



## Dhaka wants BRICS to help developing countries

Says Momen; PM flies to S Africa tomorrow

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka wants BRICS to be considered a means by which emerging economies help developing countries, not a platform for exerting influence that leads to geopolitical tension.

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen said this yesterday ahead of the prime minister joining the BRICS summit in South Africa on August 22-26.

"The developed countries should be happy that the BRICS emerging countries, who have resources, would like to help the developing countries," he told journalists at the foreign ministry.

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## Rooppur will be ready on time

But power generation will be delayed

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The much-awaited Rooppur nuclear power plant is coming along at more or less the expected pace but the country has to wait longer to enjoy the benefits as the power evacuation facility from the plant would not be ready on time.

One of the two projects for power evacuation from Rooppur, which was taken up in April 2018 for completion by December this year, saw 63 percent physical progress and 47.78 percent financial progress as of June, according to the Power Grid Company of Bangladesh (PGCB). The Tk 10,981 crore transmission project is unlikely to be completed before the middle of next year, according to officials.

The physical progress of the other project, which was taken up in July 2022 for completion by June 2025, is just 5 percent and the financial progress is 7.47 percent as of July 3, according to PGCB.

Under the project, 7 kilometre-long

400 kV and 230 kV double circuit lines crossing the Jamuna river and a 2 km-long 400 kV single circuit line across the Padma river were supposed to be set up at a cost of Tk 6,056.3 crore.

"It will not be possible to start test production unless the power evacuation facility is up and running," said a top official of the Tk 113,092 crore Rooppur power plant project on the condition of anonymity to speak candidly on the matter.

As of July, the Rooppur power plant in Pabna has seen 60 percent physical progress and 58 percent financial progress, according to a report of the Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division on the status of eight fast-track projects taken up between 2009 and 2016.

The project has reached its most important stage: fresh nuclear fuel will soon be delivered to the site, which will mark the transition of the nuclear

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## AUGUST 21 GRENADE ATTACK

## Living with traumas and splinters

ASHIK ABDULLAH APU and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Daulatun Nahar shudders when questions are asked about the August 21 grenade attack that forced her to adjust to a life of pain and trauma. Many nights she cannot sleep due to the physical suffering caused by splinters that live in her body in the hundreds.

Though the 55-year-old woman survived the gruesome attack, she lost sight in her left eye, developed multiple health complications and cannot walk properly despite undergoing six surgeries in Bangladesh and India. Thoughts of the fateful afternoon still send shivers down her spine.

"Our leader [AL President Sheikh Hasina] was about to end her speech. All of a sudden we heard the first explosion. Then there followed the blasts of several other grenades. I fell down after sustaining splinter injuries and passed out. As I regained consciousness, I found blood gushing out of my legs profusely," Nahar, the then vice-president of Pallabi thana unit Mohila Awami League.

"I still have nightmares. No matter how much I tried, I could not get over those painful memories. All we want now is justice and capital punishment for the perpetrators," she told this

newspaper yesterday, on the eve of the 19th anniversary of the attack, which left 24 killed and 300 wounded.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the then opposition leader, narrowly escaped death with injuries to her right ear. Ivy Rahman, wife of late president Zillur Rahman, was among those killed.

Three other survivors recount the attack that has caused long-term damage to their bodies, leaving them traumatised for life. They also share the pain of living with several hundred splinters and how they have been dealing with the traumas and financial strains that followed after the attack.

Back in 2004, Rotna Akter Ruby, 42, was an AL activist from Mirpur area. She was left inside the Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue as everyone thought she was dead.

"After regaining consciousness, I found myself inside the morgue, next to another body ... Although I recovered gradually, the physical and mental scars did not leave me behind. Doctors told me that I have to bear this pain as long as I am alive. But the pain is so excruciating that I think it would have been better to die that day," she added.

In the photos that appeared in newspapers after the grenade attack, she was seen in a blood-stained sari,

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## BNP-Jamaat trying to turn country into a failed state

PM says they harbour militants, terrorists

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said BNP-Jamaat has always been trying to make Bangladesh a failed state by patronising militants and terrorists.

She said this in a message on the eve of the 19th anniversary of August 21, 2004, grenade attack on an Awami League rally that left 24 people dead and scores injured.

Hasina, who was then opposition leader in parliament, narrowly escaped the attack with an ear injury.

She said the attack was carried out as a continuation of the conspiracy that started with the killing of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and most of his family

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## Bangladesh Accreditation Board (BAB) has Accredited GPH Ispat Quality Control Lab

which is the first time ever for a steel re-bar manufacturer in Bangladesh



For details scan the QR code

The Quality Control Laboratory of GPH Ispat, the only re-bar manufacturer of Bangladesh to possess the world's best Quantum Electric Arc Furnace Technology, has been awarded with the Accreditation Certificate bestowed by the Bangladesh Accreditation Board (BAB). Through this achievement, GPH Laboratory issued certificates will now gain greater international acceptance. The lab, composed of experienced and skilled technicians along with the state-of-the-art equipments, will not only ensure a superior standard of rebars but also play a greater role in the prosperity towards a sustainable development.



## Should existing banks get digital bank licence?

BB gets 52 applications

MD MEHEDI HASAN

Bangladesh Bank received 52 applications for the digital bank licence, with the majority of the forms coming in from the existing 62 banks – when their current licence allows them to offer the same service already.

Around 500 companies including banks, non-bank financial institutions, mobile financial service (MFS) providers, mobile operators, IT firms, start-ups, pharmaceuticals and cement manufacturers applied for the digital bank licence, The Daily Star has learnt from central bank officials with knowledge of the matter.

Digital banks are online-only banks that offer customers a range of financial services through digital channels, such as mobile apps and websites – and without any traditional physical branch networks. Globally, digital banks are set up by fintech start-ups who have the technical know-how to offer the services at scale at a low cost.

In its guideline, BB said digital banks will not be allowed to issue any physical instrument, give out loans to carry out foreign trade and disburse term loans to medium and large industries.

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## Spain clinch maiden Women's World Cup

AFP, Sydney

Spain won the Women's World Cup for the first time in their history with skipper Olga Carmona sweeping in the only goal for a deserved 1-0 victory over England in Sunday's final.

In front of a crowd of nearly 76,000 at Stadium Australia in Sydney, Spain were the more accomplished side and had more chances, including missing a second-half penalty.

Spain's triumph is vindication for Jorge Vilda and the Spanish football federation, who stuck with the coach even after 15 players last year said they no longer wanted to represent their country under him.

Spain are the fifth team to lift the World Cup since the tournament began in 1991, joining outgoing champions the United States, Germany, Norway, and Japan.

In front of Spain's Queen Letizia, defender Carmona rampaged from left-back to thrash home the winner low and hard on 29 minutes.

"It was a really tough game, we knew it would be tricky, England have a great team, but I think it was our game," Carmona told Spanish national broadcasters La 1.

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Spain players celebrate their 1-0 win over England in the final of the FIFA Women's World Cup at Stadium Australia in Sydney yesterday. Olga Carmona's 29th-minute strike helped the Spaniards to their first ever title in women's football's showpiece event.

PHOTO: AFP

## University units of JCD instructed to topple govt: DB

BNP terms the claim politically motivated

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Metropolitan Police yesterday claimed that the six arrested Chhatra Dal leaders collected firearms on instructions of central BNP leaders "to create instability in the country" ahead of the national election.

In a separate drive, detectives arrested 12 more BNP leaders and activists, including its Dhaka south city unit acting member secretary Tanveer Ahmed Robin, from the capital's Nayapaltan on Saturday night.

At a press conference at DMP media centre yesterday, DMP Joint Commissioner Khondkar Nurunnabi claimed that detectives arrested the six JCD leaders on Saturday from a Lalbagh house.

BNP earlier alleged that the six were picked up by plainclothes men on Friday.

They have been made accused in two cases filed with Lalbagh Police Station – one for carrying illegal arms and another for acts of sabotage.

"Three firearms and 36 bullets were seized from the arrestees. They collected two of the weapons from Pabna and one from Teknaf," Nurunnabi said.

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## India does whatever it thinks is good for it

Says Momen

UNB, Dhaka

Describing the Indian government as “very mature”, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen yesterday said if New Delhi does something for India, regional peace, and stability, this will certainly be beneficial for the region.

Momen said India is a very strong democratic country and it does whatever it thinks is good for it.

“We have no reason to comment on this. Because we believe that they have a mature government system,” he told reporters at a media briefing at the foreign ministry.

His remarks come after recent reports by Germany-based Deutsche Welle (DW) and India’s Anandabazar newspaper that a message has been conveyed to Washington that “New Delhi is not happy with the current role of the United States regarding the upcoming national elections in Bangladesh”.

Political leaders from both the ruling and opposition parties spoke soon after the reports run by two media outlets.

## 2 sent to jail over murder of indigenous man

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

A Thakurgaon court yesterday sent two people to jail over the murder of a member of the local indigenous Orao community.

Police arrested Gabriel Toppo alias Gabe, 30, and Julian Toppo, 42, after the victim’s wife Veronica Khalko filed a case accusing the duo and several others Saturday night.

Stephen Tirki, 50, a motor mechanic, was stabbed to death Friday night.

Gabe admitted to killing Stephen over a land-related dispute at Parishadpara in Thakurgaon municipality, Superintendent of Police Utam Prashad Pathak told a press briefing held at his office in the afternoon.

He said that several years ago, Stephen’s father, Daniel, along with Julian and Gabriel, took possession of a piece of land.

In this connection, a case was filed with the local police station against them. The case trial went on for seven years until it was dismissed.

After Daniel’s death, Julian and Gabriel frequently demanded compensation from Stephen, blaming his father for getting them implicated in the case. Stephen was assaulted previously for refusing to pay them.



PHOTOS: Dacca Souvenirs, SEVENDAYSNOTES

## DHAKA CHRONICLES: City’s charm in souvenirs

NUSRATH JAHAN

In a life dominated by smartphones, where pictures taken in them are seen as the only way of capturing moments in a frame, souvenirs come with the amazing ability to celebrate life and the magic that surrounds us. Be it the forgotten simplicity or the regular complexities of our lives, it’s surprising how much emotion each of these mementoes holds in them.

Among souvenirs of the past is the humble fridge magnet that stands out as a nostalgic beacon. A small emblem that is placed on the refrigerator, marking our presence at a particular time and place. However, in the desire to collect souvenirs from far-off lands, one often forgets to appreciate the charms of their hometown itself. The narrow streets, busy markets, and whispered histories of Dhaka form a complex narrative that is as vivid as any memento acquired by a traveller.

If you are indeed a vintage soul who loves this city in all its chaotic energy, local souvenirs are just the thing for you.



Not only do these bring a renewed sense of appreciation for the city but also shows how sometimes the most amazing things are within our very reach.

Souvenirs like rickshaws, auto-rickshaws, flags and the like are not hard to come across but if you are in search of the ones that will speak “Dhaka”, you’ll have to narrow your search down a little. Thanks to the rise of online shops that seem to have the answers to all our whims these days, simply browsing through Facebook or Instagram will get you the mementoes you want.

Dacca Souvenirs, for instance, offers a glimpse into a world of unique keepsakes, waiting to be taken by those who want to celebrate Dhaka’s essence. From hand-painted fridge magnets, stamps, and poster frames to miniature figures of iconic landmarks

of the capital, these souvenirs are threads that weave together the past and the present, intertwining our lives with the heartbeats of this city.

Sevendaysnotes is another page that highlights each city, including Dhaka, of our country into vibrant notebook covers. If you are in the habit of writing down your thoughts, I suggest you get your hands on one of these and fast.

There are a few things that come to mind when you think of Dhaka: the loud New Market area, Dhanmondi Lake, the heart of Dhaka University – TSC square, vintage establishments still standing in Old Dhaka or even Baitul Mukarram. Whatever fits your perfect visualisation of Dhaka, there is a souvenir for it.

Perhaps, the best part of online shopping is the absolute freedom of customisation. Several online pages now can take your favourite designs, or in this case, your favourite part of Dhaka just as you want, and replicate them in accessories like wrist bands, key rings, brooches, caps, or even a cool and casual t-shirt.

In this whirlwind of existence, allow yourself the luxury of remembrance, the joy of holding a piece of Dhaka’s essence in your hands. Be it to remember the streets you have roamed or to list the ones you yearn to walk, let this be your gentle reminder to collect a piece of Dhaka’s heart.

## University units

FROM PAGE 1

The firearms were made in Pakistan and Myanmar, according to the case statement.

The DB claimed they came to know from the arrestees that the BNP and Chhatra Dal high commands directed the Dhaka University Chhatra Dal unit and other university units “to topple the current government by inciting fear and panic among the public.”

Nurunnabi made no comment and quickly left the stage when journalists asked him if police will conduct any drives to recover firearms brandished by ruling Awami League leaders and activists in recent street rallies.

At a press conference at BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia’s Gulshan office yesterday, party Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said DB officials are making “false and motivated” claims.

“The Detective Branch said BNP is now collecting weapons to sabotage the election. This is the interesting part. That means they are now speaking entirely politically on behalf of a party,” Fakhrul said.

Two of the six JCD leaders – Mominul Islam Jisan, senior joint secretary of Dhaka University JCD unit, and Mohammad Arif Billah, former vice-president of a private university JCD unit – were placed on a two-day police remand for questioning.

Jisan’s brother Anamul Haque termed the police allegation “false and fabricated”.

“He has a stronghold at Dhaka University and was involved in organising BNP programmes. Law enforcers targeted him to weaken their movement,” he told The Daily Star.

The 12 other BNP leaders and activists who were detained on Saturday night were shown arrested in a case filed with Jatrabari Police Station.

Robin, son of former BNP MP and the party’s Commerce Affairs Secretary Salahuddin Ahmed, was placed on a four-day remand. The rest were sent to jail.

## Rooppur will be ready on time

FROM PAGE 1

power plant under construction into the status of a nuclear facility and make Bangladesh a member of the “nuclear community”.

The first unit of the Rooppur nuclear power plant was scheduled to start commissioning in March next year and the other unit a year later.

Another fast-track project, the Tk 16,000 crore Maitree Super Thermal Power Plant in Rampal, is yet to begin full-swing operation for lack of transmission facilities and dredging in the Pashur river, according to the IMED report.

The project’s physical progress is 94.64 percent and financial progress is 89.93 percent.

The deadline for the project was February 2023, and one unit of the plant has already gone into operation in December last year. However, it is yet to reach its maximum production capacity, the IMED report said.

For power supply from the plant, a 400 kV Ameenbazar line and a 230 kV Khulna line have been readied.

However, it has not been possible to supply full evacuation from the operational unit. On the other hand, when the Payra plant is operational, less electricity from the Rampal plant can be supplied through the Ameenbazar line, the IMED report said.

Besides, coal supply to the Rampal plant has been interrupted as navigability in the Pashur river has reduced amid a lack of dredging. Dredging in the Pashur river will not begin before June 2024, according to the Mongla port authority.

“There is no limitation to evacuating the power from Payra and Rampal – we are transmitting what they are producing,” AKM Gause Mohiuddin Ahmed, managing director of PGCB, told The Daily Star.

He said the IMED report might be dated.

“We have issued the clearance a long time back that we can evacuate the total electricity from both the

Payra and Rampal power plants,” Ahmed added.

The second unit of the Rampal plant is expected to go into commercial operation in October this year. The plant will require about 80 lakh tonnes of coal in the next three years as fuel consumption.

For uninterrupted coal supply, the IMED suggested the Bangladesh Bank ensure adequate dollars.

However, one of the fast-track projects, the much-talked-about Padma bridge, was opened for vehicular movement in June last year – which is ahead of schedule. Only 1 percent of the physical work now remains, while the financial progress for the project is 89 percent.

The Tk 39,246 crore Padma Bridge Rail Link Project saw 81 percent physical progress and 75.5 percent financial progress, according to the report.

As of July, the Tk 4,374.47 crore Payra deep seaport project achieved 90 percent physical progress and 86 percent financial progress.

The Tk 33,461 crore Dhaka Metro Rail project, known officially as the Dhaka Mass Rapid Transit Development Project Line 6, has recorded physical progress of 78 percent and financial progress of 68 percent.

Metro is running from Uttara to Agargaon, and from October, it will be ferrying passengers up to Motijheel. The rest of the line – from Motijheel to Kamapur – is under construction.

Another project the Mohekskhali-Matarbari Integrated Infrastructure Development project has 12 components including a 1,200 MW power plant.

The Tk 51,854 crore project has made 77.70 percent physical progress and 64.91 percent financial progress.

The project was undertaken in 2014 with a deadline set for full implementation by December 2026.

The physical progress of the Matarbari port and the power plant is 94 percent and the power plant’s

initial synchronisation has been completed, the IMED report said.

With the power evacuation line completed, the power plant has a target to start producing electricity in December.

The Tk 18,034 crore Single Line Dual Gauge Railway Track from Dohazari to Cox’s Bazar saw 87 percent physical progress and 44 percent financial progress. The railway is likely to be opened in September.

However, a project official said the cost is likely to be slashed by \$400 million as it is yet to be decided whether one of the components – a 28-km railway from Ramu to Gundam near Myanmar – would be constructed.

The total cost for the eight projects is Tk 308,676 crore, 67 percent of which has been spent as of July, according to the report.

## Spain clinch

FROM PAGE 1

“We had the feeling we were going to do it.”

