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Janata's great leniency to an errant client

AnonTex Group enjoys extraordinary benefits from state-run bank despite hardly any repayment

MD MEHEDI HASAN

Troubled state-run lender Janata Bank continues to be overly lenient towards AnonTex Group, one of its five large borrowers, despite negligible loan recovery in 13 years from the garment manufacturer.

At the 746th meeting of the board of directors of Janata Bank that was held on November 28 last year, a Tk 3,359.19 crore interest waiver was extended to AnonTex on the condition that it pay back the principal amount within June 15 this year.

Otherwise, the loans will be shown classified, according to the meeting minutes.

At the end of 2022, AnonTex's liabilities to Janata stood at Tk 7,726 crore, which is 334 percent of the bank's paid-up capital. As per rules, the four state-run banks are not allowed to lend more than 25 percent of their paid-up capital to a single party. At the end of June, Janata's paid-up capital stood at Tk 2,314 crore.

AnonTex, whose website beams British brands Tesco and New Look and Spain's Zara as clients and \$150 million as annual turnover, failed to repay the sum.

And yet, at the 778th meeting of the Janata board held on July 25, the garment manufacturer was given until the end of the year to pay back the sum. In other words, AnonTex's defaulted loans will remain unclassified until December 31, according to the meeting minutes.

However, the bank imposed a new condition this time: sell two of its two companies and repay a portion of the total liabilities by September 30.

This was not the only count of leniency extended to AnonTex by Janata, which has the highest amount of defaulted loans in the banking sector as of March.

Between 2010 and 2015, the bank disbursed about Tk 3,527.9 crore to 22 companies of AnonTex Group.

A 2018 central bank investigation found that a lion's share of the loans was obtained through forgery and irregularities and – such loans are not eligible for any additional facility like interest waiver.

JANATA BANK'S HEALTH CARD (AS OF MARCH)

- Total outstanding amount **Tk 92,573cr**
- Defaulted loans **Tk 14,950cr**
- Capital shortfall **Tk 2,389cr**
- 75% credit concentration in **5 branches**



Policemen and pro-BNP lawyers clash in front of Dhaka Metropolitan Sessions Judges' Court in Old Dhaka yesterday after the lawyers brought out a procession on Johnson Road demanding "restoration of voting rights" and the caretaker government system. Story on page 2.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Obaidul Hassan new chief justice

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Justice Obaidul Hassan, a senior judge of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, has been appointed as the 24th chief justice of the country. The current Chief Justice Hasan Foez Siddique will retire on September 25.

President Mohammed Shahabuddin made the appointment in line with article 95(1) of the constitution.



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Runaway kid lays bare airport security lapses

RASHIDUL HASAN

In an alarming security breach, a 12-year-old boy managed to evade all checks and board a Kuwait-bound plane at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport early yesterday.

The runaway from a Gopalganj madrasa had no passport, ticket or boarding card. He was discovered only because he got on a completely sold-out flight, according to airport police.

He dodged at least five security and intelligence agencies working round the clock at the airport and left officials scratching their heads.

According to sources at the HSIA, the child was in a seat of the 3:10am Kuwait Airways flight. When the person whose seat it actually was showed up, the cabin crew approached the child and failed to find his parents, a boarding card, or a passport.



SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

PRICE HIKE OF EGGS 10 firms, bodies accused of market manipulation

Bangladesh Competition Commission files complaints

SUKANTA HALDER

Bangladesh Competition Commission yesterday lodges complaints against 10 poultry firms and poultry-related organisations for manipulating the egg market in collusion with each other to send egg prices skyrocketing.



The BCC filed 10 separate cases with the commission against Kazi Farms, Paragon Poultry Ltd, Diamond Egg Ltd, Peoples Poultry and Hatchery Ltd, Naba Farm Ltd, Bangladesh Poultry Industries Central Council, Bangladesh Poultry Industries Association, Bangladesh Poultry Farm Protection National Council, Poultry Professionals Bangladesh, and United Egg Sale Point.

The commission operates under the commerce ministry and is empowered to probe, try, and punish errant companies for breaching competition laws. The commission operates under Competition Act, 2012, which allows to dispose of cases without going to a court.

BCC member Hafizur Rahman told The Daily Star that their primary findings show that these companies increased the prices of their products, controlled the market, and created an artificial crisis to destabilise the market through a syndicate.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

আসছে

আইএফআইসি
আমার
বন্ড



নিরাপদ বিনিয়োগে সেরা মুনাফা

বন্ড ক্রেতা ও বন্ড ইস্যুয়ার-এর মধ্যে IFIC স্থাপন করছে এক অনন্য মেলবন্ধন

কবে, কীভাবে?
জানতে চোখ রাখুন



UK wants fair, violence-free polls here

Says UK high commission
DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The UK encourages free, fair, participatory, and peaceful elections so the people of Bangladesh can exercise their democratic rights, according to a statement issued by the UK high commission in Dhaka yesterday.

The statement also underlined the need to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms during the fifth UK-Bangladesh Strategic Dialogue held at the Foreign Service Academy (FSA) yesterday.

Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen led the Bangladesh side and UK Permanent Under-Secretary of the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office Sir Philip Barton led the UK side at the dialogue.

“Since they are our old friend and a development partner, they have an interest in our elections. We have reiterated our commitment [to holding fair polls]. We had a positive discussion,” Masud told reporters after the dialogue.

Responding to a query, he said the word participatory has many meanings.

“We have no disagreement over a free and fair election,” Masud said, adding that Bangladesh welcomes international observers for the upcoming election.

The UK reiterated its commitment towards Indo-Pacific region, while Bangladesh explained its recently-published Indo-Pacific Outlook, which speaks of a free and open Indo-Pacific. The UK and Bangladesh agreed to continue cooperation on global and regional security, according to the UK high commission statement.

The UK noted the need for improved livelihood provisions for the Rohingya, while reiterating its commitment to the goal of a safe, voluntary, and dignified return to Myanmar when the situation allows.

The UK announced a further £3m contribution to support the Rohingya, taking its total contribution since 2017 to £368m.

Sir Philip Barton said, “The dialogue is a reflection of the growing relationship between our two countries, and our desire to work together more closely on our economic, trade, and development partnerships and on regional and global security issues.”

Momen said the two countries agreed to sign Standard Operating Procedures to find ways to bring back the irregular Bangladeshis from the UK.



Florists have set up shop partially blocking the stairs to the footbridge next to Birdem Hospital in Shahbagh. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

23 hurt as pro-BNP lawyers, cops clash

Defying police restriction, they took out protest procession on Johnson Road in the capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 23 people were injured as pro-BNP lawyers and police clashed in front of Dhaka Metropolitan Sessions Judges' Court in Old Dhaka yesterday.

Witnesses said the clash broke out around 12:30pm when the BNP-backed lawyers brought out a procession on Johnson Road, defying police restriction.

During the clash, seven members of the law enforcement agency, including DMP's Kotwali Zone Additional Deputy Commissioner Muhit Kabir Sarneabat, Assistant Commissioner Shahinur Islam and Officer-in-Charge Shahinur Islam of Kotwali Police Station, and 16 pro-BNP lawyers were wounded, according to police and BNP sources.

The injured BNP lawyers were taken to Dhaka National Medical Institute Hospital and Islami Bank Central Hospital in Kakrail, while the police personnel took treatment at Central Police Hospital in Rajarbagh.

“We brought out a peaceful procession, demanding voting rights and restoration of democracy and the caretaker government system, but police suddenly attacked us,” said BNP Law Secretary Kayser Kamal.

“This brutal attack by police is an attack on democracy, on our constitutional rights and it a clear violation of people's legal rights,” added the Supreme Court lawyer.

Contacted, ADC Muhit said, “We requested the lawyers to bring out the procession inside the court premises, but they occupied the busy streets. So, we removed them from there.”

“We didn't attack any lawyers. We just drove them away from the streets. The lawyers attacked us,” he added.

All ongoing manual land surveys cancelled

Says land minister; JS passes Land Crime Prevention and Remedy Bill-2023

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Land Minister Saifuzzaman Chowdhury has said the government has cancelled all the ongoing land surveys which have been carried out following the old method.

“All land surveys that have already been conducted are cancelled. I want to confirm this standing in parliament,” he told the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday.

The minister, however, said that the digital land survey will continue.

Saifuzzaman was speaking in parliament before the passage of Land Crime Prevention and Remedy Bill-2023. The law has been enacted aiming to curb land-related forgeries and offences.

The bill, which was placed before the House by the land minister for passage, was passed by a voice vote.

Taking part in the discussion before the passage of the bill, some opposition MPs blasted the authorities concerned for irregularities in the ongoing land surveys.

The minister said, “I have also received some complaints recently. Our objective is to follow the Bangladesh Digital Survey. We have started using the digital survey method. A pilot project has been taken up in Patuakhali and Barguna. Surveys are being conducted at some places.”

Saifuzzaman mentioned that he received some complaints even from his constituency (Chattogram-13) in Anwara upazila.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

NBR transfers 270 customs officials

UNB, Dhaka

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) has made a major reshuffle in the customs department by transferring 270 officials, including 268 assistant revenue officers of the customs, excise, and VAT departments and two joint commissioners.

Three separate notifications were issued in this regard on Sunday and Monday.

NBR's Public Relations Officer Syed A Mumen told UNB yesterday that this initiative has been taken by NBR to bring dynamism to the revenue sector.

The transfer order has asked the officials transferred to join their new workplaces between September 14 and 17, he said.

The two transferred joint commissioners are Abdur Rashid Mia and Mahbub Hasan. Abdur Rashid Mia has been transferred from Benapole to Dhaka and Mahbub Hasan from Chattogram to Rajshahi.

2 jailed for life in rape case

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

A Narayanganj court yesterday sentenced two men to life imprisonment in a case filed over the kidnapping and later gangraping of an 11-year-old child in Ruppaganj upazila six years ago.

The convicts, Mishon, 38, and Rubel, 28, were also fined Tk 1 lakh each, in default of which, they'll have to spend an additional three months behind bars, said Public Prosecutor Rakibuddin Ahmed.

Three others were acquitted in this case, he added. Judge Nazmul Haque Shyamal of the Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal announced the verdict in presence of the convicts.

On January 17, 2017, the girl was abducted on her way to her brother's house and later raped. Her hanging body was recovered from Mishon's house.

The girl's family allegedly couldn't file a rape case immediately out of pressure from local influential, and an unnatural death case was filed instead.

On February 8, the same year, the girl's mother was finally able to file a case with the court.

Ex-BCL leader arrested over torture, extortion

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

Police arrested a former Chhatra League leader over allegations of carrying out torture and extortion at the Institute of Health Technology (IHT) in Bogura.

Shojol Gosh, 33, former organisational secretary of district unit BCL, was arrested yesterday morning, 10 days after a case was filed against him, said Bogura Sadar Police Station Officer-in-Charge Saihan Oliullah.

IHT students had been protesting since August 29, demanding Shojol's arrest. They gave police a 24-hour ultimatum for his arrest on Sunday.

On September 2, Shahriar Hasan, a student at this institution, filed a case against Shojol on charges of extortion, misappropriation of hostel meal funds, and torturing students.

The complaint stated that Shojol used political dominance to illegally occupy room 218 of the IHT hostel and used to consume narcotics with outsiders there.

He also used to force students to press his feet, send them out in the middle of the night to buy cigarettes, and beat and extort students, it also read.

Janata's great leniency to an errant client

FROM PAGE 1

The Bangladesh Bank ordered Janata to conduct a functional audit and take legal action against those involved in the scam.

Janata got around to appointing the audit firm only in July – five years after the BB directive.

Md Abdul Jabbar, Janata's managing director and chief executive officer from April, declined The Daily Star's request for comment.

“If we suspend the facility, then it would not bring any positive things for both the client and the bank because we need to recover the loans,” SM Mahfuzur Rahman, chairman of the Janata Bank board, told The Daily Star.

Rahman joined the bank as its chairman in July 2020.

The bank has already recovered a small amount of the group's loans as a down payment when extending the interest waiver, he said.

“There is a provision to waive interest subject to the recovery of cost of funds. This is a standard practice used for recovering bad loans,” he added.

When the interest waiver facility is

extended, clients are given a year to clear the liabilities, according to Md Younus (Badal), managing director and chairman of AnonTex Group.

“But we were given six months. By that reasoning, the time extension by the Janata board is fair. We contacted some other banks and they are willing to take over the loans from Janata,” he told The Daily Star.

Younus said his factories are running in full swing.

“In the last 10 years, we received working capital loans for only four companies and the remaining 18 companies did not get any working capital loan facility. That is why we faced trouble repaying the bank loans.”

AnonTex has mortgaged adequate land against the loans, he said.

Asked about the allegations of forgery and irregularities found by the 2018 central bank investigation, Younus said: “Forgery has not been proven yet.”

Industry insiders, however, said such loan irregularities are one of the key factors behind the ailing financial health of Janata, which has a capital shortfall of Tk 2,389 crore at the end

of March.

Once a reputed state-run commercial bank, Janata's financial health took a turn for the worse centring on loan scams of AnonTex and Crescent Group.

At the end of 2017, the bank's bad loans stood at Tk 5,818 crore. At the end of March, it was Tk 14,950 crore, which is about 11.4 percent of the banking sector's total defaulted loans at the end of March.

The lender is now facing a liquidity shortage due to lacklustre loan recovery, said its top officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity for fear of reprisal.

“Janata Bank has become an ailing financial institution due to lack of accountability and impunity,” said Salehuddin Ahmed, a former BB governor.

The bank's board of directors and management committee are largely liable for the present situation of the bank, he said.

“It is very sad news that the bank's authority did not punish those who were involved in the AnonTex loan irregularities,” he said.

December 2012 to September 2015. He was elevated to the Appellate Division on September 3, 2020.

Justice Obaidul Hassan has written several books including “Bangabandhu, Rabindranath O Osamprodayeek Bangladesh”, “Bangabandhu Bangladesh: Ekjon Juddhoshishur Golpo O Onyanya,” and “Obornoneeyo Nirmomotar Chitro,” the SC sources said.

Supreme Court Bar Association Secretary Md Abdun Nur Dulal congratulated Justice Obaidul as the new chief justice.

“Justice Obaidul Hassan is a man of commitment and profound personality. He is an honest man. He made a huge contribution to our legal system when he was a lawyer,” he said.

Chief Justice Hassan Foez Siddique was accorded farewell on August 31 as the last regular judicial functions of the SC took place on that day before the court went on annual vacation.

10 firms, bodies accused of market manipulation

FROM PAGE 1

He said the cases were filed under section 15 of the Competition Act, 2012, and the companies will be issued notices today or tomorrow to respond in 15 days.

A senior official of the commission said if found guilty, the companies could be fined up to 10 percent of their three-year average turnover.

Section 15 of the Competition Act says that no person shall directly or indirectly enter into any agreement or collusion – in respect of production, supply, distribution, storage or acquisition of any goods or services – which causes or is likely to cause an adverse effect on competition or creates monopoly or oligopoly in the market.

In mid-August, the price of a dozen farmed brown eggs shot up to Tk 180 from Tk 145, putting many people who rely on the cheapest source of animal protein in trouble.

The BCC, following instructions by the commerce ministry, formed several committees to probe the reasons behind the unusual price hikes.

Prices of broiler chicken, the cheapest source of meat, had also gone up then.

On August 13, Fisheries and Livestock Minister SM Rezaul Karim said the cost of producing an egg in the country was about Tk 10.50. “If it is sold at the retail for Tk 12, then everyone will make a profit,” he told reporters.

The prices eventually dropped after the Directorate of National Consumers Right Protection raided markets to bust egg hoarders.

Yesterday, a dozen eggs were being sold for Tk 150, according to the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh. Egg prices have increased 18.39 percent in a year, the TCB says.

Kazi Zahin Hasan, director of Kazi Farms Group, said Kazi Farms is not involved in any cartel or “syndicate” to increase the price of eggs. When the price of eggs goes up, people jump to the conclusion that large companies have formed a cartel, he said.

He said hundreds of traders buy and sell eggs every day and they will obviously buy from whoever offers them a low price. “If Kazi Farms tries

to sell at a higher price than small farmers, the traders will buy from the small farmers and not from us.

“Over the last year, many egg farmers stopped producing eggs because the cost of feed was high and they were selling eggs at a loss. This has resulted in reduced supply.

“The hot summer further reduced egg production and reduced supply. The price of fish recently increased, leading many consumers to buy eggs instead of fish.”

Nazrul Islam Liton, general manager of People's Poultry and Hatchery Ltd, claimed that the allegations against his company were false.

He cited poor production and high poultry feed prices for the price hike of eggs.

