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Read CSA  
before  
commenting,  
says Momen

## Govt fixes egg, onion, potato prices

Experts sceptical if move  
would be effective in  
bringing down prices

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a first, the government yesterday fixed the prices of eggs, onions and potatoes in its bid to contain the runaway food inflation, which hit a 12-year-high last month.

In August, food inflation soared 278 basis points to 12.54 percent -- the highest since October 2011 -- with the price spiral more pronounced in rural areas, according to data published by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics on Sunday.

	RETAIL PRICE Tk 12.5-13 per piece
	GOVT-FIXED PRICE Tk 12 per piece
	RETAIL PRICE Tk 45-50 per kg
	GOVT-FIXED PRICE Tk 35-36 per kg
	RETAIL PRICE Tk 80-90 per kg
	GOVT-FIXED PRICE Tk 64-65 per kg

Subsequently, the agriculture ministry fixed the prices of the three items, whose prices have remained elevated in recent weeks, under provision four of the Krishi Biponon Ain 2021. The commerce ministry will implement the new prices, said Wahida Akter, agriculture secretary.

The retail price of an egg, which shot up last month, has been fixed at Tk 12, while onion, whose price has spiralled following India's announcement last month to impose a 40 percent export duty on it, will sell for Tk 64-65 per kilogram.

The price of potato, a staple, has been fixed at Tk 35-36 a kg.

The egg price was fixed after analysing the average prices in the past six months, which was about Tk 14, Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi said while announcing the prices.

The agriculture secretary assessed the prices of onions and fixed a "logical" retail price, he added.

"The initiative is good but there is doubt about its effectiveness," said Ghulam Rahman, president of the Consumers Association of Bangladesh.

He went on to urge the government to monitor the market effectively.

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## Fire rips through Krishi Market

Over 200 shops gutted; short circuit or burning mosquito coil might have caused it: firefighters

SHAHEEN MOLLAH, MUNTAKIM SAAD  
and SAJJAD HOSSAIN

A fire ripped through Mohammadpur Krishi Market early yesterday, burning down groceries and other goods worth several crore in over 200 shops.

Several hundred people will count massive losses or lose their jobs, shop owners said.

The one storey building with corrugated iron roof is on a list of risky kitchen markets in the capital, according to firefighters.

Dhaka North City Corporation CEO Selim Reza said 217 shops had been damaged.

Salim Ullah Solu, president of the shop owners' association, said over 250 shops were severely damaged, adding that many of these shops had goods worth Tk 25-30 lakh.

He and several other shop owners said the fire was first seen near a bakery on one side of the market around 3:40am.

It seems the fire was caused either by a faulty electric wire or a mosquito

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coil, Lt Col Md Tajul Islam, director at Fire Service and Civil Defence, told reporters at the scene.

Since there is no water body close to the market that doesn't have fire safety equipment, firefighters had to partially rely on water provided by Dhaka Wasa and Bangladesh Navy to put out the flames.

Tajul said the shop owners were earlier notified multiple times about the risk they were in and several awareness campaigns had been conducted there.

The fire spread really fast, collapsing the iron roofs and leaving a trail of devastation. After five hours of effort, 17 fire engines brought the fire under control around 9:25am, officials said.

By 4:00am, the shop owners began to arrive at the scene hearing about the fire. They could do little but watch the towering flames engulf the entire kitchen market that also houses many clothing shops and a few jewellery stores.

Muhammad Hossain, a leader of the local traders' association, said just

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CASE UNDER ICT ACT  
Odhikar's  
Adilur, Elan  
jailed for 2yrs

COURT CORRESPONDENT



O d h i k a r  
S e c r e t a r y  
A d i l u r  
R a h m a n  
K h a n  
a n d  
D i r e c t o r  
A S M  
A d i l u r  
N a s i r u d d i n

Elan have been sentenced

to two years in prison in

a case filed for running

"a distorted report and

doctored images" about

the May 5-6, 2013, police

action on a Hefajat-e-Islam

rally in Motijheel.

A Dhaka court

yesterday delivered the

verdict in the case lodged

under the Information

and Communications

Technology (ICT) Act.

It cancelled their bail

and ordered them to be

sent to jail with conviction

warrants. Adil and Elan

were in the courtroom.

The court also fined

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EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT  
Deeply concerned  
over rights situation  
in Bangladesh

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The European Parliament yesterday adopted a resolution expressing deep concern at the "deteriorating human rights situation" in Bangladesh and called on the government to restore a safe and enabling environment for NGOs, human rights defenders, activists, and religious minorities.

The resolution -- Human rights situation in Bangladesh, notably the case of Odhikar -- insisted that Bangladesh upholds "the country's international commitments, particularly under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights".

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THE THIRD VIEW  
Our new CJ's call  
to fight graft is  
urgent, crucial  
and enthusing

SEE PAGE 8



A nail-biting affair decided in the last delivery saw Sri Lanka reach the Asia Cup final as they ultimately won the battle of nerves against Pakistan to earn a two-wicket victory in a Super Four match at the R. Premadasa Stadium in Colombo yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## SL set up India final

AFP, Colombo

Kusal Mendis' 91 and an unbeaten 49 by Charith Asalanka helped Sri Lanka edged out Pakistan by two wickets in a last-ball thriller of the Asia Cup yesterday to set up a final clash with India.

Chasing a DLS revised target of 252 in the 42-overs-a-side contest in Colombo, Sri Lanka needed eight from the final over and achieved the target with Asalanka's winning hit on the last ball at 1.07 am local time.

A raucous home crowd rejoiced but the result broke the heart of millions of fans awaiting an India-Pakistan final in the 50-over tournament, a prelude to the upcoming ODI World Cup.

The left-handed Asalanka held his nerve despite Shaheen Shah Afridi's two wickets in two balls in the penultimate over and the first four balls from Zaman Khan giving away just two runs and a wicket in the 42nd over.

Mendis set up victory with a 100-run third-

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## Namaz e Janaza & Milad Mahfil Mafizur Rahman



Ex-Secretary Mafizur Rahman (CSP) passed away on 9th September at his Gulshan residence (Inna Lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji' un). He is survived by his wife, two daughters, two sons, five grandchildren and a host of admirers and friends.

His Namaz e Janaza will be held on Friday, 15th September 2023 baad Jummah, at Azad Masjid, Gulshan, Dhaka. His family would appreciate your attendance in joining them in prayers for his departed soul.

A Milad and Dua Mahfil will be held baad Asar prayer on Saturday, September 16th 2023 at the Lake Breeze - Ground Floor, House No 34, Road Number 104, Gulshan-2, Dhaka.

**78TH UNGA**  
**PM to leave**  
**for New York**  
**September 17**

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will leave Dhaka for New York on September 17 to attend the 78th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA 78).

She will lead the Bangladesh delegation to the UNGA, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen, who will accompany the PM, told reporters yesterday.

World leaders will gather in New York for the opening of the UNGA 78.

The high-level general debate will begin on September 19, Momen said in a media briefing at the foreign ministry.

Hasina will deliver a speech on behalf of Bangladesh during the general debate on September 22.

In her speech, she will talk about Bangladesh's incredible development progress, inclusive economic development, and success in the health sector.

The premier will also mention about issues related to world peace, security, safe migration, Rohingya crisis and establishment of climate justice.

She will attend a number of events, including Climate Ambition Summit – a high-level breakfast summit on climate mobility – at the invitation of UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

Momen said a side event titled "High-level side event on the Rohingya crisis" will be organised where the PM will deliver a speech.

Responding to a question, the foreign minister said the US has invited the premier to attend a reception to be hosted by President Joe Biden.

The UN secretary-general and the UNHCR chief will call on the PM.

**2 Rohingya men killed in 'gunfight'**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Two Rohingya men were killed and several others were injured in a "gunfight" between two rival groups at Madhurchara of Cox's Bazar's Ukhia yesterday evening.

One of the deceased, Shamsul Alam 23, of Camp 7 in Kutupalong, was brought dead at Cox's Bazar General Hospital, said Sheikh Mohammad Ali, officer-in-charge of Ukhia Police Station.

Rohingyas identified the other deceased as Noor Mohammad, 17, of Camp 6.

Seeking anonymity, a Rohingya community leader said the "gunfight" took place between the members of Myanmar-based armed groups Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army and Rohingya Solidarity Organisation.

OC Ali said they came to know that the "gunfight" took place over establishing supremacy.

**Russia expels two US diplomats for links to 'spy'**

AFP, Moscow

Russia yesterday said it was expelling two US embassy staff for allegedly "liaising" with Robert Shonov, a former US consulate worker accused by Moscow of spying.

Shonov, who worked for the US consulate in Vladivostok, was charged with allegedly passing information about the conflict in Ukraine to American diplomats, a claim the US has rejected.

**SL set up India final**

FROM PAGE 1  
wicket stand with Sadeera Samarawickrama, who made 48, but Asanka took it on himself after their departure.

Off spinner Iftikhar Ahmed took three key wickets including Mendis and Samarawickrama to keep the game in the balance till the last.

Earlier Mohammad Rizwan hit an unbeaten 86 to steer Pakistan to 252-7 after they elected to bat first in the rain delayed start to the match.

Sri Lanka's bowlers took regular early wickets to check Pakistan's scoring, but Rizwan hit back with his 12th ODI half century and a 108 run stand with Iftikhar, who made 47.

Fast bowler Pramod Madushan struck first as he bowled Fakhar Zaman for four with a yorker that raised the decibels in the ground.

Abdullah Shafique (52) and skipper Babar Azam (29) then rebuilt the innings in their stand of 63 despite surviving a few close calls including an lbw review off Dunieth Wellalage.

Pakistan returned from a rain break on 130-5 with Rizwan digging deep and he got support from Iftikhar, who took his time to get his rhythm and hit two sixes in his 40-ball knock.

Pathirana sent back Iftikhar for his third wicket and Madushan took one more scalp of his own late on, but Rizwan remained unbeaten and finished with a boundary.



**MY DHAKA**  
**Try upcycling with BEAUTIFUL ANTIQUES**

BY RBR

Bamunshur is a sleepy hamlet tucked inside the belly of the bustling Keraniganj. While many may hardly visit this part of the city outskirts, they might, however, cross this odd place while driving towards the Bosila river point from the popular Ati bazaar at the Keraniganj end.

You can also venture from the Mohammadpur end till you reach Ati bazaar.

This unremarkable place has nothing to offer except an old antique store, almost hidden from public gaze.

The haphazardly piled copper and brass cauldrons on display will grab your attention for a few fleeting seconds.

But if you are a veteran in shopping for vintage items, you will know instantly that in this odd store, in the middle of nowhere, you have hit the jackpot – assuming, of course, old, rusted, forgotten pieces excites your imagination.

Old bell metal, or kasha as it is colloquially known, used utensils, with the owner's name engraved on it; tea pots and chinaware dating back to the British rule that are stamped with Made in England or Holland labels; teak wood antiquated dressers and various sizes of cooking pots and other belongings of a lost generation are on display here.

They are, however, not stored carefully like in any normal antique shop; the place looks almost rundown. You have to really look for the treasure

in the mess. The place does carry some fine vintage items, dating back roughly a hundred years or so, after the end of the British period.

Times are now leaned towards recycling and upcycling, so vintage or antique shopping has gained momentum among a niche group of enthusiasts, even in Dhaka.

If you are the kind that fancies the ethnic chic style of décor, using offbeat old furniture or huge cooking pots or storage tubs as statement decor pieces in your home, then this store, Ronny Collection, belonging to the passionate Aminul Islam Ronny, might be just what you were looking for.

"My father had a brass and bell metal store in Karwan Bazar. My interest in these wares started early on. When my father gave up his business and wanted to close shop, I continued it on my own. My main source of earning is actually from selling tea and snacks at a corner of my gallery, and antique collection is my obsession."

"My peers call me crazy but I am a zealot in this regard. I source these by going house to house, asking if they are willing to sell me their vintage items, which aren't in use anymore. I go to all parts of the country, as far as Rangpur, to buy old items," said Ronny, while serving tea to his customers.

"These are slow items, and you cannot think of making a steady income or profit out of it, at least for small collectors like me. I don't keep replicated items, just the original one. I feel happy when someone appreciates and picks up a few items from my shop. It makes me think that there is someone else other than me who see wonders in

old pieces."

Prices vary on the weight of the product, after which, Ronny adds his cut. Small items like cast metal candlestands start from Tk 1,500, a copper pot to hold clarified butter is Tk 2,000, and big cauldrons can go up to Tk 16,000.

There are many stores in Dhaka and websites selling antiques. We are now looking back at our history and picking up by-gone designs and possessions and replicating them.

When recycling is trending, these items, perceived as holding their value because of their age, aesthetic, or historical significance, can be re-used in many ways. Many of Dhaka's elites are pursuing this hobby of collecting such vintage items.

A small cooking pot made of copper, with a name engraved on the rim – Aziz Miah – excites your imagination as to what this pot was used for in the past! Was Aziz Miah a chef, or a patriarch? What sort of a man was he? This tiny pot, after a copper polish, could be reused as a planter for assorted ferns, for example. The lively green and old copper would be an impressive centrepiece.

A uniquely shaped cauldron or witch's kettle can be made into a table or a tub to house a big ficus tree in your balcony, while an antique Chinaware bowl can be placed as a centrepiece in any food spread while hosting a party.

A little bit of imagination, entwined with creativity and a sprinkle of love for the vintage, can allow unknown collectors like Ronny to keep on pursuing their passion to find and stock up more such vintage wonders for Dhaka's buyers to purchase.



**Govt fixes egg, onion, potato prices**

FROM PAGE 1

"Fixing of prices should not be for the sake of it. But at the same time, only market monitoring will not yield any positive result – the supply needs to be increased, too," Rahman added.

The effectiveness of the government's price control measures goes unnoticed as its instruments for making the decision effective are not adequate, said Khondaker Golam Moazzem, research director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue.

"The government has been fulfilling the legal requirement despite having weakness in instruments but it is avoiding the accountability."

Sufficient production of the goods needs to be ensured at the same time.

"If the production and supply of the items are not adequate, the government should also look for the reasons."

For instance, if the government notices that the production is low, it can subsidise fertiliser or other important agricultural inputs, Moazzem added.

Maintaining the supply of goods is important, said Mahbubul Alam, president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

"Where there is any artificial crisis of goods, the government should increase the supply. When it is noticed that someone is hoarding the goods, the government should interfere in it," he added.

This is a directive of the government and businesses should comply with it, said Sameer Sattar, president of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

"If anybody does not comply with it, they should face punishment. Moreover, containing inflation is the main issue of the government now and businesses should follow the direction for the greater good," he added.

However, Munshi does not sound too confident that the price controls would work.