England had the first sniff of a chance but Lauren Hemp shot weakly at goalkeeper Cata Coll.

There was little to choose between them in the opening exchanges before both teams had golden opportunities on the quarter-hour mark.

Spain, who had never won a knockout game at the Women’s World Cup until this tournament and had lost 4-0 to Japan in the group phase, went ahead just before the half-hour mark.

With 20 minutes left, Spain were awarded a penalty after a long VAR review decided Keira Walsh had handled in the box.

But Jennifer Hermoso’s penalty was weak and Earps saved comfortably to keep England hopes alive.

But despite 13 minutes of injury time, England rarely threatened and it was an assured Spain who held on comfortably, looking the more likely to score.

## Living with traumas and splinters

FROM PAGE 1

lying among the dead on Bangabandhu Avenue. Her kidney on the right side had to be surgically removed a few months after the incident. She still carries around 50 splinters in her body.

Besides, she has been suffering from various diseases, including skin disease with both her legs swelling up at times. Her family has to spend nearly TK 30,000 every month for her treatment.

Stories of Selina Khatun and Nargis Akter are similarly distressing. Selina, 43, the then women affairs secretary of Kalabagan ward unit AL, saw her sister die in front of her own eyes while she lay injured. She survived and now has over 1,000 splinters still stuck inside her body. She lost her job after the incident.

“My elder sister Sufia Khatun and I were sitting in the third row of the rally on that day. Suddenly, I saw my sister lying in the streets, all smeared with blood,” Selina told this correspondent.

After the incident, she lost her job as an office assistant at the National University, Selina said, adding that she’s struggling to provide for her family, let alone continue her treatment.

Talking about the day, Nargis, 50, the then woman affairs secretary of Bhatara union AL, said, “I was on the north corner of the makeshift rally stage. Before I could understand

anything, I fell down on the ground after a huge explosion. Memories of that day are still fresh in my mind.”

“19 years have passed since the incident. Still, I could not regain my strength fully. I still can’t have solid food. I spent many days on water. I still have to take more medicine than food,” she said.

“Now I have only one demand –



Daulatunnahar Selina Akter

punishment of the culprits. If they are punished, I will get some relief,” she added.

In a verdict delivered on October 10, 2018, by a special tribunal in two cases filed over the grisly attack, BNP’s acting chairman Tarique Rahman and 18 others were sentenced to life in prison.

Meanwhile, former state minister for home Lutfozzaman Babar and 18 others were given the death penalty on charges of murder through criminal conspiracy.

All 38 accused were also sentenced to life in prison for causing grievous injuries.

## 18 burn to death in Pakistan bus crash

AFP, Islamabad

At least 18 people burned to death yesterday when an overnight bus smashed into another vehicle carrying diesel in eastern Pakistan, officials said.

The accident took place on a motorway at around 4:30 am (2330 GMT on Saturday) near the town of Pindi Bhattian in eastern Punjab province.

“Within five minutes, the whole

bus was engulfed in flames. Eighteen people burned alive whereas 16 others were injured, of whom four are critical,” senior police officer Fahad Ahmed told AFP on the phone.

“It seems that the driver of the bus dozed off.”

The Suzuki open-back van was carrying drums of diesel and petrol.

Fatal road accidents are common in Pakistan, where traffic rules are rarely followed.



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DHAKA ELEVATED EXPRESSWAY

Tolls fixed for Airport-Farmgate section

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has fixed toll rates for vehicles to use the Airport to Farmgate section of Dhaka Elevated Expressway, which will partially open this September. Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday presented the information at the Secretariat. Vehicles with no more than 16 seats, including cars, taxis, SUVs, and minibuses, and light-weight ones with a capacity less than three tonnes will have to pay Tk 80 as tolls. Meanwhile, medium-sized trucks (up to six wheels) have to pay Tk 320, and the ones with more than six wheels will have to pay Tk 400. All types of buses (16 seats and above) will pay Tk 160. The prime minister will inaugurate the 11.5km section

Category	Types of Vehicles	Toll Fee (Taka)
Category 1	Car, taxi, jeep, SUV, microbus (under 16 seats), and any light truck (below 3 tonnes)	80
Category 2	Medium-sized truck (up to 6 wheels)	320
Category 3	Truck (with over 6 wheels)	400
Category 4	All types of buses (16 seats and above)	160

of the expressway on September 2, after over a decade of the project's initiation. The road will be open to the public the following day. The Airport-Farmgate section will have 15 ramps with a length of 11km -- 13 of which will be opened initially. Two other ramps -- one at Banani and another at Mohakhali -- will be opened later. Users have to pay the set tolls for the whole road, regardless of the distance they intend to travel on this expressway, said AHMS Akter, the director of the project. New toll rates would be fixed once the entire 19.73km expressway from Airport to Kutubkhali on Dhaka-Chattogram highway is opened next year, he added. However, three-wheelers, motorbikes, bicycles and pedestrians would not be allowed on the expressway. This is the first transport sector project being implemented under the public-private partnership model with foreign investment.



Two individuals consume narcotics in broad daylight while people, including impressionable school students, walk past them on the busy footbridge near the Dhanmondi Govt Boys School yesterday. The sight is common in many footbridges across the capital, resulting in awkward situations for pedestrians.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Finally, road crash victims to get compensation

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Authorities have finalised a compensation package for families of road accident victims, five years after parliament enacted a law in this regard. At least Tk 5 lakh will be given to the family of a person killed due to reckless or negligent driving. The ones who have lost a limb or suffered other forms of life-changing injuries will receive Tk 3 lakh each, while the victims who are likely to recover and return to normal life will get Tk 1 lakh, according to the relevant rules. Compensation claims will be

settled by a 12-member trustee board. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will inaugurate the compensation programme on October 22, marking National Road Safety Day, a new process to compensate road accident victims or their family members. Thousands lose their lives in road crashes every year, while many suffer from life-changing injuries. However, compensation is still a rare concept in the country. Under the Motor Vehicles Ordinance-1983, which was repealed after the 2018 act came into force in November 2019, victims or their family members could seek compensation at the Motor Accident Claim Tribunal for death, injury, and damage to properties caused in crashes. SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

AUG 21 GRENADE ATTACK 19 yrs on, survivors, victims' families still wait for 'final justice'

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The August 21, 2004 grenade attack victims are yet to receive justice for the horrifying tragedy that took place at an Awami League rally, in the capital's Bangabandhu Avenue. The incident claimed 24 lives and left 300 injured. The then opposition leader Sheikh Hasina, now the prime minister of the country, narrowly escaped death in the ghastly incident on this day, 19 years ago. Trial proceedings of the cases filed over the incident -- which is considered to be one of the most sensational political crimes in the country's history -- have been finished by a lower court nearly five years back. Now, the cases are waiting on the High Court, as its bench of Justice Shahidul Karim and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman started hearings on the death references (trial court documents for confirmation of death) and appeals (filed by convicted accused) on December 4 of last year. So far, the bench has held hearings for 80 working days till July 25, court sources said. Deputy Attorney General (DAG) Bashir Ahmed, who is assigned as a state counsel for dealing with the cases, said on August 16 that statements from 224 witnesses of the total 225, have been read out before the HC during the hearings. The judgement delivered by the trial court will be read out before the HC bench after all testimonies are recorded. DAG Bashir Ahmed also said that the HC bench is not currently holding hearings as its senior judge is on ill. The hearing will resume after the judge joins office. He also said it cannot be determined how much time will be needed to complete hearings of the death references and appeals of August 21 grenade attack cases. So, there is no time frame on when the judgement will be delivered. Earlier, on August 10, Attorney General AM Amin Uddin told reporters that 10 to 12 more working days might be needed to complete hearings for the cases. Court readings from around 30,000 pages of SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



A BTCL employee, navigating through a maze of wires, is seen fixing a telephone line in response to a complaint. The sight is becoming rare these days as the charm of land phones are on the decline. The photo was taken yesterday in the capital's Adabor.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

'Unstable' migrant worker returns home, thanks to Brac

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Brac Migration Programme yesterday handed a man to his relatives after he was found by police in 'unstable' condition at the capital's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport. The man, identified as Mizanur Rahman, is in his early 50s. He was in Saudi Arabia for more than two decades working as a driver, Shariful Hasan, associate director at Brac Migration Programme said. Shariful said Mizanur returned to Bangladesh on Friday and was

found in 'unstable condition' by on-duty police officials at the airport. Following a recent Facebook post detailing his ordeal, an expatriate from Dubai contacted with Brac identifying him as Mizanur's brother. Through him, Brac could locate Mizanur's family members in Cox's Bazar's Chakaria, added Shariful. Later, one of Mizanur's brothers and a cousin communicated with Brac and met them yesterday noon. After being confirmed about their identities, Brac handed Mizanur to them in the evening, he said.

Earlier on Friday, Mizanur was found by policemen "wandering aimlessly at the airport premises, he said. At that time, he could not clearly tell about the identities of his family and relatives. Members of Armed Police Battalion handed Mizanur to Brac on Saturday for his safe return home, according to a press release. As part of its activities, Brac Migration Programme provides various support services to both outbound and returnee migrant workers at HSIA.

SULTANA'S DEATH IN CUSTODY Probe report submitted to HC bench

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A probe committee formed by the government to investigate the detention and custodial death of Sultana Jesmine of Naogaon has submitted its report to the High Court. The sealed report, sent to the Supreme Court registrar general's office on Thursday afternoon, was received by the HC bench of Justice Farah Mahbub and Justice Mohammad Mahbub Ul Islam yesterday. The bench, however, refrained from disclosing the contents of the report saying it is a very confidential and sensitive SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

LABOUR LAW VIOLATION SC dismisses Yunus' petition

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court yesterday dismissed a leave to appeal petition filed by Nobel Laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus challenging a HC verdict that rejected his petition against labour court's indictment order. A seven-member bench headed by Chief Justice Hasan Foez Siddique passed the dismissal order as it heard arguments on the petition on August 17. Complainant's lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan told The Daily Star that there is no legal bar for the labour court concerned to run the trial proceedings of SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

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**Application Deadline: August 31, 2023**



# 19 yrs on, survivors, victims’

FROM PAGE 3

the case paper books before the HC are at the final stage and one more working day might be needed to present the paper books, he said.

After readings from the paper books are concluded, the defence lawyers will place arguments and then the state counsels will make their arguments.

Attorney General Amin Uddin said the lower court has delivered a very beautiful judgement in the cases filed for the gruesome grenade attack,

properly citing the reasons and analysing the laws.

“We will pray to the High Court to uphold the lower court verdict in the cases,” he added.

Defence lawyer Mohammad Shishir Manir, who represents three convicted accused including former BNP state minister for home Lutfozzaman Babar, said the hearing of the August 21 grenade attack cases may not be concluded before October, as both the Appellate and High Court Divisions of the Supreme Court will go for a long annual vacation on September 1 and will reopen on October 8.

“We will place arguments before the High Court on behalf of our clients after it resumes the hearing,” he said, adding that neither the victims nor his clients got justice from the trial

court verdict in the case.

A long period of time may be needed for final disposal of the cases, since there are legal options for moving appeals before the Appellate Division, challenging the HC verdict and reviewing petitions before the same court against its judgement, in connection with the cases, said legal experts.

A Dhaka court on October 10, 2018 sentenced 19 people, including Lutfozzaman Babar to death in two cases for the murders, and for explosives which were used in the grenade attacks.

The court also sentenced life imprisonment to 19 others, including BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman, while 11 people were handed different prison terms.

Of the convicted accused, 18 are absconding, including Tarique Rahman.

# Probe report

FROM PAGE 3

matter, said Assistant Attorney General Md Abul Kalam Khan Daud.

The bench fixed October 15 for hearing and passing an order on the matter.

On April 5, the HC bench directed the cabinet secretary to form a high-powered committee, including the chief judicial magistrate of Naogaon and a judicial officer nominated by the district judge, to investigate the detention and death of Sultana in custody and other relevant issues.

The HC also ordered the government to withdraw the Rab officials who were involved in picking up Sultana and attach them to the Rab Headquarters for the sake of transparency and neutrality in the investigation.

The probe committee

has been ordered to submit the probe report before the HC.

The court also issued a rule, asking the authorities concerned to explain why Sultana’s detention by Rab officials without any case should not be declared illegal and unconstitutional.

In the rule, the court asked the officials concerned to show causes as to why they should not be directed to take action against the Rab members who picked up Sultana.

The HC bench issued the order and rule following a writ petition filed by Supreme Court lawyer Monoj Kumar Bhaumik.

Sultana, an employee of a union-level land office in Naogaon, died in the custody of Rab-5 after suffering brain haemorrhage on March 24.

PRAYER  
TIMING

AUGUST 21

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4:25	12:45	4:45	6:38	8:00
JAMAAT 5:00	1:15	5:00	6:41	8:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Superintending Engineer, RHD

Road Circle, Noakhali

Phone No. 02334491092

E-mail: [senoa@rhd.gov.bd](mailto:senoa@rhd.gov.bd)

Memo No. 35.01.7587.190.17.017.23-1824

Date: 20.08.2023

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01.	863384	SE/Noakhali/ NRD/PMP- Road/2023- 2024/01	PMP work for DBS Wearing Course & Protective works at Ch. 21st (P) Km. to 28th (P) Km. of Lakshmipur-Dattapara-Chatkhil Road (Z-1510) under Noakhali Road Division during the year 2023-2024.	18/09/2023 at 16:30	19/09/2023 at 12:30	19/09/2023 at 12:30

This is an online tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>). Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP helpdesk ([helpdesk@www.eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@www.eprocure.gov.bd)).

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Ranapriya Barua

ID No. 005155

Superintending Engineer, RHD

Road Circle, Noakhali

GD-1261

World Food Programme

বিশ্ব খাদ্য কর্মসূচী

SAVING LIVES CHANGING LIVES

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

For prequalification of NGOs for

“WFP’s 2024 Partnership cycle (1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024)

To implement the Humanitarian Assistance Programme in Bangladesh

to Enhance Food Security and Nutrition”

Ref. # WFP-BGD-EOI-NGO-27-07-2023

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) invites experienced and potential local/national/international NGOs to submit an Expression of Interest for the implementation of “Humanitarian assistance programs to enhance food security and nutrition.”

**About the Programme:**

Under the Country Strategic Plan (2022 – 2026), WFP will support Bangladesh on its path to ending hunger and reducing malnutrition by 2030 through four strategic outcomes (SO):

- **SO1:** Populations affected by crisis in Bangladesh are able to meet basic food, nutrition and other essential needs during and after crises.
- **SO2:** The nutrition needs of women, children and vulnerable groups in Bangladesh are met through national institutions that have enhanced capacities to design and implement gender- and nutrition-sensitive social safety net programmes by 2026.
- **SO3:** Vulnerable communities in Bangladesh are more resilient to shocks and natural disasters owing to enhanced national disaster management capacity and flexible nutrition- and gender-sensitive social safety net programmes by 2026.
- **SO4:** Vulnerable crisis-affected populations in Bangladesh benefit from enhanced coordination and improved common services during and after crises.

WFP, through its partners, currently provides humanitarian assistance to approximately 1,040,000 people in Bangladesh. In collaboration with the Government of Bangladesh (GoB), other UN agencies, and NGOs, WFP is also working in various sectors namely Food Security, Nutrition, Emergency response and Common Services. In the most vulnerable Bangladeshi communities and the camps, WFP will continue to: i) provide humanitarian food assistance to the Rohingya population every month through E-vouchers; ii) build the resilience of refugees and local communities through skills development, livelihoods, market linkages, food assistance for assets and volunteer services iii) support schools and learning centres with school feeding and capacity building for relevant national institutions; iv) implementation of an integrated package of malnutrition prevention and treatment interventions and nutrition services targeting children aged 6-59 months and pregnant and lactating women; v) Implement SafetyNet programmes vi) Implement disaster risk preparedness and response to protect the food security of vulnerable population vii) Implement Food and Nutrition Security Programme in Urban areas viii) Provide lifesaving food assistance during Emergency Response to any disaster in any geographical location in Bangladesh (Create a standby partner roster to be deployed as and when needed).

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The organization must have:

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- Past experience in community mobilization and resilience building activities
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- Organization’s strategic objectives that are aligned with WFP’s strategic priorities, SO1 to SO4 mentioned above.
- Adequate resource capacity (financial human resources and procurement)
- Relevant sector experience (Food, Nutrition, common services)
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- Strong relationships with local administration and relevant local and regional institutions.

**Prequalification Application Process:**

All the interested local/national/international NGOs with a valid registration certificate with NGO Affairs Bureau are requested to submit their profile (as per the prescribed format) through UN Partner Portal (<https://www.unpartnerportal.org/dashboards>) by 26 August 2023. Interested applicants must ensure that the Organizational Profile in the Portal is updated with all the latest information and documents. The detailed guideline for creating an organizational profile in UN Partner Portal is available at (<https://tinyurl.com/23dj9wte>)

In case, the interested NGO’s encounter any technical difficulties, please contact [bangladesh.flataskforce@wfp.org](mailto:bangladesh.flataskforce@wfp.org), email address: [bangladesh.flataskforce@wfp.org](mailto:bangladesh.flataskforce@wfp.org)

# Finally, road crash

FROM PAGE 3

The victims’ chances at compensation were narrowed after the ordinance was repealed. In rare instances, victims file writ petitions with the High Court seeking compensation.