United Egg Sale Point owner Khandaker Md Mohsin, also secretary general of the Bangladesh Poultry Industries Association, said the allegations of the BCC are not logical.

He said over 60,000 poultry farms have closed over the last three years causing a supply dearth. The prices also went up due to high feed prices.

On top of this, heatwaves this year killed layer chickens in many farms across the country, he added.

Amjad Hossain Bokul, a member of the Poultry Professionals Bangladesh, said their main function is to advise farmers on managing their farms in a scientific way.

He said their organisation is a knowledge-sharing platform that connects poultry producers, feed producers, livestock science students, researchers, teachers, and livestock sector stakeholders. They are not responsible for the recent increase in egg prices, he claimed.

The Daily Star could not reach Kayser Ahmed, managing director of Diamond Egg Ltd and Moshior Rahman, managing director of Paragon Group, for comments despite repeated attempts via phone and texts.

Ghulam Rahman, president of the Consumers Association of Bangladesh, said last year the BCC filed several cases against several companies and organisations for allegedly hiking the prices of essentials, including eggs and

broiler chickens, but there has been no outcome.

If the cases are not disposed of quickly and the culprits go unpunished, it will not be possible to stop price gouging and the consumers will continue to suffer.

He expressed hope that this time the commission will hear the cases quickly and take legal action.

In September last year, the BCC filed 44 cases against a host of individuals and organisations, accusing them of creating an artificial crisis that led to abnormal hike in the prices of items like rice, flour, eggs, poultry and toiletries.

Kazi Farms, Paragon Poultry Ltd were also among those sued. The cases are currently being heard by the commission.

Jamalpur DC

FROM PAGE 12

Madarganj municipality, chaired the function where Md Kamruzzaman, superintendent of Jamalpur police, and several other AL leaders also spoke.

Last month, Shyamal Chandra Dhar, officer-in-charge of Dewanganj Model Police Station in the district, was withdrawn for seeking votes for “boat”, AL's electoral symbol, in the upcoming general election.

Meanwhile, State Minister for Public Administration Farhad Hossain yesterday said the DC's statements were inappropriate in the lead-up to the upcoming election, reports UNB.

“We will thoroughly investigate the DC's comments regarding the election. It is inappropriate for a DC to make such declarations with elections on the horizon, these officials receive training to uphold neutrality,” said the minister while talking to reporters at the Secretariat.

“Nevertheless, it is essential to ascertain whether the speech was manipulated or distorted and subsequently propagated. In this era of artificial intelligence, speeches can be tampered with. The government will initiate appropriate action upon a comprehensive examination of the DC's statement, should it be found to be genuine,” he added.

REQUIREMENTS



YOUR NID



NOMINEE'S INFO



NOMINEE'S PHOTO



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DENGUE OUTBREAK

‘Nobody performs duty properly’

Health minister slams local govt bodies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Health Minister Zahid Maleque said the authorities concerned need to carry out their mosquito control duties efficiently to curb the dengue outbreak in the country. He said that the mosquito population has not been adequately reduced, leading to a surge in dengue cases this year.

He was talking to journalists following his address at the National Conference on Maternal and Adolescent Nutrition held at a hotel in Dhaka.

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare organised the event with the support of Unicef to accelerate nutritional care for adolescents and women in Bangladesh.

“Everyone has to perform their own duties (in curbing dengue outbreak); but we do not see anyone do this,” Zahid Maleque said pointing to the local government bodies who are responsible for controlling mosquitoes.



He also expressed concern about dengue spreading to rural areas, which were previously less affected compared to urban areas. The minister said that approximately 3,000 dengue patients are being hospitalised daily.

Regarding the nutrition status in the country, Maleque acknowledged progress but emphasised that there is still much work to be done. He announced the development of the 5th Health Population and Nutrition Sector Programme, scheduled to begin in 2024, and the government’s commitment to invest additional resources to ensure equitable access to nutrition services for mothers and adolescent girls across

Bangladesh.

Experts at the event presented evidence highlighting the consequences of inadequate nutrition, including weakened immunity, poor cognitive development in children, and increased risks during pregnancy and childbirth.

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Rusty iron rods sticking out of a moving pickup-van points at two men riding a motorbike in the capital’s Paltan. Such actions can lead to accidents. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

First ever Local Govt Day tomorrow

PM to address event at Gono Bhaban

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With an aim to make local government bodies more vibrant and effective the government is going to celebrate “Local Government Day” tomorrow for the first time with the presence of over 8,000 elected local government representatives.

With the slogan -- “Efficient pioneer for service and progress, the local government is for development and innovation”, the programme will be held at the prime minister’s official residence Gono Bhaban. PM Sheikh Hasina will address the event as chief guest.

Three elected representatives from each division will speak at the programme to describe their achievements and problems.

Mayors of the city corporations and municipalities, district council chairmen and members, chairmen of upazila and union parishads and councillors of two Dhaka city corporations were invited to the programme.

However, elected representatives of the government that were suspended and facing criminal charges, were not invited.

Currently, there are 5,474 local government bodies in the country, including 4,577 union parishads, 329 municipalities, 495 upazila parishads, 61 district councils and 12 city corporations.

Three day-long development fairs will also be held at upazila level, starting from September 16, where government’s achievements and future plans will be showcased. Upazila administrations were asked to take initiatives to make the fair attractive and participatory.

Dhaka city corporations will carry out special cleaning and anti-mosquito drives to mark the day.

Once a dream, soon to be reality

PM to open Karnaphuli tunnel on Oct 28; cops to be vigilant against ‘propaganda’, fears of gridlock at Patenga point

FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is scheduled to inaugurate Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Tunnel beneath the Karnaphuli River on October 28 during her visit to the port city.

Following the inauguration, South Asia’s first underground tunnel will open for vehicular traffic starting from October 29, said Bridges Division Secretary Md Monjur Hossain yesterday after an inter-departmental preparatory meeting held at Chattogram Circuit House.

The trial run of vehicles inside both tunnel tubes has already been completed, informed Manjur. “Inside the tunnel, vehicles will be limited to a speed of 80km per hour, and three-wheelers and two-wheelers will not be allowed to prevent road disturbances,” he said.

During the meeting, various departments in Chattogram, including the police, CDA, and political leaders, provided recommendations and insights. Present at the meeting were the Chattogram Divisional Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, Chattogram Metropolitan Police (CMP) Commissioner, leaders from the ruling party, and other stakeholders.

Chattogram Divisional Commissioner



The Tk 10,374 crore project consists of a 3.40 km tunnel and 5.35 km approach road. It will connect the northern part of the port city to Anwara upazila in the south, boosting the country’s economy.

Tofayel Islam said, “We will take legal action against any rumors or propaganda on social media regarding the tunnel. Misinformation or propaganda could arise, so everyone should remain vigilant.”

This jointly funded project by Bangladesh and China consists of a 3.40km long tunnel and a 5.35km approach road, with a total cost of Tk 10,374 crore. The tunnel, following the “one city two towns” model like Shanghai, will connect the northern part of the port city to Anwara upazila in the south, boosting the country’s economy.

It will serve as an alternate route connecting

Cox’s Bazar, Teknaf, Matarbari, and northern Chattogram, contributing significantly to the Asian Highway Network and enhancing connectivity between Bangladesh and neighboring countries.

During the meeting, CMP Commissioner Krishna Pada Roy requested the tunnel authorities to provide dedicated vehicles for rescue operations in case of breakdowns inside the tunnel and suggested the need for a ‘dumping zone’ for such vehicles.

Later Talking to The Daily Star, he said the meeting also discussed the concerns

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



With dengue fatalities and cases on the rise, Uttam, a flower wholesaler, stays inside a mosquito net while working at the capital’s Shahbagh. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

EC workshop on polls today

Section of civil society members invited

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission is set to hold a workshop today with a section of civil society members to know their expectations regarding the upcoming 12th parliamentary polls.

The commission has invited former election commissioners, bureaucrats, election observers, journalists, and others to attend the event titled, “12th National Polls: Expectations and Reality” at its office in Agargaon.

“Discussion will be held followed by a review, where we’ll get to know the expectations of all stakeholders regarding the next general polls. It will

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

NIKO GRAFT CASE

Permission sought to produce FBI official

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The prosecution yesterday filed an application with a Dhaka court seeking its permission for producing an official of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and two officials of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police as witnesses in the Niko corruption case.

Attorney General AM Amin Uddin submitted the application to the Special Judge’s Court-9 of Dhaka, said Anti-Corruption Commission’s lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan.

Judge Sheikh Hafizur Rahman fixed September 17 for hearing the issue.

The judge also completed recording statement

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

ASP SHIPON MURDER Charges framed against 15

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday framed charges against 15 people in a case filed over death of ASP Anisul Karim Shipon on November 9, 2020.

Fourteen of the accused, who are now on bail, pleaded not guilty and demanded justice after Judge Sheikh Samidul Islam of Dhaka’s Third Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge’s Court read out the charges to them.

They are National Institute of Mental Health and Hospital (NIMH) registrar Abdullah Al Mamun; Mind Aid Psychiatry and De-Addiction Hospital directors Fatema Khatun Moyna, Abdullah Al Mamun and Sazzad Amin; its marketing manager Arif Mahmud Joy; coordinator Redwan Sabbir Sajib; kitchen staffer Masud Khan; ward boys Jobayer Hossain, Tanif Mollah, Sajeeb Chowdhury,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Soil management (amendment) bill passed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Sand Quarry (Balumahal) and Soil Management (Amendment) Bill, 2023 was passed in the Parliament yesterday, bringing some changes to the existing act of 2010 with a view to impose new restrictions in defining sand quarries and extraction of sand and soil.

Land Minister Saifuzzaman Chowdhury placed the Bill which was passed by voice vote.

The hydrographic survey of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority is considered in defining sand quarries. As per the draft law, the survey of the Water Development Board, if any, will have to be considered in this regard.

If there is a possibility of destruction to cropland or its topsoil, sand and soil cannot be extracted,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

PRAYER TIMING
SEPTEMBER 13

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4:35 12:45 4:30 6:14 7:45
JAMAAT 5:10 1:15 4:45 6:17 8:15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Death anniv of Ibrahim Khalil

STAR REPORT

Today is the 3rd death anniversary of Dr Md Ibrahim Khalil, chief geologist of Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission, said a press release.

On this day in 2020, he passed away after being infected by Covid-19, aged 48.

He left behind his two daughters and one son. His only elder brother Mohammad Ismail Amin, director of Gungchil Ltd seek prayers from all for the departed soul.



Boro paddy procurement

FROM PAGE 5
crore tonne food grains annually. On the other hand, in the last fiscal year, the country produced over four crore tonnes of rice.

There is no possibility of food shortage in the current financial year as well, he said.

The minister also said over 18.54 lakh tonne food grains had been in stock in the country's government warehouses till September 7.

In response to a query of AL MP Ali Azam, the minister said within three years (2022-23 to 2024-25), the import of edible oil will be reduced by approximately 40 percent to achieve self-sufficiency.

Mustard cultivation has been increased from 6.10 lakh hectares to 8.18 lakh hectares of land, he added.

5 killed, 4 injured

FROM PAGE 5
of the injured Maruf and Sajib could not be obtained immediately.

The accident occurred around 6:45am, when the bus carrying workers of "Smart Factory" hit an electric pole and fell into the roadside ditch near Sohadia area on Mauna-Bormi regional road of Bormi union, said Aminul Islam, a sub-inspector of Sreepur Police Station.

"The driver died on the spot," he said.

Locals rescued the injured and sent them to Sreepur Upazila Health Complex, from where they were later

sent to Gazipur Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Medical College Hospital for better treatment, said Asma Khatun, a doctor at the health complex.

In Sylhet, a local Awami League leader was killed and two others were injured as a truck hit a CNG-run auto-rickshaw coming from the opposite direction at Charkhai area of Beanibazar upazila on Monday night.

The deceased was identified as Fakhruul Islam, 45, of Parkul Barabari in Rajaganj union of Kanighat upazila. He was the science and technology affairs secretary of Rajaganj Union

AL unit.

The accident occurred around 8:00pm on Sylhet-Zakiganj Road, leaving the trio injured, said Debdulal Dhar, officer-in-charge (OC) of Beanibazar Police Station.

Fakhruul died on the way to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital. The two others are now receiving treatment at the hospital, he said.

"We seized the truck and three-wheeler from the spot, but the truck driver managed to flee," the OC added.

(Our Cumilla and Sylhet correspondents contributed to this report)

Soil management (amendment)

FROM PAGE 3
according to the draft law.

Instruments of extracting sand and soil can be seized lawfully, while the leaseholder will have to bear the compensation if any road or establishment is damaged due to sand transport.

As per the draft law, sand or soil cannot be extracted from privately owned agricultural land. The existing law did not have any restrictions on the extraction of sand or soil from agricultural land.

The Bill states that sand or soil shall not be removed from land owned by a person if it is fertile agricultural land or fertile topsoil, or if it is

for commercial purposes, if it will cause damage to the environment or biodiversity, or if sand is removed by dredgers or by any other manipulative process, or if earth is excavated so as to cause damage, fault in or collapse of such land including other adjacent land.

The Bill, however, said that a person can extract sand or soil to a limited extent from the land owned by him with the permission of the concerned Upazila Nirbahi Officer for the construction of his residential house or for his own needs.

In the objective of the Bill, the minister said transparency in sand quarry and soil

management will be achieved if the proposed bill becomes law.

"Accountability will be established while maintaining the navigability of rivers through planned sand mining," he said.

He also said that protection of environment and biodiversity and meeting the demand of sand and soil in various government and private development projects will be ensured.

Besides, the trend of illegal extraction of sand and soil will stop and increase of the government revenue will be ensured with protected public interest, he added.

UK announces

FROM PAGE 5
that will enable the refugees to return to Myanmar on a safe, voluntary and dignified basis, when the conditions there allow," he said, adding that until that time, the UK is committed to supporting the Rohingyas and host communities in Bangladesh.

Since 2017, the UK has provided £365 million (over Tk 5,000 crore) to support the Rohingyas and Bangladeshi host communities.

Sir Philip Barton is visiting Bangladesh for the fifth UK-Bangladesh Strategic Dialogue.

"Building on the UK and Bangladesh's historic links, the Strategic Dialogue reflects the two countries' shared commitment to developing a modern economic, trade and security partnership," said the British High Commission.

Rights

FROM PAGE 5
government has taken tea garden land to cultivate tea, but it has been found that other crops are also cultivated there. Apart from this, they said proper efforts have not been made to send the children of tea workers to school.

Presided over by BILS Vice Chairman Md Mojibur Rahman Bhuiyan, BILS Advisory Council Member Kamrul Ahsan; Socialist Sramik Front General Secretary Ahsan Habib Bulbul; Bangladesh Tea Workers Union Finance Secretary Paresch Kalindi and Oxfam in Bangladesh's Feminist Leadership and Partnership Specialist Shahjadi Begum were present at the event.

EC workshop on polls today

FROM PAGE 3
be helpful for us to hold a free, fair, and acceptable election," said Election Commissioner Ahsan Habib.

According to EC officials, Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Habibul Awal and all four election commissioners will attend the event.

The commission has also invited former cabinet secretary Ali Imam Majumdar, former Election Commissioner Brig Gen (ret'd) M Sakawat Hossain, former secretary Abu Alam Md Shahid Khan, and Jatiya Nirbachon Parjabeekhon Parishad's

Chairperson Prof Nazmul Ahsan Kalimullah as discussants.

Former ambassador Humayun Kabir, local governance expert Tofail Ahmed, Bhorer Kagoj's Editor Shyamal Dutta, and Daily Prothom Alo's Joint Editor Sohrob Hassan has been invited as reviewers.

Besides, 20 others, including journalists and academics, were invited as guests.

Commissioner Md Alamgir, told reporters on Monday that the EC will take feedback from those who have conducted elections in the past.

He said the commission

has no plan to hold dialogue right now with political parties regarding the next general election, which is set for late December this year or early January next year.

Earlier, the commission held dialogues with registered political parties, former election commissioners, journalists and others during March-July 2022.

Nine oppositions including BNP, had skipped the talks with the EC, saying that they have no confidence that the commission would be able to hold a free, fair and participatory national polls.

Permission sought to produce

FROM PAGE 3
of the complainant ACC Deputy Director Muhammad Mahbubul Alam.

After that, defence for two accused – BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman's close friend Giasuddin Al Mamun and former Dhaka Club president Selim Bhuiyan – completed cross-examining Mahbubul.

Earlier on May 23, the court recorded a part of the

complainant's statement.

Meanwhile, lawyer Zainal Abedin Meshbah yesterday submitted an application on behalf of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, an accused in the case, for adjournment of the hearing.

