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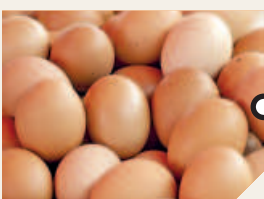
Govt fixes egg, onion, potato prices

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 Baponon 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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Huge plumes of smoke rise as a fire rages at Mohammadpur Krishi Market in the capital. Over 200 shops were damaged yesterday by the fire that started before dawn broke.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

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

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

Odhikar Secretary Adilur Rahman Khan and Director A S M Nasiruddin 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.



Adilur

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 enthralling

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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 Jumma, 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 Ukhiya 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 Ukhiya 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

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wicket stand with Sadeera Samarawickrama, who made 48, but Asalanka 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 Dunith 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.



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 Akhtaruzzaman 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 arms case.

Shahed is accused in total 24 criminal cases and he has secured bail in 23 of those, he added.

Meanwhile, ACC lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan said they will move an appeal before the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court challenging the HC bail order.

Rab member dies of burn injuries

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

A Rab member died of burn injuries yesterday afternoon, hours after he was critically injured in a fire in Narayanganj's Nitaiganj.

The victim, Abhijit Singh, 28, a member of Rab-11, passed away around 4:45pm at Sheikh Hasina National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery.

Partha Sangkar Paul, a resident surgeon at the hospital, said a woman injured in the incident was also admitted to the hospital's ICU.

Earlier in the day, police said the duo suffered burns after a fire broke out in a flat in Nitaiganj's Bhabaniganj area.

Maritime ports asked to hoist local cautionary signal 3

BSS, Dhaka

Maritime ports of Chattogram, Cox's Bazar, Mongla, and Payra have been advised to keep hoisted local cautionary signal three as the low over Northwest Bay and adjoining West-central Bay has intensified into a well-marked low over Northwest Bay off North Odisha-West Bengal coasts.

Under its influence, a steep pressure gradient lies over North Bay and adjoining coastal areas of Bangladesh, according to the Met office.

Squally weather may affect the maritime ports, North Bay, and adjoining coastal areas of Bangladesh.

All fishing boats and trawlers over North Bay have been advised to be close to the coast and proceed with caution till further notice.

Govt fixes egg, onion, potato prices

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“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 storages at Tk 27 a

kg at the wholesale level to increase the supply in 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, Shevrapara 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 Shevrapara 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

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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.

After probing the case, the DB on September 4, 2013, pressed charges against Adilur and Elan.

Odhikar in a statement yesterday denounced the arrest, trial and imprisonment of the two. It said it believes that justice has not been served.

“As an organisation, Odhikar has drawn the sustained wrath of the establishment for becoming the voice of the victims of human rights violations, including those of enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, torture, arbitrary detention and against the suppression of free expression and assembly; and for its engagement with the United Nations Human Rights Mechanisms,” it said.

The US embassy in Dhaka expressed concern that yesterday's judgment against Adilur and Elan might further undermine the willingness of human rights defenders and civil society to play their vital democratic role.

Seventy-two national and international human rights organisations in a joint statement yesterday said the Bangladesh authorities should immediately release Adilur and Elan, quash their convictions, and end all reprisals against them and other human rights defenders.

Amnesty International, Capital Punishment Justice Project, Australia, Human Rights Watch, FIDH (International Federation for Human Rights), Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA), and Robert F Kennedy Human Rights are among the signatories to the statement.

Human rights defenders should be allowed to conduct their necessary and important work without fear of harassment, intimidation, and reprisals. Instead of prosecuting and punishing those who document and expose human rights violations, the government should investigate and hold the perpetrators of these violations accountable, the statement said.

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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Everything has been burnt down to ashes. I have nothing left but my tears.

SONDHA RANI
a betel leaf shop owner

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

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.

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

a busy time for us as customers come here for their daily shopping. But fate did not give us that opportunity today."

"I rushed here after hearing announcement from the local mosque, but could not enter the market as the fire was too intense. Within minutes, my shop and goods were completely destroyed," said a weeping Munir Hossain, owner of a shoe shop.

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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

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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.

PRAYER
TIMING
SEPTEMBER 15



Fazr Juma Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4:35 12:30 4:30 6:09 7:45
JAMAAT 5:10 1:15 4:45 6:12 8:15
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

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

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

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Educational Requirements:

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Experience Requirements:

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

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- 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
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- 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-2693). 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 on or 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

Commercial Floor Rent
1st floor 1500 sqft, 2nd-6th 7500 sqft each. Bank, Insurance, Showroom, Convention Hall, Corporate Office, Hospital etc.
Contact : 01711-524-962
SN Centre, Plot-1/15-18 Mirpur DOHS Road, Mirpur-12, Dhaka.

