



B4 Lotkon farmers enjoying fair yields, prices



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BNP moves rally to Friday, so does AL

Daylong drama over police permission, venue

STAR REPORT

After much drama and uncertainty, police yesterday denied the BNP permission for holding a rally today, and the opposition party responded by rescheduling its gathering for tomorrow at Nayapalton or Suhrawardy Udyan.

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police did not give the BNP permission, saying a rally on working day would cause immense sufferings to people.

At a press conference late last night, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said people will see hindrance to any democratic activity as an attempt to obstruct democracy and fair polls.

"We are urging the authorities concerned [to extend support] to make the grand rally a success."

Also last night, the party informed the DMP about the change of date.

Signed by its Senior Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi, the letter to the DMP said the grand rally would be held tomorrow at 2:00pm either at the Suhrawardy Udyan or

at Nayapalton.

Dhaka police also refused the Awami League's associate and front organisations permission for their rally at the south gate of Baitul Mukarram citing the same reasons given to the BNP.

The Dhaka University unit of Chhatra League then sought permission from the university authorities for a rally either at the Gymnasium Ground or in the Central Shaheed Minar area.

Three associate bodies of the AL -- Jubo League, Swechhchasebak League, and Chhatra League -- eventually rescheduled their rally for tomorrow. They will hold the rally at the trade fair ground next to the Bangabandhu International Conference Center in Agargaon around 3:00pm.

Gazi Mejbaul Hossain Sachu, acting president of Swechhchasebak League, told The Daily Star yesterday, "A fair was held on that ground a few days ago and there are many holes there. The rally has to be delayed by a day as the trade fair ground is not ready yet."

All day yesterday, the political arena

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



Two BNP men in handcuffs aboard a police pickup truck on the premises of the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court in Dhaka before being produced in front of a court yesterday. They along with many others came to the capital from Jhenidah to attend the BNP's grand rally. Police picked several of them from a Purana Paltan hotel on Tuesday night.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

PALLABI DRUG TRADE

Allegations of bribery rife against cops

Locals speak up after girl 'took own life' during police raid

SHARIFUL ISLAM and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Around a week ago, Sub-Inspector Anwarul Islam and Assistant Sub-Inspector Haridas Roy of the capital's Pallabi Police Station arrested a man in Adarsha Nagar on charges of selling cannabis.

They then demanded Tk 2 lakh for his release and threatened that if he failed to pay the bribe, a case would be filed against him on charges of heroin possession.

Speaking to The Daily Star, the arrestee's wife, on the condition of anonymity, said, "I immediately took a Tk 50,000 loan from a local lender with high interest, gave it to the police officers and they eventually filed a case against my husband accusing him of possessing 200gm of cannabis."

She said she was forced to pay the bribe as it takes around a year to secure bail in cases filed over heroin possession.

Like her, around half a dozen locals of Adarsha Nagar have brought up such allegations against SIs Anwarul Islam and Zahiruddin, ASIs Haridas Roy, Abul Kalam Azad and Ferdous Rahman of Pallabi police.

Three workers of the nearby Kalshi graveyard claimed there were many families running small drug businesses in Adarsha Nagar.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

BUSINESS

Exports to China fall

Bangladesh's export to China fell to a three-year low of \$677 million in the last fiscal year as entrepreneurs could not take advantage of the duty benefits extended by Beijing.

If the earnings generated in 2019-20, when the Covid-19 pandemic wreaked havoc around the world, are excluded, the receipts in 2022-23 would be the lowest in a decade, data from the Export Promotion Bureau showed.

A limited number of products in the export basket and a lack of intermediate goods and technology products are standing in the way of increasing exports to the world's second-largest economy, which offers duty-free entry to 98 per cent of the items listed in its tariff schedule.

STORY ON BI

JOINT STATEMENT ON HERO ALOM

It's a 'violation' of diplomatic norms

Shahriar tells heads of 13 foreign missions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday said the joint statement by 13 foreign missions condemning the attack on Hero Alom was a "violation" of diplomatic norms, and urged the missions to refrain from "non-diplomatic" behaviour in the future.

After a meeting with the heads of the 13 missions, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam told reporters that he reminded the envoys about the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and that "behaviour ignoring objectivity, impartiality and non-biasness will only create a crisis of mutual trust".

"We called the ambassadors who issued a joint statement to the media in violation of diplomatic norms. We have expressed our displeasure about their behaviour beyond diplomatic etiquette," he told a press briefing at the Foreign Service Academy.

He held the press meet after a briefing with the ambassadors and high commissioners or their representatives of the 13 foreign missions at the State Guest House Padma in Dhaka in the afternoon.



Shahriar said they did not summon the missions; rather, they invited them to discuss the matter.

He, however, said the ministry had indeed summoned UN Resident Coordinator Sheldon Yett in connection with a Twitter post expressing concerns over the attack on Hero Alom, whose original name is Ashraf Alom.

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

In the joint statement on July 19, they 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.

Shahriar termed the attack on Hero Alom, an independent candidate in Dhaka-17 by-polls, an "isolated" incident.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

BNP RALLY VENUE

Intelligence report behind police refusal

It hinted BNP might have been planning a sit-in

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Dhaka Metropolitan Police's decision to deny BNP permission to hold its grand rally at either of its desired venues is grounded on an intelligence report which hints that the BNP has a plan to go for a long sit-in to bring the city to a standstill.

According to the report, messages have been sent to BNP's grassroots leaders, specifically those at the district level, to bring old bedsheets and cloths with them while travelling to the capital.

Highly placed sources confirmed these findings of the intelligence report to The Daily Star yesterday.

The report also mentions that BNP's grassroots activists were asked to remain on the streets irrespective of whatever action law enforcers took.

After consulting the report, the DMP suggested the BNP hold its grand rally at the Golapbagh ground, taking into consideration the location of the ground.

According to police sources, SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

EU special envoy sits with labour unions, rights activists

Minimum wage of Tk 23,000 in RMG sector discussed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Labour unions and rights activists yesterday held a meeting with European Union's Special Representative for Human Rights Eamon Gilmore in the capital and raised their demand for a minimum wage of Tk 23,000 in the ready-made garments sector.

The RMG minimum wage has been Tk 8,000 since 2018.

Currently, negotiations are going on as a board formed by the government is reviewing the current minimum wage.

Meeting sources said the labour representatives told Gilmore to pressure buyers into giving fair prices to factories so that workers are not paid poverty wages.

They also mentioned the murder of Shahidul Islam, a union organiser from the Bangladesh Garment and Industrial Workers Federation in Gazipur.

On June 25, Shahidul was attacked by cadres outside the compound of Prince Jacquard Sweater Limited's owner in Gazipur's Sataish Baganbari area, when he was negotiating the factory workers' demands.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6



BRIDGES OF NO USE Locals use a bamboo-made platform to get onto one of the two bridges over Bairati canal in Lalmonirhat's Kaliganj upazila. Two government organisations built the bridges within yards of each other, but they have no approach roads. The photo was taken recently. Story on page 6.

PHOTO: S DILIP ROY

BANK DIRECTORS FROM SAME FAMILY

BB orders bringing down number to 3

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The central bank yesterday instructed banks to bring down the number of directors from a single family to three in line with the Bank Company (Amendment) Act 2023 within the shortest possible time.

A maximum of four members from a family were allowed to sit on the board of a bank concurrently as per an amendment of the Bank Company Act 1991 that was made in 2018.

But the new act, which was passed in parliament on June 21, specified that the number of directors from a single family cannot be more than three.

The concerned directors should reach a mutual understanding if one of them has to resign from the board to comply with the law, said the central bank in a notice yesterday.

If they fail to reach any consensus, a lottery has to be held at a board meeting to pick the director who would have to step down, it said.

Yesterday's notice came two days after the BB advised banks to place the new law at the next board meeting.

The reduction in the number of SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



BNP wants to destabilise the country PM tells expatriates in Rome

UNB, Rome

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has alleged that the BNP doesn't want election, rather it seeks to create an unstable situation in the country.

"The election will definitely be held as per the constitution. The BNP knows that people will not vote for them. Why would the people vote for those who were driven out [of power] due to vote rigging?" she said.

Hasina was addressing a community event at her place of residence in Rome on Tuesday. She had been in Rome to attend the UN food summit.

The PM questioned how the BNP can seek votes after "killing people through arson".

"They don't want election. They lick the boots of some of their foreign lords and they want to make the people of the country suffer by them [the foreign lords]. They want to hamper the trend of development of the country and its people."

Stressing that the Awami League will have to come to power to build the country as Smart Bangladesh, Hasina sought votes for "boat", the AL's electoral symbol, again in the next general election.

Referring to the US sanctions on Rab officials and its visa policy, the PM said, "Sanction has been imposed on those who have curbed terrorism and militancy. We can't understand its mystery."

"Those who did not support our Liberation War now want to play with our country in different ways. They can't be allowed to play. The people of the country will have to remain united," she added.

Hasina asked the expatriate Bangladeshis to send remittance home through legal channels, and look for foreign partners to invest in Bangladesh.

The PM also urged them to abide by the laws of their host countries. She discouraged the overseas jobseekers from migrating to foreign countries through illegal channels.



Showing brazen disregard for safety, a bus bound for Signboard in Narayanganj drops off passengers in the middle of the Dhaka-Chattogram highway in Kanchpur yesterday. Three-wheelers also ply this part of the highway violating traffic rules. The Kanchpur Highway Police Station is nearby.

PHOTO: SAURAV HOSSAIN SIAM

El Nino weather pattern set to heat up temperatures

Southeast Asia prepares for haze crisis

REUTERS, Kuala Lumpur

Southeast Asian nations are gearing up to tackle the threat of a tougher-than-usual "haze" season together, as the El Nino climate phenomenon raises the risk of soaring temperatures.

Ministers and officials from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) met in Singapore last month, where they vowed to ramp up monitoring of wildfires and efforts to prevent air pollution, and finalise a new plan to boost cooperation.

During the dry season in Indonesia - usually starting in August - slash-and-burn clearance of forest and peatland to expand palm oil, farming and pulp and paper production covers much of Southeast Asia in a choking haze for months most years.

Yet environmentalists are concerned that this haze season could be the worst in years, after the World Meteorological Organization warned that temperatures are expected to surge across large parts of the world following the emergence of El Nino in the tropical Pacific for the first time since 2016.

"The prediction is that we are due for a strong El Nino," said Helena Varkkey, an associate professor of environmental

politics and governance at the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur. "Fires, once they occur, will likely be sustained over long periods and move across national boundaries."

After a few haze-free years - due to the Covid-19 pandemic and wet weather - a new regional roadmap to address the issue will prove vital ahead of the upcoming season, Varkkey said.

"It's important to focus on data standardisation, sharing and use - (of) air quality indexes, hotspot data - to support cross-border coordination," she added.

With the prospect of prolonged hot and dry weather raising the risk of widespread haze and air pollution if the burning of forests and peatland is uncontrolled, ASEAN is seeking to avoid a repeat of recent haze crises like those in 2019 and 2015.

In 2015, between June and October, about 2.6 million hectares (6.4 million acres) of land burned in Indonesia, mainly on Sumatra and Borneo islands, according to a 2016 World Bank report. The fires cost the country about USD16 billion, it found.

A Harvard University study linked the 2015 haze to more than 100,000 premature deaths in Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore.

During previous haze seasons, Southeast Asian nations often failed to work together, experts said, with governments publicly blaming each other and taking little cross-border action, while any ASEAN policies were seen as too weak to make a real impact.

Mushtaq Memon, coordinator of chemicals and pollution action for Asia-Pacific at the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), said the ASEAN haze-free roadmap will likely be adopted in August and set out a strategy for the rest of the decade.

It will improve implementation and science-based targets, beef up local action and empower communities, and include a new sub-regional strategy, he said, without giving further details.

"Strengthening institutions and coordination with ASEAN member states and other institutions is a must," Memon said.

"At the national level, monitoring the onset of forest fires, open burning or peatland fires is critical, as well as ensuring immediate, on-the-ground actions to prevent spreading of these fires," he added.

When Indonesia faced regional pressure during the 2015 haze crisis, its focus changed from containing fires to prevention.

IU students suspended sans due procedure: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday observed that due procedure was not followed in suspending five students from Islamic University for torturing a female student at a dormitory in February.

The vice-chancellor of Islamic University, Kushtia, is supposed to take the decision about punishing its students for any offence under the relevant provision of the Students Code of Conduct, 1987. The discipline committee of the university will examine the VC's decision and if the committee is not satisfied with the VC's decision, then the committee itself will hand out punishment.

But the discipline committee has suspended the five students without the decision of the VC which is violation of the relevant procedure, the HC bench of Justice JBM Hassan and Justice Razik-Al-Jalil said during hearing of a writ petition relating to this issue.

The bench cancelled the suspension order and ordered the university authorities to take action against the five students maintaining due procedures and to submit a report after complying with the order to this court by August 23.

College student found dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Police yesterday recovered the body of a college student near the outer signal area of Bhanugach Road in Sreemangal.

The deceased was identified as Shanta Debnath, an eleventh-grader at Moulvibazar Government College. He is the son of Nikhil Debnath of Rajnagar village.

Police found the body on the rail tracks. Shanta's both hands were found severed, said Rakibul Islam, sub-inspector of Sreemangal Railway Police Station.

He said the cause of death will be determined after an autopsy. The body was sent to Moulvibazar Sadar Hospital morgue for an autopsy.

Two get death penalty for killing a man

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A Joypurhat court yesterday sentenced two men to death for killing a man over previous enmity in 2008.

The two are Kafi Uddin and Sadiqul Islam of Altafnagar village under Dupchanchia upazila of Bogura. The court also fined them Tk 10,000 each.

Abbas Uddin, judge of Additional District and Session Judge's Court 2, delivered the verdict in presence of the accused.

Nripendranath Mondal, public prosecutor of the court, said Kafi and Sadiqul killed Sabuj Ali on August 1, 2008. Later, police recovered his body from Khanjanpur area of Joypurhat municipality area next day.

BB orders bringing down

FROM PAGE 1

directors from a single family has long been a demand from experts and multilateral lenders as it can lead to concentration of power and compromise on corporate governance.

The banking sector's health deteriorated further after the amendment to the Bank Company Act 1991 that allowed four directors from the same family.

At the end of March, the banking sector's defaulted loans stood at Tk 131,621 crore, up 16 percent from a year earlier, according to data from the BB.

This is the second highest volume of defaulted loans in Bangladesh's history. The highest volume of soured loans was registered at the end of September last year: Tk 134,396 crore.

In 2022, Bangladesh had the second-highest defaulted loan ratio in South Asia, just behind Sri Lanka.

The new Act has extended the tenure of directors to 12 years from nine years, a provision that will deal a huge blow to the financial health of banks as they will have more control over management, experts have warned

BNP moves rally to Friday, so does AL

FROM PAGE 1

was tense as several parties had scheduled rallies in the capital for today and they were waiting for police permission.

People began expressing concerns on social media about what would happen today. Many feared violence.

The BNP picked today for its grand rally on July 22 and the same day Jubo League announced that it would hold a rally on July 24 at the south gate of Baitul Mukarram.

But the next day, the youth wing of the AL, in a press release said it would hold the rally today instead.

Aggravating the situation, Islami Andolon Bangladesh on July 25 said it would arrange a rally today at the north gate of Baitul Mukarram.

The two gates are roughly 300 metres apart.

Around noon yesterday, DMP Commissioner Khandker Golam Faruq said, "I will ask all political parties to hold rallies without causing sufferings to the people. Maybe a time will come when people will be fed up and we may be forced to ban these programmes."

A few hours later, the DMP said that the BNP would not be allowed to hold the rally at Nayapaltan or at Suhrawardy Udan on Thursday.

Faruq said that they offered the BNP the Golapbagh ground and would grant permission if the party was interested.

The opposition party held its December-10 rally at Golapbagh. But before that, a BNP activist was killed, around 100 were hurt in clashes, and dozens were arrested, including party stalwarts.

After the DMP's announcement, BNP standing committee members held an emergency meeting where they decided to reschedule the rally for tomorrow.

A large number of law enforcers, with riot trucks and water cannons at their disposal, were deployed in the Nayapaltan area yesterday.

Several hundred BNP leaders and activists had gathered in front of their party office around 5:00pm but they left following the instructions from senior leaders.

ARRESTS
A few hundred BNP leaders and activists were arrested across the country yesterday and on Tuesday.

At least 95 BNP men were arrested from Dhaka and Narayanganj yesterday.

Of them, 86 were detained between Tuesday night and yesterday and have been sent to jail yesterday, said court sources.

At least 21 were shown arrested under Section-54 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, under which cops can arrest anyone without a warrant.

The rest of the detainees were held under various cases filed with police stations in the capital, sources said.

Charges of involvement in vandalism, arson attacks, and obstructing police were brought against 65 arrestees, they said.

The Daily Star learnt some details on the arrests of some BNP men in the capital.

Pallabi police stopped Ariful Islam, youth affair secretary of Bogura's Sherpur upazila unit BNP, and three local Jubo Dal activists as they arrived in Dhaka's Mirpur in a car around 3:30am yesterday.

Police went through their phones and after being sure of their political identity implicated them in a case filed with Pallabi Police Station in Dhaka on September 18 last year.

"Police implicated them in a ghost case to harass them. They were not in Dhaka when the case was filed last year. Their only crime is they are involved in the BNP," said Imtiyaz Parvez Setu, Arif's cousin.

Talking to The Daily Star at a Dhaka court, Moushumi Islam Khan said a team of Kadamtoli police picked up her husband Monirul Islam, joint convener of Cumilla City North Unit Jubo Dal from their Jurain home around 2:00am yesterday.

"My husband, a kidney patient, has been suffering from dengue for the last couple of days. I showed police the medical reports but they told us that they have been ordered to arrest him," she told The Daily Star.

would cause any untoward incidents.

A DMP official confirmed the instructions to The Daily Star.

The crime division under the DMP already held several meetings and they increased their vigilance to trace BNP leaders and activists against whom arrest warrants had been issued, and who might enter Dhaka to join the rally, the official said, requesting anonymity.

Another DMP high official said that they had requested some Thana-level AL leaders to assist them in providing information regarding BNP leaders who were evading arrests, or who might cause trouble at the rallies.

"We have requested for assistance to ensure public safety," said a police official, requesting anonymity.

Allegations of bribery

FROM PAGE 1

Locals across Pallabi claimed the same for their respective areas.

On the pretext of cracking down on the drug trade, the policemen often detain people, sometimes at random; board them in vans and then release them only in exchange for bribes.

Locals further alleged that the drug menace is not leaving Pallabi as the police are gaining from it.

People chose to speak out against the errant cops after a girl died by suicide during a raid where the law enforcers tried to detain her mother from their Pallabi home for allegedly refusing to pay bribe.

On Monday night, Baishakhi Akhter, 16, was found dead 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 take her own life if her mother was detained, alleged her 11-year-old sister.

During a visit to the house yesterday, this correspondent found family members, relatives and neighbours grieving. They expressed anger towards the police for provoking Baishakhi's death by suicide and demanded justice.

Her mother Lovely Begum said that on Friday a police team, led by SI Anwar, went to their home and told them to pay Tk 50,000. They threatened to implicate the family in a case if they failed to do so. The next day, another police team went there and took Tk 10,000 from them.

Contacted, SIs Anwarul, Zahir, ASI Haripada denied the allegations, terming them "baseless".

Anwar claimed he, SI Mahmodul and ASIs Haripada and Abul Kalam went to the house following a tip off regarding narcotics possession but did not find any drugs in the house.

"The allegations [against me] are baseless. As a girl died by suicide, they are bringing allegations against police. They [the locals' claims] have no merit. They never said anything before."

On Monday night, a separate team, led by SI Zahir and ASI Ferdous, raided the house and demanded Tk 5 lakh.

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

However, SI Zahir denied the bribery

allegations and said he recovered some drugs from her room.

He sent a video of the raid to this correspondent. In it, Lovely's daughter Chandni was heard saying that a small amount of drugs were recovered. She was also heard begging for her mother's release.

The Daily Star could not independently verify the contents of the video.

Moyna, a tenant of the second floor of the house, said she was not home during the raid.

"When I returned later, I found the lock of my room broken and Tk 6,500 missing from my wardrobe."

"I am a tenant. Why did the cops break into my home without a warrant or permission?" she questioned.

EU spl envoy

FROM PAGE 1

Furthermore, the rights activists said they do not want any trade-related sanctions or restrictions, adding that when the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) was taken away from Bangladesh, it not only hurt the industry, but also directly affected the workers.

All the union representatives present at the meeting iterated they want the GSP to be brought back.

They also spoke about new laws in formation that would criminalise "illegal" strikes and how those would have negative impacts on labour rights.

They further mentioned how workers are automatically fired, or considered "resigned", if they are absent for over 10 days, as per the law.

The activists told Gilmore how the labour law must be changed to allow trade unions inside special economic processing zones.

They described at length how factory owners infiltrate unions and spoke about the prevalence of such "yellow unions".

Unions and federations represented in the meeting include the National Garments Workers Federation, Bangladesh Garments Industrial Workers Federation, Awaaz Foundation, Solidarity Centre among others.

Representatives of Bangladesh Legal Aid Services Trust were also present.

Intelligence report behind police refusal

FROM PAGE 1

Golapbagh sits on the edge of the city so it would be easier for the law enforcing agencies to disperse the protesters if there was any anarchic situation.

Earlier in December last year, police gave BNP permission to hold its grand rally at the Golapbagh ground although the party had sought permission for its Nayapaltan headquarters. The BNP rally took place at the ground on December 10.

Queried about the possibility of BNP staging a sit-in, Kh Mahid Uddin, additional commissioner (crime) of DMP, told The Daily Star yesterday that the police are ready to face any kind of situation.

"We will take necessary measures

depending on the situation," he added.

Police also requested Islami Andolon Bangladesh (IAB) not to hold its planned rally at the north gate of the Baitul Mukarram national mosque.

IAB presidium member Mosaddek Billah Al Madani told the DMP that it was not possible for them to postpone the rally. Therefore, he said, the party would shift the venue and hold its rally in front of its Purana Paltan headquarters at 3:00pm.

In the last couple of days, the ruling Awami League leaders also talked among themselves about the possibility of BNP's sit-in, said AL sources.

The ruling camp leaders are also fearing the possibility of reoccurrence of a Shapla Chattar-like incident.