As per the Road Transport Act-2018, the government will create a fund for compensating and treating road crash victims. The fund will be created with a one-time or annual “contribution” from vehicle owners.

A 12-member trustee board will deal with the compensation claims, the act says. But the trustee board could not fully start functioning till January this year, in absence of the act’s rules.

Bangladesh Road Transport Authority started collecting the “contributions” from the transport owners from January as well.

Till July, at least 2,868

people were killed in 2,989 road accidents this year, according to BRTA. However, only 243 applications were filed from January till August 17, said BRTA Chairman Nur Mohammad Mazumder, also the chief of the trustee board.

Asked about the low number of applications, he said, “The broad is scrutinising the applications. The victims will be compensated if their claims are found to be authentic.”

“People are more or less aware about the compensation process, but it takes time for them to collect necessary papers for submitting the application,” said the BRTA chairman.

However, the number of applications is increasing lately. The trustee board will finalise the number before the prime minister hands over cheques to the victims on October 22, he added.

# SC dismisses Yunus’

FROM PAGE 3

the case against Yunus and others following the SC order.

The labour court in Dhaka is scheduled to record statements from the witnesses of the case on August 22, he added.

On August 13, Yunus filed the leave to appeal petition with the Appellate Division, seeking a stay on the HC’s August 8 rejection verdict.

Sheikh Merina Sultana, chairman of Third Labour Court of Dhaka, on June

6 framed charges against Yunus and three Grameen Telecom officials in this case.

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

On September 9, 2021, SM Arifuzzaman, a labour inspector (general) of the Inspection for Factories and Establishments Department, filed the case with the court.

The court on October 12, 2021 granted bail to them.

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ফোনঃ ০২-২২৩৩৮৩৫০৭

ডিএসসি/পিআরডি/৪২/২০২৩-২০২৪  
জিডি-১২৬৩

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Office of the Plant Manager (Superintending Engineer)  
Sirajganj 225 MW Combined Cycle Power Plant (Unit-1)  
Soydabad, Sirajganj

Ref: 27.28.8878.101.07.001.19.227

Date: 20/08/2023

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Engr. Brojendra Kumar Sarker  
Plant Manager (Superintending Engineer)  
Sirajganj 225 MW Combined Cycle Power Plant (Unit-1)  
NWPGL, Soydabad, Sirajganj

GD-1256





Defying the scorching heat, TCB card holders wait for hours to purchase essential commodities at subsidised prices. Due to ever-rising prices in the market, lower-income families have no choice but to rely on this service for survival. The photo was taken yesterday in Khulna's Khalishpur area.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

## CREDIBLE POLLS

# Free presence of foreign observers crucial: TIB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The existing 2018 guidelines for foreign election observers ahead of the upcoming national parliament elections must be revised to hold a credible, impartial, and participatory election process, said Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB).

The free presence and movement of local and foreign observers is essential to conduct a free, fair and participatory election, TIB said in a statement issued yesterday.

In the statement, TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman said, to make the guidelines “contemporary” and relevant, the Election Commission should consider the role of foreign observers’ unrestricted

presence as a significant means in achieving a level-playing field or a fair competition arena.

Earlier, in 2018 national parliamentary elections, the limited presence and controversial role of foreign observers due to visa complexities, had tarnished the election process that time, he said.

Iftekharuzzaman said that if the guidelines are formulated only on expression of government institutions’ viewpoints and restrictions, it could deepen the ongoing crisis of trust in the Election Commission and further discourage foreign observers.

The responsibility for ensuring a fair election is not solely the EC’s; similarly, the commission should not forget that it is their constitutional

responsibility and obligation to arrange a transparent and inclusive election, he added.

“So, the guidelines should be reviewed in light of the views of non-party experts, media personalities, and other stakeholders on the relevant issues and, in this case, the positive and negative experiences of Bangladesh in the past,” read the statement.

The EC has recently taken the initiative to bring changes to the guidelines ahead of the upcoming national parliament elections.

As per the current guidelines, international observers and journalists need to take permission from the commission in prescribed forms. They need clearance from home and foreign ministries.

## PROBE INTO OFFSHORE BUSINESS

# SC lawyer seeks to become party to High Court order

STAFF REPORTER

Supreme Court lawyer Barrister Syed Sayedul Haque Suman yesterday submitted two petitions — one for becoming a party to a probe ordered by the High Court and the other seeking a directive to bar S Alam’s owner and his wife from leaving the country.

The petitions were filed with the High Court and the attorney general’s office.

In the petition submitted to the AG office, Barrister Suman said there is a prima facie case against S Alam Group for laundering money, corruption and forgery and therefore, an order from the HC is necessary directing its owners Mohammad Saiful Alam and his wife Farzana Parveen not to leave Bangladesh until the end of the inquiry ordered by this court on August 6.

On the same day, Barrister Suman moved a prayer before the HC with a report in The Daily Star headlined “S Alam’s Aladdin’s lamp” published on August 4, for a suo-moto rule and probe order.

The HC bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice Khizir Hayat Lizu will hold a hearing today on the petition filed seeking to become an added party to the suo-moto rule and probe order, the lawyer said.

Last week, S Alam Group submitted two petitions with the HC and the attorney general’s office, one seeking to become a party to a probe ordered by the HC, and the other seeking a retraction of the probe and a gag order on media.

The bench on August 6 issued the suo-moto rule directing the inquiry into allegations that Saiful Alam and his wife are running offshore businesses without Bangladesh Bank’s permission.

## FLOOD IN KURIGRAM

# Locals suffer as road remains unrepaired

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

More than three hundred families of Gorokmandal village in Kurigram’s Phulbari upazila have been suffering immensely with their commute as the road, connecting the village to the rest of the upazila, remains unrepaired for over a month.

The road was damaged at four places due to flood. However, one of the damaged portions was repaired, somewhat allowing people to pass, said Shyamal Chandra Mandal, a member of Naodanga Union Parishad.

While the other damaged parts continue to decay due to a lack of repair works, locals have resorted to using a makeshift bamboo bridge to cross those portions, he added.

Naser Ali, a 65-year-old farmer of Gorokmandal village, said, “No agricultural produce can be transported to the market as no vehicles are able to ply the dilapidated road.”

A month ago, the rise in water levels in Dharla river inundated the area and severely damaged some portions of the road, Naser added.

UP Member Shyamal Chandra Mandal, said Phulbari Upazila Parishad has assured of repairing the road soon.

“Phulbari Upazila Nirbahi Officer had inspected the damaged road. If the allocation is available, the damaged road will be repaired soon,” said Ayaz Uddin, another UP member.

The project implementation officer has been directed to repair the remaining parts of the road as soon as possible, said Phulbari UNO Sibbir Ahmed.

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLES REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH  
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER  
EDUCATION ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT (EED)  
SECTOR-1, UPASAHAR, RAJSHAHI.  
web site: [www.eed.rajshahi.gov.bd](http://www.eed.rajshahi.gov.bd)



## e-TENDER NOTICE

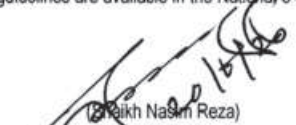
Tender Notice No: 02/e-GP/EED/Raj/ 200 College/2023-2024.

Date: 20.08.2023.

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

Tender ID	Lot/Package Location (Name of Institution)	Procurement Method	Document Last Selling Date & Time	Document Closing/Opening Date & Time
860515	Construction Of 6-Storeyed Academic Building With 6-Storeyed Foundation Of College Building At Rajshahi Government Mohila College, Sadar, Rajshahi.	OTM (NCT)	18-Sep-2023 16:00	19-Sep-2023 13:00
860516	Construction Of 6-Storeyed Academic Building With 6-Storeyed Foundation Of College Building At District & Sub-District Level. At New Govt. Degree College, Sadar, Rajshahi.	OTM (NCT)	18-Sep-2023 16:00	19-Sep-2023 13:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System portal ([www.eprocure.gov.bd](http://www.eprocure.gov.bd)) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents of following Package from the National e-GP System portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank’s Branches up to the Following Date & Time. The Provisions laid down in the “PPA & PPR -2008 including latest all amendment” and STD will be Followed. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

  
(Rakib Naser Reza)  
Executive Engineer  
Office of the Executive Engineer  
Education Engineering Department-Rajshahi.  
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GD- 1257



## গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ  
পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়  
মাইজদী কোর্ট, নোয়াখালী ৩৮০০  
Website: [www.noakhali.police.gov.bd](http://www.noakhali.police.gov.bd)

স্মারক নং-রেশন/২০৮০/১ম খণ্ড,

তারিখঃ ২০/০৮/২০২৩খ্রিঃ

## উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং-০৪/২০২৩-২০২৪

নিম্নবর্ণিত শর্তাবলী ও পারলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট আইন-২০০৬ এবং তদাধীন প্রণীত পারলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা-২০০৮ সংশোধনসহ এবং প্রচলিত অন্যান্য বিধি বিধানের আলোকে নোয়াখালী জেলা পুলিশ রেশন স্টোরের ২০২৩-২০২৪ অর্থবছরের ২য় কোয়ার্টার (অক্টোবর/নভেম্বর/ডিসেম্বর/২৩) সময়ের জন্য রেশন সামগ্রী ক্রয়ের নিমিত্তে প্রকৃত যোগানদার/সরবরাহকারীর নিকট হতে নিম্নস্থ প্যাকেট সীলমোহরকৃত খামে দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

১. মন্ত্রণালয়	স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রণালয়।
২. বিভাগ	জননিরাপত্তা বিভাগ।
৩. ক্রয়কারী/সমগ্রাহকারী কর্তৃপক্ষ	পুলিশ সুপার, নোয়াখালী।
৪. ক্রয়কারী/সমগ্রাহকারী স্বত্ত্বার জেলা	নোয়াখালী জেলা।
৫. যে কাজ/ক্রয় এবং যে সময়ের জন্য দরপত্র আহ্বান	জেলা পুলিশের জন্য রেশন সামগ্রী ক্রয়।
৬. দরপত্রদাতা/যোগানদার/সরবরাহকারীর যোগ্যতা	চলতি অর্থ বছরের নবায়নকৃত ট্রেন্ড লাইসেন্স, আয়কর সনদ, স্বাক্ষরিত কাজের অভিজ্ঞতার সনদ, যোগানদার সরবরাহকারী হিসাবে ভ্যাট রেজিস্ট্রেশন সনদ, ব্যাংক সনদেগুলি স্যাটিফিকেটসহ মোট কার্যমূল্যের সমপরিমাণ স্থিতির সনদ (সত্যায়িত কপি) দরপত্রের সাথে দাখিল করতে হবে।
৭. দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং, স্মারক নং ও তারিখ	০৪/২০২৩-২০২৪, স্মারক নং- ২০৮০/১ম খণ্ড, তারিখঃ ২০/০৮/২০২৩খ্রিঃ।
৮. দরপত্র প্রচারের তারিখ	২০/০৮/২০২৩খ্রিঃ।
৯. সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ	১১/০৯/২০২৩খ্রিঃ (সরকারি ছুটির দিন ব্যতীত)।
১০. দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের স্থান	০১। রেঞ্জ ডিআইজির কার্যালয়, বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ, চট্টগ্রাম। ০২। পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, নোয়াখালী। ০৩। পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, লক্ষ্মীপুর।
১১. দরপত্র গ্রহণের স্থান	পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, নোয়াখালী।
১২. দরপত্র গ্রহণের তারিখ ও সময়	১২/০৮/২০২৩খ্রিঃ, ১২.০০ ঘটিকা। নির্দিষ্ট সময়ের পর আর কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ করা হবে না।
১৩. দরপত্র খোলার স্থান ও সময়	পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, নোয়াখালী। তারিখঃ ১২/০৮/২০২৩খ্রিঃ, ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা, দরপত্রদাতা/প্রতিনিধি উপস্থিতিতে (যদি উপস্থিত থাকেন)। তারিখঃ ১৪/০৮/২০২৩খ্রিঃ, ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা।
১৪. দরপত্র মূল্যায়নের তারিখ ও সময়	মোঃ শহীদুল ইসলাম পিপিএম (বার), পুলিশ সুপার, নোয়াখালী।
১৫. দরপত্র গ্রহণকারী কর্তৃকর্তার নাম ও পদবী	পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, নোয়াখালী। ফোনঃ ০২৩০৪৪৯১০৩০, ফ্যাক্সঃ ০২৩০৪৪৯১১২৩
১৬. দরপত্র গ্রহণকারী কর্তৃকর্তার যোগাযোগের ঠিকানা	০১। পিপিআর/২০০৮ এর সকল বিধি বিধান দরপত্রের শর্তাবলী হিসাবে গণ্য করা হবে। ০২। ক্রয়কারী কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন বা সকল দরপত্র গ্রহণ/বাতিলের ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন এবং সর্বনিম্ন দর গ্রহণে বাধ্য নয়। ০৩। দরপত্র সিডিউলে অন্যান্য শর্তাবলী বর্ণিত রয়েছে।
১৭. বিশেষ নির্দেশনা	

ক্রমিক নং	রেশন সামগ্রীর নাম	মালামালের পরিমাণ (আনুমানিক)	সিডিউল মূল্য (অফেরতযোগ্য)	টেন্ডার সিকিউরিটি (ফেরতযোগ্য)	ক্রয়ের সময়সীমা
০১।	মস্তর ডাল সরবরাহ (উন্নতমানের দেশীয় ছোট দানা বিশিষ্ট)	৫০,০০০ কেজি (কম বেশি হতে পারে)	১,০০০/-	১,০০,০০০/-	অক্টোবর/২৩ হতে ডিসেম্বর/২৩খ্রিঃ পর্যন্ত যে কোন তারিখের ০৭ (সাত) দিনের নোটিশে মালামাল সরবরাহ করতে হবে।
০২।	সোয়াবিন তৈল (ভীষ/কপটীনা/ফ্রেস/পুষ্টি) ০.৫/১/২/৫/৮লিটার কন্টেইনার	৪২,০০০ লিটার (কম বেশি হতে পারে)	১,০০০/-	১,০০,০০০/-	
০৩।	চিনি (উন্নতমানের)	২৭,০০০ কেজি (কম বেশি হতে পারে)	১,০০০/-	১,০০,০০০/-	
০৪।	ক) চট্টের বস্তা (বাড়/ছোট) খ) প্রাচিকের বস্তা	রেশন স্টোরের মজুদ অনুযায়ী (সেক্টেম্বর/২৩ মাস পর্যন্ত)	৫০০/-	৫,০০০/-	

বিশেষ শর্তাবলীঃ					
ক)	মস্তর ডালের বৈশিষ্ট্যের ক্ষেত্রে ছোট দানা ও প্রতি ১০ গ্রাম ডালে কমপক্ষে ৬০০টি দানা থাকতে হবে, হলুদ হতে লাল কমলা রং, স্বাভাবিক জ্বালে ১০ মিঃ-২০মিঃ এর ভিতরে সিঁদু হতে হবে, রান্নার সময় সু-গ্রান বাহির ও খোসা ছাড়ানো হতে হবে, দানা আঁচ এবং যথাযথ শুকনা হতে হবে। পুলিশ হেডকোয়ার্টার্স, স্মারক নং-৪৪-২০১০/৮/৩২(১৫০), তারিখ- ০১/০৭/২০২১খ্রিঃ মোতাবেক নতুন পদ্ধতিতে মস্তরডাল সরবরাহের সময় ৩.৫ কেজি, ৪ কেজি ও ৫.৫ কেজি উন্নতমানের স্বচ্ছ পলিপ্যাকেট প্যাকেটজাত করে সরবরাহ করতে হবে।				
খ)	দরপত্রের সাথে পুলিশ সুপার, নোয়াখালী এর অনুকূলে যেকোন তফসিলভুক্ত ব্যাবকের ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডারের মাধ্যমে বর্ণিত দরপত্র জামানত অবশ্যই দাখিল করতে হবে এবং দরপত্র সক্রান্ত তথ্যাবলী দরপত্র সিডিউল সমগ্রহকালে জানা যাবে।				
গ)	ক্রমিক নং-৬ তে উল্লিখিত সকল কাগজপত্র/সনদপত্র ১ম শ্রেণীর সরকারি কর্মকর্তা দ্বারা সত্যায়িত করে দরপত্রের সাথে সংযুক্ত করতে হবে।				
ঘ)	এআইজি (শাণ্ডাই), বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ, পুলিশ হেডকোয়ার্টার্স, ঢাকা হতে বরাদ্দের আলোকে বিল পরিশোধ করা হবে। বিধি মোতাবেক আবেদন ও ভ্যাট কর্তন করা হবে।				
ঙ)	সয়াবিন তৈল, মস্তর ডাল ও চিনি এর প্রতিটির নমুনা দাখিল করতে হবে। অন্যথায় দরপত্র মূল্যায়ন কমিটি কর্তৃক নমুনা ব্যতীত দরপত্র বাতিল বলে গণ্য করা হবে।				
চ)	কার্যালয়ে দেওয়ার পূর্বে পিপিআর/২০০৮ মোতাবেক যেকোন তফসিলভুক্ত ব্যাংক হতে ১০% কার্যসম্পাদন জামানতের ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার প্রদান ও ৩০০ টাকার নন-জুটিফায়াল স্ট্যাম্প চুক্তি সম্পাদন করতে হবে। কার্যসম্পাদন জামানত কার্যালয়ে দেওয়ার ভিন মাস পরে মালামাল সম্পূর্ণ বুঝিয়ে দেওয়া সাপেক্ষে ফেরত প্রদান করা হবে।				
ছ)	কর্তৃপক্ষ দরপত্রে উল্লিখিত যে কোন আইটেমের পরিমাণ,হ্রাস/বৃদ্ধি করতে পারবেন।				
জ)	গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশের সর্ববিধানের অনুচ্ছেদ-১৮ মোতাবেক পুষ্টির স্তর উন্নয়ন ও জনস্বাস্থ্যের উন্নতি সাধনে ভোজ্য তৈলে ভিটামিন “এ” সমৃদ্ধকরণ আইন-২০১৩ এর তফসিল-১ এ বর্ণিত ভোজ্য তৈল ভিটামিন দ্বারা সমৃদ্ধকরণ এর মাত্র হবে ১৫ হতে ৩০ পিপিএম (Parts per million) অর্থাৎ প্রক্সিমা ভোজ্যতৈলে অনুসৃত ০.০১৫ হতে অনধিক ০.৩০ মিগ্রাম/ভিটামিন এ (০.০১৫-০.৩০ mg/g) এবং তফসিল-২ এর (১) মোতাবেক বাজারজাতকৃত ভোজ্যতৈলের বোতল, টিন কিংবা প্যাকেটে প্রদর্শিতব্য গ্রহীক “সঠিক পুষ্টি সুস্থ জীবন” থাকতে হবে।				
ঝ)	দরপত্র সক্রান্তে সকল প্রকার তথ্যাদি জেলা পুলিশের Website: <a href="http://www.noakhali.police.gov.bd">www.noakhali.police.gov.bd</a> এ পাওয়া যাবে।				
ঞ)	হরতাল অবরোধ অথবা অন্যান্যকোন অস্বাভাবিক কারণে দরপত্র দাখিলের দিন বন্ধ থাকলে পরবর্তী দিন যথা নিয়মে দরপত্র গ্রহণ করা হবে।				