If potatoes are being sold at more than Tk 35.36 a kg at the retail level, the government will auction the tuber stashed in the cold storage at Tk 27 a

kg at the wholesale level to increase the supply at the markets, he said.

Similarly, the government has decided to import the egg if it is not sold at the rate fixed.

Already four companies have applied to the commerce ministry for permission to import eggs, Munshi said.

"If it is seen that the eggs are selling at the government fixed rate after a day or two, we will go slow on egg imports. If it is the opposite, we will allow egg imports."

The officials of the Directorate of National Consumers Rights Protection will start monitoring the markets soon to ensure that the businessmen and traders comply with the directive, Munshi added.

Meanwhile, The Daily Star visited the Kawran Bazar, Kanchukhet, Shewrapara and Kazipara kitchen markets yesterday and found no reflection of the new prices for eggs, potatoes and onions.

Potatoes were selling at Tk 45.50 per kg and locally-grown onions at Tk 74.90 a kg.

"If we cannot purchase potatoes at a price lower than the one set by the government authority, we would find it difficult to sustain our trading," said Md. Milon, a potato wholesaler at Kawran Bazar.

He was selling potatoes at a wholesale price of Tk 43 a kg for a minimum purchase of 50 kgs, which yields him a Tk 0.5 profit on each kg.

The new price set by the authority cannot be maintained if the price is not reduced at the wholesale level, said Hena Begum, a retail trader at Mirpur's Shewrapara area, who bought potatoes at Tk 41 a kg from Kanchukhet Bazar yesterday.

"If I cannot sell potatoes or onions at a price that's Tk 7.8 more than the wholesale rate per kg, I won't be able to turn in a profit. This is because we incur a Tk 2 transportation cost per kilogram of potatoes and there is a 10 percent risk of damage," she added.

Abdul Alim, a food seller who supplies meals to student messes in

the Garden Road area, however, would be heaving a big sigh of relief if the new prices could be implemented.

**Fire rips**

FROM PAGE 1

two fire trucks arrived almost half an hour after they were called. "By then the fire had spread."

Fire service Director Tajul said firefighters struggled because of the large crowd of onlookers.

Narrow alleys divide the rows of shops in the market, but those alleys are blocked by piles of goods, he said, adding that the first responders had to break in because no one had the keys to the collapsible gates.

Two people suffered minor injuries in the fire.

Muhammad Shamim, an employee of the traders' association office, said he reached the market before daybreak.

"I saw smoke coming out of Haque Bread and Bakery. Then we switched off the electricity connection to the market," he said, adding that only the bakeries and fish and meat shops have overnight electricity connections.

Abdul Hamid Khan Liton, who owns two jewellery shops, said he had been able to save the jewellery because he arrived just on time, but furniture and fittings worth almost Tk 50 lakh were gutted.

Most of the damaged shops used to sell groceries, clothes, crockeries and jewellery.

The part where fish, chicken, meat and egg are sold has not seen much damage.

City corporation CEO Selim said the traders had largely ignored the fire safety-related warnings.

Dhaka Deputy Commissioner Anisur Rahman said assistance would be provided to the affected traders.

Massive fires at Siddikbazar, Bangabazar, Chawkbazar, Nawabpur, New Super Market and a shopping mall near Science Laboratory caused substantial damage to thousands of shops earlier this year.

The fire service last night formed a committee to identify the cause of the fire and come up with a report in 15 work days.

**Odhikar's Adilur, Elan jailed**

FROM PAGE 1  
each of them Tk 10,000, in default of which they would have to serve one month more in jail.

Public Prosecutor Mohammad Nazrul Islam Shamim told The Daily Star that they were not satisfied with the judgment and that they would appeal before the High Court.

Adilur said he did not get justice from the court and that he too would appeal.

Human rights activist Nur Khan Liton, who was present during judgment delivery, told journalists that Adilur, a prominent rights activist, was convicted under the controversial section 57 of the ICT Act which contradicts human rights and justice.

In the verdict, the judge said the accused ran the distorted report and doctored images just to malign the image of the government nationally and internationally. Moreover, their report about the death of people was false.

On June 10, 2013, the Detective Branch of police filed a general diary with the Gulshan Police Station in this connection, which was later converted into a case.

Detectives arrested Adilur at Gulshan on August 10, 2013, shortly after filing the GD which said the rights body on its website ran a false report titled "Assembly of Hefajat-e Islam Bangladesh and Human Rights Violation".

The report tarnished the images of the country, the government, and the law enforcement agencies, read the GD.

The Odhikar's report claimed that 61 people died in the wee hours of May 6 when the law enforcers flushed several thousand Hefajat activists out of the Shapla Chattar in the capital's Motijheel.

The government put the number of deaths at 13.

On August 11, 2013, police raided Odhikar's Gulshan office and seized three laptops and two desktop computers.

**Shahed gets 6 months' bail in graft case**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday granted six months' bail to Mohammad Shahed Karim, chairman of Regent Group, in a graft case in which he was sentenced to three years' imprisonment.

The bench of Justice Md Akhteruzzaman granted the bail after Shahed filed a petition challenging the trial court judgement.

On August 21, the trial court convicted and sentenced him to three years' imprisonment for not submitting his wealth statement to the Anti-Corruption Commission.

Shahed's lawyer Md Aminul Islam told The Daily Star that his client cannot get released from jail following the HC bail order as he is convicted to life imprisonment in an

## Read CSA before commenting

Says Momen as US, Amnesty Int'l express concern

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The United States and Transparency International yesterday voiced concern over the newly passed Cyber Security Bill while Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen suggested reading it first before making any comment on it.

"Read the Act first," Momen told reporters while responding to a question at a media briefing at the foreign ministry, reports UNB.

He stressed that the bill has been passed after addressing the concerns raised by different quarters.

Despite the criticism surrounding the law, the minister said, people do seek the support of the law when needed.

The Jatiya Sangsad passed the Cyber Security Bill 2023 on Wednesday.

Earlier, the US Embassy in Dhaka noted that the bill passed by the Jatiya Sangsad retained many aspects of the Digital Security Act.

"We regret that the government of Bangladesh did not give stakeholders adequate opportunity to review and provide input to the new law to ensure it meets international standards," reads a statement issued by the US Embassy in Dhaka.

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## Next polls will be free, fair

Raushan tells JS in concluding speech

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The upcoming parliamentary elections will be held in a free, fair and festive atmosphere, said Raushan Ershad, leader of the opposition in parliament, yesterday.

"And Jatiya Party will participate in that election. It is taking full preparations to contest the polls," she said in the concluding speech of the 24th session of the Jatiya Sangsad.

The opposition leader said JP has never boycotted national elections since its inception because it believes in democracy.

Raushan Ershad said the prices of many things had increased due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war.

"But now the price has come down in the world market," she said.

She mentioned that the lower-income class and even the middle-class people are gathering for TCB goods sold at lower prices.

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SAJJAD HOSSAIN and MD ASADUZ ZAMAN

Almost 10 years ago, Sondha Rani, 45, started her small betel leaf shop in Mohammadpur Krishi Market, after taking a loan from a relative. She, along with her husband, ran this small shop, which served as the only means of income for their three-member family.

However, in just a few hours, she

of shops which mainly sell vegetables, spices, groceries, and garments.

Around 4:00am, Sondha received a phone call from a friend who informed her that her shop was in flames. She and her husband, Arpon Shah, 50, rushed to the spot and saw the fire raging. They were unable to save anything.

"I had taken a loan of Tk 10 lakh from a relative and have not been able to fully repay them. We don't know what will

happen to us. How will we survive?" asked Sondha, who has a differently abled son Apu Saha, 25.

Similar to Sondha, the fire left numerous other traders stunned, as their livelihoods were reduced to ashes. Some traders were able to save some products, while many could not.

When the fire was brought under control, shopkeeper Matin Khan recovered some ginger, garlic, and onion

from his damaged shop. However, the recovered goods were ruined and cannot be sold to customers.

"The fire destroyed my small business that fed my family," lamented vegetable seller Matin, as he rummaged through the ruins.

"My family members and I used to work hard round the clock here. It was our only source of income. I have lost everything," he said.

While sobbing, another vegetable seller Delwar Hossain, said, "Every morning is



(From left) A victim cries as she talks to a relative over the phone after a fire at Mohammadpur Krishi Market gutted all she had; helpless people watch as the fire burns the market to ashes. The photos were taken yesterday. PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

lost everything, after a devastating fire burned her makeshift shop to the ground, early yesterday.

"Everything has been burnt down to ashes. I have nothing left but my tears," said a weeping Sondha, as she sat next to the burnt remains of her shop.

The fire broke out at the Mohammadpur Krishi Market at 3:43am and quickly engulfed the entire row

happen to us. How will we survive?" asked Sondha, who has a differently abled son Apu Saha, 25.

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Delayed development work on Kazi Alauddin Road in Old Dhaka has been causing inconveniences to locals for months. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## ENSURING WORKERS' RIGHTS IN LABOUR LAW In-depth reforms a must: experts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Labour experts at an event yesterday proposed bringing all EPZs and Specialized Industrial Zones under the general Labour Act to eliminate disparities among workers.

They also called for broadening the definition of "worker" [set under the Labour Law Amendment of 2013 (section 1(65))] for the universal inclusion of all workers, regardless of their employment conditions, to address the glaring gap between workers and officials in terms of the discrimination the workers are currently facing.

These recommendations were put forth at a stakeholders' meeting titled "Recommendations on Amendments of the Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006," organised by the Solidarity Center. The meeting took place at a Dhaka hotel yesterday.

In addition to these recommendations, the speakers sought a series of suggestions to ensure workers' protection, uphold their rights, enhance benefits, strengthen trade unions, and expedite legal remedies for labour disputes.

Other recommendations include

ensuring dismissed workers' service benefits, an end to unfair labour practices by employers that often lead to the dismissal of workers, quick disposal of cases at labor court, the inclusion of external representatives or advocates nominated by workers' organisations in committees investigating misconduct complaints, and amending the provision regarding workers' compensation.

In place of the current requirement of five years' service, they suggest that workers receive

## AL, BNP to hold 'counter' programmes today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country's two major political parties -- Awami League and BNP -- are once again set to take to the streets today with "counter" programmes.

BNP and their allies will hold a rally in front of the party headquarters in Nayapaltan at 3:00pm to realise their one point demand for election under a non-partisan government and demand the release of their chairperson Khaleda Zia.

The party's Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir will attend the rally as chief guest.

Meanwhile, the ruling AL will hold a peace rally at the same time in front of their headquarters on the capital's Bangabandhu Avenue.

AL's Dhaka City (South) Unit will organise the rally, protesting terror and anarchy.

AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader, also the road, transport and bridges minister, is set to address the event as chief guest.



SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

## EC reinvites application for local observers 66 granted registration

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission yesterday gave approval to 66 local observers to monitor the next general election.

It also invited again applications from interested organisations as the commission felt the number of local observers were still insufficient.

Ahead of the last December 30, 2018 parliamentary polls, the EC provided registration to 118 local organisations.

"The commission is sincere about free, fair and acceptable elections and for that, monitoring the election by impartial observers is key," Election Commissioner Brig Gen (retd) Ahsan Habib Khan told The Daily Star.

EC Director (Public Relations) Shariful Alam said interested organisations will be able to submit application from today (Friday) until September 24.

He said that organisations those sought registration in the previous process but were left out during the scrutiny also can apply.

This year the EC started the selection process in February and a total of 210 organisations applied to the election commission (EC) for registering their names as election observers.

Later, the EC shortlisted 94 organisations and enquired about them. The commission on August 8 primarily selected 68 of them to observe the 12th

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## JS passes Overseas Employment Bill

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Overseas Employment and Migrants (Amendment) Bill, 2023, was passed in parliament yesterday by voice vote to ensure accountability from agents for migrant workers.

As per the bill placed by Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Minister Imran Ahmad, intermediaries in foreign employment recruiting process will get recognition through registration.

Provision has been made for suspension of recruiting license without investigation and hearing, considering the seriousness of the complaint.

Provisions on sub agent or representative appointment and related liability have been added to bring the intermediaries in the recruitment process of foreign employment under the accountability framework.

Special financial and other welfare programmes may be adopted to ensure respect, dignity, rights, safety and security of women migrant workers in foreign workplaces, according to the bill.

It also the introduction and facilitation of bank loans, tax concessions, savings, investments, financial assistance, and scholarships, among others for the welfare of migrant workers and their family.

To increase accountability, recruiting agencies will be fined a minimum of Tk 50,000 and a maximum of Tk 2 lakh for committing any crime,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

## CAREER OPPORTUNITY WITH

**The Daily Star**

The Daily Star is looking for efficient, innovative and result-oriented Executive/Sr. Executive, Human Resources.

### Executive/Sr. Executive, Human Resources

#### Job Responsibilities:

- Assist in continuous improvement of HRMS development and understanding the requirement.
- Update and monitor employee attendance and prepare monthly report.
- Monitor and maintain Leave management.
- Coordinate in recruitment & selection process.
- Employee database management and file updating.
- Assist in payroll management.
- Prepare different analyses using slovenly data and Excel as per requirement.
- Prepare notes, letters, and circulations as per requirement.
- To update HR Audit's Corrective Action Request (CAR).
- Develop and maintain healthy relationships with colleagues.

#### Educational Requirements:

- At least BBA (major in HRM) from any reputed educational institution.

#### Experience Requirements:

- 1-2 years of practical experience, freshers can also apply

#### Job Requirements:

- Politeness within the attitude and conversation is the first priority.
- Skill in MS Excel (i.e., table, graph, VLOOKUP, Hlookup etc.) is mandatory.
- Word typing skills should be a minimum of 26WPM.
- Good command of English, both Oral and Written.
- Coordinate with the team and maintain harmony.

