



DHAKA WEDNESDAY AUGUST 23, 2023

REGD. No. DA 781

VOL. XXXIII No. 212

BHADRA 8, 1430 BS

www.thedailystar.net

SAFAR 6, 1445 HURI

16 PAGES : Tk 15.00



**Shakib's hour arrives to 'manage everything'**



**Hilsa brings back smiles to fishers**



**Drowning in a sea of distressed assets**



**Nearly 500 children die from hunger in Sudan**

## Record LGD spending in July ahead of polls

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and JAGARAN CHAKMA

July's development spending was the highest in four years on the back of enthusiastic fund utilisation by the local government division -- whose expenditure hit a record high for the first month of a fiscal year.

Last month, LGD, the unit of government responsible for developing and supporting local government bodies, spent Tk1,253.45 crore against 216 projects, according to data from the Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division.

This is an increase of 27.3 percent from a year earlier and accounts for 35.9 percent of July's expenditure of Tk 3,489.09 crore from fiscal 2023-24's annual development budget.

Economists said the higher spending by LGD -- whose main activities include rural police; construction, maintenance and management of upazila, union and village roads including bridges and culverts; development of water supply, sanitation, drainage and sewage disposal in rural and urban areas -- appears to be motivated by the polls due in January next year.

"In America, this is called pork barrel -- all low-priority projects become high priority ahead of the elections," said Ahsan H Mansur, executive director of the Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh.

Pork barrel, or simply pork, is a metaphor for the appropriation of government spending for localised projects secured solely or primarily to direct spending to a representative's district.

"Are these expenses keeping the election in mind? It is never like that in the month of July," said Zahid Hussain, a former lead economist of the World Bank's Dhaka office.

Planning Minister MA Mannan pinned the higher spending by LGD on the uncomplicated nature of its projects.

"LGD works at the grassroots level -- its scope is the most expansive. It needs to take up lots of projects and those projects are simple and do not need a feasibility study," Mannan told The Daily Star yesterday.

Which is why Mannan could approve many of the LGD projects without taking those up to the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council.

As the planning minister, Mannan can approve projects whose costs are less than Tk 50 crore and just inform the Ecneec of the approvals afterwards.

There was just one Ecneec meeting in July, and another one is scheduled for August 29, Mannan added.

In the months leading up to the polls in 2018, there would be frequent Ecneec meetings in which a flurry of projects was approved.

Meanwhile, five of the 15 large ministries and divisions could not spend any of their allocations in July: the secondary and higher education division, the ministry of science and technology, the bridges division, the ministry of water resources, and the ministry of civil aviation and tourism.

The shipping ministry could spend 0.04 percent of its allocation in July.

A year earlier, only the ministries of agriculture and primary and education among the 15 large ministries and divisions failed to spend a penny.

Among the 15 large ministries and divisions, whose allocations account for 79.8 percent of the year's total budget, LGD managed to spend the most of its outlay in July: 3.13 percent.

It was followed by the railway ministry (2.08 percent), the road transport and highway division (1.78 percent), the ministry of housing and public work (1.67 percent) and the agriculture ministry (1.17 percent).



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PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Workers of Dhaka North City Corporation using fogger machines to kill off Aedes mosquitoes in a bid to curb the spread of dengue in the capital's Lalmatia. As of two days ago, dengue cases reached a record high in the country since the first major outbreak in the year 2000. The photo was taken yesterday.

## Tale of 2 fake press releases

RASHIDUL HASAN

With the national election around the corner, a rift between Jatiya Party Chairman GM Quader and its chief patron Raushan Ershad is becoming visible again.

Yesterday, two "press releases" sent out from two WhatsApp groups went viral for quite some time. One of the releases, sent by Raushan's spokesperson Kazi Mamunur Rashid, claimed that Raushan declared herself the party chairperson. The second release, also sent out by Kazi Mamun, claimed some JP leaders expressed their "no confidence" in the leadership of GM Quader.

Both the releases later turned out to be fake, as senior party leaders close to Raushan told The Daily Star that Raushan had no knowledge of the press releases.

"Kazi Mamun may have sent the releases to the media to create further unrest and division between Quader and



SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

## DENGUE OUTBREAK 21-40 age group hit the hardest

HELEMUL ALAM

Almost 35 percent of the people who died from dengue are aged between 21 and 40 years, according to the health directorate data.

The Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) reported eight deaths from the mosquito-borne disease and 2,168 hospital admissions in the 24 hours preceding 8:00am yesterday.

The outbreak this year has caused 493 deaths and 1,04,359 hospitalisations, the DGHS data shows.

The 21-40 age group constitutes around 46 percent of the total cases this year so far.

HM Nazmul Ahsan, associate professor of medicine at the Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital, said, "It is difficult to say why this age group has the highest number of deaths. But delayed visits to the hospital could be one of the reasons. People of this age group are relatively fit, and they tend to delay the first visit to the hospital."

Early consultation with a doctor and proper medication are essential if

someone has dengue, he said, adding that patients should drink coconut water, saline, and home-made fruit juice to stay hydrated. He also advised vitamins and minerals to speed up recovery.

Hasan Mohammad Al-Amin, who studies Bangladeshi mosquitos at the QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute in Australia, said, "The main reason behind the higher casualties is that many of the patients have been infected for the second time."

Citing his own research done in 2014, he said 85 percent of the residents in the survey area previously had dengue.

"However, the majority of people are unaware of their past infections. This indicates the absence of proper surveillance. People are left uninformed and at increased risk of death," he said.

Entomologist Prof Kabirul Bashar of Jahangirnagar University said as people of the 21-40 age group go outdoors a lot, they are at risk of getting infected.

"People have to wear full sleeve tops, socks, shoes, and use mosquito nets while sleeping," he said.

## BUSINESS

### 11 NBFIs leave investors in the dark

Seven months have passed since the world bid adieu to 2022, but almost half of the listed non-bank financial institutions (NBFIs) have not published their financial statements for the year, breaching securities rules.

As a result, hundreds of thousands of general investors who are holding the stocks of the companies do not know how the non-banks fared in the year.

At present, 23 NBFIs are listed on bourses, and of them, 11 are yet to publish the financial reports.

STORY ON BI

## Rejoinder, our reply

Dhaka Central Jail has issued a rejoinder in response to our article titled "Tk 37.5cr mishandled in just one year," published on August 6 based on a report by the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General of Bangladesh, the country's supreme audit institution.

The rejoinder, penned by the senior jail superintendent of Dhaka Central Jail, said the report contains falsehoods and baseless claims.

The report highlighted discrepancies in the allocation of Tk 19 crore in fiscal 2019-20, including issues related to the quality of rice, substandard food supply, monotonous food menu and the provision of only rice and lentils during lunch.

The rejoinder offered a point-by-point clarification on the matters raised.

Regarding rice procurement, the rejoinder said that rice for inmates and staff is obtained through a regulated process from local food warehouses.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



A patient and her attendants walk out of Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital, as they are doubtful of getting proper treatment due to the ongoing strike called by intern doctors of the hospital. The indefinite strike was called by the Intern Physicians Council after the relatives of a patient, who died during treatment, vandalised the hospital and attacked staffers on Monday. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASTIR

## BRICS SUMMIT Divisions re-emerge over expansion

PM reaches S Africa

REUTERS, Johannesburg

BRICS leaders met yesterday to plot the future course of the bloc of developing nations but divisions re-emerged ahead of a critical debate over a potential expansion of the group intended to boost its global clout.

Heightened tensions in the wake of the Ukraine war and Beijing's growing rivalry with the United States have



pushed China and Russia -- whose President Vladimir Putin will attend the meeting virtually -- to seek to strengthen BRICS.

They are seeking to use the Aug. 22-24 summit in Johannesburg to forge the grouping, which also includes South Africa, Brazil and India, into a counterweight to Western dominance of global institutions.

"Right now, changes in the world, in our times, and in history are unfolding in ways like never before, bringing human society to a critical juncture," China's President

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



## Pakistan cable car ordeal ends with all rescued

REUTERS, Peshawar

Rescuers in Pakistan pulled all seven children and one man to safety after their cable car became stranded high over a remote ravine yesterday, officials said, ending an ordeal lasting more than 15 hours.

The high-risk operation was completed successfully in the darkness of night after the cable car snagged early in the morning, leaving it hanging precariously at an angle.

"All the kids have been successfully and safely rescued," caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar said in a post on messaging platform X, formerly known as Twitter.

"Great team work by the military, rescue departments, district administration as well as the local people." A helicopter rescue operation was called off as night fell, media and a security source said. Flood lights were installed and a ground-based rescue operation continued into the night.

The source said that cable crossing experts had been sent by the military to the area north of Islamabad and had been trying to rescue the children one by one by transferring them onto a small platform along the cable.

The rescue effort transixed the country, with Pakistanis crowded around television sets, as local media showed footage of an emergency worker dangling from a helicopter cable close to the small cabin, with those onboard cramped together.

### SAYEDEE'S DEATH

## 20 more BCL men suspended over FB posts

UNB, Naogaon/Khulna

Twenty leaders and activists of Chhatra League's Naogaon and Khulna units were suspended for Facebook posts on the death of Jamaat leader and war criminal Delwar Hossain Sayedee.

A press release, signed by Naogaon district BCL President Sabbir Rahman Rezwi and General Secretary Amanuzzaman Seul, confirmed the suspension of 14 leaders and activists of the student front.

"They have been suspended over allegations of engaging in activities that contradicts the organisation's policies and ideals."

The suspended BCL men include Atrai upazila unit joint general secretaries Faizul Islam and Mahathir Mohammad Tufan; organising secretaries Amanullah Faruk alias

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



PHOTO: LS ARCHIVE



# Why does Dhaka lack vegetarian restaurants?

BY FARIHA AMBER

Dhaka is undoubtedly a haven for foodies.

From a wide selection of street food to exotic dining experiences, the city has a wide taste palate.

However, one question remains -- does Dhaka have enough vegetarian restaurants? The answer is clear -- No!

But, why is that so? Why in our abundance of restaurants do we lack pure vegetarian options?

For starters, the city does not have a very large vegetarian population to begin with, which is why not many vegetarian restaurants exist to solely cater to this niche populace. Although it sounds unfair, from a business perspective, it proves unfeasible.

"Being in the restaurant business, I have pondered upon this question myself. However, from an entrepreneur's lens, running a restaurant serving



only vegetarian meals would not be sustainable in this city. My restaurant offers an assortment of vegetarian dishes, but most people order those alongside meat-based dishes," said Avishek Sinha, CEO of Signature by Khazana.

With the massive amount of competition in the restaurant industry, it becomes a challenge for pure vegetarian restaurants to sustain in the market, given that people in the city are mostly non-veg. Vegetarian items are considered fillers -- and thus, land in the side menu of most restaurants

However, is it all that difficult from a vegetarian's perspective?

Mashiat Lamisa, who has been a vegetarian for around three years, said, "Our local vegetation includes a lot of ingredients that can easily and

feasibly be used to make delicious vegetarian meals. People here assume that vegetarian recipes have to be expensive, with the inclusion of tofu and plant milk, etc. Which is clearly not the case."

Not only the business aspect but interestingly, cultural aspects come into play here as well.

We cannot disagree that we as a nation are meat lovers, and to some extent consider meat as a status symbol.

If we look back, our love for meat dates centuries ago. Whether derived from the Mughal lineage or acquired from the Arab influence, meat is what makes us happy.

"The idea of being a vegetarian is far from us. Subconsciously, we look for and prefer meat more than we know. Think back, even in soups and curries, we decide the fulfillment of the meal based on the amount of meat or fish it has," said Taskin Rahman, founder of The Food Talk -- a Facebook group for avid foodies, restaurateurs, and cooks.

Although the vegetarian restaurant is still on the niche side of the spectrum, with the growing populace catering to them, somewhere down the line, even Dhaka may have many all over the city.

## Divisions re-emerge

FROM PAGE 1

Xi Jinping said in remarks delivered at a BRICS business forum.

"The course of history will be shaped by the choices we make." Xi skipped the event, despite the presence there of counterparts Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

His remarks were delivered by Chinese Commerce Minister Wang Wentao, and it was not immediately clear why Xi, who had a meeting with host Ramaphosa earlier in the day, did not attend.

Comments from Brazil's Lula pointed to a divergence of vision within the bloc, which political analysts say has long struggled to form a coherent view of its role in the global order.

"We do not want to be a counterpoint to the G7, G20 or the United States," Brazil's Lula said during a social media broadcast from Johannesburg. "We just want to organise ourselves." Beyond the enlargement question, boosting the use of member states' local currencies in trade and financial transactions to lessen dependency of the U.S. dollar is also on the summit agenda.

"The objective, irreversible process of de-dollarization of our economic ties is gaining momentum," Russia's Putin said in a pre-recorded statement.

Russia's economy is grappling with Western sanctions over Moscow's war in Ukraine. Putin is wanted under an international arrest warrant for alleged war crimes in Ukraine, and is being represented at the summit by his foreign minister Sergei Lavrov.

South African organisers say there will be no discussions however of a common BRICS currency, an idea floated by Brazil.

### POINT OF CONTENTION

BRICS remains a disparate group, ranging from China, the world's second biggest economy, to South Africa, a relative minnow which is nonetheless Africa's most developed economy.

Russia is keen to show the West it still has friends but India has increasingly reached out to the West, as has Brazil under its new leader.

India and China have also

periodically clashed along their disputed border, adding to the challenge of decision-making in a group that relies on consensus.

Speaking to reporters in Washington on Tuesday, White House national security advisor Jake Sullivan said he did not see BRICS turning into a geopolitical rival of the United States.

"This is a very diverse collection of countries ... with differences of view on critical issues," he said.

Expansion has long been a goal of China, which hopes that broader membership will lend clout to a grouping already home to some 40% of the world's population and a quarter of global gross domestic product.

Russia is also keen to expand membership while South Africa's President Ramaphosa voiced support for the idea at the meeting with Xi.

The BRICS leaders will hold a mini-retreat and dinner yesterday evening where they are likely to discuss a framework and criteria for admitting new countries.

India, which is wary of Chinese dominance and has warned against rushing expansion, has "positive intent and an open mind", Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra said on Monday. Brazil, meanwhile, is concerned that expanding BRICS will dilute its influence, though Lula reiterated yesterday his desire to see neighbour Argentina join the bloc.

An Argentine government source involved in the country's negotiations to join BRICS told Reuters that no new members were expected to be admitted to the bloc during the summit.

While a potential BRICS enlargement remains up in the air, the grouping's pledge to become a champion of the developing world and offer an alternative to a world order dominated by wealthy Western nations is already finding resonance.

### PM REACHES S AFRICA

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina reached Johannesburg yesterday evening to attend the BRICS Summit.

The premier is joining the summit at the invitation of South African President Ramaphosa.

## Tale of 2 fake press releases

FROM PAGE 1

Raushan. The signature on the press release does not belong to Raushan Ershad," said a JP leader close to Raushan.

Raushan and Kazi Mamun did not respond to our calls and text messages requesting their comments.

The development comes when GM Quader is in India on a three-day visit. He is scheduled to return home today.

It also comes three days after Raushan's meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Gono Bhaban. At the meeting, Raushan assured Hasina that JP will provide all the support and cooperation that the PM may need.

After that meeting on Saturday, Raushan announced that JP will take part in the election under the current government.

Both the press releases were sent out from two WhatsApp groups that are run by pro-Raushan groups.

One release said Raushan took charge of the post on advice of the party's senior leaders and to bring pace in the party's activities. It also said Raushan will perform her duties as chairman till the next council.

The other release claimed five JP leaders, including four co-chairmen, wrote to Raushan in December last year expressing their lack of confidence in GM Quader. According to the release, Raushan gave her consent to the letter yesterday.

Names and signature of JP chairmen Ruhul Amin Hawlader, and lawmakers Kazi Firoz Rashid, Syed Abu Hossain, Salma Islam and Nasrin Jahan were used in this release.