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Shantamoni sprinkles water to keep her roses, which she sells for Tk 20-30 each, fresh in the heat. The eight-year-old, along with her mother and brother, sells flowers to visitors at Muktijoddha Park in Barishal Sadar to look after her father who has been ill for the past one year. She said she makes around Tk 300 every day, but also misses going to school. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Unlocking the diaspora potential

Expatriates' welfare ministry, IOM hold validation workshop on national policy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is going to formulate a policy with the broad objective to include Bangladeshi diaspora community in the country's "march towards development" and ensure their wellbeing.

As per the draft "Bangladesh National Diaspora Policy-2023", Bangladeshi diaspora are those "Bangladeshi individuals who obtain citizenship of another country or their citizenship status is under process or are permanently living in another country or were born as Bangladeshi origin or grew up in another country".

The draft policy categorises Bangladeshi diaspora in two groups -- "Non-Resident Bangladeshi" and "people of Bangladeshi origin", representing two generations -- the "first-generation diaspora" and "next-generation diaspora".

The draft policy was discussed yesterday during a validation workshop organised by the expatriates' welfare ministry at a city hotel.

According to a 2021 study of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), there could be an estimated 2.4

million Bangladeshi diaspora with the United Kingdom and the United States of America -- two key host countries.

Expatriates' Welfare Minister Imran Ahmad said the aim behind the policy is "very high" and that is to get the Bangladeshis living abroad involved in the country's development.

To attract the diaspora community for investing in Bangladesh, strategic partnership will be developed through establishing a tripartite network among relevant government bodies, private sector and diaspora trade organisations.

"This is the big scene," he said, addressing the workshop as chief guest.

He said the draft policy will go through changes and it will be discussed with the relevant ministries, NRBs, NGOs, media and other stakeholders.

As per the draft policy, a diaspora

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Protect farmers to ensure food security

Speakers tell conference

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eco-friendly agricultural practices and safeguarding the rights of marginalised farmers are essential to ensure secure and sufficient food supply, stressed speakers at a conference yesterday.

They made the remarks at "Asia-Pacific Conference on the Right to Food and Agri-Food System Conference 2023", a two-day event organised by Right to Food Bangladesh in collaboration with their national and international networks at Dhaka University's Senate Bhaban.

Present as chief guest, Speaker Dr Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury said population growth, urbanisation and food scarcity are major challenges in ensuring food for all. Along with increased food production, assuring nutritious food is one of the most important issues for Asian nations.

"Bangladesh is advancing with the goal of becoming a country with excess food production compared to demand by 2030," she added.

The government is working to assure that farmers are paid the right price for their produce. However, a collaborative effort is needed to safeguard their rights, asserted Planning Minister MA Mannan.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Almost all the coastal countries of the region, including Bangladesh, are victims of climate change, which has created challenges in securing food rights.

DR KAZI KHALIQUZZAMAN AHMED
Chairman of Right to Food Bangladesh

DENGUE OUTBREAK

Efforts to tackle the crisis

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As the death toll and hospitalisations due to dengue continue to surge, Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) is active across the country to address the escalating outbreak.

Meanwhile, the two Dhaka city corporations are also implementing measures to combat the alarming rise in dengue cases and fatalities in the capital.

The BDRCS, in collaboration with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), is taking urgent measures to combat the spread of the mosquito-borne disease and providing much-needed support to affected communities, reads a press release.

To address the crisis, more than 150 BDRCS volunteers trained in Epidemic Control for Volunteers and Community-Based Health and First Aid are mobilised to address this health emergency," it said.

One of the major concerns is the

shortage of concentrated platelet supplies, given the significant increase in dengue cases. The BDRCS, with its nationwide blood bank system, is ensuring continuous support to meet the rising demand.

The Holy Family Red Crescent Medical College and Hospital has admitted and treated 714 dengue patients as of July 25, with 220 patients still receiving medical care.

In addition, BDRCS Chattogram Blood Bank distributed 462 concentrated platelets this year, while BDRCS Blood Bank

Dhaka distributed 1,561 concentrated platelets.

"Our dedicated volunteers are working to disseminate vital awareness messages and distribute necessary resources to support public health services," said Kazi Shofiqul Azam, secretary general of the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society.

"To further strengthen the dengue response operation of BDRCS in

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



14 more die in a day

2,653 hospitalised, death toll now 215

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fourteen more dengue patients died in different hospitals across the country over the 24 hours ending yesterday morning.

Of those, 10 were in Dhaka.

The total number of deaths in dengue this year rose to 215, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

At least 2,653 dengue patients were hospitalised in the 24 hours, of whom 1,327 were in Dhaka.

With the new cases, the total number of dengue cases rose to 40,341, of which 23,676 were from outside Dhaka.

Some 8,189 dengue patients are still undergoing treatment. Over half of them are in Dhaka.

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

South Korea to give \$3m for Rohingyas

UNB, Dhaka

The government of the Republic of Korea yesterday announced its plan to provide 3 million US dollars this year to support humanitarian assistance for Rohingyas in Bangladesh.

The Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Dhaka said this year's humanitarian assistance will be provided through international organisations in Bangladesh such as UNHCR, IOM, WFP, and Unicef.

The embassy said they support dialogues between the governments of Bangladesh and Myanmar for the repatriation of the refugees and supports safe, voluntary, dignified and sustainable return of Rohingyas to their communities.

New navy chief calls on president

UNB, Dhaka

Newly appointed Chief of Naval Staff Vice Admiral M Nazmul Hassan yesterday called on President Mohammed Sahabuddin at Bangabhaban.

Congratulating the new navy chief, the president said the role of navy in extracting and preserving the marine resources of the region is very important along with protecting the sovereignty of the country's vast sea area, president's press secretary Joynal Abedin told reporters.

He expressed hope that the Bangladesh Navy will become a more modern, technological and powerful force under the leadership of the newly appointed chief.

Set Tk 25,000 as minimum wage for RMG workers

Speakers tell event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government must fix a minimum wage of Tk 25,000 for garment workers considering the increased cost of living, said noted economists and rights leaders at a discussion yesterday.

The discussion was organised by Bangladesh Garment Sramik Sanghati at Jatiya Press Club.

The speakers also called for an end to abrupt termination of workers, filing of fake cases, and suppression of rights. They also urged the government to scrap the Essential Services Bill 2023.

Speaking at the programme, garment worker Shahida Akter expressed concern over inadequate wages, which leads to financial instability among the workers' families.

"The minimum wage should be immediately increased to Tk 25,000 per month. Otherwise, the workers will be unable to sustain themselves," she said.

Noting the inflation, Taslima Akhtar, organisation president, said, "Even though prices of essentials as well as RMG products are increasing, the workers' wages are not."

She blamed low wages for the decreasing number of female employees in the sector.

"We cannot call these working women self dependent as it is nearly impossible to survive with this salary," she added.

Khondaker Golam Moazzem, research director of Centre for Policy Dialogue, stressed the need for revising the wage structure of RMG workers.

Sabina Yasmin of Naripokkho said those who protests in this regard are often silenced.

We have to ensure that existing policies on preventing sexual harassment are implemented properly. Besides, facilities like daycare centres should be made available for female workers.

PROF ANU MUHAMMAD

Author and anthropologist Rahnuma Ahmed said, "We have been making these demands for a long time, but to no avail. A stronger fight is required to press home the issue."

Barrister Sara Hossain said, "Incidents of workers being sued under false cases has to be stopped."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



Amid speeding vehicles, a man rides a motorbike, which has four people, including two children. The children had no helmets on. Such careless acts often lead to accidents. This photo was taken in the capital's Moghbazar area yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



Teachers continue their protest in front of Jatiya Press Club in the capital to press home their demand for nationalisation of secondary educational institutions. They began their movement on July 11, protesting the discriminatory salaries and facilities between government school teachers and MPO registered ones. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

বাড়ি বিক্রয় ধানমন্ডিতে ৭ কাঠার উপর ২য় তলা বাড়ি এবং বনানীতে ৬ কাঠার উপর ৪র্থ তলা বাড়ি বিক্রয় হইবে। যোগাযোগ:- মোবাইল: ০১৯১২৮১৯৩৭৮	বিক্রয় হবে পুটঃ ১৩৩/১/খ (বাণিজ্যিক পুট) (হাতিবিল সংলগ্ন) তেজগাঁও বাণিজ্যিক এলাকা ঢাকা-১২০৮। ফোনঃ ০১৯৯১-৬৬০৮১৭	বাংলাদেশ কমার্শিয়াল ব্যাংক লিমিটেড শ্রী অনলাইন ব্যাংকিং, গ্রয়োজনীয় সকল সুবিধা সম্বলিত আপস ডিজিটাল অনলাইন ব্যাংকিং, ইন্টারনেট ব্যাংকিং, ডেবিট ও ক্রেডিট কার্ড সেবার আপনার বিশ্বস্ত সহযোগী। বিসিবি
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UTTARA BANK PLC
ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT (MEZZANINE FLOOR)
HEAD OFFICE, 47, SHAHID BIR UTTAM ASFAKUS SAMAD
SARAK (FORMER-90, MOTIJHEEL C/A), DHAKA-1000

TENDER NOTICE

01. Procuring Entity	Uttara Bank PLC, Engineering Department, Head Office, 47, Shahid Bir Uttam Asfakus Samad Sarak, Dhaka-1000.
02. Tender Name	Construction and other related works of proposed UB PLC Bibirhat Branch at Fatikchhari, Chattogram.
03. Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method.
04. Eligibility of Tenderers	i) Minimum 05(five) years of work experience in the allied construction works. ii) Should have completed minimum 03 (three) nos. of similar nature of works in the last 5 (Five) years but total worth of each work should not be less than Tk. 15(Fifteen) lacs. iii) Should have valid ABC Licence for electrical works. iv) Should have valid Trade License, up to date Income Tax Certificate and VAT Registration Certificate.
05. Price of Tender Document	Non-refundable Tk.1,000/-(One thousand) only in cash for each of the tender schedule.
06. Selling & Dropping of Tender Documents	Uttara Bank PLC, Engineering Department, Mezzanine Floor, Head Office, 47, Shahid Bir Uttam Asfakus Samad Sarak, Dhaka-1000.
07. Earnest Money	5% of total quoted amount only in the form of Bank draft/Pay order favoring Uttara Bank PLC, Head Office, Dhaka-1000 for each tender.
08. Last date & time for selling Tender Document.	On or before 07.08.2023 during office hours.
09. Last date & time for Tender submission	On 08.08.2023 before 2.30 PM
10. Date and time for Tender opening	On 08.08.2023 at 3.00 PM
11. Special Instructions	i) Firm having requisite qualifications should apply on their Letter Head Pad to The General Manager, Engineering Department, Uttara Bank PLC, Head Office, Dhaka during Office hours. ii) Uttara Bank PLC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all quotations without assigning any reason whatsoever and is not bound to accept the lowest quotation.

Kazi Rayhan Kabir
General Manager

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলীর কার্যালয়, সওজ
সড়ক বিভাগ, বরিশাল
ফোনঃ ০৪৩১-৬৪১৮৫, ফ্যাক্সঃ ০৪৩১-৬১৮৪৪
E-mail: eebar@rhd.gov.bd

স্মারক নং-৩৫.০১.০৬৫১.৪০৩.০৭.০১৯.২৩-২৮৯৩ তারিখঃ ২৬/০৭/২০২৩খ্রিঃ

সীমিত দরপত্র পদ্ধতিতে (LTM) ঠিকাদার তালিকাভুক্তি বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, সড়ক বিভাগ, বরিশাল কর্তৃক পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা-২০০৮ এর আলোকে সড়ক ও জনপথ অধিদপ্তরের পরিচালনা (রাজস্ব) বাজেটের আওতায় সীমিত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি প্রয়োগের মাধ্যমে প্রতিক্ষেত্রে ৫০.০০ (পঞ্চাশ) লক্ষ টাকা পর্যন্ত প্রাক্কলিত মূল্যের অভ্যন্তরীণ কার্য (NCT-Works) সম্পাদনের লক্ষ্যে ২০২৩-২০২৪ অর্থ বছরের জন্য ঠিকাদার তালিকাভুক্ত করা হবে। নতুন ঠিকাদার তালিকাভুক্তির জন্য সিপিটিইউ কর্তৃক নির্ধারিত আবেদন ফরম নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলীর কার্যালয়, সওজ, সড়ক বিভাগ, বরিশাল অথবা উপ-বিভাগীয় প্রকৌশলীর কার্যালয়, সওজ, সড়ক উপ-বিভাগ-১/২, বরিশাল হতে অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে সরবরাহ করা হবে। অগ্রহী ব্যক্তি/প্রতিষ্ঠানকে ১০০০.০০ (এক হাজার) টাকার অফেরতযোগ্য পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/চালান নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, সড়ক বিভাগ, বরিশাল এর অনুকূলে জমা প্রদান করে অথবা মানি রিসিটের মাধ্যমে ১০০০.০০ (এক হাজার) টাকা পরিশোধ করে নির্ধারিত আবেদনপত্র (ডকুমেন্ট) সংগ্রহ করতে পারবেন। নির্ধারিত আবেদনপত্র (ডকুমেন্ট) সঠিকভাবে পূরণপূর্বক প্রয়োজনীয় কাগজপত্রসহ আগামী ৩১/০৮/২০২৩খ্রিঃ বিকাল ৫.০০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে বরিশাল সড়ক বিভাগে জমা প্রদান করার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো। সীমিত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি প্রয়োগের ক্ষেত্রে পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা-২০০৮ এর বিধি ৬৩ অনুসরণযোগ্য এবং এ তালিকাভুক্তিকরণ দরপত্র আহবান/কাজ প্রদানের নিশ্চয়তা বিধান করে না।

মাসুদ মাহমুদ সুমন
পরিচিতি নং-৬০২১৬৫
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, সওজ
সড়ক বিভাগ, বরিশাল

জিডি-১১৬২

Unlocking the diaspora potential

FROM PAGE 3

engagement board will be formed under the ministry.

The board will coordinate with diaspora engagement groups "Amra Bangladesh", which will be established at the Bangladesh missions in countries hosting the Bangladeshi diaspora community, reports UNB.

For international trade and investment, conferences will be organised under public-private partnership that will include diaspora investors and entrepreneurs, reads the draft policy.

For the diaspora investors and entrepreneurs, multilingual web portals will be developed and those will be linked with the websites of Bangladesh missions, it says.

To attract the diaspora community for investing in Bangladesh, strategic partnerships will be developed through establishing a tripartite network among relevant government bodies, private sector and diaspora trade organisations, it adds.

Once formulated, the policy will be a tool to encourage Bangladeshi diaspora to send remittance through authorised

channels.

The draft policy includes three chapters with the third chapter incorporating 61 policy statements under four broad categories.

The broad categories are enhancing diaspora diplomacy and capacity building, mobilising diaspora socio-cultural capital, promoting diaspora human capital, and facilitating diaspora economic capital.

The draft policy says the process to issue "dual citizen certificate" and "dual nationality certificate" to interested and eligible diaspora individuals and their successors will be sped up to ensure voting rights of diaspora community in Bangladesh's national and local elections.

Besides, the government will take measures to speed up the existing diaspora registration process (both online and offline) and develop a "uniform and up-to-date" diaspora database.

Economist Prof Abul Barkat, who was a consultant for the draft policy, hopes it will have a positive impact on Bangladesh's development and commence a new era

in the inclusion of diaspora community.

He said a plan of action will be required for the policy's implementation.

Senior Secretary Ahmed Munir Saleheen of expatriates' welfare ministry said they will send the draft copy to the related ministries as there are cross-cutting issues in it.

IOM Bangladesh Chief of Mission Abdusattor

Esoev said the IOM fully recognises the importance of continuing the engagement of diaspora with their countries of origin through its global "enable, empower, and engage" strategy approach.

Yaseen Chowdhury, general secretary of NRB CIP Association, and Bhorer Kagoj Editor Shyamal Dutta, among others, spoke at the workshop.

Protect farmers

FROM PAGE 3

"Over the last decade, the nation has significantly progressed when it comes to food production. However, many still don't get the right price. The authorities have continued social security programmes, but the beneficiaries are limited," said Ramesh Singh, country director of CARE Bangladesh.

Almost all the coastal countries of the region, including Bangladesh, are victims of climate change, which has created challenges in securing food rights, said Dr Kazi Khaliqzaman Ahmed, chairman of Right to

Food Bangladesh and Palli Karma Sahayak Foundation.

"In addition to having adequate food for all, it is also important that people have access to safe and nutritious edibles," he added.

Presided over by Khaliqzaman, the conference was attended by Dr Md Akhtaruzzaman, vice-chancellor of DU; and Mohsin Ali, secretary of Right to Food Bangladesh, among others.

Two plenary and eight vocational sessions on various aspects of the food and agriculture systems will be conducted at the event.

Third death anniversary of Amanul Islam

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the third death anniversary of former adviser to a caretaker government AKM Amanul Islam Choudhury.

He passed away on this day in 2020 after contracting Covid-19.

Amanul served as communications, power, energy, water and mineral resources adviser in 2001.

Brother of prominent educationist and intellectual Professor Emeritus Serajul Islam Choudhury, Amanul stood first class first from electrical engineering department of Ahsanullah Engineering College (now Buet) in 1958. He also obtained first position from engineering in the public service commission exam in then undivided Pakistan.

He also served as additional director general of Bangladesh Railway, chairman of Chittagong port trust, and chairman of DESA. He retired as additional secretary.



AL on full throttle

FROM PAGE 5

have been conducting campaigns for the AL candidate Md Mohiuddin Bachchu, while no significant local leader was seen in the campaign for Jatiya Party candidate Shamsul Alam so far.

Many candidates did not even put up posters anywhere in the constituency till yesterday. They claimed that they were conducting door-to-door campaigns distributing leaflets and handbills to voters.

Asked why the local leaders of JP were absent from his campaign, Shamsul said he did not know the reason. He also voiced concerns over free and fair polls.

Meanwhile, AL

candidate Bachchu said he was getting a good response from voters in his campaign.

"Usually many voters don't vote during by-polls. So our main challenge is to ensure a decent turnout on election day."

Besides these two, Dipak Kumar Pali from Trinamool BNP and Ganamukti Jote candidate Rashid Miah are also contesting the polls.

According to locals, as BNP is not participating in the election, the AL candidate is in a comfort zone.

The parliament secretariat on June 4 declared Chattogram-10 constituency vacant following the demise of AL lawmaker Afsarul Amin.

Efforts to tackle

FROM PAGE 3

Bangladesh, IFRC has launched a Disaster Response Emergency Fund to concentrate efforts on the most affected major cities, including Dhaka, Chattogram and Barishal," said Sanjeev Kafley, head of IFRC Bangladesh Delegation.

COMIC BOOKS FOR AWARENESS
Dhaka North City Corporation Mayor Atiqul Islam distributed a comic book titled "Mosquito Bites Harmful" to school students yesterday. The book is a

Bangla translation of a book distributed among children in Miami Dade County, USA.

It contains awareness quotes and relevant illustrations. Meanwhile, the two Dhaka city corporations yesterday fined owners of 44 establishments as part of their month-long anti-dengue drive.

During the drive, DNCC and DSCC collected a total of Tk 6.26 lakh in fines from 24 places where mosquito larvae were found. DSCC and DNCC have also set up control rooms to combat dengue.

Set Tk 25,000

FROM PAGE 3

Masuda Rehana of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad said, "Alongside ensuring proper wages, we also need to ensure that women have the right to take decisions to achieve equal rights in the sector."

Economist Prof Anu Muhammad said women have to combat various challenges while commuting to work from home. "We have to ensure that existing policies on preventing sexual harassment are implemented properly. Besides, facilities like daycare centres should be made

available for female workers," he said.

Terming the current wage structure "exploitative", he said, "When democracy is absent, workers become the biggest victims. So, workers must raise their demands through a democratic movement."

At the event, speakers also demanded facilities such as medical allowances and life insurance for workers. Shabnam Hafiz of Garments Shramik Mukti Andolon and Rebeka Neela of Biplobi Nari Sanghati also spoke at the programme.

31ST DEATH ANNIVERSARY OF MD. SALAHUDDIN FAROQUE



Today, 27th July, is the 31st death anniversary of late Md. Salahuddin Faroque, Managing Director of Modhumita Group and eldest son of late Md. Sirajuddin, founder of Modhumita Group.

Though he is not in this world, he lives in our hearts, in our minds and in our memory.

All friends relatives and well wishers are requested to pray for salvation of the departed soul.

All Members of Modhumita Family

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Chief Electrical Engineer (East)
Bangladesh Railway, CRB, Chattogram
Email: ceee@railway.gov.bd

CORRIGENDUM

Tender Notice No. 54.01.1500.115.02.105.23 dated 25.06.2023 published by Office of the Chief Electrical Engineer (East) is hereby corrected as below:

	As in the Corrigendum-1	Corrigendum-2
10	Period and last date for selling tender document	On all office days within working hour from 9-00 hrs. to 16.00 hrs. from the date of advertisement of the tender notice up to 30.07.2023
11	Time for submission of tender	Up to 11:00am of 31.07.2023
12	Time for opening of tender	At 12:00pm on 31.07.2023

All other parts of notice will remain unchanged.

Md. Habibur Rahman
Chief Electrical Engineer (East) (Add.C)
Bangladesh Railway, CRB, Chattogram

এস(২৩) (২৪০)
GD-1163

IBA
University of Rajshahi

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- Guest faculties are invited from among academics, industrialists and experts.

Admission Test:
September 01, 2023
Friday at 10:00 to 11:00am

Venue : IBA Bhaban, RU

Written Test will be held on :
English and Aptitude

Deadline for Application:
August 28, 2023

Online Application Procedure:

- To fill out the online application form, go to the institution's website: www.iba-ru.ac.bd and select the "Admission Open" menu. Read the Details menu and click on the "Apply Now." After submission, you will get the Student ID via mobile SMS. The application fee (BDT 840) has to be paid using only the NAGAD mobile banking App on Bill Pay Option. The biller number is 1632 and input the Student ID as Bill Reference Number to complete your payment. After paying the application fee successfully, you will get a Transaction ID. By inputting Student ID and Transaction ID, you will be able to download and print the Admit Card.
- For more information, please visit the IBA website: www.iba-ru.ac.bd or <http://educare.iba-ru.ac.bd/admission/Home>

NB : The students who have already enrolled in other MBA programs of IBA, RU, are not eligible to apply for this program.

Professor Dr. Zeennat Ara Begum
Director

Contact : IBA Office- +88 01725283264
Web Site : www.iba-ru.ac.bd

GD- 1161

CITY

A missing bridge and sufferings of 50,000

9 villages rely on risky bamboo structure for daily commute

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinaipur

As many as 50,000 people of nine villages in Rangpur's Kaunia upazila are suffering due to the absence of a concrete bridge over the Teesta river.