In the application, Meshbah mentioned that Khaleda Zia had earlier filed a writ petition with the High Court challenging the legality of the order for framing charges against her.

The HC, after hearing, dismissed the writ petition and said the trial would continue. Their client will file a leave-to-appeal petition with the Supreme Court against the HC order. So, hearing should be adjourned, the lawyer said.

Khaleda is now ailing and was earlier admitted into Evercare Hospital for treatment after she got out of jail, following an executive order of the government.

'Nobody performs duty properly'

FROM PAGE 3
According to a Unicef report, Bangladesh is on track to meet the 2025 World Health Assembly target of a 40 percent decrease in the proportion of stunted children under the age of five. However, sustaining this progress requires ensuring that adolescent girls and mothers have access to sufficient nutrition services.

Speaking as a special guest at the event, Sheldon Yett, Unicef Representative to Bangladesh, stressed the economic benefits of investing in better nutrition for mothers and young girls. He emphasised that such investments contribute to future generations' productivity and well-being, while poor nutrition can lead to a lifetime of suffering and

a legacy of poverty for the next generation.

Undernourished girls and women who become pregnant face a higher risk of giving birth to low-birth-weight infants. Annually, approximately 604,000 children are born with low birth weight in Bangladesh, with nearly 28 percent of them becoming trapped in an intergenerational cycle of malnutrition and poverty.

Department of International Relations

Jahangirnagar University, Savar, Dhaka-1342

Admission Notice (Fall Semester) 2023

for

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• An applicant must have a Bachelor's degree in any discipline, with at least 2nd division/class or CGPA 2.5 at every level.

Application Process:
Application can be done either online or offline. Online application process can be completed by visiting at emir.iiu.edu.bd or offline application form can be collected and submitted to the office of the Department of International Relations (working day from 8:30am to 4:00pm).

Important Deadlines:

Availability of Application Form	: August 11, 2023 to September 15, 2023
Written test	: Saturday, September 16, 2023; 10:00am to 12:00pm.
Viva Voce	: After the written test on the same day (Please bring your original mark sheets & certificates)
Class Starts	: Friday, October 06, 2023
Application fee	: 1000/- Taka (online/offline), for complete payment procedure please visit our website emir.iiu.edu.bd

For more information:
Phone: 01644408257, 01710771770 (from 8:30am to 04:00pm)

Md. Khalid Qudus, Ph.D
Coordinator, WMIR, JU

GD-1402

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer
Education Engineering Department
Mymensingh

Memo No. 37.07.6100.001.34.001.23.2513

Date: 12-09-2023

e-Tender Notice No.08/EED/MYM/2023-2024

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

Sl No.	Tender ID No.	Description of works	Procurement method
1	869157	Manufacturing & Supplying of Furniture at Alhaz Mobarak Khan College, Fulbaria, Mymensingh	OTM
2	869164	Manufacturing & Supplying of Furniture at Islamia College, Fulbaria, Mymensingh	OTM
3	869172	Manufacturing & Supplying of Furniture at Kandaniya High School, Fulbaria, Mymensingh	OTM
4	869177	Manufacturing & Supplying of Furniture at Babar Rabeya IR Junior School, Mucktagacha, Mymensingh	OTM
5	869200	Manufacturing & Supplying of Furniture at Mogoltola High School, Mucktagacha, Mymensingh.	OTM
6	869203	Manufacturing & Supplying of Furniture at K.B College, Sadar, Mymensingh.	OTM
7	869205	Manufacturing & Supplying of Furniture at Patgudam High School, Sadar, Mymensingh.	OTM
8	869206	Manufacturing & Supplying of Furniture at Mymensingh Collectorate School & College, Sadar, Mymensingh.	OTM
9	869103	Manufacturing & Supplying of Furniture at Chorjithor High School & College, Iswarganj, Mymensingh.	OTM
10	869106	Manufacturing & Supplying of Furniture at Abul Hasem Khan High School, Gaffargaon, Mymensingh.	OTM
11	869112	Manufacturing & Supplying of Furniture at Altaf Golondaz Degree College, Gaffargaon, Mymensingh.	OTM
12	869121	Manufacturing & Supplying of Furniture at Ghagra Uthuri Chipan High School, Gaffargaon, Mymensingh.	OTM

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 through any registered banks branches up to one hour before Tender last selling time.

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

Md. Yusuf Ali
Executive Engineer
Education Engineering Department
Mymensingh
E-mail: xeneedmym@gmail.com

GD-1403

Charges framed

FROM PAGE 3
Asim Kumar Pal and Saiful Islam Palash; guard Lion Ahmed; and pharmacist Tanvir Hasan.

Charges against accused Sakhawat Hossain Remon, now absconding, were framed against him in his absence.

The judge also fixed November 9 for starting the trial of the case.

Inspector AKM Nasir Ullah of Police Bureau of Investigation, the investigation officer of the case, submitted the charge

sheet to Dhaka's Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court on November 30 last year.

The IO dropped charges against Dr Nusrat as her involvement was not found during the investigation and Niaz Morshed as he died earlier.

Shipon's father filed the case with Adabor Police Station accusing 15 people after the ASP was allegedly tortured to death on November 9, 2020 at Mind Aid Psychiatry and De-Addiction Hospital.

Communication

FROM PAGE 5
Kalihati-Sakhipur road in Boheratoil area in Sakhipur upazila, that was built around eight months ago demolishing an old one, has been submerged as water level rose following heavy rains, suspending vehicular movement on it.

The bridge was built as a temporary one by RHD while the department completes the construction of a new bridge.

During a recent visit in the area, this correspondent saw people using a makeshift bamboo bridge set up on the submerged bridge, while vehicles had to use the inundated bridge bearing risks.

"Students of adjacent villages had stopped coming to school after the bridge was flooded. They came back after Russel Rana, a local lawyer, set up the bamboo bridge," said Sadiqul Islam, headmaster of Boheratoil Gono Uchha

Bidyalay.

Rafiqul Islam, a commuter, said he has to take an alternate route of 15 kilometres if he opts not to use the bailey bridge bearing risk for crossing just two kilometres distance.

Wadud Hossain, chairman of Boheratoil union parishad, said it is the responsibility of the contractor to arrange alternative facilities for movement of people and vehicles there.

Anwar Hossain, sub-divisional engineer (Mirzapur circle) of RHD, said the contractor has already been directed to increase the height of the bridge and approach road after water level goes down.

Sohel Rana, representative of the contractor, said they have kept the bridge's construction work on hold as the water level rose. The bailey bridge will be raised to higher level once water recedes.

LAND AND FACTORY SHED FOR SALE

Four bigha industrial land surrounded by 6 feet height boundary wall, 150 KVA electric substation, own water facilities including 6500 sq. feet factory shed, 680 sq. feet labour shed under Sreepur Municipality in Gazipur District will be sold on immediately. Interested genuine buyers are requested to contact. Mobile No. **01677-811561**

বসুন্ধরায় কর্ণার প্রটে বাড়ী বিক্রয়

বসুন্ধরা বারিধারা আবাসিক এলাকায় রোড- ৫, বাড়ী নং- ৫৫৯, ব্রক-এইচ, ৮০ফিট/ ২৫ফিট কর্ণার রাস্তা সংযোগ কোঠা জমির উপর নির্মিত একটি অত্যাধুনিক ইন্টেরিউর ডিজাইনসহ ওতলা বিশিষ্ট ভূপ্লেন নতুন বাড়ী বিক্রয় হইবে। যোগাযোগ: ০১৭১১৫৪৬৬৮৭, ই-মেইল: mdfariduddin6687@gmail.com

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

পুলিশ স্টাফ কলেজ বাংলাদেশ

মিরপুর-১৪, ঢাকা-১২০৬।

স্মারক নং-৪৪.০১.০৪০০.০৬২.৩১.০০১.২০২৩/২৭৮০ তারিখ: ১১/০৯/২০২৩খ্রি:

Request for Expression of Interest (EoI) এর সময়সীমা বৃদ্ধির বিজ্ঞপ্তি

পুলিশ স্টাফ কলেজ বাংলাদেশ-এ ২০২৩-২০২৫ অর্থ বছরে গবেষণা কাজ পরিচালনার জন্য স্মারক নং-৪৪.০১.০৪০০.০৬২.৩১.০০১.২০২৩.২৫৭৮ তারিখ: ২২/০৮/২০২৩ খ্রি: মূলে জাতীয় দৈনিক কালের কণ্ঠ ও দি ডেইলী স্টার পত্রিকায় গত ২৩ আগস্ট, ২০২৩ তারিখে প্রকাশিত বিজ্ঞপ্তি অনুযায়ী Request for Expression of Interest (EoI) দাখিলের সময়সীমা আগামী ০৩/১০/২০২৩ তারিখ দুপুর ১২:৩০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত বৃদ্ধি করা হলো।

বিজ্ঞপ্তির তথ্য ও আবেদনপত্র নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর অফিস হতে সংগ্রহ করা যাবে।

(মোহাম্মদ শাহজাহান, পিপিএম (বার), পিএইচডি)
বিপি-৭০৯৮০৪৩৪৬৮
পরিচালক (গবেষণা ও প্রকাশনা)
পক্ষে-রেস্ট্রার
পুলিশ স্টাফ কলেজ বাংলাদেশ

GD- 1399

ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন

নগর ভবন

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"শেখ হাসিনার মূলনীতি গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি"

স্মারকসংখ্যা: ৪৬৮.২০৭.০০০.০৩.০২.২৭১৯.২০১৯-৭৭৪ তারিখ: ২৭ ভাদ্র ১৪০০ বঙ্গাব্দ
১১ সেপ্টেম্বর ২০২৩ খ্রিস্টাব্দ

মৌখিক পরীক্ষার বিজ্ঞপ্তি

ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশনের সহকারী প্রকৌশলী (পুর) পদে ৯ সেপ্টেম্বর ২০২৩ খ্রি.তারিখে অনুষ্ঠিত পরীক্ষায় নিম্নোক্ত রোল নম্বরধারী প্রার্থীগণ লিখিত পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ হয়ে মৌখিক পরীক্ষার জন্য নির্বাচিত হয়েছেন। নিম্নোক্ত সময়সূচি অনুযায়ী মৌখিক পরীক্ষা গ্রহণ করা হবে:

ক্র. নং.	মৌখিক পরীক্ষার জন্য নির্বাচিত প্রার্থীদের রোল নম্বর	মৌখিক পরীক্ষার তারিখ, সময় ও ঠানা	জ্ঞান
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২.	১৩০০৭৯৩ ১৩০০৮২০ ১৩০০৯২৫ ১৩০১১১৪ ১৩০১১৩০ ১৩০১১৩৪ ১৩০১১৬৭ ১৩০১১৭২ ১৩০১২৪০ ১৩০১২৪২ ১৩০১৩২২ ১৩০১৩৯৭ ১৩০১৪০৯ ১৩০১৪২৫ ১৩০১৫৭৮ ১৩০১৬১৫ ১৩০১৬৩৯ ১৩০১৬৩৩ ১৩০১৬৭২ ১৩০১৭০৪ ১৩০১৭৫০ ১৩০১৭৫৩ ১৩০১৭৬৮ ১৩০১৭৭৪ ১৩০১৭৭৮ = ২৫ জন	১৮.০৯.২০২৩ রোজ সোমবার সন্ধ্যা ৬:৩০ বি.	মেয়র সজা কক নগর ভবন ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন

২। নিম্নলিখিত শর্তাবলী মৌখিক পরীক্ষার অংশগ্রহণের ক্ষেত্রে আনুষঙ্গিকভাবে অনুসরণ করতে হবে:

- সকল শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতার সমন্বিত, জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র/জাতীয়তাসনদ ও নাগরিকত্ব সনদ এর মূল কপি প্রদর্শন করতে হবে। প্রথম প্রেরিত পেনডেন্ট কর্তৃক নির্ধারিত সকল সনদপত্রের একসেট ফটোকপি এবং Online-এ পূর্ণকৃত আবেদনপত্রের একটি প্রিন্ট কপি দাখিল করতে হবে;
- সরকারি/আধাসরকারি/স্বায়ত্বশাসিত প্রতিষ্ঠানে কর্মরত প্রার্থীকে নিয়োগকারী কর্তৃপক্ষ প্রদত্ত অনাপত্তি/ছাড়পত্রের মূলকপি মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় জমা দিতে হবে;
- পরীক্ষার জন্য নির্ধারিত সময়ের ৩০ মিনিট পূর্বে যথাযথ উপস্থিতি থাকতে হবে;
- পরীক্ষার অংশগ্রহণের জন্য কোন প্রকার টিএ/ডিএ প্রদান করা হবে না।

(ডাকস্বাক্ষর)
সচিব
ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন

ডিএসসিসি/পিআরডি/৬৮/২০২৩-২০২৪

GD-1404

Boro paddy procurement half of target till Sept 7

Food minister tells JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Food Minister Sadhan Chandra Majumder yesterday told the parliament that half of the target for paddy procurement has not been achieved in the current Boro season.

In reply to a query from Awami League MP Kazim Uddin Ahmed, the minister said over 1.99 lakh tonne paddy have been procured till September 7.

The government has also procured over 12.93 lakh tonne of boiled rice so far, he said. It had set a target to procure 4 lakh tonne paddy and 14.5 lakh tonne boiled rice by August 31. Later,

The government had set a target to procure 4 lakh tonne paddy and 14.5 lakh tonne boiled rice by August 31.

the date was extended till September 14.

In reply to a query of AL MP AKM Sarwar Jahan, the minister said the government had decided to buy paddy at Tk 30 per kg and boiled rice at Tk 44 per kg during Boro season.

Among them, the aforementioned amounts of paddy have been collected till last September 7.

In response to another query by MP Kazim, the minister said there is no food shortage currently in the country.

The total population of the country requires 2.18

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



PHOTO: STAR

Locals compelled to use a risky makeshift bamboo bridge as a bailey bridge in Tangail's Sakhipu upazila stays submerged for over a month.

BAILEY BRIDGES IN TANGAIL

Communication disrupted in two upazilas

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Locals in two upazilas of Tangail are in distress as two bailey bridges in the areas remain unusable.

A bailey bridge in the district's Delduar upazila collapsed recently, cutting off direct road communication between the area and the district headquarters.

Meanwhile, commuters in Sakhipur upazila are facing immense sufferings as a bailey bridge in the area has been submerged in the water for last one month, following a tidal surge.

The dilapidated bridge in Delduar upazila, built over a ditch at Dulla area on Tangail-Delduar road, was in a vulnerable state for a long time. It collapsed recently when a sand-laden dump truck was passing on it, said locals.

Four passengers from the truck were



PHOTO: STAR

The collapsed bailey bridge in Delduar upazila.

rescued by the locals after it fell into the water. One of them was seriously injured and needed medical treatment, said Nasir Uddin Mridha, officer-in-charge of Delduar Police Station.

"With the road communication on Tangail-Delduar road being halted, commuters now have to travel several additional kilometers

to go to district headquarters through Elasin on the Tangail-Nagarpur road. Many people are also using boats to cross the water body, spending extra money," Rezaul Karim, a local.

The bridge collapsed two more times previously, and was still being used after temporary repairs, said Mohammad Ali of Sewratoil village.

Delduar Upazila Nirbahi Officer Farhana Ali said that the matter has been informed to the higher authorities.

The Roads and Highways Department has been requested to repair the collapsed bridge and restore connectivity as quick as possible, the UNO added.

Aliul Hossain, executive engineer of RHD, Tangail, said necessary measures have been taken to this end and direct communication will be restored within three days.

On the other hand, the bailey bridge on

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

5 killed, 4 injured in road accidents

STAR REPORT

Five people were killed and four others injured in separate road accidents in Cumilla, Gazipur and Sylhet districts yesterday and on Monday.

In Cumilla, three people were killed as a bus hit a motorcycle and then two pedestrians on the Dhaka-Chattogram highway in Chandina upazila yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Alamgir Hossain, Abul Kalam and Baharam, said Md Mamun, in-charge of Illiotganj Highway Police Outpost.

The accident happened at Harikhola area on the highway around 10:00am, leaving motorcyclist Alamgir dead on the spot and two others injured, he said.

The others succumbed to their injuries after they were rushed to Chandina Upazila Health Complex.

The driver of the bus fled the scene.

Filing of a case in this regard was underway, said the police official.

In Gazipur, a bus driver was killed and two others were injured, as the bus fell into a roadside ditch after hitting an electric pole in Sreepur upazila early yesterday, reports UNB.

The deceased was identified as Mofizul Islam, 30, of Sohadia village in Sreepur upazila. Detailed identities

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

ROHINGYA CRISIS

UK announces £3 mn aid

BSS, Dhaka

Britain would provide £3,000,000 (around Tk 42 crore) as new funding to support Rohingyas in Cox's Bazar and Bhasan Char of Bangladesh.

