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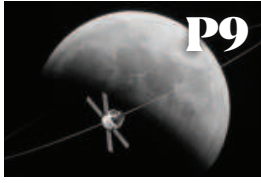
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Tk 821 crore laundered in name of export

Fraudsters used fake shipping documents to siphon off the sum to 25 countries; customs to file case soon

MOHAMMAD SUMAN

In one of the biggest money laundering scams unearthed so far in the country, customs authorities have found that 33 readymade garment factories and buying houses laundered at least Tk 821 crore over the last six years.

For the illicit money transfer, the fraudsters employed two tactics – under invoicing and using wrong shipping code. In the first case, prices were shown up to 10 times lower than the actual rate. In the second case, shipments were shown as “samples” when they were actually exports worth hundreds of crores of taka.

“We have never before identified such a large-scale export forgery. In the past, we had information about money laundering involving 10 or 15 consignments. Irregularities involving so many consignments together never caught our attention.”

Mohammad Bashir Ahmed
Additional director general of CIID, Chattogram office.

“Multiple gangs are involved here. We have found links of many powerful organisations and individuals at home and abroad. A case will be filed against them very soon,” a Chattogram customs official The Daily Star recently on condition of anonymity.

Documents show Dhaka-based buying house Asia Trading Corporation shipped 14,085 tonnes of clothing items worth Tk 308 crore (\$28 million) to the UAE, Singapore and Malaysia in 2022. However, not even a single dollar entered the country against this shipment.

In the shipping documents, the company showed all the 1,342 consignments as “sample goods”. Under customs rules, sample goods do not fetch any export earnings.

Similarly, Hong Kong Fashion, an export-oriented company based in Gazipur, exported 1,160 tonnes of RMG goods worth Tk 43.21 crore to seven countries including the UAE, Canada and Malaysia between January 2022 and May 2023. Only Tk 12.73 crore has been brought back to the country against these shipments, while the remaining Tk 30.48 crore was laundered, according to the customs probe report.

Customs Intelligence and Investigation Directorate (CIID) came up with the findings after a six-month investigation carried out in three phases, beginning January this year. The CIID analysed the export data of these companies from January 2017 to May 2023.

Of the Tk 821 crore laundered, around Tk 600 crore went to the United Arab Emirates, Malaysia and Singapore. The rest was sent to 22 other countries, including Canada, Australia, Belgium, Qatar, Spain, Kuwait, the Philippines, Sweden, Russia, Panama, Thailand, Georgia and Palestine territory, according to documents obtained by The Daily Star.

“We have never before identified such a large-scale export forgery. In the past, we had information about money laundering involving 10 or 15 consignments. Irregularities involving so many consignments together never caught our attention,” said Mohammad Bashir Ahmed, additional director general of CIID, Chattogram office.

Most of the 33 exporters and buying houses whose names came up in the customs investigation are located in Dhaka and Gazipur.

The Daily Star spoke with seven of these companies, and each of them denied any wrongdoing.

Names of at least 12 commercial banks were used in the export documents. This newspaper spoke with six banks. Officials of three banks said the exporters in question are not their clients. Three other banks said they issued the letters of credit against the export permits of

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The Harihar river is occupied by influential people of Swarnpur village in Jashore's Manirampur upazila for fish farming. They have built small dams across the river and created their “own” ponds and lakes. A large part of the 45km river has already been taken over in Jhikargachha, Manirampur and Jashore Sadar upazilas. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

No more 3-day voice, data packs from Oct 15

BTRC orders telcos to discontinue 15-day plans too

MAHMUDUL HASAN

At a time when the government is pressing full steam ahead with the ‘Smart Bangladesh’ agenda, the telecom regulator is taking measures that are at odds with it.

On September 3, the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission ordered the mobile operators to discontinue three-day and 15-day voice and data packages from October 15, in a move that stakeholders, experts and consumer rights organisations say restricts the freedom of choice.

The move will particularly hit the pockets of the grassroots, low-income and youth segments and is primed to reduce their consumption of telecom services, particularly the internet.

The operators have also been directed to limit the total number of packages they offer to 40. At present, operators offer up to 95 packages to subscribers, whose duration ranges from an hour to an indefinite period.

From October 15, mobile users will have the option to buy voice or data plans for seven days or 30 days. The option to purchase plans with unlimited validity will remain, too.

The BTRC said it arrived at the decision by surveying mobile users, who were in favour of condensing the volume of packages on offer.

The mobile operators maintain that the BTRC survey contained leading questions that influenced the respondents’ answers by suggesting responses.

Telecom Minister Mustafa Jabbar has long been expressing his annoyance over the sheer number of packages offered by the carriers.

“Earlier, they would offer 300 packages. Now they are offering 95

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BTRC CRACKS DOWN ON TELCOS’ PACKAGES

Only 7-day and 30-day plans allowed

40pc subscribers opt for 3-day packages

Only 40 data packs can be offered after Oct 15



55KG GOLD THEFT

It may be an inside job

Say police officials probing the crime at Dhaka airport

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN and MOHAMMAD SUMAN

The gold – 55.51kg to be precise – stolen from Dhaka Customs House was taken from 437 separate packs kept inside a customs warehouse at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport.

The thieves didn’t take the entire contents from the packs; rather, they pilfered only small portions of gold from the packs before putting those back, according to investigators.

All these gold items were seized under the DM (detention memo) criteria, as these were supposed to be released upon payment of fines and taxes.

To distinguish one item from another, officials placed the DM items in separate packs and sealed them with tape. The gold was pilfered from 437 of those items, which were seized between 2020 and August of this year.

“It is not possible for a common person or a thief to enter such a secure place at the airport. Even then, if anyone enters, they will not take a portion of gold from a pack; they will take the whole batch,” said Morshed Alam, deputy commissioner of Uttara Division Police.

“We also found the instruments that were used to break the vault and cut the window,” he told The Daily Star.

Police seized a cutter, an axe, and a Chinese knife from the warehouse.

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the BUSINESS

Exports growing, but slowly

Earnings from merchandise shipments in August increased slightly by 3.80 percent to \$4.78 billion, mainly riding on apparel exports, as all the other major sectors staged a poor performance.

Three important sectors – leather and leather goods, jute and jute goods and home textiles – staged a poor performance.

This was largely due to the volatile global economic situation stemming from the fallouts of the pandemic and Russia-Ukraine war.

Although inflation is going down in the major export destinations like Europe and the US bank, interest rates are still high. As a result, consumers are yet to go on a spending spree as in the pre-pandemic period.

STORY ON B1



School students, along with their guardians and others, crossing the Uttara-Tongi flyover amid heavy traffic, obstructing vehicular movement while also throwing themselves in harm's way. Such disregard for road safety rules often leads to dire accidents. The photo was taken in the capital's Uttara yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Probe into S Alam's wealth abroad

JP's Chunnu asks PM in JS without mentioning his name

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Without mentioning S Alam's name, Jatiya Party Secretary General Mujibur Haque Chunnu yesterday urged the prime minister to take immediate steps to investigate the allegations that the businessman has built an empire of USD 1 billion in Singapore.

Speaking on a point of order in the Jatiya Sangsad, he mentioned a report The Daily Star ran on the businessman.

He said the person in question owns many banks, has taken citizenship of other countries, and purchased commercial property, hotels and businesses worth a billion dollars in Singapore.

On August 4, The Daily Star published the report, headlined “S Alam's Aladdin's Lamp”.

“Such a big incident ... many pieces of evidence have come to light that are hard not to believe, and we believe this is an important matter for the state,” said Chunnu.

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Macron to visit Dhaka Sept 10

Says French embassy; Indo-Pacific cooperation, climate change on agenda

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

France has formally announced President Emmanuel Macron's visit to Bangladesh on September 10 that will focus on cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, deepening bilateral trade relations, and climate change.

He will travel to Dhaka after attending the G20 summit in New Delhi on September 9-10 and is scheduled to hold a meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Hasina, who will also take part in the summit and meet Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi possibly on September 8, will return to Dhaka from New Delhi on September 10 and welcome the French president.

"It will also be an opportunity to deepen our bilateral relations with a country that is experiencing rapid economic growth and seeking to diversify its partnerships," says the official Facebook page of the French embassy in Dhaka.

The statement says Bangladesh and France show great convergence in the face of global challenges, particularly within the framework of the Paris Agenda for Peoples and the Planet, which Bangladesh actively supports.

"Since the country is particularly vulnerable to climate change, the president will recall France's determination to stand by Bangladesh on its humanitarian front, in particular in the face of regular floods."

The French embassy said Bangladesh is also an important contributor to international solidarity actions, whether through its contingents in peacekeeping operations or in hosting Rohingya refugees.

About Macron's attending the G20 summit, the embassy said it will allow the president to maintain the constant dialogue with his counterparts from all continents.



A firefighter works at a site that was hit amid Russian drone attacks, at a location given as Odesa region, Ukraine in this image released yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Xi to skip G20 summit

China to send Premier Li Qiang; Biden disappointed

AFP, Beijing

Premier Li Qiang will lead China's delegation to the G20 summit in India this weekend, Beijing said yesterday, all but confirming President Xi Jinping will snub the meeting of the world's biggest economies.

Speculation and media reports have swirled for the past week that Xi would snub the event, but China had remained silent on the issue.

US President Joe Biden has said he would be "disappointed" to see Xi skip the gathering of world leaders in New Delhi.

Beijing's foreign ministry confirmed yesterday that Li would be at the G20 Leaders' Summit on Saturday and Sunday, which it described as an important forum for economic cooperation.

PRE-, POST-POLLS SECURITY SCENARIO

US official enquires civil society members

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

US Deputy Assistant Secretary for Regional Security Mira Resnick, who reached Dhaka yesterday for security dialogue, has enquired about the pre- and post-election security scenarios in Bangladesh and the regional security challenges.

The official of the US Bureau of Political-Military Affairs exchanged views with the civil society groups on human rights, civilian security and strategic security risks of Bangladesh and its defence relations with China and other countries in the region, according to two civil society members who preferred not to be named.

"I think the US official is assessing the overall security situation in Bangladesh



Mira Resnick

ahead of the elections," a civil society member, who was present at a meeting with Mira at the US embassy in Dhaka, told The Daily Star.

The US has repeatedly called for a free and fair election in Bangladesh against the backdrop of two previous parliamentary polls marred by allegations of irregularities. The country in May this year announced a visa policy against Bangladeshis who seek to "undermine the democratic election process".

Today, Mira is set to lead the US delegation to the ninth US-Bangladesh Security Dialogue. The Bangladesh delegation will be led by foreign ministry Director General (North America wing)

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Next year SSC in February, HSC in June

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Next year's Secondary School Certificate (SSC) and equivalent examinations are likely to be held in February, while the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) and equivalent exams are scheduled for June.

The Inter-Education Board Coordination Committee issued an office order regarding this matter yesterday.

The notification, signed by its head, Professor Tapan Kumar Sarkar, states that the SSC exam will take place in the second week of February, and the HSC exam will be conducted in the second week of June.

HSC exams will be held with a curtailed syllabus, while SSC exams will be held in full syllabus, the notification said.

21-day-old snatched from home

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A 21-day-old infant was snatched from a house in Haripur area of Habiganj's Sadar upazila yesterday while her parents were asleep.

The missing infant is the second child of Babul Mia and Liza Begum. They are now devastated after the sudden disappearance of their only daughter.

According to police, a case was filed in this regard and efforts are on to locate the infant and safely return her to her parents.

Md Badiuzzaman, officer-in-charge of Habiganj Model Police Station, told The Daily Star that after receiving the complaint late last night, a police team went to the spot and started an investigation last morning.

GAS BLAST ON TRAWLER

One dies at CMCH, 8 battle for life

UNB, Chattogram

A fisherman on Sunday night died from injuries he sustained in a gas cylinder explosion on a fishing trawler in Cox's Bazar town.

Osman Gani, 20, breathed his last while undergoing treatment at Chattogram Medical College Hospital (CMCH), where he was admitted with 60 percent burns.

On Friday morning, 11 fishermen suffered burn injuries after a gas cylinder exploded inside a trawler at ghat-6 of Nuniachara.

Of the injured, two were sent to Dhaka for treatment. And the rest, with 60-90 percent burns, are currently being treated at CMCH and their condition is not so good, the CMCH director added.

No more 3-day voice, data packs

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packages. Is it possible for customers to choose from 95 packages and remember those? This takes the level of people's confusion to extreme heights. So, we are cutting it down to 40," he told The Daily Star.

When asked if the move curbs the freedom of choice, he said: "With this, a new system is being introduced to break the autocratic attitude of operators who have been bombarding customers with a web of plans."

Curiously, at the programme on May 30 where the BTRC survey result was shared, many of the customers who spoke said they wanted more packages, particularly targeted for OTT media consumption and students.

Subsequently, the operators vehemently opposed the impending BTRC move and said it is not reasonable "in a world where consumer preference for options is vast and wide-ranging".

"Every product that operators offer is based on an analysis of the diverse demands of the consumers from various demographics," said the Association of Mobile Telecom Operators of Bangladesh (Amtob), the trade body for carriers, in a letter to BTRC on August 7.

The synergy between market offerings and customer demand may be broken if there are any abrupt changes made to the offer modalities as a result of frequent regulatory interventions.

Just in March 2022, the BTRC ordered operators to bring down the number of packages to 95 from a few hundred packages each.

Subsequently, Amtob urged the telecom regulator to reconsider its proposed changes, which will have "grave consequences on the industry".

But the BTRC went ahead and issued the directive on Sunday. Discontinuing the three-day packs, it seems, is the more polemic among the directives.

A large segment of grassroots people use data for entertainment and other purposes besides connectivity, said TIM Nurul Kabir, a former secretary general of Amtob.

And they mostly opt for the affordable three-day packs.

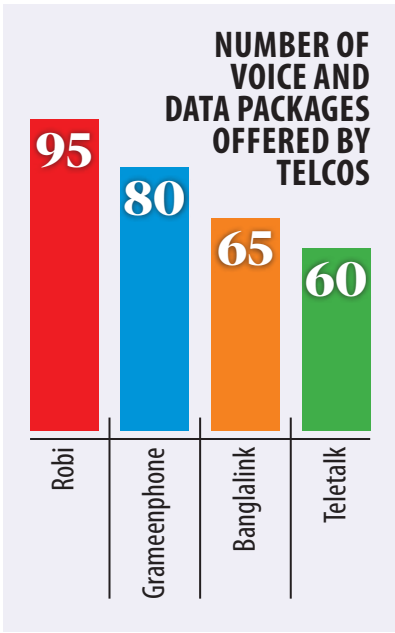
"If the option to purchase data for a short time with lower expenditure is eliminated, it will be very inconvenient for them. Customers

should always have flexibility in choosing options, and denying this would be unjustified," he added.

Asked if the customers who avail three-day packages now will have to spend more for the minimum seven-day plans, AKM Habibur Rahman, managing director of Teletalk, said: "Undoubtedly -- it is not possible to offer the seven-day packages at the same rate as the three-day ones."

As much as 48 percent of Banglalink's 4.2 crore-odd customers regularly purchase the three-day packs and just 3 percent avail of the 15-day plans, according to Taimur Rahman, its chief corporate and regulatory affairs officer.

"Discontinuing the three-day packs will have a huge impact on customers, specifically those who have a limited budget," he added.



Similarly, Robi, the second-largest carrier with 5.7 crore users, has the highest number of takers for its three-day packages: 50 percent of the recharges come from it, while 7 percent come from 15-day plans.

There are more than 11 crore unique mobile subscribers, who have a wide array of demands and requirements, said Shahed Alam, head of regulatory affairs at Robi. Meeting these demands with a mere 40 packages poses a significant challenge for the operators.

"This decision is poised to have a detrimental impact on customers' ability to select the packages that best suit their preferences and the overall cost of their mobile phone usage."

Furthermore, discontinuing the three-day packages will disproportionately affect students and individuals with limited data needs.

"The decision lacks a foundation in data or research conducted by the telecom regulator, and the findings, if any, were inconclusive," Alam added.

Subscribers more often than not fail to use up the data in the three-day packages, said BTRC Chairman Shyam Sunder Sikder.

"There is an option for customers to carry forward their unused data if they purchase the same package. But many customers were unaware of this and are ultimately deprived."

So the telecom operator is doing away with the three-day packages, he added.

"We are currently assessing the regulatory move," said Hossain Sadat, spokesman of Grameenphone, the market leader with 8.2 crore subscribers as of July.

The regulator can fix the number of packages an operator can offer to reduce customer confusion of customers, but setting the durations of packages is too much regulation, said Ghulam Rahman, president of Consumers Association of Bangladesh.

"It should be set by operators based on their customers' needs," he added.

A regulatory authority should seek the opinions of stakeholders -- operators and customers -- and conduct a thorough survey before making such an important decision that will undoubtedly affect millions of people, said Shahdeen Malik, an eminent jurist and a constitutional expert.

"It would be tantamount to incompetence if a regulator conducts an online survey with only 550 participants for this. I would say it is a misuse of power by a regulatory authority."

Furthermore, if the revenue of mobile companies, one of the biggest sources of government revenue, were to decline, it would have significant implications for public finances.

"It's not that I want the operators' revenue to increase, but from a national standpoint, their revenue is important for the government, especially considering current budgetary constraints," Malik added.

Tk 821 crore laundered in name of export

FROM PAGE 1

other companies, and not these companies.

Meanwhile, in a press release yesterday, the CIID said as many as 10 RMG factories laundered about Tk 300 crore in the name of export.

However, this figure is included in the Tk 821 crore laundered by the 33 RMG companies and buying houses since 2017.

THE FORGERY

Customs officials said some exporters use fake bank documents, sales contracts, letters of credit, and export permits to launder money.

