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JULY 27 RALLIES

AL plans tight rein on the capital

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHANN

The Awami League will mobilise its activists across Dhaka city from early tomorrow in a bid to tighten its grip on the capital, fearing the BNP and its like-minded parties may bring the city to a standstill by sparking off untoward

- AL activists to take position at unit offices from tomorrow morning
- Police to monitor activities of BNP leaders
- Permission for BNP's rally venue after analysing intelligence report

incidents.

Alongside organising its "peace rally" to counter the BNP's grand rally, the party will put its leaders and activists on guard throughout the city, say party insiders.

Besides, the party will ensure a record gathering at the rally to be held at the south gate of the Baitul Mukarram national mosque to show its strength.

The rally will be organised by the Jubo League, Chhatra League and Swechhchasebak League. The Dhaka city AL (north and south) leaders and activists will be at their respective unit offices, according to party sources.

The city unit leaders and activists will remain vigilant from tomorrow morning as ruling party leaders are in the dark about the BNP's plans centring its grand rally, sources said.

They, however, were also asked not to thwart BNP activists from joining the rally, but were told to stay alert in case the BNP tried to unleash chaos on the city streets.

Party sources say the AL leadership is apprehensive about the possibility of another Shapla Chattar incident.

On May 5, 2013, Hefajat-e-Islam supporters locked in deadly clashes with law enforcers and AL activists in Motijheel and adjacent areas, turning the capital city into a battlefield. They set fire to hundreds of shops, vehicles and police outposts and looted shops.

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A sewer carrying waste from the port city's EPZ area empties right into the sea. With such water pollution going on unabated, the biodiversity of the Bay is slowly being destroyed. The photo was taken in Chattogram's Patenga recently.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

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Girl 'takes own life' during police raid

Family alleges Pallabi police sought to detain her mother for refusing to give bribe; cops say they went there for anti-narcotics drive

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A girl "took her own life" on Monday night after police tried to detain her mother from their Pallabi home in the capital for refusing to bribe them, family members have alleged.

Plainclothes policemen raided their home around 7:00pm. Soon after, rumors spread in the neighbourhood that a girl was strangled to death by cops during an "anti-narcotics drive".

Angry locals then besieged the police team and clashed sporadically with the law enforcers

for about four hours until midnight.

They also vandalised at least 10 vehicles, including two police motorbikes.

Younger sister of victim Baishakhi Akhter, 16, alleged that Baishakhi hanged herself in a room on the second floor of the four-storey building owned by their grandparents.

A police officer locked the room from the outside after she threatened to commit suicide if police detained her mother, alleged the sister.

Pallabi Police Station Sub-inspector Zahir

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

ATTACK ON HERO ALOM Heads of 13 foreign missions summoned Govt irked by their joint statement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The foreign ministry yesterday summoned the heads of 13 foreign missions over their joint statement condemning the attack on Hero Alom during the Dhaka-17 by-election.

The heads of 13 missions in Dhaka will be informed today about the government's dissatisfaction, according to a report of Bangla daily Prothom Alo.

The 13 missions are the US, the UK, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the European Union.

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PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Illegally parked buses and trucks have been hampering regular vehicular movement on the capital's Kuril Bishwa Road right under the Kuril flyover. Despite road laws being violated by so many drivers and vehicle owners for long, the authorities concerned have done nothing to rectify the situation. The photo was taken yesterday.

Now S&P goes negative on Bangladesh economy

American credit rating agency stops short of downgrade

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Global rating agency Standard and Poor's yesterday downgraded Bangladesh's long-term rating outlook from stable to negative on the back of a continued decline in foreign exchange reserves despite an ongoing IMF programme and lower import bills.

"We revised the long-term rating outlook on Bangladesh to negative from stable to reflect the risk that its external liquidity position could deteriorate further over the next 12 months," said S&P Global Ratings.

The 'negative' outlook reflects sustained pressure on Bangladesh's external position, marked in particular by a continued decline in foreign exchange reserves.

"Bangladesh's external financial assets have fallen markedly over the past year, despite the introduction of a sweeping IMF reform and funding programme, alongside a substantially

WHY S&P WENT NEGATIVE ON BANGLADESH

- Sustained pressure on forex
- Forex declined despite IMF programme
- Forex situation could deteriorate further
- Economic growth slowing
- Modest per capita income
- Political landscape

stockpile declined about 7.3 percent; on July 19, which is the latest available data from the central bank, gross official reserves stood at \$23.4 billion.

Earlier in May, Moody's downgraded Bangladesh's long-held credit rating on the same concerns over the country's external position after monitoring the situation for about six months. S&P, however, stopped short of downgrading the credit rating this time.

"We may lower the ratings on Bangladesh if net external debt or liquidity metrics worsen further," S&P said.

Should net external debt surpass 100 percent of current account receipts, or gross external financing needs exceed 100 percent of current account receipts plus usable reserves, on a sustained basis, S&P would be downgrading Bangladesh's 'BB-' long-term and 'B' short-term sovereign credit ratings.

In January, Bangladesh entered into a 42-month loan programme with the International Monetary Fund to rebuild the country's diminished external buffers and to strengthen the management of its public finances. In that time, Bangladesh's dollar

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EU worried over DSA, media environment

Its special envoy says they want to see free, fair polls in Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The European Union has voiced concerns over the operation of the Digital Security Act and the environment for the civil society and the media in Bangladesh.

After discussions with Cabinet members, top government officials and the head of the human rights commission yesterday, Eamon Gilmore, EU special representative for human rights, also said they expect to see a fair and peaceful election held in a democratic atmosphere.

Speaking to reporters after meeting Gilmore, Law Minister Anisul Huq said a bill to amend the DSA is likely to be placed and passed in parliament in September.

Gilmore arrived in Dhaka on July 24 on a six-day visit upon Bangladesh's invitation.

After a meeting with Anisul, he told reporters, "As you all know, the European Union has been concerned about the operation of the Digital Security Act and the very large number of cases filed by individuals

against journalists and social media users."

He said Anisul also briefed him about the amendments to be made to the DSA. "We will examine those once they are made."

Gilmore further said the EU has already submitted to the authorities concerned their suggestions regarding the amendments based on their experience.

"There were also discussions on an anti-discrimination legislation, a data protection draft law, and labour rights issues."

Anisul said Gilmore's visit will strengthen Bangladesh-EU relations.

About the DSA amendments, he said, "All I can say now is that everyone will be happy about how the Digital Security Act will be amended," adding, "The labour right's situation, on the other hand, is good now."

Meanwhile, after meeting NHRC Chairman Kamal Uddin

Ahmed, Gilmore told reporters, "We discussed issues related to the country's environment for civil society organisations and the media - these are some areas of concern for us."

"We are looking forward to negotiations for a new cooperation agreement between the European Union and Bangladesh that will take place over the next couple of years."

"Human rights is very much at the heart of the relationship. The EU looks to Bangladesh to ensure high and labour rights standards, including fair wages."

He added, "Bangladesh is one of the biggest beneficiaries of the trade preferences system."

Regarding private sector business investment, he said investors around the world want to ensure they are investing in an environment that respects human rights and is good for citizens, while consumers also

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Gilmore




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Bangladesh, all other countries should have free, fair polls

Says US state dept

UNB, Dhaka

The United States has reiterated that they support everyone's right to freely exercise their role in a democratic society.

"We oppose any restrictions on human rights," US Department of State Spokesperson Matthew Miller told reporters during a regular media briefing in Washington yesterday.

He said visa restrictions would apply to anyone who undermines the democratic election process in Bangladesh.

"Actions that constitute undermining the democratic election process include vote rigging, voter intimidation, the use of violence to prevent people from exercising their rights to freedom of association and peaceful assembly, and the use of measures designed to prevent political parties, voters, civil society, or the media from disseminating their views," said the spokesperson.

Responding to another question, he said they do not take a position with respect to any political party in Bangladesh or in other country.

"But we believe that Bangladesh and all countries throughout the world should have free and fair elections," US Department of State Spokesperson Miller said.

3 Palestinians killed by Israeli troops in West Bank

AFP, NABLUS

Israeli troops killed three Palestinians in the occupied West Bank yesterday, the Palestinian health ministry said, the latest deaths in a surge of violence in the territory since early last year.

"Three Palestinians have been killed by Israeli bullets in Nablus," the ministry said. Palestinian militant group Hamas, which controls the Gaza Strip, said the three were members of its armed wing.

The Israeli army said three "armed terrorists" had opened fire on its soldiers from a vehicle in a Nablus neighbourhood and the troops fired back "to neutralise" them.

The soldiers recovered three M-16 rifles, a gun, cartridges and other military equipment, the army said in a statement.

The Palestinian health ministry identified the dead as Nour al-Deen al-Ardah, 32, Montaser Salameh, 33, and Saad al-Kharaz, 43.

AL plans tight rein on the capital

FROM PAGE 1

Apart from the rallies to be organised by the BNP and its like-minded parties, ruling party leaders are also worried about a protest rally that the Islami Andolan Bangladesh (IAB) has announced to hold on the same day at the north gate of the Baitul Mukarram, which is quite near the AL's rally venue.

Though the IAB is not an ally of the BNP, it has recently extended its support for the party's one-point movement. At tomorrow's protest rally, it will press for several demands, including the dissolution of parliament and the Election Commission.

Law enforcers have also taken all-out measures, including keeping BNP leaders and activists under close watch, and preventing its activists from inviting people to join its grand rally using loudspeakers.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) will set up check posts at various points in the capital to enhance security, along with additional posts with metal detectors at the city's entry points.

Intelligence-led operations to recover arms and explosives have also been ordered in connection with the BNP rally, a high-ranking police official told The Daily Star, requesting anonymity.

At the BNP rally, an adequate number of police officials will be

deployed to capture footage while watchtowers will be erected around the venue for enhanced surveillance, said police sources.

Dog squads will also be deployed at check posts to ensure thorough searches. Uniformed policemen will be accompanied by plainclothes officers to further strengthen security arrangements.

The DMP will give BNP permission at the last minute to hold its rally. The final decision on BNP's rally venue will be made after analysing an intelligence report so that the police can take security measures to ensure safety for all, said sources at the DMP.

Speaking to The Daily Star, DMP Commissioner Khandker Golam Faruq said the police, as public servants, would provide necessary support to all parties to hold rallies. He, however, said any attempt to incite violence and anarchy would not be tolerated.

Mohammad Harun Or Rashid, additional commissioner (Detective Branch) of DMP, said comprehensive security measures would be taken to address all potential risks, although there was no information about any subversive activities or attempts at the moment.

"Nevertheless, we are exercising increased vigilance to prevent any unauthorised activities and ensure a safe environment during the events," he added.

EU worried over DSA, media environment

FROM PAGE 1

want to purchase goods from the same kind of environment.

Meanwhile, Kamal Uddin told reporters after meeting Gilmore that the NHRC always raises its voice against incidents of extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances and custodial deaths.

"The government will need to pay more attention [to these issues] as they undermine the country's image," he told reporters after the meeting.

After discussions with Shahriar Alam, state minister for foreign affairs,

Gilmore said, "We wish to see free and fair elections conducted in a peaceful, democratic atmosphere."

He added that an EU exploratory electoral mission recently visited Bangladesh and they will now approach EU high representative Josep Borrell, who will decide whether or not an EU observer mission would be sent during the upcoming national election.

"We also spoke about the need for a healthy, open and free environment for the civil society and the media," Gilmore said.

He further said the EU does not only

notice the voting day when observing elections but also the pre-polls environment, the situations relating to party participation, political debates, media freedom and more.

Shahriar Alam said that while the election was discussed, ensuring the participation of all parties was not. "We have, however, renewed our commitment to holding a free and fair election."

He added that he hopes the 50-year-long relationship between Bangladesh and the EU further advances, which would help strengthen democratic institutions.



PHOTO: DHAKA SUMMER CON

Dhaka's thriving anime, comic book scene

NAVID ANJUM

In the busy streets of Dhaka, where tradition and modernity co-exist, a new phenomenon is sweeping through the city: the rise of an exciting pop-culture renaissance. As the global wave of anime, comic book movies, and fandom culture continue to captivate audiences everywhere, Dhaka has emerged as a vibrant hub for enthusiasts and creatives alike, showcasing a deep passion for all things animated and heroic.

With the advent of streaming platforms and online communities, the youth of Dhaka are exploring diverse narratives, vivid animation styles, and immersive storytelling that transcend cultural boundaries. Anime once considered a niche has found a devoted following within the city's borders. From timeless classics like "Dragon Ball" and "Naruto" to recent hits like "Attack on Titan" and "Chainsaw Man," Dhaka's anime fandom is flourishing.

Local enthusiasts have formed communities and arranged conventions, fostering a sense of camaraderie and creating shared experiences. So, many people are doing cosplays, making fan art, and animated short films. Some have even published their original work in magazines.

Dhaka's comic book scene is also experiencing a remarkable surge in popularity. The colourful pages that



COVER ART: RASHAD IMAM TANNOY

once transported readers to distant galaxies and heroic adventures are now cherished by a growing number of comic book enthusiasts. From American superheroes to Japanese manga, local comic book stores are teeming with graphic novels and collectibles that evoke nostalgia and ignite the imagination.

Recognising the potential of this burgeoning subculture, Dhaka's creative industry is embracing the influence of anime and comic books. Local artists, writers, and animators are infusing their work with the

distinctive visual styles and narrative elements that have made these art forms so beloved worldwide. This convergence of cultures is giving rise to a unique blend of storytelling that resonates with both local and international audiences.

Moreover, the popularity of anime and comic book adaptations has created a thriving market for merchandise, including action figures, apparel, and memorabilia. Entrepreneurs in Dhaka have seized this opportunity, establishing shops, and online platforms that cater to the ever-growing demand for fandom-related products.

Dhaka's newfound passion for anime and comic books has not only provided an avenue for entertainment but has also created a platform for expression, collaboration, and the celebration of creativity. It is a testament to the city's ability to adapt, embrace, and integrate diverse influences into its cultural fabric.

As we witness the emergence of a vibrant pop-culture scene, Dhaka stands poised to become a hub where imagination knows no bounds. So, let us celebrate Dhaka's anime and comic book scene, as it propels us into fantastical realms, encourages artistic exploration, and inspires the next generation of dreamers and storytellers.

Girl 'takes own life' during police raid

FROM PAGE 1

Leaders and activists have already started arriving in the capital, the insiders added. BNP leaders said the successful holding of the grand rally may change the course of the party's movement. And that's why plans are being drawn up centering the rally.

The party on Monday sought permission from Dhaka Metropolitan Police to hold the rally either at Nayapalton or at Suhrawardy Udyan.

The ruling Awami League, however, has announced that Jubo League, Svecchhasebak League and Chhatra League will jointly hold a rally tomorrow at the south gate of the Baitul Mukarram national mosque. Political analysts see it as an apparent move to counter the BNP's programme.

The BNP's 37 like-minded political parties and alliances are also set to organise separate demonstrations tomorrow at 10 places near the BNP's rally venue in a bid to arrange mass

gatherings in a major part of the capital, party insiders told The Daily Star.

Islami Andolan Bangladesh, which recently conveyed its support for the BNP's one-point demand, will also hold a rally tomorrow at the north gate of Baitul Mukarram.

The grand rally is going to be a turning point in our anti-government movement. The course of the movement will be changed. We want to take the movement towards the final phase through this grand rally," BNP standing committee member Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury told this correspondent yesterday.

He said the Dhaka rally would turn into "people's rally" for restoration of their voting and democratic rights.

Khasru said a series of fresh programmes will be announced at the rally.

According to several top BNP leaders, discussion is underway within the party about the fresh agitation programmes.

They claimed that we run a drug business here. But they did not find any drugs," she said, adding that police threatened to take her away when she refused to pay the money.

She admitted to The Daily Star that she used to sell cannabis and Yaba, but she left the trade a year ago.

Lovely alleged that she suffered some bruises as police and their informants tried to forcibly take her away.

THERAID Baishakhi's family members said SI Zahir and ASI Ferdous along with five to six informants started banging the gate of their house at Aradsha Nagar on Monday evening.

Her grandmother, Rahima Khatun, said she told the police to go away as her sons were not home. SI Zahir then threatened to arrest Lovely.

At one stage, Rahima opened the gate and the policemen went straight to the top floor where Lovely, Baishakhi and her husband Mintu were.

As police wanted to search Lovely's room, Lovely and Baishakhi resisted, resulting an altercation.

"At one point, ASI Ferdous slapped Baishakhi and dragged her down to the second floor. He then kicked and slapped Baishakhi and locked her in a room," said Baishakhi's sister, who

claimed to have witnessed the incident. She also said Baishakhi insisted from inside the locked room that there was no narcotics in the house.

As the policemen were unmoved, Baishakhi threatened to take her own life if the police did not open the door, said Baishakhi's sister and her aunt Rozina Begum.

They alleged that ASI Ferdous then went upstairs and informed SI Zahir about the threat.

