

## Check wastage of public funds, unnecessary expenditure

### PM directs authorities, puts emphasis on steps to curb inflation

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday stressed again the importance of reining in inflation in the country through various efforts and government policies, along with preventing unnecessary expenditure and wastage of public funds.

The premier gave the directive while chairing a meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) as its chairperson, held at the NEC Conference Room in the city's Sher-e-Bangla Nagar area.

Briefing reporters after the meeting, Planning Minister MA Mannan said that the PM once again put emphasis on reducing the inflation rate through various government measures and policies.

"But, it's not possible to bring down inflation by force or overnight."

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## Engineer beaten up, threatened by 'ruling party men'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Kaliganj Nesco executive engineer was assaulted and threatened by a group of men who allegedly identified themselves as members of the ruling party and barged into his office in Lalmonirhat yesterday.

The attackers also beat other officers and employees and vandalised the office of Northern Electricity Supply Company (Nesco) in Kaliganj upazila town.

Subsequently, Executive Engineer Raki Chandra Das left Kaliganj, fearing for his safety.

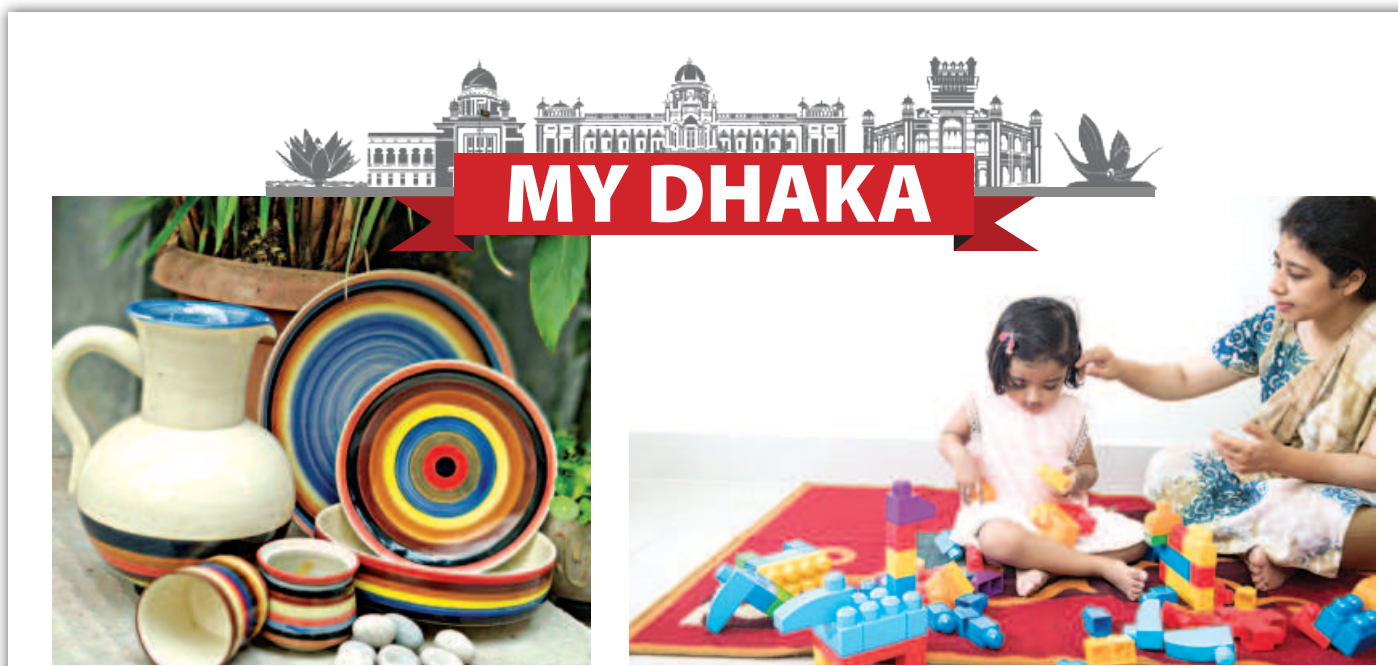
Nesco authorities did not immediately take any legal steps in this connection.

Raki told this newspaper that 10-12 youths came to his office and identified themselves as AL and BCL men. "The attackers asked me why I did not respond to the call of the social welfare minister's son, Rakibuzzaman Ahmed. So they came to attack my office on the order of Rakibuzzaman."

"The attackers beat me and abused me with obscene language. I left Kaliganj for safety because I was threatened with death."

"I have informed the higher

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## MY DHAKA

PHOTO: LS ARCHIVE

# Breaking the stigma of 'second-hand' shopping

RBR

My friend once wished to replicate a green business concept she had encountered on a visit to Europe.