Want a Hindu Bride!
American citizen of Bangladeshi origin, master's degree, smart, age 30 years, working in higher position in the US Federal Government, seeking educated, tall, fair, beautiful slim Hindu bride.
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6 killed, 11 hurt

FROM PAGE 5

“One of the injured is in a critical condition. We have seized the bus but no one could be detained in this connection,” added the OC. Meanwhile, six people were injured after a CNG-run 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 Abul Bashar, 58, of Belkhouria village in Dinaipur's Birampur upazila succumbed to his injuries. The other injured are currently under treatment at the health complex.

(Our Gazipur, Jhenaidah and Dinaipur correspondents contributed to this report.)

Next polls

FROM PAGE 3

She stressed the need for social safety net programmes for them to maintain the growth of the country.

“Otherwise, pressure on people will increase; instability will be created.”

“Dollar crisis has been going on in the country for a long time. The banking section comes into discussions several times for irregularities. Steps should be taken to mitigate the crisis,” she said.

Land Sale
Five storied building including land to be sold at Shiddeswari in Dhaka. Contact legal buyer
01799251926, 01715377136

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.

In-depth reforms

FROM PAGE 3

compensation or gratuity equivalent to one month's basic wages for every full year of service.

They also proposed a reversal of the 2022 amendment to the Bangladesh Labor Rules that reduced certain worker benefits, addressing the discrimination faced by tea plantation workers regarding leave entitlement, and implementing High Court directives to prevent sexual harassment and violence in the workplace.

The speakers also proposed that in accordance with the ILO Convention 87 and 98, trade unions and collective bargaining rights should be exercised without any hindrance, which will help strengthen workers' ability to negotiate for better working conditions and fair wages.

While speaking at the event, Fred Azcarate, Asia regional program director of the Solidarity Center, said, “If we reflect on the

core essence of any labour law, it is never about the groups with power and positions. Rather, for the working class to have the freedom to form unions in a process free of interference from employers facilitated effectively and efficiently by government.”

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 C87 and 98.”

Md Borkot Ali, deputy director (legal) of the Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST), and Salauddin Shapon, 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.

Gone with the BLAZE

FROM PAGE 3

Abu Saeed, who owned a cloth shop, said his entire stock of products was destroyed.

He also said that there was no equipment to extinguish the fire inside or around the shops. The congested alleys in the market helped the fire to spread rapidly.

Spice shop owner Kader Hossain said that due to the market's small gate and road, the fire service vehicle could not reach the market.

Delwar Hossain, a gold shop owner, said, “When I rushed to my shop, it was on fire. Even though I was able to open the shutters, I couldn't remove anything due to the smoke. With Durga Puja ahead, many customers had ordered jewellery. Now, everything is gone.”

His shop, New Hena Jewelers, burnt down with

jewellery worth around TK 3 crore, he claimed.

Shafiqul Islam, owner of Sharif General Store, stood in front of the burnt down remains of his vegetable shop, saying, “The fire has ravaged my livelihood. I started my business after taking a loan of Tk 1 lakh from different people. My father is paralysed. Every month we need to spend Tk 4,000 for his treatment. How will I bear this cost now?”

Since the beginning of this year, numerous incidents of fire have gutted markets around Dhaka, leading to loss of lives and livelihood. Despite several recommendations made by experts and probe committees, the latest incident comes as a reminder that much needs to be done to prevent such occurrences.

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 organisations—Human Rights Watch Commission of Manikganj and Rupnagar Shikkha Shasthya 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 organisations 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.

In a statement, Transparency International Bangladesh said the bill was passed “hurriedly” in the parliament, without paying heed to the recommendations of different stakeholders.

The anti-graft watchdog said the bill incorporates elements from the DSA but overlooked crucial elements to safeguard cyberspace, the internet and relevant digital platforms.

The bill was placed in the parliament on September 5 and passed within eight

days as the ruling party has an absolute majority, said TIB Executive Director llttekaruzzaman.

“With this, people's expectations have been trampled,” he said.

Although there was promise, suggestions from stakeholders such as TIB were not incorporated in the bill, he added.

Also, the Workers Party of Bangladesh expressed its frustration over the passing of the bill, saying it is nothing but the “slightly tweaked” version of DSA.

“Like the Digital Security Act, the scope of misusing this act has been left open. Over 7,000 cases have so far been filed because of the misuse of DSA. All those cases are not spared in the new law, they are alive,” the party said in a statement.

Development should

FROM PAGE 5

Professor Ahmad Kamruzzaman Majumder, founding chairman of CAPS, presented keynote in the dialogue and said the air pollution increased drastically over the years, with gaseous pollutants like sulphur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide now in relatively higher extent in the air than before.

He urged the Department of Environment to bring back the previous national standard for measuring air pollution, saying that the present rule has been relaxed.

