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Waterlogging in Ctg worsening by the day

Rough seas at outer anchorage hamper offloading of goods; trade in Khatunganj affected

SIFAYET ULLAH, DWAIPAYAN BARUA, and MOHAMMAD SUMAN

Unloading of goods from larger vessels at the outer anchorage of Chattogram Port remains suspended due to rough seas since Friday, while trade at the Khatunganj Chaktai wholesale hub has dropped significantly.

Most of the low-lying areas in the city and several upazilas of Chattogram have gone underwater due to heavy rain over the last three days.

Unloading of goods from bulk carriers at the jetties and delivery of goods have slowed down considerably due to the persistent rain.

This has resulted in at least 25 cargo vessels, carrying over 800,000 tonnes of goods, being stranded at the outer anchorage.

Wheat, raw sugar, soybean oil, SEE PAGE 7 COL 1



A mother holds on to her child tight as a rickshaw-puller tries to navigate through almost waist-deep water on a street in Shantibagh Abashik in Agrabad area of Chattogram city yesterday. Parts of the city have been under water for three straight days.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

GENERAL ELECTION Rally behind whoever the party picks

Hasina tells AL leaders at special extended meeting

ASHIK ABDULLAH APU

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday made the leaders from all tiers of her party vow that they would forget the divisions and campaign for those who get the party's nomination in the coming national election.

"Whoever we nominate -- no matter how good or bad, blind or lame -- you have to promise that you will work for them," Hasina told the party's special extended meeting at the Gono Bhaban.

At that, the nearly 5,000 AL leaders in attendance raised their hand to commit.

"When we give nominations, we follow certain rules. I do not sit idle at home. I work to build the country all day. I also do the work of the party. We conduct surveys every six months on who is in what state, the status of our lawmakers or the status of our elected representatives ... We take these into account when we announce nominations.



"After the nominations are announced, some people think to themselves, 'Since the party has not nominated me, I should work against the person who got the nomination. The party will win the rest of the [parliament] seats...' In doing this, you will make all [of the party] lose."

Sheikh Hasina

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The prime minister then slammed those who openly criticise lawmakers or local leaders from their own party, multiple AL leaders who attended the meeting told this correspondent.

"By trying to defame others, you actually defame your party, and the boat [AL electoral symbol] ends up getting fewer votes."

Addressing the meeting that went on from 10:30am to 6:00pm, she spoke of her plans to sit with the district-level leaders in phases to hear about local politics.

The Gono Bhaban premises were abuzz as the meeting resembled a reunion of the leaders.

They exchanged greetings, chatted among themselves and took selfies in a festive mood. The leaders were excited as they got the chance to speak in front of the AL president.

When the local leaders spoke, Kanai Lal Biswas, acting general secretary of Pirojpur district AL, expressed his desire to be the fully fledged general secretary.

Hasina replied that everyone who were in "acting" positions should be considered fully entitled to the posts.

At least 43 AL different district-, upazila-, and thana-level leaders spoke at the event, and many of them talked about their alienation from lawmakers.

Some of them urged the top leadership to nominate those who are popular in their constituency.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

HC orders probe into S Alam's 'properties abroad'

Move comes following report published in The Daily Star under the headline 'S Alam's Aladdin's Lamp'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the authorities to investigate the allegations against the S Alam Group owner of owning businesses abroad without Bangladesh Bank's permission.

There are allegations that Mohammed Saiful Alam, owner of S Alam Group, has many properties abroad, including a business empire worth almost \$1 billion in Singapore.

The court yesterday ordered the Anti-Corruption Commission, Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU) and Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of police to launch the investigation and submit their reports to the HC in two months, Deputy Attorney General Saifuddin Khaled told The Daily Star.

The suo moto (voluntary) rule comes after The Daily Star on August 4 published a report titled "S Alam's Aladdin's Lamp".

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Essential Drugs rationing saline to govt hospitals

Demand for IV drips surges 10 times the usual due to dengue outbreak

MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN

Essential Drugs, the state-owned pharmaceutical company, is rationing injectable saline to public hospitals to manage the high demand arising from the unyielding surge in dengue patients.

As per the rules, Essential Drugs is the only supplier of injectable saline to about 1,100 public hospitals.

"The demand is 10 times more than usual, so it has become tough to meet it," Ehsanul Kabir, managing director of Essential Drugs, told The Daily Star yesterday.

The surge in demand has compelled the company to ration the supply of injectable saline, said Md Zakir Hossain, deputy general manager of sales and marketing at Essential Drugs.

Essential Drugs is yet to start producing saline in its plant in Gopalganj, which is expected to begin in January next year.

Since 2020, it has been supplying II types of saline by procuring through tender from Beximco, Orion Infusion, Libra Infusions, Opsonin, Popular and The ACME Laboratories.

To meet the rising demand, the six companies have been asked to double their daily production in a meeting held at the Directorate General of Drug Administration

(DGDA) in Dhaka on July 27.

"Increasing the production is not possible overnight, but the companies have agreed to double or triple their production immediately. We hope the demand can be met with this," said Md Salahuddin, deputy director at the DGDA.

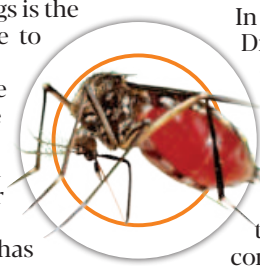
In fiscal 2022-23 fiscal, Essential Drugs supplied around 60 lakh bags of saline -- around five lakhs per month on average -- to hospitals all over the country.

Until the six companies manage to ramp up production, Essential Drugs is giving priority to the hospitals in Dhaka, where the concentration of dengue patients is the highest, said Hossain, who could not immediately share the number of saline bags the company has been supplying in a day in recent weeks.

The hospital authorities in Dhaka yesterday corroborated Hossain's claim: they were able to ensure injectable saline for all patients as per the demand.

"We need 500-700 bags of injectable saline daily and Essential Drugs has so far been able to provide us that quantity," said Khalilur Rahman, director of Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital.

The hospital has been maintaining a week's SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



No respite from high inflation

Inflation drops 10 basis points in July to 9.69pc

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Inflation slowed down slightly in July but not enough to bring any relief to the urban poor and the lower middle-class in Dhaka and Chattogram, who have been battling a cost of living crisis for a good year now.

In July, inflation stood at 9.69 percent, down 10 basis points from the previous month, according to data from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.

"This is statistical randomness -- July's inflation number does not allow you to definitively say whether it has increased or decreased," said Zahid Hussain, a former lead economist of the World Bank's Dhaka office.

Last month, food inflation edged up 3 basis points to 9.76 percent, while non-food inflation shed 13 basis points to stand at 9.47 percent.

There has been an infinitesimal drop in both rural and urban inflation in July.

Last month, rural inflation stood at 9.75 percent, down from June's 9.82 percent.

Urban inflation dropped from 9.45 percent to 9.43 percent in July, with food inflation accelerating 37 basis points to 9.63 percent.

This is particularly crushing for the low-skilled workers in urban areas,

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



Dengue patients on the floor in front of doctors' chambers at Mugda Medical College Hospital yesterday. A part of the floor gets wet when it rains but patients ignore that for medical treatment at the hospital.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

FIGHTING GRAFT US keen on sharing info, collaboration Says ACC secy after meeting US delegation

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

US State Department's Coordinator on Global Anti-Corruption Richard Nephew in a meeting with the Anti-Corruption Commission discussed potential cooperation and information exchange on preventing graft and money laundering.

ACC Secretary Md Mahub Hossain told journalists after the meeting between a three-member US delegation led by Nephew and ACC officials at the latter's office in the city yesterday.

"Corruption is not only an issue in Bangladesh but a global problem. Richard Nephew's visit is aimed at understanding how the SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

GENERAL ELECTION EC may not use CCTV cameras

Hint 2 commissioners

UNB, Dhaka

Election commissioners Md Alamgir and Rasheda Sultana yesterday indicated that there is no plan to monitor the upcoming 12th national election via CCTV cameras.

Talking to reporters at the Nirbachan Bhaban, Alamgir said, "It hasn't been discussed much between us. There was no formal discussion...Because you know, there are about four lakh centres in 300 constituencies. There may be a number of risky centres. It is difficult to monitor through CCTV cameras in so many centers."

"We will make special arrangements at the vulnerable centres in that case. I mean, we're going to hire more law enforcement members in those centers."

He said, "They [parties] play a great role in maintaining discipline Because they know that if the situation deteriorates or the situation worsens in the elections, they will be the ones who will be affected."

Talking to reports at her office, Rasheda yesterday said that the commission will not use CCTV cameras in the upcoming 12th parliamentary election.

She said there is no legal obligation to use CCTV cameras in the election, so the commission is not obliged to use them.

KIDNEY TRANSPLANT Documents of donor, receiver falsified

Finds BSMMU probe,
gives hospital clean chit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The committee tasked with probing a possible scam involving the first-ever kidney transplant surgery at the newly inaugurated BSMMU SuperSpecialised Hospital found that the documents concerning the relationship between the donor and the recipient had been falsified with the latter's consent.

Both the donor and the recipient have admitted the matter to the probe committee, officials at the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) told this newspaper yesterday.

"The committee however did not find anyone from the hospital

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

Every balcony holds a distinct sight of the rain, and it eventually becomes a safe spot for us to ponder on life or take a break from it. The narrow lanes and the familiar alleys – everything look more refreshed after a drizzle. Even a look outside the window amidst work or class to catch a glimpse of the city acts as a soothing respite from our everyday life.



A RAINY DAY in the capital

FARIHA AMBER

It's a dark, gloomy day and the smell of earth dampened by rainwater sweeps the city. You hear the sounds of pouring rain on your window and make yourself a cup of freshly brewed tea. Leaving behind all thoughts of going out, you immerse in the delight of a rainy day in Dhaka.

While this may sound dreamy, many argue rain in Dhaka is more of an inconvenience than a respite. Indeed, the waterlogged roads and unruly traffic congestion caused by a downpour creates a lot of problems for us, but once in a while we can relish the good things rain has to offer.

Imagine being tucked in your bed and waking up at 7:00am to the pattering of raindrops. It can be the cause of horror to reach work on a weekday or it can be the best feeling in the world to drift off to the cosiest nap you have had in a while during the weekend.



As we, residents of Dhaka, search for delight in the little things life has to offer, moments spent in the rain hold some of the fondest memories we have.

As the roads beneath may be flooded, the rooftops in our concrete jungle quickly fill up with happy faces when it rains. One hears the laughter of children, watches young people have the time of their lives, or even a solitary individual just enjoying some time alone.

Every balcony holds a distinct sight

of the rain, and it eventually becomes a safe spot for us to ponder on life or take a break from it. The narrow lanes and the familiar alleys – everything look more refreshed after a drizzle. Even a look outside the window amidst work or class to catch a glimpse of the city acts as a soothing respite from our everyday life.

Rain also changes the landscape of our city, beautifying what we already find beautiful – take our lakes for example. Our parks gain a refreshed look as if their souls have been rejuvenated; a walk in TSC holding hands under the tranquil rain is something on most couple's bucket list in Dhaka.

Rain in Dhaka has its distinct beauty and it does not take much to appreciate it. Although it comes with its fair share of problems, valuing the little things can turn a gloomy rainy day in the metropolis into a blissful one.

US keen on sharing info, collaboration

FROM PAGE 1

ACC operates, and discuss potential cooperation and exchange of information regarding corruption," he said.

The delegation's focus was on sharing insights about anti-money laundering and asset recovery, and increasing collaboration, he added.

Asked, whether the ACC sought cooperation from the delegation to bring back money laundered from Bangladesh, Mahbub said that no specific discussion took place on that matter.

He said the delegation's visit to the country is part of their global activities. The delegation would participate in the G20 summit in India after this visit.

He said the ACC would be willing to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Nephew's institution if it wanted to.

On yesterday's High Court order to investigate allegations of money laundering by S Alam Group, Mahbub told journalists that the ACC

will conduct the investigation if it received directives from the court.

He said the delegation's visit has no connection with the national election or any specific political party.

Nephew is likely to hold meetings today with Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen and relevant authorities including the Criminal Investigation Department and Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit and a civil society leader working against corruption.

The visit of Nephew follows a high profile visit by US under secretary of state for civilian security, democracy, and human rights early July and US' visa policy for Bangladesh that says those involved in vote rigging and intimidation will be denied US visas.

In December 2021, the US imposed sanctions on Rab and seven of its officials for human rights violations. In 2021 and 2023, the Biden Administration did not invite Bangladesh to the Summit for Democracy, one of its priorities being

fighting corruption.

Asked about the significance of Nephew's visit, Transparency International Bangladesh Executive Director Dr Iltekharruzzaman said there is scope to look at his visit positively as he may come up with proposal for cooperation in fighting poverty.

Possibly, he said, the delegation might look at the policies, legal framework, and institutional strength for curbing corruption and come up with support.

He said there are countries that do not question the source of big investments by individuals, which actually may be laundered from countries like Bangladesh.

"Discussing these aspects will be helpful," he said.

A diplomatic source said there was uncertainty if the delegation would want to know about cases of money laundering and take measures against the launderers. If the US does, it would be a big blow to money launderers.

Syria jihadist attacks kill 6 soldiers in northwest

AFP, Beirut

Six members of Syrian regime forces were killed yesterday in attacks on government positions in the conflict-torn country's northwest, the last main bastion of armed opposition, a war monitor said.

"Six regime forces, including two officers, were killed and two others wounded" in three attacks by jihadist group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) and allied factions, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

The attacks targeted regime positions in Latakia province, said the Britain-based group which relies on a vast network of sources on the ground.

HC orders probe

FROM PAGE 1

The HC asked the Bangladesh Bank governor to come up with a report clarifying whether the money in question was transferred abroad without permission and approval from the central bank.

The court also asked the government officials concerned to explain why their inaction and failure to prevent money laundering, if any, by the S Alam Group owner should not be declared illegal.

The court ordered the respondents to show causes as to why they should not be directed to enquire into the matter disclosed in The Daily Star report and why they should not be ordered to take appropriate legal steps against the individuals and entities, if any, involved in the commission of corruption and money laundering in accordance with the law.

The HC bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice Khizir Hayat Lizu issued the order and rule after Supreme Court lawyer Syed Sayedul Haque Suman placed The Daily Star report before the bench and sought necessary directives.

Secretaries at the ministries of finance and home affairs; governor of Bangladesh Bank; ACC chairman; heads of Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU) and CID; and chairman of National Board of Revenue (NBR) have been made respondents to the rule, Sayedul Haque Suman told The Daily Star.

The HC asked The Daily Star editor to submit an affidavit with regard to the

authenticity of its report published on August 4 and the documents, if there is any, to this court in two months and fixed October 8 for passing further order on this issue.

Full text of the HC order and rule have yet to be released.

During the proceedings, the bench said that money laundering is a white collar crime and it seriously affects the interest and welfare of the country.

