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## Tamim steps down as ODI captain

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh stalwart Tamim Iqbal decided to step down from the ODI captaincy role but remains eager to feature in the upcoming ODI World Cup, to be held in India later this year.

The 34-year-old disclosed it following a meeting with Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president, Nazmul Hassan Papon, and cricket operations chairman, Jalal Yunus, yesterday.

It was also confirmed that Tamim would sit out of the upcoming Asia Cup, starting on August 30. The left-hander, who has been suffering from a lingering back pain, recently underwent an invasive pain management treatment in the UK.

"I thought that it would be better for the betterment of my team to step down [as captain]," Tamim said, adding that he informed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina about his decision.

"I told the Prime Minister about my decision and she told me that she just wanted me on the field," he revealed.

The left-handed opener, however, did reveal that he intends to use the time away to focus on making it to the World Cup.

BCB, meanwhile, is still yet to decide on who would lead the Tigers in the Asia Cup.

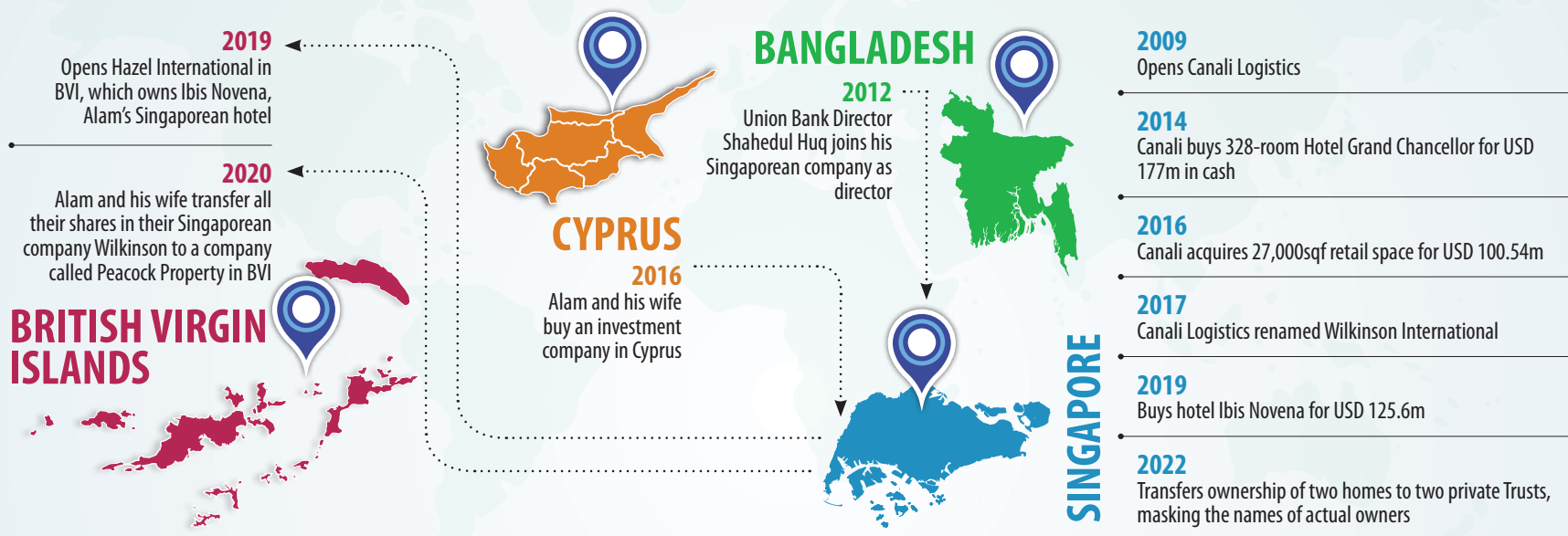
Tamim previously decided to call time on his career on July 6 but un-retired following a meeting with the Prime Minister.



# S Alam's Aladdin's lamp

No official record of a single taka taken out of country, yet he and his wife obtain citizenship of Cyprus through investment, go on property-buying spree in Singapore

## MAGICAL MONEY MOVES IN 3 CONTINENTS



ZYMA ISLAM

S Alam Group owner Mohammed Saiful Alam has built a business empire in Singapore worth at least about USD 1 billion, although there is no record of him taking any permission from Bangladesh Bank (BB) to invest or transfer any funds abroad, an investigation by The Daily Star has found.

The Bangladesh central bank has so far allowed 17 companies to invest outside the country, and this Chattogram-based business giant is not on that list. Yet in Singapore, Alam bought at least two hotels, two homes, one retail space, and other properties over the last one decade, all the while seeking to remove his name from the paper trails, documents show.



**MOHAMMED SAIFUL ALAM**  
paid \$177m in cash to buy a 328-room hotel in Singapore

**FARZANA PARVEEN**  
held 30% share in Canali Logistics which was worth \$22.5m in 2009

As of January 10, 2023, the central bank has cleared roughly about USD 40.15 million to be invested abroad globally, a BB document shows. The figure is 10 times less than what Alam has spent just to buy two hotels and one retail

space – worth over USD 411.8 million – in Singapore since 2009.

The BB document also shows that just over USD 107,000 have so far been sent to Singapore legally by a number of companies, and none of them is owned by Alam.

The Daily Star contacted Bangladesh Bank in writing for comments on S Alam's investment abroad, but the Bank did not give any official response.

Basic information about overseas investment is not officially classified. Yet it appears to be regarded as a top secret by the regulatory bank.

However, three highly-placed sources within the central bank having direct knowledge of the matter confirmed that Alam never took permission from them. All of them spoke on the condition of anonymity but confirmed the authenticity of the BB document that we have obtained.



**You can rest assured that S Alam has never taken our permission to send money abroad.**

**A top official of Bangladesh Bank,** wishing to remain unnamed

"You can rest assured that S Alam has never taken our permission to send money abroad," one of them told The Daily Star, which was separately corroborated by the two other sources.

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**SCAN THE QR CODE FOR DOCUMENTS**

## DENGUE OUTBREAK 2023 already the deadliest year

### Dhaka sees highest deaths; cases outside capital soar

HELEMUL ALAM

With 10 new deaths recorded yesterday, the total number of dengue fatalities this year has risen to 283 – making this the deadliest dengue year since the first outbreak in the year 2000.

Earlier, the highest number of deaths recorded was 281 in 2022.

Of the 283 dead this year, 157 are males and 126 females, while the age group with most deaths was 21-25 years old.

Experts and doctors attributed this year's unusually high death toll to delayed hospitalisation, reinfections, and the presence of Den-2 and Den-3 out of all four dengue strains.

HM Nazmul Ahsan, associate professor at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital, stressed that patients need to be immediately hospitalised if they experience severe stomach aches, breathing difficulties, severe weakness, bleeding from gums or nose, and vomiting.

"If a patient is not hospitalised within 24 hours [of these symptoms surfacing], they may go into dengue shock syndrome."

There are two types of dengue shocks – compensated shocks and decompensated shocks, he said, adding that if a patient is hospitalised immediately after their compensated shock, they won't reach decompensated shock – during which chances of recovery is only 50 percent.

Meanwhile, the number of dengue cases outside the capital has been increasing fast. However, Dhaka still holds the highest number of dengue deaths this year – 226 out of 283.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services, apart from the 10 new deaths recorded yesterday, nine of which were in Dhaka, 2,589 people were hospitalised across the country in the 24 hours till yesterday morning.

Of them, 1,444 were outside the capital.

Of the total 59,716 dengue cases logged this year, 27,154 were outside Dhaka.

Of the districts outside the capital, the highest number of dengue cases recorded so far – 2,252 – was in Chattogram, while Chandpur and Barishal had 1,051 and 916 respectively.

YEAR	TOTAL DEATHS	TOTAL CASES
2019	179	1,01,354
2020	7	1,405
2021	105	28,429
2022	281	62,382
2023	283	59,716

(TILL AUGUST 3)

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## External balance goes further downhill

Position deteriorated despite shrunk trade gap, current account deficit last fiscal year

MD MEHEDI HASAN

Bangladesh's external sector continues to be in distress as the overall negative balance widened by 23.5 percent last fiscal year despite the narrowing trade gap and current account deficit.

At the end of last fiscal year, the overall balance was \$8.2 billion in the negative, up from the \$6.7 billion deficit at the end of fiscal 2021-22, as per the latest data from the Bangladesh Bank.

"The pressure on the balance of payment (BoP) is yet to subside due to the deficit in the financial account," said Zahid Hussain, a former lead economist of the World

Bank's Dhaka office.

The financial account is the component of the country's BoP that covers claims or liabilities to non-residents concerning financial assets. Its components include foreign direct investment, medium and long-term loans, trade credit, net aid flows, portfolio investment and reserve assets.

It was \$2.1 billion in deficit at the end of fiscal 2022-23, in contrast to \$15.5 billion in surplus a year earlier.

The private sector's lower short-term foreign borrowing and the commercial banks drawing down their nostro accounts with foreign banks are to blame for the stunning

reversal in financial account in the space of a year, according to bankers and economists.

At the end of June, the private sector's short-term external debt stood at \$13.7 billion, down from \$17.8 billion a year earlier.

"The main challenge for the Bangladesh economy is to keep the financial account in the green – the overall negative balance would not narrow if the financial account stays in the deficit," said Ahsan H Mansur, executive director of the Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh.

The pressure on BoP would have intensified had the current account

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The dengue wards at Mugda Medical College Hospital are so full that new patients are now having to be bedded even in front of the lifts. The death toll in this year's outbreak has already reached an all-time high, while cases continue to pile up in hospitals across the country. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

## Human haulier driver murdered after minor accident

### Witnesses say car passengers attacked him with broken wing mirror in Panthapath area

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A human haulier driver was beaten to death by passengers of a private car in Dhaka's Panthapath area in the early hours of yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Sabuz, 35, who was the driver of the vehicle on the Farmgate-New Market route.

Jamal Hossain, another human haulier driver who witnessed the incident, said Sabuz's vehicle, after running out of gas, was being towed by another vehicle to Karwan Bazar for refilling on Wednesday night.

On the way, Sabuz's human haulier struck a private car and damaged its wing mirror around 11:00pm.

Three to four persons got down from the car and one of them hit Sabuz on the head with the broken mirror. The others also beat him up, leaving him critically injured.

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DHAKA WASA

## Taqsem made MD for the seventh time

### Myriad allegations not heeded; Ctg Wasa MD gets 3 more yrs

DIPAN NANDY and RASHIDUL HASAN

Taqsem A Khan, the much-discussed managing director of Dhaka Wasa, has been reappointed to the post for the sixth consecutive time.

His new three-year-long tenure will come into effect once his current one ends on October 14.

The Local Government Division yesterday issued a circular announcing the reappointment, making him the longest serving MD in Wasa's history.

Earlier on July 11, Dhaka Wasa board decided to reappoint Taqsem. A proposal was then sent to the LGRD in this regard. A summary of it was later sent to the Prime Minister's Office.



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# S Alam's Aladdin's lamp

FROM PAGE 1

Bangladesh's Money Laundering Prevention Act 2012 prohibits offshore investments without clearance from the central bank. It is punishable by up to 12 years of imprisonment and a fine twice the amount sent out.

S Alam Group was founded by Alam in 1985, and has since risen to become one of Bangladesh's largest conglomerates.

His business interests range from commodity trade to fishing, building materials to real estate, textiles to media, intercity buses to shipping, and power and energy to banking and insurance.

The Daily Star contacted Saiful Alam in writing twice – on July 6 and on July 23 – for comments on our findings. We sent him a set of elaborate questions detailing our findings about his investments abroad, requesting him to give his version. He responded through his lawyers, A Hossain & Associates, both times, saying he would not make any comment unless we shared the full report with him before publication, which is not a journalistic practice.

## HOPSCOTCHING HAVENS

This newspaper is in possession of documents that reveal parts of the web of the offshore business Alam has built with his wife Farzana Parveen. Our investigation has tracked down investments linked to Alam and his wife in Singapore, British Virgin Islands and Cyprus.

A small Mediterranean nation, Cyprus launched its Golden Passport programme in 2007. Under the scheme, wealthy foreigners were offered Cypriot citizenship in exchange for investments of about €2 million (USD 2.5 million) in their real estate, along with another €200,000 in contributions to the Cypriot government's research and land development fund, according to a number of international business consultancy firms.

Two years later, on August 27, 2009, Saiful Alam and Farzana Parveen founded Canali Logistics Pte Ltd in Singapore, listing themselves as Cypriot citizens and residents of Singapore, according to the company profile obtained from Singapore's Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority (ACRA).

The company's issued and paid-up share capital was worth USD 22.34 million (30 million Singaporean dollars) at the time. Alam and his wife were the sole shareholders, with



S Alam owns this hotel, left, and commercial space in the Centrium Square, right, in Singapore.



PHOTO: COLLECTED/KIMLY.COM.SG

and do business there. It could be a subsidiary. Bangladesh Bank has allowed only a handful of companies to do this [invest abroad]," he said, without giving any names.

## THE GOLD RUSH

Five years after its launch, Alam's Canali Logistics proceeded to buy a 328-room hotel – Hotel Grand Chancellor Pte Ltd – in Singapore's "Little India" for about USD 177 million, according to a circular sent by the hotel's previous owners to its shareholders and the Singapore Securities Exchange on August 26, 2014.

"Under the SPA [sales and purchase agreement], it is provided that the Consideration [the contract value] will be paid in cash in various instalments," the circular reads, adding that Canali has already "paid S\$18.6 million (about USD 14m) inclusive of the initial deposit and the balance deposit upon execution of and pursuant to the terms of the agreement."

A Singaporean law firm represented the hotel in the deal.

Filings made by Hotel Grand Chancellor with ACRA, the Singaporean regulatory authority, said its assets were worth USD 314 million at the end of 2021, with a yearly revenue of roughly about USD 7.4 million.

The hotel's company was renamed Grand Imperial Hotel Pte Ltd a year after the purchase, and now operates under the brand name of Hilton Garden Inn Serangoon at the heart of Singapore.

In 2016, Canali bought a 27,000

company spent at least USD 567 million in investments, which is several times the amount it earned, Wilkinson's financial statements show.

To balance this, the company took USD 458 million in financing during this period.

While financing could mean both equity and borrowing, analysts looking at the statements noted that since Alam and his wife were the sole shareholders at least until the end of 2020, this amount would potentially have to be bank borrowings or cash loans, and not equity.

## THE SMOKE SCREEN

This massive Singaporean business

the British Virgin Islands' Financial Services Commission.

Newhaven's office, located in a modest four-storey yellow building near a central roundabout on James Walter Francis Highway in British Virgin Island's Road Town, serves as a postal office box for other offshore companies too, according to the 2017 Paradise Paper leaks.

In 2015, Newhaven Corporate was penalised with a fine of USD 25,000 under BVI's money laundering laws "for failing to properly engage in or undertake customer due diligence" and "for failing to adopt relevant measures or additional measures or checks in non-face to face business

from Singapore's Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority.

In addition to being a tax haven, the BVI is a secrecy jurisdiction, and companies are not legally obliged to name their shareholders or directors on any official filings.

Countries in the Caribbean islands do not usually go after shell companies, because they want the money to circulate within their system, said Ahsan H Mansur, executive director of Policy Research Institute.

"They do not need the tax. They need the investment. So, they can offer tax exemptions. But we need our taxes, and by taking the money out of



During 2012-2018, Union Bank's placement in S Alam Group-owned company was worth over Tk 2,866cr

Real estate acquisitions worth over USD 411m

His USD 1b Singaporean empire includes hotels, real estates, homes & other properties

Owns a 12,000sqf home, whose 2018 rental value was USD 570,000

No central bank record of S Alam's investments abroad



Has businesses in Cyprus and British Virgin Islands as well



Used Cypriot nationality to run businesses in Singapore



His business chain creates smokescreen over its actual owners



Bangladesh's Union Bank ex-director Shahedul Huq is a convicted fugitive. He was a director of S Alam's Singaporean company from 2012-2018



**This is a clear example of illicit financial transfer, especially if no credible evidence is available that payments made for the Golden Passport, purchase of assets and investments made out of the country, including offshore companies in tax havens came from legitimate foreign income.**

**Dr Iftekharuzzaman,**

Executive Director of Transparency International Bangladesh



Alam controlling 70 percent of the 30 million shares and his wife the rest 30 percent.

Non-Singaporeans can get residence permit if they invest in Singapore. Singapore is home to some of the world's top businesses, including some Bangladeshi conglomerates. According to the offshore leaks database created by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, nearly 6,000 shell companies are linked to Singapore.

Alam and his wife are also linked to an offshore shell company, Peacock Property Ltd, in the British Virgin Islands (BVI). More than 17,000km away from Singapore, BVI is a tax haven with no income, corporate, or capital gains tax.

Alam also bought a company – ACLARE Investment Ltd – in 2016 in Cyprus, another tax haven. The company was later renamed ACLARE International, according to documents obtained from Cyprus' Department of Register of Companies and Official Receiver.

"This is a clear example of illicit financial transfer, especially if no credible evidence is available that payments made for the Golden Passport, purchase of assets and investments made out of the country, including offshore companies in tax havens, came from legitimate foreign income," said Dr Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh.

Former Bangladesh Bank governor Dr Salehuddin Ahmed said there are two legal ways to send money abroad for investment or trade by businesses.

One is the Exporters' Retention Quota (ERQ), which is a share of the forex remittance earned by an exporter that they are allowed to retain "only for imports and repayment of foreign loan of the exporters or their subsidiaries and sister concerns" as per BB rules.