Despite numerous pledges made by politicians during the previous national elections, the hopes of the villagers for a bridge remains unfulfilled, leaving them relying on a 370-foot long makeshift bamboo bridge, which puts their lives at risk daily.

Among the worst affected are the residents of wards 8 and 9 in Banglabazar area of Haragachh municipality, who rely on this vulnerable bamboo structure to cross the river on a daily basis during the rainy season.

“Once the Teesta is now reduced to a lifeless stream. We can easily cross it on foot during dry seasons. However, we have no other option but to use the temporary bridge when the water level rises during monsoons,” said Aynal Haq, 60, of Banglabazar area.

In 2013, Md Manik, with assistance from other locals, constructed the bridge to alleviate the suffering of the villagers. But such risky makeshift structures



PHOTO: STAR



cannot be the solution, said Anwar Islam, another local. “This makeshift bamboo bridge, although an initial relief, falls short of providing a safe and reliable passage for the residents,” he added.

The consequences of the missing bridge extend far beyond mere inconvenience, affecting various aspects of daily life across the aforementioned villages.

With five rural haats, five primary and high schools, and two madrasas, the lack of concrete infrastructure hampers access to education and economic opportunities, particularly for the students and farmers, who bear the brunt of the hardships.

“These villages are mostly home to farmers and students. They cross the bridge with great risk. Some even fall off and get injured,” mentioned Mozibar Rahman, another resident.

Shafiqul Islam, a farmer, shared the difficulties of transporting his produce to the local market, which

often results in financial loss for him.

Abdul Kader Sarkar, councillor of ward-8 of the municipality, said he has informed the matter to the mayor, hoping to find a solution that will put an end to the hardship faced by a large number of people in the area.

Contacted, Asaduzzaman Jemi, upazila engineer of LGED in Kaunia, said the location of the bridge is not under their purview. He suggested talking to the Haragachh municipality mayor.

Mayor Ershadul Haq could not be reached for comments despite repeated attempts.

Two dead, 3 hurt in road crash as driver falls asleep

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, CTG

Two people were killed and three others, including two children, injured when a SUV hit a parked car on the Dhaka-Chattoogram highway early yesterday.

The deceased are cousins Mahub, 35, and Md Mainuddin, 37. Mainuddin's wife and two sons were injured, said Md Shahadat Hossain, in charge of Kumira Highway Police. Both were in the SUV, he said.

The accident took place when a Cumilla-bound SUV hit a parked truck at Hadifakir bazar area under Mirsarai upazila around 6:30am.

“Mahub, who was driving the SUV, fell asleep while driving, which resulted in the accident. Two people died on the spot,” he added.

“On information, police and fire service officials rescued the injured,” he said, adding that the bodies will be handed over to the family soon, he said.

Meanwhile, in Naogaon, a driver and his assistant were killed and two persons injured after two goods-laden pickups collided head-on in Patnitala upazila early yesterday. The accident happened around 6:00am on Patnitala-Sapahar road at Karamjai village, said police.

Driver Rafiqul Islam and his assistant Shahin Hossain died at a local health complex.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

Journalist Shahjahan Miah no more

BSS, Dhaka

Veteran journalist and trade union leader M Shahjahan M i a h



passed away at his Rampura residence yesterday, said family sources.

He died of old-age complications. He was 82.

Shahjahan, a freedom fighter, was former chief news editor of Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha.

He was also the former president of undivided Dhaka Union of Journalists and former secretary general of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists.

He also served as minister (press) at the Bangladesh embassy in Washington.

He left behind his wife, a daughter, two sons and a large number of relatives and well-wishers to mourn his death.

The family sources said they are yet to decide his burial place and funeral details.

BSS board of directors, chairperson, managing director, chief editor, journalists and officials expressed deep condolence to the bereaved family members.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Executive Engineer
District: Bagerhat
www.lged.gov.bd

e-Tender Notice (OTM): 07/2023-2024

Memo No. 46.02.0100.000.07.002.22-2889 Date: 26-07-2023

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

Tender IDs	Package Description & No.	Last date & time of depositing document fees
856388	Mobile Maintenance works by supplying of Materials for bitumen stone chips (20mm, 12mm & 6mm down graded), Sylhet Sand, local Sand & 1st Class bricks etc & e-Tender/LGED/BAGER/GOBM/23-24/MMT-01.	13.08.2023 Time: 5:00pm

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender shall be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies shall be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>).

Md. Sharifuzzaman
Executive Engineer
Phone: 02-477794041
E-mail: xen.bagerhat@ged.gov.bd

GD-1165

JHALAKATHI BUS ACCIDENT Rab arrests driver

STAR REPORT

Members of Rapid Action Battalion have arrested the bus driver accused in a case filed over the Jhalakathi bus accident that left 17 passengers dead on July 22.

Mohon Khan was arrested from Ashulia, Khandaker Al Moin, director of the legal and media wing of Rab told The Daily Star yesterday morning.

Jhalakathi Sadar Police Station Sub-inspector Shusankar Sarkar filed the case on July 23.

At least 17 people were killed and 23 others injured when the Barishal-bound bus of Bashir Smriti Paribahan plunged into a roadside waterbody in the district's Sadar upazila on Saturday morning.

Jhalakathi district administration has formed a five-member committee to investigate the incident.



GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
EDUCATION ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT
JAMALPUR DISTRICT.

Memo No. 37.07.0000.003.63.013.23.5308 Date: 26/07/2023

e-Tender Notice (SI. No. 02/2023-24)

Tender is invited in the National e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of

Tender ID No.	Name of work	Publication Date	Closing & Opening (date & time)
856561	Manufacturing & Supplying Furniture at Idliupur Dakhil Madrasha, Sadar, Jamalpur.	25.07.2023 at 14.30	10.08.2023 at 12.00
856562	Manufacturing & Supplying Furniture at Beltia Kamil Madrasha, Sadar, Jamalpur.	25.07.2023 at 14.30	10.08.2023 at 12.00
856563	Manufacturing & Supplying Furniture at Mallik Mondol Dakhil Madrasha, Sadar, Jamalpur	25.07.2023 at 14.30	10.08.2023 at 12.00

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

(Md. Anwer Hossain)
Executive Engineer
Education Engineering Department
Jamalpur District.

GD-1157

CTG-10 BY-POLLS AL on full throttle, others yet to swing into action

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With the by-polls for Chattogram-10 (Double Mooring, Pahartoli, Halishahar) scheduled to take place on July 30, the candidates are busy campaigning from afternoon to midnight.

Although four candidates are contesting from different political parties, only the Awami League candidate is seen campaigning in full swing.

The local and central leaders of AL and its associate organisations

PRAYER TIMING
JULY 27

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

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer
Department of Public Health Engineering
Bagerhat District, Bagerhat
E-mail: ee.bagerhat@dph.gov.bd
টেলিফোন নং-০২৪৭৭৭৫১৫৫৪

Memo No. 46.03.0100.061.16.010.17-714 Date: 26/07/2023

e-GP Tender Notice No. 02 (2023-2024)

1	Ministry/Division	Local Government Division
2	Implementing agency	Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE)
3	Project/program name	Water Supply Project in Coastal Areas through Rain Water Harvesting System.
4	e-Tender IDs	856238, 856239, 856240
5	Description of works	Construction of Rain Water Harvesting (RWH) Total 14230 Nos. at Different Upazila in Bagerhat District under Water Supply Project in Coastal Areas Through Rain Water Harvesting System FY-2023-2024.
6	This is online tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. Interested persons/firms can see details in the website: (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd).	

Size: 4"x3
GD-1158

Jayanta Mallick
Executive Engineer, DPHE
Bagerhat District, Bagerhat

চট্টগ্রাম সিটি কর্পোরেশন
প্রকৌশল বিভাগ
www.ccc.org.bd
নিলামে দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

আপনার মূল্য নির্দিষ্ট করে দিতে হবে।

উন্নয়নের গণকর্তা শেখ হাসিনার মুমিনসহ।

স্মারক নং-৪৯.১১.১৯০০.০০২.০১.০২/১৩ তারিখঃ ২৬-০৭-২০২৩ইং

১	মন্ত্রণালয়	স্থানীয় সরকার পল্লী উন্নয়ন ও সমবায় মন্ত্রণালয়।
২	এজেন্ট	চট্টগ্রাম সিটি কর্পোরেশন।
৩	সম্প্রদায়িক সংস্থার নাম	প্রকৌশল বিভাগ, চট্টগ্রাম সিটি কর্পোরেশন।
৪	বিজ্ঞপ্তির উদ্দেশ্য	দরপত্র
৫	দরপত্রের শাখার নাম	প্রযোজ্য নহে।

প্রয়োজনীয় তথ্যাবলী:

৬	সম্প্রদায়িক পদ্ধতি	ও.টি.এম.
৭	বাজেট ও অর্ডার উৎস	প্রযোজ্য নহে।
৮	টেন্ডার প্যাকেজ নং	প্রযোজ্য নহে।
৯	টেন্ডার প্যাকেজ এর নাম	নিলাম প্রক্রিয়া।
১০	টেন্ডার প্রকাশের তারিখ	২৭-০৭-২০২৩ইং
১১	টেন্ডার ডকুমেন্ট বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ	০৯-০৮-২০২৩ইং
১২	টেন্ডার গ্রহণের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	তারিখঃ ১০-০৮-২০২৩ইং সময়ঃ ১২.৩০টা
১৩	টেন্ডার বোলার তারিখ ও সময়	তারিখঃ ১০-০৮-২০২৩ইং সময়ঃ ৩.০০টা

অফিসের নাম ও ঠিকানাঃ ট্রিকানালসদর
টেন্ডার ডকুমেন্ট বিক্রয় প্রকৌশল বিভাগ।

১৪ টেন্ডার ডকুমেন্ট গ্রহণ প্রকল্প পরিচালক ও নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলীর-৩, কার্যালয়, চট্টগ্রাম সিটি কর্পোরেশন।
টেন্ডার ডকুমেন্ট বোলার দরপত্র উন্মুক্তকরণ কমিটি, চট্টগ্রাম সিটি কর্পোরেশন।

দরপত্রাদায়ক তথ্যাবলী:

১৫	দরপত্রাদায়ক যোগ্যতা	চট্টগ্রাম সিটি কর্পোরেশনের বৈধ তালিকাভুক্ত, ট্রেড লাইসেন্স ও সদা নবায়নের সনদ, আর্থিক স্বচ্ছতা, আয়কর, ভ্যাট ও অভিজ্ঞতা সনদ দরপত্রের সাথে দাখিল করিতে হইবে। কোন কোনো তালিকাভুক্ত ঠিকাদার ও ব্যাংক হইতে নেউদিয়া ঘোষিত এমন দরদাভা অংশগ্রহণ করিতে পারিবে না।
১৬	কার্যের বিস্তারিত বিবরণ	সিডিউল উল্লেখ থাকিবে।
১৭	টেন্ডার ডকুমেন্টের মূল্য ও ধরণ	প্রতিসেট ৩,০০০/- টাকা, (পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট) বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশের পরবর্তী তারিখের হইতে হইবে।
১৮	নিরাপত্তা জামানতের ধরন	উদ্ধৃত দরের ১০% হারে মেসার, চট্টিক অনুবন্ধে বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশের পরবর্তী তারিখের পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট প্রদানপূর্বক সিডিউলের সাথে দাখিল করিতে হইবে। (এম.আই.সি.আর নং বিইসি পে-অর্ডার গ্রহণযোগ্য হইবে না)

কার্যের বিবরণ:

১৯	ক্রমিক নং.	কার্যের নাম	কার্যের স্থান	প্রতি সেট দরপত্রের মূল্য	নিরাপত্তা জামানতের পরিমাণ (শতকরা)
১		বহুমাধ্যম বাতাইপাত্তা হতে কর্তৃপক্ষী নদী পর্যন্ত খাল বন্দন শীর্ষক প্রকল্পের অধীনে অধিগ্রহণকৃত ৫/৪ মাসদার অধীনে ১.১২৯৩ একর জায়গার উপরিস্থি অধিকাংশে ভেঙ্গে নিলামে বিক্রয় প্রসঙ্গে।	৬নং পূর্ব মেসারদহর	৩০০০/-	১০%

দরপত্র আহবানকারী কর্মকর্তা:

২০	দরপত্র আহবানকারী অফিসারের নাম	মোহাম্মদ ফরহাদুল আলম
২১	দরপত্র আহবানকারী অফিসারের পদবী	প্রকল্প পরিচালক ও নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী ডি-৩
২২	দরপত্র আহবানকারী অফিসারের ঠিকানা	চট্টগ্রাম সিটি কর্পোরেশন
২৩	দরপত্র আহবানকারী কর্মকর্তার ফোন, ফ্যাক্স ও ই-মেইল	

ক) দরপত্র আহবানকারী সংস্থা যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিল করার অধিকার সংরক্ষণ করেন।
খ) দরপত্র মূল্যায়ন কমিটির সুপারিশ ও ব্যাংক কর্তৃক প্রাথমিক অনুমোদন পাওয়ার পর নোটিফিকেশন অব এওয়ার প্রদান করা হইবে।
গ) দরপত্রের সকল শর্তাবলী সিডিউলে বিস্তারিত বর্ণিত আছে।
ঘ) দরপত্রের বিস্তারিত তথ্যাবলী প্রকৌশল বিভাগ হইতে সংগ্রহ করা হইবে।
ঙ) দরপত্রের আবেদনকারী ও নিরাপত্তা জামানতের জন্য জমা কৃত পে-অর্ডার দরপত্রের আহবানের পরবর্তী নির্ধারিত তারিখের মধ্যে হইতে হইবে।
চ) আটকাজিতকৃত ও অসম্পূর্ণ পূরণকৃত বি ও কিউ বাতিল বলিয়া গণ্য হইবে।
ছ) নিলামকারীকে ভ্যাট আয়করের টাকা উদ্ধৃত দরের ১২.৫% হারে আলাদাভাবে উল্লেখ করিতে হইবে।

মোহাম্মদ ফরহাদুল আলম
প্রকল্প পরিচালক ও নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী-৩
চট্টগ্রাম সিটি কর্পোরেশন

চিঠি/স্মারক-২৬/২৩-২৪
নির্বাহী ৮"×০৮ কলাম
জিডি-১১৬৪



Rail communication between Sylhet and Chhatak has been suspended for about a year after floods damaged several kilometres of the line last year. Farmers in Chhatak are in trouble as they cannot send their produce to Sylhet city by rail. The railway authorities say the repair work is likely to begin in December. The photo was taken near Chhatak town recently.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Two bridges side by side, but of no use

S DILIP ROY

Two newly constructed bridges over a canal in Lalmonirhat's Kaliganj upazila have remained unfit for movements due to lack of approach roads on either side of both the structures.

As there are no approach roads, connecting both the bridges, people of several villages under Tushbhandar union are being deprived of getting any benefits from the unplanned bridges, villagers alleged.

Local residents said over a thousand people from Bairati, Chilakhal, Chikarbazar and Matabpur villages have to cross the Bairati Canal to go to their destinations, including the local union parishad (UP) office and Kaliganj upazila headquarters.

Earlier, they used to build a bamboo-made makeshift bridge over the

canal on self-help basis to ease their communication problem, especially during the rainy season, villagers said.

Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC) and Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief constructed the two separate bridges, close to each other, in 2022 and 2023 respectively.

But the two newly-constructed bridges brought nothing for the people living in the nearby areas, locals said.

Farmer Abu Bakar said thought construction of a concrete bridge was a long-cherished demand for the villagers, they are yet to get any benefits of the two unplanned bridges.

Recently villagers put a bamboo-made platform on one side of one of the bridges so that people can get into the bridge and cross it, he said.

This is nothing, but waste of

government money, Bakar added.

Abbas Ali, a resident of Bairati village, said despite getting two new bridges over the Bairati Canal, they are still suffering like before as neither of those of any use.

Besides, lengths of the two newly constructed bridges are too short, compared to the measurement of the canal, he said, adding that the water flow through the canal is being obstructed due to unplanned construction of the bridges.

Both the bridges may collapse if a major flood occur in the surrounding areas, Abbas said.

According to Lalmonirhat BADC, construction of the 98-foot-long and 15-foot-wide bridge, spending Tk 79.47 lakh, was completed in June 2022.

While, Disaster Management and Relief Ministry built the 50-foot-long and 14-foot-wide bridge at a cost of Tk 70

lakh in May this year.

Tushbhandar UP Chairman Nur Islam said the engineers can say whether the bridges are unplanned, but the truth is those are of no use.

It is quite difficult to make the two bridges usable without constructing the protection walls and connecting roads, the UP chairman added.

Kaliganj Upazila Project Implementation Officer (PIO) Mohammad Ferdous, however, said the bridges have been built according to the plan.

The connecting roads of the bridges have been washed away due to the recent flood, the PIO said.

Lalmonirhat BADC Executive Engineer Altaf Hossain said the approach roads, which damaged during the flood, will be repaired soon.

Trees on 50 acres lost in 5yrs

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

The Shuvo Sandhya Beach in Barguna's Taltali upazila has been facing serious erosion by the Bay for the last couple of years.

Due to continuous erosion by the Bay, nearly 50 acres of forestland close to the beach and about 60,000 trees have already been washed away in the last five years.

Meanwhile, due to destruction of the natural beauty of the beach, the number of tourists has decreased significantly in the recent years.

Shuvo Sandhya Beach was built on the shores of the Bay of Bengal in southwest of Taltali upazila headquarters in 2010. Later, forest department planted over one lakh trees of different species, including Jhau, on 125 acres of land in an attempt to protect the nearly 6 kilometre-long beach from being washed away by the tidal surges.

But due to tidal surges caused by the rough waves of the sea, the beach area as well as vast forestland are gradually decreasing every year.

Since 2018, at least 60,000 trees on nearly 50 acres of forestland on the beach area have either been washed away or died due to continuous erosion by the Bay.

Moreover, Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) built a brick road, which connects the beach, to facilitate tourists' movement, but a major portion of the road has already been lost to the sea.

During a recent visit to the beach area this correspondent saw hundreds of dead trees are lying scattered across the beach.

Abu Hena Mostafa, a student at Patuakhali Science and Technology University, said there were many types of trees, especially a beautiful Jhau garden, when he first came here in 2015.

But, due to continuous erosion by the Bay the beach has lost its attraction now, he added.

Moniruzzaman, Range Officer at Taltali Forest Department, said afforestation was started by planting 12,000 Jhau trees in 2013-14 fiscal year.

Later, large gardens were developed by planting various mangrove species of trees along the beach in to prevent soil erosion.

But the erosion has washed away at least 60,000 trees in the last five years. He said they have a plan to plant 50,000 more trees on the beach.



PHOTO: STAR

Ship carrying 3,000 cars ablaze off Dutch coast, crew member dead

REUTERS, Amsterdam

A fire blazed on a ship off the Dutch coast with nearly 3,000 vehicles on board yesterday, killing one member of the crew and injuring several others, the coastguard said.

The fire began on Tuesday night on the 199-metre Panama-registered Fremantle Highway, which was en route from Germany to Egypt, forcing several crew members to jump overboard. Dutch broadcaster NOS said all the crew were Indian.

Rescue ships sprayed water onto the burning boat to cool it down, but using too much water risked its sinking, the Dutch coastguard said. A salvage vessel was hooked on to stop it drifting.

The fire might last for several days, Dutch news agency ANP reported, citing the coastguard. Smoke continued to billow from the vessel near the northern Dutch island of Ameland.

"The fire is most definitely still not controlled. It's a very hard fire to extinguish, possibly because of the cargo the ship was transporting," said Edwin Versteeg, a spokesperson for the Dutch Department of Waterways and Public Works.

The coastguard said on its website that the cause of the fire was unknown, but a coastguard spokesperson had earlier told Reuters it began near an electric car. Roughly 25 out of 2,857 vehicles on the ship were electric.

The International Maritime Organisation, which sets out regulation for safety at sea, plans to evaluate new measures for ships transporting electric vehicles next year in light of the growing number of fires on cargo ships, a spokesperson said.

"Electric cars burn just as much as combustion engine cars. When batteries overheat and a so-called 'thermal runaway' occurs, then it gets dangerous," said Uwe-Peter Schieder, master mariner and representative of the German Insurance Association.

"A chemical reaction in the battery produces gases which inflate the battery."

New rules under consideration could take years to implement, but may include specifications on the types of water extinguishers available on boats and limitations on the amount a battery can be charged, which impacts flammability.

Politics can't be

FROM PAGE 16

before the lower court concerned in 15 days after receiving the judgment of the lower court concerned.

The HC observed, "There are many ways and means to make money and amass properties through lawful businesses and other professions, but politics and politicians do not come within the purview of a profession to make a huge amount of money and properties in their name and in the name of their dependents."

"The politicians engage in politics with a view to sacrificing themselves for the people's welfare and the country and it is a kind of great sacrifice and dedication for the wellbeing of the people and the country," the HC judges said in the full text.

"Corruption affects people across all genders, ages and races and it hits poor and vulnerable groups the hardest. The people of the

Modi's govt faces no-confidence

FROM PAGE 16

Modi condemned the mass assault as "shameful" and promised tough action against the perpetrators.

Opposition parties have, however, disrupted the monsoon session of parliament which began last week, to demand a detailed statement by Modi on Manipur in parliament, followed by a debate.

As head of the government, he will have to respond to the no-confidence motion before it is put to vote.

The government has offered a statement from Home Minister Amit Shah, saying internal security is his ministry's responsibility.

Labourer, wife found dead

FROM PAGE 16

job and was out of work for some days. His wife had been suffering from a fever for a week and could not go to work," he told this newspaper.

"Recently, they were failing to pay the room rent," he said.

Titu, who lives in an adjacent room, said that his sister and brother-in-law lived in Gazipur. Jewel, who hailed from Kurigram, used to be a laguna driver there but he stopped driving as he didn't have a license.

"When my sister became pregnant, our family made a crucial decision to take her to a private hospital in Kishoreganj, prioritising her health despite our financial constraints. The hospital expenses amounted to Tk

country, particularly the responsible stakeholders, should set a positive example by showing that they are not only victims of corruption, but also the key players in the struggle against it."

"... If you want to create change in the world and if you want to make Bangladesh free from corruption and money laundering, take action."

Children are refreshingly truthful. The children must be taught to differentiate between honesty and dishonesty, the bench said. "Bad people help each other to silence critics and hide stolen wealth. It is time for those who expose them to work together."

"Citizens cannot sit idle by waiting for the world and Bangladesh to change; each of us must be part of that transformation. No one can fight corruption for the Bangladeshis except the Bangladeshis," the HC judges said in the full text.