The allegation should be examined to check whether it is true or false.

If the allegation is not correct, S Alam will submit an affidavit before this court and the confusion, if any, will be gone, the HC bench added.

There is no scope to see this offence leniently, the HC bench said, adding that nobody can transfer money abroad from Bangladesh without permission from Bangladesh Bank.

Sayedul told the court that during the colonial rule, the British had taken money from Bangladesh to their countries.

"At present, we ourselves transfer the money from Bangladesh to foreign countries," he said, adding that if Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman were alive, he would have been shocked.

Lawyer Sayedul said those who laundered money to Singapore could have made Bangladesh a country like Singapore.

But they made Singapore richer by laundering money from Bangladesh, he said.

Citing The Daily Star report, he said

Six hurt in landslides

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

Six people were injured in landslides yesterday triggered by heavy rains for five consecutive days in Bandarban.

Bandarban Deputy Commissioner Shah Mojahid Uddin said the multiple landslides hit different parts of the district throughout the day.

The affected areas are Kala Ghata Bir Bahadur Nagar and Sadar union areas of Bandarban town and various parts of Naikhongchhari upazila.

Of the six injured, Rumi Akter, 28, is a resident of the Kala Ghata Bir Bahadur Nagar area while four are residents of various parts of Naikhongchhari upazila and one is from Bandarban Sadar union.

SM Iqbal, resident officer (RMO) of Bandarban Sadar Hospital, said Rumi Akter was admitted to the hospital with injuries around 12:30pm. She is undergoing treatment at the hospital, but her injuries are not serious.

The five-day-long torrential rainfall flooded low-lying areas, including Kashem para, Bir Bahadur Nagar, Kanapara, Lemuzhiri, Catchingghata's Nayapara, and Milonchari of Sadar upazila.

Emdadul Haque, officer-in-charge of the Bandarban meteorological department, said the met office recorded 219mm of rainfall in the last 24 hours and about 400mm in the last four days. This rainfall is likely to last for another 5 to 6 days.

1kg crystal meth seized

UNB, Dhaka

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) recovered a little over a kilogram of crystal meth in Ukhiya upazila of Cox's Bazar early yesterday.

A team of the 34 BGB Battalion conducted a drive in the upazila's Paschim Anjuman Para area after receiving a tip-off that a consignment of drugs would be smuggled to Bangladesh from Myanmar through the border, said a media release signed by Lt Col Saiful Islam Chowdhury, unit commander of the force.

Around 3:00am, they spotted some people intruding into Bangladeshi territory from Myanmar with a bag. However, seeing the law enforcers, they dumped the bag and fled.

Later, 1.045kg of crystal meth was found inside the bag.

Known by its street name 'ice', crystal meth is a powerful drug that affects the central nervous system. It comes in the form of clear crystals or shiny blue-white rocks.

Two children drown

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Two children drowned in a pond near their house in Rangpur's Gangachara upazila yesterday.

The deceased were identified as 18-month-old Rahima Begum, daughter of Obaidul Haque, and her cousin Sayeed Mian, 2, son of Abu Taleb of Mobfarpara village under Alambiditor union of the upazila.

Dulal Hossain, officer-in-charge of Gangachara Police Station, said that the children were playing near a pond beside their house unsupervised in the afternoon. They fell into the pond without the notice of their family members.

After searching frantically, relatives recovered the two bodies from the pond.

An unnatural death case has been lodged at the police station, he added.

Rally behind whoever

FROM PAGE 1

Dinajpur AL General Secretary Altafuzzman Mita said, "A lawmaker from Dinajpur is openly spreading rumours about the other leaders of our district. It is not desirable. We do not want bad blood between us and the parliament member. We want to work in unison."

Jamalpur AL General Secretary Bijan Kumar Das said, "Many MPs are alienated from the people. After winning the election, they lose touch with the people and activists. That is why I demand that popular leaders get nominated in the next election."

Lalmonirhat AL General Secretary Matiar Rahman said, "Jatiya Party Chairman GM Quader is an MP from Lalmonirhat-3. There is development across the whole country. But not in that area. In the next election, I demand putting an AL candidate against the Jatiya Party candidate."

At the meeting, Hasina asked the party men to remain alert about the BNP-Jamaat's possible subversive activities.

She instructed the leaders to woo voters and work for the country.

The next election will be fair, she said, directing the leaders to go to people's doorsteps and publicise the development achieved by the AL government in the last 14 and a half years.

AL central working committee and advisory council members, MPs, presidents and general secretaries of district committees, municipal and upazila units, metropolitan cities, district and upazila parishad chairman, mayors, presidents and general secretaries of AL associate organisations were present in the meeting.

The AL holds such meetings months ahead of every general election.

Otherwise, the hospital authorities would be punished.

"So we have arranged NOC for every public hospital," Alam said at an event in Dhaka yesterday.

As of yesterday, Essential Drugs have issued NOCs to three hospitals, according to Kabir.

Meanwhile, the total number of fatalities in dengue infection has risen to 313 as 10 more patients died yesterday. The total number of hospitalisation cases rose to 66,732 including yesterday's 2,764.

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Govt failed to tackle dengue outbreak

Alleges GM Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party Chairman GM Quader yesterday said the government cannot avoid responsibility for its failure to effectively control the dengue situation in the country.

Quader, also the deputy leader of the opposition in the parliament, said the government had failed to tackle the ongoing dengue outbreak.

In a statement, he blamed the two city corporations for failing to control Aedes mosquitoes and demanded those responsible for the failure be held accountable.

The JP chairman also demanded that the government ensure proper dengue testing and treatment facilities in all hospitals and medical centres.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



The driver of a rickshaw-van, approaching from the opposite direction, tries to sneak underneath a level crossing while other vehicles wait for the train to pass. Such careless actions often lead to accidents. The photo was taken yesterday at Tejgaon Rail Crossing near Bangladesh Film Development Corporation.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Govt trying to create a reign of fear: Fakhrul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday alleged that the Awami League government is recklessly using law enforcers to oppress opposition parties and individuals with different ideologies.

"Law enforcement agencies are continuing crackdown on opposition without any restraint," Fakhrul said in a statement.

Fakhrul also drew attention to the arrest of Abu Yousuf Selim, a joint convener of the Bhashani Onusari Parishad.

The ongoing suppression by the AL government has raised concerns, as exemplified by the arrest of Selim on July 29, he added.

This highlights a pattern of systematic oppression, Fakhrul alleged.

Despite Selim's deteriorating health condition while in custody, the statement alleged that he has been denied proper medical attention.

Fakhrul claimed that the government's intention is to establish a reign of fear so that no one can protest against the government.

"Still, people are taking to the streets to overthrow the government and they will be victorious," Fakhrul added.

He also called for the withdrawal of the case against Selim.



'Overcome conflict to unlock full human potential'

Says science speaker Asif at lecture

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

From communicating across the globe to exploring distant planets, humans possess an innate curiosity to understand and uncover the mysteries of the natural world that have shaped civilisations throughout history, said science speaker and author Asif at an event recently.

He came up with this remark in a lecture titled "Solar System: A History of Changing Perspectives," where he shared his insight into humanity's extraordinary potential.

Organised by the online bookstore Chandradeep, the event took place at the Bishwo Shahitto Kendro in Dhaka.

Amidst a world grappling with conflicts, greed, and the yearning for dominance, Asif highlighted the immense opportunities that await humanity if it can transcend these challenges.

His presentation shed light on the solar system's vastness, reminding us that despite our progress, we remain a mere speck in the grand expanse of the universe. However, he offered a glimpse of hope and inspiration, suggesting that embracing a cosmic existence might be the



key to overcoming global crises and unlocking new frontiers of possibility.

Humans continue to struggle with conflict, greed, and the urge to dominate, despite having the ability to communicate with people around the world and visit other planets, he said.

They also have an innate and insatiable urge to discover and understand the natural world from the very earliest stages of their development. It is a driving force that has shaped the world's history and various cultures, he added.

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FISCAL YEAR 2022-23

Remittance from KSA falls by 17pc

JAMIL MAHMUD

Remittance earnings from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia -- Bangladesh's biggest overseas labour market -- declined by 17.10 percent in last fiscal year amid growing concern over using unauthorised channels such as hundi by remitters.

The drop in remittance earnings came even as Bangladesh saw a 2.8 percent remittance growth in last fiscal year.

The \$3.7 billion inward remittance that Bangladesh received in FY 2022-2023 from the Gulf country is also 34.19 percent less than the \$5.7 billion received in FY 2020-2021, according to Bangladesh Bank data.

In FY 2021-2022, remittance sent by Bangladeshi migrant workers from KSA stood at \$4.5 billion, shows the central bank data.

Despite having a surge in migration of new workers to the Gulf country in past couple of years, this gradual decline in inward remittance from the country is alarming.

According to the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET), nearly 13 lakh migrant workers went to Saudi Arabia for employment between January 2021 and June this year, compared to 8.18 lakh workers going there in the previous three years.

In past 30 months, 54.65 percent of Bangladesh's total 2.3 million migrant workers went to Saudi Arabia, BMET data shows.

While addressing a seminar at the Bangladesh Embassy in Riyadh in June, Bangladesh Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Mohammad Javed Patwary pointed on hundi being instrumental



The government needs to enhance its effort to rein in unauthorised channels like hundi to increase remittance. Remittance through formal channel will increase if gateway of hundi is stopped.

SYED SAIFUL HAQUE
Chairman of Warbe Development Foundation

behind decline in inward remittance.

Remittance from Saudi Arabia will have significant growth if it is sent through authorised banking channel averting hundi, the ambassador said, according to a Facebook post of the embassy.

He urged about 28 lakh Bangladeshi nationals currently residing in Saudi Arabia to generate awareness against hundi at

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

We will work for more transparency

Says consumer rights DG on medical device import

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Directorate of National Consumer Rights Protection will work to bring "more transparency" in the country's medical device import sector, especially devices related to cardiac, Director General AHM Shafiquzzaman of the directorate said yesterday.

The move will come in light of a recent drive during which anomalies in selling and managing such medical devices were found, Shafiquzzaman told a meeting at the directorate's office in the capital.

"When it comes to this sector, the level of patient satisfaction is very low," the director general added.

Similar medical devices have been sold at two to three times higher price in Bangladesh compared to a neighbouring country, he said.

He urged the Directorate General of Drug Administration (DGDA) to enhance its inspection over the sector.

Besides, sophisticated cardiac-related medical devices include pacemakers, said meeting participants.

The DG said following the drive conducted based on complaints from consumers, administrative action was taken against one organisation that imports such devices.

It was fined and sealed off, he added.

There was a complaint regarding overpricing while there were also issues regarding management of the devices including that related to maintaining expiry date, he further said.

He said a committee will be formed consisting of representatives from various institutions including DNCRP, DGDA, Directorate General of Health Services, Bangladesh Trade and Tariff Commission, members of importers' association,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

ATTACK ON BERNICAT CONVOY

Detectives take 7th date to complete further probe

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday asked detectives to submit by September 4 the investigation report of the case filed over the attack on the convoy of former US ambassador Marcia Bernicat in August 2018.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Zaki Al Farabi passed the order after Detective Branch of police failed to submit the report.

Detectives have so far taken seven dates for completing further investigation into the case.

On December 28 last year, Dhaka Metropolitan

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

TARIQUE, ZUBAIDA CASE

Pro-BNP lawyers protest verdict

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Ainjibi Forum, a body of pro-BNP lawyers, yesterday brought out flag processions at different bar association premises including that of the Supreme Court protesting the August 2 court verdict in a corruption case against BNP acting chairperson Tarique Rahman and his wife Zubaida Rahman.

The forum will stage sit-ins on all the 64 bar premises across the country tomorrow, said its Secretary General Kayser Kamal.

The BJAF also held a meeting at the SCBA yesterday afternoon rejecting the judgement.

The BJAF leaders told the meeting that the judgement has been delivered with a political motive under the pressure from the government in order to malign the Zia family.

A Dhaka court on August 2 sentenced BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman to nine years and his wife Zubaida Rahman to three years in prison in a graft case filed in 2007.

Former SCBA president Zainul Abedin, its former secretaries AM Mahbub Uddin Khokon, Md Bodruddoza Badal and Md Ruhul Quddus Kazal, BJAF's Kayser Kamal, Gazi Kamrul Islam Sajal, among others, spoke on the occasion.



People from all walks of life paid their last tribute to author and former lawmaker Panna Kaiser at the capital's Central Shaheed Minar yesterday. She passed away on August 4 at the age of 73 while undergoing treatment at a city hospital.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

More rain likely in Dhaka

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh Meteorological Department has predicted light to moderate rain or thunder showers in most places of the country including Dhaka in 24 hours from 9:00am.

"Light to moderate rain or thunder showers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at most places over Dhaka, Khulna, Barishal, Chattogram, Mymensingh and Sylhet divisions and at many places over Rangpur and Rajshahi divisions with moderately heavy to very heavy falls at places over the country," said a BMD bulletin yesterday.

Highest 186mm rainfall was recorded in Bandarban in 24 hours till 6:00am yesterday.

BAUFAL HEALTH COMPLEX

Crumbling buildings put lives at risk

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

Patuakhali's Baufal Upazila Health Complex is in a terrible shape due to the dilapidated four two-storey buildings of the complex, along with a lack of specialised physicians.

The risks are evident at the complex buildings with falling plaster, stuck out rods from beams, and cracks on the ceiling. Meanwhile, employees have resorted to wearing helmets while on duty, fearing that debris from the ceiling could fall and cause injuries.

The roof leaks during rains while beds at the complex get wet, causing immense suffering to patients.

According to a source from the health complex, four buildings – including three residential ones for doctors, nurses and other staffers – were constructed in 1975.

And all these buildings are in a terrible state as those have not been repaired since then.

Although the number of beds at the complex was increased from 31 to 50 by constructing another three-storey building in 2013, it didn't improve the situation of the complex much.

The lack of space in the new building forced 31 beds to remain in the old one, leading to crowded conditions and further causing the building's deterioration.

The scarcity of specialised doctors is also concerning and worsens the complex's state, and as a result important surgeries can't often take place there, according to hospital sources.

They said obstetric surgery has been suspended at the complex for the absence of gynaecologists and anaesthetists, rendering the surgical equipment unusable over time.

The maternity surgery room has also been closed for almost five years because there aren't enough doctors.

Sources from the Upazila Health Complex said there are 22 positions for doctors in this 50-bed health centre,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



Four two-storey buildings of Baufal Upazila Health Complex in Patuakhali remain dilapidated for years due to a lack of repairs. The plaster falling off the ceiling has compelled the staff to wear helmets while on duty to save themselves from accidents. Meanwhile, rainwater enters the hospital through cracked walls, adding to the menace. A shortage of specialised physicians further exacerbates the patients' suffering.