The other method, Dr Ahmed explained, would be taking permission from the BB to invest a portion of this ERQ abroad.

"But this does not mean they can open a wholly different entity

square feet commercial space in Singapore's 19-storey Centrium Square for USD 100.53 million, according to The Business Times, a Singaporean newspaper.

A year after this acquisition, Canali Logistics changed its name to Wilkinson International Pte Ltd,

operations run behind the façade of an address that appears to exist only on paper.

The Daily Star sent a source to the registered address of Wilkinson who looked through the business directory in the lobby of the Ocean Financial Centre on Collyer Quay Road, the official address of Wilkinson. Wilkinson International was not on the directory. But the law firm that was involved in the company's hotel deal was found at the same address.

According to Singapore's open government data portal accessed by The Daily Star in June 2023, over 500 shell companies ran their operations from that building, although some of

relationships."

## CLEANING THE SLATE

Alam nominated Ong Lay Kim, a Singaporean national with no discernible online presence that The Daily Star could find as the sole director of Wilkinson after he removed his name from the Singaporean company.

Alam's name cannot also be found anywhere in the documents of Hotel Ibis Singapore Novena, the widely-publicised 2019 purchase by his company for USD 126 million.

Filings with the Singaporean authorities made by the hotel show that it is owned by a string of paper companies, all existing in the offices

the country, they [money launderers] are depriving our country of taxes," said Mansur, also former chairman of BRAC Bank.

He noted that this needs to be stopped at the source, for example, by not allowing these people to own banks.

## THE PUPPET DIRECTOR

Alam brought "Casino kingpin" Shahedul Huq on the board of his Singaporean company on October 25, 2012.

At the time, Shahedul was a director of Dhaka-based Union Bank, owned partly by S Alam Group. Alam's son Ahsanul Alam was Union Bank's chairman until mid-June 2023, when



A google street view image of one of S Alam's homes in Singapore.

whose assets were worth nearly USD 1 billion (Tk 10,000 crore) in 2021. At the time of writing this report, the Singaporean authorities did not have the 2022 files.

While the corporation purchased one property after another, its three-year annual turnover did not reveal that it made as much money as it spent.

Wilkinson's financial statements show its annual sales revenue never topped USD 78 million between 2019 and 2021. It was USD 35 million in 2020 and USD 36 million in 2019.

Yet between 2019 and 2021, the

them are no longer in operation.

Alam and his wife resigned as directors from Wilkinson on December 16, 2020, and transferred ownership to an offshore entity, Peacock Property Holdings Ltd, in the British Virgin Islands. An infamous tax haven, British Virgin Islands made headlines after the 2017 Paradise Papers leak exposed offshore activities of some of the world's most powerful people and companies.

Peacock Property's address was found to be registered in the name of an offshore agent, Newhaven Corporate Services, registered with

of the law firm mentioned above – and the ultimate owner is an offshore company in the British Virgin Islands.

The hotel is – and has been – owned by a company called Canopus II Pte Ltd since 2013, but the company's current address is the same as Wilkinson's, down to the unit number.

Canopus's sole shareholder is a BVI-based company called Hazel International Pte Ltd, also registered at Wilkinson's office address. Hazel was set up just three months before its sale to the Alam-controlled company in June 2019, according to documents obtained

he became chairman of Islami Bank, where S Alam Group has significant stakes. The junior Alam, 28, is also a current director of S Alam Group.

Shahedul was a director both at Union Bank and Wilkinson until 2018.

During this period, Reliance Finance, an S Alam Group-owned Bangladeshi company now renamed Aviva Finance, received placements worth more than Tk 2,866 crore from Union Bank, according to Union Bank's financial reports.

Placements are the sale of securities or bonds to investors to

raise capital.

Following media reports late last year, exposing how S Alam Group had been borrowing money from Islamic banks it has significant stakes in, Bangladesh Bank found that majority of Union Bank's total disbursement went to 300 local shell companies, or companies that exist only on paper, Bangla daily Prothom Alo reported at the time.

During the 2019 drives against illegal casinos, the Anti-Corruption Commission identified Shahedul among those using gambling dens to launder dirty money – and he was given the popular moniker of "Casino Shahedul".

In November last year, a Dhaka court sentenced him to five years in a case over possessing Tk 32 crore in illegal wealth. Shahedul fled the country and never showed up before the court, ACC investigators said.

Open data from American voter records show that Shahedul and his wife are registered voters in Canton, Michigan, and have properties there.

## TALE OF TWO HOMES

Records obtained from the Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore show that Alam and his wife owned a 12,260 square feet residential property in Novena, central Singapore, until 2021.

The asset's rental value was USD 570,000 in 2018, the earliest year the property could be linked to Alam. Then in 2022, a Singaporean trust – Zico Trust Ltd – became its legal owner.

Zico Trust's website states that the benefits of setting up a trust include confidentiality and wealth protection. "Trusts can be established offshore (outside of the settlor's home country) and privately, thereby ensuring confidentiality of the settlor," said the website.

It adds, "Wealth protection is a major advantage of private trusts. Since the trustee is the legal owner of the assets, the settlor relinquishes his rights. In most cases, this ensures a form of protection against creditors, bankruptcy, exchange controls, hostile governmental authorities etc."

The couple owned a second home in Singapore until 2023, when the ownership was transferred to another trust called Padang Trust Singapore Pte Ltd.

Singapore abolished estate duty in 2008. So, the income distribution of capital from Singapore trusts are exempt from tax, and successors of a Singaporean trust can be included as beneficiaries without any estate duty.

## UNDER ACC SCANNER

Capital flight has long been a global problem, with many big corporations and high-profile individuals running offshore businesses to evade high taxes at home. As for Bangladesh, between 2009 and 2018 the country lost USD 8.28 billion, nearly three times the cost of the Metro Rail Line 6 (Uttara to Motijheel), to illicit money outflow every year, according to an estimate by Washington-based think-tank Global Financial Integrity.

In the wake of mounting allegations of capital flight from Bangladesh, the government offered an amnesty in FY 2022-23, allowing Bangladeshi nationals to bring back their undeclared money from abroad by paying a flat 7 percent tax. The government has withdrawn the amnesty this year.

When S Alam's Singaporean empire was expanding and changing hands in 2020-21, different media, including English daily New Age, reported how S Alam Group had been borrowing thousands of crores from Islami Bank and other Shariah-based banks in Bangladesh.

After media reports in 2022 unearthed how his companies were securing one questionable loan after another, the High Court ordered the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit of BB, the Anti-Corruption Commission and the Criminal Investigation Department to investigate the loan scams.

In a suo moto rule on December 4, 2022, the HC asked the respondents to explain why "the failure and inaction of the respondents in taking appropriate legal steps and actions against the entities and persons who have misappropriated and laundered a huge amount of money from the Islami Bank Bangladesh Ltd. and other banks taking loans in the name of fake, fabricated and non-existent companies/entities using various unethical mechanisms and massive irregularities as mentioned and disclosed in different newspaper reports, shall not be declared illegal."

The court also asked the respondents to take action against the wrong doers.

The HC order reached the ACC on April 4 this year.

"We remain vigilant about money laundering. Currently we are investigating Islami Bank's lending," said Md Khurshid Alam Khan, panel lawyer for the ACC.

*Note: All figures were converted from Singaporean dollar on August 3, 2023.*



## 16 more released in Oman after MP Sony

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Oman authorities have released all the 17 Bangladeshis, including Khadizatul Awar Sony MP, a day after detaining them for holding a meeting at a Muscat hotel without permission.

The MP elected for the reserved women seat from Chattogram-19 went to Oman on Tuesday and held a meeting with the expatriate Bangladeshis at Halfa House Muscat Hotel around 10:00pm.

Some expatriate Bangladeshis from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates also went there.

“So far we got to know that they held the meeting without permission of the local authorities. Therefore, the Oman police conducted a raid and detained them,” Foreign Ministry Public Diplomacy wing Director General Seheli Sabrin told

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## DMP again denies Jamaat permission for rally

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Metropolitan Police again denied Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami permission to hold a rally at Suhrawardy Udyan today.

Jamaat was not given permission to hold a rally, Syed Mamun Mostafa, special assistant to DMP Commissioner, told The Daily Star yesterday.

On July 24, Jamaat announced that it would hold a rally at the north gate of Baitul Mukarram National Mosque to press home its three-point demand including holding the next national election under a caretaker government.

But DMP denied Jamaat permission to hold the rally.

The party later announced that it will hold a rally in the capital on August 4 at Suhrawardy Udyan.

On June 10, Dhaka (south) city unit Jamaat held a rally in the capital's Institution of Engineers in Dhaka after 10 years with police permission.

## PETITIONS AGAINST JAMAAT Apex court may hold hearing on Aug 10

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court may hold a hearing on August 10 on two petitions against Jamaat-e-Islami.

One of the petitions was filed seeking the apex court's order of injunction restraining Jamaat from carrying out any political activities.

Rezaul Haque Chandpuri, secretary general of Tariqat Federation, and two other petitioners submitted the petition on June 26 requesting the SC to issue an injunction on Jamaat.

The same day, they filed a contempt of court petition with the SC against five Jamaat leaders for holding public meetings as a political party.

Yesterday, the petitioners' lawyers prayed to the six-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Hasan Foez Siddique

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PRAYER  
TIMING

AUGUST 4

Fazr	Juma	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4:20	12:30	5:00	6:47	8:15
JAMAAT 4:55	1:15	5:15	6:50	8:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



It's all fun and games until someone gets hurt... Grabbing the bumper of a CNG-run three-wheeler, three boys on roller-skates take to the streets without any safety gear. Though there is a lack of proper recreational spaces for children in Dhaka, such careless actions should be prohibited as they may lead to accidents. This photo was taken in the capital's Sher-E-Bangla Nagar area yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

# Amend tobacco control act, save lives

Speakers urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government should amend the tobacco control act as soon as possible to reduce premature deaths linked to the consumption of tobacco products, Prof Dr ABM Abdullah, personal physician of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, said at a roundtable yesterday.

He made the remarks at “The Current Status of Tobacco Control Act and Tasks to Do”, jointly organised by Bangladesh Health Reporters’ Forum and the National Heart Foundation at the health directorate headquarters in the capital’s Mohakhali.

“There is no benefit to using tobacco. Rather, it causes different types of disease, which kill around 450 people every day in the country. So, the act needs to be amended,” said Abdullah, who is also a University Grant Commission professor.

Stressing the necessity to prevent smoking, Abdullah directed the authorities to pass an act to “ban” tobacco products, such as jarda and gul.

The tobacco business groups always consider their profit, said the professor. “But a larger sum of money is being spent on the treatment of tobacco-related diseases than the revenue the government earns from this sector,” he added.

Prof Abul Bashar Mohammad Khurshid Alam, director general of health directorate, highlighted the health impact of tobacco.

**The tobacco business groups always consider their profit. But a larger sum of money is being spent on the treatment of tobacco-related diseases than the revenue the government earns from this sector.**

DR ABM ABDULLAH  
Personal physician of PM

**Tax should be increased on tobacco products. If the tax amount is doubled, around Tk 8-10 crore collected as taxes can be added to the health sector budget.**

PROF DR AHMEDUL KABIR  
Additional DG at health directorate

“A smoker needs to quit smoking for at least a week before any surgery as the use of anaesthesia risks their lives. However, we do not have any choice in case of emergency surgeries,” he said.

Emphasising the importance of mass awareness in this regard, he proposed integrating the message

into government campaigns and advertisements.

Prof Dr Ahmedul Kabir, additional director general (planning and development) at the health directorate, proposed increased taxation on tobacco products.

“If the tax amount is doubled, around Tk 8-10 crore collected as taxes can be added to the health sector budget,” he said.

Prof Sohel Reza Chowdhury, head of epidemiology and research division at National Heart Foundation and Research Institute, presented a keynote at the event.

In his keynote, he stated that tobacco kills 1.61 lakh people in the country every year, which is around 19 percent of all deaths.

“Tobacco consumption, in most cases, leads to cardiovascular diseases,” he said.

He also explained the necessity for a stricter amendment of different sections of the existing Smoking and Using of Tobacco Products (Control) Act, 2005, amended in 2013.

Smoking is now prohibited in selected public places and on public transport. A ban on the advertisement of tobacco products was also imposed, and a mandate was issued to ensure health warnings on product packages.

Moderated by Rashed Rabbi, president of Bangladesh Health Reporters Forum, health reporters from different media houses

attended the event.

## YUNUS CASE Dispose of charge framing order in 2 weeks

SC directs HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday asked the High Court to dispose in two weeks the rule that questioned the labour court order framing charges against Nobel Laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus and three other officials of Grameen Telecom in a case filed over labour law violation.

The apex court said the HC bench led by Justice SM Kuddus Zaman will hold a hearing on the rule for its disposal.

A full bench of the Appellate Division of the SC headed by Chief Justice Hasan Foez Siddique passed the order after disposing of two separate petitions filed by the state and the Inspection for Factories and Establishments Department challenging the HC rule.

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

Sheikh Merina Sultana,

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# Skilled manpower key to Smart Bangladesh: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday directed the Smart Bangladesh Task Force to work on building skilled and tech-savvy manpower in a bid to turn the country into a Smart Bangladesh by 2041.

She said this at the first meeting of the task force held at the Prime Minister's Office in Dhaka.

The premier said digital devices are opening new doors before the people. “That’s why we have to develop suitable skilled manpower,” she said.

“The new generation has to be developed with education and technology. They will have to be prepared for Smart Bangladesh,” she added.

Hasina said people have to be prepared for Smart Bangladesh so that all people can know how to use digital devices and artificial intelligence.

She put emphasis on proper planning alongside motivating the people of the country towards materialising the vision of Smart Bangladesh.

“We should create the opportunities to flourish the creativity of people, their thinking, and the idea of moving forward,” she said. Outgoing Dutch envoy calls on PM

Outgoing Netherlands Ambassador to Bangladesh Anne Van Leeuwen paid a courtesy call on the premier yesterday.

At the meeting, Hasina offered lands to the Netherlands

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



## BNP leader Salahuddin held in Jatrabari

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detectives arrested BNP's business affairs secretary and former lawmaker Salahuddin Ahmed from the capital's Jatrabari area yesterday.

Confirming Salahuddin's arrest, a top DB official, wishing anonymity, said DB arrested Salahuddin as he is a named FIR accused in four cases.

He said they arrested total seven BNP leaders and activists.

Salahuddin's son Tanveer Ahmed Robin, also acting member secretary of Dhaka city south BNP, said the driver of his father informed their lawyer over the phone that Salahuddin and three other local BNP leaders were taken to the Minto Road office of the Detective Branch.

“Law enforcers picked up my father and the three local BNP leaders from Hanif Flyover in

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

## 41ST BCS 2,520 recommended for recruitment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The final result of the 41st Bangladesh Civil Service examinations under the Public Service Commission was published yesterday.

Some 2,520 candidates have been recommended provisionally for appointment to different cadres, said a press release issued by the PSC.

All successful candidates cannot be recommended for cadre posts due to a lack of vacant posts.

The number of such candidates is 9,821, the PSC press release added.

The results are now available at: www.bpsc.gov.bd



As the white clouds glide over the serene waters of Piya in Sylhet's Jaflong, a fisher throws his nets in the river before wrapping up for the day, moments after the sun sets upon blue blemishes. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR



## Zillur Rahman new president of Amateur Radio Society

STAR REPORT

Md Zillur Rahman has been elected president of the Amateur Radio Society of Bangladesh for the next three years at a meeting held on July 28, said a press release.

Since 2018, amateur radio society has been providing assistance to the victims of natural disaster, reestablishing the broken communication network with the help of their radio equipment.

Zillur started his career as a journalist in 1996. In 2003, he joined government service. He is now working in a WB-funded initiative as a communication and PR expert.



Farmers, with smiles on their worn-out faces, harvest Aush paddy, planted during May-June, from an arable land in Jhalakathi's Napitkhali yesterday. The paddies will be threshed and sold to local millers for Tk 1,000-1,200 per maund.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

## 16 more released

FROM PAGE 3  
reporters at a weekly media briefing yesterday.

After learning of the detention, officials of the Bangladesh embassy in Oman spoke to the Oman police, and Khadizatul Anwar MP and some Bangladeshi expatriates who live in Oman were released on Wednesday.

The others – who went to Oman from Saudi Arabia and the UAE – were released yesterday.

Asked if the Bangladesh embassy had to give any undertaking, Sheheli Sabrin said, “Yes, when the embassy intervened, it had to maintain official procedures.”

Asked if the meeting had any political motive, she said she had no idea

about it.

Sheheli Sabrin said the prime minister stresses maintaining local laws by the expatriate Bangladeshis.

“So, our expectation is that when our dignitaries go abroad, they should maintain local laws when they meet them. It is embarrassing for Bangladesh expatriates as well as for us, otherwise,” she added.

## Skilled

FROM PAGE 3  
for investments in the shipbuilding sector of Bangladesh.

PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim briefed reporters after the meeting.

During the meeting, both the PM and the envoy expressed satisfaction over the existing bilateral relations between the two countries and hoped that the cooperation would continue.

## Seven killed, 25 hurt

FROM PAGE 5  
8:00pm on Panchagarh-Banglabandha highway at Nijbari Basamoor village, said police.

The victims – Nur Islam, 48, and his wife Jothsna Begum, 42, of the same village – were going to Tentulia Upazila Health Complex to visit one of their relatives.

The couple succumbed to their injuries on the way to the health complex.