To launder money, fraudsters often use Code 20 on the NBR server, which denotes sending "samples" to the importers before the actual export. In this case, there is no question of export earnings. Another popular way to launder money is under invoicing -- either by quoting low prices or low weights of the export items in the shipping documents.

FROM PAGE 1

Referring to the available evidence collected so far, he said, "Everything points at the involvement of insiders with access to the warehouse, rather than an outsider."

Investigators said there were no CCTV cameras within the customs warehouse.

Tohidul Islam, additional deputy commissioner of Uttara Division Police, said there was a CCTV camera at the entrance of the customs warehouse.

"But we came to know that the camera was not working on the night of September 1 when the gold was reportedly stolen from the warehouse," he said.

According to the first information report filed on Sunday by Dhaka Customs House with Airport Police Station, the theft took place on September 1.

Meanwhile, police detained the four security guards -- Rezaul Karim, Mozammel Haq, Afzal Hossain, and Niamat Hawlader -- of the customs house for interrogation early yesterday.

One of the investigators said Niamat had failed to give satisfactory answers to questions asked about the theft.

"There is a major gap between Niamat's digital movement and statement. So, we are closely investigating his role in the incident," the official said, requesting anonymity.

In another development, police yesterday evening detained the four Assistant Revenue Officers (AROs) --

For example, four companies -- Asia Trading Corporation, Sabiha Saiki Fashion, Emu Trading Corporation, and Ilham -- used Code 20 to ship at least 1,780 consignments between January 2020 and December 2022. While the permissible RMG samples usually range from 10kgs to 100kgs, each of those consignments weighed more than 10,000kgs, the CIID report said. These consignments could leave the port as the NBR server and the customs officials did not flag those, the report added.

Through under invoicing, the rest 29 exporters shipped 14,878 tonnes of RMG goods worth Tk 554 crore, but they showed only Tk 111 crore in export earnings.

The average price of a T-shirt was shown Tk 12 to Tk 21 and a pair of pants Tk 17 to Tk 54, which is four to ten times lower than the actual cost.

Asia Trading Corporation Director (operations) Mahmud Alam, Emu Trading Company Managing

Director Abdul Kader, Ilham owner Nurul Amin, Sabiha Saiki Fashion Managing Director Md Shakil and Hong Kong Fashion Ltd Managing Director Mizanur Rahman said they have nothing to do with the forgery.

"My company has been closed since 2019. I do not know who exported these products," said Mahmud Alam.

Mizanur Rahman also blamed some unknown gangs, and demanded their punishment.

CIID Director General Mohammad Fakhru Alam said both the amount laundered and the number of companies involved may increase as investigations continue.

"We are collecting information about the Inland Container Depots (ICD) and the banks concerned, as well as the NBR server to verify more than 10,000 consignments. When we started working on four companies at the beginning of this year, found evidence of huge money laundering," he added.

Shahidul Islam, Saidul Islam Shahed, Akram Sheikh, and Masum Rana -- for interrogation as they were in charge of the warehouse.

ADC Tohidul Islam confirmed the development to this newspaper.

Customs sources said AROs Shahidul and Saidul had been in charge of this warehouse since last November.

On August 1, they were transferred to the cargo unit of Dhaka Customs. After that, AROs Akram and Masud were put in charge of the warehouse.

Upon assuming responsibility, Akram and Masud signed a document stating that the inventory of seized products was consistent and that no items were missing.

But around 13 days later, on August 23, Shahidul and Saidul were transferred back to the same warehouse.

Contacted, Dhaka Customs House Commissioner AKM Nurul Huda Azad said, "Four electronic locks were purchased a month ago for added security of the gold kept at the warehouse on a temporary basis. As Shahidul and Saidul were previously in the same position, they were transferred back to the warehouse."

However, a police high-up, involved with the investigation, said anomalies in the gold inventory were first detected on August 13, after six gold bars went missing from the vault.

Senior customs officials then summoned Shahidul and Saidul, and asked them why the gold bars were

missing, said the police official, adding that the gold bars were found inside the warehouse a day later.

Sources said digital footprints between Shahidul and some goldsmiths in the capital's Tanti Bazar area were found.

Dhaka Customs House has formed a nine-member probe committee in connection with the stolen gold.

The committee, headed by Dhaka Customs House Additional Commissioner Kazi Farid Uddin, has been asked to submit a report within seven working days.

Dhaka Customs House Joint Commissioner Minhaj Uddin told The Daily Star that the committee would look into whether there was any negligence in storing the gold.

After this incident at Dhaka Customs House, the Chattogram Customs House is also taking extra precautions. After the HSIA, the highest number of gold seizures in the country takes place at Chattogram Shah Amanat International Airport.

Talking about security of seized items, Chattogram Customs House Commissioner Mohammad Fyzur Rahman said, "All measures have been taken as per the law for the security of the seized gold and jewellery."

Preparing an inventory of all kinds of valuable goods at Chattogram Customs has begun. However, extra precautions have been taken considering the reality and legal constraints, he said.

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Identify those
going abroad
with fake
certificates: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday directed the authorities concerned to identify and take legal actions against those who go abroad with fake certificates and their abettors.

She made this directive while chairing the Cabinet meeting at her office here in the city.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Commuters from all walks of life, including patients, students, job holders, and law enforcement officials, suffer due to a long tailback on Mirpur Road. The photo was taken yesterday near Asad Gate intersection.

20,000 posts
vacant in BRRailway minister
informs parliament

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 20,000 posts now remain vacant in Bangladesh Railway, while some 2,880 persons have been employed during the last nine months in different categories, said Railway Minister M Nurul Islam Sujon yesterday.

"The manpower crisis in BR will be resolved soon," he said, while replying to a query made by treasury bench lawmaker M Abdul Latif of Chattogram-11 during the question-answer session at the Jatiya Sangsad.

The recruitment process is going on in this regard, he informed the parliament, with Jatiya

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

DENGUE DEATHS, CASES OUTSIDE DHAKA

Lack of facilities
adding to the numbersSay experts as DGHS data show 75pc deaths
are from outside the capitalHELEMUL ALAM and MOUDUD AHMED
SUJAN

Mohammad Yasin, a resident of Faridpur's Boalmari, was admitted to a hospital in his hometown after being diagnosed with dengue seven days ago.

However, the next day, he was referred to another hospital in Faridpur sadar as his platelet count came down from over 1 lakh to 46,000.

Admitted to a private facility in the town, his platelet count plummeted to 26,000 that day and to 10,000 the following day, compelling his doctors to refer him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

"My platelet count was 8,000 when I was admitted to DMCH two days ago.

I am feeling better now, thanks to timely treatment. However, I am still feeling dizzy," said the 22-year-old.

Mohammad Nayeem of Panchdona in Narsingdi, who was admitted to DMCH this Saturday, shared a similar experience.

A good number of dengue patients like Yasin and Nayeem come to different hospitals in the capital, mostly in critical conditions.

The journey further deteriorates their condition as it disrupts their fluid management, which is crucial for dengue patients, according to doctors.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services data, only 44 out of the 132 deceased in the last

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Champion of
health equitySpeakers on
Dr Zafrullah

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury earned universal love and respect for his dedication to improve the healthcare accessibility for all, said Professor Md Sayedur Rahman, Chairman of the Pharmacology Department at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University yesterday.

He was speaking at a lecture, titled "Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury, the National Drug Policy of 1982, and Bangladesh's Health Movement," commemorating the 34th anniversary of Drik.

Professor Rahman recounted Dr Zafrullah's remarkable contributions

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NID, land reform bills
placed in parliament

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Identity Registration Bill, 2023 was placed in parliament yesterday to transfer the national identity registration operations from the Election Commission to the Security Services Division, Ministry of Home Affairs.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan placed the bill which was sent to the parliamentary standing committee on the respective ministry for further examination. The committee was asked to submit its report within five working days.

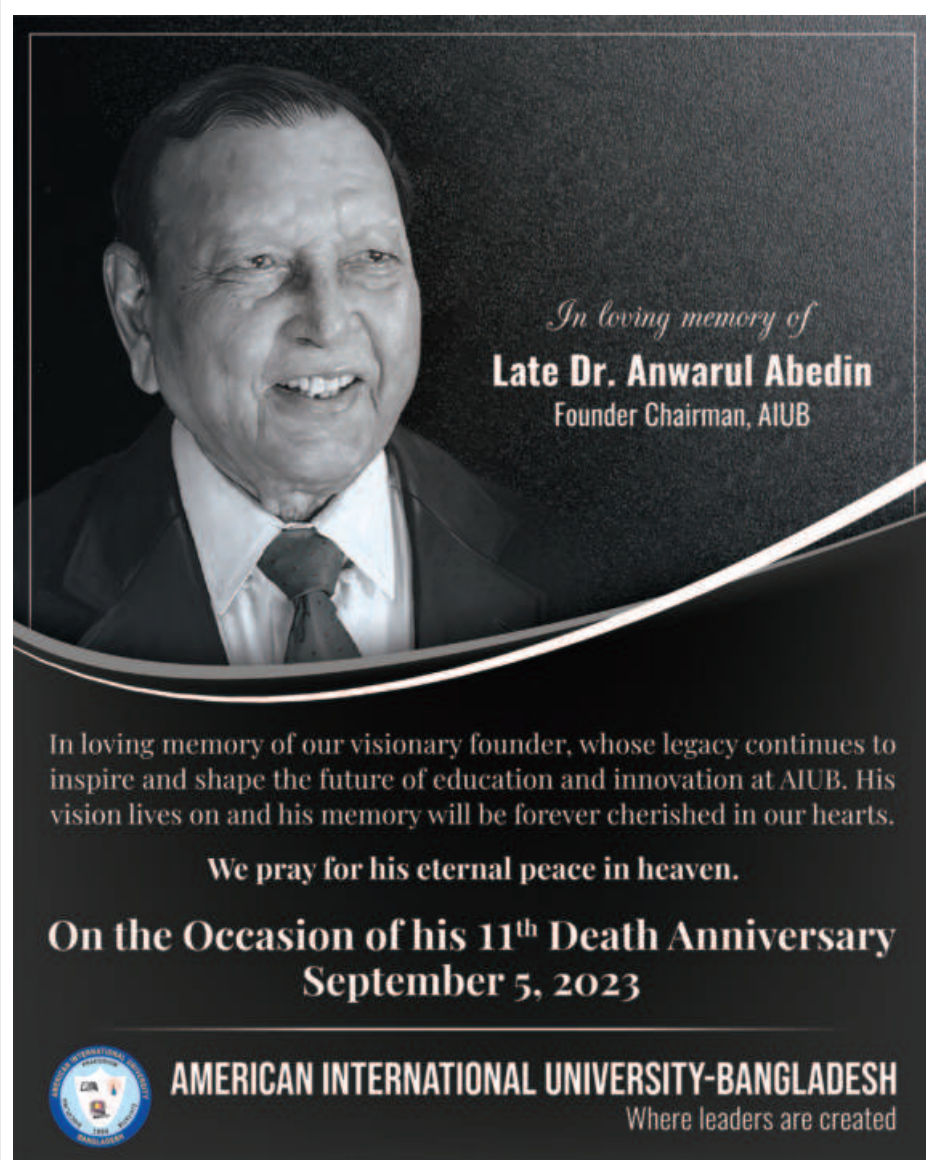
As per the proposed law, immediately

after the birth, any Bangladeshi national will be given a unique number or birth certificate, which would remain unchangeable.

The Election Commission will prepare the voter lists with the nationals aged above 18 years.

According to the bill, if a citizen intentionally or knowingly provides any false information or conceals information while obtaining a national identity card shall be deemed to have committed an offence under this law and shall be liable for such offence and shall be punished

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



In loving memory of our visionary founder, whose legacy continues to inspire and shape the future of education and innovation at AIUB. His vision lives on and his memory will be forever cherished in our hearts.

We pray for his eternal peace in heaven.

On the Occasion of his 11th Death Anniversary
September 5, 2023



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Timing: 10 AM - 7 PM (THU - FRI - SAT)

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EXHIBITORS

650+
BRANDS

2500+
HEALTHCARE
PROFESSIONALS

7500+
TRADE VISITORS

15+
COUNTRIES

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Lack of facilities adding

FROM PAGE 3
 11 days hail from the capital. However, analysing the DGHS data based on the addresses of the deceased, 101 out of 132 deceased dengue patients during this time came from outside Dhaka.

At least 12 dengue patients died in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning, eight of whom were from outside Dhaka.

With the figures, the total number of dengue deaths this year rose to 646. Of them, 468 died in Dhaka. With 2,823 new dengue cases during this period, the total number of cases rose to 1,33,134. Of them, 61,489 of whom are from outside Dhaka.

HM Nazmul Ahsan, associate professor at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital, said there should be better treatment and management facilities outside Dhaka.

"It takes several hours for a patient to reach the capital, and during this time, he does not get enough fluid supply. Thus, many patients collapse even before they are admitted to hospitals," he mentioned.

Such patients have lower chances of survival as they might suffer a decompensated shock, which reduces their chances of recovery by 50 percent. A patient with decompensated shock syndrome may die within a few minutes to one hour, he added.

Nazmul advised the authorities to improve dengue management systems outside the capital

to lower casualties. Mushtuq Hussain, consultant at the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research attributed the higher number of deaths outside Dhaka to the lack of access to testing services and adequate treatment in rural areas.

There is no dengue testing service at the upazila health complexes. Besides, people in villages

do not have any access to testing facilities near their residences and come to the facilities after it is too late. This results in delayed hospitalisation and deaths, he mentioned.

"We often see the authorities blaming the people for their lack of awareness. However, this is a very vague remark and looks like they are attempting to evade responsibility towards their people," he added.

20,000 posts

FROM PAGE 3
 Sangsad Speaker Dr Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury in the chair. In response to a question from AL MP Kazim Uddin Ahmed, the railways minister stated 851 kilometers of new railways have been constructed during the tenure of the current government.

Besides, the government completed the construction of 1,14 new railway bridges, the reconstruction of 952 railway bridges, the construction of 132 station buildings, the renovation of 231 buildings, the conversion of 340 km of railway tracks to dual gauge, and the reconstruction of 1,379 km of railway tracks, he added.

In response to another question asked by AL MP Mamunur Rashid, the railways minister said that a feasibility study project has been undertaken to start electric train service on Dhaka to Chattogram route. He said that this survey might be completed in April next year.

Meanwhile, Road

Transport and Bridge Minister Obaidul Quader told parliament that the number of motor vehicles currently registered in the country is around 57.52 lakh, while the number of issued driving licenses is 59.46 lakh.

Replying to another question, he stated that the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) commits to unconditionally reducing 3.4 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions from the transportation sector by 2030.

"At least 30% of vehicles used in the road transport sector should be converted to electric category within that time frame," he added.

Noting that the use of electric vehicles is gradually increasing in Bangladesh, as it is in the rest of the world, the minister stated that, while the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) operation will begin with diesel-powered buses, the BRT will be gradually expanded to include as many electric-powered buses as possible in order to cut emissions.

NID, land reform bills

FROM PAGE 3
 with 1 (one) year imprisonment or a fine not exceeding Tk 20,000 or both. It said if a citizen is knowingly avail more than one NID shall be deemed to have committed an offence under this law and for such crime that person shall be punished with imprisonment of not less than one year or not more than Tk 20,000 or both.

It is considered a criminal offence under the law for anyone involved in the registration process, including the preparation, distribution, and maintenance of national identity cards, to intentionally deface or destroy any information related to the cards kept by the Registrar. The punishment for such an offence is imprisonment for up to seven years, a fine of up to Tk 1 lakh, or both.

Any person who distorts or destroys any information mentioned in the National Identity Card for dishonest purposes shall be deemed to have committed an offence under this Act and shall be liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 2 (two) years or to a fine not exceeding 40 (forty) thousand or to both.

Any person who makes unauthorised access to data or uses data illegally shall be deemed to have committed an offence under this law and for such offence shall be punished with imprisonment for a term not exceeding 5 (five) years or with a fine not exceeding Tk 50,000 or with both.

Meanwhile, the Land Crime Prevention and

Remedy Bill, 2023 was placed in parliament yesterday to curb land-related forgeries and offences.

Land Minister Saifuzzaman Chowdhury placed the Bill which was sent to the parliamentary standing committee on the respective ministry for further examination.

The Committee was asked to submit its report within seven days.

In the proposed law, the land-related forgeries were specified and steps were taken to prevent, and curb the crimes related to public and private lands as well as to ensure remedy to these offences.

A scope was kept in it (the proposed law) for the disposal of land-related disputes through arbitration alongside the court.

The maximum punishment for land forgery would be seven-year imprisonment, while the minimum is two-year jail.

Champion

FROM PAGE 3
 during the Liberation War in 1971, his pivotal role in establishing hospitals, and the founding of the Gonoshasthaya Kendra.

Professor Rahman also underscored Dr Zafrullah's pivotal role in crafting the National Drug Policy of 1982, despite facing opposition.

Photographer and Drik's Managing Director Shahidul Alam delivered the welcome speech at the event.

During the event, Shireen Haque and Barish Hasan Chowdhury, on behalf of Zafrullah Chowdhury's family, was also present.

Opportunities up

FROM PAGE 5
 Report 2021-2022" of the expatriates' welfare ministry, published in April this year.

A labour welfare official at the Bangladesh mission in Canberra said the letter was part of their regular activities to explore employment opportunities for Bangladeshis in Australia.

In order to migrate to Australia, a Bangladeshi nurse needs to be registered with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra), said the official.

Currently Ahpra accepts certificates of five Bangladeshi institutions, including the Bangladesh Nursing and Midwifery Council (BNMC) and Dhaka University. The registration comprises of several steps, including a six-month training and subsequent

exam. The exam takes place in-person in the Australian city of Adelaide, noted the official.

