



DHAKA CENTRAL JAIL Tk 37.5cr mishandled in just one year

Finds CAG audit

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

In fiscal 2019-20, the Dhaka Central Jail authorities forked out Tk 9.11 crore to procure rice for inmates. That rice turned out to be unfit for consumption.

"The rice was of inferior quality, broken and putrid," said the auditors from the Office of the Comptroller

PRISON DEPT'S IRREGULARITIES

- ➔ Substandard, unhygienic food
- ➔ Portion of meat and fish is smaller than prescribed
- ➔ Obstruction to audit by not presenting income, expenditure account
- ➔ Expenditure in foodstuff in excess of demand
- ➔ Violation of procurement rules
- ➔ Cigarette purchase in excess of market rate
- ➔ Money earned from canteen not deposited to exchequer
- ➔ Income, excise tax rules not followed

and Auditor General of Bangladesh, the government's supreme audit body, after an on-site inspection of the silos.

It can thus be assumed that the entire amount had gone to waste. This was not the only irregularity unearthed by the auditors by poring over the bills, vouchers, bill registers and from on-site visits.

From providing substandard, scanty food to spending in excess of demand on foodstuff, from violating procurement rules to not depositing canteen proceeds to the exchequer, the authorities indulged in as many as 14 counts of irregularities during the course of the fiscal year involving Tk 37.5 crore.

A report on the CAG auditors' findings was presented to the parliament in June.

As per the jail code, the daily allowance for inmates'

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PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Patients and their relatives throng a makeshift nurse's station near the dengue ward on the 10th floor of Mugda Medical College Hospital to change IV drip bags yesterday. Five nurses attend to around 150 dengue patients on the floor's hallway.

AL wants to stay in power by controlling the admin

Fakhrul tells rally

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday said the Awami League government was trying to stay in power through the coming election by controlling the administration.

Criticising the

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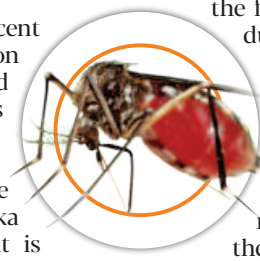
Dengue deaths cross 300

MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN

With this year's death toll from dengue infection crossing the 300-mark yesterday, the fatality rate has risen to 0.5 percent, mirroring the rates seen in 2020.

The fatality rate was 0.18 percent in 2019 when the hospitalisation cases hit an all-time high record of 1,01,354. The fatality rate was 0.37 percent in 2021 and 0.45 percent last year.

This year, the fatality rate among dengue patients in Dhaka is higher— 0.7 percent, while it is 0.2 percent outside Dhaka, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).



The total number of fatalities this year rose to 303, including yesterday's 10, while the total number of hospitalised patients rose to 63,968 including yesterday's 2,495.

Experts, meanwhile, have cautioned that the fatality rate is likely to remain high due to the higher rate of second-time infection in different dengue serotypes/strains that led to severe illnesses quickly.

"Dengue virus has been causing infection among people in our country since 2000. As a result, more people are being infected for the second time with different dengue serotypes, leading to severe illness," Dr Khalilur Rahman, Director of Shaheed

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Four of a family, including two children, and their driver survived a devastating accident after a lorry container fell on their car, crushing it completely, on the Dhaka-Chattogram Highway yesterday morning. Inset, the wreckage of the car after it was pulled out from under the container.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

At least 7 drown as picnic boat sinks

Five missing; four children among dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

At least four children and three women drowned and five others remained missing as a boat capsized with 46 people on board in a tributary of the Padma in Munshiganj last night.

The boat sank around 8:30pm after a collision with a sand-laden bulk carrier.

The people on board were returning to their homes in the Latabdi area of the district's Sirajdikhan upazila from a picnic near the Padma Bridge, locals said.

The deceased were Sakib, 8, his brother Rakib, 12, Sajibul, 5, Farihan, 10, Moksed, 40, Poppy Akhter, 26, and her sister Happy Akhter, 28, said Abdul Matin, station officer at Louhajang Fire

Station.

As locals say 46 people were on board and 34 people had survived, it is likely that five people are missing.

However, Mohammad Aslam Khan, superintendent of police in Munshiganj, told reporters around 11:30pm that rescuers recovered eight bodies and rescued 34 people.

The engine-run boat was hit by the cargo vessel near Rashkathi village of Louhajang, firefighters said.

A team of divers from Dhaka reached the scene last night to search for the missing individuals.

Munshiganj Deputy Commissioner Abu Zafar Ripon said a five-member committee

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A miraculous escape from death

Container crushes car in
Ctg; all five people survive

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

"It was drizzling when we picked up my son-in-law from the Chittagong airport, took the highway, and headed towards our Fatikhkhari home. We were in our private car on our way to meet relatives. When my driver made the U-turn, a large container suddenly fell on our moving car," said 62-year-old Musa Ahmed, who survived the accident yesterday.

A trailer carrying a container, weighing almost 40 tonnes, got detached from a lorry and flipped onto the car when it was near Foujdharhat Cadet College on the Dhaka-Chattogram Highway in Sitakunda upazila around 10:30am.

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Remarks by an Honourable Member of the Parliament on Egg Market "Syndicate": Our Rejoinder

On June 19, 2023, a respected Member of the Parliament stated, in the National Parliament in the presence of the honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, that Kazi Farms, Paragon, CP Bangladesh and other companies "formed a 'syndicate' in the egg market and looted Tk. 932 crore in 52 days. Catch the perpetrators of the 'syndicate', put them behind bars. Where is the problem?" These allegations are not based on facts.

The supposed "syndicate" in the egg market is totally fictional. Eggs are produced mainly by more than 100,000 small farmers who are spread all over Bangladesh with companies contributing only 15% of the total production. This situation does not allow for formation of "syndicates" by companies. Egg prices are determined by demand and supply.

The Member of Parliament claimed that Tk. 932 crore was "looted" in 52 days. The total daily egg production of all the companies is 60 lakh. In 52 days, the production totals 52x60= 31.2 crore. Even if the farm price is Tk. 10/egg, the total sales proceeds comes to Tk. 312 crore. After deducting the production cost from the sale proceeds, it is impossible to "loot" Tk. 932 crore. His allegation is preposterous.

In the past 30 years, there has never been any talk of a "syndicate" in the egg market. Recently, malicious rumours about an egg market "syndicate" are being spread by several quarters in a well-orchestrated manner. The intention is clear – to cripple the poultry industry and make the country dependent on imports. There is talk of reducing domestic production and importing poultry feed from abroad. Replacing a local industry like poultry which provides massive rural employment with imports is obviously against the national interest.

A Public Interest Announcement By,

Breeders' Association of Bangladesh



Malaysia detains 250 Bangladeshi migrants

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Immigration officers in Malaysia rounded up 252 undocumented Bangladeshi migrant workers during a raid yesterday, according to a report of Free Malaysia Today, an online news portal.

The Bangladeshis are among 425 undocumented migrants detained from several units in an apartment block, the report says, quoting the local immigration department.

According to Kuala Lumpur Immigration Department Director Syamsul Bahrin Mohshin, the raid at Cheria Heights apartments was carried out following investigations and surveillance for two weeks, the report adds.

The official said that in the operation carried out by 60 staff between 1:00am and 4:00am (local time), the undocumented migrants were arrested for not possessing valid identification documents, overstaying, or possessing expired temporary work permits.

The others arrested include nationals from Myanmar, the Philippines, Indonesia, Cambodia, Nepal, and Pakistan.

According to the official, those detained worked in a variety of industries, including construction and cleaning.

He said all those detained were taken to the Bukit Jalil immigration detention centre for further legal action.

BJP'S INVITATION AL delegation to arrive in New Delhi today

BSS, New Delhi

A five-member Awami League delegation, led by party presidium member Muhammad Abdur Razzaque, is scheduled to reach New Delhi today on a four-day visit.

The BJP invited AL leaders as part an initiative announced by its National President JP Nadda.

The visit aims to enhance party-to-party interaction and enable the delegation to understand BJP's vision, according to BJP sources.

The AL delegates will meet Nadda and other senior leaders of the party.

The other delegation members are AL Joint General Secretary Hasan Mahmud, also the information and broadcasting minister, Aroma Dutta MP, AL Organising Secretary Sujit Roy Nandi and executive committee member Merina Jahan.



Boatloads of guavas are on sale at a floating market in a canal in Jhalakathi's Satadashkathi area yesterday. Farmers from nearby villages sell their produce here for Tk 300 to Tk 350 per maund, depending on size and variety.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

After warship, naval drone hits Russian tanker

Kyiv claims responsibility; Moscow claims to seize settlement in northeast Ukraine

AFP, Kyiv

Ukraine carried out a drone strike overnight on a Russian tanker in the Kerch Strait, a day after one of Moscow's ships was hit in the Black Sea, a Ukrainian security source told AFP yesterday.

It was the latest attack around the Black Sea since Moscow exited a deal last month that had protected Ukrainian grain exports despite the conflict between Ukraine and Russia.

"Overnight the (Ukrainian Security Service) SBU blew up the 'SIG', a large oil tanker belonging to the Russian Federation that was transporting fuel for Russian troops," the Ukrainian source said.

The "successful special operation", which involved a naval drone and explosives, was carried out jointly with the navy in Ukrainian territorial waters, the source said, adding that the ship was "well-loaded with fuel, so the 'fireworks' could be seen from afar".

In a video obtained by AFP purporting to show the attack, a vessel is seen

approaching a large ship before the connection cuts off.

The Russian tanker SIG was hit around 11:20pm (2020 GMT) on Friday south of the Kerch Strait, Russia's Federal Agency for Sea and Inland Water Transport said.

The oil and chemical tanker is under US sanctions for supplying jet fuel to Russian forces in Syria who are supporting President Bashar al-Assad.

The oil and chemical tanker is under US sanctions for supplying jet fuel to Russian forces in Syria.

The SIG suffered a hole at the waterline in the area of the engine room, "presumably as a result of an attack by a marine drone", the agency said on Telegram. "The ship is afloat."

An oil boom had been placed around the vessel and preparations were under way to patch up the damage, it said.

Russia's state RIA Novosti news agency said there were no casualties, citing the

Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre in Novorossiysk.

Traffic on a key bridge across the Kerch Strait linking the Moscow-annexed Crimean peninsula to Russia's mainland resumed early yesterday after a three-hour halt, according to the Russian highways information centre's Telegram channel.

Crimea has been disrupted by several strikes throughout the war but it has seen more frequent attacks in recent weeks.

Russian forces yesterday downed a drone over the sea near Sevastopol, city governor Mikhail Razvozhayev said.

Ukraine struck the Olenegorsky Gornyak vessel at the Novorossiysk base in southern Russia, a Ukrainian security source told AFP, "to show that Ukraine can attack any Russian warship in that zone".

On the front line, Russia said it had captured the settlement of Novoselivske in northeastern Ukraine, where Kyiv said it was confronted with a growing number of attacks.

Footage from the Russian army showed Novoselivske completely destroyed, white smoke billowing over crumbling buildings.

AL special extended meeting today

UNB, Dhaka

A special extended meeting of the Awami League will be held at the Gono Bhaban today.

The meeting will be held at 10:30am, with AL President Sheikh Hasina in the chair, said a party press release.

The leaders of the party's central working committee, advisory council and national committee, presidents and general secretaries of the party's district, city, upazila, thana and municipality units, AL MPs, district council and upazila parishad chairmen from AL, and presidents and general secretaries of the party's associate bodies have been asked to attend the meeting.

AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader has urged all concerned to attend the meeting on time.

On the occasion of the special extended meeting, Dhaka Metropolitan Police has taken special measures to keep traffic normal in the capital.

Hit by 'garbage truck', woman dies in Jatrabari

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A woman was killed early yesterday when a garbage truck allegedly of Dhaka South City Corporation ran over her in the capital's Jatrabari area.

Nazma Begum, 46, of Bhola's Borhanuddin upazila, was a cancer patient who came to Dhaka for treatment, said Inspector Bachchu Mia, in-charge of police outpost at Dhaka Medical College and Hospital.

He said Nazma was crushed under the wheels of a garbage truck after she fell on the road from a battery-run auto-rickshaw around 5:00am, leaving her injured.

Later, she was brought to DMCH, where the duty doctors declared her dead.

Several media outlets reported that it was a DSCC garbage truck. However, in a press statement today, DSCC refuted the claim, saying that their vehicle was not involved in the incident.

In the last six years, at least 16 people have been killed by garbage trucks, according to media reports.

2kg heroin seized in Cox's Bazar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Border Guard Bangladesh recovered a little over two kilograms of heroin from a Cox's Bazar-bound bus yesterday.

BGB members seized the contraband drug after searching the bus on the highway at Uttar Muhuripara area under Jhilongjia union in Cox's Bazar Sadar upazila around 8:00am, said Lt Col Md Saiful Islam Chowdhury, commanding officer of BGB Battalion 34.

However, none could be arrested as the 2.195-kg heroin was recovered in an abandoned state, he said.

Legal proceedings were underway in this connection, he added.

Dengue deaths cross 300

FROM PAGE 1

Shuhrawardy Medical College Hospital, told The Daily Star yesterday.

According to the researchers, there are four distinct serotypes of the dengue virus: DEN-1, DEN-2, DEN-3, and DEN-4.

These serotypes are closely related but differ slightly in their genetic makeup, leading to variations in their antigenic properties.

When a person is infected with one serotype of the dengue virus, they develop immunity to that specific serotype. However, this immunity does not provide protection against the other serotypes, according to researchers.

Different studies show that most people who are infected with dengue will have mild or no symptoms.

"This fact has left many dengue patients unaware that they have caught a subsequent infection with different serotypes. So, they develop severe illness fast, but come to hospital too late," Dr Khalilur Rahman said.

He said that coming to hospital late is also the main reason behind the higher death rate among young patients.

According to the DGHS, the fatality rate among patients aged 21-25 is the highest – around 11 percent; followed by 9 percent among patients aged 26-30; and 8 percent each among 31-40 and 56-60.

"So, our advice will be that patients come to the hospital before developing severe symptoms. And drastic fall of blood pressure is the major sign," he said.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), severe dengue symptoms often come after the fever

has gone away.

According to physicians, there are seven symptoms of severe dengue: intolerable abdominal pain, persistent vomiting, breathing difficulty, bleeding gums or nose, slurred speech, declining blood pressure and severe fatigue which leaves a patient unable to even walk or stand up.

Different studies show that most people who are infected with dengue will have mild or no symptoms.

But for those who do, the most common symptoms are high fever, headache, body ache, nausea and rash and most get better in 1-2 weeks, according to the WHO.

Prof Dr Saif Ullah Munshi, a virologist at Bangladesh University of Medical Sciences, said that the four-five days following the patient's report of "no fever" are crucial.

"This is because patients may go into shock (or may develop severe symptoms) at any time during this period. So, taking caution is crucial at this time," Prof Saif Ullah Munshi told The Daily Star earlier.

According to different studies, the mortality rate among patients with severe symptoms is 1 percent if treated. When untreated, the mortality rate is 5 percent.

This year, the number of dengue cases started surging early on due to weak mosquito containment efforts and other relevant factors, leaving the hospitals under pressure.

As of yesterday morning, a total of 9,334 dengue patients were undergoing treatment at different hospitals countrywide, which is around 15 percent of all dengue cases this year.

Tk 37.5cr mishandled in just one year

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three square meals is Tk 59.34 and for prisoners Tk 54.66.

So for the entire fiscal year, the food bill should have been Tk 20.6 crore. But the authorities billed Tk 26.7 crore, meaning the government was charged Tk 6.1 crore extra.

This is a violation of General Financial Rules, the report said.

Not just that, the meal served to the prisoners and inmates were substandard.

The portion size of fish and meat was smaller than the minimum prescribed intake and no fruits are served, the report found.

For lunch, the inmates and prisoners were supposed to get rice, lentils and vegetables, but they are only served rice and lentils.

The same menu is served day in and day out and it is not appetising, so a huge portion of food is wasted. The inmates end up forking out prisoners cash to purchase food from the prison canteen.

The authorities were supposed to deposit the proceeds of the prison canteen to the government exchequer. But they do not, which violates the rules.

The authorities were supposed to get the food served to the inmates approved by the resident civil surgeon, as per the jail code.

But an on-field visit by the auditors to the Kashimpur High Security Central Jail and the Women Central Jail in Gazipur found that this was not the case.

"This poses health risks for the inmates," the report said, adding that

the two prisons spent Tk 10.6 crore on food.

The authorities also broke public procurement rules and the finance ministry's Delegation of Financial Power rules in tender approval and bill payment involving Tk 22.1 crore.

As per rules, for tenders upwards of Tk 2 crore, the authorities are supposed to take approval from the home ministry. This was not adhered to.

The senior jail superintendent of Kashimpur Central Jail-1 instead split the tender into five packages, which were for the other three prisons under the Dhaka Central Jail, and went ahead with the tenders and bill payment.