The violence began on May 3 after a court ordered the state government to consider extending special economic benefits and quotas in government jobs and education enjoyed by the tribal Kuki people to the majority Meitei population as well.

Shashi Tharoor, a leader of the main opposition Congress party, said the government must invest time to answer questions about Manipur.

"Everyone knows that Manipur has witnessed horrendous loss of lives in violence, sexual assault and displacement. How can this not be the main agenda?" Tharoor told Reuters.

63,000.

"We could manage a little more than half the amount and Jewel paid the rest after taking a loan," Titu said.

Titu came home after 12:00am early yesterday and asked his wife whether Jewel and Nasrin had eaten or not. When he went to check on them, he found their door closed.

"As there was no response, I saw both of them hanging from the ceiling fan through a chink in the door. I informed the police immediately," he said.

The bodies, which were recovered around 3:00am, were taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy, said the OC.

It's a 'violation' of diplomatic norms

FROM PAGE 1

Alom observed the election at different centres freely. He also did not face any untoward incident, or lodged any complaint, until the end of voting. Other candidates also did not make any complaint about any violence or other irregularities, he said.

"So the way a handful of diplomats have presented a last-minute isolated incident of one centre, never reflects the peaceful nature of the election. While giving a quick response, they did not give importance on the objectivity of their assessment," he added.

The missions issued the statement on July 19, and two people were arrested in connection with the attack before that. The Election Commission and the government took instant steps, he said.

The joint statement did not mention the arrest, which is a shortcoming, he said.

"Even then, in the statement these diplomats have called for legal actions, which is unwarranted and unnecessary," the state minister added.

Once Shahriar read out his briefing before the diplomats, four to five of them tried to explain their intent.

"They [diplomats] said they did it to assist the election process of Bangladesh as part of their continuous engagement with us," Shahriar said.

He said that Bangladesh officials made a counter argument that

it is clearly written in the Vienna Convention that the ministry of foreign affairs is their first point of contact regarding any issue.

"We have no objections if they talk to the media regarding any issue, but they should inform the matter first to the foreign ministry," he added.

He said that article 41 (1) of United Nations Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations 1961 states that without prejudice to their privileges and immunities, it is the duty of all persons enjoying such privileges and immunities to respect the laws and regulations of the receiving State. They also have a duty not to interfere in the internal affairs of that State.

Article 41 (2) says that all official business with the receiving State entrusted to the mission by the sending State shall be conducted with or through the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the receiving State or such other ministry as may be agreed.

"We will inform the respective capitals about our displeasure. We will urge them to ensure that no one from their missions gets involved in such activities in the future," he added.

Asked about whether such move of Bangladesh will affect relations, Shahriar said, "Not at all."

He added, "Friendship and effective relations go ahead even after these types of events. We have cordial relations, trade, and people to people contact with all these countries."

According to him, some ill attempts by some quarters are

underway centring the election, and sometimes they are a result of overenthusiasm.

In the past, one ambassador made comments that were not in agreement with the position of his capital, he said, adding, "We summoned the ambassador and after that highest-level visits were exchanged."

Asked about whether Bangladesh's reaction was a delayed one as many diplomats have been making comments about election and human rights issues for many years, Shahriar said they took steps whenever such incidents happened.

It is a continuous process and the briefing to the 13 missions was not an "abrupt incident," he said.

Khorshed Alam, foreign secretary of the Maritime Affairs unit of the foreign ministry, was present at the meeting with the envoys.

Mohammad A Arafat, the winner of the Dhaka-17 by-polls, attended the meeting briefly to share his election-day experience with the diplomats.

US EMBASSY RESPONDS

US embassy spokesperson Bryan Schiller yesterday said, "As we have said many times, we support Bangladesh's goal of holding free, fair, and peaceful elections. To that end, we joined with other foreign missions to condemn the violence against Hero Alam and to call for a full investigation and bringing the perpetrators to account. We note that a number of arrests have been made in the case. Such violence has no place in the democratic process."

Neil Thomas, a fellow on Chinese politics at the Asia Society Policy Institute, a US think tank, agreed.

"Evidence is emerging suggesting this is indeed a political purge," Thomas said on Twitter, which is being rebranded as "X".

China remained tight-lipped for weeks about the fate of Qin, who has not been seen in public since June 25 when he met Russia's deputy foreign minister Andrey Rudenko in Beijing.

China refuses to say why foreign minister

FROM PAGE 16

spokeswoman Mao Ning referred journalists to a state news agency article and declined to offer any further information.

"Xinhua has already published information. You can refer to that," Mao said.

Asked how she evaluated Qin's brief stint as foreign minister, Mao said she was "probably not the right person to answer that question".

"I don't think it's appropriate for me to pass judgment," she said, insisting that China was "releasing normal information" concerning Qin's position.

Pressed repeatedly by journalists to provide more details on Qin's fate, Mao said decisions made Tuesday by China's top lawmaking body and the president were "very clear".

"I suggest you all refer to that. I don't have any additional information," she said.

"China's diplomatic activities are all advancing steadily," Mao added.

Any reference to 57-year-old Qin had been removed from the website of China's foreign ministry by yesterday.

A search for his name yielded no results and previous articles about his diplomatic appearances showed a message saying the page "does not exist or has been deleted".

But his name did appear on other Chinese government websites, including the State Council, the Ministry of Commerce and state media outlets.

Asked about his disappearance from the foreign ministry website, Mao said: "Information on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is updated according to relevant management regulations."

Qin has been replaced as foreign minister by top diplomat Wang Yi. The foreign ministry had dodged

questions on Qin for weeks, after previously saying "health reasons" were to blame for his absence.

State media gave no reason on Tuesday for his dismissal but one expert said Qin's "digital erasure" suggested he had fallen from grace.

"If he were a comrade in good standing who had fallen ill I am not sure that would be happening," China analyst Bill Bishop wrote in his Sinocism newsletter.

Neil Thomas, a fellow on Chinese politics at the Asia Society Policy Institute, a US think tank, agreed.

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China remained tight-lipped for weeks about the fate of Qin, who has not been seen in public since June 25 when he met Russia's deputy foreign minister Andrey Rudenko in Beijing.

AFRAN NISHO

riding the 'Shurongo' wave

Afran Nisho, known for his stellar performances in TV dramas and web films, has stepped onto the big screen with *Shurongo*. His film hit 31 theaters across West Bengal recently, marking his first film to be released in the neighboring country. The film's release in Kolkata has been met with overwhelming love and admiration from both the media and the audience from Kolkata.

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

After a successful premiere in Kolkata, Nisho appeared in a gracious mood, expressing his satisfaction at the reception he received.

"I feel extremely lucky to have appeared in Kolkata in such a grand manner," Nisho stated. During his stay in Kolkata, he engaged in numerous interviews and interactions with the media, enjoying the warm reception he received.

As *Shurongo* enters its fourth week in Bangladeshi theaters, the streets of the Kolkata on the other hand are adorned with posters and banners, reflecting the widespread popularity of the film.

"I feel delighted to witness the film's success both in Bangladesh and Kolkata. It proves that the audience always look for good stories. If you can give that, your film will run successfully," Nisho said.

The actor was deeply moved by the enthusiasm of Kolkata's audience during his movie's screenings. Their overwhelming response, applause, and appreciation made the Kolkata release of *Shurongo* a truly memorable event for Nisho.

"I can't forget the moments," Afran Nisho expressed emotionally as he returned to Dhaka. He encouraged the audience to support good movies and show love for Bangladeshi cinema, underscoring the importance of backing local films.

"Although it was a short tour for me, I can't forget the love they gave me during my trip. They were so friendly that I couldn't differentiate between Bangladesh and Kolkata," he concluded.

It is being speculated that the actor's next film signing will be with director Abrar Athar, with whom he worked with in his very first web film, *Mainkar Chipay*. However, the actor is holding out until the official announcement before commenting on it.



'Ami Ki Tumi?' will reveal all the answers today

After the release of the trailer of Vicky Zahed's web-series *Ami Ki Tumi?*, the audience finds the director continuing to tell unique stories filled with thrills, mystery and drama like any of his other projects.

The star-studded show, starring Mehazabien Chowdhury, Shamol Mawla, Tariq Anam Khan Fazlur Rahman Babu, Wahida Mallick Jolly and Sadia Islam Mou will start streaming the iScreen from today.

The trailer gives the audience a glimpse into the mysterious world of *Ami Ki Tumi?*, highlighting a series of murder folded in mysteries and a hint of possible alien invasion. To know what new twist Vicky has prepared this time, one must subscribe to the newest OTT platform, iScreen.



Aryan opens up about web film 'Flight 227'

Mizanur Rahman Aryan has piqued the curiosity of audiences by unveiling the first look of his upcoming Bongo original web-film, *Flight 227*, yesterday on social media.

The intriguing poster has left netizens wondering if the aviation disaster is based on a real-life story.

In a conversation with The Daily Star, Mizanur Rahman Aryan refrained from divulging too many details about the project, but did reveal that it comprises of multiple interconnected stories within the web film.

"Our web film *Flight 227* has a lot of stories within it. There are stories about relationships, friendship and love and it all revolves around a journey," the director added. The director disclosed that it will be released soon on the Bongo app.

PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

Elita looks to highlight the youth with exciting new webcast

The usual artsy vibe of the EMK Center was complemented by youthful jubilation, as the welcoming face of a renowned singer and journalist awaited young changemakers in her new webcast, "The Youth Unleashed with Elita Karim".

SHARMIN JOYA

In association with EMK Center, and sponsored by the US Embassy, the ten-episode show will feature ten young changemakers from different professional sectors as guests. Planned, designed and scripted by Elita herself, the entire programme has been supported by Jaago Foundation, a partner to EMK Center.

"We have read their stories many times in the newspaper, sometimes on social platforms. However, through this show, their entire story will unfold in front of the viewer like never before. I believe it is important to create an avenue for their visual recognition as well," shared Elita, who had been nurturing this idea from a long time.

"One of my guests on my show is Tawhida Shiropa, who left her journalism career and built her own platform for mental health and well-being support. The founder and CEO of the platform had this urge of creating it because of her mother, who was suffering for a long time -- and they could not identify her health issue." Elita wants to bring forth such unheard stories, which might inspire more people and initiate to become one.

Since she was the Editor of Star Youth at The Daily Star, she had a rough plan to start her own podcast. However, she became set in her goals while completing her Fulbright Scholarship as a

or a crime thriller story, people would listen to it at their own leisure."

The ten participants to tell their journey of becoming a changemaker includes



PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

Humphrey Fellow 2021-2022, in the USA, for 15 months. "We had worked on various dimensions of media, out of which I was most interested in podcasts and webcasts," she added. "Essentially, the difference is miniscule between podcasts and webcasts. Podcasts are just audio shows, there are no visuals to those contents -- be it news,

Ayman Sadiq (10-minute school), Tawhida Shiropa (Moner Bondhu), Shah Rafayat Chowdhury (Footsteps), Sadia Jafrin Khan (Grow Your Reader), Syed Rashad Imam Tanmoy (Unmad and Cartoon People), Arian Arif (Mojar Ishkool), Diptha Saha (Agroshift), Shamsin Ahmed (Identity Inclusion), Shitom Ahmed

(Musician), and Kaarina Kaiser (Content Creator).

The webcast will begin airing from the first week of August. Throughout ten weeks, each episode will be released, and will be available on all the social platforms of EMK Center.

What about her musical journey? Upon being asked, Elita shared that she is waiting for a bunch of projects to be released. "I did one song in a mixed album with Joy Shahrir. I also lent voice to one of Bappa da's (Bappa Mazumder) ventures titled *Beautiful Voices*, where female vocalists including the likes of Kona, Konal, Ankhi apa (Ankhi Alamgir), lent their voices." The song has already been recorded, the music video will be shot soon. The song will be released from Bappa Mazumder's YouTube channel. "I have also recorded a song composed by Kishore Das, while I was in the US. The lyrics have been penned by Kabir Bakul, the song is supposed to be a film track, so I am waiting for it." She also did multiple songs with musician Shaker Raza.

Elita is also collaborating with Shitom Ahmed very soon. "We are planning for a duet, Shitom is quite popular at Spotify, and doing really well." The song is expected to be released next month.



The Daily Star | **act:onaid**

Climate Justice Idea Competition 2023



As we approach the 28th Conference of Parties (COP) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the urgent call for a comprehensive climate action plan and the implementation of the Loss and Damage Agreement, initiated in COP27, is at the forefront of discussions. This agreement aims to compensate people in the south and developing countries, such as Bangladesh, who are experiencing loss and damage as a result of climate-induced disasters.

The significance of Bangladesh's role in the upcoming conference, being one of the most climate-vulnerable countries,

underscores the immense potential of the nation's youth as a formidable force driving climate actions. Their passion, determination, and innovative thinking can contribute significantly to addressing climate change and fostering a more sustainable and just future for their nation and the planet. In this context, ActionAid Bangladesh and The Daily Star took a proactive step to promote climate justice by organizing the "Climate Justice Idea Competition Season 2," showcasing the innovative ideas of young minds.

Through a nationwide online call for applications, a staggering 188

submissions were received, highlighting the enthusiasm of the country's young environmental enthusiasts. From this pool, nine exceptional groups were selected, each demonstrating ingenious, solution-oriented ideas falling under three categories: circular economy, energy transition, and water rights.

To prepare these young innovators for the grand finale, a dedicated grooming session was conducted, where experts from relevant fields acted as mentors, nurturing the potential of each team's proposal. The culminating event took place at The Daily Star Center on the 17th of July 2023, graced

by esteemed guests including Saber Hossain Chowdhury MP, Chair of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change, Farah Kabir, Country Director of ActionAid Bangladesh, and Mahfuz Anam, Editor of The Daily Star.

With creativity, feasibility, and actionable plans as the guiding criteria, a distinguished panel of judges had the challenging task of evaluating the presentations. Eventually, three exceptional winners emerged, one from each category, promising to make a positive impact on the journey towards climate justice.



As global environmental destruction intensifies, sustainability is vital. Bangladesh seeks innovative ideas, offering an \$80 billion investment opportunity for climate action plans. The proactive engagement of the youth in addressing and finding solutions to climate problems is commendable.

Saber Hossain Chowdhury MP,
Chair of the Parliamentary Standing Committee
on the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and
Climate Change



ActionAid values inspiring youth voices on climate justice. To make these ideas a reality, collective efforts and government support through the trust fund are essential. Let's scale up and make a difference together in pursuing climate justice.

Farah Kabir,
Country Director, ActionAid Bangladesh



We must remember, there is no planet B. Earth is our only home where our lives exist. I want to congratulate all the participants here. This is more than just a competition; it's a heartfelt initiative.

Mahfuz Anam,
Editor & Publisher, The Daily Star

IDEAS

Circular Economy



CHAMPION
Team Entourage - Shobuj Poysha
Team members: Rifah Rafia Orpa, Shoumen Barua, Ishrak Anan

A one-stop platform dedicated to promoting sustainable practices by incentivizing environment-friendly activities. Through a user-friendly mobile application, anyone can upload their eco-conscious actions, which a local team will review. Upon verification, participants will be rewarded with redeemable incentives such as discounts and coupons.

The platform's income will come from a variety of sources, including in-app affiliate sales, marketing, advertising, sponsored challenges, and data monetization. With a strong focus on social media, the team plans to partner with online marketplaces and sustainable businesses to encourage lasting behavioral changes and promote positive solutions.

OTHER FINALISTS
Team FemCare- Napkin Disposal Machine
Team members: Rajesh Dhar, Kazi Md. Aldin Fardin, Nirvik Chakma

Aiming to address the challenges associated with menstrual pad waste, the disposal machines will recycle plastic and wood pulp from the disposed pads collected from the pad collector devices established in various locations, and convert them into raw materials, paper, or plastic objects.

Team Cleanify- Smart Waste Management
Team members: Utshob Sutradhar, Mahmud Iftakhar Asef, Md. Fahim Alam

An all-in-one smart waste management app enables QR-based waste disposal, large-scale collection, and selling household trash to local buyers. Users receive rewards for their actions. AI sorting categorizes waste, facilitating recycling in partner facilities.

Water Rights



CHAMPION
Team AlphaPi- Nirjol
Team members: Irsa Farhad, Sumit Anthony Gomes, Sk.Md. Nazmus Sakib

The solar-powered hydrogel filter, utilizing Solar Absorber Gel, purifies contaminated water, offering a sustainable solution for clean water access. This life-changing technology aids marginalized communities in combating water-related challenges and encourages lasting positive impacts on water conservation efforts.

The team aims to foster empowerment and generate job opportunities in marginalized communities using a micro-franchising business model. They intend to initiate a one-year pilot study, supported by funding, to gather valuable data for refining both the product and business model.

OTHER FINALISTS
Team H2O Innovators- Salt Away
Team members: Mainul Islam Labib, Md Rashed Jaowad Khan, Muhammad Zarif

A cost-effective, natural water desalinator utilizing "moss" to support coastal communities in Bangladesh. This energy-independent solution achieves 99% WHO-approved desalination levels, with minimal maintenance needs. Its goal is to advance sustainable technology and deliver safe, scalable drinking water solutions.

Team Durjoy DSS- Safe
Team members: MD. Nabil Hassan, Abdulla Al Shohan, Ahmed Raiyan

Sunlight-powered and utilizing an activated carbon membrane from Rice Husk waste, this eco-friendly water filtration system efficiently purifies water, removing harmful particles and improving salinity odor. It offers an affordable and sustainable solution for clean water access.

Energy Transition



CHAMPION
Team SolarXen- Solar Home System
Team members: Iftekher Ebne Mohammad Jalal, Md Jubair Zidan, Joyonta Das Joy

The model enhances energy infrastructure reliability and resilience by integrating residential users with the grid, overcoming limitations of existing net metering. It financially incentivizes solar panel usage, bringing energy justice to underserved communities and fostering energy independence.

The team's primary objective is to install a minimum of 200 solar home systems in the Raozan upazila by 2024. To achieve this, they will collaborate with local regulatory authorities to ensure adherence to regulations and standards. Additionally, they will explore funding opportunities from the government and renewable energy programs to support their initiative.

OTHER FINALISTS
Team Pioneers- From waste to watts
Team members: Tausif Reza, Anika Tahasin, Soumik Das

Using water hyacinth, cow dung, and tap water, the project aims to produce biogas. Once cleansed of pollutants, this biogas fuels a gas turbine for electricity generation. With zero greenhouse gas emissions, the process is environmentally friendly and carbon neutral.

Team Cerevisiae: 4G Biofuel
Team members: Dristy Halder, Nova Aktar, Abdur Rahman Samir

With specially designed microbes, this advanced technology converts food and industrial waste into renewable energy. Direct utilization of waste sugars and secreted enzymes increases yields while reducing carbon emissions, offering an eco-friendly alternative to conventional fuels.

Climate Justice Idea Competition 2023



A group photo after the enriching grooming session with mentors.



The esteemed Judge Panel in action.



A sneak peek into the valuable mentoring session.

ADJUDICATION PANEL

Bitopi Das Chowdhury
Head of Corporate Affairs and Brand & Marketing, Standard Chartered Bangladesh

Mahfuz Sadique
Chief Communications Officer, bKash

Iftekhar Mahmud
Special Correspondent, The Daily Prothom Alo

Nazmul Ahsan
Manager- Young People, ActionAid Bangladesh

MENTORS

Sushmita S. Preetha
Editor, Editorial and Opinion, The Daily Star

Azmin Azran
Editor, SHOUT & Star Youth, The Daily Star

Zyma Islam
Senior reporter, The Daily Star

Mostafaeur Rahman
Manager, Interventions, Swisscontact

Shadlee Rahman
Research Officer, UNDP Bangladesh

Suvendu Biswas
Senior Programme Officer- Youth Mobilisation and Climate Action, ActionAid Bangladesh

Shavreena Anam
Leadership Development Consultant

Sohanur Rahman
Coordinator-YouthNet for Climate Justice

Shah Rafayat Chowdhury
Co-Founder & President, Footsteps Bangladesh



Team AlphaPi showcasing their idea during the final round.



A member of Team Cerevisiae confidently answering a judge's question.



Captured during Team Durjoy DSS's compelling presentation.

বাংলাদেশ কলেজ অব ফিজিশিয়ানস্ এন্ড সার্জনস্
Bangladesh College of Physicians & Surgeons

বিসিপিএস নং-৭৭৬/২০২৩/১১২০৬ তারিখঃ ২৭-০৭-২০২৩ খ্রি.

