivering from the near-death experience.

However, not everyone was as lucky as him.

At least 17 people, including children, were killed and 33 injured when the bus fell into a roadside waterbody in the Chotrokanda area of Dhansiri union around 9:45am.

There were around 60 passengers in the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



Family member of a deceased breaks down in tears while sharing the loss of a loved one with others. At least 17 people, including children, were killed and 23 injured when the bus fell into a roadside waterbody in the Chotrokanda area of Dhansiri union around 9:45am yesterday. This photo was taken in Jhalakathi Sadar Hospital.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

‘They’ll never return home’

KM HABIBUR RAHMAN, from Jhalakathi

Irene, a 20-year-old mother, was happy, as she was returning home after the first nanubari (grandmother's home) visit of her one-month-old daughter, Ripa.

They were accompanied by Irene's younger brother, Nayan, and the journey was meant to end at their home in Barishal's Hizla area.

However, fate had other plans, as tragedy struck mid-road.

A bus accident claimed the lives of the three yesterday morning.

The once jubilant atmosphere turned into one of grief and sorrow, leaving their loved ones heartbroken.

“I cuddled my niece before they left this morning,” said Irene's elder brother Rubel.

“Her smiling face is still fresh right in front of my eyes,” he added.

Rubel burst into tears while talking to this correspondent at the Jhalakathi Sadar Hospital yesterday afternoon.

“Now their cold, lifeless bodies are lying at a hospital,” Rubel said.

At least 17 people including Irene, Ripa, and Nayan were killed in the accident and 33 others injured as the bus fell in a roadside waterbody in Chhatrakanda area of Jhalakathi Sadar upazila around 9:45am.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Newly-registered Supreme Party to rally in districts from Jul 28

STAR REPORT

Bangladesh Supreme Party (BSP) yesterday declared to hold rallies in several districts from July 28, demanding free, fair, and impartial elections as per the constitution.

The decision came from a rally held around 11:00am, from Paltan to Dainik Bangla intersection area. Over 1,000 leaders and activists joined the programme.

Speaking at the rally, BSP chairman Sheikh Shajada Syed Saifuddin Ahmed Maizbhandari said, “The caretaker government system conflicts with Bangladesh’s constitution and is insulting to politicians.”

“So, there is no alternative to free, fair, and impartial elections with active participation for the sake of the country’s development, progress, and stability,” he added.

He emphasised making the Election Commission independent to establish the people’s voting rights.

BSP declared to hold rallies on July 28 in Chittagong, August 1 in Munshiganj, August 7 in Gazipur, and August 8 in Cumilla.

Yesterday, the party leaders and activists at the rally protested against alleged “anti-national conspiracy”, “propaganda against the armed forces”, and demanded punishment for “Mossad agents”.

Studying under open sky as school bldg risky

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

A bunch of students in uniforms attending lectures under a tree -- this is what this correspondent saw when he first stepped inside Uttar Tiakhali Government Primary School in Barguna's Amtali upazila.

Established in 1973, the school was a cluster of tin-shed rooms back then.

In 2003, the Local Government Engineering Department constructed a single-storey building for the students. However, the building started to crumble within just a decade.

In 2021, the Upazila Primary Education Office declared the building, with a cracked roof and walls, abandoned after several students were injured due to ceiling plasters falling off on their heads, according to teachers.

For the last two years, classes have been held under a tree on the school compound on the balconies of the abandoned building during drizzles.

“We have to sit for hours under the scorching sun. The heat is unbearable, and it is very difficult to focus in such unpleasant circumstances,” shared Marium, a fifth grader at the school.

Attending classes in the balcony is more dangerous as the ceiling can collapse on their heads anytime, added Marium.



PHOTO: STAR

“We need a new school building immediately,” she pleaded.

Marium’s classmates Maria Islam, Abu Hanif, Sakil, Hasibur Rahman, Mahfuz and Nazma Akhter echoed her.

This correspondent, during his visit, saw fifth graders being taught under the tree while third graders were sitting on the balconies. A class was also underway in one of the old tin-shed rooms.

“We don’t have any classrooms. The children are suffering,” said Abdul Mannan, an assistant teacher.

The school authorities had applied for a new building after the old one was declared abandoned. However, no

4 killed, 17 hurt in road accidents

STAR REPORT

Four people were killed 17 others injured in road accidents in two districts yesterday, according to reports from our correspondents.

In Bogura, at least two women were killed and 15 passengers injured as a bus and another unknown vehicle collided on Bogura-Natore regional highway in Jamadarpukur area in the early hours.

The accident happened around 3:30pm as the Lalmonirhat bound bus collided with the other vehicle while trying to overtake it, said Abbas Ali, officer-in-charge of Kundarhat highway police outpost in Nandigram upazila.

The bus later plunged into a roadside ditch, said the OC.

Jelma Begum, 50, from Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila died on the spot while Rokashan Begum Boishakhi, 20, from Mirzapur upazila in Patuakhali succumbed to her injuries at Bogura Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital, said Sub-inspector Dulal Hossain of the hospital police outpost under Sadar Police Station.

The locals and police rescued the injured and sent them to the hospital, said police.

The victims are from Natore, Bogura, Lalmonirhat and Barishal districts, said the SI.

In Chapainawabganj, at least two persons were killed and two others injured in a head-on collision between a pickup van and a CNG-run three-wheeler at Folimari in Bholahat upazila.

Fatema Begum, 42, daughter of Idris Ali from Gohalbari village died on the way to Bholahat Upazila Health Complex and Helaluddin, 35, son of Shamsar Ali from Dhorompur village in Bholahat succumbed to his injuries while he was being

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

BARIND REGION
Food security at stake for overuse of groundwater

Speakers tell national drought convention at RU

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Speakers at a discussion in Rajshahi yesterday urged the authorities concerned to stop producing rice by overusing groundwater in the High Barind region.

Instead, they proposed promoting cultivation of high value crops like mango, guava, and dragon fruit that require less water and can generate more income for farmers than rice in the region.

They were speaking at the inaugural discussion of the national drought convention held at MA Wazed Miah Academic Building of Rajshahi University.

The convention, divided in four different sessions, was organised by 16 NGOs. The country’s food security is at stake in the Barind for overuse of the groundwater over the last three decades, said Prof ANK Noman, chairman of the Department of Economics at RU.

In addition, conflicts between fish and crop farmers are on the rise over the surface water, he said while presenting the keynote paper.

RU Vice-Chancellor and geologist Prof Golam Sabbir Sattar said the authorities are allowing overuse of groundwater, which resulted in the depletion of both surface and ground water.

“Producing rice with ground water is creating discriminations among farmers. The solvent ones are depriving the small

and marginal farmers,” said lawmaker Fazle Hossain Badsha referring to the death of two Santal farmers in Rajshahi’s Godagari upazila last year.

Lawmaker Omor Faruk Chowdhury said every year, the government leases out around 10,000 khas ponds in Tanore and Godagari upazilas, and farmers are not allowed to take water from these ponds. “Protecting the water resources in Barind should be the top priority,” he said.

Protecting the water resources in Barind should be the top priority.

OMOR FARUK CHOWDHURY
Lawmaker

ActionAid Bangladesh’s country director Farah Kabir said if the drought issue is not solved, it will take more time to deal with climate migration.

The session’s chief guest Saber Hossain Chowdhury, chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Environment, Forest and Climate Change, called upon researchers and development activists to come up with strategies and actions for the government in this regard. Chowdhury said the government is spending Tk 37,000 crore for climate change issues.

BIRTH REG
SERVER HACK
Police press charges against four

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police have pressed three charge sheets against four persons for issuing 18 birth certificates by breaching its main server in 2021.

Sub-inspector Shapan Kumar Sarkar of Counter Terrorism Division of Chattogram Metropolitan Police, also the case’s investigation officer, submitted the charge sheets last week to a Chattogram court.

The accused are Khalid Bin Yousuf, 33, Khairul Islam, 43, Nazmul Haque Arif, 38, and Asharaful Alam, 39. Among them, Khalid, programmer of Birth Registrar General Office, among others, developed the previous server, said CT officials.

Khalid and Khairul are on the run while the remaining two are behind bars.