Besides, all four prisons under the Dhaka Central Jail are supposed to have separate procurement and tender as their budgets are different.

During the period under review, Iqbal Kabir Chowdhury served as the senior jail superintendent of Dhaka central jail.

As a departmental head, he was responsible for ensuring compliance with financial regulations.

Contacted, Chowdhury, who is currently on pre-retirement leave, said: "I know nothing about it. I am not in a position to disclose anything about it."

The audit report has revealed losses amounting to Tk 26.41 lakh for the government in the purchase of cigarettes at inflated prices in different jails.

According to the report, a tender was invited to procure cigarettes for death row convicts. MS Liton Enterprise won the bid, offering each cigarette for Tk 4.88.

Imran Khan held after court conviction

FROM PAGE 1

"By the time you hear this statement, they will have arrested me. I have only one appeal: don't sit silently at home. I am struggling for you and the country and your children's future," he said.

His conviction came a day after Pakistan's high court temporarily

halted the district court trial. It was not immediately clear why the trial had proceeded despite the high court decision.

Khan's deputy and former foreign minister, Shah Mahmood Qureshi, who PTI said would lead the party in Khan's absence, said their leader had been denied a fair trial.

"We have to struggle for his freedom - we have to fight legally and politically and move in a peaceful way in line with Imran Khan's directives," he said in a video address.

The party's top decision-making body met Saturday and called for nation-wide peaceful protests, according to a statement.

At least 7 drown

FROM PAGE 1

led by an additional deputy commissioner was formed to investigate the incident.

The committee was asked to submit a report within three work days.

The upazila administration was asked to give each victim's family Tk 25,000 to cover the funeral expenses, he said, adding that further financial assistance for the families would be considered.

Suman Dev, additional superintendent of police, said the bulk carrier had been seized, but its crew members had fled.

Officials said this was not the first time a bulk carrier had collided with boats used by locals in the area.

AL wants to stay

FROM PAGE 1

recent reshuffle in the administration ahead of the national election, he said, "[DCs [deputy commissioners] and SPs [superintendents of police] have been changed, and numerous appointments and promotions have taken place in the administration. Their only objective is to regain control over the administration just like before."

Speaking at a rally organised by pro-BNP platform Bangladesh Sommilito Peshajibi Parishad in front of Jatiya Press Club, he urged the law enforcement agencies and judiciary to "stand by the country and the people. Do not accept unjust orders."

Referring to the law enforcers he said, "They have already started using firearms. They don't let people stay in their homes at night. They arrive [at the activists' houses] with warrants in false cases."

Incarcerated BNP leaders and activists are denied bail and given harsh treatment in prisons, he added.

He added that the recent conviction of BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman and his wife Zubaida Rahman in a graft case was an attempt by the government to mislead people.

He then accused the ruling Awami League of undermining two consecutive elections, and forcefully seizing power.

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A significant portion of Kazi Alauddin Road in Old Dhaka remains dug up as part of a drainage work. As the work drags on for over two months, locals continue to suffer. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

576 died in 505 road accidents last month

Says Jatri Kalyan Samity report

UNB, Dhaka

A total 576 people were killed and 1,055 injured in 505 road accidents across the country in July, said a report of Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity.

Also, 48 people died in 47 railway accidents while 21 died and 15 were injured in 16 accidents on waterway, it said.

The report, based on analysis of news on accidents published in the country's national and regional dailies and online news portals during the period, was published yesterday.

In total, 644 people were killed and 1,075 injured in 644 accidents on roads, waterways and railways across the country in July.

Of the fatalities on road, 195 people died and 122 others were injured in some 180 motorbike accidents across the country last month, which is 31.61 percent of the total fatalities and 35.64 percent of the total number of accidents.

Among those killed in road accidents in July, 119 were drivers, 77 pedestrians, 17 transport workers, 29 students, seven teachers, three members of law enforcement agencies, one army personnel, one navy personnel, one Border Guard Bangladesh member, one fire service man, 82 women, 42 children and seven activists

of different political parties.

Dhaka division saw most of the fatalities and accidents with 173 people killed and 271 injured in 157 road accidents, while the figures are lowest in Barishal division with 38 killed and 138 injured in 23 road crashes.

Dhaka division saw most of the fatalities and accidents with 173 people killed and 271 injured in 157 road accidents, while the figures are lowest in Barishal division with 38 killed and 138 injured in 23 road crashes.

Among the vehicles involved in the accidents were 18.74 percent buses, 22.84 percent pick-up vans, covered vans and lorries, 6.83 percent private cars, jeeps and minibuses, 5.74 percent CNG-run autorickshaws, 25.99 percent motorbikes, 15.32 percent battery-run human hauliers and 4.51 percent three-wheelers.

Of the accidents, 38.61 percent occurred on national highways, 30.69 percent on regional highways and 24.15 percent on roads.

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ATTACK ON FEMALE FOOTBALLERS

PM stands by the girls

UNB, Khulna

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday expressed solidarity with the female footballers who were attacked in Khulna's Batiaghata area.

Sheikh Salahuddin Jewel, lawmaker from Khulna-2 constituency, conveyed the message while talking to the girls.

"The PM said the ground where female footballers train will be renovated and a football academy will be built there," said Jewel.

Salauddin Jewel was accompanied by Khulna administration officials.

Meanwhile, Sadia Nasreen, the captain of the team, said, "The premier has directed the

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PHOTO: COLLECTED

Sit together to avoid conflict

Speakers urge political parties ahead of national polls

DU CORRESPONDENT

Civil society platform Shushashoner Jonno Nagarik yesterday called for dialogue and consensus among political parties to resolve the current political tension.

The next parliamentary polls should be inclusive and competitive. But the current political situation is unsuitable for such an election, said speakers at a human chain in the capital's Shahbagh.

Awami League and its allies are saying that next general polls should be held in line with the constitution, meaning it should be held under the current government. Meanwhile, the opposition BNP is on the street with their demand for elections under a neutral election time government, they explained.

As the election approaches, streets are getting heated. There are also incidents of clashes and deaths on streets, said Dilip Kumar Sarkar, Shujan coordinator.

Shujan believes, if the political parties do not come to an agreement, the country will head towards a

"conflict", he said.

"A participatory, competitive, peaceful, fair, and acceptable election requires dialogue and mutual understanding among political parties," he added.

Shujan directed political parties to come to a unanimous decision regarding the type of government to be in power during the upcoming national polls.

"Concession is necessary when two parties look to come to a consensus. We were able to reach a common conclusion through discussion in 1996, and that played as a level field during the polls. However, the settlement was broken following the 15th amendment of our constitution," said Shujan secretary Badiul Alam Majumdar.

"The elections will not be fair, if we fail to create a level playing field", he added.

Shujan leader Zakir Hossain said, even after 52 years of independence, the government has failed to ensure fair elections.

Dhaka University Prof Robaet

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BNP a 'blister' in country's politics: Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said BNP is a "blister" in the country's political arena.

Quader said this while talking to reporters after placing wreaths at Banani Graveyard on the 74th birth anniversary of Sheikh Kamal, eldest son of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

"Mirza Fakhrul claims that Awami League has been bowled out by their googly. But with a no ball, it doesn't matter if it's a googly," he said.

Quader said, "BNP has once again resorted to the politics of terror and conspiracy to gain power through backdoors."

Speaking there, Information Minister Hasan Mahmud said if Sheikh Kamal wasn't brutally murdered, he



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Promote renewable energy to improve air quality: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government needs to promote renewable energy to improve the country's air quality, especially in the cities and other urban areas, stressed speakers at an event yesterday.

They made the remarks at a press conference jointly organised by Center for Atmospheric Pollution Studies (CAPS), Bangladesh Resource Center for Indigenous Knowledge (Barcik) and World Vision Bangladesh at Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU) in the capital.

In a keynote speech, CAPS Founding Chairman Prof Ahmad Kamruzzaman Majumder said use of renewable energy plays an important role in improving air quality and energy development.

Use of fossil fuels constantly increases the extent of greenhouse gas emissions, which significantly deteriorate the air quality, he mentioned.

Promoting use of renewable energy and reducing fossil fuel dependency can be effective solutions to address the aforementioned challenges, he added.

Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon joint secretary

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Every citizen has the right to clean air, and the government has the responsibility of ensuring this.

DOMINIC SENTU GOMES

Technical coordinator, World Vision Bangladesh

Making fake notes for smuggling yaba

3 members of syndicate held in Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A counterfeit currency-making syndicate was plotting to smuggle a large consignment of yaba pills from Teknaf to Dhaka using forged currency.

As a part of the plan, they managed to print fabricated notes amounting to approximately Tk 10.20 lakh.

Since 2020, this syndicate has been in the business of creating counterfeit Indian rupees, which were used not only to purchase narcotics but also as payment for smuggling consignments, including goods like sarees.

The syndicate's activities extended beyond mere transactional use, as they engaged in distributing the fake rupees across various border points. They distributed around five crore counterfeit rupees into the market so far.

It cost them between Tk 2,000 to Tk 2,500 to make one lakh fake Indian rupees, which were then sold for Tk 8,000. Similarly, the syndicate sold one lakh fake Bangladeshi notes for Tk 12,000.

Deputy Commissioner Md Jafar Hossain of Lalbagh Division of Police revealed these while addressing the media at the Dhaka Metropolitan Police centre

yesterday.

These findings followed the arrest of three syndicate members in Lalbagh and Keraniganj areas on Friday. The arrestees are Sajjad Hossain Robin, 38, his brother Sadman Hossain Hridoy, 30, and their cousin Md Mahi, 19.

The syndicate's activities extended beyond mere transactional use, as they engaged in distributing the fake rupees across various border points. They distributed around five crore counterfeit rupees into the market so far.

Authorities seized approximately one lakh counterfeit Indian rupees from their possession, along with equipment like printers, ink, and fake note production materials.

Police first arrested Mahi, confiscating 50,000 fake notes from him in Lalbagh.

Based on the lead, a subsequent operation in Keraniganj led to the arrest of Robin and Sadman, accompanied by the

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Turning Dholaikhal reservoir into a park

DSCC plans to finish project by April next year

DIPAN NANDY

The Dhaka South City Corporation has taken an ambitious project to rejuvenate the Dholaikhal reservoir, which has long been used as a garbage dump. As per the project, DSCC will transform it into a park.

The project aims to create a pleasant environment and an attractive recreational space, surpassing the allure of Hatirjheel, according to officials.

DSCC Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh inaugurated the construction work on May 18 this year, expressing his vision for the area's transformation.

"The environment of Dholaikhal water retention pond will be more beautiful than Hatirjheel when the project will be completed," the mayor said at the inauguration ceremony.

"Dholaikhal reservoir is a lung of Old Dhaka. The present situation of this place will be changed within the next year and



VIEW OF ENTRY PLAZA

a more beautiful and greener than Hatirjheel will be created."

Two contractors — Masud Hitech Engineering Limited and Charu Enterprises — have been tasked with the construction works of the Dholaikhal reservoir development project and are expected to complete the project within one year and two months, DSCC sources said.

Dholaikhal reservoir

development work is ongoing under the "Greening of Dholaikhal Reservoir and Development of Aesthetic Environment" project. It will cover an area of 5,309 acres, including a pond that spans 2 lakh square foot area.

According to the revitalisation plan, the primary focus of the project is to create a pedestrian-friendly environment. A 1,968 feet pedestrian path and a 2,155

feet bicycle lane will be built to promote non-motorised transportation and encourage outdoor activities.

The park will provide ample green spaces, covering a 60,000 square feet area, with a designated 2,130 square feet area for children.

The centrepiece of the park will be the two amphitheatres, designed to host public events and gatherings. The larger amphitheatre will span 5,890 square feet, accommodating up to 350 people, while the smaller one, covering 2,302 square feet, will offer seating arrangements for 150 people. Additionally, a 1,076 square feet ghat will be constructed, adding to the park's appeal. There will also be a food court for the visitors.

With an estimated cost of Tk 19.88 crore, the project commenced on February 23 this year and is set to conclude by April 23, 2024.

"Once the project is completed,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Death anniv of Santosh Gupta

STAR REPORT

To day marks the 19th death anniversary of eminent journalist and writer Santosh Gupta.

Born in 1925 at Runshi village in Jhalakathi, he was involved in leftist politics before starting a career in journalism. Gupta made significant contributions to all democratic movements including the Liberation War.

He was also jailed several times throughout 12 years for his political connection. He joined journalism in 1957 with the Daily Azad and later switched over to Daily Sangbad.

His post editorial under the pen name "Aniruddha" made him one of the most popular journalists at home and abroad in his time. The ideology behind his writings on politics, economics and the country circulated around objectivity, independence and honesty. His article, analysis, critique on politics and economics added a different trend in journalism.

Gupta was awarded Ekushey Padak, Sher-e-Bangla Padak, Maulana Tarkabagish Padak, Jahur Hossain Memorial Padak, Kazi Mahbubullah-Zebunnisa Welfare Trust Award and many more.

To mark his death anniversary, Santosh Gupta Smriti Parishad will place wreaths at his memorial at Postagola crematorium at 9:00am, said a press release.



350 students get Shahjalal bank scholarships

STAR REPORT

Shahjalal Islami Bank Limited has awarded scholarships to 350 poor and meritorious students from different regions of the country, said a press release.

The cheques were handed over through a ceremony organised at the bank's corporate head office yesterday.

One hundred scholarship students attended the programme and received the scholarship money. The remaining 250 students will be paid through their respective bank accounts within a specified period.

A total of Tk 1.90 crore will be given to 350 students who passed the SSC examinations in 2022.

The bank's Board of Directors Chairman Mohammed Younus was present as the chief guest at the programme presided over by Dr Anwer Hossain Khan, MP, director of the bank and chairman of Bank Foundation.

Akkas Uddin Mollah, director of Shahjalal Islami Bank and chairman of the bank's executive committee; and Fakir Akhtaruzzaman, director and vice chairman of the executive committee, were also present at the event.



576 died

FROM PAGE 3

Besides, 5.34 percent accidents occurred in Dhaka city, 0.39 percent in Chattogram city and 0.79 percent on rail tracks.

The association identified plying of slow-moving three-wheelers and human-haulers on highways, increase of the movement of three-wheelers, lack

of street nights and road signs, violation of traffic rules, movement of unfit vehicles, faulty construction work on highways, dangerous overtaking, carrying passengers on goods-laden vehicles, extortion, unskilled drivers and helpers and reckless driving as reasons behind road accidents.

Where wildlife

FROM PAGE 5

wildlife of the area. Following the same proposal, he issued another letter to the conservator of Forests, Wildlife and Nature Reserve on February 27 last year, providing a rationale for reducing the speed of trains.

Meanwhile, another letter was sent from the forest ministry to the railways ministry, urging them to take necessary measures in this regard.

On January 29, a letter signed by Taufiq Imam, deputy secretary (additional duties) of the railways ministry was sent to railway director general, instructing him to take necessary measures to keep the speed limit of all the trains running on the existing railway within 20km.

Stationmaster Shakhawat Hossain said the forest department has given a letter regarding the speed limit, but they have not received it from the authorities yet.

Railway officials, seeking anonymity, said as the area has small slopes and hills, the train will not be able to ply up the slopes if the speed is so low.

On March 3, 2022, the wildlife department organised a campaign to limit vehicle speed.

However, traffic movement within the forest still continues at high speed, putting wild animals at risk.

Sohel Shyam, one of the founders of Stand for Our Endangered Wildlife, a voluntary organisation, said, if the 20km per hour speed limit is maintained, many animals will be saved.

Sit together

FROM PAGE 3

Ferdous said, "Democratic values direct the government and opposition to resolve issues through dialogue. But it is unfortunate that in our country the issues are settled on the street through violence. As a result, foreigners also get scope to interfere. This can't go on," he added.

Jatiya Kanyashishu Advocacy Forum General Secretary Nasima Akhtar Joly, and Shujan leaders Nazim Uddin and Jobarul Haq Bhuiyan also spoke at the human chain.

Promote

FROM PAGE 3

Mihir Biswas urged the power division and Sustainable and Renewable Energy Development Authority to promote renewable energy.

Dominic Sentu Gomes, technical coordinator of World Vision Bangladesh, said, "Every citizen has the right to clean air, and the government has the responsibility of ensuring this."

Barcik coordinator Jahangir Alam and Prof Adil Mohammed Khan, executive director of Institute for Planning and Development, also spoke.

Turning

FROM PAGE 3

the park is anticipated to become a popular recreational space for residents and visitors alike, fostering a sense of community and offering a serene escape from the busy city life," DSCC Spokesperson Abu Naser told The Daily Star yesterday.

Adil Mohammed Khan, urban planner and professor of Jahangirnagar University, told The Daily Star, "It's a very good initiative. If it happens as per plan, it will be an ideal place of recreation for the people of Old Dhaka. But the project has to be eco-friendly. Otherwise, it will be detrimental to the environment in the long run."