আউটসোর্সিং (Outsourcing) প্রক্রিয়ায় জনবল নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বাংলাদেশ কলেজ অব ফিজিশিয়ানস্ এন্ড সার্জনস্ (বিসিপিএস)-এর নিম্নবর্ণিত পদ সমূহে সম্পূর্ণ অস্থায়ী ভিত্তিতে আউটসোর্সিং এর মাধ্যমে লোক নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে বাংলাদেশের প্রকৃত নাগরিকদের কাছ থেকে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছেঃ-

ক্র: নং	পদের নাম	পদের সংখ্যা	শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা	বয়স	সর্বসাকুল্যে বেতন (প্রতি মাসে)
১.	অফিস সহকারী কাম- কম্পিউটার মুদ্রাক্ষরিক	০১	(১) ন্যূনতম এইচএসসি বা সমমানের পরীক্ষার উত্তীর্ণ। (২) কম্পিউটার টাইপিংয়ে প্রতি মিনিটে ইংরেজি ২৮টি শব্দ এবং বাংলায় ২০ শব্দের গতি। (৩) কম্পিউটার গ্রন্থিকরণপ্রাপ্ত; এবং (৪) কম্পিউটারে এমএস ওয়ার্ড, এক্সেল, পাওয়ার পয়েন্ট, এক্সেস, ই-মেল এবং যে কোন কাস্টমাইজড সফটওয়্যারে ০২ বছর কাজ করার অভিজ্ঞতা।	অনূর্ধ্ব ৩০ বছর	১৯,১১০/-
২.	ল্যাব এ্যাসিস্টেন্ট	০১	কোনো স্বীকৃত বোর্ড হইতে উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক সনদ বা সমমানের পরীক্ষার উত্তীর্ণ।	অনূর্ধ্ব ৩০ বছর	১৯,১১০/-
৩.	ল্যাব এটেন্ডেন্ট/ অফিস সহায়ক	০১	কোনো স্বীকৃত বোর্ড হইতে মাধ্যমিক স্কুল সার্টিফিকেট বা সমমানের পরীক্ষার উত্তীর্ণ।	অনূর্ধ্ব ৩০ বছর	১৭,৬১০/-
৪.	ক্লিনার	০১	কোনো স্বীকৃত বোর্ড হইতে মাধ্যমিক স্কুল সার্টিফিকেট বা সমমানের পরীক্ষার উত্তীর্ণ।	অনূর্ধ্ব ৩০ বছর	১৭,৬১০/-

প্রার্থীদের জন্য পালনীয় শর্তাবলী ও জ্ঞাতব্য বিষয় সমূহ

- উল্লিখিত পদ সমূহে আবেদনকারীগণকে সাদা কাগজে "সচিব, বাংলাদেশ কলেজ অব ফিজিশিয়ানস্ এন্ড সার্জনস্ (বিসিপিএস), ৬৭, শহীদ তাজউদ্দিন আহমেদ সরণী, মহাখালী, ঢাকা-১২১২" বরাবর আবেদন করতে হবে।
- আবেদনপত্রে আবেদনকারীর পূর্ণ জীবন বৃত্তান্ত যথা: (ক) প্রার্থীর পূর্ণ নাম বাংলায় ও ইংরেজিতে (Capital Letter), (খ) পিতা/স্বামীর নাম, (গ) মাতার নাম, (ঘ) পদের নাম (ঙ) স্থায়ী ঠিকানা, (চ) বর্তমান ঠিকানা, (ছ) জন্ম তারিখ, (জ) ১৭-০৮-২০২৩ খ্রি. তারিখে বয়স (ঝ) ধর্ম, (ঞ) জাতীয়তা, (ট) শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা, (ঠ) অভিজ্ঞতার বিবরণ (ড) জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্রের নম্বর (ঢ) ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার নম্বর এবং (ণ) মোবাইল/ফোন নম্বর উল্লেখ করতে হবে। আবেদনপত্রে অবশ্যই প্রার্থীর স্বাক্ষর থাকতে হবে এবং প্রত্যেকটি ছবির পেছনে প্রার্থীর নাম থাকা আবশ্যিক।
- প্রার্থীগণকে আবেদনপত্রের সাথে (ক) প্রথম শ্রেণীর গেজেটেড কর্মকর্তা কর্তৃক শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতার সকল সনদপত্রের সত্যায়িত অনুলিপি (খ) প্রথম শ্রেণীর গেজেটেড কর্মকর্তা কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত চারিত্রিক সনদপত্র (গ) ইউনিয়ন পরিষদ চেয়ারম্যান/পৌরসভার চেয়ারম্যান/ওয়ার্ড কমিশনারের নিকট হতে নাগরিকদের সনদপত্র (ঘ) সদ্য তোলা পাসপোর্ট সাইজের সত্যায়িত ০৩ কপি ছবি এবং (ঙ) জাতীয় পরিচয় পত্রের সত্যায়িত ফটোকপি সংযুক্ত করতে হবে।
- শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা থাকার ক্ষেত্রে সর্বাধিক পরীক্ষার অ্যাপিয়ার প্রার্থীগণের আবেদন বিবেচনা করা হবে না।
- চাকুরীতে নিয়োজিত অথবা বিভাগীয় প্রার্থীদেরকে অবশ্যই স্ব স্ব নিয়োগকারী কর্তৃপক্ষের মাধ্যমে আবেদন করতে হবে। আবেদনপত্রের কোন অগ্রিম কপি গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে না।
- আবেদনকারীকে খামের উপর পদের নাম অবশ্যই উল্লেখ করতে হবে। একজন আবেদনকারী একাধিক পদের জন্য আবেদন করতে পারবেন না।
- "সচিব, বাংলাদেশ কলেজ অব ফিজিশিয়ানস্ এন্ড সার্জনস্"-এর অনুকূলে ০১নং পদের জন্য ২০০/- (দুইশত) টাকা এবং ০২নং হতে ০৪নং পদের জন্য ১০০/- (একশত) টাকার (অফেংযোগ্য) ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার দরখাস্তের সঙ্গে সংযুক্ত করতে হবে।
- প্রার্থীর আবেদনপত্র খাম বন্ধ অবস্থায় অবশ্যই রেজিষ্ট্রি ডাকযোগে/কুরিয়ার সার্ভিসে অথবা ব্যক্তিগতভাবে সরাসরি নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর দপ্তরে আগামী ১৭-০৮-২০২৩ খ্রি. তারিখ বেলা ২.০০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে পৌঁছাতে হবে। উক্ত তারিখ বা সময়ের পরে ডাকযোগে বা অন্য কোন উপায়ে প্রেরিত আবেদনপত্র গ্রহণযোগ্য হবেনা।
- প্রাপ্ত আবেদনপত্রসমূহ প্রাথমিক বাছাইয়ের পর কেবলমাত্র যোগ্য প্রার্থীদেরকে পরীক্ষার জন্য ডাকা হবে। অসত্য/ভুল তথ্য সন্নিবেশ/অসম্পূর্ণ/কৃত্রিমভাবে পূরণকৃত আবেদনপত্র কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকেই বাতিল করা যাবে। আবেদনপত্র যাচাই-বাছাইয়ের ক্ষেত্রে কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্ত চূড়ান্ত বলে গণ্য হবে।

(অধ্যাপক আবুল বাশার মোঃ জামাল)
সচিব
বাংলাদেশ কলেজ অব ফিজিশিয়ানস্ এন্ড সার্জনস্ (বিসিপিএস)

GD- 1159

বাংলাদেশ কলেজ অব ফিজিশিয়ানস্ এন্ড সার্জনস্
Bangladesh College of Physicians & Surgeons

বিসিপিএস নং-৭৭৬/২০২৩/১১২০৭ তারিখঃ ২৭-০৭-২০২৩ খ্রি.

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বাংলাদেশ কলেজ অব ফিজিশিয়ানস্ এন্ড সার্জনস্ (বিসিপিএস)-এর নিম্নবর্ণিত শূন্য পদ সমূহে লোক নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে বাংলাদেশের প্রকৃত নাগরিকদের কাছ থেকে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছেঃ-

ক্র: নং	পদের নাম	পদের সংখ্যা	শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা	বয়স	বেতনক্রম (জাতীয় বেতন স্কেল ২০১৫ মোতাবেক)
১.	সহকারী পরিচালক (চিকিৎসা শিক্ষা)	০১	(ক) কোনো স্বীকৃত প্রতিষ্ঠান হইতে চিকিৎসা বিজ্ঞানে Fellowship of the College of Physicians & Surgeons (এফসিপিএস) বা সমমানের ডিগ্রি; (খ) কোনো স্বীকৃত ইনস্টিটিউট হইতে চিকিৎসা শিক্ষায় ডিপ্লোমা বা প্রশিক্ষণপ্রাপ্ত; এবং (গ) সরকারি, আধা-সরকারি বা স্বায়ত্তশাসিত কোনো প্রতিষ্ঠানে সহযোগী অধ্যাপক পদমর্যাদা সম্পন্ন কোনো কর্মকর্তা।	অনূর্ধ্ব ৩০ বছর	৩৫৫০০- ৬৭০১০
২.	পাবলিকেশন অফিসার	০১	(ক) কোনো স্বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হইতে স্নাতকোত্তর বা সমমানের ডিগ্রি; (খ) কম্পিউটার চালানায় দক্ষতা; (গ) ইংরেজি ভাষায় দক্ষতা; এবং (ঘ) প্রস্তুত/রিডিং কাজে অভিজ্ঞতাসহ সরকারি, আধা-সরকারি বা স্বায়ত্তশাসিত কোনো প্রতিষ্ঠানে সহকারী পাবলিকেশন কর্মকর্তা বা অনুরূপ কোনো পদে অনূন্য ০৫ (পাঁচ) বৎসরের চাকরির অভিজ্ঞতা।	অনূর্ধ্ব ৩০ বছর	২২০০০-৫৩০৬০
৩.	সভাপতির একান্ত সচিব	০১	(ক) কোনো স্বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হইতে স্নাতকোত্তর বা সমমানের ডিগ্রি; (খ) ইংরেজি ভাষায় দক্ষতা; (গ) কম্পিউটার চালানায় দক্ষতা; এবং (ঘ) সরকারি, আধা-সরকারি বা স্বায়ত্তশাসিত কোনো প্রতিষ্ঠানে নির্বাহী প্রধান কর্মকর্তার ব্যক্তিগত কর্মকর্তা বা অনুরূপ কোনো পদে অনূন্য ০৫ (পাঁচ) বৎসরের চাকরির অভিজ্ঞতা।	অনূর্ধ্ব ৩০ বছর	২২০০০-৫৩০৬০
৪.	হিসাব সহকারী	০১	(ক) কোনো স্বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হইতে বাণিজ্য অনুষদের কোনো বিষয়ে স্নাতক বা সমমানের ডিগ্রি; তবে শর্ত থাকে যে, হিসাববিজ্ঞানে স্নাতকসহ কম্পিউটারের MS Office Programme-এ দক্ষতাসম্পন্ন প্রার্থীদের অগ্রাধিকার প্রদান করা হইবে।	অনূর্ধ্ব ৩০ বছর	১২৫০০-৩০২৩০

প্রার্থীদের জন্য পালনীয় শর্তাবলী ও জ্ঞাতব্য বিষয় সমূহ

- উল্লিখিত পদ সমূহে আবেদনকারীগণকে সাদা কাগজে "সচিব, বাংলাদেশ কলেজ অব ফিজিশিয়ানস্ এন্ড সার্জনস্ (বিসিপিএস), ৬৭, শহীদ তাজউদ্দিন আহমেদ সরণী, মহাখালী, ঢাকা-১২১২" বরাবর আবেদন করতে হবে।
- আবেদনপত্রে আবেদনকারীর পূর্ণ জীবন বৃত্তান্ত যথা: (ক) প্রার্থীর পূর্ণ নাম বাংলায় ও ইংরেজিতে (Capital Letter), (খ) পিতা/স্বামীর নাম, (গ) মাতার নাম, (ঘ) পদের নাম (ঙ) স্থায়ী ঠিকানা, (চ) বর্তমান ঠিকানা, (ছ) জন্ম তারিখ, (জ) ১৭-০৮-২০২৩ খ্রি. তারিখে বয়স (ঝ) ধর্ম, (ঞ) জাতীয়তা, (ট) শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা, (ঠ) অভিজ্ঞতার বিবরণ (ড) জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্রের নম্বর (ঢ) ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার নম্বর এবং (ণ) মোবাইল/ফোন নম্বর উল্লেখ করতে হবে। আবেদনপত্রে অবশ্যই প্রার্থীর স্বাক্ষর থাকতে হবে এবং প্রত্যেকটি ছবির পেছনে প্রার্থীর নাম থাকা আবশ্যিক।
- প্রার্থীগণকে আবেদনপত্রের সাথে (ক) প্রথম শ্রেণীর গেজেটেড কর্মকর্তা কর্তৃক শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতার সকল সনদপত্রের সত্যায়িত অনুলিপি (খ) প্রথম শ্রেণীর গেজেটেড কর্মকর্তা কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত চারিত্রিক সনদপত্র (গ) ইউনিয়ন পরিষদ চেয়ারম্যান/পৌরসভার চেয়ারম্যান/ওয়ার্ড কমিশনারের নিকট হতে নাগরিকদের সনদপত্র (ঘ) সদ্য তোলা পাসপোর্ট সাইজের সত্যায়িত ০৩ কপি ছবি এবং (ঙ) জাতীয় পরিচয় পত্রের সত্যায়িত ফটোকপি সংযুক্ত করতে হবে।
- কোন বোর্ড বা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের অধীন কোন পরীক্ষার ওর বিভাগ/শ্রেণি বা সমমানের স্নেহ প্রাপ্ত আবেদনকারীর আবেদন গ্রহণযোগ্য নয়।
- শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা থাকার ক্ষেত্রে সর্বাধিক পরীক্ষার অ্যাপিয়ার প্রার্থীগণের আবেদন বিবেচনা করা হবে না।
- উল্লিখিত পদসমূহের জন্য কেবলমাত্র সরকারি/আধা-সরকারি/স্বায়ত্তশাসিত বা সমগোত্রীয় প্রতিষ্ঠানে চাকুরীর অভিজ্ঞতা বিবেচনা করা হবে।
- চাকুরীতে নিয়োজিত অথবা বিভাগীয় প্রার্থীদেরকে অবশ্যই স্ব স্ব নিয়োগকারী কর্তৃপক্ষের মাধ্যমে আবেদন করতে হবে। আবেদনপত্রের কোন অগ্রিম কপি গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে না।
- আবেদনকারীকে খামের উপর পদের নাম অবশ্যই উল্লেখ করতে হবে। একজন আবেদনকারী একাধিক পদের জন্য আবেদন করতে পারবেন না।
- মুক্তিযোদ্ধা/শহীদ মুক্তিযোদ্ধার পুত্র/কন্যা হিসাবে চাকুরী প্রার্থীদের মুক্তিযোদ্ধা/শহীদ মুক্তিযোদ্ধা পিতা/মাতার মুক্তিযোদ্ধা সনাক্ত সার্টিফিকেট (যা গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকারের মুক্তিযোদ্ধা বিষয়ক মন্ত্রণালয়ের সচিব এবং মাননীয় মন্ত্রী/প্রতিমন্ত্রী/উপদেষ্টা কর্তৃক যথাক্রমে স্বাক্ষরিত এবং প্রতি স্বাক্ষরিত/ ১৯৭৭-২০০১ সাল পর্যন্ত বাংলাদেশ মুক্তিযোদ্ধা সংসদের অধীনে তৎকালীন মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী কর্তৃক প্রতি স্বাক্ষরিত)-এর সত্যায়িত কপি আবেদন পত্রের সাথে জমা দিতে হবে।
- "সচিব, বাংলাদেশ কলেজ অব ফিজিশিয়ানস্ এন্ড সার্জনস্"-এর অনুকূলে ১ নং হতে ৩ নং পদ সমূহে ৫০০/- টাকা এবং ০৪ নং পদের জন্য ২০০/- টাকার (অফেংযোগ্য) ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার দরখাস্তের সঙ্গে সংযুক্ত করতে হবে।
- প্রার্থীর আবেদনপত্র খাম বন্ধ অবস্থায় অবশ্যই রেজিষ্ট্রি ডাকযোগে/কুরিয়ার সার্ভিসে অথবা ব্যক্তিগতভাবে সরাসরি নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর দপ্তরে আগামী ১৭-০৮-২০২৩-খ্রি. তারিখ বেলা ২.০০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে পৌঁছাতে হবে। উক্ত তারিখ বা সময়ের পরে ডাকযোগে বা অন্য কোন উপায়ে প্রেরিত আবেদনপত্র গ্রহণযোগ্য হবেনা।
- প্রাপ্ত আবেদনপত্রসমূহ প্রাথমিক বাছাইয়ের পর কেবলমাত্র যোগ্য প্রার্থীদেরকে পরীক্ষার জন্য ডাকা হবে। অসত্য/ভুল তথ্য সন্নিবেশ/অসম্পূর্ণ/কৃত্রিমভাবে পূরণকৃত আবেদনপত্র কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকেই বাতিল করা যাবে। আবেদনপত্র যাচাই-বাছাইয়ের ক্ষেত্রে কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্ত চূড়ান্ত বলে গণ্য হবে।
- বিভাগীয় প্রার্থী নিয়োগের ক্ষেত্রে বয়স শিথিলযোগ্য।

(অধ্যাপক আবুল বাশার মোঃ জামাল)
সচিব
বাংলাদেশ কলেজ অব ফিজিশিয়ানস্ এন্ড সার্জনস্ (বিসিপিএস)

GD- 1160

AI RISKS

Tech giants form group to ensure safety

AFP, San Francisco

Four US leaders in artificial intelligence (AI) announced yesterday the formation of an industry group devoted to addressing risks that cutting edge versions of the technology may pose.

Anthropic, Google, Microsoft, and ChatGPT-maker OpenAI said the newly created Frontier Model Forum will draw on the expertise of its members to minimize AI risks and support industry standards.

The companies pledged to share best practices with each other, lawmakers and researchers.

"Companies creating AI technology have a responsibility to ensure that it is safe, secure, and remains under human control," Microsoft president Brad Smith said in a statement.

"This initiative is a vital step to bring the tech sector together in advancing AI responsibly."



Flames and smoke rise as a wildfire burns near the village of Asklipieio, on the island of Rhodes, Greece, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Cambodian PM to step down after 4 decades

AFP, Phnom Penh

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen, one of the world's longest-serving leaders, said yesterday he will resign and hand power to his eldest son after almost four decades of hardline rule.

The former Khmer Rouge cadre has run the kingdom since 1985, eliminating all opposition to his power, with rival parties banned, challengers forced to flee and freedom of expression stifled.

His Cambodian People's Party (CPP) won a landslide victory in an election on Sunday with no meaningful opposition, taking 82 percent of the vote, paving the way for a dynastic succession to his eldest son that some critics have compared to North Korea.

"I would like to ask for understanding from the people as I announce that I will not continue as prime minister," the 70-year-old said in a special broadcast on state television.

Election authorities disqualified the only serious challenger, the Candlelight Party, on a technicality in advance of the election, and the CPP is expected to win all but five lower house seats.

The government hailed the 84.6 percent voter turnout as evidence of the country's "democratic maturity" but Western powers, including the United States and the European Union, condemned the poll as neither free nor fair.

The UN's human rights chief Volker Turk added his own criticism yesterday, saying opposition parties and media had faced "restrictions and reprisals" aimed at hindering free elections.

Junta may move Suu Kyi to house arrest

Reports say

REUTERS

Myanmar's military government may move ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi from prison to house arrest in the capital, Naypyitaw, two media outlets reported yesterday.

The 78-year-old Nobel laureate has been in detention since her arrest in early 2021 when the military overthrew her elected government in a coup and unleashed a bloody crackdown on opponents that has seen thousands jailed or killed.

The Associated Press cited an unidentified security official as saying the move was an act of clemency to prisoners as part of a religious ceremony due next week.

The BBC Burmese-language service cited a "source close to the prison" as saying she may have already been moved to a house usually used by government officials.

Reuters could not independently verify the reports or Suu Kyi's whereabouts.

A spokesman for Myanmar's ruling military was not immediately available for comment. Suu Kyi's lawyers and a spokesperson for the shadow National Unity Government, could not confirm.

Russia, North Korea to strengthen defence cooperation

Says Moscow; Kyiv top diplomat visits Liberia; new \$400 million aid package for Ukraine from US includes Black Hornet spy drone

REUTERS

Russia and North Korea plan to strengthen defence cooperation, Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu said yesterday after talks in Pyongyang with his North Korean counterpart.

"I am convinced that today's talks will contribute to strengthening cooperation between our defence departments," Shoigu said in remarks published by Russia's Defence Ministry.

Shoigu was heading a Russian delegation visiting North Korea for commemorations marking the 70th anniversary of the Korean War and the struggle against the United States and its allies.

Meanwhile, Ukraine's top diplomat visited Liberia yesterday on a third wartime tour of Africa as Russia prepares to host a summit with leaders from the continent this week after the demise of the Black Sea grain deal.

The Liberia trip by Dmytro Kuleba, the first such visit in the history of Ukrainian diplomacy, according to the foreign ministry, comes amid a concerted push by Kyiv to challenge Russian influence in Africa and the wider "Global South".

Images from Russia's defence ministry and North Korean media showed Shoigu being greeted by North Korean defence minister Kang Sun Nam and Russian ambassador Alexander Matsegora at the airport, and rows of North Korean and Russian troops.

The United States has accused North Korea of providing weapons to Russia during the war in Ukraine, including an arms delivery of infantry rockets and missiles to the Kremlin-backed Wagner mercenary group in November 2022.

Pyongyang and Moscow have denied those claims,

but Kim has vowed to bolster strategic cooperation between the nations.

The military parade in Pyongyang is likely to include as many as 15,000 personnel, and possibly feature new designs of nuclear-capable weapons, said Yang Moo jin, a professor at the University of North Korean Studies in Seoul.

Elsewhere, The US Department of Defense announced \$400 million in additional security assistance for Ukraine on Tuesday, including air defense missiles, armored vehicles and small drones, as Ukraine's counteroffensive against Russia grinds on.

The new aid package, which was first reported by Reuters, will include for the first time US furnished Black Hornet surveillance drones made by Teledyne FLIR Defense, part of Teledyne Technologies TDY.N.

The Norwegian-built Hornet is being used in Ukraine through donations by the British and Norwegian governments, the company said. FLIR Unmanned Aerial Systems was awarded a \$93 million contract in April to provide the small reconnaissance drones to the US Army.

Ukraine's Foreign Minister Kuleba during his visit to the African country, will hold talks with Liberian leaders to discuss "ensuring the export of Ukrainian grain to Africa" as well as the vision for peace in Ukraine set out by President Volodymyr Zelenskiy, the ministry said.

"Against the backdrop of Russia's food blackmail, Ukraine is maximizing its consolidation of support from African countries to continue exporting Ukrainian grain to the Black Sea," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Oleg Nikolenko said this week.

Taiwan conducts military drill at main airport

REUTERS, Taoyuan

Taiwan conducted an anti-aircraft landing drill at its main international airport for the first time yesterday, simulating the repulsion of an invading force as China ramps up military pressure to force the island to accept its sovereignty.

The drill at the island's main Taoyuan international airport was part of Taiwan's main annual Han Kuang exercises that started on Monday, focusing on protecting its infrastructure.

Six helicopters including Apache attack helicopters and some 180 soldiers took part in the drill to simulate the repulsion of an enemy force who had seized control of air traffic control facilities at the airport, the defence ministry said.

Soldiers carrying rifles were seen running on the runway to fight off enemy forces being dropped off by the helicopters. Shortly, a soldier waved Taiwan's national flag on a jet bridge, signalling their victory.

Overseeing a separate drill in the northern city of Taoyuan simulating physical and cyber attacks on an oil refinery, President Tsai Ing-wen said Taiwan must boost its resilience in the event of an emergency.

Florida ocean temperature tops 100F

AFP, Miami

Shallow waters off south Florida topped 100 degrees Fahrenheit (37.8C) for several hours on Monday, potentially setting a new world record with temperatures more commonly associated with hot tubs.

The readings were taken from a single buoy in Manatee Bay, about 38 miles (60 kilometers) southwest of Miami, at a depth of five feet (1.5 meters).

A peak temperature of 101.1F was recorded at 6:00 pm, official data showed.

The previous known high might have been 99.7F recorded in Kuwait Bay.