মোঃ শহীদুল ইসলাম পিপিএম (বার)  
ধি-৮০০৬১২৭৫৮৫  
পুলিশ সুপার, নোয়াখালী  
ফোনঃ ০২৩০৪৪৯১০৩০, ফ্যাক্সঃ ০২৩০৪৪৯১১২৩  
ই-মেইলঃ [spnoakhali@police.gov.bd](mailto:spnoakhali@police.gov.bd)

জিডি-১২৫৯



## বাংলাদেশ কলেজ অব ফিজিশিয়ানস্ এন্ড সার্জানস্ Bangladesh College of Physicians & Surgeons

বিসিপিএস নং- ৭৭৬/২০২৩/ ২১৩৩৫

তারিখঃ ২০-০৮-২০২৩ খ্রিঃ

## জমি ক্রয় বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা সর্বসাধারণের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, বাংলাদেশ কলেজ অব ফিজিশিয়ানস্ এন্ড সার্জানস্ (বিসিপিএস) এর আঞ্চলিক কেন্দ্র স্থাপনের লক্ষ্যে চট্টগ্রাম ও যশোর শহরে কমপক্ষে ৪০ ফুট রাস্তা সংলগ্ন প্রতিটি শহরে ০১ (এক) একর বা কম বেশি জমি ক্রয় করা হবে। জমি বিক্রয়ে আগ্রহী মালিকদের (জমির প্রকৃত মালিক/পাওয়ার অব এ্যাটর্নী প্রাপ্ত) শতাংশ প্রতি জমির বিক্রয় মূল্য উল্লেখপূর্বক জমির তফসিল, দলিলের ফটোকপি, পাচা (সিএস, এসএ ও আরএস), মহানগর জরিপ (যদি থাকে), বিক্রয়যোগ্য জমির পরিমাণ, মৌজা ম্যাপ, বিক্রয়যোগ্য জমির স্কেচ/লে-আউট নকশা, চৌহদ্দি, মোট মূল্য ও সংশ্লিষ্ট কাগজপত্র আগামী ০৪-০৯-২০২৩ খ্রিঃ তারিখ দুপুর ২.০০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে সীলগালা অবস্থায় সরাসরি কলেজের প্রশাসন বিভাগে রক্ষিত বস্ত্রে দাখিল করার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো। জমিটি নিরুন্টক হতে হবে।

উল্লেখ্য যে, দাখিলকৃত যেকোন জমি গ্রহণ/বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা বিসিপিএস কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করেন।



(অধ্যাপক আবুল বাশার মোঃ জামাল)

সচিব

বাংলাদেশ কলেজ অব ফিজিশিয়ানস্ এন্ড সার্জানস্ (বিসিপিএস)

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GD- 1260





Snippets from the film 'Bay of Blood'.



# ‘I hope our message of tolerance resonates with people’

Krishnendu Bose’s ‘Bay of Blood’: A commanding call for recognition and justice

**Krishnendu Bose is a visionary Indian filmmaker with a profound commitment to storytelling. In 1985, he established Earthcare Films – a platform renowned for producing award-winning documentaries that address wildlife conservation and environmental justice.**

MAHIYA TABASSUM

Notable works in his repertoire include *Harvesting Hunger* (2000), *The Amazing Race Asia* (2006), and *The Forgotten Tigers* (2014).

His latest endeavour, *Bay of Blood*, is a gripping documentary that delves deep into the heart of Bangladesh’s tumultuous past, exploring the horrors of 1971 Bangladesh genocide.

In a recent interview with The Daily Star, the filmmaker talks about his latest project, political perspectives, motivations and challenges, and more.

**What inspired you to choose this particular subject for your project?**

I was around ten years old during the Liberation War. I witnessed the staggering effect of the war that rippled through India and it has always stayed with me.

I thought of telling the story in 2019 and spent ten days in Dhaka, interviewing a cross-section of people relevant to the War.

By early 2020, I was determined to narrate the story of this nation’s birth through this film.

**Can you share some of your challenges in terms of accessing historical footage and testimonies?**

I found the experience rather surprising than challenging.

Visual representations of the Liberation War tend to have relied more on standard footage from the Indian Films Division and Bangladesh Film Archive.

Ironically, though the tale of Bangladesh’s uprising was known to very few, it was extensively covered by news broadcasters like



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

the BBC, Reuters, Associated Press, and the Indian Films Division. They have a goldmine of archives that are easily accessible online. Regrettably, we don’t have the urge to look for it.

**Any personal or emotional moments during the process that left a lasting impact on you?**

The eyewitnesses and victims’ family members shared harrowing accounts on camera – brutal details of the events etched deep into their memories. For a daughter who witnessed the assassination of her entire family, the trauma became a recurring nightmare.

At times, it seemed if I were standing right there, reliving the incidents. A sense of anger and helplessness came over me when I encountered accounts of premeditated violence unleashed on unarmed civilians.

**What role did objectivity play in shaping**

**‘Bay of Blood’?**

Objectivity is crucial as it ensures the film’s credibility. During the process, I realised that this film must address a global audience and for westerners, a story’s integrity streamlines with rationality and evidences. The team’s diversity played a pivotal role in preserving objectivity in the production.

Daniel Feierstein played a pivotal role here in explaining the ‘hows’ and ‘whys’ of genocide. Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, also explained the curve of the genocide in his testimonies – from “superior raciality” to “ethnic cleansing”.

**How does ‘Bay of Blood’ highlight the relevance of genocide in current chaotic context worldwide?**

Genocide and attacks on democracy were not isolated events confined to 1971. They had existed before and still persist, extending their relevance even into 2023.

Democracy resembles a child – vulnerable and unprotected, unable to survive on its own. It is our responsibility to safeguard, feed, and nurture it. Anti-democratic processes, people, and forces are always there, lurking around to undermine it. However, it is not confined to a particular nation.

**‘Bay of Blood’ ends with a message of tolerance. How do you envision this message resonating with audiences across the globe?**

Despite intense violence, death, and bloodshed being depicted throughout the 95-minute docufilm, in the end, I hope our message of tolerance is what truly resonates with people.

Everybody should stand for secularism and tolerance.

## ‘Shurongo’ director’s cut releasing on Chorki

*Shurongo*, one of the highest grossing films of last Eid ul Azha, will soon greet fans with an extended version on the popular streaming platform Chorki, on August 24.

Speaking about the director’s cut of his debut film, Afran Nisho shared, “For those who haven’t had the opportunity to watch the film in the theatres, you can now watch it on Chorki.”

Tama Mirza also echoed Nisho’s sentiments, adding that she is excited about the aspect that the whole world will now get to enjoy their film.



## Selena Gomez, Miley Cyrus announce new music releasing on same day

Millennials rejoiced as their worlds collided when former Disney stars and friends, Selena Gomez and Miley Cyrus, took to their social media on Friday, to hilariously share the news of their new singles, releasing on August 25.

Both the artistes posted on Instagram in support of each other, also releasing the titles of their respective singles. Selena’s song will be called *Single Soon* and Miley will be releasing a song called *Used to be Young*.



# NEWS

## Agargaon-Motijheel part to open Oct 20

FROM PAGE 12  
third terminal of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, second unit of Rampal Power Plant and the Purbachal Expressway are expected to be opened within October.

The development projects are opening just months shy of the national election, and the ruling party is sure to showcase these across the country as evidence of its achievements.

However, not all of them would be fully opened or functional on the day of the launching, as some works, including hiring adequate manpower to run them, will still remain incomplete at the time.

Quader, also the general secretary of ruling Awami League, however, denied any link between the general election and the inauguration spree of the mega projects.

### AGARGAON-MOTIJHEEL SECTION

On July 7, Quader inaugurated the performance test on Agargaon-Motijheel section and announced that it would be open to the public

late October. The authorities also planned to initially open three out of its seven stations.

After opening the section, the PM will address a rally at Suhrawardy Udyan at 3:00pm, Quader said.

MRT-5 (NORTHERN ROUTE) WORKS

The road minister said the PM will inaugurate the construction work of MRT Line-5 (northern route) on September 16, after which she will address another rally at Savar at 11:00am.

The Tk 41,239 crore project was taken to build a 20km rail line from Savar’s Hemayetpur to Bhataria via Gabtoli, Mirpur, and Gulshan, and its deadline is 2028. The line with 14 stations will have underground and elevated sections.

On May 23, Dhaka Mass Transit Company Limited (DMTCL) hired a joint venture firm of Japan’s TOA Corporation and Bangladesh’s Spectra Group to develop land for the line’s depot at Hemayetpur at a cost of Tk 1,189 crore.

The firm on July 16 started

mobilising their equipment and manpower and has begun preparatory work.

140 BRIDGES, 12 OVERPASSES

Hasina will also open 140 bridges and 12 overpasses under Roads and Highways Department on October 22, Quader said.

Earlier, the PM inaugurated 100 bridges under the RHD on November 7 last year. On December 21, she also opened 100 roads constructed or reconstructed by the RHD.

On October 22, which is National Road Safety Day, she will inaugurate the compensation programme for the road accident victims.

Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) officials said they have so far received 243 applications under a new process to get compensation for road accident victims or their family members.

The same day, she will also inaugurate a vehicle inspection centre at BRTA’s Mirpur office. The centre will help the authority give accurate fitness clearance to vehicles.

## Dhaka wants BRICS

FROM PAGE 1  
“It should be win-win for all countries. Some people speak more about the geopolitical tension for some reason or the other. There should not be any such tension. In the long run, it [the tension] will possibly go away,” Momen said.

Hasina will fly for Johannesburg at the invitation of South African President Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa, the current president of the alliance comprised of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS). Some 70 countries will be attending.

Russian President Vladimir Putin will join the summit virtually.

BRICS is considered an alternative to the western-influenced World Bank and the IMF. Analysts think that China and Russia are considering BRICS as a way of exerting geopolitical influence amid the rising global polarisation since the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

There are also efforts of de-dollarisation. Asked about this, Momen said there have been talks on it but nothing at the official level.

He said some countries are facing difficulties as many banks have

been expelled from SWIFT, a bank messaging system for transactions with dollars.

“Many speak about de-dollarisation, but it is not easy. We don’t have much to comment on this,” he added.

Traditionally, the developed countries have been supporting the developing world. They also had pledged 0.7 percent of their gross national income but only a few could deliver. The developing countries, like Bangladesh, need funding for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

“So, if the emerging countries support us with funding, the developed countries should be happy. In that case, their responsibilities will be shared,” he said.

Since 2021, Bangladesh has been a member of the New Development Bank established by BRICS, but the issue of Bangladesh joining the alliance came under the spotlight recently when Hasina called on South African President Ramaphosa in Geneva on June 14.

The issue of membership is now hanging as the BRICS members say they need to fix the criteria for issuing

membership.

### PM’S VISIT

During the visit to Johannesburg, PM Hasina will attend the “Bangladesh Trade and Business Summit” organised by the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) on August 23. She will also attend the “Regional Envoys Conference” of the Bangladeshi envoys in Africa.

She is scheduled to make a courtesy call on South African president and the heads of the states and governments of BRICS. She will attend the banquet to be hosted by Ramaphosa.

On August 24, she will participate in the BRICS-Africa Outreach and the BRICS Plus Dialogue and address there as the member of New Development Bank. In the evening, she will address the Bangladesh expatriates living in South Africa.

A number of African leaders have sought to call on Hasina during her stay in Johannesburg. A separate group of businessmen will also visit there under the arrangement of the BSEC.

Momen said Hasina would also use the visit to South Africa to explore new avenues of strengthening relationship with the African countries in terms of trade and investment.

## Jubo Mahila League leader arrested

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her photos, and tortured her, said the complaint filed with Savar Model Police Station.

The accused then tried in vain to force her to take sedatives, and after 5:30am on July 25, they took her upstairs and pushed her off the rooftop, said Dipok Chandra Saha, officer-in-charge of the police station, quoting the complaint.

Hearing the loud noise, locals rescued her and took her to a hospital, he said, adding that the girl

was critically injured and needed surgery on the spinal column.

The accused threatened her mother not to tell anyone what had happened, said the OC, adding that the mother finally gained the courage and filed the case on Saturday morning.

Police arrested Mehnaz at her flat hours later and are looking for the other accused, said the OC.

A Dhaka court is likely to hear the remand petition today.

The case was filed under the

Women and Children Repression Prevention Act.

Before she started living with Mehnaz’s family seven months ago, the victim used to live with her poor single mother.

Mehnaz, who was an acquaintance of the family, then offered to provide for the victim. Mehnaz promised that she would pay for the girl’s schooling and took her to her flat.

After Mehnaz got arrested, Jubo Mahila League suspended her, said a press release of the organisation.

## ‘End to outbreak can’t be predicted’

FROM PAGE 12  
However, in the 31st and 32nd weeks, the number of cases began lowering in Dhaka but cases continued to rise outside the city.

In the 33rd week, there was a declining trend countrywide and the number of hospitalised patients

remained below 2000-mark. But, it crossed the mark again yesterday.

“We can’t firmly predict when the dengue outbreak will come to an end this year,” Prof Dr Shahadat Hossain, director of management information system at the DGHS, said in an online briefing yesterday.

He said that there are 2,600 beds dedicated to dengue patients in 20 public hospitals in Dhaka.

As of yesterday morning, 1,872 patients, out of the 7,582 patients currently hospitalised across the country, were undergoing treatment in the capital.

FROM PAGE 1

members on August 15, 1975.

The gruesome killings of August 21 will be marked as a shameful chapter in the history of Bangladesh politics, the premier added.

Noting that the anti-liberation forces are still plotting in various ways, she urged all to work together to resist any conspiracy and make Bangladesh a safe and peaceful home for the next generation.

The BNP-Jamaat came to power on October 1, 2001, through rigged elections and established a reign of terror across the country, Hasina added.

By carrying out bomb and grenade attacks, they tried to turn this country into a militant state, she said, adding that in continuation of this, the grenade attack was launched on the rally against terrorism and militancy.

It was the moral duty of the government to arrest and prosecute those involved in this heinous act. But the BNP-Jamaat government

instead took all measures to protect the killers, allowed attackers to flee abroad and destroyed all important evidence, Hasina said in the message.

By abusing the state machinery, they staged the “Joj Miah drama” to divert this heinous act, the PM said.

Later, it came out through a fair investigation that Hawa Bhaban and many masterminds of BNP-Jamaat were directly involved in the attack, Hasina said.

She said in October 2018, the court concerned sentenced 19 people, including BNP leader and former state minister for home Lutfozzaman Babar and former deputy minister of the BNP-Jamaat government Abdus Salam Pintu, to death for their involvement in the grenade attack.

Nineteen others, including BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman and BNP leader Abul Harish Chowdhury, got life imprisonment, Hasina said, adding that through this judgment, the rule of law has been established in the country.

In another development, Hasina yesterday said Bangladesh has been moving forward facing all natural and manmade disasters since 2009.

She made this comment while inaugurating two multi-storey office buildings – named Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission Bhaban and Information Commission Bhaban – in the capital’s Agargaon, reports UNB.

Joining a function from the Gono Bhaban, the PM also laid the foundation stone of BFDC Complex in Karwan Bazar.

## 200 hurt in AL

FROM PAGE 12  
clash between police and BNP activists.

OC Ajay Chandra Dev of Habiganj Model Police Station, who suffered injuries to his eye, was moved to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital for better treatment yesterday morning, said police.