PRAYER
TIMING
AUGUST 6

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 4:20 12:45 5:00 6:47 8:15

JAMAAT 4:55 1:15 5:15 5:50 8:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

PM stands by

FROM PAGE 3

authorities to take necessary measures to ensure the safety of female footballers and bring the perpetrators to book."

On July 29, at least four girls, all members of the under-17 Khulna divisional football team, came under attack by a group of people for wearing shorts and playing football

at Tentultala village of Khulna's Batiaghata upazila.

Shawkat Kabir, officer-in-charge of Batiaghata Police Station, said police officers are actively patrolling the area to ensure safety of the footballers.

"We have informed the girls and their parents to report any safety concerns immediately," he added.

Former campus

FROM PAGE 5

discipline" for publishing a report on the VC's remarks, the authority should suspend the VC first for "encouraging" students about corruption. "How can a VC of a university make such remarks? He should step down on his own," Alam said.

Expressing solidarity, Shahidul Islam, president of Dhaka Union of Journalists, threatened a tougher movement if Monwar's suspension was not withdrawn immediately.

The speakers vowed to continue their movement until the VC steps down and the suspension is withdrawn.

MONWAR ASKED TO VACATE HALL

In another development, the authorities of Cumilla University's Kazi Nazrul Islam Hall issued a notice asking Monwar to leave the hall.

According to the notice issued on Thursday, Monwar will not be allowed to stay at the dormitory during the suspension period, reports our Cumilla correspondent.

The Daily Star has also obtained a copy of the notice.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Monwar said, "The university authorities did not give me any show-cause notice. As a student, I didn't participate in any anti-discipline activities."

30 villages, district town now

FROM PAGE 5

Hossen, headteacher of Uttar Char Borhan Government Primary School in Dasmina.

"The tidal surge has engulfed our school, which has 130 students. Students here have to go through a similar situation for 4-5 months a year," he said.

There are no embankments on the river banks, and this has led to misery, he added.

Piprahkhal and Ghatker Andua in Mirzaganj have remained submerged under 3-4 feet water since the surge

damaged the embankments on Payra river, informed UP Chairman Abul Bashar Nasir.

Patuakhali municipality executive engineer Jasim Uddin Arju blamed badly designed sluice gates and inlets of the town protection dam for the menace.

Assuring that initiatives are underway to address the problem, he said, "Alongside repairing the dams and sluice gates, 30km of paved drains will be built in the city to help the water recede easily."

Limping along on

FROM PAGE 5

for dengue patients, but double or even triple the number of infected patients come here every day.

"We are trying to increase the number of beds, but even the resources are limited. Meanwhile, dengue is on the rise," said Basar.

BROKERS IN FULL SWING
Amid patients' sufferings, brokers continue to extort people. "I had to spend Tk 8,500 on tests from a private diagnostic centre and another Tk 850 on medicine," said farmer Aminul Islam while visiting the hospital recently.

Aminul, 35, had failed to secure a ticket even after waiting in the queue outside for over two hours with severe muscle aches.

"I had to take help from a broker who took me to the private facility," he added.

Brokers receive Tk 500-700 per patient from private hospitals, clinics, and diagnostic centres. They usually serve 5-6 patients every day, said broker Rana Mia.

"Around 60-70 patients are brought in every month by the brokers in exchange for a commission we promise. This is the only way we can ensure timely salaries for our staff

and keep our machines upgraded," said owner of a local diagnostic centre, preferring anonymity.

Dr Nurul Islam, Narsingdi civil surgeon, said, "Around 131 medical posts in Narsingdi district have been vacant since 2014. The authorities know our limitations, but the recruitment process is complex and often delayed."

BNP a blister

FROM PAGE 3

could have contributed to the nation in many ways.

Meanwhile, addressing a separate discussion at the AL central office on Bangabandhu Avenue, party joint general secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif criticised the statements of rights organisations on recent violence centring BNP's sit-ins.

"What do you want? Your statements appear to be nothing more than blatant support for the subversive activities. The nation rejects your statements," he added.

Making fake

FROM PAGE 3

seizure of around 9.70 lakh counterfeit notes. DC Jafar said Robin, a graphic designer by profession, is the mastermind behind this syndicate. Robin was first introduced to the world of counterfeit notes by one Sahid in 2007.

Sahid's demise temporarily halted Robin's counterfeit activities. However, encountering financial challenges due to the pandemic, Robin again started note forgery.

Robin's reentry was facilitated through connections with two others -- Humayun Kabir Sikder and Sofiullah Sikder. "We are now conducting drives to arrest them," he said.

Students suffer for unfinished

FROM PAGE 5

the building. Construction began on January 1 this year and was scheduled to be completed by June 30, according to the LGED office in Dasmina upazila.

However, from the very beginning, the contractor was working slowly with a few workers, and in June halted the work, said Sohag Hossain, headteacher of the school.

The construction work has since then been completely stopped for two months, the headmaster said.

Meanwhile, teachers and students are suffering immensely as it is difficult to accommodate all

students in two rooms of the old tin-shed structure, while the entire school has been inundated with tidal water due to the monsoon, he added.

The educational activities of the school are being severely disrupted, he added, requesting the authorities concerned to expedite the construction work.

"It is difficult to attend classes when our school becomes inundated with tidal water. When the construction of the new building is completed, we will be able to study well," said Sumaiya, a student of class-5 in the school.

Contacted, contractor Pancham Ali Mridha said

the floor of the school building needs to be filled with sand now. However, since the place is very remote, it is difficult to bring sand to the construction site, he said.

He also said an application has been made to the authorities concerned to extend the construction time, and hoped that they would accelerate the construction work by filling up sand on the floor soon.

Contacted, Mokbul Hossain, engineer at LGED in Dasmina upazila, confirmed the matter and said the contractor has been urged to complete the construction work quickly.

TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tenders hereby invited by Prime Bank Limited from reputed companies in the relevant field for providing below items:

Name of Work	Period of Sale (Tender)		Date of Submission & Opening
	From	To	
SUPPLY OF 10 UNITS NOTE SORTING MACHINES	06 August 2023	30 August, 2023	30 August, 2023
INTERIOR DECORATION AND FURNITURE WORK OF KHULSHI BRANCH, CHATTOGRAM	06 August 2023	22 August, 2023	22 August, 2023

Details are given on the Prime Bank website.
<https://www.primebank.com.bd/tenders>

Vice President
Facility Management Division



Government of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Senior Jail Super
Rajshahi Central Jail, Rajshahi.

Memo No: 58.04.8100.126.04.021.23.4573
Date: 05.08.2023

e-Tender Notice
This is to notify all concern that the following tender is invited in the national e-GP portal:

Sl No.	Tender ID No.	Tender/Proposal Package Name	Publishing Closing Date & Time
1	859021	Procurement of High Quality Thick Lentil Pulse (Unnatamaner Moshur Dal Mota) for the period of 01 October, 2023 to 31 March, 2024.	03 Aug-2023, 23:55 24 Aug-2023, 11:00
2	859022	Procurement of High Quality Thick Lentil Pulse (Unnatamaner Moshur Dal Saru) for the period of 01 October, 2023 to 31 March, 2024.	03 Aug-2023, 23:30 24 Aug-2023, 11:15
3	859023	Procurement of High Quality Gram Pulse (Unnatamaner Cholar Dal) for the period of 01 October, 2023 to 31 March, 2024.	03 Aug-2023, 23:30 24 Aug-2023, 11:45

This is an online Tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in the national e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-tender, registration in the National e-GP portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the national e-GP system portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

05.08.2023
Md. Abdul Jalil
Senior Jail Super
Rajshahi Central Jail
Telephone No. 0258850791

GD-1190

Government of the people's Republic of Bangladesh
Directorate of Technical Education
F-4/B, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207
Phone: 02-41024597, E-mail: advocddo@gmail.com

Invitation for Tenders

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Education, Technical and Madrasah Education Division		
2	Agency	Directorate of Technical Education		
3	Procuring Entity Name	Director (Vocational)		
4	Invitation for	Supply of Manpower through outsourcing in the newly launched 3rd phase 15 Technical School and College (TSC) at different upzila.		
5	Invitation Ref No	57.03.0000.027.07.024.23.400		
6	Date	27.07.2023		
KEY INFORMATION				
7	Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (OTM)		
FUNDING INFORMATION				
8	Budget and Source of Funds	GoB		
9	Tender Package No.	DTE/VOC/OUTSOURCING/2023_2024		
10	Tender Package Name	Supply of Manpower through outsourcing in the newly launched 3rd phase 15 Technical School and College (TSC) at different upzila.		
11	Tender Publication Date	06.08.2023		
12	Tender Selling Date	06.08.2023		
13	Last Selling of Tender Document Date (must be the date prior to the day of Tender Closing Date)	Date : 20.08.2023, Time: 4:00 PM		
		Date	Time	
14	Tender closing Date and Time	21.08.2023	02:00 PM	
15	Tender opening Date and Time (within one hour of Tender Closing)	21.08.2023	02:30 PM	
16	Pre Tender meeting Date and Time	16.08.2023	11.30 AM	
17	Name & Address of the office(s)	Address		
-Selling Tender Document (Primary Place)		Director (Vocational), Directorate of Technical Education Accounts Section, 3 rd Floor, Room No.: 311, F-4/B, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207.		
-Selling Tender Document (Secondary Place)		Principal, Technical Teachers Training College, Tejgaon, Dhaka-1208.		
-Receiving Tender Document		Director (Vocational), Directorate of Technical Education 1 st Floor, Room No.: 212, F-4/B, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207.		
-Opening Tender Document		Director (Vocational), Directorate of Technical Education 1 st Floor, Room No.: 212, F-4/B, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207.		
INFORMATION FOR TENDERERS				
18	Eligibility of Tenderers	As per TDS		
19	Brief description of services	Supply of Manpower (Electrician Cum pump operator category 1, Security Guard category 5, Cleaner category 5) through outsourcing in the newly launched 3rd phase 15 Technical School and College (TSC) at different upzila.		
20	Price of Tender Document (tk.)	2000.00 (Taka two thousand only)		
21	Package No	Identification of package	Location	Tender security amount (tk.) Completion time in weeks / months
	01	DTE/VOC/OUTSOURCING /2023_2024/	Director(Vocational), Directorate of Technical Education	3,60,000/- (Taka three lac sixty thousand only) Within 10 (ten) days after signing contract
22	The Procuring entity reserves the right to reject all the tenders or annul the tender proceedings			
23	PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS			

Md. Salahuddin Ahmed
Joint Secretary
Director (Vocational)
Directorate of Technical Education
Phone:02-41024597
E-mail: advocddo@gmail.com

GD-1189

Students suffer for unfinished school building

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A tin-shed building hosts a primary school. Inside its walls lie classrooms which are completely submerged in knee-length water, leaving the little ones struggling to carry out their educational activities.

The recent tidal surge, caused by a depression over the Bay, has inundated at least 30 villages and shoals in Patuakhali.

But these children wouldn't have suffered if the school building promised to them was completed within the deadline.

Poor communication and contractor's negligence halted the construction work of the new academic building of Uttar Char Borhan Government Primary School in Patuakhali.

The school, established in 2005 by locals in a tin-shed structure in the remote Char Borhan island under Dashmina upazila of Patuakhali, has 130 students, including 65 girls, and four teachers at present.

The school was nationalised in 2013. Later, the Local Government Engineering Department took a Tk 1.19 crore project to construct the school's new four-storey academic building.

A contractor named Pancham Ali Mridha got the construction work of

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



With water reaching up to their knees and books on their heads, students of Uttar Char Borhan Government Primary School try to reach the school gate following class. The children currently have to sit in the old tin-shed building for classes as their permanent school building remains under construction. The photos were taken in Patuakhali's Dasmina upazila after a tidal surge inundated around 30 villages in the district recently.

PHOTO: STAR

TIDAL SURGE IN PATUAKHALI

30 villages, district town under water

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

At least 30 villages and shoals in Patuakhali have been inundated due to tidal surge caused by depression over the Bay.

The district's Mohipur and Alipur of Kalapara upazila, Char Montaj of Rangabali upazila, Charborhan of Dasmina upazila, and Piprakhal of Mirzaganj upazila are under 2-3 feet water.

Water also entered the district town on Thursday afternoon, flooding the Post Office, Mahila College, Jubilee School, Old Hospital, and Fire Service roads.

Besides, Munsef Para, Mother and Child Welfare Center; and Civil Surgeon Office, New Market, and Medical College Hospital squares were also inundated.

According to Water Development Board sources, the district's rivers and streams are flowing 20cm above the danger level.

The low-pressure over the Bay has caused a rise of 2-4 feet in the sea's water level. Rainfall added to the crisis, mentioned Patuakhali Meteorological Office observer Joydeep Kabiraj.

The flood has disrupted the activities of locals, especially students, said Sohag

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Man kills himself after stabbing wife to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A man allegedly took his own life after killing his wife over a family dispute in Kaunia upazila of Rangpur early yesterday.

He also attacked his two brothers when they tried to resist him, said police.

The deceased were identified as Rabindra Chandra Barman, 55, and his wife Shova Rani Roy, 45, from Dharmeshwar (Meerbagh) village.

The couple went to bed after taking dinner on Friday night and their family members woke up around 1:00am hearing screams, police quoted the family as saying.

At one stage, the husband threw the mattress out of his room and set afire. Later, he started stabbing his wife with a sharp weapon, they added.

When Rabindra's two brothers -- Chetan and Gopal -- went to rescue Shova, he also stabbed them.

The family members took Shova to Rangpur Medical College Hospital in a critical state. Later, she died at the hospital.

Meanwhile, Rabindra hanged himself from the ceiling, said police.

Being informed, police recovered the bodies and sent those to Rangpur Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy, said Hossain Muhammad Raihan, additional superintendent of police (A-circle) in Rangpur.

NARSINGDI SADAR HOSPITAL

Limping along on limited facilities

JAHIDUL ISLAM, Narsingdi

"I have been waiting for four hours for my test since I arrived here at 9:00am with a stomach ache. However, by the time my turn arrived, the doctor had already left the hospital," said Sonia Akter while talking to this correspondent recently.

The 28-year-old mother of three had to travel from Alokali in Sadar upazila to reach Narsingdi Sadar Hospital.

Sonia is not the only one. Other patients too shared similar experiences.

Hundreds of patients went there every day from different upazilas of Narsingdi, Brahmanbaria and Kishoreganj.

While patients have been suffering due to a shortage of doctors and facilities, illegal local brokers, promising patients to make the process a little easier, have taken over the hospital's alleys, adding to the menace.

Established in 1962, the hospital currently has seven units -- outpatient, emergency, pathology, X-ray, blood bank, ultrasonography, and ECG. Ambulance facilities are available on a limited scale, and most tests are done with old machines.

According to hospital sources, limited staff and a shortage of modern, residential, and technological facilities are to blame for the hospital's condition.

SHORTAGE OF STAFF, BEDS

A total of 21 doctors are supposed to be employed at this hospital; however, only 14, including consultants, are currently serving patients. There are no consultants in cardiology, surgery, physical medicine, or ophthalmology departments.

During a recent visit, this correspondent found patients waiting in the emergency room while there were no doctors or trained paramedics to tend to them.

"I have to attend to around 120-150 patients every day, which makes it difficult for me to properly diagnose them," said Rozi Sarkar, a medical officer at the hospital.

According to hospital sources, around 2,000 patients visit the centre every day for treatment, including 500-600 at the



Patients continue to suffer as limited beds, resources and lack of cleaning initiatives plague the hospital.

PHOTO: STAR

emergency unit alone. At least 80-85 patients are admitted to the hospital on a daily basis. However, it also has only 100 seats -- 15 for children, 23 for women, 42 for men, 20 for gynaecology, and 10 for diarrhoea units.

Thus, a large number of patients have to stay on the floors, corridors, and balconies. The shortage of manpower further exacerbates their sufferings, informed Mahmudul Kabir Basar, resident medical officer.

"The authority knows that we have been short-staffed since 2014. I had also asked them to appoint at least 50 doctors, including consultants, here, but to no avail," he added.

While talking to this correspondent, multiple patients at the hospital said they

had to wait for at least an hour in line to get a ticket and another 3-5 hours just to access the outdoor facilities. The wait is even longer when it comes to meeting doctors, taking tests, and accessing necessary medicines.

Many patients and their attendants alleged that unplanned garbage dumping in 7-8 adjacent open drains not only increases the risk of dengue infections but also compromises the overall cleanliness of the hospital, located near Narsingdi Municipality.

The overgrown bushes on the hospital compound due to a lack of mowing further worsen the hospital's hygiene.