51 whales dead after mass stranding in Australia

AFP, Sydney



Dozens of pilot whales have died just hours after stranding themselves on a beach in Western Australia, authorities said yesterday.

The 51 long-finned pilot whales were among a pod of almost 100 spotted off Cheynes Beach near Albany, about 400 kilometres (250 miles) southeast of Perth on Tuesday.

The state's Parks and Wildlife Service said it was working with volunteers to try to save the remaining 46 whales, with plans to guide them to deeper water during the course of the day.

A spokesperson for the organisation said it had been "overwhelmed with hundreds of offers of help" but that it has enough volunteers and the public should "stay away" from the beach.

Iran enforcing 'intensified' hijab crackdown

Rights group says

AFP, Paris

Iranian authorities have in the last months launched an intensified crackdown against women deemed to have violated the Islamic republic's strict dress rules, Amnesty International said yesterday.

Iran was convulsed for months by unprecedented protests sparked by the September 2022 custody death of Mahsa Amini, 22, who had been arrested by the morality police for purportedly breaking the rules.

With the intensity of protests diminishing over the last months, Amnesty said Iranian authorities had launched a new crackdown on women's dress since April.

"The Iranian authorities are doubling down their oppressive methods of policing and punishing women and girls to quell widespread defiance of degrading and discriminatory compulsory veiling laws," Amnesty said.

It has been obligatory for women to cover their heads and necks since shortly after the Islamic revolution of 1979 that ousted the secular shah.

But Amnesty said there is in fact "an intensified nationwide crackdown", and noted that police this month announced the return of car and foot patrols enforcing compulsory veiling across the country.

According to Amnesty, more than a million women have received SMS warnings threatening that their vehicles will be confiscated if they are found travelling in a car while unveiled.



Taiwanese soldiers take part in the military Han Guang drill at the Taoyuan International Airport yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

3 die in Greece as wildfires rage

AFP, Rhodes

Raging wildfires in Greece turned deadly yesterday when a firefighting plane crashed, killing two pilots, and a third person was found dead as relentless heatwaves fuelled flames.

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.

The pilots were members of the Greek air force, and the defence ministry said it had declared a three-day mourning period.

"They lost their lives, saving lives," the Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said in a statement.

The Greek defence ministry ordered three days of mourning in the armed forces.

Another man was found dead according to Greek police spokeswoman.

TYPHOON DOKSURI 2 dead in Philippines Taiwan, China threatened

REUTERS, MANILA/BELING/TAIPEI

At least one person died as powerful typhoon Doksuri lashed the coastline of the northern Philippines with gale-force winds and torrential rain yesterday, bursting banks of rivers and leaving thousands without electricity.

Rain pounded coastal communities, including isolated villages tucked away in tropical forests. Many people had already been moved to safer areas ahead of the storm, which brought winds of up to 175 kilometres per hour (108 miles per hour).

"We're being battered here," Manuel Mamba, governor of the northern corn-growing Cagayan province, told Reuters.

The storm, labelled as a super typhoon by China's Meteorological Administration, is nearly 900 km (560 miles) across and is expected to sustain strength as it continues towards Taiwan and the Chinese mainland.

China's weather agency has already raised its storm alert to the second-highest tier and the manufacturing hub of Guangdong province has warned of the worst storm in a decade.

Doksuri is expected to make landfall in China on Friday, the second typhoon to land in under two weeks after Talim slammed into Guangdong on July 17.

Throughout July, record temperatures have caused havoc across the globe, sparking wildfires in the US and the Mediterranean. Scientists say global warming will also make storms wetter, windier and more violent.

In the Philippines, at least one person drowned in the province of Rizal, the national disaster agency said.

More than 4,000 passengers were stranded at ports across the country after sea travel was suspended, the Philippine coast guard said.

The storm's outer rain bands were expected to hit southern Taiwan later yesterday, its Central Weather Bureau said.

Taiwanese authorities issued warnings for several counties and cities in the south including the major port city of Kaohsiung.



Members of the Philippine Coast Guard remove a fallen tree from a road following the onslaught of Typhoon Doksuri in Buguey, Cagayan province, Philippines yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

JUDICIAL CRISIS Israel Supreme Court to hear appeal

Netanyahu suffers polls dip

REUTERS, Jerusalem

Israel's Supreme Court said yesterday it would hear an appeal against a new law that curbs some of its own powers, pitting it against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's right-wing government that is seeking an overhaul of the judicial system.

A bench decision posted on the court's website said a hearing will be set for the appeal in September. The court did not issue an injunction against the new law, which came into effect yesterday.

A political watchdog and Israel's bar association had petitioned the court to intervene.

Critics say the changes will open the door to corruption and abuses of power by removing effective checks on the governing executive's authority.

The judicial overhaul has caused a deep divide in Israeli society, kindling months of unprecedented protests, stirring concern among allies abroad including top supporter Washington for the health of Israel's 75-year-old democracy, and straining the loyalties of some army reservists.

But it has also seen Arab citizens, who make up a fifth of Israel's population, stay on the sidelines, disillusioned with what they say is systemic discrimination

that has left them disproportionately disadvantaged. They say they have no place in the debate over Israel's identity as Jewish and democratic.

Netanyahu has taken a hit in opinion polls. Surveys by two main Israeli news broadcasters showed that if an election was held now, the number of seats held by his hard-right governing coalition in the 120-seat Knesset (parliament) would fall from 64 to 52 or 53.

Seats held by the 73-year-old premier's Likud party would fall from 32 to 28, according to N12 News, and to as low as 25, according to Reshet 13 in the polls published late on Tuesday.

Blinken criticises China's 'problematic behaviour'

REUTERS, Wellington

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken warned of China's "problematic behaviour" during a visit to the Pacific island nation of Tonga on Wednesday, citing Beijing's militarisation of the South China Sea and what he called economic coercion.

China's growing presence in the region, which saw it sign a security pact with the Solomon Islands last year, has fuelled concern in the US and Australia about Beijing's ambitions. It also prompted increased Western aid and engagement.

Blinken said at a press conference that the US had no objection to China's engagement with the region but there were concerns that its investments needed to be transparent and undertaken with sustainable finance.

"I think one of the things that we've seen is that as China's engagement in the (Indo-Pacific) region has grown there has been some, from our perspective, increasingly problematic behaviour," he said.

Japan sees record drop in population

AFP, Tokyo

Japan's population fell by a record in 2022, government data showed yesterday, as the country struggles to reverse its perennial low birthrates.

While many developed countries face low birthrates, the problem is particularly acute in Japan where the population has now fallen for 14 straight years.

The country has the world's second oldest population, after tiny Monaco, and in January, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida warned Japan was "on the verge of whether we can continue to function as a society".

Last year, the number of Japanese fell by 800,523, or 0.65 percent, to 122,423,038 from a year earlier, a survey by the internal affairs ministry shows.

For the first time, the population fell in all 47 prefectures.

The overall drop was the steepest decline recorded since 1968, when the government survey began, the ministry said.

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Police excesses must stop

Report on police raid leading to girl's suicide is deeply alarming

It was only the other day that we commented on an incident in Natore in which five cops allegedly tortured three men in custody, leading to the local court asking the police authorities to file a case against the officers responsible. While a court's intervention on behalf of helpless victims is laudable, the truth is, bereft of institutional accountability, it is hardly a deterrent against police excesses, which have been occurring with frightening regularity in the country. The latest to be reported by the media occurred in Pallabi, Dhaka, where Baishakhi Akhter, aged 16, allegedly took her own life after police attempted to detain her mother during a raid.

There have been contrasting claims about what really happened. Police allege that the family ran a drug business and that the aim of the raid on their home was to "recover narcotics." But the family denied these allegations. Our concern is not about whether the family had any criminal history, but what happened after the so-called raid and whether police were somehow responsible for the tragedy that followed. According to Baishakhi's family, not only did the police team attempt to extort money from them, but they also tortured mother and daughter before hauling Baishakhi off to a room where, locked from outside, she threatened and subsequently committed suicide.

The truth of the matter will only come out if a thorough investigation is conducted. However, from what has been reported, several facts stand on their own: 1) police conducted the "raid" in plain clothes; 2) a young girl killed herself during the raid; and 3) something happened during the raid that prompted it, leading to angry protests by locals. These facts are enough to indicate foul play at some stage of the raid. The picture that emerges from media reports – as well as the history of police involvement in extortion using the well-worn excuse of narcotics possession – is once again a reminder that beyond token disciplinary measures, not much is being done to ensure accountability of the errant members of this vital force.

In the past, we have often seen how the authorities tried to discredit allegations of police misconduct by citing the supposed criminality of victims. But in the eyes of law, everyone deserves to be treated with dignity and given a fair chance to be heard in a court of law. But it is because of police's vigilante-style raids – using the cover of plain clothes – that such principles stand violated, and that people find it hard to trust them. In these columns, we have also often raised concerns about how such police excesses and extrajudicial actions have created fears among ordinary citizens. A continuation of this situation will be most frustrating.

We, therefore, urge the police authorities to ensure a fair investigation into the Baishakhi tragedy and bring anyone responsible to book. Unless they take proper steps in such cases, public trust in police may never be recovered.

Black Sea grain deal must be upheld

Russia should consider the bigger picture of global food crisis

We are gravely concerned about Russia's decision to not rejoin the Black Sea Grain Initiative. Reportedly, the country recently rejected the UN chief's call in this regard, which we fear may severely affect global food supply, especially in countries that are dependent on grain imports. Ukraine is a major producer of staple crops such as wheat, corn, maize, oilseeds, etc. For three years prior to the Russia-Ukraine war, about 10 percent of the wheat and 15 percent of the corn traded globally came from Ukraine. Russia, too, had a major contribution to global food as well as fertiliser supplies.

Given how food prices in the international market shot up as Ukraine's grain exports got disrupted following the war, the UN and Türkiye stepped in to broker the Black Sea Grain Initiative in July 2022 – which opened up Ukraine's ports in the Black Sea for grain exports. Under the deal, the World Food Programme (WFP) procured more than half of its global wheat supply from Ukraine to run aid operations in several countries.

With Russia refusing to rejoin the deal now, chances are those ports will become inaccessible, which means Ukraine won't be able to ship grains anymore. That does not bode well for the rest of the world. Already, this development is affecting food prices. In Bangladesh, which is the third largest importer of wheat from Ukraine, the price of low-grade wheat shot up by Tk 20-30 per maund at Chattogram's Khatunganj wholesale market the day after Russia announced it was pulling out of the deal.

Russia's refusal does have some merit, however. It says it sees no reason to uphold the deal as the commitments made to facilitate its food and fertiliser exports under the deal have yet to be fulfilled. While Western sanctions on Russia do not apply to food and fertiliser exports, restrictions on payments, logistics and insurance have certainly hindered shipments, according to Moscow. We understand its troubles, but Russia must see the bigger picture and consider how its decision will affect millions of people around the world. On humanitarian grounds, as well as to strengthen its global standing, Russia must consider rejoining the deal to avert a potential catastrophe. At the same time, we urge the UN to find ways to accommodate Russia's demands so that the integrity of the initiative is upheld.

Our social safety budget is neither equitable nor efficient



Dr. Bazlul Haque Khondker is chairman at South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (Sanem) and former faculty member of the University of Dhaka. He can be reached at bazlul.khondker@gmail.com

BAZLUL H. KHONDKER

Social protection is an important component of the national budget in Bangladesh, which essentially aims to improve the welfare of vulnerable citizens. Identifying the pitfalls of the social protection system and realising the importance of improving it to meet certain objectives, Bangladesh adopted the National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) in 2015. Thereafter, it was agreed that the recommendations of the NSSS will be implemented through medium-term five year plans and annual economic plans, such as the national budget. Based on this, the analysis for the social protection budget should ideally be carried out in line with the NSSS.

Reforms outlined in the NSSS fell under two broad categories: programmatic reform and institutional reform. On the other hand, the reforms may also be considered from equity and efficiency lenses. The proposal to cover 50-60 percent of vulnerable citizens, increase social protection expenditure to three percent of GDP, and enhance transfer values to reflect the needs of beneficiaries originate from an equity perspective. Improvement of the payment system (such as G2P), installation of an MIS system, establishment of a single registry, and digitisation of data are some of the proposals adopted in the NSSS on grounds of efficiency. Improvement of the beneficiary selection (that is, minimising the exclusion and inclusion errors) covers both equity and efficiency.

How does the social protection budget for the 2023-24 fiscal year fare when analysed through the lenses of equity and efficiency?

Allocation and equity

The government has allocated Tk 126,272 crore, around 7.4 percent more than last year's social protection allocation of Tk 113,576 crore. However, in terms of GDP, the allocation in FY2023-24 is 2.52 percent – which falls short of the NSSS target of three percent of GDP. This is a disturbing development. The Tk 126,272 crore allocation may be considered as gross allocation, since it includes a number of items which are not usually categorised as social safety net items. These include pensions for retired government employees and their families, interest payments for national savings certificates, agriculture subsidies, interest subsidy for SMEs, and allocation for health risk and natural shock management. Together, these constitute around 59 percent of the total social protection budget allocation for FY2023-24. In other words, the net social safety allocation for vulnerable citizens is



VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

only around 41 percent of the social protection budget. This amount was around 64 percent of the gross allocation in both FY2020-21 and FY2021-22. But a significant drop occurred in FY2022-23 by about 18 percent, and by 23 percent in FY2023-24. Again, the declining trend in net allocation is a serious cause of concern.

Another important observation is that, due to rural to urban migration, poverty and vulnerability have been shifting to urban areas in Bangladesh. However, the social protection system is not keeping pace with this development. As a result, the coverage gap (the difference between poverty rate and social safety expenditure) has widened for the urban poor in Bangladesh. The government must use the social protection allocation to reduce these gaps and establish parity in social safety budget allocation between rural and urban areas.

Beneficiary selection and efficiency Bangladesh's social safety system is still beset with myriad exclusion and inclusion errors, reflecting the inefficiency in reaching out to deserving beneficiaries. To remedy this, the NSSS recommended establishing a single registry system (that is, a comprehensive database of existing and potential beneficiaries), a robust management information system (MIS), and a grievance filing mechanism. Progress has been slow on all these fronts. In particular, the country has neither established a single registry system, nor installed a robust MIS. The National Household Database (NHD) was initiated by the

Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) with support from the World Bank to prepare a comprehensive household-level database. However, NHD's fate is still unclear. Even if it is now made available, the database would have lost its relevance due to demographic transition (or dynamism) and large income growth. Meanwhile, the

A modern and balanced social protection system is composed of three pillars: social assistance (SA), social insurance (SI), and active labour market programmes (ALMP). When SI and ALMP are active, private sector participation increases. However, both these pillars are underdeveloped in Bangladesh.

criteria used for beneficiary selection were prepared in 2013 and are still in use, raising serious concern about their usefulness due to their lack of dynamism and adaptability.

Since it is more or less accepted that the NHD has failed, it was expected that for the FY2023-24 social protection budget, the government would have rectified its position regarding the NHD by discarding it and experimenting with new alternatives that would be home-grown and less expensive. In this context, it should be mentioned that under the Asian Development Bank (ADB)-supported Covid-19 Active Response and Expenditure Support (CARES) programme, and in collaboration with the Department of Social Services (DSS), a pilot community-based targeting and selection process (CBTSP) was carried out in two unions in Bangladesh between March and April 2023. Only two programmes – old age allowance and widow allowance – were considered. In terms of selection efficiency, the pilot CBTSP produced encouraging outcomes suggesting that, with community involvement, it is possible to better identify beneficiaries for social protection programmes. And following focused group discussions, social mapping, transect walks, and dedicated household surveys, it would be possible to prepare a master beneficiary list and separate beneficiary lists for most of our social safety programmes.

Also, allowing private participation in social protection could improve efficiency, coverage, and lessen burden on the national budget.

As is apparent, both equity and efficiency have been ignored while formulating the FY2023-24 social safety budget allocation. Unless measures are included to improve equity and efficiency, the benefits of the social protection budget will continue to be low. The government may consider some solutions in this regard.

First, it must commit to enhancing net social safety allocation to around three percent of GDP. The social protection budget should be used to ensure parity in allocation across rural and urban areas and across all age groups.

Since the NHD is not functional, the government must look for an alternative beneficiary selection approach. The CBTSP approach may be an important source of information to prepare an evidence-based social protection budget, which is likely to improve selection, reduce leakage, and improve value for money. However, in order to assess its robustness and scale it up at the national level, the CBTSP may be conducted in eight upazilas spread over four regions – north, south, east, and west – to allow assessments and inclusion of regional characteristics.

Additionally, the criteria used for beneficiary selection for social safety programmes need complete overhauling. Hence, there is a need not only to update them but also include periodic automatic updates in line with economic expansion. The government must also ensure balance between the three social protection pillars to generate maximum benefits and ensure private sector participation.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send us your letters to letters@thedailystar.net

Go green!

With our world facing increasing environmental challenges, adopting a sustainable lifestyle has become more crucial than ever. We need a movement that encourages individuals to make conscious choices that reduce their impact on the environment. By incorporating eco-friendly practices into our daily lives, we can contribute to a healthier planet and ensure a better future for generations to come.

With the increasing threats of climate change, resource reduction, and environmental degradation, it has become urgent to adopt sustainable practices and promote a green lifestyle. By embracing renewable energy, sustainable transportation, and energy-efficient technologies, we can collectively reduce our carbon footprint and work towards a greener future. Creating an eco-friendly home is a fundamental step towards sustainable living. Start by conserving energy through

efficient insulation, using LED bulbs, and investing in energy-saving appliances. Reduce water consumption by fixing leaks, installing low-flow faucets, and harvesting rainwater for gardening purposes. Embrace recycling and composting to minimise waste and promote a circular economy. Additionally, consider using non-toxic cleaning products and integrating indoor plants into your home environment to improve air quality.

We should also opt for eco-friendly transportation methods – choose public transport, biking, or walking whenever possible. If you need a car, consider investing in a hybrid or electric vehicle. These options not only reduce emissions, but also help save money on fuel in the long run. Additionally, regular vehicle maintenance ensures optimal fuel efficiency and reduces environmental impact.

Before making a purchase, evaluate the necessity and

durability of the product. Choose quality over quantity and opt for items made from sustainable materials. Support ethical and eco-friendly brands that prioritise fair trade practices, use renewable resources, or incorporate recycled materials. Embrace the concept of minimalism, decluttering, and sharing resources to reduce waste generation.

To promote sustainable eating habits, opt for locally-sourced, organic, and seasonal produce. Support farmers' markets and community-supported agriculture initiatives to reduce food miles and promote local economies. As livestock production is a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, decreasing meat consumption can also help. Instead, we could embrace a plant-based or flexitarian diet, consuming more fruits, vegetables, and sustainable protein sources like legumes.

When travelling, consider eco-friendly alternatives that

minimise your carbon footprint. Opt for destinations that prioritise sustainable tourism practices, such as promoting local culture, preserving natural habitats, and supporting community development. Choose eco-lodges or accommodations with green certifications. Minimise waste by carrying reusable water bottles, shopping bags, and toiletries. Respect local ecosystems and cultural heritage by practising responsible and low-impact tourism.

Small changes in our daily routines can lead to significant environmental benefits. Let us strive to live consciously, protect natural resources, and inspire others to join this green revolution. Together, it must create a sustainable and thriving future for generations to come.

Taslim Ahammad
Assistant professor, BSMRSTU
Gopalganj, Bangladesh



Our water development efforts lack an understanding of local cultural and indigenous practices related to flood and land use in the river delta. PHOTO: MARUF AREFIN MIM

Living with the river or fighting against it?



Dr Mohammad Zaman has carried out extensive ethnographic research on flood, erosion disasters, and displacement in the Brahmaputra-Jamuna floodplain. His recently edited book (co-edited by Mustajab Alam) is titled 'Living on the Edge: Char Dwellers in Bangladesh.'

MOHAMMAD ZAMAN

As recent reports and editorials in this newspaper have conveyed, the scale of river erosion in eight northwestern districts, particularly Kurigram and Lalmonirhat, is very alarming. The heart-breaking stories of people losing their homes and hearth, their sources of livelihood, and all their belongings, are all too common in Bangladesh. As a result, close to one million people are internally displaced annually due to river erosion in the country.

As a delta country, Bangladesh is largely formed by river deposition, erosion, and redeposition. Major river systems such as the Teesta, Brahmaputra-Jamuna, Padma, and Meghna, together with their larger tributaries, are continually eating up land from one bank and depositing silt to the other. As Kazi Nazrul Islam's verse goes, "E kul bhang, o kul gorey, eito nodir khela" ("Here a bank breaks, there another emerges. Such is the play of rivers"). In the process, alluvial chars of various sizes also emerge as agricultural frontiers, which are populated and often whither away again. This erosion and accretion of land is a characteristic feature of the active river systems of Bangladesh.

The annual flooding and the massive flow of water from upstream Himalayas cause extensive bankline erosion and channel migration, associated with the siltation of river beds as chars, further amplifying flood risks and erosion. This also has macro and micro impacts on the rural population and land-based economy of the country. The earliest response by the government to this "twin" problem of flooding and erosion can be traced back to the measures recommended by the United Nations Krug Mission in 1956, following the massive floods in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) in 1954. The Krug Mission Report stressed the need for the construction of high embankments to confine the waters of major rivers within their main channels and to cordon off large areas from flooding.

A long-term master plan was also prepared by the East Pakistan Water and Power Development Authority (EPWAPDA) – the predecessor of the Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) – focusing on large-scale engineering construction and interventions for flood control and bank protection efforts such as building embankments, groins, dams, and polders to provide protection and minimise human and material losses.

Many experts now believe that the Krug Mission set off the process of water development in a wrong direction. There was little attention to environmental and ecological aspects and to the need

to understand local cultural and indigenous practices related to flood, land use, land rights, and socioeconomic processes in the river delta. In fact, it is neither possible nor desirable to eliminate flooding completely, for floods are intricately linked to the very survival of people in this delta country. Rice and fish – staples in Bangladeshi diet – require a tremendous amount of floodwater to grow and flourish.

Even today, the BWDB approach to river management tends to remain totally monistic, with a single-minded preference for protective

Long-term river stabilisation is an ambitious yet uncertain course of action. Such a plan should be based on a broader and clearer understanding of the vital physical, ecological, economic, social, and environmental vulnerabilities of floodplain users, particularly keeping in mind the rights of char inhabitants over the newly reclaimed land, their livelihoods, kinship, residence patterns, and resettlement.

efforts. The multi-channel Jamuna River stabilisation programme is one example of this, which seeks to narrow down the width into a single- or double-channel planform, combined with dredging for a navigational channel, protection of the existing bankline against erosion, and boost of economic growth, as envisioned in the Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100. If the corridors of major rivers were to be converted into a single channel, an estimated 50,000 hectares of new land would be reclaimed for potential use for various development interventions, including for the establishment of river ports and industrial/trade centres such as economic processing zones (EPZs).