Police seized the covered-van and detained its driver. A case was filed with Tentulia Police Station.

In Joypurhat, at least 25 people were injured after a bus skidded off Bogura-Akkelpur road and fell into a ditch in Akkelpur upazila yesterday.

Akkelpur Police Station OC Abu Bakar Siddique said the bus was heading

towards Bogura from Akkelpur upazila. The driver lost control over the vehicle at Bhikni village while it was overtaking a cement-laden truck, said the OC.

Among the injured, 12 were sent to Joypurhat while the rest were sent to Bogura for treatment.

In Lalmonirhat, president of the district unit of Jatiyatabadi Tanti Dal was killed after a truck hit his motorbike in Aditmari area on Wednesday night.

The accident took place on Lalmonirhat-Burimari highway in Saptibari Palli Bidyut area around 9:00pm.

Mozammel Haque, 62, died while undergoing treatment at Lalmonirhat Sadar Hospital. Police seized the truck but the driver and helper managed to flee.

## Apex court may hold

FROM PAGE 3  
to hold hearing of the petitions earlier.

The SC bench said the matters will come up in the hearing list on August 10.

On July 27, forty-two eminent citizens filed an application with the SC, seeking its permission to place arguments before it against Jamaat

in connection with the contempt of court petition.

Meanwhile, 47 supporters of Jamaat on July 31 filed an application with the SC seeking its permission to place arguments before it in favour of the party's long pending appeal against the HC verdict that scrapped its registration with the EC.

## TARIQUE, ZUBAIDA CASE Verdict following due process Says info minister

UNB, Dhaka

The verdict against BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman and his wife Zubaida Rahman in a case over amassing illegal wealth has been delivered following normal process, said Information Minister Hasan Mahmud yesterday.

“Our government did not file this case. The case was filed by the caretaker government of BNP's choice. If our government was vindictive, we would have filed the case, and we wouldn't have to wait 14 years for a verdict, the verdict would have been delivered much earlier,” he added.

He said these while exchanging views with journalists at the secretariat.

Responding to the BNP's reaction after the verdict, the minister said, “BNP has no faith in the law and court, they only go to foreigners.”

“We don't go to foreigners; foreigners come to us if they need to,” he added.

Replying to a question on bringing Tarique Rahman back home, the minister said, “We are in talks with the UK government.”

## Thief masquerading as house help Says PBI after arresting woman in Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Using fake names and addresses, she managed to secure jobs as a house help at well-off houses throughout the capital, and as soon as a chance presented itself, she used to make off after stealing valuables like jewellery and cash.

The Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) said this yesterday at a press briefing after arresting the so-called house help, Bilkis Begum, 40, from the Kotwali area of the city in a theft case on Wednesday.

The case against her was filed with Hatirjheel Police Station on September 12 last year in the charge of stealing Tk 5.62 lakh in cash, along with gold jewellery.

The complainant in the case, Manowar Ali, mentioned that their house help, Nurjahan, with the assistance of another one, got her 55-year-old wife unconscious and escaped from his house on Dilu Road in New Eskaton after he left the house for his office.

Nurjahan is actually Bilkis, who hails from Mymensingh's Dhobaura, said Jahangir Alam, special superintendent of police of PBI Dhaka Metro (North).

“The PBI was tasked with investigating the case after Hatirjheel police submitted a probe report before the court without charging anyone,” he added.

SI Rabiul Islam of PBI, who was investigating the case, said Bilkis was presented before a court yesterday, where she confessed her crimes.

Three cases were filed against Bilkis. Two of the cases are under trial now, said Jahangir during the briefing at his office.

In primary interrogation, the accused admitted that she sold the gold ornaments to gold traders in the capital's Khilkhet area and Islampur in Jamalpur.

## Dispose

FROM PAGE 3  
chairman of the Third Labour Court of Dhaka, on June 6 framed charges against Yunus and others.

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

On June 6, the labour court exempted Yunus from personal appearance during the trial.

On September 9, 2021, SM Arifuzzaman, a labour inspector (general), filed the case with the court.

The court on October 12, 2021 granted bail to Yunus and others accused in the case.

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বাণিজ্যিক প্লট বিক্রয়

বসুন্ধরা বারিধারা পি-এক্সটেনশনে ২০কাতার ৬০ফুট ও ২৫ফুট কর্ণার বাণিজ্যিক প্লট এবং ৫ ও ৪কাতার আবাসিক বাড়িভারীকৃত আকর্ষণীয় প্লট বিক্রয় করা হইবে। যোগাযোগ: ০১৭১১৫৪৬৬৮৭, ই-মেইল: mdfariduddin6687@gmail.com

help to learn skills to earn! UCEP Bangladesh

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Established in 1972 with the motto 'Help to Learn, Skills to Earn', UCEP Bangladesh is a non-governmental organization which provides Technical Education and Decent Work to youth through Technical Vocational Education & Training (TVET) and Skill Development. UCEP is seeking applications from qualified candidates for one post of Deputy Director, Programme and Innovations.

For details, please visit <https://jobs.ucepbd.org> or [www.bdjobs.com](http://www.bdjobs.com). Last date for submitting application is 10 August 2023.

Coca-Cola Bangladesh Beverages

Career Opportunity for an International Organization

Coca-Cola Bangladesh Beverages Limited (CCBB) is a 100% foreign direct investment of The Coca-Cola Company (TCCC) in Bangladesh. In accordance with our business plan and to cater our first growing market we are seeking to appoint a highly experienced, accomplished & result driven Finance Professional to lead our finance team in Bangladesh.

Position Snapshot:  
Position Name: Finance Director  
Level: Senior Level  
Job Type: Permanent  
Reporting Line: Country General Manager (GM)  
Location: Dhaka, Head Office

Role Overview:  
Finance Director is responsible for formulating the short- and long-term business strategy and driving business results in collaboration with the country GM and senior leadership team. He / she drives business performance improvements by providing key strategic inputs to the operating teams, focusing on continuous and sustainable profitability improvement while ensuring financial stability and discipline. Manages all the financials needs of the operation in a high-pressure complex environment, with all the necessary requirements for control processes, management reporting, regulatory reporting, business & financial planning, shared services, cash management and taxation.

Key Responsibilities:

- Ensure effective financial management of business.
- Drive business and operating performance with topline growth, profitability, and Capital utilization.
- Drive margin management in the business through revenue growth management and cost efficiency. In addition, manage allocation of resources through prioritization of capital deployment for business.
- Function as a key business and decision-making partner for the GM, functional directors and support the growth agenda for the business.
- Ensure and safeguard the strong governance model of TCCC and compliance with legal, tax and other statutory requirements.
- Manages commodity risk and procurement strategies for the operation.
- Provide leadership and vision to the finance function and play key role in managing commodity risk in discussion with BIG CFO and Procurement Hub Leads.

Qualifications and Experience

- Bachelors in accounting or finance. MBA/master's will be given preference.
- Professional Qualification in CA/CPA/CMA/CIMA or any other equivalent certification is mandatory.
- 20+ years of experience in a matrixed global organization who has experience of managing cross cultural market in leadership position.
- Experienced in similar role in a FMCG company particularly in beverage sector will be an added advantage.

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- Thought Leadership & Ownership Mindset
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Salary and Benefits:  
Basic Salary, House Rent Allowance, Medical Allowance, Conveyance Allowance, Festival Bonus, Leave Fair Assistance (LFA) and other benefits as per company policy.

If you feel that you are the right candidate whom we are looking for, please email your application and detailed CV with photograph, quoting the position within 15 days to [ibplhr@coca-cola.com.bd](mailto:ibplhr@coca-cola.com.bd). Only shortlisted candidates who match all the criteria above will be called for further selection process.

\*\*Diversity and inclusion are an integral part of our culture and are one of the ways we bring our purpose and values to life. We are an equal opportunity employer, and we encourage everyone to explore a career with us regardless of their gender, physical abilities, religious beliefs, ethnic backgrounds, or social status. \*\*

পাত্রী চাই

শির্ষস্থানীয় ব্যবসায়ী ও সম্ভ্রান্ত শিকিত পরিবারের অক্টোপিয়া হতে প্রাক্কোশন, বয়স- ২৩, (৬-২") গার্লের জন্য ও/এ লেভেল পড়ুয়া শিক্ষিত, শার, সুপ্পনা, শখা,নামাজী পাত্রী চাই। অভিজাতবকাল যোগাযোগ করুন।  
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পুট বিক্রয়

বসুন্ধরা আবাসিক এলাকায় "পি-ব্লক" কার্পোজ রাস্তায় বাড়িভারী করা ও কাতার পুট ভরকারী বিক্রয় করা হবে।  
যোগাযোগ: ০১৩২৫-৩১৩০৮৩, ০১৭১১-০৭৩৮১৩

Apartment Rent

Rented apartment at Gulsan Road no 31.House no.28.Apartment A/4. approximately 2600 sqft.Fully Furnished. From 1<sup>st</sup> September. Only foreigners. Please Contact-Shahidur Rahman.01819228104.

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TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL BANGLADESH  
Social movement against corruption

Invitation for Tender (IFT) for Laptop & Monitors  
REF: IFT Ref no: TIB/Proc/IFT/2023/031

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) is hereby inviting all bona fide traders/suppliers for participating in tender process for supplying of Laptop & Monitors as per the specification published in the tender documents.

Interested vendors are requested to download IFT document from the following link of TIB website or collect hard copy from Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), House 5, MIDAS Centre 4th Floors, Road 16 (new) 27 (Old), Dhanmondi, Dhaka 1209. All other terms and conditions are mentioned in the tender documents. For any clarifications or queries, please contact at [shafiqul@ti-bangladesh.org](mailto:shafiqul@ti-bangladesh.org). Hard copy of tender documents shall be submitted to above address on or before 3:00 PM, 31 August 2023.

Download Link: [ti-bangladesh.org/articles/tender/all](http://ti-bangladesh.org/articles/tender/all)

BIRDEM General Hospital Notice

Certificate Course in Research Methodology (CCRM)

BIRDEM Academy is inviting applications from eligible candidates for the 4 months Online Certificate Course on Research Methodology for the 4th session, September, 2023. Interested participants are requested to apply online immediately. <http://www.cmedbd.com>

Eligibility:  
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Contact: Prof Humayun Kabir Chowdhury, Course Director, 01711520427, Email: [hkabirdr@gmail.com](mailto:hkabirdr@gmail.com)  
Dr Parvin Akter Khanam, Course Coordinator; 01714365262, Email: [parvin\\_khanam@yahoo.com](mailto:parvin_khanam@yahoo.com).

Director Academy, BIRDEM

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নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

একটি স্বনামধন্য আর্থিক প্রতিষ্ঠানের অটোমেটেড আইসিটি সিস্টেম প্রকল্পের জন্য অস্থায়ী ভিত্তিতে লোকবল নিয়োগের উদ্দেশ্যে বাংলাদেশের স্থায়ী বাসিন্দাদের নিকট থেকে আবেদনপত্র আহবান করা হচ্ছে। প্রার্থীদেরকে বাংলাদেশের যে কোনো স্থানে কাজ করতে অগ্রহী হতে হবে।

১। পদের নামঃ টীম লিডার (আইটি কনসালটেন্ট)।  
শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতাঃ যে কোন বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় থেকে কম্পিউটার সায়েন্স/কম্পিউটার সায়েন্স এন্ড ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং বিষয়ে মাস্টার্স/এমবিএ পাশ।  
অভিজ্ঞতাঃ এই সংক্রান্ত কাজে ন্যূনতম ১২ (বার) বছরের অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে।  
বেতনভাতা ও অন্যান্য সুবিধাদিঃ আলোচনা সাপেক্ষ।

২। পদের নামঃ সিস্টেম এ্যানালিস্ট (আইটি কনসালটেন্ট)।  
শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতাঃ যে কোন বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় থেকে কম্পিউটার সায়েন্স/কম্পিউটার সায়েন্স এন্ড ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং বিষয়ে কমপক্ষে বি.এস.সি পাশ।  
অভিজ্ঞতাঃ এই সংক্রান্ত কাজে ন্যূনতম ৫ (পাঁচ) বছরের অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে।  
বেতনভাতা ও অন্যান্য সুবিধাদিঃ আলোচনা সাপেক্ষ।

৩। পদের নামঃ সিনিয়র (আইটি কনসালটেন্ট)/মিড লেভেল প্রোগ্রামার।  
শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতাঃ যে কোন বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় থেকে কম্পিউটার সায়েন্স/কম্পিউটার সায়েন্স এন্ড ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং বিষয়ে কমপক্ষে বি.এস.সি পাশ।  
অভিজ্ঞতাঃ প্রোগ্রামিং নিয়ে সিনিয়র প্রোগ্রামার পদের জন্য ন্যূনতম ৫ (পাঁচ) বছর এবং মিড লেভেল প্রোগ্রামার পদের জন্য ন্যূনতম ৩ (তিন) বছরের কাজের অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে।  
বেতনভাতা ও অন্যান্য সুবিধাদিঃ আলোচনা সাপেক্ষ।

৪। পদের নামঃ সিনিয়র (আইটি কনসালটেন্ট)/জুনিয়র ডাটাবেজ এক্সপার্ট।  
শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতাঃ যে কোন বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় থেকে কম্পিউটার সায়েন্স/কম্পিউটার সায়েন্স এন্ড ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং বিষয়ে কমপক্ষে বি.এস.সি পাশ।  
অভিজ্ঞতাঃ ওরাকল ডাটাবেজ নিয়ে সিনিয়র ডাটাবেজ এক্সপার্ট পদের জন্য ন্যূনতম ১০ (দশ) বছর এবং জুনিয়র ডাটাবেজ এক্সপার্ট পদের জন্য ন্যূনতম ০৩ (তিন) বছরের কাজের অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে।  
বেতনভাতা ও অন্যান্য সুবিধাদিঃ আলোচনা সাপেক্ষ।

৫। পদের নামঃ সিস্টেম সাপোর্ট ইঞ্জিনিয়ার।  
শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতাঃ ন্যূনতম বিএ/বিকম/বিএসসি বা সমমান পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ।  
অভিজ্ঞতাঃ মাইক্রো ক্রেডিট সফটওয়্যার/নেটওয়ার্ক কোম্পানীতে কাজসহ চাকুরীতে ন্যূনতম ০৮ (আট) বছরের কাজের অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে।  
বেতনভাতা ও অন্যান্য সুবিধাদিঃ আলোচনা সাপেক্ষ।

৬। পদের নামঃ সিস্টেম সাপোর্ট ও মনিটরিং ইন্সিয়ার।  
শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতাঃ ন্যূনতম বিএ/বিকম/বিএসসি বা সমমান পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ।  
অভিজ্ঞতাঃ ব্যাকিং/সফটওয়্যার/নেটওয়ার্ক কোম্পানীতে কাজসহ চাকুরীতে ন্যূনতম ০৫ (পাঁচ) বছরের অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে।  
বেতনভাতা ও অন্যান্য সুবিধাদিঃ আলোচনা সাপেক্ষ।

আবেদন পদ্ধতিঃ ১৭/০৮/২০২৩ ইং তারিখের মধ্যে নিম্নোক্ত ঠিকানায় আবেদন প্রেরণ করতে হবে। আবেদনপত্রের সাথে জীবন বৃত্তান্ত, জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্রের কপি, অভিজ্ঞতা ও সকল শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতার সনদপত্রের কপি সংযুক্ত করে প্রেরণ করতে হবে।

অন্যান্যঃ শুধুমাত্র শর্ট লিস্টেড প্রার্থীদের নিয়োগ পরীক্ষার জন্য ডাকা হবে। পরীক্ষা কেন্দ্রে আসা-যাওয়ার জন্য কোন টিএ-ডিএ পাওয়া যাবেনা। নিয়োগ প্রদানকারী কর্তৃপক্ষ এই নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি বাতিল করার ক্ষেত্রে যে কোন সিদ্ধান্ত গ্রহণের ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।

বঙ্গ নংঃ এ-০৪, প্রযত্নে-দি ডেইলি স্টার, ৬৪-৬৫ কাজী নজরুল ইসলাম এভিনিউ, ঢাকা-১২১৫।



### Protect land, waterbodies from grabbers Suggests JS body

UNB, Dhaka

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Land Ministry yesterday suggested taking necessary steps to free the land, waterbodies and ponds from illegal occupation across the country.

The parliamentary watchdog in its 17th meeting came up with the recommendation.

It also recommended taking steps to recruit lawyers for handling government cases related to land.

A discussion was also held in the meeting on "Land Development Tax Bill 2023" and the illegally occupied land, water bodies and ponds.

The committee suggested placing the Land Development Tax Bill 2023 before the parliament with some addition and amendment.

### 2 Palli Bidyut employees electrocuted in Jhalakathi

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhalakathi

Two employees of Palli Bidyut Samity died after being electrocuted in Jhalakathi's Kathalia upazila on Wednesday night.

The deceased are Md Mizanur Rahman, 42, in-charge at Marichbunia complaint centre, and lineman Md Manir Hossain, 35, of Jhalakathi Palli Bidyut Samity.

Mizanur was from Patuakhali and Manir was from the district's Kathalia upazila, said Md Shahidul Islam, officer-in-charge of Kathalia Police Station.

According to locals, both Mizanur and Manir were electrocuted while they were repairing a torn electric wire near Mollah Bari of Nyamatpura area.

The locals took them to Kathalia Upazila Health Complex where the doctor on duty declared them dead.



PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

FLUTTERING WINGS OF JOY... A tailed jay, scientifically known as Graphium Agamemnon, relishes the pink petals of a Nayantara (Madagascar periwinkle) as the flower blooms after an encounter with rain. Adorning its vibrant coffee and green wings, the butterfly slowly climbs up the flora to reach for its centre to taste its nectar. The photo was taken yesterday in Chuknagar of Khulna's Dumuria upazila.

### Seven killed, 25 hurt in road accidents

STAR REPORT

Seven people were killed and 25 injured in road accidents in five districts during the last two days, according to reports from our correspondents.

In Narsingdi, three people were killed after a CNG-run auto-rickshaw was hit by an unknown vehicle on Dhaka-Sylhet highway in Shibpur upazila early yesterday.

The incident took place around 12:15am in Sayednagar area when the victims were going to Bhelanagar from Sayednagar, said Abul Khayer, sub-inspector of Shibpur Highway Police.

Nasir Uddin, 26, driver of the auto-rickshaw died on the spot and the other two -- Joj Mia, 23, and Shahin Hossain, 28 -- succumbed to their injuries on the way to a hospital.

The bodies were taken to Narsingdi Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy.

In Dhaka, a man died after being hit by a bus in Jatrabari yesterday.

The deceased, identified as Abul Khayer, 40, was a rickshaw-van puller. The accident took place at Chandankotha area around noon.

Khayer was taking iron plates to

Jatrabari from Postogola when a Narail Express bus hit him, leaving him critically injured. He was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead around 1:30pm, said Mofizur Rahman, Khayer's brother.



In Joypurhat, at least 25 people were injured after a bus skidded off Bogura-Akkelpur road and fell into a ditch in Akkelpur upazila yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

In Panchagarh, a couple was killed as a covered-van hit their motorbike in Tentulia upazila on Wednesday night. The accident happened around

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

### MOSQUITO LARVAE DNCC to get pesticide from Singapore

UNB, Dhaka

Dhaka North City Corporation will apply BTI pesticide to destroy mosquito larvae from Sunday, said Mayor Atiqul Islam yesterday.

"After completing all the procedures, we were able to bring the insecticide BTI from Singapore, which destroys mosquito larvae. An expert team from Singapore will talk to the health department on Friday and Saturday," he said at a meeting.

Earlier, an awareness rally was held in front of Nagar Bhaban. LGRD Minister Md Tazul Islam also took part in the rally.

### EU gives Tk 525cr for education

UNB, Dhaka

The European Union has disbursed the third tranche of the ongoing education budget support implemented by the government.

The amount of the disbursement is EUR 44.875 million (around Tk 525 crore) with the aim of advancing the country's education reforms, in line with national and international commitments.

"The European Union is pleased to support the Government of Bangladesh in its efforts to address key issues like equity and quality of the education in primary and Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET)," said EU Ambassador Charles Whiteley.

### Champa finds success in DRAGON FRUIT

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

A couple of years back, if someone told Champa Begum a fruit that originated in Central America would change her life, she would probably not believe them.

And now, she has emerged as a successful woman entrepreneur, cultivating dragon fruit, on a family-owned land in Baniyali village under Haibatpur union in Jashore Sadar upazila.

This year, the garden has produced the pink fruit attracting visitors every day.

In the beginning of 2022, Champa was struggling to support her ailing husband and child. She was somehow managing the family by rearing poultry and livestock at home.

Six months later, she participated in a courtyard meeting for the Feed the Future Bangladesh Nutrition Activity Project of Jagorani Chakra Foundation (JCF) and later turned one bigha of her land into an organic dragon fruit plantation, investing Tk 1 lakh.

Champa planted 512 dragon fruit saplings on the land. She nurtured these without using any chemical fertilisers, following the advice of agricultural officials from the project.

After six months, the plants began to bear fruits. At the end of the year, Champa earned a considerable profit from the harvest. "I began dragon fruit cultivation in the area with help of the project and relevant digital information. I also received entrepreneurship development

training, which helped me find success. I am currently supplying safe and nutritious dragon fruit to people," said Champa.

"When I started out, many objected to a woman working in the fields. But I proved everyone wrong. Now people from near and far come to visit my garden every day," she added.

is on a rise, Champa said she expects to earn Tk 8-9 lakh by selling the fruits this season.

Trees can bear fruits for 30 years if the garden is properly taken care of, she added.

Fulima Begum of Baniyali village is one of those who took inspiration from Champa's example.



Champa Begum at her dragon fruit orchard. PHOTO: COLLECTED

She said other women were also inspired by her to start cultivating fruit in the area.

A dragon fruit tree takes one to two years to mature. A matured tree bears 25 to 30 fruits, over six months between June and November. The current market price of the fruit is Tk 200-300 per kilogramme, but organically harvested dragon fruit can fetch Tk 350-400 per kg, she said.

Sharing that cultivation cost

"Following Champa apa, I also started dragon fruit cultivation with 200 saplings. I hope to see results soon," she said.

Abu Talha, additional deputy director of the DAE in Jashore, said, "We believe that Champa Begum revolutionised the cultivation of this attractive crop in the region. If she needs any assistance, the department will definitely provide her with necessary support."

### Sea ports asked to hoist signal three

UNB, Dhaka

Maritime ports of Chattogram, Cox's Bazar, Mongla and Payra have been advised to keep local cautionary signal 3 hoisted as the monsoon depression over India's West Bengal-Bihar and adjoining areas moved west-northwestwards and now lies over north Chhattisgarh and adjoining area.

It is likely to move in a west-northwesterly direction further and weaken gradually into a well-marked low, said a special bulletin of the met office yesterday.

Under its influence, a steep pressure gradient persists over north Bay and adjoining coastal areas of Bangladesh.

PROF. DR. ANISUR RAHMAN

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FCPS (Surgery), FRCS (Glasgow)  
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Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

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Memo No. BGC/CEDP/2023-24/25

Date: 02/08/2023

**e-Tender Notice: 01/2023-2024**

e-Tender is invite in the National e-Gp System portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following package;

Sl. No.	Tender ID. No.	Name of Package	Last Date and Time of Tender Security Submission	Tender Closing Date & Time
01	854523	G-03: Procurement of Table cum Chair, Chair, Table and Book Self for class room and seminar	21- August-2023 01:00 PM	21- August-2023 02:00 PM

This is an on line tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-Gp portal and no offline/hard copy will be accepted.

To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-Gp portal ([https:// www. eprocure. gov. bd](https://www.eprocure.gov.bd)) is required.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-Gp system portal have to be deposited online through any registered Banks Branches up to 21-August-2023, 1:00 PM

Further information and guideline are available in the National e-Gp System portal and from e-Gp Help Desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

03.08.2023

(Professor Md. Nurul Absar Chowdhury)

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GD-1188



# Get inducted into the ‘Ministry of Love’ with 12 fresh projects

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

The season is rife with mangoes, rain and love as noted director Mostofa Sarwar Farooki has helmed 12 fresh love stories, to be made available on Chorki.

A unique event took place at a hotel in the capital yesterday, as filmmakers for these 12 projects ‘took oath’, and were inducted into the *Ministry of Love*. These filmmakers, being playfully referred to as ‘ministers’, are an amalgamation of some of the

country’s top established and upcoming directors.

Besides creatively guiding and co-producing the entire project, Mostafa Sarwar Farooki will direct *Something Like an Autobiography* and *Last Defenders of Monogamy*. Robiul Alam Robi is directing *Forget me Not*, Shihab Shaheen will look to extend his OTT hit-streak with *Kacher Manush Dure Thuiya*, and Chorki CEO Redoan Rony himself will direct *Uki*.

The undeniable Ashfaque Nipun is coming with a project titled *We Need to Talk*, Abu Shahed Emon will direct *Aboni*, Raihan Rafi will look to take his good theatre fortune to OTT with *Mohabbat*, and Anam Biswas will lend his expert hand to make *Shoulder Man*.

The duo of Shankha Dasgupta and Raka Noshin Nower are making *50/50*, festival-ace Arifur Rahman looks to helm *Jui*, and upcoming director Rezaur

Rahman will make *36-24-36*.

During the event, Mostafa Sarwar Farooki told the media that the project will be as unconventional as it is ambitious. Redoan Rony informed that the projects will be available throughout different times in 2023 and 2024.

The approach by the famed streaming platform has certainly gotten OTT and cine-enthusiasts interested in the projects, as has the assembly of such high-profile directors.

## Robiul Alam Robi’s ‘Suraiya’ selected for Asian Project Market 2023



The Asian Project Market (APM), considered the largest film investment and co-production market in Asia, has recently unveiled its 30 selected projects for this year’s edition.

Among these prestigious selections is the Bangladeshi film *Suraiya*, directed by Robiul Alam Robi and produced by Fazle Hasan Shishir.

The film is based on the original novel named *Suraiya* by writer Shibabrata Barman who is also a co-producer of this project.

## Gal Gadot confirmed to star in ‘Wonder Woman 3’

Exciting news for fans as Gal Gadot officially confirms her role in *Wonder Woman 3*, with James Gunn and Peter Safran at the helm. During an interaction with ComicBook.com’s Chris Killian ahead of the SAG-AFTRA strike, Gadot shared her deep affection for the *Wonder Woman* series and revealed her upcoming partnership with James and Peter in the project.

“I love portraying Wonder Woman. It’s so close to and dear to my heart. From what I heard from James and from Peter is that we’re gonna develop a *Wonder Woman 3* together,” said Gadot.

Gal Gadot previously starred in 2017’s *Wonder Woman* and its 2020 sequel, *Wonder Woman 1984*. Both films were directed by Patty Jenkins. Chris Pine played the lead actor Steve Trevor.



After the Covid-19 pandemic, OTT has crept its way into living rooms and even the palm of one’s hands in Bangladesh. Much of it is due to the superior content and innovative ways to sell the customers on why they should pay for a subscription. This time Chorki brings a fresh new concept to strengthen its own library.



# NEWS

## EC to work with Facebook

FROM PAGE 12

said EC Additional Secretary Ashok Kumar Debnath after a meeting with a delegation of Meta held at the EC office.

Ruzan Sarwar, Meta’s head of public policy in Bangladesh, led the delegation, which included head of APAC Global Response Aidan Hoy and Regulatory Specialist Eugene Poh.

After the meeting, Ashok told reporters that as there were some technical issues, a technical team of the EC held the meeting.

“It was discussed how to prevent propaganda that spreads via Facebook, especially hate and communal speeches, and misinformation, or how these will be deleted, removed and blocked,” he said.

A focal person of the EC will be assigned to be in touch with Meta.

“What appears to be negative to us, we will tell them and they will remove it. Such steps will be taken only regarding various election-centric contents, if we request for that,” he said, adding that the process would start after the polls schedule is announced.

He, however, did not mention the process of how the EC would determine propaganda. “The discussion is still at the preliminary stage,” he said.

The election is likely to be held in late December or early January next year.

Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Habibur Awal earlier said the schedule would not be announced before October. He hinted that the schedule can be unveiled 50 or 60 days ahead of the election day.

Before the last parliamentary election held on December 30, 2018, the EC started to monitor the social media platforms, especially Facebook, to prevent the spread of propaganda centring that polls.

The EC faced huge criticism, as it instructed for slowing down mobile internet by shutting down 3G and 4G services on election day in December 2018.

## Ex-Basic Bank chairman, 13 others charged

FROM PAGE 12

Director Md Ibrahim submitted the charge sheet against them to the Dhaka Metropolitan Senior Special Judge’s Court.

Ibrahim, also the case investigating officer, also appealed to the court to issue arrest warrants against Bacchu and the 10 others as they did not get bail from any court.

The court has set August 16 for the next hearing to decide whether it will accept the charges against Bacchu and 13 others in the case.

On September 22, 2015, the ACC filed a case with Paltan Police Station against Faqurul and 11 others for their alleged involvement in the embezzlement of Tk 23 crore.

Later, the 10 included the names of Bacchu and Shah Alam in the charge sheet after discovering their involvement in the graft.

According to the case statement, on June 26, 2012, the accused bank officials sanctioned a loan of Tk 23 crore to Ashraf Ahmed and his wife Nasrin Jahan Ratna, proprietors of Ahmed Oil Mills Ltd without scrutinising any documents submitted on behalf of the company. The money was later embezzled in its entirety.

The ACC also filed 17 other cases

on September 22, 2015, against a number of bankers and borrowers linked with the Tk 5,000-crore BASIC Bank scam between 2009 and 2013.

**FOUR ORDERED TO SURRENDER**

The High Court yesterday directed four Basic Bank officials to surrender before the lower court concerned in six weeks in connection with 20 corruption cases filed over the bank’s loan scam.

The bench of Justices Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Khizir Hayat Lizu passed the orders after hearing 20 separate petitions filed by the accused officials seeking anticipatory bail in the 20 cases.

The four are Basic Bank’s Assistant General Managers Sadia Akther Shahin, Romana Ahad, ASM Amitur Rahman, and Md Jalal Uddin.

During the hearing, Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan produced the charge sheets of 20 corruption cases before the bench in compliance with its Wednesday’s order.

The ACC has approved the charge sheets against former Basic Bank Chairman Sheikh Abdul Hye Bacchu and 146 others in connection with 59 cases filed over embezzlement of Tk 2,265 crore.

## Dhaka is now hopeful

FROM PAGE 12

In 2011, Bangladesh and India failed to sign the Teesta water-sharing agreement due to West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee’s last-minute opposition during the then Indian prime minister Manmohan Singh’s visit to Dhaka.

The issue remains unresolved, leaving farmers in Bangladesh’s northern region in trouble as irrigation has become difficult for them.

Bangladesh and India have 54 rivers in common and a treaty on sharing water of the Ganges was signed in 1996. The two countries are now working on sharing water of six other small rivers.

Earlier this year, Dhaka had sent

a note verbale to Delhi seeking to know details about the West Bengal government’s decision, as reported by media, to set up three hydropower plants in Darjeeling, and two of them are likely to reduce the volume of water in the Teesta.

Indian newspaper The Telegraph had reported that the West Bengal government acquired 1,000 acres to dig two canals and divert more water from the river to irrigate farms in Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar districts.

Asked if Dhaka received any response from Delhi on the matter, Seheri Sabrin yesterday said India was working on the issue and Bangladesh was expecting a response soon.

## Dozen hurt as pro-AL, BNP

FROM PAGE 12

Uddin Khokon, Md Ruhul Quddus Kazal, Kayser Kamal, and Gazi Kamrul Islam Sajal, attacked the pro-AL lawyers and vandalised and ransacked his office room in a planned manner.

“At least five lawyers, including Golam Sarwar Amin and Safayat Jamil of Ainjibi Parishad were injured in the attack,” he told The Daily Star.

Dulal said the pro-AL lawyers were holding a “peace meeting” in front of the office rooms of the SCBA president and secretary like other days protesting “anarchy” by pro-BNP lawyers.

He said legal action will be taken against the pro-BNP lawyers.

However, Kayser Kamal, secretary general of Ainjibi Forum, told this correspondent that the pro-AL lawyers, led by SCBA President Md Momtaz Uddin Fakir and Secretary Dulal, attacked the pro-BNP lawyers

when they were holding the press conference.

The pro-BNP lawyers resisted the pro-AL lawyers. At a stage, pro-AL lawyers spread powder from fire extinguishers, leaving about nine pro-BNP lawyers, including Salma Sultana Soma and Jasmine Akhter, injured, he added.

Earlier in the day, Ainjibi Forum leaders told the press conference that the government has “destroyed the judiciary” and was using judges as “political activists”.

“We are rejecting this judgement [conviction and sentencing of Tarique and Zubaida]. The anti-fascist movement cannot be stopped by filing cases, carrying out attacks, making people disappear, arrests and causing harassment,” Kayser Kamal said in a written statement.

He said the forum will bring out flag processions on August 6 and stage sit-ins on August 8 on all

BAR premises across the country protesting the verdict.

Similar scuffles had broken out on the SCBA premises between the pro-BNP and pro-AL lawyers twice after the annual election to the BAR association on March 15-16. The incidents caused chaos and injuries.

In the election, pro-ruling party lawyers won all 14 SCBA posts, including president and secretary.

Pro-BNP lawyers have been staging demonstrations on the SCBA office premises demanding a date be fixed for holding fresh polls to the association under an acceptable election conducting subcommittee.

In a counter move, AL-leaning lawyers have been holding “peace meetings” in front of the SCBA president’s office room protesting snatching of ballots and vandalism by “pro-BNP lawyers” on the SCBA office premises during the polls on March 15.

## US interested

FROM PAGE 1

judiciary, the security services, and obviously the voters have roles to play.”

After the meeting with Haas, the AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader told reporters that free, fair and peaceful elections were desired by the US and the AL alike.

“The United States has not said anything about the caretaker government, the resignation of Sheikh Hasina, the dissolution of parliament and the Election Commission,” Quader said.

The issue of dialogue with the opposition party was also not discussed at the meeting, he said.

Asked whether the AL was feeling any pressure from the foreign diplomats’ statements regarding elections, he said, “Why should the Awami League feel pressure? It is our commitment to hold fair elections.”

AL presidium member Lt Colonel Mohammad Farooq Khan (ret’d), International Affairs Secretary Shammil Ahmed, Office Secretary Barrister Biplab Barua, Information and Research Affairs Secretary Salim Mahmud and Executive Member Mohammad Ali Arafat were present at the meeting.

## External balance goes further downhill

FROM PAGE 1

deficit not narrowed, Hussain said.

Last fiscal year, the current account deficit narrowed 82.1 percent to \$3.3 billion thanks to the import curbs.