Zahir grabbed a scarf that was hanging on a rope on the third-floor balcony and gave it to Ferdous, who then threw it through the window and asked Baishakhi to do whatever she wanted, they said.

After a while, ASI Ferdous peeked through the window and saw Baishakhi hanging.

On the news of her death, locals lay siege to the house and clashed with the cops.

Additional police force led by DC Jasim Uddin Mollah rushed there and brought the situation under control around 1:00am, when this correspondent was present at the scene.

Victim's uncle Mohammad Sumon said police recovered Baishakhi's body

HC bench asks lawyers not to use "my lord" to address them

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two judges of a High Court bench asked lawyers not to use the words "my lord" to address them.

The bench of Justices Sheikh Md Zakir Hossain and AKM Zahurul Huq instructed lawyers to use "your honour" or "sir" instead.

An official of the bench issued a notice in this regard yesterday.

Contacted, Supreme Court's Appellate Division Registrar Mohammad Salfur Rahman told The Daily Star that he was unsure if there was any rule for addressing SC judges.

An HC source said lawyers have been using "my lord" to address SC judges since the British era and it is a tradition in most commonwealth countries.

There is no provision in the rules of the Appellate Division or the High Court Division for addressing judges as "my lord", the source added.

The source also said former chief justice Fazle Kaderi Mohammad Abdul Munim issued a notice on October 4, 1982, banning the use of the words "my lord". But the directive is not followed anymore.

Arrest warrant issued against suspended ASP

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka tribunal yesterday issued an arrest warrant against Sohel Uddin Prince, a suspended assistant superintendent of police (ASP), in a case filed against him on charge of raping a woman.

According to the case statement, the victim, who was in a relationship with the ASP, went to the Ramna Police Officers' Mess around 7:00pm on February 4, 2021 and was raped there by the accused at gunpoint.

Following the incident, the victim filed a case against Sohel with the tribunal on November 23 last year.

After a hearing, the tribunal ordered the Dhaka Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court to conduct a judicial inquiry into the matter and to submit a report.

A metropolitan magistrate conducted a judicial inquiry and found the incident true. The magistrate then sent the inquiry report to the tribunal for the next course of action.

Earlier, the accused was sued by his wife on charge of torturing her for Tk 10 lakh dowry, following which he was suspended.

9 BCL men expelled for breaching discipline

UNB, Rangpur

Nine activists of Rangpur district unit Chhatra League were expelled on Sunday for breaching discipline and clashing during a party programme around a month ago.

They are Siam Alam of Rangpur Textile College, Jihad Rahman Jisan of Lalmonirhat's Uttar Bangla College, Monazat, Al Amin Hossain, Rajon Hossain of Rangpur Government College, Shahadat Hossain Rimon, Imon Islam, Masud Rana Safin, and Amin Hossain of Rangpur's Carmichael College.

SMSabbir Ahmed, president of Rangpur district unit BCL, said the central body expelled them after scrutinising video footage of the clashes during the divisional rally.

Tomorrow's rally could be a turning point for BNP

FROM PAGE 1

gatherings in a major part of the capital, party insiders told The Daily Star.

Islami Andolan Bangladesh, which recently conveyed its support for the BNP's one-point demand, will also hold a rally tomorrow at the north gate of Baitul Mukarram.

The grand rally is going to be a turning point in our anti-government movement. The course of the movement will be changed. We want to take the movement towards the final phase through this grand rally," BNP standing committee member Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury told this correspondent yesterday.

He said the Dhaka rally would turn into "people's rally" for restoration of their voting and democratic rights.

Khasru said a series of fresh programmes will be announced at the rally.

According to several top BNP leaders, discussion is underway within the party about the fresh agitation programmes.

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Bangladesh-Bangabandhu Room opened at FAO HQ

UNB, Rome

The Bangladesh-Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Room was inaugurated on Monday at the headquarters of Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Rome.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who is now in Rome to attend the UN Food Systems Summit+2 Stocktaking Moment (UNFSS+2), inaugurated the room. FAO Director-General QU Dongyu was present at the event.

The establishment of the room marks the celebration of the 100th birth anniversary of Bangabandhu.

The prime minister said that her country is delighted to have a little piece of Bangladesh inside the FAO Headquarters.

She said Bangladesh became a member of FAO in 1973 under the guidance of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

This room also stands for the 50 years of excellent partnership between Bangladesh and FAO, she added.

The newly furnished room shows an image of Bangabandhu, depicted in a paddy field by one of Bangladesh's farmers. This artistic work was done during the "Mujib Year" - Bangabandhu's birth centenary observed in 2020-21.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at a meeting with Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni at the latter's office in Rome yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

Italian PM for legal migration of workers

UNB, Rome

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni yesterday stressed the need for migration of Bangladeshi workers in legal ways.

She said this at a bilateral meeting with Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. "Bangladeshi workers are doing very well here. They have enough credibility. I don't want illegal workers," she was quoted as saying by Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen.

On her arrival at Palazzo Chigi, the Italian PM's office, Hasina was received by Meloni.

Issues including undocumented Bangladeshi expatriates, bilateral trade and business came up during the discussion.

The Italian side said they don't want illegal Bangladeshis to stay there as locals don't want it. "They opened the door for Bangladesh to send manpower in legal ways," said Momen.

Hasina said both documented and undocumented Bangladeshis are working for the welfare of the two countries. But, she said, Bangladesh discourages illegal migration.

Noting that her government is developing 100 economic zones and 39 hi-tech parks in Bangladesh, Hasina asked Italy to invest there.

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DHAKA-N'GANJ RAIL ROUTE

Operation resumes Aug 1, but won't be smooth before 2026

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Although rail services between Dhaka and Narayanganj will resume on August 1 after eight months of suspension for construction works, it would take three more years to have smooth and enhanced rail service on this route.

Unilateral cancellation of contract by a Chinese contractor midway of work and changes in work scope eight years after the initiation of the project will cause the long delay to have double line facilities on this route, officials said.

The cost of Dhaka-Narayanganj Double Lining project has already risen to Tk 658.34 crore from Tk 378.65 crore and the deadline got extended to June 2026 from June 2017, they said.

Before suspension of services, railway used to operate nine pairs of trains - eight pairs of local and one of Demu - between Dhaka and Narayanganj daily and several thousand people avail themselves of the services.

Passengers could reach Narayanganj from Dhaka within 45 minutes at a fare of Tk 15. On the other hand, it takes almost an hour to reach Narayanganj by bus at Tk 55 fare.

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Submit list of railway land grabbers in 30 days: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday sought a list of people who have illegally grabbed lands of Bangladesh Railway across the country.

The court ordered the authorities concerned of the government to prepare the list and to submit it in 30 days.

At the same time, it issued a rule asking the authorities to explain in two weeks why their inaction to free the lands from illegal occupation should not be declared illegal and they should not be ordered to evict the occupiers.

The bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice Khizir Hayat Lizu

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DENGUE OUTBREAK

Pregnant women more vulnerable

Two expecting mothers die at city hospitals

HELEMUL ALAM

As a deadly dengue outbreak tightens its grip across the country, an escalating number of lives are being claimed each day.

Meanwhile, there lies a group at an even greater risk - pregnant women.

These expectant mothers face an alarming vulnerability, as the disease threatens not only their lives but also the lives of their unborn children.

Yesterday, two pregnant government officials fell victim to the dengue outbreak in Dhaka. SM Nazia Sultana, a senior assistant secretary of the commerce ministry, and Kanta Biswas, an assistant director of the Public Account Department of Bangladesh Bank, both passed away while undergoing treatment at separate city hospitals, confirmed family members and colleagues.

Both women were eight months pregnant. Nazia got into public service following the 30th BCS while Kanta was appointed in the Bangladesh Bank as an assistant director in 2019.

According to doctors, infants (below one year), pregnant women, obese and elderly people (above 65-year of age) are the high-risk groups.

These dengue patients will have to remain under constant observation of doctors, said HM Nazmul Ahsan,



Infants (below one year), pregnant women, obese and elderly people (above 65-year of age) are high-risk groups

They will have to remain under constant observation of doctors

After being diagnosed, a pregnant patient must have to be admitted to a hospital immediately, as they need extra care

associate professor at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital.

He said after being diagnosed with dengue, a pregnant patient must be admitted to a hospital immediately, as they need extra care.

"There are two parts in blood pressures - systolic and diastolic. In the case of pregnant women,

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YUNUS CASE SC issues status quo on proceedings

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday issued status quo till August 3 on the proceedings of a case filed against Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus and three other top officials of Grameen Telecom on charge of labour law violation.

Justice M Enayetur Rahim, chamber judge of the Appellate Division of the SC, passed the order following a petition filed by the state seeking stay on a High Court rule that questioned the labour court order framing charges against Yunus and three others.

The apex court chamber judge also sent the state's petition to its full bench for hearing.

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

On September 9 of 2021, SM Arifuzzaman, a labour inspector (general), filed the case. The labour court on October 12, 2021 granted bail to Yunus and other accused in the case.

CHT Peace Accord, an empty promise Speakers tell rally

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League government has been farcing with the indigenous communities by not fully implementing the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord, said speakers at a rally yesterday.

The rally, arranged by student and youth organisations, marked the 25th anniversary of the treaty and voiced demands for its swift implementation.

Alik Mree, president of Adivasi Chhatra Sangram Parishad, criticised the AL government's repeated promises to implement the accord made before the 2008, 2014, and 2018 national elections.

When the treaty was signed, indigenous communities believed that their two-decade-long movement had come to an end. However, it is deeply disheartening that even after 25 years, only 25 out of 72 clauses have been fully implemented.

ALIK MREE
President of Adivasi Chhatra Sangram Parishad

"When the treaty was signed, indigenous communities believed that their two-decade-long movement had come to an end. However, it's deeply disheartening that even after 25 years, only 25 out of 72 clauses have been fully implemented," he said.

Accusing the government of using the treaty as a facade to deceive the indigenous people, Mree also alleged the ruling party of suppressing the indigenous people in the CHT and seizing their ancestral lands in the name of development projects like eco-parks, resorts, restaurants, and hotels.

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Law enforcers intercept a procession of Gono Odhikar Parishad at Bangla Motor intersection around noon yesterday when the party was heading towards the Election Commission office demanding that their party get EC registration.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

'Register us in seven days or we'll besiege your office'

Gono Odhikar Parishad issues ultimatum to EC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gono Odhikar Parishad leaders yesterday issued an ultimatum to the Election Commission, demanding that their party be registered in the next seven days.

They warned of besieging the EC office if their demands were not met during this period.

A letter outlining their demands was submitted yesterday to the EC's office in the capital's Agargaon.

"If our demands are not met, we will not start the march from the party

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

SCHOOL FEEDING Bangladesh inks deal with WFP

UNB, Rome

Bangladesh has signed an agreement with the World Food Programme (WFP) for expanding and improving school feeding programme for the country's primary school students.

The agreement was inked at an event attended by Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen.

Bangladesh government introduced a school feeding programme in 2010 and now some 23 lakh students of 15,000 primary schools in 104 upazilas are getting free meals.

Under the new agreement, the programme will be expanded to more than 150 upazilas, raising the number of beneficiaries to 37 lakh students.

Thanks to the programme, the dropout rate has declined by 7.5 percent and the enrolment rate increased by 14 percent in the primary schools, said Momen.

Moreover, Bangladesh has become the 85th member of the School Meals Coalition at an event on Monday.

Abul Kalam Manzur Morshed no more

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Linguist Prof Abul Kalam Manzur Morshed, an Ekushey Padak recipient, passed away at his residence in Dhaka yesterday.

Prof Manzur, a former director general of the Bangla Academy and recipient of the Bangla Academy Award, breathed his last in Nakhlapara, according to family sources.

His daughter, Manzula Morshed, told The Daily Star that her father used to conduct two classes a week at Dhaka University.

They suspect he suffered a stroke.

His namaz-e-janaza will be held at Dhaka University Central Jame Mosque after Zohr prayers today.

He will be laid to rest at the Mirpur Intellectuals Graveyard.

Born in Rajshahi, Prof Manzur completed his education at various institutions, including Dhaka University and the University of Edinburgh in Scotland, where he obtained his PhD.

His illustrious career began in 1964 when he joined the Department of Bangla at DU.

Over time, he also taught at Chittagong University before returning to DU.

Italian PM for legal

FROM PAGE 3
Hasina also asked Italy to ease import process of leather goods from Bangladesh. In response, the Italian side showed interest.

Meanwhile, two instruments were exchanged in presence of the two PMs.

The documents -- a memorandum on energy cooperation and a five-year cultural exchange programme -- were exchanged between Momen and Antonio Tajani, Italian deputy PM, also the foreign minister.

Under the MoU on

energy cooperation, Italy will extend research support and investment on LNG and renewable energy.

Earlier, three Italian ministers met Hasina on the sidelines of the UN Food Systems Summit at the headquarters of FAO in Rome. They also spoke about recruiting manpower from Bangladesh.

The three Italian ministers are Agriculture Minister Francesco Lollobrigida, Interior Minister Matteo Piantedosi and Justice Minister Carlo Nordio.

Operation resumes Aug 1

FROM PAGE 3

As the existing Dhaka-Narayanganj metre gauge (MG) line is not capable of meeting the growing demand of passengers, the Bangladesh Railway (BR) in January 2015 took up the project to build a second line on this route to double the existing capacity of 16 pairs of trains daily.

The project deadline was June 2017 but the railway could not even hire contractors for the works within the stipulated deadline.

In the meantime, BR in last December suspended train operation on this route to facilitate the work of the Padma Bridge Rail Link Project. Under this project, a 169km rail line is being built from Dhaka's Kamalapur to Jashore.

Besides, two separate dual gauge rail lines from Kamalapur to Gendarai; and one separate dual gauge line from Gendarai to Jurain would also be built under the project, which will actually be used for train operation on the Dhaka-Narayanganj route, said officials.

As a result, a second line on the remaining 12km line from Jurain to Narayanganj will be built under the Dhaka-Narayanganj double lining project, they added.

When the project works saw 82 percent progress, Power Construction Corporation of China (PCCC), the contractor laying the rail line, on March 15 this year sent a "contract termination notice" to the project

authority. The contractor alleged that it was not getting payments and the project site was not handed over to it on time, shows a project document.

BR tried to revive the contract but the contractor did not give any positive reply, so BR has started the process to hire a new contractor, Project Director Selim Rouf told The Daily Star yesterday.

Railways Minister Nurul Islam Sujon, after visiting the route yesterday, also told reporters that they were going to hire a new contractor for the job.

Council (Ecne), following the proposal of the project authority, revised the project in April this year to convert the existing metre-gauge line from Jurain to Narayanganj, taking the project cost to Tk 658.34 crore and the deadline to June 2026.

"Now we will hire a contractor for two jobs -- converting the metre gauge line into dual gauge and complete the rest of the work, which was left out by the Chinese contractor," Rouf told this correspondent.

They will float a tender soon, he said, adding that

Pregnant women

FROM PAGE 3

the difference between systolic and diastolic blood pressure remains normally high, so doctors have to treat them differently compared to a normal patient," he explained.

Nazmul said when the gap of a dengue patient's systolic and diastolic blood pressures remains less than 20, it means the patient has gone into shock. But a pregnant woman can go into shock when the gap is 30.

He said the pulse volume of a pregnant person also remains high compared to a normal person. When the pulse volume becomes low, it means the patient is under serious problem, he added.

"There are many challenging factors which we keep in mind while treating a pregnant woman," he said.

The dengue virus also can be transmitted to the baby which remains in the womb, Nazmul added.

Besides, providing fluid to a pregnant woman also requires a lot of thinking.

"We provide fluid to a patient observing hematocrit. When the amount of hematocrit increases over 10 percent, it means their fluid level has gone out and plasma leak has started. And when the amount of the hematocrit is 20 percent high or more compared to its normal level, we consider a significant amount of water has been

released," he added. "This hematocrit remains normally low for the pregnant woman, meaning measurement for such patients is little different here. So, if the amount increases even slightly, we have to be cautious," he added.

Hematocrit, also known by several other names, is the volume percentage of red blood cells in blood, measured as part of a blood test. The measurement depends on the number and size of red blood cells.

It is normally 40-42 percent for men and 35-36 percent for women and children, Nazmul explained.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services, almost two-thirds of the total dengue patients this year are male. However, among the deaths, the number of female is higher than the males.

Of the 201 deaths so far this year, 114 are female and 87 are male.

CHT Peace Accord

FROM PAGE 3
Mukta Barai, president of Samajtrantik Chhatra Front, questioned the government's intention and commitment to implementing the treaty.

The government's indifference to fulfilling its obligations raised doubts about its true intentions, she stressed.

Terming the issue "political", Tony Chirang, organising secretary of Adivasi Jubo Forum, highlighted the government's indifference to implementing the treaty.

Khan Asaduzzaman Masum, president of Bangladesh Jubo Union, expressed frustration over the government's perceived failure to uphold the accord.