The cases were filed with Patenga and Chawkbazar police stations after 18 dubious birth registration certificates were issued by hacking the user IDs and passwords of three ward councillor offices under Chattogram City Corporation.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

বিভাগীয় বন কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়

চট্টগ্রাম দক্ষিণ বন বিভাগ, চট্টগ্রাম

Website: <http://forestsouth.chittagongdiv.gov.bd>

দরপত্র/নিলাম বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং-০১/(রাজস্ব) অব ২০২৩-২০২৪

তারিখঃ ২০/০৭/২০২৩খ্রিঃ

জন্দকৃত বনজন্ডব্য দরপত্র/প্রকাশ্য নিলামে বিক্রয়ের বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা সর্বসাধারণের অবগতির জন্যে জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, চলতি ২০২৩-২০২৪ আর্থিক সালে চট্টগ্রাম দক্ষিণ বন বিভাগের অধীন বিভিন্ন রেঞ্জ/স্টেশন/বিটে জন্দকৃত/ঝড়ে ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত/বিভাগীয় পর্যায়ে আহরিত এবং জিম্মায় রক্ষিত বিক্রয়যোগ্য বনজন্ডব্যের লটসমূহ নির্ধারিত তারিখে ক্রয়ে আগ্রহী প্রকৃত কাঠ ব্যবসায়ীগণের নিকট হতে সীলমোহরযুক্ত বদ্ধ খামে নিম্নবর্ণিত শর্তাবলীতে নির্ধারিত সিডিউলে নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর বরাবরে দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে। প্রকাশ্য নিলাম বা দরপত্রের মাধ্যমে ক্রয়ে আগ্রহী অংশগ্রহণকারী ব্যক্তি/প্রতিনিধিকে দরপত্র দাখিল/প্রকাশ্য নিলামের পূর্বে স্ব-স্ব রেঞ্জ/স্টেশন/বিটে রক্ষিত লটসমূহ সরেজমিনে দেখার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হল। দরপত্র দাখিল/প্রকাশ্য নিলামের পর বনজন্ডব্য না দেখার অজুহাতে কোন প্রকার ওজর আপত্তি গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে না। পারিপার্শ্বিক অবস্থার প্রেক্ষিতে যে কোন সময় বিভাগীয় বন কর্মকর্তা নিলাম স্থান, সময় ও তারিখ পরিবর্তন করতে পারবেন। দরপত্রের শর্তাবলী ও লট সম্পর্কীয় যাবতীয় জ্ঞাতব্য বিষয়াবলী বিভাগীয় বন কর্মকর্তার দপ্তর ও স্ব-স্ব রেঞ্জ অফিস হতে অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে দেখতে ও জানতে পারা যাবে।

ক্রঃ নং	প্রকাশ্য নিলামের তারিখ	নিলামের সময়	প্রকাশ্য নিলাম যে স্থানে অনুষ্ঠিত হবে	বনজন্ডব্যের অবস্থান	মন্তব্য
(১)	১১/১০/২০২৩খ্রিঃ	সকাল ১০.০ ঘটিকা হতে নিলাম কার্য শেষ না হওয়া পর্যন্ত।	বিভাগীয় বন কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয় প্রাঙ্গণ, বনপাহাড়, মন্দনকানন, চট্টগ্রাম।	কালুরঘাট ডিপো, সংশ্লিষ্ট রেঞ্জ ও রেঞ্জের অধীন বিট/ক্যাম্প এবং স্টেশন কার্যালয় প্রাঙ্গণ।	জন্দকৃত/ঝড়ে ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত/বিভাগীয় পর্যায়ে
(২)	১৫/০২/২০২৪খ্রিঃ	ঐ	ঐ	ঐ	আহরিত/জিম্মারাখা
(৩)	১৫/০৫/২০২৪খ্রিঃ	ঐ	ঐ	ঐ	সকল প্রকার কাঠ

সীল টেভারের জন্য ধার্যকৃত তারিখ

ক্রঃ নং	দরপত্র দাখিলের তারিখ	দাখিলের সময়	দরপত্র যে সকল স্থানে গ্রহণ করা হবে	বনজন্ডব্যের অবস্থান	মন্তব্য
১)	২৩/০৮/২০২৩খ্রিঃ	সকাল ১০.০ ঘটিকা হতে দুপুর ২.০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।	১) বন সংরক্ষক, চট্টগ্রাম অঞ্চলের কার্যালয়। ২) জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, চট্টগ্রাম। ৩) বিভাগীয় বন কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়, চট্টগ্রাম দক্ষিণ বন বিভাগ।	কালুরঘাট ডিপো/সংশ্লিষ্ট রেঞ্জ ও রেঞ্জের অধীন বিট/ক্যাম্প এবং স্টেশন কার্যালয় প্রাঙ্গণ।	জন্দকৃত/ঝড়ে ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত/বিভাগীয় পর্যায়ে আহরিত/জিম্মা রাখা সকল প্রকার কাঠ
২)	১৩/১২/২০২৩খ্রিঃ	-ঐ-	-ঐ-	-ঐ-	-ঐ-
৩)	১৭/০৪/২০২৪খ্রিঃ	-ঐ-	-ঐ-	-ঐ-	-ঐ-

আব্দুল্লাহ-আল-মামুন
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জিডি-১১৩৯



A solemn walk through TEN YEARS AFTER RANA PLAZA

Exhibition ongoing at DrikPath Bhobon

Ismail, who had been residing in France prior to coming to the country for this exhibition, currently works as a member of Agence VU in Paris. He had been photographing the Rana Plaza disaster and its victims since 2013, having taken breaks in between due to the sheer mental exhaustion that he faced as an onlooker of such a tragedy.

MALIHA MASHIAT

In a silent inauguration on July 21, immersive exhibition *Ten Years After Rana Plaza* kicked off at the level 2 of DrikPath Bhobon, Panthapath. The exhibition is composed of the interdisciplinary works of photojournalist Ismail Ferdous, curated to be displayed in a swirling walkway, designed by architect Farhana Nizam Chowdhury.

The exhibition started without any opening or celebration, as a solemn reminder of the tragic history and the aftermath of the event. Ismail Ferdous consciously chose not to arrange the exhibition in April, when the tragedy struck in 2013. According to him, instead of looking for an occasion to remember, this tragedy should be a part of the history that everyone remembers without fanfare, especially the younger ones.

"This exhibition is not for foreigners, this is for us Bangladeshis!" exclaimed Ismail, who does not like to call himself an activist but rather, a photojournalist. This sentiment is also apparent in the layout of the exhibition which is accessible for all, with the walkways

being wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs and other facilities available, which are able to serve specially-abled individuals of all sort.

Some of the artistes who have contributed to the making of the displayed collages include names like Morshed Mishu and Ata Mojlish. The photos displayed contained multiple styles of pictures, some portraits, some landscapes, but all of them shared the common subject of garment workers.

While the large photo of a crowd of garment workers commuting to work invokes a strange sense of omniscience, on the other side, the photo of a victim being pulled out of the rubble by volunteers, reluctantly makes the viewer feel the other side of the omniscience coin, the helplessness of being an observer.

"The first person that I talked to was the architect. That's where the core idea lies. Then I spoke to the artistes, on how to convey the sentiment of 'silence'", Ismail said to The Daily Star.



Ismail Ferdous



PHOTOS: ARSHADUL HOQUE ROCKY

"If you look around, you will not see dramatic photos, rather quiet ones. To convey the moment of silence observed for all the lives that have been lost".

Dr Naomi Hossain, Research Professor at American University at Washington, DC and one of the organisers, remarked about the photos

displayed, and shared her insights on the particularly harrowing effects the disaster had on the low-income female work force.

"Despite the tragedy, the industry has not stopped and female workers don't want it to either, they have mouths to feed." She then drifted off by complimenting the exhibition on its layered and nuanced vision, both

literally and metaphorically.

Ismail, who had been residing in France prior to coming to the country for this exhibition, currently works as a member of Agence VU in Paris. He had been photographing the Rana Plaza disaster and its victims since 2013, having taken breaks in between due to the sheer mental exhaustion that he faced as an onlooker of such a tragedy.

His photos of the tragic sight have been displayed in countless places, one of them being a projection onto the Lincoln Centre and stores, places that had sourced from the Rana Plaza, during New York Fashion Week, 2014.

The pièce de résistance of the exhibition, a portrait that Ismail had taken, is set at the last alley of the winding walkway. As per the artiste's request, the description of the photo has been kept secret, as that is something he wants the visitors to experience first-hand. All of the photos, collages displayed are tied to the structure and also the experience, which the photographer hopes will stir the emotions of the younger generations, from within.

The exhibition will remain open to the public every day until July 29, from 3 pm to 8 pm.

NEWS

Biman official found negligent

FROM PAGE 12

"I don't want to comment on the report as I have not seen it yet," he said, adding that he was involved in the question-setting committee by default but his name was not mentioned in the charge sheet.

On October 21, 2022, Biman Bangladesh was to hold a recruitment exam for 10 posts for electricians, mechanics, welders, painters, operators and tailors.

Around two hours before the exam, the recruitment process had to be suspended because it was found that the question paper had been leaked.

The investigation report, turned in on November 27 last year, stated, "The question paper setting committee is responsible for this question leak."

On December 27, 2022, the ministry sent the probe findings to the managing director of Biman and instructed them to "take appropriate action against the employees found responsible as per the findings".

According to the probe report, the question setting was done over two days – October 19 and October 20, 2022.

On the second day, Nizam had invited MLSS (member of lower subordinate staff) Jahid Hasan, along with a deputy general manager and an assistant manager, to print and photocopy the question papers. None of these people were part of the

question-setting committee approved by the board.

As they all were carrying their cellphones, Jahid, unsupervised at the time, took a photo of the question paper while photocopying.

Another investigation report, prepared by Biman itself, also confirmed the incident.

"It has been proved that the question paper has been leaked from the offices of the general manager and director of administration," it said.

Jahid was formally accused by the DB in the charge sheet in the Digital Security Act case filed in connection with the leak.

In a confessional statement, Jahid said, "On October 19, the GM of admin (Nizam) instructed me to report by 10:00am the next day at the director of admin's office. I personally photocopied a thousand sets at first and then 216 more, using the photocopy machine in that office."

"During the last set of 216, GM Nizam went to the washroom and I took a photo using my cellphone."

The Biman report said Jahid was included in the process without any written decision or permission taken.

The ministry's investigation report said the committee is at fault because it not only invited people, who had not been pre-approved, into the room but also allowed them to carry cellphones, adding

that it was "careless and thoughtless management".

The report recommended that nobody be allowed to bring in cellphones or use the internet during the question-setting and printing process.

On June 19, Nizam Uddin was first transferred from his post to the Public Security Division of the home ministry.