The idea was to have a store with preloved or preowned items – clothes, home accessories, bags, crockeries, anything that was once yours – up for sale to have them either upcycled or recycled by someone else.

However, she did not follow through as the Dhaka crowd has long been prejudiced regarding preloved sales because the items are, bluntly put, "not new" and therefore second hand.

Some people are trying to replicate this international trend and it has recently begun registering under the radar of Dhaka residents.

Nuzhat Tarannum, who previously worked in marketing, advertising, and communication, and is now on a break to recover from cancer, said, "Remember how, in our childhood, we used to wear hand-me-downs of our older siblings and cousins? It was a regular practice in every family in Dhaka; frocks or shirts worn earlier were re-used for years on."

If we could recycle and reuse back in those days, why not now? Does it really matter if it does not belong to your family member?

Every one of us buy and use our necessities with love; reusing these second-hand items is nothing to be condescending about. The things that we use and ultimately throw away leaves a carbon footprint and second-hand shopping is a small step towards saving the planet.

We must not hold any unfounded

prejudices regarding it.

Thus, Nuzhat decided that on every Saturday throughout the month of September, starting from the 2nd of the month, she will organise a fair-natured sale for preloved products.

The fair, called T's Preloved Show, will have eight tables – each with a booking money of Tk 2,000. You can donate or put your items up for sale at an affordable price.

Books, furniture, kitchen appliances, electronics or expensive saris will be added as the sale gathers momentum.

For now, the preloved items for sale would include kids' toys or clothes, home décor or crockery items; basically, anything you can offer in good quality and put an affordable tag on.

Nuzhat added that the first month will be a test run to get a better grasp of how preloved sales work in Dhaka, and how buyers react or whether they accept the concept at all.

Nuzhat also wants to donate items that are not sold, or given only as donation, to women's organisations in her village, schools, and public hospitals. But most importantly, she wants to help women who are suffering.

Nuzhat's perspective towards life went through a lot of alteration while she battled with cancer last year.

"While I was lying in my bed dealing with the side effects of aggressive chemotherapy, I went through a major life-changing phase. I was born again and my mantra towards life, living and well being took a greener turn.

"I hope to work for the betterment of the people and the community. All my initiatives will reflect my purpose of helping cancer survivors and warriors. Being a cancer warrior, I know how exhausting it can be for the patient and for the family. There's huge financial pressure, no matter where you do the treatment."

Explaining why she came up with the preloved sale idea, she further said, "So, I've decided to create a fund to support women who are in need, with whatever I can collect. I'm doing the shows in September so that I can start working on it from October, which is observed as Breast Cancer Awareness month worldwide. The proceedings will go to a fund for Breast Cancer Treatment for underprivileged women."

A young couple starting a family or moving in together can benefit from such sales and buying second-hand gives them the opportunity to save money.

Even older couples can put up their lifetime collection of possessions for sale in these places. Someone who loves antiques can be happy with the finds.

Nuzhat intends to ask celebrities to donate their expensive saris or other paraphernalia to attract fan-girl sales.

One man's trash is another man's treasure; thrifting and buying second-hand belongings is gaining popularity worldwide and it is time that Dhaka starts boarding this hype train. The fair will be held in Gulshan 2, Rd-63, H-12/A.



স্বপ্ন বিকাশের ডিজিটাল সেন্টার

## Jubo League activist hacked to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A Jubo League activist died early yesterday, hours after criminals attacked him with sharp weapons in Mymensingh's Muktagachha upazila.

The victim, Asaduzzaman Asad, 32, a resident of the upazila's Tarati Purbapara, was an activist of Muktagachha unit Jubo League, said his cousin, Md Alamgir Hossain.

Quoting locals, Muktagachha Police Station OC Md Abdul Mazed said a gang of at least 20 criminals attacked Asad and his friend Nahid, 25, with sharp weapons on Monday around 9:00pm when they were at Atani Bazar.

Hearing screams, locals rescued Asad and Nahid and took them to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital, where Asad died of his wounds around 1:00am, said the OC.

Nahid was undergoing treatment at the hospital. On information, police recovered the body and sent it to the Mymensingh Medical College morgue for an autopsy.

Police detained two people – Razib, 35, and Shahid, 40, – in connection with the killing. They suspect that the murder might have occurred over a previous feud.

No case was lodged in connection with the incident till around 4:00pm yesterday.

## Chinese national sent to jail in rape case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A male Chinese national and a local woman were sent to jail Monday in a case filed over raping an 11th-grade college student.