Hawlader and Kazi Firoz declined to comment.

But Syed Abu Hossain in a video message said Jatiya Party is united under the leadership of its chairman GM Quader and with the blessings of Raushan.

He also categorically dismissed that he signed any paper urging Raushan to become the party chief replacing GM Quader.

"The statement [press release] is fake," he said.

Hours after the news was published in different media, Jatiya Party

Secretary General Mujibul Haque Chunnun in a press release said those who were expelled from the party spread the fake news.

"No such incident happened, and there is no scope of happening such thing," he said.

"I already spoke with the JP leaders who were said to have signed a letter to Raushan Ershad, and they told me that they did not sign any such letter," Chunnun added.

According to the JP charter, no one can become the party chief as per their will. Nor can anyone relieve any leader from the party in such a manner, he noted.

A section of JP leaders fear that such a move from JP leaders loyal to Raushan might split the party ahead of the election. They also fear that similar moves will recur in the coming days in efforts to take control of the party before the polls.

There are discussions within the Jatiya Party about Raushan Ershad's close ties with the Awami League government.

GM Quader, on the other hand, has been criticising the government for quite some time now.

JP sources told The Daily Star that pro-Raushan group has been planning to oust Quader from the party helm.

Conflict between pro-Raushan and Quader groups intensified when JP Parliamentary Party last year wrote to Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury to make Quader the Leader of the Opposition in parliament, replacing Raushan.

The Speaker has not made any decision on the matter yet.

Presently, Quader is the deputy leader of the opposition in parliament.

Quader earlier on several occasions alleged that the government is using Raushan to create division in JP to put pressure on him.

The conflict between Raushan and Quader surfaced after Ershad, Quader's brother and Raushan's husband, died in July 2019.

Since then, the rift between the pro-Raushan and pro-Quader groups has been making headlines quite frequently.

## Record LGD spending

FROM PAGE 1

The relatively higher spending by railway ministry and road transport and highway division can be explained by the government's planned inauguration of a few mega projects such as the Padma rail link, phase 2 of Dhaka MRT Line 6, Dhaka Elevated Expressway and Karnaphuli Tunnel later this year.

"That's a natural political move. You want to make the best case for yourself. All governments do that," said Mansur, also a former economist of the International Monetary Fund.

Hussain said the swift implementation of the mega projects

is beneficial for all.

"For whatever reason, if good projects are finished swiftly, whatever the motivation is, it is good for the national economy. Even if the election is the reason, the outcome for us is good," he said, citing the fast progress on the Dhaka Elevated Expressway over the past month as a case in point.

Of the amount spent in July, 61.5 percent came from the government's funds and 32.5 percent from foreign aid.

July's outlay was 1.12 percent of the total ADP budget of Tk 274,674 crore for this fiscal year.

## Rejoinder, our reply

FROM PAGE 1

The procurement takes place through a by-transfer system with proper oversight, which minimises room for irregularities.

Dhaka Central Jail disputed the CAG report's finding of procurement of poor-quality rice: the rice provided to inmates aligns with the standards set for basic rations and was not flagged during regular inspections or meetings.

About the food menu, the rejoinder said the published information about the same, substandard food is erroneous. The jail code governs the inmates' dietary intake, specifying menus based on a prescribed diet scale. The jail administration follows the guidelines closely.

According to the jail code, the inmates' breakfast menu for four days a week is flatbread made of wheat and vegetables and for two days it is khichuri. Once a week, they are served halwa and wheat flatbread.

The lunch includes vegetables, lentils and a rotation of fish, beef, chicken and goat meat. Dinner includes rice, lentils and vegetables.

The rejoinder also said canteen operation adheres to established policies and is funded by inmates. Consequently, canteen dividends are not directed to the government

## 2 fugitive war crimes suspects arrested

UNB, Dhaka

The Anti-Terrorism Unit, a specialised unit of Bangladesh Police, have arrested two fugitive war crimes suspects in Satkhira's Shyamnagar upazila.

The arrestees are Abdul Aziz alias Aziz Commander, 82, and Surat Ali Ghazi, 76.

The elite force conducted a drive and arrested them from Taranipur village of the upazila on Monday, said an ATU media release yesterday.

The accused were allegedly involved in the mass killings in Shyamnagar's Vetkhali-Joyakhali Kheyaghat area during the 1971 Liberation War.

Later, a case was filed against them in Satkhira Judge Court in 1996.

After being arrested in the case, the two accused remained in jail for a long time and were later released on bail from the High Court.

International Crimes Tribunal-1 issued an arrest warrant against them in 2017. Earlier, the investigation agency of the tribunal submitted its report against them.

## Man arrested for raping 7-yr-old girl

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinaipur

A man was arrested from Jamalpur on the charge of raping a seven-year-old girl in Naogaon.

The arrestee is Hasan Ali, 42, of Moharpara village in Porsha upazila, Naogaon.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of Joypurhat Rab-5 arrested him in Madarganj, Jamalpur Monday night. Later, he was taken to Joypurhat.

Hasan was handed over to Porsha Police Station yesterday, and the girl's father filed a case against him.

"The first grade schoolgirl of a local primary school went to a pond to bathe on August 12. Finding the girl alone, Hasan abducted her to a deserted place and raped her there. Afterwards, he went into hiding," said Rafiqul Islam, company commander of Rab-5.

## BNP announces processions on Friday, Saturday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP has announced a fresh programme to press home its one-point demand -- resignation of the Awami League government and general election under a non-party, neutral government.

The party will bring out mass processions with black flags in the capital on August 25, said the BNP media cell in a post on its verified Facebook page last night.

Dhaka north and south units of BNP will organise the processions.

The party's all city units across the country will bring out mass processions with black flags on August 26.

## Two children drown

UNB, Kurigram

Two children drowned in a pond at Khuliatar village of Chakirpashar union in Kurigram's Rajarhat upazila yesterday afternoon.

The deceased were identified as Sohana Akter, 7, daughter of Solaiman Ali of Medni Khatib Khan village of Gharialdanga union, and Roksana Akter, 8, daughter of Ripon Mia of Khuliatar village.

Quoting locals, Rajarhat Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC) Abdullahil Zaman said the two children drowned while taking a bath in the pond.



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Causing suffering to tens of thousands, some 300 students from seven DU-affiliated colleges formed a blockade at the Nilkhet-New Market intersection on Mirpur Road for seven hours yesterday. During their protest, traffic movement came to a standstill. While some endured the traffic congestion for hours in vehicles, others, who lost patience, started walking towards their destinations.

PHOTO: STAR

# Neglected, they demand fair pay, promotions

## Health assistants urge govt to end discriminatory policies

MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN

It was 2021. Braving flooding in the Padma basin which disrupted daily life and rendered vast stretches of land uninhabitable in Manikganj, a group of local health workers toiled tirelessly to safeguard the health of children disregarding their own.

Naimul Islam Badal, a health assistant, was one of them.

"We conducted the campaign on boats to ensure vaccination of children as the floodwaters had left no safe ground for conducting campaign," he told this correspondent recently.

But he is not alone. Most of the health assistants this newspaper have talked to shared similar stories of commitment and resilience.

Harin Joy Tripura is one of them. His responsibilities extended across the rugged terrain of Sajek Valley in Bandarban.

"During my 10-year-long career, weather or disasters couldn't stop me from my duty. I have many stories to share," said Harin.

During the 2020 Measles-Rubella drive, he even had an encounter with a wild bear on his way from Lungtianpara to Gandachhara in Sajek to vaccinate children.

Despite the obstacles they faced, these health assistants were instrumental in achieving remarkable child vaccination coverage. Harin Joy said despite being a remote place, the Sajek Valley boasts a coverage rate of around 70 percent, a mere 10 percentage points

below the national average of 80 percent.

Stories of commitments like that of Harin's are not an isolated incident. This is more or less the story of 26,500 health assistants across the nation.

Their relentless efforts in the face of adversity had significantly contributed to the success story of immunisation in the country and helped to curb malnutrition, and child and maternal mortality. Besides, they also played a pivotal role during Covid-19 vaccination campaigns.

However, their dedication had not translated into the recognition they rightfully deserved. Striving for over two decades, their plea for

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## LABOUR LAW VIOLATION CASE

### Trial begins against Yunus, three others

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A trial began yesterday against four people, including Nobel Laureate Dr Muhammad Yunus, in a labour law violation case.

Prof Yunus is the chairman of Grameen Telecom. The three others accused in the case are Grameen Telecom's top officials Ashraful Hasan, Nur Jahan Begum and Mohammad Shahjahan.

Sheikh Merina Sultana, chairman of the Third Labour Court of Dhaka, recorded statements of prosecution witness Tariqul Islam, also a labour inspector, Mohammad Nuruzzaman, bench assistant of the court, told The Daily Star.

The defence started cross-examining Tariqul, but could not complete it, he said.

The court also set August 31 for next hearing in the case.

During yesterday's hearing, Prof Yunus did not appear before the court. His lawyer represented him.

On June 6, the court

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PRAYER TIMING				
AUGUST 23				
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				

## BSF returns youth's body after 78 days

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Lalmohirhat

Indian Border Security Force returned the body of a Bangladeshi youth to Border Guard Bangladesh yesterday, 78 days after he was killed in BSF firing at Kalirhat border of Lalmohirhat's Patgram upazila.

The body of Yusuf Ali, 25, was handed over through a flag meeting at the border in the afternoon.

Yusuf, who was shot dead before dawn on June 5, was a resident of the bordering Meserdanga village in Patgram.

Mostafizur Rahman Sohel, chairman of Jagatber Union Parishad, said 10-12 Bangladeshis were bringing cows from Sarkarpara area of West Bengal's Cooch Behar district on June 5. At one stage, BSF personnel opened fire on the Bangladeshis, leaving Yusuf dead on the spot, he added.

Shah Jamal, father of the Yusuf Ali, told The Daily Star that his son used to work in agriculture. Some local youths lured him into bringing cattle from India.

Nayek Subedar Sadekul Islam, commander of Kalirhat BOP Camp of BGB 61 Battalion, said the body was handed over to Yusuf's family yesterday afternoon.

Asked about the delay in handover of the body, he said correspondence between the foreign ministries of the two countries in this regard took time.

## ROHINGYA REPATRIATION

# Dhaka stands firm on the issue: Momen

UNB, Dhaka

Six years after the Rohingya influx in Bangladesh, the government continues its efforts to ensure their safe repatriation, though some countries and international organisations are pushing for their integration into Bangladesh.

"Our priority is that they [Rohingyas] will return to their homeland. Myanmar is also willing to take them back," said Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen

**Some countries and international organisations recommended the government give Rohingyas training, improve their skills, and keep them here.**

AK ABDUL MOMEN  
Foreign Minister

yesterday, noting that Myanmar needs to ensure safety and security of the Rohingyas after their return to their place of origin.

On August 25, 2017, Myanmar's military began carrying out violent operations against the Rohingya population in northern Rakhine state, which resulted in grave crimes under international law. Entire villages were burnt, and hundreds of thousands of Rohingyas were forced to flee into Bangladesh.

The foreign minister said the government stands firm on their repatriation to Myanmar.

"So, discussion is underway. We are always hopeful," he said, adding that some countries and international organisations recommended the Bangladesh government give Rohingyas training, improve their skills, and keep them here.

Momen said Bangladesh already has a huge

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## HAWAII WILDFIRE

### PM writes to Biden expressing sadness



DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has written a letter to US President Joseph R Biden, expressing deep sadness over the devastation and loss of lives in a deadly wildfire in the Hawaiian island of Maui.

The raging wildfire that swept through the town of Lahaina on the Hawaiian island of Maui, earlier in the month, killed more than 100 people, making it the deadliest natural disaster in Hawaii since it became a state in 1959.

"I am deeply saddened by the news of devastation and loss of lives caused by one of the deadliest wildfires across the Hawaiian island of Maui," she said in the letter, according to the Bangladesh Embassy in Washington on Monday.

The prime minister said, "On behalf of the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

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## Premier Bank consultant Shahidul Islam passes away

STAR REPORT

MShahidul Islam, a consultant to Premier Bank Ltd, passed away at Green Life Hospital, Dhaka on August 21, said a press release.

He served as the managing director and chief executive officer of Shahjalal Islami Bank Limited before joining Premier Bank Limited.

Earlier, he had served at United Commercial Bank PLC, Prime Bank Limited and National Bank Limited in key strategic and managerial roles.

Shahidul Islam won “Islamic Finance Personality of 2020” award for his work in Islamic Finance.

Premier Bank board of directors, management and officers prayed for the salvation of his departed soul and expressed their sympathy to the bereaved family.

Shahidul's first namaz-e-janaza was held after the Fazr prayers at Mohakhali DOHS Mosque and the second janaza was held after Zohr prayers at Gulshan Central Mosque (Azad Mosque) yesterday.

## PM writes

Government and the people of Bangladesh, I convey our deepest condolences and sympathy to the families of the victims and all those affected by this natural catastrophe.”

She said Bangladesh stands with the government and people of America in this challenging time and expresses its solidarity with all the frontline responders engaged in the rescue operations.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said, “Our thoughts and prayers are with those who have lost their loved ones in this tragic incident.”

## Neglected, they demand fair pay

FROM PAGE 3

improved government pay remained unanswered. The role of a health assistant is a block position, and their appointments and retirements occur within the 17th-grade pay scale, in accordance with the recruitment rules.

According to the latest Bangladesh National Pay Scale implemented in 2015, basic salary for a 17th-grade employee is Tk 9,000, which increases to the highest Tk 21,800 during their 25-year job period.

“With decades of grassroots experience, I can say that health assistants play a vital role in implementing the government's preventive healthcare programmes,” said Dr Satyakam Chakraborty, former line director of Hospital Service Management at the Directorate General of Health Services.

“According to the rules, health assistants are not entitled to demand higher pay than specified in the job conditions. However, the government has the option to consider their request as a gesture of acknowledging their contribution,” he added.

In early 2020, Bangladesh Health Assistant Association enforced a work stoppage to realise their demand, which forced DGHS to suspend the nationwide measles rubella campaign.

Consequently, a meeting at the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on

February 20, 2020 decided to amend the recruitment regulations for health assistants, aiming to enable their promotion to the upper grade.

The ministry, however, set a condition for this – all the health assistants would be required to achieve a two-year technical diploma degree to be employed under “technical cadre” and be promoted.

A committee formed in the same year in this regard, however, submitted a draft curriculum for a one-year diploma course.

“We were tasked to draft a one-year course curriculum, but we have put a note that the curriculum should span two years. Otherwise, it will not resolve the plea for better pay,” said Dr Satyakam Chakraborty, also the head of curriculum adoption committee.

Around three years have passed since Dr Satyakam submitted the draft curriculum, but DGHS is yet to finalise it.

Against this backdrop, representatives of Bangladesh Health Assistants Association met DGHS Director General Prof Abul Bashir Mohammad and other high-ups on August 10.

“The officials gave assurance that our demand would be met soon,” said Sheikh Rabiul Alam Khokon, convener of the association.

“Other government officials, such as those of

primary education and agriculture who entered under the same job conditions, have received promotions through rule amendments. We urge the government to put an end to this discrimination,” he added.

Talking to several officials concerned, this correspondent, however, learnt that the process is complex and lengthy, and involves multiple ministries.

“The approval for improved pay will not be immediate. Once the health ministry finalises it, there will be a need for vetting by the public administration ministry. We have been working on addressing this matter,” said Dr Rasheda Sultana, additional director general (administration) at DGHS.

## Students

FROM PAGE 5

permanent solution, said Mozammel Haque, manager of a local cooperative society.

School sources said Bhaluka Upazila Nirbahi Officer Md Ershadul Ahmed visited the school recently and asked the local Kachina union parishad chairman Md Mushfiqur Rahman to take steps to recover the canals at any cost.

They have started to pump out the water this week, the headmaster said.

