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Pragati to start assembling sedans by Dec



City begin bid for PL history



Hawaii wildfires kill 36



Of displaced people and lost arable land

FLOODS IN CTG DIVISION

Waters recede, misery lingers

Roads take hit; thousands left without electricity, access to water

STAR REPORT

Besides leaving thousands of people without safe water and prompting evacuations of many others, the floods in Chattogram division damaged over the last few days at least 282 kilometres of major roads in just three districts.

As waters recede, locals are confronting the grim reality of damaged or completely wrecked houses with no means of cooking.

Thousands of residents in Bandarban and Chattogram's Satkania and Chandanaish upazilas are left without drinking water and electricity. Cellular networks in the areas have also been very poor over the last few days.

Flooded roads to Bandarban have been closed since Sunday while the Chattogram-Cox's Bazar highway, with new potholes and craters, opened to traffic yesterday morning.

Locals in Pekua upazila of Cox's Bazar found the bodies of three children of a family a day after they went missing from the flooded neighbourhood of Ferasingapara.

The children are Tauhida, 10, daughter of Nurul Alam; her brother Amir Hossain, 5; and their cousin Humaiara, 8, daughter of Saber Ahmed. The bodies of the children, still holding each other, were found around 6:30am, said local union parishad chairman Tofazzal Karim.

The situation is likely to improve in the coming days as Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre yesterday said the level of water in the Muhuri, Feni, Halda, Karnaphuli, Sangu and Matamuhuri will continue to fall.

In Satkania and Chandanish, thousands of residents' homes were still

Roads to Bandarban have been closed since Sunday while the Chattogram-Cox's Bazar highway, with new potholes and craters, opened to traffic yesterday morning.

under two to five metres deep in flood waters yesterday.

Those who returned to their homes found their earthen stoves washed away.

"On return, we found that the house is not liveable any more. We have not eaten cooked food in two days," said Abdul Haque, a resident of Satkania.

The farmer said he lived on rail lines with his wife and two children for several days after his house got inundated.

In places where the flood waters have completely receded, owners of restaurants and shops were busy cleaning up, he added.

Abul Hossain, a shopkeeper at Keranirhat Bazar in Satkania, said, "At least 300 sacks of rice in my shop were ruined."

Many other shopkeepers said their lives have been upturned by the floods. Bandarban town has not had electricity since Sunday night and thousands of people are suffering a severe crisis of drinking water. Many neighbourhoods were still under water yesterday.

ROADS TAKE HIT

According to the Roads and Highways Department (RHD), 142kms of road got damaged in its Chattogram (south) division, 79kms in Chattogram division, 59kms in Cox's Bazar, and 1.88kms in Rangamati.

The Marine Drive road, a tourist attraction in Cox's Bazar, also got damaged.

The scale of the damage to the roads in Bandarban is not clear yet as the RHD headquarters could not contact its local office.

An engineer at the RHD headquarters said since July 15, floods damaged 163km of roads in Kurigram, Nilphamari, Rangpur, Khulna, Baghat, Sunamganj, Tangail, Jhalakathi and Feni.

In different districts, 65.31km of national highways, 120.75km of regional highways, and 258.97km of district roads got damaged.

The newly built Chattogram-Cox's Bazar rail lines were also damaged by the flood.

[Our correspondents from Chattogram, Cox's Bazar and Bandarban contributed to the report]

AL, BNP to hold counter-programmes in city today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP and Awami League-led 14-party alliance are once again set to take to the streets today.

The BNP will bring out two processions from Badda and Kamalapur in the capital as part of its one-point movement demanding resignation of the government and election under a non-party government.

The party's Dhaka south and north city units will organise the processions, which will begin at 3:00pm.

Meanwhile, to "counter" the BNP's programme, the AL-led 14-party alliance last night said they would hold a "peace rally" in Uttara, like what the AL did in the last two months.

The rally will be held in front of Rajlaxmi Amir Complex at Uttara around 4:00pm. Alliance coordinator Amir Hossain Amu will be present as the chief guest, said a press release of the combine.

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CYBER SECURITY ACT

Stakeholders have to give opinions by August 22

Says law minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Anisul Huq has said stakeholders can give their views on the draft of Cyber Security Act (CSA) within August 22, and well-thought-out opinions will be considered.

Speaking at a press conference yesterday, he said there are provisions in the Digital Security Act for big penalties which has been reduced in the CSA. Also, non-bailable offences under several sections of the DSA have been made bailable in the proposed law.

The minister said the sections of the DSA that stipulate double or extended sentences for repeat offenders have been

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

CHILDREN BELOW 10

31 die from dengue so far this season

Shows DGHS data; 2,959 new cases detected, 12 more deaths recorded

HELEMUL ALAM

With her health improving, two-year-old Mayamanat Islam Sadia was spending her time playing with a balloon on her bed at the dengue ward of Mugda Medical College and Hospital.

The toddler was admitted to the hospital on August 7 after showing a dengue warning sign – extreme weakness.

"Whenever she feels better, she smiles and plays," said Rokaya Ferdous, the child's mother and a resident of the capital's Khilgaon. Rokaya and her sister live in the same house, along with their mother and children. Her sister's six-year-old child Mariyam and Mayamanat were diagnosed with dengue on the same day.

"We admitted them together, and they are still under treatment," she said.

Meanwhile, Farida Begum has been in the hospital with her three-year-old twin girls, Humayra and Faria, who also fell sick together.

"They've been undergoing treatment for the last few days and their conditions have not yet improved," she said, as she sat between their neighbouring beds.

At least 9,541 dengue child patients between zero and 10 years of age were hospitalised across the country, accounting for 12 percent of the total number of dengue patients this year.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

5 Shariah banks fined Tk 281.3cr in six months

MD MEHEDI HASAN

Bangladesh Bank slapped five shariah-based banks with fines amounting to Tk 281.3 crore in the first six months of the year for their failure to maintain the minimum levels of cash and liquidity.

Islami Bank, Bangladesh's largest private sector lender, faced the highest amount of penalty: Tk 162 crore. It was followed by First Security Islami Bank (Tk 61.3 crore), Social Islami Bank (Tk 30 crore), Union Bank (Tk 20 crore) and Global Islami Bank (Tk 8 crore).

"We are imposing fines as per rules on those banks that are facing CRR and SRR shortfall," Md Sarwar Hossain, assistant spokesman for BB, told The Daily Star.

As per rules, banks have to keep a certain amount of deposit with the central bank every night. This is called the cash reserve ratio (CRR). They also have to keep a minimum percentage of customers' deposits in the form of liquid cash, gold or other securities overnight. This is called the statutory liquidity ratio (SLR).

For Islamic banks, the minimum CRR requirement is 4 percent of cash and the SLR requirement is 5.5 percent of deposits, as per the central bank rules.

For failure to maintain the CRR and SLR, the penalty is 9 percent and 8.5 percent of the shortfall amounts for the day respectively.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Businessman, 4 others sued for laundering Tk 100cr

Brother of ex-LGRD minister Mosharraf among the accused

STAR REPORT

Police on Wednesday filed a money laundering case against Siddiqur Rahman, businessman and former president of Faridpur Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and four others for aiding him in amassing Tk 100.5 crore illegally.

The four others are Khandaker Mohtesam Hossain Babar, brother of former LGRD minister Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain; AHM Fuad, former assistant personal secretary of Mosharraf; and former Faridpur AL leaders Sajjad Hossain alias Barkat and his brother Imtiaz Hasan alias Rubel.

Inspector Nasir Uddin, of Faridpur's Criminal Investigation Department, filed the case with Kotwali Police Station.

All five accused were charge-sheeted in an earlier Tk 2,000 crore money laundering case, also filed by the CID with Kafrul police, against Barkat and Rubel, in June 2020.

CID initially submitted a charge sheet against 10 people, including Babar, Fuad, Barkat and Rubel, before a Dhaka court in March 2021.

However, on September 1, 2022, the court said the charge sheet was submitted without following the due procedure and ordered further investigation.

The CID then found the involvement of 37 others, including Siddiqur, and framed a new charge sheet.

In the statement of the case filed on Wednesday, plaintiff Nasir Uddin said Siddiqur would snatch tenders from different offices, initially with the Mohtesam's help, by giving a 3-5 percent commission.

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One-year-old Mariam lying next to seven-month-old Maria, held by her mother, as they are having to share a bed at the dengue ward of Mugda Medical College Hospital, with a surge of child patients being admitted yesterday. Due to the scarcity of beds, many dengue patients now have to share their spaces.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

2 US Congressmen to fly in tomorrow

Likely to sit with AL, BNP, JP, visit Rohingya camps



Ed Case
McCormick
DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Two US Congressmen -- Richard McCormick and Ed Case -- will be visiting Bangladesh from August 12 to 15.

The diplomatic visit is being seen as significant ahead of the country's general elections, with Washington keeping a close eye on the matter.

During their visit, they are scheduled to meet with representatives from major political parties, including the ruling Awami League, the opposition BNP, and the Jatiya Party, as well as the foreign minister and members of civil society.

The Congressmen, Republican Richard McCormick and Democrat Ed Case, will also visit the Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar as part of their trip.

"We welcome the visit by the US Congressmen to Bangladesh. We realise that we need more dialogue to improve our bilateral relationship and collaborate on issues of mutual interest," Nahim Razza, Awami League lawmaker and member of the parliamentary standing committee on foreign affairs, told The Daily Star last night.

He added, "The Congressmen will have a better understanding of Bangladesh and its people as they will be meeting different stakeholders here."

The visit comes ahead of the national polls in late December or early January next year.

As things stand, there is a stalemate over polls-time government, with the AL wanting polls under the current regime and the opposition calling for an interim government.

Against the backdrop of anomalies in the 2014 and 2018 national polls, the Biden Administration has repeatedly said that it wants the polls to be free and fair and will be keeping a close watch on it.

As part of putting pressure on Bangladesh, the Biden Administration imposed sanctions on Rab and its seven officials in 2021 and the new visa policy on Bangladesh was announced in May this year.

State Department's Coordinator for Global Anti-Corruption Richard Nephew, during his visit to Dhaka from August 6-8, communicated to the government that they use sanctions as a tool to fight corruption.



PHOTO: SAZZAD IBNE SAYED

Serene 'Shapla Beel' at the backwaters of Zinda Park

RBR

I was on a dinghy. Sitting at the edge of the boat with my eyes closed, my face was being washed by drizzle. The young boy paddling the boat plucked a white lotus and offered me his appreciation for that particular moment in time that we shared.

It was not a dream but a dream-like reality I experienced when I went to the Shapla/Poddo Beel (the water lily and lotus pond) at the backwaters of Zinda Park. I heard about the ethereal beauty of this beel and saw many enticing videos and reels but nothing compared to the beauty of the pond dotted with pink, white and red lotuses and lilies.

There are many such waterbodies throughout the country but the one I visited was in the suburbs of Dhaka, crossing the expressway that connects Purbachal to Dhaka and takes you to the back of Zinda Park.

It takes around an hour to reach

the destination provided you stop in the farmer's market lined by the road, otherwise, it is a short ride from the 300 feet expressway.

The winding roads of this small, urban village have an old Kali temple sheltered under the big aerial roots of a banyan tree. The goddess, with a burning red tikka or dot on her forehead, seems indomitable, ruling over her surroundings.

The village road leads you to a small tea stall placed on a Y-junction just as you cross the temple. The curve of the road leads you to a crooked old bridge but the beautiful blooms in almost all village ponds make for a surreal scene.

Crossing the bridge by foot, because that is where the cars need to stop, you come across a lush carpet of green grass.

The park benches and canopies are there for you to rest but I suggest you walk a little further until you come to a broken pier where all the small boats



are roped in. The boatmen, young boys hardly passed their teens, take you as far as you want to go for Tk 300 per hour.

The serenity, the colours of shapla and poddo, and rain-drenched nature give you a feeling like no other. It soothes your body and calms your mind, takes you beyond the chaotic reality of everyday life.

This beautiful scene is at its best during monsoon. Although early mornings are the best time to enjoy the scenes, few hours before dusk is also a romantic setting. The golden light of the setting sun peeking through the rain-washed sky makes for the best Instagrammable shot.



31 die from dengue

FROM PAGE 1

According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), at least 12 dengue patients died in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning, raising the total number of dengue fatalities to 364.

Of those, 31 patients, or 9 percent of all fatalities, were children aged 0 to 10 years old.

Meanwhile, 2,959 new patients were recorded yesterday, bringing the total number of dengue cases to 78,028.

HM Nazmul Ahsan, associate professor at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital, said dengue symptoms are slightly different in children.

"While for older people, the symptoms begin with a sudden fever with pain in the body and eye, children first experience nausea and/or coughing."

A child (newborn to 12) may cry excessively, have a fever with nausea and cough, and younger ones may show disinterest in being breastfed -- if such symptoms show up, they may be suspected of having dengue, he said.

Dengue, he added, also reaches the critical stage faster in children.

"It takes 48 hours for the situation to become critical for adults, while children only have 24 hours, which is why we suggest hospitalisation as quickly as possible."

"Children are also more prone to developing shock syndrome, which is risky for any dengue patient."

Urging guardians to be careful while sending children to the coaching centres and schools, Nazmul said the chances of being infected in educational institutes are high, and both the authorities concerned and guardians will have to be careful.

"Most of the schools don't have full-sleeved uniforms, which is very essential during the dengue season. Their legs should also be protected with long socks and shoes."

Stakeholders have to give opinions by August 22

FROM PAGE 1

cancelled in the proposed law.

"When the issues of Digital Security Act came up, it was said that offences under many sections of the act were non-bailable. Now we have made most of the offences under the sections of the Cyber Security Act bailable. You [stakeholders] can give your opinion on some sections [17, 19, 21, 30, 33] under which offences are still non-bailable," said Anisul.

The press conference on the draft of Cyber Security Act-2023 was organised at ICT Tower in the capital's Agargaon. Zunaïd Ahmed Palak, state minister for ICT, also spoke.

The draft of the law was uploaded on a government website on Wednesday. The stakeholders can submit their opinion within 14 days from that day.

The government has decided to revoke the controversial DSA amid widespread criticism from different quarters. It has drafted the CSA making several changes to the DSA. The cabinet approved the draft law on August 7.

Centre for Governance Studies' DSA Tracker logged a total of 381 journalists being accused until mid-July under the law since it came into force in 2018.

The law minister said, "All I can say is that all the sections that have now been made bailable will remain bailable [in the law]. Some other clauses [non-bailable] can be added to the law."

Offences under sections 17, 19, 33 have been made non-bailable and these are all related to cybercrime, Anisul said, adding that the government's main objective here is to stop cybercrime.

"I think the misuse of Digital Security Act will stop after the enforcement of the proposed law."

The minister said if the draft law is compared with the DSA, one must

notice the changes in the draft law and it is not an "old wine in a new bottle".

He said the problems (sections of DSA) which worried the journalist community will be gone and so harassment of journalists will also stop.

The mental pressure and fear which was created in independent reporting for journalists through the use of DSA will be removed by the CSA, he added.

About the changes in the CSA, Anisul said there is a jail term for defamation in section 29 of DSA, which has been replaced with only fine. There is 10-year jail sentence under article 21 of DSA, but now the jail term has been cut to seven years.

"Ninety-five percent of the people, starting from the United Nations high commissioner for human rights to my journalist friends, who spoke to me opined that there should be such a law. The government's main aim is to amend parts of the Digital Security Act so that independence of the media is not disrupted.... We strongly believe we have removed that fear with this act."

International Federation of Journalists in a statement on Wednesday said it should be ensured that any future legislation respects and defends press freedom, instead of criminalising it.

"While the government's intentions to reform the problematic Digital Security Act are welcomed, we remain concerned at the CSA's potential to recreate the repression seen under its predecessor. If Bangladeshi authorities wish to reduce the harm of frivolous and dangerous legal action against the media, then this legislation must centre press freedom concerns," said the platform.

5 Shariah banks fined Tk 281.3cr

FROM PAGE 1

"Those five banks have been failing to meet CRR and SLR since December last year -- it is not just the odd day here and there," said a top official of the central bank on the condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the matter.

For instance, on June 30, Islami Bank had a CRR shortfall of Tk 3,900 crore but it met its SLR requirement.

First Security Islami Bank (FSIBL), whose chairman is S Alam Group Chairman Mohammed Saiful Alam, had a CRR shortfall of Tk 1,400 crore and SLR shortfall of Tk 900 crore, according to data from BB.

That day, Social Islami Bank (SIBL) had Tk 700 crore in CRR shortfall and Tk 1,100 crore in SLR shortfall, Union Bank Tk 600 crore as CRR shortfall and Tk 460 crore as SLR shortfall, and Global Islami Bank (GIB) Tk 360 crore as CRR shortfall and Tk 460 crore as SLR shortfall.

Subsequently, the five banks were fined Tk 5.9 crore for their CRR and SLR shortfall.