But before he could join his post, Biman on June 23 sent him to Saudi Arabia "to assist Bangladeshi hajjis" for 37 days.

On July 9, the division issued an order announcing that Nizam will be promoted to DC of Bhola. Then on July 13, the ministry changed his posting to Shariatpur.

Biman has so far terminated or temporarily suspended at least 21 staffers, including traffic helpers, cleaners, security guards and office aides, over the leak.

Other than Jahid, none of the others was present in the photocopy room. But they were found guilty of either receiving or helping distribute the leaked papers.

It was pointed out to the State Minister for Public Administration Farhad Hossain that the civil aviation ministry blamed the entire question-setting committee for the question leak, to which he responded that it does not mean that every person in the committee was involved.

Palestinian teenager killed by Israel forces

AFP, Nablus

Israeli forces have shot dead a Palestinian in the occupied West Bank, Palestinian officials said yesterday, in what the army described as a "car ramming attempt" near Nablus.

Fawzi Mukhalifa, 18, "was killed by the occupation (Israeli) bullets in the town of Sebastia" late on Friday, the Palestinian health ministry said.

He was the second Palestinian to be killed by Israeli forces in the West Bank within hours.

The army said troops had responded to "a car ramming attempt" in the northern West Bank town "by firing towards the suspects who were in the vehicle. The driver was neutralised."

Another "suspect" who had been

in Mukhalifa's car was wounded and arrested, the army said.

The deadly incident came amid rising tensions in the West Bank, which Israel has occupied since the 1967 Six-Day War.

The territory has seen a string of attacks by Palestinians on Israeli targets, as well as a surge in violence by Israeli settlers against Palestinian communities.

Earlier on Friday, the Palestinian health ministry reported the death of Mohammed al-Bayed, 17, near the city of Ramallah.

Bayed died from injuries sustained by live bullets fired by Israeli forces in the village of Umm Safa, it said, while Israeli border police accused him of attacking officers.

Cops not informed

FROM PAGE 12

to tackle any untoward incidents during polls in the future.

Meanwhile, the case filed over the attack was transferred to Detective Branch of police from Banani Police Station yesterday, Rifat Hossain Shamim, deputy commissioner of DB (Gulshan), told The Daily Star.

All the arrestees are so far ruling Awami League activists, according to media reports.

Hero Alom, however, refuted the DMP commissioner's claim of attacking him outside the polling centre and visiting the centre for the second time without notifying police.

He alleged that AL activists attacked him inside the centre in presence of police, but the law enforcers did not take any action

against them.

"The DMP commissioner told the media that I visited Banani Bidyaniketan centre twice. But the fact is that I visited Banani Model Primary School centre in the morning and the Banani Bidyaniketan centre only in the afternoon after hearing of ballot stuffing there," Hero Alom told this correspondent.

"I'm a candidate and I have rights to visit polling centres. Why would I have to inform police prior to my visit? It is police's duty to ensure security of candidates."

Claiming vote rigging in the Dhaka-17 by-elections, Hero Alom said he would appeal to the Election Commission today, seeking re-election.

Fair polls not possible

FROM PAGE 12

general elections, Quader said.

"A fair election is never possible in such a reality," the JP chief added.

Quader also said, "When the government feels that it needs to make elections appear neutral, it is doing so and when it believes that it must lose, it makes sure that it does."

The election results are now

being determined by the will of the government and not by the people's votes, he added.

The JP chairman finally said democracy is supposed to be a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. "However, the government elected by Awami League is working for Awami League, not for the people."

Hasina not afraid of any threat

FROM PAGE 1

government by waging movements, reports BSS.

Referring to BNP's one-point movement, he said BNP has not been successful in the past 14 and a half years of agitation and would not be successful in the next four months as well.

The AL general secretary said BNP is waging movements to disrupt the ongoing massive development across the country.

Quader urged the party leaders and activists to remain united.

Addressing the people, he said, "Perhaps BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir did not know that Noakhali used to be a fort of BNP. But now it has become a base of Awami League."

Quader attended a similar rally in the afternoon at Noakhali Zilla School, reports our correspondent.

Addressing the rally as chief guest, AL Presidium Member and deputy leader of the parliament Matia Chowdhury asked the BNP to test its fate by participating in the upcoming national polls.

"The [national] election is a few days away, try your luck there," she said urging the opposition party to respect democratic practices.

Matia said there is no point in trusting foreigners. "They themselves are suffering from an economic downturn," she added.

The BNP wants to hold the country hostage in the name of its "youth rally", alleged Jubo League General Secretary Mainul Hossain Khan Nikhil.

"BNP was responsible for the 1/11 in the country. They want to create a similar situation," he said.

Nikhil said the national election will not be held as per foreigners' prescription, rather it will be held in line with the constitution.

From the rally, the JL general secretary announced that they will hold a rally on Monday at the south gate of Baitul Mukarram National Mosque in the capital.

65 percent faced obstacles at work

FROM PAGE 12

Vague terms such as "anti-state activities" and "inimical" or "derogatory" comments about the constitution and constitutional institutions should be deleted to prevent the abuse of the law.

Blocking access to foreign funds is often the chosen method of harassment by the government, the report said.

Whenever an organisation is seen as a "troublemaker", their permission for foreign funding is denied, said the human rights activists interviewed for the report.

The availability of foreign grants is being seen as a negative, said Sara Hossain, honorary executive director of the Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust, a major legal aid provider, at the event.

"The NGO affairs bureau was set up to facilitate the process, make it

easier to bring foreign funds. Now it has become a gatekeeper."

Extrajudicial threats make it impossible to seek legal redress, said Hossain, also a barrister in the Supreme Court of Bangladesh.

Nurul Kabir, editor of the English daily New Age, pointed out how human rights defenders face reprisal from the government for reporting issues to the UN and other international organisations.

"It is my democratic right to report to the UN because my state recognises our membership to the UN," he added.

Zi Khan Panna, chairman of Ain o Salish Kendra, a national legal aid and human rights organisation, and Kamal Uddin Ahmed, chairman of the National Human Rights Commission, a constitutionally mandated entity, also spoke.

World’s biggest permafrost crater thaws as planet warms

REUTERS, Batagai

Stunning drone footage has revealed details of the Batagaika crater, a one kilometre long gash in Russia's Far East that forms the world's biggest permafrost crater.

In the video two explorers clamber across uneven terrain at the base of the depression, marked by irregular surfaces and small hummocks, which began to form after the surrounding forest was cleared in the 1960s and the permafrost underground began to melt, causing the land to sink.

"We locals call it 'the cave-in,'" local resident and crater explorer Erel Struchkov told Reuters as he stood on the crater's rim. "It developed in the 1970s, first as a ravine. Then by thawing in the heat of sunny days, it started to expand."

Scientists say Russia is warming at least 2.5 times faster than the rest of the world, melting the long-frozen tundra that covers about 65 percent of the country's landmass and releasing greenhouse gases stored in the thawed soil.

The "gateway to the underworld," as some locals in Russia's Sakha Republic also call it, has a scientific name: a mega-

slump.

And while it may attract tourists, the slump's expansion is "a sign of danger," said Nikita Tananayev, lead researcher at the Melnikov Permafrost Institute in Yakutsk.

"In future, with increasing temperatures and with higher anthropogenic pressure, we will see more and more of those mega-slumps forming, until all the permafrost is gone," Tananayev told Reuters.

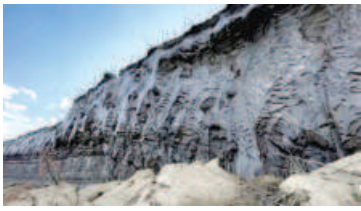
Thawing permafrost has already threatened cities and towns across northern and northeastern Russia, buckling roadways, splitting apart houses, and disrupting pipelines. Vast wildfires, which have become more

intense in recent seasons, exacerbate the problem.

Locals in Sakha have taken note of the crater's rapid growth.

"(Two years ago the edge) was about 20-30 metres away from this path. And now, apparently, it is much closer," Struchkov said.

Tananayev says the soil beneath the slump contains an "enormous quantity" of organic carbon that will release into the atmosphere as the permafrost thaws further fuelling the planet's warming.



A Ukrainian serviceman inspects a destroyed Russian tank in the recently liberated village of Novodarivka, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Zaporizhzhia region, Ukraine on Friday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

SUDAN WAR

Rockets in Darfur kill 16 civilians

AFP, Wad Madani

At least 16 civilians have been killed by rocket fire that hit their houses in war-torn Sudan's western Darfur region, a local lawyers' union said yesterday.

The vast region, already ravaged by brutal conflict in the early 2000s, has seen some of the worst of the violence since fighting erupted in mid-April between Sudan's rival generals vying for power.

"During an exchange of rocket fire between the army and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), 16 civilians were killed on Friday, according to a preliminary toll, in Nyala," the South Darfur state capital, the union said.

And at least one man was killed by a sniper, it added.

In the West Darfur capital of El Geneina, near Chad, snipers have reportedly been targeting residents from rooftops since fighting began, and tens of thousands of residents have fled across the border.

Fighting in Darfur, an RSF stronghold, has recently concentrated around Nyala, after brutal clashes in El Geneina where the United Nations had reported atrocities.

Battles have also continued in and around Khartoum. Residents reported on Saturday first army air strikes on villages in the Al-Jazirah state's north, just south of the capital.

The fertile land between the White Nile and Blue Nile rivers now hosts several hundred thousands of the estimated 3.3 million people the war has displaced. If fighting expands into Al-Jazirah, they may be forced to flee again.