Local people, however, demanded a permanent solution.

## Journo Habibur Rahman no more

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Habibur Rahman Khan, a senior correspondent of the Bangladesh Daily Jugantor, passed away yesterday due to cardiac arrest. He was 42.

The family said he felt chest pain around 4:00pm. Later, he was declared dead at National Heart Foundation Hospital & Research Institute.

Habibur is survived by a son and a daughter.

He was buried at Mirpur Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard after his namaz-e-janaza at Mirpur Shainpukur Housing Jame Mosque last night.

Jatiya Press Club, Dhaka Reporters' Unity, and Dhaka Union of Journalists expressed shock at the sudden demise of Habibur.

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir expressed his shock over Habibur's death and spoke to his wife Farzana Mahmud over the phone, extending sympathy to the bereaved family.

## Saudi Arabia

FROM PAGE 5

gateway to Makkah and Medina, allowing visitors to create their own Umrah itinerary with the variety of services it offers.

“With Nusuk, travellers from all over the world can easily organise their entire visit, from applying for an E-visa to booking hotels and flights,” Nusuk's website says.

The website includes various details and information that pilgrims need to be aware of to make their visit go smoothly. For example, it offers different options for accommodation, along with a list of landmarks and holy sites that visitors would want to add to their itinerary.

Bangladesh is the fourth-largest Muslim-majority country in the world, home to a population of 150 million Muslims. Annually, thousands of Bangladeshis visit Saudi Arabia for Umrah and Hajj.

## BCL's IU

FROM PAGE 5

Abdul Quader of BCL's Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Hall unit; Ashik Quraishi of Sheikh Russel Hall unit; Shahdullah Siddiqui Saimun and Tasin Azad of Jati Pita Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall unit.

IU BCL unit President Faisal Siddiqi Arafat told UNB that they suspended the eight activists from the organisation temporarily for violating its rules and regulations. They also submitted a written statement to the BCL central body for their permanent expulsion, he added.

On Sunday, a discussion programme marking the 48th martyrdom anniversary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the National Mourning Day, was held at Bir Shrestha Hamidur Rahman Auditorium in the morning.

IU BCL's Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Hall unit activist Shamim Hossain, a student of law department under 2018-19 academic session, locked into an altercation with BCL's Sheikh Russel Hall unit activist Ashik Quraishi, student of management department under 2019-20 academic session, over entering the auditorium to take part in the programme.

Following the altercation, two groups – one led by the Ziaur Rahman Hall unit and another led by Sheikh Russel Hall unit – attacked each other with sharp weapons in front of Bir Shrestha Hamidur Rahman Auditorium around 2:00pm.

The clash left five people from both groups injured. Fellow students rescued the injured and took them to the IU Medical Centre for treatment.

## A month-long strike

FROM PAGE 5

effective initiatives from the owners to solve their crises, Rambhajan added.

NirpenPaul, acting general secretary of Bangladesh Tea Workers' Union, said the owners of Imam and Bawani tea plantations are discriminating against the workers.

“On August 21, we organised a large programme at several gardens. Later, the district administration asked the owners for a meeting with them to meet the workers' demands on August

22. That is why we've temporarily suspended our programme.”

Contacted, Fakhruul Islam, general manager of Imam and Bawani tea gardens, said the owners had faced various financial problems in the management of the tea gardens.

“Prompt payment of dues will be made in consultation with the leaders of the tea workers' union,” he added.

Speaking on the matter, Nabiganj Upazila Assistant Commissioner (Land) Shaheen Delwar said the

garden owners also owe land development tax of Tk 80 lakh to the government, and a recommendation has been made for cancellation of their lease for the plantations.

Additional Deputy Commissioner (Revenue) Rafiqul Islam said, “The owners have been asked to present the necessary documents to the district administration during the meeting on August 22 to solve the crisis of Imam and Bawani tea gardens. Appropriate initiatives will also be taken to resolve workers' crises in that meeting.”

## Trial begins against Yunus

FROM PAGE 3

framed charges against the accused – including Prof Yunus – in the case.

On September 9, 2021, Labour Inspector (general) SM Arifuzzaman of the Inspection for Factories and Establishments Department filed the case with the Third Labour Court of Dhaka.

According to the case

documents, officials of the Inspection for Factories and Establishments Department on August 16, 2021, inspected the office of Grameen Telecom in the capital's Mirpur and found several violations of labour laws.

On August 19 that year, the department sent a letter to the authorities of Grameen Telecom, mentioning that

67 of its employees were supposed to be made permanent employees. But it was not done, the case statement said.

Besides, the employee's participation and welfare funds were yet to be formed, and 5 percent of the company's dividends supposed to be paid to the workers, were not paid, it added.



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### গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

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তারিখঃ ৭ ভাদ্র ১৪৩০  
২২ আগস্ট ২০২৩

বিজ্ঞপ্তি

**বিষয়ঃ সীমিত দরপত্র পদ্ধতির আওতায় প্রকৃত সরবরাহকারী বা ঠিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠান তালিকাভুক্তকরণ।**

বাংলাদেশের প্রকৃত সরবরাহকারী বা ঠিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠান ২০২৩-২০২৪ অর্থ বছরের জন্য তালিকাভুক্ত করার নিমিত্ত নিম্নোক্ত লেটভিত্তিক অগ্রহ প্রস্তাব আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছেঃ

লেট নং	কাজের বিবরণ
লেট-ক	অফিস স্টেশনারি ও মনোহারি প্রদান্য সরবরাহ
লেট-খ	• খ্রিস্টাব্দের টোনার এবং অন্যান্য কম্পিউটারের আনুষঙ্গিক যন্ত্র ও যন্ত্রাংশ সরবরাহ • ফটোকপি মেশিনের টোনার এবং অন্যান্য আনুষঙ্গিক যন্ত্র ও যন্ত্রাংশ সরবরাহ
লেট-গ	বৈদ্যুতিক সরঞ্জাম

২। আগামী ৭/৯/২০২৩ তারিখ দুপুর ১২:০০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে অগ্রহী সরবরাহকারী বা ঠিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের প্যাডে অগ্রহপত্র বা প্রস্তাব কমিশন কার্যালয়ের প্রসাদন ও অর্থ শাখায় রক্ষিত বাস্তব প্রমাণ দাখিল করতে হবে। দাখিলের ক্ষেত্রে নিম্নরূপ শর্তাবলি অনুসরণ করতে হবেঃ

ক) প্রতিটি অগ্রহ প্রস্তাব লেটভিত্তিক আলাদা খামে দাখিল করতে হবে এবং খামের উপর লেট নম্বর উল্লেখ করতে হবে। অন্যথায় বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে;

খ) অগ্রহ প্রস্তাবের সঙ্গে হালনাগাদ ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, TIN সনদ ও ভ্যাট নিবন্ধন সনদের সত্যায়িত অনুলিপি দাখিল করতে হবে;

গ) চেয়ারম্যান, জাতীয় নদী রক্ষা কমিশন-এর অনুকূলে ৫,০০০/- টাকার (অফেরতযোগ্য) পে-অর্ডার দাখিল করতে হবে।

৩। তালিকাভুক্ত প্রতিষ্ঠানের কাজের মান সন্তোষজনক বিবেচিত হলে তালিকাভুক্তির মেয়াদ বৃদ্ধি হতে পারে।

৪। তালিকাভুক্তিকরণের ক্ষেত্রে কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্ত চূড়ান্ত বলে বিবেচিত হবে এবং ২০২২-২০২৩ অর্থবছরে কমিশনের ক, খ ও গ লেটে তালিকাভুক্ত সরবরাহকারী বা ঠিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠান ২০২৩-২০২৪ অর্থ বছরের তালিকাভুক্তির জন্য ২,০০০ (দুই হাজার) টাকা মাত্র + ১৫% ভ্যাটসহ বিনা জরিমানায় আগামী ৫/৯/২০২৩ তারিখের মধ্যে কমিশন কার্যালয়ের হিসাব শাখায় জমা প্রদানপূর্বক তালিকাভুক্তি নবায়ন করার জন্য নির্দেশক্রমে অনুরোধ করা হলো।

  
মহম্মদ হাসান  
সহকারী পরিচালক (প্রসাদন ও অর্থ)  
দুরালাপনীঃ ০২-৪১০৫২০৫১

জিউ-১২৭৬



## নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

শিক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয় ও বাংলাদেশ করিগরি শিক্ষাবোর্ড অনুমোদিত  
**আলহাজ্ব আয়েশা খাতুন পলিটেকনিক ইনস্টিটিউট**  
(৪ বছর মেয়াদি ডিপ্লোমা-ইন-ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং কোর্স)  
কনকপৈত, চৌমুহা, কুমিল্লা। মোবাইল: ০১৭৩৯৮২০৪৯২

ক্রমিক নং	পদের নাম	পদ সংখ্যা	শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা
১	অধ্যক্ষ	১	যে কোন স্বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে বিএসসি ইন-ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং / এমএসসি ইন ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং ডিগ্রীধারী (কমপক্ষে ১০ বছর অভিজ্ঞতা প্রয়োজ্য)।
২	ইন্সট্রাক্টর সিভিল টেকনোলজি-১ কম্পিউটার সাইন্স টেকনোলজি-১ মেকানিক্যাল টেকনোলজি-১ ইলেকট্রিক্যাল টেকনোলজি-১	৪	যে কোন স্বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে বিএসসি ইন-ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং। অথবা করিগরি শিক্ষাবোর্ড অনুমোদিত যে কোন ইনস্টিটিউট হতে সংশ্লিষ্ট বিষয়ে ডিপ্লোমা-ইন-ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং ডিগ্রীধারী। (ডিপ্লোমাধারীদের ক্ষেত্রে ৩ বছরের অভিজ্ঞতা প্রয়োজ্য)।
৩	ইন্সট্রাক্টর (নন টেক-ম্যাথমেটিক)	১	যে কোন স্বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে সংশ্লিষ্ট বিষয়ে স্নাতক/স্নাতকোত্তর ডিগ্রীধারী (অভিজ্ঞতা সম্পন্নদের অগ্রাধিকার দেওয়া হবে)।
৪	হিসাব সহকারী-কাম-কম্পিউটার অপারেটর	১	এইচ.এস.সি সমমান পাশ/স্নাতক ডিগ্রীধারী (কম্পিউটার কাজে অভিজ্ঞতা সম্পন্নদের অগ্রাধিকার দেওয়া হবে)।
৫	অফিস সহায়ক	১	এস.এস.সি সমমান পাশ।

সকল পদে আগামী ৩১/০৮/২০২৩ খ্রি: তারিখ বিকাল ৩.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত ইনস্টিটিউট এর অফিস কক্ষে সরাসরি অথবা ই-মেইল [alhajajayeshakhatunpolytechnic22@gmail.com](mailto:alhajajayeshakhatunpolytechnic22@gmail.com) এর মাধ্যমে নির্ধারিত নিয়োগের আবেদন ফরম পূরণ করে আবেদন পত্রের সাথে জীবন বৃত্তান্ত, জাতীয় পরিচয় পত্র, শিক্ষাগত সনদের ফটোকপি, অভিজ্ঞতা সনদের ফটোকপি সহ ২ কপি পাসপোর্ট সাইজ ছবি জমা দিতে হবে। এসএমএস ও ই-মেইলের মাধ্যমে পরবর্তীতে লিখিত ও মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময়সূচী জানিয়ে দেয়া হবে।

প্রতিষ্ঠাতা/সভাপতি  
আলহাজ্ব আয়েশা খাতুন পলিটেকনিক ইনস্টিটিউট



## 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 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).

**Conditions for entry:**  
The organization must have:

- Legal status (valid registration certificate with NGO Affairs Bureau)
- Physical presence and experience in the area for which it applies
- Past experience in implementing food, nutrition, education (specifically school feeding), cash-based transfers and/or market-based interventions.
- Past experience in community mobilization and resilience building activities
- Past experience in emergency preparedness and response
- 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)
- Strong project management experience
- Adequate financial strength to conduct the required activities supported by an audited financial statement
- 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)



TEA WORKERS IN HABIGANJ

A month-long strike for arrears, better life

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Around 360 tea workers and their families of Imam and Bawani tea gardens in Habiganj's Nabiganj upazila have observed a strike for a month to press home their seven-point demand that include receiving due wages and better living conditions.

The tea workers have long been holding various programmes demanding rations, unpaid wages, bonuses and festival allowances, arrears of provident fund, medical care, and permanent accommodation, but to no avail.

Although tea garden owners repeatedly assured them of meeting their demands, they have yet to come up with any visible steps to this end, tea workers alleged, adding that they no longer have faith in mere words of affirmation.

Talking to this correspondent, the workers claimed the owners are not paying their dues, violating the labour contract signed between the Bangladesh Tea Association and the Bangladesh Tea Workers' Union.

On June 25, the tea workers wrote to the chairman and managing director of Imam Tea Estate Ltd to realise their demands. However, as the owners did not take the complaints into consideration, the tea workers went on strike from July 3 to July 11.

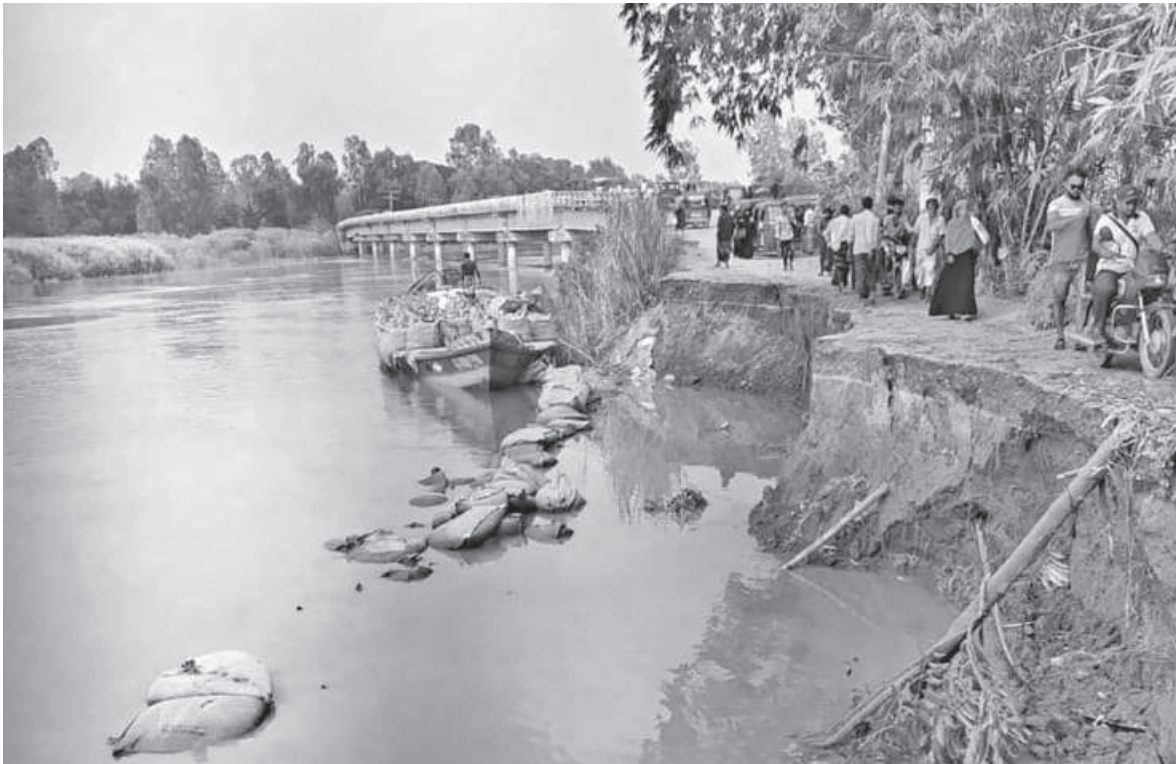
Rambhajan Rabidas, president of Imam Tea Garden Panchayet Committee, said the owners of Imam and Bawani tea gardens owe Tk 81.59 lakh in outstanding wages and Tk 14.47 lakh in bonuses, which was to be paid to 360 workers in the financial years 2019-20 and 2021-22.