PHOTO: STAR

BARISHAL UNIVERSITY

12 injured in BCL infighting

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

At least 12 students of Sher-e-Bangla Hall of Barishal University were injured in a clash between two factions of Chhatra League activists over establishing supremacy in the dormitory early yesterday.

Barishal University VC Prof Md Sadequul Arefin said three injured students are currently receiving treatment at Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital.

Zosinta, a senior staff nurse, told this correspondent that seven students were admitted to the hospital with injuries, but they left the hospital without taking discharge orders.

Students said the BCL factions – “followers” of Barishal City Corporation mayor Serniabat Sadik Abdullah and “supporters” of State Minister for Water Resources Zaheed Farooque – are feuding for years.

There is no BCL committee at the university, they added.

The students said followers of the former BCC mayor couldn't stay at the hall for a long time as the state minister's followers allegedly have a strong hold over the dormitory.

They said the clash took place after the ex-mayor's followers tried to take control of the dormitory on Saturday night.

Witnesses said a group of 30-55 people, wearing masks and helmets, entered Sher-e-Bangla Hall around 11:00pm and started to search for their opponents on the fourth and fifth floors of the hall.

The attackers hit the rival group with sticks and iron rods injuring at least 12 students.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

200-year-old pond being filled up to widen road

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A 200-year-old pond of Mymensingh Laboratory High School is being filled up with debris from a road widening project in Judge's Court area of Mymensingh city.

Mahbubur Rahman, who owns a roadside tea stall, said he first noticed debris from construction work on an adjacent road being dumped beside the pond since Friday morning. He later informed the school's headteacher about it.

Meanwhile, the dumping has continued, local people said.

Md Saiful Islam, headteacher (acting) of the school, said they were not informed in this regard. “After hearing about the matter, we protested against it and sought necessary action from the authorities concerned,” he said.

“No roadside structure in the city has been evicted yet for widening the road. But why debris is being



PHOTO: STAR

dumped in the pond? The pond must be preserved for better environment of the city,” he demanded.

Freedom fighter and former headteacher of the school Md Abul Kashem said the pond of the school is a great source of water for adjacent Mymensingh Fire Service and Civil

Defense unit.

During any fire incident in the city and its suburbs, the firemen collect water from this pond, he said.

Advocate Nazrul Islam Chunnun, convener of citizens' platform “Jonouddiyog Mymensingh”,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

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GD- 1196

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পরিচালকের কার্যালয়			
৫০০ শয্যা সাতক্ষীরা মেডিকেল কলেজ হাসপাতাল, সাতক্ষীরা।			
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স্মারক নং-সামেকহা/সাত/শা-২/২০২৩-২০২৪/		তারিখ- /০৮/২০২৩ ইং	
“বিজ্ঞপ্তি”			
০১।	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	:	স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার কল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়।
০২।	এজেন্সি	:	পরিচালকের কার্যালয়, সাতক্ষীরা মেডিকেল কলেজ হাসপাতাল, সাতক্ষীরা
০৩।	ক্রয়কারী কর্তৃপক্ষের নাম	:	ডাঃ শীতল চৌধুরী, পরিচালক, মেডিকেল কলেজ হাসপাতাল, সাতক্ষীরা।
০৪।	চালান জমা দেওয়ার কোড নং	:	সোনালী ব্যাংক সাতক্ষীরা শাখা-১/২৭১১/০০০০/২৩৬৬।
০৫।	ক্রয়কারী কর্তৃপক্ষের জেলা	:	সাতক্ষীরা।
০৬।	আহবানকৃত দরপত্র	:	২০২৩-২০২৪ আর্থিক সনে সাতক্ষীরা মেডিকেল কলেজ হাসপাতাল, সাতক্ষীরার জন্য (ক) ইডিসিএল বর্ধিত ঔষধপত্র (খ) চিকিৎসা ও শল্য চিকিৎসা সরঞ্জামাদি গ) গজ ব্যাভেজ তুলা ইত্যাদি (ঘ) লিলেন সামগ্রী (ঙ) কেমিক্যাল রি-এজেন্ট (এক্স-রে ফ্লিম, ইসিজি পেপার সমূহ) (চ) আসবাবপত্র ও কিচেন সামগ্রী। (ছ) আসবাবপত্র।
০৭।	দরপত্র আহবানের সূত্র ও তারিখ	:	সামেকহা/সাত/শা-২/২০২৩-২০২৪/১৪৫১ তারিখ- ০৩/০৮/২০২৩ইং
০৮।	ক্রয় পদ্ধতি	:	উন্মুক্ত পদ্ধতি
০৯।	বাজেট এবং ফান্ডের উৎস	:	জিওবি/উন্নয়ন, (স্বাস্থ্য অধিদপ্তর ও স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার কল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয় হতে প্রাপ্ত)
১০।	উন্নয়ন সহকারী	:	প্রযোজ্য নহে।
১১।	প্রজেক্ট / প্রোগ্রাম কোড নং	:	প্রযোজ্য নহে।
১২।	প্রজেক্ট/ প্রোগ্রামের নাম	:	২০২৩-২০২৪ আর্থিক সনে সাতক্ষীরা মেডিকেল কলেজ হাসপাতাল, সাতক্ষীরার জন্য (ক) ইডিসিএল বর্ধিত ঔষধপত্র (খ) চিকিৎসা ও শল্য চিকিৎসা সরঞ্জামাদি গ) গজ ব্যাভেজ তুলা ইত্যাদি (ঘ) লিলেন সামগ্রী (ঙ) কেমিক্যাল রি-এজেন্ট (এক্স-রে ফ্লিম, ইসিজি পেপার সমূহ) (চ) আসবাবপত্র ও কিচেন সামগ্রী। (ছ) আসবাবপত্র।
১৩।	দরপত্র প্যাকেজের নং	:	০১ (এক)।
১৪।	দরপত্র প্যাকেজের নাম	:	২০২৩-২০২৪ আর্থিক সনে সাতক্ষীরা মেডিকেল কলেজ হাসপাতাল, সাতক্ষীরার জন্য (ক) ইডিসিএল বর্ধিত ঔষধপত্র (খ) চিকিৎসা ও শল্য চিকিৎসা সরঞ্জামাদি গ) গজ ব্যাভেজ তুলা ইত্যাদি (ঘ) লিলেন সামগ্রী (ঙ) কেমিক্যাল রি-এজেন্ট (এক্স-রে ফ্লিম, ইসিজি পেপার সমূহ) (চ) আসবাবপত্র ও কিচেন সামগ্রী। (ছ) আসবাবপত্র।
১৫।	দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশের তারিখ	:	০৭/০৮/২০২৩ইং
১৬।	দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের শুরু তারিখ	:	১০/০৮/২০২৩ইং বেলা ২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
১৭।	দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ	:	৩১/০৮/২০২৩ ইং বেলা ২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
১৮।	প্রাক দরপত্র সভার স্থান, তারিখ ও সময়	:	সাতক্ষীরা মেডিকেল কলেজ হাসপাতাল, সাতক্ষীরা ০৩/০৮/২০২৩ইং সময়ঃ ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা।
১৯।	দরপত্র দাখিলের তারিখ ও সময়	:	০৪/০৯/২০২৩ ইং বেলা ১০.০০ ঘটিকা হইতে ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
২০।	দরপত্র বাস্তব খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	:	০৪/০৯/২০২৩ ইং বেলা ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা।
২১।	অফিসের নাম ও ঠিকানা	:	ক) দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের স্থান- সাতক্ষীরা মেডিকেল কলেজ হাসপাতাল, সাতক্ষীরা। খ) দরপত্র গ্রহণের স্থান-সাতক্ষীরা মেডিকেল কলেজ হাসপাতাল, সাতক্ষীরা। গ) দরপত্র বাস্তব খোলার স্থান- সাতক্ষীরা মেডিকেল কলেজ হাসপাতাল, সাতক্ষীরা।
২২।	দরপত্র দাতার যোগ্যতা	:	সংগ্রাহক স্বাক্ষর কর্তৃক পি পি এ এবং পি পি আর ২০০৬/২০০৮ অনুযায়ী আরোপিত শর্তানুযায়ী।
২৩।	পণ্য/কাজের বিবরণ	:	২০২৩-২০২৪ আর্থিক সনে সাতক্ষীরা মেডিকেল কলেজ হাসপাতাল, সাতক্ষীরার জন্য (ক) ইডিসিএল বর্ধিত ঔষধপত্র (খ) চিকিৎসা ও শল্য চিকিৎসা সরঞ্জামাদি গ) গজ ব্যাভেজ তুলা ইত্যাদি (ঘ) লিলেন সামগ্রী (ঙ) কেমিক্যাল রি-এজেন্ট (এক্স-রে ফ্লিম, ইসিজি পেপার সমূহ) (চ) আসবাবপত্র ও কিচেন সামগ্রী। (ছ) আসবাবপত্র।
২৪।	সম্পর্কিত কাজের বিবরণ	:	২০২৩-২০২৪ আর্থিক সনে সাতক্ষীরা মেডিকেল কলেজ হাসপাতাল, সাতক্ষীরার জন্য (ক) ইডিসিএল বর্ধিত ঔষধপত্র (খ) চিকিৎসা ও শল্য চিকিৎসা সরঞ্জামাদি গ) গজ ব্যাভেজ তুলা ইত্যাদি (ঘ) লিলেন সামগ্রী (ঙ) কেমিক্যাল রি-এজেন্ট (এক্স-রে ফ্লিম, ইসিজি পেপার সমূহ) (চ) আসবাবপত্র ও কিচেন সামগ্রী। (ছ) আসবাবপত্র।
২৫।	দরপত্র সিডিউলের মূল্য	:	প্রতিসেট যথাঃ (ক) ইডিসিএল বর্ধিত ঔষধপত্র ৫ (পাঁচ) হাজার টাকা (খ) চিকিৎসা ও শল্য চিকিৎসা সরঞ্জামাদি ৩ (তিন) হাজার টাকা গ) গজ ব্যাভেজ তুলা ইত্যাদি ১ (এক) হাজার টাকা (ঘ) লিলেন সামগ্রী ১ (এক) হাজার টাকা (ঙ) কেমিক্যাল রি-এজেন্ট (এক্স-রে ফ্লিম, ইসিজি পেপারসহ) ২ (দুই) হাজার টাকা (চ) আসবাবপত্র ও কিচেন সামগ্রী ২ (দুই) হাজার টাকা। (ছ) আসবাবপত্র ২ (দুই) হাজার টাকা মাত্র।
২৬।	দরপত্র আহবান কারীর নাম	:	ডাঃ শীতল চৌধুরী।
২৭।	দরপত্র আহবান কারীর পদবী	:	পরিচালক।
২৮।	দরপত্র আহবান কারীর ঠিকানা	:	সাতক্ষীরা মেডিকেল কলেজ হাসপাতাল, সাতক্ষীরা।
২৯।	দরপত্রের মেয়াদ	:	৩০শে জুন/২০২৪ পর্যন্ত বলবৎ থাকিবে।
৩০।	কোন দরপত্র বাস্তব বা গ্রহণের পূর্ণ ক্ষমতা কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করেন।		
৩১।	বরাদ্দ প্রাপ্তি সাপেক্ষে কার্যাদেশ প্রদান করা হইবে এবং স্বাস্থ্য অধিদপ্তর/মন্ত্রণালয় হইতে ব্যয় মঞ্জুরী পাওয়ার পর বিলের টাকা পরিশোধ করা হইবে।		
ক্রম নং	ক্রপের নাম	দরপত্র জামানত	কার্যসম্পাদন জামানত
ক	ইডিসিএল বর্ধিত ঔষধ	৪,০০,০০০/-	কার্যাদেশকৃত মূল্যের উপর ১০%
খ	চিকিৎসা ও শল্য চিকিৎসা সরঞ্জামাদি	৩,০০,০০০/-	
গ	গজ, ব্যাভেজ ও তুলা ইত্যাদি	১,৫০,০০০/-	
ঘ	লিলেন সামগ্রী	১,৫০,০০০/-	
ঙ	ক্যামিক্যাল রি-এজেন্ট (এক্স-রে ফ্লিম, ইসিজি পেপার সমূহ)	১,৫০,০০০/-	
চ	আসবাবপত্র ও কিচেন সামগ্রী	১,৫০,০০০/-	
ছ	আসবাবপত্র	১,৫০,০০০/-	
(ডাঃ শীতল চৌধুরী)			
পরিচালক			
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People in Bangladesh have deep appreciation for their cultural heritage: Hridi Huq

With her highly-anticipated directorial debut, ‘1971 Shei Shob Din’, set to hit the screens on August 18, the Daily Star delved into the inspiration, challenges, and vision that have shaped her journey as a filmmaker.

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

The daughter of the eminent actor, academic, and playwright Enamul Haque, and theater personality Lucky Enam, Hridi Huq is carving her own path as a director, in the world of cinema.

With her highly-anticipated directorial debut, *1971 Shei Shob Din*, set to hit the screens on August 18, The Daily Star delved into the inspiration, challenges, and vision that have shaped her journey as a filmmaker.

Can you tell us about the underlying message of ‘1971 Sei Shob Din’?

We take the audience back to 1971, where they can experience the taste of earning freedom. You see, the yearning and strive for freedom is a basic human tendency. It’s not just a story of just one timeline; it’s a story of moving forward. Overall, the movie portrays the spirit of our Liberation War.

It must have been challenging to choose such a significant story for your first movie.

Indeed, it was quite challenging. Great work often comes from choosing difficult subjects. *1971 Shei Shob Din* is based on a story by my father, Enamul Haque. Our theatre troupe had previously adapted this story for a drama, and I wrote the screenplay, expanding it with additional characters.



PHOTOS: STAR AND COLLECTED

Bringing the year 1971 to the screen must have required meticulous attention to detail. How did you manage to capture that era?

Capturing the essence of 1971 was crucial. The environment and the way people spoke back then were different. We had to ensure that everything, including the costumes, makeup, and overall setting, reflected that era accurately. For instance, there is a scene with more than a thousand people, and to execute such a grand scene, a lot of effort and planning were required. But I

believe it was necessary to create an authentic and immersive cinematic experience.

‘1971 Shei Shob Din’ is a government granted film. Can you tell us more about that?

We consider the grant as an honour because cinema is a significant art form that requires considerable resources. Our production company, Ticket, has been a great support, and despite facing challenges, we have come together to bring this movie to life. Unfortunately, I lost my father, Enamul Haque, during the making of the film, but his inspiration and spirit continue to guide us.

The song ‘Jachchho Kothay’ has been praised by the audience. Did you feel gratified?

Jachchho Kothay has received tremendous praise since its release. Kamruzzaman Ronnie

and Ishrat Annie have lent their voices to the song, and I wrote the lyrics. Debojyoty Mishra from Kolkata composed the music with a lot of heart. The song has resonated well with the audience, and I have received a lot of positive feedback, which is truly heartening. Additionally, an Urdu song from the movie has also gathered a lot of appreciation.