He also emphasised the need for uniformity of rules between hills and plain

lands. The movement had evolved beyond being solely about indigenous rights. It now represents the aspirations of people across the country, said Dipayan Khisha, joint convener of the CHT Peace Accord Implementation Movement.

Rallies will be organised nationwide to gain stronger and broader support, said Dipayan, informing that the next rally is scheduled in Sylhet.

"The movement will continue until the treaty is fully implemented," he asserted. The speakers also presented a five-point demand, which included crafting a time-bound action plan for implementing the treaty.

The rally, presided over by Jubo Maitri Central President Shahidul Islam and moderated by Chhtra Union President Dipok Shil, concluded with a procession that marched towards the Teachers Students Centre at Dhaka University.

Contractors paid Tk 1.36cr even

FROM PAGE 5

orders as deposit. They cannot just disappear by taking such a huge amount of money. The buildings will be constructed."

UNO Mohammad Amimul Ehsan Khan echoed the same.

Asaduzzaman Tipu, proprietor of M/s City Trade, claimed that they are implementing five more projects under the LGED in the apazila. As the funds for those projects haven't been disbursed yet, the apazila engineer issued the bills for the school construction in advance as compensation.

No one from M/s Nadia Enterprise could be reached for comments.

In a recent visit to the project sites, this

correspondent saw only the works of dismantling the old buildings were going on.

Headteachers Nilufa Yasmin and Ayesha Akter of Taltala Government Primary School and Kasba Government Girls Primary School said classes are now being taken in section of the old buildings.

Contacted, executive engineer of Brahmanbaria LGED Md Abdul Mannan said, "There is no provision of taking advance bills without starting work. We will look into the issue."

Submit list of railway land

FROM PAGE 3

issued the order and rule following a petition filed by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh.

Senior Advocate Manzill Murshid, accompanied by lawyer Ripan Barai, appeared for the petitioner while Deputy Attorney General Md Saifuddin Khaled represented the state.

PRAYER TIMING

JULY 26

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 4-20 12-45 5-00 6-50 8-15

JAMAAT 4-55 1-15 5-15 6-55 8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Congratulations To Our Rector

Dr. Mokhles ur Rahman
PhD, MPA, USA

For achieving Doctorate degree from the American East Coast University, USA.

His PhD dissertation topic was "Entrepreneurship roadmap for the unprivileged person and product: A cross boundary case analysis of unparallel success".
Courtesy: Office Staff of the Institute of Training and Management (ITM)

Request for proposal (RFP) for hiring sub-awardee.

Tender Ref. icddr/G&F/OTM/2023/001 Date: 26th July, 2023

icddr,b is implementing "Balika Bodhu: a social norm intervention to address denial of sexual and reproductive health and rights to married adolescent girls in rural Bangladesh" project under the funding of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD) through AdSEARCH project by icddr,b. icddr,b is inviting sealed proposals from interested organizations (non-government organizations/civil society organizations/community-based organizations, whether for-profit or non-profit, must be legally registered under the laws of Bangladesh) with a proven experience and also fulfill the criteria mentioned in the RFP for selection of sub-recipient. The RFP document contains all the necessary information for interested bidders. With the most proficient bidder, icddr,b will sign an agreement for the currently established scope.

Interested participants can download the RFP documents from the web address below with the title "Balika Bodhu: a social norm intervention to address denial of sexual and reproductive health and rights to married adolescent girls in rural Bangladesh"

<https://www.icddr.org/work-with-us/tender-notices>

Pre-bid meeting will be held on 07th August, 2023 at 02:30 PM BST on Microsoft Teams. Please see the RFP for details.

Bidders shall submit their proposals through email as mentioned in the RFP document. Proposals must be received no later than 16th August, 2023 at 2:30 PM BST. Please note that bid opening session will not be conducted as a public opening.

icddr,b reserves the right to accept or reject all/part proposals without assigning any reason whatsoever. This RFP invitation will also form a part of the contract and will be binding upon the tenderer.

icddr,b Senior Manager, Grants & Compliance

The City Bank Limited
Head Office : City Bank Center
136, Bir Uttam Mir Shawkat Sarak
Gulshan Avenue, Gulshan-2, Dhaka-1212

Price Sensitive Information

This is kind information for all concerned that the Board of Directors of The City Bank Limited in its 639th meeting held on July 25, 2023 at 3:00 pm through Digital Platform, after detailed discussion while considering the unaudited Half Yearly Financial Statements for the period ended June 30, 2023 has declared the followings:

Particulars	Amount in Tk.			
	Consolidated		Solo	
	30-Jun-23	31-Dec-22	30-Jun-23	31-Dec-22
Net Assets Value per Share*	29.96	28.21	28.96	27.36

Particulars	Amount in Tk.			
	Consolidated		Solo	
	30-Jun-23	30-Jun-22	30-Jun-23	30-Jun-22
Net Operating Cash flow per Share*	1.23	(6.74)	1.34	(7.41)
Earnings per Share (for the period ended)*	1.97	1.81	1.82	1.72
Earnings per Share (for the current quarter ended)*	1.23	1.07	1.13	1.10

* Previous year figures were adjusted for Bonus share declared and issued based on 2021 performance.

Dated: July 25, 2023

By the order of Board,
Sd/-
Md. Kafi Khan
Company Secretary

Register us in seven days

FROM PAGE 3

office again. Instead, we will directly besiege the EC office," Rashed Khan, general secretary of the party, told journalists after submitting the letter.

The letter was signed by the party's president Nurul Haque Nur.

Earlier at noon, a procession started from the party's Paltan office aiming to besiege the EC office.

It marched through Zero Point, Matshya Bhaban, and Shabbagh, eventually reaching the Bangla Motor intersection, where the police intercepted the party leaders and activists.

During this time, a party faction, led by Nur staged a sit-in at the Bangla Motor intersection for around an hour, protesting the EC decision to not register the party.

VACANCY NOTICE

United Nations Development Programme in Bangladesh announces vacancy for the following position under the National Personnel Services Agreement (NPSA) with Initiation Plan for Integration of Resilience and Inclusive Growth.

1. Project Analyst (Manager), NPSA-9 (1 Position)

The duration of the NPSA Contract is one year initially, subject to renewal upon satisfactory performance and availability of funds.

For details of the Job Description and instructions to apply, please visit our website: <https://www.undp.org/bangladesh/careers>. You will find the application deadline in the vacancy advertisement.

Note: UNDP is committed to achieving workforce diversity in terms of gender, ethnicity, and culture. Individuals from minority groups, indigenous groups, and people living with disabilities are equally encouraged to apply. All applications will be treated with the strictest confidence.

UNDP does not tolerate sexual exploitation and abuse, any kind of harassment, including sexual harassment, and discrimination. All selected candidates will, therefore, undergo rigorous reference and background checks.

Scam warning
The United Nations does not charge any application, processing, training, interviewing, testing, or other fees in connection with the application or recruitment process. Should you receive a solicitation for the payment of a fee, please disregard it. Furthermore, please note that emblems, logos, names, and addresses are easily copied and reproduced. Therefore, you are advised to apply particular care when submitting personal information on the web.

Only short-listed candidates will be contacted. Female candidates are particularly encouraged to apply.

বিক্রয় বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা আর বিক্রয়ির মাধ্যমে জানাশো যাচ্ছে যে, দেশোদয় মার্কেটিং কোম্পানী (এসএমসি) এর ব্যবহৃত গ্ৰীট স্লিপ ও ৯টি মোটরসাইকেল খেদামে যে অবশ্যই আছে' বিক্রিতে বিক্রয় করা হবে। অস্থায়ী নগরসভাসভাপদের (বাড়ি/প্রতিষ্ঠান) নিমিত্ত থেকে সিডিউল বর্ণিত শর্তাবলী সাপেক্ষে নগরস্ব অধিবাসন করা যাবে।

সুদূর সংগ্রহ ও মাসামাল পূর্ণপূর্ণের স্থান ও সময়:
নগর সিডিউল আশানী স্থলসি ২৩, ২০২৩ ইং থেকে আফট ০৯, ২০২৩ ইং তারিখ পর্যন্ত নিম্নলিখিত ওয়েবসাইট থেকে সংগ্রহ করা যাবে। যানবাহন সমূহ সিডিউল বর্ণিত এসএমসির নির্ধারিত অফিসের টিকানায় (সকাল ৯:০০টা থেকে দুপুর ১:০০টা পর্যন্ত) পরিদর্শন করা যাবে।

সুদূর জমা দেয়ার শেষ তারিখ ও সময়:
আফট ০৯, ২০২৩ ইং তারিখ দুপুর ২:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।

সুদূর সংক্রান্ত বিস্তারিত বিবরণ নিম্নোক্ত ওয়েবসাইটে পাওয়া যাবে:
<https://www.smc-bd.org/tenders>

এসএমসি কর্তৃপক্ষ কোনো কারণে মর্শনো বাতিলকৃত উক্ত নগরস্ব আংশিক অথবা সম্পূর্ণ বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করে।

সিনিয়র যানবাহন, প্রকিউরমেন্ট
দেশোদয় মার্কেটিং কোম্পানী

Save the Children Date: July 26, 2023

Save the Children is the world's leading, independent organisation for children

Invitation for Tender

Save the Children International (SCI) is hereby inviting for tender from interested experienced bona fide vendors for Providing **Security Service Support and Cleaning Service of Save the Children International** for its offices and other locations in Bangladesh. For details, please see the IFT schedule, which is available on <http://procurement.scibd.info/> under tender notification. Downloaded copy is acceptable for tender participation.

SL	Name of IFT	Reference No.	Pre-Tender Meeting Schedule and Place	Last date of Tender Submission
1	Framework Agreement for providing Security Service Support	IFT/SCI/BD/CO/FY-23/0008 (Manual)	Physical Meeting: 31/07/2023 at 3:00 PM House CWN (A) 35, Road 43, Gulshan 2, Dhaka 1212, Bangladesh	August 20, 2023, at 3:00 PM
2	Framework Agreement for providing Cleaning Service	IFT/SCI/BD/CO/FY-23/0009 (Manual)	Physical Meeting: 31/07/2023 at 11:00 AM House CWN (A) 35, Road 43, Gulshan 2, Dhaka 1212, Bangladesh	August 20, 2023, at 3:00 PM

Special Instruction: (a) All activities in connection with the said procurement of Goods/Services will be guided as per the SCI's Procurement Policies. **(b)** If it is not possible to receive & open the tender on the scheduled date for any unavoidable circumstances, the same will be received and opened on the following working date at same time and same place. **(c)** If the Tenderer(s) submit any false/incorrect or fake documents then the provided bid by tenderer will be considered as disqualified. **(d)** The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders.

Head of Supply Chain

RU recruitment suspension lifted after two years

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The education ministry yesterday lifted the suspension on all types of recruitment at Rajshahi University after over two and a half years.

Prof Pradip Kumar Panday, administrator of RU's public relations office, told The Daily Star that they received a notification issued by the Secondary and Higher Education Division (SHED) in this regard.

The notification said the embargo was withdrawn following RU authorities application to ensure academic and administrative activities at the university. It also said the university authorities can now conduct all recruitment activities in accordance with their policy.

On December 10, 2020, the education ministry suspended all kinds of appointments at the university as they found evidence of corruption and irregularities by the then RU VC Prof Abdus Sobhan and Pro-VC Prof Choudhury Zakaria, in the appointment of teachers at the university.

The commission submitted a probe report to the education ministry and the Prime Minister's Office, which recommended taking action against them and cancelling the appointment of 34 teachers, as the administration had made these appointments by relaxing university rules.

The report said the vice-chancellor, in collusion with others, also relaxed the rules to appoint his daughter and son-in-law at the public university.

Subsequently, on December 10 that year the education ministry had suspended all kinds of appointments at the university. The ministry also directed the university to prepare a new teacher recruitment policy.

CONSTRUCTION OF 2 SCHOOL BUILDINGS Contractors paid Tk 1.36cr even before work starts

MASUK HRIDOY, Brahmanbaria

A project was passed for the financial year 2022-23 to build two new school buildings with the funding of the World Bank in Kasba upazila of Brahmanbaria at a cost of Tk 1.36 crore.

On March 7, Local Government Engineering Department flouted a tender for constructing multi-storied buildings of Kasba Girls Government Primary School and Taltala Government Primary School in the municipal area.

On March 30, the work order was issued against M/s Nadia Enterprise and M/s City Trade.

As per relevant rules, including Unnayan Prakashasamuher Artha Abamukti o Bebohar Nirdeshika (roughly translated to fund disbursement and use for development projects), fund for such projects should be withdrawn in phases, only after the work begins.

But in a gross disregard to existing provisions, the contractor firms withdrew the entire Tk 1.36 crore from Sonali Bank (Kasba branch) on April 21 and 22 respectively, without even starting the construction works.



The appeals for withdrawal contained the signatures of LGED engineer Saiful Islam and UNO of Kasba upazila Mohammad Amimul Ehsan Khan, indicating their alleged involvement in the irregularities, confirmed bank sources.

Relevant stakeholders seeking anonymity alleged that Saiful has taken bribe from the contractors to give them such unlawful benefits.

Saiful denied the allegation but confirmed that Tk 1.36 crore was

indeed withdrawn from the bank with his signature.

"See, the project was for FY 2022-23. But the project was in no position to be completed within this deadline. So the allocated money would have gone back to the donor organisation. This shouldn't have happened, especially at a time of economic crisis. So I did it for my country," he said.

Replying to a question, he said, "The contractors have kept the pay

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

30 AL men sued for severing JL leader's hand

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

Shariful Islam Ramzan, general secretary of Natore district Awami League, and 29 others have been sued for their alleged involvement in severing the hand of a Jubo League leader.

Swapna Badsha, brother of victim Mithun Ali, general secretary of Natore municipality ward-3 Jubo League, filed the case with Natore Sadar Police Station on Monday night, accusing 30 named and eight to 10 unidentified people, said Officer-in-Charge Nasim Ahmed.

Natore's AL joint general secretary Syed Mortuza Ali Bablu, its labour affairs secretary Nannu Sheikh, and Natore AL municipality unit president Syed Mostak Ali Mukul were among the accused.

Meanwhile, police in a drive arrested five suspects early yesterday. They are Ashraf Hossain Mondal, 50, Obaidul Sardar, 40, Rumon, 26, Mohsin Mondal, 31, and Nasir, 37, the OC added.

According to the case statement, followers of AL leader Ramzan attacked Mithun in presence of Ramzan and Bablu in the town's Balaripara around 9:30pm on Sunday and cut off his right hand from the wrist.

Swapna and four others were also injured in the attack.

Later, Mithun was sent to a hospital in Dhaka. Contacted, AL leader Ramzan denied the allegations and said he along with the other leaders was at the party office during the incident.

OC Nasim said on February 16, a group of criminals attacked Nannu Sheikh, labour affairs secretary of district AL, at Bhabaniganj in the town. Mithun was accused in the case filed over the attack.

Government of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh Roads and Highways Department Office of the Project Director (ACE, RHD) Chattogram-Cox's Bazar Highway Improvement Project RHD Foreign Aided Office Building (1st Floor) Road No. 27, Block-A Banani, Dhaka-1213

Notice for Invitation of Expression of Interest (EOI) for Consulting Services for Detail Design, Tender Assistance and Construction Supervision of Chattogram-Cox's Bazar Highway Improvement Project (CCHIP)

Memo No.35.01.2607.057.3(A).23-34

Date: 25.07.2023

1. The Government of Bangladesh has applied for a loan from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (hereinafter referred to as "JICA") for the "Chattogram-Cox's Bazar Highway Improvement Project" (hereinafter referred to as "the Project") with the objective of achieving smooth cargo transportation and improve access to Matarbari Port by constructing flyovers and outer roads at major congested sections between Chattogram and Cox's Bazar along the National Highway 1 (hereinafter referred to as "NH1"), thereby contributing to the economic growth of the surrounding area and improvement of logistics in Bangladesh. A portion of the proceeds of the loan is intended to be used for eligible payments for consulting services for which this EOI is issued.

2. The project will consist of the following components:

- Construction of outer roads at Dohazari, Lohagara and Chakaria
- Construction of Flyover at Keranirhat
- Improvement of alignment and widening of the existing Patiya Bypass

The project is expected to be completed by November 2028

Executing Agency: Roads and Highways Department (RHD)

Location of the Project: Chattogram District and Cox's Bazar District

RHD will select and employ the consultant for rendering consulting services of the project. Payments to the consultant will be made both in local and foreign currencies.

3. Roads and Highways Department (RHD) under the Road Transport and Highways Division (RTHD) of the Ministry of Road Transport and Bridges (MoRTB) will be the client of the consulting services. RHD now invites "Expression of Interest (EOI) in English from reputed international consulting firm(s), individual or in joint venture (hereinafter referred to as "the interested Consultant") for short listing the consulting services for Detailed Design, Tender Assistance, Construction Supervision, Facilitation of Implementation of Environmental Management Plan (EMoP), Environmental Monitoring Plan (EMoP) and Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) and Technology Transfer under the project. The international consulting firm(s) may submit the EOI in joint venture or in association with other international/national consulting firms.