"I am pleased to announce a further UK contribution of £3,000,000 to UNHCR, which will help ensure refugees in Cox's Bazar and Bhasan Char be able to access healthcare, clean water, hygiene and sanitation services and cooking fuel," said Sir Philip Barton, permanent under-secretary to the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO).

The new funding will be channeled through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), said a press release issued by the British High Commission in Dhaka yesterday.

Six years since the atrocities of 2017, which forcibly displaced Rohingyas into Bangladesh, the UK continues to stand with the Rohingyas in Bangladesh, and all those affected by this crisis, Barton said.

"We continue to push for a long-term solution

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Rights situation for tea workers unsatisfactory

Says BILS and Oxfam study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The actual rights situation of tea workers in Bangladesh is unsatisfactory compared to the existing legal standards for tea workers as a whole, according to a study.

"The employment opportunities in tea gardens are very limited, and there is no job security for workers. Only 15 percent of tea workers are permanent employees, while 5 percent work temporarily," it said.

The study, "Rights of Women Workers Engaged in the Tea Sector and the Prevailing Status of Decent Work," conducted by Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies with the support of Oxfam in Bangladesh (BILS), was unveiled yesterday at the capital's Dhaka Reporters Unity.

It was conceptualised with the aim of improving the tea workers' quality of

life, implementing decent wages in tea gardens, and improving the skills of tea workers.

Over 17 percent of women workers do not have an appointment letter, while 87 percent do not have any identity cards. Additionally, 10 percent of women workers do not know what an identity card is, the study read.

Over 17 percent of women workers do not have appointment letters.

All of the study participants said they do not have a service book in the tea garden, and 41 percent of workers said they work 1-2 hours of overtime for extra income.

Speakers at the event said there is no sexual harassment prevention committee for women workers, even though more than 50 percent of the workers are female. They alleged that the land rights for tea garden workers are also not clear.

According to speakers, the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Dhaka-Narita flight delayed for 11 hours

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines on Dhaka-Narita route was delayed for around 11 hours due to a technical glitch, causing suffering to its 76 passengers.

The flight, BG 376, was initially scheduled to take off around 11:45pm on Monday.

Tahera Khondoker, general manager (public relations) of Biman, said the delay was due to a technical problem. "Biman never compromises the safety of its passengers. After fixing the glitch, the flight took off from the Dhaka Airport at 11:00am today [yesterday]," she said.

Passengers were taken to nearby hotels.

Biman started the much-awaited Dhaka-Narita-Dhaka flight on September 1.

Office of the Zilla Parishad
Naogaon
www.zpnaogaon.gov.bd

শেখ হাসিনার মুদ্রা
গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি

Memo No. 46.00.6400.002.06.749.2017-310

Date: 11-09-2023

e-Tendering Notice Number-02/2022-2023
Limited Tendering Method (LTM)

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

Sl No.	Package No.	Description of works	Tender ID	Last selling date & time	Submission date & time
1.	e-Tender/ZP/ Nao/ADP/ 2022-23/02/03	A. Estimated for Bodhapur High School Semipucca Building for Truss & CI Sheet under Manda Upazila, Dist. Naogaon. (PART-A) B. Estimated for Bodhapur High School Semipucca Building for Truss & CI Sheet under Manda Upazila, Dist. Naogaon. (PART-B)	868786	Date: 25/09/2023 Time: 17.00	Date: 26/09/2023 Time: 13.00
2.	e-Tender/ZP/ Nao/ADP/ 2022-23/02/04	Improvement of Double Brick Soling Road at Birgram-Verom Pucca Road Mongalia Belal House More to Mongalia Eistpara Late Ahammed Ali House at Rood from Ch 00m-414.100m under Dhamoirhat Upazila, District. Naogaon	868788	Date: 25/09/2023 Time: 17.00	Date: 26/09/2023 Time: 13.00
3.	e-Tender/ZP/ Nao/ADP/ 2022-23/02/04	A. Estimate for Construction of Approach Road with Roundabout and fountain at Chanda Ideal High School Alipur under Mohadevpur Upazila, District: Naogaon. (Part-A) B. Estimate for Construction of Shahid Minar at Chanda Ideal High School Alipur under Mohadevpur Upazila, District: Naogaon. (Part-B)	868789	Date: 25/09/2023 Time: 17.00	Date: 26/09/2023 Time: 13.00

This is 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 through any registered banks. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP helpdesk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Rajia Shultana
Chief Executive Officer
Zilla Parishad, Naogaon
E-mail: zpnaogaon@lgd.gov.bd

GD-1397

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Director
National Institute of ENT
Tejgaon, Dhaka
E-mail: nient@hospi.dghs.gov.bd
Phone: +88 02 8878155, Fax: +88 02 8878150

Memo No. NIENT/Admin/Tender(Medical Equipment/Heavy)/2023-2024/1274

Date: 12/09/2023

Invitation for Tender

KEY INFORMATION					
1.	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare			
2.	Agency	Department of Health Services			
3.	Procuring entity name	Director, National Institute of ENT			
4.	Procuring entity district	Dhaka			
5.	Invitation for	Procurement of Medical Instruments (Heavy Equipment)			
6.	Invitation Ref No.	NIENT/Admin/Tender(Medical Equipment/Heavy)/2023-2024/1274			
7.	Date	12/09/2023			
8.	Procurement method	Open Tendering Method (OTM)			
FUNDING INFORMATION					
9.	Budget and source of funds	GOB (Revenue)			
PARTICULAR INFORMATION					
10.	Organization code	1270208111119			
11.	Organization name	National Institute of ENT, Tejgaon, Dhaka-1208.			
12.	Tender publication date	13/09/2023			
13.	Tender last selling date and time	15/10/2023 during office hours			
	Date	Time			
14.	Tender closing date and time	16/10/2023 11.00am			
15.	Tender opening date and time	16/10/2023 12.00pm			
16.	Name & address of the office(s)				
	(a) Selling tender document	Office of the Director, National Institute of ENT, Tejgaon, Dhaka			
	(b) Receiving tender document	1. Office of the Director, National Institute of ENT, Tejgaon, Dhaka 2. Office of the Deputy Police Commissioner (North), Tejgaon Division (North), Shamoly, Dhaka (west to Shamoly Shishu Park)			
	(c) Opening tender document	Office of the Director, National Institute of ENT, Tejgaon, Dhaka-1208.			
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER					
17.	Eligibility of tenderer		The tenderer shall have a minimum 3 years of general/overall experience in the supply of similar goods to the govt./semi-govt./autonomous institute/hospital. Certificate must be submitted along with supplying documents. The tenderer shall have a minimum 2 years of specific experience in the supply of related services to the govt./semi-govt./autonomous institute/hospital. Certificate must be submitted along with supplying documents. Other requirement described in the Tender Document.		
18.	Brief description of goods		Medical Instruments (Heavy Equipment)		
19.	Pkg. No.	Identification of Pkg	Tender security (Tk.) (refundable)	Price of tender document (Tk.)	Deposit on Code No. 1-2711-0000-2366 by Treasury Challan (with CTR) in favor of Director, National Institute of ENT, Tejgaon, Dhaka-1208.
	GR-24	Supplying of Medical Equipment	2% As quoted offer	2000/-	
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS					
20.	Name of official inviting tender		Prof. Dr. Md. Zakaria Sarker		
21.	Designation of official inviting tender		Director, National Institute of ENT, Tejgaon, Dhaka-1208.		
22.	Address of official inviting tender		Tejgaon Industrial Area, Dhaka		
23.	Contact details of official inviting tender		Telephone: 02-8878155, Fax No. 02-8878150		
24.	Authority is not bound to accept the lowest tender/rate. Authority may cancel the whole tender/part of the tender without assigning any reason.				
25.	Terms and conditions of the tender and other information will be available with the schedule.				

Note: If the date of selling, receiving & opening of tender is disturbed under any unavoidable circumstances, the next working day will be applicable for the same respectively.

Prof. Dr. Md. Zakaria Sarker
Director
National Institute of ENT
Tejgaon, Dhaka

GD-1400

G20 SUMMIT

US, China call it ‘success’

AGENCIES

Days after the conclusion of the G20 Summit in New Delhi, the United States on Monday affirmed that the global meet was a “success” despite the absence of the Chinese and Russian presidents and the joint declaration not explicitly condemning Russia’s role in the ongoing war in Ukraine.

China, meanwhile, reacting to the summit, refrained from commenting on the absence of its president from the meet.

A day earlier, China said that the declaration has sent a “positive signal” that the member countries are joining hands in tackling global challenges and economic recovery, reports The Indian Express.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning, addressing a media briefing, said, “The declaration released by the G20 summit shows that China’s proposition is a good signal.”

McCarthy calls for Biden impeachment inquiry

REUTERS, WASHINGTON

Republican US House of Representatives Speaker Kevin McCarthy yesterday called for an impeachment inquiry into Democratic President Joe Biden encouraged by his party’s right flank - a move certain to further divide lawmakers as they struggle to passing legislation to avoid a government shutdown.

“I am directing our House committees to open a formal impeachment inquiry into President Joe Biden,” McCarthy told reporters.

Many in McCarthy’s party were infuriated when the House, then controlled by Democrats, twice impeached Republican President Donald Trump - in 2019 and 2021 - though he was acquitted both times in the Senate.

Biden, who defeated Trump in the 2020 election, is seeking re-election next year. Republicans, who now narrowly control the House, have accused Biden of profiting while he served as vice president from 2009 to 2017 from his son Hunter Biden’s foreign business ventures, though they have not presented substantiation.



Rescue workers carry a body recovered from under the rubble in the aftermath of a deadly earthquake in Talat N’Yaaqoub, in Morocco yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

MOROCCO EARTHQUAKE

Survivors struggle in shelters

Death toll rises to 2,901; Red Cross appeals for over \$100m to support victims

REUTERS, Amizmiz

Many survivors of Morocco’s most powerful earthquake in over a century were struggling in makeshift shelters yesterday after a fourth night outside, with rescuers yet to reach remote mountain villages which suffered some of the worst devastation.

The death toll from the 6.8 magnitude quake that struck in the High Atlas Mountains late on Friday stood at 2,901, with 5,530 people injured, but those figures looked likely to rise.

Rescuers from Spain, Britain and Qatar were helping Morocco’s search teams, while Italy, Belgium, France and Germany had all offered to send in specialists but said they had yet to receive the green light from the Moroccan government.

The International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) launched an emergency appeal to raise 100 million Swiss francs (\$112.3 million) to support victims of the earthquake in Morocco.

Hopes of finding survivors under the rubble were fading with the passage of time, not least because many of the traditional mud brick houses that are common in the mountain villages crumbled to earthen rubble



without leaving air pockets.

Along the Tizi n’Test road that passes through some of the most remote areas, survivors were critical of the rescue efforts by the government, which they accused of failing the most devastated hamlets.

“The problem is that the authorities are focusing on the bigger communities and not the remote villages that are worst affected,” said Hamid Ait Bouyali, 40, who had spent the night along the road on the outskirts of Rakte.

Some villages had yet to receive

Indian police arrest cow vigilante after riots

AFP, New Delhi

Indian police yesterday arrested the leader of a vigilante group devoted to protecting cows who had been accused of inciting deadly religious riots near New Delhi in July.

Monu Manesar leads a chapter of the radical Hindu right-wing group Bajrang Dal and is a suspect in the mob lynching in February of two Muslim men accused of cow smuggling.

Cows are considered sacred by Hindus and their slaughter is illegal in many Indian states.

Manesar remained free and continued to post inflammatory anti-Muslim content regularly on Facebook and Instagram for months after authorities linked him to the murders.

He announced in July plans to attend a Hindu procession in Nuh near the capital.

At least six people were killed and dozens more injured in the resulting unrest.

Nuh district police officer Shubhjeet Singh confirmed Manesar’s arrest on charges of spreading hateful content on social media.

N Korea’s Kim in Russia

US warns Pyongyang against selling arms to Moscow

REUTERS, Seoul/Moscow

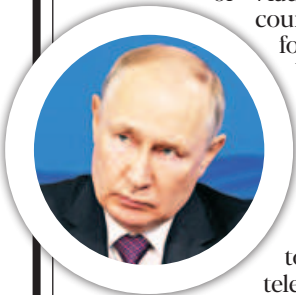
North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has arrived in Russia, a source told Reuters yesterday, for what the Kremlin said would be a comprehensive discussion with President Vladimir Putin - amid warnings from Washington they should not trade weapons. Kim left Pyongyang for Russia on Sunday on his private train, the North’s state media reported yesterday, accompanied by top arms industry and military officials. A Russian source with knowledge of the trip told Reuters Kim arrived yesterday morning, leaving his train to meet local officials in Khasan, the main rail gateway to Russia’s Far East, before continuing on. “It will be a fully fledged visit,” Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said. “There will be negotiations between two delegations, and after that, if necessary, the leaders will continue their communication in a one-on-one format.” Discussions could also include humanitarian aid to North Korea and the UN Security Council resolutions imposed against Pyongyang, Russian officials said. US officials, who first said the visit was imminent, said arms talks between Russia and North Korea were actively advancing and Kim and Putin were likely to discuss providing Russia with weapons for the war in Ukraine.

Putin signals he expects long war in Ukraine

Chides West for arms supplies

REUTERS, Vladivostok

Russian President Vladimir Putin yesterday indicated he was bracing for a long war in Ukraine, saying that Kyiv could use any ceasefire to rearm and that Washington would continue to see Russia as an enemy no matter who won the 2024 US election. Speaking for several hours at an economic forum in Russia’s Pacific port city of Vladivostok, Putin said Ukraine’s counteroffensive against Russian forces had so far failed and the Ukrainian army had sustained heavy losses of 71,000 men in the attacks. Only when Ukraine was exhausted when it came to men, equipment and ammunition would it talk peace, he said in reply to questions from a Russian television presenter acting as a moderator. But he said Kyiv would use any cessation of hostilities “to replenish their resources and restore the combat capability of their armed forces.” Putin said many potential mediators had asked him if Russia was ready to stop fighting but said that Russia could hardly do so when it was facing a Ukrainian counteroffensive. For there to be any chance of talks, said Putin, Ukraine would first have to cancel its self-imposed legal ban on peace talks and explain what it wanted. “Then we shall see,” Putin said. He also said that 1,000 - 1,500 Russians were signing voluntary contracts to join the military every day. Russia controls about 18 percent of Ukrainian territory, including Crimea which it annexed in 2014, and a swathe of eastern and southern Ukraine which it seized after invading Ukraine on February 24 last year.



Runaway kid lays bare airport security lapses

FROM PAGE 1

They then did a head count and found they had one passenger more than the plane’s capacity.

Subsequently, the pilots were informed, and security personnel got on board and took the boy away.

He was then handed over to the Airport Police Station.

Besides exposing serious security lapses at the airport, the incident sent shockwaves through the authorities concerned.

Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (Caab) Chairman Air Vice Marshal M Mahfudur Rahman said it’s a big question as to how a child could evade the eyes of immigration officials and board an aircraft.

CCTV footage shows that the child was between an elderly couple as if he were of that family, and he managed to cross the immigration. This was not supposed to happen, he added.

“That’s why I have asked to suspend all those involved in the immigration security and then start the

investigation to unveil how it all happened,” said the Caab chairman.

It was not immediately clear where the boy was headed and why.

“We are investigating and also taking action against the personnel responsible ... for negligence of duty,” Executive Director of HSIA Group Captain Kamrul Islam told The Daily Star.

Officer-in-Charge of Airport Police Station Azizul Haque Mia said the child was now in police custody, and his parents were on their way to Dhaka.

“He fled from a madrasa three days ago and came to Gazipur. He went to the airport area on Monday night,” he added.

A person needs to go through at least five checks at the airport before they can board an aircraft.

ATM Nazrul Islam, an aviation expert, told The Daily Star, “This is an example of the collapse of security at the country’s prime airport, which is alarming.”

“Such an incident tarnishes the image of the country.”

APS Azizul hit ADC Harun first

FROM PAGE 12

last night said he was not aware of the statements made by DB chief Harun and ADC Sanjida.

“I don’t know where [DB chief] Harun got this information. Ask him...” he told reporters at the DMP Headquarters.

“If she [ADC Sanjida] gave such a statement [to the media], she had not done the right thing. She can’t do it without the commissioner’s permission.”

ADC Sanjida on Monday told this correspondent that she went to Birdem Hospital Saturday evening for treatment and ADC Harun helped her get a doctor’s appointment.