#### How to Apply:

If you feel worthy you can apply through the below link or scan the QR Code

Link: <https://forms.gle/D6Db6XQePWCPWFDy9>



Human Resources Department

The Daily Star Centre  
64-65, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215

Application Deadline: September 29, 2023



Female players of under-17 Khulna divisional football team opt for self-defence training in the district's Batiaghata upazila. The girls were attacked on July 29 for playing in shorts. The photos were taken yesterday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

## TO-LET

Warehouse + Office Space 10,000 Square feet/10 Katha land (Close to SPL Building 1 Minute away). Suitable for showroom/workshop. 153/5, Tejgaon Industrial area, Dhaka-1208. Contact:-01977-473876

## CONCERN worldwide SALE OF USED VEHICLES

Concern Worldwide, an international NGO, invites sealed bids for the sale of two used Toyota vehicles (Kluger Jeep: Dm-Gha-11-7076, Model 2003, CC 2700 and Hiace Micro Bus: DM-Cha-53-1142, Model: 2008, CC-2963). The vehicles are to be sold on an AS IS, WHERE IS basis and can be inspected from Sept. 17-27, 2023, between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. (working days). Bidders must deliver their sealed bid with 5% of the bid amount as earnest money or bid security or on before 2:30 PM on 01/10/2023. Concern Worldwide has the right to reject or cancel the bid process without assigning any reason. A schedule with details of terms and conditions is available at the Concern Worldwide office: House-15 SW(D), Road-7, Gulshan-1, Dhaka-1212. Tel.: 58816923 and 222264387

বাংলা একাডেমি বাংলালি জাতিসভা ও বুদ্ধিভূক্তি উৎকর্ষের প্রতীক



মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী, বাংলা একাডেমির ফেলো ও লেখক

## ৪৪ শেখ হাসিনার

তম জন্মদিন উপলক্ষ্যে

### শিশু-কিশোরদের কাছ থেকে ছড়া ও কবিতা আহ্বান

মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী, বাংলা একাডেমির ফেলো ও লেখক শিশু-কিশোরদের কাছ থেকে ছড়া ও কবিতা নিয়ে একটি সংকলন প্রকাশ করবে। এ লক্ষ্যে শিশু-কিশোরদের কাছ থেকে শেখ হাসিনাকে নিবেদিত ছড়া ও কবিতা আহ্বান করা হচ্ছে। আগামী ২০শে সেপ্টেম্বর র ২০২৩ তারিখে মধ্যে dcultureba@gmail.com এই ই-মেইলে লেখা পাঠাতে হবে। লেখার সঙ্গে লেখকের নাম, পিতার নাম, মাতার নাম, শ্রেণি, জন্মতারিতি ও শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠানের পরিচয়গত এবং জন্মনিবন্ধন সমন্বে ফটোকপি ও ১ কপি ছবি মুক্ত করতে হবে। লেখকের বয়স ১৮ই সেপ্টেম্বর ২০২৩ তারিখে অনুরূপ ১৭ বছর হতে হবে। লেখা নির্বাচনের ফেরে সংকলন সম্পাদনা পর্যবেক্ষণ সিদ্ধান্ত ছড়ান্ত বলে গণ্য হবে। প্রাকাশিত লেখার জন্য লেখককে সম্মানী প্রদান করা হবে।

প্রয়োজন: ০২-৫৮৬১১২৫৬

(ড. মোঃ শাফিউল ইসলাম)  
উপপরিচালক  
সংস্কৃতি উপবিভাগ  
বাংলা একাডেমি, ঢাকা

GD-1419



## নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় খবি মোতাবেক প্রদেয় অন্যান্য ভাত্তাদিসহ টা: ৩৫,৫০০-৬৭,০১০/- বেতন ক্লেল (জাতীয় বেতন ক্লেল-২০১৫) ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের আইসিটি (তথ্য ও যোগাযোগ প্রযুক্তি) সেল-এর ছায়া শুল্ক ১১ টি ওয়েব প্রেসার্চার-কাম-ওয়েব মাস্টার্স (ডেড-৬) পদ প্রদর্শের জন্য ৫০/- (পঞ্চাশ) ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের নিকট হতে দরখাত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে। প্রার্থীকে খুঁটিয়া খেলি/সিজিপিএ ৪ ক্লেল মুনতম ৩,০০ সহ যেকোনো স্থির বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে কল্পিতার সাথে এক ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং/সার্টিফিকেশন ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং/থেক্ষ প্রযুক্তি/কম্পিউটার ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং পদে যোগাযোগ করিব। প্রার্থীকে শিক্ষাজীবনের কোনো পর্যায়ে খুঁটিয়া খেলি/সিজিপিএ-৩,০০ এর নিচে গ্রহণযোগ্য নয়। প্রার্থীকে সরকারি/আধা-সরকারি/স্বায়ত্তশাসিত/বহুজাতিক/ BASIS নির্বাচিত বেসরকারি সহজওয়ার প্রতিষ্ঠানে technology stack (MERN/MEAN) ব্যবহারস অন্যান্য সমসাময়িক ওয়েবভিত্তিক অ্যাপ্লিকেশন তৈরীর কাজে সুন্দর নথি প্রস্তুত করতে হবে। Oracle DBA/Oracle Developer সার্টিফিকেশন থাকাসহ নিন্দিত ট্রুন ও টেকনোলজি সম্পর্কে বাস্তব অভিজ্ঞতামূলক প্রার্থীদেরকে অ্যাক্সিলার দেয়া যেতে পারে।

Experience Field Tools/Technology

Frontend technology HTML5, CSS3, Bootstrap5, Tailwind CSS, JavaScript ES6, React.js, Angular.js, Vue.js

Backend technology PHP/Python, Laravel/Django, Node.js

Database Oracle 12-23c (any), PL/SQL, PostgreSQL, MongoDB/NoSQL

Version Control GIT, SVN etc.

Technology stack MERN/MEAN

API Experience in REST/SOAP API creation, development & integration.

Others JSON (JavaScript Object Notation)/XML

মেজিস্ট্রারের অনুকূলে প্রদেয় ৭৫০/- (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ) ঢাকা মূল্যের প্রে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট এবং সকল পরীক্ষা পাশের সালিফিকেট ও প্রশংসাপত্রের সত্যায়িত

প্রতিষ্ঠিতসং ধ (আর্ট) প্রস্তুত দস্তাবেক মধ্যে মেজিস্ট্রারের (২০৩ নং কক্ষ) নিকট পৌঁছাতে হবে। শিক্ষাগত যোগাযোগ অভিজ্ঞতা ও

অ্যাক্সিলার সমস্পর্শযুক্ত (যদি থাকে) আবেদনের সঙ্গে সহ্যুক্ত করতে হবে। চার্টুরাত প্রার্থীকে যথাব্যক কর্তৃপক্ষের মাধ্যমে আবেদন করতে হবে। ফিল্ট-১৪১৫

## JS passes Overseas

FROM PAGE 3

said the minister in the bill's objective.

During the discussion, Jatiya Party MP Pir Fazlur Rahman stressed the need for post mortem of deceased migrant workers, especially women, to determine their actual cause of death.

"Migrant workers are treated like criminals at the airport and also harassed

on arrival. A separate desk

should be set up for them at the airport," added Rahman.

Jatiya Party MP Shameem Haider Patwari demanded for separate lounge for the migrant workers in the airport while Gonoforum MP Mukabbir Khan asked for health checkups for female workers every three months to stop violence against them.

## EC reinvites application

FROM PAGE 3

national polls. The election is likely to take place late December this year or early January next year.

During the hearing, names of two organizations—Human Rights Watch Commission of Manikganj and Rupnagar Shikha Shashya Foundation of Shahayata Foundation of Dhaka—were dropped from the primary list.

The registration of local election observers was introduced before the 9th parliamentary

election in 2008. Based on the Representation of the People Order bill, the EC developed a policy for selecting local election observers.

During the 2018 national election, about 26,000 individuals from 81 organizations were approved as observers by the EC. In the 2014 polls, about 8,900 individuals monitored the election.

In 2008, 1.59 lakh local observers monitored the election and in 2001, the number was 2.18 lakh.

## Read CSA before

FROM PAGE 3

The new legislation continues to 'criminalise' freedom of expression, retains non-bailable offences, and too easily could be misused to arrest, detain, and silence critics, it adds.

Md Borkot Ali, deputy

director (legal) of the Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST),

and Salauddin Shapen,

president of the Bangladesh Revolutionary Garment

Workers' Federation, were

among the panelists.

Nazma Yesmin, director

of the Bangladesh Institute

of Labor Studies, said,

"The current percentage

of workers (20 percent)

required to form a union

directly contradicts ILO

C89."

Md Borkot Ali, deputy

director (legal) of the

Bangladesh Legal Aid and

Services Trust (BLAST),

and Salauddin Shapen,

president of the Bangladesh Revolutionary Garment

Workers' Federation, were

among the panelists.

Nazrul Islam, legal

officer of the Solidarity

Center, presented the

keynote speech at the

event while AKM Nasim,

Bangladesh country

program director of the

Solidarity Center, delivered

closing remarks.

Meanwhile, six people

were injured after a CNG

auto rickshaw collided

with a battery-operated

autorickshaw coming

from the opposite direction at

Kachdaha village in the

upazila in the evening, said

Touhidul Islam, officer-in-

charge of Nababganj Police

Station.

The injured were taken

to the local upazila health

complex where Madrasa

employee Abdul Bashar,

58, of Belkhuria village in Dinajpur's Birampur

upazila succumbed to his injuries. The other injured are currently under treatment at the health complex.

(Our

Gazipur,

Jhenaidah and Dinajpur

correspondents

contributed to this report.)

Meanwhile, six people

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auto rickshaw collided

with a battery-operated

autorickshaw coming

from the opposite direction at

Kachdaha village in the

upazila in the evening, said

Touhidul Islam, officer-in-

charge of Nababganj Police

Station

## 6 killed, 11 hurt in road accidents

### STAR REPORT

Six people were killed and at least 11 others injured in three separate accidents in Gazipur's Pubail, Jhenaidah's Shaikupura upazila and Dinajpur's Nababganj upazila yesterday.

In Gazipur, three persons were killed and at least four others were injured as a truck hit an auto-rickshaw in Pubail College Gate area yesterday evening, said Shafiqul Islam, officer-in-charge of Pubail Police Station.

Relatives brought the victims to the hospital. Of them, three were brought dead while four others are being treated in critical condition, said Dr Rafiqul Islam, resident doctor at Shaheed Taj Uddin Ahmad Medical College Hospital.

The identities of the victims could not be known till filing of this report around 8:30pm yesterday.

In Jhenaidah, traders Mahadeb Kumar, 60; Khokon Hossain, 29, and two others of Vaina village under Harinakundu upazila were going to Garaganj with betel leaves in a human hauler. A Kushtia-bound bus of Rupsa Paribahan hit the human hauler, approaching from opposite direction, on the Jhenaidah-Kushtia highway at Garaganj bridge area in the afternoon, said Mizanur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Jhenaidah Highway Police Station.

Khokon died on the spot. Firefighters rushed the injured to Shaikupura Upazila Health Complex where doctor declared Mahadeb dead.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

## Man hacked to death

### OUR CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

A man was hacked to death allegedly by his brother-in-law in Munshiganj's Srinagar upazila early yesterday.

Md Russell, 30, of Rudrapara village in the upazila's Baghra union was killed while he was sleeping.

Russell had sent his brother-in-law Sheikh Rahman, a drug addict, to rehab multiple times. Upon his latest return, Rahman attacked Russell with a Chinese axe, said Md Akkas Miyaji, UP member of the union's ward-5.

Russell was rushed to nearby Doha Health Complex where doctor declared him brought dead.

Russell was killed over family dispute. The accused has been absconding since the incident. The body was sent to Salimullah College Hospital morgue for an autopsy, said Abdulla Al Taybeer, officer-in-charge of Srinagar Police Station.



This picture doesn't tell the entire story. A destitute man lies down in front of a bulldozer to stop it from demolishing his rental home, illegally built on Sitakunda Khas Land by local influential people. An executive magistrate and at least four police personnel were injured after those influential people attacked a mobile court team on their way back after the eviction drive yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAJHAN

## Development should prioritise people

Saber Hossain Chowdhury tells nat'l dialogue

### STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Saber Hossain Chowdhury, special envoy of the prime minister on environment and climate change, yesterday stressed the importance of having a mindset to look at development both from the lens of economic benefit as well as public health.

Saber, also chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, said the country's policies should not deviate from the Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan which was unanimously approved by the Cabinet.

He was speaking at a national dialogue titled "Ensuring Clean Air: Challenges and Way Forward", organised by the Centre for Atmospheric Pollution Studies (CAPS) and World Vision at The Daily Star Centre in the capital.

"What should be the approach to define development? Will it be judged based on GDP growth, foreign direct investment and fore-

reserve? While these are important, however, when we take the quality of life of people into account, then public health becomes a really big issue," he said.

The definition of development revolves round the idea of GDP. This is a one-dimensional approach to look into this issue, he added.

Stressing that air pollution is a public health concern, the lawmaker said, "We have to think of development in terms of the quality of education and public health. Over the years, the government prioritised energy security. After availability of energy is guaranteed, we have to think about what would be our energy mix, giving preference to renewable sources."

"We have the Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan approved by the Cabinet. So, we should not take any deviant policy that goes against it," he added.

He emphasised on the current quantification of energy demand.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

Prof M Khairul takes charge as PKSF chairman

### STAR REPORT

Prof Dr M Khairul Hossain joined the Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation office as chairman yesterday morning, said a press release.

He succeeds Dr Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad who took the office on November 15, 2009.

On September 12, 2023, the government appointed Prof Hossain as the new PKSF chairman for the next three years.

Before this, Dr Hossain served as a professor at the finance department of Dhaka University. He also served as the chairman of Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission and the Investment Corporation of Bangladesh.

## Jamalpur DC transferred for political remark

### STAR REPORT

Jamalpur Deputy Commissioner Md Imran Ahmed has been transferred to the Ministry of Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment yesterday.

On the other hand, Bangladesh Civil Service Administration Academy's deputy director (deputy secretary) Md Shafiqur Rahman was appointed as the deputy commissioner of Jamalpur.

The Ministry of Public Administration issued separate circulars in this regard yesterday.

Speaking at an event on Monday, in the presence of local MP Mirza Azam, Jamalpur DC Imran urged people to re-elect the AL government to continue the ongoing development work.

At the same time, he also hoped that MP Azam would be made a minister after the polls. The video clip of his speech went viral on social media.

The Election Commission on Wednesday wrote to the cabinet secretary to take action against him after verifying the authenticity of his speech, where he sought votes for the ruling Awami League.

## Trial run held on Akhaura-Agartala rail route

### OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

A trial run of a special train was conducted on the newly constructed Akhaura-Agartala rail route yesterday.

The four-coach special train left Brahmanbaria's Gangasagar Railway Station at noon and crossed 6.78km of the Bangladesh portion to reach the Shibnagar area on the Bangladesh-India border.

Project officials said only freight trains will run on this route initially, while passenger trains will be introduced later on.

Indian Premier Narendra Modi and Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina will jointly inaugurate this rail route soon, the officials also said.

Abu Jafar Miah, director of the Akhaura-Agartala dual gauge railway project (Bangladesh part), and Sharat Sharma, country manager of Indian contracting firm Texmaco Rail and Engineering Limited, and other officials concerned were present during the trial run.

The construction of this 12.24km rail route from Gangasagar in Akhaura to Nishchintpur in Tripura took more than five years since the works began in July 2018 costing Tk 241 crore.