Besides, retired workers are also not getting their matured provident fund.

Also, the tea workers have long been suffering due to poor accommodation and are also being deprived of medical services due to a lack of doctors at the gardens.

Under these circumstances, the tea workers resorted to continuous strikes from July 21 to August 22, demanding

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



Dhaleshwari river devours an approach road of a bridge in Tangail Sadar upazila, suspending vehicular movements and causing immense suffering to inhabitants of several char areas who depend on the bridge for communication. This photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: STAR

WATERLOGGING IN BHALUKA

Students suffer due to unplanned constructions

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A high school in Mymensingh's Bhaluka upazila remains under water during the monsoon due to unplanned construction of buildings in the neighbourhood.

A little rainfall inundates field of the Batajhor Bhawal Muslim High School for several days, hampering academic activities.

During a recent visit to the school, this correspondent saw the teachers and students have to wade through ankle to knee-deep water in the field to reach their class rooms.

Though waterlogging has been a problem for the last 10 years, the situation took a serious turn in last 2 years, said Md Abdul Quddus, the headmaster of the school.

"Now we face severe waterlogging for around four months every year. During heavy showers, the field remains inundated for some 10 days," said the headmaster.

There are some 1,400 students in the school, but only 200 attend their classes during the monsoon, he added.

Locals say markets and buildings have been built blocking canals which used to drain out rainwater.

The school authority and local people have knocked the doors of administration and local leaders seeking relief from this menace, but found no

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

BCL's IU unit suspends 8 activists

UNB, Islamic University

Eight activists from the Islamic University unit of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), the student wing of the ruling Awami League, have been suspended from the organisation temporarily for violating its rules and regulations.

A press release, signed by IU BCL unit President Faisal Siddiqi Arafat and General Secretary Nasim Ahmed Joy, was issued on this matter yesterday morning.

The suspended activists are Sabbir Khan, Shamim Reza, Akib Masud Anubhav, Parvez Hossain Banat and

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

BANGLADESHI PILGRIMS

Saudi Arabia to launch Nusuk platform

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Saudi Arabia will be launching the Nusuk platform in Dhaka tomorrow, aiming at enhancing the convenience for Bangladeshi Hajj and Umrah pilgrims.

A delegation led by Saudi Minister for Hajj and Umrah Dr Tawfiq Al-Rabiah was scheduled to arrive at Dhaka, on a three-day visit, last night, Md A Hamid Zamadder, Secretary of religious affairs ministry told The Daily Star.

The purpose of the delegation's visit is to advance Saudi Arabia's initiatives aimed at enhancing the pilgrimage experience for Bangladeshis during Hajj and Umrah.

The Nusuk roadshow by Saudi Tourism Authority will be launched tomorrow at the Bangabandhu International Convention Centre in the capital, sources at the religious affairs ministry said. Additionally, the Nusuk digital platform for Umrah pilgrims will also be launched tomorrow.

Nusuk is a platform that works as a one-stop

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Police not giving political statements

IGP responds to BNP's claim

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun yesterday said the police are focused on maintaining law and order instead of making political statements.

This comment came against the backdrop of BNP leaders' claims that top officials of law enforcement agencies are making political statements ahead of the upcoming general election.

The IGP made the remark while visiting Habiganj Police Station Officer-in-Charge Ajay Chandra Dey at the National Eye Science Institute and Hospital in Dhaka.

Ajay's eye got injured in a clash between BNP and police during a BNP road march in Habiganj on Saturday when a brick chunk hit him.

Responding to a query, Mamun said, "I have not come across any statement from law enforcement agencies that can be deemed political. We fulfill our duties according to the law and regulations."

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Local Government Engineering Department  
Office of the Executive Engineer  
1012, CDA Avenue, Sholashahar  
District: Chattogram  
[www.lged.gov.bd](http://www.lged.gov.bd)

শেখ হাসিনার মুদ্রা

গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি

Memo No. 46.02.1500.000.99.010.23.4585

**e-Tender Notice-09/2023-24**

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 of following Packages from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks' branches.

Sl No.	Package No.	Name of works	Tender ID	Procurement method	Last date & time of selling documents	Last date & time of submission documents
1	SupRB/Chott/New/22-23/W-86	Construction of 75.06m long PSC Girder Bridge on Tewari Hat GC to Charamba UP Via Andar Manik Rd at Ch. 7950m under New Construction Category [415473005] Lohagara	846630	OTM	20/09/2023 16:00 BST	21/09/2023 13:00 BST
2	e-tender/LGED/CTG/GOBM/23-24/W-58	Periodic Maintenance Pukuria UP office to Pukuria Bazar Road (Rampur DC Road) from Ch. 00-3100m (Banskhali) 415082007	860747	OTM	24/09/2023 16:00 BST	25/09/2023 13:00 BST
3	CW-101/RCIP/CTG	Section-A (i) Maintenance of Charati-Khoderhat-Moulavir Dokan-Bazalia-Bomang Hat-Noya Hat Road (From RHD # 129) at Ch. 00-10802m (Road ID-415822010) Upazilla: Satkania, District: Chattogram (Salvaged Cost-2020491.00). Section B Maintenance Works: 5 Year Maintenance works of all the above Roads.	862320	OTM	24/09/2023 16:00 BST	25/09/2023 13:00 BST

Ahamad Shafi  
Executive Engineer  
Local Government Engineering Department  
District: Chattogram  
Phone: 02334454402  
E-mail: [xen.chattogram@lged.gov.bd](mailto:xen.chattogram@lged.gov.bd)

GD-1280

PhD Admission Notice

Admission to the PhD Program offered by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Research Institute for Peace and Liberty (BSMRIPL) at Dhaka University has started for academic year 2023-2024. Interested persons are invited to apply in prescribed forms. It can be downloaded from the Dhaka University website: <http://www.du.ac.bd> or is also available in Room # 323 at Registrar Office. Forms must be duly filled and submitted to the Office of the Director of the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Research Institute for Peace and Liberty (BSMRIPL). Along with the application form, the original copy of a receipt, depositing 1,000/- Tk at Janata Bank TSC Branch, photocopies of all examination certificates, and 1 (one) copy of passport-size photograph attested by the Director of the Institute must be submitted. A synopsis of the research project must also be submitted. In case of degrees obtained from abroad, the equivalence must be determined before applying for admission. Information that is concealed or incorrect will result in cancellation of the admission.

To apply for admission to the PhD program. Candidates must apply for the PhD program through a supervisor selected from among the teacher/teachers of the related department/institute. Aspirants must have passed M.Phil or have a 4-year Bachelor (Honors) and 1-year Master's degree from a public university. Candidates must have at least 2nd class/division with minimum 50% marks in all examinations. The CGPA must be 3.5 out of 5 or 3.00 out of 4. Candidates must have at least 2 research articles published in journals of recognized standard. In case of the Faculties of Arts, Social Sciences, Law, and Business Studies, at least 1 research publication must be single authored. Candidates with 3-year Bachelor (Honors) and 1-year Master's degree must have at least 2 years of research experience in any recognized educational institution, or at least 2 years of work experience in government, non-government, autonomous or semi-autonomous organizations.

For further information, please contact the M.Phil and PhD section of the Registrar Office, Room # 323 or Call 88-9666911463/4653, 4651, or E-mail: [bsmripl@du.ac.bd](mailto:bsmripl@du.ac.bd) or access our website: <https://du.ac.bd/body/BSMRIPL>

Fakrul Alam

**Fakrul Alam. PhD**  
Director  
Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Research Institute for Peace and Liberty (BSMRIPL)  
University of Dhaka

GD-1278

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS)

Planning, Monitoring & Research Operational Plan (PMR OP)

[www.dghs.gov.bd](http://www.dghs.gov.bd)

Request for Expression of Interest (EOI) for Individual National Consultant (ICT)

1.	Ministry / Division / Directorate	MOHFW, HSD, DGHS
2.	Procuring Entity Name	Planning, Monitoring & Research Operational Plan (PMR – OP)
3.	Procuring Entity District	Dhaka
4.	Expression of Interest for selection of	Individual National Consultant ( ICT)
5.	EOI Ref No	DGHS/PMR/Consultant-1/94/2023-24/107
6.	Date	17/08/2023
KEY INFORMATION		
7.	Procurement Method	QCBS Method according to PPR 2008
8.	Budget and Source of Funds	GoB (Development)
9.	Development Partner	NA
PARTICULAR INFORMATION		
10.	Project / Programme Code	1270201-2241002
11.	Project / Programme Name	PMR – OP, DGHS
12.	EOI closing date and time	Date : September 10, 2023      Time : 14:00 Hours
INFORMATION FOR APPLICANT		
13.	Brief description of the Assignment and Delivery Capacity Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Familiarity with the health, nutrition and population sector program;</li><li>Extensive knowledge on health in all policies of Bangladesh and how health system works with have clear idea on health-related different Research Activity;</li><li>Capacity to prepare different papers in accordance with the PMR OP activities e.g., Policy brief, Research abstract, Journal publication;</li><li>Capacity to maintain &amp; management of the Research Policy Communication Cell of PMR</li><li>Collection &amp; Analyze data as required from different Ops, institutions, government agencies, and other stakeholders; and,</li><li>Perform any other duties delegated by senior authority.</li></ul>
14.	Academic Qualification Experience, Resource and Nature of Job, Salary	MBBS with a Master in Public Health/ Health Informatics from a recognized/ authorized Govt. University with excellent computer and Analytical skills. Having skills of Python, Oracle database is preferred. Nature of Job: Contractual (Full Time), Salary: Consolidated BDT per month
15.	Other details (if applicable)	EOI should be submitted in sealed envelope clearly marked "Request for Expression of Interest (EOI) for Individual National Consultant (ICT)" along with name of the position. Submit academic, experience and relevant documents and apply for to the undersigned within time period.
16.	Indicative start date (month/ year)	October, 2023
17.	Indicative completion time (month / year)	June, 2024
18.	Other Detail (if applicable)	Not Applicable
19.	Association with foreign firm is	Not Applicable
20.	Phasing of Services	Not Applicable
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS		
21.	Name of Official Inviting EOI	Prof. Dr. Mazharul Islam
22.	Designation of Official Inviting EOI	Line Director, Planning, Monitoring & Research Operational Plan, DGHS, HSD, MOHFW
23.	Address of Official Inviting EOI	Planning, Monitoring & Research Room No – 615, 5 <sup>th</sup> Floor, Director General of Health Services (Old Building) Mohakhali, Dhaka - 1212
24.	Contact details of Official Inviting Tender	Telephone- 02-9880082, 02-8819958 e-mail: <a href="mailto:pmr@id.dghs.gov.bd">pmr@id.dghs.gov.bd</a>

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

Planning, Monitoring & Research (PMR-OP)

Director General of Health Services

GD- 1279



ENTERTAINMENT'S RISING STAR

REZAUR RAHMAN  
Addressing chaos  
through comedy

MALIHA MASHIAT

In the field of emerging directors, Rezaur Rahman has appeared as a relatable figure amongst Bangladeshi youth with his debut web-series *Internsheep*.

He is now gearing up for the upcoming Chorki anthology film series, *Ministry of Love*, supervised by Mostofa Sarwar Farooki, where his production *36-24-36* will be featured.

The anthology film series will feature 12 love narratives from varying perspectives. Reza's *36-24-36* will explore the role of beauty in the intricacies of love.

However, he's not ready to spill the beans just yet. "I don't want to talk too much and reveal everything," teased Reza about his upcoming project.

Referring to the number combination as an 'hourglass ratio', Reza hinted that the title might be more than what meets the eye.

"We are trying to break the stereotype here. While the title does highlight the socially prevalent beauty standards, we intend to flip the narrative by questioning people's obsession regarding these standards," stressed the director.

"We're still working on the script, but my story will focus less on love and more on drama. I'll try my best to entertain," he added.

The director looks to present something light-hearted to his audience while the media continues to be saturated with dark content.

Despite his academic background in accounting, Reza always felt like he had an artistic spirit.

"Since school, I always had a camera with me -- a trusty Cybershot. I knew I wanted to pursue art but my family intervened. So, I gave that a try

and didn't find the corporate world to my liking," mentioned Reza.

After his foray into the entertainment sector, Reza crafted a multitude of advertisements with reputed brands. He went on to establish House of Chaos, a production house, in collaboration with his friend and influencer Kaarina Kaisar, in 2020.

When asked about his debut series' filming experience, Reza said, "One of the main challenges of shooting in Dhaka is the saturation of locations. How can we give a new look to a room that has been featured in hundreds of other productions?" Reza also shared how he enjoyed depicting the challenges faced by an intern through situational comedy in *Internsheep*.

"Even serious issues can be presented in a light-hearted and relatable manner," he said. Reza looks to expand the production as a franchise.

"We hope to launch the second season of *Internsheep* by next year with Shommo retaining the lead," he concluded.



PHOTOS: COURTESY



Milon to share screen  
with Mel Gibson

Actor Anisur Rahman Milon has accomplished a remarkable milestone by becoming the first actor from Bangladesh to attain a membership in the prestigious Hollywood artistes' organisation, Screen Actors Guild (SAG).

Soon, Milon will be featured in *Boneyard*, where he will share the screen with *Braveheart* famed actor Mel Gibson. He will also be seen in *Flash It*, a production where he will share the screen with a Colombian actress.

The actor also revealed that he received the SAG membership in May 2022, with Asif Akbar, the director of *MR 9: Do or Die*, helping him in the process. Milon is currently shooting for some new projects in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh Police  
theatre to stage  
'Avishopto August'  
from today

Bangladesh Police theatre is set to present the 125th production of the play *Avishopto August* at Bhola Shilpakala Academy auditorium today.

The play's plot revolves around the tragic assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on the fateful day of August 15, 1975.

Penned and directed by Md Zahidur Rahman, an inspector within Bangladesh Police, the play delves into the poignant events surrounding the untimely demise of the Father of the Nation.

The play has already been staged in Dhaka, Sayedpur, Rangpur, Kurigram, Mymensingh, Chuadanga and Kishoreganj this month. Two more shows of the production will be staged on August 28 and 29, in Narail.



NEWS

Property mogul Thavisin elected Thai PM

FROM PAGE 12

will work tirelessly to improve the livelihood of all Thais," Srettha told reporters at Pheu Thai's headquarters, his voice drowned out by supporters chanting "Srettha, Srettha".

Thaksin received a rapturous reception after he arrived on his jet at a Bangkok airport early yesterday, where he briefly met Pheu Thai lawmakers before being escorted by police to the Supreme Court then to a prison to serve a sentence of eight years for abuse of power and conflicts of interest.

Political neophyte Srettha, a former president of luxury property developer Sansiri SRI.LBK, will be tasked with forming and holding together a potentially fragile coalition that includes parties created by the royalist military, which overthrew Pheu Thai governments in 2006 and 2014 coups.

Among those ousted was Thaksin, a former telecoms tycoon and owner of Premier League football club Manchester City, who was accused by the army of corruption, cronyism and disloyalty to the powerful monarchy.

He fled abroad and was sentenced to jail in absentia in 2008 and sister Yingluck Shinawatra suffered an almost identical fate as prime minister a few years later. Both say the allegations against them were politically motivated.

The return of Thailand's most famous politician and Srettha's surprisingly smooth ascent to the top job will add to speculation that the influential Thaksin had struck a deal with his enemies in the military and establishment for his safe return and possibly, an early release from jail.

Thaksin and Pheu Thai have rejected that.

Yesterday's events were the latest twist in a nearly two-decade power struggle between the Shinawatra family and its business allies, and a nexus of royalists, generals and old money families that have long wielded influence over politics and the economy.