Islami Bank's penalty was Tk 2.9 crore, FSIBL's Tk 1.3 crore, SIBL's Tk 79 lakh, Union's Tk 54 lakh and GIB's Tk 37 lakh, shows a central bank document.

The banks have been unable to clear their penalty for the first half of the year and have been given until September to do so, The Daily Star has learnt from BB officials involved with the proceedings. They spoke on the condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the matter.

Earlier in June, when unveiling the monetary policy for the second half of the year, BB Governor Abdur Rouf Talukder named the five banks and said the banks needed to improve their financial health by September.

"We continuously met with those banks about the issue. We imposed fines for their CRR and SLR shortfall but that is not a priority for us. We want those banks to improve their financial health by September," Talukder said.

Islami Bank, it appears, has already started taking measures to that end.

At the bank's 324th board meeting held on June 19 -- in which the 28-year-old Ahsanul Alam, the elder son of

S Alam Group chairman Alam, was unanimously elected as the chairman -- a decision was taken to tighten the lending activities.

"We have already met our SLR shortfall -- we are now facing CRR shortfall but that would go away soon as well," said a top executive of Islami Bank on the condition of anonymity as he is not authorised to speak with media.

The current liquidity crisis will end within the deadline imposed by the regulator because the deposit flow is "good now", he said, adding that the bank's remittance flow also increased in recent months.

SIBL MD Zafar Alam said acknowledged there are some gaps in the regulatory requirement.

"But we are trying to mend those issues. We are keeping the focus on mobilising deposits," he said, adding that the banks introduced new deposit products.

The bank, whose chairman Belal Ahmed is the son-in-law of S Alam Group chairman Alam, is not issuing large loans for now, concentrating more on SME and agriculture loans.

"We were always in a good position when it came to deposits, but due to some reports, our deposit base has been adversely affected -- that is why we are in trouble," said Syed Habib Hasnat, the MD of GIB, which was previously called NRB Global Bank. PK Halder, who is now in a Kolkata jail while he awaits trial on charges of money laundering and embezzlement, was its former MD.

After some media reports, GIB -- whose vice chairperson Maimuna Khanam is S Alam Group chairman Alam's daughter -- saw its customers withdraw Tk 1,700 crore in a short span, according to Hasnat.

"We suspended all the lending activities and are requesting those who withdrew their money to come back," he added.

Union Bank -- whose directors include S Alam Group chairman Alam's two brothers Osman Goni and Md. Rashedul Alam -- has already met its shortfall and its financial health is improving by the day, according

Rohingya man stabbed to death by 'Arsa members'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A Rohingya man was stabbed to death allegedly by members of the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (Arsa) at a refugee camp in Ukhiya upazila of Cox's Bazar last morning.

The deceased Mufti Jamal, 55, used to teach at Sahih al Bukhari at Monkhal Madrasa and Nakfura Madrasa in Rakhine, Myanmar, before his escape to Bangladesh, said his family members.

Some five to six men ambushed him when he went out for groceries to a local market at E-12 block of Balukhali Camp II in Palongkhali union around 9:30am.

The criminals stabbed him multiple times and fled the scene immediately, said Additional Deputy Inspector General Amir Zafar, commanding officer of the Armed Police Battalion (APBn)-8.

Jamal, a camp resident, was taken to a nearby hospital, where doctors declared him dead, he said.

Mufti Jamal was once an active member of Arsa but left the group seven to eight months ago, the APBn official said, quoting locals.

"We heard that Arsa members killed him for leaving the group," he said.

Bodies of three children recovered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

The bodies of three children were recovered from a water body in Pekua upazila of Cox's Bazar last morning, a day after they went missing.

Villagers found floating bodies of the children, who were holding each other's hands even after death, at Ferasingapara under Uzantia union around 6:30am, said Toffazzal Karim, chairman of the union.

The deceased were Tauhida Begum, 10, daughter of Nurul Alam of Ferasingapara, her brother Amir Hossain, 5, and their cousin Humaïara Begum, 8, daughter of Saber Ahmed.

They went missing Wednesday evening when they went to catch fish in the floodwater, said Mohammad Omar Haidar, officer-in-charge of Pekua Police Station.

The bodies were handed over to the families, he added.

2 brothers suffocate to death inside septic tank

UNB, Cox's Bazar

Two brothers died from suffocation inside a septic tank while they were cleaning it without wearing any protective gear in the South Bohaddarkata area under Chakaria upazila in Cox's Bazar Wednesday night.

The deceased were identified as Shahadat Hossain, 50, and Shahidul Islam, 22, sons of Anwar Hossain and residents of the South Bohaddarkata area.

"First, the younger brother got into the tank. When he did not come up, his elder brother followed him into the tank to get him," Chakaria Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC) Mohammad Javed said yesterday.

Informed, fire service personnel got them out of the tank and took them to Chakaria Upazila Health Complex, where the on-duty doctor declared them dead.

"The autopsy reports have been prepared. A case over unnatural death will be filed in this regard," he added.

Businessman

FROM PAGE 1

The accused then went on to control the tenders of different offices in Faridpur and other districts using Mosharrar's former APS Fuad, Barkat, and Rubel's infamous "helmet bahini" and "haturi bahini".

The statement further said Siddiqui ran a sand and stone business on grabbed government land near the rail station in Faridpur town. He would also control the district Chambers of Commerce, C&B terminal and Tepakhola Bazar and the cattle market.

The complainant also mentioned a long list of land and other properties that Siddiqui acquired using money earned through laundering and other criminal activities.

Those included over 3,287 decimals of land worth Tk 14.2 crore; a three-storey market in Faridpur worth around Tk 3 crore; a brick kiln and auto bricks worth Tk 20 crore; shops and rooms on 500 decimals of land at the C&B terminal worth Tk 15 crore; and a community centre and flat worth Tk 12 crore.

He also has houses, apartments, lands and office space in his, his wife's and other relatives' names, the case statement read.

Except for Siddiqui, all the accused are in jail in various other cases.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Siddiqui said, "My father has been in business for 36 years, and I've been in it for 27 years. We have tax files. The assets in our tax file are shown as illegally acquired in the case. However, they were gained through honest business and have nothing to do with corruption."

Ban BNP politics

Jubo League submits memoranda to EC, ministries

STAR REPORT

Jubo League has submitted a four-point memorandum to the Election Commission and home, law and foreign ministries demanding a “ban on BNP politics” and cancellation of its registration.

The other demands are posthumous trial of BNP founder Ziaur Rahman, extradition of convicts Tarique Rahman and his wife Zubaida Rahman.

Besides, JL also sought implementation of punishment for the fugitive killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman by bringing them back, reports UNB.

A JL delegation led by Chairman Sheikh Fazle Shams Parash and General Secretary Md Mainul Hossain Khan handed over the memoranda to the EC and other ministers.

Regarding the
SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



Bangladeshi UN official AKM Sufiul Anam, who was taken hostage by Al-Qaeda in Yemen, met Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Gono Bhaban yesterday. His family members were also present during the meeting.

PHOTO: PID

‘Take action against contractors for all incomplete works’ JS body asks LGRD ministry to float retenders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A parliamentary body yesterday asked the Local Government and Rural Development ministry to take actions against contractors who have stopped construction halfway.

The parliamentary standing committee on the LGRD ministry also asked to float retenders to complete those unfinished work.

The recommendation came during its meeting at Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban with former minister and MP Nurul Islam Nahid in the chair.

Expressing discontent at contractors for stopping construction work in different parts of the country, committee members asked the top LGRD ministry officials to submit a complete report on the number of work halted and the reasons behind it, and place it before the next meeting.

Parliamentary standing committees are supposed to hold at least one meeting every month.

At the meeting, two lawmakers mentioned that some construction work was halted for around four to five years, due to which people are being deprived of the benefits, meeting sources said.

Contractors often claim that due to the rise in prices of construction materials -- including iron rods -- they are forced to stop the work.

But a lawmaker at the meeting said some construction

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Collective efforts a must to control dengue outbreak

Speakers tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Multi-sectoral efforts are necessary to control the current dengue outbreak that has taken a severe turn, said speakers at a seminar yesterday.

To improve the situation, there is an urgent need for everyone’s responsible attitude and engagement, they said at the event organised by Public Health Association of Bangladesh at National Institute of Preventive and Social Medicine (NIPSOM).

“A combined approach is imperative in the fight against dengue,” said Prof Shah Monir Hossain, president of the association and former director general of DGHS.

He stated that eliminating dengue entirely from the country is not possible for the government without active participation of civil society, media, and people.

“We can get rid of the problem by uniting public service providers and government institutions through effective planning,” he said.

While presenting another keynote, Prof Sanya Tahmina, former additional director general of the DGHS, said, “The present situation does not indicate that we are united. The dengue situation seems to have been forgotten due

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ensure combined approach
- Declare nat’l health emergency
- Take measures nationwide
- Follow dengue guidelines

to the election issue. This may intensify the disaster further.”

She opined that the present dengue crisis should be declared a health emergency.

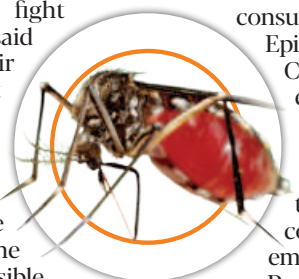
Dr Mushtaq Hussain, consultant at Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research, echoed the same.

“It is not like hundreds of people need to die for the situation to be considered a [health] emergency,” he said.

Prof Nazmul Islam, director of Disease Control at DGHS, emphasised the urgency of measuring the severity of dengue outbreak nationwide.

Prof Md Golam Sarwar, head of entomology department at NIPSOM, stated that mosquitoicide and larvicide have lost their effectiveness.

Journalist Shishir Moral added that the guideline to tackle dengue outbreak is not being followed amid the ongoing dengue outbreak.



‘Little known’ BNM, BSP now registered parties

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The Election Commission yesterday officially declared two “little-known” and “suddenly established” parties -- Bangladesh Nationalist Movement (BNM) and Bangladesh Supreme Party (BSP) -- as registered political parties with the commission.

The EC unanimously decided to register the parties. BNM’s symbol will be an “anchor”, while BSP will have “ektara” as its symbol, read an EC statement.

This registration took place just ahead of the next polls, slated for late December or early January.

A political party must be registered with the EC to participate in the national polls, and with the two new ones, the total number of registered political parties is now 44.

Since 2008, 49 political parties have been registered with the EC. However, the registration of five of them was cancelled later.

The commission registered three parties ahead of the 2014 elections but did not register any ahead of the 2018 national polls.

The commission yesterday took the decision to register the new parties following a hearing on Monday after different individuals raised four objections regarding EC’s decision to grant registration to the parties.

On July 16, the commission issued a public notice seeking objections to their primary decision to register BNM and BSP.

The EC began the registration process for new parties in May 2022, as 93 political parties sought registration.

Twelve parties were primarily selected for registration, with two of them finally being able to secure it at the end.

Meanwhile, soon after the EC primarily cleared BNM and BSP for registration, many politicians alleged that BNM is a party formed by some former BNP leaders, while BSP is an ally of some Islamist parties having ties with Awami League.

“Who are they? I’ve never heard of them before. The question is, why is the EC registering two unknown parties, excluding the ones

that are rather active?” said Shushashoner Jonno Nagorik (Shujan) Secretary Badiul Alam Majumdar.

“It’s an agency job. The party will get registration to create a rift in BNP,” said Mustafizur Rahman Iran, chairman of Labour Party, which failed to get a registration.

A BNP standing committee member told The Daily Star yesterday that they smelled something fishy in the EC’s decision. “It’s part of the [government’s] conspiracy to split BNP,” he alleged, wishing anonymity.



The EC began the registration process for new parties in May 2022, as 93 political parties sought registration. Twelve parties were primarily selected for registration, with two of them finally being able to secure it at the end.

BNM was formed in July 2021. Its convener is Abdur Rahman, and Maj (ret’d) Md Hanif is its member secretary. Both are former BNP leaders.

Rahman was elected MP with BNP’s nomination from Barguna-1 in 1996 but he later left the party. Hanif resigned from BNP’s executive committee in June 2021.

BNM Spokesperson and Joint Convener Sarwar Hossain left BNP in 2019.

Sarwar denied their party’s involvement in any conspiracy.

“The allegation against BNM of hatching a conspiracy to split BNP is completely false,” he said.

BNM insiders said at least nine of the 33 central leaders of the party are retired army officers.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Burial made easy in DNCC ‘Smart graveyard management’ launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

City dwellers under Dhaka North City Corporation will now be able to access information related to burials without having to go to the graveyard.

They will be able to complete all pre-burial procedures online, after filling out the application form with the relevant information, stated a DNCC press release yesterday.

Once all the procedures have been completed online, the body can be taken directly to the designated graveyard. The burial certificate will also be provided online.

Additionally, all information related to a graveyard will be available online. So, city dwellers can know how many graves are located there, where exactly a body was buried under whose name, and where they can find a vacant spot for burial.

All the graveyards of DNCC will be brought under a smart graveyard management system in phases, said DNCC Mayor Md Atiqul Islam, while inaugurating the smart digital graveyard management system at Gulshan Nagar Bhaban.

Six graveyards -- Banani Graveyard, Mirpur Shaheed Intellectual Graveyard, Rayerbazar Graveyard, Uttara Sector 4 Graveyard, Uttara Sector 12 Graveyard, and Uttara Sector 14 Intellectual Graveyard -- will be brought under the smart digital graveyard management system first.

An app named Graveyard Management DNCC is now available on the Google Play Store for city dwellers.



LABOUR RIGHTS US trade body expresses concern

Calls for fair probe into murder of union leader Shahidul

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

American Apparel and Footwear Association (AAFA), a US-based platform of apparel and footwear traders, expressed deep concern over the recent situation regarding labour rights in Bangladesh.

In a letter on July 27, AAFA said urgent action is needed to ensure welfare of labourers in Bangladesh. The letter was addressed to the Prime Minister and Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) President Faruque Hassan.

“However, it is with deep concern that we communicate AAFA’s position on certain pressing worker welfare issues that demand immediate action,” Stephen Lamar, president and chief executive officer of the AAFA, said in the letter.

AAFA, which represents more than 1,000 global brands that are having more than US \$490 billion worth transactions annually, expressed its shock at the recent murder of Shahidul Islam, a ready-made garments workers’ union leader.

His (Shahidul Islam) killing is not only an immeasurable loss for his family and friends but also represents a setback for workers’ rights and the overall welfare of workers in Bangladesh, AAFA said in the letter.



Shahidul Islam



Demanding Tk 25,000 as minimum wage for readymade garment workers, leaders of 11 rights organisations held a procession in the capital’s Jatiya Press Club area yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Tk 25,000 minimum wage or we boycott polls

Say RMG workers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The readymade garment workers will boycott the national polls if the government fails to guarantee Tk 25,000 as their minimum wage by then, said speakers at a procession yesterday.

They made the remarks at “Garment Workers Movement for Wage Increase” organised by 11 rights organisations in front of Jatiya Press Club in the capital.

The speakers also demanded a 10 percent annual increment.

According to the participants, additional benefits, including overtime pay, gratuities, and maternity benefits, have also been taken away from the workers.

No party has yet proposed any new wage board, despite the fact that

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

MADHABPUR HEALTH COMPLEX

X-ray room locked for 16 years

People suffer for lack of service

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

The X-ray room at the 50-bed Madhabpur upazila health complex in Habiganj has been out of service for around 16 years. This situation has left patients from 11 unions of Madhabpur upazila without access to much-needed X-ray services, compelling them to turn to expensive private alternatives.

Authorities at the hospital blamed the machine's protracted inactivity on the lack of a qualified technician, which forced the X-ray room to close for an extended period of time.

According to the sources in the complex, the X-ray machine operated until 2006 after being installed in 2001. No one was hired as replacement after the technician's transfer, and the X-ray room's operations came to an abrupt halt.

The X-ray machine and the room have been out of service and inaccessible ever since.

Visiting the health complex recently, this correspondent saw that the X-ray room was closed, as a rusted lock hung at the door, while the door was covered in spider webs.

Ruban Mia, a resident of Madhabpur town, said, "I experienced chest pain and sought



the X-ray machine being dysfunctional.

A radiographer from a nearby private diagnostic centre seeking anonymity, said the upazila health complex's X-ray machine had been out of service for a long time, fuelling the growth of private X-ray businesses as a result.

Chhatiaian UP chairman Minhaj Uddin Kased Chowdhury urged the authorities to fix the machine immediately.

Olid Mia, president of Madhabpur Press Club, said this health complex treats lower and middle-class residents from 11 unions and one municipal area. But still, no one objected to the X-ray machine staying out of service for 16 years due to a manpower shortage.

"If the machine gets fixed it will hamper the businesses of private X-ray services," he alleged.

Contacted, Dr AHM Ishtiaq Mamun, upazila health and family planning officer, said the operations are halted due to a lack of technicians in the X-ray section.

"I have written to the authorities several times regarding this, but to no avail," he said.

The health official was unable to predict when a technician might join.