Also, foreign nurses need to achieve an overall score of seven and a minimum of seven in each of the four components in the IELTS exam, he added.

According to the letter, a Bangladeshi nurse need to show five years of professional job experience to apply for a position in Australia.

As per an Australia Bureau of Statistics media release issued last year and available online, over 40 percent of registered nurses and caregivers were born overseas, with almost 40,000 arriving since 2016.

In July this year, there were 1.48 lakh registered nurses, midwives, and allied professionals in Bangladesh, according to BNMC.

Identify those

FROM PAGE 3
 There are allegations of people going abroad with fake certificates for various jobs. Even physicians and engineers are using those, said Cabinet Secretary Md Mahbub Hossain while briefing reporters after the meeting.

"The prime minister has directed the home minister to bring the culprits to book, and identify who helps them," he said.

In the meeting, the draft of Foreign Employment and Immigration (Amendment) Act 2023 and the draft of the Overseas Employment and Expatriates Act (Amendment), 2023 were approved.

Besides, other decisions including approval of plastic industry development policy were taken.

6 Islamic

FROM PAGE 5
 liberation forces and won't bow down to any evil force.

He hoped that the upcoming general election would be free, fair and peaceful.

Misbahur Rahman Chowdhury, chairman of Bangladesh Islami Oikya Jote and executive chairman of the alliance, said anti-liberation forces are hatching conspiracy against the present government and the country, we will remain alert against any kind of conspiracy.

Besides, the alliance declared nine points, including commodity price reduction, arrest of the patrons of black marketers, and permission for peaceful rallies.



EAST WEST UNIVERSITY
 Progoti Foundation for Education and Development
 Permanent Sanad Holder

TENDER INVITATION

Tender is invited from the bonafide suppliers/firms for the following items:

- Procurement of 10 (ten) different types of Laboratory Instruments for the Department of EEE
- Procurement of Furniture for the Chemistry Lab, Department of MPS
- Printing of Exam Scripts with cover sheet for the Fall Semester 2023, Spring & Summer Semester 2024 of EWU
- Procurement of 11 units Computer with Monitor and 04 units UPS (650VA) for various departments /offices of EWU
- Procurement of 111 units Computer with Monitor, 03 units Interactive Flat Panel and 03 units Network Printer for Multimedia and Image Processing Lab, Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality lab and Human-Computer Interaction Lab for the Department of CSE of East West University
- Implementation (Supply and Installation) of Network Infrastructure for Multimedia and Image Processing Lab, Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality lab and Human-Computer Interaction Lab (Room# 431, 435 and 436)

The schedule of the items with terms and conditions (hard copy) can be obtained from the Finance & Accounts Department (2nd floor) of the University up to **18.09.2023** during office hours (**up to 03:00 p.m.**) on working days. The schedule of **item no. 4 & 5** will also be available in the e-tender process (<http://etender.ewubd.edu>). The price of the tender schedule (non-refundable) is **Tk.500/-** (excluding online service charge for e-tender process).

The interested bidders are requested to submit the tender schedule in the tender box kept at the 2nd floor of the Office of the Treasurer (Room No-316) of the University or through e-tender process (according to the schedule) **by 19.09.2023 within 02:00 p.m.** Tender(s) submitted within the deadline will be **opened on the same day (19.09.2023) at 02:30 p.m.** at the Conference Room (4th floor, Room No # 508) of East West University in presence of the bidders (if any) by ensuring health safety.

The bidders must mention the **"name of the item"** at the top of envelope. Otherwise, the bid document will be treated as cancelled.

East West University authority reserves the right to accept any tender in full or part of it or reject all tenders without mentioning any reason thereof.

Chief of HR & Logistics

Water recedes

FROM PAGE 5
 "I have shifted my shop from the river bank," Azizul said, adding that he is not sure when he can resume his business.

Sharif Hossain, resident of Boro Koyra village in Sadar upazila, said his house is still inundated by floodwater.


"We have been living in an inundated house for the last five days. The water is receding, but very slowly. After the floodwater recedes, we have a battle waiting for us as we have to clean up and repair the damage to our homes. The flood might be gone, but the struggle remains," Sharif added.

According to Sirajganj relief and rehabilitation office, around a hundred villages of 22 unions in five upazilas were submerged in flood water in the last five days.

PRAYER TIMING
 SEPTEMBER 5

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4:35	12:45	4:30	6:20	7:45
JAMAAT 5:10	1:15	4:45	6:25	8:15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
 Office of the Executive Engineer
 PW Division, Munshiganj
 Phone: (02) 7612177 Fax: (02) 7612728
 E-mail: ee_musi@pwd.gov.bd

Memo No. 25.36.5900.460.27.001.20.১৪৭ Date: 04/09/2023

e-GP Tender Notice


e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) for procurement of the following work described below.

1. No.	Name of work	Tender ID No.	Tender proposal opening date and time
1.	Construction of Sreenagar Upazila Model Mosque and Islamic Cultural Center (3-storied Building with 3-storied Foundation) at Munshiganj (Sub-Head: Construction of Boundary Wall & Road) FY 2023-2024	869390	Date: 27-09-2023 Time 12:00pm

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 Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP Portal and e-GP help desk: helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd.



Md. Khairuzzaman
 Executive Engineer
 Munshiganj PW Division
 Munshiganj

GD-1350



পরীক্ষা নিয়ন্ত্রকের অফিস
 ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
 ভেঁড়ার নোটিশ

ক্রমিক নং	কাজের নাম	সংগ্রহ পদ্ধতি	টেডার ডকুমেন্টস বিক্রির শেষ তারিখ	টেডার বক্স বন্ধের তারিখ ও সময়	টেডার খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	প্রয়োজনীয় তথ্য সংগ্রহের স্থান
১	পরীক্ষা নিয়ন্ত্রকের অফিসের জন্য ০৩ (তিন) টি সার্ভার, ১ (এক) টি নেটওয়ার্কিং সুইচ এবং ১ (এক) টি 10 KVA অনলাইন ইউ.পি.এস. ক্রয়।	OTM	১৭/০৯/২০২৩ অবশিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত।	১৮/০৯/২০২৩ সকাল: ১০:০০ টা পর্যন্ত।	১৮/০৯/২০২৩ সকাল: ১১:০০ টা পর্যন্ত।	পরীক্ষা নিয়ন্ত্রকের অফিস। ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ওয়েব সাইট।


 মোঃ বাহরুল হক চৌধুরী
 পরীক্ষা নিয়ন্ত্রক
 ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

GD-1351



Chittagong Medical University
 Salimpur, Faujdardhat, Chattogram
 Phone: 024-4045146, 01309-034100, 01829626055
 Email: info@cmu.edu.bd

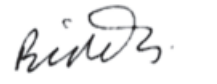
Ref: 37.00.1586.001.01.007.23 Date: 05/09/2023

e-Tender Notice

e-Tender is invited to the e-GP Portal for following goods. Interested tenderers are requested to visit (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) website for details. (APP ID-37.00.1586.001.01.007)

Sl No.	Tender ID	Name of the goods	Tender publication date	Tender opening date and time
1.	870417	Purchase of Cleaning Apparatus for the Fiscal Year 2023-24	05-Sep-2023 12:00	20-Sep-2023 11:30
2.	870478	Purchase of Sanitary Supplies for the Fiscal Year 2023-24	05-Sep-2023 12:00	20-Sep-2023 11:30
3.	870484	Purchase of Printing Materials of General Store for the Fiscal Year 2023-24	05-Sep-2023 12:00	20-Sep-2023 11:30
4.	870489	Purchase of Stationary Products of General Store for the Fiscal Year 2023-24	05-Sep-2023 12:00	20-Sep-2023 11:30
5.	870568	Purchase of Various Types of Paper (A4, Legal, A3) for Dean Office usage for the Fiscal Year 2023-24	05-Sep-2023 12:00	20-Sep-2023 11:30
6.	870506	Framework Agreement for Purchase of Answer Paper, Bills & forms for different Exams under Controller of Examination of Chittagong Medical University	07-Sep-2023 12:00	25-Sep-2023 14:00
7.	870513	Purchase of Toner & Cartridges for Office usage in Chittagong Medical University	10-Sep-2023 12:00	25-Sep-2023 12:00
8.	870574	Purchase of Desktop Computer for the Fiscal Year 2023-24	10-Sep-2023 12:00:00	25-Sep-2023 11:30:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal. To submit tender registration in e-GP System Portal is required (www.eprocure.gov.bd). For further information and guidelines please contact with e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).


Dr Bidduth Barua
 Deputy Director (Planning & Development)
 BITID Building, Salimpur, Faujdardhat
 01309034100, drbbaruabd@gmail.com

GD-1353

NURSING JOBS IN AUSTRALIA

Opportunities up for grabs

Says Bangladesh mission in Canberra

JAMIL MAHMUD

Australia can be a destination for Bangladeshi nurses, as the Oceania nation is currently hiring professionals in the field from different countries due to a domestic shortage in workforce.

The Bangladesh High Commission in Canberra issued a letter to the Expatriates' Welfare Ministry in July, citing the workforce shortage and requesting the ministry to take effective measures to utilise this opportunity.

According to the letter, Australian health providers maintain a registration process to hire foreign nurses. In this process, several thousand nurses from different countries—including India and Nepal—migrate to Australia each year.

"By following this process, it is possible to send many nurses to Australia from Bangladesh," reads the letter, recommending government authorities to raise awareness about this opportunity among local nursing professionals.

Nursing is a dignified profession in Australia and an entry-level nurse can earn AUS \$80,000 (Tk 57 lakh) per year, the letter adds.

At present, state-owned Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Limited (Boels) send nurses to Kuwait in line with a memorandum of understanding.

Under the arrangement, 670 nurses have gone to Kuwait so far. Their wages range from Tk 90,000 to Tk 1,00,000 per month, according to "Labour Migration

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



Three school-goers glide home in a dinghy on a local canal in Jhalokathi's Prashanda village, following classes. Letting children opt for such routes without any adult supervision is risky and can lead to drowning incidents. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

FLOOD IN SIRAJGANJ

Water recedes, not sufferings

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Pabna*

The flood situation in Sirajganj is improving as the water level has started to decreased in the Jamuna.

However, the river is still flowing above the danger level, leaving many still waterlogged.

According to Water Development Board in Sirajganj, the water of Jamuna at Hard Point was flowing

11cm above the danger level at 6:00am yesterday, even though the water level had decreased by 11cm in the previous 24 hours.

Meanwhile, the water level at Kazipur point has decreased by 13cm and is now flowing at the danger mark.


"The onrush of water from upstream has decreased, so the water level has started falling," said Ranajit Kumar,

sub-divisional engineer of Sirajganj WDB.


However, people are still suffering as the floodwater has not receded fully, reports our correspondent visiting some flood-hit areas recently.

Azizul Haque, a resident of Bamongram in Shahzadpur upazila, said recent flooding has inundated riverbank establishments and roads.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



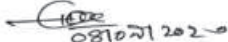
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Divisional Forest Officer
Social Forest Division, Faridpur.



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

Sl No	Tender ID & Package No.	Description and Name of the Package	Publication Date & Time	Closing & Opening Date & Time
01	870617 & SFDF/23-24/Rev-eGP-W-07	Repair of Boundary Wall at Purbogongabordi SFNTC, Faridpur	07-Sep-2023 12:00 PM	21-Sep-2023 12:00 PM
02	870622 & SFDF/Charmuguria EP/2023-2024/WD-09	a) Constructions of Entry Gate at Char Muguria Eco Park. b) Construction of Golghar, 4 nos. at Char Muguria Eco Park. c) Construction of Guard Room, at Char Muguria Eco Park in Madaripur Sadar Upazila, Madaripur.	07-Sep-2023 12:00 PM	25-Sep-2023 12:00 PM
03	870623 & SFDF/Charmuguria EP/2023-2024/WD-10	Construction of Sitting Sheds, 4 Nos, at Char Muguria Eco Park in Madaripur Sadar Upazila, Madaripur.	07-Sep-2023 12:00 PM	25-Sep-2023 12:00 PM

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.


(Mohammad Golam Quddus Bhuiyan)
Project Director
Modernization of Existing Char Muguria Eco-Park under Madaripur Zilla and Divisional Forest Officer, Social Forest Division, Faridpur.

GD-1356



Barishal City Corporation
Barishal



(German Financial Cooperation with the People's Republic of Bangladesh)

Memo No. BCC/CCAUDP/268/2022 Date: 03/09/2023

Publication of the Result of Tender Process

This is to notify that in response to the Invitation for Bid (IFB) Vide BCC/CCAUDP/207/2023 dated 26/01/2023 for the Package: Procurement of General Equipment and Survey Instruments (NCB No. BCC-CCAUDP NCB-11) under Climate Change Adapted Urban Development Programme (CCAUDP), Barishal Component, Phase-1. In accordance with the conditions stipulated in the IFB, the members of the Bid Opening Committee opened the Tender on 01/03/2023 at 3:00pm, BD local time and received total Two (2) Bids for Package: Procurement of General Equipment and Survey Instruments (NCB No. BCC-CCAUDP NCB-11) and performed preliminary records & examinations of all the Bids/Bidders. No withdrawals were found in the submitted Bids. No modifications were found in the submitted Bids. Two (2) Bidders were found initially responsive for the comprehensive technical & financial evaluation.

Members of the TEC went through the evaluation criteria of the Bids (Financial and Technical Requirements and Qualifications, and performed comprehensive analysis and evaluation on the basis of that criteria, and other terms & conditions stipulated in the Bid Documents. They also examined and verified all technical & financial documents, certificates and evidences as required for the comprehensive evaluation.

Result of the Tender Process for Package: Procurement of General Equipment and Survey Instruments (Reference No. BCC-CCAUDP NCB-11):

In regard to the required Technical Qualifications Md. Mahfug Khan & Shafi Enterprise has passed both technical and financial requirements and qualifications. Md. Mahfug Khan was evaluated a substantially responsive 1st lowest Bidder with its price amounting to BDT 6,518,404.85 (Sixty-Five Lakhs Eighteen Thousand Four Hundred Four Taka & Eighty-Five Paisa only). Therefore, Md. Mahfug Khan Nalchity, Jhalokhati was recommended for awarding the Notification of Award (NOA) for signing Procurement of General Equipment and Survey Instruments (NCB No. BCC-CCAUDP NCB-11).

It is noted that the Employer shall promptly respond in writing to any unsuccessful Bidder who after (NOA) in accordance with ITB 41.1 requests in writing the grounds on which its Bid was not selected.


Md. Abul Bashar
Project Director
CCAUDP, Barishal Component Phase-1
Barishal City Corporation, Barishal

GD-1354

Illegal stone extraction resumes despite ban
Three rivers under severe threat in Lalmonirhat

S DILIP ROY

Illegal stone extraction in three rivers in Lalmonirhat's Patgram upazila resumed in full swing after a six-year pause, resulting in massive damage to the water bodies, which may lead to erosion.

The local administration had taken strong measures to stop illegal stone extraction from rivers in 2017. However, with time, the activity has resumed on a greater scale.

According to locals, at least 200 dredger machines are currently employed in rampant stone extraction at the Dharla, Saniajan, and Shingimari rivers in the upazila.



Disregarding governmental regulations, politically influential figures are involved in this illicit endeavour, churning profits by exploiting natural resources and causing severe harm to the environment, they added.

Shamsul Islam, a 60-year-old resident of Masantari village in the upazila, said the locals are afraid to protest as they fear that the stone lifters, who are involved with political parties, would harass them.

The operation of mechanical dredgers, which can go over 100 metres beneath riverbeds, creates hollow spaces underground, which exacerbates the chances of erosion. Each of the 200 dredgers can extract 700 cubic feet of stone per day.

Such unplanned extraction is ultimately harming the locals who are now afraid of losing their homesteads and arable lands located along the river bank again, said Mansur Ali, a 65-year-old farmer from Bangkanda village.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

ROAD CRASH
2 killed in Kishoreganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Mymensingh*

Two people were killed in a road crash in Kishoreganj's Karimganj upazila yesterday morning.

The victims were identified as Hafizur Rahman Hashem, 32, and Somrat Mia, 38.

According to the police, Hashem, son of Samir Uddin of Komolbhogh village in Kishoreganj, was a teacher at Chowganga Fazil Madrasa in Kishoreganj. Somrat, son of Nazimuddin of Kajla village, who used to share rides for a living.

Quoting local people, Md Mazharul Islam, sub-inspector of Karimganj Police Station, said Hashem and Somrat died on the spot after a truck hit them around 10:00am, when Hashem was going to his madrasa on the motorbike.

On information, police recovered the bodies and sent them to the Kishoreganj General Hospital morgue for autopsy. Police seized the truck, but the driver managed to flee the scene. A case was filed with the police station.

3 die in bike accident

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Noakhali*

At least three people, including two siblings, were killed in a road accident at Noakhali's Begumganj upazila yesterday.

The deceased are Mohammad Riday, 18, his younger brother Aradhan Shuvo, 15, and their neighbour Md Zahed, 18. Locals said the trio were travelling on a motorbike from Ghatla to Horambi Bazar area. When they reached Boropole Horambi Road area at around 10:00am, the motorbike rider lost control and hit a roadside tree. All three fell on a roadside ditch and suffered serious injuries. Locals rescued them and took them to a nearby hospital.

As their physical condition deteriorated, they were shifted to the Noakhali General Hospital for better treatment, but on-duty doctors there declared them dead, said Md. Salauddin, chairman of local union parishad.

Contacted, Begumganj Model Police Station's sub-inspector Md Awlad Hossain confirmed the incident and said the bodies were handed over to the victims' family members.