As he emerged from the airport wearing a black suit, red tie and yellow lapel pin bearing the royal insignia, Thaksin clasped his hands in a traditional "wai" greeting to the crowd before kneeling and bowing in respect in front of a portrait of the king and queen.

Thaksin is still loved and loathed in equal measure in Thailand and his return overshadowed the vote for prime minister, with related hashtags top-trending on social media and the country gripped by blow-by-blow media coverage of his celebrated arrival and his prompt imprisonment.

1 held over murder

FROM PAGE 12

and Ashraful] met on Sunday and went to room 208 of Hotel Sun Moon at the Holiday intersection. After spending some time there, they went out. Later Saif returned alone. An hour later, Saif called Ashraful and made him return to the hotel by threatening that he would release the video of them in the hotel room.

"Ashraful returned with a knife and engaged in a scuffle with Saif. Ashraful stabbed Saif

indiscriminately. As he screamed, Ashraful gagged him with a bed sheet and tied up his hand with a belt. After confirming his death, Ashraful left on his motorcycle."

Saif's brother, Mohi Uddin Mohim, told The Daily Star that the notion that Ashraful alone killed his brother was not credible. "My brother's character has been assassinated to divert the probe into a planned murder orchestrated by an influential quarter," he said.

Russian jet destroys

FROM PAGE 12

all of the capital's airports were now working normally.

Russian officials have repeatedly cautioned that military drones could cause a major disaster while flying over Moscow, which along with the surrounding region has a population of nearly 22 million people.

Ukrainian military intelligence

(GUR) said on Monday it had overseen an attack on the Russian Shaykovka military airfield in the Kaluga region in which it said several aircraft had been damaged.

Asked about Monday's attack on Moscow, Andriy Yusov, a GUR spokesperson, said that "the GUR is working" but declined to give details.

20 more BCL men suspended  
over FB posts

FROM PAGE 2

Bachchu and Raihan Sobhan alias Russell; and Naogaon Sadar upazila unit Organising Secretary Mominul Islam Sagar.

Meanwhile, another press release signed by Khulna BCL President Parvez Hawlader and General Secretary Imran-e-Hasan said six Chhatra League leaders and activists have been suspended.

The six include district BCL Deputy Health Affairs Secretary Irtajul Gazi, Terkhada upazila unit Vice President

Rony Fakir, Organising Secretary SM Hasibur Rahman, Dumuria upazila unit Vice President BBA Kajal and Paigachha upazila unit Joint General Secretary Sabbir Hossain.

Sayedee, 83, was sentenced to death in 2013 for rape, murder, and persecution of members of Hindu community during the Liberation War.

The convicted war criminal, whose sentence was later reduced to 'imprisonment till death', died on August 14 from heart attack.

They tried to make it  
look like militants did it

FROM PAGE 12

On August 19, Emon and Sadek went to Kibria's house while Sagar was stationed nearby with an autorickshaw. At one stage, the duo suffocated Kibria to death, placed the pre-written note over the body, stole Tk 6.5 lakh and four mobile phones from his home, and fled on

the autorickshaw.

The trio then went to the Savar Bus Stand and split the money among themselves.

Sagar received Tk 50,000. Emon and Sadek divided the remaining Tk 6 lakh equally, said Moin.

All three then went into hiding, he added.

Make bail for accused pending trial

FROM PAGE 12

publication of "false, offensive or defamatory information" and "deteriorating law and order".

In 2021, Amnesty International had documented that 80 percent of cases relating to DSA recorded by the Cyber Tribunal in Dhaka between 1 January and 6 May 2021 were filed under the DSA's Section 25 and -29 that contravene international laws, pointed out Amnesty.

"In retaining sections 25, 29 and 31 of the DSA in the CSA, the potential to weaponize these provisions to silence peaceful dissent, as done under the DSA, remains unchanged.

"While Section 29 of the CSA makes defamation punishable by a sentence of fine, rather than imprisonment as under the DSA, defamation remains criminalised."

Vague and overbroad terms used

in Section 25 such as "affect the image or reputation of the state", "spread confusion", "annoy", "insult", "humiliate" remain undefined in the list of definitions.

"Due to the broadly worded nature of Section 25, it can and has acted as a catch-all provision to criminalise a wide range of conduct which consists of the legitimate exercise of the right to expression and opinion."

Amnesty recommended removing sections 21, 25 and 28 and decriminalising defamation under Section 29.

Section 42 of the CSA is identical to Section 43 of the DSA and continues to authorise any police officer to search premises, to seize computers and similar hardware, and to search the body of a person and to arrest a person present in that place without a warrant, said Amnesty.

"The police officers must believe: that a crime under the act has occurred, is occurring or is likely to occur or that any evidence is likely to be lost, destroyed, deleted or altered or made unavailable in any way. They are simply required to record the reasons for such belief."

The human rights organisation called this overly-permissive and suggested that the powers of the police be clearly and narrowly defined.

It also recommended that release of an accused pending trial be made the general rule, while pre-trial detention is restricted to cases where a court finds specific, concrete, and compelling reasons to do so in the interest of justice or safety.

The letter was signed by Smriti Singh, the interim regional director of the South Asia Regional Office of Amnesty International.

allegations, saying, "I was not at the scene. I heard there was an argument between him [Nayan] and some BCL activists. But there was no attack.

"After the incident, I even went to Patuakhali Press Club and spoke to the president and general secretary about the matter. We will accept whatever decision they make."

Bir Muktiyoddha VP Abdul

Mannan, general secretary of Patuakhali district AL, said, "I don't know about the incident, I am looking into it right now. It is not okay to attack journalists."

Md Jasim, officer-in-charge of Patuakhali Police Station, said the victim has filed a GD and after investigation, legal actions will be taken against the attackers.



WAR-HIT SUDAN

## Hundreds of children die of starvation

AFP, CAIRO

Starvation has killed at least 498 children and “likely hundreds more” in Sudan four months into a war between rival generals, Save the Children said yesterday.

The conflict between the army under General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) commanded by Mohamed Hamdan Daglo broke out on April 15.

Around 5,000 people have been killed, according to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project, and more than four million have been uprooted.

“At least 498 children in Sudan and likely hundreds more have died from hunger, including two dozen babies in a state orphanage,” Save the Children said in a statement.

The British charity said it had been forced to close 57 of its nutrition facilities since the war began and that stocks were running “critically low” in the 108 it still operates.

“Never did we think we would see children dying from hunger in such numbers, but this is now the reality in Sudan,” said Save the Children’s Sudan country director, Arif Noor.

ALLEGED MIGRANT KILLINGS

## Ethiopia unveils joint Saudi probe

AFP, Addis Ababa

Ethiopia will launch a joint investigation with Saudi Arabia into a Human Rights Watch report accusing the kingdom’s border guards of killing hundreds of Ethiopian migrants, the foreign ministry said yesterday.

“The Government of Ethiopia will promptly investigate the incident in tandem with the Saudi Authorities,” the ministry said on X, formerly Twitter, a day after the publication of the HRW report sparked global outrage.

“At this critical juncture, it is highly advised to exercise utmost restraint from making unnecessary speculations until (the) investigation is complete,” the ministry said, noting the “excellent longstanding relations” between Addis Ababa and Riyadh.

The allegations, described as “unfounded” by a Saudi government source, point to a surge in abuses along the perilous route from the Horn of Africa to Saudi Arabia, where hundreds of thousands of Ethiopians live and work.

One 20-year-old woman from Ethiopia’s Oromia region, interviewed by HRW, said Saudi border guards opened fire on a group of migrants they had just released from custody.



Activists hold placards that translate as “Nuclear contaminated water - Stop the discharge” and “The discharger and the one who allows it to happen - Both accomplices” during a protest against the planned release of wastewater from Japan’s stricken Fukushima nuclear plant into the Pacific, outside the City Hall in Seoul, South Korea yesterday, after Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida announced the release will begin tomorrow.

PHOTO: AFP

FORMER AFGHAN MILITARY, OFFICIALS

## Over 200 members killed since Taliban takeover: UN

REUTERS

More than 200 members of Afghanistan’s former military, law enforcement and government have been killed since the Taliban took over, the UN mission in Afghanistan said yesterday, despite a “general amnesty” for old enemies.

The mission said in a report it had recorded at least 218 extrajudicial killings with links to the Taliban from their takeover of Afghanistan in mid-2021 up to June.

“In most instances, individuals were detained by de facto security forces, often briefly, before being killed,” the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) said.

Senior Taliban leaders have said there is an amnesty for former



government officials and members of the military by order of their supreme leader.

The Taliban-led foreign affairs ministry said in response to UNAMA that it had not received reports of any cases of non-compliance with the order and any cases that did occur would be investigated.

UN human rights chief Volker Turk said the killings were a “betrayal of the people’s trust”

since the victims had been assured they would not be targeted. UN rights office spokesperson Jeremy Laurence said the scale of killings was “shocking” and expected the true count to be higher.

UNAMA said about half of the killings it recorded occurred in the four months after the Taliban took over, as US-backed foreign forces were withdrawing, in August 2021, and 70 were recorded in 2022.

“For the majority of violations discussed in this report, there is limited information regarding measures taken by the de facto authorities to investigate incidents and hold perpetrators to account,” UNAMA said, referring to the Taliban administration.

CAMBODIA PARLIAMENT

## Hun Sen’s son elected as PM

REUTERS

Cambodia’s newly elected parliament endorsed four-star military general Hun Manet as prime minister yesterday, completing a historic transfer of power in a fast-changing country led by his father Hun Sen for nearly four decades. The Western-educated Hun Manet, 45, had the overwhelming backing of a National Assembly dominated by his Cambodian People’s Party (CPP), following an election in July that was dismissed abroad as a sham that lacked any viable opposition. Hun Manet told lawmakers that election was free and fair and promised he would implement the CPP’s policies and ensure peace, economic growth, better infrastructure, and wage increases for civil servants and garment workers. He lauded his father and the older generation of politicians for steering Cambodia from years of devastating civil war to an era of peace, growth and better living for its people. Hun Sen, 71, a former Khmer Rouge guerrilla and self-styled strongman has pledged to remain in politics in other roles for at least a decade.



## Wagner making Africa ‘freer’

Says chief of the group

AFP, Moscow

The leader of Russia’s Wagner mercenary group Yevgeny Prigozhin said in a video published Monday that his group was making Africa “freer” and suggested he was on the continent. Prigozhin, a former Kremlin ally whose group rebelled against Russia’s military leadership in June, has made few public appearances since the mutiny. The group maintains a strong military presence in Africa, where it has partnered with several nations, including Mali and the Central African Republic. “We are working. The temperature is above 50 degrees Celsius (122 degrees Fahrenheit). Just how we like it,” Prigozhin said in the video, which AFP was unable to immediately verify. The video shows Prigozhin holding an assault rifle, before panning around to reveal military vehicles parked on a large, desert-like plain. “The Wagner Group is conducting reconnaissance and search activities. Making Russia even greater on every continent -- and Africa even freer,” Prigozhin said.



Local residents extinguish a fire in Avanta, near Alexandroupoli, northern Greece yesterday. Eighteen burned bodies, possibly of migrants, were found in the remote, rural area south of the village of Avantas in northern Greece yesterday where wildfires have been burning for days, the fire brigade said.

PHOTO: AFP

## Militants kill six Pakistani soldiers: army

REUTERS, Islamabad

Six Pakistani soldiers were killed yesterday in a clash with Islamist militants in a northwestern region near the border with Afghanistan, the army said, adding that four of the militants were killed.

The Pakistani Taliban claimed responsibility saying its fighters had ambushed two military vehicles.

“During an intense exchange of fire, six brave soldiers, having fought gallantly, embraced martyrdom,” the army said in a statement, adding that the clash took place in North Waziristan.

The rugged border region has long served as a safe haven for militants linked both to domestic Islamists who have been fighting against the state and the Afghan Taliban.

## UN STUDY AI likely to augment rather than destroy jobs

AFP, Geneva

Artificial Intelligence is more likely to augment jobs than to destroy them, a UN study indicated on Monday, at a time of growing anxiety over the potential impact of the technology.

The launch in November of the generative AI platform ChatGPT, which is capable of handling complex tasks on command, was seen as a tech landmark foreshadowing a potentially dramatic transformation of the workplace.

But a fresh study from the United Nations’ International Labour Organization (ILO) examining the potential effect of that and other platforms on job quantity and quality suggests that most jobs and industries are only partially exposed to automation.

Most are “more likely to be complemented rather than substituted by the latest wave of Generative AI, such as ChatGPT”, the ILO said.

“Therefore, the greatest impact of this technology is likely to not be job destruction but rather the potential changes to the quality of jobs, notably

work intensity and autonomy.”

The study meanwhile highlighted that the effects of technology would vary greatly between professions and regions, while it warned women were more likely than men to see their jobs affected.

It found that clerical work was the category of jobs with the greatest technological exposure, with nearly a quarter of tasks considered highly exposed and more than half of tasks having medium-level exposure.

In other occupational groups, including managers and technicians, only a small share of tasks was found to be highly exposed, while around a quarter had medium exposure levels, the ILO said.

The analysis meanwhile indicated that higher-income countries would experience the greatest effects from automation due to the important share of clerical and para-professional jobs in the job distribution there.

It found that a full 5.5 percent of total employment in high-income countries was potentially exposed to the automating effects of generative AI.



Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh

Bangladesh Police

Police Staff College Bangladesh

Memo No. 44.01.0400.062.31.001.2023.2578

Date: 22/08/2023

Request for Expression of Interest (Eol)

Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh

1.	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Home Affairs
2.	Agency	Police Staff College Bangladesh
3.	Procuring entity name	Rector, Police Staff College Bangladesh
4.	Expression of Interest for	Conducting and publishing research report
5.	Eol Ref. No.	44.01.0000.324.32.003.23.2578
6.	Date	22 August 2023

KEY INFORMATION

7.	Procurement method	Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS) Method
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FUNDING INFORMATION

8.	Budget and source of funds	Revenue budget Research head for FY 2023-24
9.	Development partners (if applicable)	N/A

PARTICULAR INFORMATION

10.	Selected projects and required documents	Title: 1. SMART Police Stations in Bangladesh: Prospects and Challenges (in English) 2. নগর এলাকায় আইনের সংস্পর্শে আসা কিশোর: শিশু আইন-২০১৩ এর আলোকে তদন্ত এবং অপরাধ সম্পৃক্ততার ঝুঁকি পর্যালোচনার উপর একটি সমীক্ষা (in Bangla). Researchers/Research institutes interested in conducting any 1 (one) of the above-mentioned research works should collect the Application Format from the undersigned's office (Room-111, Admin Building, Police Staff College Bangladesh, Mirpur 14, Dhaka) during office hours. The price of the Application document is BDT 1000. The filled-up application has to be submitted (in hardcopy) on or before the Eol closing day via mail, courier, or in person. Shortlisted candidates will be contacted and asked to submit the technical and financial proposals on a later date.
11.	Eol pre-submission meeting	5 September 2023, Time: 11:30am BST
12.	Timeframe of work	Total two years from signing letter of Agreement
13.	Eol closing date and time	10 September 2023, Time: 12:30 pm BST
14.	Eol submission place	Police Staff College Bangladesh, Mirpur 14, Dhaka.

PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS

15.	Name of official Inviting Expression of Interest	Mohammad Shahjahan, ppm (Bar), Ph.D.
16.	Designation of official Inviting Expression of Interest	Director, Research and Publication
17.	Address of official Inviting Expression of Interest	Room Number 111, Admin Building, Police Staff College, Section 14, Mirpur, Dhaka 1206
18.	Contact details of official Inviting Expression of Interest	01755975720, dc_shahjahan@yahoo.com
19.	The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all Eols.	