Two boys struggle to maintain balance as a rickshaw-van carrying them plies through knee-deep water in Tejuri Bazar area of the capital's Farmgate, following rain. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Tk 25,000 min wage

FROM PAGE 3

a proposal in this regard has already been submitted to the authorities. This delay is an indication that the workers are in danger, the speakers said.

With barely Tk 8,000, the workers and their

families are battling disease and malnutrition. It is impossible for them to make ends meet with less than Tk 25,000, they said.

The participating leaders and activists also said the wage board must be made public to

guarantee accountability and transparency.

Taslima Akhter, president of Bangladesh Garments Sramik Sanghati, presided over the demonstration organised by Raju Ahmed, secretary of Garment Sramik Federation.

Ban BNP politics

FROM PAGE 3

matter, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal said legal steps will be taken to bring back fugitive convicts BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman and his wife Zubaida Rahman, reports BSS.

"We have received their memorandum. According to the law, we will make the necessary arrangements from the Ministry of Home Affairs. We know all the facts," the minister added.

Meanwhile, a copy of the memorandum was sent to the foreign ministry.

Take action against

FROM PAGE 3

work has been halted for over five years, when the price did not increase.

The parliamentary committee also asked the ministry to investigate the issue and report back, meeting sources told this correspondent.

The committee also recommended the LGRD ministry to award work to

the contractors of all the institutions under it based on their capacity.

LGRD Minister Tazul Islam and State Minister Swapan Bhattacharjee, and lawmakers Moshir Rahman Ranga, Shah E Alam and Sanwar Hossain were present at the meeting among the committee members.

'Little known' BNM

FROM PAGE 3

Meanwhile, BSP, which was formed in 2019, is a member of the newly floated Islamic Liberal Alliance.

According to media reports, BSP organised different programmes last year where AL lawmakers and party leaders, including Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya and former AL MP Aga Khan, joined either as chief or special guests.

BSP's chairman Syed Saifuddin Ahmed is the nephew of Syed Najibul Bashar Maizbhandari, chairman of Bangladesh Tarikat Federation, a government ally.

However, Mohammad Ibrahim Miah, office

secretary of BSP, claimed, "Leaders of different political parties attend our social programmes."

Election Commissioner Md Alamgir earlier said that they do not make decisions based on agency reports.

He said that BNM and BSP are set to get registration as they have fulfilled criteria set by law.

PRAYER TIMING
AUGUST 11

Fazr	Juma	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4-25	12-30	4-45	6-41	8-00
JAMAAT 5-00	1-15	5-00	6-44	8-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

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US trade body expresses

FROM PAGE 3

"We join the US government in calling for the pursuit of justice to hold accountable those responsible for his death and to send a strong message that such heinous acts will not be tolerated," Lamar also said.

Freedom of association is vital for safeguarding workers' rights, ensuring proper working conditions, and promoting a harmonious labour ecosystem, the letter also said.

In the letter, Stephen Lamar also condemned violence, threats or intimidation against fostering an environment that respects workers' collective bargaining rights and empowers them as essential stakeholders in the nation's progress.

Lamar also said they are closely monitoring the current minimum wage review of RMG workers in Bangladesh, which provides a crucial opportunity to address

existing disparities and to establish fair remuneration for them.

AAFA urged the wage board committee to actively engage true worker representatives, labour unions, and all other relevant stakeholders to promote an atmosphere of open dialogue and inclusivity.

Lamar said they give immense value that Bangladesh is the third largest supplier of garments as well as a fast-growing supplier of footwear and travel goods to the United States.

The favourable relationship between the two nations have brought shared prosperity, economic growth, and a spirit of collaboration, he said.

Amirul Haque Amin, president of National Garment Workers Federation, said his organisation has been demanding justice for the killing of Shahidul along

with the death of two more RMG workers recently.

Amin demanded compensation for the deceased workers.

BGMEA Vice-president Md Shahidullah Azim said Shahidul was killed outside the factory. It was an internal feud between two unions, he added.

"We have already demanded arrest of the killers and so far, six persons were arrested in this connection," Azim said.

However, the death of the union leader and workers should not affect the bilateral relations and trade between the two countries, he added.

The US is the single largest export destination for Bangladesh.

Last year, Bangladesh exported goods worth more than US \$10 billion to the US, including RMG products worth US \$9.74 billion, registering a 36.38 percent growth from previous year.

Of displaced people and lost

FROM PAGE 5

have forcibly displaced thousands of people during this period, said Dacope upazila chairman Monsur Ali Khan.

A recent example would be the Manga erosion, which devoured a stretch of over 1.5km in Pankhali union's Kheyaghat in the last few years.

"The riverbanks have been eroding for the last 10-12 years, but the Water Development Board did not build any sustainable dams to protect us. They only deploy a few geo-bags, which are washed away when the water level rises," said Yasin Sheikh, a resident of the union.

Due to this, many people have been compelled to relocate to safer spots, losing their homesteads and arable lands, he added.

Residents of Joynagar, Hatkhola Gate, Gunari, Kalibari, Nalian, Jaliakhali, Kalabagi, Sutarkhali, and Kaminibasiya areas in Chalna Municipality are also in distress.

As per an evaluation done a few years ago, almost 10,000 bighas of

arable land were lost due to erosion in the upazila. Around 20,000 people from across 50 villages have been displaced, said Monsur Ali Khan, chairman of the upazila.

"Thousands are affected by the erosion every year. Building a sustainable dam is the only way to save them," he said.

Around 36 families in Tildanga union's Kaminibasiya village have lost their homesteads to erosion this year, said Jalal Uddin Gazi, the chairman of the union.

The soil quality of the western region is different, and it is important to examine the soil texture before planning dams here, said Prof Sanaul Islam of Soil Science Discipline at Khulna University.

"If the soil is not elastic enough, the newly-constructed embankments will also be washed away when the river swells. The soil has to be feasible for building dams," he added.

According to WDB, Coastal Embankment Development Project, Phase-I (CEIP-I), a Tk 3,280

crore project was initiated in 2012-13 fiscal year to build sustainable embankments in six coastal districts, including Khulna.

Dams stretching around 50km in Dacope upazila's Kamarkhola and Sutarkhali unions and another 50km in Bajua, Dacope, Banishanta, Laudob and Kailashganj unions were supposed to be constructed under this project between July 2016 and December 2022.

Additionally, 36 culverts and sluice gates were constructed, and 17km of canals were also supposed to be reexcavated, spending around Tk 350 crore.

However, the work has not been completed yet.

"The rivers' nature was different when work started back in 2013, as there were no signs of erosion in many of the aforementioned areas. But with time, the course and nature of the rivers changed, and the erosion took on a more deadly face," said Ashrafur Alam, executive engineer of WDB Khulna-2.

"The project is almost complete," he added.

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মালায় ভাষা এলিমেন্টারি কোর্স
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কোর্সের মেয়াদ : ১৫০ ঘণ্টা
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ভর্তির সময় : সকাল ১০:০০টা - বিকাল ৪:০০টা পর্যন্ত
(বৈধতার থেকে বুধসপ্তাহের)
ক্রমিক সময় : রূপ-এ সম্মত ৬:০০টা- রাত ৮:৩০টা পর্যন্ত
(বৈধ, মঙ্গল, বুধসপ্তাহ)
রূপ-বি বিকাল ৪:০০টা- সম্মত ৬:৩০টা পর্যন্ত
(সোম, বুধ, বুধসপ্তাহ)
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CAPM IBBL Islamic Mutual Fund
Asset Manager: CAPM Company Limited
PRICE SENSITIVE INFORMATION
This is for information of all concerned that the Trustee Committee of 'CAPM IBBL Islamic Mutual Fund' has approved the Audited Accounts for the year ended 30 June 2023 and took the following decisions:
i. **Proposed Dividend** : 6.00% Cash Dividend (i.e. Tk. 0.60 per unit)*
ii. **Record Date** : 07 September 2023
iii. **Date and Time of Trustee Meeting** : 10 August 2023 at 3:00 p.m.
iv. **Financial Information:**

Net Profit for the period	(1st July 2022 to 30th June 2023)	35,341,548
Earnings Per Unit during the period	(1st July 2022 to 30th June 2023)	0.53
Net Asset Value Per Unit @ Cost	(As on 30th June 2023)	10.84
Net Asset Value Per Unit @ Market	(As on 30th June 2023)	11.43
Net Operating Cash Flow Per Unit	(1st July 2022 to 30th June 2023)	0.53

*Based on Net Income and Considering retained earnings the Trustee Board declared a Cash Dividend of 6.00% (i.e. Tk. 0.60 per unit), for the year payable to holders of the units as on record date.

By order of the Trustee Committee
Trustee of 'CAPM IBBL Islamic Mutual Fund'
Investment Corporation of Bangladesh

Note:
1. The financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2023 are available on the website of 'CAPM Company Limited' (www.capmbd.com)
2. Abridged audited accounts have been published in 'The Business Standard', 'Banik Barta', 'Sharebazar News (Online)', 'Aurthosuchak (Online)', 'Sunbd24.com (online)' and 'Ajker Bazar (online)' on 11 August 2023.

CAPM Company Limited, Safura Tower, 20 Kemal Ataturk Avenue, Banani, Dhaka-1213, Bangladesh
Tel: +8802 2222 91611, 82269, Fax: +8802 2222 76393, E-mail: contact@capmbd.com
Website: www.capmbd.com

CAPM BDBL Mutual Fund 01
Asset Manager: CAPM Company Limited
PRICE SENSITIVE INFORMATION
BDBL
This is for information of all concerned that the Trustee Committee of 'CAPM BDBL Mutual Fund 01' has approved the Audited Accounts for the year ended 30 June 2023 and took the following decisions:
i. **Proposed Dividend** : 6.00% Cash Dividend (i.e. Tk. 0.60 per unit)*
ii. **Record Date** : 07 September 2023
iii. **Date and Time of Trustee Meeting** : 10 August 2023 at 3:00 p.m.
iv. **Financial Information**

Net Profit for the period	(1st July 2022 to 30th June 2023)	26,592,823
Earnings Per Unit during the period	(1st July 2022 to 30th June 2023)	0.53
Net Asset Value Per Unit @ Cost	(As on 30th June 2023)	10.96
Net Asset Value Per Unit @ Market	(As on 30th June 2023)	11.54
Net Operating Cash Flow Per Unit	(1st July 2022 to 30th June 2023)	0.55

*Based on Net Income and Considering retained earnings the Trustee Board declared a Cash Dividend of 6.00% (i.e. Tk. 0.60 per unit), for the year payable to holders of the units as on record date.

By order of the Trustee Committee
Trustee of 'CAPM BDBL Mutual Fund 01'
Investment Corporation of Bangladesh

Note:
1. The financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2023 are available on the website of 'CAPM Company Limited' (www.capmbd.com)
2. Abridged audited accounts have been published in 'The Financial Express', 'Sharebiz', 'Sharebazar News (Online)', 'Aurthosuchak (Online)', 'Sunbd24.com (online)' and 'Ajker Bazar (online)' on 11 August 2023.

CAPM Company Limited, Safura Tower, 20 Kemal Ataturk Avenue, Banani, Dhaka-1213, Bangladesh
Tel: +8802 2222 91611, 82269, Fax: +8802 2222 76393, E-mail: contact@capmbd.com
Website: www.capmbd.com

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer, Department of Public Health Engineering
Kishoreganj District, Kishoreganj.
Web-www.dphe.gov.bd

Invitation for e-Tender

Memo- 46.03.4800.061.07.040.19-328 Date: 10-08-2023

1	Ministry/Division	Local Government Division
2	Implementing Agency	Department of Public Health Engineering.
3	Project/Program Name	Project for Safe Water Supply Throughout the Country.
4	Tender IDs	860286, 860059, 860056, 860125, 860067, 861259, 861199, 861143, 861088 & 860383.
5	Description of Works:	Drilling & Installation of Deep Tubewell (100x38) mm dia with Submersible pump at different Upazila in Kishoreganj District of Department of Public Health Engineering under Project for Safe Water Supply Through Out The Country FY- 2023-2024.
6	This is online Tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. Interested persons/firms can see details in website : www.eprocure.gov.bd	
7		

Tel. No: 02-997761178
ee.kishoreganj@dphe.gov.bd

(Engr. Mahbubur Rahman)
Executive Engineer, DPHE,
Kishoreganj District.

GD- 1211



Around 20,000 people hailing from Khulna's Dacope upazila lose their homesteads and croplands to erosion as embankments constructed around 60 years ago remain unrepaired. While locals tried their best to salvage whatever they had by deploying geobags, the rising water levels following persistent rains kept damaging the banks. The photos were taken recently.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

EROSION IN KHULNA'S DACOPE UPAZILA

Of displaced people and lost arable land

Embankments stretching 153km remain unrepaired for last 6 decades

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

In the 1960s, a series of embankments stretching 153 kilometres were constructed in Khulna's Dacope upazila to protect the region from flooding and erosion.

However, these embankments have remained unrepaired over the last six decades, leading to recurring stories of lost homesteads and arable lands.

According to locals, cyclones Sidr in 2007 and Aila in 2009 caused severe damage to the embankments, further weakening their already

vulnerable state.

Additionally, seven rivers -- the Shibsa, Pasur, Dhakai, Bhadra, Manga, Jhapihapi, and Chunkuri -- flowing through the upazila have suffered due to unplanned and faulty construction of sluice gates.

These actions have further deteriorated the embankments' conditions.

Meanwhile, some locals have resorted to cutting through the embankments to create shrimp enclosures, resulting in the loss of crucial protective barriers and the diversion of water for personal gain.

Presently, the extent of damage is evident, with breaches in at least 30 points of the embankment within a 15km stretch of the overall length.

As a result, seven of nine unions in the upazila -- including Dacope, Banishanta, and Bajua -- are mostly affected by river erosion. The situation is most dire in Sutarkhali, Kamarkhola, Tildanga, and Pankhali unions.

Over one lakh people residing in the aforementioned unions have fallen prey to erosion over the past decade. The erosion and cyclones have

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



Seven of nine unions in the upazila -- including Dacope, Banishanta, and Bajua -- are mostly affected by river erosion. The situation is most dire in Sutarkhali, Kamarkhola, Tildanga, and Pankhali unions. Over one lakh people residing in the aforementioned unions have fallen prey to erosion over the past decade. The erosion and cyclones have forcibly displaced around 20,000 people during this period.

MONSUR ALI KHAN, Dacope upazila chairman

College admission underway

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The first phase of the admission process for class XI, for the 2023-24 academic session, started yesterday and will continue until August 20.

Students can choose a minimum of five and a maximum of 10 colleges for admission, according to the admission policy for enrolling in class XI.

The policy states that the admission process will be conducted in three phases. In the first phase, students have until August 20 to apply, and the results will be published on September 5. During the second and third phase, students can apply from September 12 to 14 and September 20 to 21, respectively.

Students who have passed the SSC or equivalent exams from any education board or open university, in the years 2021, 2022, and 2023, are eligible for admission.

JU to create three new positions

JU CORRESPONDENT




Jahangirnagar University authorities will create Emeritus Professor, Supernumerary Professor and Bangabandhu Chair positions.


The decision came at a syndicate meeting held yesterday, Prof Laek Sazzad Andalla, syndicate member and teacher of the university's mathematics department, told The Daily Star.

According to JU sources, the university authorities have not taken such a move in the last 52 years.

Meanwhile, some students of the university staged a rally on campus, urging the administration not to place any controversial person in those positions.