Furthermore, only 12 beds in four wards are

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

SUSPENSION OF CUMILLA UNIVERSITY REPORTER

Former campus journo demand VC's resignation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former campus journalists yesterday demanded immediate resignation of Cumilla University Vice-Chancellor Prof. AFM Abdul Moyeen for suspending a student for a news report on him.

The demand was raised from a human chain organised in front of Jatiya Press Club in Dhaka.

The suspended student, Mohammad Iqbal Monwar, is a masters student at the English department. He is also a reporter of Bangla daily Jajaidin.



PHOTO: STAR

On July 31, a report titled "Corruption is the reason for development in Bangladesh: CoU VC" was published in the daily, detailing some remarks made by the VC during a university programme.

In the suspension order, it was mentioned that Monwar was suspended for "violating university discipline".

According to the order, Monwar allegedly distorted a statement made by the VC and intentionally circulated it with misleading information to tarnish the university's image.

Monwar refuted the allegations and claimed that he only reported the statement made by the VC during a programme.

Addressing today's event, Ali Younus Hridoy, a former campus journalist from Rajshahi University, said, "By making these remarks, Cumilla University VC has lost the moral right to hold the office. He should resign immediately."

Rabiul Alam, former campus journalist at Jagannath University, said if a journalist can be suspended on charge of "violating university

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Eight Jamaat, Shibir men detained in Rangpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Police yesterday detained eight Jamaat-Shibir men for trying to bring out a procession in Rangpur without prior permission from the authorities.

Police also charged batons to disperse them.

Around noon, the leaders and activists of Jamaat Shibir started the march from near Jummappara Bhanga Mosque in Rangpur city.

Police intercepted them and detained eight people, said OC Mahfuzar Rahman, of Kotwali Police Station.

Jamaat-Shibir bring out processions in the city without permission, said the OC. The detainees could not be identified.



Animals living in the Lawachhara National Park continue to become victim of speeding vehicles and trains as they ply the Sreemangal-Kamalaganj road and Dhaka-Sylhet rail tracks inside the forest, defying a 20km speed limit.

PHOTO: STAR

LAWACHHARA NATIONAL PARK

Where wildlife falls victim to speeding trains, vehicles

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

Lawachhara National Park is an important sanctuary, buzzing with rare and endangered animals. However, its wildlife is facing a significant challenge when it comes to co-existing with the railway and regional road that passes through it.

The 1,250-hectare forest is home to numerous species of animals including owls, monkeys, pythons, wild fowl, pangolins, barking deer, fishing cats, and wild boars.

According to the wildlife conservation department, over 50 animals fall victim to fatal railway and road accidents annually.

However, local conservationists claim the number to be much higher in reality.

The accidents are mostly caused on Sreemangal-Kamalaganj road and Dhaka Sylhet railway park pass. The wildlife in the area is also disrupted due to the noise pollution caused by speeding trains and vehicles.

For example, on May 20, Sylhet-bound Udayan Express met with an accident after a tree fell in the park. The subsequent rescue and public gathering caused a lot of disruption to the wildlife movement.

Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, former divisional forest officer, sent a letter to the forest conservator on November 14, 2021, proposing the maximum train speed be reduced to 20km per hour while crossing the 7.5km stretch of park to protect the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



The play, held at Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy over the weekend, portrayed a complex narrative crafted by Tauquir Ahmed.

PHOTOS: THABIT AL BASHAR

TAUQUIR AHMED’S ‘Tirthojatri’ is a stellar theatrical comeback

After a substantial hiatus, Tauquir Ahmed made his theatrical comeback with the play ‘Tirthojatri’ in New York. Over the weekend, the esteemed artiste enthralled theatre lovers of Dhaka with his directorial rendition of the play, at the Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA).

DOYEL BISWAS

The play is adapted from popular writer Humayun Kabir’s philosophical fiction *Tirthojatri Tinjon Tarkik*. It is co-written by the fiction’s original author, and Tauquir himself.

The plot of the play revolves around three former soldiers who, after a brutal war, find out they have nowhere to go. The brutality of the war took their loved ones away and destroyed their homes. Thus, appalled by the horror of their newly found reality, they together begin a journey towards introspection and wisdom.

In the play, we see these three sceptic explorers roam around the depths and peaks of the world to find answers and a home. However, to much of their astonishment and dismay, they find out that although the military wars have ended, the internal battles that human beings engage in with others and themselves never end or will.

As the play proceeds, the explorers portrayed by three sets of different actors, indicating three different ages– encounter people engaging in internal and external conflicts that are not related to any greater good but differentiated perspectives. Self-

conceitedness, righteousness, and pride, unsettles their previous convictions, bewildering them.

Tauquir gives the audience at least ten different morally conflicting and discomfoting scenarios, where they experience the same confusion and dilemma these explorers deal with.

It was pretty clear from the start that the explorers were set at a premonition of being alie the audiences and humans overall, with such casualty, ease, and no special characterisation or treatment, that the side stories and mid-scenes become more prominent and take centre-stage almost every time.

As their journey reaches the end of the play, these explorers start to doubt each other’s morality, judgement, convictions, and perspectives on core humane philosophical stances, and the play never even tries to present comfortable answers.

“It was actually intended. I picked this novel for the play for its philosophical dimensions. Life is sad and perplexing

like this play indeed; one could never make sense of what is happening around and to them, and there is no solution to anything,” explained Tauquir Ahmed to the Daily Star.

“What we tried to do with this rendition is to present the same questions we ask ourselves at every instance and pretty much go by our day nonetheless. My intention was to take that same element of our lives and remind ourselves how important self-introspection is,” he concluded.

As a director, Tauquir Ahmed did a tremendous job in the theatrical representation of his tenet. His confidence in his craft was traversing throughout the 105 minute-long play, yet it did not feel lengthy at all.

The masterful placement of over 15 actors in extravagant battle dresses in front of the main hall of BSA (even before the play has begun), their entry to an awfully minimalistic yet subtly powerful set design, created a confusing and tense atmosphere for the audiences. Thus they never actually could settle or relax in their

seats to get the full sense of the splendour that was going on stage.

The sound design and the playful-yet-bold presence of over six songs, played skillfully by the musicians, were exquisite, thanks to the sound designer of the play, Pintu Ghosh. The costume design was so articulate yet simple, and it blended in with every character.

Tauquir somehow achieved the perfect coherence between the actors, dialogues, music, light, and set design, and it served him well. However, the one thing that seemed a little out of place was a few comical scenes; they might have been handled better. Also, the dialogue of its three main protagonists seemed a little archaic, as it fell short of meeting the flow of the previous scenes.

This is the 16th instalment of the play from Tauquir’s theatre troupe, Natyakendra. Tauquir has dazzled audiences with his directorial masterpieces throughout his career, including *Ichchhamrittyu*, *Hoybodon*, and *Pratisaran*.

Prior to this, Tauquir presented the play to the expatriate audience at the Queens Theater in New York, USA, on March 18. *Tirthojatri* was showcased at BSA till August 4.

‘Breaking Bad’ and ‘Better Call Saul’ star Mark Margolis dies at 83



Breaking Bad and *Better Call Saul* actor Mark Margolis breathed his last on Friday at Sinai Hospital in New York City. The 83-year-old artiste was known for playing Hector Salamanca, the meth cartel don nicknamed Tio, associated with the Mexican drug cartel boss Don Eladio Vuento and Don Juan Bolsa.

The actor was suffering from a short illness leading to his demise. The news was announced by Margolis’s son, Morgan Margolis.

USA’s Richardson city will celebrate August 5 as ‘Babita’ Day

Bob Dubey, Mayor of Richardson city in USA’s Texas has declared August 5 as ‘Babita’ Day at an award-giving ceremony yesterday, where the iconic actress Babita received a lifetime honour in recognition of her illustrious cinematic career. The award ceremony took place during the Dallas Bangla Film Festival, which kicked off with a screening of Babita’s acclaimed film, *Noyonmoni*.

The sixth season of the Dallas Bengali Film Festival was inaugurated Friday at the Angelica Film Centre in Dallas, Texas, USA. Over the course of three days, six films, including the timeless classics *Golapi Ekhon Train E* and *Ashani Sanket*, both starring Babita, will be screened at the festival.



NEWS

Govt gives in to transport

FROM PAGE 12

From the day it is registered, not from the day it leaves the assembly line, the federation added.

A top BRTA official requesting anonymity, said, “Different quarters were opposing the decision, saying that if it was implemented, there would be a scarcity of vehicles.

“They [transport associations] have contacted higher authorities. The authorities accepted their demand.”

Prof Hadiuzzman, former director of the Accident Research Institute at the Buet, said setting a limit to the economic life of commercial vehicles was key to reducing crashes, bringing discipline on roads and curbing pollution.

“Changing the decision will raise indiscipline on the roads... Crashes will not reduce as long as the old and unfit vehicles are on the road,” he told this newspaper yesterday.

Contacted, RTHD Secretary Nuri said the order was put on hold because the “goods-laden vehicles” were not clearly defined in the previous order. “We might not have checked it properly at the time.”

A committee led by the BRTA chairman was formed to review the previous order and set economic life for different vehicles soon.

Asked about the transport associations’ pressure, he said, “Can’t we make mistakes and fix it? It has nothing to do with pressure here.”

This is not the first time the government changed its decision regarding the road transport sector. The authorities suspended implementation of several sections of the Road Transport Act 2018 for months following a strike by transport associations in late 2019.

Following the transport associations’ demand, the RTHD prepared a draft to amend the Road Transport Act, reducing fines mentioned in 11 sections and punishment under four sections.

The authorities on multiple occasions waived the fines for vehicle owners who failed to update documents of vehicles on time.

Global food prices rise

FROM PAGE 12

WHEAT PRICES RISE

The Cereal Price Index declined by 0.5 percent in June. This was largely the result of two factors: a nearly five percent drop in coarse grain quotations due to increased seasonal supplies of maize from Argentina and Brazil, and potentially higher-than-anticipated production in the United States.

However, wheat prices rose for the first time in nine months due to uncertainty over exports from Ukraine and continued dry conditions in North America.

Meanwhile, rice prices increased

by 2.8 percent in July and by almost 20 percent over the past year after India prohibited exports. FAO warned that the move “raises substantial food security concerns for a large swathe of the world population, especially those that are most poor and who dedicate a larger share of their incomes to purchase food”.

The Sugar Price Index declined by nearly four percent, the result of good progress in Brazil’s sugarcane harvest, improved rains across most growing areas in India, and subdued demand from Indonesia and China, the world’s top importers.

A miraculous escape

from page 1

Within a few hours, social media was flooded with pictures and videos of the incident.

Musa Ahmed, his Dubai expatriate son-in-law Abu Bakkar, granddaughters – Adila Akhter, 6, and Adina Akhter, 3 – and their driver were inside the flattened car for nearly 35 minutes before they were able to return from the jaws of death.

Speaking to reporters at the Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH), Musa said, “We thought our time had come. The children were crying for help, while the rest of us were yelling out to the pedestrians to help us. It was Allah who saved us with his own hands.

“Fire service officials arrived after around 30-35 minutes and began their operation to pull us out of the wreckage.”

Belal Uddin Jahangir, officer in-charge of Baro Awlia Highway Police Station, told The Daily Star, “The heavy-weight but empty container was heading towards KDS factory in the port city’s Nasirabad Industrial Area. The trailer carrying the container got detached from the lorry and fell onto the car, smashing it completely.

“When our police team rushed to the spot, we thought everyone was dead as the car was badly smashed. But the moment we heard the cries of children, we didn’t wait for a second to begin our operation to rescue them.”

Firefighters from Kumira Fire Station, nearly 20km from the accident spot, arrived around 11:00am. Before that, locals tried

placing logs, stones, and iron rods under the container so that it was slightly lifted from the car.

Sultan Mahmud, the fire station officer, said, “When we saw the situation, we never imagined they could be alive. We thought our plan of action was to remove the trailer and pull out the car with dead bodies inside. But then we heard the voices and changed our plan.

“Using police wreckers and then a crane, we lifted a corner of the container and dragged the car out from underneath it. We then proceeded to pull out the survivors one by one. The two children were scared but unscathed.”

They were all taken to CMCH for observation, he added.

Police took the car and the lorry into custody for legal action, OC Belal said.

On May 10, in a similar accident, a father and son were killed after a container fell from a running lorry on their rickshaw in Patenga.

Tagore

FROM PAGE 12

Jorasanko mansion in Kolkata.

The “Bard of Bengal” composed over 2,000 songs which created a separate genre, known as “Tagore songs”.

He also wrote eight novels, 84 short stories and numerous poems in his prolific literary career spanned over almost seven decades. Gitanjali, Gora and Ghare-Baire are his best-known works.

Rabindranath became the first non-European to win the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913.

His compositions were chosen by two nations as national anthems: Bangladesh’s “Amar Shonar Bangla” and India’s “Jana Gana Mana”.

Port city suffers on 2nd day of inundation

FROM PAGE 12

them to take shelter in local schools but they preferred to go to their relatives’ houses.”

Visiting the low-lying areas in the city, this correspondent found that Chawkbazar, Bahaddarhat, Muradpur, Sholashahar Gate No 2, Badurtola, Bakalia DC Road, KB Aman Ali Road, Agrabad, Halishahar, Chandgaon, Katalganj, Shulakbahar and Dewan Bazar areas went under knee-to-waist-deep water.

People’s suffering increased as the shops and houses in those areas were flooded. Most of the roadside shops in Badurtola area remained shut in the morning. The shop owners said rainwater made it impossible for them to stay inside.

Talking to this correspondent, Shafiqul Alam, a shop owner in Badurtola area, said, “Following heavy rain, my shop was flooded on Thursday night. I bailed out all the water the next afternoon only to find out that it was flooded again at night.”

“If we bail the water today, it will be flooded again as the rain continues to pour. That’s why most of the owners did not open their shops today,” he added.

The ground floor of Chawk Super Market in Chawkbazar area has remained submerged since Friday. Murky water, smelling of filth, entered the ground-floor shops and damaged goods and products.

The road from Telipatti to Chawkbazar Kitchen Market went under knee-deep water. People were seen to wade through filthy water spilling from roadside drains.

Next two years crucial

FROM PAGE 12

1,000 crore a year. We will supply fuel from Patenga to Dhaka through another pipeline which is also almost complete,” Nasrul said.

He said the government has increased fuel storage depots in Moheshkhali, Patenga, Khulna and Baghabari.

About import of LNG, the state minister said this will not increase dependency on imports. “It will be a short-term solution until we have more gas from local sources.”

He said the government target now is to provide uninterrupted electricity at an affordable price.

Presenting the keynote paper,

Taposi Ghosh, a resident of West Bakalia DC Road area, was plodding through filthy water on a stretch of the road. She said she was going to the hospital to attend to her mother-in-law.

“There are no vehicles to ply the road. I just found two rickshaws but the pullers demanded a high fare that I cannot afford,” she said.

PASSING THE BUCK

Although Chattogram Development Authority (CDA) has been implementing a mega project worth Tk 5,617 crore to address waterlogging in the city, the city dwellers alleged that the project did not benefit them in any way even five years after the project was initiated.

Many pointed their fingers at the Chattogram City Corporation for not cleaning up the canals and drains regularly.

Contacted, Mayor of Chattogram City Corporation Rezaul Karim Chowdhury told The Daily Star that there are two canals in Bahaddarhat area – Chaktai Khal and Birja Khal.

“The CDA has been working with the canals under the mega project but no earth has been dredged from them,” he said, adding, “That’s why the canals cannot carry the rainwater and so waterlogging occurs in the area whenever it rains.”

“The CDA authorities are seen to build protection walls along the canals but they do not dredge the canals,” the CCC mayor pointed out.

When this correspondent reached out to CDA project director Lt Col Shah Ali, he said they dredged some canals but had to leave some others out as they had to build retaining

walls first.

“If we go to dredge the canals before building retaining walls, the buildings and establishments on the banks of those canals will be damaged,” he explained.

Asked why they did not build retaining walls along all the canals in five years, Shah Ali said, “We could not move vehicles along the banks of many of the canals as those are too narrow. So, we asked the district administration to acquire land and go for evicting illegal occupations from the banks.”

Blaming the waterlogging on the CCC’s failure to clean up the drains regularly, the CDA project director also said, “Dredging of canals was not the reason for waterlogging. Another reason for waterlogging was that the drains were clogged. The CCC workers did not clean those regularly.”

LANDSLIDE WARNING AND EVACUATION IN RANGAMATI

The Rangamati district administration also issued a directive about evacuating people from their homes on hill slopes.

Residents in Shimultoli, Rupnagar, Loknath Temple and Bhedbhedi Muslim Para areas in Rangamati were asked to move to shelters. The local administration has opened 19 shelters in nine wards of Rangamati town in this connection.

“There is a risk of landslides in the district due to torrential rain over the last several days and that’s why the local administration asked the residents to take shelter in safer places,” said Rangamati District Commissioner Mohammad Mosharraf Hossain Khan.