4. As part of the services, the consultant will conduct the following works:

- Review the JICA's Preparatory Survey including road alignment and propose modification, if necessary.
- Detailed Design
- Tender Assistance
- Construction Supervision
- Facilitation of Implementation of Environmental Management Plan (EMoP), Environmental Monitoring Plan (EMoP) and Resettlement Action Plan (RAP)
- Technology Transfer

The above works include the following tasks:

ii. Detailed Design

- Review all available primary and secondary data collected during the JICA's preparatory survey for the Project;
- Carry out all the required engineering surveys and investigations as applicable to the concerned project components.
- Prepare detailed work plan, progress reports and implementation schedule for the Project
- Prepare the detailed design of the Project including tender drawings, technical specifications, detailed cost estimates etc.
- Define sources and estimated quantities of construction materials
- Prepare the detailed design of resettlement sites together with land acquisition plan, infrastructure and utility installation plan etc.

iii. Tender Assistance

- Prepare bidding documents in Consultation with RHD
- Assist RHD in issuing bid invitation
- Assist RHD to evaluate bids
- Assist RHD during bid evaluation, contract negotiation and final contract agreement etc.

iv. Construction Supervision

- Execute construction supervision and contract administration services
- Regularly monitor progress and take actions required for timely completion of works
- Verify contractors work statements and issue payment certificates
- Review and necessarily modify design, drawing, specification, cost etc.
- Dispute Board assistance
- Prepare an operation and maintenance manual for the constructed works
- Other necessary support to the client concerning the implementation of the project
- Conduct training on Community Health and HIV/AIDS prevention etc.

v. Facilitation of implementation of Environmental Management Plan (EMoP), Environmental Monitoring Plan (EMoP) and Resettlement Action Plan (RAP)

- Update EMP and EMoP as appropriate
- Assist RHD in obtaining clearance/permits/plans related to environment and forest from the competent authorities
- Assist RHD to implement the measures identified in the EMP and EMoP
- Update and/or prepare Resettlement Action Plan (RAP) as necessary etc.

vi. Technology Transfer

- Provide the opportunity to the RHD officers and staffs to be involved in the working team of the Consultant during the design works for their capacity building wherever possible
- Brief and demonstrate the survey and design procedure
- Assist RHD and its staff to build their capacity as a part of on the job training under the Project etc.

The consultants will be selected under Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS) method in accordance with the procedures set out in the "Guidelines for the Employment of Consultants under Japanese ODA Loans, April 2012" (https://www.jica.go.jp/english/our_work/types_of_assistance/oda_loans/oda_op_info/guide/handbooks/c8h0vm0000aoeux8-at/201204_chapter1_en.pdf)

RHD will conduct the Short-Listing of interested consulting firms for the above mentioned consulting services.

5. The Consulting Firm(s) submitting Expression of Interest must have following experiences (during the last 15 (Fifteen) years from the last date of submission of EOI and where only successfully completed projects will be considered for assessing experience. General experience in consulting services of Highway and Bridge construction projects in the areas of Detailed Design, Tender Assistance and Construction Supervision.

- General Experience of Consulting Services in Highway and Bridge construction Projects in the areas of Detail Design, Tender Assistance and Construction Supervision,
- Specific experience of consulting services:
 - Experience of Detail Design and Construction Supervision of minimum 20 kilometer long Highway/Road/Expressway in a single contract.
 - Experience of Detail Design of Pre-Stressed Concrete (PC) Bridge having at least total accumulated length of 1,000 meter in a single contract.
 - Experience of Construction Supervision of Pre-Stressed Concrete (PC) Bridge having at least total accumulated length of 1,000 meter in a single contract.
 - Design and Construction Supervision of bridges of minimum 80-meter span length.
 - Experience of Consulting Services of Highway Projects in Developing Countries.

In addition to above, 5(i) and (ii) experiences, the consulting firms should preferably have the following experiences-

- Experience of Japanese ODA Loan funded projects
- Experience of Detail Design/Construction Supervision of PC U-Composite girder for bridge superstructure
- Experience of Detail Design/Construction Supervision of Steel Box Girder Bridge for bridge superstructure
- Experience of Detail Design/Construction Supervision of PC wells for bridge substructure
- Experience of Soft-soil Treatment/Ground Improvement in the Detail Design/Construction Supervision of road/ bridge/ ground improvement Project.

6. The EOI should specifically include (along with certified English translation if not in English):

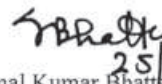
- The firm's Registration Certificate
- Company profile including management, personnel, firm's specialty, performance
- General and specific experiences
- Experience in design and construction supervision of Embankments, Highways, Flyovers, Steel box girder bridges, Pre-stressed Concrete (PC) Girder bridges, Highway interchanges, Highway intersections, culverts, sluice gates, soft soil improvement, slope protective works and drainage structures
- Experiences in design and construction supervision of Highway/Bridge/Flyover projects (FIDIC contract basis) in developing countries
- Experiences in design and construction supervision of Highway/Bridge/Flyover projects (FIDIC contract basis) in Bangladesh
- Experience in Design and Construction supervision in Japanese ODA loan projects
- In the above list for (c), (d), (e), (f) and (g), the following information should be provided: Client's name, address, country of project, email, phone contact, nature of service, contract amount and period, man-months deployed, duration of service with commencement and actual completion date, name of other firms in JV or association if any.
- Number of Bridge, Highway, Geotechnical and other relevant engineers/professionals (permanent/full time and intermittent/contractual), those who belong to the firm for more than a year and average working experience (years) of these engineers and professionals
- Audited financial statement (Balance sheet, Profit and loss statement and Cash flow statement for the last three years
- History of litigation in courts or any arbitration proceedings (if any)

7. With all supporting documents, 02 signed hard copies of the EOI must be delivered at or before 1300 hours (Bangladesh Standard Time) on 31st August 2023 in sealed envelope marked with the "EOI for Consulting Services of Chattogram-Cox's Bazar Highway Improvement Project" to the following address- Project Director, Chattogram-Cox's Bazar Highway Improvement Project (Bangladesh), RHD Foreign Aided Office Building (1st Floor), Road No. 27, Block-A Banani, Dhaka-1213
Phone and Email: +880241080627, pdcbmip@rhd.gov.bd, pdcrossborder@gmail.com

8. The Request for Proposal (RFP) is expected to be issued to the short listed Firms by 15 October 2023. The client will not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by the firm's in connection with the preparation or submission of the EOI.

9. The EOI notice will be available at www.rhd.gov.bd, www.rthd.gov.bd, www.cptu.gov.bd (website)

10. RHD reserves the right to accept or reject one or all EOIs or stop the process of approval at any stage, at its sole discretion and shall bear no liability whatsoever consequent upon such a decision.


(Shyamal Kumar Bhattacharyya)
25/07/2023
Project Director
(Additional Chief Engineer, RHD)
Chattogram-Cox's Bazar Highway Improvement Project

BARBIE

A fearless plunge into the neon-pink abyss



The iconic Mattel doll has served as the vehicle for our hopes, desires, fantasy as well as animosity for 6 decades now. The movie captures the spirit of Barbie's timeless appeal which is beloved by generations of children who spent hours playing with Barbie and her friends Ken, Midge, Skipper, and Allan.

SHANIZ CHOWDHURY

Barbie can be seen in almost every guise, including Stereotypical Barbie (played by Margot Robbie with great panache), President Barbie (underutilised and consistently entertaining Issa Rae), Doctor Barbie (Hari Nef), Lawyer Barbie (Sharon Rooney), Disheveled Barbie (Kate McKinnon), etc. Overall, the Barbies are diverse in terms of ethnicity and body image, including a wheelchair-using Barbie. They all live together in Barbie Land, which is exquisitely portrayed, with gorgeous vistas, vibrant backdrops, and well-crafted characters.

Greta Gerwig, who co-wrote the script with Noah Baumbach, draws inspiration from *The Truman Show* and *Toy Story* as they plunge the protagonist into an existential crisis brought on by a glimpse into the real world that is encroaching on Barbie's synthetic, comforting idyll.

This seemingly casual excursion is meant to give the movie depth and substance. Barbie becomes plagued with regret and

mortality-related ideas as she realises that the outside world is a far cry from her delirious fantasy land. She and the other Barbies grapple with the idea of whether Barbie dolls are demeaning or empowering.

On the other hand, Ken is busy filling his empty head with all the patriarchal lies as Barbie goes through a rude awakening. Ken learns that women are inherently held subordinate to men in the Real World, an idea he brings back to Barbie Land where it has the glaringly ludicrous effect of brainwashing all the women into acting like submissive housewives.

Barbie acts as a dazzling mirror, examining social norms, deconstructing stereotypes,



and boldly tackling underlying themes of the human race such as gender inequality and toxic masculinity issues.

Gerwig's strategy is skewed more toward audiences who want to indulge in nostalgia as there are subtle references and inside jokes throughout the movie. Even though Gerwig occasionally uses the film as the vehicle for what seems like a gender studies lecture for undergraduates, it is evident that the movie was created by professionals who understand how children's imaginations develop while playing with Barbies. The majority of its messages are encouraging for young girls, while those that gave the film its PG-13 rating might overlook it due to

the visually pleasing scenes and costumes.

I was amazed by the technical depth of the Barbie world and the mixed styles of filming used to juxtapose reality from fantasy. The musical numbers in the movie left a lasting impression, as the catchy tunes and fantastic choreography enhanced the story and added an extra level of enjoyment.

Robbie is an excellent actor who excels at balancing perfection and chaos. Ryan Gosling as Ken is a match made in heaven as he sports a range of expressions, as the helpless pretty boy. He is the true comedic gem and exemplifies how the pervasive nature of patriarchy can sink its teeth into even the most naïve men. However, this begs the question why let Ken steal the spotlight if "Barbie" is all about highlighting and honouring women?

At times, the monologues, humour and bitter ironies presented a commercialised and co-opted version of feminism, which is as good as it gets when the movie is produced by Barbie's corporate manufacturer Mattel. The script feels most daring when the

movie calls out Mattel for the high and unreachable ideals it placed on women through fuchsia hegemony.

The script could have done away with some unnecessary scenes and put in more nuance and subtlety. It could maybe have more Barbie and Ken in the real world. They should have empower women without victimising them, and especially not have the women fight back using petty ways.

However, the script is self-aware. It is hysterical but there are also times when it feels a little demure and restrained, as if they want to be funny but can only be harsh and caustic. Regardless, the writers had enough faith in the script to leave it open for a sequel. The ending steered clear of clichés like romance or the "hero saves all" theme.

The movie does not just boast zany and charm, it is proof of what is possible even in the darkest recesses of capitalism. "Barbie" is an innovative and subversive film which is gearing up to be one of the biggest summer blockbusters in recent memory.

NEWS

Now S&P goes negative

FROM PAGE 1
"Lower generation of current account receipts than we expect, a higher overall current account deficit than we forecast, or a failure to materially boost foreign exchange reserves would indicate downward pressure on the rating."

The American credit rating agency could also downgrade Bangladesh if it observes a material and sustained rise in commercial banks' ownership of government debt as a proportion of the sector's total assets.

This would signify a limited ability for banks to lend more to the government without crowding out private sector borrowing.

"Our ratings on Bangladesh reflect the country's modest per capita income and limited fiscal flexibility owing to a combination of low revenue-generation capacity and high interest burden."

Bangladesh's per capita income, which S&P estimates to be less than \$2,700 for fiscal 2023-24, remains one of its main rating constraints.

"This level of per capita income limits the fiscal and monetary flexibility needed to respond to exogenous shocks."

Evolving administrative and institutional settings represent additional rating constraints, S&P said.

"We weigh these factors against consistently high economic growth and an external position that's supported by substantive engagement with bilateral and multilateral development partners, large remittances from overseas Bangladeshi workers, and a globally competitive garment sector."

Despite this structural support, Bangladesh has witnessed a material decline in the strength of its external balance sheet and liquidity position, it said.

The economy is likely to expand at 6-6.4 percent over the next three years, reflecting a slight moderation compared with the growth trend of its long term average real GDP.

Another drawback for Bangladesh is its political landscape, which remains polarised with considerable power centred on the ruling Awami League.

"The opposition's representation in parliament remains extremely small, limiting checks and balances on the government."

The highly concentrated domestic political conditions may constrain the effectiveness of institutions and undermine the predictability of future policy responses, it said.

S&P may reinstate a 'stable' outlook to stable if Bangladesh materially improves its external position.

This would be indicated by a substantial increase in foreign exchange reserves combined with a modest current account deficit, and healthy growth in current account receipts.

More favourable trade and financial flows will be necessary for Bangladesh's external settings to stabilise over the next 12 months, S&P added.

"We are already in a difficult situation, so there would not be any big impact of this downgrade by S&P," said Ahsan H Mansur, executive director of the Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh.

The IMF programme has not brought any improvement in the foreign exchange situation.

"There is no chance of the situation improving in the next six months — there are lots of payment obligations pending. The forex situation is not heading in the right direction as of now," said Mansur, a former economist of the IMF.

For the situation to materially improve, the government needs a steady resolve.

The interest rate needs to go up further, the tax collections need to be ramped up and the government's expenditure needs to be cut substantially.

"It is tough to change these things. Nothing really is in favour of the government or the economy. It remains unclear whether the government has the time or the guts to do the policy changes needed," Mansur added.

The government though played down the significance of the outlook downgrade by S&P.

"This will have no impact on the Bangladesh economy," said BB Spokesman Md Mezbahul Haque.

Bangladesh's macroeconomic fundamentals are "very strong".

"Our expected growth rate is close to projection. As you saw, ADB [Asian Development Bank] recently revised its estimates upwards."

On July 23, ADB revised its fiscal 2022-23's growth estimate to 6 percent, which is higher than its April forecast of 5.3 percent. ADB's estimate is in line with the provisional growth estimate of 6.03 percent made by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics in May.

S&P's negative outlook on the Bangladesh economy would have had an impact had the government issued a sovereign bond.

"In the current global economic scenario, all countries are going through a stressed situation. Based on that, all ratings are seeing a change. Internally, there is no problem in the economy."

Prof Yunus pays Tk 12.47cr in tax

FROM PAGE 12
three charitable trusts.

Meanwhile, the SC ordered status quo until August 3 on the proceedings of a case filed against Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus and three other officials of Grameen Telecom in connection with labour law violation.

Justice M Enayetur Rahim, chamber judge of the Appellate Division of the SC, passed the order following a petition filed by the state seeking a stay on a High Court rule that questioned the labour court order framing charges against Prof Yunus and three others in the case.

The apex court's chamber judge also sent the state's petition to its full bench for hearing on August 3.

Prof Yunus's lawyer Abdullah Al-Mamun told The Daily Star that the SC chamber judge issued the order of status quo on "the subject matter"

of the case, which means that all its proceedings will remain halted until further order from the apex court.

The labour court cannot continue with the trial following the SC chamber judge's order, he said.

Lawyer Mamun said the chamber judge was not scheduled to sit at his court yesterday.

However, Justice M Enayetur Rahim dealt with the case as a special chamber judge since Chief Justice Hasan Foez Siddique has assigned him to do so following an application from the state, he said.

The lawyer also said the state has filed a petition with Appellate Division against an HC rule, which is unprecedented.

Additional Attorney General Sk Md Morshed, who represented the state during the hearing, could not be reached for comments despite repeated attempts.

Free up more beds for dengue patients

FROM PAGE 12
After the meeting, Col Johirul told The Daily Star, "We will be able to serve 370-380 patients with the existing manpower. We are under pressure as more patients are coming every day."

"We have already sent a demand letter to the ministry for more manpower. But all the hospitals in Dhaka are under pressure. So, it will not be easy to get required manpower. It will take time."

Health officials, meanwhile, said they have already started distribution of manpower to tackle the situation.

"We have asked the nursing institutes to send nurses. Doctors who are working at hospitals where dengue patients are not so many will be sent to those under pressure," Prof

Ahmedul Kabir, additional director general of the health directorate, told this newspaper yesterday.

At the meeting, directors of different hospitals in Dhaka said many patients are unnecessarily coming to the capital from outside.

The health minister said the hospitals in divisional cities and other major towns should take measures so that all patients don't need to travel to the capital.

Urging people not to get panicky, Prof Kabir said dengue treatment is possible even at an upazila health complex. "So, people should not waste time and money travelling to Dhaka and other major cities."

Zahid also asked the health officials to work closely to destroy the larvae

of Aedes mosquitoes, the carrier of dengue virus.

Meanwhile, lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan who represents the complainant of the case against Prof Yunus and others, told this correspondent that his client will not move before the labour court concerned until the SC issues further orders.

Following a petition filed by Prof Yunus, the HC on July 23 issued a rule asking the state to explain in two weeks why the labour court order that framed charges against him and three others of Grameen Telecom in the case should not be scrapped.