Dhaka Electric Supply Company Ltd. (DESCO)
House # 22/B, Faruque Sarani, Nikunja # 2, Dhaka-1229, Bangladesh
Tel. No: +88 02 8900110-11, 8900820-23, Fax No. +88 02 8900100
E-mail: pit@desco.gov.bd, Web: www.desco.gov.bd




শ্রমিক শ্রমিক
উন্নয়ন
যদি তুমি চাও

Invitation for International Tender

1	Ministry/Division	Power Division, Ministry of Power, Energy & Mineral Resources		
2	Agency	Dhaka Electric Supply Company Limited (DESCO)		
3	Procuring Entity Name	Procurement, Inspection & Testing Division, DESCO		
4	Procuring Entity District	Dhaka, Bangladesh		
5	Invitation for	International Competitive Tender for SCADA Maintenance with Capacity Building of DESCO personnel for 3 (three) years		
6	Tender No.	ICT-35/2023		
7	Invitation Ref No.	27.24.0000.021.07.035.23.902		
8	Date	10/08/2023		
KEY INFORMATION				
9	Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (One Stage Two Envelope)		
FUNDING INFORMATION				
10	Budget and Source of Funds	DESCO's own fund		
PARTICULAR INFORMATION				
11	Tender Name	SCADA Maintenance with Capacity Building of DESCO personnel for 3 (three) years		
12	Tender Selling Date, Closing & Opening Date and Time	Last Selling Date September 24, 2023 4:00 PM	Closing Date & Time September 25, 2023 12:00 Noon	Opening Date & Time September 25, 2023 12:30 PM
13	Date & Time and Address of the office for Pre-tender Meeting	31/08/2023, 11.00 AM DESCO Conference Room, Office of the Managing Director, DESCO. House # 22/B (3 rd floor), Faruque Sarani, Nikunja#2, Uttara, Dhaka-1229.		
14	Name & Address of the office for selling Tender Document, receiving & opening tender	Selling Office of Deputy General Manager (Accounts), DESCO. House # 22/B (6 th floor), Faruque Sarani, Nikunja#2, Dhaka-1229.	Receiving PRIMARY PLACE: Office of the Superintending Engineer (P,I&T), DESCO Address: Plot # 22/B, Faruque Sarani, Nikunja # 2, Dhaka-1229, Bangladesh. SECONDARY PLACE: Not Applicable	Opening Office of the Superintending Engineer (P,I&T), DESCO. House # 22/B (1 st floor), Faruque Sarani, Nikunja#2, Dhaka-1229, Bangladesh.
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER				
15	Eligibility of Tenderer	This invitation for Tender is open to all eligible Tenderers or JVCA. Details of eligibility and qualification criteria of the Tenderer are described in the tender document.		
16	Description of Works & related Services	Major works & services includes: 1. Compulsory Maintenance Responsibilities with scheduled preventive maintenance of (a) Core SCADA system software and hardware in control centers (b) Sub-station Automation System (SAS) with necessary modification/upgradation of BCU/Relays/IEDs with necessary hardware/software whenever required, (c) Station Remote Terminal Units (RTU), Gateways and system hardware with necessary modification/upgradation of BCU/Relays/IEDs with necessary hardware/software whenever required (d) Control centers support and protection system (Ancillaries) (e) Telecommunication systems, hardware and Fiber Network/Cable management and Maintenance (f) DC Power system 2. Need based (Optional) maintenance on requirement basis 3. Supply of spare parts for comprehensive maintenance works Details are described in Tender document.		
17	Price of Tender Document	US\$ 115.00 (USD One Hundred Fifteen) (incl. VAT) or BDT 12,500/- (Taka Twelve Thousand Five Hundred) only (incl. VAT) payable in the form of Pay Order/Bank draft from any scheduled bank in Bangladesh in favor of 'Dhaka Electric Supply Company Limited (DESCO)'.		
18	Tender Security Amount	The amount of the Tender Security shall be Tk. 1,00,00,000.00 (One Crore taka) only or US\$ 92,000.00 (Ninety Two Thousand US Dollar) in the form of an irrevocable Bank Guarantee issued by any scheduled bank of Bangladesh or by any internationally reputable bank in favour of 'Dhaka Electric Supply Company Limited'. But in case of internationally reputable bank, the Bank Guarantee should be endorsed by its any correspondent bank located in Bangladesh. The tender security in the form like SWIFT copy or any other way is not acceptable.		
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS				
19	Name of Official inviting the Tender	Engr. Mohammad Tanvirul Islam Bhuyan		
20	Designation of Official inviting the Tender	Superintending Engineer (Procurement, Inspection & Testing)		
21	Contact details of Official inviting the Tender	Interested firms may obtain further information from the office of the under signed during normal office hours (09:00 AM to 04:00 PM). Office of the SE (Procurement, Inspection & Testing), DESCO. Address: 22/B (1 st floor), Faruque Sarani, Nikunja # 02, Uttara, Dhaka-1229. E-mail: pit@desco.gov.bd		
22	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any/all tender(s) without assigning any reason whatsoever.			
N.B. The Tender Document is published on DESCO's website. Copy of tender document purchase receipt is mandatory during Tender submission.				
Engr. Mohammad Tanvirul Islam Bhuyan Executive Engineer (I & T) & Superintending Engineer (P,I&T) Addl. Charge, DESCO				



Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Chattogram City Corporation
Tigerpass, Chattogram
www.ccc.gov.bd



উন্নয়নের গণতন্ত্র
শেখ হাসিনার মূলমন্ত্র

Memor No. 46.11.1600.002.14.23.0070

Date: 09/08/2023

e-Tender Notice – DRIIDARP/2023-24/02

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

Package/ Lot No.	Tender ID	Identification of lot	Tender document last selling date and time	Tender closing & opening date and time
DRIIDAR/2022-23/CCC/W40/L2	850818	Development of Rajapukur lane, Shatish Babu lane, Mirinda lane, Old Girza road, Hajari lane, Kadam Mobarak road, Nazir Ahmed Chowdhury road, Tulshi Dham adjacent road with others ancillary work at 32 No. Anderkilla Ward.	11-September-2023 16.00	12-September-2023 14.00
DRIIDAR/2023-24/CCC/W-20/L2-A	857797	Development of Pahartoli Bazar Road and Masjid Road and Delhi lane bylane at 12 No. Saraipara Ward.	11-September-2023 16.00	12-September-2023 14.00
DRIIDAR/2023-24/CCC/W23/L2	857798	Development of a) Dampara bylane, b) Kajir Deori lane bylane, c) Shahid Mirza road and RCC drain,) Bayezid road (part), e) CDA Avenue bylane-1, 2 & 3 at 15 No. Bagmoniram Ward.	11-September-2023 16.00	12-September-2023 14.00
DRIIDAR/2023-24/CCC/W28/L2	857799	Development of a) Khalifapatti road, b) Gura Mia Chowdhury lane bylane, c) Machhuya Jhama lane's Monchur Goli, Rabbi's Goli, Harun's Goli, d) Rumghata Jhelepara and Pujabari road, e) Boluar Dighi's West par Saleh Ahmed lane, Kabir Driver's lane and Drum Mathh's lane, Ancillary works including construction of RCC drain inside Boluar Dighi Avoymitro Mohashosan and f) Drain from Khalifapatti Mor to Azadi Malek Sahab's house at 20 No. Dewanbazar ward.	11-September-2023 16.00	12-September-2023 14.00
DRIIDAR/2023-24/CCC/W26/L1/C	857820	Development of Mia Khan Road (Kala Mia Bazar to Hatkhola bridge at 18 No. Ward	11-September-2023 16.00	12-September-2023 14.00
DRIIDAR/2023-24/CCC/W-26/L2-C	857821	Development of Sylhet Company Road and Rowshan Mistri Road with drain at 18 No. East Bakalia Ward	11-September-2023 16.00	12-September-2023 14.00
DRIIDAR/2023-24/CCC/W-26/L1-B	857822	Development of K.B Aman Ali Road (Sadek Shah Majar to Moqbool Shah Majar), Choddomar Bari Road with drain at 18 No. East Bakalia Ward	11-September-2023 16.00	12-September-2023 14.00
DRIIDAR/2023-24/CCC/W-26/L1-A	857823	Development of Abdur Sobhan Road, Syed Shah Road, (Wapda to Kalamia Bazar), Fakir Bari Road, Delwar Jahan Memorial College Road, Kashem Ali Baper Bari Road with drain at 18 No. East Bakalia Ward	11-September-2023 16.00	12-September-2023 14.00
DRIIDAR/2023-24/CCC/W-24/L1-C	857825	Development of Chattogram Medical College Staff Quarter Road, O.R Nizam Road, Riverly Hill Road at 16 No. Chawkbazar Ward.	11-September-2023 16.00	12-September-2023 14.00
DRIIDAR/2023-24/CCC/W-19/L1-A	857826	Development of Lohar Pool Main road at 11 No. Ward	11-September-2023 16.00	12-September-2023 14.00
DRIIDAR/2023-24/CCC/W48/L1-B	857828	Development of Maiz Para Road lane bylane and Dhumpara lane bylane at 40 No. North Patenga Ward	11-September-2023 16.00	12-September-2023 14.00
DRIIDAR/2023-24/CCC/W46/L1-C	857829	Development of Ahamad Mia School to Meher Afzol School Road (Malum road), Dup Pol, Imam Sharif Road drain slab with repair work, Baker Ali Fokir Bari Road, Sheel Bari Road, Chander Para Gofur Shah R/A Road, Sattar Mistri Road, Borkhan Para Road with slab, Sachi Chow. Para bylane, Latu Sarang Road with slab, Hindu Para 1, 2 No. Road, Fela Gazi, Lohar Pool Goni and Munsli Miaji Road, Badshah Bari Road, 1 No. site Morshed Bari Road, Maji Para Baccha Mia lane and drain with slab at 38 No. Ward	11-September-2023 16.00	12-September-2023 14.00

The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders.

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and offline hard copies will not be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank branches up to particular date and time specified on the tender notice.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

CCC/PRD-40/23-24
Size: (12"x4Col)
GD-1210

Md. Jashim Uddin
Deputy Project Director
"Different Roads and Important
Infrastructural Development including
Airport Road under
Chattogram City Corporation"
& Executive Engineer,
Chattogram City Corporation
(on behalf of PE)

BABITA

immortalised

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

In the Bangladesh film industry, one name that shines undeniably bright is Farida Akhar Babita, better known as just Babita. With a career spanning across eras, she has graced the silver screen in a remarkable 275 films, etching her presence in the hearts of countless fans.

The seven-time National Film Award-winning actor soared to international acclaim through her performance in the masterpiece *Ashani Sanket* by the legendary Satyajit Ray. Notably, she was the first Bangladeshi actress to collaborate with Ray, representing her homeland in global film festivals.

In a fitting tribute to her enduring influence, Babita's legacy recently crossed oceans and borders. August 5 was officially declared "Babita Day" by Bob Dubey, the Mayor of Richardson city in the USA's Texas, a gesture that resonated profoundly within the Bengali cinema community.

Babita expressed her sentiments to The Daily Star, reflecting, "The proclamation of 'Babita Day' by the Mayor of Richardson city felt like the culmination of a lifelong journey. It's that defining moment when all the accolades find their ultimate destination. This recognition carries a unique significance in my heart."

The prestigious Dallas Bengali Film Festival, recognizing her extraordinary cinematic journey, honored Babita with a lifetime achievement award. Throughout the festival's three days, the silver screen came alive with the luminance of Babita's performances. The enchanting aura of her timeless classics, including *Golapi Ekhon Train e* and the celebrated *Ashani Sanket*, was screened in the festival, offering

audiences an opportunity to relive her cinematic magic.

Turning the pages of time, the iconic actress recently celebrated her 70th birthday, embracing the joys of life with her son Anik in Canada. Anik's heartfelt gestures on her birthday spoke volumes of their bond, as he planned surprises that wove unforgettable moments into her life.

"On my birthday, Anik gave me a lot of surprises, he drove me to Toronto, and many other places I have never been before," she shared.

The journey to Toronto and exploring uncharted places filled her heart with happiness. Babita affectionately shared, "Every gesture of my son is a treasure to me. He understands my love for flowers, surprising me with their beauty, and a delightful birthday cake."

Anik's dedication to his mother's happiness continued throughout the day, concluding in a visit to a grand castle, a breathtaking ballet performance, and cherished meals together.

Babita's journey, embellished with cinematic triumphs and personal joys, continues to inspire and uplift. With her indomitable spirit, she has not only become an icon in the history of Bengali cinema but also a beacon of light, illuminating the hearts of those who admire her. As her legacy intertwines with the narrative of time, Babita stands as a true testament to the enduring magic of the silver screen.



PHOTOS: SHAHREAR KABIR HEEMEL



5 Bangladeshi artists' works exhibited in the US

Five Bangladeshi artists' works were exhibited in Cambridge, Boston, under the title *Electric Bangladesh; Fossil Free Future*. The event took place from August 1 till August 4 at Cambridge Foundry.

The exhibition advocated for a peaceful and secure future in which lives and livelihoods are not disturbed and Bangladeshis have access to sustainable energy.

The event featured projects by Ata Mojlish, AFM Moniruzzaman Shipu, Monica Jahan Bose, Morshed Mishu and Debashish Chakrabarty.

Taylor Swift announces release of '1989 (Taylor's Version)'

Taylor Swift is all set to re-release her 2014 album *1989*, which includes three of her popular album hits *Shake It Off*, *Blank Space* and *Bad Blood*, as well as other cherished tracks including *Out of the Woods*, and *Clean*.



Swift announced, *1989 (Taylor's Version)* will be released on October 27, the same date as the original album's release nine years ago, during her final US gig of the Eras Tour at SoFi Stadium in Los Angeles on Wednesday. Swift's most recent album to receive the Taylor's Version

makeover is 1989. It was a watershed moment for her, marking her crossover from country to pop music.

NEWS

Doctor failed to assess patient's condition

FROM PAGE 12
to the health minister, secretary of the health services division, director general of the health directorate and three other high officials at the health ministry on August 2.

Dr Shahjadi Mustarshida, the duty doctor, and Dr Muna Saha, another physician, were arrested and sent to jail in connection with the incident. They were freed on bail last month.

According to the investigation report, Dr Sangiukta Saha, a consultant at the hospital, uploaded numerous promotional videos on her Facebook page showcasing her skills in assisting normal childbirth at Central Hospital.

Having seen those videos, Mahbuba, who had wanted a normal delivery, consulted Dr Sangiukta and took advice from her twice during her pregnancy.

Mahbuba went into labour around noon on June 9, when she was first taken to Titas Upazila Health Complex in Cumilla. Doctors there recommended a C-section due to complications, but both Mahbuba and her husband Yakub Ali declined to follow their advice, the report said.

Subsequently, the couple spoke with the assistant of Dr Sangiukta Saha

and headed for the Central Hospital on assurance that Dr Sangiukta will supervise the delivery.

However, Dr Snjukta Saha left the hospital around 9:30pm on June 9, assigning Dr Shahzadi Mustarshida, who does not have a gynaecology degree, to handle the case, according to the report.

Dr Snjukta also did not inform the hospital authorities about her absence.

However, until 12:25am of June 10, the attending physicians did not disclose to Mahbuba and her husband that Dr Sanjukta Saha was not around.

Later, Dr Shahzadi Mustarshida and Dr Muna Shaha, who worked as part of Dr Sangiukta's team, performed a C-section, leading to the death of the newborn and the mother, the report said.

The investigation committee pointed out some malpractices by Dr Sangiukta, including making videos on social media about natural childbirth with some exaggeration, telling fellow doctors to treat patients using her name when she was not around, and telling Dr Shahzadi to treat Mahbuba when she was not there.

The committee identified four anomalies of the hospital authorities. They are permitting Dr Sangiukta Saha

and Dr Muna Saha to treat patients with expired licences; concealing that Dr Sangiukta Saha was not available at the hospital; allowing other physicians to treat Mahbuba; and taking no action against the illegal campaign on social media by Dr Sangiukta.

The committee said that Yakub Ali, Mahbuba's husband, had some liabilities. The report said that Yakub was insistent about normal delivery until the last moment although Mahbuba was in labour pain for about eight hours.

The committee cleared Dr Farida Akter Mili, Dr Ehsan Jamil, and Dr Sakhawat Alam since they went to the hospital when the patient was already in a critical condition.

Health Minister Zahid Maleque did not respond to our phone calls and text messages last night.

Dr MA Quasem, Vice Chairman of Central Hospital, admitted before the investigation committee that they made a mistake by allowing Dr Sangiukta Saha to treat patients with an expired licence.

Contacted last night, he said, "Checking doctors' licence is not our responsibility alone. It is also the responsibility of Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council."

sources from where disinformation and anti Bangladesh propaganda are being spread and addressing those with proper counter efforts based on facts.

Prof Mizanur Rahman, former chairman of National Human Rights Commission, mentioned three specific locations -- London, Brussels and Washington DC -- from where propaganda is being spread.

Govt bans Jama'atul Ansar

FROM PAGE 12
Bangladesh have been banned."

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan stated that the outfit's long involvement in disruption of law and order led to this decisive action.

The outfit's activities came to light following reports of eight people going missing from Cumilla on August 23 last year.

As Rab carried out investigations into these disappearances, it was uncovered that members of the militant group were undergoing armed training in collaboration with Kuki Chin (KNF), a separatist group in the hill tracts.

In response, Rab and CTTC launched a crackdown to apprehend the outfit's members.

Meanwhile, the outfit's ameer, Anisur Rahman alias Mahmud, and spiritual chief Shamin Mahfuz have already been taken into custody by law enforcers.

Commander Khandaker Al Moin, director of Rab's legal and media wing, said a total of 82 individuals, including the outfit's ameer, have been arrested in special operations conducted in both hilly and plain land since October last year.

Moreover, 17 leaders and members of KNF were held for aiding and

abetting militants in the hill areas and providing training to them, he added.

Moin further said that they had apprised the home ministry of the outfit's activities and subsequently applied for its ban.

Md Asaduzzaman, chief of the CTTC unit, said with the militant group's activities now banned, legal proceedings against its arrested members will be completed faster.

"This ban will discourage both their sympathisers and the fugitive operatives from engaging in any criminal activities," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Delhi hopes to see free, fair polls

FROM PAGE 12
journalists of the outcome of the three-day visit, at the invitation of BJP.