LNG will not be the main source of gas in the country. He suggested that entrepreneurs establish their industries in planned areas to get uninterrupted energy supply.

Senior Secretary at Energy Division Md Khairuzzaman Majumder said there will be no gas crisis for industries from 2026.

“We have already signed long term contracts with Qatar and Oman for import of LNG. Efforts are on to sign three more long term deals,” he said, adding that signing of contracts was in the final stage to set up more LNG terminals to increase storage and unloading capacities.

Palestinian killed by Israeli settlers buried

AFP, Burqah

Mourners yesterday attended the funeral of a Palestinian killed by Israeli settlers in the occupied West Bank, after the UN warned of a dramatic spike in such cases.

The Palestinian health ministry in a statement late Friday announced the death of Qusai Jamal Maatan, 19, saying he was “shot dead by settlers in the village of Burqa”, east of Ramallah.

In a statement yesterday, the Israeli army said clashes broke out between Palestinians and Israeli civilians who were herding sheep near Burqa village.

The Palestinians let off fireworks and “Israeli civilians shot towards the Palestinians,” the army said.

Friday’s killings came three days after a Palestinian gunman wounded six people in a shooting at an Israeli settlement in the West Bank before being shot dead himself.



A fire, boosted by heavy winds, is threatening buildings on the close outskirts of Portbou, near the French-Spanish border yesterday. Firefighters said they evacuated more than 130 people as they fought to control a wildfire at Portbou on the Spanish border with France on the Mediterranean coast.

PHOTO: AFP

NORTHERN CHINA FLOODS

Death toll rises to at least 30

AFP, Beijing

At least 10 people were killed in floods in a city near Beijing, officials said yesterday, bringing the death toll from recent torrential rains in northern China to at least 30.

Officials reported the deaths in Baoding, about 150 kilometres (90 miles) from Beijing, adding that 18 people were missing.

Storm Doksuri, a former super typhoon that hit mainland China last Friday, has brought the most severe rains to the region since records began 140 years ago.

By noon yesterday (0400 GMT), more than 600,000 of Baoding’s 11.5 million residents had been evacuated from areas deemed to be at risk, officials said.

The torrential rain that hit northeast China yesterday battered the provinces bordering Russia and North Korea. A red alert remains in force in Beijing due to “geological risks” such as landslides linked to the bad weather.

Clean-up operations are ongoing after the overwhelming rainfall, which destroyed infrastructure and flooded entire districts.



ABROGATION OF ARTICLE 370 ANNIVERSARY

Situation tense as rebels kill 3 soldiers in Kashmir

AFP, Srinagar

Three soldiers were killed in Indian-administered Kashmir during a clash with suspected rebels as the disputed region marked the fourth anniversary of New Delhi imposing direct rule, police said yesterday.

An army patrol looking for armed rebels in the forests of Halan in the southern Kashmir valley clashed with the militants late Friday night, leaving the trio wounded in the exchange of fire.

“The three personnel sustained injuries and later succumbed,” police posted on Twitter.

A search operation was under way to track the rebels.

Clashes between armed rebels and government forces have dropped significantly since August 2019, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s government ended the restive Muslim-majority region’s limited autonomy.

The government says the move

was meant to bring peace and development to the embattled region.

But nearly 900 people, including 144 members of Indian security forces, have died in the four years since the change.

At least 63 people, including nine civilians, 16 government forces personnel and 38 suspected rebels have been killed this year so far, compared with 253 deaths last year.

Young men continue to join rebel groups that have been fighting for decades for the region’s independence or its merger with Pakistan, which controls a smaller part of the divided Himalayan territory.

India’s top court is currently weighing whether Modi’s government acted lawfully in suspending Kashmir’s constitutionally guaranteed semi-autonomy.

The region has witnessed a drastic curtailment of civil liberties since, with restrictions on protests and journalists complaining of official

harassment.

Several leaders of the local Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) were detained overnight after authorities denied them permission to stage a protest against yesterday’s anniversary of the 2019 decision.

“All this is being done to hoodwink the public opinion in the country,” PDP leader Mehbooba Mufti posted on Twitter alongside footage of a party official being detained by police.

“Just goes on to expose the façade of normalcy.”

Hundreds of police and paramilitary troops were deployed yesterday around commercial districts in Srinagar, Kashmir’s largest city, to keep order during the anniversary.

But two members of commercial associations representing the city’s shopkeepers, who asked to remain anonymous, told AFP that retailers had been verbally instructed by police to remain open through the day.

‘Ridiculous’

In Alabama, Trump slams indictment

AFP, Washington

Former president Donald Trump appeared before ardent supporters in the deeply conservative southern state of Alabama on Friday, dismissing the latest federal indictment against him a day earlier as an “illegal and unconstitutional travesty.”

Trump, who is facing sweeping conspiracy charges over his efforts to overturn the 2020 election, called the indictment “ridiculous.”

“It’s an act of desperation by a failed disgraced crooked Joe Biden and his radical left thugs to preserve their grip on power,” Trump told the crowd.

A day after his visit to largely hostile Washington, Trump received a warm reception at the Republican summer dinner in Montgomery, Alabama’s state capital.

The 77-year-old billionaire won Alabama by landslides in 2016 and 2020, and all six Republicans the state sends to the House of Representatives in Washington endorsed his re-election bid ahead of the evening engagement.

In the Republican primary, Trump was 39 points ahead of his closest rival, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, in FiveThirtyEight’s national polling average on Friday – the kind of lead that has never been surmounted in modern primary contests.

But Trump makes his bid for a historic return to the White House charged with 78 felonies in three separate criminal probes. He is due to go on trial in New York in March next year over allegations that he misrepresented “hush money” payments to a porn star, and is scheduled to be tried in May over his handling of national security secrets.

Ex-PM Thaksin

delays return to Thailand

AFP, Bangkok

Former Thai prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra yesterday said he had delayed his return to the kingdom next week, as he awaits a breakthrough in a post-election gridlock that could see his family’s party lead a coalition government.

The 74-year-old billionaire, who won two elections but was ousted in a 2006 military coup, has been in self-exile for 15 years and long said he wished to return home – despite facing criminal charges that he says are politically motivated.

Yesterday, Thaksin said that he had delayed his return due to a medical appointment.

His daughter Paetongtarn Shinawatra announced last month that her father was due to

arrive on August 10.

The Thaksin-backed Pheu Thai party has been trying to form a government, and property tycoon Srettha Thavisin is set to be its prime minister nominee.

The House speaker has pushed the date for a PM vote until after a constitutional court ruling on August 16.



Vendors waded through the flooded waters of Ganges river with their belongings after monsoon rains in Prayagraj, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Climbers break 14 peaks record

AFP, Kathmandu

Record-breaking mountaineering duo Kristin Harila and Tenjin “Lama” Sherpa were greeted with a heroes’ welcome in Nepal yesterday after the pair successfully conquered the world’s highest peaks.

The Norwegian climber and her Nepali guide set the record last month for the fastest summit of all 14 of the world’s 8,000-metre (26,000-feet) mountains, completing the feat in only 92 days.

The pair surpassed Nepal-born British adventurer Nirmal Purja’s 2019 record of six months and six days.

Sherpas performed religious

rites and a band played songs as the team arrived in Kathmandu while several hundred metres for a while,” Harila told the crowd.

The pair, joined by other record-holding climbers, stood on a van adorned with garlands and took a victory tour around the city.

“I don’t think I will climb any eight thousand metres for a while,” Harila told the crowd.

“I will be outside and come back to Nepal again, but not in this way.”

Harila is a native of Vadso, on the Barents Sea in Norway’s northernmost reaches, where the highest point is just 633 metres (2,000 feet).

In her race to the record, Harila

had to repeat the summit of 12 mountains, including K2, after delays in securing visas from China to climb Shishapangma – wholly in Tibet – and Cho Oyu, normally climbed from the Chinese side.

Lama, who has been a guide since the age of 16, was Harila’s companion throughout her record-breaking journey.

More than 40 people have summited the world’s top 14 peaks, but only a few of them are women.

“If you go and look at history, it’s been all about men,” Harila told AFP in an interview last week.

“I haven’t been thinking too much about the record,” she added.

“For me, I wanted to change something.”

JEDDAH TALKS

Saudi dives into Ukraine peace push

AFP, Riyadh

Saudi Arabia is hosting talks on the Ukraine war yesterday in the latest flexing of its diplomatic muscle, a session that Kyiv acknowledged would “not be easy” given the wide range of countries represented.

The meeting, which Ukrainian organisers had said would include representatives from nearly 40 countries but not Russia, began yesterday afternoon in the Red Sea coastal city of Jeddah, participants said.

According to an agenda seen by AFP, the session was expected to feature three hours of statements from various delegations before a two-hour closed discussion and a dinner.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky’s office said this week that the meeting would focus on his 10-point peace formula that calls for the full withdrawal of Russian troops from Ukrainian territory.

It also calls for the restoration of Ukraine’s borders – including the territory of Crimea, annexed by Russia since 2014.

Russia has in the past said any negotiations would need to take into account “new territorial realities”.

The Jeddah meeting follows talks in Copenhagen in June that were designed to be informal and did not yield an official statement.

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

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পুবালাী ব্যাংক লিমিটেড
PUBALI BANK LIMITED

Abandoned rail track a concern for farmers

Occupied land in Gaibandha must be returned to owners, with compensation

The story of a nine-kilometre rail track in Gaibandha – lying unused and neglected for eight years – is an old one that shows how unconcerned the relevant authorities are about monitoring the viability of infrastructure that they have constructed with public money. More appalling, however, is their disregard for the long years of suffering endured by the former owners of the land, mostly farmers, who have not been given the compensation they were promised.

According to a report in this paper, the railway line was constructed on 145 acres of land – owned by 629 farmers – between 1996 and 1997 so that rail communications could be established along with the ferry services which had changed their route. The agreement was that Bangladesh Railway would compensate the farmers for the time the line was operational, and give back the land if the track became inactive. However, the track became totally inactive in 2015 as the Jamuna Bridge offered a more efficient, quicker route and soon replaced the routes taken by the ferry services.

Unfortunately, the farmers who had given up their lands for the track allege that they have not received compensation for the last 10, 14 or even 19 years. We cannot understand why there has been no action by the government for so many years to remove the rail track, give back the land to the rightful owners, and pay off compensation to them? It is as if the railway authorities have completely forgotten that they had built this rail track on the lands of these farmers.

This is yet another example of the indifference of the relevant authorities towards those who have been affected but do not have the means to fight for their rights. The Bangladesh Railway is obligated to pay the compensation, and the fact that it has not been honouring the agreement should have come to the notice of the higher authorities a long time ago.

One of the BR engineers has said that since the rail line was operational until 2015, compensation would be given till then and that the land would be given back to the owners. No reason has been given as to why these landowners have been kept waiting for all these years. Additionally, it is not fair that they would only be paid compensation till 2015 since the land has been occupied by BR for much longer than that. The farmers should not be deprived because of the BR's inefficiency or reluctance to pay.

We urge the government to hold BR accountable for its negligence and make sure that the farmers get back their lands and are paid the compensation for all the years that they were unable to utilise them.

Relief rice for privileged groups?

Authorities must prevent misallocation of resources meant for the poor

We are quite alarmed by the findings of a recent report that brought out a disturbing reality about the distribution of relief rice in Pabna. According to the report, rice from the government's support programmes for vulnerable and underprivileged communities was diverted to privileged organisations, including officers' clubs, press clubs, and other social clubs. This is a gross violation of the intended purpose of such relief efforts. It also highlights a significant flaw in the management of relief materials that made it possible.

According to the guidelines set forth by the disaster management and relief ministry, relief assistance is specifically designed to aid the poor, ultra-poor, disaster-affected individuals and families, malnourished children, etc. It also extends to government and non-government orphanages. Organisations like these are the ones who are supposed to get relief support. However, in Pabna, many entities that do not fit the above description got tonnes of relief rice (so that they can sell those and use the proceeds for their own purposes). Particularly, the involvement of officers' clubs – populated by public officers who are already well-compensated – is most unfortunate. This not only goes against the spirit of the government guidelines, but also perpetuates a system of inequality and abuse of resources.

The justification provided by some of the recipient organisations is equally troubling. Claiming that they received the rice following "due procedure" and that they had various "needs" does not absolve them of responsibility. The fact remains that the relief rice should have been allocated only to organisations and communities that meet the specified criteria of vulnerability and need. That it didn't happen indicates the lack of proper monitoring and oversight on the part of those in charge of our social support programmes.

Of course, this is not the first time that such incidents have happened. In fact, over the last few years, particularly since the outbreak of the pandemic, we have had multiple reports on how the social support schemes have been compromised by the inclusion of underserving recipients. Many well-off and politically connected individuals who shouldn't have been on the government-prepared lists of beneficiaries were included, while many who deserved the help were either exploited or totally excluded. The latest incident only shows that nothing has been done to rectify this situation.

We urge the government to conduct a thorough investigation into the Pabna incident. Those responsible for misallocating relief rice should be held accountable. Additionally, there should be a comprehensive review of the existing relief distribution process to ensure that it remains fair, efficient, and targeted towards the most vulnerable populations.

Surging government borrowing portrays a grim future



OPEN SKY
Dr. Birupaksha Paul
is a professor of economics at the State University of New York at Cortland, USA.

BIRUPAKSHA PAUL

Government borrowing from the banking sector has been rising alarmingly since the end of the pandemic. The government took around Tk 98,000 crore in loans from Bangladesh Bank in the 2022-23 fiscal year – which was 44 percent of the total deficit, suggesting excessive borrowing. Borrowing is used to plug the budget deficit, but enough acumen on economics and finance must be exercised to decide the sources of borrowing since different sources can lead to different repercussions on growth and the economic future. Recent trends seem to care too little about the wise art of deficit financing.

Since we are sure that the FY2024 budget is not headed in a good direction – because of its underestimation of inflation and overestimation of growth – let us take the revised budget of FY2023 as an example to visualise the ever-growing fiscal anaemia. Just 10 years ago under the same regime, the FY 2013 budget displayed its deficit as 23 percent of the budget, according to calculations derived from official figures, suggesting that the government managed Tk 77 when the budget was assumed to be Tk 100. The fiscal capacity of that magnitude was not too bad, though the government then vowed to increase its revenue capacity every year ahead. Ten years later, the budget eventually delivered a picture of the dwindling fiscal capacity. A budget of Tk 100 in FY2023 required deficit financing for Tk 34 while it should have been below the 23 percent that was possible a decade ago.

If this trend of chronic fiscal incapacity continues, a 10-year projection from now would land the nation at a budget deficit of around Tk 44 or so out of Tk 100 – which will be disastrous if the government's taxing capacity cannot be rescued from the disease of pampering the super-rich. Not displeasing the oligarchs and tycoons by imposing progressive tax rates on them lies at the root of the gradual collapse in our fiscal capacity, whose pernicious impact has been pushing the banking sector from bad to worse. And the finance sector is heading to an unsustainable state thereby depicting a grim future for the nation.

While borrowing from other commercial banks will create crowding out effects by depriving the private sector from availing loans, borrowing



VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

from the central bank is a double-edged sword for stoking inflation and promoting further fiscal incapacity. The stubbornly high inflation at double digits, and the government's increased fiscal borrowing over the post-pandemic years, are bitter testimonies to the claim that a bleak future for the economy looms on the horizon unless the finance ministry pulls the bridle of the fiscal spending and accelerates its capacity to increase the amount and base for tax collection. The government should consider building a separate ministry for the entire revenue collection system since the finance ministry shows no improvements regarding expected tax collection.

The FY2013 budget occupied 18.24 percent of GDP while the government was able to manage 14 percent of GDP as revenue. The FY2023 budget captured an even lower share of GDP, only 14.9 percent, while the government's revenue management reached another low at 9.9 percent. The revenue-to-GDP ratio should naturally step up as an economy moves up on the development ladder. Of course, the economy is developing but the super-rich are not contributing the fair share of their increased capacity to the public coffers simply because the tycoons can make

public institutions act in their favour and eschew paying appropriate taxes in order to balloon their fortunes.

This kind of symbiotic relationship between the affluent and the regime is perilous for the future of the economy. And the relationship has recently turned into hyperactive endorsements from both sides as the election bell rings. The FY2024 budget projects

of the central bank.

The worst effect of the government's borrowing from the central bank surfaces through the high-octane pressures on inflation – different from that of other modes of financing. The central bank gives high-powered money to the government, and it has higher multiplier effects on money creation. Thus, borrowing from

to increase the revenue-to-GDP ratio to over 20 percent in the future. No matter how farcical that kind of utterance is, the ministry did not give any timeline, implying the vagueness of the statement. In contrast, take, for example, the growing economy of Vietnam where the average revenue-to-GDP ratio from 2020 to 2022 has remained above 15 percent.