Project officials said the construction works of the immigration and customs building and platform are still going on.



## Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer  
Education Engineering Department  
Barishal  
E-mail: ee\_bar@eedmoe.gov.bd

### e-Tender Notice

Tender Notice No 61/EED/BARI/Project Code (1250301-120001602-3258108) e-Tender/2023-24  
Name of Project Repair Renovation of Non-Govt Educational Institutions.

e-Tender is invited through the National e-GP Portal for the following procurement of works:

Sl	Name of the tender	Tender ID	Type method	Last date & time of selling documents	Last date & time of submission documents
01	Non-Govt Rev-23 Construction of Boundary wall and Toilet Block at Uzirpur Mohila College, Uzirpur Upazila Barishal District	857611	NCT, LTM	01-Oct-2023 16:00	02-Oct-2023 12:00
02	Non-Govt Rev-24 Construction of Boundary wall at Jogirkanda Girls College, Uzirpur Upazila Barishal District	857610	NCT, LTM	01-Oct-2023 16:00	02-Oct-2023 12:00
03	Non-Govt Rev-27 Repair and Renovation work at W S M Girls Secondary School, Banaripara Upazila Barishal District	854786	NCT, LTM	01-Oct-2023 16:00	02-Oct-2023 12:00
04	Non-Govt Rev-60 Repair and Renovation works at Pachim Pluher Secondary School, Banaripara Upazila Barishal District.	854780	NCT, LTM	01-Oct-2023 16:00	02-Oct-2023 12:00
05	Non-Govt Rev-36 Construction of Semi-Pacca Building at Amirganj Secondary School, Mehendiganj Upazila Barishal District.	856936	NCT, LTM	01-Oct-2023 16:00	02-Oct-2023 12:00
06	Non-Govt Rev-35 Repair and Renovation Work at Ishak Chowdry Memorial Secondary School, Mehendiganj Upazila Barishal District	856935	NCT, LTM	01-Oct-2023 16:00	02-Oct-2023 12:00
07	Non-Govt Rev-28 Construction of Boundary wall at B K Secondary School, Uzirpur Upazila Barishal District.	857608	NCT, LTM	01-Oct-2023 16:00	02-Oct-2023 12:00
08	Non-Govt Rev-37 Construction of Shahid Minar and Internal Road at Patarhat Girls Secondary School, Mehendiganj Upazila Barishal District	856932	NCT, LTM	01-Oct-2023 16:00	02-Oct-2023 12:00
09	Non-Govt Rev-39 Repair and Renovation Work at Hizla BL Girls Secondary School, Hizla Upazila Barishal District.	856930	NCT, LTM	01-Oct-2023 16:00	02-Oct-2023 12:00
10	Non-Govt Rev-38 Construction of Semi-Pacca Building at Kasipur Secondary School, Mehendiganj Upazila Barishal District	856933	NCT, LTM	01-Oct-2023 16:00	02-Oct-2023 12:00
11	Non-Govt Rev-56 Construction of Semi-Pacca C N B Degree College, Bakerganj Upazila Barishal District.	858481	NCT, LTM	01-Oct-2023 16:00	02-Oct-2023 12:00
12	Non-Govt Rev-58 Construction of Main Gate and Internal Road Works at Kakorda A K M Institute, Bakerganj Upazila Barishal District	858488	NCT, LTM	01-Oct-2023 16:00	02-Oct-2023 12:00

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

Md Shohidul Islam  
Executive Engineer  
Education Engineering Department  
Barishal



## Bangladesh Election Commission

Identification System for Enhancing Access to Services (IDEA) Project (2nd Phase)  
Nirbahan Bhaban (Floor-8), Agargaon, Dhaka-1207

### Invitation for Re-Tenders

1	Ministry/Division	Bangladesh Election Commission	
2	Agency	Election Commission Secretariat	
3	Procuring entity name	Represented by Project Director, Identification System for Enhancing Access to Services (IDEA) Project (2nd Phase), Election Commission Secretariat.	
4	Procuring entity district	Dhaka	
5	Invitation for	"Purchasing and Installation of BVRS Server" Lot-2 'Spare Storage Server Hard Disk'	
6	Invitation Ref. No. & Date	17.14.0000.240.07.140.2023/2856; Dated: 14 September, 2023	
7	Procurement method	Open Tendering Method (OTM)	
8	Budget and source of funds	GoB (Development Budget)	
9	Project /program code (if applicable)	224331200	
10	Project name (if applicable)	Identification System for Enhancing Access to Services (IDEA) Project (2nd Phase)	
11	Tender Package No.	GD-35, Lot-2 (Re-Tenders)	
12	Tender package name	Purchasing and Installation of BVRS Server.	
13	Date	15 September, 2023	
14	Pre-tender meeting date and time	19 September, 2023 11:30am	
15	Tender last selling date and time	24 September, 2023 04:00pm	
16	Tender closing date and time	25 September, 2023 02:00pm	
17	Tender opening date and time	25 September, 2023 02:30pm	
18	Name & address of the office(s)	Address	
	Selling tender document (principal)	Assistant Director (Finance), Room No. 818, (Floor-8), Nirbahan Bhaban, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207.	
19	Pre-tender meeting		
20	Receiving tender document	Conference Room No. 721, Nirbahan Bhaban (Floor-7), Agargaon, Dhaka-1207.	
21	Opening tender document		
22	Eligibility of tenderer	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tender shall have the legal capacity to enter into the contract under the applicable law.</li> <li>Tenderers shall be enrolled in the relevant professional or trade organizations registered in Bangladesh.</li> <li>Tenderers shall have to fulfil its obligation/obligations to pay taxes under the provisions of laws and regulations of Bangladesh.</li> <li>Detail information has been provided in the tender document.</li> </ol>	
23	Brief description of services	Lot-02 Spare Storage Server Hard Disk as specified in the Tender Document	



Kazi Hayat

Omar Sani

Shakil Khan

Shakib Khan

## Film industry struggling to accept Sohan's demise

ARTS &amp; ENTERTAINMENT DESK

**As Sohanor Rahman, Sohan, one of Bangladesh's film industry's most beloved names, was laid to rest yesterday beside his wife Priya Rahman. Sohan had passed away from a brain stroke at the capital's Crescent hospital, and his wife passed away just a day earlier. The shock was still not overcome by his colleagues, juniors and fans.**

A cloud of grief loomed over Dhaka's sky in remembrance of the man who gave one of the biggest blockbusters in Bangla cinema, *Keyamot Theke Keyamot*, kickstarting the careers of Moushumi and Salman Shah as lead actors.

Moushumi was overwhelmed with sorrow when contacted, her voice clearly shaky from crying. Unable to talk, she passed the phone to Omar Sani, who asked everyone to pray for his departed soul.

"He was the one who named me Shakib Khan. He gave me the name by which millions of people now know me, I will forever be indebted to him," wrote Shakib Khan on his social media. "We talked only a few days ago - he was supposed to go to Japan for further treatment. I cannot believe that he is not there anymore. May the Almighty give him and *bhabhi* peace."

Riaz told The Daily Star that he is lucky to have done a film with him. "He was an artisan when it came to producing stars," he said. "Look at whom he brought to the limelight - two megastars in Salman Shah and Moushumi. Trust me, this is an unforeseen achievement. May the Almighty bless him."

Kazi Hayat is one of the most prolific directors in Bangla cinema. He is also serving as the president of the Directors' Association. "I cannot believe that he is no more. As good



Moushumi

as he was as a director, I believe that he was equally skilful as an organiser. He was there for everyone when they needed it. 90's heartthrob Shakil Khan's first film, *Ghor Amar Behesto*, was directed by Sohanor Rahman Sohan, and it was a super hit film. He acted in 5 films by the director. "He had to face a lot of challenges because he decided to give chances to new faces," he told The Daily Star. "No one had as much success with debutants as he did, and I am indebted to him for my

career. He will forever live through his works."

Sohanor Rahman Sohan started his career as an assistant director to Shibli Sadiq in 1977. His first directorial film, *Biswas Obiswas*, was released in 1988, but he truly broke new ground after making *Keyamot Theke Keyamot* in 1993, starring Salman Shah and Moushumi.

Some of his notable works are *Amar Desh Amar Prem, Swajan, Amar Ghor Amar Behesto, Ananta Bhalobasha, Shami Chintai, Amar Jaan Amar Pran, Poran Joliya Jay Re, Koti Takar Prem, She Amar Mon Kereche and Lobhe Paap Paape Mrittu.*

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## INTERNATIONAL

## 68 Chinese warplanes detected near island: Taiwan

AFP, Taipei

Dozens of Chinese warplanes and 10 navy ships were detected around Taiwan, authorities in Taipei said yesterday after warning that Beijing was conducting air and sea drills in the Western Pacific.

China claims self-ruled Taiwan as its territory and relations have soured since the island's independence-leaning President Tsai Ing-wen came to power in 2016.

Beijing has in recent years ratcheted up diplomatic and military pressure on Taiwan and the number of warplane flights around the island increased dramatically following a visit by Nancy Pelosi, then-speaker of US House of Representatives.

Taiwan's defence ministry said in a statement that 68 Chinese aircraft and 10 naval vessels were detected near the island between Wednesday morning and yesterday.

INDIA'S AYODHYA  
Ram temple to be opened to devotees in January

REUTERS, New Delhi

The first phase of Ram Temple in India's town of Ayodhya will be completed in December and will open to devotees in January, an official said yesterday.

The site where the temple was built was bitterly contested for years, with both Hindus and Muslims laying claim to it.

Hindus say the site was the birthplace of Lord Ram, and was holy to them long before Muslim Mughals built the Babri mosque there in 1528.

A Hindu mob destroyed the mosque in 1992, triggering riots that killed about 2,000 people across India. Supreme court awarded the site to Hindus in 2019, paving the way for the construction of a Hindu temple.



An Italian police officer sprays a migrant with fresh water after he has crossed the fence to exit the operational centre called "Hotspot" on the Italian island of Lampedusa yesterday. The number of migrants arriving in Italy after crossing on boats from North Africa has surged this year, at almost 124,000 since January -- up from 65,500 during the same period in 2022, according to government data.

PHOTO: AFP

## Putin, N Korea's Kim send rivals a warning

Say analysts as both leaders vow defence, other cooperation

REUTERS, Seoul

Whatever practical cooperation emerges from this week's summit between Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, their deepening relationship is aimed at sending their rivals a warning, analysts said.

Calling each other "comrade", the men toasted their friendship on Wednesday after Putin showed Kim around Russia's most modern space launch facility and they held talks alongside their defence ministers.

The two countries have an interest in demonstrating that, despite their geopolitical isolation, they have partners they can call on. And both seek to weaken US-led sanctions and pressure campaigns against Russia over the war in Ukraine and against North Korea for its nuclear weapons and missile programs, analysts said.

"Putin and Kim would both gain

from a transactional bargain but they would also gain geopolitically by giving off the impression that their nuclear-armed countries are cooperating militarily and sending a warning about potential consequences to America's allies and like-minded partners that support Ukraine," said Duyeon Kim, of the Center for a New American Security.

"Kim would also be signalling to Washington, Seoul and Tokyo that Russia has his back in Northeast Asia."

Both Russia and North Korea have denied US claims that they plan to provide each other with weapons, but the leaders promised to deepen defence cooperation, and Putin said Russia would help the North build satellites.

If they simply wanted a secret arms deal, the two leaders did not have to meet in person, said Leif Eric Easley, a professor at Ewha University in Seoul.

"Putin and Kim would both gain

"Putin and Kim's diplomatic display is meant to claim success in challenging the US-led international order, avoiding over-reliance on China, and increasing pressure on rivals in Ukraine and South Korea," he said.

Discussions of any open violation of UN Security Council resolutions on North Korea would signal that major international agencies will be paralysed, said Andrei Lankov, a Korea expert at Seoul's Kookmin University.

The summit is an indicator that North Korea-related Security Council resolutions are dead, as are all attempts to stop North Korea or penalise it for having a nuclear program, he said.

"It creates an important precedent that is likely to be used not only by Russia but pretty much every major international player that if you don't like a UNSC resolution you just ignore it," Lankov said.

## Nasa installs new chief of UFO research

REUTERS, Washington

Nasa yesterday said it has named a new director of research into what the government calls "unidentified anomalous phenomenon," or UAP, while the US space agency's chief said an expert panel that urged more fact-finding on the matter found no evidence of an extraterrestrial origin for these objects.

A d m i n i s t r a t o r Bill Nelson made the announcement of the new research chief - though he did not disclose the person's identity - after the independent panel of experts recommended that Nasa increase its efforts to gather information on UAP and play a larger role in helping the Pentagon detect them. UAP are better known to the public as unidentified flying objects, or UFOs.

Human activity risking Earth's life-support systems  
Landmark study warns

REUTERS, Berlin

The Earth's life-support systems are facing greater risks and uncertainties than ever before, with most major safety limits already crossed as a result of planet-wide human interventions, according to a scientific study released on Wednesday.

In a "health check" for the entire planet published in the *Science Advances* journal, an international team of 29 experts found that the Earth is now "well outside" the safe operating space for humanity" due to human activity.

The study, expanding on a 2015 report, said the world had now crossed six of nine "planetary boundaries" - the safe limits for human life in areas such as the integrity of the biosphere, climate change and the use and availability of fresh water.

In all, it said, eight of the nine boundaries are under more pressure than in the 2015 assessment, with only the sky's ozone layer improving - raising the risk of dramatic changes in the Earth's living conditions.

"We don't know that we can thrive under major, dramatic alterations of our conditions," lead author Katherine Richardson from the University of Copenhagen told a news conference.

The authors said crossing the boundaries did not represent a tipping point where human civilisation would just crash, but could bring irreversible shifts in the Earth's support systems.

"We can think of Earth as a human body, and the planetary boundaries as blood pressure. Over 120/80 does not indicate a certain heart attack but it does raise the risk," Richardson said.

The scientists sounded the alarm about increasing deforestation, the excessive consumption of plants for fuel, and the proliferation of manmade products like plastic, genetically modified organisms and synthetic chemicals.

## CAREER OPPORTUNITY

**M2K TECHNOLOGY & TRADING CO.** - a company that is registered in Bangladesh and which is carrying out business within power, energy, ICT, water, aviation, petrochemicals, mines, defence, transportation movement, housing, urban development and softwares mainly <[m2kttc.com](http://m2kttc.com)>. The company intends to recruit for the following positions immediately:

SL. NO.	POSITIONS	QUALIFICATIONS
1.	<b>ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER - Marketing and Sales</b>	B. Sc in ECE/EEE with MBA (Marketing) from BUET, RUET, KUET, CUET, DUET, NSU, BRAC, MIST and DU. 3 - 5 years of experience in similar corporate, preferably within multinationals.
2.	<b>ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER Technical</b>	B. Sc in ECE/EEE from BUET, RUET, KUET, CUET, DUET, NSU, BRAC, MIST. 3 - 5 years of experience in similar corporate, preferably within multinationals.