# Polls a choice between democracy and autocracy

## Says Taiwan VP amid China’s military drills

REUTERS, Taipei

Taiwan's election next year is a choice between democracy and autocracy, Vice President William Lai said in comments broadcast after China carried out military drills around the island in anger at his visit this month to the United States.

Lai, the front-runner in polls to be Taiwan's next president at elections in January, made brief stopovers in the United States this month on his way to and from Paraguay, prompting fury in Beijing, which views him as a dangerous separatist given China's territorial claims over the island.

Taiwan's defence ministry said on Sunday morning that in the past 24 hours 25 Chinese air force planes had crossed the Taiwan Strait's median line, which had served as an unofficial barrier between the two sides until Chinese military aircraft began regularly crossing it a year ago.

That included Su 30 and J-11 fighter jets, according to a map the ministry published, though there was no immediate sign China was continuing its exercises on Sunday.

Taiwanese officials had said China was likely to conduct military exercises near the island, using Lai's U.S. stopovers as a pretext to intimidate voters ahead of next year's presidential election and make them "fear war".

In an interview broadcast late Saturday with a Taiwanese television station but conducted while he was in New York last weekend, Lai said it was not up to China to decide who wins the election.

"It's not who China likes today, and then they can assume the post. This goes against the spirit of Taiwan's democracy, and represents huge damage to Taiwan's democratic system," he said.

China should not "make a fuss over nothing" when it comes to foreign travel by Taiwanese leaders, Lai said.

"My position is that Taiwan is not a part of the People's Republic of China. We are willing to link up with the international community and talk to China under the guarantee of security."

China has for many years wanted to "annex" Taiwan and this is not something that started under the ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) government, he said, pointing to battles along the Chinese coast in the 1950s when China seized Taiwan-controlled islets.

"This election is not a choice between peace and war. We can't order off a menu, choosing peace and then there's peace, choosing war and then there's war. That's not the case. What it is is that we have the right to choose whether we want democracy or autocracy. This is the real choice we have to make in this election."



Christians hold the holy cross and a placard during a protest in Islamabad yesterday, to condemn the attacks on churches in Pakistan. More than 80 Christian homes and 19 churches were vandalised in an hours-long riot in Jaranwala in Punjab province on August 16, after allegations that a Quran had been desecrated spread through the city.

PHOTO: AFP



## CANADA WILDFIRES

### 30,000 forced to flee homes

AFP, Kelowna

Officials in western Canada's British Columbia implored tens of thousands of residents to heed evacuation orders Saturday as "rapidly evolving" wildfires threatened large parts of the scenic Okanagan Valley, including the city of Kelowna.

The situation in the popular boating and hiking destination was "highly dynamic," said Bowinn Ma, the province's minister of emergency management.

Around 30,000 people were under evacuation orders while another 36,000 were under alert to be ready to flee, she said.

Kelowna, a city of 150,000, was choked with thick smoke as it became the latest population center hit by one of the many wildfires scorching Canada this summer.

British Columbia alone had 385 active wildfires by late Saturday night, according to government data.

Blazes in the neighboring Northwest Territories have meanwhile prompted the evacuation of regional capital Yellowknife, leaving the remote city of around 20,000 largely a ghost town.

The exodus from Yellowknife and elsewhere means two-thirds of the near-Arctic territory's population has been displaced, Thompson said.

# 'Strong enough now'

## BRICS nations eye global geopolitical shift

AFP, Johannesburg

Leaders of the BRICS emerging economies, which account for about a quarter of the world's wealth, meet in Johannesburg this week looking to widen the bloc's influence and push for a shift in global geopolitics.

South Africa's Cyril Ramaphosa is expected to host China's President Xi Jinping, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva for the annual three-day summit starting tomorrow.

Russian President Vladimir Putin also will join remotely.

Putin decided against attending in person as he is the target of an International Criminal Court arrest warrant that South Africa is in theory bound to enforce if he sets foot in the country.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov will travel to Johannesburg instead.

Representing billions of people across three continents, with economies undergoing varying levels of growth, the BRICS share one thing in common -- disdain for a world order they see as serving the interests of rich Western powers.

"The traditional global governing system has become dysfunctional, deficient and missing in action," Chen Xiaodong, the Chinese ambassador to Pretoria said at a briefing on Friday, adding the BRICS are "increasingly becoming a staunch force in defending international justice".

There is growing interest in the bloc -- at least 40 countries have expressed interest in joining, and 23 of those have formally submitted applications to become BRICS members.

Anil Sooklal, South Africa's ambassador-at-large for Asia and the BRICS, told AFP on Friday that one of the reasons countries are lining up to join is "the very polarised world we live in, that has been further polarised by the Russia-Ukraine crisis, and where countries are being

forced to take sides".

"Countries in the South don't want to be told who to support, how to behave and how to conduct their sovereign affairs. They are strong enough now to assert their respective positions," added Sooklal.

The BRICS have raised hope for countries looking to restructure the global "architecture", he said.

"The major markets are now in the Global South... but we are still on the margins in terms of global decision-making."

Lebogang Legodi, international politics lecturer at the University of Limpopo, agrees that many states keen on joining the group "are seeing BRICS as an alternative to the current hegemony" in world affairs.

Around 50 other leaders will attend a "Friends of BRICS" programme during the summit.

This year's gathering is themed "BRICS and Africa: Partnership for mutually accelerated growth, sustainable development and inclusive multilateralism".

It comes at "a critical inflection point," said Steven Gruzd of the Africa Russia Africa project at the South African Institute of International Affairs.

"The current multilateral system is under strain," he said.

A decision on expanding the BRICS membership is expected at the end of the summit, according to Sooklal.

But experts closely watching the BRICS aren't very optimistic about the meeting's outcomes.

"I don't think this summit will yield those dramatic results because the power is still with Western countries. China is rising, but is not the dominant power yet," said SAIIA's Gruzd.

Formally launched in 2009, the BRICS now account for 23 percent of global GDP and 42 percent of the world's population.

The combined bloc represents more than 16 percent of the world's trade.



## Should existing banks get digital licence?

FROM PAGE 1

"52 applications were received, which is more than our expectation," BB Spokesman Md Mezbaul Haque told The Daily Star yesterday.

The deadline for applying for the digital bank licence ended on August 17, after it was extended by 16 days.

The applications will now be scrutinised and those that meet the BB's 'fit and proper' criteria will be forwarded to the board for approval, he said.

BB will initially issue a letter of intent for the licence, said Haque, who is also an executive director of the central bank.

He, however, did not disclose the number of digital bank licences that would be issued.

One of the applications is from a consortium of 10 private banks called Digi10 Bank.

The ten banks are City, Eastern, Mutual Trust, Mercantile, NCC, Midland, Dutch-Bangla, Prime, Trust and Pubali.

Dutch-Bangla and Trust have MFS operations called Rocket and TAP respectively.

Another application is from a consortium of four state-owned commercial banks: Sonali, Agrani, Janata, and Rupali.

United Commercial Bank, which has an MFS arm called UPay, is leading another consortium that includes Genex Infosys, Navana Pharmaceuticals and Aramit for the UPAY Digital Bank.

Most of the private sector banks are owned by large business groups and they are serving large clients, said AKM Fahim Mashroor, chairman of BASIS standing committee on fintech and digital payment.

"Very few serve small entrepreneurs. If big corporations and business groups own digital banks

too, it is highly doubtful that anything will change," he added.

"Traditional banks would not be able to do good in digital banking -- they need to team up with a tech-based or fintech company," said Ahsan H Mansur, a former chairman of Brac Bank.

Brac Bank is investing in the proposed digital bank of its trailblazing MFS subsidiary bKash, which also counts the World Bank Group's International Finance Corporation, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Ant Group, Money in Motion LLC and SoftBank Vision Fund in its board.

"Our shareholders have a long and proven experience of working on financial inclusion as well as world-class digital banks. Their global experience along with 12 years of involvement in Bangladesh's financial inclusion through digital services has made us interested in a digital bank," Kamal Quadir, chief executive officer of bKash, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Along with the pilot, bKash has been practising Bangladesh's first-ever digital loan for the last three and half years under BB's supervision. It also rolled out digital savings schemes, according to Quadir.

"We believe our existing digital framework and experience can be utilised through a digital bank to ensure universal access to small credit, bring down the cost of collateral free borrowing and ensure 24/7 customers' access to funds. We would like to contribute to strengthening the digital financial ecosystem to achieve the government's vision of a Smart Bangladesh," Quadir added.

Its MFS competitor Nagad is also gunning for a digital bank licence.

"We brought the concept of the digital bank to the public discourse in 2020 -- only digital banks can make the government's financial inclusion agenda whole now," Tanvir A Mishuk, managing director of Nagad, told The Daily Star.

Nagad wants to take banking services to the grassroots level, which the legacy institutions have failed to reach for various reasons.


"As much as 52 percent of the economy is informal and we want to bring it under the banking umbrella. Nagad Digital Bank would be a comfortable, low-cost solution for the grassroots people," he added.

Pathao, the breakout star from Bangladesh's start-up scene, has also applied for a licence to set up a digital bank, which, its MD & CEO Fahim Ahmed says, is a "natural progression" for the company.

The company is a market leader in ride-hailing, food delivery and e-commerce services, with the majority of its 10 million customers being the youth, whose banking needs are unmet by traditional banks.

"The time is now to break the status quo, and to deliver the fintech products that the aspiring Bangladeshi youth truly deserve," said Ahmed, adding that the company has demonstrated its fintech capabilities through Pathao Pay Later, Bangladesh's first and largest Buy Now Pay Later solution.

Powered by artificial intelligence and machine learning algorithms, Pathao Pay Later has been offering flexible spending limits and a frictionless user experience to 100,000 of its most loyal and active customers since November 2021, with very low delinquency rates.




GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER

EDUCATION ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

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e-Tender Notice (Open Tendering Method)

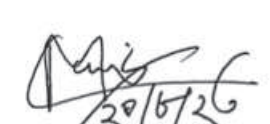
Notice No:- EED/Manikganj/7016 /SHED/2023-24/04

Date: 20-08-2023

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


SL No.	Tender ID	Name of Works	Last date and time of selling documents	Tender Closing & Opening Date/Time
01	863417	Construction of Single Storied Academic Building With Four Storied Foundation including Sanitary, Water Supply & Electrification Works at Kanij Fatema Girls School and College, Sadar Upazila ,Manikganj District.	03-Sep.- 2023 16:00BST	04-Sep.- 2023 14:00BST

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP Portal have to be deposited online through any registered Banks branches up to **16.00 BST on 03-Sep-2023** and Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).




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Memo No.৩০-এসসি/বি/২০২৩/৬২৭

Date : 20.08.2023

e-Tender Notice 07/2023-2024

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

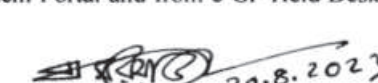
Sl. No.	Tender ID No.	Name of Supply	Last Date and Time of Tender Security Submission	Tender Closing Date & Time
1	861729	Establishment of Campus Networking for Murarichand College, Sylhet	05-Sep-2023 02:00pm	05-Sep-2023 02:30pm

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copy will be accepted.

To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System portal have to be deposited online through any registered Banks' Branches upto 04-Sep-2023.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP Held Desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).



(Professor Abul Anam Md. Reaz)  
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GD- 1258



## National assessment of students sends ominous signals

### When will the government overhaul the education system?

We are worried by the latest National Student Assessment 2022, by the Directorate of Primary Education and Unicef, which exposes the deep fractures in our primary education system. The assessment found that over 60 percent of third graders and 70 percent of fifth graders do not have the proficiency in maths appropriate for their grades. Shockingly, 51 percent of the third graders and 50 percent of the fifth graders lack grade-level competence in Bangla. For years, education experts and stakeholders have been screaming themselves hoarse over how the primary school system needs a major overhaul. Even though many of the weaknesses have been identified, precious little has been done to address them in a comprehensive way over the decades.

The result is that the very foundation of education is weak. This has a cumulative effect as these students go to secondary school without the basic competency needed to understand and absorb the curricula in higher grades. We can only imagine the long-term consequences of such a flawed education system.

Unfortunately, the widely known problems – lack of proper classroom teaching, high student-teacher ratio, poor student-teacher interaction, inadequate infrastructure, and fund shortage – have not been solved for decades. The latest education budget, far from reaching the Unesco recommendation of 4 to 6 percent percent of the GDP, was only 1.76 percent of the GDP, the lowest in 15 years.

How does this show the government's commitment to invest in education to create the "smart citizens" of tomorrow? Twelve percent of Class 3 and 8 percent of Class 5 students have advanced proficiency in Bangla. In maths, the percentages are 11 and 9 percent, respectively. What will happen to the rest who simply have not been able to learn what they should have through no fault of their own?

What is most telling is the discrepancy in academic performance across divisions as well as geographical areas. Students in Dhaka and Mymensingh, for instance, performed better compared to Sylhet, while children in remote places and islands did poorly. This should give the government a good indicator as to which areas must be prioritised.

In the last decade or so the number of students enrolled has increased but the quality of education remains below par. The government must take immediate measures to revamp the education system. This will include increasing the education budget, employing quality teachers, providing them with proper training and salaries, and making sure classrooms are smaller so that teachers can pay attention to students as well as redesign the curriculum and teaching methods so that students learn how to be creative and independent thinkers. As Bangladesh approaches LDC graduation, there will be a huge demand for a skilled workforce. Unless the quality of education is dramatically upgraded, it will not be possible to develop such skilled human resources.

## Why is our drive against dengue so unscientific?

### It's high time we listened to our own experts

With the dengue situation in the country worsening by the day, it is truly frustrating to see the authorities resorting to the same tried-and-not-tested methods of mosquito control, without any real effort or investment into understanding whether their approaches are working. In fact, at a recent conference in the capital, noted entomologists in the country argued that the current measures undertaken by the city corporations are unscientific and farcical, and are actually contributing to the surge in dengue cases.

Experts have long warned that fogging, the most cited method of dengue control by the city corporations, is ineffective in curbing the dengue menace, as *Aedes aegypti* does not live inside sewerage lines or drains, and can kill at most 20 percent of the mosquitoes. Meanwhile, ad hoc measures, such as importing bacteria (*Bacillus thuringiensis israelensis*) for mosquito larvae control, will fail to provide a sustainable solution for dengue, and may, in fact, prove to be dangerous. The scientists pointed out that dengue control in neighbouring Kolkata was successful because they made use of their entomologists and other experts to come up with a scientific and comprehensive plan to eradicate mosquitoes from their communities. We join the experts in asking the critical question: why has Bangladesh not done the same?

It is obvious by now that the country and the institutions tasked with tackling dengue lack the necessary data and research to devise methodical solutions to the public health crisis. What is equally evident is the authorities' reluctance to listen to those with expertise to fill in their knowledge gaps. It is of urgent importance that the government bring doctors, public health professionals, entomologists, urban planners, city corporation officials and other stakeholders together to devise a coordinated action plan, not just for the immediate future, but for the long run, as by now, we know that dengue is here to stay. Investments need to be made in researching the virus, methods of transmission and serosurveillance, alongside evaluations of existing mosquito control measures. We must study and learn from the best and worst practices of other countries also battling dengue and prioritise data-driven approaches and adaptive technologies over traditional methods. Science, not bureaucracy, must be the driving force behind our fight against dengue.

# Rising risky loans and the talent of making excuses



**OPEN SKY**  
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**BIRUPAKSHA PAUL**

The Bangladesh Bank's (BB) Financial Stability Report 2022, released this month, revealed that our banking sector's risky loans amounted to Tk 377,922 crore by December 2022. This amount can be arrived at by calculating the total non-performing loans (NPLs), outstanding rescheduled and restructured loans, as well as written-off loans. It seems that the report was prepared under pressure from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and BB was not eager to have it placed under the spotlight. Politically, it must also be embarrassing for the government as it has largely failed to rein in wilful defaulters and reduce the surge of bad loans. Economically, this culture is attributable to a gradual deterioration of Bangladesh's financial health.

The amount of advances reached Tk 1,472,112 crore as of June 2023, as data on the central bank's website suggests. The figure for risky loans counted those till December 2022. Surely, the number of delinquent loans had crawled further up by June this year. If included, we can easily assume that this amount of risky loans would have occupied over 25 percent of the total advances till June. Meanwhile, the amount of defaulted loans surged from Tk 120,656 crore at the end of December 2022 to Tk 131,620 crore by the end of March.

Thus, the amount of NPLs, though still below 10 percent of loans, has experienced positive growth. The actual share of NPLs in total loans would have crossed 20 percent had BB not loosened the definition under the tacit dictation of the finance ministry. Such allowances made for habitual defaulters have created incentives for new and old borrowers to default, and then be excused later. This trend poses a serious threat to the financial industry. Almost all of the risky loans will gradually be defaulted, regardless of BB branding them as "rescheduled" or "restructured" or "doubtful." This malignant growth of the default culture has nothing to do with the real state of the economy – which has grown at a rate of 6.3 percent between 2009-2022, as data from the World



VISUAL: STAR

Bank suggests. Rather, this is solely attributable to poor governance and the political practice of pampering the superrich. Though the central bank and the finance ministry readily blame the war in Ukraine or the Covid-19 pandemic for any shortcoming on their part, the bad loans cannot be explained away as such.