With such dedication and hard work, what are your expectations from the audience regarding the movie?

We are very optimistic about the audience, especially the young people of our country. When they encounter a compelling story, they get excited, and the general audience appreciates good movies as well. People in Bangladesh have a deep appreciation for their cultural heritage, and we believe they will connect with *1971 Shei Shob Din* on a profound level.



Sabila dons another challenging role as fish vendor

For the first time, Sabila will be appearing in the role of a vendor for her upcoming project, *Motshokonna*. Surrounding the premise of a woman’s struggle with life and revenge, the drama required Sabila to act out her character in a real-life fish market.

Furthermore, Sabila apparently had to shoot among the general public and the crowd of the fish market, having even sold some fishes to market-goers.

Motshokonna has been written by Doyal Saha, directed by Aalok Hasan. Also starring in the drama are Fazlur Rahman Babu, Disha and many more.

Sushmita Sen confirms project based on her life



Sushmita Sen’s upcoming project *Taali* will soon release on the JioCinema app. During its promotion, the actor unveiled an interesting detail that it will be based on her life.

“I’ve approved two other projects, as well as a third which will not feature me but will be based on my life. So, keep an eye out for that. I’m not going to say anything else. I definitely shouldn’t have said that, but I’m so pleased about it that I couldn’t help myself. You’ll realise that it’s not a biopic,” revealed the actor.

Sushmita Sen will be playing transgender activist Shreegauri Sawant in the Ravi Jadhav directorial web-series *Taali*.

NEWS

I won’t return home

FROM PAGE 12

Besides, Nava and Turan, another child – Mahim Sheikh, 4, remained missing. He is the son of Rubel Sheikh, a resident of Sirajdikhan upazila’s Khidirpur village.

Of the deceased, six are members of the same family.

They are Happy Akhtar, 28, her sons Sakibul, 8, and Sajibul, 4, sister Poppy Akhtar, 26, and their relatives Farihan, 10, and five-month-old Humaira. The other deceased is Mokseda, 40. They are all from Khidirpur village.

Happy’s husband Jahangir, 40, miraculously survived the tragic accident but was found to be completely inconsolable after losing so many family members.

On a visit to Khidirpur last morning, this correspondent noticed that a sense of sorrow had descended upon the village.

“Where have my sons gone? How will I go on with my days without them? I have lost everything. I cannot live anymore,” cried Jahangir.

“We’ve become speechless after the shocking accident. This is the worst thing to have ever happened to us,” said Jahangir’s brother Uzzal.

Happy’s cousin Arshad Akash, who is a police inspector, demanded that the government strictly monitor the operation of water vessels, as he

said the picnic trawler capsized after being hit by the cargo vessel.

The accident took place at around 8:30pm, prompting locals to start a rescue operation immediately.

Later, members of the fire service rushed to the spot and conducted rescue operations until 2:00am yesterday.

The rescue operations were halted for five hours due to inclement weather.

At around 7:00am, the rescue operation resumed, with the Navy and Coast Guard joining.

So far, 34 people have been rescued, said Aslam Khan, district superintendent of police.

A case was filed with Louhajang Police Station yesterday, accusing four named and some unnamed crew members of the cargo vessel that hit the picnic trawler.

The police seized the cargo vessel, but its crew members fled the scene.

“We are trying to arrest the accused persons,” said Khandaker Imam Hossain, officer-in-charge (OC) of the police station.

Police have detained the cargo vessel’s cook for interrogation.

Meanwhile, the district administration has formed a five-member probe body headed by Additional District Magistrate Sharmin Ara to investigate the accident, said Abu Zafar Ripon, deputy commissioner of Munshiganj.

Agargaon-Motijheel

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three out of seven stations – Farmgate, Secretariat (Jatiya Press Club), and Motijheel – at the beginning.

The section saw 96.10 percent progress till July, and the authorities set a target to complete performance test, system integrity test, trial run and blank operations by October 15, according to monthly progress report.

“We have sought time from the prime minister to open this section any day after October 15,” MAN Siddique, managing director of Dhaka Mass Transit Company Ltd (DMTCL), the implementing agency of the project, told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said they sent a letter via the Road Transport and Highways Division last week.

Once opened, around 5 lakh people will be able to use the line daily and it would take only 38 minutes from Uttara to Motijheel, while it takes over

two hours in other modes.

THIRD METRO LINE

Physical work of MRT Line-5 (northern route) started on July 16 with the beginning of land development of its depot at Hemayetpur, said MAN Siddique.

On May 23, DMTCL hired a joint venture firm of TOA Corporation of Japan and Spectra Group of Bangladesh for the work at the cost of Tk 1,189 crore. They are mobilising their equipment and manpower and doing preparatory work, he said.

He added that they expected the prime minister would inaugurate the physical work of the Tk 41,239 crore project next month.

The project to build 20km rail line from Savar’s Hemayetpur to Bhatara via Gabtoli, Mirpur, and Gulshan would be implemented with Japanese loan and its deadline is 2028. The rail line with 14 stations will have underground and elevated sections.

Hardliners back

FROM PAGE 12

Most of those leaders have already been freed from jail.

Amid pressure from various quarters, Hefazat was forced to scrap its committee and announce a new one in June 2021, dropping most of its hardline leaders who have strong stances against the government.

The party insiders said leaders like Mamunul, Azizul, Junayed Al Habib, Abdur Rob Yusufi, Ahmed Abdul Kader, Khalid Saifullah and Mufti Harun Izhari were dropped from the central committee due to government pressure.

Hefazat first hogged the headlines in 2009 after protesting a draft of a national women’s development policy that provided equal inheritance rights to women.

After a year, Hefazat-e-Islam was formally launched in 2010 as an organisation based in Chattogram, under the leadership of the late Shah Ahmad Shafi.

Things, however, escalated after the 2013 mayhem at Shapla Chattar, after which Shafi and the then AL government got closer.

Asked, Hefazat Joint Secretary General Mohiuddin Rabbani told The Daily Star, “The inclusion of those leaders was made to reorganise, strengthen the party and bring pace to our movement and materialise our longstanding 13-point demand, along with some fresh ones, including the release of our arrested leaders.”

The 13-point demand includes reinstating the phrase “Absolute trust and faith in the Almighty Allah” in the constitution as one of the fundamental principles of the state policy, and passing a law to ensure capital punishment for maligning Allah, Islam and the Prophet and for smear campaigns against Muslims.

Abul Kasem Kasemi, a former Hefazat leader of Dhaka city unit, said that due to the government’s pressure, those leaders were not included in the new committee and thus, a division was created among the leaders.

“Hefazat will become stronger by bringing those leaders back,” Kasemi, also senior nayeib-e-ameer of Khelafat Andolon, told this correspondent.

As the current government’s tenure is near its end, Hefazat has apparently taken the step to strengthen the organisation and put pressure on the government to realise its demands, party insiders said.

Hefazat amir Muhibullah Babunagari presided over Saturday’s meeting, where a 12-member sub-committee, led by Sajedur Rahman, was also formed.

Poet, freedom fighter Mohammad Rafiq

FROM PAGE 12

Rafiq rose to prominence by infusing poetic fervour into the student movement in the 1960s, the Liberation War, and the anti-dictator movement in the 1980s.

On October 23, 1943, he was born to Samchuddin Ahmad and Reshatun Nahar in Baitpur village under Bemrata union of Bagerhat Sadar upazila. Rafiq, the eldest of eight children, spent his childhood in Bagerhat.

During the Liberation War, he took up arms and fought for Bangladesh’s independence. He also worked at

Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra.

After independence, he started his career as a college teacher before joining Jahangirnagar University. The poet retired in 2009.

Mohammad Rafiq was recognised with the Ekushey Padak in 2010 for his outstanding contributions to literature.

His other recognitions and awards include the Bangla Academy Award, Prothom Alo Best Book of the Year Award, and Gemcon Literary Award.

Rafiq’s first book of poetry, “Boishakhi Purnima”, was published in 1970.

His other notable works include “Dhulor Songsare Ei Mati”, “Kirtinasha”, “Kopila”, “Swadeshi Nishwas Tumimoy”, “Matsyagandha”, “Bishkhali Sondhya”, “Kalapani”, and “Troyee”.

One of his poems, “Khola Kobita”, against military ruler HM Ershad, drew a huge response.

Documents

FROM PAGE 2

to be involved in the scam. We will publish the details of the probe report tomorrow (Monday),” said Prof Dr Sharfuddin Ahmmed.

As per documents, Suzon Roy, 42, received the kidney from his sibling Susen Roy, 31, on July 17.

However, it was later revealed that the donor’s real name is Sumit Hawlader and he is not the recipient’s brother.

Organ donations beyond family members are strictly prohibited by the country’s law.

As such, the BSMMU authority formed a probe committee two days later on July 19 to investigate the matter.

The committee recorded the statements of the kidney donor, the recipient, their family members, the legal officer of the BSMMU, and the head of the transplant surgery team on July 20 and 23.

They also scrutinised the documents submitted by the donor and the recipient.

“The donor and the recipient have admitted that they falsified the papers. The law enforcers can now investigate how they did it,” said Prof Habibur Rahman Dulal, proctor of BSMMU, who led the transplant surgery team.

Sources said that Suzon reached Sumit with the help of an organ trafficking ring.

Suzon, who was a migrant worker in Greece, told Sumit that he could also be taken to Greece if he donated one of his kidneys to him.

Helper crushed

FROM PAGE 12

Hossain, driver of another bus of Paristhan Paribahan.

Jisan was first taken to a nearby hospital and then moved to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, where doctors declared him dead around 12:30pm.

The body was sent to the hospital’s morgue for autopsy.

Maldives SC bars Yameen from race

REUTERS, Male

The Maldives Supreme Court yesterday confirmed that jailed former president Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom is barred from the country's September presidential election.

The ruling is another setback for the Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM), which declared Yameen its candidate before his December conviction for corruption and money laundering over kickbacks from a private company while he was president.

The party last week challenged the EC's block on his candidacy because he is serving an 11-year jail sentence, arguing the commission had misinterpreted the constitutional prerequisites for presidential candidates.

The commission's decision "that Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom is ineligible... under article 109 is the correct decision," Justice Husnu Al Suood ruled.



Firefighters extinguish a fire in the university building following a shelling in the course of Russia-Ukraine conflict in Donetsk, Ukraine, early yesterday. Russia carried out several waves of attacks on Ukraine overnight, while Kyiv hit bridges in occupied territories yesterday.

ETHNIC VIOLENCE 15 houses set ablaze, man shot in Manipur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Fifteen houses were set ablaze in the Indian state of Manipur's Imphal West district and a man was shot at in a fresh bout of arson, officials said yesterday.

The incident took place on Saturday evening at Langol Games village as a mob went on the rampage, they said.

Security personnel fired several rounds of tear gas shells to disperse the mob and bring the situation under control, they added.

Fresh violence was also reported from Imphal East district's Checkon area where a large commercial establishment was torched on Saturday, officials said. Three nearby houses were also set on fire, they said.

The incidents of violence were reported amid the 24-hour general strike called by the coordinating committee of 27 assembly constituencies, which paralysed normal life in the Imphal valley on Saturday.

Meanwhile, the Manipur police stated that they have retrieved 1,195 stolen weapons from various locations within the state. According to their statement, 1,057 arms were found in the valley districts, and 138 arms in the hill districts.

China water-cannoned boat in South China Sea

Says Manila; Beijing claims Philippine ships trespassed, carried illegal materials

REUTERS, Manila

The Philippines yesterday accused China's coast guard of blocking and water-cannoning a Philippine military supply boat in the South China Sea, condemning the "excessive and offensive actions" against its vessels.

China's coast guard countered that it had implemented necessary controls in accordance with the law to deter Philippine ships, which it accused of trespassing and carrying illegal building materials.

After the incident, the US State Department said China's "repeated threats to the status quo in the South China Sea (were) directly threatening regional peace and stability" and that Washington stands with its Philippine allies in the face of such "dangerous actions".

"The United States reaffirms an armed attack on Philippine public vessels, aircraft, and armed forces - including those of its Coast Guard in the South China Sea - would invoke US mutual defense commitments under Article IV of the 1951 US Philippines Mutual Defense Treaty," it said in a statement.

China claims sovereignty over almost the entire South China Sea, an assertion rejected internationally, while Malaysia, Vietnam, Brunei, Taiwan and the Philippines have various claims to certain areas.

Beijing often irks its neighbours with maritime actions they call



aggressive and with longer-term activities like building islands on reefs and equipping them with missiles and runways.

A Chinese coast guard vessel on Saturday blocked and water-cannoned the chartered Philippine boat on a routine troop rotation and resupply mission, "in wanton disregard of the safety of the people on board and in violation of international law", the Armed Forces of the Philippines said.

It said in a statement the incident occurred near the Second Thomas Shoal, which Manila calls Ayungin Shoal, a submerged reef where a handful of its troops live on a rusty World War Two-era US ship that was intentionally grounded in 1999.

The Chinese coast guard's

"dangerous manoeuvres" prevented a second boat from unloading the supplies and completing the mission, it said.

"We call on the China Coast Guard and the Central Military Commission to act with prudence and be responsible in their actions to prevent miscalculations and accidents that will endanger peoples' lives," the armed forces said.

China Coast Guard spokesman Gan Yu responded that China has "indisputable" sovereignty over the Spratly Islands and their adjacent waters, including the Second Thomas Shoal.

"We urge the Philippine side to immediately stop its infringing activities in this waters," Gan posted on the coast guard's WeChat social media account.

Western bid to get Global South to back Ukraine doomed Says Russia

REUTERS

Moscow said yesterday that weekend talks in Saudi Arabia including the US, China and India aiming to establish principles for a peaceful end to Russia's war in Ukraine were a doomed Western attempt to align Global South behind Kyiv.

Senior officials from some 40 countries were attending the 2-day meeting, part of a push by Ukraine to build support beyond its core Western backers among countries that have been reluctant to take sides in the conflict. Russia was not invited.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov called the meeting "a reflection of the West's attempt to continue futile, doomed efforts to mobilise the international community, and more precisely, the Global South, even if not entirely, in support of the so-called Zelenskiy formula, which is doomed and untenable from the outset".

Ukrainian President Zelensky said he hoped the initiative would lead to a peace summit of leaders from around the world this autumn to endorse principles for a settlement.

Imran's lawyers can't reach him in Pakistan jail Says his spokesperson

REUTERS, Islamabad

Pakistani former prime minister Imran Khan's lawyers could not reach him yesterday after he spent the night in a jail near the capital following his arrest the previous day on a corruption conviction, a spokesperson said.