Police arrested Ji Chen, 58, and Hira Chakma, 25, in Uttara's Sector-16 Sunday night after the student filed a case with Uttara Paschim Police Station in Dhaka.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Mahbub Ahmed yesterday rejected Ji Chen's bail petition, a police official of the court told The Daily Star.

According to the case documents, Ji Chen raped her while Hira Chakma assisted him in committing the crime.

Hira promised to take the victim to China after they got acquainted through Facebook. On Friday night, she took the victim to Ji Chen's house in Uttara's Sector-14 where he raped her.

## Woman, daughter found dead; husband held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A 33-year-old woman and her four-year-old daughter were found dead at their residence in the port city's Bank Colony in the EPZ area yesterday.

The deceased are RMG worker Shahnaz Akhter and her daughter Eva. Police detained her husband, Shahzahan, also a garment worker, for interrogation.

A neighbour who used to look after Eva while her parents were at work went to check on them in the morning and found Shahnaz and Eva hanging from the ceiling.

"The woman and her daughter were hanging by the same rope," said EPZ Police Station Inspector (Investigation) Nuruzzaman.

The bodies were sent to Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) morgue for autopsy.

Mohammad Ershad, brother of Shahnaz, told UNB that Shahnaz and Shahzahan used to fight over his alleged extramarital affair.

The couple had a fight over the same issue on Monday night, he added.

## It is people's participation that matters

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The government's goal is to join the New Development Bank because transactions with the bank don't have to be in dollars only, she said.

The visit to South Africa to join the summit opened a new horizon for Bangladesh amid sanctions and counter-sanctions on countries.

"I have been able to present the picture of Bangladesh's socio-economic development to the world."

She urged investors worldwide, particularly from South Africa, to get involved in Bangladesh's goal to become a trillion-dollar economy and a fully developed smart nation by 2041.

About her meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping, Hasina said the Chinese leader said that his country wants a solution to the Rohingya problem and expressed interest in helping Bangladesh in energy, renewable energy, and infrastructure development.

Replying to a question about the trial against Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus and an open letter from 160 global leaders, including over 100 Nobel laureates, Hasina said her government has no influence over legal proceedings.

"The judiciary is completely independent. Everything goes according to the law of the land."

"If someone doesn't pay taxes and embezzles workers' money, and in those circumstances, if a case is filed with the labour court on behalf of the workers, then can we intervene and withdraw the case?"

She invited foreign experts and lawyers to assess and scrutinise the documents against Prof Yunus to see whether there was injustice, inconsistency, or wrong prosecution.

"There is a statement and demand from outside to withdraw the case. Do I have any rights here? You tell me, who gives me the power?"

"If they send the experts and lawyers, many more things will get revealed... Many such things will come out... They can observe the [legal] process."

"Our country has laws, courts, a labour law, and labour court. The law will take its own course."

"If the gentleman had so much self-confidence that he had not committed any crime, then he wouldn't have begged for a statement at the international level."

"If anyone doesn't pay dividends to the labourers, and they [employees] file a case with the court, and as an outcome of the case, if they [workers] are fired, and then if they file a case again, is it our responsibility?"

Hasina said that regarding the labour law, Bangladesh has to pay heed to a lot at the international level, especially at the ILO.

She referred to the commerce minister's recent remarks about how difficult it is to disband syndicates of traders who hike prices of essentials.

"Did the commerce minister say such a thing? I will get hold of him. It can't be true that a syndicate, if there is any, cannot be broken up. We take measures whenever prices of essentials shoot up."

When traders raise prices, the government imports goods, leaving the traders with no choice but to lower the prices.

"I don't know how powerful the syndicates are, but I will see what measures can be taken."

About several BNP leaders' recent visit to Singapore, Hasina said, "Intelligence agencies will enquire what they are doing there."

## Economy headed in wrong direction

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country is heading in the right direction, the top reasons include good economic condition (46 percent), overall development (36 percent), good infrastructure (27 percent), increased employment (16 percent), increased quality of life (14 percent), there is no shortage (14 percent), improved business (11 percent), offering of various government allowances (10 percent), communication system improvements (9 percent), improved electricity system (7 percent), salary increases for government jobs (4 percent).

The respondents were asked to identify the major challenges faced by the country currently, and about 44 percent of them said the main problem in Bangladesh is the 'price hike'.

The other problems mentioned by the respondents include business downturn (11 percent), unemployment (10 percent), political instability (8 percent) and corruption (3 percent).

Respondents were asked about the political direction of the country, and if they think Bangladesh is heading in the right or wrong direction. Almost half the respondents (48 percent) said Bangladesh is heading in the wrong direction, an increase from 31 percent in 2019.

The percentage of the respondents uncertain about the direction of the country also increased from 5 percent in 2019 to 11 percent in 2022.