As per the global standard set by the World Health Organization (WHO) for PM 2.5, it is just 5 microgrammes per cubic metre, much lower than the 35 microgrammes as per country's Air Pollution Control Rules at present, he noted.


“According to air

quality, Sylhet is the cleanest city in the country. But in terms of global standard, the city's air is nine times more polluted. This development is a deformed one as it only focuses on building structures. If we take the health hazards into account, we can no longer call it a development,” said lawmaker Shameem Haidar Patwari.

Ahsan Adelur Rahman, a lawmaker and also a member of Climate Parliament, urged the youth to raise their voices against air pollution.

Professor Ali Naki presided over the event where Mohammad Hossain, director general of Power Cell, Ziaul Haque, director of DoE, Manjurul Hannan Khan, executive director of Nature Conservation Management, Mohammad Azaz, chairman River and Delta Research Centre, spoke among others.


বাংলা একাডেমি বাঙালি জাতিসত্তা ও বুদ্ধিবৃত্তিক উৎকর্ষের প্রতীক



মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী, বাংলা একাডেমির ফেলো ও লেখক
শেখ হাসিনার
তম জন্মদিন উপলক্ষে
শিশু-কিশোরদের কাছ থেকে ছড়া ও কবিতা আহ্বান

মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী, বাংলা একাডেমির ফেলো ও লেখক শেখ হাসিনার ৭৭তম জন্মদিন উদ্‌যাপন উপলক্ষে বাংলা একাডেমি শিশু-কিশোরদের লেখা নির্বাচিত 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 ২০২৩ তারিখে মধ্যে ddcultureba@gmail.com এই ই-মেইলে লেখা পাঠাতে হবে। লেখার সঙ্গে লেখকের নাম, পিতার নাম, মাতার নাম, শ্রেণি, জন্মতারিখ ও শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠানের পরিচয়পত্র এবং জন্মনিবন্ধন সনদের ফটোকপি ও ১ কপি ছবি যুক্ত করতে হবে। লেখকের বয়স ১৮ই সেপ্টেম্বর ২০২৩ তারিখে অনূর্ধ্ব ১৭ বছর হতে হবে। লেখা নির্বাচনের ক্ষেত্রে সংকলন সম্পাদনা পর্বদের সিদ্ধান্ত চূড়ান্ত বলে গণ্য হবে। প্রকাশিত লেখার জন্য লেখককে সম্মানী প্রদান করা হবে।


প্রয়োজনে: ০২-৫৮৬১১২৫৬



বাংলা একাডেমি

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

GD-1419




নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

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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.

রেজিস্ট্রারের অনুকূলে প্রদেয় ৭৫০/- (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ) টাকা মূল্যের পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট এবং সকল পত্রীকা পাশের সার্টিফিকেট ও প্রশংসাপত্রের সত্যায়িত প্রতিলিপিসহ ৮ (আট) প্রাপ্ত দরখাস্ত আগামী ০৫-১০-২০২৩ তারিখের মধ্যে রেজিস্ট্রারের (২০৩ নং কক্ষে) নিকট পৌঁছাতে হবে। শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা, অভিজ্ঞতা ও অন্যান্য যোগ্যতার সনদপত্রসমূহ (যদি থাকে) আবেদনের সঙ্গে সংযুক্ত করতে হবে। চাকুরীভার প্রার্থীকে যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের মাধ্যমে আবেদন করতে হবে।

জিডি-১৪১৫



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তারিখ ৩০ ভাদ্র ১৪৩০ বঙ্গাব্দ
১৪/০৯/২০২৩ খ্রিষ্টাব্দ

Request for EoI for the Executive Director

নিয়োগ যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা

যোগ্যতা

(ক) কোনো স্বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হইতে কৃষিবিজ্ঞানের যে কোনো শাখায় পিএইচডি (PhD) ডিগ্রি থাকিতে হইবে।

(খ) জাতীয় ও আন্তর্জাতিক জার্নালে কমপক্ষে ১৫ (পনের) টি প্রকাশনা (Publication) থাকিতে হইবে। তন্মধ্যে কমপক্ষে ৭ (সাত) টি পাবলিকেশনে প্রথম অথর (Author) হিসাবে থাকিতে হইবে।

অভিজ্ঞতা

(ক) NARS ভুক্ত গবেষণা প্রতিষ্ঠানের সংস্থা প্রধান (১-২ গ্রেড) হিসাবে দায়িত্ব পালনসহ গবেষণায় ১০ (দশ) বৎসরের অভিজ্ঞতা থাকিতে হইবে।

(খ) কৃষিবিজ্ঞানের বহুমুখী বিষয়ে গবেষণা এবং ব্যবস্থাপনায় কমপক্ষে ২৫ (পঁচিশ) বৎসরের অভিজ্ঞতা থাকিতে হইবে।