Of course, new excuses can always be discovered, such as disturbances created by opposition parties, occurrence of natural calamities, side effects of US sanctions on Russia, social discontent over US visa policies and whatnot. But how far will these excuses justify the authorities' failure (both now and in the future) regarding poor loan recovery, fiscal incapacity, and foreign reserve depletion? The truth is that financial policymakers have become experts in manufacturing excuses which lack research and economic reasoning.

In its Monetary Policy Statement of July-December, the central bank went so far as to blame interest rate hikes in the US as a reason behind

the instability of the taka's exchange rate since April 2022. But what of BB's highly managed, non-market exchange rate which has remained aligned with an artificially higher value of the taka since 2016? By raising its policy rates to curb high inflation, the US has been successful in bringing its inflation down to as low as 3.3 percent in July 2023 from nine

regular and rescheduled/restructured loans and the pace in recovery of NPLs may improve the asset quality of the banking industry." Bangladesh Bank's hope of seeing an improvement in asset quality will remain wishful thinking unless the nature of its loan administration is changed. The BB governor relaxed the definition of defaulted loans shortly after

percent in mid-2022. Bangladesh, whose inflation rate has been hovering near 10 percent for some time now, is failing to take such measures due to its strange policy on the interest rate cap, which favours wealthy borrowers who will eventually become defaulters or money launderers.

In its report, BB acknowledged, "Asset quality of the banking sector as a whole slightly deteriorated in 2022 as gross NPL showed a marginal rise..." But there are two errors in the statement. First, the word "slightly" may be pleasing to the finance ministry, but it is technically wrong. It should be replaced by "remarkably." Second, the asset quality dropped not just because NPLs showed a "marginal" rise, but because risky loans increased remarkably as borrowers sensed politicians' reluctance to displease looters and money launderers. Instead of superficially looking at the numbers, BB should have observed the trend and character of surging risky loans.

As the central bank asserts, "Ensuring the proper monitoring of

assuming office, and this might have been enough to signal to professional defaulters that regulations exercised by the central bank would now be lax. This was a massive blunder, and BB now has to face the consequence of being dealt more and more bad loans.

The BB report also stated that "... external issues like (the) prolongation of the Russia-Ukraine conflict and other geopolitical issues may result in slow business as well as impaired debt-servicing capacity of the borrowers, which might ultimately deteriorate the asset quality of the overall banking sector in Bangladesh." This is a roundabout way of saying that the central bank of Bangladesh will fail to recover loans and explain it away using irrelevant excuses. After all, what do rising default loans in Bangladesh have to do with the Russia-Ukraine war? Do our businessmen live in Ukraine, or have they invested in Russian assets frozen by the US? In the end, our financial authorities' talent of making excuses does not make sense in terms of economics.

## Why are we paying so much for healthcare?



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**MOHAMMAD IHTESHAM HASSAN**

Why do we see people begging on the streets or in front of mosques? Some beg to buy clothes or food. But there are others who beg out of desperation, in order to finance the medical expenses of themselves or their loved ones.

One study, based on data from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), found that the catastrophic health expenditure (CHE) among households in Bangladesh stood at 26 percent in 2016-17. A household faces CHE when its out-of-pocket (OOP) spending on healthcare exceeds 10 percent of their total income or expenditure. An estimation based on the BBS' Household Income and Expenditure Surveys shows that the CHE is rising. And, each year, around five million people in Bangladesh fall below the poverty line due to high OOP healthcare spending.

However, Bangladesh aims to achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC) by 2030. This means that all citizens of the country would have access to quality healthcare and financial protection. Undoubtedly, this is a much-needed initiative to achieve our Sustainable Development

Goals while also ensuring the constitutional obligation of the government to provide healthcare services to all citizens.

In line with achieving this goal, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) published the Health Care Financing Strategy 2012-2032 in 2012. The strategy was designed as a framework for how the UHC would be achieved. It identified three broad challenges in health financing in Bangladesh: inadequate health financing, inequity in health financing and utilisation, and inefficient use of existing resources. The plan also proposed three key strategic interventions as a way of countering the challenges and increasing financial protection for the population.

Eleven years since the report was published, let us briefly break down the progress we have made in overcoming the challenges. The distribution of the total health expenditure in Bangladesh can be divided into out-of-pocket expenditure (from citizens), government financing, and private financing. In 2012, the government expenditure on healthcare was 26 percent, and the goal was to increase

this to 30 percent by 2032. Instead, it has declined to around 23 percent. In 2012, there was no social health protection scheme, but the target was that it would constitute 32 percent of total health expenditure by 2032. Unfortunately, a national social health protection scheme is still not in existence. One such scheme, the Shasthyo Suroksha Karmasuchi, was launched in 2016 on a pilot basis in Tangail and is only now being expanded on a limited scale to six other districts.

OOP expenditure, which constitutes the lion's share of total health expenditure in Bangladesh and is a reason why so many people face CHE, was 64 percent in 2012. The goal then was to reduce it to 32 percent in 2032. However, OOP medical spending stood at 68.5 percent in 2020. In short, we seem to have gotten worse over the last decade.

So, why have we not been able to overcome the challenges outlined in the government's health financing report? The reasons behind this are numerous and complex. According to the World Bank, there are bottlenecks in Bangladesh's public financial management system, which are hampering the implementation of the Health Care Financing Strategy. Removing the barriers in the system – which would not require much resources – can significantly improve the value for money in the government's health budget. The health budget has consistently remained below six percent over the past decade. This is problematic because the WHO's recommended allocation for this sector is 15 percent.

Moreover, the problems are further exacerbated because 20-30 percent of the allocated health budget remains unspent each fiscal year.

We need to remove existing barriers and implement the interventions mentioned in the Health Care Financing Strategy. However, we must also add supplementary innovative solutions that can help increase financing protection. For instance, the Institute of Health Economics at Dhaka University found that levying a monthly fee of Tk 21.5 on each active mobile phone subscriber can generate financial protection of Tk 500,000 for at least 60,000 cancer patients. This minimum charge can be used to provide health protection for patients of other leading non-communicable diseases as well. Similarly, CMED Health is using AI-driven health kits and trained paramedics to provide preventive healthcare through doorstep health screening in various districts of Bangladesh. Their comprehensive services can be availed at only Tk 100.

If the government can collaborate with such startups, which are providing cost-effective solutions, a lower number of households will have to face catastrophic health expenditure as they will be able to identify non-communicable diseases early on and prevent them. Healthcare financing is a crucial facet for a country aiming to obtain universal health coverage. It is time for collective efforts to be made by the government and stakeholders, and for innovative ventures to pave the way for a healthier and more prosperous future for Bangladesh.





The vector-control strategy in Bangladesh still resorts mostly to fogging, which is proven to be practically ineffective in the long term. PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

DENGUE CRISIS

# No alternative to a long-term plan



Naimul Alam Alvi is a member of the editorial team at The Daily Star.

NAIMUL ALAM ALVI

The tragic scale of this year's dengue outbreak is a cumulative result of global atrocities against climate; our national failure in healthcare, city, and social behaviour management and policy structures; and the overall abysmal response to the situation. A multitude of studies predict that dengue, the fastest-spreading tropical disease according to WHO, and other arboviral diseases will increase multifold in the near future, and that we need to systematically restructure our society and institutions as soon as possible if we want to tackle these growing public health threats.

Dengue is emerging as a greater global threat than ever before, with a more than eightfold increase in yearly reported cases worldwide since 2000. Asia and South America are both experiencing one of the worst instances of dengue outbreaks on record, and Bangladesh is witnessing its worst numbers this year – with 466 lives lost and 97,860 reported cases as of August 19. Our healthcare system is already overwhelmed, and if the trend continues, it may crumble in the coming months.

Our authorities cannot evade responsibility for these dreadful figures. Despite repeated warnings, unnerving predictions, and pleas for measures to mitigate the threat, from both local and global experts and organisations, our healthcare and disease-prevention efforts failed to show sincerity and effectiveness. In West Bengal, which shares many of our geological and sociological factors, authorities have been quite successful in controlling the Aedes mosquito population by implementing a year-long vector surveillance strategy, WHO guidelines, and a sustained implementation structure.

Twenty-three years have passed since Bangladesh's first dengue cases, and we are yet to form a national vector-control policy, an integrated vector and virus surveillance system, or any coordinated dengue outbreak mitigation guidelines. The vector-control strategy here still resorts mostly to fogging, which is proven to be practically ineffective in the long term, according to multiple studies. Even then, we are failing miserably as reports show that many of the personnel assigned lack knowledge of the effective dosage or procedure of fogging, let alone WHO guidelines.

In 2018, the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (icddr,b) found that mosquitoes here have developed strong resistance to traditional insecticides. But Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) says that at least one major government official ordered for the findings to not be published to the media because it was during an election year. Plus, many other officials labelled the scale of dengue threat that year as *gujob* (hearsay or rumours). The following

year, Bangladesh faced its worst dengue outbreak up until that time. Experts now warn that this misuse of fogging is creating a shift in vector characteristics, and mosquitoes are adapting to breed in not just clear water in small containers, but also in water canals, lakes, floodwater, etc.

Over the years, Dhaka has become a perfect breeding ground for mosquitoes, with plenty of unregulated high-rises, government-owned backyards, construction sites, discarded tires, drums, and plastic waste just lying around, and clusters of people living in damp, concrete messes which sunlight can barely touch. The capital's two city corporations barely pose a threat to these tiny insects. They don't monitor or properly implement their own or global guidelines and aren't proactive in using newer vector-control tools. Three years have passed since the city corporations were authorised to reclaim and maintain the canals. Yet, in most places, the canals remain as garbage-filled swamps.

A study published in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health finds a correlation between Dhaka's increasing temperature and growing numbers of Aedes mosquitoes, which is, in turn, the result of receding water bodies and increasing unplanned urbanisation. The result: over half the reported dengue cases and deaths are recorded in Dhaka. In July, when fatalities were breaking all previous records, the DNCC mayor went on a 17-day overseas tour, without leaving any promising guidelines to curb the situation.

It's true that dengue is a global problem, with WHO warning it to be a "pandemic threat" back in January this year and pointing towards climate change as one of the leading factors for the worsening situation. But we can't just wait for a global response for an effective mitigation solution. We have to realise that we are one of the frontier countries fighting this global threat, along with other climate change-related phenomena. We cannot afford to consider it as just another monsoon incident and wait for situation to get worse every year before beginning to actually take worthwhile actions.

First and foremost, we need a comprehensive, long term policy for addressing dengue and other wetaher-based diseases. We need a strategy for how to prevent outbreaks and a clear guideline on how to mitigate severity if major outbreaks do occur. We need coordinated efforts from city corporations, the medical and pharmaceutical sectors, tech industries, relevant ministries, law enforcement, urban planners, research institutions, engineers, academia, and all other stakeholders concerned.

We must consider dengue

prevention and overall public health as an essential investment priority, not just a reactive expense. A 2021 study found that the aggregate total economic expenditure of patients (including treatment costs and productivity losses) only in Dhaka city that year was more than Tk 130 crore. In addition, every dengue outbreak forces the government to incur mammoth expenses and relocate supplies for mitigation efforts.

A well-maintained environment and a soundly structured healthcare system are necessities for tackling dengue outbreaks. We should allocate a larger share of the national budget to public health (which was surprisingly reduced this year) and ensure proper implementation. Bangladesh has to emerge as a frontline dengue-prevention strategist, regional and global collaboration advocate, and a voice for including tropical diseases as an element for climate-change compensation from the "developed" world.

We need to implement new-age tools, both to operate a thorough, widespread, and continuous surveillance system and also for vector control. Our cities need to be rigorously fixed and aligned to minimise vector habitation. We must also develop an urban design guideline incorporating dengue and other arboviral disease-controlling pointers, and be strict in implementation.

It's time we broaden our focus beyond the big cities and to the vast rural and hill regions. The condition of social awareness, medical support, testing facilities, surveillance operations, and overall investment outside the cities is still grossly inadequate. This forces patients from all over the country to flock towards big cities, which overwhelms the hospitals there and increases the possibility of a wider spread of infection. Currently, the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research is operating from just one office in Dhaka. We need its operation to be more robust and cover the entire country.

As a society, we have to accept that the changing weather patterns and that the increased risk of tropical diseases is our new reality. We need to make a habit of not disposing of garbage all over the streets, between buildings, in the water bodies. Eradicating vector habitations, as a practice, has to be embedded in our culture. And the authorities have to provide proper support, with comprehensive waste management systems and city maintenance guidelines. Community-based awareness and clean-up groups can be formed to encourage more social engagement.

There's no case of sustained dengue eradication in the world yet. Dengue has only been successfully prevented through vector control in just three instances over history by Pan American Sanitary Board, Cuba, and Singapore from mid- to late-20th century. But all these successful cases were a result of extensive national-level coordinated efforts by the respective governments. Our government must therefore act with absolute urgency, sincerity, and transparency – or else the blight of dengue will not spare us anytime soon.

# Saudi Arabia and Israel put a high US price tag on diplomatic relations



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JAMES M DORSEY

It's not just Saudi Arabia that puts a high US price on diplomatic relations with Israel. So does Israel.

A confidante of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, strategic affairs minister Ron Dermer, is in Washington this week for talks with senior officials, including US President Joe Biden's national security advisor, Jake Sullivan.

In a phone call last month, Netanyahu told Biden that he wanted a security treaty with the United States focused on deterring Iran as part of normalising relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia.

US and Israeli officials may not want to admit it, but there is little doubt that the Israeli demand

Gulf state ships and exclude attacks on Saudi and Emirati oil and other infrastructure.

An informal agreement between the United States and Iran, involving a prisoner swap and a release of frozen Iranian funds, could lead to Iran refraining from attacking US shipping.

The deal does not signal a possible return to the 2015 international agreement that curbed Iran's nuclear programme, even though Iran has reportedly slowed the pace at which it accumulates near-weapons-grade enriched uranium and diluted some of its stockpiles.

However, Netanyahu has made clear that nothing short of the complete termination of Iran's

– and also dangerous, because if you don't see results you will think that de-escalation is in vain or has no results."

He likened Saudi-Iran relations to Europe's relations with Russia. Europe has "diplomatic relations with Russia, but you're at war with Russia," the official said.

The official conceded that prospects for economic cooperation with Iran remained limited without reviving the Iranian nuclear deal because of US sanctions.

Phrased differently, Saudi-Iran relations depend as much on policies crafted in Riyadh and Tehran as on policies pursued in Washington.

All this casts a different light on Netanyahu's demand for an Iran-focused security agreement with the United States. Netanyahu has made establishing diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia a crown jewel of his foreign policy. To achieve that, Israel has acquiesced in Saudi Arabia enriching uranium for research purposes as part of a US-Saudi deal.



Saudi Arabia demands security arrangements with the United States, US support for its peaceful nuclear programme, and unfettered access to sophisticated US weaponry. FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

complicates Biden's already complex efforts to persuade the two Middle Eastern nations to formalise their substantial informal ties.

Saudi Arabia has put a steep price on establishing diplomatic relations that cater to its security and geopolitical interests.

Saudi Arabia demands security arrangements with the United States, US support for its peaceful nuclear programme, and unfettered access to sophisticated US weaponry. Saudi Arabia has also made Israeli moves to resolve its conflict with the Palestinians a pre-condition.

Like Israel, the kingdom wants a formalised security agreement, even if that accord may not target Iran as explicitly as Israel's request does.

Saudi Arabia will likely be more circumspect following the China-mediated agreement in March to reestablish relations with Iran. Relations ruptured in 2016 when mobs stormed Saudi diplomatic missions in Iran in protest against the execution of a prominent Saudi Shiite cleric. So far, from Saudi Arabia's perspective, the agreement has only partially paid off.

To be sure, the agreement, alongside recent rapprochements between other Middle Eastern states, including Egypt, Turkey, Israel, Syria, and the United Arab Emirates, has dialled down regional tensions.

The kingdom and Iran have exchanged ministerial visits, reopened diplomatic missions, spoken about security and economic cooperation, and invited each other's leaders to visit.

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian visited Saudi Arabia this week for the first time since diplomatic relations resumed.

Most importantly, as seen in Riyadh, Iranian recent aggressive moves in Gulf waters target US and Israel-related vessels rather than

programme is good enough as far as he is concerned.

"Arrangements that do not dismantle Iran's nuclear infrastructure do not stop its nuclear programme and will only provide it with funds that will go to terrorist elements sponsored by Iran," Netanyahu's office said.

The statement contrasts starkly with a US position articulated in March by Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman Gen Mark Milley, who told Congress the United States would not allow Iran to "have a

**Saudi Arabia will likely be more circumspect following the China-mediated agreement in March to reestablish relations with Iran. Relations ruptured in 2016 when mobs stormed Saudi diplomatic missions in Iran in protest against the execution of a prominent Saudi Shiite cleric. So far, from Saudi Arabia's perspective, the agreement has only partially paid off.**

fielded nuclear weapon." The key word here is "fielded."

Saudi Arabia and Israel may be closer than meets the eye when it comes to Iran, but they strike different tones. Moreover, Israel is less inclined to deal with the current Iranian regime than Saudi Arabia is.

Addressing a closed meeting in Europe with Middle East experts, a senior Saudi official recently said it was the kingdom's "hope" to resolve issues with Iran but cautioned that "it is too simple to think in that way

Netanyahu has also indicated he would be willing to gesture to Palestinians if a normalisation deal with Saudi Arabia depended on it. He suggested he would not let ultra-conservative religious and ultranationalist coalition members block an agreement.