**Handsome remuneration packages and impressive incentives are awaiting for the most deserving professionals.**

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## Earn trust of grassroots people

FROM PAGE 1  
The PM said, "You [public representatives] will have to stand against drug abuse, terrorism, and militancy. You will have to pay special attention so that no one can be involved in these."

Over 9,000 public representatives of 5,474 local government bodies -- 12 city corporations, 61 zilla parshads, 329 municipalities, 495 upazila parshads, and 4,577 union parshads -- took part in the event organised by the Local Government Division.

Hasina said, "As people have voted for you once, you have to earn the trust and confidence of the people so they can vote for you again."

Referring to the construction of 560 model

mosques by the government, the premier said they are also providing money for renovating temples and other places of worship.

The government will do whatever is necessary for the development of mosques, temples, churches, and pagodas."

"We've made this country independent together. This country is a country of non-communal spirit and will continue to be so."

Hasina also asked the public representatives to pay attention to the community clinics so it can render proper services.

She laid emphasis on creating awareness so that the overseas jobseekers are not deceived by the middlemen, rather they can take loans

from the banks, particularly Probashi Kallyan Bank, which offers them loans without collateral.

Mentioning that there are many dirt roads in villages, she said if her party gets the scope to serve the people again, they will develop these roads. "Every village will be developed like a town."

Hasina asked all to be positive about the recently introduced universal pension scheme.

She called upon everyone to be conscious about dengue and use mosquito nets alongside keeping their homes and surroundings clean.

Regarding the subsidy in power, Hasina said now only the rich are enjoying the full benefits of the subsidy and

that is why she has ordered to provide a safeguard in the use of electricity for the common people.

Hasina said when the use of electricity goes up to a certain level, the price will also increase. "We will do it slowly and then we will be able to protect those who consume less power. Those who use more power will pay more."

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Md Tazul Islam presided over the event, while State Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives Swapan Bhattacharjee and Local Government Secretary Muhammad Ibrahim spoke on the occasion.

Several public representatives also spoke at the event.

## Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Local Government Engineering Department

Office of the Executive Engineer

District: Bhola

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

শেখ হাসিনার মৃলন্তি

গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি

Date: 14/09/2023

## e-Tender Notice No. 14/2023-24

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

SL. No.	Upazila	Package No.	T-ID No.	Name of scheme	Method	Last date of receiving
1.	Bhola Sadar	e-Tender/LGED/Bhola/GOBM/23-24/W-28	866974	(a) Rehabilitation of Doskhali Bridge-Chandraprashad - Janal Baparir Shop-Mir Bazar (Bisso Road) Road from Ch. 00m-2900m under Bhola Sadar Upazila, District-Bhola. Road ID No. [509184087] (b) Rehabilitation of Bheduria Bangla Bazar-Char Pata Bheduria via Hazir Hat Road from Ch. 00m-1010m under Bhola Sadar Upazila, District: Bhola. Road ID No. [509184012]	OTM	18-Oct-2023, Till 12.00pm
2.	Bhola Sadar	e-Tender/LGED/Bhola/GOBM/23-24/W-29	866975	(a) Rehabilitation of Hatner Hat-Arujan Ali Khayhat Road from Ch. 00m-2050m under Bhola Sadar Upazila, District-Bhola. Road ID No. [509184036] (b) Rehabilitation of Utar Beduria High School Jungi Khayhat Road from Ch. 00m-1500m under Bhola Sadar Upazila, District: Bhola. Road ID No. [509185016]	OTM	18-Oct-2023, Till 12.00pm
3.	Bhola Sadar	e-Tender/LGED/Bhola/GOBM/23-24/W-31	866977	Rehabilitation of Kheyaghat Bridge-Sher-e-Bangla RPS-Nazir Majee Khayhat Road from Ch. 00m-4700m under Bhola Sadar Upazila, District-Bhola. Road ID No. [509184044]	OTM	18-Oct-2023, Till 12.00pm
4.	Bhola Sadar	e-Tender/LGED/Bhola/GOBM/23-24/W-32	866978	Rehabilitation of Charkali-Majeer Hat Road from Ch.00m-3080m under Bhola Sadar Upazila, District: Bhola. Road ID No. [509184042]	OTM	18-Oct-2023, Till 12.00pm
5.	Bhola Sadar	e-Tender/LGED/Bhola/GOBM/23-24/W-33	866979	Rehabilitation of East side Velumia Bazer-Nazir Mazi Kheya Ghat Road from Ch. 00m-3000m under Bhola Sadar Upazila, District: Bhola. Road ID No [509184056]	OTM	18-Oct-2023, Till 12.00pm
6.	Bhola Sadar	e-Tender/LGED/Bhola/GOBM/23-24/W-34	866980	Rehabilitation of Parangjan-Pangashia FRB Road to Talukder Char Bridge via Guptamunshi - Char Algi - Talukder Hat Road from Ch. 00m-4200m under Bhola Sadar Upazila, District: Bhola. Road ID No. [509185108]	OTM	18-Oct-2023, Till 12.00pm

This is an online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP 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 registers bank branches up to Date: 17/10/2023 till 16.00pm. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and e-GP help desk ([helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd](mailto:helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)).

Mohammad Ibrahim Khalil  
Executive Engineer  
LGED, Bhola  
E-mail: [xen.bhola@lged.gov.bd](mailto:xen.bhola@lged.gov.bd)

## Deeply concerned over rights situation

FROM PAGE 1  
The resolution specifically deplored yesterday's sentencing of two Odhikar leaders Adilur Rahman Khan and ASM Nasiruddin Elan - and urged the government to immediately and unconditionally quash the ruling.

It called on the government to immediately and unconditionally reinstate Odhikar's registration and ensure that civil society organisations can access approved foreign grants.

It said, "An Everything but Arms (EBA) enhanced engagement process remains ongoing with Bangladesh owing to its serious violations of international conventions; is concerned that the Odhikar case is a regrettable step back, bearing consequences as to whether EBA preferences [should] continue to apply to Bangladesh."

Under the EBA, Bangladesh now gets duty-free access to the European Union market.

Seven groups of members of European Parliament (MEPs), including the centre-right, social democrats, and leftists, jointly proposed the resolution. It was debated at the parliament in Strasbourg, France, on Wednesday and adopted by show of hands yesterday.

The resolution asked for the Digital Security Act to be repealed and a cybersecurity law that complies with international standards to be adopted.

It also expressed concerns about the "mass arrests of opposition representatives and the excessive use of force against protesters" and asked the government to "guarantee the conditions for free, fair and participatory elections in Bangladesh, notably the case of Odhikar."

The European Parliament also called on the European External Action Service, the EU Delegation and the member states' embassies in Bangladesh to raise human rights concerns at the highest levels and increase their support for local human

GD-1416

## A joke of a legal reform

### Passage of Cyber Security Act a threat to democracy and people's rights

Five years ago, mere months before the 2018 general election, the parliament had passed the Digital Security Bill. Then, on September 13, 2023, again just months before another election, the parliament passed the Cyber Security Bill – its successor. Clearly, there's something about the approach of a general election that makes the government want to hone its legal tools to deal with the more vocal of voters. But let's face it, what's at stake here is much more than the result of a once-in-a-five-year event. We are talking about a sustained state policy of suppressing free thought and expression that has been affecting the very fabric of our society.

According to media reports, the Cyber Security Bill has been passed despite stiff opposition from opposition lawmakers. There has been little change in the draft approved last month by the Cabinet, despite promises that concerns raised by journalists and rights activists would be heeded. This makes it "a spitting image" of the very law it meant to replace – i.e. the DSA. What is the point of replacing it, then? Ever since the government announced its decision to amend the DSA, we hoped that any change would be in substance, not just in semantics. We also protested when the draft that later came out retained almost all controversial sections of the DSA, with all other changes related only to sentencing and bail. The bill passed on Wednesday reflected none of our concerns.

Granted, the provision of Official Secrets Act has been removed from it. But the provision of arrest without warrant remains. Essentially, what all this means is that the CSA – or DSA 2.0 – is every bit as dangerous as its earlier iteration. The pretense of amendment may have ticked a box for the government, facing criticism from home and abroad, but it will not help restore its image lost over the four years and a half of DSA's existence. If the government really cares about its image, it must realise that no other black law or repressive action has done as much damage to its credibility internationally as the abuse of this one law did, and by continuing it under a different name it is only further harming its reputation.

We urge the government to reconsider the passage of the bill and bring appropriate reforms or repeal it entirely, if possible. The right to speak, share and publish freely is a vital part of democracy, and a fundamental human right guaranteed by the constitution. The authorities must respect and protect that right.

## Why keep on awarding errant defaulters?

### Janata Bank must answer for its poor handling of AnonTex's loans

Financial discipline is the backbone of any banking sector; ours, however, seems to be permanently paralysed by financial irregularities. An investigation by this daily has revealed alarming details of how errant borrowers get away with defaulting loans, over and over again, with the authorities bending over backwards to facilitate their requests for extension of payments, ignoring due processes. The report highlights how apparel exporter AnonTex Group, which has an annual turnover of \$150 million, was able to take loans amounting to Tk 3,527.9 crore between 2010 and 2015.

As of 2022, AnonTex's liabilities to Janata stood at a whopping Tk 7,726 crore, which is 334 percent of the bank's paid-up capital. As per Bangladesh Bank's rules, the state-run banks are not allowed to lend more than 25 percent of their paid-up capital to a single party. How is it that Janata Bank could violate BB's rules so egregiously, and equally importantly, what did the central bank, as a regulator, do to reign Janata in? More shocking still is the fact that the state-run bank (whose total bad loans stand at Tk 15,000 crore) is yet to show the loans taken by AnonTex as defaulted loans, with the garment manufacturer given until the end of the year to pay back the sum.

At a time when Janata Bank is suffering from severe liquidity crisis, and the government is recapitalising the state banks from public coffer, the privilege afforded to errant borrowers like AnonTex is unacceptable. According to an investigation by the Bangladesh Bank in 2018, a majority of the loans was obtained through forgery and irregularities. Yet, the authorities, instead of punishing those involved in scams, have rewarded them over and over again, even waiving interest on the loans, laying bare the extent of impunity enjoyed by some powerful quarters and the severe lack of accountability in the banking sector.

Janata Bank (particularly its board and management committee at the time) as well as the Bangladesh Bank, as the regulator, must answer for their role in this affair. The Financial Institutions Division, under the Finance Ministry, cannot deny its responsibility either as it is tasked with appointing board members for the state bank to take care of savers' money and ensure healthy and sound operation of the bank. The anarchy in the banking sector – which is causing its foundation to rot – must be addressed by the authorities concerned. The question, as always, remains: do they have the will to do so?

New Message

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# EDITORIAL

## Our new CJ Obaidul Hassan

His call to fight graft is urgent, crucial and enthusing



### THE THIRD VIEW

Mahfuz Anam  
is the editor and publisher  
of The Daily Star.

MAHFUZ ANAM

In his first media engagement, our just-appointed chief justice expressed his determination to fight corruption: "Corruption is like cancer. There is corruption to some extent in every sector. It cannot be said there is no corruption or irregularities even in the court premises."

We congratulate the chief justice (whose term starts from September 26, the day on which he will take his oath) for his forthright identification of one of the main issues of concern for Bangladesh's future. He has correctly characterised corruption as "cancer" and talked about how it has spread to various sectors of the society. We applaud his unambiguous declaration that "there is zero scope for compromise with any corruption and misdeeds." His hint that the court premises are not free of this "cancer" indicates his courage to be frank and admit to the weaknesses in his own backyard.

Nothing threatens Bangladesh's remarkable growth and its sustainability more than corruption. There is corruption at the lower echelons of the society and at the higher levels too. However, there is a crucial and all-encompassing difference. Lower echelons' misdeeds cause harm to a limited extent and are, of course, harmful and must be eradicated. But it is the higher level corruption that threatens our future. It subverts the purpose of the law, distorts processes, debilitates institutions, destroys the morals of functionaries and, taken together, jeopardises our very future. Our current economic gain, for which significant credit is owed to our prime minister, stands threatened by corruption from the higher levels.

Those corrupt at the higher levels start by subverting the purpose of the law. While the law's magnificent ethos is to serve justice, those in high positions use it to serve privilege. While the common people revere the judiciary, the rich find loopholes in the law and hire the best of minds as staff to serve their vested purpose.



Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan.

Legal assistance then follows. Thus, the biggest crimes are committed camouflaged under the veneer of legalise.

Income tax is a good area to study, which will reveal some stunning realities. Then comes the culture of defaulting at banks. It has been allowed to grow under the very eyes of all the legal monitoring bodies. Even when they did point out flagrant violations of banking laws, practically nothing was done. In fact, procedures were relaxed to accommodate the rich and the powerful to further default. When very little came out of that, the conditions were relaxed even more. The story went on and the aghast depositors – the real owners of the banks – were made helpless onlookers. Who will speak for them but the independent media and the guardian of all laws, the judiciary?

Money laundering is another area where the rich and the powerful treat. According to Washington, DC-based think tank Global Financial Integrity (GFI), Bangladesh lost, on average, approximately \$8.27 billion every year from 2009 to 2018 due to

trade misinvoicing. To this, if we add the amount for the last five years, the conservative estimate will be an additional \$43.5 billion, making for a giant total loss of \$126 billion since 2009. This, in a struggling country like ours. It is like an individual working his guts out for a decent living and someone else sucking his blood out. Can that person ever retain

Honourable Chief Justice, the determination that you have expressed in fighting corruption – the expression of which has greatly enthused the people of the country and us, the media – will require the full force of the judiciary, especially of the higher judiciary and of your esteemed office. Once people know, internalise, and gain faith that the chief justice, along with the whole judiciary, is determined to eradicate corruption, Bangladesh will definitely win.

You have so correctly categorised corruption as "cancer," and like cancer it is spreading. It is sad but true that very little can be done in our beloved country without indulging in corruption. It is now systemic. And it is against this systemic phenomenon that your fight against the "cancer" has to be directed.

And it is here that we, from the media, would like to extend our full support. As you said, "I learnt from the newspapers that the high court order has been falsified by forging signatures of two judges of a high court bench." This is but a small example of the assistance we can extend to the judiciary. The whole media, if supported, can provide fully authenticated reports that will help your fight – which is our fight and the nation's fight – against corruption. We will be the first to admit that there is corruption within the media too, but that should not deter us. For there are enough truths in media reports that can truly make our fight against corruption effective.