MINORITY RIGHTS
Oikya Morcha announces series of programmes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Oikya Morcha, representing religious and ethnic minority organisations led by the Bangladesh Hindu Bouddha Christian Oikya Parishad, has announced a series of programmes including mass hunger strikes and sit-ins scheduled in various districts from September 8-23.

These events will culminate into a rally on October 6 at Suhrawardy Udyan, announced Rana Dasgupta, chief coordinator of the morcha and general secretary of the parishad, during a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

They have chosen to take to the streets in order to press for the fulfillment of pledges made in the ruling party's election manifesto to protect the interests of minority communities, Rana said.

6 Islamic parties form alliance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A new alliance named Liberal Islamic Alliance (LIA) was formed yesterday, comprising of six Islamic and like-minded political parties.

The six Islamic parties are Bangladesh Supreme Party (BSP), Bangladesh Islami Oikya Jote, Ashikine Awlia Oikya Parishad Bangladesh, Bangladesh Janodal, Krishak Sramic Party and National Awami Party (NAP Vashani).

Speaking at a press conference, Chairman of the alliance and Bangladesh Supreme Party (BSP), Dr Shajada Syed Saifuddin Ahmed Maizbandhari said the alliance will always work in favour of pro-

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8



প্রধান প্রকৌশলীর দপ্তর
ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
ঢাকা-১০০০



মেমো নং-৬৩৫৯(২)/প্রকৌঃ তারিখঃ ০৪/০৯/২৩


e-GP Tender Notice
e-GP Tender is invited in the National e-GP System (www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of works mentioned below under University of Dhaka.

Sl No.	Tender ID	Package No.	Name of work	e-Tender last selling date & time	e-Tender closing date & time
1	869261	PG-AC-GS-04	Supply of Furniture for Bangamata Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Centre of Gender and Development of Studies (BCGDS) at CARASS, University of Dhaka	17-09-2023 18.30	18-09-2023 14.30

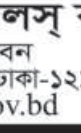
This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online branches of any registered bank branches. Further information and guideline are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).


Mohammad Zabed Alam Mridha
Superintending Engineer
University of Dhaka

GD-1352



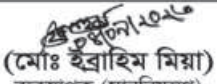
বাংলাদেশ টেক্সটাইল মিলস্ করপোরেশন
বিটিএমসি ভবন
৭-৯, কাওরান বাজার, ঢাকা-১২১৫
www.btmc.gov.bd



মাইক্রোবাস ভাড়ার দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বিটিএমসি প্রধান কার্যালয়ের কর্মকর্তা-কর্মচারীদের অফিসে আনা-নেয়ার নিমিত্তে চালক, জ্বালানী, মেরামত ও রক্ষণাবেক্ষণ এবং আবাসিক সকল খরচসহ ১২ (বার) আসন বিশিষ্ট ৪টি এসি মাইক্রোবাস ভাড়ায় সরবরাহের জন্য সংশ্লিষ্ট সরবরাহকারী ব্যক্তি/প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট থেকে দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

০১	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	: বস্ত্র ও পাঠ মন্ত্রণালয়
০২	সংস্থা	: বাংলাদেশ টেক্সটাইল মিলস্ করপোরেশন (বিটিএমসি)
০৩	কাজের বিবরণ	: বিটিএমসি প্রধান কার্যালয়ের নিম্নোক্ত কটসমূহের কর্মকর্তা কর্মচারীদের অফিসে আনা এবং নেয়া: (ক) চিটিগাং রোড-হানিক ফ্লাইওভার-মানিক নগর-মুগদা হাসপাতাল-কাওরান বাজার, কুট নং-১ (খ) পঞ্চবটী-পাণলা-মিল ব্যারাক-দয়াগঞ্জ-কাওরান বাজার, কুট নং-২ (গ) ডেমরা স্টাফ কোয়ার্টার-বনরী-রামপুরা-হাতিরঝিল-কাওরান বাজার, কুট নং-০৩ (ঘ) হাটখোলা-প্রেসক্লাব-কাওরান বাজার, কুট নং-০৪ (২৪.০৩.০০০০.১০৫.১৯.১১৬.২৩; তারিখ ০৩-০৯-২০২৩ খ্রি:)
০৪	দরপত্র সূত্র ও তারিখ	: ২৪.০৩.০০০০.১০৫.১৯.১১৬.২৩; তারিখ ০৩-০৯-২০২৩ খ্রি:
০৫	প্রকিউরমেন্ট মেথড	: উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র
০৬	অর্থের উৎস	: নিজস্ব অর্থায়নে
০৭	দরপত্র সিডিউল প্রাপ্তির স্থান	: ১। হিসাব বিভাগ, বিটিএমসি, কাওরান বাজার, ঢাকা-১২১৫। ২। হিসাব বিভাগ, আহমেদ বাওয়ানী টেক্সটাইল মিল, ডেমরা, ঢাকা।
০৮	দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের সর্বশেষ তারিখ ও সময়	: ১৭-০৯-২০২৩ খ্রি: অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত।
০৯	দরপত্র দাখিলের তারিখ ও সময়	: ১৮-০৯-২০২৩ খ্রি: তারিখ বেলা ১১.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
১০	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	: ১৮-০৯-২০২৩ খ্রি: তারিখ বেলা ০২.০০ ঘটিকা।
১১	দরপত্র গ্রহণের স্থান	: ১। ব্যবস্থাপক (মাননিয়ন্ত্রণ) সাধারণ কর্মশাখা, বিটিএমসি এর অফিস কক্ষ, বিটিএমসি ভবন (২য় তলা), ৭-৯, কাওরান বাজার, ঢাকা-১২১৫। ২। মিল ইনচার্জ, আহমেদ বাওয়ানী টেক্সটাইল মিল এর অফিস কক্ষ, ডেমরা, ঢাকা।
১২	দরপত্র খোলার স্থান	: ব্যবস্থাপক (মাননিয়ন্ত্রণ) সাধারণ কর্মশাখা, বিটিএমসি এর অফিস কক্ষ, বিটিএমসি ভবন (২য় তলা), ৭-৯, কাওরান বাজার, ঢাকা-১২১৫।
১৩	দরদাতার যোগ্যতা	: হালনাগাদ ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, ডাট নিবন্ধন সনদপত্র, অয়রকর সনদপত্র, ব্যাংক সলভেন্সি, প্রস্তাবিত গাড়ির হালনাগাদ রেজিস্ট্রেশন কার্ড, ট্যাক্স চেকেন, কুট পারমিট, গাড়ির ফিটনেস সার্টিফিকেট, বীমা সনদ, মালিকানার বৈধ দলিলাদি এবং বৈধ লাইসেন্সধারী দক্ষ চালক থাকতে হবে।
১৪	কার্যকাল	: সরবরাহের তারিখ থেকে ১৫ (পনের) মাস অর্থাৎ ০১-১০-২০২৩ খ্রি: তারিখ থেকে ৩১-১২-২৪ খ্রি: তারিখ পর্যন্ত (প্রয়োজনে বৃদ্ধি করা হতে পারে)
১৫	যানবাহনের সক্ষমতা বিবরণ	: চালকের আসন সহ ১২ আসন বিশিষ্ট ডুয়েল এসি মাইক্রোবাস (২০১৭ সনের পূর্ববর্তী মডেলের মাইক্রোবাস গ্রহণ যোগ্য হবে না)।
১৬	দরপত্র সিডিউলের মূল্য	: প্রতি সেট ১,০০০/- (এক হাজার) টাকা।
১৭	দরপত্রের জামানত	: যে কোন সিডিউল ব্যাংক হতে ৫,০০০/- (পাঁচ হাজার) টাকার (ফেরতযোগ্য) ডিডি/পে-অর্ডার বাংলাদেশ টেক্সটাইল মিলস্ করপোরেশন এর অনুকূলে দরপত্রের সাথে জামানত হিসেবে জমা দিতে হবে এবং জামানত বিহীন দরপত্র বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে।
১৮	দরপত্র সংশ্লিষ্ট বিস্তারিত তথ্যাবলী দরপত্র সিডিউলে বর্ণিত আছে।	
১৯	কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ছাড়াই যে কোন অথবা সকল দরপত্র গ্রহণ ও বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।	


মোঃ ইব্রাহিম মিয়া
ব্যবস্থাপক (মাননিয়ন্ত্রণ)
সাধারণ কর্মশাখা, বিটিএমসি, ঢাকা।
ফোন: ৫৫০১২৭৩৭

Why should local films suffer for foreign ones?

Now, the question still remains – if the local films had not stepped back, then, according to the rules, there wouldn't have been a chance for *Jawan* to hit theatres in Bangladesh.

SHARMIN JOYA & RAKSHANDA RAHMAN MISHA

Bangladeshi film industry has been turning on a dime with its own competence. In recent years, films like *Hawa*, *Poran*, *Priyotoma*, and *Shurongo* have proved that the industry is growing rapidly. These films have also made waves in the global arena. Following the trend, every month, a good number of films are released in cinemas. In the coming week, two films were slated to be released on September 8. One of them is Dipankar Dipon's much-awaited cyber-crime thriller,

simultaneously in Bangladesh, creating history in our local theatres. Under the SAFTA (South Asian Free Trade Area) agreement, approved by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on April 10, films have been imported in exchange for Bangladeshi productions. Within this year, two Hindi films have been imported – *Pathaan* (in exchange for *Panku Jamai*) and *Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan* (in exchange for *Koshai*). However, now, the question arises – when popular Bangladeshi films, such as Mejbaur Rahman Sumon's *Hawa* and

to the arrival of foreign ones? According to Mohammad Sadequl Arefeen, one of the producers of *Antarjal*, they have been requested by the hall owners to shelve their project. "It is not about lack of our confidence, but we had to come to a mutual understanding," he told The Daily Star. "We have considered this because the hall owners have been waiting for this historical moment for a long time. Also, we know that *Jawan* is a film with great potential, but sadly, we were not given the opportunity to share halls and have screenings at the same time."



Dipankar Dipon



Mushfiqur Rahman Gulzar



PHOTOS: COLLECTED

Antarjal, while the other is Mushfiqur Rahman Gulzar's government-granted film, *Dushshahoshi Khoka*, based on the life of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. However, these films have been postponed due to the arrival of Bollywood's much-hyped action film *Jawan*, which will have a global release

Raihan Rafi's *Poran*, are available, why are Bangladeshi movies, which failed to generate revenue even in local theatres, are being exported in exchange for big-budgeted Bollywood films? The postponement of two films now raises another question – how justified is it to halt the release of local films due

Arefeen also informed that *Antarjal* will be globally released on September 22 alongside local theatres. Meanwhile, Dipon shared his thoughts in this regard, "As a director, I feel there should be some proper guidelines that must be maintained to support our local films. We could have competed with an Indian

film, but if we don't get the allocation of halls, then how can we prove it to the audience?" We spoke with the cast of *Antarjal* – Bidya Sinha Mim, ABM Sumon and Sunerah Binte Kamal – they shared that they were disappointed by the delay. However, they have nothing much to do at the moment other than accept reality. Mushfiqur Rahman Gulzar informed that his film, *Dushshahoshi Khoka*, has been delayed until the last week of September. "It is true that no one actually forced us to postpone the release, but we had to keep their request," he shared. Interestingly, there are unwritten rules that if there are already two films scheduled to be released in the same week, then another one cannot be on the same line to get premiered. We spoke to Khorshedul Alam Khosru, president of Bangladesh Film Producers' Association, who informed that they did not receive any letter for the preview of *Jawan* from the ministry until September 4. "Being a censor board member, I have not been informed about any such letter yet. Thus, it is not confirmed if the censor board would approve it on time." Mia Alauddin, vice president, Exhibitor Association, said, "Local films should be our first priority, however, the people associated with the business are

now desperate for the release of *Jawan*. There is nothing I could do." "We also understand that a delay in the release of a film loses its charm to the audience. We noticed similar incidents when *Pathaan* and *Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan* were released in our theatres. Consequently, the halls incurred financial losses." Action Cut Entertainment is the importing company of *Jawan*. Its owner, Anonno Mamun, told the media, "We have diligently followed all the protocols in importing this film. The authorities responsible for permitting its exhibition are certainly not naive. They have approved it with full awareness of the situation. There is no rationale behind creating unnecessary protests to safeguard our industry." Now, the question still remains – if the producers and directors of *Antarjal* and *Dushshahoshi Khoka* had not stepped back, then, according to the rules, there wouldn't have been a chance for *Jawan* to hit theatres in Bangladesh. Certainly, we need comprehensive guidelines, and they need to be followed strictly to encourage local films instead of creating barriers for them. All of the concerned associations should come together to re-evaluate this condition.

NEWS

India ease into Super Fours

FROM PAGE 12
India's opening match against Pakistan, who were the first team to move into the next round, was abandoned after just one innings. In their second outing, India were 17-0 in 2.1 overs when heavy rain forced players out of the ground and the field totally covered. Ground staff worked tirelessly to make the ground ready for play again. Rohit and Gill came out roaring and hit a string of boundaries to reach their respective half-centuries

and race to the target. Rohit smashed five sixes in his 59-ball knock. Nepal, who are still finding their feet in international cricket and got ODI status in 2018, put up an impressive show after Sheikh's fifty helped the team to a respectable total. Nepal lost their way after a strong start by Sheikh and Kushal Bhurtel (38) but the middle and lower-order fought back. Number eight Sompal Kami smashed 48 before the innings ended in 48.2 overs. Spinner Ravindra

Jadeja and fast bowler Mohammed Siraj took three wickets each. Rohit won the toss and elected to field first, but Bhurtel and Sheikh got quick runs with help from the Indian fielders, who dropped three catches in the first five overs. "We were maybe 30-40 short. In the middle order we could have done better... I think in these conditions it was really hard because of the dew, but our bowlers did really well," said Nepal captain Rohit Paudel after match.

Govt to buy

FROM PAGE 12
city and inter-district bus services in Bangladesh. The official said many of the existing buses are beyond repair and must be written off. The government is implementing the Dhaka Elevated Expressway project, and a portion of it – from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport to Farmgate – was opened by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Saturday. Once completed, the expressway will connect the airport with Chittagong Road at Kutubkhali. The main target of buying the buses is the elevated expressway, said the official. Besides, the BRTC buses will ply other routes, he added. The buses will be environment-friendly as those will run on CNG. Of the 340 buses, 140 will be single-decker AC buses, which are meant for the Dhaka city only. About 15 percent spare accessories and related equipment will also be imported. The other 200 buses will be single-decker inter-city AC buses. Fifteen percent spare parts and related equipment for those will also be imported. The official said they would import parts because they could not operate imported buses in the past due to the lack of spare parts. In 2019, the government procured 600 buses and 500 trucks from India, with loans from the Indian government, to assist the BRTC in improving its service and improving its financial condition. The fleet size had then increased to 1,600, but many vehicles had to be sold over the last four years.

Gourmati offers new hope

FROM PAGE 12
production is going well. Currently, cultivation of this mango has been expanded to a small extent in the northern regions – Naogaon, Chapainawabganj, Rajshahi, and Natore. According to the DAE, 30,000 hectares of mangoes have been cultivated in Naogaon this year. Gourmati was cultivated in around 145 hectares of those, said the district's DAE Deputy Director Abul Kalam Azad. Sohel Rana, a grower in the Naogaon's Sapahar upazila, cultivated Gourmati on 35 bighas of land in 2018. This year, he expects over 1,000 maunds, worth around Tk 80 lakh as per the current market price. He said the prices of other varieties usually range from Tk 1,200 to Tk 3,000 per maund. "But Gourmati's price ranges from Tk 6,000 to Tk 16,000 per maund, allowing farmers to profit at least four or five times more than usual." On the other hand, he said, Gourmati sees higher yield than other varieties. "Each bigha yields around 50-

60 maunds of Amrupali, Langra, Khirsa and Himsagor. But we get around 70-100 maunds in the case of Gourmati. However, as the mangoes need to be kept in the orchards for long time and require bagging, the production cost too is at least Tk 10,000 higher compared to other varieties." Md Raihan Siddique, another grower in Naogaon's Porsha upazila, cultivated Gourmati in 80 bighas of land. "The Gourmati variety can change the fortune of mango farmers. My advice to new farmers is to pick Gourmati for cultivation if they want to stay in the business." Md Kamrul Islam, principal scientific officer at Regional Horticulture Research Station (previously known as mango research Centre), said, "The mango season would start in May and end in July. But since the introduction of the previous late varieties – Ashwina and BARI-4 – the time would be stretched till the first week of September. However, Ashwina's taste is not as good as the Gourmati – which is available in markets till at least September 20."

Gourmati stays in the market for over a month, and no other mango lasts as long, he said, adding while the Katiman variety is also available in the market for a similar amount of time, it cannot compete with Gourmati in terms of quality. "It also has huge potentials to take over the export market as it has great taste as well." Mehedi Masood, project director for the year-round fruit production for the DAE's nutrition improvement project, said, "After detecting this naturally-mutated variety in 2012, we have systematically expanded its cultivation ... In 2015-16, we produced 50,000 plants of Gourmati mangoes through this project and then distributed them all over the country through horticulture centers. "So far, about 5,000 hectares of land across the country has been dedicated to Gourmati cultivation. However, the variety has one flaw – it's poor immunity and resistance to germs." Kamrul Islam said researches are being conducted over the last few years to improve its immunity.