“Falling imports are not good for the country’s economy,” Hussain said, adding that the infrastructure and industrial sectors have been adversely impacted by the import control measures put in place to safeguard the strained dollar stockpile.

Last fiscal year, import payments slumped 15.8 percent to \$69.5 billion while export earnings edged up 6.3 percent to \$52.3 billion.

Subsequently, the trade gap declined 48.4 percent year-on-year to \$17.15 billion at the end of June.

“It would not be possible to continue with the import curbs every year. Now the stakeholders have to take measures on how to improve the financial account. There is huge mismanagement because our monetary policy, exchange rate policy and fiscal policy did not work to address the issue,” Hussain said.

Achieving the targeted 7.5 percent GDP growth and 6 percent inflation rate would not be possible this fiscal year with the current reserve position.

As of July 26, gross international reserves stood at \$23.3 billion. The net international reserve is less than \$20 billion, said a senior official of the BB.

“The economy now needs policy correction,” Hussain said, while calling for letting the market decide the exchange rate and interest rate and strict adherence to the government’s austerity measures.

The pressure on BoP would not be going away anytime soon, according to Mansur, also a former economist of the International Monetary Fund.

“It will last one or two more years as we need a lot of supplies like gas, fertilisers and those payments are already overdue,” he added.

The external sector is under pressure due to deferred payment, said Md. Sarwar Hossain, assistant spokesman of the central bank.



## Soaring hunger in Sudan as 4m displaced: UN

AFP, Wad Madani

The UN sounded the alarm Wednesday of impending famine in Sudan, where months of war have hit food supplies and pushed nearly four million people to flee the fighting.

“Over 20.3 million people, representing more than 42 percent of the population in the country, are experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity,” the UN’s Food and Agriculture Organization announced.

Half that number was already highly food insecure last year, before war broke out between army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and his former deputy, Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, who commands the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF).

In a new escalation of an already disastrous humanitarian situation, “6.3 million people are one step away from famine”, the UN warned on Wednesday.

## COMMUNAL CLASH

### Vandalism, arson reported in Haryana

NDTV ONLINE

Despite the Indian police stating that the situation was improving after two days of communal clashes earlier this week, isolated incidents of violence, including arson and attempted vandalism, were reported in Haryana yesterday.

The police said they had received complaints of fires at two religious centres in Nuh district’s Tauru area overnight.

However, no damage to the structures, injuries, or deaths were reported in these recent events.

“There were two reports of arson last night. At the first incident, a fire was reported near the power input unit of a at a religious centre, where batteries were kept. It was put out quickly. It was raining, could have been a short circuit as well. No Molotov cocktails were used. The other one was also a small incident, and we have stationed a car there as well,” senior police officer Varun Singla said.



People pay tribute to Kuki community members killed in Manipur’s ethnic violence, in Churachandpur, India yesterday. 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 Kuki people to the majority Meitei population as well.

PHOTO: AFP

## Vote for Thai PM postponed

### Constitutional Court ruling prolongs political deadlock nearly three months after election

AFP, Bangkok

Thailand’s parliament yesterday postponed a vote to choose a new prime minister after a Constitutional Court ruling, prolonging the kingdom’s political deadlock nearly three months after an election.

The reformist Move Forward Party (MFP) won the most seats in May’s polls but fell well short of a majority, and an eight-party coalition was not enough to get its leader Pita Limjaroenrat approved as premier.

The 42-year-old was blocked by junta-appointed senators spooked by MFP’s pledge to reform strict royal defamation laws, then was denied the chance to be renominated a week later -- throwing Thailand into political turmoil.

Yesterday, the Constitutional Court said it needed more time to decide whether to hear a petition challenging the legality of that decision.

This prompted house speaker Wan Muhamad Noor Matha to delay another vote to choose a PM that had been scheduled for today.

“The vote for the prime minister tomorrow is postponed -- we will have to wait for the Constitutional Court decision on August 16,” he told reporters.

The court said it needed to weigh more evidence on whether to accept the case brought by the official ombudsman.

The developments come a day after MFP dropped out of the coalition it once led -- now headed by the Pheu Thai party, which came second in the election.

Pheu Thai has said property tycoon Srettha Thavisin will be its PM nominee, but following yesterday’s events it cancelled a press conference that had been planned to announce a new coalition.

“We have enough votes to set up the government,” Pheu Thai deputy leader Phumtham Wechayachai told reporters.

“The delay of the Constitutional Court will allow us to be even better prepared.”

To become prime minister, a candidate must be approved by a majority of both houses of parliament -- including 250 senators appointed under the last junta. Without MFP’s 151 seats, Pheu Thai has been in talks with other parties to build a parliamentary majority.



## Taqsem made MD for the seventh time

FROM PAGE 1

Upon Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina’s approval, Taqsem’s appointment was finalised.

Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority is governed by the Wasa Act passed in 1996. According to it, the chief executive officer of the organisation is supposed to be the managing director.

The government appoints people to such posts through the LGRD ministry, upon a proposal or recommendation from Wasa. However, the law does not state anything about how many times or for how many years the same person can serve in the post.

Taqsem has been the Dhaka Wasa MD for the past 14 years after getting his first appointment on October 14, 2009.

Since then, many complaints had surfaced against Dhaka Wasa for actions and decisions that include supplying contaminated water in residential areas, increasing the water tariff by up to 15 times, undertaking

ineffective projects in the name of “improving services” at the expense of crores of taka.

The recently-sacked Wasa board chairman Engineer Gholam Mostofa wrote a letter to the Local Government Department highlighting various irregularities of Wasa under Taqsem’s tenures.

The LGRD ministry then removed Mostafa from his post on May 21.

Despite severe criticism from various quarters regarding Wasa services, Taqsem, who is a US citizen along with his wife and children, has held onto his post.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Mozammel Haque, president of Dhaka Wasa’s Kormokorta Kormochari Oikya Parishad (Officers and Employees Union Council), said the government should not have reappointed a controversial person like Taqsem.

“He [Taqsem] was desperate to get reappointed for his own personal interest as this organisation is like a

gold mine for him,” said Mozammel, also an executive engineer of Dhaka Wasa.

Gholam Mostofa, who is in London now, told this correspondent over the phone that what he had said earlier about the MD is still valid.

In an earlier interview with this newspaper, he had said, “Wasa has become Taqsem A Khan’s ‘personal property’.”

He added that the MD’s monthly salary has increased by 421 percent over the last 12 years -- which currently is now Tk 6.25 lakh per month. Even during the Covid-19 pandemic, it was increased by Tk 1.75 lakh.

Questions have surfaced about keeping him in the same position despite allegations of corruption and irregularities.

Mozammel Haque said Taqsem has done nothing extraordinary in the position for him to be able to retain it for another three years.

“Traditionally, one should also not

stay in the same position for long as it blocks the path for new leadership.”

In 2019, the MD faced huge public outrage after claiming that Wasa-supplied water was 100 percent drinkable.

He made the claim at a press conference arranged to refute allegations made by Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB).

TIB, after a year-long study titled “Dhaka Wasa: Challenges of Good Governance and Way Forward”, revealed their findings in April 2019, where it mentioned how 91 percent of the 2,728 connections and service recipients of Wasa surveyed in Dhaka had to boil the water to make it drinkable.

In the process, they burnt gas worth Tk 332 crore a year.

TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman said, “The incumbent Dhaka Wasa MD’s extension for the seventh term is highly disappointing for Dhaka dwellers, though not at all surprising.

“He has already demonstrated that his power base is much deeper and stronger than the impact of the collective, long accumulated frustrations and dissatisfactions of the people that the organisation is supposed to serve.”

He added, “The extension is an example of malicious disregard for the fate of the consumers who have been subjected to arbitrary and extortionist imposition of the ever-increasing cost of the lowest possible quality of the supplied water, which the MD publicly recognised as not good enough for himself to drink.

“This decision also represents a blatant insensitivity to allegations of institutionalisation of corruption in project implementation and abuse of power by which an unaccountable authoritarian regime has been established, including dysfunctionality and subservience of the Dhaka Wasa board to the MD.”

This is also an ominous precedence

for other similar entities, which is the last thing to be accepted in a democratically governed society, Iftekharuzzaman said.

Despite repeated attempts, Taqsem could not be reached over the phone for comments on his reappointment.

**FAZLULLAH REAPPOINTED AS CTG WASA MD**

AKM Fazlullah, managing director of Chattogram Wasa, has been reappointed to his position for another three years.

A gazette was issued by Local Government Division in this regard yesterday.

“I was not interested in serving as MD again, but I will have to do it to meet the requests of the Wasa board members,” Fazlullah claimed.

The 81-year-old was made the Chattogram Wasa chairman on July 6, 2009. He was appointed as the MD after the post was created in 2011.

His current fifth term is set to expire on October 31.

## 2023 already the deadliest year

FROM PAGE 1

Entomologist Manzur Chowdhury said the infection rate outside Dhaka usually increases when those infected in Dhaka migrate out of the capital.

“Earlier, the epicenter [of the viral disease] would be Dhaka and would go outside if patients would travel out of the capital. But this year, the number of patients seemed to have simultaneously increased in Dhaka and outside, due to the intense

breeding of the Aedes mosquito.”

More so, many people carrying the virus travelled outside the capital during Eid-ul-Azha, which also may have contributed to the spread, he added.

Manzur further said it is now necessary to break the transmission chain, and one of the main methods is to use mosquito nets while sleeping, wearing clothes that protect exposed body parts, spraying repellants and ensuring clean water, especially if

breeding of the Aedes mosquito.”

More so, many people carrying the virus travelled outside the capital during Eid-ul-Azha, which also may have contributed to the spread, he added.

Manzur further said it is now necessary to break the transmission chain, and one of the main methods is to use mosquito nets while sleeping, wearing clothes that protect exposed body parts, spraying repellants and ensuring clean water, especially if

necessary attention in this regard.

“It would be much easier to control the spread of the disease and breeding of the mosquitoes if a vector management authority, who would be able to provide proper guidelines, was set up.

“The LGRD ministry should send at least some written guidelines, however brief, to the district level authorities, regarding the elimination of Aedes breeding sources and personal protection.”

FROM PAGE 1

Jamal said.

The attackers got back into the car and sped away immediately afterwards, he added.

Sabuz was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead around 12:30am yesterday, said Inspector Bacchu Mia, in-charge of DMCH Police Outpost.

The body was sent to the hospital morgue for autopsy.

A case was filed with Tejaagon

Police Station in this connection.

Imran Hossain, assistant commissioner of Tejaagon zone, said police were yet to identify the car and arrest the attackers.

“The CCTV camera located near the spot is out of order due to the ongoing construction work of the Metro Rail. There were many vehicles on the road around that time. We are analysing the footage of other CCTV cameras to identify the vehicle,” he added.

## Trump in court to face election conspiracy charges

AFP, Washington



Former president Donald Trump arrived in federal court in the US capital on Thursday to answer historic charges of leading a criminal conspiracy that sought to defraud the American people by overturning the 2020 election.

Trump, the frontrunner for the 2024 Republican presidential nomination, is being arraigned at the same downtown Washington courthouse where hundreds of his supporters who took part in the January 6, 2021 attack on the US Capitol have been convicted and sentenced.

Shortly before leaving his Bedminster, New Jersey, golf club for the flight to Washington, Trump defiantly doubled down on his baseless claim that the election was “stolen.”

Trump is expected to enter a plea of not guilty at a hearing before magistrate judge Moxila Upadhyaya. He is likely to be fingerprinted but not have a mugshot taken.

The 77-year-old billionaire has already been charged in two other criminal cases, and the new conspiracy charges raise the prospect of his being further embroiled in legal proceedings at the height of next year’s election campaign. The accusations that Trump and six unnamed co-conspirators plotted to upend the 2020 election result is the most serious of the cases threatening to derail his White House comeback bid.

## TRIAL OF CIVILIANS

### Won’t allow army to take unconstitutional steps: Pakistan CJ

DAWN ONLINE



Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial yesterday said the armed forces would not be allowed to take “unconstitutional steps” as a six-judge bench indefinitely adjourned the hearing on a set of petitions challenging the trials of civilians in military courts.

The bench, headed by the top judge, comprised Justice Ijazul Ahsan, Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Sayeed Mazahar Ali Akbar Naqvi and Justice Ayesha A. Malik. A day earlier, the apex court had rejected a plea, filed by senior counsel Faisal Siddiqi on behalf of civil society activists, to constitute a full court for the case.

During yesterday’s hearing, the CJP expressed regret and grief over the events of May 9 and stressed that he didn’t want the “army to raise their weapons against the people of Pakistan”. He said armed forces should be praised for not opening fire on civilians despite the violence on May 9, recalling that people in Mianwali had broken into and attacked army installations.

“However, the military will not be allowed to take any illegal steps,” he noted. Justice Bandial further said the court was of the opinion that there was a further need to hear Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan’s arguments but contended that the court would not be able to do so for at least two weeks due to the unavailability of judges.



## We must end human trafficking

Addressing root causes of trafficking needs concerted efforts by all

It is disheartening that human trafficking still poses a serious threat to Bangladesh despite the progress made in combating it in recent times. There are a number of special tribunals to deal with trafficking-related cases, and as per the US State Department's 2023 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report, 94 traffickers were convicted in 35 cases in the latest reporting period, whereas 18 were convicted in 11 cases in the previous period. Legal instruments are vital in the fight against trafficking, so the rise in convictions should convince us of the effectiveness of ongoing measures. However, as experts have pointed out at a recent event, significant challenges remain.

While legal consequences do serve as deterrence, trafficking will continue to occur unless we address its root causes such as poverty, inequality, and lack of education. These factors often make individuals vulnerable to exploitation and entrapment by traffickers, who also take advantage of poor social and administrative safeguards that are in place. For a multi-dimensional problem like this, the response needs to be multi-dimensional, too. Experts at the event highlighted a number of areas where the authorities must intervene simultaneously and redouble existing efforts.

The first challenge is to "cut off the source", which the government can do by implementing comprehensive socio-economic policies aimed at uplifting marginalised communities – where the victims usually come from – and providing them with better opportunities for education and sustainable livelihoods. This is a big task, of course, but eradicating poverty can help address a lot of other critical challenges as well. Continuously raising awareness is also crucial, as many potential victims and their families may not be aware of the dangers of trafficking or may lack knowledge of available support services.

The next front is institutional. Ensuring proper institutional safeguards requires a thorough review of related manpower and law enforcement agencies and plugging any hole that exists. A vital part of this is strengthening the justice system, including enhancing the capacity of investigators and prosecutors. While the numbers provided by the TIP report are encouraging, the rate of convictions in general is still frustratingly low. An analysis of the convictions shows that the courts sentenced most traffickers to just fines. The imposition of fines rather than jail time weakens deterrence and likely creates security and safety concerns, particularly for victims cooperating with officials. We must, then, build a strong legal framework with well-trained investigators and prosecutors that can ensure that traffickers face appropriate consequences for their actions. We also need to ensure every victim gets the support and protection they deserve.

Finally, collaboration among all the sectors and stakeholders is vital to a successful anti-trafficking strategy. Everyone must play their part so we can make it impossible for the traffickers to commit the crime, or get away without punishment.

## End the stalemate in Ruet

Appoint a VC urgently to run all academic, administrative activities smoothly

It is nothing new that public universities in Bangladesh are plagued with various irregularities that often hinder their academic and administrative activities. From the falling standard of education to nepotism and corruption in appointing teachers and staff, from unhealthy student politics to rampant seat trade by the BCL – the list of problems they face seems never-ending. The ongoing stalemate at the Rajshahi University of Engineering & Technology (Ruet) is a case in point. According to a report by Prothom Alo, the university has been running without a regular VC for a year now, which has been hampering its activities. Many departments, for example, are failing to hold regular exams, while the promotion of more than a hundred teachers has also been stalled. Many teachers are unable to go outside the country even after receiving scholarships, while some are not getting NOCs from the administration to go overseas for emergency treatment.

Reportedly, after the term of the last VC expired at the end of July last year, the Ministry of Education appointed the dean of the Faculty of Applied Science and Humanities as acting VC. Although he handled the day-to-day responsibilities of a VC, he was not mandated to take care of the appointments, promotions, or take many major academic decisions. After he resigned on May 28 this year, in the face of a movement from teachers, the university has been literally limping along. Last month, the students waged a movement demanding the announcement of exam dates. Although they were assured by their teachers that the exam dates would be given soon, many departments have still not been able to do so because of the absence of department heads. The situation is as bad as it can get.

The question is, should a public university run like this, and for such a long time? What could be the reason for not appointing a VC in this vital university? What role are the education ministry and UGC playing to solve the crisis? What will happen to the thousands of students whose academic life is being hampered due to these administrative problems? How will the university address the issue of session jam that will follow after a year of such a stalemate? We urge the government to take the issue seriously and immediately appoint a VC at Ruet following proper procedures. It must not allow the crisis to linger anymore.

# ‘Gladiatorial’ street contests and prospects of free, fair elections

WHAT WE SHOULD CELEBRATE, WE ARE BEGINNING TO FEAR



### THE THIRD VIEW

Mahfuz Anam  
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of The Daily Star.

MAHFUZ ANAM

From the looks of it, our two major political parties are preparing for “gladiatorial” street fights as a part of their election preparation. Can this be democracy? There is some logic to mass mobilisation, but having a demonstration each time the opposition has one, and on the same day, how logical is that? Will it lead to a free and fair election or jeopardise it further? As the election is getting nearer, the possibility of a nightmarish pre-election period is driving fear and panic among the people.