“The doctor gave me several tests. I was at the ETT [Exercise Tolerance Testing] room. ADC [Harun] sir was waiting outside. Suddenly, I heard a commotion. I heard sir [ADC Harun] saying, ‘Why would you hit me?’

“I looked and saw my husband. He seemed very angry. There were two or three young men [Chhatra League leaders] with him. They attacked sir and forcibly entered the ETT

room. He [Azizul] asked the young men to take pictures and videos of us [ADC Harun and ADC Sanjida]. As I screamed, my husband slapped me across my face,” Sanjida said.

She added that she tried but failed to take away the mobile phone from one of the men.

Sanjida said her husband Azizul and the men appeared at the scene out of the blue and began the attack.

She said as she had not told Azizul that she was going to the hospital, he might have done it because he felt insecure.

Prof MA Rashid, a senior consultant at Ibrahim Cardiac Hospital and Research Institute, said he heard similar accounts of the incident at the hospital.

After the incident, ADC Harun allegedly called in a team of police and took BCL Organising Secretary Anwar Hossain Naeem and BCL Science Affairs Secretary Sharif Ahmed Munim to Shahbagh Police Station around 9:00pm.

The pro-Awami League student body alleges that its two leaders were tortured for almost an

US takes on Google in landmark antitrust trial

AFP, Washington

A landmark case pitting the US government against Google over the dominance of the company’s world-dominating search engine began in a Washington courtroom yesterday.

“This case is about the future of the internet and whether Google will ever face meaningful competition in search,” said Justice Department lawyer Kenneth Dintzer as the United states government began making its case against the tech titan.

Over the course of 10 weeks of testimony involving more than 100 witnesses, Google will try to persuade Judge Amit P. Mehta that the landmark case brought by the Department of Justice is without merit.

Held in a Washington courtroom, the trial is the biggest US antitrust case against a big tech company since the same department took on Microsoft more than two decades ago over the dominance of its Windows operating system. “Even for Washington DC, I think we have the highest concentration of blue suits in any location here today,” Mehta joked, observing the dozens of lawyers assembled in his courtroom.

The Google case centers on the government’s contention that the tech titan unfairly forged its domination of online search by forging exclusivity contracts with device makers, mobile operators and other companies that left rivals no chance to compete.

Through these payments of billions of dollars every year to Apple and others, Google secured its search engine default status on phones and web browsers, allegedly burying upstarts before they had a chance to grow.

A third of population still without internet: UN

AFP, Geneva

A third of the world’s population is still without access to the internet, even though the number of people connected has never been so high, according to the latest UN statistics published yesterday.

Around 100 million more people are able to access the internet since last year’s census by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the UN agency for information and communication technologies. That means 67 percent of the world’s population, or 5.4 billion people, are now online.

However, the other 2.6 billion people are still without access.

“This improvement in connectivity is another step in the right direction,” said ITU Secretary-General Doreen Bogdan-Martin.

“We won’t rest until we live in a world where meaningful connectivity is a lived reality for everyone, everywhere,” she added.

PRISONER DEAL

US signs off on transfer of funds to Iran

AFP, Washington

The United States confirmed Monday it had signed off on the transfer of \$6 billion in frozen Iranian funds from South Korea, paving the way for five US citizens to leave Tehran.

The archenemies announced last month, after protracted negotiations, a deal in which the US citizens were freed from prison and put under house arrest, with the expectation they will fly out of Iran once the funds are moved to an account in Qatar.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken notified Congress that he had gone ahead on a key part of the agreement, signing a waiver that will shield banks involved in the transfer from US sanctions.

The money transfer is “a critical step in securing the release of these five US citizens,” a State Department spokesperson said.



Staff members install a sign reading “Nipah isolation ward, entry strictly prohibited” at a hospital where a ward is being prepared for suspected Nipah virus patients in Kozhikode district, Kerala, India yesterday. A district-wide health alert was issued on Monday after two deaths were reported, suspected to be due to Nipah virus infection.

PHOTO: REUTERS

FIGHTING CLIMATE CHANGE

UN maps out decarbonisation of construction sector

AFP, Paris

The construction sector -- the most polluting and difficult to decarbonise -- must build less, use more sustainable materials and clean up conventional ones to slash its emissions, the United Nations said yesterday.

The industry is responsible for 37 percent of global carbon dioxide emissions and growing urbanisation is spurring the construction of new buildings made from carbon-heavy materials, especially concrete and steel.

Mushrooming urban environments -- which add new buildings in an area equivalent in size to Paris every five days -- damage life-sustaining ecosystems and pose serious challenges to fighting climate change.

A report published by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and Yale Center for Ecosystems and Architecture yesterday called on the sector to prioritise a “circular” approach that avoids waste.

Net zero by 2050 in construction is achievable if “governments put in place the right policy, incentives and regulation to bring a shift the industry action”, said Sheila Aggarwal-Khan, director of UNEP’s industry and economy division.

Building less and repurposing existing structures generates 50-75 percent fewer emissions than new constructions, the report said.

Switching to renewable bio-based materials such as timber and biomass could see emissions savings of up to 40 percent by 2050 in some regions, it added.

Conventional materials that cannot be replaced -- concrete, steel, aluminium, glass and bricks -- must find ways to decarbonise further, said the report.

Electrifying production, scaling up innovative technologies, and using more recycled materials would accelerate efforts to clean up these especially carbon-intensive materials.

Concrete, aluminium and steel alone account for 23 percent of overall global emissions.

The share of concrete in global construction should be cut by half between 2020 and 2060 for an effective decarbonisation of the sector, the report recommended.

LIBYA STORM FLOODS

10,000 feared missing

Says IFRC; quarter of eastern city of Derna wiped out; 1,000 bodies recovered so far

REUTERS, Near Derna

About a quarter of Libya’s eastern city of Derna was wiped out after dams burst in a storm, the administration in the area said yesterday, and the Red Cross said 10,000 people were feared to be missing across the country in floods.

At least 1,000 bodies had already been recovered in the city of Derna alone, and officials expected the death toll would be much higher, after Storm Daniel barrelled across the Mediterranean into a country crumbling from more than a decade of conflict.

The flooding, which has also devastated other coastal areas, is as a result of a Storm Daniel which hit on Sunday.

A Reuters journalist on the way to Derna, a coastal city of around 125,000 inhabitants, saw vehicles overturned on the edges of roads, trees knocked down, and abandoned, flooded houses.

“I returned from Derna. It is very disastrous. Bodies are lying everywhere -- in the sea, in the valleys, under the buildings,” Hichem Abu Chkiouat, minister of civil aviation and member of the emergency committee in the administration that controls the east, told Reuters by phone.

“The number of bodies recovered in Derna is more 1,000,” he said. “I am not exaggerating when I say that 25 percent of the city has disappeared. Many, many buildings have collapsed.”

Abu Chkiouat later told Al Jazeera that he expected the total number of dead across the country to reach more than 2,500, as the number of missing people was rising.

“We can confirm from our independent sources of information that the number of missing people is hitting 10,000 so far,” Tamer Ramadan, the head of a delegation of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), told reporters in Geneva via video link from Tunisia.

Videos showed a wide torrent running through Derna’s city centre after dams burst. Ruined buildings stood on either side.

Another video shared on Facebook, which Reuters could not independently verify, appeared to show dozens of bodies covered in blankets on the pavements. Convoys of aid and assistance were heading towards the city.

Libya is politically divided between east and west and public services have crumbled since a 2011 Nato-backed uprising that prompted years of conflict.

The internationally recognised government in Tripoli does not control eastern areas but has dispatched aid to Derna, with at least one relief flight leaving from the western city of Misrata yesterday, a Reuters journalist on the plane said.

Other countries, including the United States, also said they would help.



Trump seeks disqualification of US judge

REUTERS, Washington

Former US President Donald Trump filed a motion on Monday seeking to disqualify US District Judge Tanya Chutkan from presiding over one of the criminal cases charging him with trying to overturn his 2020 presidential election loss.

Trump, the front-runner for the 2024 Republican presidential nomination, said last month he planned to seek Chutkan’s recusal as well as a change of venue for the case. Trump argued in a court filing that Chutkan’s prior statements appearing to refer to his role in influencing the January 6, 2021, attack on the US Capitol by his supporters raise questions about her impartiality in the case. The court filing cites a remark Chutkan made at a 2022 sentencing hearing for a Capitol riot defendant.

Nawaz to return to Pakistan on Oct 21: Shehbaz

DAWN ONLINE

PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif is set to return to Pakistan on October 21, ending his four-year exile in the UK, his brother and party president Shehbaz Sharif confirmed yesterday. A statement by Shehbaz, shared by PML-N Information Secretary Marriyum Aurangzeb on social media platform X, said that the party founder would be given a grand welcome upon return. Shehbaz had in July said if the PML-N was voted to power in the forthcoming elections, Nawaz would be the party’s candidate for the slot of prime minister. The elder Sharif left the country in November 2019 on medical grounds following his conviction in a corruption case but never returned. Nawaz’s departure took place 20 days after Islamabad High Court’s order, which granted him temporary relief on medical grounds in Al Azizia case. In February 2020, the then government had declared him an absconder, and later an accountability court had declared him an offender in Toshakhana vehicles reference.

Chinese city hunts for crocodiles on the loose

AFP, Beijing

A Chinese city has launched an operation to find a large number of crocodiles that escaped when floods hit the region in recent days, authorities said yesterday. A typhoon brought sustained heavy rains to southern China last week, triggering inundations in Hong Kong and other areas. Deluges around the city of Maoming in Guangdong province caused a lake at a commercial crocodile farm to overflow with over 70 animals escaping, local media reported. A person who answered the phone at the local emergency management office told AFP yesterday that officials were “working to deal with” the reptilian runaways. The person did not say how many animals were still on the loose or whether any had so far been recovered. A video published by the state-backed Beijing News showed responders in red uniforms searching flooded fields in rescue boats. Further images showed several two-metre-long scaly beasts lying on the road, their fearsome jaws bound tight with red tape. “Crocodiles are still in the water, and several government departments are working to catch them,” the China National Radio reported.

রেজিস্ট্রার দপ্তর

যশোর বিজ্ঞান ও প্রযুক্তি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

যশোর-৭৪০৮, বাংলাদেশ।

Office of the Registrar

Jashore University of Science and Technology

Jashore-7408, Bangladesh

স্মারক নং-সবিপ্রবি/রেজিঃ/সংস্থাপন/রাজস্ব জনবল/ ১০০২(৬)/শ্যাজো নথি/১১-৩৭০০

তারিখঃ ১২/০৯/২০২৩খ্রি.

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

যশোর বিজ্ঞান ও প্রযুক্তি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের নিম্নোক্ত পদগুলো পূরণের নিমিত্তে বর্ণিত শর্তসাপেক্ষে বাংলাদেশের স্থায়ী নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে দরবাখ আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

ক্রম নং	পদের নাম, পদসংখ্যা ও বেতন স্কেল	সর্বোচ্চ বয়স	শর্তাবলী
০১	প্রশাসনিক, ০১ টি স্থায়ী পদ বেতন স্কেলঃ ৫৬৫০০-৭৪৪০০/-	৫০ বছর	আবেদনকারীকে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের নির্ধারিত আবেদন ফরমে প্রয়োজনীয় সকল কাগজপত্রসহ ০২ সেট আবেদন রেজিস্ট্রার, যশোর বিজ্ঞান ও প্রযুক্তি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, যশোর-৭৪০৮ বরাবরে আগামী ১১/১০/২০২৩খ্রি. তারিখ অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ের মধ্যে পৌছাতে হবে। রেজিস্ট্রার, যবিপ্রবি এর কার্যালয় অথবা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ওয়েব সাইটঃ www.just.edu.bd হতে আবেদন ফরম ও যোগ্যতার বিস্তারিত বিবরণ সংগ্রহ করতে হবে। প্রার্থীকে আবেদনপত্রের সাথে নিম্নলিখিত কাগজপত্রের ছায়াছবি সন্নিবেশ করতে হবে- (ক) শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা, অভিজ্ঞতা (যদি থাকে), প্রশিক্ষণ সংক্রান্ত ও অন্যান্য সকল প্রকার মূল/সাময়িক সনদপত্র (খ) সদ্য তোলা পাসপোর্ট সাইজের ০৩ কপি ছবি (গ) জাতীয় পরিচয় পত্র (ঘ) নিজ নিজ এলাকার ইউনিয়ন পরিষদের চেয়ারম্যান/ পৌর মেয়র/ওয়ার্ড কাউন্সিলর এনন্ড ন্যাশনাল সনদপত্র। বয়স গণনার ক্ষেত্রে আবেদন জমার শেষ তারিখ পর্যন্ত হিসাব করতে হবে। চাকুরীতে নিয়োজিত প্রার্থীদের যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের মাধ্যমে আবেদন করতে হবে। দ্রুতিপূর্ণ/অসম্পূর্ণ এবং বিলম্বে প্রাপ্ত আবেদনপত্র (নির্ধারিত সময়ের পর) গ্রহণ করা হবে না। উপাচার্য মহোদয় অভিজ্ঞতা সম্পন্ন বিভাগীয়/অভ্যন্তরীণ প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতার যে কোন ০১ (এক) টি শর্ত শিথিল করতে পারবেন। প্রার্থীর যোগ্যতামের বর্তমান তিকানা লিখিত ১০/- (দশ) টাকার ডাকটিকেট সংলগ্ন দুইটি ফেরত খাম আবেদন পত্রের সাথে সংযোজন করতে হবে।
০২	পরিচালক (শরীরচর্চা শিক্ষা দপ্তর), পুনঃ বিজ্ঞপ্তি, ০১ টি স্থায়ী পদ বেতন স্কেলঃ ৫৬৫০০-৭৪৪০০/-	৫০ বছর	বি.স্ট্র. জমিক নং ০২,০৪,০৫,০৬ এবং ০৯ নং পড়ে ইতিপূর্বে যারা আবেদন করেছেন তাদের পুনরায় আবেদন করার প্রয়োজন নাই।
০৩	উপ-প্রধান চিকিৎসা কর্মকর্তা, ০১ টি স্থায়ী পদ (উপযুক্ত প্রার্থীর অপ্রাপ্যতার ক্ষেত্রে উক্ত পদের বিপরীতে মেডিকেল অফিসার (আবাসিক) নিয়োগ দেওয়া হবে) বেতন স্কেলঃ ৪৩০০০-৬৯৮৫০/-	৪৫ বছর	
০৪	সহকারী রেজিস্ট্রার (রেজিস্ট্রার দপ্তর), পুনঃ বিজ্ঞপ্তি ০১ টি স্থায়ী পদ বেতন স্কেলঃ ২৯০০০-৬০৪১০/-	৩৫ বছর	
০৫	অডিট এন্ড একাউন্টস অফিসার (উপাচার্যের কার্যালয়) পুনঃ বিজ্ঞপ্তি, ০১ টি স্থায়ী পদ বেতন স্কেলঃ ২২০০০-৫৩০৬০/-	৩০ বছর	
০৬	হিসাব কর্মকর্তা (হিসাব দপ্তর), পুনঃ বিজ্ঞপ্তি ০১ টি স্থায়ী পদ বেতন স্কেলঃ ২২০০০-৫৩০৬০/-	৩০ বছর	
০৭	মেডিকেল অফিসার (আবাসিক), উপ-প্রধান চিকিৎসা কর্মকর্তা পদের বিপরীতে, ০১ টি স্থায়ী পদ বেতন স্কেলঃ ২২০০০-৫৩০৬০/-	৩০ বছর	
০৮	সহকারী টেকনিক্যাল অফিসার (জিইবিটি, গণিত, রসায়ন) ০৩ টি স্থায়ী পদ বেতন স্কেলঃ ১৬০০০-৩৮৬৪০/-	৩০ বছর	
০৯	সহকারী টেকনিক্যাল অফিসার (বায়োমেডিকেল ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং বিভাগ) পুনঃ বিজ্ঞপ্তি, ০১ টি স্থায়ী পদ, বেতন স্কেলঃ ১৬০০০-৩৮৬৪০/-	৩০ বছর	

GD-1401

স্বা/ (প্রকৌশলী মোঃ আহসান হাবীব) রেজিস্ট্রার যশোর বিজ্ঞান ও প্রযুক্তি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়।

Rangamati Government College

Sadar, Rangamati Hill District

www.rangamaticollege.gov.bd

E-Tender Notice

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

Sl. No.	Tender ID No.	Name of works	Last Date and Time of Tender Security Submission	Tender Closing Date & Time
1.	872611	Supply of Desktop Computers, Smart Board and Related Services	27/09/2023; 2:00 pm	27/09/2023; 3:00 pm

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

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

The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System portal have to be deposited online through any registered Banks' Branches upto 26/09/2023 at 4:00 pm.