Mohammad Shahjahan ppm (Bar), PhD

BP No. 7098043468

Director (Research & Publication)

Police Staff College Bangladesh

Mirpur-14, Dhaka-1206

GD-1277



## Another day, another dengue record

Govt must hold to account those failing to control dengue surge

Bangladesh has hit another unwanted milestone this week as the total number of dengue cases in 2023 reached 1,02,197 (till Monday) – the highest in a single year – surpassing the 2019 high of 1,01,354 in just under eight months. Earlier, the country saw another record broken in terms of the number of deaths, which has crossed 485. We're officially in the worst phase of the short history of dengue on our shores – a stark reminder of how this disease evolved from a seasonal nuisance tied to some cities 23 years ago into an uncontrollable force of nature spreading its tentacles across the country.

It's also illustrative of the failure of this government that has repeatedly failed to heed calls for caution – and prioritise the well-being of citizens over its parochial interests – even though the last few years sent plenty of warnings to that effect. Even now, when overwhelmed hospitals are turning patients away, and essential services have been stretched thin, there is still no sense of urgency in policy circles. A national health emergency is yet to be declared, and a central wing is yet to be opened to expedite and coordinate dengue-related interventions. The authorities in Dhaka, which saw at least 363 deaths, as well as elsewhere are still following traditional, largely ineffective methods of dengue control. As we have warned in a recent editorial, the current measures undertaken by the city corporations are not only unscientific, but are actually contributing to the surge in dengue cases.

August-September is usually considered the peak time for dengue. But if this year has taught us anything, it is that this disease is evolving fast, with new variants and risks of multiple infections coming into the fray, while the deadly combination of rain and increasing warming of our atmosphere (which helps Aedes mosquitoes to breed) may lengthen the danger period. In other words, there may not be any relief any time soon, despite the relative decline seen in recorded cases lately. Additionally, dengue has grown into a year-long menace by now. What all this means is that traditional strategies may no longer work. The authorities must shed their laissez faire approach, and allow scientists to fashion a comprehensive response with an eye to the future.

Given the current danger level, the priority now is to reduce infections at any cost and equip all hospitals properly. The authorities must not fail in this task.

## What's stopping Karwan Bazar shift?

Authorities should address traders' concerns before relocating them

It has been quite some time since the authorities decided to relocate the traders of Karwan Bazar Kitchen Market to the Amin Bazar and Jatrabari wholesale markets. Reportedly, most traders are not willing to go there because they fear it may affect their business negatively. Up until now, only some 300 wholesalers have agreed to relocate their shops. But most businesses – including retailers selling groceries, clothes, hardware and electronics items – are still against the move. The kitchen market was long marked as risky by the authorities, and already 90 percent work of the Amin Bazar and Jatrabari markets is complete, so there is hardly any option left for the traders to not close shop here. But there should be proper arrangements in place to facilitate or ease their relocation.

At present, there are 1,789 permanent and 180 temporary shops at the four DNCC-owned markets of Karwan Bazar. The plan is to relocate them to the proposed markets in phases. While the authorities think that the move will improve the supply system for farm products and reduce traffic congestion in the Karwan Bazar area, the traders believe they will suffer huge losses in the new locations. They have also expressed concerns about the new shops which they say are too small compared to those that they now have. Moreover, there is a visible lack of trust between the traders and the authorities concerned as far as the relocation is concerned.

Given the situation, we think the authorities should continue discussion with the traders' bodies and come to a solution that is agreeable to all parties. While concerns about inappropriate designs of the newly-constructed markets should be addressed through necessary renovations, the authorities should also consider constructing three separate roads at Amin Bazar and Jatrabari, as the traders have demanded. Additionally, the government should think about giving some financial incentives to them considering the loss they might incur due to shifting their business to new locations. The relocation should be done sooner than later, but not without addressing the traders' concerns first.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

letters@thedailystar.net

## Make pension scheme easier for the ultra-poor

The government recently introduced the much-talked about Universal Pension Scheme in the country, which is definitely a good initiative. One of the important aspects of the scheme is that people from all income groups – between the ages of 18 and 50 – can participate in it. Under this scheme, there are four packages called Progoti, Probash, Shurokkha and Somota. The country's ultra-poor population is supposed to participate in the Somota package with a monthly instalment of Tk 1,000, of which the government will pay Tk 500. But the question that comes to my mind is, do these extremely poor people of our country have the ability to pay even Tk 500 as a monthly instalment? I think the government should reconsider the amount that has been fixed for the ultra-poor population. It should also take suggestions from the experts on how to make this scheme more people-friendly.

Aminur Rahman  
Dhaka

# The new tariff policy may help increase competitiveness



### MACRO MIRROR

Dr Fahmida Khatun  
is executive director at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) and non-resident senior fellow of the Atlantic Council. Views expressed in this article are the author's own.

FAHMIDA KHATUN

Bangladesh's new tariff policy features some key policy changes in view of the country's graduation from the Least Developed Country (LDC) category in 2026. The policy may be considered a step towards Bangladesh's attempt to diversify exports, attract foreign investment, sign free trade agreements, and ultimately enhance economic progress. This policy will also help the country align itself with the tariff regime of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The key objective of the WTO is to increase trade among member countries by eliminating or reducing tariffs. Members provide information on their tariff commitments for goods in their schedule of concessions on goods. The schedules represent commitments to not apply tariffs above the listed rates (called bound rates). Once a country commits to a bound rate with the WTO, it is difficult to increase the rate.

WTO member countries work towards improving market access through work programmes and negotiations. The Doha Development Round of the WTO in 2001 launched such negotiations, with trade ministers of member countries agreeing to initiate tariff reduction on all non-agricultural products. The aim is to "reduce, or as appropriate eliminate tariffs, including the reduction or elimination of tariff peaks, high tariffs, and tariff escalation, as well as non-tariff barriers, in particular on products of export interest to developing countries."

However, LDCs are exempt from making such tariff commitments as reciprocity, given their economic status and potentially a higher level of tariff protection. As an LDC, Bangladesh has imposed tariffs unilaterally, but once it graduates from the LDC category, the country will face increased competition as it will have to make tariff reduction commitments to trade with its partners.

At present, local companies are protected by high import tariffs. Various types of tariffs are imposed on imports such as customs duty, regulatory duty, supplementary duty, value added tax, advanced tax, and advanced income tax. The average tariff protection rate was around 30 percent in FY 2022-23. The reasons behind such a high tariff are: 1) to generate revenue through higher import duty since tax as a percentage of GDP is low at only 8.5 percent in FY 2021-22; and 2) to protect local industries from international competition. The government earns a large amount of revenue from import duties on raw materials, intermediate goods, and consumer goods. But following tariff



The new tariff policy will play an important role in export diversification.

FILE PHOTO: STAR

rationalisation, the government will have to forgo this income and reduce its dependency on import duties. In FY 2021-22, import duties constituted 10.3 percent of the government's total revenue. This is projected to be 10.5 percent in FY 2023-24. Hence, the new tariff policy means that efforts towards domestic revenue collection should be enhanced.

Of course, lower import tariffs may result in an increase in imports, and some revenue can still be collected from customs duty on some goods. But this could be in conflict with the government's objective of developing import-substitution industries, and businesses here may not be able to compete with global exporters and suppliers. Therefore, lower import costs for capital machinery and intermediate goods will help local industries reduce their costs of production and keep their prices competitive. The loss of tariff advantage can be compensated with lower import costs, so that tariff rationalisation can also help local entrepreneurs to export at competitive prices.

With lower tariffs, foreign investors may also be more inclined to run operations in Bangladesh, which would create employment and enhance economic activities. However, ensuring other conditions such as infrastructure, skilled human resources, and efficient administration would be crucial to make this happen.

Protection of local industries would be important at the initial phase

(CPD) has been urging policymakers to estimate how much revenue is lost due to such exemptions. Notably, the finance minister, for the first time ever, provided some relevant numbers in the FY 2023-24 budget, though there is no segregated estimate of revenue forgone due to such incentives and exemptions at the import level. In the budget, it is mentioned that the total amount of direct tax expenditure applicable for FY 2020-21 was Tk 1,25,813 crore, of which Tk 85,314 crore was at the corporate level. These are equivalent to 3.56 percent and 2.38 percent of Bangladesh's GDP, respectively. Though there is no number for import tax rebates at the industry level, it may have been counted with the corporate level exemptions. It was projected by the government that direct tax expenditure for FY 2022-23 would be Tk 1,78,241 crore. The total share of this amount in total tax revenue and total direct tax revenue is high. Clearly, the government is losing a substantial amount of revenue due to such exemptions including tariff rebates, as direct tax expenditure includes rebates, discounts, exemptions, reduced rates of taxation, and exclusion of income in computing total taxable income.

The new tariff policy will also play an important role in export diversification. Though Bangladesh's economy has increasingly integrated into the global economy over the past five decades, trade openness is still low. Our export basket is narrow, with heavy reliance on readymade garments

upcoming LDC graduation, it will lose preferential market access.

Bangladesh is interested in joining the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), which is the world's largest FTA comprising about 30 percent of global GDP. Joining such a bloc will help Bangladesh face its post-graduation challenges and boost exports, as RCEP members enjoy preferential market access amongst themselves. Bangladesh does already import from several RCEP member countries including China, Japan, Thailand, South Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Australia. Hence, joining the RCEP will mean that a certain amount of revenue from these countries will be lost. But this loss can be made up for through higher trade via preferential trade arrangements with RCEP member countries.

However, this would require Bangladesh to be prepared, with appropriate policies being put in place. To be part of such agreements, the country needs to make many policy changes. Full reciprocity of tariff measures among trading countries will be the basis of these agreements. As part of this, enabling regulatory and institutional mechanisms, and removing supply-side bottlenecks such as infrastructure, quality of products, and capacity of human resources, should be addressed. The new tariff policy is only one factor, and has to be followed through with adequate preparation immediately.

# Scale up climate change adaptation as soon as possible



### POLITICS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Dr Saleemul Huq  
is director of the International Centre for Climate Change and Development and a professor at Independent University, Bangladesh.

SALEEMUL HUQ

The recent floods in Bandarban and Chattogram have left behind a trail of deaths, while waterlogging put countless lives in misery. To make matters worse, this was just one of the many episodes caused by unusually heavy rainfall, and we must expect more of such incidents as human-induced climate change continues. While Bangladesh has been doing quite well in adapting to climate change, there is still a long way to go with not much time to waste. Serious actions need to be taken urgently to boost the country's resilience.

First, ministries and agencies should ensure that all government agencies are involved with adaptation efforts. The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change alone cannot be responsible for or

monopolise combating climate change. It should rather act as a catalyst for governmental and even non-governmental actors to take steps.

It is imperative that the planning ministry, which will prepare the ninth Five Year Plan, incorporate cross-ministry activities for climate change adaptation in the new plan.

In regards to the finance ministry, the national budget has a climate change component which needs to be better monitored and evaluated to make it more impactful. Besides, the Economic Relations Division needs to gear up its capacity to access sizeable climate change funding from global adaptation funds like the Green Climate Fund and Adaptation Fund, and from multilateral development

banks such as the World Bank and Asian Development Bank. While Bangladesh has managed to obtain tens of millions of dollars worth of climate finance, our climate action needs require hundreds of millions, if not billions of dollars.

The local government ministry, along with the Local Government Engineering Department, needs to invest heavily to scale up efforts for locally-led adaptation; this should be our national priority. Also, the water resources ministry needs to manage water more efficiently, and the agriculture ministry should do more to develop and spread new varieties of climate-resistant crops, fish, and livestock. The disaster management and relief ministry also has an essential role to play in addressing loss and damage from climate change.

Finally, the education ministry must educate the new generation to not only know about climate change and its effects but also on tackling these issues.

Moving on to the non-government sector, we already have a successful network of over 50 universities and research institutes in Bangladesh, collaborating under the Gobeshona

framework. These establishments can be engaged to work with the government, NGOs, and private sector actors to carry out research that can be used to take effective action.

Thousands of NGOs are already playing an excellent role in different regions. It is essential to bring them all under one umbrella so they can share their learnings and experiences. The National Platform on Locally-Led Adaptation, started by NGOs and research institutions, is working to this effect.

The private sector, which consists of large corporations as well as millions of small and medium enterprises, will have to be pushed to action as soon as possible. Besides this, the media can help inform people about matters of climate change.

Finally, our young girls and boys, who are the future of Bangladesh and of the world at large, are pivotal for this mission. If we invest our resources to turn them into champions of climate change adaptation, they can surely pave the way for a sustainable future.

To be sure, Bangladesh has what it takes to tackle climate change by bringing together key players and all of society. But there is no time to lose.





COLLAGE: REHNUMA PROSHOON

# Drowning in a sea of distressed assets



A CLOSER LOOK

Tasneem Tayeb is a columnist for The Daily Star. Her X handle is @tasneem\_tayeb

TASNEEM TAYEB

The amount of distressed assets in Bangladesh’s banking sector – written-off loans, non-performing loans, and outstanding rescheduled loans, excluding loans that had been unclassified by court orders – currently stands at a staggering Tk 3.78 lakh crore, which is almost half of the country’s national budget for FY 2023-24. This grim reality was revealed in the recently released Financial Stability Report of the central bank, published following a demand from the IMF. While the number does not come as a surprise, given that economists and financial analysts had had doubts about the central bank’s previous figures, it should nonetheless be a humbling realisation for Bangladesh Bank.

The new figure points to the gross misgovernance, nepotism, and corruption that is endemic in the banking sector. It also raises questions about the greater ecosystem surrounding bad loans and their flow, especially outside the country, and the ineffective reclaiming process.

To begin with, a basic question anyone looking at the figure would ask is, where did the money go? Judging by the economy’s current state, it certainly did not go into legal local ventures. Most likely, criminal loan defaulters have laundered it abroad and/or invested in the shadow economy.

Every year, \$12-15 billion is smuggled out of the country, according to Transparency International Bangladesh Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman. Moreover, there has been a sharp spike in the number of suspicious transactions in 2021-22 fiscal year: by 62 percent year-on-year. According to Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU), suspicious transaction and suspicious activity reports increased drastically during

this time. Unsurprisingly, scheduled banks filed 93 percent of the reports. To assuage concerns, BFIU suggested that suspicious transactions are not necessarily unlawful activities, but the drastic increase in such cases should be a wake-up call for any financial watchdog. In the previous fiscal year alone, the number of such reports stood at 5,280.

Between the banking sector being plagued by an alarming lack of governance, and day-to-day operations being heavily influenced by the banks’ boards – the extension of board directors’ tenure to 12 years, which was a last-minute addition to the Bank Company (Amendment) Bill 2023, passed in the parliament on June 21 – has potentially put the sector under additional stress. Plus, the failure of authorities to apprehend known money launderers is creating a conducive environment for financial criminals to borrow money from banks and launder them abroad.

Apart from this, there is another problem that authorities should seriously look into: reclaiming over Tk 2.07 lakh crore that is entangled in 214,282 default loan lawsuits. It should be noted that between January and March this year, 14,650 new cases involving Tk 27,400 crore have been filed by 60 banks since they failed to recover the defaulted loans. There are 61 scheduled banks, 52 local and nine foreign, in the country, under the full control and supervision of the central bank.

In 2003, the money loan courts were established to rapidly resolve disputes centring loan repayments. But the overwhelming number of cases in comparison to limited resources are making it difficult for these courts to expedite such resolutions. And so, this money stays with the defaulters. Moreover, media reports stated that while the banks

apply to lower courts to reclaim defaulted loans, the borrowers file writs with the High Court to contest rulings. At the same time, the petitioners avoid immediate repayment by securing stay orders. In addition, the eight to ten years it takes to settle a lawsuit is a great impediment to the reclaiming process.

Lending money under political or the board’s pressure, circumventing due diligence before sanctioning loans, and granting loans to habitual defaulters have become regular practices. So, it is striking to see the lack of vigilance on the part of intelligence bodies and the inability of authorities to punish known launderers. The failure of law enforcers to curb shadow-economy activities is why defaulters are confidently borrowing money with the intention of never paying back.