"India is our neighbour. They are aware of everything that happens in Bangladesh. They know the political and economic situations of our country," added Razzaque, also the agriculture minister.

The BJP invited AL leaders as part of "Know BJP initiative" announced by its National President JP Nadra.

Quoting Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar as saying, Razzaque said, "India wants to see political stability in Bangladesh, wants to see fair elections. They said they will provide us with all kinds of cooperation at the international level."

During a meeting, BJP President JP Nadra told the delegation that his party is interested in working

with the AL in the future as they did in the past for the sake of political stability and countering terrorism in the region.

Razzaque said BJP leaders told them that China and Jamaat-e-Islami are no threat to India.

The AL leader, however, added, "China is always a factor of concern for India. That is why tensions sometimes rise on their borders. We have said our foreign policy is friendship with all and enmity towards none. We are following that policy Our [bilateral] relationship with India cannot be compared with any other countries."

He further said the AL and the BJP agreed that Jamaat is a communal force, a threat to security.

Speaking at the briefing, AL Joint General Secretary Hasan Mahmud, a member of the delegation, said, "The people we talked to strongly

believe that elections will be held in Bangladesh as per the constitution."

On the first day of the visit on August 7, the delegation held three separate meetings with BJP President Nadra, General Secretary Vinod Tawde and Jaishankar.

The meeting with Nadra put emphasis on regional political stability, regional cooperation, and combating militancy, said Razzaque.

In a separate meeting, Harsh Vardhan Shringla, chief coordinator for India's G20 presidency in 2023, told the delegation that India would invite Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to the G20 summit slated to be held in India on September 9-10.

Other members of the delegation were AL Advisory Committee member Aroma Dutta, Organising Secretary Sujit Roy Nandi and AL Executive Committee member Prof Merina Jahan.

Dhaka to welcome US move

FROM PAGE 12
meeting with experts, Momen said they advised on how to deal with the foreign diplomats ahead of the election.

He said foreign diplomats in Bangladesh often make comments (on the country's internal issues) which does not happen in other countries.

The minister said there was a suggestion that an orientation

programme is arranged for journalists on how to ask questions as they don't ask critical questions on human rights and elections in the foreign diplomats' countries.

Experts suggested taking pragmatic and effective steps to counter anti-Bangladesh campaign and efforts to undermine the country's achievements, reports UNB.

They advised on identifying the

General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir at a protest rally yesterday alleged that the government does not want to allow the BNP to hold peaceful political programmes.

The BNP yesterday mentioned the routes for their processions.

Fakhru will lead the procession by Dhaka north city unit that will start from Suvastu Tower in Badda and end near Abul Hotel in Rampura, while BNP standing committee member

Mirza Abbas will lead the procession by Dhaka south city unit that will start from Kamalapur Stadium and end at Malibagh Railway Gate.

BNP's 36 like-minded parties will also bring out processions in different parts of the city as part of their simultaneous movement to press home the one-point demand.

On August 7, the BNP announced that it will bring out processions in the capital.

AL, BNP to hold counter- programmes

FROM PAGE 1
Speaking to The Daily Star, BNP standing committee member Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury said the processions will be peaceful.

He said the government has long been trying to foil their movement by creating anarchy on the streets, but they could successfully avoid "the trap set up by the government".

Referring to the attacks on BNP's sit-ins on July 29, party Secretary

Bangladesh's dev model an inspiration

FROM PAGE 12
Bangladesh implement the Delta Plan-2100.

Talking about the Rohingya issue, Iyer mentioned that the global lender has already provided \$ 700 million assistance for the Rohingyas.

In this context, Hasina put emphasis on repatriation of the Rohingyas to Myanmar.

She apprised Iyer of different aspects of Bangladesh's development programmes. "Our main target is

poverty eradication. We want to ensure a better life of the people," she was quoted as saying.

The PM said her government and party design and implement plans taking all aspects in consideration.

About the climate issue, she said though Bangladesh is not a carbon emitter, it has to suffer the adverse impacts of climate change.

She said the World Bank is administering a technical assistance on the ecological restoration and

ensuring navigability of rivers surrounding Dhaka city to make it more liveable under an umbrella investment programme.

Hasina said her government opened everything for the private sector and is extending support to the sector.

WB Alternate Executive Director Ahmad Kaikaus, ERD Secretary Sharifa Khan and PMO Secretary Mohammad Salahuddin were present.

PARLIAMENT

Modi’s govt defeats no-confidence motion

AFP, New Delhi

The government of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday defeated a no-confidence motion in parliament after a fiery speech by premier at the climax of a three-day debate.

Opposition lawmakers -- who had brought the motion over months of ethnic violence in Manipur state -- walked out of the chamber, prompting a furious rebuke from the premier, with the government then winning the vote.

The walkouts, according to broadcasters, included Congress party leader Rahul Gandhi, who on Wednesday said Modi’s government was “set on burning the whole country”.

Modi denounced them, saying: “Those who don’t trust democracy are always ready to make a comment but don’t have the patience to hear (the rebuttal).”



Migrants of African origin trying to flee to Europe gather on a vessel belonging to the Tunisian coast guard after they were transferred from their small boat, at sea between Tunisia and Italy yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

N Korea’s Kim calls for war preparations
Dismisses top general

REUTERS, Seoul

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un replaced the military’s top general and called for more preparations for the possibility of war, a boost in weapons production, and expansion of military drills, state media KCNA reported yesterday.

Kim made the comments at a meeting of the Central Military Commission which discussed plans for countermeasures to deter North Korea’s enemies, which it did not name, the report said.

The country’s stopgeneral, Chief of General Staff Pak Su Il was “dismissed,” KCNA reported, without elaborating. He had served in his role for about seven months.

Pak was replaced by General Ri Yong Gil, who previously served as the country’s defence minister, as well as the top commander of its conventional troops.

Ri also previously served as the army chief of staff. When he was replaced in 2016 his sacking and subsequent absence from official events sparked reports in South Korea that he had been executed. He reappeared a few months later, when he was named to another senior post.

Russia downs wave of Ukrainian drones

Destroys fuel depot in Rivne region; Kyiv announces ‘humanitarian corridor’ for ships stuck in Black Sea ports

AGENCIES

Russia downed 11 Ukrainian drones nearing Crimea and two headed for Moscow, officials said yesterday, the latest in a blitz of air strikes on Russian-held territory.

“Two UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicles) flying in the direction of the city of Moscow were destroyed,” the Russia’s defence ministry said in a statement on Telegram.

It said one drone was shot down over the Kaluga region southwest of Moscow, and another over the Odintsovsky district bordering the capital. Those drones were shot down at around 4:00 am (0100 GMT), Moscow mayor Sergei Sobyenin said on Telegram.

Two other Ukrainian drones were shot down near the city of Sevastopol on the Crimean coast, the defence ministry said, and “another 9 were suppressed by means of electronic warfare and crashed in the Black Sea”.

It said there were no reports of damage or casualties in any of the affected areas.

The strikes come a day after Russia said two Ukrainian combat drones headed for Moscow were shot down, and constitute at least the fourth attack near the capital within a week, reports AFP.

Russia previously said it downed a drone over Kaluga on Monday, as well as seven drones in the region last Thursday.

In a separate incident, Russian drones destroyed a fuel depot in



Ukraine’s western Rivne region in an overnight attack in the early hours of yesterday, causing a huge blaze, governor Vitaliy Koval said. There were no casualties, he said.

The Ukrainian air force said that seven out of 10 Iranian-made “Shahed” drones were shot down during the Russian attack which lasted from 23:00 (20:00 GMT) on Wednesday until 04:00 yesterday.

Meanwhile, Ukraine’s navy said a new temporary Black Sea “humanitarian corridor” had started working yesterday and that the first ships were expected to use it within days.

Oleh Chalyk, a spokesperson for the Ukrainian navy, told Reuters that the corridor would be used

by commercial ships blocked at Ukraine’s Black Sea ports and for grain and agricultural products.

In Zaporizhzhia, two young women and a man were killed and nine other people were wounded in a Russian missile attack on the Ukrainian city late on Wednesday, Ukrainian officials said yesterday.

Ukraine yesterday urged civilians near the northeastern front line to evacuate as Russia ramped up an assault to capture the territory already once seized during the conflict.

Kupiansk and the surrounding areas of Ukraine’s Kharkiv region were liberated by Kyiv’s forces last September, but Moscow has since pushed back on the region.

THAI ELECTION
Rival party backs Pheu Thai in bid to form govt

REUTERS, Bangkok

Thailand’s Pheu Thai party yesterday received a boost in its efforts to form a government after a ninth party joined its alliance and a senior member of a rival, military-backed party pledged its support to try to end months of deadlock.

Thailand has gone nearly five months under a caretaker government after the election-winning Move Forward party leader’s bid for premier was blocked twice by conservative and pro-army opponents.

Move Forward’s former ally, the second-place Pheu Thai party, last week took the lead in trying to form a government and is expected to face the same opposition.

Pheu Thai is set to nominate real estate tycoon Srettha Thavisin for premier and needs the support of more than half the bicameral legislature including the royalist-dominated upper house.

Previous Pheu Thai governments, backed by the billionaire Shinawatra family, were ousted by military coups in 2006 and 2014, when its interests clashed with the country’s powerful old money elites and royalist military.

Hawaii wildfires kill 36 people

Rescue efforts hampered by power outages

REUTERS, Kahului

At least 36 people have died after wildfires, fanned by winds from a faraway hurricane, devastated much of the resort city Lahaina on Hawaii’s Maui island, the Maui County said in a statement late on Wednesday.

Multiple neighbourhoods were burnt to the ground as the western side of the island was nearly cut off, with only one highway open and thousands to evacuate as officials told of widespread devastation to Lahaina, its harbor and surrounding areas.

Some people fled into the ocean to escape the smoke and flames.

“We just had the worst disaster I’ve ever seen. All of Lahaina is burnt to a crisp. It’s like an apocalypse,” said Lahaina resident Mason Jarvi, who escaped from the city.

More than 11,000 travellers were evacuated from Maui, Ed Sniffen of the Hawaii Department of Transportation said late on Wednesday. Though at least 16 roads were closed, the Maui airport was operating fully and airlines were dropping fares and offering waivers to get people off the island, Sniffen had said earlier in the day.

Evacuation efforts were complicated by power outages and disruption to cell phone service, as communication with the west side of Maui was only available via satellite, Hawaii’s Lieutenant Governor Luke said.

‘Mother Nature needs money’
Brazil’s Lula tells rich countries at summit

AFP, Belém

Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva urged wealthy nations Wednesday to fulfill their unkept promises to fund developing countries’ fight against climate change, at a summit on saving the world’s tropical forests.

Vowing to act as a bloc in future climate negotiations, the eight South American countries that share the Amazon basin and nations from the Caribbean, Africa and Asia called on the industrialized world to do more to protect Earth’s disappearing tropical forests, vital buffers against global warming.

“It’s not that Brazil needs money. It’s not that Colombia or Venezuela need money. Mother Nature needs money, it needs financing, because industrial development has destroyed it over the past 200 years,” Lula told a news conference.

But he and other leaders at the summit faced criticism themselves over their failure to adopt a pledge to stop illegal deforestation in the Amazon by 2030 and ban new oil exploration, as climate campaigners and Indigenous groups had urged.

The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) expressed its “great concern at the lack of a common goal to end deforestation” at the closely watched summit. Brazil’s main Indigenous organization meanwhile chastised leaders for not doing more to protect native lands, which experts say are one of the best defenses for forests.

“We hope all this effort at dialogue won’t come down to empty words,” said the Association of Brazil’s Indigenous Peoples (APIB). The two-day summit was a key test for veteran leftist Lula, who returned to office in January.



‘No evidence’ Facebook harms well-being: study

AFP, London

There is “no evidence” that the growth in using Facebook led to “widespread psychological harm”, the largest independent scientific study on the topic concluded Wednesday, contradicting previous analyses and widespread perceptions.

The probe by the University of Oxford’s Internet Institute, which analysed data from nearly 1 million people across 72 countries over 12 years, instead found “positive correlations” between adopting the social media platform and so-called well-being indicators.

Researchers combined data on well-being collected by Gallup with Facebook’s own global membership statistics to assess how engagement with the site related to three indicators: life satisfaction, and negative and positive psychological experiences.

Facebook provided data, which its researchers had checked for accuracy, but did not commission, fund or influence the design of the study, or know the findings beforehand, according to the Oxford team.

Their paper also underwent peer review by the journal Royal Society Open Science.

Andrew Przybylski, an Oxford University human behaviour and technology professor, said they “examined the best available data carefully -- and found they did not support the idea that Facebook membership is related to harm”.

“Quite the opposite,” he added. “In fact, our analysis indicates Facebook is possibly related to positive well-being.

But Przybylski also noted that “this is not to say this is evidence that Facebook is good for the well-being of users”.



Afghan burqa-clad women receive food from foreign aid in Kandahar, Afghanistan yesterday. The country has been teetering on the brink of famine and economic collapse since the Taliban’s return to power in August 2021 after 20 years of war and US occupation.

PHOTO: AFP

Niger coup leaders name new govt

REUTERS, Niamey

West African heads of state discussed their response to last month’s military takeover in Niger at closed-door talks in Nigeria yesterday after the junta defied their earlier threat to use force to restore democracy.

The meeting is taking place hours after Niger’s coup leaders named a new government, forcing their agenda before the summit.

Since the July 26 power grab, the junta has rebuffed diplomatic overtures and ignored an August 6 deadline from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to reinstate ousted president Mohamed Bazoum.

Mahamane Roufai Laouali, cited as “Secretary General of the Government”, named 21 ministers on state television overnight without specifying any further government plans.

Ramp up anti-dengue supplies

Hospitals must be better equipped to treat incoming patients

It is disheartening to see how a long-predicted surge in dengue cases has been overwhelming not just hospitals but also medical equipment and supplies, especially ICU and HDU beds, leaving patients literally gasping for air and shuttling between multiple medical facilities in desperation. The picture emerging out of the hospitals in Dhaka and other districts is quite reminiscent of the heyday of Covid-19, when patients were forced to navigate a similar medical dystopia. Even though the number of ICU beds has increased since then, it is not nearly enough to handle an emergency.

Take, for example, the case of Rafia, a 14-year-old girl battling dengue. As per a report by this daily, despite needing critical care, the lack of vacant ICU beds forced her family to shuttle her between multiple hospitals. Left with no other option, she was finally put in a regular ward at the Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital, but not before the duty doctor took an undertaking from her mother that basically absolves the hospital of any responsibility in case something tragic happens. Her name is now on a list where 15 other patients are also waiting for ICU admission, highlighting the stark reality facing so many patients – especially those from underprivileged backgrounds – who must contend with suboptimal treatment in the absence of proper facilities.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), there are around 1,323 ICU beds and 886 HDU beds in different government hospitals. Even combined with those of the private hospitals, their total number is still far from sufficient. As well as the crisis of ICU/HDU beds, there is also a shortage of essential supplies like saline. Essential Drugs, the state-owned pharmaceutical company, is currently rationing injectable saline to public hospitals to manage the high demand. Unfortunately, it remains the only designated supplier of saline for the 1,100 or so public hospitals, and despite a ten-fold rise in demand, it is not expected to begin saline production in its Gopalganj plant until January next year. Although the six private companies it procures saline from have been recently asked to double their daily production, the lack of preparedness and swift action from the health authorities has been compromising patient care, resulting in needless deaths and suffering. This is most unfortunate.

This year's dengue numbers have already broken all previous records. As of August 10, at least 364 patients have died of the mosquito-borne fever in 2023. Of them, 113 died in the first ten days of this month alone. Most of the deaths were recorded in Dhaka hospitals, but more patients are being hospitalised outside Dhaka, which suggests a countrywide, epidemic-level crisis. What this requires is a comprehensive response by properly equipping all hospitals, among other things. The government must do this urgently so that patients get the treatment they deserve.

We need to invest more in R&D

Without it, our economic growth will lose momentum

It is disappointing that despite the country's laudable economic growth in recent decades, our approach to research and development (R&D) has been quite questionable. As a report by this daily points out, both the private and public sectors in Bangladesh have historically lacked innovation. Our goal of becoming a developed nation in less than two decades is admirable, yes, but one cannot help but wonder if our current growth will be sustainable if it continues to rely heavily on garment exports and the earnings of mostly unskilled migrant workers – the two mainstays of our economy.

The R&D allocation for the current fiscal year is Tk 100 crore, which equals a meagre 0.3 percent of our GDP. The scenario is not much better in the private sector either. One would assume that a mixed market economy would drive innovation. Instead, universities spend a minuscule amount of their annual budgets on research, while private firms, when adopting new technologies, often opt for foreign sources rather than cultivating in-house research and innovation. In the long run, such a trend is bound to hinder progress for the country as a whole.