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

Principal
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GD- 1406

Higher food prices, worse living crisis

Govt should have figured out how to rein in food inflation by now

The latest update on inflation from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) paints a grim picture of exactly how bad the cost-of-living crisis has been in the country. According to the data published on Monday, food inflation rose to a staggering 12.54 percent in August 2023 – highest since October 2011 when it had hit 12.82 percent. The crisis is more intense in the rural areas, where food inflation has shot up to 12.71 percent. This pushed up the country’s overall inflation rate to 9.92 percent in August, close to the 11-year high of 9.94 percent in May.

We are at a loss to understand why Bangladesh is going backwards when other countries are well in the process of relieving inflationary pressure on their economies. Also, we don’t understand why food prices are raised so frequently when, according to government data, we have ample stocks of locally produced grains and vegetables. Export ban in countries from where we import certain food items has reportedly affected their prices in our domestic market. But given the volatility in the global market and risk of external shocks, our policymakers should have been able to anticipate such possibilities and devised alternatives to counter such shocks.

We believe it is the government’s delayed and ineffective responses to the crisis that have pushed us into this mess. Our economic experts have long been warning against deliberate market manipulation by a vested quarter, but the government has been unable to take control of the market and effectively regulate it. In fact, in June, our commerce minister admitted that stern action against market manipulators – “large businesses” – would create a sudden crisis.

This upward trend of food prices is restricting the purchasing power of the country’s people, especially those in the low-income group who have already been struggling to make ends meet over the past year. The inflated prices have served a severe blow to these people’s savings, especially because their earnings have not increased in accordance with the rising expenses. This state of affairs is simply not acceptable. The government must put strict policies in place to regulate the market so that manipulators cannot keep making undue profits. The finance minister said in parliament on Monday that the government was taking various steps to bring inflation under control. At this point, there can be no denying that we need a radical departure from our existing policies to be able to rein in this out-of-control inflation.

Corruption, corruption, everywhere

Planning minister’s comments in this regard should be taken seriously

Planning Minister MA Mannan recently said in parliament that the level of corruption had increased all across the country. As the government seems to be in denial when it comes to corruption, such an admission by none other than our planning minister should serve as a wake-up call for all the government institutions. The minister also termed corruption as a national problem, saying that the spending of public money has doubled, tripled or in some cases quadrupled now compared to the last 30-40 years, which means that the scope for corruption has also increased significantly. Who knows this better than the people of this country, who often have to endure corruption when seeking services from various government offices?

Reports are aplenty in the media on how almost all our public sectors have become increasingly vulnerable to corruption, with hardly any government office or project found to be working with complete transparency and accountability. Citing a few news reports on corruption that were published only yesterday will make it clear. According to one report in *Prothom Alo*, the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General (OCAG) has found various types of irregularities and corruption in the procurement process of Bangladesh Railway (BR) – the BR has, in fact, purchased a machine for Tk 3 lakh from a contractor, which would cost Tk 19,000 in the market. Another report published in *The Daily Star* has disclosed how a project director of the Department of Fisheries has been using his own car as a leased vehicle for his project and earning money from this. These two reports are just the tip of an iceberg. Corruption in the form of bribery, extortion, embezzlement, deception, negligence of duty, nepotism, etc is rampant across all government sectors, including health, railway, education and other service sectors, which have been widely reported in the media.

Earlier this year, the Transparency International published the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2022, in which Bangladesh was ranked 147th out of 180 countries. The TIB also conducted a survey on 15,454 households to examine the level of corruption in our service sectors last year and found that around 71 percent of them had to face corruption while trying to avail public services. The graft watchdog also found various forms of anomalies in government procurement and recruitment processes.

It is clear from all these reports, surveys and investigations that corruption has spread like an infectious disease into every sphere of our society, impeding our progress as a nation. Against this backdrop, the comments made by the planning minister should be taken seriously by the government. It should identify all the avenues of corruption and take drastic measures to ensure accountability and transparency at all levels of the government.

How the prices of essentials are manipulated



Kallol Mustafa is an engineer and writer who focuses on power, energy, environment and development economics.

KALLOL MUSTAFA

In a market economy, the price of a commodity is supposed to be determined by the market’s “invisible hand,” which refers to demand and supply. In Bangladesh, though, the invisible hand is not of the market but of some powerful businesses. This is true for both domestically produced and imported commodities. Given the present reality, let’s look at how the price of eggs, which are produced domestically, is manipulated.

According to the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, the production cost of an egg should not exceed Tk 10.50, and the maximum retail price should not cross Tk 12. But our production cost itself is higher than the retail price of eggs in neighbouring India and Pakistan. In West Bengal, the price of an egg is Rs 5.33 (or Tk 7.50) and in Pakistan, a dozen eggs went for 294 Pakistani rupees as of August 17, which translates to roughly Tk 9 per egg. This indicates that, in Bangladesh, the costs of poultry feed and day-old chicks are higher, which are subject to the corporate control of a few big poultry farms.

Apart from this, the retail price of eggs is fixed well above the cost

This mechanism of hiking prices is not new. According to a report by the DNCRP, in August last year, large egg-producing firms appointed agents to manipulate prices during auctions. But no action was taken against the perpetrators and, as a result, this kind of price manipulation is still the norm.

of production. Although small farmers produce 85 percent of eggs, middlemen, large markets, and big farms are playing a greater role in setting the price. Every morning, they inform farm-level producers about the price through SMS or Facebook groups, which the producers must comply with irrespective of their production cost, as eggs cannot be stored for long at farms. For example, North Egg and Kazi Farms jointly



In Bangladesh, the prices of essentials are determined not by demand and supply, but by the syndicate of a few powerful businesses.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

decide the price in Dinajpur. The farmers of Gazipur’s Sreepur have to sell eggs every morning at the price set by traders in Dhaka. Farmers in Bhairab and Kishoreganj also rely on text messages sent from Dhaka for setting prices. Rajshahi Poultry Dealers Association declares the price of eggs in Rajshahi every day.

According to the Directorate of National Consumer Rights Protection (DNCRP), assuming that the daily demand for eggs in Bangladesh is four crore, dishonest traders make an additional profit of Tk 8-12 crore daily by hiking the price of each egg by Tk 2-3.

This mechanism of hiking prices is not new. According to a report by the DNCRP, in August last year, large egg-producing firms appointed agents to manipulate prices during auctions. But no action was taken against the perpetrators and, as a result, this kind of price manipulation is still the norm.

Another reason behind widespread manipulation is that the government does not have accurate and reliable data about the commodity’s production and demand. As per the Department of Livestock Services, egg

of eggs, it could have filled in the gaps by incentivising more production or imports. Amid all this, big businesses are taking advantage of the situation.

Even imports are mired in manipulation. The import of essentials is now almost entirely controlled by a few big businesses. They have established control at every stage of the import process through mutual cooperation, rather than competition based on market rules.

The market share of 17 daily commodities (including sugar, pulses, and oil) has been captured by a few big importers. For example, five companies – Deshbandhu, Abdul Monem, S Alam, Meghna, and City – mainly import raw sugar from abroad, then refine and sell it within the country. Four companies – TK, Meghna, City and S Alam – import 88 percent of edible oil. Big importers have colluded and created a situation wherein middle-level traders cannot buy the products according to their own preferences. If a trader wants to buy a product, they have to go to the importer, who will decide which product the trader can purchase from whom and at what price. Even if a trader

the trader to incur a huge loss.

The reasons why some large businesses can establish such extensive control over the market are that they 1) are major importers; 2) own or manage commercial banks, and/or 3) they or their associates own the lighter vessels. Even product dealerships are controlled by people connected with these large businesses.

By establishing complete control over the import and production of essential commodities, these businesses can decide all the variables, often under the pretext of domestic and international situations. They are the reason why prices of essentials like soybean oil, sugar, and lentils have not gone down in the domestic market though international prices have decreased significantly. They are the owners of the invisible hand. The names and identities of these businesses are not unknown to government officials; the commerce minister himself admitted the existence of this syndicate. When no action is taken against market manipulation, it is only natural for the people to wonder whose interests the government is protecting.

Macron’s support for an ‘adaptation pact’ with Bangladesh



POLITICS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

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

SALEEMUL HUQ

The second initiative Macron invited Bangladesh to join was the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF) that has been created recently to support the conservation of both terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity in different countries. For this, he offered support from France in terms of carrying out nature-based solutions. Macron was particularly interested in supporting the conservation of mangrove forest ecosystems.

to share what the French president had to say to us and what he offered to collaborate on.

Macron first told us that he had had a one-on-one conversation with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina already in which he’d offered assistance from France to Bangladesh to work on an energy transition partnership. France (alongside other European countries) has already engaged in such initiatives with a number of other developing countries, such as South Africa and Indonesia, wherein France has provided hundreds of millions of euros to help these countries transition

from fossil fuel-based economies to renewable energy-based economies.

The second initiative Macron invited Bangladesh to join was the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF) that has been created recently to support the conservation of both terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity in different countries. For this, he offered

particularly in locally-led adaptation, he was impressed and made an offer to enter into an “adaptation pact” with Bangladesh to support a truly bottom-up adaptation programme involving the government, civil society, and particularly the youth, in order to enable Bangladesh to tackle climate change. He offered to increase the funding that Bangladesh receives each year from France through the French Development Agency (AFD) to support the pact and also promised to get other developed countries to provide funding support as well.

We also had Information Minister Muhammad Hasan Mahmud with us, and were able to promise to get back to President Macron with a proposal to enter an adaptation pact by COP28 in Dubai this December.

The onus is therefore ours to do a quick evaluation and prioritise some of the most promising activities already identified in the various plans that we have developed – including the Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP), the National Adaptation Plan (NAP), the Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan (MCPP), and the Delta Plan 2100 – to prepare the first bilateral adaptation pact between Bangladesh and France.

Such a bilateral pact could become a replicable model for other developing countries to prepare and pair themselves with a developed country for support in tackling the impacts of climate change.



US President Joe Biden took a selfie with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her daughter Saima Wazed Putul while exchanging pleasantries on the sidelines of the recently concluded G20 Summit in New Delhi, India.

A selfie, some visits, and a show of diplomacy



THE STREET VIEW

Mohammad Al-Masum Molla
is chief reporter at The Daily Star.

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Diplomatically, this year has possibly been the most eventful in the history of Bangladesh. A number of top US officials visited the country over the past months. Our prime minister had a meeting with President Xi Jinping of China in South Africa during the BRICS summit. And then the Russian foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov, visited Bangladesh, followed soon after by the visit from French President Emmanuel Macron.

Lavrov is the first foreign minister of Russia to visit Bangladesh since Bangladesh's independence. The Russia-Ukraine war has led to a reorientation of the world order and the visit was part of his world tour to garner support, which was evident from the comment he made: "If we look at the situation and analyse it, we can clearly see that the US and its allies are truly trying to promote their interests in the region by using the so-called Indo-Pacific strategy. Their goal is clearly both to counter China and to isolate Russia in this region." It will be interesting to see how the ruling government manoeuvres itself amid the global cross-currents and conflicting spheres of influence.

After this visit, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina went to India for the G20 summit, even though Bangladesh is not a member of the forum. There is no doubt that it is a matter of pride for the country to join the summit as a guest. Its political implications were substantial. The premier also met with her Indian counterpart, Narendra Modi, at his residence on the eve of the G20. Although there were no reports or mentions of the topic of their discussion, speculation has it that politics

was very much on the agenda. Historically, Awami League has had a close relationship with New Delhi, regardless of the party in power, and India's predilection for AL is not a closely guarded secret either.

It is noteworthy that the PM visited India at a time when the ruling party is under pressure at home and abroad over the upcoming national election. While the western world is stressing on holding free and fair elections, India has refrained from expressing a concrete sentiment. The only comment from a spokesperson a month back did not indicate much either way, when he said it is the people of Bangladesh who will have to decide how the next national polls will be held. "Of course, we are closely monitoring [the situation in Bangladesh]. We have a High Commission there... We hope that there is peace and no violence and the elections are held as per plans."

But that aspect of Hasina's trip has been completely overshadowed by the much-publicised selfie with US President Joe Biden. Hasina had been critical of the US on several occasions, especially after the US put sanctions on some Rab personnel and restricted visas for those who undermine elections in Bangladesh. Taking the cue from their party leader, Awami League members had also been rather critical. But these very party members circulated the much-discussed selfie almost as soon as it was posted.

Understandably, the viral selfie was a matter of simple courtesy for the two leaders and is very unlikely to shift foreign policies. But the ruling party has garnered optimum mileage from this event. Many might

say the photo signifies that as all is well between Bangladesh and the US. Addressing his BNP counterpart, AL general secretary Obaidul Quader said that many BNP leaders had lost their sleep after seeing the selfie. In response, BNP's Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir retorted, "I suggest [Quader] walk around with a photo of this selfie tied around his neck. It'll help you a lot to demonstrate that America's Biden is with you."

Things did not end here, as there was another photo of UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, down on one knee, speaking to his Bangladeshi counterpart on the sidelines of the G20 summit. This got a lot of attention on the internet as well, but again, it was mere courtesy of a young leader towards a senior stateswoman who has steered her country successfully for 15 years, reducing poverty and attaining sufficient growth to have it graduate into a developing country.

After that, French President Emmanuel Macron visited Bangladesh for 20 hours during which we committed to ordering 10 aircraft from Airbus, which is a major shift from Boeing's domination in Bangladesh. This is perhaps an attempt to make France more malleable to Awami League's cause, with the hope of softening an influential player of EU, also a UN Security Council member.

Ultimately, there were no expectations of great achievements from the sudden spurt of diplomacy. But there is no denying the political mileage that PM Hasina has garnered through the high-profile meetings and visits in the lead-up to the election, at a time when there were no hopes of any let-up in spiralling food prices, or a boost in exports leading to a rise in our foreign currency earnings. Nor is there any indication of an amicable end to this hostile political atmosphere, which would have been a welcome relief. That remains, as it always has, squarely dependent on how the parties play it out within our borders. Everything else is window dressing.

With digital banks, we must proceed with caution



A CLOSER LOOK

Tasneem Tayeb
is a columnist for The Daily Star.
Her X-handle is @tasneem_tayeb

TASNEEM TAYEB

Bangladesh has witnessed commendable digital transformation since 2008. As per the current government's 2008 election manifesto, the vision of Digital Bangladesh took centre stage in the grand plan for sustainable development. Rapid digitalisation, embraced by both the public and private sectors, and timely policy support have led to an exponential growth of digital connectivity. The spread of internet connectivity is one of the key indicators of how fast we have adopted digital transformation. From there being just 1.5 million internet users in the country in 2006, this January saw a staggering 66.94 million users.

Due to the push for increasing digital services during the Covid-19 pandemic, e-commerce has thrived. During this development, mobile financial services have also flourished, and even banks are increasingly becoming digital with the help of innovative financial solutions and introduction of digital transaction tools.

digital strides in the last one-and-a-half decades, we remain vulnerable to threats of cyber attacks. There has been a recent surge in attacks targeting sensitive government and private websites, and data has been exfiltrated and leaked. For instance, in July this year, there was a suspected leak of highly sensitive data of five crore citizens from the Office of the Registrar General, Birth and Death Registration, including birth dates and national identification numbers. On August 15, websites of 25 government and private institutions were hacked. What is of concern is that two of the websites belonged to Investment Corporation of Bangladesh and Directorate General of Health Services, with the former containing data of around 10,000 investors and investment applicants and the latter having information on revenue collection from government hospitals.

And the recent release of the *Billion Dollar Heist* documentary has once again reminded us of our vulnerability to cyber-financial

how do the potential digital banks propose to encourage deposits, especially from people living in the fringes, earning daily wages?

In terms of lending, if the digital banks are going to focus on providing loans to small and medium enterprises, where would that leave SME-focused conventional banks or the SME disbursement wings of conventional banks? And if the sole focus of digital banks is to provide small loans to the unbanked, how do they propose to ensure collection of the loans provided? The viability of commercial and governance aspects need to be thoroughly scrutinised by the central bank for such banks to sustain themselves in the long run.

While it has become imperative to bring the unbanked population under the formal financial umbrella, this initiative might be counterproductive if the target group is not empowered with adequate literacy on digital security and transactions. The shocking revelation of the MTTE scam, which has snatched away the life savings of its many vulnerable, unsuspecting "clients" should be a key lesson on why digital literacy is essential before they are exposed to new tools.