In a follow-up question, the 39 percent of the respondents who say Bangladesh is moving in the right direction explain why they think so. Just over half, 51 percent cite political stability as a reason why Bangladesh is moving in the right direction.

The other reasons include: overall development (22 percent), improved human rights situation (20 percent), reduced political violence (15 percent), reduced terrorism activities (10 percent) and infrastructure development (2 percent).

For the 48 percent who say Bangladesh is politically heading in the wrong direction, the reasons include instability (46 percent), the

dominance of one political party (25 percent), price hikes (20 percent), no democracy (10 percent), vote cast without consent (12 percent), one-sided politics (10 percent) and a lack of opportunity to express an opinion (9 percent).

Findings show 96 percent intend to vote in the upcoming elections.

The survey explores perceptions of democracy and democratic principles.

When asked what they understand by democracy, more than a third of the respondents admit they "don't know" (36 percent). Nearly one-fifth said "equal rights for all" (18 percent), people's freedom (17 percent), government by the people (15 percent), the opportunity to vote freely (15 percent), freedom of speech (11 percent) and public participation in all activities (7 percent) are what they understand to be a democracy.

Pronounced differences emerge by education level as respondents with a bachelor's degree or above are more likely to describe democracy as the opportunity to vote freely (16 percent), equal rights for all (14 percent) and people's freedom (12 percent).

In contrast, 48 percent of the respondents with no formal education say "don't know". As income levels decrease, respondents are more likely to say they do not know what democracy means.

The proportion of the respondents who believe Bangladesh is moving in the right direction socially dropped from 77 percent in 2019 to 58 percent in 2022.

For those who say the country is socially heading in the wrong direction, the reasons are: deterioration of law and order (64 percent), increase in corruption (23 percent), the bad education system (16 percent), increase in drug use (16 percent), torture of innocent people (11 percent), increased violence against women (9 percent) and power concentrated among the rich (7 percent).

As much as 73 percent said it is never or not very often safe to post political opinions on Facebook, while 63 percent said the same posting

about social issues.

The majority of the respondents follow news through Facebook and consume news through private TV channels. Only 25 percent said they read newspapers.

Respondents with at least an undergraduate degree are more likely to get news through Facebook (84 percent) than those with no education (64 percent).

Overall trust towards Facebook news is higher (55 percent) than trust in newspapers (27 percent).

Regarding the construction of the Padma Bridge, 72 percent of participants consider it the most significant success in Bangladesh.

The report states that 47 percent of the respondents credited Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for the bridge's construction, while 28 percent gave credit to the government.

## Stakeholders'

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He said trial of cases already filed under the Digital Security Act will continue and this has been mentioned in the proposed Cyber Security Act.

The minister said the government is thinking of incorporating provisions for lesser punishments in the new law. "The thing is that Article 35 of the constitution clearly states that trial will be held under the law that was in force at the time of occurrence of a crime, and the punishment mentioned in that law will be meted out."

He said reducing the sentence should not be in conflict with the constitution.

About a letter from Nobel laureates regarding cases against Prof Muhammad Yunus, the law minister said, "I don't want to make any statement about Dr Yunus' case because it is pending trial. As far as I know about this case, the trial is being held at the Labour Court. He secured bail from the trial court."

Anisul said the judiciary of Bangladesh is independent.

## Imran's graft

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"The sentence has been suspended," Panjutha said on messaging platform X, formerly known as Twitter, adding, "God be praised."

Khan's legal team lodged the appeal against his conviction on the grounds that he was convicted without being given the right to defend himself.

The court also ordered Khan's release on bail, another one of his lawyers, Shoaib Shaheen, told reporters outside the court. But he will not be freed as he has been detained in at least one other case on charges of leaking state secrets.

A special court in Islamabad has ordered the jail authorities to keep Khan in judicial custody and present him before the court today, according to an undated order seen by Reuters.

A Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) official, who requested anonymity, said Khan is charged with making public the contents of a confidential cable sent by Pakistan's ambassador to the United States and using it for political gain.

Khan's top aide, former foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, has already been arrested in the same case.

Khan alleges that the cable proves that his removal was at the behest of the United States, which he said pressed Pakistan's military to topple his government because he had visited Russia shortly before its attack on Ukraine.

Both the United States and the Pakistani military have denied that. Khan faces dozens of cases, including charges of abetment to murder and orchestrating violent protests.

It is unclear how the ban on his contesting elections will be affected with the suspension of his sentence. National elections are due later this year, but they are likely to be delayed several months.

The suspension marks another win for Khan and comes a day after the Balochistan High Court dismissed sedition charges against him, saying they had been improperly filed.