There is no doubt that Bangladesh has been trying to ride out a protracted economic crisis in the wake of the pandemic. But it would be nonsensical not to keep an eye on the future and invest in research and development across all sectors. Besides encouraging academic research and technological innovation, focusing heavily on sector-specific R&D will also be beneficial. For instance, in terms of boosting remittance, it is crucial to upskill our aspiring migrant workforce. Recent data has revealed that nearly half of all workers going abroad between 1976 and 2019 were less skilled or unskilled. In fact, as per data from the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training, 73.65 percent of migrating workers in 2021 were unskilled. As a result, Bangladesh is receiving a lot less in remittance than other comparable countries that are exporting skilled labour.

Therefore, it is crucial for the authorities (both private and public) to look beyond immediate gains and challenges and try to transform our economy which will benefit us all in the long run. In order for Bangladesh to conduct large-scale research and development activities, and to fulfil the objectives of SDG 9 – which are to build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation, and foster innovation – we need to dedicate more of our budget to R&D and let it guide our policies. Otherwise, our progress as a nation will be stalled.

We don't want more people in jail for their posts on the internet



Saad Hammadi is Global Governance Fellow at the Balsillie School of International Affairs, University of Waterloo, and a human rights advocate. He can be followed on X at @saadhammadi

SAAD HAMMADI

As someone who has actively campaigned against the many abuses that the Digital Security Act (DSA) has instrumentalised since its introduction, I would have been pleased had the law or at least the most problematic sections been repealed, but we are nowhere close to it. Instead, the DSA is being renamed to Cyber Security Act (CSA) with some cosmetic changes and hefty fines.

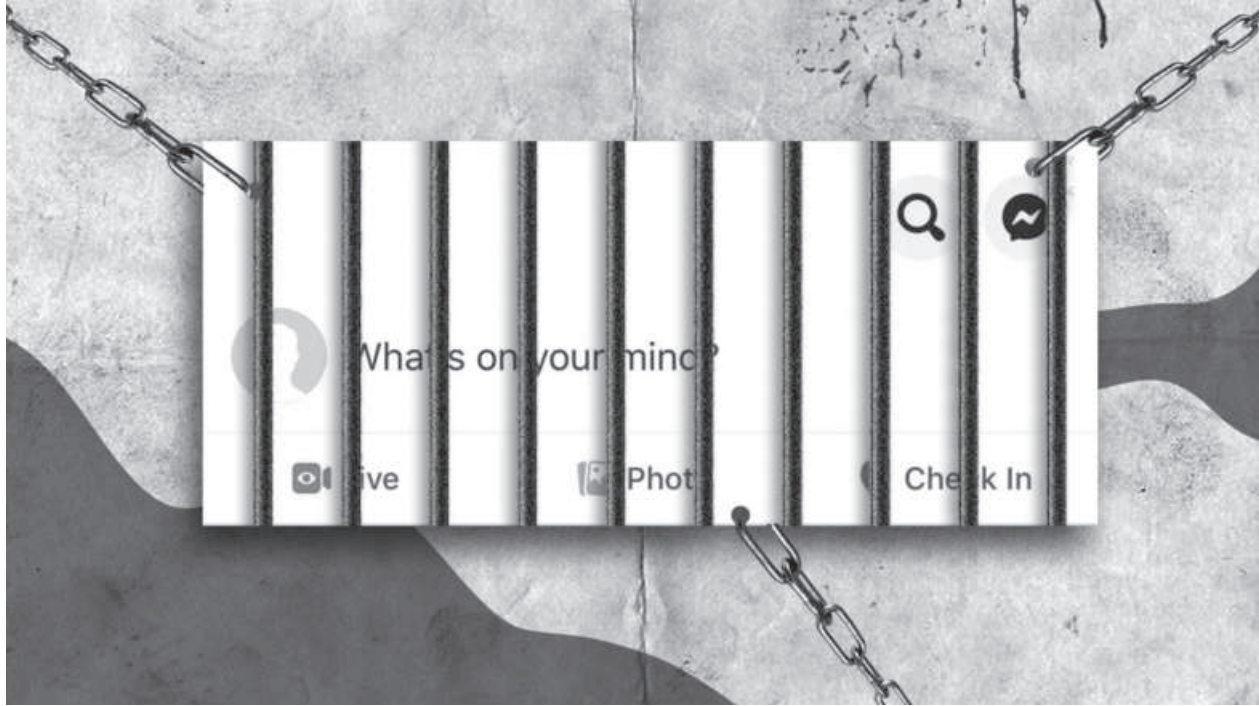
Law Minister Anisul Huq's press briefing highlighted that most penal actions or the jail terms are being replaced with fines, and he suggested that the failure of paying the fines could amount to three to six months' imprisonment. Upon a quick review of the draft of the CSA, I found to my dismay that most of the problematic penal actions of the DSA are retained in the CSA.

For example, the penalty for Section 21 of DSA, which stipulates a 10-year imprisonment for using "propaganda" against Bangladesh's Liberation War, the first president of the country, the national anthem, and the national flag, will be reduced to seven years. The penalty for Section 25, which stipulates a three year imprisonment for transmitting "offensive, false or threatening" information, will be reduced to two years.

Reducing jail terms from 10 years to seven years or from three years to two years does not change the nature of the law. The use of criminal punishment in the CSA for what may constitute a legitimate form of expression has the same concerns as the DSA on this day.

In fact, the prison data that I obtained in July 2021 under the Right to Information Act indicates that most prisoners of the DSA (185 to be precise) were targeted under Section 25, followed by Section 31 (data causing "enmity, hatred and hostility"; 163 prisoners), Section 29 ("defamation"; 162 prisoners), Section 28 ("hurting religious sentiment"; 40 prisoners) and Section 21 ("propaganda"; 13 prisoners).

This is only so far as the data indicates. What about the human



VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

rights violations induced by indefinite pre-trial detention and sessions of hearing? Renowned photographer Shahidul Alam, who was charged under the now non-existent section 57 of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Act for his criticism of the government in a televised interview in August 2018, still attends court every month. A jail term of 14 years still hangs over his head if convicted in the obsolete law. What's the legitimacy of a trial under a non-existent law?

No one should forget the price writer Mushtaq Ahmed had to pay with his life for sharing his criticism of the government on a Facebook post. He died in custody of the state authorities after being detained for 10 months. His colleague, who was detained on the same charges but released on bail shortly after Mushtaq's death, said that they both were tortured in custody of a state security agency.

The High Court on August 8 ordered a stay of proceedings in the DSA case against environmental activist Shahnewaz Chowdhury, who raised his concerns about a coal-fired power plant in his neighbourhood in Banshkali, Chattogram. Had the government not weaponised the ICT Act and the DSA, Mushtaq would not have had to lose his life for his words, Shahnewaz Chowdhury and Shahidul Alam would not have had to spend time in jail for their words. But the government does not seem to have any remorse.

Except for defamation, the government has retained the penal actions against all the sections of the DSA discussed above. In case of defamation, the government has proposed an increment of the fine from Tk 10 lakh to Tk 25 lakh. At this rate, fines from DSA might become an alternative source of the national revenue.

that clearly demonstrate the personal harm.

A political party mindful of public interest would aim to do away with harmful pieces of legislation and place human rights at the heart of its campaign. In line with those actions, the government would make sure that the next piece of legislation is transparently reviewed by a wide range of stakeholders, including members of the media and civil society. Only after those reviews are publicly discussed and incorporated should a law be sent to parliament for approval.

The government should do away with the criminal punishment for expressions entirely, and make cybersecurity specific to criminal offences such as child pornography, stealing of protected personal data, and financial crimes. We don't want to see more people being jailed for their posts on the internet.

The interim solution for Pakistan



Zahid Hussain is a Pakistani journalist and author. His X handle is @hidhussain.

ZAHID HUSSAIN

It is yet another episode of "from power to prison," a tragicomedy long played on Pakistan's political stage. The plot is predictable: yet another former prime minister bites the dust. The sentencing and disqualification of Imran Khan was foretold, as it had been in the case of other former prime ministers. He, too, has been charged with corruption like his predecessors.

It is irrelevant whether one is guilty or not; the "monster" has to be culled. It all seems to be going according to script. The plan is to keep Khan out of the electoral race. The recent court verdict may have served the objective, but the project of dismantling the PTI is not over yet. Khan's imprisonment does not seem to have affected his popular support base. The game is far from over. In fact, it has just begun. It is now going to be a long-drawn political and legal battle between the two antagonists.

All this has made it increasingly uncertain whether elections will be held within the stipulated time frame even as the National Assembly is dissolved and a caretaker administration takes charge. The last-minute decision to hold elections on the basis of the latest population count has already delayed polling beyond the 90 days as mandated by the constitution. There is a fear that the delay could exceed the few months needed by the Election Commission to complete the delimitation exercise. A prolonged and empowered caretaker administration backed by the security establishment seems to be very much on the cards, putting democratic

transition on hold.

A series of legislation pushed through parliament in unprecedented haste just a few days before the dissolution of the National Assembly has reinforced suspicions. Most alarming is the passage of the amendments to the Official Secrets Act bill, which provides sweeping powers to the security agencies, thus undermining civil rights. Although some of the provisions were slightly diluted after strong protest in the Senate, its overall lethality has not been blunted.

Such unchecked powers for security agencies will further strengthen the extra-democratic forces. It seems to be part of the plan to silence the opposition. What the ruling coalition fails to understand is that it could also be used against them. It will certainly come back to haunt the current ruling parties. The shadow of the security establishment has already grown longer, raising concerns about the country staying on the democratic path.

We may be moving towards permanent hybrid rule, with the civilians playing second fiddle. There are already signs of the security establishment's creeping domination, with the security leadership's increasing role in several civilian fields, including running the economy. The ruling coalition has virtually abdicated civilian authority.

What has been happening is a sad commentary on the country's retreating democratic process, however weak it may have been in

the first place. The last 16 months is a testimony to the backward march. The PTI, which is now in the eye of the storm, is equally, if not more, to be blamed for wrecking the system with its destructive narrative.

Instead of taking the parliamentary path, the former prime minister took a confrontationist approach, seeking to bring down the entire edifice. His populist rhetoric and the public's disenchantment with the PDM government may have won him unprecedented support among the people, but his recklessness has done huge damage to the democratic process. He simultaneously took on his political rivals and erstwhile patrons in the security establishment. He is now paying the cost of his thoughtless populist politics. Though his popular base seems to have remained intact, the party is in disarray, with the departure of several leaders under pressure.

However, there is no sign of Khan losing support, despite the restrictions on his statements being printed or telecast. In fact, his popularity graph seems to have climbed after his imprisonment. Despite state repression and efforts to dismantle the party, the PTI is still capable of giving a tough fight to the PML-N in the electoral battleground of Punjab even in relatively free polls. Perhaps it is the fear of being swept away that has brought the PDM closer to the security establishment and that has seen the emergence of a new hybrid arrangement with another civilian partner. There is complete convergence between the two on eliminating the PTI challenge. In the process, it is democratic space that seems to be shrinking.

With the PDM government's departure around the corner, all eyes are on the composition of the caretaker administration. With the PTI, the main opposition party, out of the consultation process, it has

been left to the coalition partners and a token leader of the opposition to nominate the interim prime minister – of course, with input from the security establishment. That would make the credentials of the interim government as a non-partisan body questionable.

With the likelihood of prolonged interim rule, there is very much a possibility of an empowered technocratic setup being installed to run the administration during perhaps the most challenging time in our recent history. Such an arrangement would mean virtual military rule. Can such non-representative technocratic-cum-military rule stabilise the politically volatile situation? Of course not. Ruthless use of state power to suppress the opposition will only make things worse. It would then become extremely hard for anyone to control the situation.

It is a dangerous scenario that confronts a country already in the midst of a dire economic crisis and rising terrorism. Sidelining a popular leader and making and breaking political parties won't stabilise the situation. Unfortunately, our political leadership has never learnt any lesson – not even from their own history. The politics of confrontation and revenge has already led to shrinking democratic space. Delaying elections is not the solution. It is the responsibility of both the government and opposition to bring down the temperature in order to create a conducive atmosphere for free and fair elections. Regrettably, it doesn't seem to be happening. The time for political reconciliation appears to be over. One can only hope that sanity prevails.

The article was first published in Dawn, an ANN partner of The Daily Star, on August 9, 2023.



People come to Dhaka from all parts of the country hoping to find a better life, but most of them find an uncaring, brutal city.

FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

Dhaka’s ugly, ruthless side



NO STRINGS ATTACHED

Aasha Mehreen Amin
is joint editor at The Daily Star.

AASHA MEHREEN AMIN

It was a piece of news in late July that tugged at the heart and left a nagging unease long after the first read. Jewel Mia, a day labourer, and his wife Nasrin, a domestic worker, had hanged themselves from the ceiling fan of their tin-shed room in Rampura, Dhaka. They were 28 and 22, respectively – in other words, “in the prime of their youth.” Eight months ago, they had lost their first child. Nasrin had given birth to a stillborn baby despite the couple raising Tk 63,000 for the delivery in a private hospital in Kishoreganj. According to the news report, relatives said it was both the tragedy and the financial hardship that led them to take such an extreme decision.

They had a Tk 30,000 loan on their heads as well as Tk 3,500 unpaid rent for their one-room tin-shed home, not to mention daily expenses like food. Jewel’s job as a day labourer was irregular, and Nasrin could not go to work for the last few days as she had a fever. From the couple’s point of view, the future, clouded by their child’s death and riddled with unpaid bills and loans, looked so bleak that death seemed the only escape.

The story would resonate with many young couples starting out in this ruthless city, where what you earn is nowhere near what you spend, just for the bare minimum. It is a bizarre scenario where the cost of food, housing, and healthcare – basic needs for any human – keep soaring while incomes stay relatively the same.

On the day I read the news of Jewel Mia and Nasrin, 14 people had died of dengue in 24 hours. Diseases spread easily in a city that has 23,234 people inhabiting each square kilometre. For the working class, getting tested for a fever and flu-like symptoms hardly warrants a costly

visit to the doctor or huge fees for tests. But sometimes they get sicker and cannot afford not to go to work, so they are forced to seek healthcare. Yet, where will they go? The public hospitals are overcrowded and, for many, too far to drag the sick to. So they go to nearby private clinics and doctors’ chambers where a long list of expensive tests and medicine are prescribed. Thus, a huge chunk of their income just disappears into the doctors’ chambers, diagnostic centres and pharmacies. If hospitalisation and surgery are required, the costs are bound to soar to impossible heights. So, they sell assets or jewellery, and if they don’t have that, borrowing is the only answer. For others, even a serious illness may have to be waited out with practically no treatment apart from over-the-counter pills. Sometimes they live, sometimes they die: being fatalistic helps to justify perishing without any medical attention.

Perhaps this painful story struck a chord with me because of Minara, a highly efficient home worker. Two weeks ago, her husband and seven-year-old son had fallen sick and tested positive for dengue. There was no government hospital near her house, and the far-away ones would have turned them away, being overwhelmed with patients. The tests, cost of saline drips, and doctors’ fees reached well over Minara’s means and she could only cover them with help from her employers. But even then, she had to buy food on credit; the bill had already reached Tk 6,000, weeks before her next paycheck. I was shocked to know she and her family had been having just *daal*, potatoes, and rice for all the time her husband had been sick, as he could not drive the rickshaw and earn money for

daily groceries. I thought of how anxious those days must have been for her and her husband, agonising over how they would make ends meet in the following days. I wondered what would have happened if her husband and son hadn’t had follow-up tests done, or received treatment. What if her husband or her son had not survived? What desperate thoughts would have engulfed her?

I know I should not have such morbid thoughts, but I cannot help feeling defeated, realising that I don’t know even a fraction of the struggles that Minara and her husband face on a daily basis.

What I do know is that there is something obscenely absurd that Minara has to pay the same amount for tests that I do when I am sick. A recent study by the World Bank has found that out-of-pocket spending in Bangladesh accounts for 73.9 percent of health expenditure – the highest in South Asia. In the absence of a universal health insurance scheme, people in Minara’s income bracket just cannot afford proper healthcare, no matter how serious the illness. Essential surgeries, medication, and other forms of treatment are postponed or abandoned because of a lack of funds. Otherwise, borrowing from loan sharks who charge high interest rates is the only answer. There are no statistics on the informal debt burden of the poor – not just in the cities but in the villages too. Often, another loan is taken to pay off the first loan, and so the burden just gets bigger and bigger and the debtor becomes poorer and poorer.

People come to Dhaka from all parts of the country with the belief that they will earn enough to survive and feed their families. But soon enough, they become trapped in the vicious cycle of working and spending every penny on just living costs. For the majority of its residents, Dhaka is the most expensive city where even a shabby tin-shed room like Jewel and Nasrin’s costs Tk 3,500 a month. Dhaka is also an uncaring, brutal city where no one really cares if a young couple decides to hang themselves from the ceiling fan when they feel they have no way out.

DYSFUNCTIONAL COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION IN ACADEMIA

A call for leadership training



Dr Syed Saad Andaleeb is distinguished professor emeritus at Pennsylvania State University, former vice-chancellor of Brac University, and vice-chair at the Foundation for Learning, Teaching and Research.