Sheikh Merina Sultana, chairman of the Third Labour Court of Dhaka, on June 6 framed charges against Prof Yunus and others.

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

Of yesterday's deaths, 14 were reported in Dhaka.

At least 2,418 patients were hospitalised during the 24-hour period, of which 1,162 were in Dhaka. The number of dengue cases stood at 37,688, including 22,349 outside Dhaka.

Some 7,927 dengue patients were undergoing treatment yesterday, of which 4,646 were in Dhaka.

Firefighting plane pilots die in Greece crash as wildfires rage

AFP, Rhodes

Two pilots died when their water-bombing plane crashed while battling a blaze on the Greek island of Evia yesterday, as wildfires flared across the Mediterranean.

Greece's fire department said the Canadair aircraft crashed into a ravine close to where the fire started on Sunday. Footage on state TV ERT showed the plane clipping a tree before falling nose-first and exploding.

EC won't hold

FROM PAGE 12
election commissioner.

In response to another question, he said that there has been no official discussion over election schedule at the EC so far.

The schedule must be announced 45 days ahead of the polls, which should be in late December or early January.

In response to a question on whether the EC was under pressure to hold polls under a partisan government, he said they faced no government obstacles in any work so far. "We hope we can continue to work like this in the future."

Stop anti-state

FROM PAGE 12
involved in arson attacks, terrorism, militancy," she added.

Regarding the sanctions against Rab, the PM said, "Unfortunately, sanctions are imposed on those who worked in curbing terrorism and militancy. Due to this, they lose their confidence."

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen and PM's Private Industry and Investment Adviser Salman F Rahman were present at the conference.

In another development, Hasina offered Nepal the use of its newly constructed Payra Port during a meeting with her Nepalese counterpart Pushpa Kamal Dahal.

The two premiers met at the newly opened Bangladesh-Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Room in the FAO Headquarters in Rome.

The leaders are there to attend the UN Food Systems Summit.

"Bangladesh has already opened the Chalna and Chittagong ports for Nepal. Nepal can use the newly constructed Payra Port as well," Foreign Minister Momen quoted Hasina as saying.

Chinese foreign minister replaced

FROM PAGE 12
He has filled in for Qin during his absence and represented China at a national security advisers' meeting of BRICS countries in Johannesburg, South Africa this week.

State media did not report why Qin was removed from office and China's foreign ministry did not respond to a request for comment. Xi signed a presidential order to make the decision effective, state news agency Xinhua reported.

"The lack of an explanation opens more questions than provides answers," said Ja Ian Chong, associate professor of political science at National University of Singapore.

"It also underscores the opacity and unpredictability, even arbitrariness in the current political system."

It is not the first time there has been an unexplained absence of officials in China.

Industry minister Xiao Yaqing disappeared from public view for nearly a month last year before it was revealed he was being investigated for corruption.

Qin was one of China's youngest foreign ministers, enjoying a meteoric ascent that analysts partly attributed to his closeness to Xi. He was twice foreign ministry spokesman, between 2006-2014, and chief protocol officer

from 2014-2018, overseeing many of Xi's contacts with foreign leaders.

He headed to Washington as ambassador in July 2021, after a period of unusual public vitriol between US and Chinese officials.

Wang was promoted to the politburo of the Chinese Communist Party, one of China's top leadership bodies.

Heretakes the foreign ministry post as China seeks to re-engage with the world after years of Covid-induced isolation, as a mooted economic recovery fails to gain hold and the country spars with the United States over issues from Ukraine, Russia and Taiwan to trade and technology disputes.

SUDAN WAR 16 killed in Khartoum air, artillery strikes

AFP, Wad Madani

Air strikes and artillery barrages from Sudan's warring generals killed at least 16 people in a Khartoum neighbourhood yesterday.

After more than 100 days of war, the latest bombardments added to a toll of at least 3,900 killed nationwide.

"Sixteen citizens died today in this senseless war" when shells hit civilian homes in the Ombada area of Khartoum's northwest, a neighbourhood group said.

It is one of many pro-democracy "resistance committees" that have cobbled together supplies over the patchy internet, land lines, or by risking their own lives to venture out since the war began.

The total number of casualties from the latest strikes was still unclear, the committee added.



This handout satellite image taken and released by Maxar Technologies yesterday, shows smoke from a wildfire and burnt areas on the Greek Ionian island of Corfu.

PHOTO: AFP

SUPER TYPHOON The Philippines, China, Taiwan gear up for Doksuri

DEUTSCHE WELLE

Super Typhoon Doksuri rolled toward the northern Philippines yesterday with maximum sustained winds of 185 kilometers per hour (115 miles per hour), prompting evacuation orders for coastal areas.

Forecasters predict Doksuri will move on to hit Taiwan before plowing into densely populated parts of China with torrential rain and strong winds.

Doksuri, which is called "Egay" in the Philippines, is headed toward the northern tip of the main island of Luzon and pass the Cagayan and Batanes provinces.

While it was expected to remain offshore, the typhoon was likely to pass closely by outlying islands.

The country's weather bureau hiked the highest storm signal warning level of 5 over the Babuyan Islands, where as many as 20,000 people could be affected.

Cagayan's Governor Manuel Mamba said work and classes would be suspended to allow people to prepare for the onslaught.

Current heatwave 'impossible' without climate change: study

AFP, Paris

Blistering heat that has baked swathes of North America and Europe this month would have been "virtually impossible" without human-caused climate change, researchers said yesterday, as intense temperatures spark health alerts and stoke ferocious wildfires.

With tens of million people affected in the northern hemisphere and July on track to be the hottest month globally since records began, experts warn that worse is to come unless we reduce planet-heating emissions.

Severe heatwaves have gripped southern Europe, parts of the United States, Mexico and China this month, with temperatures above 45 degrees Celsius.

In the new rapid analysis of the scorching temperatures, scientists from the World Weather Attribution group found that the heatwaves in parts of Europe and North America would have been almost impossible without climate change.

Temperatures in China were made 50 times more likely by global warming, they found.

"The role of climate change is absolutely overwhelming," said climate scientist Friederike Otto, of the Grantham Institute for Climate Change and the Environment, Imperial College London.

Intense temperatures have swept much of the southwest and southern United States - including in Phoenix, Arizona, which suffered a record-breaking three straight weeks of highs above 43C.

Blazes on the Greek mainland and islands have caused tens of thousands to flee, sent tourists scrambling for evacuation flights and prompted the prime minister to say the country is "at war".

In Beijing, the government urged the elderly to stay indoors and children to shorten outdoor playtime to reduce exposure to the heat and ground-level ozone pollution.

Scientists have already established that climate change - with about 1.2C of global warming since the late 1800s - has made heatwaves in general hotter, longer and more frequent.

To trace how far the July heatwaves in the northern hemisphere had departed from what would have been expected without that warming, Otto and her WWA colleagues used weather data and computer model simulations to compare the climate as it is today with that of the past.

Researchers said they focused on periods when "the heat was most dangerous in each region".

Otto said in the past it would have been "basically impossible" that such severe heat waves would happen at the same time and that people should no longer be surprised to see temperature records tumbling. The future could be even worse.

"As long as we keep burning fossil fuels we will see more and more of these extremes."

The researchers found that these severe heatwaves can now be expected roughly once every 15 years in North America, every 10 years in southern Europe and every five years in China.

And they will become even more frequent - happening every two to five years - if temperature rise reaches 2C, expected in around 30 years unless countries fulfil their Paris Agreement pledges and rapidly cut emissions.

The study also found that these heatwaves were hotter than they would have been without climate change.



The Maldives CEC sacked before polls

AFP, Male

The Maldives Election Commission has sacked its chief ahead of presidential polls in September, an official said Monday, triggering opposition fears it would be able to hold a free and fair vote.

Fuwad Thowfeek, the president of the five-member Elections Commission, was removed following a majority no-trust resolution, the official told AFP.

"He was voted out, but remains in office until the decision is ratified by parliament," said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih is seeking re-election in the September 9 polls in the tiny Indian Ocean atoll nation of about 380,000 Sunni Muslims.

Five opposition parties expressed concern over the commission's ability to conduct the polls after Thowfeek's sacking.

A new party, The Democrats, a breakaway faction of Solih's Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP), claimed the commissioners who voted him out are close associates of Solih.

"The party is concerned that such actions will cause instability within the institution this close to the elections."

DIVISIVE JUDICIAL REFORMS

Israel braces for unrest

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel braced for fresh strikes and protests yesterday following a divisive parliamentary vote on a controversial judicial reform which has split the nation and drawn criticism from allies abroad.

The decision by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's hard-right government to push through a key plank of its reforms on Monday has already sparked legal challenges and clashes on the streets.

Opponents were set to keep up months of protests yesterday, with doctors walking out.

"The hand, extended for dialogue, was left hanging in the air, as victory celebrations took place symbolising above all a war that only has losers," the head of the Israel Medical Association, Zion Hagay, said in a statement announcing the walkout.

The move came after the Histadrut trade union confederation threatened a repeat of the general strike it called in March over the reforms.

Amid the instability, the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange (TASE) continued to fall yesterday after slumping 2.21 percent the previous day.

The Israel Bar Association was among numerous groups to file petitions to the Supreme Court aiming to strike down the new legislation.

"A black day for Israeli democracy," read the blackened front pages of three of the country's top newspapers, which carried an advert by opponents of the judicial reforms.

Protesters remained on the streets late into the night following the vote

Chinese man gets life in jail for taking bribes

REUTERS, Beijing

A Chinese court has sentenced a former Communist Party secretary of eastern Hangzhou to life in prison, with state media saying he had been found guilty of taking more than 182 million yuan (\$25.48 million) in bribes.

The sentencing of Zhou Jiangyong, the former party chief of the city southwest of Shanghai which is home to Chinese tech giants such as Alibaba and Ant Group, was made public at a court in Chuzhou, in eastern Anhui province, yesterday, CCTV news said.

Zhou was found to have personally or through his relatives taken bribes in cities and counties in Zhejiang province between 2001 and 2021 in return for aiding deals such as one related to construction and land acquisition. CCTV did not name any other parties involved.

Singapore to execute first woman in nearly 20 years

AFP, Singapore

Singapore is set to hang two drug convicts this week, including the first woman to be sent to the gallows in nearly 20 years, rights groups said yesterday, while urging the executions be halted.

Local rights organisation Transformative Justice Collective (TJC) said a 56-year-old man convicted of trafficking 50 grams (1.76 ounces) of heroin is scheduled to be hanged on Wednesday at the Southeast Asian city-state's Changi Prison.

A 45-year-old woman convict who TJC identified as Saridewi Djamani is also set to be sent to the gallows on Friday. She was sentenced to death in 2018 for trafficking around 30 grams of heroin.

If carried out, she would be the first woman to be executed in Singapore since 2004 when 36-year-old hairdresser Yen May Woen was hanged for drug trafficking.

Heads of 13 foreign missions

FROM PAGE 1

In the joint statement published by the US embassy in Dhaka on July 19, the missions called upon the government to conduct a full investigation and take legal steps against the perpetrators of the attack on Alom.

"Violence has no place in the democratic process. We call for a full investigation and accountability for the perpetrators. Everyone involved in the upcoming elections should ensure that they are free, fair, and peaceful," the statement read.

Alom, who ran as an independent in the Dhaka-17 by-polls, was physically assaulted outside a polling centre in the capital's Banani on July 17.

On July 20, the government summoned acting UN resident coordinator Sheldon Yett to discuss a Twitter post expressing concern over the attack on Alom.

The tweet was posted by Gwyn Lewis, UN resident coordinator in Bangladesh, on July 19. Unicef representative Sheldon is serving as the acting UN resident coordinator as Lewis is away from Bangladesh.

Lewis in the tweet said, "The UN in Bangladesh is concerned over the attack on independent MP candidate Ashraf Alom during the Dhaka-17 by-polls. The fundamental human right of everyone to participate in elections without violence should be guaranteed and protected."

Thai PM vote postponed, prolonging post- election deadlock

BANGKOK, Thailand

Thailand's parliament yesterday postponed a vote to choose a new prime minister, prolonging the kingdom's political deadlock more than two months after an election won by opposition parties.

Reformist candidate Pita Limjaroenrat, whose party won the election, failed to get enough votes in a first parliamentary sitting to select a prime minister on July 13 - blocked by military and pro-royalist senators.

general of the health directorate, said, "Everyone [healthcare providers] has to be aware about not revealing the sex of fetuses or making the mothers aware about the social repercussions."

The guideline has three purposes. The first is to create awareness for preventing the misuse of pre-natal diagnosis procedures and tests for determining the sex of the foetus at any time of pregnancy and the abuse of infertility treatment for selecting the sex of the foetus.

Secondly, sensitising key stakeholders on the "Code of Professional Conduct, Etiquette and

Ethics", provided by Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council pertaining to the non-performance of pre-natal sex determination and its social and demographic implications.

And lastly, facilitating awareness and enhancing knowledge on gender equality and valuing girl children.

Speaking as the chief guest, Md Anwar Hossain Hawlader, secretary of the health services division, said, "The government has ensured many facilities for girl children. Girls are blessings for a family but people have a lack of proper understanding in this regard."

Don't disclose sex of foetuses

FROM PAGE 12

female foetuses may be victims of gender discrimination, resulting in increased violence against women after the birth of those, experts said at the event yesterday.

Dr Mohammad Mainul Islam, of Dhaka University's population sciences department, gave the keynote speech.

"Son preference' has dire demographic, social and economic consequences," he said, adding that the disclosure of the foetus's sex is quite common in Bangladesh.

About the guideline, Prof Ahmedul Kabir, additional director

ESSENTIAL DRUGS COMPANY LIMITED
395-397, Tejgaon Industrial Area
Dhaka-1208

Local Press Tender Notice

Sealed tenders are hereby invited from Genuine Manufacturers/Importers/Authorised dealers (engaged in related Business) for supply & Installation of following item to Khulna Essential Latex Plant (KELP) on urgent basis:

S.L No.	Tender No. Date	Name of the Item	Cost of Tender Schedule	Last date of Closing & Opening
01.	EDCL(KELP)/PUR/LT /2023/293 Dt. 25/07/2023 Work site: Khulna Essential Latex Plant, Mattomdanga, Gilatola Khulna.	Supply & Installation of 1. Fixed type Air Circuit Breaker (ACB) (Details as per Tender Schedule)	Tk. 750.00/set Non-refundable	Closing: 09/08/2023 at 12.00 PM Opening: 09/08/2023 at 12.30 PM

Tender schedule will be sold from the Accounts Department of Essential Drugs Company Limited, Dhaka on payment as stated above during office hours on all working days (except Friday, Saturday and Govt. Holidays). No tender schedule will be sold on the opening date of the tender.

The tender will be accompanied by a amount of Earnest Money @ 2.5% quoted value in the form of Bank Draft/Pay order from any Schedule Bank of Bangladesh in favour of "Essential Drugs Company Ltd." without which the Tender will be considered as non-responsive.

EDCL authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.

General Manager
Procurement Deptt.
For: Managing Director.

(Size: 6 Inch. x 4 Colum)

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

Rising AL-BNP confrontation is most disturbing

This cannot bode well for our democracy

The signals coming from the streets are very concerning. Our two biggest political parties might be heading towards greater violence with the focus firmly on tomorrow's events at the moment. While both sides express their determination to not trigger any violence themselves, they seem more than willing to jump into the fray if the "other side" provokes it. And, as we have seen in the past, there will always be an "other side" to blame if it happens.

The tragedy of the situation is that regardless of endless talks about avoiding violence, neither side will make any concession that can ensure it. Leaders of both parties know in their hearts that, without compromise, there is no way to stop violence, and yet no leader will publicly even hint at such a possibility without any clearance from the top. And so far, there has been no hint of that.

We have criticised the ruling party for always trying to hold rallies on the same day as the opposition does, but to no avail. In tomorrow's case, it is going to be the same as Jubo League, Swachh League, and Chhatra League have all shifted their programmes to coincide with that of the BNP. The aim of the ruling party appears to not let BNP be physically present on the streets of the capital without ensuring its own simultaneous presence – the logic being that if BNP is allowed any open play, it will get some advantage from which it cannot be dislodged later. So, prevent it before it happens! It is quite uncertain how far this goal of the ruling party can be implemented with any serious occurrence of violence as BNP will have to be contested every time it plans an event. The ruling party's suspicion has been further fed by BNP's calling for two major demonstrations in such quick succession.

Whatever may be the goal of the two sides, the general public cannot but be worried about how the rising tensions between the two will affect their lives. It can almost be assumed that shopkeepers, rickshaw pullers, daily workers, etc may have to forego at least a day's earnings for tomorrow's events, assuming that there is no violence, police assault, arrest or death.