Khan was taken by police from his home in the eastern city of Lahore on Saturday and transferred to the jail just outside Islamabad, where a court had convicted him of charges arising over the sale of state gifts. The conviction likely means the cricket star-turned-politician will be disqualified from running in a national election.

"Attock prison is a 'No Go' area for (his) legal team as well as locals in the vicinity," said Naem Haider Panjotra, Khan's spokesperson for legal affairs, adding they were unable to take him food or arrange the signing of legal documents.

Pakistan's information minister referred a request for comment on Khan's access to his lawyers to provincial authorities in Punjab, where the jail is located. Punjab's top information official could not immediately be reached for comment.

It was not clear whether Khan would appear in court today, after a trial court's surprise weekend decision sentencing him to three years in prison.

The nationwide reaction was largely quiet, despite calls by his party on Saturday for nationwide peaceful protests.

SHIPWRECKS OFF ITALY 30 migrants missing in rough seas: survivors

AFP, Rome

At least 30 migrants are missing following two shipwrecks off the Italian island of Lampedusa, according to survivor testimony, the UN's migration agency said yesterday. Around 28 people were reported lost at sea by survivors on one boat, while three were reported missing from the second, after both went down in stormy weather on Saturday, said the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Both were rickety iron boats believed to have set off from Sfax in Tunisia on Thursday.

Cultural mediators with the IOM believed there were "at least 30 people missing" after speaking to the survivors, press officer Flavio Di Giacomo told AFP. An investigation into the shipwrecks has been opened in Agrigento, on the nearby Italian island of Sicily. Agrigento's chief of police Emanuele Ricifari said the traffickers would have known rough seas were forecast. "Whoever allowed them, or forced them, to leave with this sea is an unscrupulous criminal lunatic," he told Italian media. "Rough seas are forecast for the next few days. Let's hope they stop. It's sending them to slaughter with this sea," he said. As the stormy weather continued, firebrigade and alpine rescue teams were preparing yesterday to pull to safety some 20 migrants trapped on a rocky part of Lampedusa's coastline. The migrants have been there since late Friday, after their boat was tossed onto the rocks by strong winds. They have been provided with food, water, clothes and emergency thermal blankets by the Red Cross, but the coastguard has been unable to rescue them by sea due to the high waves.



Waterlogging in Ctg worsening

FROM PAGE 1

fertilisers, and industrial raw materials are among the goods.

Water Transport Cell, a private organisation responsible for operating lighter vessels, said they allocated 25 lighter vessels for unloading goods of 12 large vessels out of 25 at the outer anchorage.

But none of the lighter vessels could reach the anchorage due to rough seas, said a WTC official, adding that this disruption could damage goods.

Due to disruption in unloading at outer anchorage, vessels are having to stay longer.

Contacted, Md Omar Faruk, secretary of Chattogram Port Authority (CPA), said unloading from five bulk carriers and 10 container vessels berthed at the jetties was going on but at a slow pace.

MV Amis Brave, a bulk carrier with 59,000 tonnes of cement clinker, arrived at the outer anchorage on July 23, but it was yet to be emptied fully.

Zahur Ahmad, managing director of ship's local agent Seacom Shipping Lines Ltd, said the importer would have to pay around \$15,000 per day as fixed operating cost for the vessel.

Meanwhile, situation at the Khatunganj-Chaktai market, one of Bangladesh's largest wholesale hubs for household essentials, has

worsened as rainwater and tidal water inundated most areas, resulting in a 50-60 percent fall in trade activities.

Ahmedul Haque, executive member of Chaktai-Khatunganj Warehouses Samiti, said most traders and labourers were passing days without work as business activities have almost come to a halt.

"The roads have been submerged for the last two days, but water could not enter shops and warehouses."

Many low-lying areas are still waterlogged as it has been raining heavily over the last three days.

The Chattogram Met Office yesterday recorded 231.4mm rainfall, the highest in the district this year, in the 24 hours until 3:00pm, said Assistant Met Officer Jahirul Islam.

This worsened the waterlogging situation.

The Daily Star yesterday found ground floors of most houses and business establishments were flooded in Muradpur, Bahaddarhat, Badurtola, Kapasgola, Sholashahar, Prabartok, Agrabad, Halishahar, Chawk Bazar, KB Aman Ali Road, and DC Road in the port city.

There were fewer vehicles on the streets. Some vehicles broke down on waterlogged streets.

"I had to change three vehicles to travel around two kilometres from Sholashahar to Chawkbazar as the streets in our area went under knee-to-waist-deep water," said Maruf

Hossain, an employee of a company.

"My paddy fields have gone underwater, and the crops will be destroyed soon," said Mohammed Akbar, a farmer from Hathazari upazila.

Low-lying areas of Raozan, Rangunia, and Hathazari upazilas went underwater, said locals.

The Chattogram district administration evicted 800 families from risky hill slopes in the city as pouring rain caused landslides in the Tiger Pass area on Friday.

The Chattogram Development Authority, which is implementing a Tk 11,344 crore mega project to mitigate waterlogging, had said before the monsoon that this year's inundation would be less than that of previous years due to digging of many canals to mitigate the problem.

The city dwellers alleged that CDA gave them false hope.

Blaming the CCC for the waterlogging, CDA Chief Engineer Hasan Bin Shams said the drainage system has become ineffective as the CCC is not cleaning the drains properly.

Contacted, Mobarak Hossain, chairman of the CCC Standing Committee on Conservancy, said the CDA has been working with 36 major canals in the city, and until those are handed over to the CCC, they cannot do anything in the canals.



Hiroshima Mayor Kazumi Matsui and representatives of bereaved families enshrine a list of the atomic bomb victims at the cenotaph during a ceremony to mark the 78th anniversary of the world's first atomic bomb attack, at the Peace Memorial Park in Hiroshima, Japan yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Curb corruption in prison services

CAG audit report on Dhaka Central Jail demands proper response

We appreciate the efforts of the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) in unearthing large-scale financial irregularities in Dhaka Central Jail during 2019-20 fiscal year. According to *The Daily Star's* report on this issue, the CAG audit team has found 14 counts of irregularities in the amount of Tk 37.5 crore. These include giving prisoners substandard and insufficient food, overbilling, violating procurement rules, not depositing canteen revenue to the exchequer, etc.

We are well aware of the deplorable state of our prisons, as this has been reported many times before. Among the common challenges inmates face are unhygienic living conditions, overcrowding, torture by staff and other inmates, and a highly organised system of corruption that extends to extorting money for services that the jail should provide anyway. All this paints a grim picture of the plight of prisoners. The audit report only reinforces the reality of the subhuman conditions under which they are kept in jail.

It is especially shocking that auditors found putrid, low-quality rice in the Central Jail's silos. The jail authorities spent Tk 9.11 crore for rice that proved to be unfit for consumption. Not only were the meals of poor quality, even the portions of fish and meat served were less than the minimum required. There were no fruits either. The quality of food in general is so poor that many inmates are forced to pay to get food from outside. Earlier reports in this paper have also found that some prison staff extract a hefty sum of money from prisoners' families in exchange for basic facilities such as proper bedding, water for bathing and even access to toilet. We shudder to think what prisoners who cannot pay these "fees" must go through.

The CAG audit makes it clear that those members of the jail administration responsible for procurement and distribution of food enjoy impunity which allows them to continue to engage in irregularities. The audit is of only one fiscal year, however. It is essential that audit reports from previous and current years are revealed.

We urge the prison authorities and the higher-ups at the home ministry to critically examine not just how jail funds are being spent but also the overall conditions of our jails. They must identify those engaged in corrupt practices and punish them under the law. Prisoners are required to serve their jail time according to their convictions. But no one should be treated with such cruelty and neglect. It violates the basic principles of human dignity that every person is entitled to. The parliament, which has been presented with the audit report, must respond properly to put a stop to this.

Roads churning out dead bodies

Govt must take effective measures to make our roads safe

We are quite frustrated at the lack of efforts from government agencies to prevent the avalanche of road crashes. According to Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity, which compiled the figures of July, 576 people were killed and 1,055 injured in 505 road crashes last month. Reports by other road safety organisations are likely to follow, as they usually do, but there may not be much change in the numbers. These reports, unfortunately, never seem to be taken seriously by those in charge, who for years promised reforms to make our roads safe but never really delivered. Instead, they are often found to be taking decisions in favour of the powerful transport associations and owners who are mostly responsible for today's grim scenario.

For instance, the government has recently put on hold an order that set a limit to the economic life of buses and trucks, which, according to transport experts, is essential to ensure road safety – since old and unfit vehicles are a major reason behind road crashes. What could be the reason behind staying such a directive? Even one day without road limits is one day too many in our present context. Currently, there are over 74,000 registered buses, trucks and other commercial vehicles (as of April) that are past their economic lifespan, according to the limit set by the government in May this year. Just imagine the amount of damage that these and other soon-to-be-expired vehicles can do to us, including by polluting the air and contributing to road crashes.

Previously, we have seen how the authorities suspended the implementation of several sections of the Road Transport Act-2018 for months following a strike by transport associations in late 2019, and how they prepared a draft later to amend the act, reducing fines under 11 sections and punishment under four sections. All this is proof of the unchecked power and undue concessions that transport associations continue to enjoy while the authorities turn a blind eye to the woeful state of our road safety situation. This must change.

We urge the government to prioritise road safety over the demand of the transport associations. Experts have already identified the areas where work needs to be done. Bangladesh Jatri Kalyan Samity, for example, has particularly highlighted several factors – such as the increasing number of motorcycles, plying of slow-moving vehicles on highways, violation of traffic rules, faulty construction work on highways, dangerous overtaking, etc. – which must be addressed. Additionally, the importance of taking all unfit vehicles – and all unskilled/unlicensed drivers – out of our roads cannot be stressed enough. The authorities must take these steps for the sake of citizens.

Can BNP really put up a good fight?



Tanim Ahmed
is a freelance journalist
based in Dhaka.

TANIM AHMED

One cannot help but note the strange twist of fate in which the BNP finds itself in almost the same position as Awami League did in 1996. Back then, Awami League had demanded that BNP resign and hand over power to a caretaker government to oversee elections. BNP refused and doggedly went ahead with the elections. Awami League mounted a crippling street campaign and BNP relented and agreed to amend the Constitution to allow a caretaker government before it stepped down after just 12 days in office. BNP's half-hearted assembly at Dhaka's entry points on July 29, 2023 – the day after a huge rally in front of its central office – was slightly reminiscent of Awami League's campaign of laying siege on the capital, grounding life to a halt, in 1996. Even a section of the bureaucrats was openly coopted through the *Janatar Mancha*, which was probably the beginning of systematic politicisation of the bureaucracy.

Elections were held under the caretaker government in 1996, 2001 and 2008; in 2011, Awami League cancelled that provision through another constitutional amendment, and now keeps repeating that the election will be held according to the constitution. The suggestion that BNP's demand is unconstitutional conveniently ignores that, in statecraft, political legitimacy always triumphs over constitutional legitimacy. But political legitimacy does not emerge by itself. It must be convincingly illustrated from different social and political spheres. It must be demonstrated from the streets, visibly and volubly.

This is a game that is almost intrinsic to Awami League's DNA. The party has campaigned on the streets since before Bangladesh's independence, with the six-point movement and the non-cooperation movement leading up to the 1971 Liberation War, to name just a couple. When it comes to waging a popular campaign on the streets, Awami League is a veteran and a master of the game. In contrast, BNP is a novice and does not have the organisational wisdom or the cunning such a movement would require. The two times it won an election convincingly were when it did not have to fight for a conducive environment to



Without a concrete set of pledges that speaks to the heart of the people, BNP's one-point campaign to get the ruling regime to resign will keep falling on its face, or stumble on at best.

FILE PHOTO: STAR

begin with. It was already there in 1991, since all the parties had agreed to have a caretaker government, and in 2001, thanks to the 13th amendment, BNP did not have to worry about levelling the playing field before the elections.

After its landslide victory in 2008, Awami League conveniently removed the caretaker government provision from the Constitution through another amendment and ensured that the party would remain at the helm during elections. BNP's bid to boycott the next election in 2014 and thereafter destabilise the country through a vicious and bloody campaign of fire bombs on public transport did not work. In fact, it backfired, resulting in hundreds of deaths, thousands of injuries, and a frustrated electorate. BNP's lacklustre participation in the 2018 election was doomed, given Awami League's robust groundwork. In fact, the elections were so well engineered – with Awami League winning 302 seats and BNP just seven – that it became a matter of embarrassment even for the AL hawks.

on the ballot. BNP's failure to whip up frenzied popular support that would lend credence to its demand for political legitimacy, as opposed to Awami League's apparent pledge for constitutional legitimacy, is not that surprising, either. The party was born under the protection of the government and founded by a military strongman who was himself the president – rather similar to Ershad's Jatiya Party. It did not go through the test of fire as did Awami League, and has not shown the mettle for a taxing campaign. From its inception, BNP has been an amalgamation of anti-Awami League elements, without a distinct ideology. To make matters worse, the party appears to be held hostage by a presumptive crown prince who believes his only deserving ransom is a premiership of Bangladesh while he wiles away his time in London.

Since 2008, as Awami League systematically decimated BNP into a ghostly shadow of the formidable party it had appeared to be after the 2001 elections, BNP has not really spoken

to lose it soon after. And without a concrete set of pledges that speaks to the heart of the people, BNP's one-point campaign to get the ruling regime to resign will keep falling on its face, or stumble on at best.

Along the way, Awami League will do its best to get BNP off balance and off its track. Its numerous fronts, like the Jubo League and the Chhatra League, will be deployed as distractions. There will be counter programmes and snares. Then there will be the league of sycophantic civil servants who will dine them, and leak pictures of luncheons to the press. There will also be viral social media posts. All of it derail BNP's campaign, and it would be foolish to expect an open field. BNP will have to claw its way in. It has to be ready to take all of it in stride and be nimble, too. On the streets, the ruling party is a far more evolved political organism than the opposition. But, as it appears, BNP finds itself utterly out of depth against Awami League's guile and savvy.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Environmental protection laws need stricter enforcement

The Global Liveability Index 2023, published by Economist Intelligence Unit, listed Dhaka as the seventh least liveable city in the world. According to the Climate Risk Index (CRI) 2021, by German NGO Germanwatch, Bangladesh ranks seventh among countries most affected by extreme weather events in 2000-2019. And, according to the World Bank, air pollution caused 78,145-88,229 deaths in Bangladesh in 2019. The vast majority of these deaths were caused by exposure to PM2.5, which are tiny particles that can penetrate deep into the lungs and cause respiratory problems.

It is safe to say that Bangladesh is one of the most polluted countries in the world, with an average annual concentration of fine particulate matter (PM2.5) of 83.3 micrograms per cubic metre (µg/m³). The safe level of PM2.5 concentration is 5 µg/m³, according to the World Health Organization. Bangladesh has a rapidly growing number of vehicles, which contribute to air pollution in major cities like Dhaka and Chattogram. To add to this, large-scale industrial projects have been

undertaken in environmentally vulnerable locations. Under the Paris Agreement, as part of its Intended Nationally Determined Contributions, Bangladesh has agreed to decrease greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by five percent unconditionally and by a further 10 percent subject to financing from the international community.