Digital banks, launched in a conducive environment, can be a great opportunity for the people to utilise this service. A 2018 IMF study suggested that the size of our underground economy is around 30 percent, and Centre for Policy



ILLUSTRATION: BIPOB CHAKRABORTY

As part of this digital journey – now with a focus on Smart Bangladesh Vision 2041 – going cashless has become a key priority for both the public and financial sectors, resulting in some banks and MFS providers going the extra mile to become digital banks. According to media reports, around 52 local and foreign companies have applied to Bangladesh Bank for licences to set up digital banks, including the two top MFS providers, bKash and Nagad, and four state-owned banks – Sonali, Agrani, Janata, and Rupali. The central bank has also approved guidelines for setting up such banks, which will be governed by the Bank Company Act.

While all this is good news, and soon some of the applicants, which include a consortium of 10 local private banks, might even get the required licence, it is time the authorities pause and reflect if the right infrastructure and plans are in place to support and sustain the upcoming digital banks.

Let us start with infrastructure. While we have made significant

crimes: we had been subjected to one of the biggest cyber heists in history when criminals stole around \$1 billion from the central bank in 2016. While this risk is equally relevant for the existing banking landscape of the country, digital banks might be more susceptible to such attacks, as they would be operating virtually, carrying a hoard of lucrative client data. Therefore, at this point, the authorities must check and recheck if they are capable of providing the required protection.

Besides, we also need to consider the wider spectrum of the digital banking ecosystem, like how to exactly support the unbanked and encourage deposits and borrowings. The fact that unbridled inflation is eating away our savings is no new information for us. Food inflation stands at a 12-year high at 12.54 percent, while general inflation inched closer to 10 percent. Central bank data showed that bank deposits fell to Tk 14,88,447 crore in January 2023 from Tk 14,89,169 crore in December 2022. Given this scenario,

Dialogue said that Bangladesh's tax loss was Tk 84,200 crore in 2021 as a result of the shadow economy. A lot of it is because we have not been able to create a formal payment channel for the underprivileged population, involved in informal jobs. This is where digital banks can come in and create a lasting impact.

However, for digital banks to operate efficiently, they will need effective strategic directions and guidance from the Bangladesh Bank – as governance is already a major pain point for conventional banks and a potential issue for digital banks. Adequate policy support from lawmakers, proper cyber security, and support for digital literacy are also essential.

To turn digital banks into a catalyst for growth, authorities will need to invest efforts, planning and resources to create a conducive ecosystem. Launching digital banks could be a major positive milestone for the nation, but it could also turn into a digital nightmare, depending on the readiness of the ecosystem. We must proceed with caution.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

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11 Cobbler fruit

12 Love, in Livorno

13 Wyoming's – Range

14 Bad kind of situation

15 Makes a choice

17 Take apart

18 Deck worker

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22 German cry

23 Cereal proofs-of-purchase, often

26 The ones here

28 Elroy's dog

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indicator

31 Brood watcher

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33 Workout count

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40 Leaves out

43 Places

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1 Diet no-no

2 Clumsy guy

3 Very current

4 Incline

5 Circus sight

6 Sought a seat

7 Quantities

8 Very close

9 Parched

10 Gambling city

16 Hit letters

18 Yoga needs

19 Sore

21 Final, e.g.

23 Second letter

24 Make ready

25 Some heirs

27 Neatened (up)

30 "– Clear Day"

33 Forum figure

34 Netlike fabric

35 Falco of TV

37 Election action

39 Curvy letter

41 Huck's pal

42 Pig's place

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SUNDAY'S ANSWERS

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A L E S L O A D E R

R E P U B L I C

S E A D O D G E

R E A D Y S N E E R

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B A T T L E E S P Y

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50

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শেখ হাসিনার মুখশিতি
গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি

Memo No: 46.02.5600.000.190.001.23-3595

Date:12/09/2023

Invitation for Tender (works)

e-Tender Notice No.17/2023-2024 (OTM)

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

Sl. No.	Tender ID & Package No	Name of Works	Tender Proposal Document last selling & Submission Date and Time
1	873945 GDP-3/MA-103	Construction of 50m Long RCC Girder Bridge on Ghior Head Quarter -Shamganj GC Road Over Ichamati River At Ch.900m Under Upazila: Ghior, District: Manikganj, Road ID: 356222002 (3 rd Call)	26 September-2023 16:00 & 27 September-2023 16:00

These are online Tender's where only e-Tender's will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank's branch. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd.)

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GD- 1405



PHOTO: COURTESY

Shohel Mondol returns to his roots

After a year-long hiatus, Shohel Mondol is all set to return to the theatre stage with 'Let Me Out'. The actor will take on the role of a police officer in the latest production of the theatre troupe, Tarua.

AKHLAKUR RAHMAN

Directed by Bakar Bakul and written by Runa Kanchan, the play is scheduled to be staged at the Neelima Ibrahim Auditorium of Bangladesh Mohila Samity.

Speaking about his comeback to the theatre stage, Shohel Mondol shared his thoughts and excitement with The Daily Star.

You have been a member of the famed theatre troupe Prachyanat for over a decade. Tell us a bit about your journey into the troupe?

Theatre is where I honed all my acting skills and prowess. I joined Prachyanat in 2009 and have remained a dedicated member of the group ever since. However, my involvement in theatre predates that, and I have also collaborated with Tarua in several plays.

My last staged play was *Raja Ebong Onyanno* back in September 2021.

How does it feel to return to the stage after such a long hiatus?

I feel exhilarated! For me, theatre is a platform where an actor can directly connect with the audience and deliver their finest performance.

Due to my commitments to visual media, I haven't been able to focus on the theatre much.

Nevertheless, I am a theatre artiste at heart, and my passion for it has never waned. My heart yearns to be with my troupe Prachyanat, every day, but we need to make a living as well.

Could you tell us a bit about your play 'Let Me Out'?

Let Me Out draws inspiration from a real missing child case that occurred in Los Angeles in 1928. It sheds light on the corruption and abuse of power within the judicial system, issues often overlooked by the general populace. The play is an adaptation of that case, with connections to contemporary situations of our society.

What role will you be playing in the play?

I will portray the character of a corrupt police officer overseeing the case, one who abuses his authority and harasses the parents of the missing child. Some might label it as a negative role. However, I believe there is no such thing as negative roles—there are only the psychological complexities of a character and how they navigate their surroundings.

In your own words, what's the most

captivating aspect of theatre?

The most enchanting aspect of a theatre play is immersing myself in the character. We forget our regular selves when we are on stage and embrace the role while performing before hundreds of audiences.

As an emerging star from a theatre background, how do you think we can bring this medium back to the mainstream limelight?

Compared to television or web content, theatre audiences are relatively lower worldwide. Several factors contribute to this. Theatre productions require effective promotion, suitable venues, and compelling stories. Moreover, just as we need better cinema halls, we also need more spaces for staging theatre plays.

Did you know that most theatre plays in our capital are held at either Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy or Bangladesh Mohila Samity?

Our situation with the cinema halls is steadily improving; hopefully, theatre plays will undergo the same progress.

When can we expect to see you back on the silver screen?

I already have two new and upcoming films in the pipeline—*Shyama Kabya* and *Bonolatashen*. We have already completed the production process for *Shyama Kabya* and hopefully, it will be released next year. There is a bit of shooting left for *Bonolatashen*, which will be wrapped up soon.

Shohel Mondol and his theatre troupe will be staging *Let Me Out* for three shows from September 14 to 15. Theatre enthusiasts can purchase advance tickets for the play through Tarua's Facebook page.

Tasnia Farin to star in Kolkata film again



With her silver screen debut in the Tollywood industry with Atanu Ghosh's *Aro Ek Prithibi*, Tasnia Farin has earned critical appreciation for her performance. The actress is now gearing up for another film in Kolkata, directed by Biplab Goswami. The news was confirmed by Farin to The Daily Star.

The *Karagar* famed actress also informed that the film titled, *Patri Chai*, will begin its shooting soon. She will be sharing the screen with actors Sabyasachi Chakraborty, Arjun Chakrabarty and Mamata Shankar, amongst others. The project will be produced by Kolkata-based production company, Promod Films.

Director Biplab is also one of the scriptwriters of, *Laapataa Ladies*—a film produced by Aamir Khan and directed by Kiran Rao.

'Pushpa 2: The Rule' release date revealed

Film enthusiasts are counting the days for the much-anticipated sequel, *Pushpa 2: The Rule*, starring Telugu sensation Allu Arjun. The excitement reached a new height on Monday evening as Mythri Movie Makers, the film's producers, unveiled the official release date.

Although Allu Arjun's appearance is yet to be unveiled, the teaser poster has already been released, featuring his ominously bloodstained hand adorned with rings and bracelets.

Pushpa 2: The Rule is slated to be released in theatres on August 15, 2024.



COUNTRYWIDE

Julfikar finds success in persimmon farming

AZIBOR RAHMAN, Jhenidah

Persimmon, a Japanese fruit variety, is being cultivated for the first time in the Jessore region, thanks to the favourable growing conditions.

Alongside Japan, China and South Korea are also the top producers of persimmon.

Julfikar Ali, a nursery owner from Hizli village in Jashore's Chowgachha upazila, started persimmon farming experimentally in the area on his seven decimals of land in 2020.

While talking to this correspondent, Julfikar said he has been running nursery business for the last 30 years.

In 2020, he collected 30 persimmon plants for Tk 1,500 to Tk 2,000 each from Natore, after he came to know that persimmon plants are available there.

After three long years, his trees have started bearing fruits this year.

Every single plant is bearing around 400 persimmon fruits, weighing around 70 to 90 grams each, and will continue to provide the fruit for around 25 years.

If someone walks by Julfikar's plantation, it would seem to him that the trees are holding apples.

With its orange and yellow hue, the fruit also looks a lot like tomato, in fact from the inside it looks quite like ripe tomato when cut. There is no seen inside the fruit, and can be eaten with the peel.

A closer look, however, will reveal that it is an entirely different fruit.

A fruit seller from the capital's

Karwan Bazar has express his interest in buying the fruits at Tk 800 per kilogram, but he refused to sell any fruit this year, he added.

"I have a plan to distribute the first yield of this unknown fruit among people of my locality," Julfikar said.

Flowers started blooming in March and the trees borne fruits in August and September.

Julfikar collects seedlings, seeds and trees of exotic varieties of fruits and first made mother trees in his nursery.

Later he produces seedlings from the mother trees and sell those to others.

"I have also produced around 50 saplings so far and sold those among several villagers," he further said.

Shahin Hossain of Madhabpur village in the upazila said he has purchased five saplings from Julfikar for Tk 800 each.

Another Jahangir Hossain, who bought 10 saplings from Julfikar, said this unknown fruit is quite tasty, sweet and juicy.

Dr Mohammad Ashrafuzzaman Zahid Hossain, chairman of Department of Nutrition and Food Technology at Jashore Science and Technology University, said persimmons are the national fruit of Japan and the fruit is a good source of potassium, phosphorous and vitamin C.

Chowgachha Upazila Agriculture Officer Mossabir Hossain said they have been supporting Julfikar in farming the rare fruit variety from the very beginning.



Julfikar Ali takes care of his persimmon trees at Hizli village in Jashore's Chowgachha upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

Paramilitaries kill 17 civilians in Sudan capital

AFP, Wad Madani

Sudanese paramilitaries killed at least 17 civilians yesterday in northern Khartoum, a medical source said, as the United Nations warned the conflict between two rival generals has "broken the nation".

Witnesses reported shelling by the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces in the Karary district of Omdurman, a part of greater Khartoum that has seen fierce battles between the RSF and the regular army.

A medical source told AFP "17 civilians were killed" in the attack, five months into the conflict between the army under General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and RSF commanded by his former deputy, Mohamed Hamdan Daglo.

Nearly 7,500 people have been killed in Sudan since the conflict broke out on April 15, according to a conservative estimate from the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data project.

All ongoing

FROM PAGE 2
He said digital surveys will be conducted in phases.

BILL
The land-related forgeries have been covered in the Land Crime Prevention and Remedy Bill 2023. It also has provisions for curbing the related crimes.

The bill also includes a provision for disposal of land-related disputes through arbitration.

According to the bill, the maximum punishment for a land-related forgery is seven years' imprisonment while the minimum punishment is a two-year jail term.

A growing health hazard

FROM PAGE 12

Explaining the reason for the rise of NO₂, the report said this increase is likely driven by a reliance on fossil fuels for energy production, expanded industrial activity, and increases in the number of vehicles over the last decade.

As many as 564,739 vehicles were due for regular fitness checks but did not take clearance as of April 30, according to Bangladesh Road Transport Authority data. More than 50 lakh vehicles are plying the streets, and most of them are old.

Experts said that incompetent combustion of fuel, old and unfit vehicles, and low-quality fuel are the key reasons for the rise of NO₂ levels in the air.

Prof Abdus Salam of Dhaka University's chemistry department said old vehicles and traffic congestion are the key sources of NO₂, which can be checked by using clean energy and allowing only fit vehicles on the roads.

"As the usage of cars increases, the combustion

of fossil fuels is also on the rise, as is the concentration of nitrogen dioxide in the air," he said.

When asked whether the government is taking any steps to reduce it, he said "One may find something on paper but in reality, there is nothing."

Government officials said they know the sources of the air pollution, but to address the problem, a holistic approach is needed.

Department of Environment officials said that the air quality improves in the rainy season in Bangladesh due to showers, but in recent years it has been observed that the air quality remains poor even in the rainy season too.

"Over the years, vehicles have become a major concern for air pollution in the big cities, and that's why we see that air quality does not improve at an expected level in the rainy season," said DoE Director Md Ziaul Haque.

He also said the BRTA does not have any mechanism in place to do emission tests on the

vehicles, and vehicles that are 25 years old must be taken off the road.

The report said air pollution is the leading environmental risk factor for poor health in South Asia.

At the population level, the disease burden of air pollution can strain healthcare systems and have a broader impact on communities and economies, it added.

Speaking on the matter, Dr Pallavi Pant, head of global health at the Health Effects Institute, said, "Data on air pollution levels and the associated health and economic impacts point to the need for long-term, sustained air quality management in Bangladesh and across South Asia. These data also point to the fact that it is crucial to plan multi-pollutant mitigation strategies and not focus on individual pollutants such as PM2.5. Also, since the sources are similar across the region, cooperation on both scientific research and policy action can spur faster action."

Nobel laureate Maria Ressa acquitted

FROM PAGE 12

In 2020 for cyber libel in one of several cases against the website filed by government agencies. She maintained those cases were politically motivated.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr, who has been in office for 14 months, has said he would not interfere in the court cases against Rappler.

Rappler is still operating unhindered pending its appeal against a closure order from the securities regulator.

Francis Lim, one of Ressa's lawyers, said the team hoped the latest acquittal would lead to the dismissal of the other cases, including the closure order.

The Philippines is ranked 132 out of 180 countries in the World Press Freedom Index, describing its media as "extremely vibrant despite the government's targeted attacks and constant harassment" against journalists that are "too critical".

High prices of eggs and chicken to blame

FROM PAGE 12

he said his apprehension had come true for that month.

Asked why the inflation in Bangladesh is going up despite the fact that Sri Lanka managed to tame it, Mannan said Sri Lanka's inflation is runaway inflation.

"Our inflation increased gradually and it will subside in the same way. But Sri Lanka saw a rapid rise in inflation and it subsided in the similar way. The living standard of the Sri Lankan people remains unchanged like it was before the rise in inflation. They kept a tight grip on inflation," he added.

Shamsul Alam, state minister for planning, said if the government had taken any drastic measures like Sri Lanka did, it would have led to a negative growth. The current job openings in the country would not have been there if the government had taken such initiatives, he added.

"Sri Lanka hiked their policy rate by 10 percent. If we had followed that policy, our growth would have seen a negative trend. We are trying to contain the inflation keeping the growth rate unharmed.

"The government had not been sitting idle over

the last one year. The duty on rice imports has been cut twice after increasing the policy rate twice, which now stands at five percent. The imports have been controlled. Hopefully, the inflation will drop in November," the state minister said.

Shahnaj Arefin, secretary of the Statistics and Informatics Division at the planning ministry, said Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics only calculates the inflation and it is not responsible for analysing the increase or decrease in inflation.

The BBS calculates

inflation based on 749 commodities, including 242 food items, she said.

According to planning ministry data, the overall inflation was 9.92 in August while the food inflation was 12.54.

Planning Minister Mannan said that the issue of availing \$1 billion financing from climate fund was discussed recently between French President Emmanuel Macron and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

The Sundarbans would get the highest priority in getting funds, said the minister.

RIYAD CLAWING HIS WAY BACK?