We express our serious concern about the way political events are unfolding in the country. The constant exchange of invectives, the growing violent tendencies on both sides, and the diminishing chance of a peaceful settlement have created uncertainty about the prospect of a peaceful transition towards the coming polls. More and more, our passage towards the polls appears to be strewn with violence which is turning people away from the most crucial of democratic exercises – casting their vote. This cannot bode well for our democracy.

Let no child die from drowning

Death by drowning continues to be a major headache for rural communities

Drowning is perhaps one of the most common but overlooked causes of death in the country. What's bleaker still is the fact that it is mostly children who die from drowning, even though it is preventable. As reported by this daily, an average of 50 people die from drowning every day, 40 of whom are children. Altogether, the number comes up to a staggering total of 19,000 annually. Unfortunately, efforts from the authorities to prevent this menace have been quite disappointing so far.

Take, for example, a project undertaken in May last year by the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs which aims to establish coordinated child care centres in 16 districts countrywide. Given that many rural children are left unsupervised while their parents or caregivers go to work, such community-based initiatives can help keep them away from potential drownings. However, the project has seen very little progress so far, with care centres set up only in six districts, each catering to a maximum of 25 children under the age of five.

Another initiative related to this project is the SwimSafe programme. It aims to provide swimming lessons to over 306,000 children aged 6 to 10 across 1,600 venues (100 in each of the 16 districts). However, the Centre for Injury Prevention and Research – which is overseeing the programme – has only been able to run three centres in the Patuakhali and Barguna upazilas, offering their services to around 3,000 children. While this is still a positive development, especially given the alarming child drowning rate in Patuakhali – according to the Patuakhali civil surgeon's office, the death toll is nearly doubling each year – it is far from satisfactory.

In Bangladesh, drowning is the second leading cause of death for children under the age of five, according to Unicef Bangladesh and the World Health Organization. Clearly, existing measures are failing to deliver results. This is quite alarming. We urge the authorities to take a critical look at this state of affairs and ramp up efforts to prevent drownings. Bureaucratic delays, such as late recruitments or plan approvals, as well as other institutional barriers must not hinder the progress of projects that can save children from dying such avoidable deaths. The authorities should also engage community leaders to raise awareness about water safety, especially among low-income families.

New Message

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Unravelling the insecurity in our IT infrastructure



Faiz Ahmad Taiyeb is a Bangladeshi columnist and writer living in the Netherlands. Among other titles, he has authored 'Fourth Industrial Revolution and Bangladesh' and '50 Years of Bangladesh Economy.'

FAIZ AHMAD TAIYEB

Bangladesh's digital infrastructure and cybersecurity are facing significant challenges, leading to concerns about its safety and vulnerability. As the country approaches a crucial parliamentary election, there has been a worrisome increase in data leaks and cyberattacks. A recent incident involved a suspected leak of personal data belonging to 50 million citizens from the Office of the Registrar General, Birth and Death Registration (BDRIS). This breach exposed sensitive information such as National ID numbers, names, addresses, dates of birth and parents' details, making it easy for malicious actors to create counterfeit NIDs. This poses a serious risk of influencing the electoral system, with the potential for misuse of this data by either the ruling party or other local as well as foreign entities. As a result, urgent measures are required to address the prevailing vulnerabilities and safeguard the integrity of Bangladesh's digital arena.

Viktor Markopoulos, a researcher at Bitcrack Cyber Security, an international cybersecurity solution provider based in South Africa, discovered that the BDRIS website was unprotected and had leaked various personal details of numerous citizens. Despite contacting the Bangladesh e-Government Computer Incident Response Team (BGD e-GOV CIRT), Markopoulos received no response.

Interestingly, on the official website of BGD e-GOV CIRT, prominent figures such as the prime minister herself, the IT adviser to the prime minister, the state minister of information technology and the BTRC Chairman are all displayed as the team in charge, complete with their pictures. However, attempts by US-based online newspaper TechCrunch to seek information regarding the leak from the government's press office, the Bangladesh embassy in Washington DC, and the Bangladesh consulate in New York City remained unanswered. This incident has exposed significant vulnerabilities in the digital security of Bangladesh government. The lack of effective cybersecurity measures and poor management practices have alarmingly intensified data leaks and cyberattacks on both citizens and government databases in the country.

According to Markopoulos' statement to TechCrunch, the leaked information surfaced automatically during a Google search without any intentional effort to seek it. Specifically, it emerged as the second result when searching for an SQL error, indicating a vulnerability in the website's programming language used for database queries. With this personal data now accessible through web applications, there is a heightened potential for unauthorised access, modifications, or deletions of birth registration records. Consequently, the accuracy and transparency of the data

are in question, amplifying concerns regarding its misuse and potential implications for the individuals affected.

Inadequate IT infrastructure and vulnerable digital security persist as pressing issues in the country. Recently, there have been instances of "Distributed Denial-of-Service" (DDoS) attacks, where poor security measures have allowed servers to be flooded with excessive internet traffic, resulting in the disruption of connected online services and sites. Several prominent institutions have also fallen victim to cyberattacks. The Bangladesh Krishi Bank's servers are currently



ILLUSTRATION: BIPOB CHAKROBORTY

under attack by ransomware, and in March, hackers demanded \$5 million in ransom from Biman Bangladesh Airlines while holding 100GB of data hostage. On March 15, a group called New World Hacktivists leaked 84 police login credentials. Just two days later, another hacking group called the Indian Cyber Force leaked information of about 270,000 Bangladeshi citizens from the Cox's Bazar police's server. A couple of years ago, taxpayers' information was also compromised in a separate incident. Last but not least is the unprecedented Bangladesh Bank reserve theft in 2016, on which a Hollywood documentary titled *Billion Dollar Heist* has been made, due to come out next month.

On July 12, vulnerabilities were identified in the Election Commission's NID webserver, Posts and Telecommunications Division, and the telecommunications regulator BTRC website, as they lacked adequate SSL security. Moreover, many government sites, including the one-stop site for government services, utilise certifications from non-

approved authorities, deviating from root certificate issuing authorities. Entry into these sites from secured computers raises security concerns. These issues underscore the critical need for comprehensive and robust measures to strengthen the country's digital security infrastructure and safeguard against potential threats.

According to Victor Markopoulos and TechCrunch's findings, critical security measures such as the firewall and VPN on the database frontend and backend are not functioning properly, a matter that is deemed completely unacceptable. Although the NID server was claimed to pose no security risk after the incident, numerous other institutions in the country perform e-KYC processes that involve handling personal confidential information. Consequently, sensitive data such as birth registration records, driving licences, passports, land sales, bank account openings, mobile SIM purchases and registrations, etc remains vulnerable.

and weak security measures. The front database and central database are accessed by making "API calls" by exploiting coding leaks in the app server and web server. Such subpar IT management practices within a country are indeed deeply disappointing from a security standpoint.

This vulnerability can be attributed to a lack of awareness and negligence, as well as the absence of regular evaluation of website security systems. The absence of a clear cybersecurity policy and a perception of cybersecurity as an additional cost further contribute to the weak state of affairs. Government websites are often developed inexpensively and haphazardly, with novices handling the site application instead of skilled programmers, resulting in easily exploitable vulnerabilities susceptible to hacking.

Moreover, a recurring pattern of duplicating existing sites to create new ones, often relying on open-source tools like WordPress, leads to

Moreover, the architecture of key components such as the application, front database, back NID database, architecture bus, and API communication flow is exposed in the Bangladesh National Digital Architecture site, which is entirely unacceptable given the sensitive and confidential nature of the information involved.

The author has personally gathered insights from departmental app managers, which reveal that many of the government's departmental apps, such as those for birth registration, the National Board of Revenue (NBR), passport department, as well as "scheme apps" like e-KYC for banking and telecom, are outdated and not regularly updated. Moreover, sufficient funds are not allocated for the necessary upgrades, leading to the usage of outdated software versions plagued with critical security threats. This neglect of firmware updates and software upgrades has resulted in numerous security breaches and leaks. Firewalls between "Local DB" and "Central DB" and VPN connections of applications suffer from outdated

a lack of robust security measures. Regular maintenance and multiple layers of security are not prioritised, and e-audits are rarely conducted. The absence of a comprehensive and universally enforced cybersecurity policy compounds the issue.

This overall lack of cybersecurity awareness among government institutions in Bangladesh makes them susceptible to cyberattacks and technical weaknesses. The repercussions of data breaches can be substantial, resulting in financial and social security losses. When data falls into the hands of hackers, it can be exploited for illegal activities, including unauthorised financial transactions, illegal banking, usage on Dark Web, SIM registration fraud, OTP message theft, mobile payment fraud, e-ticket fraud, SMS-based service fraud, virtual electronic identity creation, fake bookings, e-governance and e-nothi fraud, and money laundering, posing significant threats to security and privacy. The inadequate and risky management of the IT sector reflects poorly on a government with a digital reputation.

The endearing simplicity of Bangladeshi brand names



Sheikh Sidratul Muntaha is a student at the English department of the University of Asia Pacific.

SHEIKH SIDRATUL MUNTAHA

As I was scrolling through my Facebook feed recently, one particular post caught my eye. It was about someone's recent visit to Bangladesh. Apparently, what fascinated me the most was the delightful simplicity of brand names in the country, and how these brands embraced their Bangla roots with names that were refreshingly straightforward.

Take Dorjibari as an example. Established in 2003, Dorjibari has become one of the go-to clothing stores

for Bangladeshis, especially among men. I must admit, the simplicity of the name represents the elegance and style that this brand exudes. Then there's Khut, a brand that is all about recycled fashion and turning rejected clothes into art. The owners of Khut were so inspired by the exquisite hand-stitched patterns on discarded garments that they named their brand after this idea. The philosophy behind the name is poetic: acknowledging that perfection is overrated and that beauty can be

found in the flaws. I have to hand it to them; it's a clever play on words and a reminder that imperfection can be pretty cool.

And then we have the mobile financial service brand, Nagad. It offers a secure and dynamic digital service for most of one's money-related needs. The brilliance of the name lies in its simplicity. Nagad means "cash" in Bangla. Again, we see a brand that didn't beat around the bush, but called its service what it is.

When it comes to grocery delivery services, Chaldal is somewhat of a kingpin. They can bring almost every household item you could need right to your doorstep. And the service is named after *chal* (rice) and *dal* (lentils), which are staples of the Bangladeshi diet. They certainly knew the way to the hearts and stomachs of their customer base.

Online marketplaces such as Bikroy.com also follow this trend of simplistic branding. Bikroy literally means "sell"

in Bangla. The way they did not resort to any jargon or make it complicated is certainly admirable. And how can we forget our national flag carrier, Biman? Biman, of course, means "aircraft" in Bangla. Again, talk about keeping it straightforward!

Last but not least is OBHAI, a ride-sharing app that links cabs, bikes, and auto-rickshaws to commuters. The name itself is endearing, as the latter part of it means "brother" in Bangla. It's like having a trusted sibling by your side, ready to be whisked away to your destination. "Pouchhe debo," their tagline says, which translates to "Will get you there."

These brand names not only show respect for Bangla, a language for which Bangalees fought hard, but they also demonstrate the country's rich cultural heritage and the importance of embracing simplicity. Sometimes, keeping it simple and relatable is the way to go.

The attack on Hero Alom and a lost opportunity



Tanim Ahmed is a dropout journalist who thinks freely, comments a lot, and writes a little.

TANIM AHMED

Popularly known as Hero Alom, Ashraf Hossain Alom made his name as a YouTuber with chronically viral but unashamedly vulgar content. It is not just that his videos are repulsive and distasteful, but they are also blatantly sexist and chauvinistic. What is perhaps most revolting about this viral content creator is his conscious and deliberate attempt to embrace vulgarity to become popular. He tickles the basest desires of an unsophisticated demographic with his titillating videos and secures hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of views. But Hero Alom is fully within his rights to do so, just as this writer is in calling him vulgar. Freedom of speech, thoughts, and expression is a fundamental inalienable right. And, fortunately, one's right to free speech is not subject to the approval of any individual or group. It is guaranteed by law.

This same Hero Alom was running as an MP candidate in last week's by-election to Dhaka-17 constituency. He had gone to a number of polling centres and complained that his polling agents had not been allowed in. This article will continue to refer to him as Hero Alom, for it was not the candidate Ashraf Hossain who was hounded down the streets of Banani like a common criminal when he had been to inspect a polling centre. The

YouTube has been trying to make his mark in politics since 2018 and came quite close to winning a by-election in Bogura in February of this year.

On July 17, Alom had himself gone to inspect one polling centre, at Banani Bidyaniketan, where he was assaulted and made to leave quickly before the situation got out of hand. Then, outside on the streets, a crazed mob of ruling party activists chased him down, sometimes landing flying kicks on his back, sometimes hitting him with sticks, and sometimes simply felling him on the street and pummelling him.

Not that the ruling party activists would be expected to behave kindly with their opponents. Imbibed in a culture of intolerance for dissent, the ruling party cadres appear to view one's desire to contest elections against Awami League very much as an audacious affront – more so from a subaltern YouTuber, if one might call Hero Alom that. But their behaviour towards Hero Alom, their viciousness towards him suggested there was more to it than merely his role of a political opponent. To them, Hero Alom was trying to sneak into the high table at dinner, whereas they would rather he stand in queue on the pavement for table scraps and leftovers. He was little more than a street urchin who was the main challenger of a constituency that was



FILE PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

previously held by one of the most popular actors in Bangladesh's film industry.

It may very well be that Hero Alom is among the cringiest manifestations of free speech, but he still deserves it as much as the finest artists and writers in Bangladesh. It may very well be that Hero Alom provides the best excuse to impose some form of moderation, which will invariably lead to regulation and then to censorship, which is why his right is as sacred as anyone else's. Hero Alom is also a test for the intellectual elite. Their dedication towards and belief in the sanctity of individual

freedoms are best tested when the worst practitioners are censured. A test that we roundly failed when he was picked up for allegedly distorting Rabintra Sangeet. And when he was set upon by a mob last week, we failed to rally around him. Hero Alom may well present a case where one must defend distasteful content for the sake of defending free speech. But our failure to do so points only to our intellectual bankruptcy.

Had it been any other artiste, actor, director, writer, or playwright rooted within Dhaka's urban community, there would be droves of people protesting against this

behaviour of the ruling party cadres. Associations and unions would be foaming at the mouth in protest. Civil society platforms would be up in arms in furious uproar. But Hero Alom rubs them the wrong way. He scoffs at sophistication and shuns artistry, and thus does not meet the approval of the intellectual elite. But that is exactly why his rights deserve to be championed more than others'. Otherwise, it will make for that one instance that is needed as precedence, after which detractors will continue making excuses against free speech, which is already in peril.

Hero Alom's case provides for

another interesting test that surely many will be looking at keenly. There were scores of cameras following him that day, and there must be thousands of photographs from different angles every time he was struck. His assailants did not make any attempt to hide their faces either. So, each one should be easily identifiable. This is probably one case that leaves no doubt about at least half a dozen individuals who, by dint of their actions, make for excellent candidates for the recently declared US visa restrictions. The ruling party as well as the opposition camp will be quite keen to find out whether the US actually follows through with what it has threatened to do. For now, there has not been much noise beyond a joint statement.

As for the Awami League's last chance to demonstrate that they could oversee and the Election Commission's chance to show that it could execute free, fair and inclusive elections and act when necessary, this by-election leaves little doubt that they can't. For argument's sake, if Hero Alom had indeed ended up winning the seat, he would have been an MP for no more than five months anyway, but the ruling party would have come away with a political victory evincing what it has been claiming for long – that it can hold free, fair, and inclusive elections. This needless violence smacks of political short-sightedness that is atypical of the ruling party. Instead, Dhaka-17 will have an MP with just nine percent of votes of the electorate. While it may be sufficient to win a seat, it is certainly not enough to earn the moral right to govern. A right that the ruling regime appears to be clinging on to, rather like clutching at straws.

A pursuer of change

Shuvo Kibria is a senior journalist and former coordinator of Bishwo Shahitto Kendro.

SHUVO KIBRIA

I knew that Abdullah Abu Sayeed was the founder of Bishwo Shahitto Kendro (BSK). But I didn't get the opportunity to know him personally as he taught at Dhaka College and I studied in a remote, suburban institute. Still, whenever I watched him speak on television, I was mesmerised. He is among a few select individuals in the country who have spoken about eternal values and standards.

After graduating with an engineering degree during the 90s, I started working at the Power Division. Soon afterwards, I realised that I was not ready for a nine-to-five job. I had a single-track mindset; and I always believed my work should mean something. Motivated by that drive, I wrote to three renowned, visionary individuals – Dr Muhammad Yunus, Professor Dr Muhammad Zafar Iqbal, and Professor Abdullah Abu Sayeed – outlining my dream job in those letters.

Only Sayeed Sir responded. He invited me to meet him at the BSK in Dhaka. From then on, I saw him every evening, for two to three hours, for more than a month. Further motivated by him and his work, I quit my job and joined BSK as his deputy in mid-2000, where I worked till 2006. I must say, those were the best years of my life – as well as a transitional period. I tried to spend as much time as possible with Sayeed Sir at BSK, and discovered him to be a multifaceted personality.