(গ) চমৎকার গবেষণা ব্যবস্থাপনা ও নেতৃত্বের নৈপুণ্যসহ গবেষণা অগ্রাধিকার নির্ধারণ (Research priority setting) প্রশাসন, ক্রয়, মানব সম্পদ ব্যবস্থাপনা (HR management), অর্থ, প্রশিক্ষণ, রিসোর্স মোবাইলিজেশন ইত্যাদি সম্পর্কে অভিজ্ঞতা থাকিতে হইবে।

(ঘ) পলিসি ডকুমেন্ট/পলিসি ব্রিফ, লিগ্যাল ইন্সট্রুমেন্ট, গবেষণা প্রস্তাব ও সম্প্রসারণ মেটিরিয়ালস তৈরির অভিজ্ঞতা থাকিতে হইবে।

(ঙ) কৃষি গবেষণায় জড়িত সরকারি/বেসরকারি প্রতিষ্ঠান ও বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে গবেষণার সম্যক ধারণা থাকিতে হইবে।

(১) প্রার্থীকে অবশ্যই আগামী ১০/১০/২০২৩ খ্রিঃ তারিখে বিকাল ৫.০০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে চেয়ারম্যান, সার্চ কমিটি, কৃষি গবেষণা ফাউন্ডেশন (কেজিএফ), এআইসি বিল্ডিং, ৪র্থ তলার কক্ষ নং-৪২১, বিএআরসি ক্যাম্পাস, ফার্মগেট, ঢাকা-১২১৫ বরাবরে দরখাস্ত জমা দিতে হইবে।

(২) কেজিএফ এর নির্ধারিত আবেদন পত্রে (Prescribed format) দরখাস্ত দাখিল করিতে হইবে। আবেদনপত্র কেজিএফ এর ওয়েবসাইট (www.kgf.org.bd) থেকে সংগ্রহ করিতে হইবে

(৩) আবেদন পত্রের সাথে অবশ্যই সদ্য তোলা পিপি সাইজের ২ (দুই) কপি রঙিন ছবি সংযুক্ত করিতে হইবে।

(৪) সকল সনদের ফটোকপি আবেদনপত্রের সহিত সংযুক্ত করিতে হইবে।

(৫) প্রার্থীর বয়স আগামী ১৫/০৯/২০২৩ খ্রিঃ তারিখে অবশ্যই অনূর্ধ্ব ৬১ বছর হইতে হইবে।

নির্বাহী পরিচালক
কৃষি গবেষণা ফাউন্ডেশন

D-120

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 Shailkupa 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 Shailkupa Upazila Health Complex where doctor declared Mahadeb dead.



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 RAIHAN

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 forex

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 Shafur 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 Date: 14/09/2023
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 Jogirka 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 Pluhar 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 Chowdury 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).

**Md Shohidul Islam**
Executive Engineer
Education Engineering Department
Barishal

GD-1417

**Bangladesh Election Commission**

Identification System for Enhancing Access to Services (IDEA) Project (2nd Phase)
Nirbachan 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
KEY INFORMATION		
7	Procurement method	Open Tendering Method (OTM)
FUNDING INFORMATION		
8	Budget and source of funds	GoB (Development Budget)
PARTICULAR INFORMATION		
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.
		Date
13	Tender publication 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), Nirbachan Bhaban, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207.
No conditions apply for sale, purchase or distribution of tender documents		
19	Pre-tender meeting	
20	Receiving tender document	
21	Opening tender document	Conference Room No. 721, Nirbachan Bhaban (Floor-7), Agargaon, Dhaka-1207.
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER		
22	Eligibility of tenderer	1. Tender shall have the legal capacity to enter into the contract under the applicable law. 2. Tenderers shall be enrolled in the relevant professional or trade organizations registered in Bangladesh. 3. Tenderers shall have to fulfil its obligation/obligations to pay taxes under the provisions of laws and regulations of Bangladesh. 4. Detail information has been provided in the tender document.
23	Brief description of services	Lot-02 Spare Storage Server Hard Disk as specified in the Tender Document
24	Price of tender document	BDT 3000.00 (three thousand Tk only) non-refundable.
25	Lot	Identification of lot Tender security Completion time in weeks
	Lot 2	Spare Storage Server Hard Disk Tk 8,00,000.00 (eight lac) 3 weeks from the date of NOA signing.
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS		
26	Name of official inviting tender	Brigadier General Abul Hasnat Mohammad Sayem
27	Designation of official inviting tender	Project Director
28	Address of official inviting tender	Identification System for Enhancing Access to Services (IDEA) Project (2nd Phase), Nirbachan Bhaban (Floor-8), Agargaon, Dhaka-1207.
29	Contact details of official inviting Tender	Telephone: 00-88-02-55007594; e-mail address: pd_idea2.bd@gmail.com
30	The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all the tenders or annul the tender proceedings.	