In Bangladesh, 63 percent of the fiscal deficit of the FY2023 budget was financed from domestic sources, and the remaining 37 percent from foreign counterparts. The banking sector alone gave 52 percent of the fiscal deficit while the amount borrowed from the central bank was as high as 44 percent. The "beauty" of borrowing from the central bank is that eventually the government does not pay anything for the interest burden because the central bank's income is ultimately the government's earnings. That is why most emerging governments prevent this damaging practice from happening by imposing a law against this kind of easy debt monetisation. India passed the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act, 2003 to stop automatic monetisation of the fiscal debt. Bangladesh requires a similar act to check the current trend of fiscal trespassing into the territory

Sonali Bank versus Bangladesh Bank is fundamentally different in fuelling inflation. The magnitude is much higher once the government borrows money directly from the central bank. That is another reason why Bangladesh's inflation even in July 2023 remained over double digits, while the inflation rate for other comparable economies including India has dropped to almost half of ours.

The government's borrowing from the banking sector over FY2024 will be even higher, as predicted. The default loans will go up as the trend suggests. Businessmen will prepare excuses, citing political disruptions in the lead-up to the upcoming national election. The pressure from both the government and the habitual defaulters will squeeze the lending space for banks, making the cost of funds more expensive for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). This will discourage investment, which will in turn impede GDP growth and growth in employment. The only rescue plan from this conundrum is to drastically enhance tax collection from business groups, noted tycoons, habitual defaulters, and doubted money launderers. There is no Plan B in this respect.

Lost childhood, wasted potential: We must put an end to child labour



Rabiul Alam
is an independent writer and a graduate of Asian College of Journalism in India.

RABIUL ALAM

Child labour remains a persistent issue in Bangladesh, as evidenced by the recent National Child Labour Survey-2022, which reveals a concerning rise of 4.5 percent in child labour over the past decade. Many children have dreams and aspirations of what they want to become in the future. However, child labour drastically limits their possibilities and crushes these dreams, as they are forced to accept their current circumstances instead of working towards a brighter future.

The harsh reality is that, over 17.76 lakh children (or approximately 8.90 percent) aged 5-17 years are victims of child labour in the country, according to the survey conducted by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS). This alarming increase calls for immediate action and a united effort, particularly from the government, NGOs, INGOs, and private companies which have corporate social responsibility funds.

Bangladesh has taken legislative measures to combat child labour through key laws such as the Bangladesh Labour Act 2006 and the Bangladesh National Child Labour Elimination Policy 2010. The latter

policy aimed to eradicate hazardous child labour from the country by 2015, aligning with the Millennium Development Goal. However, the aforementioned survey's outcomes have exposed the dire reality of our current situation, revealing how far we have fallen behind in achieving our objectives. The enforcement of these laws must be strengthened. For one, the government should allocate sufficient resources to ensure that child labour is strictly prohibited and that violators are brought to justice.

It is commendable that some NGOs and INGOs like Unicef, Caritas Bangladesh's Alokito Shishu Project, and Plan International are wholeheartedly dedicating their work to improving the lives of underprivileged children. But it is imperative that the government take a leading role in coordinating and strategising efforts. By creating a comprehensive plan that aligns with the objectives of all child-focused organisations, the government can ensure that resources are optimally utilised, duplication of efforts is minimised, and a unified approach is adopted in tackling the issue of child labour.

According to the BBS survey, income inequality, economic injustice, and discriminatory social structures are among the root causes driving children into the workforce. These factors deny children the opportunity to receive education, exposing them to exploitation and hazardous work environments. To tackle this crisis comprehensively, all stakeholders must come together to address certain key issues.

The government should provide adequate funding, technical support, and monitoring mechanisms to empower organisations to carry out their crucial work efficiently and sustainably. Together, through strong partnerships and a shared vision, these entities can work towards eradicating child labour and creating a safer, healthier, and more promising future for the country's children.

Education is a fundamental right and a powerful tool to break the cycle of poverty and child labour. The government should invest more in the education sector, making quality education accessible to all children, regardless of their socio-economic background. NGOs and INGOs can contribute to this effort by establishing schools in vulnerable areas and providing educational opportunities for underprivileged children.

Many lower-income families resort to child labour due to financial hardships. To address this, the government and private companies should focus on creating employment opportunities and promoting fair wages for adults. Skill development

programmes can also empower parents to secure stable jobs and provide better for their families.

Public awareness campaigns can be a powerful tool in highlighting the detrimental effects of child labour on children's physical and mental well-being. By fostering a collective sense of responsibility, society can advocate for the eradication of child labour and create a more supportive environment for children. Private companies with corporate social responsibility funds can use those to invest in community development initiatives, support education programmes, and implement responsible supply chain practices to ensure that their products are free from child labour.

Authorities must improve child protection mechanisms, ensuring that child welfare is a top priority. This involves identifying and rescuing children from hazardous work situations, providing them with rehabilitative services, and monitoring their well-being.

The issue of child labour in Bangladesh is complex and deeply entrenched, but it is not insurmountable. With concerted efforts and a firm commitment to the welfare of children, progress can be made. It is crucial that all entities with the required means and resources step forward and play their part in securing a brighter future for the children of Bangladesh. Let us unite in our resolve to end child labour and ensure that every child can enjoy their childhood, pursue an education, and fulfil the dream of a more promising future.



In a country as football-crazy as Bangladesh, can “playing football” really become part of the ever-growing list of reasons women face gender-based violence?

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Too unsafe to even play football?

Latest attack lays bare the relentless gendered violence faced by Bangladeshi women



Shuprova Tasneem is a journalist. Her Twitter handle is @ShuprovaTasneem

SHUPROVA TASNEEM

When I was a little girl, the only female athletes whose names I knew were Serena and Venus Williams. I wasn't a tennis fan though. I was mad about cricket, especially the Sri Lankan team, and I could tell you what I loved about Ranatunga, Jayasuriya and Chaminda Vaas even before I properly knew how to spell their names.

At that point, if anyone had asked me if I thought women played cricket or football, I would probably have instinctively said no. My school only reinforced this belief, taking out the boys in our class in buses every week to play football and cricket on open fields, while the girls had to do with the small courts within campus walls. It's not that they didn't think we were capable though, they were only protecting us from the lack of safety that they seemed fine subjecting the boys to.

You can only imagine how much pride it gives me now to know that even if the Asia Cup title continues to elude the Bangladesh men's cricket team – who by the way have had my undying fidelity since that fateful day in Northampton in 1999 (if you know, you know) – the Bangladesh women's team, despite having far less experience under their belt, beat six-time champion India in 2018 to clinch the title. Most recently, the Tigresses held their own in their first-ever home series as well, with a 1-1 series draw against India.

As a child, I don't think I imagined that one day, images of Bangladesh's women cricketers and footballers would be on the front pages of major local newspapers like they were after the 2018 Women's T20 Asia Cup, and after the Bangladesh team's dramatic win in the 2022 SAFF Women's Championship. I definitely could not have imagined the hero's welcome our footballers would return to after winning the SAFF trophy, with crowds of people, men and women,

pouring out onto the streets to cheer them on. Whether it's weight lifting, mountain climbing or archery, today's little girls have so many more role models to look up to that it's impossible to not feel hopeful about how far Bangladeshi women have come in the last couple of decades.

This is why it's all the more difficult to be shocked back to reality by the attack on four members of the under-17 Khulna divisional football team on July 29 in Khulna's Batiaghata upazila. According to media reports, not only were these young girls assaulted simply for wearing sports attire and practising football; they were then threatened with acid attacks if they refused to withdraw the case they had filed against their attackers.

Unfortunately, and as we are all aware, such gender-based violence is an everyday reality in Bangladesh. The media is so saturated with horrific cases of rape and violence that the regular abuse, harassment and threats women face for simply daring to inhabit public spaces barely make it into the conversation. Too often, their experiences are trivialised and ignored: by families, communities, law enforcement agencies and the justice system. But the truth is that the rosy picture of Bangladeshi women's achievements has always masked a darker underbelly: whether it is of greater financial insecurity, social stigma, lack of support, or being undermined and underestimated at every turn.

And this is all the more pertinent when it comes to women's sports. In fact, I doubt we would be able to find even a single female athlete in the country who has not, at some point in her journey, faced criticism, threats or even verbal/physical abuse for her chosen profession.

The fact that female athletes have a harder time of it than men

is hardly new information. The ongoing Fifa Women's World Cup, where viewership is expected to hit over two billion for the first time, has once again shone a spotlight on the inequalities and difficulties faced by female athletes. Jamaica made history by becoming the first Caribbean country to reach the final 16. Despite having so little financial backing, they needed crowd-funding to get to their games. Morocco also made history by reaching the top 16 in their first-ever World Cup appearance, and their players spoke to the media about the social stigma they faced at home for wearing “men's clothing” and playing football. At the same time, Moroccan defender Nouhaila Benzina became the first player to wear a hijab at a World Cup, proving that diversity and representation can exist not only on the same field but even in the same team. In a world where everyone else seems to be taking a step forward, why does it feel like we're not only failing to keep up but taking a step back instead?

After England won the UEFA European Women's Championships, I remember watching their captain Leah Williamson speak of England's 50-year ban on women's football in an interview, and how her mother pretended to be a boy so she could play when she was young. Thankfully, this was one regressive colonial law that never managed to seep into our system, but the same patriarchal views of a woman's “place” in society continue to guide attacks like the one in Batiaghata.

If the relevant authorities fail to bring the perpetrators to justice, it will only highlight the incongruity of our situation in terms of equal rights and freedom. In a country as football-crazy as Bangladesh, can “playing football” really become part of the ever-growing list of reasons women face gender-based violence? In a place where women occupy some of the highest positions in office, and where women's involvement in economic development has been so widely lauded, why should the most ordinary activity that every young person should have access to become a test of courage and act of rebellion?

Six years on, a solution to the Rohingya crisis is still elusive



Dr. Mohammad Zaman is an international development/resettlement specialist. He has written extensively on the Rohingya crisis.

MOHAMMAD ZAMAN

Since my last piece was published in *The Daily Star* in May 2023 – titled “What if the Rohingya are not repatriated?” – discussion surrounding repatriation has been continuing at all levels, without any tangible results. The Bangladesh government wants at least a “pilot” or trial run of repatriation, leaving the rights issues for the Myanmar military regime to sort out. In the latest development on repatriation, the Chinese Special Envoy for Asian Affairs Deng Xijun reportedly hinted at taking back the Rohingya to their own villages in North Maungdaw, instead of any camps. The move still falls short of addressing the Rohingya citizenship issue which is central to the crisis. A pilot or trial run also does not offer a solution to the Rohingya demand to resettle

various forms of discrimination in the Bamar state, hundreds of thousands of Rohingya started fleeing the country as early as the 1970s; further outflow followed after the 1982 nationality law, which stripped the Rohingya of Myanmar citizenship. The continued repression, indiscriminate arrests as suspected separatists, rape, murder, and arson by the Myanmar military forces triggered the mass exodus in 2017. Let's not forget the genocidal actions against the Rohingya that took place with democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi at the helm, who also shamefully defended the military action at the Hague Court. Today, of an estimated 2.0 million Rohingya, less than 200,000 live in military-guarded camps in Sittwe, Rakhine's capital city, without any

crisis in various forums since 2017 but failed to take any concrete action for accountability. China and India are playing both ways – i.e. expressing concern over the ethnic conflict in Myanmar while supplying weapons to the military junta that led the coup in 2021, plunging the country into a civil war. India has already imprisoned many Rohingya refugees for living “illegally” in the country. No one should be imprisoned for being a refugee. Both India and China have a responsibility to effectively resolve the “tragic” situation in Myanmar. The US is also playing regional power politics, essentially driven by economic and strategic interests. It appears that the powerful countries and alliances are reluctant to condemn the Myanmar junta and side with the Rohingya. The targeted sanctions by major powers have not yielded effective results yet.

Amidst all this, the dwindling financial commitments by the international community are affecting the work of various humanitarian agencies on the ground. The camps in Cox's Bazar are suffering from lack of food



The recent “go and see” visits to camps in the Rakhine state's Maungdaw town by a Rohingya refugee delegation and Bangladeshi officials did little to revive hope in the long-stalled repatriation.

PHOTO: REUTERS

in their original villages and have their rights as Myanmar citizens restored. As things stand, the repatriation issue still stagnates at a “dead end,” posing a big dilemma for Bangladesh.

More than 1.2 million Rohingya refugees have been sheltered by Bangladesh for six years now. Two previous attempts at repatriation were stalled in 2018 and 2019. The UN refugee agency and other rights groups are against any trial run without ensuring a suitable environment conducive for the Rohingya to return safely. The recent “go and see” visits to camps in the Rakhine state's Maungdaw town by a Rohingya refugee delegation and Bangladeshi officials did little to revive hope in the long-stalled repatriation.

That trip to Myanmar took place in May, under a bi-lateral arrangement between Bangladesh and Myanmar brokered by China. Apparently, there were no “takers” for the repatriation opportunity despite cash “incentives,” backed by intimidation from various forces, in the camps. The UN has called to halt and suspend the move for trial repatriation. The apparent silence and pause indicate that the pilot run plan has been abandoned. The Rohingya refused to accept any such repatriation “trap” by the Myanmar military to deflect international pressure. In fact, the Myanmar government has never been sincere about taking the Rohingya back. The so-called verification lists for repatriation in 2018 and 2019 ultimately proved to be a hoax.

Myanmar's majority Buddhists are not ready to acknowledge the Rohingya Muslims as their own despite the fact that the Rohingya have lived for generations in the Rakhine state. The Myanmar state largely viewed them as “illegal” settlers and interlopers from East Bengal/Bangladesh. Faced with

right of free movement. The rest fled to Thailand, India, Nepal, Indonesia, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and even to the US, the UK, Canada and Europe, but the majority have been in Bangladesh since 2017.

Six years on, the international community is not doing enough

As a host country, Bangladesh is now faced with dilemmas over diplomatic and security concerns, among others. It seems that regional interests of the major players such as China, India, Japan and the US may determine both the timing and outcome of any repatriation in the long run. Until then, and given the current status quo, Bangladesh should take a long view requiring simultaneous and protracted engagements, and push for more international attention on the repatriation issue balancing between support for the displaced Rohingya in the camps and sustainable solutions to the crisis.

for Rohingya repatriation. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) lost traction on the Rohingya genocide case and conducted a ground investigation in Cox's Bazar only recently, after four years. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has discussed the

supplies, and health and hygiene issues, coupled with lack of education for the Rohingya children. The protracted uncertainty and increasing deterioration of the law and order situation inside the camps have taken a heavy toll on the refugee population, particularly the youth, who are trying to escape the camp life by land and sea, often assisted by human traffickers. The situations inside the camps have reached a boiling point. In 2022, according to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), more than 3,500 Rohingya individuals ran away from the camps in Cox's Bazar and Bashaan Char, primarily by sea to Indonesia, Malaysia and other countries, risking their lives.

The Rohingya crisis, resulting from systematic state atrocities inside Myanmar, has triggered crises across borders in many countries in the region. The armed forces of Myanmar are still struggling to establish control locally despite increased violence on its people. The situation is unlikely to improve in the near future. As a host country, Bangladesh is now faced with dilemmas over diplomatic and security concerns, among others. It seems that regional interests of the major players such as China, India, Japan and the US may determine both the timing and outcome of any repatriation in the long run. Until then, and given the current status quo, Bangladesh should take a long view requiring simultaneous and protracted engagements, and push for more international attention on the repatriation issue balancing between support for the displaced Rohingya in the camps and sustainable solutions to the crisis. The new initiative and efforts to send the Rohingya refugees back must address what they have been demanding all along and ensure their safety and security in the Rakhine state.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 Bugler's evening call

5 Plot

11 Trumpeter Al

12 Blackout thief

13 Smell

14 White Rabbit's cry

15 Turned over a new leaf

17 Eden name

18 Check marks

22 English county

24 Peach center

25 — Angeles

26 Veto

27 Pretentious people

30 Grant's bill

32 Snowy wader

33 Top pitcher

34 Theater seat features

38 Chin cover

41 Tibet setting

42 Confuses

43 Big ringer

44 Plagues

45 Historic periods

DOWN

1 Hammer wielder

2 Staff member

3 College figure

4 Tried hard

5 Slender

6 Astronomical sightings

7 “Wait a sec!”

8 Greek vowel

9 Convened

10 Before, to bards

16 Sheepdog in “Babe”

19 Priest, at times

20 Polo shirt, e.g.

21 Hot

22 Different

23 Musical number

28 John or Paul

29 Manhole setting

30 Way off

31 Pleistocene period

35 Clutter

36 Turner of song

37 Yields to gravity

38 Chatter

39 Dedicated verse

40 Spots

FRIDAY'S ANSWERS

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WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK: 1-7
AUGUST 2023

Let’s make
breastfeeding and
work, work!