An independent judiciary is crucial and indispensable for democracy. This is the most vital institution that can ensure justice, rule of law, and the rights of all citizens. But the judiciary needs an independent media to truly serve its mission. It is the latter that assists the former by drawing its attention to all the instances of corruption, abuse of power, cronyism, nepotism, violation of fundamental rights, etc. But the media also needs the judiciary. The media's "watchdog" role is primarily focused on the executive, who have all the powers to "punish" the media for playing its role. This is why the independent media needs the judiciary to stand by it – as long as the media reports are authentic – and give it the protection that the Constitution guarantees it.

Honourable Chief Justice, we are fully behind the judiciary in fighting corruption and serving the nation.

## Why we need information commissions

Shamsul Bari and Ruhi Naz  
are chairman and assistant director (RTI), respectively, of Research Initiatives, Bangladesh (RIB). Email them at rib@ctech-bd.com

### SHAMSUL BARI and RUHI NAZ

Last month, two new commissioners were appointed to the Information Commission of Bangladesh, filling positions that had been sitting empty for some time. A fully-functional commission is indispensable for balanced, impartial, and objective decision-making, particularly for adjudicating claims between disgruntled information seekers and recalcitrant public officials. We welcome the new commissioners and wish them well in advancing the Right to Information (RTI) Act, arguably the country's most important citizen-friendly instrument to promote transparent and accountable governance.

We begin in Pakistan, where one Rana Abrar Khalid submitted an information request to the Cabinet Division in November 2020, under the country's Right of Access to Information Act. Abrar wanted to know about gifts received from foreign dignitaries by former prime minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan. Not receiving a response within the stipulated period, he filed an appeal to the Pakistan Information Commission (PIC).

The requested information included the number of gifts Khan had received from foreign heads of states, governments or dignitaries between August 2018 and October 2020; descriptions or specifications of all the gifts; and gifts retained for himself and the amount deposited in the national exchequer in return, including account number(s) to which the money was transferred. Other citizens subsequently made similar RTI requests, seeking details about all gifts received by public representatives and officials since independence.

The Cabinet Division denied all the requests, claiming that gifts exchanged between heads of states and the government add a personal touch to inter-state relations, and their disclosure could create sensationalised media stories, damaging Pakistan's interests and jeopardising inter-state relations.

Giving decisions on appeals, the PIC stated that while giving a "personal touch" to inter-state relations through gifts is a normal practice, the relations

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between any two states are primarily dictated by common interests. The latter has a greater impact on inter-state relations than gifts. Media hype and unwarranted stories come from withholding information and the consequent trust deficit between citizens and public institutions. Ordering disclosure of the information, the PIC further opined that "public interest in terms of promoting transparency and accountability through the disclosure of requested information far outweighs any likely harm, if at all, to inter-state relations. In fact, such a disclosure is likely to strengthen inter-state relations."

The Pakistan government petitioned against the PIC order to the

High Courts of Islamabad and Lahore. While the final verdict remained pending, the Islamabad court declared that PIC's decision was not being barred. The PIC went ahead, imposing a fine on the secretary of the Cabinet Division for not implementing its order. When the secretary applied to have the fine forgiven, the court granted the request on condition that the PIC's order be implemented.

Additionally, the PIC order led to the framing of a new federal policy on gifts received from foreign dignitaries. The earlier practice of allowing government functionaries to retain any gift by paying 50 percent of the assessed price was abolished, and any gift exceeding \$300 now becomes Toshakhana property immediately. Subsequently, an Islamabad court

convicted Imran Khan in August 2023 on a related case based on the disclosure, which was submitted by the Election Commission. The power of the country's right to information law was revealed loud and clear.

We now move to Sri Lanka, where the Right to Information Commission went beyond ordering disclosure and filed a case itself before the Colombo Chief Magistrate's Court (CMC) against two information officers of the Sri Lankan health ministry. These officers had failed to disclose information sought by an RTI applicant despite being ordered by the commission to do so.

Dr Nilan Fernando, representing the People's Movement for Free

Health Service, filed an application in February 2019 at the health ministry, requesting information on ingredients contained in imported milk powder. Not receiving the information, he filed an appeal to the commission in September 2021, upon which the latter directed the ministry to provide the requested information. As this too yielded no result, the commission filed the case.

At the hearing, the commission's counsel argued that the two accused should be convicted for violating specific sections of the country's RTI act. Convinced, the CMC summoned the two information officers to appear in court on March 21, 2023. They were facing a fine up to 50,000 Sri Lankan rupees or imprisonment up to two years or both. They escaped the punishment by providing the information.

The commission continues to encourage citizens to undertake similar, if not more, determined efforts to make government authorities more open and accountable. It ordered the release of a probe report on former state minister of prison management Lohan Ratwatte's controversial visits to Anuradhapura and Welikada prisons at night. Allegedly, he along with a group of friends would enter under the influence of alcohol and try to abuse inmates. The Centre for Society and Religion requested the information from the rehabilitation and prison reforms ministry, but the latter refused release, claiming the probe to be a classified document. Upon enquiry, the commission learnt that the probe commission's report was not a classified document, and hence, ordered its release.

The experiences of Sri Lanka and Pakistan are lessons for everyone concerned with promoting the right to information. They demonstrate the extensive reach of the law and the role information commissions can play to help citizens get there. In Bangladesh, however, we must first encourage people to use the law more in such cases.



Is the idea of a democracy not as appealing to Bangladeshis now as it was only a couple decades ago?

## INTERNATIONAL DAY OF DEMOCRACY

# Do Bangladeshis want democracy?



Kamal Ahmed  
is an independent journalist.  
His X handle is @ahmedkal

### KAMAL AHMED

The recent survey by Open Society Foundations titled "Open Society Barometer: Can Democracy Deliver?" appears to have rekindled some hope as it found that, globally, 86 percent people have faith in democracy. Perhaps it's even more encouraging for us as the percentage of faithfuls for democracy in Bangladesh is five percent higher than the global average. However, to overlook the small print would mean not noticing the danger signals as democratic backsliding globally, and in our homeland, could lead us to a nightmarish situation.

It is already ironic that while we are observing the International Day of Democracy today, the most authoritative evaluation of the state of democracy worldwide, V-Dem Institute's Democracy Report 2023, noted that "Advances in global levels of democracy made over the last 35 years" were "wiped out" in 2022.

V-Dem Institute, under the University of Gothenburg in Sweden, produces the largest global dataset on democracy for 202 countries from 1789 to 2022. V-Dem describes Bangladesh as an elected autocracy and places it in the group of countries that fall in the bottom 10-20 percent in its Liberal Democracy Index along with countries like Iran, Congo, Somalia, Cambodia, Russia, and a few others.

Judging the share of world GDP by regime type, it observes that "Autocracies are becoming more powerful economically, and their numbers are growing... Conversely, democracies are gradually declining in their share of global economic wealth. If these trends continue, autocracies will surpass democracies in economic power over the next decades." The V-dem report also says that the global balance of trade power is tilting in

favour of autocracies. But democracies are becoming less and less reliant on each other for trade. It notes that autocracies are becoming less and less dependent on democracies for both their exports and imports, but that democracies' dependence on autocracies is increasing.

Freedom House, a leading think tank from the United States which claims that it has been "systematically tracking the most pressing threats to democracy and freedom around the globe," also ranks Bangladesh as a country that is "partly free." In Freedom House's scoring, Bangladesh scores only 15 out of 40 for Political Rights and 25 out of 60 in Civil Liberties.

Amid such grim and depressing assessments, the Open Society survey respondents' high level of faith in democracy and strong urge for making the powerful accountable must be acknowledged as a sign of hope. Earlier, V-Dem Institute in its report also noted this rebound in public mood and termed it "defiance in the face of autocratisation."

According to the Open Society report, in addition to expressing faith in democracy well above the global average, Bangladeshis also valued human rights in higher numbers than the world average. The country was unique among the 30 countries polled, in that participants from Bangladesh showed a higher preference for prioritising civil and political rights (36 percent) over economic and social rights (28 percent). Another notable finding is the considerable support for accountability when rights are abused.

While globally 63 percent respondents agreed that "tools such as travel bans and freezing bank accounts are useful ways to bring human rights violators to justice," the support for these in

Bangladesh reaches 79 percent. The small print in this survey, however, is quite worrying as authoritarian rule – either by the army or a leader who "does not bother" with parliament or elections – still appeals to nearly one-third of respondents globally. In Bangladesh, the number is nearly double the global average. One may wonder whether the last decade of absence of an effective parliament, coupled with the concentration of power to the executive and systematic capture of institutions by the state, have contributed to the normalisation of autocratisation.

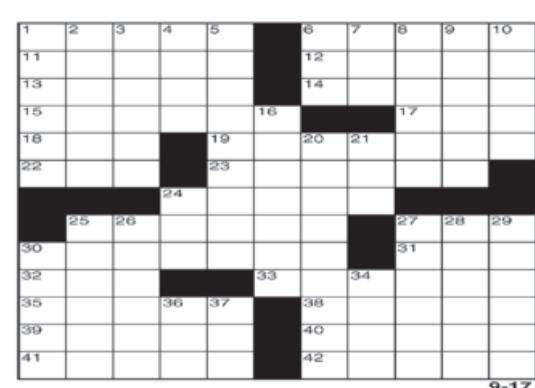
Another finding of the Open Society survey that should ring alarm bells is that, globally, most of those who positively view authoritarian rule are aged between 18 and 35 years, closely followed by the group aged between 36 and 55 years. If we consider Bangladesh's demographic composition, about two-thirds of our population belonging to the relevant age group could well be a reason for such a high level of preference for authoritarianism. The absence of democratic exercises in institutions of higher learning, like universities and colleges, could also be contributing to young people's subjugation to power.

This year's theme for International Day of Democracy is "Empowering the Next Generation." This can only happen if we can ensure their rights to express their views freely and without any fear, and provide the necessary space to do so, too. Universities and colleges should urgently take steps to hold student union elections, encouraging them to participate in national conversations on issues about their future. The government should also remove all barriers to freedom of expression and organisation and ensure a free and fair election.

Most of Bangladesh's young people, like the rest of the nation, did not have a chance to vote in the last two elections. There's a clear warning in the Open Society survey which indicated that 70 percent of Bangladeshis fear that political unrest will lead to violence next year. Only a fair, free, and genuine election can bring an end to the continuing political crisis and rising tensions.

### CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS	times	one	8	Good name
1 Shut out	31 Dr.'s org.	9 Correcting aid	10	Light lunch
6 Merchandise	32 Vacuum's lack	10	Playground	sights
11 Spinetingling	33 Some tires	16	Probe's	destination
12 Puccini	35 Messy sorts	20	21 Completely	22
creation	38 Turn away	24	25 Pole worker	26 Deceits
13 Golfer's feat	39 Caesar's land	28	29 Blunders	30
14 Neighbor of	40 River of	31	32	33
Tibet	Africa	34	35	36
15 Brews, as tea	41 School paper	37	38	39
17 Can. neighbor	42 Door sign	40	41	42
18 Great weight				
19 Under				
22 Neighbor of				
Mich.				
23 Kitchen				
gadget				
24 Stand for a				
painting				
25 Pill type				
27 Energy				
30 Be-home by				



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# Independent media's latest stink bomb: Fake writers



### NO STRINGS ATTACHED

Aasha Mehreen Amin  
is joint editor at The Daily Star.

### AASHA MEHREEN AMIN

Attacks on independent media constitutes one of the biggest threats to democracy all over the world. While we are all familiar with how political thuggery and laws are used and designed to muzzle the freedom of independent media, the latest blow is the onslaught of fake news, often used as propaganda for governments, both local and foreign. Journalism is now being attacked by a new virus: op-eds written by fake writers.

In the "old days" of journalism, when it came to news, journalists considered the most important aspect of it to be verifying information, especially if there were allegations made against a person or entity in a report. This was done by including multiple sources and conducting thorough fact-checking. When it came to features or op-eds that seemed a little too well-written to be true, the easiest thing was to do a Google search of a paragraph or phrase and, sure enough, we would find the usual copy-paste job of the plagiarist. Unfortunately, many eminent writers have been caught using such unethical means which were then exposed with the help of internet searches. Sometimes the real writers contacted newspapers and expressed their outrage at their writing being lifted by others without any kind of acknowledgement. Other times, it was a gut feeling that a sub-editor had of "something not feeling right."

But now, editors have another big headache in trying to catch fake writers. For editors of English-language papers and media outlets in

media. The articles were written with a particular agenda – to praise government policies or showcase arguments in favour of particular countries. Using fake photos and bios, these "writers" have been fooling the media (*The Daily Star* included), and consequently the public, for quite some time.

According to the AFP report, this is part of a "sustained campaign" of disinformation by "unknown actors" ahead of the national election due by the end of January next year, and is intended to help the ruling party government. The fake writers pose as experts, usually academics from leading universities abroad. They even have fake headshots. The more these "experts" get their articles published, the more difficult it is to detect their fraud. The AFP report also suggests that a rush of such articles appeared online around September 2022.

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The fake writers pose as experts, usually academics from leading universities abroad. They even have fake headshots. The more these "experts" get their articles published, the more difficult it is to detect their fraud. The AFP report also suggests that a rush of such articles appeared online around September 2022, after the foreign ministry



VISUAL: BIPLOB CHAKROBORTY

Bangladesh, a country where most people prefer to write in their mother tongue Bangla, finding people who write in English is challenging, and one of the greatest pleasures is to be sent opinion pieces that are well-written with salient arguments and, most of all, impressive credentials.

If the writer claimed to be associated with reputable institutions (or at least reputable-sounding ones), and was found to have written other pieces for various well-known media outlets, and even had a believable author or social media profile, and say they are researchers from the University of Melbourne or some well-known or lesser known university abroad, we thought it was enough to feel confident that they were who they said they were.

Now we know that this is not always the case.

A recent AFP investigation has found hundreds of articles in Bangladeshi and international media written by authors that may not even exist. Now that's a new stink bomb for the

called for "good columnists" to offset the deluge of "negative propaganda."

Thus, the new challenge for the independent media is to detect which stories are being "fed" by certain quarters and which columnists are actually non-existent. This means that even if they have been published in various well-known platforms and say they are researchers from the University of Melbourne or some well-known or lesser known university abroad, we cannot automatically assume that they are real.