Members of the National Institute of Migration (INM) and local authorities rescue migrants mostly from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, who were traveling in an overcrowded box in a trailer and were found abandoned on the side of La Tinaja-Cordoba highway, Veracruz state, Mexico, in this photo released on Friday and distributed by INM.

PHOTO: REUTERS

‘ENORMOUS’ AI RISKS

Biden secures tech giants’ safety pledges

AFP, Washington

President Joe Biden evoked AI's "enormous" risk and promise Friday at a White House meeting with tech leaders who committed to guarding against everything from cyber-attacks to fraud as the sector revolutionises society.

"It is astounding," Biden said, highlighting AI's "enormous, enormous promise of both risk to our society and our economy and our national security, but also incredible opportunities."

Standing alongside top representatives from Amazon, Anthropic, Google, Inflection, Meta, Microsoft and OpenAI, Biden said the cutting-edge companies had made commitments to "guide responsible innovation" as AI rips ever deeper into personal and business life.

"We'll see more technology change in the next 10 years or even in the next few years than we've seen in the last 50 years. That has been an astounding revelation to me," Biden said. "The group here will be critical in shepherding that innovation with responsibility and safety."

Ahead of the meeting, the seven AI giants committed to a series of self-regulated safeguards that the White House said would "underscore three principles that must be fundamental to the future of AI: safety, security and trust."

Although AI -- in which computer programs learn to do many jobs currently performed by humans -- is seen as a hugely empowering tool, it also poses potentially nightmarish risks.

In their pledge, the companies agreed to develop "robust technical mechanisms," such as watermarking systems, to ensure users know when content is from AI and not human-generated.

Worry that content created by artificial



intelligence will be used for fraud and misinformation has ramped up as the technology improves and the 2024 presidential election gets closer.

Already, supporters of Republican candidate Ron DeSantis have gotten attention with an attack ad featuring an artificially generated voice like that of party frontrunner Donald Trump.

The White House initiative demonstrates an early effort to get in front of the snowballing problem of how to regulate an industry developing faster than Congress may be able to handle.

Among the measures pledged by the seven companies ahead of the Biden meeting is agreeing to independent "internal and external security testing of their AI systems before their release" for threats to biosecurity, cybersecurity and "broader societal effects."

Officials said Biden is also already working on an executive order -- something that has limited powers, but does not require congressional approval -- on AI safety.

"We need to make sure we're pulling

every lever of the federal government to regulate and take action -- and work with... (Congress) on legislation," White House Chief of Staff Jeff Zients told Axios.

"We will need legislation to build the capacity to have the experts that we need in the federal government, and then to have the regulatory authority to hold the private sector accountable -- and to hardwire these actions so that they're enduring," Zients said.

The White House said it is also working with foreign allies to seek "a strong international framework to govern the development and use of AI" around the world. The topic was prominent at the G7 in Japan this May, while Britain is set to hold an international AI summit.

Biden cautioned that governments and societies need to do better on the emergence of AI than was the case when social media platforms exploded, leading to widespread concern over the effects on mental health and misinformation.

"Social media has shown us the harm that powerful technology can do without the safeguards in place," Biden said.

Algeria applies to join BRICS

REUTERS, Tunis

Algeria has applied to join the BRICS group and submitted a request to become a shareholder member of BRICS Bank with an amount of USD 1.5 billion, Ennahar TV quoted Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune as saying.

It added that Tebboune said at the end of his visit to China that Algeria had sought to join the BRICS to open new economic opportunities.

"We officially applied to join the BRICS group, we sent a letter asking to be shareholder members in the bank ... Algeria's first contribution in the bank will be \$1.5 billion," Ennahar quoted Tebboune as saying.

More than 40 countries expressed interest in joining BRICS.

Indian cough syrups caused 70 infant deaths

Gambia finds

AFP, Banjul

A government taskforce in The Gambia announced Friday that four cough syrups imported from India were responsible for the deaths of at least 70 children from kidney failure last year.

Health Minister Dr Ahmadou Lamin Samateh told a press conference that there were failings in regulatory and import checks of the medication, beginning with the products not being registered with the West African country's Medical Control Agency (MCA).

China sends warplanes towards Taiwan

DEUTSCHE WELLE

China sent dozens of warplanes towards Taiwan, said the island's defense ministry yesterday.

The Chinese military planes entered Taiwan's air defense identification zone days before Taiwan is set to conduct anti-invasion military exercises.

The Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) sent a forceful flight of 37 aircrafts and seven navy vessels between Friday and Saturday, the Taiwanese defense ministry said in a statement.

Among these were J-10 and J-16 fighter jets as well as H-6 bombers.

The Taiwan defense ministry detected that 22 of these warplanes had entered the island's air defense identification zone and had crossed the midline of the Taiwan Strait.

Brazil restricts gun ownership

AFP, Brasilia

Brazil's leftist President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva on Friday signed a decree to limit civilian access to firearms, seeking to undo a boom of gun ownership under his far-right predecessor Jair Bolsonaro.

Under Bolsonaro, private gun ownership nearly tripled as he loosened controls in a nod to his "Bibles, bullets and beef" support base.

"We will continue to fight for fewer weapons in our country. Only the police and the army must be well-armed," Lula said in Brasilia as he unveiled a series of violence-curbing measures.

Save Arial Beel from real estate sharks

Encroachers are destroying the once-thriving ecosystem of this wetland

It is extremely disappointing to know that Arial Beel, one of the country's largest wetlands located in Munshiganj, stands on the brink of a devastating transformation. One may recall that over a decade ago, the residents of Arial Beel united to protect their ancestral lands from an ill-conceived airport project of the government. Their determination and community solidarity also paid off, forcing the government to abandon its plan. However, this triumph is now overshadowed by a new threat that looms over the beel – illegal real estate development.

According to a report, the very farmers who once valiantly defended their territory are now yielding to the lure of higher profits, thus becoming “pawns in a sinister game of environmental degradation”. Exploiting their financial vulnerabilities and a surge in land prices following the opening of the Padma Bridge, unscrupulous real estate companies have acquired portions of the wetland, filling them up with sand and promoting residential development through strategically placed signboards. This is a clear violation of multiple environmental laws that prohibit any filling or altering of government-recognised reservoirs, including the Natural Water Reservoir Conservation Act 2000, the Bangladesh Environment Conservation Act 1995, and the Bangladesh Water Act 2013.

It goes without saying that the consequences of this will be devastating and far-reaching. We cannot stress enough the importance of wetlands like Arial Beel, whose natural water storage capacity plays a crucial role in absorbing excess water during heavy rainfall or storms, mitigating the risk of flooding in nearby areas. But thanks to the unchecked encroachment by real estate sharks, its once-thriving ecosystem is at risk. Already, loss of land fertility due to the obstruction of water entry as well as a decline in fish production have been reported. However, the exact extent of damage suffered by the wetland remains unclear, due to the lack of accurate data, which also shows the lack of concern by the relevant authorities.

This is deeply alarming. The responsibility to safeguard Arial Beel falls squarely on the Department of Environment (DoE), but also on the local administration and other relevant agencies, who, unfortunately, are turning a blind eye to the ongoing degradation. It is largely because of their inaction that we have already reached an overall critical stage, with a recent study revealing that the rate of wetland filling in the country has increased significantly over the past eight years. We must not allow this trend to continue. The authorities must take immediate action to halt further destruction of our beels and haors in the name of development. Failure to do so will not only have catastrophic consequences for the present generation but also for all the generations to come.

An inspiring eco-friendly venture

Govt should encourage innovations to protect the environment

We are delighted to learn of the innovative project of Nasima Akhtar, a struggling mother of two from Jashore, who has shown us how individual initiatives can bring about change in society. Reportedly, she has built a business model that also protects the environment – remodelling plastic pens by using their nibs to make them into eco-friendly products. This is quite laudable.

Nasima takes the nibs and ink cartridges of plastic ballpoint pens and wraps them with paper, which is biodegradable, to make new pens. What is more remarkable is that each pen has seeds inside it, which can be planted in the soil after the pen has served its purpose. The seeds would then grow into flowering plants or vegetables. With this small but praiseworthy effort amid raging plastic pollution in the country, Nasima is not only able to support her family, but has also motivated young people in her community to use these pens and be more aware of the need to protect the environment.

Another commendable initiative to have made headlines recently was by the Moulvibazar municipality, which has set up a plastic trading booth where people can deposit and sell their used plastic bottles, which are then recycled. By giving plastic users and collectors a financial incentive, this project has already encouraged many people to join the anti-pollution movement and earn some money at the same time. We can only imagine how our cities and towns would look like if every municipality took such initiatives.

We all know how severe plastic pollution has become, and how devastating its consequences are. Today, landfills and open garbage dumps are filled with plastic. People indiscriminately throw plastic bottles everywhere. Garbage is still being dumped without any attempts to have separate bins for recyclable plastics and biodegradable waste. All this has led to a massive accumulation of plastic, entering water sources, soil and even our food chain and wreaking havoc on the health of all.

But initiatives like the ones mentioned above should serve as an inspiration to others to join the fight and protect our environment. Socially conscious entrepreneurs like Nasima should be supported by the wider society so that they feel encouraged to continue their efforts. In addition, the government should encourage citizens to start such businesses. Incentives such as low-interest loans, tax rebates, and free business management skills training can motivate more entrepreneurs to take up eco-friendly projects, and help reduce the use of plastic and its accumulation in the environment.

What good will nationalising all secondary schools do?