**Abul Hasnat Mohammad Sayem**
Brigadier General
Project Director
pd_idea2.bd@gmail.com

GD-1418



Kazi Hayat



Omar Sani



Shakil Khan



Shakib Khan

Film industry struggling to accept Sohan’s demise

As Sohanoor Rahman Sohan, one of Bangladeshi 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.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

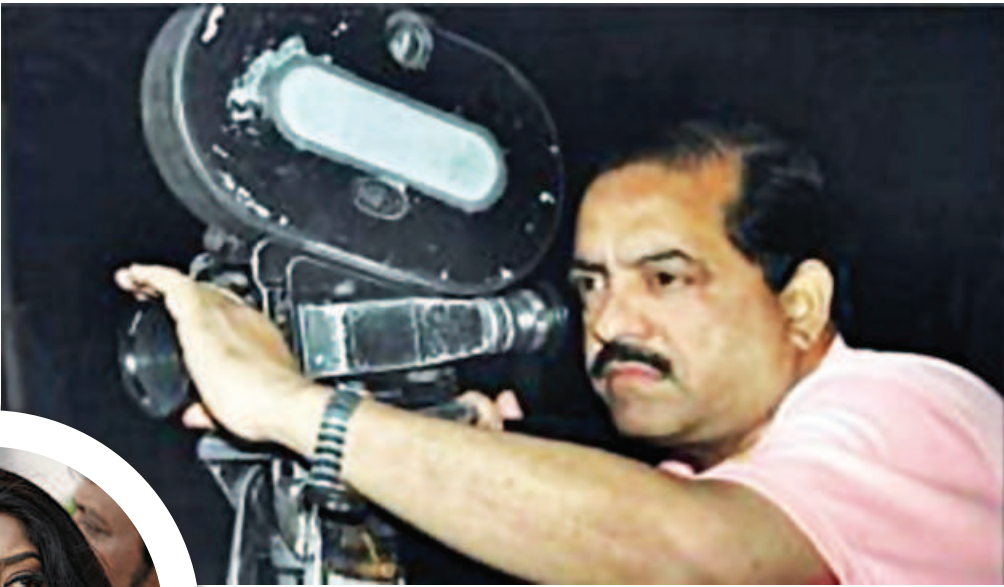
A cloud of grief loomed over Dhaka’s sky in remembrance of the man who gave one of the biggest blockbusters in Bangla cinema, *Keyamot Theke Keyamot*, kickstarting the careers of Moushumi and Salman Shah as lead actors.

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



Sohanoor Rahman Sohan

as he was as a director, I believe that he was equally skillful 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 Sohanoor 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.”

Sohanoor 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*.



Moushumi

Tabu returns to silver screen with spy thriller ‘Khufiya’



Tabu and Vishal Bhardwaj’s on-screen partnership boasts a history spanning two decades. It all began with the 2003 gangster drama *Maqbool*, in which Tabu starred alongside Irrfan Khan.

Recently, Tabu and Vishal Bhardwaj have reunited once again for the spy thriller *Khufiya*, set to release on Netflix on October 5.

Khufiya is a neo-noir spy thriller adapted from Amar Bhushan’s espionage novel, *Escape to Nowhere*. Besides Tabu and Vishal, the film features a stellar cast, including Ali Fazal, Wamiqa Gabbi, and Ashish Vidyarthi.

When asked about the secret behind Tabu and Vishal’s explosive on-screen chemistry during the teaser launch, Vishal Bhardwaj candidly replied, “It’s love”.

Mosharraf Karim to play Hajari Thakur in ‘Adarsha Hindu Hotel’?

Mosharraf Karim is reportedly all set to don the role of Hajari Thakur in Arindam Sil’s project *Adarsha Hindu Hotel*. The project is based on the iconic novel by Bibhutibhusan Bandyopadhyay and will soon release on an OTT platform.

The novel, originally published in 1940, weaves the captivating tale of Hajari Thakur, a humble hotel cook, who harbours ambitious dreams of owning his hotel one day. Undeterred by opposition from his co-worker Padma and owner Bechu Chakraborty, Thakur begins his journey to establish his own hotel.

A n a n y a Chatterjee is reportedly in consideration to play the character of Padma. While the shooting was initially scheduled to commence in September, it has now been rescheduled to January.



NEWS

Macron’s visit may help diversify the ties

FROM PAGE 12
current and former officials for human rights violations, including extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances.

The events strained Dhaka-Washington relationship to some extent.

Prof Syeda Rozana Rashid, a teacher of international relations at Dhaka University, said the European countries, alongside advancing their trade and economic interests, want to promote the values of democracy and human rights.

“Recently, we have seen Emmanuel Macron taking a mediator’s role in different conflicts. I’m not sure if something along that line was discussed during his visit,” she said.