DAG refuses to sign AG

FROM PAGE 12
signed by the attorney general, additional attorneys general, deputy attorneys general and assistant attorneys general. The DAG, however, said he did not see the contents of the statement. DAG AKM Amin Uddin Manik told this correspondent, "Many lawyers including the law officers under the attorney general's office have signed it. Nobody is being compelled to sign. I have signed the statement." A total of 104 Nobel laureates and 79 other global figures in an open letter to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on August 28 expressed concern about the safety and freedom of Prof Yunus. In the letter, they asked the PM to "immediately suspend the current judicial proceedings against Prof Yunus". On September 9, 2021, Labour Inspector (general) SM Arifuzzaman

of the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments filed a labour law violation case against four people, including Prof Yunus, with the Third Labour Court of Dhaka. According to the case documents, officials of the department on August 16, 2021, inspected the office of Grameen Telecom in the capital's Mirpur and found several violations of labour laws. On June 6 this year, the court framed charges against the accused. The trial began on August 22. On May 30, the Anti-Corruption Commission filed a case against Grameen Telecom Chairman Muhammad Yunus and 12 others for misappropriating about Tk 25 crore of the Grameen Telecom's Workers Profit Participation Fund. ACC Deputy Director Gulshan Anowar Prodhan filed the case with its integrated district office.

Khaleda Zia

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on Thursday and will determine the next steps of her treatment depending on the reports, party sources said. A BNP member, preferring anonymity, said several tests were done on Khaleda even yesterday, and the medical board will hold a meeting before deciding the next course of action. Prof Dr AZM Zahid Hossain, a personal physician of Khaleda, said she is still not fit to be discharged

from the hospital. "How much longer she will need to be in hospital is still uncertain... Doctors think she needs to be kept under stricter observation." The medical board is currently consulting local and foreign experts for her treatment. Last year, Khaleda's angiogram detected three arterial blockages. She has long been suffering from multiple health complications, including arthritis, diabetes, and kidney and liver problems.

INVASIVE SPECIES

World losing over \$400b per year: UN

AFP, Paris

Invasive species that wreck crops, ravage forests, spread disease, and upend ecosystems are spreading ever faster across the globe, and humanity has not been able to stem the tide, a major scientific assessment said yesterday.

The failure is costing well over \$400 billion dollars a year in damages and lost income – the equivalent to the GDP of Denmark or Thailand – and that is likely a “gross underestimation”, according to the intergovernmental science advisory panel for the UN Convention on Biodiversity.

From water hyacinth choking Lake Victoria in Africa, to mosquitoes exposing new regions to Zika, dengue and other diseases, the report catalogued over 37,000 so-called alien species that have taken root far from their places of origin.

ANN ramps up co-op to amplify Asia’s voice

VIET NAM NEWS ONLINE

Representatives of 15 news titles in Asia emphasised the need for elevating cooperation to a new level and making Asia’s voice heard during the Asia News Network (ANN) annual board meeting in Beijing yesterday.

The meeting marks the first in-person assembly of the leading regional news alliance in Asia since the Covid-19 pandemic, building new bridges for collaborative efforts among Asian countries and between Asia and the rest of the world.

Representatives explored the possibility of establishing an independent newsroom with reputed professionals to make ANN an independent news source for all its members and for regional and global media in general.



Schoolchildren walk to a classroom set up at a metro station to avoid air attacks, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Kharkiv, Ukraine yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Ukraine war, absence of Xi, Putin set to dent G20 summit

REUTERS, New Delhi

Deeper and more entrenched divisions over Russia's war in Ukraine risk derailing progress on issues such as food security, debt distress and global cooperation on climate change when the world's most powerful nations meet this weekend in New Delhi.

The hardened stance on the war has prevented agreement on even a single communique at the 20 or so ministerial meetings of the G20 during India's presidency this year, leaving it to the leaders to find a way around, if possible.

But China will be represented by Premier Li Qiang, not President Xi Jinping, while Russia has confirmed President Vladimir Putin's absence, suggesting that neither nation is likely to join any consensus.

That means the two-day summit from September 9 will be dominated by the West and its allies. The G20 leaders who will attend include US President Joe Biden, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, French President

Emmanuel Macron, Saudi Arabia's Mohammed Bin Salman and Japan's Fumio Kishida.

A failed summit would expose the limits of cooperation between Western and non-Western powers, and prompt countries to double down on the groups they are more comfortable with, analysts said.

To tackle global threats "breaking off into Western and non-Western blocs isn't what you want," said Michael Kugelman, the director of the South Asia Institute at the Wilson Center in Washington.

Failing to forge a consensus will also hurt the diplomatic credentials of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is using the presidency to bolster New Delhi's position as economic

powerhouse and a leader of the global south.

"If the leaders' summit is a flop, New Delhi and especially Modi will have suffered a major diplomatic, and political, setback," Kugelman said.

India, which has not condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine, will have to either convince the bloc to agree to a joint statement – the so-called Leaders Declaration – or allow its presidency to be the first to end without such a communique since 2008.

"The positions have hardened since the Bali Summit," a senior Indian government official told Reuters, referring to the 2022 summit held in Indonesia. "Russia and China have toughened their position since then, a consensus

would be very hard."

In Bali, Indonesian President Joko Widodo clinched a last minute joint statement from the bloc. India is hoping that the leaders can again work something out at the last minute, another government official said.

The Bali Leaders' Declaration said "most members strongly condemned the war in Ukraine and stressed it is causing immense human suffering and exacerbating existing fragilities in the global economy."

It also said that "there were other views and different assessments of the situation and sanctions."

Another Indian official said that in Bali, "Russia and China were more flexible." But as the war completes 18 months, countries "are not agreeing even to the language used in the Bali Declaration".

Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, who will come in place of Putin, have already drawn battlelines.



TALIBAN THREAT

France evacuates 5 Afghan women

AFP, Paris

France was due to receive five Afghan women "threatened by the Taliban" after repeated requests it create a humanitarian corridor for women shut out of public life, an official said yesterday.

Since returning to power in August 2021, Taliban authorities have imposed a strict interpretation of Islam, with women bearing the brunt of laws the UN has labelled "gender apartheid". Women and girls have been banned from attending high school and university as well as barred from visiting parks, fairs and gymnasiums.

French immigration authority chief Didier Leschi told AFP that by presidential order, special attention is being paid to women who are primarily threatened by the Taliban because they have held important positions in Afghan society.

POST-COUP MYANMAR

Bomb attack on border hub kills 5

AFP, Yangon

A bomb attack on a government compound in the Myanmar border hub of Myawady killed five government and security officials and wounded 11 policemen, sources told AFP yesterday.

The town on the border with Thailand has seen sporadic clashes between the military and anti-junta fighters since a coup in 2021 plunged the country into turmoil. Early Sunday evening two "drop bombs" fell into a compound containing the district police office and general administration office, a military source told AFP. As officials took "security measures" after the blasts, another two bombs were dropped, killing five and wounding 11.

Probe into S Alam’s wealth

FROM PAGE 1

"We urge the prime minister to immediately investigate and see if any Bangladeshi has investments [businesses] abroad ... and if so, how they got access to these funds as a Bangladeshi citizen, sources of their funds, and if the money is not from Bangladesh, where did it come from," added the opposition party leader.

He slammed the finance minister, alleging that he has remained silent on the issue.

"We have raised the issue of capital flight and money laundering so many times in parliament, but the finance minister has not spoken. This is a country where the finance minister does not speak about the state of the economy ... does not let us know about the latest condition of the country," he continued.

Chunnu also demanded that the minister publicly speak on the issue.

He said if the allegations against this businessman are true, then this is anti-state, tantamount to sedition.

"The High Court ordered the Anti-Corruption Commission to probe the incident, but even that has been stopped by the Appellate Division," Chunnu said.

He also talked about how interest worth Tk 252 crore on loans by Nasa Group was pardoned by Janata Bank. "This was done despite objections placed by an observer of Bangladesh Bank," he said.

"There are questions about Janata Bank. Since this is a state bank, we must ask how this was allowed," he said.

He went on to say that such a pardon is not given to the poor, like farmers.

Factory owner

FROM PAGE 12

"As the allegations against the owner and his four sons were not found to be true, their names have been left out," he said.

Six people were named as accused in the charge sheet. They are company Chief Executive Officer Shahan Shah Azad, Deputy General Manager Mamunur Rashid, Administrative Officer Md Salauddin, Chief Engineer (mechanical and electrical) Omar Farooq, and Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments inspectors Nesar Uddin and Saikat Mahmud.

Expressing frustration over dropping the prime accused from the charge sheet, victims' family members said it was unacceptable.

"We have heard about not naming the prime accused in the charge sheet. We don't accept it,"

said rickshaw puller Fazlur Rahman, father of late Mohammad Hasnaine, 12, who died in the blaze.

He said the company owner and his sons must be punished as "they are guilty".

Fazlur said they would file a fresh case, if necessary.

Two days after the incident, Inspector Nazim Uddin Mazumder, then in charge of Bhulta Police Outpost under Rupganj Police Station, had filed the murder case.

Speaking to this newspaper yesterday, he said he knew nothing about the charge sheet as the IO did not inform him about it.

"The factory owner can't avoid his responsibility. I will take necessary steps after going through the charge sheet," said Nazim Uddin, who is currently working for the police's Special Branch in Chattogram.

Injured monkey seeks help

FROM PAGE 12

upazila livestock office and forest department. However, there was no immediate response from them.

The next morning, the monkey came to the complex again, and Nur Uddin, upon noticing it, changed the wound dressings and once again requested forest department officials and the upazila animal resource officer to rescue the primate.

Yesterday morning, he saw the monkey back at the complex in a serious condition, and the health complex officials asked the upazila livestock officer and wildlife conservation officer to come urgently.

Nur Uddin said, "When the monkey first showed up on Saturday afternoon,

we [upazila health complex officials] saw wounds all over its body... I immediately took it to the emergency department and bandaged the injuries.

"I thought it would be better to provide medical care under the supervision of a veterinary surgeon, and so I informed the upazila livestock officer and forest department officials. They didn't come that day, saying they would 'see what could be done'."

When he saw the monkey the next day, almost all the bandages were coming off.

"I brought it back to the emergency room, changed the dressings for the wounds, and once again informed the authorities

US official enquires

FROM PAGE 2

Khandker Masudul Alam.

"This annual, civilian-led discussion will cover regional issues, security and human rights, military cooperation, security assistance, and counterterrorism in addition to other topics," according to the US embassy.

It said Washington and Dhaka share a vision to ensure the Indo-Pacific region is free, open, peaceful, and secure.

The US wants Bangladesh to reduce its reliance on China for defence cooperation and offers itself as an alternative since Dhaka wants to modernise its defence forces by 2030, said diplomatic sources.

The US also seeks to sign two defence agreements

-- General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) and the Acquisition and Cross Servicing Agreement (ACSA) -- which are foundational deals to enabling a closer defence relationship.

A diplomatic source said the US in the security dialogue may push Bangladesh to sign the deals.

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen recently said that Dhaka is not willing to ink any deals before the general elections, slated for January next year.

Amid rising inflation, the government is more interested in ensuring food security and other basic needs of the people, the minister added.

concerned, but to no avail."

The next day, Nur Uddin implored the upazila livestock officer and wildlife conservation officer to rescue the monkey on an emergency basis as its wounds were beginning to get infected.

"They finally came that day and took it away."

Referring to the animal's calm demeanour, he said, "Every time I treated it, it was very calm. Even when it waited near the health complex on its own, it sat calmly at the gate until help came."

Sitakunda Livestock Officer Tahmina Arju said when she heard the monkey was in bad condition, she and other officials of the wildlife conservation department rushed to the health

complex and took it to the Chittagong Veterinary and Animal Sciences University for proper treatment.

"The monkey's wounds seemed like they were inflicted by sharp objects... It is, however, in a stable condition now."

Asked why Nur Uddin chose to help the animal despite working at a health institute dedicated to humans, he said, "When I first saw the monkey on Saturday, the way it looked at me, I could tell it was desperate for help. It was after office hours, and I knew that vets would also not be available at the moment."

"I had to help it in any way that I could, so I tried my best for as long as it needed."

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Supply, Distribution and Marketing Division
Directorate of Food
Ministry of Food
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No. 13.01.0000.052.07.015.23.306

e-Tender Notice

Date: 04/09/2023

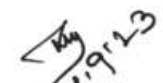
e-Tender is invited in the national e-GP System portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the Procurement of following goods:

Sl No.	Tender ID	Name of Tender	Tender/Proposal Selling /Closing & Opening Date and Time	Ref. No. Date
1	860436 (Goods-OTM)	Procurement of 266.000 (Two Hundred and Sixty-Six) M.T. Rice Premix Kernel for FFP of Dhaka Division. (34 LSDs of 34 Upazilas)	04-Sep-2023; 17:00 PM 26-Sep-2023; 10:00 AM	297 03/09/2023
2	860437 (Goods-OTM)	Procurement of 263.000 (Two Hundred and Sixty Three) M.T. Rice Premix Kernel for FFP of Chattogram Division. (63 LSDs of 63 Upazilas)	04-Sep-2023; 17:00 PM 26-Sep-2023; 10:00 AM	298 03/09/2023
3	860438 (Goods-OTM)	Procurement of 245.000 (Two Hundred and Forty Five) M.T. Rice Premix Kernel for FFP of Rajshahi Division. (27 LSDs of 27 Upazilas)	04-Sep-2023; 17:00 PM 26-Sep-2023; 10:00 AM	299 03/09/2023
4	860439 (Goods-OTM)	Procurement of 150.000 (One Hundred and Fifty) M.T. Rice Premix Kernel for FFP of Khulna Division. (22 LSDs of 22 Upazilas)	04-Sep-2023; 17:00 PM 26-Sep-2023; 10:00 AM	300 03/09/2023
5	860440 (Goods-OTM)	Procurement of 172.000 (One Hundred and Seventy Two) M.T. Rice Premix Kernel for FFP of Barishal Division. (17 LSDs of 17 Upazilas).	04-Sep-2023; 17:00 PM 26-Sep-2023; 10:00 AM	301 03/09/2023
6	860441 (Goods-OTM)	Procurement of 72.000 (Seventy Two) M.T. Rice Premix Kernel for FFP of Sylhet Division. (15 LSDs of 15 Upazilas).	04-Sep-2023; 17:00 PM 26-Sep-2023; 10:00 AM	302 03/09/2023
7	860442 (Goods-OTM)	Procurement of 296.000 (Two Hundred and Ninety Six) M.T. Rice Premix Kernel for FFP of Rangpur Division. (24 LSDs of 24 Upazilas).	04-Sep-2023; 17:00 PM 04-Oct-2023; 10:00 AM	303 03/09/2023
8	860443 (Goods-OTM)	Procurement of 261.000 (Two Hundred and Sixty One) M.T. Rice Premix Kernel for FFP of Mymensingh Division. (18 LSDs of 18 Upazilas).	04-Sep-2023; 17:00 PM 26-Sep-2023; 10:00 AM	304 03/09/2023

1. 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;

2. To submit e-Tender, registration in the e-Gp system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required;

3. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through branches of any registered Bank. Further information and guidelines are available on the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)


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GD- 1355

Downfall of remittance again

Time to rethink our fixed exchange rate policy

In what is undoubtedly a worrying development, remittance has fallen by 21.5 percent in August – the steepest decline since the peak of the pandemic in 2020. According to the Bangladesh Bank, August's receipts are the lowest in six months. The latest development signals yet another blow to the country's dwindling dollar reserves, which stood at \$23.06 billion on August 30 and is projected to slip below the \$23 billion mark this week. For a country so dependent on remittance earnings, the situation is beyond concerning.

The decline in remittances – despite an increasing number of Bangladeshis leaving for jobs abroad – has become a persistent trend in recent times due to the growing use of unofficial channels, i.e. hundi. What is most frustrating is that economists have been endlessly warning about the wide difference between the market exchange rates in the official and kerb channels that continues to sway workers to choose the latter. Last Thursday, the exchange rate in official channels was set at Tk 109.5 per dollar, while the rate at kerb market prevailed around Tk 117-118 per dollar. According to a report by this daily, even private banks who can offer more to remitters have to follow the low rate fixed by the Bangladesh Bank. Now, with the growing number of informal channels online, which easily allows them to transfer money and with higher rates, remitters are increasingly eschewing the cumbersome formal process. Can we even blame them?

Instead of wasting energy on chasing those who make and choose the channel of hundi, the authorities should, first and foremost, acknowledge that the taka's artificial overvaluation is the primary reason that hundi has mushroomed over the years. We urge the Bangladesh Bank to pay heed to the warnings of our economists and urgently rethink its misguided policy of artificially fixing the exchange rate. It goes without saying that, given the current volatility of our economy and our ever-dwindling forex reserves, we can no longer afford to stay complacent about the consistent dip in remittances.

It is widely known that workers also prefer informal channels due to the lack of external fees and higher accessibility compared to banks. The government should therefore give further incentives to exchange houses to alleviate the fees of remittances and let private banks develop their own apps for workers to seamlessly transfer their hard-earned money back to their families.

Have we abandoned the street children?

‘Dandy’ abuse is a symptom of deeper socioeconomic issues

We are deeply concerned about the widespread abuse of “dandy” – an adhesive glue widely available in hardware stores – among street children in Bangladesh. This toxic substance contains toluene, among other harmful chemicals, which causes intoxicating hallucinations, euphoria, and dizziness. A recent report in this daily has highlighted that street children primarily consume it because it helps them forget their hunger and detach themselves from the tough reality they live in. It is tragic that for most of these children, who earn less than Tk 100 a day, this glue is more affordable than food.

Reports show that, despite multiple studies and mitigation initiatives from government and non-government organisations, drug abuse is still prevalent among this extremely marginalised and deprived segment of our population. We find it appalling that most of these children are growing up in absolute neglect, abandoned by society and the state. The mitigation efforts, especially from the government, still heavily rely on persecution of the user, or rehabilitation programmes which are very limited in scope and scale. It is high time our policymakers understood that drug abuse among street children is a socioeconomic problem that cannot be solved through ad hoc and insensitive responses.