In the last 10 years, many countries have made significant progress to increase exclusive breastfeeding rates. Yet even greater progress is possible when breastfeeding is protected and supported, particularly in the workplace.

This World Breastfeeding Week, under its theme, “Let’s make breastfeeding at work, work” – UNICEF and WHO are emphasising the need for greater breastfeeding support across all workplaces to sustain and improve progress on breastfeeding rates globally.

In the last decade, the prevalence of exclusive breastfeeding has increased by a remarkable 10 percentage points, to 48 per cent globally. However, to reach the global 2030 target of 70 percent, the barriers women and families face to achieve their breastfeeding goals must be addressed.

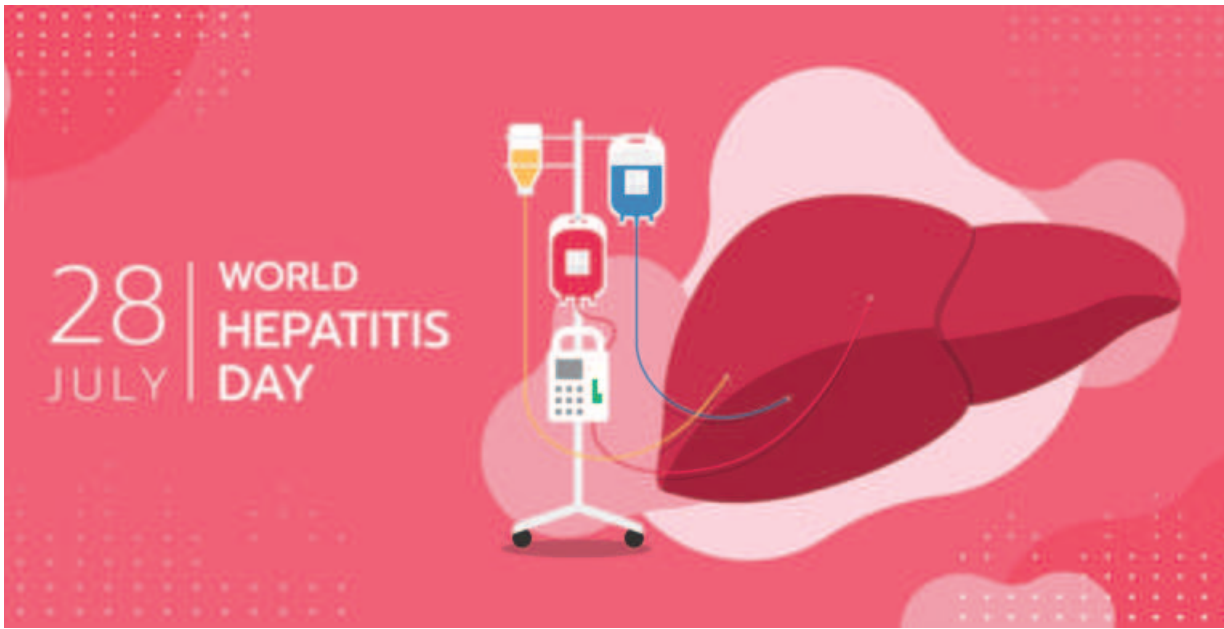


Supportive workplaces are key. Evidence shows that while breastfeeding rates drop significantly for women when they return to work, that negative impact can be reversed when workplaces facilitate mothers to continue to breastfeed their babies.

Family-friendly workplace policies - such as paid maternity leave, breastfeeding breaks, and a room where mothers can breastfeed or express milk - create an environment that benefits not only working women and their families but also employers.

Supporting breastfeeding in the workplace is good for mothers, babies, and businesses, and that is why UNICEF and WHO are calling on governments, donors, civil society, and the private sector to step up efforts to:

- ensure a supportive breastfeeding environment for all working mothers - including those in the informal sector or on temporary contracts - by having access to regular breastfeeding breaks and facilities that enable mothers to continue breastfeeding their children once they return to work;
- provide sufficient paid leave to all working parents and caregivers to meet the needs of their young children. This includes paid maternity leave for a minimum of 18 weeks, preferably for a period of six months or more after birth; and
- increase investments in breastfeeding support policies and programmes in all settings, including a national policy and programme that regulates and promotes public and private sector support to breastfeeding women in the workplace.



Prioritising liver health: eliminating
hepatitis for a healthier future

STAR HEALTH DESK

Your liver silently performs over 500 vital functions every single day to keep you alive. But viral hepatitis infection is also silent, with symptoms only appearing once the disease is advanced. Although there are many different types of hepatitis viruses (A to E), hepatitis B and C are the most concerning and cause nearly 8,000 new infections every day, which are mostly going undetected.

Every year, World Hepatitis Day is celebrated on July 28 to create awareness on this issue and this year the theme was ‘One life, one liver’

We have only got one life, and we have only got one liver. Hepatitis can devastate both. Knowing our hepatitis status and seeking treatment, reducing alcohol, achieving a healthy weight, treating hypertension, and managing diabetes are keys to a healthy liver.

Viral hepatitis still kills over a million people every year. Combined, hepatitis B and hepatitis C globally cause 1.1 million deaths and 3 million new infections every year. 350 million people are living with a chronic viral hepatitis infection. 3,000 people die from hepatitis every day. That is one hepatitis death every thirty seconds. Over 8,000 new hepatitis B and C

infections occur each day. That is over five infections per minute. If the current trajectory continues, viral hepatitis will kill more people annually than malaria, tuberculosis, and HIV/AIDS combined by 2040.

Globally, there are a huge number of undiagnosed and untreated people living with hepatitis. This must change.

Hepatitis infection is silent, and liver health awareness is low. Most symptoms only appear once the disease is advanced, resulting in a huge number of undiagnosed people living with hepatitis. Even when hepatitis is diagnosed, the number of people who go on to receive treatment is incredibly low.

Only 10% of people with chronic hepatitis B are diagnosed. Only 22% of those receive treatment; that is just 2% of the total global health burden. Only 21% of people with hepatitis C are diagnosed. 62% of those diagnosed receive treatment to cure them—just 13% of the total global health burden. So many hepatitis infections and deaths can be prevented.

Offering easy-to-navigate services at local health facilities is key to successfully ending hepatitis.

To eliminate hepatitis, simplified primary care services for viral

hepatitis should ensure that all pregnant women living with chronic hepatitis B have access to treatment, and their infants have access to hepatitis B birth vaccines to prevent infection. 90% of people living with hepatitis B and/or hepatitis C are diagnosed. 80% of diagnosed people are cured or treated according to the newer, expanded eligibility criteria.

Hepatitis C can be prevented by adequately screening all donated blood and ensuring safe injection practices in health care settings, at home, and especially among people who inject drugs. With COVID-19 no longer a global health emergency, now is the time to eliminate viral hepatitis and meet our targets.

COVID-19 has slowed the progress of the global hepatitis response in recent years. However, continued success in reducing hepatitis B infections in children proves that progress is possible.

The reduction of hepatitis B infections in children by effective vaccination practise is one of the few Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) health targets that is on track.

Giving more hepatitis B vaccines at birth is urgently needed to meet the SDG target of preventing mother-to-child transmission.

HAVE A NICE DAY
The art of voice

DR RUBAUL MURSHED

Overusing our voice is the most common cause of voice sickness. And when a voice with a range of words or behaviours is used to manipulate, intimidate, and maintain power over someone, it is known as ‘verbal abuse’.

Verbal abuse may be worse than physical injuries. The danger is in the unseen emotional damage to others. The psychological effects of verbal abuse include fear and anxiety, depression and stress, disturbing memories, and frightening responses. It may even lead to self-harm and assaultive behaviours.

Verbal abuse is a type of harassment and mistreatment that happens in relationships, families, and friendships. Many underprivileged and domestic helping hands in our region suffer from verbal abuse daily, which is not any less destructive than other domestic abuses. Unfortunately, these oral and emotional abuses are usually overlooked.



Extravagant voices are made of a low-quality pitch with a loudness that differs depending on an individual's age, gender, or cultural background. In short, this interpersonal violence mainly hurts and unnerves the victim.

Controlling our tongue is about verbal control. As voice is an inherent part of the human experience, speaking softly and less goes beyond stress reduction and improved communication. It enables building a much stronger core for the entire family and the community. When the voice of the righteous speaks wisdom, his/her tongue talks of justice with softness.

Speaking softly and little has additional benefits: it makes it easier to confirm facts instead of based on authority and loudness. That is why it is said that *he who knows does not speak, he who speaks does not know*.

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UPDATED GUIDELINES

A new approach to fats and
carbohydrates for better health

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has updated its guidance on total fat, saturated and trans fat, and carbohydrates based on the latest scientific evidence.

The three new guidelines, saturated fatty acid and trans-fatty acid intake for adults and children, total fat intake for the prevention of unhealthy weight gain in adults and children, and carbohydrate intake for adults and children, contain recommendations that aim to reduce the risk of unhealthy weight gain and diet-related noncommunicable diseases, such as type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and certain types of cancer.

With its guidance on dietary fat, the WHO notes that both quantity and quality are important for good health. WHO reaffirms that adults should limit total fat intake to 30% of total energy intake or less. Fat consumed by everyone 2 years of age and older should be primarily

unsaturated fatty acids, with no more than 10% of total energy intake coming from saturated fatty acids and no more than 1% of total energy intake coming from trans-fatty acids from both industrially produced and ruminant animal sources.

Saturated and trans-fatty acids in the diet can be replaced with other nutrients such as polyunsaturated fatty acids, monounsaturated fatty acids from plant sources, or carbohydrates from foods containing naturally occurring dietary fibre, such as whole grains, vegetables, fruits, and pulses.

Saturated fatty acids can be found in fatty meat, dairy foods, and hard fats and oils such as butter, ghee, lard, palm oil, and coconut oil, and trans-fatty acids in baked and fried foods, pre-packaged snacks, and meat and dairy foods from ruminant animals, such as cows or sheep.

Together with WHO's existing guidance to limit free sugar intake,

the new guidance on carbohydrate intake highlights the importance of carbohydrate quality for good health. WHO provides a new recommendation that carbohydrate intake for everyone 2 years of age and older should come primarily from whole grains, vegetables, fruits, and pulses. WHO recommends that adults consume at least 400 grammes of vegetables and fruits and 25 grammes of naturally occurring dietary fibre per day.

In first-time guidance for children and adolescents, WHO suggests the following intakes of vegetables and fruits:

- 2–5 years old, at least 250g per day
- 6–9 years old, at least 350g per day
- 10 years or older, at least 400g per day

And the following intakes of naturally occurring dietary fibre:

- 2–5 years old, at least 15g per day
- 6–9 years old, at least 21g per day
- 10 years or older, at least 25g per day

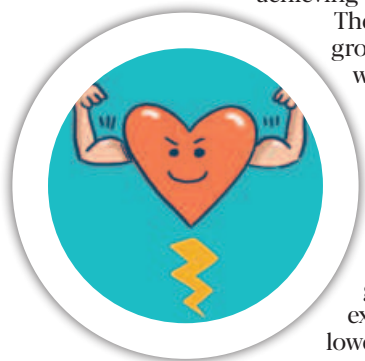
Exercising for a
healthy heart

In a study published in The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), researchers explored the benefits of different exercise patterns on heart disease risk. Current guidelines recommend at least 150 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (MVPA) per week to lower the risk of heart disease. However, the researchers wanted to understand whether the distribution of exercise throughout the week made a difference in achieving these benefits.

The participants were categorised into three groups: ‘weekend warriors’ (around 40%), who accumulated half or more of the recommended 150 minutes of MVPA over 1-2 days; ‘regular exercisers’ (about 25%), who spread their 150 minutes of MVPA throughout the week; and ‘inactive’ individuals (about 35%) who did not meet the recommended MVPA level.

The risks of heart disease in both active groups (weekend warriors and regular exercisers) were approximately 20–37% lower for atrial fibrillation, 31–37% lower for myocardial infarction (heart attack), 37–37% for heart failure, and 19–37% lower for stroke than in the inactive group.

These findings suggest that, regardless of how physical activity is distributed throughout the week, meeting the recommended 150 minutes of MVPA can substantially lower the risk of heart disease. Whether individuals engage in regular exercise or opt for weekend warrior-style activity, they can enjoy similar protective benefits for their heart health.



The rising youth in health technology

Young professional Dr Abdul Gaffar Plabon has been honoured with rising youth awards for his contribution to health technology.

ICT State Minister Zunaid Ahmed Palak handed over the awards at the National Youth Career Carnival held at Krishibid Institution in the capital recently, according to a press release.

Dr Plabon has been working to spread health education among the masses in Bangladesh for the last thirteen years. The young physician aims to create a digital healthcare ecosystem for dealing with the problems of health quality, affordability, and breaking barriers.

United Hospital

Organization Accredited by Joint Commission International

Hepatobiliary and Pancreatic Surgery

Ultrasonic Liver Surgery

Less blood. Less time. Less risk.

Minimally Invasive Liver Surgery

- Laparoscopic Liver Resection
- Laparoscopic Cholecystectomy
- Laparoscopic Liver Cyst Surgery
- Laparoscopic CBD Exploration

Less pain: Laparoscopic surgery is minimally invasive, meaning that it is done through small incisions in the abdomen. This results in less pain and a faster recovery time than open surgery, which requires a larger incision.

Shorter hospital stay: Patients who undergo laparoscopic liver surgery typically stay in the hospital for 1-2 days, compared to 5-7 days for patients who undergo open surgery.

Better cosmetic results: The small incisions made during laparoscopic surgery are much less noticeable than the larger incision made during open surgery.

Faster return to normal activities: Patients who undergo laparoscopic liver surgery typically return to their normal activities sooner than patients who undergo open surgery.

Appointment 02 22 22 63 446 10666

Our Sister Concerns

United Medical College & Hospital

medix dharmadi

M A Rashid Hospital

Star SPORT

DHAKA SUNDAY AUGUST 6, 2023, SRABAN 22, 1430 BS

What to WATCH

T SPORTS
FIFA Women's World Cup
Netherlands vs South Africa
Live from 8:00 am
Sweden vs USA

Live from 3:00 pm
GT20 Canada final
Live from 10:00 pm
SONY SPORTS 2
Durand Cup
Delhi FC vs Hyderabad

Live from 3:00 pm
East Bengal vs Bangladesh Army
Live from 5:30 pm
FA Community Shield
Manchester City vs

Arsenal
Live from 9:00 pm
DD SPORTS
West Indies vs India
2nd T20I
Live from 8:30 pm

Lyon 'didn't really see Bazball'

ICC

Australian spinner Nathan Lyon has said that he "didn't really see Bazball" during the two Tests he played against England in Ashes 2023.

Lyon played the first two Tests of the thrilling Ashes series — at Edgbaston and Lord's — before a calf injury ruled him out.

The spinner was brutal in his assessment of England's style of play under Ben Stokes and Brendon McCullum, famously dubbed 'Bazball', and played down the hype around it. "I know everyone keeps talking about Bazball, to be honest, I didn't really see Bazball... throughout my two Tests against them," Lyon told SEN Cricket.

The Australian said that the aggressive brand of batting deployed by England should be complemented by the flexibility to change gears when needed.

"I'm 2-0 in my Tests against Bazball," Lyon said, reminding that Australia did not lose both Tests he featured in during the Ashes. "I look at the Australian cricket team and the batters we've had, David Warner for example. I've seen him score hundreds in a session and that's off playing an attacking brand of cricket."

"I think there's a lot of smoke and mirrors with Bazball, if I'm being honest with you, and I feel like if you're going to play an aggressive brand of cricket anyway, it's about being able to go up and down in gears and understanding the moments in the game."



Recipients elated with sports award



PHOTO: BSS

Legendary hockey player and organiser Abdus Sadek received a lifetime achievement award from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina during the Sheikh Kamal National Sports Council Award at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the capital yesterday.

SPORTS REPORTER

Sports personalities from different disciplines have expressed their elation after receiving Sheikh Kamal National Sports Council Award from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the capital yesterday.

Ten sports personalities and two organisations were handed over the awards in eight categories in recognition for their outstanding contribution to sports at the programme, organised by the NSC and the Ministry of Youth and Sports.

Among the recipients were legendary hockey player and organiser Abdus Sadek, women's football team captain Sabina Khatun and cricketer Taskin Ahmed.

Each of the awardees received Tk 1 lakh, a crest and certificate.

Sadek, the legendary hockey player who also played football, recalled his affection towards Sheikh Kamal, the eldest son of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, after whom the award has been named.

Sadek received the national sports award in 1996. Now he has won the NSC award for his lifetime contribution to sports and took the award from the same person 27 years later.

"I received both the awards from the Prime Minister. But this award is special as it is named after Sheikh Kamal. I was the captain of Abahani's first football team, so I have many memories with

Sheikh Kamal," Sadek said in his reaction.

Footballer Sabina, who led the Bangladesh team to the title of the SAFF Women's Championship last year, said this award is special since it is an individual award.