Bangladesh has a number of environmental laws in place, but enforcement is often weak. The most important aspect of these laws is utilising various provisions of the Bangladesh Environment Conservation Act (BECA) 1995. It provides a comprehensive framework for environmental protection and establishes the Department of Environment (DoE) as the lead agency for environmental protection, giving it the power to regulate pollution, enforce environmental standards, and grant environmental clearances.

Meanwhile, the Environment Court Act, 2000 establishes specialised environment courts to deal with environmental offences and violations, meant to ensure speedy and effective resolution of

environmental disputes.

The Forest Act, 1927 regulates the conservation, management, and utilisation of forests in Bangladesh, addressing issues such as deforestation, illegal logging, and forest encroachment.

Bangladesh's Wildlife (Conservation and Security) Act, 2012 aims to protect and conserve wildlife species in Bangladesh, including endangered species, by prohibiting hunting, trading, and trafficking of wildlife.

For the protection, conservation, and management of water resources in the country, Bangladesh Water Act, 2013 focuses on covering issues such as water pollution, river basin management, and water allocation.

Despite these laws and regulations, environmental degradation continues to be a major problem. This is due in part to weak enforcement of environmental laws. There are a number of challenges to implementing environmental laws in Bangladesh such as a lack of political will, corruption, weak enforcement, public apathy, and lack of data. Transparency International Bangladesh

(TIB), in its recent research, highlighted several deficiencies in environmental legislation, and the DoE's failure to effectively execute existing laws, regulations, and supplementary laws. In 2019, the World Bank estimated that air pollution cost Bangladesh up to 4.4 percent of its GDP. A recent report by the WB concluded that 20 percent of deaths in the country occur due to air pollution.

To sustain the existence of human life, the environment must be saved. In order to overcome these challenges, the government needs to take more steps such as demonstrating a political will to protect the environment, strengthening enforcement of existing environmental laws, raising public awareness, and collecting data on pollution and climate vulnerability in different regions of the country.

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Those who have earned the top score of GPA5 deserve to be congratulated, but despite their good performance, all may not be able to enroll in preferred institutions.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

SSC EXAM RESULTS

What do the numbers mean?



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MANZOOR AHMED

More than two million children – girls slightly outnumbering boys – sat for the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examination this year. Results were published on July 28, which showed an average pass rate of 80.39 percent for the nine general education boards and the equivalent one technical and one madrasa education board. Almost nine percent of the examinees obtained the top score of grade point average (GPA) 5 – again, girls surpassed boys. This is reason enough for the satisfaction of the education authorities.

The SSC exam at the end of 10 years of schooling is a milestone in children's education journey and a cause for much anxiety for both children and their parents. The result has a large influence on further education and occupational courses for the child. Given its importance, what the numbers related to the results, collectively for society and personally for each child, mean is a legitimate question. The answer is not all that clear.

Those who have earned the top score of GPA 5 are happy and deserve to be congratulated. However, despite their good performance, all may not be able to enrol in preferred institutions or subjects at the tertiary stage of education. The combined performance at SSC and the next level of higher secondary certificate (HSC) examinations earn them only a ticket to sit for the admission test for institutions and subjects of their choice. The concerned education authorities, public or private, apparently do not have enough confidence in the SSC and HSC results to rely on these when selecting their students.

Moreover, to what extent do the top scorers' performance represent the performance of their schools and teachers? Private tutoring and coaching, even at expensive private schools, have become the norm. Time, effort, and money have to be spent by the students' parents to help prepare their children for the milestone public exams. Students and their parents are largely on their own in ensuring a fair start in life for the former. The large majority, whose families cannot muster the resources or are not capable of guiding and helping their children themselves, does not have that fair chance in life – an injustice to the children and a loss to the nation as a whole.

It is the plight of the 90-plus percent of the students not obtaining the coveted high scores – their educational opportunities and their life chances – that is the

true measure of performance in the school system. Public exams such as SSC and HSC can be an important measure of student learning when they meet two criteria: validity and reliability of the measurement. Without going into technicalities, the validity of a test is about whether the content and items of questions in the test represent the knowledge and skills learners are expected to acquire and whether the tests actually measure students' level of those skills and knowledge. Reliability refers to getting the same results when the tests are repeated. On both counts, the public exams are suspect and public perception about the results reflects that doubt. Not relying on the results in deciding admission of students to institutions at the next level of education and the great variation of aggregate results across education boards and across years raise these doubts.

In 2021, at the waning phase of the Covid-19 pandemic, the SSC exam

It would be reasonable to assume, given the moderate level of difficulty of the test, that most of the students (80 percent or more) should obtain letter-grade scores equivalent to GPA 3 to 5. The reality was that over two-thirds did not meet this expectation. Moreover, how reasonable is the practice of accepting a 33 percent score as a passing grade?

was held on a shortened syllabus for elective subjects only, inexplicably leaving out the core subjects of Bangla, English, and Math. The pass rate jumped to 93.58 percent. Tests on a shortened syllabus in 2022 also showed a high aggregate pass rate of 87.44 percent. Poor scores in English and Math have been mentioned by the education minister as reasons behind the low performance this year, even though the syllabus was again truncated for the tests. There were not enough school days to teach the total lesson content after the post-Covid resumption of classes.

The test results varied in part based on what was decided to be tested from year to year – a challenge to validity of tests. The range of scores for the different boards varied substantially. This year, for example,

among the nine general education boards, the average pass rate for Barishal is 90.18 percent, compared to 76.06 percent for Sylhet. Is it plausible that such a large difference in results is caused by a wide gap in the quality of instruction and performance of schools between the two divisions? There seems to be no good explanation except for a probable test reliability issue. Maintaining validity and reliability of large-scale tests are always a challenge, and call for continuing research and analysis of tests and modifying them accordingly by competent specialists.

Education commentators John Richards and Shahidul Islam cited a recent report of *The Economist* magazine, which outlined how India was doing a terrible job of ensuring that youngsters who thronged its classrooms pick up essential skills, and that much of this critique applied to other South Asian countries including Bangladesh. In *The Daily Star*, the two commentators wrote, "...we need an independent research initiative [in Bangladesh]... for the evaluation of students' learning and the system's performance."

When a foundation is not built of basic skills of reading and counting at the primary level for most students, the effect of this lingers. As part of Education Watch Report 2022, an assessment of students' learning performance was undertaken by administering a 90-minute test each on Bangla, English, and Math, with a sample of Class 8 and Class 9 students. The tests were prepared based on the Class 8 syllabus, deliberately pitching the items at a "middle level" of difficulty. The overall result showed that 36 percent of Class 8 students and 33.5 percent of Class 9 students obtained very low scores of below 40 percent. The scores for the two classes on tests based on the Class 8 syllabus suggest that there is a cumulative adverse effect on student learning, most likely due to the pandemic-induced school closure.

It would be reasonable to assume, given the moderate level of difficulty of the test, that most of the students (80 percent or more) should obtain letter-grade scores equivalent to GPA 3 to 5. The reality was that over two-thirds did not meet this expectation. Moreover, how reasonable is the practice of accepting a 33 percent score as a passing grade? This suggests that a student is regarded as performing adequately at grade level even if she/he has yet to learn two-thirds of the content of a subject specified for the grade.

A detailed analysis of the SSC results is likely to show a similar pattern of student performance as was found in the Education Watch study. Is this level of learning outcome from our schools acceptable? It is relevant to ask how the introduction of the ambitious new school curriculum will work unless the various obstacles to grade level performance of students are recognised and addressed.

The World Cup that keeps on giving



Raiyan Binte Rafiq is pursuing an LLM, while freelancing for Football.Co and INDIVISA to cover UEFA Women's Champions League and Women's Super League. She also oversees recruitment in Next Level Sports Management, based in Bangladesh.

RAIYAN BINTE RAFIQ

Defending World Cup Champions, the US, are out. Olympic champions, Canada: gone. South American champions, Brazil: crashed out. Germany: dumped in the group stages. Spain was goal-shy and shocked. European champions, England, struggled against Haiti. The 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup has undoubtedly been the most open one ever.

Kicking off just a fortnight ago, the tournament has kept up with the theme of the 2022 men's World Cup – there have been goals, epic celebrations, shocks of grand proportions, and the unexpected rise of underdogs. This World Cup has been the gift that keeps giving.

The very first night, an inspired New Zealand (co-hosts with Australia) shocked the tournament's dark horse, Norway, and won their first World Cup match. When the final whistle blew, Eden Park stadium broke into euphoria. Captain Ali Riley's passionate and heartfelt post-match interview made headlines. "The energy helped us get through it. This morning, something really tragic happened," said Riley, referring to the shooting incident that had taken place just hours before kick-off, causing numerous fatalities, in downtown Auckland. "We wanted to bring something positive tonight. And we thought of the victims and the first responders, and they made us so proud. And we wanted to just help

Cup, her brilliance and leadership gave Ireland a faint hope of winning its first ever World Cup match. Scoring directly from the corner, an "Olimpico," in the first six minutes, McCabe set the entire stadium ablaze in jubilation. Nigeria, on the other hand, one of many teams that have fought tooth and nail against their Federation for support and finance, silenced the co-host Australia with

Often, a World Cup match will leave you feeling divided. Before the tournament, the legendary Marta, one of the most decorated players to ever play, announced this would be her last World Cup. Many believed that this would be her "Messi moment." Then again, when does football really go the way you want it to?

a win that will live long in African football folklore. Nouhaila Benzina of Morocco made history as the first player to wear a hijab while competing at a senior-level global tournament. She stood firm against the tirade of South Korean attacks and inspired her country to its first ever World Cup victory. A few days later, the Morocco team's resilience

despite them already being knocked out of the tournament. At that moment, it did not matter. Some of these players probably never imagined that one day they would be playing on such a big stage. Despite going on to lose 6-3, their determination, and the thrill they exuded while playing, never faded – and the fans loved it. In fact, at one point, even some French supporters wanted the referee to give Panama a goal, just to witness the purity of the happiness it brought to the team's fans and players.

Often, a World Cup match will leave you feeling divided. Brazil had to win their final group match in order to advance. Before the tournament, the legendary Marta, one of the most decorated players to ever play, announced this would be her last World Cup. After their 2022 Copa America win, many (including myself) believed that this would be their year; that perhaps Marta, too, would have her "Messi moment," and that her legacy would be complete. Then again, when does football really go the way you want it to? Brazil's opposition, Jamaica, who had not conceded a single goal in the tournament so far, had its own adversaries to face. Since 2008, the team has been disbanded, defunded, and ignored. In 2014, Bob Marley's daughter, Cadella Marley, received a flyer from her son's school coach, asking for donations to help restart the women's football team. She did everything in her power to help the "Reggae Girls." And yet, their federation continued failing them, cutting off funding, and making them play against local clubs to save money instead of playing other countries. A few months prior to the tournament, a player's mother set up a GoFundMe page to help the team finance its journey to Australia. Now, the Jamaica team has made everyone

take notice of them as they withstood the torrent of crosses Brazil put into their box. When the final whistle blew, Jamaica's coach ran around attempting cartwheels like he had promised to if they made it to the knock-out stages. Khadija "Bunny" Shaw fell to the floor and broke into tears as Marta, dejected but somehow still content, walked up to her. For a few long minutes, the two attackers from two different countries, representing two different generations, both of whom had their own battles to fight, embraced each other. It was sportsmanship at its finest, where Shaw gave her condolences and perhaps even thanked Marta for the contribution she made to this beautiful game. After all, who can forget Marta's inspiring plea in 2019: "Women's football depends on you to survive."

As major shockwaves rumble through the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023, each as volcanic as the last, a newfound admiration is engulfing women's football. The tectonic plates of the sport are shifting, paving the way for a new generation of footballers to spread their wings. As we bid farewell to our Martas, Rapinoes, and Sinclairs, and welcome our Dumornays, Caicedos, and Shaws, it is essential to acknowledge those who came before and fought to elevate this beautiful game to its current heights and beyond. Everyone wanted to be Marta, and now anyone can be, *because* of Marta.



Brazil's Marta gives the first kick of the match against Jamaica on Wednesday, August 2, 2023.

PHOTO: REUTERS

bring something amazing today."

The now-eliminated most successful women's national team, the US, kicked off its campaign against debutants Vietnam. On paper and logically, this was the most uneven matchup. And while a three-nil scoreline does not flatter Vietnam, it does reflect the brilliance of Vietnamese keeper, Tran Thi Kim Thanh, who made several important saves to keep the scoreline down. When England took on Haiti, they were made to work extremely hard for the three points. Haiti's 19-year-old Melchie Dumornay mesmerised the crowd with her speed, tactics, and physicality which seemed way beyond her age and maturity.

Colombia put on a show that deserves its laurels. Beating South Korea and then serving one of the shocks of the tournament by beating Germany, Linda Caicedo let herself become known on the biggest stage in women's football. Just 18 years old, Caicedo has played three World Cups this year: U18, U20, and now the Women's World Cup. If that was not inspiring enough, Caicedo's story is even more profound beyond football. Hers is a story of resilience, perseverance, and self belief, which helped the youngster recover from cancer at the age of 15. There is a reason why her first coach said, "Caicedo is one of those people who was touched by God, who was born for this."

Katie McCabe of Ireland is a natural-born leader. Helping her country qualify for its first World

152ND BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF ABANINDRANATH TAGORE

“The Ever-Falling Darkness of History”

Abanindranath became the center of the renaissance in Indian art from about the turn of the twentieth century. He set the agenda in several ways: thematically, because of the kinds of subjects that he chose to paint; stylistically, because of the techniques that he both used himself and taught to his students; institutionally, because of the schools and salons of art that he either headed or founded.

ANANYA VAJPEYI

In the opening years of the twentieth century, Abanindranath Tagore (1871–1951), Rabindranath's nephew and a prominent artist living at the Tagore palazzo in Calcutta, Jorasanko, made a trio of paintings depicting the Emperor Shah Jahan (r. 1628–58) at different stages of his life, together with his great monument to love, the Taj Mahal. Abanindranath painted Shah Jahan thinking about the Taj, then supervising its building, and finally, on his deathbed, gazing at it from a distance. The paintings were shown at the Durbar in Delhi in 1903, and one of them, *The Passing of Shah Jahan*, won the silver medal in a contest there.

The Durbar itself was a Mughal institution—it meant, literally, “holding court” — eagerly inherited by the British crown that controlled most of India. The British defeated Bahadur Shah Zafar in 1857–58 and symbolically took over the court of the Mughals. The Delhi Durbar of 1903 marked the coronation of Edward VII as emperor of India.