Dr Manzoor Ahmed is emeritus professor at Brac University, chair of Bangladesh ECD Network, and vice chair of Campaign for Popular Education. Views expressed in this article are his own.

MANZOOR AHMED

Non-government secondary school teachers have been demanding the nationalisation of schools for a long time. That the schools as well as the teachers should perform better and the conditions for doing so have to be created is not in dispute. Is nationalisation, that is, bringing all schools under government management and making teachers national government employees, the answer?

Teachers have been carrying out sit-ins in front of the national press club and being subjected to coercion by police to restrain them. This is a sight we can do without. The meeting of the protesters' representatives with Education Minister Dipu Moni is reported by the teachers' spokesman to have been not “fruitful.” The minister said no decision can be taken before the upcoming national parliamentary election, but promised to appoint two committees, respectively, to look into “how nationalisation may be undertaken” and its “financial implications.” Teachers vow to continue their protest.

The protesting teachers' demand to be placed on the government employees' roll and to be remunerated as per civil service salary and benefit rules, on the face of it, may be seen as legitimate. Teachers' well-being is important, but the stakes are much higher. Teachers' welfare has to be protected along with solving the problems of the woefully low quality, inequality of opportunities and exclusion of various disadvantaged groups. Expenses on teachers amounts to over 80 percent of the operating costs of schools. How well teaching personnel cost is managed largely determines the return from the total education investment of the nation.

There are over 20,000 secondary schools in the country, of which only 684 are managed by the government directly, all of which enrol about 18 million students. The non-government schools (other than a few privately owned schools, many of which are English-medium) receive government support through MPO (Monthly Pay Order), an arrangement to pay basic salaries by the government of approved numbers of teachers. The system originated in the colonial days, when the rulers declined to take responsibility for children's education and instituted the system of meagre grants-in-aid to schools established by community initiative and philanthropy.

Independent Bangladesh has taken responsibility for free and compulsory education at the primary level (up to



Teachers of privately-run secondary educational institutions protesting in front of Jatiya Press Club, demanding nationalisation of their schools.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Class 5) by adopting the compulsory education act in 1990. No such obligation has been assumed by the government for secondary or tertiary education. Without belabouring the point, it can be said that a developing country aiming to gain middle-income status in a decade and aspiring to be a developed country by 2041, cannot leave a large proportion of its youth deprived of secondary education of acceptable quality. Goal 4 of the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 2030) aims for free, inclusive, and quality secondary education for all children. Bangladesh has accepted this commitment. But it has not worked out a plan and strategy defining the scope of government obligation, including public funding commitment. This is what Dr Dipu Moni may be talking about when she says two committees will work on the “nationalisation” approach and its financing.

We need to learn from the experience of primary school nationalisation. It's not exactly a resounding success, despite official narratives being to the contrary. In over three decades, we have not achieved universal inclusive and equitable participation, especially if one considers children actually completing this stage. Even more disturbing is the result in learning outcomes. By the World Bank's learning poverty metrics, 58 percent of children in Bangladesh between 10-14 years of age cannot read a simple Bangla text comprehensively.

It cannot be a consolation that our neighbours in South Asia are not doing much better. The point is that nationalisation has not delivered the results, though the teachers' remuneration has improved somewhat. Primary teachers do complain about anomalies about the salary structure in which they have been placed, compared to civil service positions in other sectors.

and ensuring greater accountability of schools and teachers to the parents – eventually creating district school authorities to run quality schools in each neighbourhood.

2) Attracting and retaining the best talents in school teaching, with necessary steps taken for professional preparation, certification, professional career path, incentives, and social

A nationalisation plan for secondary education in line with what has been done for primary schools (which apparently is the demand of the protesting teachers) will not serve the children's and the nation's interest. And ultimately, it will not help to improve the welfare and status of teachers.

Fulfilling the state's obligation to guarantee the right to basic education, now universally defined as pre-school to pre-tertiary (K-12), need not and should not be an issue of scarcity of public funding. Many countries poorer have invested larger public funds in education than the less-than-two-percent-of-GDP of Bangladesh. It is a question of national priority and political commitment. But, at the same time, it has to be ensured that the funds are used effectively to achieve the results.

Basic structural problems of education governance and management, including the performance of teachers and their status in society, have to be considered. Looking at the issues though a broad frame, rather than just repeating the pattern in primary education that has not worked well, is necessary. Education discourse, research, advocacy of education activists, and relevant international lessons suggest key areas which need policy-level attention.

1) Decentralising the education governance to plan and manage quality education in each upazila and district,

status. A national education service cadre and a separate education service commission would also be important measures.

3) A regulatory framework for all schools and all teachers (government and non-government), applying basic school and teacher quality and performance standards.

Working on these issues calls for a longer-term commitment at the highest level of policymaking. But these are perhaps not the concerns high on the list of the protesting teachers. An appropriate strategy would be to consider short-, medium-, and longer-term actions within an overall frame of goals, principles, and strategies. While transformative and ambitious changes are envisaged and initiated, children have to attend school, and teachers have to teach. Therefore, interim and transitional measures have to be considered, being careful not to preempt larger reform.

A vision for change in basic education (primary and secondary) has to be shared with teachers and their leaders. The message has to be conveyed that the vision cannot be realised without teachers joining the journey. Meanwhile, some of their grievances can be addressed with the assurance to modify MPO payments as needed, including raising salaries and benefits. This message of vision, shared journey, and interim steps to be taken would be best delivered by the prime minister to inspire confidence among teachers.

We can't allow healthcare costs to spin out of control



ABM Uddin is a healthcare consultant at the Florida Agency for Health Care Administration. Views expressed in this article are the author's own.

ABMUDDIN

While teaching at the University of Chittagong from 2003-2009, I came to learn that the Teachers' Association would intermittently dock one day's salary from all teachers to help support medical treatment for colleagues, when requested. It felt counterintuitive given that one of the most dignified professional classes will ask for goodwill from fellow compatriots to pay their medical bills. This also loudly tells what the common people experience when it comes to healthcare. Many citizens go penniless to pay medical expenses, while others choose to go without care. The state of affairs in healthcare is in shambles.

According to a report in *The Daily Star*, from 1997-2020, out-of-pocket costs for medical expenses in Bangladesh increased from 55 percent to 68.5 percent, the highest among Saarc nations. The report is supported by the fact that appropriation for healthcare in Bangladesh gets a perplexing 2.63 percent of the national budget, while the US allocates roughly 13 percent of its national budget in this

area. Arguably, it is beyond the government's capacity to provide medical care to over 170 million people for free – an idea floated around the demand for universal healthcare in the country. However, there are innovative solutions. Promoting commercial and private healthcare insurance, driven by competition, can drive down healthcare costs while expanding healthcare to countless people.

Admittedly, the first barrier to promoting health insurance coverage is a lack of trust and transparency – the two key pillars of affordable healthcare. The rampant corruption, favouritism, and nepotism in the health industry feel insurmountable. We must wipe out dishonesty and ill-intentioned businesses which are geared towards profits. The state of the insurance market, which contributes only 0.46 percent to the country's GDP, tells us that the existing insurance culture is not functioning. Consumers' trust in insurance companies has eroded as subscribers' claims remain unsettled

extendedly or they are simply lied to when it comes to receiving critical assistance in times of need.

The government must implement existing laws to strengthen the regulatory framework and eliminate the influence of political and social clouts in healthcare, be it in the hospital or the insurance sector. New laws will be just as fruitless without enforcement. The authority must build a comprehensive legal framework to introduce and support health insurance companies to operate on a competitive basis. Competition reduces healthcare costs and improves the quality of care as it promotes consumers' power to decide which company can best serve their medical needs.

Insurance companies must develop their policies and coverage simply and lucidly. In the US, health plans must write their benefits statements easily enough that even average eighth graders can understand them. A simplified policy will reduce chances of duplicity by insurers.

Insurance companies must also build a network of providers based on bargains and transparency to bring the best care to patients at a competitive price. The providers will embrace competition to penetrate the market and offer a wide range of services at lower prices. The plan-to-plan and provider-to-provider competition drives the healthcare industry for positive patient outcomes. This leads to a patient-centred ecosystem, giving the patient

the ultimate power to choose.

The government must build parallel insurance plans for low-income individuals and families to drive competition even further. These plans will help the needy, which is a significant segment of the population. Commercial and private insurers will vie to get government contracts for health services. In the US, the federal government sponsors 34 percent of total health spending while households spend 27 percent.

Ideally, almost the entire population should be served under all these distinct health plans funded by the government and the public.

Competition will bring hospitals to the transparency we so crave to see in our healthcare sector. The government must require hospitals to publish their quality reports including charges, fees, services, and customer satisfaction on their websites. In practice, government-provided quality scores of providers are key to helping consumers decide their healthcare choices. Every provider must inform patients what the cost of the service would be even before treatment starts.

Because of transparency and competition, the low-performing facilities will go out of business while the better providers will gain more market share. The collective role of plans, providers, and the public can build a health sector where most people can afford the care, as OOP costs will be reduced and resources equitably allocated.

ILLUSTRATION: REHNUMA PROSHOON

Raffat Binte Rashid
is features editor at The Daily Star.

/Opinion

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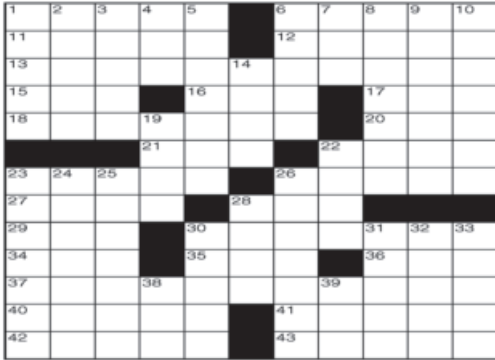
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YESSSS!