Long-term river stabilisation is an ambitious yet uncertain course of action. Such a plan should be based on a broader and clearer understanding of the vital physical, ecological, economic, social, and environmental vulnerabilities of floodplain users, particularly keeping in mind the rights of char inhabitants over the newly reclaimed land, their livelihoods,

kinship, residence patterns, and resettlement. Currently, there are an estimated six million char dwellers, with or without land rights, living on the chars from Chilmari to Sirajganj. Therefore, a more holistic approach to the issues of flooding and erosion is necessary – one that would take cognisance of the complex interactions of all aspects of how people have traditionally organised, produced, and survived within physical constraints. Each of these aspects is critical to understanding the river management problem from a "hydrosociality" perspective, and not just an engineering perspective.

In the past, the BWDB has taken many structural measures to control and/or regulate the Jamuna River. But the mighty Jamuna and the sheer magnitude of the monsoon floods preclude almost all types of engineering work as a means to halt erosion and prevent flooding. The short-lived and limited utility of some of the physical infrastructures built so far have led to widespread doubts about the wisdom of this approach. Experts are also concerned regarding the long-term impacts of river stabilisation if implemented without careful consideration of the transboundary nature of the country's river systems, given that Bangladesh is located at the lower reaches. If the width of the lower stream of the Jamuna and other rivers – which originate upstream in Tibet, China, and India – are narrowed down to one or two channels, it could spell disaster for the normal flow of water and seriously harm the rich local biodiversity.

Any river stabilisation programme of a large scale must be based on national dialogues and engagements with stakeholders in char areas. Since there appear to be no practical means of stopping erosion (despite existing embankments and protective efforts), the solution lies in developing socioeconomic measures (such as improving warning systems, increasing preparedness for loss reduction, recovery, resettlement, livelihoods, formulation of new land laws for char use and ownership, etc) to mitigate the impacts of erosion events, rather than preventing erosion itself. In other words, it is necessary to live with the river rather than fight against it.

Of course, some interventions and limited protection work for major towns, ports and other important establishments will always be necessary, along with some form of stabilisation in selected sections of major rivers. However, a full scale programme for the stabilisation of these rivers may be unnecessary, as they would affect human populations and their agricultural needs, besides impacting essential ecological processes and biological diversity. It is possible to plan alternatives and create adaptive pathways to manage the rivers in Bangladesh, which would also be in line with the Delta Plan 2100. There is a greater need for understanding life in the delta before we transform it. Unfortunately, this seems to be lacking in Bangladesh as of now.

Combatting colourism in Bangladesh



Aftab Ahmed is a Master of Public Policy candidate with the Max Bell School of Public Policy at McGill University. He can be reached at aftab.ahmed@atum.utoronto.ca

AFTAB AHMED

In Bangladesh, colourism subtly yet firmly grips society, particularly affecting young girls with darker complexions who often endure colour-based discrimination. Flourishing within a patriarchal framework, colourism perpetuates a deep-seated racial discourse, causing long-lasting psychological distress for families with darker-skinned members.

What is colourism, you ask? Colourism persists under the shadow of racism, delicately infiltrating society. Racism and colourism, while interconnected, are not identical. Racism is systematic, underpinned by prejudice against a minority based on their ethnic heritage. For example, discriminatory attitudes or institutional practices against the Indigenous communities in Bangladesh, such as those living in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, based purely on their ethnic heritage, could be classified as racism.

Conversely, colourism operates on preferential treatment within a minority group, based on skin tones. The occurrence of this bias within a single racial or ethnic group demonstrates its complex character. In the Indian subcontinent, the prevalence of Fair & Lovely, a skin-lightening cream that was marketed for decades, is widely recognised. The marketing strategies associated with Fair & Lovely and similar products have perpetuated the notion that having lighter skin can enhance a woman's prospects for marriage, employment opportunities, and social status. This not only demonstrates the prevalence of colourism, but also reinforces the normalisation of such beliefs, thus embedding it into societal norms and expectations.

Colourism can be traced back to the era of slavery in the United States, where skin colour was a deciding factor in the allocation of duties and privileges among the enslaved. This entrenched hierarchy based on skin colour has lingered, influencing social, educational, and economic opportunities and creating a damaging legacy.

For instance, a bastion of public influence, Hollywood has a contentious history of depicting skin colour in a manner that perpetuates colourism. This manifests in the casting of lighter-skinned or "White-passing" actors in leading roles. Such an industry trend, whether intentional or inadvertent, frames perceptions of beauty, value, and worth, setting an unspoken standard that infiltrates the mindsets of audiences globally.

In communities of colour, colourism stirs discord, creating a "hierarchy" based on skin tones. The notion of "validity" or "worth" is attached to skin colour, a toxic legacy of oppressive histories that were internalised by oppressed communities and then reproduced within these communities. During the colonial era, British colonists

imposed Eurocentric beauty standards that favoured lighter skin as a symbol of superiority, beauty, and purity. This notion was fortified through various means, including discriminatory practices, social rankings, and the promotion of Western beauty ideals.

The preference for lighter skin and the marginalisation of darker-skinned individuals became ingrained in Bangalee society during

conveniently veiling their original intent.

An inevitable question surfaces: how do we tackle colourism? As with most societal problems, the initial step lies in education. One such initiative is the All Shades are Beautiful project. This initiative aims to raise public awareness of the harmful physical and psychological effects of colourism in Bangladesh. Its work has helped people understand the complexities of colourism and brought attention to hidden societal problems – problems that are frequently disregarded, normalised, and accepted as a part of routine life.

Projects like this can lay the groundwork for these conversations to take place publicly, and challenge the biases associated with skin colour and foster acceptance of all skin tones. Personal stories shared



SOURCE: FREEPIK

the British Raj and have endured long past the end of colonial rule. The internalisation of these beliefs has led to the reproduction of colourist attitudes within the same communities, where lighter skin is seen as being more desirable, attractive, and socially acceptable.

Take Bangladesh as a case in point. Here, in the marriage process, a disconcerting scene often unfolds where panic is triggered by the "darkness" of an individual's skin. One's skin tone alone prompts the misguided assumption that darker-skinned individuals are somehow "inferior" to their lighter-skinned counterparts.

Beyond beliefs, the far-reaching influence of colourism infiltrates various sectors, including the entertainment industry and the job market. A testament to this is the booming global market of skin-lightening products. This trend underlines a deeply-rooted bias that associates lighter skin with privilege, success, desirability, and intelligence.

Even though several corporations have vowed to discontinue the sale of products blatantly marketed as "skin-whitening," these products are likely to remain accessible under subtler aliases. By employing euphemisms like "glowing," "radiant," "bright" or "clear," these products may be repackaged as wellness commodities,

through such platforms can highlight the experiences of individuals facing taunts or discrimination based on their skin colour.

To facilitate open discussions and interactions, All Shades are Beautiful organises "Talk About It Tuesdays," providing participants with a platform to share their personal experiences and thoughts on colourism, among other social issues. The discussions held thus far have touched on various aspects, such as the young age at which individuals first encounter comments about their skin tones and their experiences with skin treatments aimed at achieving fairer skin. The series "Shades of Bias: Unravelling Colourism" educates viewers about the definition, historical background, and present-day effects of skin colour discrimination in Bangladesh. And lastly, "True to Complexion," an upcoming series, aims to showcase and inspire women to employ make-up techniques that enhance rather than alter their natural skin tone, challenging the prevailing cultural norm in Bangladesh.

Initiatives like these shed light on a deeply overlooked but highly prevalent form of prejudice, sparking essential conversations about the hidden concept of colourism. One hopes that such projects can be emulated. It is time for us to be better and brighter, beyond one's skin colour.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

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- 6 Parade sight
- 11 Impromptu
- 12 Jeweler's aid
- 13 Davis of "Thelma & Louise"
- 14 Took steps
- 15 Yummy, informally
- 17 Yoga need
- 19 Squid's squirt
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- 23 Globe features
- 25 Really large
- 26 Shift
- 28 Grazing group
- 29 Runner, for example
- 30 Billboards, e.g.
- 31 "– a deal!"
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- 33 Sneaker part
- 35 Run up
- 38 Small bottles
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- 2 Praiseful poem
- 3 Cry
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- 35 Leaf lifter
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- 37 Penny prez
- 39 Fate
- 40 Shrewd



MONDAY'S ANSWERS



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ESSAY

Leafing through this life

Growing up with books

The Zola novel stunned the reader in him. This was literature telling him to get out there in the world. There were worlds beyond his comprehension. There were lives to see in this world, a life to be lived on his own, and to feel life through compassion and empathy.

MURSA LIN MOSADDEQUE

This century had started 14 years ago—and unlike the previous one—the world was not drafting 19-year-olds to a great war so that they could die in the trenches. The world had grown much crueler; it did not intend on giving this odd bloke a clue, what this life was all about.

Here begins the story—a strange boy walked into town one day with his stocky pants and a scraggy stubble.

His quaint upbringing in the northern districts gave him little idea what to expect. The childhood days—all seemed like a blur; a long stretch of dupurbela: a Bangali summer afternoon in the suburbs that is often disturbed by the screeching of crows, and the snoring of the not-so-sweet neighbour.

This was a world where the adults either took their afternoon naps or were at work—which gave our guy ample time to read what his heart desired and what his hands could find. The dusty old bookshelf still towered over his seemingly miniature figure and he could only read what his height allowed his hands to grab. The random

assortment of books in that wooden shelf would inadvertently go on to define his taste in authors, genres, and books in general for the rest of his reading life.

Little did his boyish innocence know, the stagnant suburban air could only do so much for his blossoming heart which wanted to read the world.

One afternoon, he found an old tattered copy of a novel. It was a Soviet era Bengali translation of Émile Zola's *Nana* (1880), a realist portrayal of an escort in decadent Paris. Not many adults would regard this as appropriate reading material for a 13-year-old, but such was the benevolence of the Bangali dupur bela—only its permissive generosity prevailed that afternoon and not the prying and poking noses of the adults.

It was not just indulging in the forbidden that the boy felt that afternoon. Zola tore apart the society's mask of progress and brought its hypocrisy out in the open for the world to see. Our young reader who was uninitiated to the realities of life was overwhelmed. But what else could he do? Reading was the only life that he knew.

Could he not have picked up a book that was more suited to his age? He hadn't learnt yet that books had any tags with them—that of age, ideas and ideology, passion and necessity. His household had no shortage of books. But this labelling or categorisation of books as children's stories and young adult novels, the dwindling drama and debate regarding genre and literary fiction, the seriousness and anti-seriousness of the business of reading—hadn't polluted his mind yet.

He only knew reading, merely reading. If growing up entailed relinquishing our innocence, he was stepping into it in stages.

The Zola novel stunned the reader in him. This was literature telling him to get out there in the world. There were worlds beyond his comprehension. There were lives to see in this world, a life to be lived on his own, and to feel life through compassion and empathy.

A few years had passed. He had grown a little, albeit mostly in stature, since the day he encountered Zola. He could finally reach the Chekov and Samareh from the top shelf. But the pleasant and tranquil afternoons no longer possessed him. There was a

nor'wester brewing in his heart which dared to disturb the dupurbela of yore.

The joy of stumbling upon a book at the library or from an acquaintance had become less a reality and more a reminiscence. Not returning a book on Greek tragedy from a distant cousin in seventh grade was a memory still quite fresh. So was his first encounter with Jibanananda Das from an anthology he had received as a birthday gift.

The years of his flesh were betraying him. His loyalty to a life of reading was dwindling and it terrified him. What would he be without it? He knew little of what was happening to him. His younger self had buried his nose in old magazines and rigorously bound local hardcovers instead of making friends at school and playing till maghrib with neighbourhood peers. Social life was something he had only read in the pages of the witty Wilde and the towering Tolstoy.

One day he was amused to find something growing in him that he had only read and cherished from afar. The spectrum of emotions and pathos sketched in Rabindranath Tagore's *Golpo Guccio* (1307) was what he had regarded as life's essence. But here he was—showing the audacity to make presumptions about life instead of choosing to embrace it. He had little choice but to stand trial for his foolish attempt at a proxy life, that in reading.

And who am I kidding? You might be quite irked at me by now, for what might come off as a nonsensical third-person rendering of my own life. I needed to distance myself from this past not out of shame—I loved and still do love to read but because this is painful. I was just like any other awkward teen who was not well prepared for a transition to adult life with its caricatures of social, personal and many other domains that I still find baffling.

And this was what my life felt like when I moved to Dhaka in 2014 and became that odd stranger who was new in town.

The urban landscape in Dhaka tried its best to suffocate me and I was beginning to lose my hold over structures that held life together. I was spiritually shaken and at that time could only hold on to very few things. I had merely switched delusions—from mistakenly trying to find an aesthetic exegesis to life from Tagore's short stories and poems to desperately hanging on to Tagore like

a raft; the Tagore of *Geetanjali*, pujo-porber-gaan and the crisp yet idyllic prose of his non-fiction. It wasn't the drowning that let me down but the fear of letting go of what was so dear to me. (Returning back to Tagore again and again is such an old and tiresome Bangali cliché but I don't think I can tell it honestly otherwise.)

So here I was all alone, drifting away on a raft in cold unknown waters. Studying, going out, dining out, making conversations while my heart only ached and it still does for a life in reading.

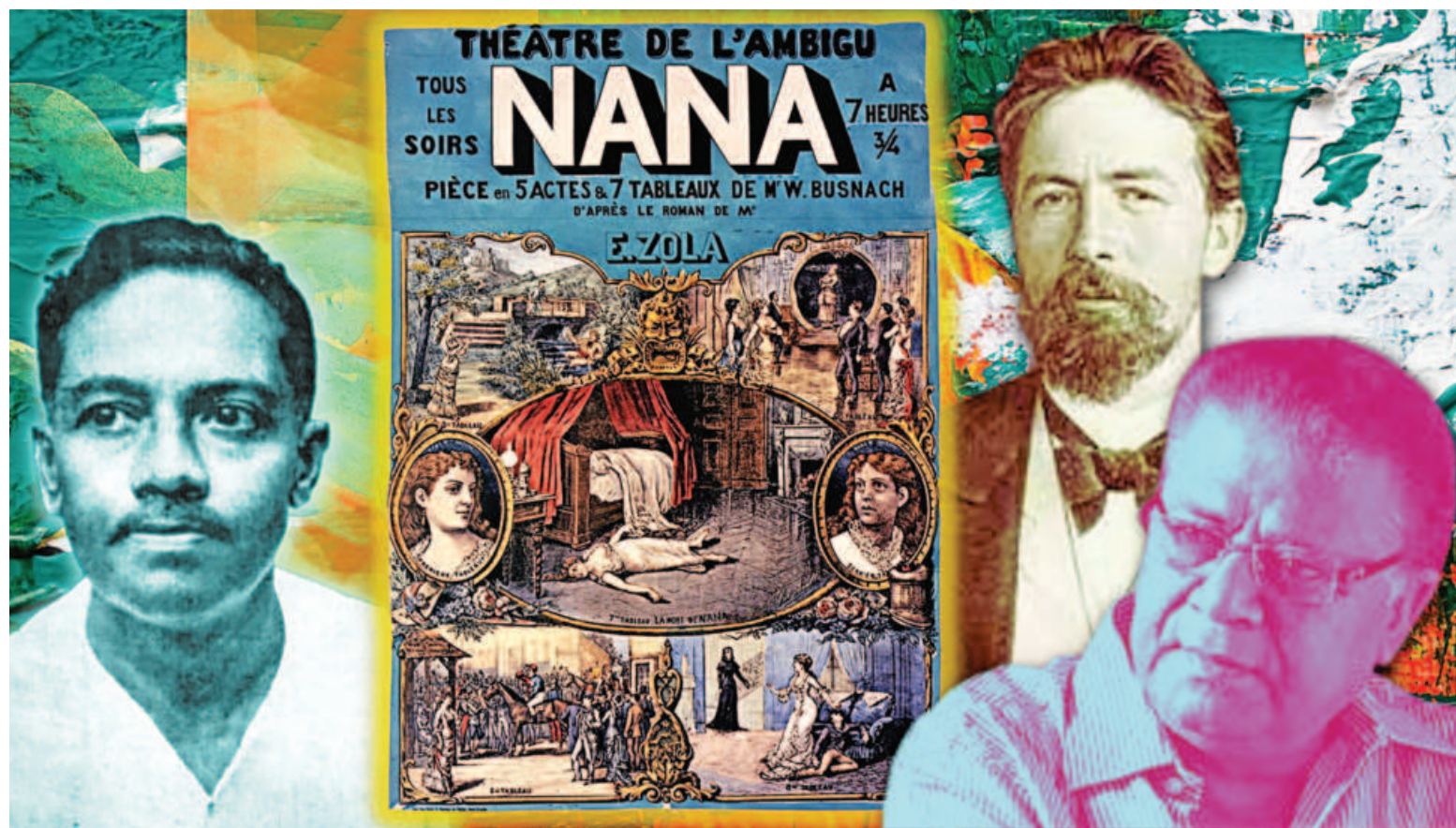
I would soon walk through the doors of a small bookstore in my neighbourhood. It was Charcha. I was so shocked that something so stupendous could exist so close to my place. It would soon become my second family. Charcha became a place where the reader in me found a home. I was free from the anxieties that had haunted me till then. I didn't have to compromise or struggle to make space for the reader in me. He existed at ease there, as though it was in its natural habitat. It was my family, it showed me that social life didn't have to be divorced from a life immersed in books. I made friends for life in Charcha among fellow readers. Prioritising to read above everything, came with a sacrifice, I had always thought. I had prepared myself to give up on things to read. This Elysian bookstore showed me that the reader in me too could embrace the many parables of life.

Charcha doesn't exist anymore. And the wound is still quite fresh though it's been a few years since it closed its doors. When I began writing this piece, it was supposed to be about Charcha but it feels too soon to broach a subject that's so tender. I ended up writing about who I was when I walked through its doors instead.

The writer Mario Vargas Llosa in an interview for *The Paris Review* stated how he needed some space and time apart from a subject before he could write about it. I can now understand what he meant.

So, the stranger did indeed walk into a bookstore in town but that story is yet to be told. That life probably is yet to be lived.

Mursalin Mosaddeque grew up in the suburban town of Rangpur and he can be reached at mursalinmosaddeque@gmail.com.



PHOTOS: COLLECTED, ILLUSTRATION: MAISHA SYEDA

BOOK REVIEW: FICTION

Bad kids, worse adults

'Bad Kids' by Zijin Chen (Pushkin Press, 2014)

The children return home to find that in the background of a video featuring their various antics, a man can be seen pushing the elderly couple over the edge. What the children don't fully realise is the darkness they will be led into through this incident.

FARAH GHUZNAVI

If you are looking for something different from your next read—especially if you're interested in reading a story that offers a window into another Asian culture—then *Bad Kids* by Zijin Chen might be a good choice. This book was an instant bestseller when it was published in China, and has since been adapted for the small screen.

I should start by mentioning that the book's title is misleading, as the kids are not so easily pigeonholed. Far from it. The absorbing and highly eventful narrative keeps the reader on the edge of her seat up to the very last page. And while the concept behind the story is relatively simple, its execution is anything but.

Chaoyang is a bright 13-year-old who is having a bad time at school. Widely considered a nerd, he is singled out for bullying by the daughter of a high-level police officer. The girl is jealous of his excellent academic results. And his dubious social status as the son of divorced parents in a China where conservative social values still hold sway makes the boy particularly vulnerable to such behaviour, as his plight garners little sympathy from his teachers.

To make matters worse, Chaoyang's wealthy father provides very little support to the boy and his mother, forcing the latter—despite being a single parent—to often spend days away from home in order to meet the requirements of her job. Meanwhile,

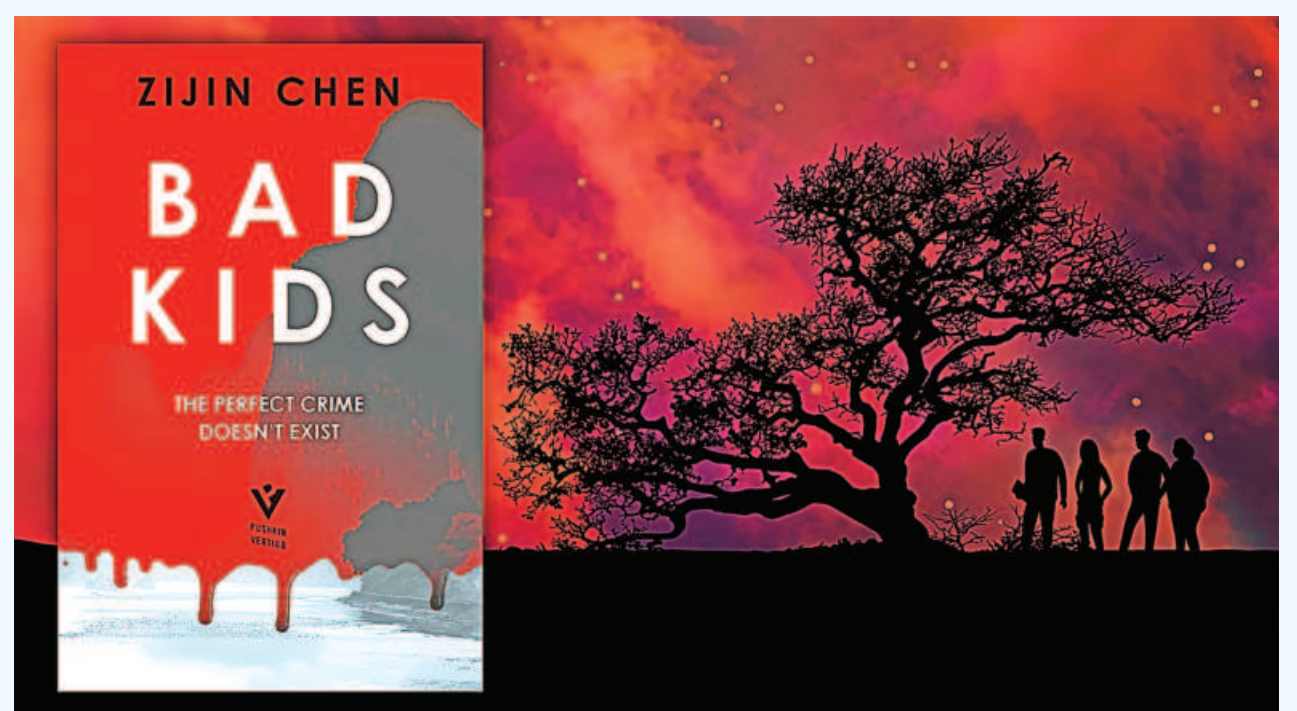
Chaoyang's neglectful father and unpleasant stepmother dote on their own 10-year-old daughter, who is not even aware that she has a brother!