I remember one day in particular. We were waiting for him to sign a letter, to be sent to a ministry. Eventually, he came in and we gave him the letter, which was printed on BSK's letterhead. The letter had to be sent to the ministry the next day, so everyone was in a rush. Sayeed Sir read the letter and made some corrections. We placed the corrections and gave him another printout, but he made some more corrections. He looked at the new draft and asked for it to be sent to his house, where he would take a look at it the next day.

We could not send the letter to the ministry the next day either. Even after repeated corrections, we could not get the final signature from Sayeed Sir. At one point, I got a bit annoyed and said, "Sir, if we take so much time to send one letter, we have to stop all other work." In reply, Sir raised his voice a bit and asked, "Whose signature will be on the letter, yours or mine?" I answered, "Yours." Sir replied, "Then it is necessary to be cautious. My image is at stake here. If a single word is wrong in this letter, everyone will laugh and say, 'This is the maker of enlightened individuals (alokito manusher karigor)! My whole life's efforts will be tarnished within a moment!'"

I became dumbfounded. Sir noticed my reaction and signed the letter. Lowering his

voice, he said, "Look, it's about perfection. I know I am nobody. But look at Rabindranath's manuscripts, and you will know what perfection is. He used to make so many corrections in a single write-up!"

This is how concerned Sayeed Sir is about his and BSK's reputation, which is why he has always been cautious about his work, especially

that such committees would eventually not be fruitful. Professor Serajul Islam Chowdhury would sometimes attend the meetings. The only exception was Sayeed Sir. He had a lot of enthusiasm and he really hoped for a positive change. Sir used to tell us, "A state is a behemoth. You have to continuously push it for the sake of the people. It is the civil

reading books, and keeping that initiative alive and running year after year through new ideas, with an almost meditative attention, for which we should praise him. I believe there are very few individuals in our country who can match Sayeed Sir's tolerance level and his ability to accept criticism with a smiling face. He is an exceptional human being with a childlike simplicity, and a great love for mankind in his heart.

On July 25, Sayeed Sir's birthday, I bestow my humble respect and love towards him. His work, words, writings, resilience, colourful efforts – all these will continue to inspire Bangladesh's youth through different ways and means, for generations to come. Happy birthday, sir! Congratulations, and best wishes to you.

Translated from Bangla by Mohammed Ishiaque Khan.



Professor Abdullah Abu Sayeed

SOURCE: FACEBOOK

that which is linked with the BSK.

Sayed Sir has been deeply interested in the environmental movement. New initiatives and innovations make him more active. In the past, when he got involved with the environmental movement, it caught the government's attention, especially due to the media coverage of his involvement. He was outspoken against river-grabbing and river pollution. He started speaking about these issues on TV regularly and wrote articles for newspapers and journals. For the first time, it seemed that a civil society movement was being formed, and it also garnered respect from the media. At that time, the government established a high-powered committee to eliminate river-grabbing around Dhaka, and to create a circular riverine way.

As civil society representatives, Professor Sayeed was included in the committee, along with Professor Muzaffar Ahmed and Professor Serajul Islam Chowdhury. The BNP was in power then. The committee members included powerful ministers such as Mirza Abbas, Sadeque Hossain Khoka, Lt Col (ret'd) Akbar Hossain, etc. The committee met occasionally, but Professor Muzaffar Ahmed would never join them, because he thought

society's duty to do so."

Once, he entered the meeting a bit later than the stipulated time. Mirza Abbas remarked, "The civil society makes such noise, but no one other than Sayeed Shaheb attends the meetings." Sir replied with a smile, "Civil society is like a Royal Bengal Tiger. One member is good enough." His witty comment led to roars of laughter.

On another occasion, during an important government meeting, someone commented that Sayeed Shaheb had worked with the previous regime, too. Sir paused for a while, then replied with a smile, "See, BSK gets nominal help from the government. Thus, I have to participate in meetings and work with whoever forms the government. Can I be blamed for your inability to come to power? Previously, you failed to form the government, and now why are you shifting the blame on me?" As usual, the meeting ended with a lot of laughter.

I have many such experiences and anecdotes regarding Sayeed Sir. Before knowing him, I did not know that one could work with so much love for life, with the dream of awakening the hearts of people. Sayeed Sir continues a most difficult act of making people habituated with

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh		
Directorate General of Food Construction & Maintenance Unit 16, Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka-1000 www.dgfood.gov.bd		
Invitation for Enlistment (Works) Part A, of Schedule X of the PPR 2008)		
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh		
1.	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Food
2.	Agency	Directorate General of Food
3.	Procuring entity	Director General of Food
4.	Procuring entity district	Dhaka
5.	Invitation for	Enlistment of Contractor
6.	Invitation Ref No.	13.01.0000.140.48.218.23 (Port-1)-314
7.	Date	25/07/2023
KEY INFORMATION		
8.	Procurement method	Limited Tendering Method
PARTICULAR INFORMATION		
	Date	Time
9.	Application closing date and time	16/08/2023 4:00pm
10.	Name & address of the office(s)	Address
	- Application form availability	Cashier, Accounts & Finance Division of Directorate General of Food (Room No. 419, 4th Floor), 16, Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka-1000.
	-Receiving application form	Application will be received in the box kept in the Room No. 511, Construction & Maintenance Unit, Directorate General of Food, 16, Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka from publication date to time and date mentioned in Sl. No. 9.
INFORMATION FOR APPLICANT		
11.	Eligibility of applicant	a. Must have valid trade license. b. Must have TIN and Vat registration certificate c. Must have up-to date bank solvency certificate d. Submission of number of employees & list of equipment as specified in the application form.
12.	Price of application form (Tk)	1,000.00 (One thousand) only (non-refundable)
13.	Enlistment fee (Tk)	5,000.00 (Five thousand) only (Vat applicable).
14.	Enlistment/license book (Tk)	500.00 (Five hundred) only.
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS		
15.	Name of official inviting application	Abu Bakar Siddique
16.	Designation of official inviting application	Executive Engineer
17.	Address of official inviting application	Directorate General of Food, Construction & Maintenance Unit, 16, Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka-1000.
18.	Contact details of official inviting application	Tel: 02-41050726 E-mail: ee.mu@dgfood.gov.bd
19.	The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all Applications	
20.	Note: In the financial year 2022-23, all the institutions which have submitted their application in view of the enrollment circular called 13.01.0000.140.48.137.22.1000 dated 04/08/2023 may be mentioned in the enrollment circular that they do not need to re-apply.	
GD-1154	Abu Bakar Siddique Executive Engineer Directorate General of Food, Construction & Maintenance Unit	

SOUTH PAHARTALI

Denied of civic amenities despite paying taxes

“The streetlights on our area road are currently dysfunctional. After repeated requests to the ward councillor, the authorities fixed some of the lights, but they became dysfunctional again within a short time.”

SIFAYET ULLAH

A home to around two lakh people, South Pahartali area under ward-1 within Chattogram City Corporation is grappling with a severe lack of civic amenities.

Modern drainage and proper waste management systems, wider roads, and functioning streetlights remain elusive for its residents, despite decades of appeals to the authorities.

The persistent neglect by officials concerned has left the inhabitants with no choice but to resort to throwing waste in open spaces and water bodies, as there are no designated spots for disposal.

Adding to their frustration, residents are compelled to pay city taxes without getting any benefits in return, said Mohammed Harun, a resident of the ward's North Fatehabad area.

Other residents this correspondent talked to echoed the same.

Covering approximately 24 square kilometres, the dire situation continues to paint a grim picture for the ward's inhabitants, who yearn for a better quality of life.

While visiting the ward, this correspondent saw a canal near the councillor office filled with household waste.

Many residents had resorted to connecting their sewage lines directly to the canal due to the absence of a proper waste dumping zone and sanitation system.

Mahbubul Alam, a resident of Chowdhuryhat area, said, “We are forced to throw garbage and sewage into canals as there is no dumping zone.”

Moreover, the lack of a modern drainage system leads to waterlogging in various parts of the ward, even after a drizzle.



Kamruzzam, a resident of Sandwip Colony area, said, “We have to depend on tube wells for drinking water as there is no water supply system.”

During a visit to Fatehabad City Corporation College Road within the ward, this correspondent observed that the road's narrowness allowed only one truck to pass through at a time, leading to frequent traffic congestion.

Anik Acharjee from Acharjee Para said, “This narrow road is regularly used by heavy vehicles, which often block the road.”

Besides, many areas of the ward suffer from inadequate street lighting, forcing residents to rely on outdoor lamps while walking at night.

The dysfunctional streetlights due to a lack of proper maintenance remain a persistent issue.

Mohammed Hossain of Mahmudabad area said, “The streetlights on our area road are currently dysfunctional. After repeated requests to the ward councillor, the authorities fixed some of the lights, but they became dysfunctional again within a short time.”

Contacted, Ward Councillor Gazi Shafiqul Azim, admitted to the claims made by locals.

“We have already selected land for a dumping ground and have also written to the higher authorities to bring the ward under the sewerage system,” he said.

According to CCC, Chittagong Municipality was formed in 1863. In 1977, the government changed the name of Chittagong Municipality to Chittagong Pourashava.

Since then, the South Pahartali ward has been under their jurisdiction.

A new park to be set up on Karnaphuli bank

ARUN BIKASH DEY

To save the Karnaphuli from encroachers, the Chattogram City Corporation and district administration have jointly initiated a project to build a park on the river bank in the port city's Firingi Bazar area.

Termed “Karnaphuli Lookout”, the park will stretch across 12.45 acres of government khas land.

It will have a ferris wheel, kid's zone, boat museum, open stage, walkways, picnic spots and courts for tennis, basketball, and volleyball, said district administration officials.

“I was looking for suitable lands for such parks since I joined officer about seven months ago. I am happy we finally found one and I urge all to look for lands so that we can have such parks in all 191 unions in the district,”

“Building new parks and amusement centres in the city was one my election pledges and I am happy that I have been able to keep my promises,” said CCC Mayor Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, who visited the park spot on July 12 with Deputy Commissioner Abul Bashar Mohammad Fakhruzzaman.

Building parks and playgrounds will not only be beneficial to locals but also help prevent encroachments and pollution, said the deputy commissioner.

“I was looking for suitable lands for such parks since I joined officer about seven months ago. I am happy we finally found one and I urge all to look for lands so that we can have such parks in all 191 unions of the district,” he added.

At present, the work of land development is underway, he said.



Kalurghat Bridge across the Karnaphuli in Chattogram will remain closed for three months from August 1 for repair works as railway finally looks to mend it before they launch rail services from Dohazari to Cox's Bazar. The 700-foot bridge has served as the only roadway to the port city for the residents of Boalkhali upazila, who will now have no land route to travel to the city. The authorities are planning to launch ferry services for commuters during the stipulated period. Established around the 1930s, authorities allowed all kinds of vehicles to ply it in 1958. After serving for decades without any maintenance, the bridge was labelled as dangerous in 2001. Now, vehicles plying the bridge face difficulties as the deck and iron fencing on both sides have become worn out and holes have developed on the surface, creating a risk of accident.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

BAKALIA ACCESS ROAD New road brings relief to commuters

SIFAYET ULLAH

“I don't have to waste hours in traffic anymore thanks to the newly-constructed Bakalia Access Road,” said Sajeda Akter, a school teacher, who used to get late for work regularly due to gridlock at Kotwali intersection while travelling from Chattogram's Karnaphuli upazila to the city's Chawkbazar.

Constructed by Chattogram Development Authority (CDA), this road will ensure easy and safe commute for thousands residing in the eight upazilas located in the southern end of the district.

According to CDA sources, they undertook a project in 2015 to construct a link road from Sirajud-Doula to Shah Amanat Bridge, following the city's master plan formulated in 1995.

The project commenced on September 6, 2016, with a budget of Tk 205 crore and was supposed to be completed by June 2019.

Following delays due to complications in land acquisition

processes, the project was extended till June this year, while its budget got increased by Tk 15 crore, said Kazi Kader Neawz, the project's director.

Visiting the 1.5 kilometre and 60-foot wide road on Tuesday, this correspondent found the physical works completed. The workers were seen carrying out cleaning and beautification work.

“I will soon move to another project within a week as our works here are over,” said Mohammed Joshim, a worker who has been employed in this project for the last two and a half years.

The construction of this road had led to an increase in land prices and local businesses, said Mozammel Hoque, owner of Mahin Sanitary, located near the road.

A letter seeking permission to officially inaugurate the road has already been sent to the ministry, informed the project director.

“We will inaugurate the road as per the higher authorities' instructions. Meanwhile, vehicles will continue to ply it,” he added.



FPWA demands reduction of foreign players

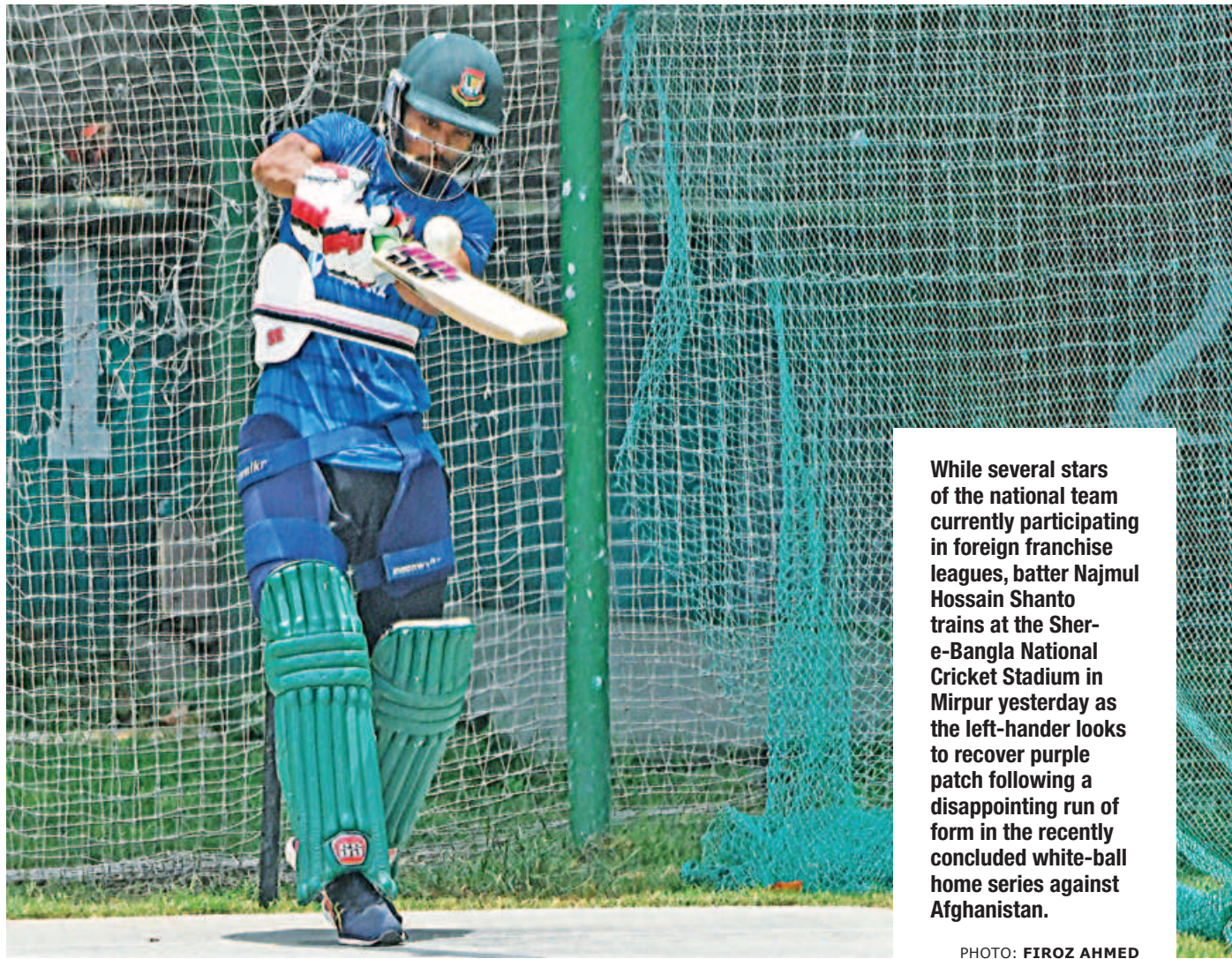
SPORTS REPORTER

The Football Players Welfare Association (FPWA) yesterday placed a memorandum to Bangladesh Football Federation president Kazi Salahuddin, demanding reduction of foreign players' quota from four to three in the Bangladesh Premier League.

The demand came at a time when defending champions Bashundhara Kings demanded increase of foreign players' registration from five to six ahead of their AFC Champions League commitments.