To address the persistent problem of bad debts, Bangladesh Bank, the government, policymakers, financial watchdogs, law enforcers, and the banks themselves will have to work in tandem to dismantle the loop that feeds the entire ecosystem, from loans being sanctioned to the money being laundered abroad or invested in illicit areas.

Bangladesh can learn from Singapore, where the country’s monetary authority is currently working on developing a secure digital platform called COSMIC (Collaborative Sharing of Money Laundering/Terrorism Financing Information and Cases). This platform will enable financial institutions to share information on suspicious customers, with the aim to minimise financial crimes, including money laundering. The Financial Services and Markets (Amendments) Bill, passed in the Singapore parliament on May 9, provides a legal framework for COSMIC.

It is high time the authorities deal with this matter with utmost importance. They must apprehend and punish the criminals, irrespective of their corporate or political identities. The government must demonstrate a strong political will to eliminate this problem, lest the banking sector drown in a sea of distressed assets.

# FIFA Women’s World Cup: Where do we go from here?



Raiyan Binte Rafiq is a sports columnist for The Daily Star. She is currently pursuing an LLM, while freelancing for FootballCo and INDIVISA to cover UEFA Women’s Champions League and Women’s Super League. She also oversees recruitment at Next Level Sports Management based in Bangladesh.

RAIYAN BINTE RAFIQ

Legacy – the long-lasting impact of particular events. A moment in time that changes the course of life, but in this case, the alteration of women’s football. The FIFA Women’s World Cup concludes by crowning a new world champion, Spain, and brings an end to what has been the most scintillating four weeks of football in Australia and New Zealand. New players announced themselves on the biggest stage, young players stepped up to take the mantle, and new rivalries were formed. A hundred and sixty-four goals scored, 55 clean sheets kept, and celebrations that will now be played out in video games. This was a tournament breaking new records, achieving feats that were once a dream.

When the tournament kicked off, FIFA announced that this would be the biggest Women’s World Cup ever held. This was deemed as a “legacy tournament” – in other words, it would be so impactful that it would take the women’s game to new heights. The impact was undeniable and even contagious. Australians fell in love with their Matildas, Colombia sent Sydney into bedlam, South Africa danced their way into our hearts, Jamaica made sure we noticed them, Morocco left a profound influence on Muslim girls, tears were shed for Nigeria’s miracle run, Panama made every goal feel like a victory, and Philippines embraced their women’s team. People of all ages crowded the streets, thousands travelled in to soak the atmosphere, and even airlines streamed the penalty shootout of the Australia versus France match. It was at times emotional, but it was beautiful.

Since Australia’s run ended in the semi-finals, the Anthony Albanese government pledged \$200 million to the development

were instances where the demand was underestimated – an issue that has arisen in the past year due to the unpredictable growth of the game. Fans found themselves resorting to customising their own T-shirts and even creating goalkeeper jerseys. The oversight was pointed out by FIFA’s Best Goalkeeper of 2022, Mary Earps, who expressed disappointment in the lack of

When the tournament kicked off, FIFA announced that this would be the biggest Women’s World Cup ever held. People of all ages crowded the streets, thousands travelled in to soak the atmosphere, and even airlines streamed the penalty shootout of the Australia versus France match. It was at times emotional, but it was beautiful.

attention given to goalkeepers. In line with the recurring theme of the tournament that “actions speak louder than words,” goalkeepers emerged as standout performers. Zecira Musovic, MacKenzie Arnold, Dominic van Domselaar, and Mary Earps’ performances were impossible to ignore. By the conclusion of the tournament, Nike

cup was in 2011 with Japan. Thus, the anticipation was palpable as we awaited the crowning of the new world champions following the exit of USA. Australia was propelled by the outpouring of love and support as one of the host nations. Sweden endeared themselves with ABBA-themed celebrations that touched our hearts. Japan showcased captivating football, reminiscent of their 2011 triumph. Colombia became the sentimental favourite of many. Netherlands valiantly battled their opponents to prolong their journey. However, amid these diverse narratives, one team garnered distinctly polarised opinions – Spain.

When it came to Spain, a divisive thought always loomed overhead. The circumstances under which they entered this World Cup were under scrutiny, with Jorge Vilda’s role in the team questioned. Many football fans feared that Spain’s triumph in the World Cup would diminish the hard work put in by the smaller African, Asian and South American teams, rendering their efforts in vain. Then it happened: Spain emerged as the World Cup champions. Even as we witnessed two of the finest midfielders of our generation, Alexia Putellas and Aitana Bonmati, realising every footballer’s dream, a mix of emotions accompanied the moment.

The allegations against Vilda are too significant to ignore and the RFEF response, tweeting captions like “Vilda IN,” a playful reference to the “Vilda OUT” tweets used by Spanish fans just a few months ago, encapsulates the situation. This is a loss for women’s football in several ways, as there’s now a looming concern that federations may employ his case as a precedent to remain unyielding in their decisions, even if those choices are detrimental to the player’s well-being.

Spain’s prospect in the realm of women’s football is promising, with burgeoning talent across all age categories significantly elevating the quality of the game. The RFEF holds a clear responsibility towards its players and must take proactive measures to not only hear their voices but also safeguard



If actions indeed speak louder than words, the footballers who played in the just-concluded Women’s World Cup have unequivocally demonstrated their worthiness of the support they seek and require.

PHOTO: AFP

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 Highways

6 Rap sheet name

11 Concur

12 Lofty

13 Pinned-on-top hairstyle

15 Brewed beverage

16 Zodiac animal

17 Distress signal

18 Peony part

20 Grownup

23 Hospital worker

27 Artist’s inspiration

28 Christmas song

29 Perfect

31 River craft

32 Become narrower at one end

34 Wine choice

37 By now

38 German article

41 Dickens classic

44 Film prize

45 Deceive

46 Prom group

47 Supply with funds

DOWN

1 River floater

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SUNDAY’S ANSWERS



# Hilsa brings back smiles to FISHERS

Braving a cyclone, a 65-day fishing ban and another spell of inclement weather, fishermen in Cox’s Bazar finally got what they wanted, but challenges remain

MOKAMMEL SHUVO

“Only God knows how we survived. First, it was the cyclone, and then came the fishing ban, and then another depression. We could only hope for better days soon. But the wait was too long.”

Fazal Ahmed, a fisherman from Kutubdia upazila in Cox’s Bazar, was recalling the hard times he and his family had to go through since mid-May.

Not only Fazal, but most of the fishermen in the Chattogram region also sat idle for nearly four months since Cyclone Mocha hit the region in the second week of May.

As the cyclone system passed, after a few days, the government imposed a 65-day ban on fishing in the Bay. And then came another depression that flooded the region, making a voyage to the sea tough.

“We got hilsa worth around Tk 3 lakh when we set off for the sea after the ban lifted on July 23 but had to come back within three days because of the depression in the bay. That trip incurred us a loss of Tk 2 lakh,” he said.

He said during that period he had to borrow money to meet his family’s daily needs. This was the case for the other fishermen as fishing is the only occupation they know to earn their living.

Now, that the depression is gone, things are getting better for them.

Fazal’s last fishing trip to the sea was a success.

“We were lucky this time. We

quickly caught around 7,000 hilsa fish worth around Tk 45 lakh,” said a beaming Fazal.

Like him, Shakil and his fellow fishermen in the same area also got 4,000 hilsa and sold them for Tk 35 lakh.

“It’s been a long time since we got hilsa in such large quantity. If the trend continues, we will be able to repay all of our debts made during the ban period,” he said.



Both fishermen were talking to The Daily Star at Cox’s Bazar Fish Landing Station recently.

Rubel Islam, publication secretary of Cox’s Bazar Fish Traders’ Association, said the market is now being flooded with hilsa, dropping their prices considerably.

However, he said a huge supply sometimes plummets prices, incurring losses for both the fishermen and traders.

Most of the fishing trawlers are getting 2,000 to 10,000 hilsa

per trip, he said.

Abdul Khaliq, a fish trader at the landing station yesterday, said they are buying hilsa weighing over 1kg at around Tk 1,150 per piece, while 900g-1kg hilsa is sold at Tk 1,050-1,120 per piece, and below 800g is Tk 800-930.

From the start of the month till yesterday, Cox’s Bazar Fish Landing Station received 183.9 tonnes of hilsa. This time last

fishing, and they are getting good catches.

However, expressing concerns, he alleged that hundreds of Indian fishing boats were catching fish in Bangladeshi territory near Mohipur and Meghna estuaries. Those boats with advanced fishing mechanisms can catch large quantities of fish. If it is continued, our fishers will likely not get fish in the near future, he said.

Asked, he blamed the fishers’ woes on the impractical and untimely fishing ban.

Delwar said local fishers set their timing for fishing depending on the full moon and new moon.

“We traditionally suspend fishing in the Bangla months of Ashar and Sharban, when the sea becomes rough. But the government officials set the date for the fishing ban following the English calendar (Gregorian calendar), which is piling misery on the fishers and also harmful for fish breeding.”

The authority should impose a ban on fishing based on ground realities. The ban came a month earlier than required, he added.

He urged the authorities to consider changing the timing of the fishing ban.

He also alleged that “Around half the names in the government list for compensation during the ban period are not fishermen. So, a large number of fishers are left out of the government food assistance programme.”



PHOTO: MOKAMMEL SHUVO



## Historical Kadam Mobarak Mosque

FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN

Most of the Muslim devotees of the port city are unaware of a hidden gem of Islamic heritage in the heart of the city. The Kadam Mubarak Mosque, located in Jamal Khan in port city has been carrying the history of the Mughal era. But the most unique and interesting thing about it is that the mosque is believed to have a footprint of the beloved prophet Muhammad (pbuh) for the last 350 years.

It was established by Yasin Khan, a Mughal ruler of Chattogram, in 1719. It has a three-domed roof and four octagonal turrets.

The mosque has three rooms for prayers. The middle room is larger than the two others. The small room in the north has a footprint (Kadam Mubarak), which is believed to be the footprint of the prophet. Besides, the footprint of Hazrat Abdul Qadir Jilani is also believed to be preserved here.

Both the footprints are preserved on separate stones which are believed to be collected by the mosque’s first Mutawalli Yasin Khan from Makkah and Baghdad. The mosque has three arches (Khilan), and on the south wall, there are three beautifully crafted Mehrabs.

It is decorated with stonework with vine designs, Arabic calligraphy, geometric patterns, and mosaic designs.

The mosque complex has a graveyard. It also has an orphanage, one of the biggest in the area.

Abu Tyeb Suman, a Muslim devotee told the Daily Star “Every time I visit this mosque, as a believer, I get thrills. A relic directly related to our beloved prophet is here. If taken proper measures, the mosque can be a major tourist attraction due to its historical values.”

Mutawalli Azad Ullah Khan said some development works are now underway including expanding the complex with an Islamic Research Center.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

# Dengue hits the port city hard

Experts say initiatives to control the disease still not visible enough

ARUN BIKASH DEY

With the number of patients increasing every day, dengue has already become a menace in Chattogram this month. And if proper actions are not taken, the outbreak threatens to wreak havoc in the region.

Around a hundred patients have been detected on average every day in Chattogram. For example, a total of 103 patients were detected on Sunday, 80 patients were detected on Saturday, 84 patients were detected on Thursday

and 91 patients were detected on Wednesday in Chattogram.

With number of patients increasing, the death toll of patients due to dengue is also increasing.

A total of nine patients died of dengue in the first six months (between January and June) in this year while a total of 37 patients died in the next two months (between July and August) taking the year’s death toll to 46 in dengue till August 20.

On August 20, a total of two patients died of dengue while on

August 19, a total of three patients died of dengue in different hospitals in Chattogram.

A total of 500 dengue patients were admitted to hospitals in Chattogram in the first six months. However, since July, a total of 3920 dengue patients were hospitalized pushing the number of patients to 4480 till August 21 so far in this year, according to the data provided by Chattogram Civil Surgeon Office.

Experts say the actual numbers may be multiple times higher as the official data are collected from hospitals. There are a good number of patients who take treatment in-house and in the private chambers of doctors.

At present, a total of 226 dengue patients were undergoing treatment at different hospitals in Chattogram.

Though the situation is alarming, the initiatives taken by the authorities including Chattogram City Corporation (CCC) and Directorate of Health to prevent the breeding of Aedes mosquitoes seem to be insufficient, say city dwellers.

A survey was conducted in the port city by a group of researchers from Chittagong University under the supervision of CCC in 2021 to find out the breeding spots of Aedes. The CCC, later, took steps to destroy the larvae

in those areas.

However, no such survey was conducted in 2022 and this year so far.

Although a significant number of patients is found in rural areas this year, actions are missing to prevent the outbreak in those areas.

For example, around a hundred dengue patients have been detected in a single village named Sonaichhari of Sitakunda upazila this year but no anti-mosquito drive has been initiated in this village.

Contacted, Monir Ahmed, chairman of Sonaichhari Union Parishad, said they informed the upazila nirbahi officer and the office of Chattogram Divisional Director of Health Services, Chattogram but to no avail.

“We do not have logistic equipment to initiate an anti-mosquito drive ourselves,” said the UP chairman.

The CCC, however, started a 100-day anti-mosquito crash programme on June 22. Later, CCC mobile court conducted some drives and fined some people as they found larvae of dengue in the surroundings of their abode.

According to civil society members and rights activists, the initiatives

taken by CCC are too little, too late.

“The situation didn’t become like this in a day. We, civil society members and media people, have continuously been saying and writing about the dengue danger. But the authorities didn’t take proper actions,” he said.

Contacted, Chattogram District entomologist Entajer Ferdous said the CCC staffers should spray insecticides to kill flying mosquito during the evening and dawn, adding, at dawn and pre-evening time is the best time to spray mosquito insecticides as a study found that density of mosquito remains highest that time.

Contacted, CCC mayor Rezaul Karim Chowdhury said the CCC conservancy workers were spraying medicines in the breeding grounds of mosquitoes.

Rezaul said, “The CCC alone cannot prevent dengue; mass awareness is a must in this regard,” adding, “The city corporation workers can only kill mosquitoes outside the house. So we have to keep our respective homes and yards clean.”

Contacted, Dr Md Mohiuddin, Chattogram divisional director of Directorate General of Health Services, said they have already started surveying different areas in the city to find out the dengue hotspots.

He said, during the survey, Aedes larvae were found in areas including Khulshi, Sadarghat, Firringji Bazar, North Kattoli, South Kattoli, Akbar Shah, Colonel Hat, Shulak Bahor and Chandaon.

“We have informed the CCC about the hot spots of dengue,” he said.



PHOTO: RAJIB RATHAN



## Mohun Bagan prove too good for Abahani

SPORTS REPORTER

Abahani once again failed to move into the AFC Cup group stage following a 3-1 defeat against Mohun Bagan Super Giants at the Salt Lake Stadium in Kolkata last night.

The six-time Bangladesh Premier League winners, who had become the first Bangladeshi club to progress to the inter-zonal semifinals in 2019, conceded three goals after taking an early lead against the Kolkata giants.

Abahani coach Mario Lemos made four changes from the match that beat Club Eagles of Maldives last week, bringing on Shqahidul Alam Sohel, Shushanto Tripura, Asaduzzaman Bablu and Youssef Mohammed.

Cornelius Stewart gave the Sky Blues a 17th minute lead, poking home a rebound after Mohun Bagan keeper Vishal Kaith fluffed Emeka Ogbugh's shot.

The Mariners, though, put on tremendous pressure on the visitors, earning a spot kick in the 35th minute which Australia's Jason Cummings buried to get the hosts on level terms.

The hosts' pressure only mounted after the restart, with Abahani defender Milad Soleimani turning in Hugo Boumous' cross into his own net on 58 minutes before Armando Sadiku made it 3-1 two minutes later, guiding home Liston Colaco's low cross into the goalmouth.