We may have dug the first under-river tunnel in South Asia, built a bridge over one of the mightiest and toughest of rivers in the world, made virtual revolution in agriculture and other sectors, caught up with modern cities in building metro, elevated expressway, etc., yet we have not progressed even an inch with our democracy. This is where we have failed ourselves most miserably. The sad state of our parliament, which has transformed from being the “House of the People” to nothing more than an extension of the government of the day, exemplifies this failure most dramatically. Democracy remains totally under the thumb of the party that forms the government and defines what is and what is not democracy. It remains violence-ridden where freedom of expression is totally compromised by the fear of laws like the Digital Security Act and where the culture of dissent is demonised to an extent that dissenters are seen as enemies rather than as integral to the democratic process.

Election is when voters are supposed to be “the king”; it is a time when political leaders literally genuflect before the “court of the people,” either begging forgiveness for mistakes made, or explaining why voters should trust them or plead for support in the upcoming election. It is the time when power reverses and the common people have – once every five years in our case – the upper hand. It is the moment when the “Republic” shows its true colour and the people get to feel, in both collective and personal terms, what a democratic state is really like.

Nothing like that is happening in our case. Instead of feeling like “kingmakers,” we feel just as threatened, as intimidated and as dominated by the powers that be as we did during the



When AL and BNP both take a position of no dialogue and no compromise, the implication is that it will be settled by force on the streets.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

past. Nothing has changed in terms of voters feeling empowered because it is election time.

As we mentioned at the beginning, when AL and BNP both take a position of no dialogue and no compromise, the implication is that it will be settled by force on the streets.

When politics becomes nothing more than fighting on the streets, the question arises: which type of workers – on both sides – get the upper hand? The ones who are decent, sober, politically conscious and somewhat culturally-oriented are usually sidelined. It is those who are crude, given to muscle power, used to violence and adept at using weapons who emerge more in leadership roles. They, in turn, preach more street fights because it brings them increased clout, power and money. The more the street fights, the more the goons take centre stage, and the more the exchanges between the two sides get violent. Soon the violence acquires its own dynamics and goes up in degrees of ferocity and frequency. Political activities, especially movements, get more and more dependent on “muscle” rather than

(BCL) – some may argue that they are already an extinct species – gradually lost influence and leadership.

A prolonged process of street violence leads to a deterioration of quality of politics in general and in the quality of political leadership in particular. We are a good example of that.

As to the consequences of their actions, both parties are in denial – denial of the reality that their respective positions have already led to a backsliding of democratic culture and to the rise of violence and with more of it in the coming days. Their denial cannot be good for the country that they pretend to speak on behalf of.

Why should we – the voters – be forced to accept this situation? We wait five years for the chance to vote, to express our judgment on the incumbent, to examine the credentials of those who are vying for power, to evaluate the plans and policies implemented, to express our displeasure on things that we really hate and also share our own vision on how we see our future. This is what happens when the people are allowed

their thinking loses touch with the facts on the ground. They inevitably fall victim to their own propaganda which results in shutting down any authentic feedback mechanism that could have brought them back into the real world. This is when the civil society, grassroots level NGOs, professional think tanks and independent media become the “enemy,” whose views are not only rejected but also suppressed and their institutions demonised. As propaganda needs to hold sway over facts, state “agencies” are called into action who subtly and not so subtly get into the act of controlling the narrative. Paid agents of the state become peddlers of the truth and the truth tells a victim of the state.

This blurring of the reality and gradual dominance of propaganda is one of the most dangerous post-truth realities that developing countries are facing and of which we are an integral part. From gladiatorial street fighting to controlling the narrative, democracy in Bangladesh is facing an existential challenge which none of the major actors seem to be aware of and, more sadly, concerned about.

## Disaster risk financing is the way to go



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KAZI AMDADUL HOQUE

In the face of a rapidly deteriorating climate situation, a framework or system that allows countries and developmental organisations to prepare funding in advance has become almost mandatory. It is largely seen that funding that is prepared after a disaster strikes is neither timely nor wholly successful.

A study conducted by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) mentions that the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance due to climate disasters is projected to double to 200 million by 2050. Another study conducted by START Fund Bangladesh mentions that around 12.10 million people, belonging to some 2.71 million households, could potentially be affected by different climate-induced disasters such as monsoon floods, flash floods, river erosion, cyclones and landslides annually. Research has also found that a minimum of 18.33 million people may get exposed to climate-related hazards in all 64 districts of Bangladesh a year between 2021 and 2025.

Between 2000 and 2013, natural disasters cost Bangladesh more than \$10 billion in economic losses. Available

funding for relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction, however, stood at \$2 billion only. Measuring the value of non-economic losses such as health hazards, losses to education, etc is more difficult; experts predict those losses to be valued at much higher.

Another study by Start Fund, spanning the last nine years, calculated that 1,053 lives were lost and 9.4 million people displaced during different climate-related disasters in 58 districts of the country since 2014. The existing finance mechanisms are not comprehensive or anticipatory in nature and create more barriers for vulnerable countries. Funds for climate-induced disasters are mostly raised at events, whereas disasters, when they strike, may not give responders enough time to arrange fundraisers to raise funds. They are neither sufficient nor efficient to deliver finances of the speed or scale necessary to respond to losses and damages. We need to shift the focus from response to protecting people ahead of shocks. Relying on pre-agreed plans and finance is a faster, more dignified and cost-effective approach to disaster and crisis.

The solution? Disaster risk financing. The concept is expected to

reduce losses and damages associated with the sudden onset of climate disasters. The United Nations says that for every \$1 invested in such a fund, \$6 can be saved, with additional benefits of up to \$4. Investing in climate resilience projects even creates jobs and saves money. Just a 24-hour warning before a storm or heatwave can curb ensuing damage by 30 percent. It was calculated that spending \$800 million a year could translate into savings of \$3-16 billion, with additional benefits of \$66 billion annually.

The key actions should consider: i) investing in early warning systems and capacities to support anticipatory action; ii) investing in local capacities to disseminate and act on early warnings at the community level; and iii) investing in preparedness capacities at the local level to ensure actors are able to rapidly implement anticipatory actions.

Before one can truly conceive of an up-and-running anticipatory fund programme, there must be proper data analysis – reviewing history, consulting community wisdom, and identifying causes and concerns. Many organisations – i.e. IFRC, WFP, Friendship International, ADPC, etc – in Bangladesh and abroad are moving to create these models, through which it is possible to predict disasters, get central approvals taken prior to a disaster, and go for fund mobilisation on site as soon as the warning signals are visible. The more localised the model, the more acute the impact.

The model being proposed must include extensive scientific data, which lies dormant in files and

folders most of the time. Utilising it, analysing and interpreting it, bringing it to the forefront of the disaster, and designing programmes around it are crucial to building these models. Rather than waiting for aid to come through, low- and middle-income nations need to gradually come out of disaster risk management and ensure that budget allocations at each level include anticipatory funding instead.

A significant benefit of such a research-based climate awareness and disaster finance model is a stellar early warning system, interpreted differently for different locations. The wider the area it covers in terms of safeguarding people and their livelihoods prior to a disaster, the more successful it would be considered. This could also help spur local action, catalysing a proactive approach in the local people to safeguard themselves. The beauty of such models is also that these can be developed remotely, by young people and those that have the technological know-how to do this.

Governments, development partners, the private sector and civil society should all come together through COP28 and UN-GPDRR 2024 to co-create such efficient and accountable mechanisms that would keep communities on the frontline, considering loss and damage impacts. Engaging transboundary facilitators and partners like Global Network on Disaster Reduction (GNDR) and Climate Action Network (CAN) can also work synergistically if certain disasters are common in a few neighbouring countries. This would give the issue both national and international traction.





ILLUSTRATION: BIPLOB CHAKROBORTY

# A lunch date gone wrong



OF MAGIC  
& MADNESS

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BADIUZZAMAN BAY

It wasn't a "date" so much as it was damage control by police in a rather absurd turn of events. But let us stick with the term for now because optics matter, more so in Bangladesh's politics than anywhere else, and because the paradoxical nature of what was on offer – for both Gayeshwar Chandra Roy and the intended wider audience – and the unsavoury background to that offering makes it difficult to digest without a slight pinch of comedy.

First, let us spare a minute on the spectacle before we delve into the background. In pictures and videos that have gone viral, the senior BNP leader is seen having lunch with an unlikely host, the chief of the Detective Branch of police. Before them is a lavish spread of delicacies apparently brought in from a five-star hotel. It was a culinary showdown, with enough fruits and dishes to give anyone, as the saying goes, a "fine dining" experience. Although Gayeshwar has later clarified that he only accepted food brought from the DB chief's home, the spectacle held a power of its own, causing reactions both funny and speculative.

A second spectacle witnessed on the same day had another senior BNP leader, Amanullah Aman, tied to a hospital bed, receiving an unexpected lunch package courtesy of the prime minister herself. This image too quickly went viral.

So there it was: proof that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government is not insensitive to the needs of political rivals, offering them food and hospitality even when they were found in the crosshairs of law enforcement. Both leaders, in case you didn't know, sustained injuries earlier in the day during BNP's sit-in programme at the city's entry points – both, ironically, beaten in clashes with police or ruling party activists. Under pressure from all sides, Awami League was not about to let the potential of this photo op go to waste.

Its general secretary, Obaidul Quader, while denying his party had anything to do with the public dissemination of these images, couldn't resist mocking: "Why had he [Gayeshwar] eaten the meal? Was he that hungry? What type of a political leader is he?"

Or maybe it was this: an orchestrated episode meant to portray a false narrative, distract attention from the wider concerns in public life, and create confusion

**Public beating followed by public courtship – is this going to be a new political trend then? What's next on the menu? A parliamentary potluck for the surviving opposition MPs? A cabinet buffet? A charity football match between the serial beaters and serial victims of our confrontational politics?**

among BNP's rank and file at a time when it is trying to mobilise public support for its one-point demand for the government's resignation in favour of national elections under a non-party interim administration. BNP has said as much, with both of its leaders hitting out at the government for using the photos for political advantage. Gayeshwar, not one to mince his words (pun intended), found the whole episode of offering food – and then turning it into political feed – "in low taste," and labelled it "shameful."

Whichever narrative you find yourself leaning toward, it must be acknowledged that such pictures of apparent hospitality are so rare in our present political history that one needs to go back over 15 years in time for the closest reference to what a newspaper has termed "video politics" – it was during the last caretaker government, before Awami League came to power, when videos of one of its veteran leaders, then in custody, with fruits placed in front of him, were widely disseminated.

The problem with such images is that once they go viral, it is impossible to un-viral them or the message they ostensibly contain. It's little wonder that a significant percentage of social media users – in admiration or contempt – found the Gayeshwar/Amanullah spectacles compulsively absorbing.

But the truth eventually comes out. The lunch is eventually seen for what it is – not a lunch of the kind we know, but a poor attempt at making up for brutalities publicly inflicted, brutalities that, in the age of a punitive US visa policy, may end up blowing up in the face of those behind them. Or at least this is how BNP's general secretary wants us to review this episode. Unfortunately for Awami League, this may just outlast all other theories making rounds at the moment, and unfortunately for us, the party may not care.

Public beating followed by public courtship – is this going to be a new political trend then? What's next on the menu? A parliamentary potluck for the surviving opposition MPs? A cabinet buffet? A charity football match between the serial beaters and serial victims of our confrontational politics? A sword duel to decide who gets to sit at the helm? Seeing how things have taken a strange turn lately – misusing authority to stage the optics of serving wounded/detained political opponents – it may not be long before "you've been served" enters the glossary of political double entendre.

Jokes aside, there is really no takeaway from Saturday's food fiasco. It will go down as yet another example of pointless political posturing – an inconsequential subplot, really, in the big political drama that is currently unfolding in the country.

## US CONGRESSIONAL HEARING ON UFOS

# Are they fact, fiction, or fantasy?



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QUAMRUL HAIDER

On July 26, 2023, the House Oversight Subcommittee on National Security, the Border and Foreign Affairs of the United States House of Representatives convened to hear testimony from three retired military veterans regarding their sightings of Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena (UAP), a new term that encompasses not just Unidentified Flying Objects (UFOs) but also any craft or phenomena observed in space or underwater that cannot be identified. The hearing was held after the whistleblower David Grusch, a former intelligence officer of the US Air Force, claimed that the US government was hiding evidence of "non-human intelligence" in its possession.

Before discussing the outcome of the hearing, a brief history of UFOs is in order. Following the publication of HG Wells' *The War of the Worlds* in 1898, there was a wave of reports of strange objects seen sailing through the skies in the US as well as other parts of the world. Later, in his book *Chariots of the Gods?* written in 1968, Erich von Däniken presented the theory that ancient Earth had been visited by aliens. Interest in UFOs increased greatly during World War II when US fighter pilots used the term "foo fighters" to refer to unexplained sightings in the sky.

The modern fascination with UFOs began with a widely reported sighting on June 24, 1947. While flying a small plane near Mount Rainier in Washington, Kenneth Arnold, a businessman from Idaho, reported seeing nine dazzling, disk-shaped objects drifting in a tight formation. Two weeks later, a rancher reported finding unidentifiable debris near Roswell, New Mexico. Since then, there have been numerous reports of encounters with UFOs.

Now, back to the hearing where former US Navy aviator Ryan Graves, former US Navy commander David Fravor, and whistleblower David Grusch testified about UAPs. Ryan Graves told the panel

develop desktop computers just because a laptop somehow landed in their cave.

The scepticism about UFO sightings is aptly described by Republican Representative Eric Burlison, of Missouri, when he said, "the concept that an alien species is technologically advanced enough to travel billions of light years and gets here, and is somehow incompetent enough to not survive Earth and crashes, is something I

**If the US government is indeed running a secret UFO research programme, it is simply wasting taxpayers' money. However, hyperbole about UFO sightings begs the question: are UFOs fact, fiction or fantasy? We cannot answer these questions until the aliens get in touch with us.**

find a little far-fetched."

Representative Burlison is right on the money. There were many gaping holes and inconsistencies in the testimony of the officers. Hence, their testimony does not have any scientific merit whatsoever. Also, if the US government is indeed running a secret UFO research programme, it is simply wasting taxpayers' money.

However, hyperbole about UFO sightings begs the question: are UFOs real? Are they fact, fiction or fantasy? We cannot answer these questions until the aliens get in touch with us or we find evidence of their existence. Anyhow, if they are real, then the high speed, sharp angle turns of their spaceships darting at supersonic speed through Earth's atmosphere without a sonic boom violates some of the fundamental laws of physics.

Furthermore, calculations based on known propulsion systems indicate that it would take thousands of years for an alien spaceship to travel the distance from even the nearest star, Alpha Centauri A, which is 41.6 trillion kilometres away. The travel time could be cut down to a few decades if the spaceship could travel at speeds comparable to the speed of light. Any alien society that could do so routinely would be far more technologically advanced than ours.



A UFO was photographed by a government employee near Holloman Air Development Center in New Mexico on Oct. 16, 1957. The photo was released by the Aerial Phenomena Research Organization after careful study.

PHOTO: BETTMANN ARCHIVE

that commercial airline pilots had spotted UAPs operating in military airspace. He believes that it is an "urgent and critical national security issue" that deserves better scientific scrutiny. But the stigma associated with sightings "silences" possible witnesses from reporting the episodes. He wants the government to establish a "safe and transparent reporting process." David Fravor asserted that in 2004, he and three fellow military pilots saw something "unsettling" above the Pacific Ocean, hovering below their jets. As he descended to inspect the object, a UAP with no visible rotors, wings or exhaust began to ascend and approach his fighter jet. According to him, it suddenly vanished, only to reappear a few seconds later. But this time he saw it 60 miles away, accelerating to "supersonic speeds."

The most dramatic moment of the hearing came when David Grusch claimed that he is absolutely certain the US government is in possession of "intact and partially intact" UAPs. He said that over a four-year period, he interviewed dozens of individuals who recovered "non-human biologics" from UAP crash sites. Grusch talked about many friendly ears in the committee who were already convinced that the government is involved in secret programmes involving aliens and UAPs.

Does Grusch's allegation of the government possessing UAPs hold water? During the hearing, Grusch did not present any material evidence in support of his claim. Besides, in June, the Pentagon said it could not find "any verifiable information to substantiate" the claims about crashed alien spacecraft. While the government might be successful in concealing evidence for a short time, it seems implausible to them that such evidence could remain secret for decades. It is thus inconceivable that the government is trying to put a lid on evidence of alien visits.

On the other hand, conspiracy theorists, who also believe in the abduction of earthlings by aliens, allege that the government is taking advantage of UFOs to design new military hardware via "reverse engineering." However, reverse engineering UFOs is as unlikely as expecting Neanderthals to

Largely out of concern that UFO sightings by Arnold and others might represent new types of aircraft developed by the Soviet Union, the US Air Force hired teams of scientists to investigate the incidents. After nearly two decades of sifting through evidence, the overall conclusion was that there was no reason to believe that UFOs are either highly advanced Soviet aircraft or spacecraft piloted by aliens from other worlds.

So, what are these mysterious objects that were sighted by so many? What can science say about UFOs? Although a staple for science fiction movies and novels, the fuzzy blobs and spinning lights are definitely not UFOs. We can attribute the sighting of UFOs to many known astronomical phenomena, such as bright stars, meteors, or asteroids with orbits close to Earth. Because of its high luminosity, Venus is often mistaken for a UFO when it appears low on the horizon.