Studies show that broken families, lack of parental care, poverty and unemployment pushes these children towards homelessness and drug abuse. Many of these children are victims of physical abuse, forced prostitution, and even harassment from law enforcement personnel. It should come as no surprise that without any hope for a better future, these children feel abandoned by society, which in turn can lead them to abandon social norms and customs. As a result, many of these children tend to become addicted to other hard drugs and get entangled in small-scale criminal activities.

When asked, most of these children express a desire to attend school and get out of drug addiction and poverty. Like every citizen of this country, these children deserve an opportunity to lead a respectful life. We expect more sincerity from the government to address the underlying socioeconomic issues and take a comprehensive approach to safeguard street children from drug addiction and homelessness.

New Message

To

Subject

Have things to say? Want your thoughts about current events to be published in The Daily Star? Send us a letter (100 - 300 words) with your name and area!

Write to us: letters@thedailystar.net

Demystifying BRICS and the stakes for Bangladesh



Dr Selim Raihan is professor at the Department of Economics of the University of Dhaka, and executive director at the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (Sanem). He can be reached at selim.raihan@gmail.com.

SELIM RAIHAN

The BRICS bloc, when formed, created the hope to serve the common interests of Global South – the developing countries and the emerging market economies. The world economy has witnessed an unprecedented growth of emerging market economies and developing countries, with their share in global GDP rising from less than 40 percent in 1990 to almost 60 percent in 2022. Also, between 1990 and 2022, the combined share of developing countries in global export trade reached close to 40 percent from just about 20 percent. Trade between developing countries increased by an average annual rate of 10 percent since 2000, hitting \$5.3 trillion in 2021. During the same period, world trade grew at a slower 5.5 percent. Although impressive growth performance has characterised many developing countries, the rise of BRICS economies has widely been recognised as the defining features of the advanced south, paving the way for a world economy with an increasingly multi-polar character.

The era following the 2008 global economic crisis marks the relative decline of the West, the end of the post-Cold War unipolar moment, and the rise of China and other major economies, all of which are challenging the current world order. The world is now fragmented due to escalated protectionism, explicit and implicit trade wars, and the emergence of regional mega blocs like RCEP, CPTPP, TTIP, etc. While the current centres of gravity for global politics and economics are Asia and the Western Pacific, geopolitics is now taking new turns due to the growing gap between the distribution of economic and military powers, which is driving further division. These trends are likely to shape the future of the world order.

Despite the much-created hype, there are doubts whether BRICS, as a bloc, is capable of creating a new world order. In my view, BRICS can't become a powerful economic and trade bloc in the near future for a variety of reasons.

First, BRICS is an investment cooperation, not a trade forum. One notable achievement of the BRICS bloc is that in 2014, at the 6th BRICS Summit, the BRICS states signed the agreement on the New Development Bank (NDB). The NDB is a multilateral development bank aiming to support public or private projects through loans, guarantees, equity participation and other financial instruments. However, without comprehensive agreements in the areas of trade in goods and services, trade facilitation, intellectual property rights, and non-tariff measures, mere investment cooperation would not be meaningful. The prospect of such comprehensive trade agreements among BRICS countries seems bleak.



BRICS is still an investment cooperation, not a trade forum.

FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

Also, there are allegations that BRICS countries impose various restrictions on investment from each other. In July 2023, India rejected Chinese automaker BYD's \$1 billion investment proposal to build electric cars and batteries in India in partnership with a local company. Allegedly, security concerns with respect to Chinese investments in India have been flagged by the Indian authorities. Certainly, such concerns are not helpful for BRICS to emerge as a powerful platform for investment cooperation.

Second, the bilateral political relations among some of the BRICS countries are not smooth and favourable. Also, the bilateral political animosity between the US and China and between the US and Russia affect the internal political relations within the BRICS countries. On top of these, the bilateral political relation between China and India, the two largest economies in BRICS, is tense and, in recent years, has been dwindling. In contrast, currently, India and the US maintain close relations, common interests, and collaboration on issues such as counterterrorism and countering Chinese influence in the Indo-Pacific region. India is a member of the QUAD, which was allegedly formed to contain the rising influence of China in the Indo-Pacific region. While India was part of the initial Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) negotiations; allegedly, due to the growing political tension between India and China and

with each other, the prospect of BRICS emerging as a powerful entity will remain bleak.

Third, the much-hyped BRICS currency is not feasible. As long as the economic differences between the member countries remain considerable, and an inherently strong mood of non-cooperation continues between India and China, the common currency is unrealistic. However, bilateral currency swaps (as it is happening on some scales between China and Russia, and between India and Russia) may continue to reduce dependency on the US Dollar.

Fourth, the recent inclusion of the six new members – Argentina, Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia, Iran, UAE and Egypt – in BRICS doesn't provide a clear and solid roadmap for the BRICS to consolidate power and redefine global governance into a “multipolar” world order that prioritises the voice of Global South. The inclusion of Saudi Arabia, Iran, UAE and Egypt seems very Middle East-centric, which has more oil-centric, socioeconomic, geopolitical and geopolitical implications, rather than representing the interests of the Global South. To emerge as the voice of Global South, BRICS needs to work out its expansion plan carefully.

What are Bangladesh's stakes in BRICS?

Bangladesh has strong economic aspirations to become part of a forum like BRICS. Both China and India are Bangladesh's major trading partners, growing sources of external

US. While Bangladesh needs effective and enlarged trade and investment cooperation with all three, it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain a reasonable balance due to the pressure coming from these countries out of their geostrategy and geopolitical interests, and for Bangladesh to handle this pressure in the contexts of conflicting domestic politics, weak institutions and governance.

Finally, graduation from the LDC status by 2026 will bring new challenges for Bangladesh. Among the BRICS nations, China and India are Bangladesh's two largest import sources. Bangladesh, as an LDC, gets duty-free facilities for the export of all products to India, except for 25 liquor and tobacco goods. In China, Bangladesh's exports receive duty-free treatment in 98 percent of tariff lines. In the post-LDC era, unless Bangladesh signs free trade agreements (FTAs) with India and China, it will lose its preference in these markets. Our country hasn't signed any bilateral FTA so far - the only success is a preferential trade agreement with Bhutan for some products. With this very limited experience, no doubt, Bangladesh needs to do proper homework while negotiating FTAs with India and China in the coming days. Even if the country is able to join BRICS in the future, how effectively it manages its trade, investment, and strategic relationships with India and China will also be critical factors for realising its own benefits out of BRICS.

READERS' POV

Why are our passport services so insufferable?



Abdullah Iftekhar Chisty is an entrepreneur who splits his time between Bangladesh and the UK.

ABDULLAH IFTEKHAR CHISTY

Recently, I walked out of, or rather escaped, a passport office in Chattogram after failing to complete the biometric enrolment for myself and my two sons. At that time, I was filled with rage, frustration and shame just thinking about what the citizens of Bangladesh have to suffer to avail such a basic but crucial service. Really, why do we have to run a gauntlet for something so necessary as a passport?

My children reside abroad, and we are dual citizens of that country and Bangladesh. When I compare the due processes to get a passport of these two countries, it's just depressing to see what goes on at Bangladesh's passport offices. The neverending queues, the unbearable heat, the lack of customer service, and the ensuing chaos – I don't even know how I should

start my traumatising story. It's mind-boggling to think that an office is probably contributing towards making its service worse!

A new Bangladeshi passport cost between Tk 4,025 and Tk 13,800, depending on the type, size, length of validity and urgency. Since it's not a free service, we are all customers who are entitled to a facility that is simple, comfortable and swift. But our passport offices are the complete antithesis of this. It's evident that the government is generating heaps of revenue from the thousands of customers availing passport-related services every day. So, we have the right to ask why this dismal condition of service still persists, and point our fingers at those responsible.

Applying for a passport in the

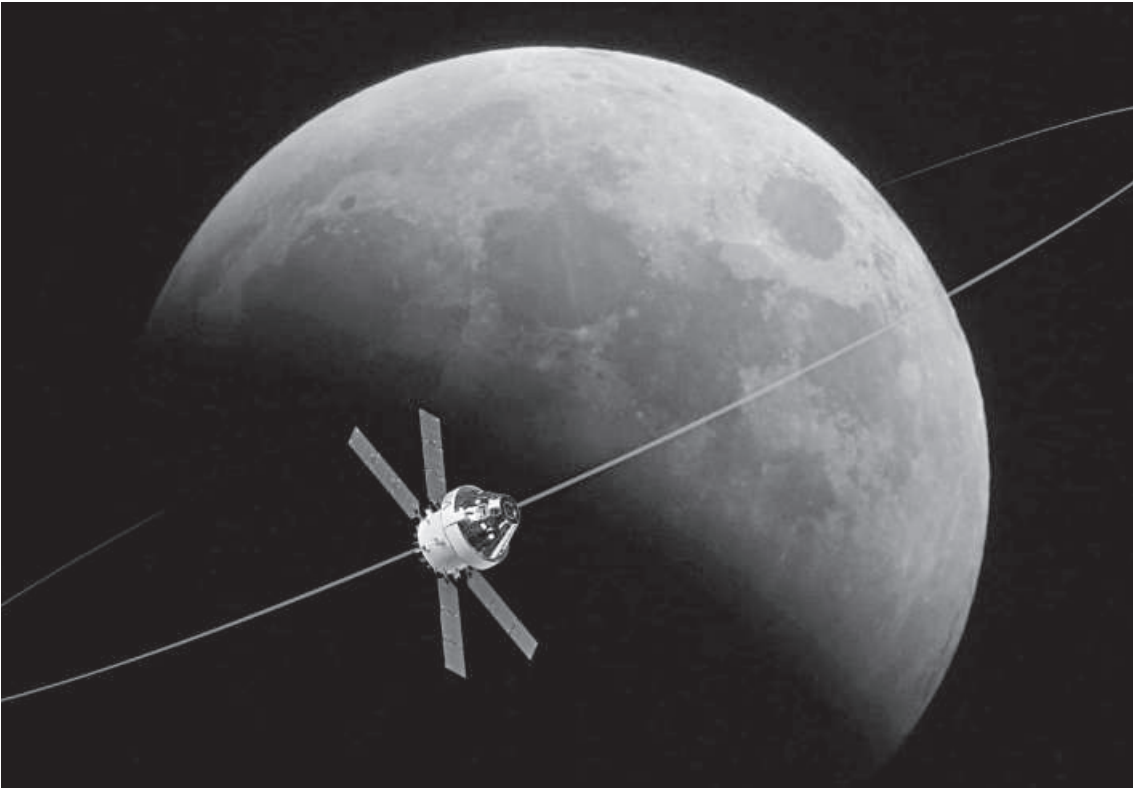
other country is a simple online or postal process. We don't even need to send a passport-size photo; it's as simple as taking a photo in front of a white background – that, too, with your phone – and uploading it to the site. Now, I don't expect the process to be so simple in Bangladesh, and acknowledge that implementing this will take time. But considering the importance of such a service and the substantial revenue the country rakes in, Bangladesh shouldn't be this abysmally behind the curve.

Why don't the authorities open more service centres to prevent overcrowding, and the chaos that accompanies it? We have a well-established National ID database, which contains biometric data of a large part of the population. Surely this database can be used to streamline the process to get a passport? Why must children spend an entire day (missing out on classes and recreation) amid the horrendous office environment when the authorities can just set automated appointments? While we're at it, why are the service centres so understaffed, and why does the staff misbehave with paying customers? Why is there no proper system in place to set a time

for the customer to arrive, queue up, go through the various processes and exit, being satisfied by the fact that they got their money's worth? There are so many more questions I could ask, but I would run out of space.

As we are all aware, our country is going through a difficult financial situation amid rising inflation and depleting foreign exchange reserves. We are very quick to highlight the garment industry and its crucial role in our economy. However, millions of hard-working people make equal (if not more) contributions by going abroad and toiling in unforgiving conditions, with the goal to send their earnings back to Bangladesh. The most important services these expats probably avail within Bangladesh are those related to the passport office. I leave it up to the readers to work out the significance of passport services when considering this situation.

As for me and my kids, we did not complete the application process and have no plans to go back and try again. It's a shame because the Bangladeshi passport reflects our identity, which we like to keep updated and in hand. But I'm not going to put my children through hell and back for it!



The ownership of Moon is still a grey area. FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

The Moon is hot again, but why?

It's the beginning of humanity's newest frontier and a space war



Dr Sayeed Ahmed is a consulting engineer and the CEO of Bayside Analytix, a technology-focused strategy and management consulting organisation.

SAYEED AHMED

Starting with Apollo 11, Nasa landed six crewed missions on the Moon between the summer of 1969 and Christmas of 1972. They carried 24 astronauts, of which 12 walked on the lunar surface. After Apollo 17 in 1972, no human has gone there yet.

Those were essential to claim the Free World leader Washington's geopolitical bragging right against the communist Moscow to prove who was technologically superior. It was strictly a political stunt: go to the Moon, plant the flag, and return to Earth. So once Moscow was beaten, there was no motivation for going there anymore.

But that's changing. Nasa is committed to landing astronauts on the Moon again in 2025 as part of its Artemis Programme. China has plans to land humans on the Moon by 2030. In the meantime, uncrewed missions are increasingly heading towards the Moon. Russia's robotic Luna-25, the first such endeavour in 47 years, crashed on the lunar surface shortly after 11:57 GMT on August 19. India made history on August 23 by soft-landing its Chandrayaan-3 mission at the Moon's south pole.

After so many years, why has the Moon landing become so cool again? The simple answer is: water.

Scientists have long speculated that water could exist on the Moon, but the samples that the Apollo crews returned in the 1960s and early 1970s appeared dry. However, when Brown University researchers revisited those samples with new technology in 2008, they found hydrogen inside tiny beads of volcanic glass. In 2009, a Nasa instrument aboard the Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) Chandrayaan-1 probe detected water on the Moon's surface. Another Nasa probe hit the south pole in the same year and found water ice below the surface. It confirmed the findings of an earlier Nasa mission, the 1998 Lunar Prospector, that the highest concentration of water ice was in the south pole's shadowed craters.

Water on the Moon is crucially important, not the least for the astronauts' use, which otherwise would have to be transported from Earth. Nasa says it costs almost \$10,000 to launch a one-pound

payload into the Earth's orbit, which can be significantly reduced if lunar water is available. More importantly, scientists can break it down to produce hydrogen for fuel in spacecraft for more distant missions and oxygen to breathe. A lunar pitstop will make missions to cosmic destinations far and

Water on the Moon is crucially important, not the least for the astronauts' use, which otherwise would have to be transported from Earth. Nasa says it costs almost \$10,000 to launch a one-pound payload into the Earth's orbit, which can be significantly reduced if lunar water is available. More importantly, scientists can break it down to produce hydrogen for fuel in spacecraft for more distant missions and oxygen to breathe. A lunar pitstop will make missions to cosmic destinations far and beyond possible.

beyond possible. Lesser lunar gravitational force – one-sixth that of the Earth – also reduces the cost of launching a satellite into its orbit.

Other than water, several minerals on the Moon can be commercially mined and transported back to Earth. These include a rare earth metal called neodymium, essential for making EV cells (batteries for powering electric vehicles), whose demand is growing as we shift away from fossil fuels. Extracting rare earth metals causes high levels of contamination of the surrounding environment. The Moon could be a pricier but greener option, offering a multi-trillion-dollar market.

Then there is helium-3, a rare element that can create a large amount of energy following the solar combustion process. Helium-3 is so rare on Earth that it sells for \$1.4 million per kilogram. Solar wind constantly bombards

the lunar surface without any atmosphere or magnetic field for protection, depositing helium-3 on it. Just to have an idea, at current price levels, there's around \$1.5 quadrillion (one quadrillion is 1,000 trillion) worth of helium-3 on the Moon. However, supply and demand economics means bringing helium-3 back from the Moon would significantly reduce the price.

But who owns the Moon?

Unfortunately, there is no clear legal framework to answer this question, and the ownership issue is still a grey area. The 1967 Outer Space Treaty of the United Nations states that "outer space shall be free for exploration and use by all countries" and that "outer space is not subject to national appropriation or ownership."

That was at the height of the Cold War, and the treaty aimed to prevent space from becoming another theatre of warfare, including a place to launch nuclear weapons. However, the present situation is entirely different, and the treaty doesn't cover many potential scenarios, such as the involvement of private entities.

Then, in 2015, sniffing industrial prospects of space and the increasing participation of private entities, the Obama administration drafted the Commercial Space Launch Competitiveness Act, which Congress passed the following year, making space mining legal.

Despite the absence of any universally accepted legal framework, several countries are planning permanent bases on the Moon and Mars. Nasa is working on a permanent lunar base by 2035 and likely a Mars base by 2050. China's International Lunar Research Station (ILRS) – with participation from Russia and several other countries – plans to have a similar lunar base in the 2030s. That will be a research base for launching further missions to Mars, eventually setting up a base there. By then, many heavy, complex and hazardous industries will move to the Moon, which will become a launch pad for regular crewed missions to Mars.

So, humanity is not going back to the Moon but forward, as Dr Jack Burns, director of the Nasa-funded Network for Exploration and Space Science, says. Unlike the 1970s, the present technology is sustainable, the cost is manageable, the goal is straightforward, and the vision is long. Apollo had five kilobytes of Random Access Memory (RAM). Today, a simple mobile phone is millions of times more powerful.

A new space war has begun as humanity enters an uncharted territory.

How many eggs are there in our basket?



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ASRAR CHOWDHURY

An egg market is a textbook example of perfect competition. There are many sellers and many buyers. All sellers and buyers see the eggs as identical. The only difference is that the eggs are either white or brown. No egg farm and no final consumer can influence the price on a particular day. Econ 101 then suggests that egg prices will be determined by the forces of supply and demand where nobody has market power.