Abanindranath's works, displayed on this occasion, should have read like an ironic commentary on the evanescence of power and on the pathos of mortality that afflicts all human endeavour, even the greatest architectural project of one of the most powerful monarchs ever to rule India. In giving Abanindranath the prize, however, the British authorities evidently missed the irony altogether.

In his essay on Rabindranath's relationship to Orientalism and the Orient, Amit Chaudhuri describes Abanindranath's paintings as “faux Mughal,” with “their life—blood partly in the kitschy, the popular. He claims that this is a historically accurate description, rather than a value judgment, but it's difficult not to sense Chaudhuri's disapproval of what he sees as the unreconstructed Orientalism of Abanindranath's art — even if he grudgingly admits that the artist is considered to be “the father of modern Indian painting.”

Several major art historians writing about Abanindranath and the Bengal School of painting associated with him and his students have examined in detail how he was trained and promoted by his teacher, E. B. Havell (1861–1934), and appropriated by Sister Nivedita (1867–1911). He thus became drawn, willy-nilly, into both Orientalist and nationalist projects that were unfolding in tandem in colonial Calcutta between roughly 1895 and 1915. Even Chaudhuri's incisive reading of the complex lifeworld of the Tagores and of their prodigious creative output as a family, which leads him to identify Rabindranath's Orientalism as “revisionist,” does not give Abanindranath his due.

The consensus in the art historical scholarship is that Abanindranath was a preeminent figure in his cultural context, but that he cannot be counted as a truly gifted painter. Too much about his art reflects the influence of those with whom he was in conversation—from the first systematic historian of Indian art, the Englishman Havell, to Indian intellectuals involved in Swadeshi politics like his uncle Rabindranath Tagore, to the Japanese painter Kakuzo Okakura who was trying to theorize an ‘Asian’ art, to his colleagues and acolytes at the Calcutta Art School, at the Bichitra Club in Jorasanko, and at Kala Bhavan, the art department at Visva Bharati University, many of whom became increasingly enamoured of the traditional arts of Bengal.

That such a diverse range of understandings about the importance of pictorial and sculptural arts for Indian nationalism could all converge at the Jorasanko house and in Santiniketan, is a testament to Abanindranath's role as a magnet for vanguard thinking about art in his time. Alas, it is also the reason why most critics regard his work as a clear glass through which to see the ideas of others, rather than admiring it for the images that reflect a genius all his own.

The existing scholarship in English



The Passing of Shah Jahan. Painting by Abanindranath Tagore. 1902

takes Abanindranath seriously as an art theorist, an institution builder, a nationalist, and a hub for Bengali, Indian, Asian, and European art practice as well as for the exchange of ideas across significant cultures of modern art throughout the pre-Independence period. But his critics are concerned about the numerous influences upon Abanindranath, and the ripple effects of his being serially taken up with different kinds of art (Western, Japanese, Chinese, Persian, Buddhist, Rajput, Mughal, or tribal Bengali) upon his disciples and peers.

He learned so much from so many sources, evolved so continuously as an artist and thinker, and painted in such a bewildering array of styles over the course of five decades, that it might seem patently impossible to discover in his oeuvre a single answer to his search for an Indic “self.”

Abanindranath became the center of the renaissance in Indian art from about the turn of the twentieth century. He set the agenda in several ways: thematically, because of the kinds of subjects that he chose to paint; stylistically, because of the techniques that he both used himself and taught to his students; institutionally, because of the schools and salons of art that he either headed or founded; theoretically, because of his writings and publicly expressed views on art; and finally, ideologically, because of his dealings with all of the major practitioners, historians, ideologues, and institution builders of the times who had anything whatsoever to do with Indian art.

In addition to his prominent, indeed towering presence in the world of art and aesthetics, he was also directly involved in nationalist political activity, especially during the Swadeshi movement (c. 1900–1910). From about 1900 to 1925, Abanindranath and his mentors and disciples dominated the world of Indian art from Calcutta.

Abanindranath's Shah Jahan triad is supposed to convey *samvega*, the aesthetic shock that the painter experienced in his encounter with Indian history, particularly the history of Indian art, as expressed through both the Mughal miniature form and the sublime architectural form of the Taj Mahal. Abanindranath went on to paint a number of works depicting the Mughals, specifically the great emperors Jahangir (r. 1605–1627) and Aurangzeb “Alamgir” (r. 1658–1707).

He also painted the tragic figures of Dara Shikoh (1615–1659) (Aurangzeb's older brother and heir apparent, whom he had assassinated) and Bahadur Shah Zafar (1775–1862), the last Mughal, who was defeated and imprisoned by the British in 1857, and made to endure the execution of his sons in Delhi, eventually dying in captivity in a jail in Burma five miserable years later.

Far from being an expression

of kitsch, an Orientalist reflex, a programmatic appropriation of an especially high moment in precolonial Indian art, or an ideologically driven revivalism of the Mughal miniature form, Abanindranath's engagement with Shah Jahan and other protagonists of the Mughal dynasty is at the very heart of his reaction to the history of India and its traditions of representational painting.

Shah Jahan Dreaming of the Taj Mahal, *The Building of the Taj Mahal*, and *The Passing of Shah Jahan* all show us, not the Taj Mahal directly or in detail, nor Shah Jahan alone, but the emperor in the act of looking at the Taj — “looking,” that is to say, with his imagination, with his memory, as well as with his physical eyes, at a structure that stands for a number of things at once.

These are: his undying love for his dead queen, Mumtaz Mahal; his own erstwhile prowess as a monarch, once able to commission and supervise the building of so magnificent a monument; the fleeting nature of human life contrasted with the abiding



Rabindranath Tagore singing to the accompaniment of esraj played by Abanindranath Tagore, c. 1888, Jorasanko.

nature of beauty itself; the political power and aesthetic refinement of the Mughals, rulers of Hindustan such as were never seen before or since; and last but not least, the facticity, the eternity, the intransigence, of Death.

Mention is made of the death of Abanindranath's young daughter in the Calcutta plague of 1902, an incident that by the painter's own admission had left him depressed and filled with thoughts of mortality as he worked on *The Passing of Shah Jahan*, showing the emperor's daughter Jahanara sitting at the foot of his deathbed.

A 1915 issue of a Calcutta journal, *The Modern Review*, carries a small piece by the historian Jadunath Sarkar, titled “The Passing of Shah Jahan.” Painted thirteen years earlier,



Night at the Shalimar - The Emperor Shah Jahan. Painting by Abanindranath Tagore

Abanindranath's work by the same title is the frontispiece of this issue of the magazine. Sarkar's account reconstructs the last seven years of Shah Jahan's life, from 1658 to 1666. In this period, Shah Jahan was imprisoned in Agra Fort by his son Aurangzeb, subjected to neglect as well as mental and physical abuse, divested of his considerable property, continuously spied upon, repeatedly insulted to his face and in writing, and forced to stand by helplessly as Aurangzeb had two of his brothers, including the crown prince and Shah Jahan's favourite son, Dara Shikoh, eliminated.

He became very pious during his final years in captivity and was cared for by his daughter, Jahanara Begum (the female figure in Abanindranath's painting). When he passed away after a brief illness in 1666, his body was denied a grand funeral and instead buried very quietly and simply in the Taj Mahal, in a grave alongside his dead wife, Mumtaz Mahal. Not only did Aurangzeb not come to the burial; he did not even come to pay his respects to the grieving Jahanara until a month later.

In 1916, as part of the collection titled *Balaka*, Rabindranath published a poem titled “Shah Jahan.” This poem was probably written in 1914, soon after Rabindranath won his Nobel Prize for literature. Abanindranath's painting, Sarkar's history, and Rabindranath's poem all return to the same subject: the passing of Shah Jahan. Each one of these is a work beautiful in its own medium and in its own way.

There can be no doubt that both Sarkar's historical account and Rabindranath's poem are in dialogue with Abanindranath's painting, so closely do the three works resemble one another, and such is the unity of mood between them. Rabindranath's “Shah Jahan” is addressed directly to the emperor and chides him for seeking “To conquer time's heart / Through beauty” (ll. 43–44). The Taj Mahal, radiant, pearlescent, is “one solitary tear” that the grief-stricken Shah Jahan hopes will “hang on the cheek of time” (ll. 15–16).

How wonderful the deathless clothing
With which you invested
Formless death . . . ! (ll. 45–47)
Poet-Emperor,
This is your heart's picture,
Your new Meghaduta . . . (ll. 59–61)

But Shah Jahan cannot change the logic of human history, human love, or human memory, all of which follow the arrow of time. Abanindranath, Sarkar, and Rabindranath all seem to be spiralling in ever-widening loops away from any kind of straightforward allegory about the mortality of the flesh, the immortality of a thing of beauty, the capacities and incapacities of power, and the persistence or the frailty of love. They seem also to

be distancing themselves from an obvious commentary about the nature of the Mughal Empire or by analogy, the British Empire — although such a commentary could indeed be read into these three meditations on the passing of Shah Jahan.

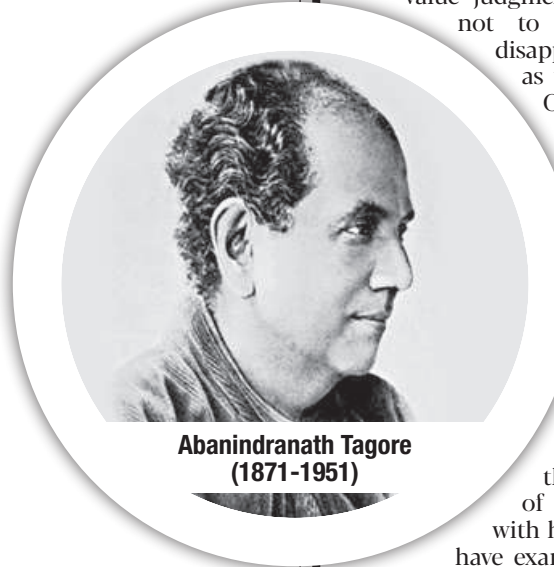
In this search for an Indic tradition and an Indic idiom, Abanindranath inevitably turned to some of the best-known stories and characters that could be found in Indian literature, mythology, religion, and history, and set about illustrating familiar textual narrations with novel pictorial depictions. He also simultaneously relied upon his contemporary art historian friends and colleagues, who were during the same years writing the first accounts of Indian art through the ages, to supply a chronology as well as geography of styles and themes.

His milieu in colonial Bengal was predominantly Orientalist, and Abanindranath, though brilliant in his own way, did not have his uncle Rabindranath's unique ability to withstand the force of Orientalism and to develop a highly individual, fiercely non-conformist approach to the Indic past. Many, if not most, Indian Indologist scholars, artists, and intellectuals in places like Calcutta and Poona in the early twentieth century were Orientalists to some degree or other: this does not mean we dismiss their historicism, their philology, or their politics as being in bad faith. Colonized nationalists are often Orientalists: this ought to be taken as a sort of sutra of colonial history.

I began with a comment on the irony of the British administration giving Abanindranath an award for painting an aged emperor looking at his prize possession—the Taj Mahal, India's contribution to the seven wonders of the world—even at the very moment when it slipped out of the view of his dying eyes, about to close forever. As the Mughals disappeared into the ever-falling darkness of history, so would the British, if they but knew it.

Perhaps the first step toward regaining India's lost sovereignty was the intuition of the finitude of sovereignty; the knowledge that the self transcends even the most awesome capacities of sovereign power, remains beyond the reach of all historically known or as-yet-unimagined forms of power, articulates itself in its quest for a limitless freedom. The certainty that power ends is only a reminder that the self does not. The Tagores sought more than India's liberation from British rule. They sought self-knowledge.

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Abanindranath Tagore (1871-1951)

Abanindranath's Shah Jahan triad is supposed to convey *samvega*, the aesthetic shock that the painter experienced in his encounter with Indian history, particularly the history of Indian art, as expressed through both the Mughal miniature form and the sublime architectural form of the Taj Mahal.

Tamim expected to start net session from Aug 19

SPORTS REPORTER

Former ODI captain Tamim Iqbal went to the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium yesterday while national team players were undergoing the last day of their fitness drills, ahead of skill training camp which begins on August 8.

It was Tamim's first visit to the 'home of cricket' in Mirpur since having announced his decision to step down as ODI captain.

The 34-year-old spent time in the medical department and, according to sources, the southpaw discussed his rehabilitation process with doctors. He later visited the cricket operations department before leaving Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) premises.

Tamim's initial two-week rest is set to continue till August 11, following which he will go through rehabilitation.

According to the chairman of the cricket operations committee, Jalal Yunus, the left-handed opener is expected to start net sessions from August 19.

"We had a meeting today (yesterday) and Tamim is expected to undergo further rehabilitation with [fitness coach] Nick Lee for the first week from tomorrow (today). If things go well, Tamim may start working at the nets from August 19," Jalal told The Daily Star yesterday.

Tamim's current rehabilitation plan is to overcome injury issues and return for Bangladesh's home ODI series against New Zealand right before the World Cup in India.

Pakistan to send team to India for World Cup

AGENCIES

Pakistan has decided to send its cricket team to India for the upcoming 2023 ODI World Cup.

This comes after Pakistan's foreign office cleared the decks for the team's participation in the World Cup that will be held in India during October-November.

A release from the foreign ministry said that Pakistan will be sending its national team and that sports should not be mixed with politics.

"Pakistan believes that the state of bilateral relations with India should not stand in the way of fulfilling its international sports-related obligations," the release said.

The ministry however maintained that the safety and security of the team will be of paramount importance.

"We expect that the full safety and security of the Pakistan cricket team will be ensured during its visit to India," the release said.

The neighbouring countries, who share fraught relations, have played each other only in multi-team events at neutral venues over the last decade.

Earlier, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had formed a committee to review and decide on Pakistan's participation in the World Cup.

The committee was scheduled to meet under the chairmanship of foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto and Zaka Ashraf, the chairman of the PCB Management Committee.

The 14-member committee includes various ministers and advisers, including the foreign minister, the interior minister, the law minister, the Inter-Provincial Coordination minister, the information and broadcasting minister, the adviser on Kashmir affairs, the adviser on establishment, the foreign secretary, PSPM, as well as representatives from secret agencies and other sensitive departments.

Sources added that there was no objection to Pakistan playing in India, but the committee wanted assurance that the players, officials, fans and media would not face any problems.

Tearful end to Rapinoe's WC career

REUTERS

Megan Rapinoe did not get the Women's World Cup farewell she wanted on Sunday, a penalty that sailed over the crossbar the last international play by one of the United States' most decorated players.

American soccer's charismatic figurehead was sent on as a substitute in extra time but the last-16 game against old foes Sweden ended 0-0 before the Swedes won the penalty shootout 5-4.

Rapinoe was of three American players to miss her spot-kick.

"This is the balance to the beautiful side of the game. I think it can be cruel and (it was) just not our day," Rapinoe told Fox Sports.