"I have received many awards in the past and I have also accepted awards from the honourable Prime Minister. But today's reward is above all," she said.

Cricketer Taskin, who has been in terrific form in recent times, was overjoyed with getting his first national award.

"For the first time I have received a national award, it is a matter of great pride for me to receive the award from the honourable Prime Minister," Taskin said, adding: "She was asking what matches we have ahead. Honourable Prime Minister herself was saying that Asia Cup, World Cup are ahead, good luck to all, play well."

Among the others to receive the award were: South Asian Games gold medallist weightlifter Ziarul Islam, young table tennis player Muhtasin Ahmed Hridoy, young hockey player Amirul Islam, cricketer-turned-commentator Athar Ali Khan, veteran photojournalist Khandakar Tarek, grassroots hockey organiser Ustad Fazlu, Kalsindur Govt School and College's principal Mala Rani Sarker, Bangladesh Archery Federation and Bangladesh Association of Banks.

The youth and sports ministry introduced the award in 2021.

Opening spot under scanner

MAZHAR UDDIN

As a lingering back injury forced Tamim Iqbal to sit out the upcoming Asia Cup, once again the Bangladesh selectors are faced with a new challenge: to find a replacement for the experienced cricketer in crucial opening position.

With Liton Das primed to take the major responsibility at the opening position in Tamim's absence, it will be interesting to see who will be his partner in the regional tournament, approaching in less than a month's time.

The opening pair of Tamim and Liton had mostly featured in the last year or so. Interestingly, with or without the vastly experienced left-hander, the opening stand remained a vulnerable aspect for the Tigers. Although there were a few bright performances from the duo in the last 18 ODIs, consistency was lacking from both Tamim and Liton.

The team management did try different opening pairs in Tamim's absence. The likes of Naim Sheikh, Anamul Haque, Rony Talukdar and even Najmul Hossain Shanto were featured in the opening stand alongside Liton in different games.

After Tamim announced his sudden retirement after the first ODI against Afghanistan last month, Naim got the opportunity following a prolific run in the Dhaka Premier League. The left-hander, though, failed in both matches and the selectors stayed in a limbo as they look to finalise the Asia Cup squad.

According to national opener Imrul Kayes, it will be important for the selectors to back whoever is given opportunities in the coming days.

"Look, someone like Tamim was not made overnight. If I talk about Liton even,



"Obviously, losing Tamim is a setback. With Tamim on board, we previously looked for a back-up opener but now we have to look for a proper opener as well. We, however, do have a few options in mind. Let's see what happens."

Selector **Habibul Bashar**

he too got enough opportunities before he eventually started to deliver. But if I talk about the others, did they get enough opportunities compared to Liton? I think it is very important that the selectors back everyone like they did with Liton, or even Shanto," Imrul told The Daily Star.

"Someone like Naim may have failed with the bat in the last series but he did come on the back of a brilliant run in the Dhaka [Premier] League. So, he should get more opportunities."

There were talks over including a fresh face in the opening spot. Tanzid Hasan Tamim, Mahmudul Hasan Joy or Zakir Hasan are candidates for a surprise inclusion heading to the mega event.

Former captain and selector Habibul Bashar Sumon told The Daily Star, "Obviously, losing Tamim is a setback.

With Tamim on board, we previously looked for a back-up opener but now we have to look for a proper opener as well. We, however, do have a few options in mind. Let's see what happens."

Imrul thinks "it is very important for the selectors to also groom the youngsters by keeping them in the squad, thus giving them the exposure which will help them whenever they get an opportunity".

"If I talk about Tanzid Tamim or if there are some other options in hand, then why not? But you also need to understand the type of mindset Tanzid will have. It won't be the same for Liton because he then has the responsibility to play the leading role. In that case, Liton may have to change his strategy as a batter and we have to understand that," he said.

Imrul opined that a successful opening

pair requires great understanding, and at times there are different roles to play in various situations.

"Now a days we see there are a lot of talks about the strike-rate. I would like to tell you that batters get only one chance and the bowlers have more options in international cricket. No player can bat at the strike-rate of over ninety in every game, and at times it depends on the game situation. If Liton bats at a strike-rate of over ninety, then the batter at the other end may not be able to go at the same flow, and it is natural," said Imrul.

"In world cricket, if I talk about Rohit Sharma and Shikhar Dhawan, there are very few occasions when you see both the batters scoring at the same rate in a game. So, it is important to complement each other and I feel this is one of the reasons Tamim Iqbal took the pressure on himself and tried to change his game."

BANGLADESH'S OPENING STAND IN ODIs FROM AUGUST 2022 TO 2023

Total no. of matches: 18

No. of openers and opening pairs used: 6

Tamim Iqbal - Liton Das: 10 matches (Partnerships: 33, 1, 1, 15, 42, 102*, 3, 9, 30, 119)

Tamim - Rony Talukdar: 1 (18)

Naim Sheikh - Liton: 2 (15, 2)

Tamim - Anamul Haque: 2 (71, 41)

Najmul Hossain Shanto - Liton: 1 (0)

Anamul - Liton: 2 (11, 33)

Riise praises Japan's tiki-taka style

AFP, WELLINGTON

Norway coach Hege Riise said Japan will be hard to beat at the Women's World Cup after the 2011 champions powered into the quarter-finals on Saturday with a 3-1 win.

Japan will face either defending champions the United States or Sweden in the last eight after outplaying Norway in Wellington.

Riise was full of praise for Japan's tiki-taka style -- using fast, short passes to open up the opposition.

"They are a great team with a lot of good players and tactics," said the Norway boss, whose side has never looked like repeating their 1995 title success.

"The combination of tiki-taka with direct play is hard to defend."

Even deploying five defenders, Riise said Norway struggled to cope.

The defence was "a little bit shaky in the first few minutes, after that we kind of settled, but Japan is a great side", she said.

"Credit to Japan -- how they played and how they broke us down," she added.

"Even with the plan we had, we were solid in defence at times, but not quite good enough."

How can I say I don't like Liton [Das] as a captain? Liton led Bangladesh to a series win against India. But whatever the case, Shakib [Al Hasan] will be the front-runner. He has way more experience as a captain, and his intelligence would be there for consideration. But I don't want to belittle Liton. He has done really well as captain in the past. But I believe, when Shakib is in a team, he should be given the leadership. This is my personal opinion.

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) director **Khaled Mahmud Sujon**

City the 'team to beat', says Arteta

AGENCIES

Arsenal are determined to fight for all trophies in the new season as the Premier League runners-up begin their 2023-24 campaign against treble winners Manchester City today in the Community Shield, manager Mikel Arteta said on Friday.

Arsenal's title challenge crumbled last season in the face of a relentless City, who have won three successive top-flight titles before winning their maiden Champions League crown in June.

Arsenal enjoyed an eight-point lead over City until mid-March but lost it at the end of April and will now look to seek revenge in Sunday's traditional curtain-raiser to the Premier League season at Wembley.

"Very excited to play a final to win a trophy, we are playing against the team to beat," Arteta told reporters.

"This is what we want (a new era for Arsenal), fighting for every trophy. We have to prove that. What we did last year was not enough to win the big trophy, and we have to be better."

"We have to try and maintain the level and improve it for them (fans)."

But head-to-head record against City does not help Arteta's cause as the Spaniard has lost on eight occasions in the nine matches he has faced against a City side as coach, with the only win coming in the 2020 FA Cup semifinal.

In the last decade, only one side has been able to lift the Premier League after winning the Community Shield, and that was City in 2018.



PHOTO: FACEBOOK

Manchester United completed the signing of Denmark striker Rasmus Hojlund from Atalanta yesterday. The 20-year-old signed a five-year deal, giving United manager Erik ten Hag the striker he has longed for going into the new season. United play Wolves in their opening Premier League fixture on August 14.



Spain midfielder Aitana Bonmati (R) celebrates after scoring her team's first goal in 5-1 demolition of Switzerland in the Women's World Cup Round of 16 match in Auckland yesterday. Doubts were raised about Spain's ability to go far without a fully fit Alexia Putellas but Bonmati's starring role showed that they are not over-reliant on the current Ballon d'Or winner. [Inset] Japan midfielder Hinata Miyazawa celebrates after scoring her team's third goal during a 3-1 victory over Norway in the Round of 16 match in Wellington.

PHOTO: AFP



Port city suffers on 2nd day of inundation

Landslide warning issued

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Chattogram

The low-lying areas of the port city were inundated yesterday for the second consecutive day as heavy rain continued to fall accompanied by strong winds in the region.

"77 mm rain was recorded in the city in the last 24 hours till 3:00pm on Saturday," said Shrikanta Kumar Basak, the Chattogram Met officer, adding that the monsoon wind is likely to cause the rain to continue for the next two days.

A warning has been issued for heavy rainfall and landslide for the next 48 hours, he stressed.

The Chattogram district administration on Friday started to evacuate people from risky hill slopes to safer places in the city.

Chattogram Deputy Commissioner Abul Basar Mohammad Fakhruzzaman said people living on hill slopes in Motijharna, Batali Hill, Firoj Shah and Akbar Shah areas were being relocated.

Asked whether they were taken to any shelter centre, he said, "We asked

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



Due to yet another round of intense rain on Friday night, the port city's low-lying areas remained submerged for the second day in a row yesterday. Dwellers of Chawkbazar and Badurtola in the port city were the worst affected. Many had to wade through ankle- to knee-deep water on major streets.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

UKRAINIAN GRAIN

Global food prices rise after Russia pullout from deal: FAO

UNB, Dhaka

After the collapse of the landmark agreement to ship grain from war-torn Ukraine to other countries, global food prices rose for the first time in months, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has said.

The UN agency has issued its latest Food Price Index (FPI), which tracks the monthly international prices of cereals, vegetable oil, dairy, meat and sugar.

The FPI averaged 123.9 points in July, up 1.3 percent from June, driven by an increase in vegetable oil and rice prices.

FAO's Vegetable Oil Price Index registered a 12.1 percent jump in July after seven months of consecutive declines.

Sunflower oil prices rebounded by 15 percent due to uncertainties sparked by Russia's decision to pull out of the Black Sea Initiative on grain and fertiliser exports.

The UN brokered deal, together with a parallel accord between the UN and Russia, provided a lifeline for hundreds of millions worldwide facing hunger and spiralling food costs.

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SPORT



PM hands over Sheikh Kamal NSC Award

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday handed over the Sheikh Kamal National Sports Council Award-2023 to 10 sports personalities and two organisations in eight categories in recognition of their outstanding contribution to sports. She distributed the awards among the winners on the occasion of the 74th birth anniversary of Sheikh Kamal.

Ministry of Youth and Sports and NSC organised the programme at the city's Osmani Memorial Auditorium.

STORY ON PAGE 11

Govt gives in to transport associations' clout

Old, rundown commercial vehicles will stay on roads

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amid pressure from transport associations, the government has put on hold an order that set a limit to the economic life of buses and trucks.

The original order issued on May 17 was aimed at reducing crashes and pollution through setting the economic life of buses at 20 years and trucks and lorries at 25.

The Road Transport and Highways Division on Thursday issued a circular staying the order. The fresh order was put in effect immediately, officials said.

After first order, Bangladesh Road Transport Authority asked all of its offices to dump the outdated vehicles until a guideline on scrapping was not in place.

But, following the latest order, BRTA asked its offices to ignore the previous one, sources said.

The decisions are made at a time when thousands of people get killed and suffer life-changing injuries in crashes every year.

Many road safety experts have pointed out that old and unfit vehicles are a major reason behind the crashes.

As of April this year, over 74,000 registered buses, trucks and other commercial vehicles are past their economic lifespan set by the government in May. At least 576 people were killed in 505 road accidents in July, Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity said yesterday.

Transport expert Prof Hadiuzzaman termed

the latest decision "very unfortunate", saying it would further reduce road safety.

Asked if the government backtracked from the original decision because of lobbying and pressure by transport associations, RTHD Secretary ABM Amin Ullah Nuri said that that was not the case.

The original decision came more than four years after a special committee formed by the National Road Safety Council recommended setting an usable life of commercial vehicles to reduce crashes.

On May 17, the RTHD published on its website a draft guideline for scrapping old vehicles. The draft mentioned that no vehicle owner would be able to register a new vehicle if they owned a vehicle that had exceeded the "service life" set by the government.

The draft Motor Vehicle Scrapping Guideline-2023 also said

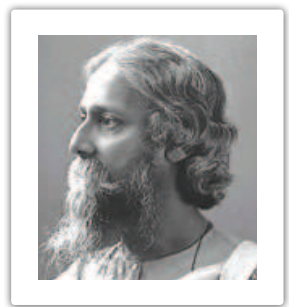
the government would outsource the vehicle scrapping job to private firms enlisted with the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) which would supervise the job.

The draft guideline was never finalised.

In the months following May, different transport associations expressed discontent over the decision. The Greater Chattogram Public and Goods Transport Owners' Federation last month demanded that the authority set the economic life of commercial vehicles at 30 years.

The economic life of a vehicle should begin

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



Tagore's 82nd death anniv today

BSS, Dhaka

The 82nd death anniversary of Biswakabi Rabindranath Tagore is being observed in the country today.

Different government, non-government and socio-cultural organisations have drawn up programmes to observe the day.

According to the Gregorian calendar, Rabindranath died at the age of 80 on August 7 in 1941. But his death anniversary is observed in Bangladesh on Sraban 22 of Bengali calendar.

The youngest of 13 surviving children of Debendranath Tagore and Sarada Devi, Rabindranath was born on 25th of Bengali month of Baishakh 1268 (May 7, 1861) at the

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

MANIPUR ETHNIC VIOLENCE

Father, son among 3 killed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Three people, including a father and his son, were gunned down in their sleep by suspected militants in the ethnic strife-hit northeastern Indian state of Manipur, the Indian media reported yesterday citing police.

The three were gunned down and later slashed with swords at Kwakta in the Bishnupur district, police said, adding the assailants came from Churachandpur.

The three used to stay in a relief camp but had moved to their residences in Kwakta on late Thursday, PTI said quoting police.

Soon after the incident, a mob gathered at Kwakta and wanted to head towards Churachandpur but was stopped by security personnel, reports our New Delhi correspondent quoting police.

On August 4, Manipur police said a joint security force conducted an operation in the Koutruk hill range and destroyed seven illegal bunkers.

Meanwhile, a 24-hour strike called by the coordinating committee of 27 assembly constituencies in Manipur went into force yesterday in Manipur capital Imhal, crippling day-to-day life.

Business establishments remained shut in almost all localities and public transport stayed off the road. Only a few private vehicles were seen plying the streets.

Schools also remained closed due to the strike from midnight.

The months-long outbreak of violence began on May 3 after a court ordered the state to consider extending to the majority Meitei population special economic benefits and quotas in government jobs and education that up to now have been reserved for the tribal Kuki people.

Over 180 people have been killed and thousands have fled their homes, since the violence started in Manipur, a state of 3.2 million that borders Myanmar. It has also rendered 50,000 people homeless.

POWER AND ENERGY

Next two years crucial

Nasrul Hamid tells discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Nasrul Hamid yesterday said the next two years would be critical for the energy and power sectors.

He said the country needs to move forward faster during this period to meet the increasing demand and ensure energy security as different projects slowed down due to the coronavirus pandemic and the Ukraine-Russia war.

"We need to increase our local gas production by 600 mmcfd... We will start building a gas pipeline from Bhola to Khulna, and replace all old ones in Dhaka and Narayanganj to bring those under an automated system... Achieving these goals will be a huge challenge."

The state minister was addressing a seminar titled "Highest Utilisation of Natural Resources of Bangladesh: Philosophy of Bangabandhu". Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industries (FBCCI) organised the event at its Motijheel office in the capital, with FBCCI President Jashim Uddin in the chair.

"We have built 260km pipeline under the ocean from Moheshkhali to Patenga, which will save us about Tk

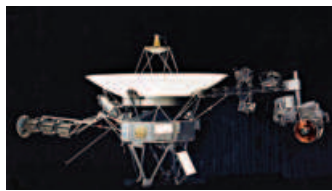
SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



Trucks park in the service lane of Gazipur-Tangail highway clogging the lane emergency vehicles often have to use when crashes or breakdowns block the highway. The photo was taken in Gazipur's Bhogra area recently.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

'Interstellar shout' brings back Voyager 2



AFP, Washington

Nasa has succeeded in re-establishing full contact with Voyager 2 by using its highest-power transmitter to send an "interstellar shout" that righted the distant probe's antenna orientation, the space agency said.

Launched in 1977 to explore the outer planets and serve as a beacon of humanity to the wider universe, it is currently more than 12.3 billion miles (19.9 billion kilometers) from our planet -- well beyond the solar system.

A series of planned commands sent to the spaceship on July 21 mistakenly caused the antenna to point two degrees away from Earth, compromising its ability to send and receive signals and endangering its mission.