In a highly competitive market like the egg market, one would expect prices to remain stable. They can rise, but over time.

The recent volatility in egg prices in Bangladesh suggests that the egg industry is experiencing shocks from one or multiple places. Keeping jargon and data aside, we can ask two simple questions. What causes egg prices to increase? What happens after this increase? This

the Russia-Ukraine war led to a global supply disruption of vital feed ingredients in the countries from whom Bangladesh imports. Some countries that export these ingredients to Bangladesh are facing challenges to meet their own domestic demands. All this adds to an increasing feed cost. In the last few years, the margin between the selling price of broiler feed and its cost of production has made it a challenge for the feed industry to sustain.

High egg price means less revenue

Eggs are the main source of protein in low-income households in Bangladesh. Estimates suggest that the demand for eggs responds to price. If price increases by five percent, the demand will fall by more than five percent. Families will either consume fewer eggs or they will search for an alternative source.

usually auction their eggs and transport them to the wholesalers, or sell them through sales centres in large urban cities.

Small egg farms sell to a trader who collects eggs from several farms in an area. The trader takes the eggs to an urban market, like Tejgaon in Dhaka, where he sells them to a second trader. The second trader sells the eggs to retailers. So, between the small farmer and the consumer, there are at least two traders. This year, two factors contributed to rising egg prices. During summer this year, excessive heat led to hens finding it difficult to eat. This contributed to a fall in egg production. During monsoon this year, many small farms failed to transport their eggs to wholesalers. Supply fell. Prices of cheap fish, tilapia and pangas went up. Low-income households tried to switch to eggs as an alternative. The demand for eggs increased when the supply was already less than usual. Eggs were sold at a high price during the shock.

There is one issue. The eggs that reach the final consumers in Bangladesh are all local eggs. When supply shocks appear, the government can't import eggs because there's a ban on egg imports. This is to protect and encourage the domestic industry.

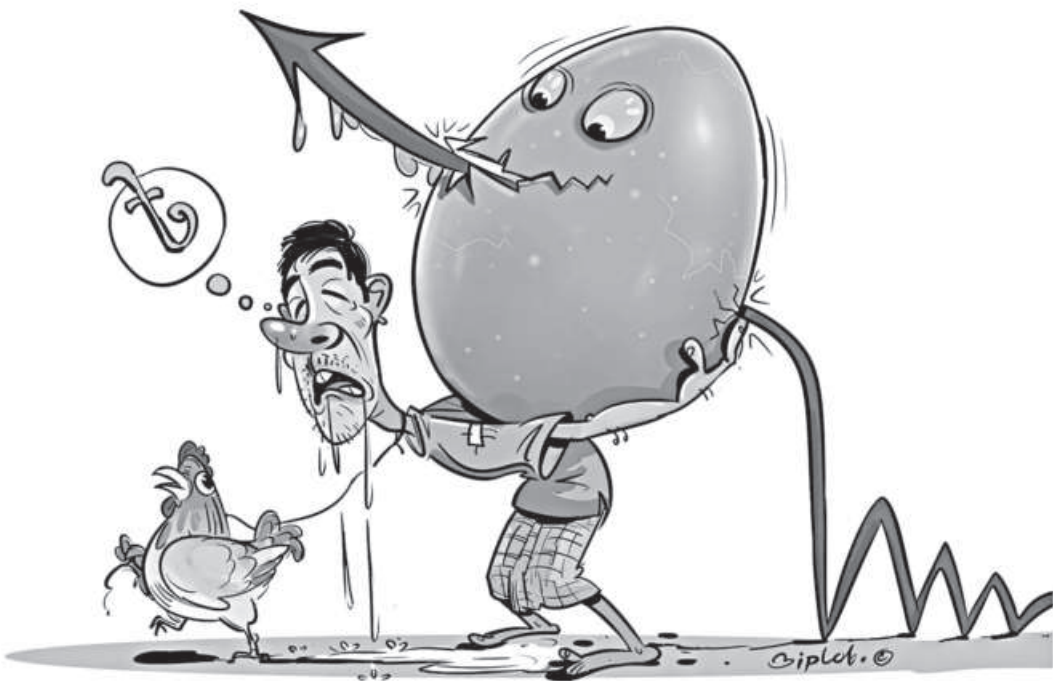


ILLUSTRATION: BIPLOB CHAKRABORTY

will help understand an industry that's been taken for granted for too long.

Feed is the main cost component

The main cost component in egg production is feed. This can be up to two-thirds of the total cost of producing eggs. Of this, corn and soybeans are the main ingredients.

Bangladesh has sufficient feed mill capacity. The poultry industry on its own consumes almost three-fourths of the feed mill production in the country. However, many small feed mills shut down when corn and soybean prices increased, which in turn raised the price of feed. Many small farmers stopped buying chicks because they were selling at a loss. They could not sustain loss over time due to small farm size.

Further challenges appeared in opening letters of credit (LC) due to volatility in the dollar exchange rate. This leads to temporary supply shortages where the available domestic feed becomes expensive.

The Covid pandemic and

This is where the story gets messy.

In Bangladesh, the nearest alternatives to eggs as a source of protein in low-income households are fish such as tilapia and pangas, and in poultry it is broiler chicken. All three of these food items have become pricier over the last couple of years. Why? These markets are interlinked because of feed ingredients that are common to all.

Less egg sales have resulted in less revenue for farms. This has adversely affected small farms that have been surviving on razor-thin profits. Since 2020, egg farms in Bangladesh have had to absorb two shocks: first caused by Covid, and the second by an increase in the cost of feed, medicine and other inputs. Many egg farms had to close because they could not bear the losses.

How eggs travel from the farm to the final user

Egg farms in the country start from a few large corporate farms at the top to medium and small farms down the chain. Corporate farms

This has led to a status quo where an open market policy could backfire.

How much do we really know?

The beauty of competitive markets is that no seller or buyer can influence the industry. However, as we have seen, supply shocks can happen in the egg industry. Some of these shocks are structural and some are seasonal.

The beast of competitive markets is, during these supply shocks, the supply chain gets disrupted for a short period. Within this period, the scope for a quarter to reap benefits arises. However, in the absence of a comprehensive survey of the egg industry, it can be misleading to point at any quarter.

The time has arrived for state departments and ministries to conduct a comprehensive survey of the country's egg industry. The rationale is simple. Eggs are the cheapest source of protein for low-income households who don't have easily available alternatives to access. We need to know how many eggs we have in our basket.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

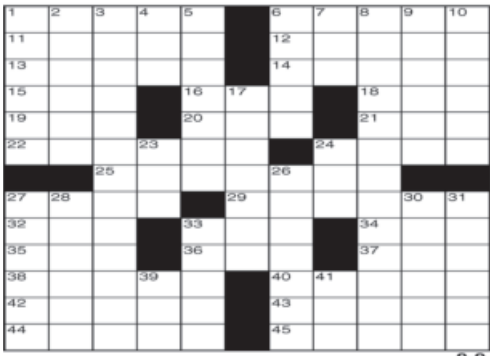
- 1 Crew member
- 6 Eat loudly
- 11 Kept in reserve
- 12 Wit
- 13 Fancy neckwear
- 14 Fill with wonder
- 15 Cheering cry
- 16 Stipulations
- 18 Possesses
- 19 Quarterback
- 20 "Platoon" setting
- 21 Gallery fill
- 22 Redirected route
- 24 Wild about
- 25 Showy flower
- 27 Appropriate
- 29 Facilitate
- 32 Can. neighbor

- 33 Mine matter
- 34 Campaigned
- 35 Naughty act
- 36 Next-to-last letter
- 37 Plus
- 38 Social category
- 40 Dance music
- 42 Freshly
- 43 Crooked
- 44 Attendance count
- 45 Takes to the sky

DOWN

- 1 Laughed loudly
- 2 Reduced
- 3 Midwest metropolis
- 4 Green prefix
- 5 Following
- 6 Ravine

- 7 Rhythmic sound
- 8 Midwest metropolis
- 9 "Don Giovanni" composer
- 10 Magic word
- 17 Experts in the field
- 23 Common bill
- 24 – tizzy
- 26 Mohawk Valley tribe
- 27 From Florence, say
- 28 Crumbly Italian cheese
- 30 Cavalry soldier
- 31 Funds
- 33 Some tournaments
- 39 Bind up
- 41 Equal: Prefix



YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

S	U	D	A	N		J	O	N	A	S
U	T	I	C	A		O	X	I	D	E
M	E	A	N	T		D	E	P	O	T
	L	E	A	D	I	N				
H	U	T	L	E	E		P	A	T	
U	T	O	P	I	A		S	I	R	E
F	I	N	G	E	R		B	O	N	E
F	L	E	A		S	I	L	E	N	T
Y	E	S		T	I	P		C	A	Y
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N	U	D	E	S		L	A	S	T	S

The issue with A level grade boundaries this year

Many students and educators found the shift too drastic. The pandemic affected not only the quality of education that students received but also their overall perception of studying.

BARSHA AZIZ

All A level students appearing for the Summer 2023 session of the AS and A level examinations had been made aware by the Cambridge and Pearson Edexcel examination boards that their grading standards would be returning to the pre-pandemic levels of 2019. The students knew of these changes as they wrote their papers and awaited the announcement of their results. However, results day still came as a shock to the vast majority who received much lower grades than what they were expecting.

A grade boundary is the minimum mark you require in order to achieve a particular grade. This varies from year to year

depending on the difficulty of the paper and the performance of the students. In 2023, education boards aimed to return to pre-pandemic standards and consequently, fewer students excelled.

When asked to comment on the issue, Hayley White, Pearson Vice-president of Assessment, Standards and Services, said, “During the pandemic May/June series of 2020 and 2021, we were unable to run exams, and so the method of assessment had to change. We asked teachers to award students grades, which we then validated. This style of assessment led to a natural inflation of grades awarded. Teachers awarded grades based on students’ full potential. In an examination environment, some candidates do not perform to their full potential, and so an examined assessment will tend to give lower results than teacher assessments. This meant that with teacher grades, we saw a higher-than-usual percentage of candidates achieving higher grades. An eventual return to the pre-pandemic established grading standard (last seen in 2019) is the fairest way to proceed.”

“We set grade boundaries which reflect a comparable standard to that set in 2019 and earlier. As a result, the proportions of students

achieving at each grade was in line with those seen in 2019 and earlier,” she added. “In 2023, even though we committed to returning to normal standards, we did that with some protection for this year’s students, to acknowledge the disruption caused by the pandemic. By this, we mean we made allowances for a slightly lower than normal standard of work at each grade.”

However, many students and educators found the shift too drastic. The pandemic affected not only the quality of education that students received but also their overall perception of studying. The lax rules skewed their view of education and many of these students became impossibly demotivated due to the impact on their mental well-being. The change to the boundaries attempts to negate the long lasting impact of Covid. Despite the rationale behind the boundaries being understandable, the transition being gradual rather than abrupt would’ve been more considerate and sensible.

“The pandemic has had a lasting impact on my ability to study and concentrate. I’ve had to juggle work alongside studies to cover the expenses of therapy,” says Farhan Hossain, a private A level candidate.

Sakib Ahmed*, a student of Sir John Wilson School, said, “Shifting back to boundaries that even pre-covid students would have struggled with seems like an idea that was destined to fail. The exam boards should have been charitable but they failed to do so, making lives for so many students all around the world so much worse. The exam boards left us disappointed.”

Md. Alauddin, A level Chemistry teacher at Southbreeze, Bangladesh International School and Greendale, opines, “Students couldn’t really recover after the traumatic experience of Covid.”

He further stated, “I have noticed some discrepancies in the marking this year. Some of my students wrote the answers that were in the mark scheme, yet they were not awarded the mark.”

Moreover, the difference between each grade is separated by only a few marks on paper. Unit 4 of Edexcel IAL Biology, for example, had a two-mark difference between each grade. These substantial leaps across an entire grade seem unreasonable.

Jezaul Khair Hazique, a teacher of Business and Economics at Maple Leaf International School, said, “The grade boundaries and marking principles this year were certainly stricter than in the past few years. I believe many of the students did much worse than they could have done. Many of my students missed the A grade for just a mark or two.”

“With the boundaries set near 90 percent on paper for an 80 percent on uniform mark scale, it compelled me to temporarily set aside all other commitments and channel my focus solely into academics in order to barely pass,” added Farhan Hossain.

Not everyone received Cs and Ds, but even those with higher grades weren’t entirely content with their marks. People have different expectations of themselves, so feeling disappointed is typical, even if their performances were comparatively better.

Porom Khandaker*, a student from Academia School, said, “I did get an A, but the score wasn’t high enough to bridge it to an A* in A2. It’s disheartening, given the effort I invested over the past year.”

Since many students didn’t get their desired grades, they are going to have to go for retakes or rechecks, which place a huge financial burden on them. The retake deadlines were too close to the results date for students to make informed decisions. Additionally,

Cambridge doesn’t allow students to view their scripts before they register for retakes or rechecks so they couldn’t decide which is the best path to take.

Moreover, many students who had hoped to apply to universities with their grades may be unable to do so. This is because they have to wait till January for their results after having given a retake in October/November. Only then can they apply to universities but that means many of them are forced to take an involuntary gap year. Additionally, many students had their conditional letters from universities revoked because they fell short of the conditions asked of them. As a result, they have been forced to change their future trajectory.

“I expected to score well and apply abroad to study business but the grade boundary for May 2023 contradicted those expectations. Now everything has to be recalculated, including when to apply for retakes and when to begin college application. As I study for the retake, it will increase my workload and I may have less room to study for my A2 exams at the same time,” asserted Niloy Khan*, a private Edexcel AS candidate.

Thousands of students across the world have been left disappointed as a consequence of their A level results. It is a tough time for them and the best they can do is to try their hardest for their upcoming sessions.

*Names have been changed upon request

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3. The Guardian. *Equality depends on education. England's class of 2023 have suffered a grave injustice over A-level results*.

How independent learning can enhance the academic performance of university students

It often dawns on me that in comparison to myself, some of my classmates excel at practical learning while some struggle more at academics due to transitioning from a Bangla medium education background to the all-English academia of higher education.

AHMED NUZHA OISHEE

When I began lab classes during my first semester at university, I had to deconstruct the way I approached practical learning. Until high school, I was accustomed to working under constant supervision from my instructors. Most times, tinkering with instruments unrelated to my task was discouraged.

Often, my classmates and I would be passive observers, watching teachers carry out experiments that they felt we couldn’t be trusted with. While this dependent learning was primarily due to the shortcomings in my school’s teaching methods, university posed a very different challenge.

Even though I had access to an abundance of resources and highly qualified faculty, it soon became apparent that university teachers were not as accommodating and personally involved in the academic rigours of individual students. Some teachers would discuss only the basics of a topic in class but expected elaborate and accurate output from us. No longer was my every move in the lab supervised. I had to document my findings accurately – all on my own.

Half-basking and half-flailing in the newfound academic independence, I turned to educational apps, libraries, and academic websites for guidance. I was sifting through pages upon pages of relevant texts from different sources, noting and outlining keywords, learning jargon and trying to figure out how to do my assignments and lab tasks. Sometimes provided class notes touched on only foundational information and I’d end up scouring through a pile of out-of-syllabus textbooks to understand a topic.

This meant that my batchmates who were already adept at comprehensive reading, appraising and outlining information and retaining what

they read from an ocean of verbose academic literature were doing better in the coursework.

This act of assuming responsibility for one’s own learning – known as independent learning – takes centre stage in university, where students are no longer held strictly liable to teachers for their learning habits.

Independent learning encompasses self-regulated learning (SRL) wherein students adopt cognitive strategies or set goals to acquire partial autonomy in how they learn the course content. This learning process is facilitated by strategies like taking to-the-point notes from

help from the right sources and knowing where to seek help is also pivotal to independent learning. Different educational support services can help students study more effectively through tutoring, counselling, paid subscriptions, and workshops. Learning which educational forums to be a part of prepares you for future academic endeavours.

Peer

reviews, group discussions and sharing course materials can help you immensely as well.

Not only can you find additional resources to work through your problem, but you also become acquainted with new

(SDL) wherein students define and initiate what they need to learn, formulate, then implement their own strategies and evaluate their own outcomes.

Examples include taking an online course on computational skills, learning a new language, trying creative writing, joining clubs, or honing communication skills. Whether you’re working on a project, thesis, presentation, or any academic paper, irrespective of your major, these skills are vital.

It often dawns on me that in comparison to myself, some of my classmates excel at practical learning while some struggle more at academics due to transitioning from a Bangla medium education background to the all-English academia of higher education.

So, considering diverse backgrounds, not all students have the means to learn in the same way. Independent learners can tailor their own pace and schedule of learning outside the classroom to work on their shortcomings.

Learning independently is not easy. But once you realise that you have the most control over your learning, treading the bumpy uphill road of higher education becomes a lot less exhausting.

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roundabout lectures, identifying thematic concepts, setting learning goals, and sourcing knowledge from outside prescribed portals and textbooks.

It’s not enough to just learn on your own. Seeking



More ‘wonders’ in store?

SPORTS REPORTER

With Bangladesh getting twin centuries, from Najmul Hossain Shanto and Mehedi Hasan Miraz, only for the fifth time in ODIs, the crucial role that the ‘Tigers’ bowling unit played to beat Afghanistan by 89 runs went under the radar in Lahore on Sunday.

Shanto and Miraz centuries did see the Tigers post their highest-ever ODI total in the Asia Cup and laid the platform for a big win, but the comprehensive margin of win that eventually saw the Tigers through to the Super Four would not have materialised without the concerted bowling effort from Taskin Ahmed and Co.