"We have noticed that recently a proposal of increasing the number of the foreign players in Bangladesh Premier League has been proposed and we are scared about players at the grassroots level," read the memorandum letter as FPWA president Iqbal Hossain, along with some other national players, met with the BFF president yesterday.

Currently a club is allowed to sign five foreign players and play four foreigners including one on Asian quota in a match while the remaining foreign player will be out of the 23-players squad for the match.



While several stars of the national team currently participating in foreign franchise leagues, batter Najmul Hossain Shanto trains at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur yesterday as the left-hander looks to recover purple patch following a disappointing run of form in the recently concluded white-ball home series against Afghanistan.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Kaur suspended for two matches

ICC

India captain Harmanpreet Kaur has been suspended for her team's next two international matches following two separate breaches of the ICC Code of Conduct during the third match of their ICC Women's Championship series against Bangladesh in Dhaka on Saturday.

Kaur was fined 50 per cent of her match fee and three demerit points were added to her disciplinary record for a Level 2 offence after she was found guilty of breaching article 2.8 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel, which relates to "showing dissent at an umpire's decision".

Kaur was also fined 25 per cent of her match fee for a Level 1 offence after she was found guilty of breaching article 2.7, which relates to "public criticism in relation to an incident occurring in an international match." This is the highest penalty imposed in women's international cricket.

The first incident occurred in the 34th over of India's innings when Kaur hit the wickets with her bat in a show of dissent after she was adjudged caught at slip off spinner Nahida Akter. The other incident was during the presentation ceremony when Kaur criticized the umpiring in the match.

Kaur admitted the offences and accepted the sanctions proposed by Akhtar Ahmed of the Emirates ICC International Panel of Match Referees and, as such, there was no need for a formal hearing.

On-field umpires Tanvir Ahmed and Muhammad Kamruzzaman, third umpire Moniruzzaman and fourth umpire Ali Arman levelled the charges.

Sports organiser Tipu no more

STAR SPORT DESK

Rafiqul Islam Tipu, a renowned face in Bangladesh's sports community, passed away yesterday at the Azgar Ali Hospital in Dhaka.

He was 69 years old. He left behind his wife and a daughter and a host of well-wishers.

His namaz-e-janasas were held at the Sheikh Russel Roller Skating Complex in Paltan and in Swamibagh before he was laid to rest at the Azgar Ali Graveyard.

The late Tipu was admitted to the Azgar Ali Hospital after suddenly falling ill on Monday. A CT scan report found blood clots in his brain, and he was under observation at the intensive care unit of the hospital. He was taken to life support later on Monday before being pronounced dead at 3:03pm on Tuesday.

Tipu was a selfless sports organiser, the likes of whom are very rare these days. He had dedicated his life to sports, serving a number of sporting federations in various capacities close to four decades. A former general secretary of Bangladesh Table Tennis Federation, Tipu was an executive member of Bangladesh Archery Federation till his demise.



BCB's tricky challenge over foreign league participation

Taskin denied but Hridoy to be granted NOC

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh players Taskin Ahmed and Tawhid Hridoy had sought No Objection Certificate (NOC) to play the Lankan Premier League (LPL), in line with the recent trend where many of the national team stars are getting opportunities to play in franchise leagues around the world, marking an increasing demand for their services. It allows players to get more confidence in their game while also gaining much-needed exposure to foreign conditions.

Both Taskin and Hridoy applied for NOC on an official basis for the LPL but it was learned that Taskin will not be granted NOC for the tournament, due to workload management issues ahead of the Asia Cup and the World Cup, but Hridoy's NOC will be granted, BCB sources confirmed to The Daily Star yesterday.

Taskin had sought NOC for the full LPL while Hridoy's NOC application sought permission to play the tournament for Jaffna Kings till August 8. Shoriful Islam has also informed the board about an LPL offer but has not asked for NOC officially.

"Towhid Hridoy will be granted NOC. For Taskin, however, the board has decided against it since there is World Cup and Asia Cup coming up and also since he is currently playing in a franchise league (Zim Afro T10 league), he will cross the level of workload he should take on.



With that in mind, the team management and board has decided not to grant him [Taskin] NOC for LPL," a Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) official told The Daily Star on conditions of anonymity.

It will come as a disappointment to Taskin, who so far has not put aside appearances in the IPL, English County cricket with Yorkshire and a stint in the PSL, due to focus on national duty. Since batters go through less stress than fast bowlers, the BCB decided to only grant NOC to Hridoy for now.

"Because Taskin is performing so well, the interest is there to get him signed and it will remain but for this year, the Asia Cup and World Cup is there and BCB wants

him fresh and fit for the tournament," the BCB official added.

Along with Taskin, Mushfiqur Rahim is also playing the ongoing Zim Afro T10 league in Zimbabwe. Meanwhile, star all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan and batter Liton Das are playing the Global T20 Canada tournament while Shakib is also set to feature in the LPL along with compatriot Mohammad Mithun for Galle Gladiators.

For the players, it is renewed inspiration that doing well for the national team grants them opportunities to flourish in other leagues.

"Our players are performing outstandingly and that's why the interest from other franchise leagues is on the rise. Previously when there was a limit set for NOC in two tournaments only, the interest from other franchise leagues was only on Shakib. Now our players are doing well and interest has increased and the board will be taking things into account before making decisions on these," cricket operations manager, Shahriar Nafees, told The Daily Star yesterday.

While Taskin's case may be an exception given the all-important ODI World Cup ahead of the T10s, the BCB would have to rethink their workload scheme after the showpiece event in India. More players being sought out for foreign leagues mean that the player pool will have to be adequate enough to allow stars to feature in other leagues when schedule allows.



Fargana, Nahida scale new height

STAR SPORT DESK

Bangladesh women's cricket team's commendable performance in the recent ODI series against India was reflected in the latest ICC rankings.

Bangladesh drew the three-match ODI series with India 1-1 as the third and deciding match ended in a tie. Fargana Hoque became the first Bangladeshi woman to score a century in the format during the third match. Earlier, the Tigresses lost the T20I series against the same opposition 2-1.

The latest weekly update released by ICC on Tuesday considered performances in the last two matches of the series, which was part of ICC Women's Championship, with Fargana and Nahida Akter attaining new highs.

Fargana's 565 rating points are the highest by a Bangladeshi woman batter, and she is the first from her country to break into the top 20 (19th position) after scoring 107 in the tied final ODI in Mirpur. The previous best was Rumana Ahmed's 25th position in February 2017.

Left-arm spinner Nahida's figures of three for 37 in the final ODI have helped her move up to 19th position in the bowling rankings. The previous best by a Bangladeshi bowler was 20th position reached by Salma Khatun in December 2022.



Sarina Bolden is ecstatic after scoring her side's all-important goal as the Philippines stunned co-hosts New Zealand to win their maiden World Cup match in Wellington yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

India's Test transition begins smoothly

REUTERS

India would be reasonably pleased with the smooth start to the transition of their Test team against the West Indies, even if a 1-0 series victory against a side seven rungs below them in the official rankings may not sound impressive.

Persistent rain in Port of Spain did not allow any play on Monday, resulting in a stalemate between the sides and depriving India of a 2-0 series sweep when they needed eight wickets to win.

Smarting from their defeat, second in a row, in the World Test Championship final against Australia last month, India went to the Caribbean with a new top order, an uncapped stumper, and a rookie pace attack for the two-test series.

With Shubman Gill moving down to number three after veteran Cheteshwar Pujara was dropped, India harnessed an uncapped Yashasvi Jaiswal with skipper Rohit Sharma in a left-right opening combination.

Jaiswal smashed a match-winning 171 in his debut in Roseau and scored 57 and 38 in the drawn Test in Port of Spain making immediate impact.

Gill is yet to settle in his new position, but the team management is more than willing to be patient with a player hailed as the future of Indian cricket.

India have badly missed wicketkeeper Rishabh Pant since his horrific car crash in December but have unearthed a



replica in stumper Ishan Kishan, an identical left-handed batter known for his six-hitting prowess.

While his glove work drew praise from his captain, Kishan smashed an unbeaten 52 off 34 balls in India's second innings at Port of Spain after being promoted to number four.

"You need guys like Ishan. We wanted quick runs, we promoted him," Rohit said.

"He wasn't afraid, he was the first one to put his hand up."

"You need the mixture of everything. We have depth, we have got variety."

While Jaiswal finished the series as its leading scorer, Rohit and Virat Kohli

completed the top three.

Of India's old guard, only Ajinkya Rahane should worry about his Test future having managed just three and eight in his two outings in West Indies.

Rohit was particularly pleased how Mohammed Siraj led an inexperienced pace attack in the absence of a recovering Jasprit Bumrah and a rested Mohammed Shami.

"I have been watching him closely," Rohit said of the right-arm seamer who breathed fire on a docile track to claim 5-60 in West Indies' first innings at Port of Spain.

"He's taken such a giant step. He has led this attack (superbly)."



Stop anti-state propaganda

Hasina asks Bangladeshi diplomats, offers Nepal to use Payra Port

UNB, Rome

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked Bangladeshi diplomats abroad to work to stop anti-Bangladesh propaganda so that the international community is not misled.

"I would like to tell the foreign ministry that you should inform our envoys about propaganda. So that confusion can't be created. We should be more active, particularly in the places of international organisations," she said.

The PM issued the directive while addressing the Conference of Bangladesh Envoys in Europe held at her place of residence in Rome.

Some 15 Bangladeshi envoys stationed in European countries participated in the event.

She said after committing crimes in Bangladesh and taking shelter in a foreign land, some people are spreading propaganda against the country.

Hasina said there are some people who could never take the country to a dignified position.

She said they are spreading misinformation against the country while staying abroad. "Everyone should be vigilant against them."

Mentioning that the foreigners often get confused by misinformation, the PM said there are one or two countries that are busy with how to remove the Awami League before every election.

"In addition, we have to hear about human rights from those who shelter the murderers as well as the people

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6



Relatives look after dengue patients at the DNCC hospital in the capital's Mohakhali. The health directorate has dedicated this hospital for the treatment of dengue patients due to the soaring caseload. Built as a market, the structure had been converted into a Covid-19 dedicated hospital. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Don't disclose sex of foetuses

Expert urges health care providers at event unveiling guideline

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In efforts to prevent gender-biased sex selection, a national guideline based on a study on gender preference and the risks involved was unveiled yesterday.

Titled "National Guideline for Prevention of Son Preference and the Risk of Gender-Biased Sex Selection 2022", it was introduced at an event jointly organised by the health and family welfare ministry, UNFPA, and the Norwegian Embassy in Dhaka at the BICC.

The guideline was adopted as per a High Court directive to prevent sex determination of the foetus.

Preferring a son as a first child is more common among women than men in Bangladesh, according to a study conducted by Dhaka University in 2019.

In this context, even

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1

Scientists decode a 2,000-year-old curry recipe

CNN ONLINE

Traces of spices detected on a grinding slab and other stone tools unearthed in Vietnam reveal that curry was eaten in the region at least 2,000 years ago — and what was in the dish.



The sandstone slab, buried two metres (6.5 feet) below the surface, was dug up in 2018 at the Oc Eo archaeological complex in southern Vietnam. The site was once an overseas trading hub of an ancient Southeast Asian kingdom known as Funan, according to a new study of the substances found on the slab.

"Preparing curry involves not only a diverse range of spices but also the use of grinding tools, considerable time, and human effort," said study author Dr Hsiao-chun Hung, a senior research fellow in the department of archaeology and natural history at Australian National University in Canberra.

"Remarkably, even individuals residing outside of India nearly 2,000 years ago expressed a strong desire to savor the flavors of curry, as evidenced by their diligent preparations," Hung said.

Hung and a team of researchers analysed microscopic remains. Their analysis revealed several culinary spices that originated in different places around the world: turmeric, ginger, fingerroot, sand ginger, galangal, clove, nutmeg and cinnamon.

Free up more beds for dengue patients

Health minister asks directors of hospitals across country; 16 more die from dengue, 2,418 new cases detected

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Health Minister Zahid Maleque yesterday asked all public hospitals to increase beds for dengue patients.

The instruction came at a time when major public hospitals in Dhaka and other divisional cities are struggling to treat growing number of patients due to shortages of medical staff.

"As the number of patients continue to rise, we have to dedicate more beds for dengue patients at all hospitals proportionately, and everyone [hospital directors] must act accordingly," Zahid said.

The minister was speaking at a virtual meeting with hospital directors, civil surgeons and other health officials.

He talked to the directors of all medical college hospitals in the divisional cities and other major hospitals, particularly in Dhaka city.

Meeting sources said the instruction on raising the number of beds is not the same for all hospitals.

For example, Kurmitola General Hospital in Dhaka has been asked to arrange an additional 200 beds

for dengue patients while Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital, Dhaka Medical College Hospital, and Sheikh Hasina National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery have been instructed to increase 100 beds each.

Besides, Chattogram Medical College Hospital has been told to add 100 beds to the existing 60 and Rajshahi Medical College Hospital 100 beds to the existing 55.

In reply, hospital directors informed the minister about the shortage of doctors, nurses and other supporting staffers.

Col AKM Johirul Hossain Khan, director of the DNCC Hospital in Dhaka's Mohakhali, which was recently announced a dengue-dedicated healthcare facility, told the minister that they could not admit patients to all 500 beds due to a lack of manpower.

Yesterday, the hospital had 290 dengue patients. With the existing manpower, the hospital can provide healthcare service to 330 beds.

To serve the patients, there are 51 doctors, 64 nurses, 157 ward boys and cleaners, he added.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

Prof Yunus pays Tk 12.47cr in tax as per SC verdict

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday paid Tk 12.47 crore tax on the money he donated to his three trusts.



His lawyer Sarder Jinnat Ali told The Daily Star that Prof Yunus paid the money in compliance with the Supreme Court order. "The account officer of Prof Muhammad Yunus has informed me that the money has been paid through South East Bank Ltd to the government exchequer," he said.

Replying to a query, the lawyer said the National Board of Revenue may inform the SC of the matter if it is felt necessary.

On July 23, the Appellate Division of the SC upheld a High Court verdict that justified the tax authorities' decision to impose tax on the money Prof Yunus donated to his

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

Russia rejects UN call to rejoin grain deal

AGENCIES

Russia yesterday said it was impossible for it to return to the Black Sea grain export deal until an agreement related to Russian interests was honoured, rebuffing a call by UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres for Moscow to rejoin.

Guterres on Monday urged Russia to resume allowing Ukraine to export grain safely from its seaports despite what Russia calls its "special military operation", in line with a proposal he had made to President Vladimir Putin.

But the Kremlin suggested Guterres' proposal did not address its main complaint: that there had been no progress on a related agreement that was designed to facilitate Russian food and fertiliser exports amid Western sanctions imposed in response to the war, according to Reuters.

"Indeed, Mr Guterres' letter again set out some kind of action plan and contained promises that at some point it would be possible to implement the Russian part of these arrangements," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

"Unfortunately, at the moment it is impossible to return to the deal because it (the Russia-related agreement) is not being implemented, and de facto it has never been implemented."

Putin will discuss Ukraine with leaders of African countries, who will gather for a Russia-Africa summit hosted in Saint Petersburg later this week, the Kremlin also said.

"On July 28, Vladimir Putin is scheduled to have a working lunch with a group of leaders of African states on Ukraine issues," the Kremlin said in a statement, reports AFP.

Several African leaders including South African President Cyril Ramaphosa are expected at the summit set for Thursday and Friday in Putin's native city.

EC won't hold dialogue with political parties before election

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission is not thinking about dialogues with political parties before the elections.

The EC believes political issues should be resolved politically, Election Commissioner Anisur Rahman told reporters at his office at the Nirbachan Bhaban in Agargaon yesterday.

"We are not thinking about dialogues. I don't think we need any more dialogues. Political issues will be resolved politically. The BNP did not come, did not sit with us, and did not speak [with us]," he said.

In response to a question, Anisur said that there was no scope for going beyond the constitution. Political issues are not our jurisdiction. They will be resolved in the field of politics.

"We will proceed with the election process ... Election schedule will be announced on time. As election time approaches, we will be under pressure, political parties will also be under pressure. Competition [in the election] makes our work easier. We expect all parties to join the polls," said the

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6



An electricity transformer has been installed right next to the Kaptan Bazar Electric Market in Old Dhaka, putting people at risk. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Chinese foreign minister replaced after mysterious absence

REUTERS, Beijing

China named veteran diplomat Wang Yi its new foreign minister yesterday, removing former rising star Qin Gang after a mysterious one-month absence from duties barely half a year into the job.



Qin Gang

Qin, 57, a former aide to President Xi Jinping and envoy to the United States, took over the ministry in December but has not been seen in public since June 25 when he met visiting diplomats in Beijing.

The ministry has said he was off work for health reasons but gave no details, sparking speculation and drawing attention to the secrecy often surrounding China's Communist leadership and decision making.

Qin's successor Wang, 69, was also his predecessor, holding the post from 2013-2022 as ties frayed with rival superpower the United States to a point Beijing described as an all-time low.

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