Editors, therefore, are in quite a fix. On the one hand, they are looking for fresh voices and a diversity of views to enliven their opinion pages, and on the other, they must be super vigilant of certain vested groups trying to push their agenda through opinion pieces written by ghostwriters or

is quite daunting; though not impossible. The media must now adopt even more stringent and clever ways of gatekeeping with the help of technology. Just as AI-driven tools like ChatGPT can generate news content based on a few keywords and phrases which could be used to dupe an editor, extra layers of checking and verifying through other tools will be able to detect the fake writers. Independent media must collaborate with fact-checking groups to fight this new virus. In fact, the advent of fake writers, as with the emergence of fake news, will awaken the media from its complacency and force it to up its game in terms of not only basing stories and views on meticulously verified facts and figures, but also conducting thorough screenings of columnists and contributors to make sure their credentials and views are authentic. Surely, that's a good thing.

## LAW VISION

# Bail, stay on bail, and the judicial discretion



**It amounts to violation of fundamental right when bail is refused in bailable offences. The order of bail should be kept from being suspended or delayed by either the subordinate or higher judiciary.**

MASDER HOSSAIN

The principal use of bail in modern legal systems is to secure the freedom, pending trial, of one arrested and charged with a criminal offence. However, it may also be used in some cases to secure release pending an appeal of a conviction. Subject to jurisdictional variations, its use in civil cases has diminished along with the decline of imprisonment for debt.

In legal systems that have a bail procedure, its operation, by and large, revolves around discretionary powers of the authority. For instance, in the United States, granting bail involves a certain degree of discretionary power, primarily exercised by judges. Discretionary authority allows judges to consider various factors when determining whether to grant bail to an individual or not. Here's how discretionary power is typically used in the bail process:

Judges evaluate the gravity of the alleged offence. The use of discretion is necessary to safeguard the public from potential damage. If a judge determines that a defendant's release could threaten society, bail may be denied or granted at a high amount. Also, judges consider the defendant's ties to the community—as those with strong ties are typically less likely to abscond.

Personal characteristics, such as the defendant's character, reputation, and behaviour during previous court appearances, can also impact the judges' decisions on bail. Although not explicitly used to deny bond, the judges should consider the defendant's financial resources when deliberating on bail.

In our neighbouring country Sri Lanka, a distinct legislation, defining the ambit and features of Bail regarding both civil and criminal matters, has been enacted, namely the Bail Act, 1997. Section 5 of the Act allows the Court to release a person suspected or accused of committing a non-bailable offence on Bail. Section 13 states that a High Court judge must grant Bail to anyone, even if they are suspected or accused of committing a death or life-sentence offence. Furthermore, Section 16 states that no person shall be jailed for more than twelve months from the date of arrest unless convicted and sentenced. This law ensures practice of utmost judicious discretion and reduces the burden on the accused.

Across jurisdictions, the purposes of bail pending trial in criminal cases are to avoid inflicting punishment upon an innocent person (who may be acquitted at trial) and to encourage the unhampered preparation of his defence. The amount of bail is generally set taking into account the gravity of the offence charged and the likelihood of flight.

However, some consider other factors, such as the strength of the evidence, the character of the accused, and the ability of the accused to secure bail. Failure to consider financial ability generated much controversy in the mid-20th century, for bail requirements may discriminate against poor people and disproportionately impact certain minority groups who are thus deprived of an equal opportunity to secure their freedom pending trial.

When a person is granted bail, they essentially get released from physical custody (such as being held in jail or detention) and placed under the Court's or relevant authorities' legal supervision for the duration of their trial or legal proceedings. When out on bail, an accused individual is still subject to specific terms that the Court sets. These requirements may include attending all court sessions, avoiding specific activities, or guaranteeing that they are present throughout the legal processes.

It must be noted that bail ought to be the rule, and refusal of bail ought to be the exception. It amounts to violation of fundamental right when bail is refused in bailable offences. Hence, the order of bail should be kept from being suspended or delayed by either the subordinate or higher judiciary. In Bangladesh, regrettably, a concerning trend has emerged whereby the Appellate Division has been issuing stays on such orders despite the High Court Division granting bail. This practice raises concerns regarding the potential infringement of the accused individuals' constitutional rights.

Upon examining Indian case laws, it becomes evident that while the legal framework has similarities, India has adopted a more progressive stance on this issue. For instance, in *Rasiklal v Kishore* (2009) 4 SCC 446, the Indian Supreme Court held that 'the right to claim Bail granted by Section 436 (Indian CrPC Corresponding section in CrPC in Bangladesh is S. 496 & 497) of the Code in a bailable offence is an absolute and indefeasible right. In bailable offences, there is no question of discretion in granting Bail, as the words of Section 436 are imperative. The only choice available to the officer or the Court is as between taking a simple recognition of the accused and demanding security with surety.'

It is crucial to remember that the determination of whether or not to stay a bail order can be challenging and depends on the particulars of each case. Having said that, the Court's primary goal is to strike a balance between the rights of the accused and the proper administration of justice. Hence, the granting of bail is a matter of utmost significance, and a stay order (as is now the case with the Appellate Division) on the same demolishes the true objective of bail.

The writer is Senior District and Sessions Judge (Rtd).

## LAW VIEWS

## Navigating legal waters: Independent contractors' status in Bangladesh

NAURIIN AHMED

In today's rapidly evolving business landscape, the role of independent contractors has become increasingly significant. These professionals are self-employed individuals who provide valuable services to organisations without the formalities of traditional employment. While this arrangement offers flexibility and specialisation, it also comes with some legal risks. Therefore, the legal framework governing these contracts deserve our attention.

Bangladesh Contract Act 1872 regulates the engagement between independent contractors and their hirers. The Act sets out



**In the dynamic interplay of modern business relationships, the legal and regulatory framework governing independent contractors is a symphony of rights, responsibilities, and consequences. Navigating these waters with clarity and precision is not only a legal necessity but also a strategic imperative.**

the fundamental principles for establishing valid contracts, ensuring the legal soundness of contracts. Generally, for a valid contract there must be (i) an offer and acceptance, where both parties unequivocally

agree to the terms and conditions, (ii) capacity of contracting parties (thereby excluding minors, those of unsound mind, and those disqualified by law from entering into binding agreements), (iii) consent of the parties to the contract being free from coercion, undue influence, fraud, misrepresentation, or mistake, and (iv) lastly, lawful consideration and object.

The application of these principles to agreements involving independent contractors is quite fascinating. Take, for instance, non-compete clauses that seek to limit an individual's ability to engage in a similar profession. While these clauses may appear restrictive, Indian case law offers insights into their legality. Notably, the Supreme Court of India has held such clauses void, safeguarding an individual's right to earn a living. However, there are exceptions to this rule as seen in the *Niranjan Golikari v The Century*

*Spinning and Mfg. (1967)* case, where contracts limiting the ability to work elsewhere during employment were upheld.

Distinguishing independent contractors from regular employees becomes pivotal, as the latter enjoy distinct legal protections under the labor laws of Bangladesh. The Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006 and the Bangladesh Labour Rules, 2015 apply exclusively to 'workers', defined as individuals engaged in manual, technical, or clerical work, which means employees who discharge their duties in accordance with instructions from their superiors, have virtually no authority to deviate, and who have no authority to hire or fire other employees. This distinction underscores the importance of clarity in categorising engagements.

The ambiguity surrounding independent contractor status is

not ignored by the courts. Case law emphasises that the determination hinges on factual considerations. The *Suraiya Rahman v Skill Development for Underprivileged Women and others (1997)* case elucidates that the nature of control and supervision exercised by the hirer defines the relationship. The degree of power wielded by the hiring organisation over the contractor's work process thus was identified as a decisive factor.

Amidst these intricacies, misclassifying someone's employment status can have significant consequences. Although there isn't a direct penalty for erroneously classifying an independent contractor, the courts possess the power to apply labour laws if misclassification occurs. This shift retroactively awards workers the rights and benefits they would have otherwise been entitled to, compelling employers to provide gratuity, earned leave, and other benefits, proving the far-reaching ramifications of misjudgment.

In the dynamic interplay of modern business relationships, the legal and regulatory framework governing independent contractors is a symphony of rights, responsibilities, and consequences. Navigating these waters with clarity and precision is not only a legal necessity but also a strategic imperative. As our professional landscape continues to evolve, a deep understanding of these principles will empower organisations and contractors alike, fostering relationships that thrive within the bounds of legality and equity.

The author is a Senior Associate at The Legal Circle

## RIGHTS ADVOCACY

## Reshaping mental health legislation in Bangladesh

FATIMA ZAHRA AHASAN RAISA

Bangladesh is party to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). Under this Convention, an array of obligations is imposed on state parties. These obligations include duty to provide suitable training regarding disability issues to those involved in the administration of justice, a concrete programme to help people with disabilities and their careers, and general obligations on states to raise awareness of disability issues. But regrettably, mental health has been one of the most disregarded sectors within the Bangladesh legal system ever since its independence.

According to the National Mental Health Survey of Bangladesh 2018-2019, 16.8% of adults and 13.6% of children in Bangladesh suffer from mental health illnesses, which represents a country-wide prevalence of 21.5 percent. The lack of knowledge and taboo surrounding mental health conditions are further obstacles to receiving mental health care in the country. In light of this, Bangladesh launched its first-ever National Mental Health Policy (NMHP) in 2022. In order to secure the rights of those with mental illnesses, the controversial Lunacy Act of 1912 has been replaced by the Mental Health Act 2018 (MHA). However, the Act has several shortcomings.

Section 6 of the MHA elucidates that matters related to health, property, dignity, education, and other rights of people affected by mental illness need to be ensured. However, given the present state of mental healthcare and the scarcity of mental health professionals, these rights cannot be adequately realised.

Despite experiencing similar socioeconomic realities with Bangladesh, India appears to have a much more progressive mental health legislation than us. Unlike the mental health legislation of India, the MHA does not include a provision for an 'advance directive,' which would allow people to designate how they 'wish to be' and 'wish not to be treated'. Electroconvulsive therapy for minors is outright forbidden under section 95(l) (b) of the Indian Mental Health Act 2017. Even for adults, the therapy has been administered while using safety precautions. The Act of Bangladesh should likewise contain such a clause.

Counselling is a *sine qua non* to guarantee universal mental health support. However, as per the MHA, mental illness is a medical condition that can only be managed by medical interventions. The specifics of patient confidentiality concerns and associated responsibility of medical professionals for breaching patient privacy are also not clearly covered in the Act. As was found by the WHO-AIMS study on the mental health system in Bangladesh, there is no human rights review committee to look into the frequent abuses of people's human rights caused by mental illness.

To uphold the principles of equality and non-discrimination, the Act should include a clear provision that people with mental illnesses have a right to receive the same level of care as patients who are physically ill at the time of treatment, including emergency services, ambulance services, etc. Moreover, the patient or his/her guardian should have the right to be informed of all aspects of the treatment for which he/she undergoes, including details on any side effects. By allowing the adoption of NMHP in all districts, the Act can better implement the right to mental health treatment. Only if all these concerns are satisfactorily addressed, can the rights of people with mental health illnesses be truly upheld in Bangladesh.

The author is a student of the Department of Law, University of Chittagong.



# Shakib emphasises on teamwork to end on a high

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's Asia Cup hopes have already been dashed but with a host of starters unavailable, the Tigers will be keen on trying some new combinations to finish their campaign on a high against India in Colombo today.

Skipper Shakib Al Hasan, however, seemed quite uninterested in entertaining the eager questions from the media when he attended Thursday's pre-match presser. In fact, he did not seem very eager to answer anything in particular.

Usually, Shakib is someone who addresses issues in a rather diplomatic way, barring the times he feels the need to be direct. In a very nonchalant manner, Shakib said that it is not only up to him to shoulder all the responsibility when asked what his message to the side was ahead of today's contest as the most experienced campaigner.

"The thing is that not all the responsibility is mine alone. I am sure everyone will work from their position and if individually they do that then our chances of doing well as a team increase. If we can combine those individual performances, maybe we will be able to do well," Shakib said during the media interaction in Colombo yesterday.

As Shakib mentioned, his only motive



is now to win against India. He also brushed aside suggestions that he will not feature in the coming series against New Zealand.

Shakib was also in no mood to divulge what areas of the team he was satisfied with or not satisfied with.

"Actually, what areas I am satisfied with and what areas I am not satisfied with are not things to be discussed in the media. These are topics for the team management to discuss and find solutions to," he said.

Some of the batters have not been in form and for that, all that Shakib had to say was: "They haven't contributed that much and they know that. They are trying

to do that."

The skipper also mentioned that he was not quite sure whether Asia Cup performances would affect the side going forward.

However, it is not true that all the batters struggled in the continental championship. Najmul Hossain Shanto is still the third highest run-scorer in the tournament even after being ruled out of the Asia Cup just after two games due to injury. Mehedi Hasan Miraz and Tawhid Hridoy have found runs as well.

But not everyone has found their feet in important moments.

Shakib himself has struck just one fifty in the tournament. He got dismissed

playing similar shots against Sri Lanka in both matches. Against Afghanistan, his cameo was useful in putting up a big score -- the only instance when collective performance was seen from the Tigers in the Asia Cup.

Against Pakistan, he had looked good but perhaps picked the wrong moment to up the ante and lost his wicket. Had he made a bigger score, Bangladesh could have been in a better position in that game.

Without the in-form Shanto, the onus was very much on veterans Shakib and Mushfiqur Rahim but they failed to make the kind of contributions that would have given the team more vitality in crucial match scenarios.

Also, Shamim Hossain and Afif Hossain continuing to disappoint at the lower middle order did not help the Tigers during crunch moments.

Amid all his snarky replies yesterday, Shakib, however, did leave a message for the team.

"I think [Abdur Razzak] Raz bhai said one good thing that day which is that those who are playing in the national team are doing so because they are capable. Here experience or inexperience or new and old doesn't come into the equation. If we can play well as a team it would be good for us," Shakib said.

## U-17s 'will not disappoint us'

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh are all set to begin a new era under coach Mahbubur Rahman Litu in the second round of AFC U-17 Women's Championships, scheduled for September 20 to 24 in Hanoi, Vietnam.

The team will fly out on Monday afternoon for Vietnam.

The national age group women's teams have not competed in a tournament since the departures of long-serving head coach Golam Rabbani Choton and technical director Paul Smalley's three months ago.

"I feel no pressure [with the absence of Choton and Smalley] because it has been my profession which is always challenging, and I have been enjoying my roles," said Litu at a press conference at BFF House yesterday.

Bangladesh, who came to the second round after getting past Singapore and Turkmenistan, have been placed along with strong Australia, Vietnam and Philippines. Two teams will advance to the eight-team final round where Japan, North Korea, China and hosts Indonesia play directly.

Bangladesh had twice qualified for the finals of AFC U-16 Women's Championships, which has now been changed to a U-17 event.

Captain Ruma Akter exuded supreme confidence. "We have been working hard since the completion of the first round and trying to play the way we want to play against Australia and Vietnam because our target is to qualify for the third round by winning all matches," she said.