During the banquet at the hotel InterContinental Dhaka on September 10, Macron said, “Based on democratic principles and the rule of law, in a region facing new imperialism, we want to propose a third way – with no intention to bully our partners or to lead them to an unsustainable scheme.”

Hasina on the other hand termed Macron “a breath of fresh air in international politics” and hoped

“the new strategic move between Bangladesh and France will play an effective role in establishing regional and global stability and peace”.

Asked what Macron meant by saying “third way”, Muniruzzaman said there is a tension in the Indo-Pacific region, with major powers mounting pressure on small countries to be in their blocs.

“France wants to emerge as a third force to support the small states that are under pressure from the major powers. However, there is no idea of how France can do it because it does not have much engagement in this region,” he told this correspondent on Monday.

Foreign policy analysts say stepping up cooperation on defence and space technology is good in terms of diversification of sources as Dhaka depends mostly on Beijing for defence purchase.

However, the question remains as to whether the government has conducted any needs assessment for buying 10 planes at a cost of more than \$3 billion, and the second satellite, said Dr Obaidul Haque, an associate professor of international relations at Dhaka University.

“We don’t know how economically viable the Bangabandhu Satellite-1 is. Also, do we have enough money to go for such big purchases at this moment?” he questioned.

Obaidul said Macron has spoken very positively of Bangladesh’s developments and also on how more French companies should be interested in investing here. “We need to best utilise the momentum created by Macron’s visit.”

Dr Shariful Islam, an associate professor of international relations at Rajshahi University, said France has vast experience and the technological know-how to harness the blue economy, and Bangladesh can work with the European nation for utilising its marine resources. The same goes for artificial intelligence.

He said Bangladesh should also seriously think about how it can use the potential of the French job market by improving its relationship with the country.

During the visit, Macron took a keen interest in climate change, Shariful said, adding that this can add a new dimension to climate financing for Bangladesh.

Tipu Munshi takes flak from opposition MPs

FROM PAGE 12
protein have become dearer.

He also reiterated that the syndicates are behind the rise in prices of goods.

“Millions of crores of taka are already taken from the people’s pockets by the time ministers take measures in this regard.”

Another JP MP Fakhrul Imam sarcastically chimed in, saying Tipu Munshi is successful in both business and politics.

JP MP Hafiz Uddin Ahmed said it would be better if the title of the proposed law was “Trade Syndicate Act” instead of “Trade Organisation (Amendment) Bill”.

He added that not only are the people being deprived of eating hilsa

and beef, they cannot even afford eggplants now.

Hafiz Uddin further said people will not survive if the prices of goods do not come down.

JP MP Pir Fazlur Rahman said, “We don’t know why the commerce minister is unable to take action against the syndicates.”

Responding to the criticism, Tipu Munshi said the prices of goods and syndicates were discussed earlier, and it was said he was the leader of the syndicates. “I am unfortunately a businessman, and I have said in parliament many times that I was in politics long before I got into business. I started doing business 20 years after joining politics.

“If doing business is a crime, then

I am guilty of that crime. Maybe if I didn’t do business, I would have had to live by taking donations from here and there. The business I am involved in is not related to the country. I export abroad.”

He added that prices sometimes increase in the country and he will not hesitate to admit that businessmen sometimes take advantage of that.

“How will we control millions of egg producers?” he asked.

The minister said the price of eggs has been fixed. “If eggs are not sold at that price, the government will start importing eggs within a couple of days.”

He added he is trying his best to control the prices of essentials.

SC refuses to issue injunction

FROM PAGE 12
the High Court’s suo moto rule. They are not a party to the leave-to-appeal petition either.

“How can I issue an order against someone who is not a party to the matter?” the SC asked.

Petitioners’ lawyer Azmalul Hossain KC said that his clients want the injunction “mainly against The Daily Star”.

“The Daily Star published one news report, but you [the petitioners] published advertisements in every media,” observed Justice Enayetur Rahim, referring to S Alam Group’s series of advertisements on national dailies refuting the investigative story published by The Daily Star on August 4.

Justice Enayetur Rahim discounted the petitioners’ arguments that they are being hounded by the media.

“If they [The Daily Star] had published continuous follow-up reports on the issue, then I could have evaluated this application,” he added.

He said the petitioners, if they wish, may place the injunction petition before the full bench of the Supreme Court during hearing of their leave-to-appeal petition on January 8 next year.

Earlier on August 23, Justice Enayetur Rahim set January 8, 2024, for hearing of the leave-to-appeal petition filed by Alam and Farzana against the High Court order that directed the government agencies concerned to conduct an enquiry into Alam’s properties abroad.

On that day, he also ordered a status quo on the investigation ordered by the HC until the next hearing.