It's not clear that the prime minister could make gestures that would be minimally acceptable to the Saudis and avoid breaking up his coalition, the most hardline in Israeli history.

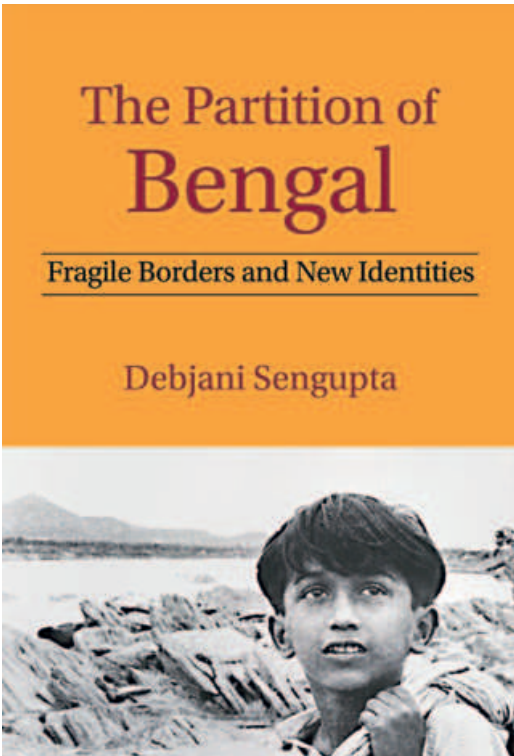
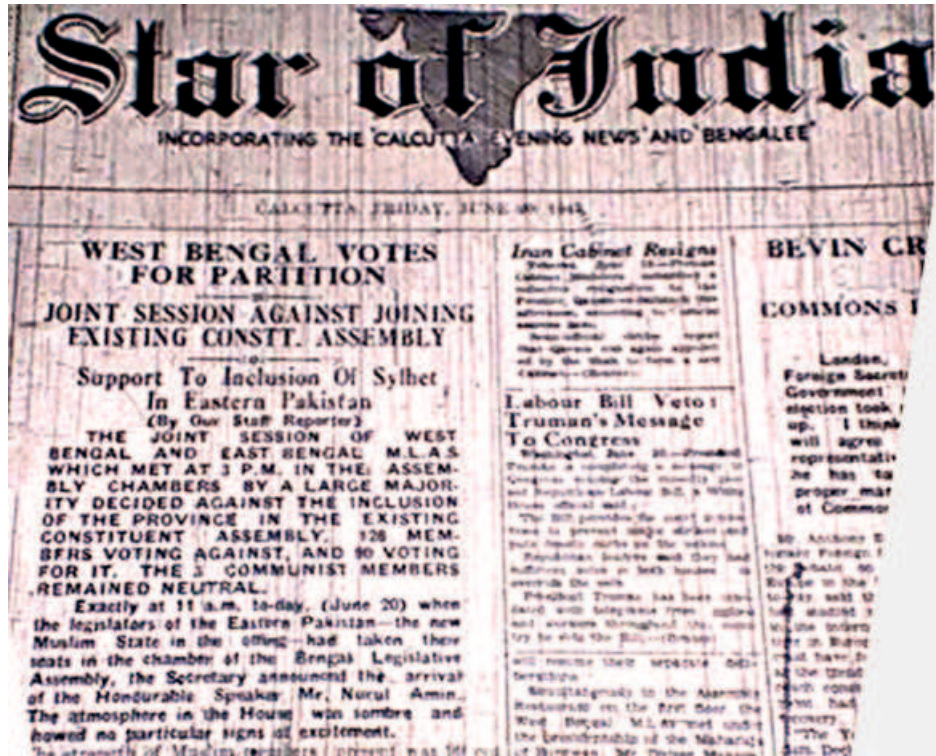
This month's appointment of Saudi Arabia's first ambassador to the Palestinians suggested the gap Netanyahu would have to bridge. Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen did not object to the move but asserted Israel would not permit the opening of diplomatic representations for the Palestinians in Jerusalem. Israel views united Jerusalem as its capital, while the Palestinians see the east of the city, captured by Israel during the 1967 Middle East war, as the capital of a future Palestinian state. As the custodian of Islam's holiest cities, Makkah and Madinah, Saudi Arabia would be hard-pressed to make concessions on Jerusalem, the faith's third holiest city.

As a result, the question is what Netanyahu wants to achieve with his demand for an anti-Iran security deal with the United States. Certainly, the deal would ensure Israel's seat at the table and bolster Israel's position vis a vis Iran.

Netanyahu may also want to complicate US-Saudi talks about security arrangements in the belief that without a solid agreement with the United States, the kingdom would have a greater interest in formalising relations with Israel sooner than later.

Either way, Israel remains a player with the potential to be disruptive rather than constructive, depending on how Netanyahu defines Israel and his political interests.





Hasan Azizul Huq.

PHOTO: TEERATH KUMAR MAJUMDER

# The many meanings of Partition 1947 AND BEYOND

The Partition of India is a *longue durée* rather than an event, a barely perceptible shadow that has stretched its tentacles over and into our present lives.

DEBJANI SENGUPTA

*My memory is again in the way of your history.*

Agha Shahid Ali

*The fact that it is now forgotten does not mean that it does not extend into the present.*

Walter Benjamin

The Partition in 1947 was the result of a complicated series of historical forces, circumstances, aspirations and machinations that played out

nationalist historical accounts of this separation, including Nehru's famous 'tryst with destiny' speech, often do not take into account that the long-cherished freedom came accompanied by murder, mayhem, rape and homelessness for countless men, women and children. On the other hand, Saadat Hasan Manto, Akhtaruzzaman Elias and Ritwik Ghatak thought that the freedom we had gained in 1947 had come at a terrible price because it was tainted with so much violence. Was that why Partition remained a forbidden area of historical investigation for so long, and why we, as a society, chose to remain silent about it?

When Pakistan came into being, a large section of the people in East Bengal, then called East Pakistan, celebrated the birth of a new nation that was seen as a just aspiration for the marginalized Muslim communities who had for years smarted under upper caste Hindu economic and social domination in the eastern part of Bengal. However, many others felt the pain as more and more of their neighbours left for India, leaving aside homes and hearths, under a perception of violence. On both sides of the border, there was a feeling of insecurity, anxiety and a sense of loss that underlay the experiences of independence. Abdullah Abu Syed, remembering 14 August 1947, recollected:

Even now, when I look back at 14 August 1947 I think that as we, the Muslims of Pakistan, were celebrating the Independence with the joyous abandon, at that very moment our neighbouring Hindu houses, behind their gaping front doors, were hiding a group of despairing, helpless and sad people standing speechless with the thought of an uncertain future. The same had happened in the lives of almost all the saddened and voiceless Muslim families across India.

Ashis Nandy once wrote perceptively about what has remained unacknowledged about 1947: 'Like a disowned self, dogging the steps of a patient who cannot yet own up his or her illness, the past traumata of a collectivity, too, haunt not only the direct victims and the perpetrators, but also the following generations, which inherit without as much as an exchange of a word on the subject, the fears, anxieties, tensions, often even the homicidal fantasies, a genocide throws up. Unlike an unexamined life, which we are told is not worth living, an unexamined past has to be lived out over the succeeding generations.' The oppressive nationalist discourses and the various forms of political violence that have been bequeathed to the subcontinent through Partition's legacy is here to stay and it is only after decades of silence and amnesia that the human cost of 1947 is now painfully coming to light. One can then say that the Partition of India is a *longue durée* rather than an event, a barely perceptible shadow that has stretched its tentacles over and into our present lives. For example, Bangladesh's birth in 1971 subverted in some ways the legacy of 1947. When the British left India in 1947, the two nations of India and Pakistan came into being to accommodate Hindu and Muslim nationalist interests and goals. Carved out of British India, Pakistan, comprising of two halves of West and East Pakistan, was an anomaly in geographical terms. The two parts formed non-contiguous segments of one nation separated

by almost thousand miles of Indian territories. The difference in languages between the two halves would result in a popular outpouring of resistance in East Pakistan and Bangladesh came into being on the basis of her linguistic and secular identities. So, in one way, 1947 gave rise to other political upheavals that reconfigured the previous divisions and gave rise to other forms of political processes.

In Partition Studies, a new thrust is discernible in the last few decades; it has now begun to take literary representations more seriously than ever before. A demand for new resources for remembering and representing the Partition means that social relations, locality as well as memory that shapes our subjectivities, come under the historian's scrutiny. As a form of representation and construction, memory is deeply implicated with geography, so an engagement with a literary archive can be an important and significant way to enter the hidden and diffused narratives of the Partition. These texts then become sites of resistance and a nuanced understanding that challenge hegemonic narratives of identity, power and belonging. In these alternative voices and experiential realities, we can truly seek to find what the real bequests of 1947 have been through successive generations and to begin a process of healing that seems to elude us still.

Hasan Azizul Huq's novel *Agunpakshi* (The Firebird, 2008) is an example of this kind of interrogation of our shared past. The narrative can be seen as an enquiry into the meaning of home, belonging and habitus, a departure of sorts from mainstream Bangla partition fiction because it attempts an altogether different aesthetic exploration of language and form through a subjectivity that is doubly marginalized. Written in a dialect spoken in areas of southern Bengal (where Huq had spent his early years), it is a narrative that foregrounds minority (in terms of gender, language and religion) subjectivity, and brings out the less visible and delayed effects of displacement and violence within the family and in community spaces. A first person account by a Muslim woman of her life in a village in undivided Bengal, the novel narrates how the village (and the self) changes through the events of war, famine and the division of the country. The phenomenological time of the narrator's adolescence and adulthood (seen as a duration) is destroyed by the Partition that irrevocably brings a schism in her and many other lives. It also changes the definition of her experiences of belonging to a land that now becomes alien. The occurrences of the events leading to the partition interacts and modulates other experiences of collective life: the novel explores both the synchronic and diachronic processes of history and memory. Her life, hitherto intricately connected to the land, comes under scrutiny as her family leaves for East Pakistan, the country designated for 'Muslims'. The unnamed narrator, known as Meter Bou (the second daughter-in-law) refuses to leave her home and her land where she belongs. The primacy of region over religion is part of her self-imagining: home is the village rather than the new nation. This act of transgression marks her body's relationship to space and to language: her identity as a woman, hitherto defined by her role as a wife and mother, is now moulded into another set of aspirations. Refusing territorialism as a precondition of nationalism, she sets into play new

gendered notions of citizenship and subjectivity. Through Meter Bou's narratorial voice one begins to see how her identity is constructed through significant moments of personal and social history and is mediated by location and culture:

The ponds, lakes and the earthen houses with their ribs exposed told everyone that our village was ancient. The roads were paved only during the last war. Throughout the day only two cars went by over that paved road, one in the morning and another at dusk. Otherwise the day was silent: the village did not seem of this world. I know the village quite well! The large pakur tree in front of the homestead, isn't that unlucky? Pakur is a large tree (maharaha), and it should be in the middle of a field or at the centre of the village – where people gather to smoke their hubble bubble – but no – it was right in the middle of the courtyard.

In the novel, the village that the narrator describes is not just a place where she lives; it is also where one's child has died and dead spirits hover in the air. The homely and the unhomely traverse and conjoin in the soil that gives a rich harvest every season: the village is inhabited by the living as well as by the dead:

People think that there were two kinds of humans – dead and living. They must exist together. All those living people who roam inside and outside, who can tell one or two of the dead are not among them? There is no way to know.

The narrator is defined by her experiences of marriage and adulthood in a landscape that is remembered through language, a language that is both uncanny and sublime. In her remembrances, nostalgia plays a creative role and the surfeit of memory instead constitutes the 'affective' dimensions of loss of the everyday markers of lived experience. Thus, in this novel, place/space (and time) are not passive containers for historical events but a vital and living presence whose mysterious and subtle properties transform and thread through human lives. The physical topos is thus transformed through memory into the mysterious and subtle marker of a 'home'. How does the landscape confer meaning to the self? To belong to a place is not only to be embedded in its geography but also to be immersed in the linguistic, cultural and social practices that emerge in relation to the place. The narrative of this novel that unfolds in the first years of the twentieth century and ends a few years after the partition of Bengal (and India) in 1947 is both linear and meandering with its own pace. The span of time captures the changing intercommunal relationship in the village where the Muslims are a minority. The village, a self-contained and independent site is yet marked by clear divisions of caste and religion. Yet the quotidian world of labour is a shared world of work between Muslims and Hindus although each group knows the taboos that govern their relationships. The politics of difference that is on the rise makes Meter Bou impatient:

What is the use of thinking about the differences between Hindus and Muslims? Religions are different from each other...there are no end of differences between Hindus and Hindus! Aren't there differences among Muslims? In this world we are all different. What is the use of thinking about it?

In the novel, the domestic world of a well-to-do Muslim household at the turn of the century is drawn in meticulous detail, but the domestic is aligned and complemented with the world outside. Although Meter Bou lives in purdah, she is aware of her thirst for the world and the changes that come slowly and inevitably upon it (pithimite elom kintuk pithimir kichui dekhlo na/I came to the world but saw nothing of the world). The Roys, a prominent Hindu Brahmin family, are on a decline. They have lived on ancestral wealth and the present generation have neither educated themselves nor have they worked for a secure future. The Hindu eclipse is in contrast to a new Muslim awakening. The narrator's husband becomes the first minority President of the district Union Board and buys the Roy's land at an auction. As the century unfolds its turbulent history, Meter Bou tries to understand what each of the events presage for her family and the small village community. The isolation of the village is broken by the World War when white soldiers come to live in a camp nearby. The war and the subsequent famine destroys the insurmountable difference between the city and the country: the skyrocketing prices, the 'gora' soldiers, guns and cannons bring the two spaces in interlocking relationship with each other. The pre-partition riots also show how the differences have merged: the riots in the city soon spread to the village communities as well. Yet they bring out new questions about identity that have never seemed so important before:

Human beings have lived their lives, with their children, their homesteads; everyone to their own lives...who was a Hindu and who was a Muslim?...I don't want to think of it even now but from time to time the thoughts came to my mind: what if the riots started here too? Maybe the husband of Napit Bou or Hala Bagdi's father will come to kill my two sons? Impossible!

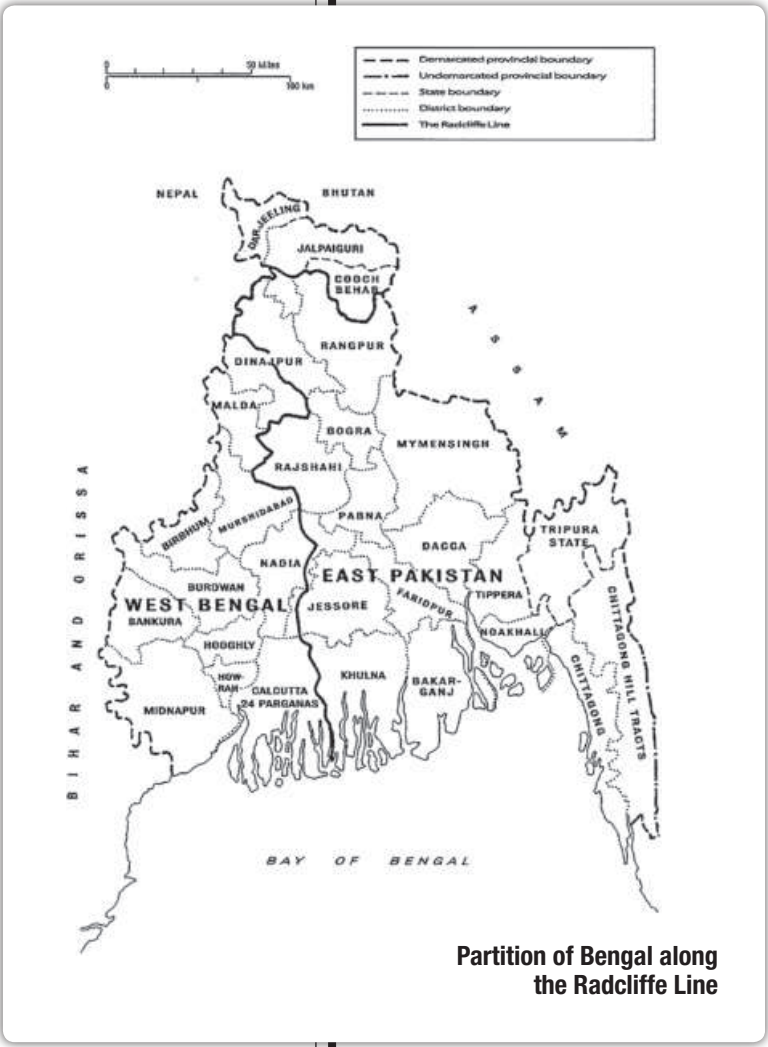
When she hears that her Muslims neighbours are demanding a separate nation, it is equally impossible for her to grasp the concept and reality of Pakistan. Her gendered understanding of the call for separation is ultimately a sharp critique of the politics of aggrandizement and self-serving nationality, as she challenges the structures of habitus by contesting the dominant communal view. Her memories come in the way of a new history of cruelty and separation that she rejects:

Shame! Has everyone forgotten everything? One field, one riverbank, one road, one drought, one monsoon and one harvest that we all share – Alas for a few men on both sides, everything is spoilt!