"I still just feel really grateful and joyful."

Renowned for her reliability as a penalty taker, Rapinoe said missing one in the final moment of her career felt like "a sick joke".

She tearfully embraced her coach on the pitch before linking up with her team mates one last time while the Sweden players celebrated to Abba's "Dancing Queen".

"I've loved playing for this team and playing for this country. It's been an honour," she said.

Rapinoe won the Golden Boot, Golden Ball and Ballon d'Or for her role in the United States' victorious 2019 World Cup campaign and her personality and activism off the pitch took her star to new heights in a country where not many female soccer players have achieved household fame.

"I've always tried to play the game the right way and to go about things the right way," she told reporters in Auckland.

"I've always tried to use whatever platform we have - and this platform obviously was built long before I got here."

The 38-year-old Rapinoe played few minutes at her fourth World Cup, embracing a role



largely as a mentor to a young and inexperienced U.S. team after playing a key part in helping the team win the 2015 and 2019 world crowns.

Her most memorable moment, however, came in 2011 when she sent a laser-like cross to Abby Wambach in the quarter-final against Brazil to set up what was voted the greatest goal in the history of the tournament.

Rapinoe plans to finish her club season with National Women's Soccer League side OL Reign before retiring and shows no signs of retreating from public life after a career spent championing social causes.

She was a leading voice for the

captained Bangladesh in five ODI matches, winning three which includes the 2-1 series triumph over India at home last year, is also in the running.

From the current crop of players, veteran Mushfiquir Rahim is another who has captained the side in 37 games to win 11. With vast experience on his side, he may be unwilling to take on the role. Naturally, Liton was set to step in as skipper but the cricket board wants a long-term solution.

"We have not discussed captaincy yet. We have to take a break and think about it after taking some time. As I have said before, if it was one series, we could have gone with the vice-captain but now we have to think about the long term," Nazmul told reporters on Saturday while attending a programme to commemorate Sheikh Kamal's 74th birth anniversary.

The BCB president, however, was wary of suggesting Liton's name for such a big event as the World Cup.

"Shakib is the obvious choice [as captain] but can you say he will play for two years? We don't know that and so we need to know his plan and talk with the board.

"I think the easiest choice is Shakib and there is no problem with it," Nazmul had said regarding Shakib.

According to a BCB source close to the development, the BCB president is set to discuss captaincy with the candidates on Tuesday. Shakib would be the chief choice for the board and the BCB president would query Shakib regarding his interest in taking over.

Shakib has also captained the side in seven ODI World Cup matches, winning three and losing four. Given the Tigers' aspirations for a big performance in the upcoming event, BCB would want a performing captain leading from the front but keeping in mind Shakib's contribution in the 2019 World Cup, only his availability remains the question going forward.

Attendance record set

AFP, Melbourne

The Women's World Cup in Australia and New Zealand is the best-attended edition of the tournament ever, FIFA said on Sunday, surpassing Canada in 2015.

Prior to the evening game between holders the United States and Sweden in Melbourne, a total of 1,339,331 people had been through the turnstiles, FIFA said.

An attendance of 27,706 in Melbourne pushed the overall number to a Women's World Cup record.

The previously best-attended Women's World Cup was in Canada with a total of 1,353,506.

On that occasion there were fewer teams and therefore fewer matches -- 52 games compared with 64 this time.

The record will be extended further with the current tournament still in the last-16 stage. The average crowd at this World Cup is just over 26,000.



ICC WC trophy in town

SPORTS REPORTER

The ICC Cricket World Cup 2023 trophy arrived in Bangladesh in the early hours of Monday part of the official Trophy Tour.

On the first day of its three-day tour, the official photoshoot of the trophy will take place at service area 1, of the Padma Multipurpose Bridge, Mawa End at 3:00pm today.

The trophy will be on display tomorrow at the Sher e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur from 9:00am to 12:00pm for the members of the men's and women's national team, current and former cricketers, cricket officials, organisers and members of the media.

The third and final day of the trophy tour will allow the general people to witness the trophy from up close as the public display of the trophy is scheduled from 11:00am to 8:00pm at the Bashundhra City Shopping Mall in Dhaka.

The trophy tour was launched on June 27, 2023 in India to mark the 100 days' countdown of the event. Over the course of 100 days that follow, the trophy will take travel to 18 ICC member countries.



Bangladesh Army hold East Bengal to 2-2 draw

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Army Football Team registered their first point in the Durand Cup with a 2-2 draw against East Bengal at the Salt Lake Stadium in Kolkata yesterday.

The Bangladeshi outfit, who suffered a 5-0 thrashing against Super Giants Mohun Bagan in their opening fixture on August 3, came back from two goals down against East Bengal in yesterday's match.

Spanish forward Saul Crespo gave the Kolkata giants a 34th minute lead from the penalty spot before Javier Siverio, another Spaniard of the ISL outfit, doubled their advantage four minutes into the first-half stoppage time.

The Bangladeshi team, who took a number of players from top-tier outfit Mohammedan SC on loan for this assignment, scored two late goals to stun the local side.

Shahriar Emon pulled one back in the 88th minute with a left-footed placing shot before Meraj Proddhan scored the equaliser in the sixth minute of added time.

Bangladesh Army will play their last group-stage match against Punjab on August 10.

A total of 24 teams including two invited foreign teams are taking part in the 132nd edition of the Durand Cup, considered to be one of the oldest football tournaments in the world.



Thailand's Nitithorn Thippong prevailed in the Mandiri Indonesia Open yesterday after a gripping finish at Pondok Indah Golf Course. Having started the day with a comfortable five-shot margin, he was pushed all the way to the finish line, closing with an even-par 72, for an 18-under-par total, and a two-stroke triumph over Australian Scott Hend, Steve Lewton from England and Chinese-Taipei's Lee Chieh-po, who all carded 68s. Bangladesh's Siddikur Rahman, meanwhile, finished the 500,000-dollar event at 51st position, earning 2150 dollars in the process. This was the first event of the Asian Tour season following a three-month midseason break.

PHOTO: AFP



‘I won’t return home without my boys’

Says father of two teens missing since Saturday’s trawler capsizes

TANJIL HASAN, Munshiganj

A heart-breaking scene unfolded on the Padma riverbank as a father cried out for the safe return of his two sons, who went missing after Saturday night’s trawler capsizing incident in Munshiganj.

“I won’t return home without my boys!” exclaimed Arif with a heavy chest.

He said ever since the accident took place, he had been waiting by the riverbank for the rescue of his sons.

Arif is from Sirajdikhan upazila’s Koirakhola village. His two sons, Nava, 5, and Turan, 7, have remained missing since the picnic trawler sank in a tributary of Padma river near Raskathi village under Louhajang upazila.

At least seven bodies, including those of four children, have so far been recovered till the filing of this report last night.

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Members of the navy, coast guard, naval police, and fire service conduct a joint search and rescue operation yesterday to find three children who are missing since the trawler capsized in Munshiganj the night before.

PHOTO: STAR

Hardliners back into Hefazat fold

RASHIDUL HASAN

Hefazat-e-Islam leaders who are known for their staunch opposition to the Awami League government have been reinstated to the Qawmi madrasa-based Islamist organisation’s central committee.

Hefazat took the decision at an emergency meeting at a madrasa in the capital’s Khilgaon on Saturday.

Mamunul Haque and Azizul Haque Islamabadi are among those reinstated.

With several cases against him, Mamunul has been behind bars since 2021. The year before, he was made the organisation’s joint general secretary.

Azizul, who was recently freed from jail, was made an organising secretary that same year.

After the new committee was formed in late 2020, following the death of Hefazat amir Ahmad Shafi, the organisation made headlines as it strongly opposed the installation of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman’s sculpture in Dholaipara of Dhaka, and issued many anti-government statements.

The organisation came to the limelight again when it opposed the Bangladesh visit of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on March 26, 2021.

Following clashes between Hefazat and law enforcers from that day till March 28, around 17 people died in different parts of the country.

At least 154 cases were filed against Hefazat men in the following days.

Meanwhile, around 1,230 people, including more than 30 top Hefazat leaders like Mamunul, were arrested, according to the police headquarters data.

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Algorithm finds 600-foot asteroid near Earth



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

An algorithm has spotted a nearly 600-foot, potentially hazardous asteroid near Earth.

The tool is intended to find dangerous objects in Earth’s vicinity, to allow scientists to better track them and understand any threat they might pose.

The new discovery is the system’s first detection of a “potentially hazardous” asteroid, a term that is used for those rocks that are near enough and possibly threatening enough to cause a danger to Earth. An asteroid gets the designation if it is within about 5 million miles of Earth’s orbit.

The asteroid, known as 2022 SF289, does not pose any threat to Earth for the foreseeable future. Its closest approach brings it 140,000 miles from Earth – closer to us than the Moon, but still far enough away to be safe.

But the creators of the algorithm said that it showed that the system could be used to detect others in the future – some of which may pose a threat to life on Earth.

“By demonstrating the real-world effectiveness of the software that Rubin will use to look for thousands of yet-unknown potentially hazardous asteroids, the discovery of 2022 SF289 makes us all safer,” said scientist Ari Heinze, the principal developer of the algorithm, known as Heliolinc3D.

Russia launches a new burst of missile attacks

3 killed in Ukraine

REUTERS

Russia launched a multi-wave attack on Ukraine with 70 air-assault weapons including cruise and hypersonic missiles as well as Iranian-made drones, Kyiv’s Air Force said yesterday, and at least 10 missiles appear to got through air defences.

Three people have died in the night of intense shelling across Ukraine, according to officials.

Local media said a worker at a grain silo had been wounded in the overnight attack, which appeared to be focused on an area of western Ukraine, far from the front line.

President Volodymyr Zelensky said people had been killed and wounded in an earlier hit to a blood transfusion centre, aeronautics firm and a building of University of Economics and Trade.

Rescue workers were extinguishing a fire at the scene in transfusion centre, he said, describing the strike as a “war crime.” He did not say how many casualties there were.

Ukraine’s air defence destroyed 30 out of 40 cruise missiles and all 27 of the Shahed drones that Russia launched overnight, the Air Force – which celebrated in a holiday yesterday – said on the Telegram messaging channel.

It also said Russia launched three Kinzhal hypersonic missiles, but did not disclose any further information on them.

30 killed after train derails in Pakistan

Dozens injured; death toll may rise

AFP, Nawabshah

At least 30 people were killed yesterday when an express train derailed in southern Pakistan, the chief minister of Sindh province said, with an emergency declared at local hospitals struggling to deal with dozens of injured.

Accidents and derailments occur frequently on the country’s antiquated railway system, which has nearly 7,500 kilometres of track and carries more than 80 million passengers a year.

Sindh chief minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, who spoke to the media at People’s Medical College Hospital in Benazirabad – the district home to Nawabshah, said the injured could be shifted to Karachi if needed and directed the local administration and health officials to expedite relief and rescue efforts.

“This is quite a big accident,” railway minister Khawaja Saad Rafique told reporters. Rafique said at least 1,000 passengers were aboard the Hazara Express when it derailed on a section of track where no faults had been reported.

“There can be two reasons: first that it was a mechanical fault, or the fault was created – it might be a sabotage. We will investigate it.”

The derailment happened near Sahara railway station close to Nawabshah city in the southern Sindh province. “Eight coaches have derailed,” Mohsin Syal, a railway official, told local HUM News.

The railway minister said an emergency had been declared at local hospitals as doctors struggled to treat the injured. There were chaotic scenes at the Nawabshah Trauma Centre as ambulances and private cars ferried the injured for treatment.

One man leapt from the back of an ambulance clutching a child, his clothes soaked in blood, while a woman moaned in pain as she was carried in on a stretcher. “We don’t know what happened, we were just sitting inside,” said one dazed woman.



Poet, freedom fighter Mohammad Rafiq no more

OUR CORRESPONDENT,

Bagerhat

Ekushey Padak-winning poet and freedom fighter Mohammad Rafiq passed away yesterday. He had been suffering from several health issues for a long time. He was 80.

Rafiq suddenly fell ill yesterday while staying in his hometown in Chitoli, Bagerhat. He was taken to a private clinic in Barishal city where he was diagnosed with several complications, including heart problems. Doctors advised taking him to Dhaka.

Rafiq breathed his last while heading to Dhaka from Barishal around 9:00pm, said his cousin Shibli Hawladar.

The prolific poet will be laid to rest in Bagerhat.

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MRT LINE-6

Agargaon-Motijheel section to open after October 15

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The metro rail up to Motijheel could be operational any day after October 15.

The authorities set a target to complete all kind of test and trial runs on Agargaon-Motijheel section by October 15 and sought time from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to open it after the date, said officials.

Meanwhile, physical work of the country’s third metro rail line started last month with the beginning of land development work for its depot at Hemayetpur, on the outskirts of the capital.

The Metro rail authorities also sought time from the prime minister to formally inaugurate the breaking ground of Mass Rapid Transit Line-5 (northern route) from Savar’s Hemayetpur to Bhatara. It is expected to take place next month, the officials added.

As per the government’s time-bound action plan, it would build a 140km metro rail network, comprising six lines, in Dhaka and adjacent areas by 2030 to reduce traffic congestion and environmental pollution.

The country’s first metro rail line – MRT Line-6 – was launched partially from Uttara to Agargaon in December last year.

Physical work of the second metro rail line – MRT Line-1 – which is also the first underground metro line of the country, started in March this year.

AGARGAON-MOTIJHEEL PART

Since the opening of Uttara-Agargaon section of MRT Line-6, the demand for trains on the Agargaon-Motijheel route has increased as the major catchment area runs through Mirpur to Motijheel.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader inaugurated the performance test on Agargaon-Motijheel section on July 7 and announced opening of this section in late October. The authorities also planned to opening

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The dilapidated road that leads to Syedabad under Mayor Mohammad Hanif Flyover is finally being repaired. Tailbacks caused by breakdowns on the pothole-ridden road was a common phenomenon there. The photo was taken yesterday. PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Helper crushed to death as two buses jostle for passengers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A teen bus helper was crushed to death between two buses as the drivers were jostling to get ahead of each other to pick up passengers in the capital’s Mirpur area yesterday.

Md Jisan, 17, was a helper of a Paristhan Paribahan bus.

The incident took place around 8:00am, said Mohammad Mohsin, officer-in-charge of Mirpur Police Station.

Police seized both buses and detained the drivers, he said.

The Paristhan Paribahan bus was going to Abdullahpur from Mohamadpur. When the vehicle stopped at Mirpur-1 to pick up passengers, another bus of Prajapati Paribahan arrived.

At that time, the Paristhan bus started moving in a bid to cut off the other bus.

Jisan, the helper of the bus who was calling in passengers, was crushed between the two buses while getting on the bus as both the vehicles tried to overtake each other, said Tofazzal

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