Alone and friendless, Chaoyang is surprised at home one day when a friend of his comes to visit after a gap of several years. It turns out that this 13-year-old boy, Ding Hao, is on the run with a young girl of about 11, who is nicknamed Pupu. The pair have escaped from a state institution where they were placed after their parents were incarcerated or executed for violent crimes.

Initially unwilling, Chaoyang nevertheless allows them to hide out at his place. The trio quickly become fast friends, and one day Chaoyang takes Ding Hao and Pupu for a day out at the National Park where his mother works. While they are touring the sightseeing area, an unfortunate accident occurs, two elderly tourists falling to their death during their son-in-law's attempt to take a scenic picture.

The children return home to find that in the background of a video featuring their various antics, a man can be seen pushing the elderly couple over the edge. What the children don't fully realise is the darkness they will be led into through this incident.

This is a well-plotted book, with a remarkable number of twists and turns, and all four of the main characters are brought vividly to life. The supporting characters—who include the killer's wife, Chaoyang's



DESIGN: MAISHA SYEDA

parents, stepsister and stepmother, his classmates, and the police officers involved in the case—are also well-drawn, and linger in the reader's mind.

It was particularly interesting to learn about contemporary China through the eyes of these children, and to witness the ways in which the authorities puzzle over the complexity of these multiple cases which they are not even aware are linked.

Despite the occasional quirk inevitable in a translated work, which

makes some of the dialogue seem a little stiff, this is a fast-paced read, and quite gripping. The complexity of the plot is belied by the ease with which the story can be breezed through.

I highly recommend the book to anyone who enjoys coming-of-age stories featuring complicated family dynamics, a dramatic storyline incorporating murder and blackmail, and good storytelling that combines psychological insights and crime thriller elements. If that sounds like a wild ride, let me assure you that it

is—and an immensely entertaining experience, too!

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

'Can't accept seeing my teammates disrespected'

SPORTS REPORTER

It was on the cards for Harmanpreet Kaur to be penalised after the Indian skipper lost her temper both on and off the field following dissatisfaction over the umpire's decision during the third and series-deciding ODI against Bangladesh last Saturday.



Harmanpreet was suspended for the next two international matches following two separate breaches of the ICC Code of Conduct.

For Bangladesh, it was a huge moment to beat a team like India for the very first time in the ODI format in the first game and then to go on to draw the three-match series 1-1, with the final game tied, in dramatic fashion -- an outcome that could be regarded as a stepping stone for women's cricket in the country.

Despite Harmanpreet's shocking behaviour during and after the game, Bangladesh players expected appreciation from their opponents who are among the top teams in world cricket.

"We expected appreciation from them and some words of encouragement which would have motivated our players," Bangladesh skipper Nigar Sultana Joty told The Daily Star.

Upon hearing an unpleasant comment from Harmanpreet, Joty left the field with her teammates midway through the post-match photo session with the trophy and the Indian players.

"But what they did certainly does not leave a good message. The two teams were standing for the photo session and there was no point saying such a thing in front of the players as they could complain to the match referee according to the rules. Obviously, it felt bad when they were not showing respect. So, I felt there was no point in standing there as I respect my teammates and I can't accept that," Joty added.

According to Joty, Harmanpreet, a seasoned campaigner with a total of 284 international appearances, should have not dragged the matter outside of the field as it only relayed a bad message to the players around the world who look up to the Indian captain as a role model.

"Cricket is a game of discipline and most importantly, whatever we do inspires others. So, we won't do anything that gives a bad message to the others who look up to us. As for the captain of India, whatever happened during the game -- whether it was losing temper or showing frustration -- was normal but it was not right to carry that even after the game. We could have lost the game but in the end, we played better cricket and tied the match," she said.



Opener Abdullah Shafique's maiden double century (201 off 326) and an unbeaten 132 by Agha Salman put Pakistan in the box seat Wednesday on day three of the second Test against Sri Lanka. The tourists reached 563-5 at stumps, leading Sri Lanka by 397 runs in their first innings at Colombo's Sinhalese Sports Club. Another Pakistani middle-order batter, Saud Shakeel, also became the first batter in history to reach fifty in each of his first seven Tests.

PHOTO: AFP



“ He has taken a huge weight off his shoulders with the Argentine national team [after World Cup triumph]. Leo is liberated and we can expect more of this type of performance.”

Inter Miami coach TATA MARTINO

Lionel Messi's instant impact in the United States continued as he scored twice in his first start for Inter Miami in their 4-0 victory over Atlanta United yesterday, firing his team into the knockout rounds of the Leagues Cup. Messi also reached the landmark of scoring against 100 different clubs.

PHOTO: AFP

'A performing Tamim will have everything on his side'

SPORTS REPORTER

While there are lots of question marks regarding Tamim Iqbal's return to the team following his retirement, however, two of his mentors in former ODI captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and Nazmul Abedeen Fahim talked about the most important part of Tamim's return, which is to come back with motive and full fitness.

Tamim had departed for the UK on Tuesday and was set for meetings with doctors, accompanied by the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) chief physician, Debashish Chowdhury. He had held online meetings with doctors at least three to four times and his schedules had been set prior to the visit to the UK.

He has a few MRI reports with him and more scans are to be done in England, according to BCB sources.

Tamim had only overturned his decision to retire following intervention from Bangladesh Prime Minister. Tamim also had requested that Mashrafe Bin Mortaza become the team's mentor for the 2023 ODI World Cup in India. At the moment, though, Mashrafe did not see the point of having a mentor under the current circumstances.

"What's to gain from a mentor? Can someone tell me? I don't know why he [Tamim] asked. I don't know what a mentor does. When a situation [team's requirement] like that comes, then something can be said. At this moment I don't have an answer," Mashrafe said while attending a programme for a university yesterday.

He further clarified that if the Prime Minister asks him too, there will be no objections from Mashrafe's side. However, his main issue at the moment in Tamim's retirement saga is not what caused the player to retire in the first place. Rather he wanted Tamim to hold his

end of the bargain in terms of fitness and performance.

"I don't know exactly [what happened]. He didn't share much with me. I was more upset seeing Tamim vulnerable. I feel that Tamim should return with a hundred per cent fitness. We won't hope that he will be thinking about who is on his side or not. We will be thinking that he is a performer who will perform and automatically everything will be on his side," Mashrafe said.

The upcoming World Cup is also a golden opportunity for Tamim, having served the national team for a long time. At the twilight of his career, veteran coach Fahim believes that all his focus needs to be on getting the best out of what probably would be his last appearance in the showpiece event.

"The World Cup is a big occasion and, of course, he would want to perform very well. He is still the captain, as the BCB president said. If there had been criticism of him, what would be best is for him to reply to those criticisms with performances. He is capable of that. If he focuses on other issues, it will make him more vulnerable."

"What's most important right now is to be free of injury so he can play. To be able to answer criticism with performances is the most satisfying. Another thing is to play well because he may not have that opportunity again, so it has to be seen from the view that it's the best opportunity of his life," Fahim told The Daily Star yesterday.

"Lot of people support him and want him to do well, so he has to borrow strength from within himself, not outside. Injuries have long-term and short-term solutions, and maybe he will discuss the short-term solutions with doctors keeping the World Cup in mind. What will be key now is how much he can focus on his physical fitness."



'My idol is Ronaldo'

AFP, Auckland

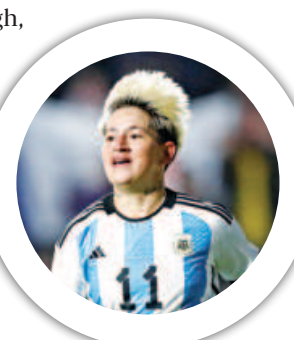
Argentina's Women's World Cup striker Yamila Rodriguez has defended having a tattoo of Cristiano Ronaldo on her leg, saying: "I don't hate Messi."

The 25-year-old faced flak on social media from fans back home after they spotted the ink on her left shin of Portugal's Ronaldo -- the great rival of Argentina captain Lionel Messi.

"Please, enough, I'm not doing well. At what point did I say I'm anti-Messi?" Rodriguez wrote on social media in response.

"Messi is our great captain in the national team, but the fact that I say that my inspiration and my idol is CR7 (Ronaldo) does not mean that I hate Messi. Enough, it's tiring and it hurts."

Rodriguez, who came on as a substitute in Monday's 1-0 World Cup defeat to Italy, has numerous other tattoos, including one of Argentina legend Diego Maradona.



Australia eye to end 22-year wait

AFP, London

Australia may have retained the Ashes but a chance to win a Test series in England will spur them on after they "got away" with a draw in Manchester.

Ashes holders Australia have arrived in London for a series finale at The Oval starting Thursday with the urn secured at 2-1 up with one to play after England dominated the fourth Test at Old Trafford, only for rain to ensure the match ended in a draw.

Australia also led 2-1 in 2019 only for England to win at The Oval and end the series all square at 2-2.

Pat Cummins's squad, which contains several survivors from that trip, are determined to avoid a repeat as they bid to end Australia's 22-year wait for an Ashes series win in England.

Australia will consider recalling specialist spinner Todd Murphy, omitted from an attack plundered for 592 at Old Trafford -- a total featuring Zak Crawley's 189.

It was less than two months ago that now injured off-spinner Nathan Lyon helped



bowl Australia to victory at The Oval in the World Test Championship final against India, taking 4-41 in the second innings.

All-rounder Mitchell Marsh, who returned to Test cricket after a four-year absence with a hundred in England's win in the third Test at Headingley, is struggling with "soreness", while fast bowler Mitchell Starc has a shoulder problem.

As a result, fellow paceman Michael Neser could make his first appearances of the series after a successful stint with Glamorgan in the English County Championship.

England, meanwhile, named an



unchanged team for the match on Wednesday.

Fast bowler James Anderson, 40, has retained his place in the side despite struggling to make an impact in the series with just four wickets in three matches.

Anderson said he has "no thoughts about retirement" in his Telegraph column on Tuesday.

Pace bowler Stuart Broad, who captured his 600th test wicket when he dismissed Australian Travis Head in the fourth test, will play his fifth match of the series.

England have sometimes inadvertently annoyed the rest of the cricket world with

Booters' WC Qualifiers fate to be decided today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh will get to know their opponents of the first round of joint qualifiers for FIFA World Cup and Asian Cup today when the draw takes place at the headquarters of Asian Football Confederation in Kuala Lumpur.

As the top 27 teams of the AFC region will directly play in the second round of qualifiers, the bottom 18 teams will play in Round 1, on home and away basis on October 12 and 17 respectively. From there, nine winners will qualify for the second round. Bangladesh had beaten Laos 1-0 on aggregate at the same stage in the last edition of the qualifiers for 2022 World Cup after having been beaten 3-1 on aggregate by in 2016 for the 2018 World Cup.

The men in red and green will face one of these nine teams, namely Indonesia (150), Chinese Taipei (153), Maldives (155), Yemen (156), Afghanistan (157), Singapore (158), Myanmar (160), Nepal (175) and Cambodia (176).

Japan, Spain roll into last 16

AFP, Auckland

Rampant title contenders Spain and former champions Japan became the first teams to reach the Women's World Cup last 16 on Wednesday as both won with ease.

Two-times Ballon d'Or winner Alexia Putellas started for Spain following her serious knee injury and played her part in a 5-0 demolition of Zambia.

Japan had been on the brink of reaching the knockout rounds following their 2-0 win over Costa Rica earlier in the day and the Spain result



sent both of them sailing through.

Japan and Spain meet on Monday to decide who wins Group C, and with it a theoretically easier draw. Both have a perfect six points from two games and are yet to concede a goal.

Costa Rica and Zambia play the same day in the fight to avoid finishing bottom of the pile.

Teresa Abelleira put Spain, 3-0 winners over Costa Rica in their World Cup opener, ahead after nine minutes with one of the best goals of the tournament yet.

Jennifer Hermoso made it 2-0 four minutes later and Spain coach Jorge Vilda rang the changes at the break with an eye on the Japan clash and the last 16. Hermoso scored again in the second half and substitute Alba Redondo also got a brace as Spain added gloss to the scoreline.

The 2011 champions Japan similarly beat an error-prone Costa Rica comfortably in front of 6,992 spectators in Dunedin, the smallest crowd at the tournament yet.

The game was effectively killed off in the space of three first-half minutes with goals from Hikaru Naomoto and 19-year-old Aoba Fujino.

a self-proclaimed mission to "save" the Test format, making it sound as if their wins are to be celebrated and any defeats don't matter provided the public are entertained.

That opinion is unlikely to be changed by England batsman Harry Brook saying Tuesday: "If we can win this week, it almost makes it a moral victory."

England's aggressive 'Bazball' style, however, has yielded 12 wins from 17 Tests since England captain Ben Stokes and coach Brendon McCullum joined forces last year.

In this series, Stokes was arguably too bold when least required by declaring on the opening day of the first Test at Edgbaston before England had scored 400 in a match Australia eventually won by two wickets and insufficiently bold by not declaring at Old Trafford in a match forecast to be interrupted severely by rain.

Not that he seemed overly concerned, with the all-rounder saying after the Manchester washout: "As much as I would love to be an Ashes-winning captain, I want this to be a legacy team. Regardless of how the series ends up, people will always talk about us."



OFFSHORE GAS EXPLORATION Cabinet approves new guidelines

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The cabinet committee on economic affairs yesterday approved the draft of the production sharing contract (PSC) for offshore gas exploration that Petrobangla insists ensures a fair deal for both the government and the international oil companies (IOCs).

The draft was designed to make offshore gas exploration attractive to IOCs and prepared in consultation with Wood Mackenzie, a UK based global insight business for renewables, energy and natural resources.

Wood Mackenzie studied the PSCs of eight peer countries —India, Myanmar, Bulgaria, the Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam, Sierra Leone and Papua New Guinea — and made suggestions to the initial draft prepared by Petrobangla.

The new PSC is based on the sliding scale R-factor profit-sharing model. The R-factor is calculated by dividing total contractor receipts by total contractor expenditures.

The government's profit share can be a minimum of 40 percent and a maximum of 65 percent in the case of

This R-FACTOR-based production sharing contract is win-win for both the government and international oil companies.

shallow blocks. For deep blocks, it would be a minimum of 35 percent and a maximum of 60 percent.

In the previous PSCs, which were based on gas production, the government's profit share was a minimum of 55 percent for shallow blocks and a maximum of 80 percent. For deep sea blocks, it was a minimum of 50 percent and a maximum of 75 percent.

Due to the prolonged nature of cost recovery, the IOCs' profit share progressively declined under the previous models. This discouraged them from investing adequately, The Daily Star has learnt from Petrobangla officials with knowledge of the matter.

Subsequently, Petrobangla's invitation for gas exploration in the maritime territories gained in 2012 and 2014 from Myanmar and India respectively barely found any takers despite floating the tender three times.

Contracts were signed with a handful of IOCs but they abandoned the project after just the seismic survey as they did not find the terms of the PSC attractive, Petrobangla officials said.

In the new PSC, the cost recovery ceiling for IOCs is 75 percent per year for both shallow and deep-sea wells. The ceiling was 55 percent for shallow wells in PSC 2012 and 70 percent for deep wells in PSC 2012 and 2019.

"In determining the profit share between the government and the IOC through R-FACTOR, all revenue and expenses of the IOC are considered after the signing of the contract," Petrobangla officials said.

In the case of new investment by IOC, the R factor is reduced, so it is possible to quickly recover the invested money of IOC.

"Due to fast cost recovery, the government's profit share also increases."

Since the new PSC has been designed to be gainful for IOCs, they would be more interested in exploring Bangladesh's offshore resources and there is an opportunity to discover new gas fields.

"This is why the R-factor is considered a win-win for both parties," said a Petrobangla official preferring to remain unnamed.

Another attractive feature of the new PSC is the gas price at well head, which would be 10 percent of Brent.



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Ten-month-old Ayra's mother holds tightly onto her daughter on their third day in the capital's Mugda Medical College Hospital yesterday. Ayra has been suffering from a fever for five days and was found to be dengue positive before being admitted to hospital. As dengue cases keep rising, health facilities across the city are facing more and more child patients every day.

ADMITTING DENGUE PATIENT TO HOSPITAL Father held over assault on a doctor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday arrested a man for assaulting a doctor over admitting his seven-year-old daughter, a dengue patient, to Mugda Medical College Hospital in the capital.

Habibur Rahman, 33, an electrician, was held in the afternoon after the physician filed a case against him with Mugda Police Station, Abdul Majid, officer-in-charge of the police station, told The Daily Star.

Habibur went to the hospital in the morning to get his daughter admitted. He scuffled with the physician after a heated argument. The doctor sustained injuries to his two fingers, the OC added.

The arrestee will be produced before a Dhaka court today.

Habibur's wife Sathi Akter said their child was admitted to the hospital following the incident, but she later took the child home.

She said her child's health was not good.

Politics can't be a money-making tool

HC observes in full text of verdict, affirms 9yrs' imprisonment for BNP leader Tuku for graft

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

Politics cannot be a tool to make money and amass properties, and if the politicians indulge in corruption, the entire society will plunge into darkness, the High Court said in the full text of a verdict.

"Being protectors, the politicians cannot be the predators.... This court wishes that those involved and engaged in politics should not run after money and properties."

"If the politicians own a huge amount of properties and money, they have to spend a lot of time of their life to sustain them and in that case, they would have little time to work for the people's welfare and the country as well," the bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice Khizir Hayat Lizu said in the 273-page full text of the judgment released yesterday.

On May 30, the bench delivered the verdict affirming the trial court judgement that on November 15, 2007, convicted and sentenced BNP leader and former state minister Iqbal Hassan Mahmood Tuku to nine years' imprisonment for amassing wealth illegally and concealing information in his wealth statement.

The special anti-graft court also fined him Tk 50 lakh and directed the government to confiscate his wealth worth over Tk 2.24 crore which is disproportionate to his known sources of income. In default, Tuku will have to spend another one year behind bars, the court said.

ACC lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan told The Daily Star that Tuku, who had been on bail till the delivery of the HC judgment, cannot take part in elections as per article 66(2) (d) of the constitution following the HC verdict.

In the full text of the verdict, the HC directed Tuku to surrender

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Labourer, wife found dead in capital

Relatives say death of child, financial hardship weighed heavily on them

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The bodies of a couple were recovered from a tin shed room in the capital's East Rampura in early hours yesterday.

They were found hanging from a ceiling fan in the room, said Rafiqul Islam, officer-in-charge of Rampura Police Station.

The husband Jewel Mia, 28, was a day labourer while his wife Nasrin, 22, was a domestic help.

The deceased couple were depressed after the loss of their child eight months ago. Married for around four years, the couple were expecting their first child, but Nasrin, who was from Kishoreganj, gave birth to a stillborn baby, said relatives.

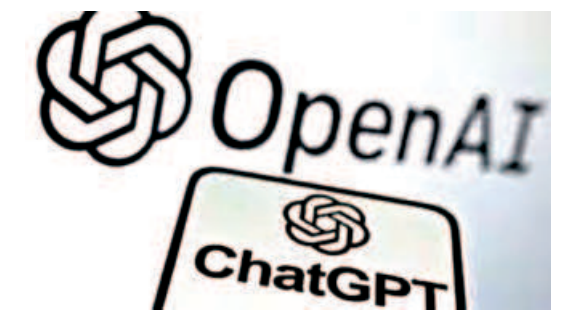
Things went from bad to worse for them as their financial problems increased after the incident. Financial hardship might have led them to take their own lives, they added.

Nasrin's brother Titu Mia said Jewel had to take a loan of Tk 30,000 to meet the hospital expenses during his wife's stillbirth.

"Every month, Jewel had to pay Tk 3,000 as loan instalment and Tk 3,500 as room rent besides their daily expenses. But he didn't have a regular

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

Bangladesh among first 4 countries to get ChatGPT Android version



STAR REPORT

OpenAI has launched the android version of its popular artificial intelligence chatbot ChatGPT.

It made ChatGPT available for android users to download in four countries of the world: the USA, India, Bangladesh and Brazil.

The American AI research and deployment company said it plans to expand the rollout to additional countries over the next week, according to the company's website.

OpenAI released the iOS version of ChatGPT in May 2023.

ChatGPT is estimated to have reached 100 million monthly active users in January, just two months after launch, making it the fastest growing consumer application in history, according to a UBS study.

The report, citing data from analytics firm Similarweb, said an average of about 13 million unique visitors had used ChatGPT per day in January, more than double the levels of December, according to Reuters.

China refuses to say why foreign minister Qin was removed

AFP, Beijing

China refused to disclose yesterday why Qin Gang had been sacked as foreign minister, insisting it was releasing information "normally" despite him having not been seen publicly for more than a month.

Qin was removed from office by Beijing's top lawmaking body on Tuesday after just 207 days in the job, following weeks of speculation that the former ambassador to the United States and confidant of President Xi Jinping had fallen out of favour.

Asked at a regular briefing about his removal,

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Qin Gang



PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

As water levels have gone down in the Shoilmari river, a man attempts to catch fish from the mud in Khulna's Batiaghata upazila yesterday. During low tide, locals prefer catching their own fish due to high prices at the market, as it is an easier and cheaper option for them.

Modi's govt faces no-confidence vote over ethnic clashes

REUTERS, New Delhi

India's parliament yesterday authorised a no-confidence vote against Narendra Modi's government by an alliance of opposition parties, to force the prime minister to address in detail concerns about ethnic clashes in a northeastern state.

Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has a clear majority of 301 members in the 542-seat lower house of parliament, so the no-confidence vote will not affect its stability.

The opposition instead wants to trigger a debate about violence in the remote, BJP-ruled Manipur state, where more than 130 people have been killed and 60,000 displaced since it began in early May.

Approving the opposition motion, lower house speaker Om Birla said he would soon decide when the debate and vote would take place.

The ethnic tensions in the small state of 3.2 million people are seen as a rare security and political failure by Modi's government, which will face a national election by May 2024.

Further incidents of arson and the destruction of some abandoned houses, government offices and vehicles by armed mobs were reported from at least two districts of Manipur on Wednesday, a local police official said, asking not to be named.

Modi had not commented in public about the violence until last week, when videos showing two women being paraded naked and molested by a mob in Manipur sparked national outrage.

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