SYED SAAD ANDALEEB

A recent report on the private banking sector in Bangladesh was replete with examples of strategic thinking, leadership, being in sync with the times (digital transformation, internet banking, digital transaction tools, etc), superior service, cost reduction, sustainability and environmental considerations, and customer inclusiveness using nano-deposits. Emphasis on capacity building of employees “for a better tomorrow,” welcoming international best practices, tuning services to customer needs, ensuring best-quality corporate governance (still a questionable quest), product innovation, streamlining operational efficiency, incentivising creativity, and a holistic view of banking (not just profits) are all remarkable developments in the sector promising larger societal impact (employment, economic growth, environment preservation, and so on).

Are the above innovations and management initiatives in the banking sector – many transferable to other areas – even remotely visible in the higher education sector? Sadly, the colonial imprint here is so stark, one wonders whether system lethargy, serving parochial interests (that often turn into raging turf battles), can ever be overcome and replaced by a vibrant and visionary educational edifice, powering development across the nation.

With a hierarchical and centralised system, and with decision-making concentrated in the hands of a select few, serving their own selfish interests, the “colonised” underlings and their experience-based thinking are routinely disregarded with detrimental consequences already evident in intellectual, social and moral decay permeating the various sectors. Such administrative systems also limit the flow of information and communication to maintain control, preserve the hierarchy, and ignore – even silence – imaginative voices to maintain the status quo.

In contrast, modern management systems are decentralised, empowering individuals and teams at various levels to achieve goals creatively while being more adaptive and responsive to changing circumstances and challenges. Such systems foster efficient and equitable governance, organisational development, participatory decision-making, and sustainable development, all directed at the welfare of various stakeholders.

Modern management systems also encourage transparency, open communication, and free flow of information while seeking to engage with stakeholders, including employees, customers and the public, to gather feedback and make informed decisions.

But modernisation efforts in higher education are passionately resisted. Consequently, it continues to remain indolent and unresponsive to changing times, operating in silos, lacking in transparency and accountability, and resisting innovative ideas and best practices to bring positive change. It also serves as a home for faculty and administration who, once employed, have lifetime job security despite their continuing lacklustre performance in developing the universities as knowledge centres where discovery, dissemination, and use of knowledge ought to advance knowledge frontiers in a collaborative spirit.

Most university teachers are not certified to teach; many universities are not accredited; teaching-learning is tethered sadly to lectures and rote learning where students engage in little analysis, synthesis or application; research contributions even by Asian standards are pathetic; people are placed in positions without requisite qualifications or credentials to lead their departments, faculties or the institutions (HoDs, deans, VC/PVC) and without being subject to performance assessment; and boards (and government functionaries for public universities) rule with impunity and little accountability. Sadly, the system continues to churn out graduates of poor quality who need to

undergo serious pre-service and in-service training to be able to serve other sectors competently. Even the regulatory bodies and the implementing ministry go scot-free without any serious assessment of whether and what impact they have really made!

So, where do we go from here? It is indeed possible to start at any of several different points, sequentially or simultaneously, to fulfil a deeper educational mission. One such point is the need to train academic leaders, especially on institutional efficacy. From a systems perspective, many administrators of the higher bodies responsible for taking the larger education agenda forward (UGC, education ministry, etc) are also ill-trained, some even ill-motivated.

Training is essential to developing competent and effective administrators to manage the diverse and complex responsibilities

lead by example, promoting a positive institutional culture, and serving as creative problem solvers.

Financial management and budgeting

Academic institutions are often tight on budgets that require adept financial management skills. Training should cover budgeting, resource allocation, and planning to ensure financial sustainability.

Human resources and personnel management

Administrators deal with a diverse workforce, including faculty, staff, and support personnel. They must be well-versed in recruitment practices, professional development, performance evaluation, motivating the staff, and allocating rewards and recognition. Nurturing an environment of collaboration with team building skills is also vital.

Data infrastructure and institutional research

Administrators need to be data-informed decision-makers. Training should equip them with skills in data (internal and external) analysis, and organisational assessment methods to measure and improve institutional effectiveness. Familiarity with and leading institutional research programmes is also crucial.

Other critical areas of training



ILLUSTRATION: EHSANUR RAZA RONNY

of running educational institutions. Adopting a vision and mission to align stakeholders, they must strive to benefit not just students, but also the larger stakeholder community. Because universities are embedded in society, the gifted administrator must find purpose and fuel passion within the university to ultimately serve society and its knowledge needs.

Seven modules of administrative training are essential to introduce the much-needed and refreshing change in academia.

Understanding the academic environment: Administrative training should provide a comprehensive understanding of the intricate academic environment. They must also be skilled at identifying and interacting with various stakeholders and the unique challenges that academic institutions face.

Academic policy and governance

Administrators must be well-versed in academic policies and governance structures. Understanding accreditation requirements, curriculum development, and faculty retention and dismissal procedures is crucial for leading effectively.

Strategic planning and institutional development

Administrators must be trained to develop a university’s mission, values, and strategic goals and be able to align their efforts and adapt to a rapidly changing educational landscape.

Leadership and decision-making skills

Effective administrators must possess strong leadership skills. Training should focus on leadership styles, conflict resolution, and ethical decision-making. The effective administrator must also

to be introduced in phases are: student affairs and support services (especially mental health and counselling); legal and ethical compliance issues; communication and public relations; technology integration, emergency preparedness; and continuous professional development.

Academic administration is complex as it serves multiple stakeholders. This requires a diverse range of essential skills and knowledge to run the institutions competently and efficiently. The question is whether the academic top brass understands the need to get trained as transformation leaders while helping them emerge from their entrenched and colonial-bureaucratic mindsets. By equipping them with proper tools, knowledge, attitudes, and values, Bangladesh’s academic institutions can become competitive and vibrant knowledge centres, promoting institutional innovation, enhancing the overall quality of education and student experience, and propelling national development. Attention may also be devoted in due course to train a special cadre of education administrators instead of relying on other sectors, with different cultures, to provide administrative support in education.

From an ecosystem perspective, a range of training inputs is also important for the UGC and the education ministry officials simply because the quality of human assets they continue to churn out speaks volumes about the quality of stewardship of these officials in managing such a vital sector. When all levels are properly aligned, higher education can forge new frontiers in an emerging global order, as demonstrated by our neighbours in East Asia and Southeast Asia. The troubling question is: can we do it?

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 Antlered animal

6 Old poets

11 Add on

12 Deplete

13 Precipitous

14 Be generous

15 Box office buy

17 Cub’s cave

18 Outback runner

19 Lab worker

22 Gym unit

23 Houston team

24 Dance music

25 River of song

27 “Xanadu” band

30 Elevator operator’s

question

31 Plant

32 Writer Beattie

33 Squelch

35 Orlando team

38 Furious

39 City on the Mohawk

40 Frisco player

41 Home run, in slang

42 Swiss watch parts

DOWN

1 Great painter

2 Punctual

3 Half a pint

4 Look for

5 With child

6 Tour carrier

7 Fire proof

8 Scan, as data

9 Coercion

10 Used up

16 Minotaur’s slayer

20 Apart from

21 Great Leap

Forward leader

24 Writer Brown

25 Liszt work

26 Improvise

27 Sevilla setting

28 Blackout thief

29 They have titles

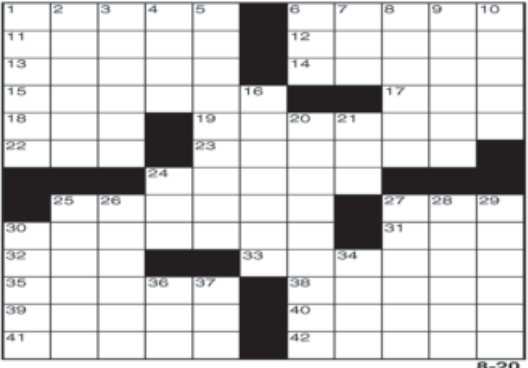
30 Full range

34 Lake near Buffalo

36 Drink cubes

37 Compact, e.g.

WRITE FOR US. SEND US YOUR OPINION PIECES TO dsopinion@gmail.com.



WEDNESDAY’S ANSWERS





RIGHTS WATCH

Rights of migrant workers

While domestic laws ensure necessary protection for migrant workers, safety concerns persist once the workers are abroad. Furthermore, a significant challenge lies in the lack of an adequate monitoring system and insufficient resources and infrastructure for authorities to supervise the recruitment process and working conditions of these workers.

MD. HARISUR ROHOMAN

A significant number of Bangladeshi migrant workers are working across various parts of the world, and a large number of them are employed in countries in the Middle East. According to the data of Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training, approximately 10 million Bangladeshi workers are currently working in the Middle East.

A large number of these migrant workers are subjected to various forms of discrimination and violence. In addition to physical and mental abuse, World Bank reports have highlighted issues such as passport confiscation and non-payment of salaries. As a result, workers are forced to undertake hazardous works and excessive overtime, leading to severe health issues and even deaths.

A study conducted by the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies in 2019 revealed the dire situation faced by Bangladeshi workers in the Middle East. The study shows that 67% of workers had experienced abuse, 73% did not receive any safety guidelines, and 62% lacked access to healthcare. Additionally, the research found that 24% of workers did not receive their salaries, and 42% experienced delays in payment. It is pertinent to note that the death rate of Bangladeshi migrant workers in the Middle East has increased at an alarming rate compared to that in the previous years.

The *Kafala* system is one of the significant ways of torturing and exploiting workers. Under this system, workers are unable to change jobs or leave the country without

their employer's permission. If the owner's permission is not taken, the workers often face difficulties in finding future employment, including being sent back to their home country. In effect, this system legitimises the oppression of workers.

On the other hand, due to various irregularities in the hiring processes, workers suffer through multiple problems. Agencies and sometimes brokers charge additional fees from workers creating a vicious cycle of debt and thereby forcing workers to work longer hours. More often than not, workers do not receive the promised work environment and salaries as assured by the agencies.

In this regard, it should be highlighted that receiving money through false promises and false assurance of salaries and benefits is punishable offences according to section 31 of the Overseas Employment and Migrants Act, 2013 (OEMA). These offences are punishable with up to five years' imprisonment and one lac BDT as fine.

Furthermore, due to a lack of sufficient information, migrant workers have to face various complications, although according to section 22 of the OEMA, every migrant worker has the right to get information (vide an employment contract) regarding the migration process, work environment, and relevant legal rights. Moreover, according to section 27 of OEMA, any migrant worker who becomes a victim of fraud has the right to get legal assistance.

Apart from filing criminal cases under this Act, aggrieved workers can file civil suits

to seek compensation under section 28. Migrant workers also have the right to return to their country according to section 29, and workers have the right to get assistance from the embassy in this regard. The recruitment agency will have to bear the cost of migrant workers returning to the country if negligence or illegal activities on part of the agency are reason underlying the return to home of any migrant workers.

While domestic laws ensure necessary protection for migrant workers, safety concerns persist once the workers are abroad. Furthermore, a significant challenge lies in the lack of an adequate monitoring system and insufficient resources and infrastructure for authorities to supervise the recruitment process and working conditions of these workers.

Moreover, many Bangladeshi workers are undocumented, and hence, they remain deprived of legal protection. In this context, undocumented women workers who migrate as domestic aides are the most vulnerable, and their protection should be addressed on an urgent basis. For the protection of Bangladeshi workers, an overarching infrastructure is needed for the proper implementation of the law. Furthermore, diplomatic relations between Bangladesh and the Middle Eastern countries ought to be strengthened, and in this regard, Bangladeshi overseas missions can play a vital role.

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

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Muslim marriages Relevant laws, rights, and obligations

MD. NAFIS ANOWAR SANTO

There are many rights and obligations that vest upon the parties after solemnisation of a valid marriage. For instance, the legitimacy of children, claim for maintenance, questions regarding the right to inheritance, etc. are all dependent upon the status of marriage. Similarly, statutory laws try to regulate aspects of marriages as part of public weal. Hence, it is useful to get acquainted with the laws, consequent rights and obligations of marriages. This article briefly discusses a few such rights and obligations with respect to Muslim marriages.

As per section 3 of the Muslim Marriages and Divorces (Registration) Act 1974, every marriage solemnised under Muslim law shall be registered. Where a marriage is solemnised by the Nikah registrar himself, he shall register the marriage at once. On the other hand, where a marriage is solemnised by a person other than the Nikah registrar, the bridegroom shall report it to the concerned Nikah registrar within 30 days from the date of solemnisation. Interesting to note, registration is not mandatory in Hindu marriages. But registration should be done for getting legal protection while traveling abroad, asset transfer, preparing a deed of gift, presenting evidence in court, and divorce. The Hindu Marriage Registration Act 2012 has paved the way for registration of marriages solemnised under the Hindu law.



According to the Child Marriage Restraint Act, 2017 the parties to a marriage must be of legal age of marriage. Section 2 of this Act sets the minimum age of the groom at 21 years, and that of the bride at 18 years. It is pertinent to mention that this Act does not render marriages validly solemnised under Muslim Law invalid but penalises the solemnisation of marriage of or between underage individuals.

Interestingly, there has been a misconception about 'court marriage' in our society which merely is an affidavit sworn by the parties to a marriage before a magistrate to the effect that they have decided to marry at their own discretion and without any undue influence or coercion. As such, after this procedure, in order to validate the marriage, formalities must be completed as per the family law (e.g., Muslim personal law).

Dower is a strict financial obligation set by *Shariah* that has to be undertaken by every Muslim husband as a consequence of a marriage. There may be two portions in terms of the time of payment of dower: prompt and deferred. The prompt portion has to be paid immediately, and the deferred portion is payable on dissolution of marriage or at the occurrence of any specified event. Dower should be determined based on the social status and economic capacity of both parties. The whole or any portion of the dower that is to be paid to the wife should be clearly mentioned in the *Kabinnama*.

Clause 18 of the *Kabinnama* speaks about delegating the right to divorce to the wife, also known as *Talaq-i-Tafwid*. This right can be delegated unconditionally or with conditions attached by the husband. It gives a Muslim woman the right to repudiate the marriage without the intervention of court.

The writer is a student of Law at University of Dhaka.

COURT CORRIDOR

On implementing the DIRECTIONS OF THE COURT

MD FATEEN FARHAN

The High Court Division (HCD) has, over the years, made numerous significant directions and observations on issues ranging from environment protection to accountability of governmental entities and statutory bodies. However, these decisions have rarely been translated into any substantial changes in our day-to-day practices. This article focuses on some of these examples and the possible reasons underlying such phenomenon.

For instance, in 2020, the HCD ordered a ban on single-use plastic products in coastal areas, hotels, motels, and restaurants across the country in one year. To end rampant and pervasive use of plastic, the HCD additionally instructed the government to enforce the ban on use of plastic bags and to shut down manufacturing factories.

Despite the categoric judicial directions, as a study conducted by the Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA) in 2023 indicates, there has been a



steep rise in annual per capita plastic consumption in urban areas, surpassing the previous figures. The study reveals a six-fold increase in the consumption of LDPE

packaging materials since 2005.

In addition to this, in 2020, the HCD directed the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) to increase the number

of vehicle fitness testing centers to monitor unfit vehicles. However, the number of unfit vehicles increased from 2.9 lacs in 2019 to 5.08 lacs in 2022. Thus, the massive increase in the consumption and usage of plastic and in the number of unfit vehicles clearly contrasts the directions of the court.

Like these, there are numerous instances where the directions of the court have not been complied with and have not yielded optimistic results. Well-crafted court orders are often ignored and they indicate the acute need for smooth interaction and coordination among different organs of the state. Lack of political will across multiple governance tiers, resource constraints and administrative bottlenecks can be underscored as the central issues which prevent the implementation of the directions of the courts. The schism between direction and implementation increases with time due to the absence of effective monitoring and public awareness as well.

Although there is no effective monitoring body, the court has the power to appoint committees to oversee implementation of certain orders. Indeed, in some cases, the court has sought to monitor and supervise the implementation of its orders by appointing supervisory committees. It may be argued that only cases with high public exposure get such supervision. To address this, the court needs to establish a mechanism to administer and supervise implementation of its directions in every instance, instead of selective ones.

In conclusion, the unpleasant relationship between direction and implementation needs to be taken into consideration at the earliest for the sake of good governance and rule of law. The judicial system, law enforcement agencies, and the public must work together to ensure proper implementation to realise the directions that the court lay down.

The writer is a final year law student at London College of Legal Studies (South).

Tigresses' focus on fitness in Sylhet camp

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh women's team are set to begin their preparation for the upcoming Asian Games in September as the Tigresses will be heading to Sylhet next Sunday to begin their fitness training.

The team is slated to begin camp on August 14 at the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium. The members of the national team had undergone screening tests at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur on Wednesday and are will undergo the Yo-Yo fitness test on Friday at the same venue, according to Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) officials.