Superagers: older adults with razor-sharp memory show better mental health

A new study published in The Lancet Healthy Longevity journal suggests that older adults with razor-sharp memories, known as ‘superagers,’ enjoy better mental health and move more quickly than typical older adults. Superagers, in their eighties, have memory abilities comparable to those of people decades younger. They seem to resist the age-related decline in memory that most people experience as they get older.

Researchers found that superagers have more grey matter in key brain regions linked to memory function based on MRI scans. This extra grey matter is associated with better memory preservation over time. Surprisingly, superagers showed no differences in biomarkers or genetic risk factors for neurodegenerative diseases, indicating resistance to memory decline related to ageing.

The study involved a large group of older adults and identified factors associated with superaging. Faster movement speed and better mental health were the most common traits found in superagers. Despite similar reported exercise levels, superagers performed better in mobility and fine motor function tests, and they had lower levels of anxiety and depression than typical older adults.

The research also revealed that superagers had generally more active lifestyles in midlife, better sleep satisfaction, and a higher likelihood of having a musical background. They also demonstrated greater independence and scored higher on intelligence tests.

While the study sheds light on the factors associated with superaging, more research is needed to fully understand the mechanisms behind their exceptional memory and movement abilities. The findings may eventually help in developing strategies to preserve memory function in older people and prevent age-related memory decline.

Overall, superagers present a fascinating area of study, offering insights into the resilience of the brain and providing hope for better cognitive health in old age.

Anyone can drown, no one should

TRAIN bystanders in
SAFE RESCUE AND
RESUSCITATION

Set and enforce safe
BOATING, SHIPPING AND
FERRY REGULATIONS

IMPROVE FLOOD RISK
MANAGEMENT
locally and nationally

Install BARRIERS
controlling access
to water

Provide SAFE PLACES
away from water for
pre-school children,
with capable child care

TEACH school-age
children basic SWIMMING,
WATER SAFETY AND SAFE
RESCUE SKILLS

STAR HEALTH DESK

Drowning has caused over 2.5 million deaths in the last decade. The overwhelming majority of these deaths (90%) happen in low- and middle-income countries. Globally, the highest drowning rates occur among children aged 1–4 years, followed by children aged 5–9 years.

The human, social and economic toll of these losses is intolerably high, and entirely preventable.

In 2023, the 76th World Health Assembly adopted its first ever resolution on drowning prevention. The resolution accepts the invitation of the United Nations General Assembly for the World Health Organisation (WHO) to coordinate actions within the United Nations (UN) system on drowning prevention and facilitate the observance of World Drowning Prevention Day on 25 July each year.

Globally, 25 July is observed as the World drowning prevention day. To mark this year's World Drowning Prevention Day, WHO will continue to focus on raising awareness on

drowning as a public health issue, reminding people that *anyone can drown, but no one should*.

They are also raising awareness on the six evidence-based, low-cost drowning prevention interventions that countries and organisations can use to drastically reduce the risk of drowning. These include actions for technical partners.

Drowning does not have a single cause, or a single solution. But it can be prevented.

Some governments have started the process of developing national strategies for drowning prevention. Groups hosted public awareness events and launched water safety campaigns. Countless individuals acted by learning and sharing new skills (swimming, safe rescue and resuscitation), or providing support to a drowning prevention group or activity.

One problem, many solutions - building on this momentum, WHO now asks countries and partners to respond to the call to action for global drowning prevention.

If you are not yet involved in

drowning prevention then do one thing. There is so much that can be done, whether you are an individual, a group (organisation or community) or a government.

If you have already started to work in your area on drowning prevention, then improve one thing. There is always an opportunity to engage a broader range of partners, identify parts of your efforts that are not working as well as they should, or connect with a high-risk group for drowning that your efforts have not reached yet.

If you are deeply engaged with drowning prevention and have a mature programme or a portfolio of programmes, then add one thing. Look for ways of adding to your portfolio of action, tackle a new part of the drowning context in your setting, or broaden your efforts to reduce drowning in other settings. There is always more that can be done.

Individuals can play a crucial role in preventing drowning and promoting water safety. Expand your knowledge on drowning prevention through reviewing resources.

HAVE A NICE DAY The Stockholm syndrome

DR RUBAIUL MURSHED

The origin of the term *Stockholm syndrome* arose in the aftermath of a robbery that took place in Stockholm in 1973. This incident caused a remarkable development that continues today. After the release of the four hostages, they were not willing to press charges against the abductors. After psychological research, the psychiatrist, Nils Bejerot concluded that these people were suffering from something called the *Stockholm syndrome*.

This syndrome is a psychological response related to a coping mechanism for an abusive situation. It occurs when hostages or abuse victims' bond with their abusers. People develop positive feelings towards their captors over time. This condition applies to situations including child abuse, tutor-student abuse, and sex trafficking.

There could also be relationship abuse between husband and wife, especially in poor socio-economic and disturbed families.

Signs of Stockholm syndrome may include confusion, depression, post-traumatic stress, phobias, nightmares, and insomnia. This behaviour could be deeply rooted in the victim's fear of their abuser. Due to the extended time, the criminals may use tactics like 'acts of kindness' to manipulate their hostages. Captives might have confusing feelings towards the abuser.

But despite this becoming a well-known syndrome, it is not considered a mental disorder in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5). Although by now there are many famous cases that have been regarded as Stockholm syndrome events, the condition rarely comes up seriously in neuroscience circles, as it is supposed to result from a rather specific set of circumstances, namely the power imbalances delimited in hostage-taking and abusive relationships.

Whatever the exact science behind it may be, there is still more to learn about Stockholm syndrome.

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Understanding Diabetes 1.5: A closer look at a less prevalent type of diabetes

DR NUR-A-SAFRINA RAHMAN

Diabetes is a common health condition that affects many people worldwide. There is a type of diabetes called “Diabetes 1.5” or “Latent Autoimmune Diabetes in Adults” (LADA) that many people may not know about. Based on certain studies, LADA might make up approximately 5% to 10% of the total number of diabetes cases.

Diabetes 1.5 is a type of diabetes that has features of both Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes. Like Type 1 diabetes, in case of LADA, the immune system attacks and damages the insulin-producing cells in the pancreas. This autoimmune process gradually leads to a decrease in insulin, which means that insulin therapy is needed. LADA progresses more slowly than Type 1 diabetes. LADA is similar to Type 2 diabetes.

People with LADA usually have a slim body and are more active than people with Type 2 diabetes. Type 1 diabetes usually starts in childhood or adolescence, while Type 2 diabetes is more common in older adults. However, LADA often appears in people between the ages of 30 and 50.

It is really important to accurately identify the type of diabetes so that we can manage and treat it effectively. Misclassifying LADA as Type 2 diabetes can cause delays in starting insulin treatment, which is important for preserving beta cell function.

LADA Diagnosis: Doctors need to do specific tests to tell the difference between LADA, Type 1, and Type 2 diabetes because they have similar symptoms.

1. **Blood tests:** A wide range of blood tests, including essential ones like fasting blood glucose levels, haemoglobin A1c (HbA1c) tests to determine the average blood sugar levels over the past few months, and autoantibody testing, will be required. LADA is identified by the presence of certain autoantibodies.

2. **C-peptide assessment:** This

measurement shows how much insulin the pancreas produces. Low levels of C-peptide may mean less insulin production, which is a key sign of LADA.

3. **The glucose tolerance test:** It is sometimes used to assess the body's ability to process glucose after consuming a sugary beverage.

Strategies for prevention: Preventing Diabetes 1.5 (LADA) is challenging due to its autoimmune nature. In order to reduce the likelihood of complications, individuals can manage their blood sugar levels by implementing the following modifications to their daily routines.

- Consume a well-rounded diet that includes ample amounts of fruits, vegetables, lean sources of protein, and nutritious fats. Decrease the intake of unhealthy foods and sugary additives.

- Ensure that you engage in regular exercise, aiming for a minimum of 150 minutes per week at a moderate intensity level. This can enhance your body's insulin response.

- Minimise the likelihood of issues by attaining and sustaining a balanced weight.

- Remember to regularly check your sugar, blood pressure, and cholesterol levels when you visit your doctor.

- Manage stress by practising calming activities such as yoga or meditation to prevent sudden decreases in blood sugar.

- Smoking and drinking too much alcohol can make diabetic complications more likely. It is best for people with diabetes to avoid or limit these habits.

If you have any concerns or questions about diabetes and how to manage it, talk to a healthcare professional. By doing this, you can get personalised advice and expert guidance that is specifically tailored to your unique situation.

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New study suggests inflammatory biomarkers may help predict dementia risk

New research published in the open-access journal PLOS ONE, which studied data from around 500,000 people, suggests that there may be a connection between inflammation in the body and the risk of developing dementia.

Dementia affects millions worldwide, and scientists are working to uncover its complex causes. Previous studies have indicated that inflammation, which is the body's immune system response, might play a role in the development of dementia.

To explore this potential link, researchers analysed data from the UK Biobank study, which included various cognitive tests and inflammatory biomarker measurements. They looked at the participants' cognitive performance both at the time of the biomarker assessment and years later, as well as any later dementia diagnoses.