In what was a must-win game for Bangladesh, the prospect of having to improve the net run-rate only made the challenge steeper for the Tigers, especially for the bowlers as they needed to bundle out the opposition with enough runs in hand, and that too on a batting-friendly surface at the Gaddafi Stadium.

One thing that made things even tougher for the Tigers was the team management’s decision to go with five specialist bowlers, reducing options for skipper Shakib Al Hasan if any of the frontline bowlers had a bad day.

However, Taskin, Shoriful Islam, and Hasan Mahmud – regarded as part of arguably the best pace bowling unit the country has ever had – lived up to their billing.

The pace trio combined for eight wickets to bundle out the Afghans for 245. Taskin led the charge with four wickets, Shoriful took three and had the most impact as



he gave crucial breakthroughs while Mahmud scalped one as they portrayed guile in their way of operation on a ground known to aid batters.

“I think it was a difficult task for the pacers on a batting-friendly surface. Yes, the batters put up a big total but what I liked was the way our seamers adapted to the condition and showed good standard. Our bowlers remained consistent and also bowled with good pace,” Taskin’s mentor and local pace bowling coach Mahbub Ali Zaki told The Daily Star yesterday.

According to Zaki, going with five specialist bowlers only showed the faith put in the pace unit by the skipper.

“What prompted Shakib to go with five specialist bowlers was probably the belief he had on the pace attack. The pacers have been well organised recently and bowled according to the plan which gives the luxury to the captain,” Zaki added.

Even in the first game when the Tigers were bundled out for a mere 164 runs against Sri Lanka, the bowlers did manage to put pressure by picking up early wickets. However, the task proved too much with a small target on the board.

Shakib also praised the bowlers’ effort after the game on Sunday, saying that the pacers have been doing the trick for the Tigers for some time now.

With even bigger challenges awaiting the Tigers in the Asia Cup, Zaki believes that the pacers would now need to bank on their strength.

“Look, Taskin is a furious attacker and is proven in world cricket while Mahmud is relatively new and relies on his variations. Shoriful can swing the ball and likes to attack the batter. So, we have a good variety in our pace unit. I think it will be important we bank on our strength and I believe this unit can do wonders in the coming days for Bangladesh,” he said.



Sri Lanka batter Kusal Mendis does keepy-uppy during a net session of his team, who will take on Afghanistan in a crucial Group B encounter of the Asia Cup in Lahore today. Having beaten Bangladesh convincingly in their first match, the Lankans are on top of the group and favourites to progress to Super 4 stage, barring a massive-margin defeat today. (Bottom) Bangladesh batter Liton Das flew to Lahore last night to join the squad for tomorrow’s Super 4 fixture against Pakistan.

PHOTO: AFP/COLLECTED

Team combinations come to fore ahead of Super 4

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh opener and ODI vice-captain Liton Das departed for Pakistan yesterday but it remains unclear whether Liton would be part of the playing eleven against Pakistan in Lahore on Wednesday in the first Super Four game of the ongoing Asia Cup.

Liton had been suffering from fever which led to him being ruled out of the Asia Cup. He recovered a few days back but Anamul Haque Bijoy had already been sent as a “like-for-like” replacement.

“Liton is now doing fine. There are a few injury concerns in the team [Asia Cup squad]. We need to discuss these injury issues with the team management and find out if any replacement is required,” chief selector Minhajul Abedin had told The Daily Star yesterday.

The Tigers would have a few combination-related worries to sort out before their crucial Super Four opener. There had been instability in the opening slot with Mohammad Naim not quite finding his feet with a big score while the big stage was always going to be intimidating for the young opener Tanzid Hasan Tamim.

Following the debacle in the first group match against Sri Lanka, the Tigers brought in Mehedi Hasan Miraz, who answered the team’s call with an authoritative ton. Najmul Hossain, who continued his form with the bat, took Tigers to a strong total which would bring some much-needed confidence to the batting unit.

However, every opponent has a definitive threat lying in wait for the Tigers in this tournament. Facing the likes of Shaheen Shah, Naseem Shah and Harris Rauf would bring different challenges to the table. The new ball would be important for Pakistan and thus the onus will be on

Tigers to counter it.

Would Miraz be able to negotiate the seam and swing that Pakistan attack usually gets even on flat surfaces? The presence of a left-handed opener would be one of the mechanisms the management can go for to protect the right-handers against Shaheen’s in duckers. Thus, Naim or Tanzid will remain in the picture.

Miraz, meanwhile, may not appear as an opener if Liton is fit enough to play. Given that the new ball may not do much in Pakistani conditions, Miraz will be an

option as opener once more. According to BCB sources, the team management does not prefer changing a winning combination.

Miraz was used to counter Mujeeb Ur Rahman’s threat early against Afghanistan. With no such spin threat foreseeable against Pakistan at the start of the innings, could plans change?

“Actually, I am always ready for any bowler because it’s a new journey for me. If I can’t play in the opening slot, I can play in the top-order if the team management gives me an opportunity,” Miraz had said about the prospect of facing Pakistan pace attack after

the Afghanistan match.

The team management, moreover, would need to focus on the number seven and eight spots too. Shamim Hossain and Afif Hossain seem to be providing similar profiles in those positions, with the latter more suited up the order.

However, the need to bolster the lower-middle order to face up to top-order collapse may be the idea going into the Pakistan game. The absence of a sixth bowler, provided Mahedi Hasan remains out of contention, means the Tigers would have to precariously balance risk and advantages in setting up the eleven against Pakistan.



U-16s stay afloat

SPORTS REPORTER

A second-half strike from Ashikur Rahman saw Bangladesh keep their hopes of qualifying for the semifinals of the SAFF U-16 Championship alive with a 1-0 win over Nepal in their second and final group match at the Changlimithang Stadium in Bhutan yesterday.

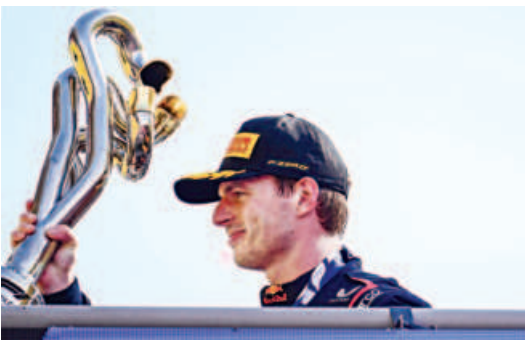
The triumph helped the boys in red and green to have equal three points as group leaders India, who are ahead due to better goal difference.

Now, Bangladesh’s fate of moving into the last-four battle depends on the outcome of the final group game between Nepal and India. Any result other than a defeat for India will see Bangladesh in the semifinals.

It was a must-win game for Bangladesh, having lost to India 1-0 in the first game.

Bangladesh missed a few chances in the first half but Ashikur headed in from a corner to score the only goal yesterday.

After conceding, Nepal pushed harder for an equaliser but the Bangladeshi defenders kept their nerves and thwarted all the Nepal attacks.



Verstappen’s record 10th straight F1 win

AFP, Monza

Max Verstappen won a record-breaking 10th straight Formula One race on Sunday after coming out on top at the Italian Grand Prix in a show of force from Red Bull at Monza.

Reigning world champion Verstappen dominated on a beautiful day in northern Italy which left Ferrari fans disappointed, with Verstappen’s teammate Sergio Perez finishing second ahead of home hope and pole-sitter Carlos Sainz.

Spaniard Sainz crossed more than 11 seconds back in third, unable to resist the power of Verstappen, the runaway leader of the drivers’ championship.

Verstappen extended his lead on teammate Sergio Perez at the top of the drivers’ standings to 145 points and also ensured that Red Bull maintained their perfect record with 14 wins from as many GPs this season.

The 29-year-old has now won 12 of this season’s races and is all but certain to claim his third consecutive F1 title after breaking a record he shared with Sebastian Vettel by winning in Zandvoort last weekend.

Swiatek stumped by ‘loss of control’

AFP, New York

Iga Swiatek said she was at a loss to describe the way in which her US Open title defence was left in ruins Sunday in a last-16 defeat to Latvia’s Jelena Ostapenko.

The Pole lost for the fourth time in as many meetings with the talented but inconsistent Ostapenko, who roared back to clinch a 3-6, 6-3, 6-1 victory after dominating the final two sets.

“She plays well against me. I mean, I don’t have any comparison because she always did that,” said Swiatek.

“But I’m just surprised that my level changed so drastically because usually when I play bad, I play bad at the beginning, then I kind of catch up or just problem solve. This time it was totally the opposite.

“I don’t really know what happened with my game. I felt no control suddenly. I just have to watch and see ‘cause, yeah, I didn’t really know why I started making so many mistakes.”

The 22-year-old Swiatek will lose her status as world number one following the US Open, with Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus set to take over top spot.

Swiatek had cruised into the fourth round in New York after not dropping a set in her first three matches, looking in prime form to defend the title she won last year.

But Sunday’s defeat will snap her 75-week reign at the summit.



“Usually I’m not looking at numbers, but overall I love them. I would love to, like, extend this record a little bit longer,” said Swiatek, a five-time Grand Slam champion.

“This is something that when I was younger, I actually kind of wanted to break some record or have something.

“I already did that ‘cause I already won a Slam as a first Polish player. Obviously being No. 1 as the third player in history is great.

“But for sure when it happens, when you lose it, there are some sad emotions.

“All these great players know it’s going to come back if you’re going to work hard, focus on the right things, just develop as a player.”



Inter Miami’s Argentine talisman Lionel Messi celebrates after assisting Leonardo Campana during their 3-1 win over Major League Soccer fixture against Los Angeles FC in Los Angeles yesterday. It was the most impressive display from Inter Miami in their Messi era, with two assists from the Argentine boosting their playoff hopes.

PHOTO: AFP



FIRE AT HASHEM FOODS Factory owner, his sons not charged

SAURAV HOSSAIN SIAM, Narayanganj

The Criminal Investigation Department of police has submitted the charge sheet in the murder case filed over the July 2021 fire at Hashem Foods Ltd in Narayanganj, which killed 54 people, dropping the names of the company owner and his four sons.

Abul Hashem, the owner of the food processing company, and his sons were not named in the charge sheet as the investigating officer did not find any evidence of their involvement in the incident, according to the charge sheet.

Hashem was the prime accused in the case.

Inspector Moksedur Rahman, the investigating officer of the case, filed the 13-page charge sheet before the Chief Judicial Magistrate's court around 5:00pm Sunday, more than two years after the blaze.

Hashem's four sons are Hasib bin Hashem, Tarek Ibrahim, Tawsheef Ibrahim, and Tanjeem Ibrahim.

Contacted, Moksedur said three other IOs had probed the case before him and that he prepared the charge sheet based on their findings.

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1



People of the low-income group queued up in front of an OMS truck in Mohammadpur's Ring Road area. Come rain or shine, they wait for hours on end for their turn to get food essentials at subsidised rates in the face of soaring shelf prices.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

ROHINGYA RETURN Myanmar to allow int'l volunteers

Bangladesh delegation
holds talks in Naypyidaw

PORIMOL PALMA

Myanmar will allow international volunteers, including those from the UN, China and ASEAN countries, to take part in the humanitarian assistance programmes during the repatriation of the Rohingyas.

The country agreed to this during a meeting between Bangladesh and Myanmar in Naypyidaw yesterday, a member of the Bangladesh delegation told The Daily Star.

The four-member Bangladesh delegation was led by Miah Md Mainul Kabir, director general of the foreign ministry's Myanmar wing. The meeting was part of a tripartite initiative mediated by China.

Bangladesh had asked Myanmar to ensure the involvement of international volunteers in the humanitarian assistance programmes after the Rohingyas voiced concern over security.

Yesterday, Myanmar also agreed that the Rohingyas will be repatriated to

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LETTER ON YUNUS DAG declines to sign AG office's statement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Deputy Attorney General Imran Ahmed Bhuiyan yesterday said he refrained from signing a statement, prepared by the attorney general's office, protesting the recent letter from global figures to the prime minister over trial proceedings against Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus.

"I have decided not to sign the statement as I support the letter issued by the Nobel laureates and world leaders about the trial proceedings against Muhammad Yunus. I think Dr Yunus is an honourable person. His prestige is being damaged and he is being subjected to judicial harassment," Imran told reporters at a briefing on the Supreme Court premises.

Contacted, Imran told The Daily Star that the attorney general's office was getting a statement, protesting the letter issued by many Nobel laureates and other global figures,

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Injured monkey seeks help at health complex Doctor takes notice and saves its life



ARUN BIKASH DEY, Chattogram

An injured monkey showed up at a hospital three days in a row till yesterday all by itself to get treatment for wounds in Chattogram's Sitakunda upazila.

According to locals, the monkey wandered into the locality from a nearby forest to search for food.

On Saturday, they said, it appeared at the main gate of Sitakunda Upazila Health Complex, covered in wounds.

Dr Nur Uddin, the health and family welfare officer at the complex, noticed the injured monkey while he was leaving his office and rushed it to the emergency room for primary treatment.

He then informed the officials of the

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Govt to buy 340 buses from S Korea Tk 1,133cr project to be placed at Ecneec meeting today for approval

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation is going to take up a project to import 340 buses and other equipment from South Korea.

The Tk 1,133 crore project will be placed today before the Executive Committee on National Economic Council (Ecneec) meeting for approval.

Of the amount, the Korean government will provide Tk 829 crore in loan while the rest will be financed by the Bangladesh government.

The project deadline is December next year.

A planning ministry official, however, said the target is to get the buses on roads by June next year so that people, especially in Dhaka city, have sufficient public transport.

The BRTC currently has a fleet of 1,350 buses -- 1,250 in operation and the rest under repairs. It offers

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Gourmati offers new hope for mango growers

Good yield, higher profits make it potential
export item, say agri experts

MOSTAFA SHABUJ

A new variety of mango, Gourmati or BARI Mango 12, is winning farmers over as it promises them higher profits, being the last of the varieties to arrive at the market during the coveted mango season.

It has also gained popularity among consumers, who are now able to get the summer fruit till the end of September without having to opt for imported ones. The other varieties usually run out by the first week of the month.

Farmers have been growing Gourmati for the past four to five years, and selling it at higher prices due to its good quality. The variety is developed naturally as a mutation of Langra and Ashwina mangoes in Chapainawabganj's Shibganj upazila since 2012.

Imports of the fruit to Bangladesh have dropped largely over the years due

to the success of this variety.

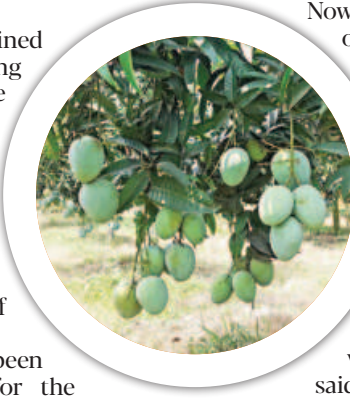
Serazul Islam, president of Bangladesh Fresh Fruits Importers Association, said, "Mango import has almost stopped for the last three-four years due to the good production of late variety mangoes in Bangladesh.

Now, the markets are full of homegrown good mangoes for six months at a stretch."

Earlier, during August-September, some mangoes would be imported from Thailand, but with high import duty. They cannot compete with our good quality late varieties any longer, he said.

Expressing satisfaction, Palash Sarkar, deputy director of the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) in Chapainawabganj, one of the largest mango-producing districts, said the orchards dedicated to growing the variety have been expanding and

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India ease into Super Fours



AFP, Kandy

India skipper Rohit Sharma and Shubman Gill remained unbeaten as the seven-time champions hammered minnows Nepal by 10 wickets in yesterday's rain-hit match to enter the Super Four stage of the Asia Cup.

Chasing a DLS (Duckworth-Lewis-Stern method) revised target of 145 in 23 overs after a rain interruption, India reached home with 17 balls to spare in Pallekele.

Rohit, on 74, and Gill, on 67, stood strong. Nepal were bowled out for 230 after Aasif Sheikh top-scored with 58.

The 50-over tournament is seen as a tune-up for the upcoming ODI World Cup in India but rain has played spoilsport, forcing organisers to discuss a venue change for upcoming matches in Colombo.

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Khaleda Zia's health worsens

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's health has further deteriorated, with no signs of improvement even 26 days into her hospitalisation at Evercare Hospital.

Some of her organ-related complications have increased and her mineral levels are also deficient, the hospital's medical board said yesterday.

Dr Rafiqul Islam, health secretary of BNP, said, "Doctors are keeping Khaleda Zia under constant observation."

"When admitted to the hospital on August 9, her calcium, potassium, and haemoglobin counts were very low. Meanwhile, the conditions of her liver, kidney and some other organs seem to be worsening suddenly," a board member said.

Doctors performed further tests on her

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Impounded vehicles are left on the road next to Shahbagh Police Station in the capital, which eventually destroys them. This also causes waterlogging as the drains cannot be cleaned properly. The photo was taken yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Black Sea grain deal can be restored soon Says Erdogan as Putin demands West must stop blocking Russian exports

REUTERS, Moscow

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said after talks with Russia's Vladimir Putin yesterday that it would soon be possible to revive the grain deal that the United Nations says helped to ease a food crisis by getting Ukrainian grain to market.

Russia quit the deal in July - a year after it was brokered by the United Nations and Turkey - complaining that its own food and fertiliser exports faced serious obstacles.

Erdogan, who previously played a significant role in convincing Putin to stick with the deal, and the United Nations are both trying to get Putin to return to the deal.

"As Turkey, we believe that we will reach a solution that will meet the expectations in a short time," Erdogan said in the Black Sea resort of Sochi after his first face to face meeting with Putin since 2022.