The 26-member squad for the upcoming camp will train in Sylhet till the end of August.

During their recent home series against India, quite a few youngsters were given the opportunity to showcase their skills with the team management's idea being to plan for the 2024 T20 World Cup which is to be hosted by Bangladesh.

A few results have been disappointing, and the team management has now identified the need for reinforcing the value of fitness ahead of the Asian Games.

"The camp is going to be all about fitness. We need to get a lot better even as we have done well recently," a member of the team management told The Daily Star yesterday.

The camp in Sylhet would be followed by more training schedules as the Tigresses hope for a good showing in the Asian Games.



Bangladesh head coach Chandika Hathurusingha demonstrates some batting tips to opener Naim Sheikh at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday as the Sri Lankan gets back in business ahead of the upcoming Asia Cup after returning from vacation.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Rumana advised to 'reach out' following outburst

SPORTS REPORTER

National women's team all-rounder Rumana Ahmed caused an uproar when she wrote "no more cricket" in a social media status. Word travelled fast that she was announcing her retirement while she also told a few media outlets that she wanted to be away from cricket.

Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB) women's wing yesterday called the all-rounder for a meeting at BCB premises to explain her actions.

32-year-old Rumana has played in 50 ODIs and 84 T20Is for Bangladesh and she was left frustrated after not being kept in the 26-member preliminary squad for the Asian Games.

BCB's women's wing committee chairman Shafiu Alam Chowdhury Nadel and selector Sajjad Ahmed Shipon asked Rumana to explain her actions in the meeting.

"She is a senior player and we have advised her to keep communication open with coaches and trainers," Nadel told The Daily Star yesterday.

"It wasn't like she was being warned [regarding code of conduct] or anything like that," he added.

Rumana was frustrated at not being able to make the aforementioned camp. She was advised to keep going through her process and not give up.

"We have given her advice on various things and also told her to reach out when she requires something or if she needs to understand something.

"The fact is, it's not like she is being excluded altogether. Obviously in similar positions there are a number of players in the side. The other seniors are also training hard at the moment. We have advised her that she will be availed practice facility and Mirpur and, if needed, she will be availed coaches and trainers separately," the women's wing chairman added.



Modest City begin bid for Premier League history

AGENCIES

Manchester City kick-off the new Premier League season at Burnley on Friday to begin their bid to become the first side to ever win four consecutive English top-flight titles but manager Pep Guardiola remained humble as he said that his side will not be able to scale the dizzying heights of last season's treble-winning campaign.

Arsenal appear best-placed to capitalise if City's grip on the English game is to come to an end and will expect to get off to a flier at home to Nottingham Forest on Saturday.

City are still riding the wave of euphoria from the end of last season as they added the club's first ever Champions League to go with Premier League and FA Cup glory -- becoming only the second English team after Manchester United to win treble.

Despite City undoubtedly being favourites in every competition they will feature in this season, Guardiola was rather guarded about the team's prospects.

"It will not be possible to do what we did last season, it is once in a lifetime," Guardiola told reporters ahead of Friday's trip to Turf Moor.

"We climbed the highest mountain last season, but in the last two days we came down from it and now we start again," added the Spaniard, whose side were beaten in the Community Shield curtain raiser by Arsenal last weekend.

"Everyone has the same intention



and there will be a lot of difficulties to climb the mountain as high as possible."

The summer has not been without its challenges for Guardiola as captain Ilkay Gundogan departed to Barcelona and the riches on offer in Saudi Arabia was too much for Riyadh Mahrez to turn down.

Guardiola's opposite number in the dugout on Friday already has a statue outside the Etihad from his playing days, but Vincent Kompany has quickly established himself as one of the brightest coaching talents on the continent.

The former Belgian captain turned around a club in crisis during his first season at Turf Moor to return Burnley to the Premier League with seven games to spare.

The Claretts are a very different proposition to the side that punched above their weight to survive for six seasons in the top flight under Sean Dyche between 2016 and 2022.

Inspired by Guardiola, Kompany

has transformed Burnley into a side that dominate the ball.

"I would play every week of every month of every year against a team the level of Man City. That is the best way to improve," said Kompany.

Burnley, though, did see the downside of opening up against City when they lost 6-0 in the FA Cup quarterfinals last season.

Guardiola was also all praise for the ex-city player.

"He has changed completely the way Burnley were playing with Sean Dyche and destroyed the Championship. It will be a tough, tough game," Guardiola said.

Guardiola added that one of City's two new signings, Josko Gvardiol, who was signed for 90 million euros (\$99.15 million) from Bundesliga club RB Leipzig last week, could make his debut against Burnley.

"He's ready. He's settled in well. Nathan Ake is ready too," Guardiola said.

Action returns to Spain, France, Saudi as well

AGENCIES

Manchester City kicking off the Premier League might be the most anticipated footballing event on Friday but fans will also see the action return to two more top leagues in Europe as both LaLiga in Spain and Ligue 1 in France are set to begin today.

There is a standout fixture on the opening matchday of the 2023-24 LaLiga campaign, with Sevilla welcoming Valencia to Estadio Ramon for what should be a fascinating affair.

Both Sevilla and Valencia desperately underachieved in LaLiga last season, with Sevilla ending the season down in 12th position, while Valencia were 16th, only just surviving relegation to the second tier of Spanish football.

Sevilla, however, managed to save their campaign by winning the Europa League for a record-extending seven times and directly qualified them for the group stage of the 2023-24 Champions League.

Meanwhile, in the first round of Ligue 1, Nice and Lille will come up against one another in a battle that will go down at Allianz Riviera.

Elsewhere, outside Europe, when the new Saudi Pro League season kicks off today, it will herald a new dawn for football in the Gulf kingdom which has spent close to half a billion dollars luring top players and coaches from traditional European powerhouses.

Last season, Al-Ahli and Al-Hazm were in the second division but the two clubs will meet in the league's opener. One could forgive Al-Ahli fans for rubbing their eyes in disbelief when they see Champions League winners like Riyad Mahrez, Edouard Mendy and Roberto Firmino line up in their team's shirt after the club's return to the top flight.

Al-Ahli, in particular, are one of the few clubs that have benefited from the Saudi Public Investment Fund's (PIF) project to invest in and privatise clubs, which also include reigning champions Al-Ittihad, Al-Hilal, and Cristiano Ronaldo's Al-Nassr.

Army exit Durand Cup with heads held high

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Army Football team's Durand Cup campaign ended following a goalless against Indian Super League (ISL) outfit Punjab FC in their third and final group match at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan in Kolkata yesterday.

Having suffered a 5-0 defeat at the hands of Mohun Bagan SG followed by a 2-2 draw against East Bengal FC, Bangladesh Army came into the contest with a must-win situation to stay in the tournament.

Six group champions and the two best runners-up from six groups will advance to the last eight in one of the world's oldest football tournaments.

Before the start of the match, Bangladesh Army coach Abdur Razzak deemed the tie crucial for them and aimed to leave the ground with a win but they had to settle with a commendable draw against former I-League champions Punjab.

The charges of Razzak created a few chances in the second half while goalkeeper Ashrafat Islam Rana made a host of impressive saves in the match as Bangladesh Army clawed out a goalless stalemate to leave the tournament with successive draws against ISL oppositions.



An increasingly confident Japan's status as genuine title contenders will be tested against Sweden in today's Women's World Cup quarter-finals clash at Eden Park in New Zealand. Goalkeeper Zecira Musovic's valiant effort helped Sweden grind through to the last eight with a tough win over holders USA on penalties but they will be wary of the threat from Hinata Miyazawa, tournament's leading goal-scorer, who slotted five of Japan's 14 goals in four outings so far.

PHOTO: REUTERS



BOTCHED C-SECTION Doctor failed to assess patient's condition

Govt probe finds about
death at Central Hospital

MOUDUD AHMMED SUJAN

The death of a newborn and her mother at the capital's Central Hospital in June occurred primarily due to the duty doctor's failure to assess the patient's condition, and the patient and her husband's insistence about normal delivery instead of a C-section, an investigation by the health ministry has found.

The hospital authorities may also have some "liabilities," said the report, prepared based on the statements taken from everyone engaged in the treatment of Mahbuba Rahman Akhi, 25.

She died on June 18 while in intensive care at another hospital, eight days after the death of her newborn following a last-moment C-section in the early hours of June 10.

"We were tasked with finding out who played what roles, and we did it. Now the ministry will decide about the punishment," Hossain Ali Khandaker, additional secretary (Legal Wing) at the health ministry, told The Daily Star.

The committee submitted the report

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THE KING OF FISHERS ... After a successful plunge-dive for hunting, this White-throated kingfisher was spotted shaking off water before beginning its meal at the National Botanical Garden in Dhaka. Widely distributed in Asia, this kingfisher species is a resident over much of its range, though some may make short migrations. It is one of the few wild species that saw success in adapting to urbanisation – as long as there are trees around. Unlike other kingfishers, despite the name, these birds don't feed on fish alone and are classified as omnivores. Anything it can spear with its razor-sharp bill may become food – large insects, lizards, crabs, earthworms and sometimes even small birds! And so, finding a habitat around water is not very necessary for them. In fact, their habitats can be in dry, deciduous forests, parks, gardens, wooded areas near open grass patches, while also near water bodies such as canals, rivers, or mangroves. With few predators recorded and an expanding population, White-throated kingfishers are listed in the "Least Concern" category by the IUCN.

PHOTO: TIMU HOSSAIN

Bangladesh's dev model an inspiration

World Bank executive
director tells PM

UNB, Dhaka

World Bank Executive Director Parameswaran Iyer said other developing countries can follow the development model of Bangladesh.

"Bangladesh has witnessed a phenomenal transformation," he said while paying a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Gono Bhaban yesterday morning.

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

Iyer praised the PM saying that the developments of Bangladesh have been achieved because of her leadership and planning.

He conveyed the greetings of the WB president to the premier.

He said the World Bank will assist Bangladesh in improving infrastructures in the next phase of its development journey.

The WB official said Bangladesh's private sector is thriving, adding that the country's sanitary system is also remarkable.

He said the WB will also help

PHOTO ON PAGE 3

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Govt bans Jama'atul Ansar

So far nine militant
outfits outlawed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has banned militant outfit Jama'atul Ansar Fil Hindal Sharqiya citing its potential threat to public safety and law and order.

The home ministry on Wednesday issued a gazette to this effect.

This development came following formal requests from the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit of police and the Rapid Action Battalion to the ministry to make the outfit's activities illegal.

Jama'atul Ansar is the ninth militant group to have been outlawed in the country.

The eight others are Ansarullah Bangla Team, Ansar Al Islam, Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh, Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh, Harkat-ul Jihad al-Islam Bangladesh, Hizb ut-Tahrir, Allahr Dal, and Shahadat E al-Hikma.

The government's notification said that the declared activities of Jama'atul Ansar are against the peace and discipline in the country.

"The activities of the organisation have already been deemed to be a threat to public security and its activities in

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

ROHINGYA REFUGEES 17 die as boat breaks up off Myanmar

Say rescuers; dozens missing

AFP, Yangon

At least 17 people drowned when a boat carrying Rohingya refugees fleeing Myanmar's Rakhine state broke up at sea this week, rescuers said yesterday.

Thousands of Rohingya people risk their lives each year making perilous sea journeys from camps in Bangladesh and Myanmar to try to reach Muslim-majority Malaysia and Indonesia.

Byar La, a rescuer from the Shwe Yaung Metta Foundation in the town of Sittwe, said more than 50 people were thought to be on the boat heading for Malaysia when it got into trouble in heavy seas on Sunday night.

"We found 17 dead bodies... as of yesterday," he told AFP. "We found eight men alive. Police have taken them for questioning."

Rescuers are still trying to find those unaccounted for, he said.

Rakhine in Buddhist-majority Myanmar is home to around 600,000 Rohingya people, who are considered migrants from Bangladesh and are denied citizenship and freedom of movement.

More than 3,500 Rohingyas in 39 vessels attempted crossings of the Andaman Sea and the Bay of Bengal in

2022, up from 700 the previous year, according to the United Nations refugee agency's January data.

At least 348 Rohingyas died or went missing at sea last year, the agency said, calling for a regional response to stop further drownings.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees says calls for maritime authorities in the region "to rescue and disembark people in distress have gone unheeded with many boats adrift for weeks".

Amnesty International likens the living conditions of Rohingya people in Rakhine state to "apartheid".

A Myanmar military crackdown in 2017 forced some 750,000 Rohingyas to flee Rakhine for Bangladesh following widespread accounts of murder, arson and rape.

Myanmar is facing genocide accusations at the United Nation's top court following the mass exodus.

Bangladesh and Myanmar have discussed efforts to begin repatriating Rohingya refugees to their homeland.

A top US rights envoy in Bangladesh said in July conditions remain unsafe for the return of ethnic Rohingya refugees to Myanmar.

Dhaka to welcome US move to seize laundered money

Momen says govt may
not sign defence deals
with US before polls

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka will be happy if Washington helps it root out corruption, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen said yesterday.

"We will be happy if they [US] confiscate the ill-gotten money that is laundered from our country. We will welcome it," he told journalists after a meeting with former diplomats, academics and civil society members at the capital's Foreign Service Academy.

State Department Spokesperson Matthew Miller on Tuesday said they have tools such as sanctions and freezing assets of the corrupt people.

Asked if the government would sign defence agreements -- Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) and General Security of Military Information Agreement -- with the US, Momen said he does not think Dhaka will sign any such deal before the next general election.

He said food security and housing are the government's top priorities.

Enquired about suggestions from his

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Length of day on Mars shrinking

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Data from Nasa's InSight Mars lander suggests the Red Planet's rotation is strangely accelerating every year, leading to a fractional shortening of the length of the Martian day.

The research, published recently in the journal Nature, found Mars' rotation on its axis is accelerating by about

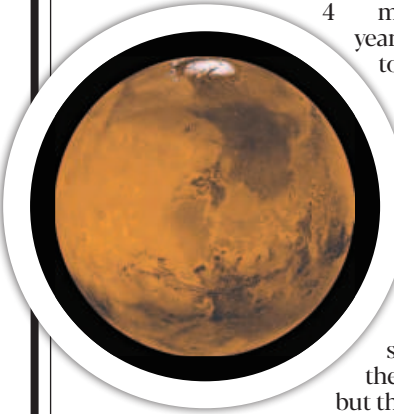
4 milliarcseconds each year – corresponding to a shortening of the Martian day by a fraction of a millisecond per year.

Scientists, including those from Nasa's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in California, are unsure what is causing this subtle speeding up of the Red Planet's rotation, but they have some ideas.

"I've been involved in efforts to get a geophysical station like InSight onto Mars for a long time, and results like this make all those decades of work worth it," study co-author Bruce Banerdt said.

In the research, scientists made the most precise measurements ever of Mars's rotation as well as detecting how the planet wobbles due to the "sloshing" of its molten metal core.

The study suspects factors such as ice accumulating on Mars' polar caps or post-glacial rebound where landmasses rise after being buried by ice could be behind this acceleration of the planet's spin.



Pak parliament dissolved

Outgoing PM Sharif starts talks
to pick caretaker premier

REUTERS, Islamabad

Pakistan's parliament was dissolved by the president on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's advice late Wednesday night, the president's office said, setting the stage for a national election amid political and economic crises.

The advice came three days ahead of the parliament's five-year term, which expires on August 12. It will be followed with a caretaker administration to be picked by Sharif and an opposition leader in the outgoing parliament to hold new elections in 90 days.

Sharif met outgoing opposition leader Raja Riaz yesterday in what was their first meeting to reach a consensus on selecting a name for the caretaker premier.

Confirming the much-anticipated meeting, Riaz said: "With a consensus, we have decided that there will be another meeting tomorrow (Friday)."

Under the constitution, the two have three days to reach agreement on a caretaker. If they can't, the decision will go to a parliamentary committee, and if it can't, then the Election Commission of Pakistan will decide.

The vote, however, could be delayed several months with the election commission set to start redrawing hundreds of constituencies based on a fresh census.

Analysts have said any delay in the election could fuel public anger and add to uncertainty in the nuclear-armed nation.

The last general election in July 2018 was won by the party of cricketer-turned-politician Imran Khan, who was sworn in days later as prime minister for the first time.



Bikers drive their vehicles on the footpath to beat traffic congestion, leaving little space for pedestrians to walk. The photo was taken from Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue in the capital's Banglamotor area yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Delhi hopes to see free, fair polls in Bangladesh Says Razzaque upon AL team's return from India

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

India hopes the next national election in Bangladesh will be held in line with the constitution and it will be free and fair, Awami League presidium member Abdur Razzaque, who led the five-member AL delegation that recently visited India, said yesterday.

"The Election Commission will hold the polls; the government will assist them. What will India do about it? India has nothing to do with the polls here," he said in response to a query on what would be India's role regarding the election in Bangladesh.

He was speaking at a press briefing at the party president's political office in Dhanmondi.

The ruling AL held the briefing to inform

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