Tuesday’s gag petition was moved by Barrister Rokanuddin Mahmud and Ajmalul Hossain KC on behalf of Alam and his wife, arguing their clients are undergoing a media trial.

The injunction they seek applies to electronic and print media as well as social media.

They also mentioned The Daily Star, Prothom Alo, New Age and SC lawyer Barrister Syed Sayedul Haque Suman by name, and petitioned that the court keep them from publishing or broadcasting any statements, opinions, reports, remarks, or online videos “touching the merit” of the Appellate Division’s decision to put on hold the enquiry into Alam’s offshore assets.

Although the state was one of

the respondents in the injunction petition, there was no representation from the attorney general’s office at the courtroom.

Anti-Corruption Commission’s panel lawyer senior advocate Khurshid Alam Khan objected to the petition, highlighting the importance of media in uncovering corruption.

He said the High Court has issued the suo moto rule based on a report by The Daily Star. The HC did not act on any report by Prothom Alo and New Age.

“Then why drag the newspapers who had nothing to do with the report into this? The meaning is obvious – no one is allowed to talk about me. To put it simply, everyone must just keep their mouth shut,” he said.

“We at the Anti-Corruption Commission get 50 percent of our information about corruption from the media. They bring it to light and we act on it. If the media is restrained then our work will suffer,” the ACC lawyer said.

The lawyers for Alam said the media should complain to the ACC if they find instances of corruption and only report on it if the ACC fails to act.

S Alam’s petition is related to an investigation by The Daily Star, titled “S Alam’s Aladdin’s Lamp,” which found that Alam along with his wife has built a business empire worth at least about \$1 billion in Singapore, although there is no record of him taking any permission from the central bank to invest or transfer any funds abroad.

No scope

FROM PAGE 12
In response, the minister said there is no question of paying compensation.

Explaining the issue, Anisul said the position of the law is that as the cases were filed under the old law, trials would be held under the law and the court would hand down punishment.

He said according to article 35 of the constitution, “No person shall be convicted of any offence except for violation of a law in force at the time of the commission of the act charged as an offence, nor be subjected to a penalty greater than, or different from, that which might have been inflicted under the law in force at the time of the commission of the offence.”

Hunter Biden

FROM PAGE 12
criminal trials.

Weiss was elevated to special counsel status in August after investigating Hunter Biden’s business dealings for years as the US attorney in the Democratic president’s home state of Delaware. Weiss was originally nominated by Trump.

The younger Biden for years has been the focus of unrelenting attacks by Trump and his Republican allies who have accused him of wrongdoing relating to Ukraine and China, among other matters. Hunter Biden has worked as a lobbyist, lawyer, investment banker, and artist, and has publicly detailed his struggles with substance abuse.

Committees in the Republican-led US House of Representatives for months have been probing the Hunter Biden’s foreign business dealings. Some party hardliners are pushing for an impeachment inquiry into President Biden.

While Republican lawmakers have collected testimony that Joe Biden at times joined calls with his son’s business associates, they have yet to produce evidence that the president personally benefitted.

Departmental case

FROM PAGE 12
the torture incident.

Regarding updates of the investigation, Kamal said they had taken necessary actions immediately and the subsequent process, including the case filing and investigation, will follow its course.

He added, “No one is above the law. Whoever does wrong will be punished.”

On September 9, ADC Harun and some other police officials took the two Chhatra League leaders to Shahbagh Police Station around 9:00pm and tortured them for about an hour, BCL leaders alleged.

Earlier on Tuesday, DB Chief Harun Or Rashid alleged ADC Harun was assaulted first by the president’s Assistant Personal Secretary Azizul Haque at Birden Hospital that evening. “This should be investigated too,” he said.

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

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 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.

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 parishads, 329 municipalities, 495 upazila parishads, and 4,577 union parishads – 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



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 teased 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'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.

Administrator 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 of 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>. The company intends to recruit for the following positions immediately:

SL NO.	POSITIONS	QUALIFICATIONS
1.	ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER - Marketing and Sales	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.	ASSISTANT GENERAL MANAGER - Technical	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.
Interested candidates are requested to send an EOI (Impressive incentives (Expression of Interest) to < info@m2kttc.com> on or before September 30, 2023.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Executive Engineer
District: Bhola
www.lged.gov.bd

শেখ হাসিনার মূলনীতি
গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি

Memo No. 46.02.09.00.000.14.014.23.2906

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
GOBGM						
1.	Bhola Sadar	e-Tender/LGED /Bhola/GOBGM /23-24/W-28	866974	(a) Rehabilitation of Doskhali Bridge-Chandraprashad - Janal Bapair 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/GOBGM /23-24/W-29	866975	(a) Rehabilitation of Hatner Hat-Arujan Ali Khayghat Road from Ch. 00m-2050m under Bhola Sadar Upazila, District-Bhola. Road ID No. [509184036] (b) Rehabilitation of Utar Beduria High School Jungla Khayghat 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/GOBGM /23-24/W-31	866977	Rehabilitation of Kheyaghat Bridge-Sher-e-Bangla RPS-Nazir Majee Khayghat 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/GOBGM /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/GOBGM /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/GOBGM /23-24/W-34	866980	Rehabilitation of Paranganj-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).