The findings showed that higher levels of inflammatory biomarkers were associated with an increased risk of dementia diagnosis three to eleven years later. Additionally, elevated inflammatory biomarkers were linked to poorer performance in certain cognitive tests, like prospective memory, fluid intelligence, and reaction time, both at the initial assessment and years later.

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Pinky wins race against Joty

SPORTS REPORTER

Fargana Hoque Pinky opened a new chapter in the country's cricket history yesterday as she became the first Bangladeshi woman cricketer to score an ODI century.

Every athlete dreams of setting a maiden record for their nation, and Pinky is no exception. However, the right-hander – who moved up in the batting order to open the innings in the all-important fixture against India – had an added incentive, courtesy of her captain, Nigar Sultana Joty.

“The one who sits beside me (Nigar Sultana Joty), always told me that ‘I will make the century first’. I always heard it. I never replied. I always told her ‘Ok, you will do it’. So, 70 to 80 per cent credit goes to her for my hundred because I wanted to show her that I would make it first,” said Pinky with a grin while Joty was also smiling at the time.

Pinky further informed that her teammates always held the belief that she would be the first one to reach the landmark. Prior to her 56th ODI, she had registered nine fifties and her previous-best score was 71, made against Pakistan in Hamilton in 2022.

“I never scored [an international] hundred before but recently saw Mushfiq bhai (Mushfiqur Rahim) and Shanto bhai (Najmul Hossain) scoring two hundreds; but I scored hundred in domestic cricket,” she added.

“The plan was that if I batted long, we have four-five players who can play big knocks. I always had faith in my skill. When you play a big innings against a big team, it will boost you up in future.”



Bangladesh captain Nigar Sultana Joty and teammates erupted with joy once pacer Marufa Akhter got last Indian batter Meghna Singh out caught-behind in the third ball of the final over to tie the series-deciding ODI at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: : FIROZ AHMED

USA, Japan make fast WC starts

AFP, Brisbane

England squeezed past Haiti 1-0 as they began their Women's World Cup title bid in unconvincing fashion on Saturday, but holders the United States and former champions Japan were far more comfortable.

European champions England have been touted as the prime challengers to a United States team chasing an unprecedented third World Cup crown in a row.

But they will have to play far better than they did in front of nearly 45,000 spectators in Brisbane, where a youthful Haiti side making their World Cup debut could have snatched a point at the end.

In contrast to England's laboured performance, the United States and Japan were rampant against other supposed minnows.

The United States cruised to a 3-0 win over Vietnam -- it should have been many more -- before Japan crushed Zambia 5-0.

Sophia Smith was the star of the show for the US team at Eden Park in Auckland, scoring twice and setting up captain Lindsey Horan for the third in front of just over 41,000 fans.



Kaur loses temper on field, labels umpiring 'pathetic'

SPORTS REPORTER

During the ODI series decider between Bangladesh and India in Mirpur yesterday that ended in a dramatic draw, the pressure of a high-stakes encounter had apparently got the better of Harmanpreet Kaur.

The India skipper created a scene after having failed to accept an umpiring decision that went against her favour.

Prior to Kaur's dismissal, as India were chasing 226, stumper-batter Yastika Bhatia was not pleased with the leg-before decision that got her out. She tried to argue with the umpire soon after, perhaps indicating that there may have been an issue with height and angle of the ball; even though Sultana Khatun's delivery had struck in line with stumps.

When it came to Kaur, also a victim of leg-before, the India captain was visibly livid after getting out and she proceeded to hit the stumps with the bat before pointing fingers at the two on-field umpires. Moreover, Kaur made the so-called "pay me" gesture -- signalled by repeatedly rubbing one's thumb over the tip of the index finger and middle finger -- and showed a thumbs-up aimed towards the stands as she left the field.

Kaur said after the game: "I think a lot of learning for us from the game. Even apart from the cricket, the kind of umpiring that was happening were were very surprised. The next time when we come to Bangladesh we will make sure we have to deal with this type of umpiring and prepare ourselves accordingly."

"... as I mentioned earlier some pathetic umpiring was done and we are really disappointed about some decisions given by the umpires," she reiterated.

'A respectable step forward'

SPORTS REPORTER

Prior to the start of the home series against a strong India side, women's cricket in Bangladesh was still searching for a big break to showcase what the team was capable of.

Despite losing the T20I series with a game in hand, the team bounced back superbly and showed great character to clinch the third T20I by four wickets as belief started to grow among Nigar Sultana Joty and Co.

Exciting young pacer Marufa Akter was in her full force in the first ODI, picking up four wickets to help the Tigresses clinch their maiden win against India in the fifty-over format by 40 runs in a rain curtailed encounter through DLS method.

The win came as a huge morale-boost for the women in red and green, and despite the comprehensive defeat in the second ODI, the hosts showed great character in the third and series-deciding affair.

Fargana Hoque Pinky wrote a piece of history by smashing the first ODI ton for Bangladesh in women's cricket, helping the hosts post their second highest total of 225 for four. And then just as India looked headed for a comfortable win, the Tigresses again bounced back to tie the game and share the series.

According to Joty, the series has given Bangladesh women's cricket a respectful step forward. The skipper said that the players were able to grab the spotlight -- the spotlight that was never on them before.

"I am not entirely happy since I thought we could have done better. But it was pleasing to see how the

members of the board backed us and said positive things. I am happy to see how the fans and media came in and supported and promoted us, so overall I am happy," Joty told the media after the game.

"I always wanted this team to take one step forward and I think we have taken a respectable step forward after this series. There were many who didn't know us, apart from one or two players. At least those people now recognise who is Nahida, Pinky or Marufa. So, I think this is an achievement since the people of Bangladesh now know who plays in the women's team," she added.

Although there were many positives to take for the Tigresses from both the T20I and the ODI series, the 25-year-old was not fully satisfied and wants further improvement in the coming days.

"Definitely I am not satisfied as we couldn't win the series, we just levelled. But I would say we rectified few mistakes from the other day and it was good today.

We could have done better in the second game, but yes, there are many areas for us to learn and if we can rectify those mistakes, I think we will be able to play better cricket in the coming days," said Joty.

Chairman of the BCB's women's wing, Shafiul Alam Chowdhury Nadel, felt that the success was the reflection of the support provided by the board.

"We are very happy as we have seen Pinky scoring a maiden hundred for Bangladesh in ODI format and I think it's a stepping stone for women's cricket in the country. The board president provided all the necessary support and we have increased the salary and match fees, so the board is always behind the players and is continuing to provide facilities," said Nadel.



Bangladesh, India in same group in two SAFF events

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh will play against India in the group stages of two SAFF age-level tournaments for boys which will be held in September in Nepal and Bhutan.

The draw ceremony of both events -- SAFF U-16 Championship and SAFF U-19 Championship -- were held at the SAFF Secretariat in Dhaka yesterday.

Six teams from the seven SAFF members, barring Sri Lanka who are under a FIFA suspension, were divided into two groups through the draw. The U-16 championship pit Bangladesh, India and Nepal in Group A while Bhutan, Maldives and Pakistan were pitted in Group B. The event will be held in Thimphu, Bhutan from September 1 to 10.

India are the defending champions of this tournament as they beat Nepal 4-0 in the final of the tournament which was last year held for under 17 age-group.

The SAFF U-19 Championship will be held in Kathmandu, Nepal from September 21 to 30, with defending champions India drawn alongside Bangladesh and Bhutan in Group B. Nepal, Maldives and Pakistan make up Group A.

India had beaten Bangladesh 5-2 after extra time in the final of the event, which was held for under 20 age-group, in August last year.

The draw ceremony was conducted by SAFF general secretary Anwarul Haque Helal and Bangladesh Football Federation's acting general secretary Imran Hossain.

Police finish BPL in third position

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Police finished in third position, leaving Mohammedan and Sheikh Russel KC in fourth and fifth positions respectively, as the Bangladesh Premier League came to an end yesterday.

There were three matches held at three different venues on the final day of the league, with all three aforementioned sides notching victories and hence no change on the eventual positions of those three teams.

Police beat Chittagong Abahani 3-2 in Munshiganj to finish on 35 points in third position -- their best ever in top-flight football -- after having finished in ninth and eighth positions in their two previous campaigns.

Mohammad Abdullah, Mateo Palacios and Robiul Hasan gave Police a 3-0 lead at half-time before David Ojukwu and Mohammad Nahian scored two late goals for the port city side, who finished in eighth position with 21 points.

Mohammedan finished fourth with 32 points after a 3-1 thrashing of Rahmatganj MFS in Cumilla, with Sunday Emmanuel, Arif Hossain and Soleymane Diabate getting on the score-sheet for the Black and Whites. Emon Hossain pulled one back in stoppage time for Rahmatganj, who finished ninth -- just above the relegation zone, with 19 points.

The day's other match saw Sheikh Russel edge already-relegated Muktijoddha Sangsad 3-2 at the Bashundhara Sports Complex in Dhaka.

Kenneth Ikechukwu and Mohammad Ibrahim gave the hosts a 2-0 lead early in the match before Emmanuel Ikechukwu and Landry Ndikumana brought Mukti into level terms. Dipok Roy's 78th minute strike, however, earned Sheikh Russel all three points which saw them finish on 30 points. Muktijoddha ended the campaign with 15 points and will be relegated to Bangladesh Championship League along with Azampur FC.