The UFOs could also be aircraft, gliders or balloons, or a weather-related spectacle known as St Elmo's fire, caused by reflections of light from ice crystals in the atmosphere, or "sprites" that are flashes of electrical discharges triggered by thunderstorms high in the atmosphere, or "lens clouds" – a UFO-shaped object that is formed when wind blows moist air over tall structures like hills and mountains, seen in the skies over Turkey in May 2023.

As for Arnold's UFO, it could be a fireball – a meteor breaking up upon entry into Earth's atmosphere. The debris in Roswell, according to the US military, are the remnants of high-altitude balloons carrying acoustical equipment to monitor Soviet nuclear tests, and foo fighters were probably St Elmo's fire.

Finally, the absence of evidence is not evidence of absence because there is no way for us to verify someone's eyewitness account of a UFO. Nevertheless, for all its faults and limitations, science is the best means by which rational beings can distinguish between what is real and what is not real. We can therefore conclude that UFOs are not real. Instead, they are fantasies of a stressed-out society.

## CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

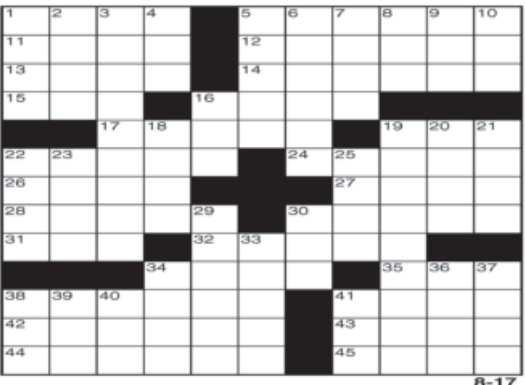
### ACROSS

- 1 Diminishes
- 5 Emotionla shock
- 11 Olympian leader
- 12 Assailed
- 13 Tenant's fee
- 14 Monticello, e.g.
- 15 Compass trace
- 16 Watch part
- 17 17-syllable poem
- 19 Deep hole
- 22 VCR button
- 24 Radiate
- 26 Finish last
- 27 Some bills
- 28 The Grinch's creator
- 30 Yoda's creator
- 31 Swiss peak
- 32 "– the Raven..."
- 34 Put on the wall
- 35 Longoria of TV

### DOWN

- 1 Pound of poems
- 2 Saloon staple
- 3 Gathers in a cluster
- 4 Fast plane
- 5 Fine-tune
- 6 Save
- 7 Poker payment
- 8 Hagen of the theater
- 9 Small rug
- 10 Finished off
- 16 In shage
- 18 Good pair

- 19 Enlivens, as text
- 20 Inkling
- 21 Thomas Hardy heroine
- 22 "Frozen" queen'
- 23 Singer Billy
- 25 Mark as deleted
- 29 Knight's attendant
- 30 Lumber unit
- 33 Beneath
- 34 Plucked instrument
- 36 Tum suddenly
- 37 Showily
- pretentious
- 38 Phone download
- 39 Fragrant tree
- 40 Old auto
- 41 Battleship letters



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ENVIRONMENTAL LAW

# Woes of being blinded by the light

## Light pollution in context

Several countries across the globe have incorporated provisions regarding light pollution in their laws but Bangladesh is yet to do so. It is high time we incorporated provisions regarding light pollution control in our environmental laws.

**AORPA SAHA**

Light pollution refers to the usage of excessive artificial light that is neither necessary nor energy efficient. At present, nearly 83 percent of the world's population live under skies polluted by light—as artificial light goes on to engulf the sky's entire terrain.

Climate stability of the world is already hanging by a thread; hence shifting attention to light pollution might seem like a utopian discussion but it is not. This article attempts to illustrate why we need laws to address light pollution for a better tomorrow. Apart from disrupting our ability to observe the night sky, light pollution adversely affects human health, meddles with the equilibrium of ecosystem, hinders astronomical research, and also contributes to energy wastage. Immediate measures are needed to tackle this anthropogenic disaster. But do we have any provisions on addressing light pollution within our environmental legislative landscape? Unfortunately, we do not.

Constant exposure to artificial light disrupts the circadian rhythm in human beings, causes headaches, sleep disorders, cardiovascular diseases, and other often fatal ailments. Alongside that, artificial light hinders melatonin production, a hormone that regulates some of the cardinal neuroendocrine functions of human body. In recent times, research has found correlation between melatonin deficiency and the prevalence of breast and prostate cancer. To make things worse, light pollution wreaks havoc on the wildlife as well. Over-

illumination, for instance, has forced many species to lose their habitats and pushed them to the verge of extinction. Thus, the deleterious consequences associated with light pollution are responsible for getting millions of living beings on earth killed every year. However, measures to curb or regulate the use of artificial light are yet to be introduced— both at the national and the local levels.

Light pollution is also not a standalone hazardous phenomenon. Excessive artificial light destroys nitrate radicals and prevents the normal night-time reduction of atmospheric smog emitted from vehicles and factories, thereby leading to air pollution. Consequently, the major cities of our country always top the charts of the worst air equality indexes. That is how seemingly harmless over-illumination cater to debilitating condition of other elements of the environment.

Research opportunities are already nominal in our country. A dark sky aloof from artificial light is a prerogative for astronomical research. However, this seems like a rarity at present. Our youth is incredibly capable, and for the past few years they have been achieving brilliant feats in across dynamic research fields. Hence, it is our collective responsibility to ensure the best circumstances suited for astronomical research by opting for energy efficiency. International Dark Sky Association estimates that 35% of artificial light is wasted just by being poorly aimed or unshielded. A country like ours cannot afford to waste a huge chunk of electricity on over-illumination because power shortage already looms large as a major issue of concern.

Solution to curb light pollution starts with very easy methods like changing the light fixtures, using electricity when it is in fact needed, and adhering to rules regarding using artificial illumination sources. Light levels can be quantified by field measurement or mathematical modelling using isophote maps or light contour maps. International organisations like IDA and NASA are trying to raise awareness about the consequences of light pollution and its correlation with climate change. It is about time we started to initiate campaigns to educate general mass about light pollution. The primary requirement is the willpower to shift the paradigm.

Invention of light bulbs have changed the trajectory of modern science, but over usage of any resource is bound to beget miseries. Therefore, we have to be responsible while using electricity and illumination sources to save our present, and the future generations to come from the woes of being blinded by light. Several countries across the globe have incorporated provisions regarding light pollution in their laws but Bangladesh is yet to do so. The Environment Conservation Act 1995, the Wildlife (Conservation and Security) Act 2012, and the Bangladesh Biodiversity Act 2017 form part of the environmental legislative landscape of Bangladesh, but unfortunately, they are failing to keep up with international standards. It is high time we incorporated provisions regarding light pollution control in our environmental laws.

The writer is a student of law at Jahangirnagar University.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

## Protection of minority shareholders

ATIQUR RAHAMAN

A minority shareholder is an individual or entity that owns a minority stake in a public or private company. They provide capital to businesses, which eventually helps in creating jobs and boosting the economy. The protection of minority shareholders is also an important issue for investors as they are more likely to invest in companies that have strong protections for minority shareholders. Therefore, it is always important to protect the rights of minority shareholders of companies.

Minority shareholders are often at a disadvantage compared to the majority shareholders. This is because minority shareholders typically own a smaller percentage of the company's shares, which gives them less voting power and influence over the company's management. On the other hand, the majority shareholders can control the company's board of directors and make decisions that benefit them at the expense of the minority shareholders. Minority shareholders may be subjected to unfair treatment by majority shareholders, such as being denied dividends or being excluded from decision-making. As a result, it creates an issue of trust between majority shareholders and minority shareholders.

In Bangladesh, the Companies Act, 1994 offers certain safeguards for minority shareholders. According to section 233 of the Act, minority shareholders have the right to approach the court and seek remedies if they believe they have been prejudiced by the decisions of the majority shareholders. Subsequently, the court has the authority to issue orders aimed at safeguarding the interests of the minority shareholders. However, to avail this remedy, the minority shareholders would need to hold at least ten percent of the shares in a company with share capital, either individually or jointly. Therefore, when the minority shareholders are discriminated against by the majority shareholders, a petition can be filed under section 233.

If the court is satisfied that the minority shareholders have been oppressed, the court may modify the resolution, regulate the conduct of the company's activities, or amend any provision of the memorandum and articles of association of such company. If the court orders to modify the memorandum or articles of association, such changes may not be reversed without the permission of the court. Acting in contravention to an order passed by the court for protection of minority shareholders would be deemed to be contempt of court and is punishable.

Protecting the rights of minority shareholders means educating them about their rights and encouraging them to participate in the corporate company processes. This will help ensure that minority shareholders are aware of their rights and are able to protect themselves from getting exploited.

The writer is a student of at the University of Asia Pacific.



LAW LETTER

# A case for PIL against municipalities

PIL may be utilised to initiate proceedings against public bodies in instances where they derogate from their responsibilities or act in contravention to the same. However, in this regard, it is also necessary that the judgments of the court are monitored while getting implemented.

**MD. SHAMSUL HUDA SHAON**

The negligence of municipalities in proper management of roads, drainage, water, and waste management is a cause for significant concern. In rainy seasons, even the slightest of raining causes flooding. The waste-disposal measures are inadequate and cause severe hindrance to movement and livelihood of residents of many municipalities of Bangladesh. Potholes and broken roads contribute to road accidents. Even though residents pay bills and taxes to the local government bodies for their services, they frequently have to bear the brunt of poor management in the municipalities. The local government laws clearly outline the responsibilities of the municipalities. Section 50 of the Local Government (Municipalities) Act, 2009 lays down the general duties and responsibilities of the municipalities which include water and sewage system management, and waste disposal. As such, failure to properly manage these systems are contradictory to their statutory responsibilities. This article explores whether PIL can be a useful tool in



holding municipalities accountable for failure to perform their statutory responsibilities.

A public interest litigation (PIL) is when individuals or groups move the High Court Division on behalf of the public. PIL in Bangladesh has addressed a wide range of human rights concerns including police brutality, unlawful imprisonment, consumer protection, health rights as

well as the rights of children, women, and other sections of minority.

The early foundations of PIL are attributed to the *Kazi Mukhlesur Rahman v Bangladesh* case in which the court explored the possibility of violations of fundamental right affecting the general public. Later, it found its foothold in the landmark decision delivered by the Appellate Division in *Dr. Mohiuddin Farooque*

*v Bangladesh*, where the court made a much-anticipated declaration in stating that when “a public injury or public wrong or an infraction of fundamental right affecting an indeterminate number of people is involved...any member of the public, being a citizen...or an indigenous association...has the right to invoke the court's jurisdiction.” Over the years the ambit of PIL has only expanded in the context of Bangladesh. Besides on the application of one who is aggrieved, the court can also go on to redress mass constitutional grievances *suo motu* upon taking constructive notice of rights violation..

PIL has many positive aspects, such as ensuring judicial protection for the marginalised groups, ensuring government accountability and transparency, addressing democracy deficits, fostering judicial institution efficiency, enabling defused interests' representation, ensuring access to justice, fostering participatory justice, enforcing legal norms, and defending democratic governance and the rule of law. As such, PIL may be utilised to initiate proceedings against public bodies

in instances where they derogate from their statutory responsibilities or act in contravention to the same. However, in this regard, it is also necessary that the judgments of the court are monitored while getting implemented. Rolling or continuing *mandamus* (i.e., in which the court continues to oversee the implementation of its judgments) could be a way forward in this regard.

Municipalities and other local governments lack the appropriate capacity, resources or authority needed to adequately perform their functions. This is evident from poor road conditions, drainage systems, and water and waste mismanagement issues across the country. The inadequacies of municipalities have the potential of decreasing the positive impacts sought to be brought about through development initiatives of the government. It is high time judicial redress were explored to ensure increased accountability of the local governments.

The writer is an Advocate, District & Sessions Judge Court, Dhaka.



## SPORT

What to  
WATCH
**Star Sports 3**  
 Lanka Premier League  
 Kandy vs Dambulla  
 Live from 3:00 pm  
 Galle vs Jaffna  
 Live from 7:30 pm

**Sony Sports 2**  
 Durand Cup  
 North East United vs  
 Lajong  
 Live from 6:30 pm  
**Star Sports 2**

 GT20 Canada  
 Surrey vs Vancouver  
 Live from 9:00 pm  
 Brampton vs Montreal  
 Live from 1:30 am  
 (Saturday)

# Tamim's sole focus on World Cup

SPORTS REPORTER

Tamim Iqbal stepped down from captaincy yesterday after the much-awaited meeting with Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan Papon and cricket operations chairman Jalal Yunus, with injury at the heart of the decision.

Tamim conveyed the matter of captaincy himself before Jalal informed the media in the same press conference that Tamim will not be playing the Asia Cup in order to not force the issue and instead get ready for a return for the home series against New Zealand in September, just before the World Cup.

Defying the weather, media personnel flocked to Mirpur while national team players had the Yo-Yo test awaiting them. The focus of the media, however, was not on the activities related to fitness drills as their attention was fully trained on when and where the meeting between Tamim Iqbal and BCB will commence.

As their wait grew till the evening, the press event which was supposed to commence at 8:00 PM, began much later after 9 PM.



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

**"I am very angry about it. I feel that the matter needs to be investigated since there is a difference in the way the matter was presented to us and what happened in reality. If this was diagnosed in 2022 and treatment began back then, by now he would have recovered. This thing was neglected in some way which is why we had to hear all this right at the doorstep of the World Cup."**

BCB president Nazmul Hassan Papon said regarding Tamim's injury diagnosis.

"I had an important meeting with Jalal bhai and Papon bhai. We have discussed what will happen going forward. From today [Thursday] I will step down as Bangladesh cricket team ODI captain. I feel that injury is an issue and I have taken injections but those treatments are almost hit-and-miss at this point. I have spoken of my problems with them. Thinking of the team, stepping down would be the best possible thing," Tamim said at the press conference yesterday while also relaying that he talked to the Bangladesh Prime Minister about his decision ahead of the meeting.

"Whether somebody else is captain, the target is one which is to do well at the World Cup. Country is much bigger than the individual," Tamim added.

Jalal informed that Tamim's pain subsided "somewhat" after being administered injections multiple times in the UK. On 28th July, he was instructed to go for two weeks' rest. On August 11th, the two weeks' rest will end before Tamim can begin rehab in a "small way". Two more weeks would pass once he begins rehab. Then it would take two more weeks for him to return to nets and Tamim will not be able to do high-

intensity training before 21st August.

"Two more weeks will pass after that before he can return to nets. As you know, by that time our schedule for Asia Cup will resume and his intensity can't increase before the 21st. The team will leave for Asia Cup on [August] 26th so it will not be possible for Tamim to return before the Asia Cup," Jalal informed.

meant that the board would seek a candidate for the captaincy in the long run. According to BCB sources, they would prefer Shakib Al Hasan for the long-term role but they need to discuss it among themselves and also the player concerned.

Jalal further said that Tamim will likely not go for surgery as it would be difficult to make a return following a

**\*Tamim took charge of the Tigers in ODIs after Mashrafe Bin Mortaza stepped down in 2020 following the home series against Zimbabwe. He had to wait for his first assignment as captain and started his captaincy against the West Indies in 2021 at home.**

**\*Tamim led Bangladesh in 37 matches, where the Tigers won on 21 occasions and lost 14 times. Two other matches had no results.**

**\*During his tenure as captain, Tamim led Bangladesh to memorable series victories against India (home) and South Africa (away).**

The BCB president also said that they are confident that Tamim will be able to return before the New Zealand series as a player while also informing that they have not talked to any other player regarding captaincy.

BCB president said that had Tamim not been available for Asia Cup, then the vice-captain would lead the Tigers as per normal procedure. However, Tamim's decision to quit captaincy

surgery.

BCB are still going to investigate how the situation got so far regarding Tamim's injury diagnosis in the L4 and L5 discs.

Tamim relayed at the press conference that his problem was diagnosed first in November 2022. However, a recent MRI report in Dubai revealed a different injury diagnosis.

## Abahani bank on new foreigners in AFC Cup

SPORTS REPORTER

Abahani were the first Bangladeshi club to progress into the inter-zonal semifinals of AFC Cup in 2019 but struggled in Asia's second-tier club competition ever since.

In last three editions, six-time Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) winners failed to get out of the preliminary round or play-off stage after falling prey to either Maldivian or Indian outfits.

Bashundhara Kings had booked a spot in the group stage of South Asian zone on virtue of being BPL champions. Abahani, meanwhile, as the Federation Cup champions or league runners-up, got a chance to compete in the group-stage qualifiers.

Maldivian outfit Club Eagles stand in the way of Abahani in the second preliminary round. If the Sky Blues cross that hurdle, they could face Mohun Bagan in the play-off match.

A new rule which allows six foreign players in an AFC Cup match is providing optimism for Abahani to fare better this time around. Coach Mario Lemos, however, sees the down side as well.

"New signing does help the club.

We are getting five new foreign players but not much time because all of them are from different clubs," Lemos

told The Daily Star yesterday.

"They now need to adapt to the way we want to play and build the connection with new players. It is about me getting to know the players and trying to use them in the best possible ways."

With last season's Daniel Colindres, Peter Norah, and Raphael Augusto unavailable, the Abahani retained the services of

(Chittagong Abahani) and Brazilian defender Danilo Augusto (Fortis FC) for the preliminary round.

Abahani started their preparation for the AFC Cup on July 29 in Dhaka as the match was billed for August 16 in Sylhet.