Head coach Litu, on the other hand, kept his optimism in check.

"You know Australia, Vietnam and Philippines are ranked 2nd, 5th and 7th, respectively, while Bangladesh are ranked 29th. This group of girls do not possess the experience of players such as Maria [Manda], Monica [Chakma], Sanjida [Akhter] and others who had played the finals of the championships twice."

"However, this team have not been bad. I think they will not disappoint us."

Bangladesh had previously beaten Vietnam and Philippines in AFC U-16 Qualifiers. Against Australia, they held vastly superior opponents to a 2-2 draw in the final round in 2019 after having lost 2-1 in the final round in 2017.

### FIXTURES

September 20 :  
Bangladesh vs Vietnam  
September 22 :  
Philippines vs Bangladesh  
September 24 :  
Australia vs Bangladesh

## India's sweet dilemma with bowling depth

AFP, Colombo

India face a "problem of plenty" in their bowling stocks ahead of Sunday's Asia Cup final and the ODI World Cup starting next month, coach Paras Mhambre said.

India booked their place in the final after wins over Pakistan and Sri Lanka, with their bowlers excelling in both matches. Rohit Sharma's side bowled out Pakistan for 128.

"A problem of plenty is always good, we have four quality bowlers out there, we have great options," bowling coach Mhambre said Thursday of a pace attack led by Jasprit Bumrah and also boasting Mohammed Shami, Mohammed Siraj and Shardul Thakur. There is also all-rounder Hardik Pandya.

Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel and Kuldeep Yadav hold the spin force.

"The option of choosing the right combination will depend on what surface we are playing and what opponents we are playing," he added.

Indian players including up-and-coming batsman Tilak Varma and T20 star Suryakumar Yadav trained in the nets on the eve of the team's last Super Four match, against Bangladesh in Colombo on Friday.

Mhambre gave little away about the line-up.

"We haven't decided on what we will do, but obviously there is an opportunity to give a game to other players since we have qualified for the final," said the former medium-pace bowler.

Bangladesh have won just one match at the Asia Cup, but Mhambre said: "They have



played very competitive cricket in the last few years. They have got some quality fast bowlers coming through."

"From our perspective everyone that we play is important, every team is going to challenge us. Bangladesh is a good team and we will have to play our best cricket."

## 'Clarity of role' in batting does the trick for Stokes

AGENCIES

England batter Ben Stokes revealed that the fact he was in the team as a specialist batter provided him with more clarity in regards to his role and allowed him to bat with more freedom while at the crease.

Stokes hit 15 fours and nine sixes while playing as a specialist batter as his 182 helped England thump New Zealand by 181 runs at The Oval on Wednesday. He eclipsed Jason Roy's 180 against Australia in 2018 to claim the record for the highest individual score by a men's player for England in ODI cricket.

Consistent No.3 Dawid Malan briefly attempted to steal the limelight with an excellent knock of 96 in a partnership of 199 with Stokes, but it was the record-breaking innings from the England Test captain -- in a rematch of the 2019 World Cup Final -- that stood out on a dominant day for the hosts.

"This is the first time that I've been clear in my mind that that's the one thing I can focus on," Stokes said.

"I think over the last 18 months, every day has been, 'will I bowl, will I not bowl?'



Now, I know that I can just focus on that... that's my thing for the team now. Having that clarity in my head contributes to that.

Stokes has not been bowling since July this year to manage his chronic left knee injury.

The left-hander said that his approach, irrespective of the position he bats, stays the same.

"I'd prefer not to go in that early because I want to see the other lads at the top do well. I don't think I've necessarily changed my approach in one-day cricket from all the years I spent at No. 5 or 6... I still think that batting at No. 4, I'll go out with the exact same approach I had at No. 5," Stokes said.

Stokes retired from ODI cricket last year and even told reporters at the conclusion of this year's Ashes series that he had no plans of performing a backflip on that decision and returning to action for the World Cup that commences in India next month.

However, he returned to the England set-up last month ahead of their World Cup title defence in India as he was named in England's preliminary squad.



Najmul Hossain Shanto returns to the nets yesterday for the first time since he was ruled out from the ongoing Asia Cup due to injury. Having gone through rehabilitation in the past few days for the hamstring injury, he worked with coach Sohel Islam, batting against throwdowns and spinners.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## CA makes neck guards mandatory against pacers

SYDNEY, Australia

Australian batters will have to wear neck protectors on their helmets when facing fast or medium-pace bowlers for the 2023/24 season, Cricket Australia announced Thursday.

The governing body has recommended neck guards be used since Australian batsman Phillip Hughes was killed after a bouncer hit him in the neck during a game in Sydney in 2014.

Stars such as Usman Khawaja, Steve Smith and David Warner had resisted wearing them but neck protectors will be mandatory in men's and women's matches when the new season starts in early October, Cricket Australia said.

"Protecting the head and neck is extremely important in our sport," Cricket Australia's head of operations Peter Roach said in a statement.

He said the decision was based on "a lot of advice and consultation with a wide range of experts and stakeholders".

The decision comes a week after Australian all-rounder Cameron Green had to leave the field with concussion after a bouncer hit the side of his helmet during his team's win over South Africa in a one-day international match.

## Women referees to break another barrier

AFP, Kuala Lumpur



Women including Japanese trailblazer Yoshimi Yamashita will referee at the men's Asian Cup for the first time next year in Qatar, officials said Thursday. Yamashita, who was also selected for the 2022 men's World Cup in Qatar, has been chosen alongside four other women for the regional championship in January-February.

"For the first time ever, women match officials are poised to make their debut at Asia's most prestigious men's national team competition," the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) said in a statement.

The Video Assistant Referee (VAR) system will also make its "full debut" at the tournament, the AFC said.

The Asian Cup will have 24 teams for the first time and hosts Qatar are the reigning champions.

## Pay deal ends Spanish players' strike

AFP, Barcelona

Footballers from Spain's women's top flight, Liga F, have called off a strike which postponed the first week of fixtures after an agreement over wages was reached, unions and the league said on Thursday.

"Liga F and the unions have reached an agreement regarding the minimum wage that allows the strike to be called off," said Liga F in a statement.

Five unions, including AFE and Futpro, called a strike covering the first two rounds of fixtures last week. "The deal is in regard to the minimum wage, the main cause of the strike -- accepted by the players as an act of responsibility to the fans of the sport," said the unions in a statement.



## S ALAM'S WEALTH ABROAD

# SC refuses to issue injunction on media

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday refused to issue any injunction on news media and social media to restrain them from publishing reports about the now-stalled investigation into S Alam's wealth abroad.

Justice M Enayetur Rahim, chamber judge of the Appellate Division of the SC, however, kept in record the gag petition filed on Tuesday by S Alam Group Chairman Mohammed Saiful Alam and his wife Farzana Parveen.

The petition sought a blanket injunction against "any and all discourses" about the High Court-ordered investigation into Alam's offshore businesses, as found in an investigation by The Daily Star.

"If the press finds any information on corruption, it is only natural that they would report on it. Is it possible to restrict them from that?" asked the judge, adding that investigative reports have always happened like this.

Everyone should follow ethical guidelines, he said, adding that he did not see the materials required for an injunction in the petition.

The chamber judge said none of the media against whom the petitioners are seeking injunction is a party to

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**"If the press finds any information on corruption, it is only natural that they would report on it. Is it possible to restrict them from that?"**

Justice M Enayetur Rahim

## PRICE HIKE OF ESSENTIALS

# Tipu Munshi takes flak from opposition MPs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Opposition MPs came down hard on Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi yesterday for what they said was his failure to control the prices of essentials and take action against the market syndicates.

Jatiya Party and Gonoform MPs lambasted the minister while participating in a discussion on the "Trade Organisation (Amendment) Bill 2023".

Gonoform MP Mukabbir Khan said that even the price of potatoes has increased despite a sufficient stock in the country. "There is only one reason behind this – the syndicates," he added.

"The commerce minister himself is a businessman, he understands business well. He denied the [existence of] syndicate many times in parliament.

"When people started alleging that the commerce minister is the owner of the syndicates, he started telling the truth about their existence and said they [the syndicates] cannot be touched."

Jatiya Party MP Shameem Haider Patwari said people are suffering due to the price hike as all the cheap sources of

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# Macron's visit may help diversify the ties

PORIMOL PALMA

French President Emmanuel Macron's recent Dhaka visit can serve as a solid basis for Bangladesh to enhance bilateral trade and diversify strategic and defence relations between the two countries, say foreign policy analysts.

They reckon that strategic relations with France, a major European country having veto power in the UN Security Council, can be very helpful for Bangladesh given that it requires support from global powers to face some key challenges like the Rohingya crisis and climate change.

The France-Bangladesh relationship is also significant in terms of economy. The annual bilateral trade between the two countries now stands at about €5 billion, of which Bangladesh's export is almost €4 billion.

The analysts, however, are not sure why the French president opted not to mention anything about the state of democracy, human rights and governance in Bangladesh.

"France generally plays a vocal and active role when it comes to democracy and human

rights. However, the joint statement after Macron's visit did not give any detail on those issues except for saying the two countries share friendship based on shared democratic values and promotion of human rights," said security and political analyst Maj Gen (retd) ANM Muniruzzaman, also the president of Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies.

He said there were no details on how France assesses the status of democracy and human rights in Bangladesh.

Macron's September 10-11 visit took place more than three months after the US on May 24 announced a visa policy for Bangladeshis. The US said it will impose visa restrictions on individuals and their immediate family members if they are responsible for, or complicit in, undermining the democratic election process in Bangladesh.

The policy was announced against the backdrop of alleged irregularities in the national elections in 2013 and 2018.

In December 2021, Washington imposed sanctions against Rab and seven of its

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Departmental case to be filed against ADC Harun. Says home boss

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal yesterday said a departmental case will be filed against Harunor Rashid, the suspended additional deputy commissioner of the DMP, for torturing two BCL leaders inside Shahbagh Police Station.

"The victims have not yet filed a case but if they do so, the authorities concerned will investigate their complaints. However, as an incident has taken place, a departmental case will be filed [against the suspended ADC]," he told reporters at the Secretariat yesterday.

After suspension, Harun was attached to the Rangpur Range Police.

Meanwhile, a three-member committee of Dhaka Metropolitan Police is currently looking into

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# No scope for scrapping DSA cases Says law minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Anisul Huq told parliament yesterday that there is no scope for quashing the cases filed under the Digital Security Act.

He said this while replying to a query from Gonoform lawmaker Mukabbir Khan during the question-answer session with Deputy Speaker Shamsul Haque Tuku in the chair.

The Cyber Security Bill was passed in parliament on Wednesday, which is supposed to replace the controversial DSA.

The proposed law will come into effect after a gazette notification and the president signing it into law.

According to the Cyber Security Bill, trials of the cases already lodged under the DSA will continue.

In his question, Mukabbir wanted to know whether those who have been subjected to various forms of harassment and those who landed in jail due to the misuse of the DSA would be compensated.

He also wanted to know from the minister how these issues would be resolved.

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A train reaches Akhaura's Shibnagar border area from Gangasagar Railway Station in Brahmanbaria during a trial run yesterday. The new Akhaura-Agartala dual-gauge rail line is ready to be inaugurated jointly by Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi. Traders hope that trains between the two countries will help boost business.

PHOTO: MASHUK HRIDOV

# ChatGPT diagnoses ER patients 'like a human doctor': study



AFP, The Hague

Artificial intelligence chatbot ChatGPT diagnosed patients rushed to emergency at least as well as doctors and in some cases outperformed them, Dutch researchers have found, saying AI could "revolutionise the medical field".

But the report published Wednesday also stressed ER doctors needn't hang up their scrubs just yet, with the chatbot potentially able to speed up diagnosis but not replace human medical judgement and experience.

Scientists examined 30 cases treated in an emergency service in the Netherlands in 2022, feeding in anonymised patient history, lab tests and the doctors' own observations to ChatGPT, asking it to provide five possible diagnoses.

They then compared the chatbot's shorthand to the same five diagnoses suggested by ER doctors with access to the same information, then cross-checked with the correct diagnosis in each case.

## Hunter Biden indicted on gun charges

REUTERS, Washington



US President Joe Biden's son Hunter Biden was criminally charged yesterday, after efforts to reach a plea deal failed, leading to the first ever prosecution of a sitting president's child.

The indictment was filed yesterday at the US District Court in Delaware with three criminal counts related to gun possession.

The indictment brought by recently elevated US Special Counsel David Weiss comes after a deal for Hunter Biden, 53, to plead guilty to two misdemeanor tax charges and enroll in a program to avoid prosecution on a gun-related charge collapsed in a stunning turn in a July hearing.

The charges ensure that courtroom drama will play an outsized role in the 2024 US presidential campaign as Biden, 80, seeks reelection in a likely rematch with his Republican predecessor Donald Trump, 77, who faces four upcoming

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**THE MISUNDERSTOOD MONITOR ...** A golden monitor seemingly smiling right at the camera when spotted in Khulna's Dumuria upazila recently. Native to countries like India, Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh, this lizard generally prefers wet areas, on the edge of forests or near human settlements and agricultural land. Almost all species of monitor lizards are scavengers and important for biomass decomposition and recycling. Golden monitors even have a playful side as they've been observed alternating between swimming and floating. Despite playing a significant role in the balance of the ecosystem and being quite harmless, the golden or yellow monitor lizard is now endangered because of human activities – direct killing as they are considered "terrifying pests" due to a lack of awareness, deforestation, destruction of habitats, and animal skin trade.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

# LIBYA FLOOD Survivors search for loved ones

Death toll may reach 20,000, Derna mayor says

REUTERS, Derna

Survivors of a flood that swept away the centre of the Libyan city of Derna picked through the ruins yesterday in search of loved ones from among thousands of dead and missing, while authorities feared an outbreak of disease from rotting bodies.

A torrent unleashed by a powerful storm burst dams on Sunday night and hurtled down a seasonal riverbed that bisects the city, washing multi-storey buildings into the sea with sleeping families inside.

Confirmed death tolls given by officials so far have varied, but all are in the thousands, with thousands more on lists of the missing. Derna Mayor Abdulmenam al-Ghaithi said deaths in the city could reach 18,000-20,000, based on the extent of the damage.

"We actually need teams specialised in recovering bodies," he told Reuters in Derna. "I fear that the city will be infected with an epidemic due to the large number of bodies under the rubble and in the water."

The head of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) said yesterday that casualties could have been avoided in the floods if the divided country had a functional weather service able to issue warnings.

Mohamed al-Menfi, head of the three-member council that acts as the presidency in Libya's international recognised government, said on X that the council had asked the attorney general to investigate the disaster.

Usama Al Husadi, a 52-year-old driver, had been searching for his wife and five children since the disaster.