Meter Bou's realization that 'when it is morning and there is light, I will face the East. I will look at the rising sun and I will stand up again' is a language of agency and self-reliance. Taken at a symbolic level, the East would mean the birth of Bangladesh, whose flag holds a rising sun and whose coming into being will challenge the 1947 Partition that had taken place on the basis of religious nationalism. Huq's novel then gives us a unique way to understand 1947: how the vagaries and exigencies of division and cruelty keep churning to give rise to another history and other possibilities of hope and recovery.

**All translations from *Agunpakshi* are mine**

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As a form of representation and construction, memory is deeply implicated with geography, so an engagement with a literary archive can be an important and significant way to enter the hidden and diffused narratives of the Partition.

over vast stretches of land and in the lives of people: millions lost their lives while many others forsook their homes in the months following independence from colonial rule. The division was the result of decisions to accept Partition as the only solution to internecine fratricide and bloodshed that had raged for many months in the cities and the hinterlands of British India. The years leading up to 1947 were eventful to say the least: the irreparable wreckage of the World War and the Great Famine of 1943, the communal riots in Noakhali, Bihar, Calcutta and Punjab, the massive anti colonial and Left-led peasant movements were some of the churnings that the country faced, particularly in undivided Bengal. The birth of the new nation states of India and Pakistan, the assassination of Gandhi in 1948, the rioting and communal conflagrations have all lead these years to be termed as the 'best and the worst of times, occurring in crowded sequence, churning up catastrophe and exhilaration in equal measure and ruthlessly compressing vast, unprecedented, indeed unimaginable changes in the urban landscape and demography within a span of little more than ten years.'

The Partition resulted in a division not only of the geographical spaces but also of the shared history, culture, languages and memories between different communities. The





Ecstatic Spain players celebrate clinching their first-ever Women's World Cup following their 1-0 win in the final over England, who were left devastated in front of a packed Stadium Australia in Sydney on Sunday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

# From mutiny to WORLD CUP GLORY

- Spain are the fifth team to win the FIFA Women's World Cup, after the United States (4), Germany (2), Norway (1), and Japan (1).
- Prior to this year's edition, Spain had only ever won one Women's World Cup match.
- A total of 164 goals were scored in this edition – highest at any edition of the World Cup.
- With 18 goals scored, Spain are the team with most goals this edition.
- Spain, the winning team, have been awarded a prize money of \$4.29 million. The total prize money for the tournament is \$110 million.
- With 64 matches played – most in one edition of the Women's World Cup – the tournament in Australia and New Zealand saw a World Cup record total attendance of 1,978,274.
- Having been beaten in the final by the USA while in charge of the Netherlands in 2019, England's Sarina Wiegman is the first coach to finish as runner-up in two Women's World Cup tournaments.
- Spain, who lost 4-0 to Japan 20 days ago, are only the second side to be crowned champions of the Women's World Cup despite having lost a group stage game. Japan are the first to do so in 2011.
- England have lost a competitive match for the first time under Wiegman, having gone 29 games unbeaten since losing against Spain in the SheBelieves Cup in March 2020.
- Spain's penalty, saved by Mary Earps from Jenni Hermoso, was the 27th to be awarded at this edition of the Women's World Cup, the most on record at the tournament (2011 onwards).
- The Stadium Australia in Sydney saw four games, including the final, played out in front of a full-capacity crowd of 75,784.
- The tournament saw an average attendance of 30,911 – more than 9,000 above the average for the 2019 edition in France, which had 24 teams participating.

AFP, Sydney

Coach Jorge Vilda was derided as a control freak who was not up to the job, but he has now made history by taking Spain to their first Women's World Cup crown. His team beat England 1-0 in front of a sell-out crowd of nearly 76,000 in Sydney in Sunday's final to seal an achievement that seemed unthinkable less than a year ago.

Discontent between players on the one side and the Spanish football federation (RFEF) and Vilda on the other had been brewing for some time.

In September 2022 the situation exploded – 15 of the squad emailed the RFEF to say they did not want to be considered for selection, citing their "emotional state".

The exact nature of their complaints was never officially made public, but Spanish media had previously reported that they wanted the 42-year-old Vilda sacked.

Reports said the players, many of whom were at Barcelona, accused Vilda of being "dictatorial" and did not approve of his training methods or tactics.

Mundo Deportivo and other publications said he would insist on the players keeping their hotel doors open before midnight while on national duty so he could personally check that they were asleep on time.

There were also claims that if the players went out, Vilda wanted to know where they were going, with whom, and what they were buying.

Vilda said in the lead-up to the World Cup that the dispute was "practically over", but of the 15 mutineers, he only called up three.



He is a typically guarded character, but following Spain's 2-1 win in the semifinals over Sweden, he said that the turmoil had "made all of us stronger".

"The support of Luis Rubiales, the president of the federation, and everyone at the federation, means so much and will always stay with me, as well as that of my family because they have suffered this year," said Vilda.

Vilda was a promising player in his youth but was forced into coaching by injury.

In 2015, he was made in charge of the senior side.

Spain were at a low ebb, having finished bottom of their group without a win at the 2015 World Cup.

With Vilda at the helm, Spain went out in the last 16 of the 2019 World Cup – to eventual champions the United States – and they also failed to get beyond the quarterfinals at two editions of the European Championship.

That lack of success despite the talent of the players at his disposal was also reported to be one of the players' objections to Vilda.

Reports said that Rubiales promised to act on some of the complaints by bringing in a nutritionist and more physios.

There was also a bit more leeway for the players to see their families during camps, including at the World Cup.

But he was always steadfast in support of Vilda.

"Jorge is a top-class coach who gave up the chance with other teams for more money to stay with Spain," Rubiales told Spanish television after the semifinal win.

He and Vilda have now been vindicated – and then some.

## Abahani head to Kolkata

SPORTS REPORTER

Six-time Bangladesh Premier league champions Abahani are all set to fly to Kolkata today in two separate contingents to take part in their AFC Cup playoff match against Mohun Bagan Super Giants.

The match will take place tomorrow at the Salt Lake Stadium, with the winners progressing to the group stage of South Asian zone of Asia's second-tier club competition.

The Sky Blues will leave with at least seven foreign players including six of those who started in their 2-1 win against Club Eagles of Maldives in Dhaka last week.

In the last edition, Abahani suffered a 3-1 defeat against the Kolkata giants in a playoff fixture, as a result exiting the competition from either the preliminary round or the playoff stage for the third time in a row. This time, though, the team management is hopeful about getting into the group stage for the first time since 2019.

"Due to the inclusion of six foreign players, I think the gap between the two clubs is less than the previous occasions," Abahani manager Satyjit Das Rupu told The Daily Star yesterday.

Rupu, however, admitted that the Indian clubs are ahead of Abahani due to their experience of playing in the Indian Super League.

"There is no denying that Indian clubs are progressing due to the ISL, where a lot of big players are coming to play and the Indian local players also grow in stature. The Indian players are now more confident and the style of play has also changed," Rupu said.



PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

It had been more than a month since Tamim Iqbal last batted but his recuperation went well enough for the opener to pick up the bat yesterday and have a seemingly light training session. He batted at the nets to throwdowns before working with the Bangladesh Cricket Board's newly-appointed chief rehabilitation center physio Kieron Thomas.

## Spikers lose big against Pakistan

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh national volleyball team failed to carry their spirited performance against South Korea to the second match against Pakistan, suffering a 3-0 sets defeat in the Asian Senior Men's Volleyball Championship in Urmia, Iran yesterday.

Bangladesh set their sights on beating Pakistan to move into the top 12 teams of the championship, and they had a brilliant opening match against South Korea on Saturday where they gave the 31st-ranked side in the world a run for their money despite losing the match.

However, Bangladesh surrendered meekly against the Pakistanis, losing by 25-16, 25-14, 25-22 points. Bangladesh will now play in the 13th-18th place deciding matches.

## 'Observer' Mahmud to accompany Tigers in Asia Cup

SPORTS REPORTER

Former team director Khaled Mahmud Sujon had been away from the national side's periphery for a while.

Often the one to manage the dressing room environment in key tournaments, Mahmud's decision to keep away from the role of team director since head coach Chandika Hathurusingha's arrival created room for controversy. Mahmud had not served in that role since the India series in December last year.

"Since this is a home series, everyone will be here, so, I don't really want to [return to the role]," Mahmud had told the media before the England series this year.

However, the recent issues including the Tamim Iqbal retirement saga, have seen the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) feel the urgency for maintaining clear communications between players and the BCB hierarchy.

According to BCB sources, Mahmud will now be "with the team as an observer in the upcoming Asia Cup". It was also learned that if things go well, he may even return as the team director in the World Cup in India.



Mahmud yesterday attended the Tigers' practice session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur. He was seen overseeing spinners in a net session while also discussing things with the Tigers' coaching staff. During Hathurusingha's previous stint, Mahmud worked as the team manager.

Meanwhile, the Asia Cup standbys and the probable players for the New Zealand series in September also came to the ground yesterday after the national team's practice ended. A group of nine players, including Tamim Iqbal, are being kept prepared under a separate program with the World Cup in mind. The idea, as per the BCB officials, came from the head coach.

Tamim yesterday batted in a training session for the first time in 46 days since that first ODI against Afghanistan. Mahmudullah Riyad skipped the session due to family emergency. Meanwhile, the likes of Soumya Sarkar, Khaled Ahmed, Zakir Hasan, and Mosaddek Hossain also are with the group alongside the Asia Cup standbys Taijul Islam, Saif Hassan, and Tanzim Sakib. The players will continue their training under coach Sohel Islam.



Inter Miami players toss Lionel Messi in the air after the World Cup-winning Argentine helped the Major League Soccer side beat Nashville SC in a thrilling Leagues Cup final which was settled by a marathon 10-9 penalty shootout after a 1-1 tie on Sunday. Messi, who opened the scoring with a screamer into the top left corner of the net, overtook former Barcelona teammate Dani Alves and became the most decorated player in the history of the game as he won 44 trophies in a career spanning almost two decades.

PHOTO: AFP





## MRT LINE-6 Agargaon-Motijheel part to open Oct 20

PM will address a rally after inauguration

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will open the Agargaon-Motijheel section of the metro rail on October 20, bringing 20.10km of the entire MRT Line-6 into operation.

The remaining 1.16km Motijheel-Kamalapur section is yet to be open.

She will also inaugurate the construction work of MRT Line-5 (northern route) on September 16 and open 140 new bridges under the Roads and Highways Department on October 22.

The same day, Hasina will also launch the compensation programme for road accident victims and a vehicle inspection centre.

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader made the announcements at a press briefing at his ministry yesterday.

Earlier, he announced that the Dhaka Elevated Expressway will partially open on September 2, while the Bangabandhu Tunnel in Chattogram will be open to the public on October 28.

Apart from these, four new rail lines, the

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



SEPT 02

Partial opening of Dhaka Elevated Expressway

SEPT 16

Construction of MRT Line-5 (northern route) to begin

OCT 07

Opening of third terminal of Hazrat Shahjalal Airport

OCT 20

Agargaon-Motijheel section of Metro rail to open

OCT 22

Inauguration of 140 bridges and 12 overpasses

OCT 22

Opening of Vehicle Inspection Centre

OCT 28

Opening of Bangabandhu Tunnel



This biker went against the traffic while crossing the Mohakhali level crossing when the gate was closed and was almost run over by the train. He managed to stop between the gate and the train at speed. Such recklessness often leads to lives being lost. The photo was taken from the Mohakhali flyover yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## Jubo Mahila League leader arrested

She 'pushed 15-yr-old girl off roof of building' in Savar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

A Jubo Mahila League leader accused of shoving a 15-year-old girl off the roof of a five-storey building was arrested in Savar on Saturday.

Police yesterday appealed to a court to place Mehnaz Tabassum Mishu, who has now been suspended by the ruling Awami League associate body, on a seven-day remand.

The victim, who stayed at Dhaka North Jubo Mahila League Joint General Secretary Mehnaz's house as a dependent, survived with serious injuries to her spine as she fell on the corrugated-iron roof of an adjacent one-storey building.

According to a case filed by the eighth-grader's mother, six or seven unidentified men tried to rape the girl in the presence of Mehnaz, 35, and her husband Atikur Rahman Atik in the couple's flat on the night of July 24.

As the girl resisted, Mehnaz, Atik and the other accused tore her clothes, took



Mehnaz Tabassum

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## 200 hurt in AL, BNP clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Supporters of the Awami League and the BNP clashed in Habiganj town yesterday and both parties claimed that the violence left 100 people hurt in each side.

Police fired rubber bullets and used teargas canisters to end the clash that continued for around two and a half hours from 5:00pm.

Witnesses said the district AL yesterday organised a road march protesting the "terror and anarchy of the BNP" after several hundred BNP activists on Saturday locked in a clash with police that left 150, including 30 policemen, injured.

Yesterday, the AL men started their road march from the town's Shayestanagar area around 5:00pm.

When the march reached Water Development Board area, some people attacked a temporary office of the BNP, said witnesses.

They also attempted to attack the home of Habiganj BNP Joint Convener GK Gaus in the area.

The BNP activists tried to resist the attack and the clash ensued. Both groups chased one another and threw brick chunks, the witnesses added.

Police went to the spot, lobbed teargas canisters and used rubber bullets to bring the situation under control.

Contacted, district unit AL Joint General Secretary Lutfur Rahman alleged that BNP men first attacked their procession without any provocation, injuring 100 AL activists.

However, Gaus said the clash broke out after AL activists vandalised their office and his home, leaving at least 100 BNP activists hurt.

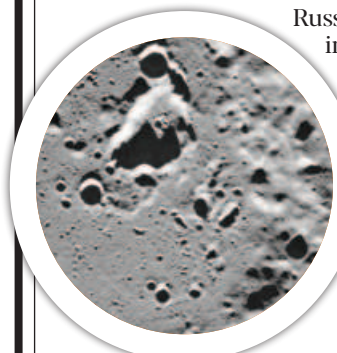
Badiuzzaman, officer-in-charge (investigation) of Habiganj Model Police Station, said additional police personnel were deployed in the area to avert further untoward incidents.

On Saturday afternoon, at least 150 people, including 30 police personnel, were wounded in Shayestanagar during the

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## Russia's Luna-25 spacecraft crashes into moon in failure

MOSCOW, Reuters



Russia's first moon mission in 47 years failed when its Luna 25 space craft spun out of control and crashed into the moon after a problem preparing for pre-landing orbit, underscoring the post-Soviet decline of a once mighty space programme.

Russia's state space corporation, Roskosmos, said it had lost contact with the craft at 11:57 GMT on Saturday after a problem as the craft was shunted into pre-landing orbit. A soft landing had been planned for Monday.

"The apparatus moved into an unpredictable orbit and ceased to exist as a result of a collision with the surface of the Moon," Roskosmos said in a statement.

It said a special inter-departmental commission had been formed to investigate the reasons behind the loss of the Luna 25 craft, whose mission had raised hopes in Moscow that Russia was returning to the big power moon race.

The failure underscored the decline of Russia's space power since the glory days of Cold War competition when Moscow was the first to launch a satellite to orbit the Earth - Sputnik 1, in 1957 - and Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first man to travel into space in 1961.

### DENGUE CASES

## 'End to outbreak can't be predicted'

Says DGHS official; 10 more die in a day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With 2,134 dengue patients hospitalised yesterday, the health directorate said when the outbreak will end cannot yet be firmly predicted.

In the last 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, 10 more patients died, including six in different hospitals in the capital, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

With the latest count, the total number of hospitalised patients rose to 99,995, while the total number of fatalities reached 476.

According to the DGHS, the highest number of dengue patients requiring hospitalisation were from within Dhaka city, in the 29th to 30th weeks of this year.

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Farmers of Kanchan Nagar in Chattogram's Chandanaish upazila carrying freshly harvested guavas to the wholesale markets lining the Dhaka-Chattogram highway, where they will make Tk 1,200-2,000 per two sacks. From there, the fruits are distributed across the country. However, growers say the yield this year was considerably less as guava trees have been adversely affected by brick kilns mushrooming near the orchards (not in picture). The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

## Bomb blast kills 11 labourers in Pakistan

AFP, Islamabad

Eleven labourers were killed in a bomb blast in northwestern Pakistan near the border with Afghanistan, a local government official said yesterday.

The device exploded after being attached to the vehicle they were travelling in on Saturday evening, Rehman Gul Khattak, senior government official for North Waziristan, said in a statement.

"The labourers were working at an under construction post for the Pakistan army," Khattak said.

Amir Muhammad Khan, a senior police official in the area, confirmed the bomb blast and the number of casualties to AFP.

"Heartbreaking to know about the terrorist attack in North Waziristan which claimed the lives of 11 innocent laborers. Strongly condemn this senseless act of violence and stand in solidarity with the families affected," caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar posted on X, formerly known as Twitter.

Pakistan has seen a sharp rise in militant attacks since the Afghan Taliban surged back to power in neighbouring Afghanistan in 2021.

The militant assaults have been focused in regions abutting Afghanistan, and Islamabad alleges some are being planned on Afghan soil -- a charge Kabul denies.

Pakistan's home-grown Taliban group, Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), has waged a growing campaign against security officials, including police officers.

In January, a suicide bomber linked to Pakistan's Taliban blew himself up in a mosque inside a police compound in the northwestern city of Peshawar, killing more than 80 officers.