Argentine superstar Lionel Messi made a magical debut to his American adventure on Friday. The Argentina World Cup winning captain scored on a curling free-kick deep into second-half stoppage time to put an exclamation point on his first game with Inter Miami jersey, which officially became the third club in the Argentine talisman's career after his spells at Barcelona and PSG. Messi lifted his new team to a 2-1 victory over Cruz Azul in both teams' Leagues Cup opener. "To be honest, as soon as I saw the free kick given, I thought this is the way it's meant to end. Especially when you've got players like Leo and Sergio on the pitch, that's what they produce," said the former England midfielder and club's co-owner David Beckham.

PHOTO: TWITTER



QUESTION PAPER LEAK Biman official found negligent, yet made DC

ZYMA ISLAM and RASHIDUL HASAN

While 19 junior officers have been let go over the question paper leak in Bangladesh Biman recruitment, a senior officer of the main question-setting committee, who was also found guilty in the investigation, has been made a deputy commissioner.

Muhammad Nizam Uddin Ahmed, general manager of administration and human resources, was first made the deputy commissioner of Bhola, and then posted to Shariatpur. His first working week starts today.

An investigation report by the civil aviation ministry, however, clearly stated that the entire question-setting committee was responsible for the question paper leak.

The committee had seven members, including Nizam.

He had invited an unapproved office assistant to help with the photocopying, who was later found to have been the one who took photos of the questions and distributed them for money.

According to the Detective Branch of police, each leaked question paper was being sold for lakhs of taka.

The DB filed a charge sheet in the case on July 5, formally accusing 30 employees of Biman, including only one senior officer – Major Taiz Ibne Anowar, a former general manager of the ground service equipment department.

It did not charge Nizam, although the ministry found the entire committee responsible for the leak.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Nizam said he was not aware of any investigation report that blamed the entire question-setting committee responsible for the question paper.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



Wearing caps in vibrant red, yellow and green, hundreds of activists of BNP's associate bodies gather at the youth rally at the historic Suhrawardy Udyan yesterday. The rally was organised by Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal, Chhatra Dal and Swechchhasebak Dal to involve youth leaders and activists in boosting the BNP's one-point movement. The photo was taken around 4:00pm yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

BUSINESS

Wheat importers looking for alternative sources

Wheat importers of Bangladesh are exploring alternative sources to ensure uninterrupted domestic supplies after Russia pulled out of the UN-brokered Black Sea grain deal.

Importers say they are currently monitoring the situation, talking to suppliers of alternative sources and will decide on placing orders after a week.

“We are talking with suppliers of Bulgaria, Romania, Argentina and Brazil to ensure supplies,” said Md Aminul Islam, managing director of Nabil Group, one of the traders that import wheat.

STORY ON BI

Fair polls not possible under this government Says GM Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party Chairman GM Quader yesterday said that a fair election is not possible under the present government, as it has complete control over the whole electoral system.

“All governments that have come to power in the past have tried to maintain control over the electoral system, just as the current government has done. However, the electoral system should always be independent and kept out of the purview of the government,” he added.

The deputy leader of the opposition in parliament made the remarks while speaking to reporters at his party office in the capital's Banani.

The government has appointed its own loyalists to key positions and reformed laws to favour its own interests in the next

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

50 RIGHTS DEFENDERS 65 percent faced obstacles at work Says report of Centre for Governance Studies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 65 percent of the 50 grassroots human rights defenders, covered by a survey, faced obstructions in their work from the state and ruling party.

One in five had been harassed by law enforcement agencies, according to the report by the Centre for Governance Studies, which surveyed the rights defenders from 36 districts.

A quarter of them faced obstacles from the ruling party, while one in ten had been harassed by intelligence agencies, said the report “Who defends the defenders? The predicament of human rights activists in Bangladesh”.

“Overwhelmingly, our respondents have described the situation in Bangladesh as unsafe,” said the report, which was authored by Ali Riaz, a distinguished professor of political science at Illinois State University.

Riaz, who was the principal investigator for the report, shared the findings of the study at an event in Dhaka yesterday.

Some of the major harassment tactics include legal cases, death threats, physical attacks and intimidation of family members.

Three of the human rights defenders reported having been victims of enforced disappearance for their work, while 12 of them were physically assaulted. As many as 15 of the survey respondents faced government repression.

One in ten got slapped with frivolous cases just for

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

UKRAINE COUNTEROFFENSIVE Kyiv attacks Crimea ammunition depot

Russian war reporter's death prompts Moscow's
outrage over alleged use of cluster bombs

REUTERS

A drone attack on an ammunition depot in Crimea prompted authorities to evacuate a five km radius and briefly suspend road traffic on the bridge linking the peninsula to Russia, the region's Moscow-installed governor said yesterday.

Ukraine said its army had destroyed an oil depot and Russian army warehouses in what it called the “temporarily occupied” district of Oktiabrsk in central Crimea.

The attack caused an ammunition depot to explode, said Russian-installed governor Sergei Aksyonov, adding there was no reported damage or casualties. Footage shared by state media showed a thick cloud of grey smoke at the site.

Meanwhile, A Russian war reporter was killed and three were wounded in Ukraine yesterday in what the defence ministry said was a Ukrainian attack using cluster munitions, prompting outrage from Moscow.

In a separate incident, German broadcaster Deutsche Welle said one of its journalists, Yevgeny Shilko, had been wounded elsewhere in Ukraine in

a Russian attack with cluster munitions that killed a Ukrainian soldier. It said his life was not in danger.

Reuters could not independently verify the use of such weapons in either incident yesterday. Both sides have used them in the course of Russia's 17-month invasion of Ukraine.

The dead Russian journalist was named as Rostislav Zhuravlev, a war correspondent for state news agency RIA. His three colleagues were evacuated from the battlefield after coming under fire in Ukraine's southeastern Zaporizhzhia region, the defence ministry said.

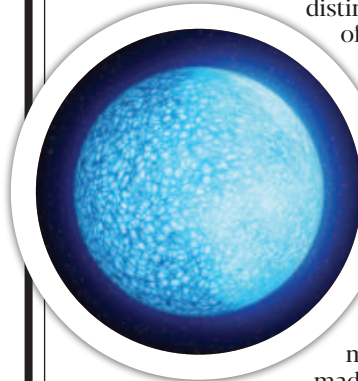
Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova denounced what she called “criminal terror” by Ukraine and said, without providing evidence, that the attack appeared deliberate.

“Those responsible for the brutal reprisal against a Russian journalist will inevitably suffer well-deserved punishment. The entire measure of responsibility will be shared by those who supplied cluster munitions to their Kyiv protégés,” she said.

Introducing Janus, the exotic ‘two-faced’ white dwarf star

REUTERS, Washington

Scientists have observed a white dwarf star - a hot stellar remnant that is among the densest objects in the cosmos - that they have nicknamed Janus owing to the fact it has the peculiar distinction of being composed



of hydrogen on one side and helium on the other.

“Janus is the Roman god with two faces, so we thought it was very appropriate. Moreover, Janus is the god of transition, and the white dwarf might be currently transitioning from having an atmosphere made of hydrogen to one made of helium,” said Ilaria

Caiazzo, a Caltech postdoctoral

fellow in astrophysics and lead author of the study published this week in the journal Nature.

The star is located in our Milky Way galaxy about 1,300 light years from Earth in the direction of the Cygnus constellation. A light year is the distance light travels in a year, 5.9 trillion miles (9.5 trillion km).

Janus is fairly massive for a white dwarf, with a mass 20 percent larger than that of our sun compressed into an object with a diameter half that of Earth. It rotates on its axis every 15 minutes - very fast considering these stars usually rotate every few hours to a few days.

Cops not informed of Hero Alom's visit to polling centre

Says DMP chief; Alom
claims attack took place
in presence of police

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner Khandker Golam Faruq yesterday said police could not provide security to Ashraful Alom, better known as Hero Alom, an independent candidate in Dhaka-17 by-polls, as he went to the same polling centre for the second time without informing the police.

He added that the assailants might have taken the chance to attack him.

The DMP commissioner made the comments in response to questions from reporters after a programme at Polwel Market in the capital.

He said that due to a chaotic situation at the Banani Bidyaniketan polling centre, Hero Alom and his supporters were asked to leave. He was attacked outside the centre. The accused are being identified by scrutinising the CCTV footage, he said.

So far 10 people have been arrested in this connection, he added.

He said police will be more vigilant in the future for security of candidates.

The DMP commissioner added that the law enforcement agencies are ready

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



Seven-year-old Shamim's fever has not gone down despite being under treatment for four days in the capital's Mugda Medical College Hospital. His mother resorted to pouring water on his head to help bring his temperature down yesterday. Like him, many children across the country are suffering as the dengue outbreak intensifies.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

MANIPUR SEXUAL ASSAULT 5th accused arrested Four detainees placed on remand for 11 days

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Indian police arrested a fifth accused in connection with the video that surfaced on July 19 showing two women being paraded naked by a mob and sexually assaulted in the country's strife-torn Manipur.

The four who were earlier nabbed for disrobing and parading two women in Manipur on May 4 were remanded to 11-day police custody on Friday, police said.

Several Naga civil society organisations in Manipur, including the powerful United Naga Council (UNC), All Naga Students' Association Manipur (ANSAM) and Naga People's Front, have strongly condemned the defiling of the two Kuki tribe women by a mob on May 4.

The UNC asked the Manipur government to take up the case in a fast-track court to deliver justice instantly.

“The government must initiate necessary steps for immediate booking of all the people involved in such dehumanizing crime,” the UNC said in a statement.

Violence erupted in the northeastern state of Manipur between the mainly Christian Kuki and the predominantly Hindu Meitei in May over job quotas and land rights, and intermittent clashes have continued since.

PHOTO ON PAGE 2