Experienced batter Mahmudullah Riyad keeps his eyes on the ball during net practice at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. The right-hander, who has been out of the team for quite some time, continued his training with the hope of making a comeback. However, given the whispers surrounding Riyad's inclusion in the World Cup squad that was submitted to the International Cricket Council (ICC), the veteran all-rounder might end up travelling with the World Cup team in India. Bangladesh will make their final call on September 27. Selector Habibul Bashar informed yesterday that Mahmudullah has a good chance to play two to three games in the five-match practice series between Bangla Tigers and Asian Games-bound team, starting from Thursday in Chattogram. Tamim Iqbal, too, could feature in the series but it depends on his return to full fitness.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



U-23 team lose all

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's AFC U-23 Asian Cup Qualifiers campaign ended with a third defeat in three matches as they lost 1-0 against Philippines at the Chonburi Stadium in Thailand yesterday.

After a barren first half, Gavin Muens converted from the spot in the 56th minute to send the men in red and green packing without a single point.

Bangladesh had earlier lost 2-0 against Malaysia and 3-0 against Thailand. It was Bangladesh's 17th defeat in 19 matches in the history of the qualifying campaign.

Head coach Zulfiker Mahmud Mintu said this team had a lot to learn in order to compete at international level.

"We have to learn how to control emotion, tempo and take right decisions at the right moments. We lack these things at international level," said Mintu after losing the third match.

"We found two clear-cut chances and we should have scored. If Javed could have calmly placed the ball on the first post, it could have been a goal while Bappu was denied by the opposition goalkeeper."

Readying a backup opener remains a top priority

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

Bangladesh will meet India in their final Super Four game on Friday, September 15, knowing that even a win may not guarantee a place in the final. However, the Tigers' major goal would be to regain some momentum and confidence before returning home, with the ODI World Cup just around the corner.

Moreover, given the form and fitness of current regular openers, the backup opening options may have a telling impact on Tigers' World Cup challenge.

While dealing with injuries, the kind that dawned on Bangladesh before the Asia Cup, short term fixes are often justifiable. There was no Tamim Iqbal while Liton Das -- initially ruled out of the Asia Cup due to fever -- returned to fill in the vacant number three spot left by in-form Nazmul Hossain Shanto after having missed out on the first two games.

The ongoing Asia Cup has exposed Bangladesh's fragility at the top. No one has done particularly well recently except Mehedi Hasan Miraz, a makeshift opener. In the last two years, Tigers have had to turn to nine different opening pairs in ODIs that justify readying backup options.

According to sources, the team

management do not have the confidence to play Tanzid Hasan Tamim in the final game, feeling that another failure may shatter the youngster's confidence.

Even former Bangladesh skipper Mohammad Ashraful, an exciting batter in his own right, felt that India may be a difficult challenge for Tanzid.



"There was much excitement regarding Tanzid in the team before the Asia Cup since he had a good season. But after a duck [against Sri Lanka] the hopes have somewhat gone away from the team management. Since he is young, maybe that's why the experienced [Mohammad] Naim was prioritized," Ashraful told The Daily Star yesterday.

"Even though Naim couldn't make hay, it's a positive that the

captain and coaches have backed him. I feel that too much rotation is not good. From one viewpoint, what the management did was right: regarding backing Naim. But if they would have wanted someone exciting, someone like Tanzid who has that element of excitement, could have been backed. Then maybe instead of



dropping him after the first game, we could have had one from Naim or Tanzid who can provide that kind of excitement.

"You can't complain about anyone here but if the management had shown that courage, it could have benefited Bangladesh. You have to face the likes of [Jasprit] Bumrah against India. There is doubt about if Tanzid can do it against such bowlers," added the youngest Test

centurion.

It brings the selection criterion into question once again that why management selected Tanzid in the first place if they did not have prior faith. Given regular opener Tamim's injury issues, he will have to be continued game by game if he manages to return fit enough to play the New Zealand series. A backup option would thus be vital at the World Cup, in case injury crisis resurfaces.

Opener Anamul Haque Bijoy's inclusion in Asia Cup, at the last moment due to Liton's fever, was curious given that he was not part of team management's plans for the tournament.

"I feel that the kind of wicket we batted in, Bijoy could have scored a hundred against Afghanistan. The wicket was easy and he has experience. Some opportunities would not have been bad. It's true that everyone gets opportunities but maybe someone is getting five opportunities and someone just one. It's also not possible to give equal opportunities," Ashraful said regarding Bijoy.

With three ODI matches to come against New Zealand at home, the Tigers would need to have more defined plans if they are to avert concerns at the World Cup in case regular openers such as Liton or Tamim succumb to injuries.



Dunith Wellalage's five for 40 against India became the best bowling figures by a Sri Lankan left-arm spinner in the Asia Cup. Wellalage led the Sri Lankan spin attack along with part-time option Charith Asalanka, who scalped four wickets for 18, his best ODI bowling figures during a Super Four match in Colombo yesterday. In-form spinner Maheesh Theekshana picked up the other wicket as for the very first time in their ODI history, India lost all 10 wickets to spinners as the Rohit Sharma-led side were bundled out for 213 in 49.1 overs after electing to bat. Overall, this is the 10th occasion when spinners have bagged all 10 wickets in an ODI.



Sharma enters 10,000-run elite club

AGENCIES

India skipper Rohit Sharma became only the 15th batter to reach 10,000 runs in the history of One Day Internationals.

The right-hander completed the feat when he reached 23 with a six straight over Kasun Rajitha during Asia Cup Super Four encounter against Sri Lanka yesterday. He ultimately scored 53 runs.

He became the second-fastest batter to reach this landmark. He took 241 innings to get here, which stands only behind his compatriot Virat Kohli (205 innings).

Rohit was the sixth India batter to achieve this feat. Preceding him are Sachin Tendulkar, Virat Kohli, Sourav Ganguly, Rahul Dravid and MS Dhoni. He has the highest individual score (264) in ODI history, and is the only batter to hit three double tons in the format.

He also has the most number of sixes for an India batter in ODIs (285). This is the third-highest in the world, after Shahid Afridi (351) and Chris Gayle (331).

Batters with 10,000 runs: Sachin Tendulkar (18426), Kumar Sangakkara (14234), Ricky Ponting (13704), Sanath Jayasuriya (13430), Virat Kohli (13024), Mahela Jayawardene (12650), Inzamam-ul-Haq (11739), Jacques Kallis (11579), Sourav Ganguly (11363), Rahul Dravid (10889), MS Dhoni (10773), Chris Gayle (10480), Brian Lara (10405), Tillakaratne Dilshan (10290) and Rohit Sharma (10031*).

Pogba sinks to new low after doping revelation

AFP, Milan

Once the most expensive footballer in the world, France star Paul Pogba has sunk to a new low after being provisionally suspended for a doping violation.

Injuries and a bizarre blackmail plot involving his own brother have dominated his second spell at Juventus, and the latest revelations came just as the midfielder looked ready to get back to his best.

Italy's anti-doping authority NADO revealed on Monday that Pogba, who is still only 30, showed elevated levels of testosterone in a test taken after Juve's season-opening win at Udinese, a match in which he did not even play.

Pogba has since been a substitute in Juve's other two Serie A matches and despite picking up a thigh knock against Empoli earlier this month could well have featured in Saturday's home fixture against Lazio had he not been dealt the latest of a series of blows to his career.

The test result came soon after the release of an interview with Al Jazeera in which he said he wanted to make his critics "eat their words".

"I want to show them I'm not weak. They can talk bad about me. I will never give up," he said.

He has only started one match since returning to Juve as a free agent from Manchester United in July last year, six years

after leaving the Turin giants for a then world record 105 million euros with four Italian league titles to his name.

It was a move which was supposed to regenerate his career which had gone stale in England, but he almost immediately suffered a serious knee injury in pre-season.

And his initial decision to not undergo surgery in a bid to make the Qatar World Cup eventually back-fired, ending his chances of helping France defend their world title and further complicating his club campaign.

Pogba was a key figure in the 2018 triumph in Russia and scored one of France's goals in their 4-2 win over Croatia in that year's final, but he has not featured for his country since a friendly win for Les Bleus over South Africa in March last year.

From being on top of the world Pogba has slowly slipped down to the depths, ravaged by injuries and a difficult personal life which he admits has been adversely affected by the vast sums of money earned by football's top players.

"Money changes people. It can break up a family. It can create a war," he said.

"Sometimes I was just by myself thinking, 'I don't want to have money anymore. I just don't want to play anymore. I just want to be with normal people, so they will love me for me -- not for the fame, not for the money'."



PHOTO: AFP

Bruno Fernandes ran the show for Portugal as they romped to a record 9-0 win over Luxembourg on Monday without suspended talisman and all-time top goalscorer Cristiano Ronaldo to preserve their perfect record in Euro 2024 qualifying. Portugal's previous record was 8-0, which they achieved three times - twice against Liechtenstein (1994 and 1999) and once versus Kuwait (2003).



ASSAULT ON BCL MEN APS Azizul hit ADC Harun first

Claims DB chief saying role of the APS in the incident should be probed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detective Branch chief Harun Or Rashid yesterday said the suspended additional deputy commissioner, his namesake, was assaulted first at Birdem Hospital on Saturday evening.

The attack on the suspended ADC, Harun-or-Rashid, was led by President's Assistant Personal Secretary Azizul Haque, the DB chief told reporters at his office, adding that this should be investigated too.

The home ministry suspended ADC Harun on Monday amid allegations that he had tortured two Chhatra League leaders that night.

The DB chief added that Azizul Haque as a government official should have let the higher authorities know if he had any complaints.

"But instead of doing that, he called some people [in Chhatra League] and hit a police officer, broke his glasses, and chased him away in front of many people inside the hospital. I believe it should be investigated."

Azizul's wife, Sanjida Afrin, also an ADC of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, gave The Daily Star a similar account of the event at Birdem Hospital.

However, DMP Commissioner Khandker Golam Faruq

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PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

The pole with the orange tip was placed there by Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority to demarcate the Turag river. But it has clearly not deterred sand traders from illegally encroaching on the land in Mirpur Beribandh area. The photo was taken yesterday.

RIISING INFLATION High prices of eggs and chicken to blame Says planning minster

STAR REPORT

Planning Minister MA Mannan yesterday assured the nation that the overall inflation would come down soon.

He said the rise in egg and chicken prices largely contributed to the surge in inflation.

"The prices of these two commodities went up so high that it impacted the overall inflation which we are trying to address. Hopefully, the inflation will go down soon," Mannan told reporters in response to a query after an Ecneec meeting yesterday.

The minister said the government was keeping an eye on inflation.

Referring to his earlier prediction that inflation would decline in August,

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

Jamalpur DC urges people to re-elect AL

Video clip of his speech at local event goes viral

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

Violating service rules, the Jamalpur deputy commissioner has called upon people to elect the ruling Awami League in the next general election.

"The incumbent government must be in state power again to continue the development work. This will be the commitment of us all," said DC Md Imran Ahmed.

He made the comments while speaking as the special guest at the inauguration ceremony of a newly constructed building of Madarganj municipality on Monday.

Local AL lawmaker Mirza Azam, also organising secretary of the party's central committee, was present there as the chief guest.

"I hope the chief guest of today's programme will be a minister after the next polls and will do huge development work in this district," said the DC.

A day later, a video clip of the DC's speech went viral on social media.

Imran, who was a deputy secretary of the Statistics and Informatics Division, was made Jamalpur DC on July 24 this year.

As per the Government Servants (Conduct) Rules, "No government servant shall canvass or otherwise interfere or use his influence in connection with or take part in any election to a legislative body, whether in Bangladesh or elsewhere."

This correspondent could not communicate with DC Imran over the phone and via WhatsApp for comments.

Azam's younger brother Mirza Kabir, also the mayor of

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6



Md Imran Ahmed

NITROGEN DIOXIDE

A growing health hazard for Dhaka

Says global study, finds NO₂ level in capital highest in the country

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Nitrogen dioxide has become a cause for serious concern as the concentration of the pollutant in Dhaka's air is increasing while it is decreasing across the world, according to a global study.

This pollutant has implications for the production of "ozone" — another gaseous pollutant that can be harmful to human health, as well as the formation of particulate matter, said the study titled "State of Global Air: South Asia, A Regional Air Quality Snapshot."

The flagship study, conducted by the US-based organisation Health Effects Institute, said exposure to NO₂ can irritate airways, aggravate existing respiratory diseases, raise the risk of asthma development in children, and increase the frequency and severity of asthma symptoms in children and adults.

"South Asia is among the few regions in the world where NO₂ levels are increasing in some areas. Between 2000 and 2019, NO₂ exposure in South Asia increased by 22 percent, while global averages decreased by 5 percent," said the report published last night.

Data shows that in 2019, five cities in Bangladesh were among the top 20 cities with the highest NO₂ levels

in the region.

The cities exceeded the WHO Annual Air Quality Guideline for NO₂ (10 µg/m³), with Dhaka having the highest level in the country at 23.6 µg/m³, followed by Chattogram with 21.3 µg/m³, Sylhet with 13.5 µg/m³, Rajshahi with 13.1 µg/m³, and Khulna with 11.0 µg/m³.

In 2019, five cities in Bangladesh were among the top 20 cities with the highest NO₂ levels in the region.

Meanwhile, Kathmandu (Nepal), Hyderabad (India), Bengaluru (India), and Karachi (Pakistan) had the highest NO₂ levels in the region, in that order.

The report said a total of 31 percent of fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) in the region comes from residential sources, including the use of solid fuels for heating and cooking.

Additionally, a growing fleet of personal vehicles and continued reliance on coal for energy production pose the challenge of increasing levels of NO₂ and PM_{2.5}, said the report.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

10 AIRBUS PLANES Govt buying them to get 'commission' Claims Fakhrul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam yesterday alleged that the government decided to procure 10 Airbus aircraft to get kickbacks.

"Their actual goal is to get kickbacks from this purchase of aircraft. Do you understand kickbacks? It means commission," Fakhrul said at a programme before distributing leaflets on dengue prevention in front of the party's Nayapaltan central office.

The BNP leader said the 10 planes are being bought by the government so that the money can be "stolen easily". "They might have already stolen the money."

Amid the soaring prices of essentials, people were expecting to have a good news during French President Emmanuel Macron's visit to Bangladesh, he said.

Fakhrul said that people are dying from dengue, and they even can't afford proper meals, but the government wants to purchase 10 aircraft to "make money".

PHILIPPINES TAX CASE Nobel laureate Maria Ressa acquitted

REUTERS, Manila

Philippines Nobel laureate Maria Ressa and her news site Rappler were acquitted of tax fraud by a trial court yesterday, in another legal victory for the embattled journalist and for press freedom in the Southeast Asian country.

Ressa, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2021 alongside a Russian journalist, is head of Rappler, which earned a reputation for its intense scrutiny of former president Rodrigo Duterte and his deadly war on drugs.

After the verdict was announced, Ressa told reporters her acquittal sends a "good signal" to the business community, as her tax charges "have a lot to do with the rule of law".

"The acquittal now strengthens our resolve to continue with the justice system, to submit ourselves to the court despite the political harassment, despite the attack on press freedom," Ressa said.

"It shows that the court system works. We hope to see the remaining charges dismissed," she added. Ressa's acquittal was expected after she was cleared of similar tax charges nine months ago.

Those charges stem from a 2018 government indictment that accuses Ressa and Rappler of dodging tax payments after failing to declare proceeds of a 2015 sale of depositary receipts to foreign investors.

Ressa, 59, is currently on bail and was convicted

SEE PAGE 10 COL 7



India spinner Kuldeep Yadav celebrates with Virat Kohli following one of his four wickets during their Asia Cup Super Four fixture against Sri Lanka at the R Premadasa Stadium in Colombo yesterday. Having got bowled out for 213, Kuldeep's four-for helped India bundle out the defending champions for 172 to get a 41-run victory and book a spot in the final.

PHOTO: AFP

ঢাকা উত্তর সিটি কর্পোরেশন

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- এডিস মশা সাধারণত বাড়ির আশেপাশে পরিত্যক্ত টায়ার, ফুলের টব, চৌবাচ্চা/পানির ট্যাংক, নির্মাণাধীন বাড়ির লিফটের হোল, ছাদ, বেজমেন্টে জমা পানি, ওয়াশার পানির মিটার, ফ্রিজের ট্রে, এলির পিছনে জমা পানি, অপ্রয়োজনীয় পাত্র/কন্টেইনার, ডাবের খোসা, ডিসপোজেবল গ্লাস, প্লেট, পানির ড্রাম ইত্যাদি জায়গায় জমা পরিকার পানিতে ডিম পাড়ার মাধ্যমে বংশ বিস্তার করে।
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পানি ফেলে দিন”

“সবাই মিলে শপথ করি
পরিচ্ছন্ন নগর গড়ি”

“দশটায় ১০ মিনিট প্রতি শনিবার
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