Lemos brought on Faysal Ahmed Fahim for Shushanto Tripura and Mohammad Sohel Rana for Muzaffarov, and Rahim Ali for David Ifegw later on, but those changes failed to bring a change to the Dhanmondi giants' fate.

## Stokes the best England has ever produced: Root

AGENCIES

England batter Joe Root has deemed Test skipper Ben Stokes as the best player that the country has ever produced as he praised the match-winning ability of Stokes on Tuesday.

Stokes retired from ODI cricket in July 2022 but reversed his decision and was named in England's provisional squad for the ICC Men's World Cup later this year in India.

"You look at the two World Cup finals we won, and he won for us. Even the one we lost against West Indies in 2016, he still took on the big moment – he wanted that final over. To be able to come back from that in the manner that he has and deliver some of the things he has done in an England shirt is a testament to what a legend he is in the game. Probably, I think, the best player we've ever produced as a country," Root told ESPN Cricinfo on Tuesday.

His return from retirement was hinted in England's ODI and T20I head coach Matthew Mott's recent interview with The Daily Mail, in which he stated, "Jos Buttler will probably lead the way on that communication, but Ben's pretty straight with all of us. We will see if he's keen."

Stokes was one of the heroes of England's win over New Zealand in the epic finale at the 2019 World Cup. When the chips were down, Stokes produced a Player of the Match-winning knock of 84\* to force the game into a Super Over.

After his World Cup heroics, Ben Stokes played only 10 ODIs as England adopted a strategy to balance players' workloads across various formats. Eventually, Stokes decided to step away from ODIs to extend his career in other formats. He is poised to make his ODI comeback in England's upcoming four-match series against New Zealand, starting 8 September.



Liton Das was seen taking instructions from Bangladesh head coach Chandika Hathurusingha at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur yesterday as the Tigers' ODI vice-captain went straight back to business following his stint in the Lanka Premier League, where he played alongside Shakib Al Hasan for the Galle Titans. [Below] Shakib experienced a different kind of busy afternoon as commercial engagement saw the Bangladesh captain fly to Barishal in a helicopter to inaugurate the Alhaj Nur Mohammad Munshi Hospital.

PHOTO: BCB/TITU DAS

## Shakib's hour arrives to 'manage everything'

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

Shakib Al Hasan will have to manage things in more ways than one in the next few months. Having once captained Bangladesh in the biggest cricket event in 2011, the 36-year-old finds himself at the helm of the ODI side again just ahead of the World Cup after Tamim Iqbal stepped down from captaincy.

The Asia Cup and the World Cup are the targets and Shakib, who continues to show an impeccable talent of managing various facets that transcends the periphery of the field.

Shakib had returned to the country on Monday and by yesterday morning was travelling to Barishal to inaugurate a hospital. Later in the evening, he fulfilled another commercial commitment in Dhaka.

"If I don't work, I would become insane," Shakib had famously said once when it appeared that there was a lot on his plate amid frequent travelling.

He has only pushed boundaries in that regard. In Barishal, a huge crowd acknowledged Shakib's presence in the city. Asked about his dream, Shakib replied, "The dream is the World Cup and Asia Cup. The rest we will see later."

Prior to the Barishal trip, the all-rounder featured in the G20 Canada T20 league in Canada

before heading to Sri Lanka to play the Lanka Premier League. He then headed to Dubai for a commercial engagement on Monday.

Asked about his engagements in between cricket and the enormous distance covered in the space of days, Shakib said, "As a professional cricketer, we have to manage such things. Since there isn't a lot of time, a way has to be found to manage everything in the little time that's available. It's a little busy but I enjoy it."



Shakib, with a little time left before huge assignments, would have to manage quite a lot.

His relationship with Tamim had been a major talking point ever since Bangladesh Cricket Board president revealed in an interview that the two were not on talking terms. Following Tamim's retirement saga, the experienced opener returned to the nets for a batting session a few days back.

The southpaw would likely now return for the New Zealand series sandwiched between the two big events.

Cricket operations chairman Jalal Yunus had recently said: "We all want Tamim to return to his previous self. He is recuperating from a big injury and everyone is supporting him."

Part of that management skill would have to come from Shakib as well, in order to make the dressing room geared up with one singular focus. Along with the seniors, Shakib would now be managing youngsters from that U-19 group who tasted World Cup success in 2020. It is time to rope everything in and become a team ahead of big events.

Back in 2019, Shakib had worked with a singular focus to get ready for the World Cup despite an imminent ICC ban hanging over his head. This time he does not need that "kick", he said yesterday. "Just trying to be as fit as possible," he added.

Shakib's fitness work is already exemplary, but now he must ensure the team's energy points towards the same goals. This time as a World Cup captain, he is far from the youngster he was in his previous tenure. His remarkable feats in the 2019 campaign gained him individual accolades but the team did not leave a mark. In the driving seat this time, only time will tell what Shakib has in store.



## Shuttlers win three gold medals in Nepal

SPORTS REPORTER

It was double delight for SS Sifat Ullah as the teenage shuttler bagged two out of Bangladesh's three gold medals in Badminton Asia South Asia (U-17 and U-15) Regional Junior Championships in Kathmandu yesterday.

Sifat beat Sri Lanka's Thidasa Weragoda 21-16, 12-21, 21-17 to win gold medal in boys' singles in under-17 category. Sifat then paired up with Rajon Mia to win the boys' doubles event with a 21-11, 21-11 victory against Nepal's Kabir KC and Abhay Mahara.

In the under-15 category, Wali Ullah won gold in boys' singles event by handing a 21-15, 21-15 defeat to compatriot Mostakim Hossain in the final.

Wali Ullah and Mostakim then paired up to compete in the final of under-15 boys' doubles event where they suffered a 21-15, 19-21, 21-23 defeat to Sri Lanka's Kenth Aruggoda and Senuth Semitha Perera.

Bangladesh also won three bronze medals – two in mixed doubles and one in girls' doubles event of the tournament, where Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Maldives took part.

## Marsh available to captain Australia for as long as needed

REUTERS, Melbourne

Mitchell Marsh said on Tuesday he will gladly captain Australia for as long as required as the all-rounder prepares to lead the T20 and ODI sides on a tour of South Africa that includes three ODIs and five T20Is.

Marsh is stepping in for injured ODI captain Pat Cummins while Cricket Australia has yet to decide on a T20 skipper for the long term following the retirement of Aaron Finch.

"It's certainly been a crazy year. Throw in getting married, it's been a good one," he told reporters in Sydney. "We'll get through South Africa and see how we go. I'm available to captain for as long as the team needs me. We'll see where it all ends."

Cummins, who also captains the test side, is expected to link up with the squad in India ahead of the 50-overs World Cup which starts in October.



PHOTO: REUTERS

Spain's prime minister Pedro Sanchez poses for a photograph with the players, coach Jorge Vilda and president of Spanish FA Luis Rubiales at Moncloa Palace in Madrid yesterday during a reception of the Spanish women's football team, who won the FIFA Women's World Cup in Australia and New Zealand recently. The Spanish premier, meanwhile, said Rubiales' apology for kissing star player Jenni Hermoso on the lips after the World Cup final victory was insufficient.

AFP, Budapest

Sha'Carri Richardson took no prisoners on the track in storming to women's 100m world gold in a mirror image of her pugnacious style off it – which though not to everyone's taste has earned praise from track legend Michael Johnson.

Richardson, 23, recorded a championship record of 10.65sec to stun the far more experienced Jamaican powerhouse duo of Shericka Jackson and Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce and win her first global title on Monday.

Richardson thrives on confrontation and in a feisty display at the post-race press conference the American said it was as much 'the haters' as her close circle that had driven her to success.

'The haters', in her view, are those who waded in after she had to miss the Tokyo Olympics two years ago when her US trials results were annulled following a positive test for marijuana.

"I always say never give up," she said after Monday's triumph from lane nine. "Never allow the media, never allow outsiders, never allow anything but yourself to define who you are. I would say always fight, no matter what, fight."

Her initial contrition about the marijuana – which even earned praise from US President Joe Biden – and explanation that she had smoked it after being told of the death of her biological mother, Shayaria, seems to have hardened







## CYBER SECURITY ACT Make bail for accused pending trial the norm Urges Amnesty

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The newly drafted Cyber Security Act retains all but one offence from the Digital Security Act, said Amnesty International in a letter to the ICT ministry.

“The only changes the CSA makes are related to sentencing, which can be summarised as follows: lowering the maximum applicable prison sentence for eight offences, removing a sentence of imprisonment for two offences, increasing the maximum applicable fine for three offences and removing the higher applicable penalty for all repeat offences,” said the letter.

While the right to freedom of expression is subject to permissible restrictions, the restrictions proposed by the draft CSA are not permissible under international law, said the letter.

The CSA leaves offences under sections 25, 29 and 31 unchanged and only reduces the applicable penalties and removes provisions mandating higher penalties for repeat offenders, it added.

These sections criminalise the

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Railway officials use a special car to inspect the Akhaura-Agartala line which will be opened soon. Project officials hope that they would be able to run tests with locomotives this month.

PHOTO: MASHUK HRIDOV

## BCL activists assault journo over report

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A group of Patuakhali district BCL activists on Monday attacked a journalist for publishing a report allegedly against the unit’s president Md Saiful Islam.

The victim Md Nayan Mridha, Patuakhali correspondent of the daily Ajker Darpan and Barta-Bazar, is currently undergoing treatment at Patuakhali Medical College Hospital.

The attack took place around 7:30pm in the town’s Gymnasium area, said Nayan, adding that he filed a general diary with Patuakhali Police Station the same night.

“My house is in Hetalia Bandhghat area. I was on my way to Natun Bazar, where the Patuakhali Press Club is, on my motorcycle. When I was crossing the Diabetic Hospital, some BCL activists, including the district unit’s President Md Saiful Islam, blocked my path. They said, ‘You have become such a big journalist that you dare to report against the district Chhatra League president? We will teach you a lesson.’ They then began verbally abusing me.

“At one point, some of them, including Saiful’s cousins Sabbir Hossain and Al-Amin, started kicking and slapping me. Al-Amin even tried to injure my eye. Later, locals nearby rescued me and

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## MURDER OF TEACHER They tried to make it look like militants did it Says Rab after arresting 3 suspects

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former school teacher Golam Kibria was murdered and robbed in Savar and he was not killed for ethical transgression as claimed by a note found near his body, said Rab after an investigation.

The killers tried to mislead investigators with the note, which gave the impression that the killing was carried out by Islamist militants, said Rab’s Legal and Media Wing Director Khandaker Al Moin during a briefing yesterday.

Rab has arrested 3 suspects – Emon Khan, 23, Md Sagar, 22, and Sadek Gazi, 22 – and the suspects knew the victim, claimed the official.

On August 20, Kibria’s body was found at his home in Bhatpara, Savar.

According to Rab, Emon and Sagar used to visit the victim’s house regularly. Then they devised a plan to murder Kibria after learning that he has a good amount of cash at home.

They later included Sadek in their plan.

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## BLACK SEA GAS FACILITIES Russian jet destroys Ukrainian vessel

Three hurt; two drones shot down over Moscow region, flights briefly disrupted

REUTERS, Moscow

A Russian warplane destroyed a Ukrainian reconnaissance vessel in an area in the Black Sea where Russian gas extraction facilities are located, the Russian Defence Ministry said yesterday.

The ministry said in a short statement that the Ukrainian vessel had been destroyed by an SU-30 aircraft from Russia’s Black Sea Fleet.

There was no immediate comment from Ukraine, which rarely comments publicly on its operations inside Russia or on Russian-controlled territory but which Moscow has accused of stepping up attacks on Russian interests using uncrewed naval drones.

Russian-backed officials in Crimea, which Russia seized and annexed from Ukraine in 2014, said in June last year that Ukrainian forces had attacked drilling platforms in the Black Sea owned by Chernomorneftegaz, an oil and gas company.

At least three people were wounded in one incident and work on three drilling platforms was suspended, they said at the time.

Russia seized Chernomorneftegaz from

Ukraine’s national gas operator Naftogaz as part of Moscow’s 2014 annexation. The company is under US and European Union sanctions.

Meanwhile, Russia shot down two Ukrainian drones over the Moscow region with no casualties and brought down a further two drones over the Bryansk region that borders Ukraine, the Defence Ministry said yesterday.

A Reuters reporter in the town of Krasnogorsk in the Moscow region, seat of the Moscow regional government, saw minor damage to tiling on a high-rise residential building and shattered glass exterior window panes in a few of its apartments.

A further two Ukrainian drones were detected by air defence systems over the Bryansk region, which borders Ukraine, and crashed without hurting anyone after being brought down by jamming

systems, the defence ministry said in a statement. Air space over the Russian capital was briefly closed and three Moscow airports suspended flights, the TASS news agency reported.

Rosaviatsia, Russia’s aviation authority, said nine flights had been diverted at Moscow’s Vnukovo and Domodedovo airports, but that

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## 1 held over murder of Cox’s Bazar AL leader Victim’s family reject police claim of the motive

STAFF CORRESPONDENT,  
Cox’s Bazar

Police claimed that an 18-year-old murdered Awami League leader Saif Uddin, 42, of Cox’s Bazar after the leader tried to blackmail him with footage of them in a hotel.

The victim’s family has rejected the police claim.

Suspect Ashraf Islam, 18, a madrasa student, was arrested around 11:00pm on Monday at Whykong Police outpost from a bus heading for Teknaf, Superintendent of Police Md Mahfuzul Islam said in a press briefing at his office yesterday evening.

Police on Monday recovered the body of Saif, relief and social welfare secretary of AL’s Cox’s Bazar municipality unit, from a hotel in Cox’s Bazar town.

Quoting the arrestee, Mahfuzul said, “They [Saif

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## Hitler’s birth house to be turned into police station



AFP, Vienna

The redesign of Adolf Hitler’s birth house will go ahead as planned, starting on October 2, Austria’s interior ministry said Monday, after a documentary aired new claims about the late Nazi dictator’s wishes for it.

Following years of legal wrangling, the government decided to turn the house in the northern Austrian town of Braunau, where Hitler was born in 1889, into a police station with a human rights training centre.

In a bid to prevent the building on the border with Germany from becoming a neo-Nazi shrine, the government took control of the dilapidated building in 2016. The expropriation ended a bitter saga between the state and the former owner.

“The construction (to convert the house) is scheduled to start on 2 October 2023,” an interior ministry spokesman confirmed to AFP. “Everything will go ahead as planned,” he added.

## AL govt using militant issue to stay in power Says Fakhrul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Innocent people were picked up from a neighbourhood in a forest and labelled as militants, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said yesterday.

“Because they [government] want to show that there are militants in Bangladesh ... and they are needed to suppress the militants. This is their main goal, and this is what they want to show the western countries and India,” said Fakhrul.

He made the remarks at an event commemorating the eighth death anniversary of Kazi Zafar Ahmed, former chairman of a faction of Jatiya Party. The event was held at Diploma Engineers Institute in the capital’s Kakrail.

“We know that they are the militants ... The Awami

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Parked motorbikes and cars completely block the pavement for pedestrians at Karwan Bazar. The photo was taken across the street from Hotel Sonargaon yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

## Property mogul Thavisin elected Thai PM

Ally Thaksin jailed on  
return from exile

REUTERS, Bangkok

Thai property mogul Srettha Thavisin was elected prime minister after a decisive win in a parliamentary vote yesterday as his party’s fugitive figurehead Thaksin Shinawatra made a historic homecoming after years in exile and was taken straight to jail.

The victory by 60-year-old Srettha paves the way for a new coalition government, ending weeks of uncertainty and stalemate in parliament after an election 100 days ago that threatened to weaken the political clout of the country’s powerful military.

Srettha, who was thrust into the spotlight just a few months ago by the populist heavyweight Pheu Thai, won the support from two thirds of parliament in a vote that followed hours of hysteria in Thailand over the long-awaited return of Thaksin from self-imposed exile.

“I will perform my duties to the best of my ability. I

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Srettha Thavisin