Mohammad Ibrahim Khalil
Executive Engineer
LGED, Bhola
E-mail: xen.bhola@lged.gov.bd

GD-1416

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.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam, however, said that a resolution by the MEPs on a court matter on Odhikar is interference in internal affairs.

"We have a very strong relations with the European Union. From that perspective, we hope that the European Council would not intervene in our internal affairs, especially when it is a legal issue," he said at a media briefing.

The resolution encouraged Bangladesh authorities to cooperate with the UN on establishing a specialised mechanism to investigate the allegations of enforced disappearances and insisted that international observers

are allowed to attend court hearings.

It said the European Parliament was appalled by the murder of trade unionist Shahidul Islam in June 2023 and called for those responsible to be brought to justice.

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 2024".

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

rights defenders, union workers, and journalists under attack, including by monitoring trials.

Foreign Ministry Statement

The foreign ministry yesterday said that the government is "appalled by the favouritism" reflected in the European Parliament's resolution on 'Odhikar' and disagrees with the text of the resolution, UNB reports.

"The government of Bangladesh expresses its utter disappointment at the adoption of a resolution by the European Parliament on September 14 on human rights situation in Bangladesh, notably the case of Odhikar."

It said Adilur was a deputy attorney general for five years during the BNP-Jamaat government.

"Therefore, 'Odhikar' is not at all a neutral or independent organisation that it tries to claim and is unfortunately believed by some in the international community," it said.

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

To

Subject

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

Write to us: letters@thedailystar.net

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



Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan.

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.

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

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 tread. 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@citech-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. Examples from our neighbouring countries can lead the way for our commissioners.

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

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

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.

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 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 @ahmedkul

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 second 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.

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

worse, by bots. Thus, the scope of creating a platform for new writers and fresh perspectives has become more restricted. It also means that media outlets have to be extra-careful and only publish articles or opinion pieces written by known writers or those that have been referred to by reliable people.

For the public, it is a conundrum almost impossible to solve. Research has found that most people get their news from social media posts, which makes them vulnerable to fake news or news that is skewed to promote the agenda of some group, usually a political party. We have seen how this has been done, especially before elections in the US, India, and in our own country. But this onslaught of ghostwriters, with believable profiles and credentials, will create a new level of vulnerability for the public who want to read expert

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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views and analysis of issues that affect them. Now that some imposters have been exposed to readers, it may make them question the real ones. This facilitates further brainwashing through informal channels (such as social media platforms like Facebook or vide streaming platforms like YouTube) where misinformation and baseless views freely circulate.

The task ahead for independent media, therefore,



VISUAL: BIPLOB CHAKROBORTY

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 Shut out

6 Merchandise

11 Spinetlingling

12 Puccini creation

13 Golfer’s feat

14 Neighbor of Tibet

15 Brews, as tea

17 Can. neighbor

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

times

31 Dr.’s org.

32 Vacuum’s lack

33 Some tires

35 Messy sorts

38 Turn away

39 Caesar’s land

40 River of Africa

41 School paper

42 Door sign

DOWN

1 Handles

2 Michael of

3 “Spotlight”

3 Pressing

4 River of Africa

5 Doesn’t fall behind

6 Took the title

7 King Kong, for

one

8 Good name

9 Correcting aid

10 Light lunch

16 Playground sights

20 Probe’s destination

21 Completely

24 Pole worker

25 Deceits

26 Blunders

27 Report card signer

28 Come into view

29 Flock leader

30 Social category

34 River to the Severn

36 Lingerie buy

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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45

WEDNESDAY’S ANSWERS

FAUST RADAR
APLE AMORE
TETON NOWIN
OPTS UNDO
MATE RENT
ACHE BOXTOPS
THESE ASTRO
SYMPTOM HEN
IRAN REPS
MENU AVOW
EDUCE OMITS
SITES TAROT
HEEDS ENEMY

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, 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 recognisance 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).

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.



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

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 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 Mhambrey 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 Mhambrey 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.

Mhambrey 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 Mhambrey 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."

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.

'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 Sohail Islam, batting against throwdowns and spinners.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



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

"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

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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 HRIDOY

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 Gonoforum MPs lambasted the minister while participating in a discussion on the "Trade Organisation (Amendment) Bill 2023".

Gonoforum 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 the] 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

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

Maj Gen (retd) ANM Muniruzzaman
President of Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies

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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 Harun-or-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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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 shortlist 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

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6



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.