Forward Nabib Newaj Jibon believes they "have an advantage of playing on home ground amid familiar conditions".



two foreigners: Syrian defender Yousef Mohammad and Nigerian Emeka Ogbogh.

The Sky Blues have five new signings in Caribbean forward Stuart Cornelius from Sheikh Jamal DC, Uzbek midfielder Muzaffar Muzaffarov (Mohammedan SC), Nigerian forward Ifeagwu Ojukwu David (Chittagong Abahani),

Egyptian midfielder Mostafa Mahmoud Kahraba

Asked whether they would struggle to adjust with new foreign players, Jibon reckons they would gel easily because of the familiarity of having played against each other in the league.

Lemos, who guided Abahani in 2019, said: "I think this time we have an advantage of playing six foreigners since Maldivian players are slightly better than Bangladeshi players, technique-wise."



**Lionel Messi scored two more goals on Wednesday, giving him five in three matches for Inter Miami, as he led the Herons to a 3-1 win over Orlando City in a Leagues Cup round-of-32 match at Fort Lauderdale. Messi scored twice from close range -- a left-footed volley followed up by a right-footed volley -- to maintain his 100 percent winning record with Miami, who were winless in 11 league games before his arrival but have now set up last 16 Leagues Cup clash against FC Dallas.**

PHOTO: REUTERS

## 'Born to be referee'

REUTERS, El Alto

Erick Callejas may be just 10 years old -- and a lot shorter than the other participants on the football pitch -- but he has no qualms enforcing the rules as one of the few referees his age.

In high altitude El Alto, Bolivia's second-largest city and neighbor to capital La Paz, Callejas can be found on weekends blowing his whistle and calling the shots at local games, inspired by his referee father Ramiro.

"On Saturdays and Sundays, I go out to referee with my little colleague, my son, Erick," Ramiro said. "I am very proud, I'm filled with emotion because refereeing runs in his blood."

Callejas refereed his first match in a women's league after his dad signed him up for the job.

"He runs. He moves. He is not intimidated by people, even if the public shouts," player Beimar Tancara said. "I think he was born to be a referee."

Callejas also dreams big. "My dream is to referee the Bolivian Derby, to be a FIFA referee so I can go to World Cup, America Cup, Liberators Cup and Champions League," he said.



PHOTO: AFP/REUTERS



**Morocco's goalkeeper Khadija Er-Rmichi revels in joy as they stunned Colombia 1-0 in their final group match in Perth on Thursday to reach the last 16 of the Women's World Cup at the first attempt. Morocco's historic run to the semifinal in the 2022 FIFA Men's World Cup, as they became the first African nation to do so, was one to savour for football fanatics around the world and their female compatriots could now add more to the country's football folklore. [Inset] Meanwhile, In a tournament full of shocks, two-time world champions Germany suffered their earliest exit in Women's World Cup history after being held to a shock 1-1 draw by South Korea in their final Group H match.**



PHOTO: BCB

**Bangladesh batter Najmul Hossain Shanto recorded the highest score as the national team players underwent the Yo-Yo fitness at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium on Thursday ahead of the camp for the upcoming Asia Cup. With 18.6 determined as the standard passing score, Shanto registered a score of 19.5.**

## Taskin, Sabina, Ziarul among NSC awardees

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh women's football team captain Sabina Khatun, cricketer Taskin Ahmed and SA Games gold medalist weightlifter Ziarul Islam were named among winners of the Sheikh Kamal National Sports Council (NSC) Awards 2023 in sportsperson category.

State Minister for Youth and Sports, Zahid Ahsan Russel, on Thursday revealed the names of 12 awardees from eight categories.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is expected to hand over the awards on August 5, on the occasion of the 74th birth anniversary of Shaheed Captain Sheikh Kamal who is eldest son of Bangababdh Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and founder of Abahani Limited.

"In a quest to inspire budding and upcoming players, we have emphasised on the current players. The committee also emphasised on other disciplines beyond football and cricket," sports minister Russel told reporters at the NSC conference room.

Table tennis player Muhtasin Ahmed Ridoy and hockey player Amirul Islam were named in the emerging athlete category.

"In 2022, we gave away nine awards under seven categories but this time we have inserted one more category, of sports commentators, because they have also been contributing to sports like you sports journalists," added Russel.

Abdus Sadek, legendary hockey player and former general secretary of Bangladesh Hockey Federation, will receive the prestigious "lifetime achievement" award -- won by Kazi Salahuddin and Harun Ur Rashid in 2021 and 2022, respectively.

Mala Rani Sarker, headmistress of Kalsindur Primary School, who enormously contributed to the rise of a group of footballers in the national women's team from the remote village under Dhobaura upazilla, and Fazlul Islam, a hockey coach from Old Dhaka who had groomed a lot of national players, were the two nominated organisers from grassroots.

Bangladesh Archery Federation got recognition as the best sports federation while Bangladesh Association of Banks (BAB) bagged the sports sponsor award.

Photojournalist and freedom fighter Khandoker Tareq Mohammad Nurullah and Athar Ali Khan have been nominated under sports journalists and sports commentator categories, respectively.





## Dozen hurt as pro-AL, BNP-leaning lawyers scuffle at SCBA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Pro-BNP and Awami League-leaning lawyers scuffled once again yesterday during separate programmes on the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) office premises.

The incident, which left about a dozen lawyers injured, took place after pro-BNP lawyers held a press conference at the association's South Hall protesting Wednesday's court verdict in a graft case against BNP acting chairperson Tarique Rahman and his wife Zubaida Rahman.

The office room of the SCBA secretary was ransacked and some windows were vandalised allegedly by pro-BNP lawyers in the afternoon, said witnesses.

Chaos broke out as lawyers from both camps staged demonstrations and brought out processions.

Leaders of Bangabandhu Awami Ainjibi Parishad and Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Ainjibi Forum blamed each other for the incident.

SCBA Secretary Abdun Nur Dulal, also a leader of the Ainjibi Parishad, alleged that pro-BNP lawyers, led by AM Mahbub

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



The office of the Supreme Court Bar Association was vandalised after a scuffle broke out between pro-BNP and pro-Awami League lawyers on the association premises yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## STOPPING PROPAGANDA EC to work with Facebook

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Authorities of Facebook's parent firm Meta want to assist the Election Commission in containing the negative campaign centring the upcoming 12th parliamentary election, EC officials said yesterday.

After announcement of the polls schedule, the social media giant can help by removing misinformation, hate and communal speeches from Facebook,

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

### TECH & STARTUP

Dear readers, As you may know, Toggle has discontinued its print edition, with the last publication released on July 28, 2023. However, we're excited to inform you that we have transformed into Tech & Startup, with a primary focus on delivering tech content to the larger tech community in Bangladesh and beyond through the digital realm. Stay connected for round-the-clock tech news updates online and exclusive in-depth tech stories in print.

FOLLOW THE QR CODE TO HEAD ON TO TECH & STARTUP



## Wagner fighters seek to unsettle Nato's flank

Says Polish PM; Russia downs 7 Ukrainian drones near Moscow

AGENCIES

Fighters from Russia's private Wagner mercenary force are being moved close to Nato's eastern flank to destabilise the military alliance, Poland's prime minister said yesterday.

Wagner soldiers have begun training with the Belarus national army, prompting Poland to start moving more than 1,000 troops closer to the border. On Tuesday it accused Belarus of violating its airspace with military helicopters.

"We need to be aware that the number of provocations will rise," Mateusz Morawiecki said after meeting Lithuanian President Gitanas Nauseda in eastern Poland.

"The Wagner group is extremely dangerous and they are being moved to the eastern flank to destabilise it."

The politicians met in the Suwalki Gap, a sparsely populated but strategically important area of Polish territory between Belarus and the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad that joins the Baltic states to other Nato members.

Nauseda said the number of Wagner fighters in Belarus could be higher than 4,000.

"We must not only talk about measures at the national level but also ... what should be done if this situation becomes even more complicated, including the closure of the

border with Belarus," Nauseda said. "This should be done in a coordinated manner between Poland, Lithuania and Latvia."

Belarus allowed Russian President Vladimir Putin to use its territory as a launch pad for the Ukraine invasion, but has not committed its own troops to the war, reports Reuters.

Meanwhile, Russia said yesterday it had downed seven drones over the Kaluga region, less than 200 kilometres southwest of Moscow, amid a surge in Ukrainian drone attacks targeting the capital.

The defence ministry said it had foiled "a terrorist attack with drones" in the region. Regional governor Vyacheslav Shapsha confirmed on the Telegram messaging app that seven drones had been shot down. There were no casualties, he added.

As Moscow's offensive in Ukraine stretches into its second year, drone attacks on Russian cities and towns have multiplied.

The European Union has called on G20 countries to push Russia to resume a deal allowing Ukraine grain exports through the Black Sea, a letter seen by AFP yesterday said.

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell told G20 top diplomats that Russia's agricultural sector was the "main beneficiary" of Moscow's withdrawal from the UN-brokered agreement.

**The European Union has called on G20 countries to push Russia to resume a deal allowing Ukraine grain exports through the Black Sea.**

## EMBEZZLING TK 23CR Ex-Basic Bank chairman, 13 others charged

STAR REPORT

The Anti-Corruption Commission has pressed charges against former chairman of Basic Bank Abdul Hye Bacchu and 13 others in a case filed in connection with the embezzlement of Tk 23 crore.

The other accused are the bank's sacked managing directors Kazi Faqurul Islam and Shah Alam Bhuiyan, deputy managing directors Fazlus Sobhan and A Monaem Khan, assistant general managers Md Jalal Uddin, ASM Anisur Rahman Chowdhury, Sadia Akhter Shahin, and Rumana Ahad, and former general manager Md Ali Chowdhury.

Along with them, Ashraf Ahmed, managing director of Ahmed Oil Mills Ltd, its directors Nasrin Jahan Ratna and Iqbal Hossain Bhuiyan; managing partner of SD Survey Farm and its chief surveyor and partner Md Faruk are also accused in the case.

Md Ali, Iqbal Hossain, and Fazlus Sobhan are currently on bail, while Bachhu and 10 others are absconding.

On July 31, ACC Deputy

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

## Bangladeshis will decide on how polls to be held: India

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

It is the people of Bangladesh who will have to decide how the next national polls would be held there, said India yesterday, expressing hope that it would be held peacefully.

In its first official comment over the recent developments in the run-up to the elections in Bangladesh, it, however, declined to remark on the caretaker government issue.

Arindam Bagchi, spokesperson of India's Ministry of External Affairs, made the comments during the weekly media briefing in New Delhi.

"Look, I think there are multiple activities going on [in Bangladesh], people are perhaps commenting on it," he said, referring to the comments made by some diplomats regarding the national polls in Bangladesh.

"The whole world may be commenting on it, but India is India and we have a very special relationship with Bangladesh. What happens in Bangladesh, impacts us," Bagchi said, adding the election and the democratic process in Bangladesh have to be decided by the people there.

He said, "Of course, we are closely monitoring [the situation in Bangladesh]. We have a High Commission there....We hope that there is peace and no violence and the elections are held as per plans."

"On the issue of caretaker government and all, I certainly don't have any comment on it," the MEA spokesman said.

## Massive ancient whale fossil discovered in Peru



AFP, Lima

A newly discovered whale that lived nearly 40 million years ago could be the heaviest animal to have ever lived, based on a partial skeleton found in Peru, scientists said on Wednesday.

The modern blue whale has long been considered the largest and heaviest animal ever, beating out all the giant dinosaurs of the distant past.

But Perucetus colossus -- the colossal whale from Peru -- may have been even heavier, according to a study published in the journal Nature.

Extrapolating from some massive bones found in the Peruvian desert, an international team of researchers estimated that the animal had an average body mass of 180 tonnes.

That would not take the heavyweight title by itself. The biggest blue whale ever recorded weighed 190 tonnes, according to Guinness World Records.

But the researchers estimated the ancient whale's weight range was between 85 and 340 tonnes, meaning it could have been significantly larger.

## TEESTA WATER SHARING ISSUE

## Dhaka is now hopeful

## Indian parliamentary body asks its external affairs ministry to 'address it at the earliest'

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka sees a ray of hope for resolving the long-standing Teesta water-sharing issue with Delhi as an Indian parliamentary committee has recommended the government address the matter.

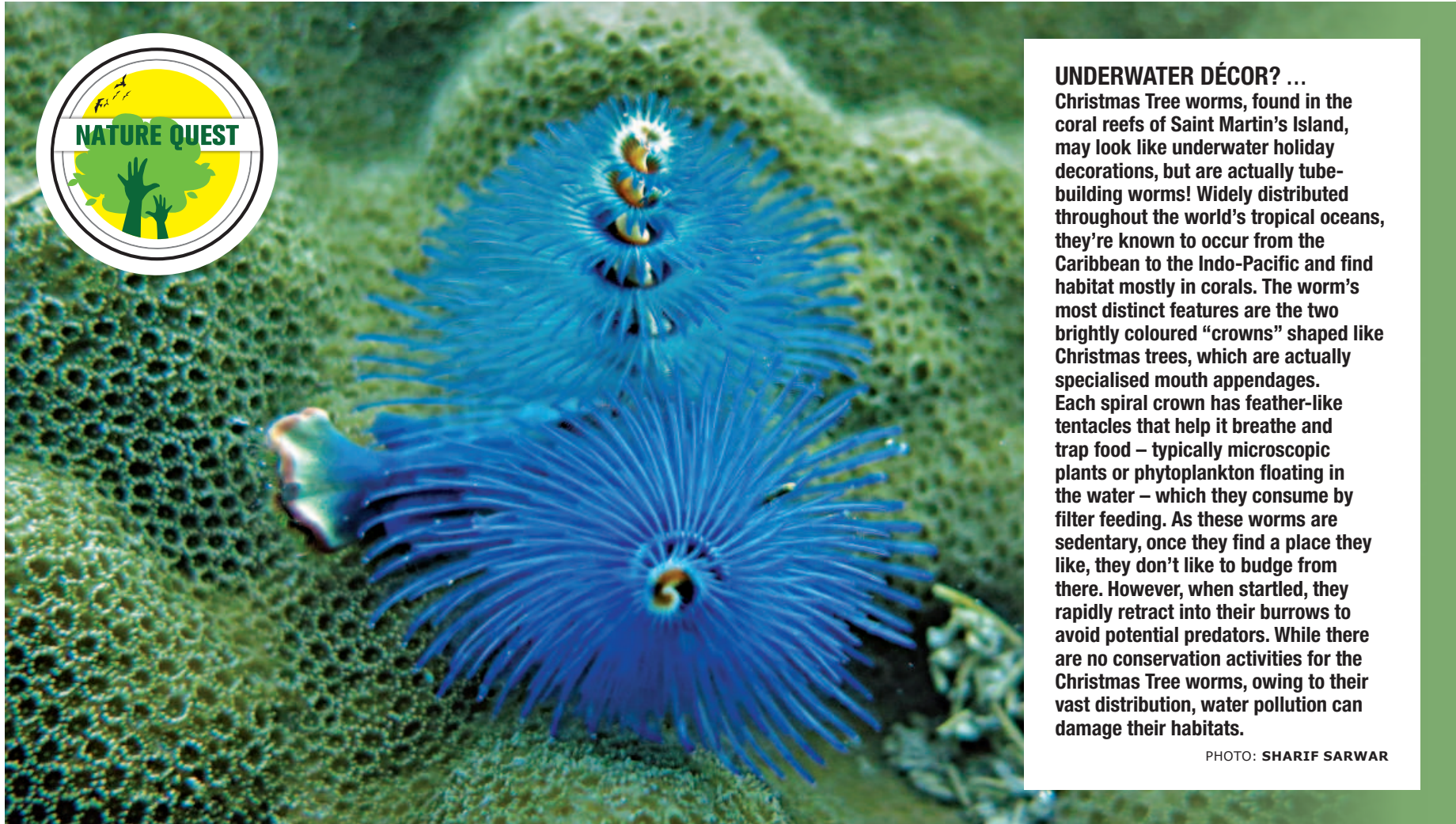
"This recommendation has generated hope. This is a significant development as MPs from all parties, including BJP, Congress and Trinamool Congress, are there in the committee," Bangladesh foreign ministry spokesperson Sehel Sabrin told reporters at the weekly media briefing yesterday.

Dhaka is hoping to step up diplomatic efforts to resolve the issue, she said.

The Indian parliamentary watchdog recommended the country address the Teesta water-sharing issue "at the earliest" for improved bilateral ties with Bangladesh.

The committee, in its 22nd report submitted to parliament on July 25, asked the external affairs ministry "to initiate meaningful dialogue with Bangladesh on a regular basis to arrive at a consensus in the Teesta matter, and the progress/outcome may be informed to the committee".

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**UNDERWATER DÉCOR? ...** Christmas Tree worms, found in the coral reefs of Saint Martin's Island, may look like underwater holiday decorations, but are actually tube-building worms! Widely distributed throughout the world's tropical oceans, they're known to occur from the Caribbean to the Indo-Pacific and find habitat mostly in corals. The worm's most distinct features are the two brightly coloured "crowns" shaped like Christmas trees, which are actually specialised mouth appendages. Each spiral crown has feather-like tentacles that help it breathe and trap food – typically microscopic plants or phytoplankton floating in the water – which they consume by filter feeding. As these worms are sedentary, once they find a place they like, they don't like to budge from there. However, when startled, they rapidly retract into their burrows to avoid potential predators. While there are no conservation activities for the Christmas Tree worms, owing to their vast distribution, water pollution can damage their habitats.

PHOTO: SHARIF SARWAR