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EC, AL already in election mode

JP planning to go it alone

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE *and* MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The Election Commission and Awami League seem to have started taking preparations for the coming national election.

The Jatiya Party, the main opposition in parliament, is also making preparations to participate on its own, not part of the AL-led alliance.

The AL and the JP are currently finalising their election manifestos and the lists of lawmaker nominees.

AL chief Sheikh Hasina started campaigning on August 2 in Rangpur by seeking votes. She asked the AL lawmakers to stay in their constituencies, make door-to-door visits to the constituents and quell feuds within the party.

To set an example, she even stayed at her Gopalganj-3 constituency for two days in July and met voters.

Almost all members of the ruling 14-party alliance are also getting ready for polls slated for January next year.

AL Joint General Secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif told The Daily Star that the AL is completely focused on the 12th national election.

"We are taking all-out preparations for the election. We are meeting people, highlighting our government's achievements, collecting information to find the fittest nominees, organising rallies across the country, taking steps to keep grassroots united by resolving rifts, making door-to-door visits to woo voters, and drafting our manifesto," he said.

The EC has redrawn 10 constituencies, registered two new political parties, updated the voters' list, and made a primary list of 42,350 polling centres.

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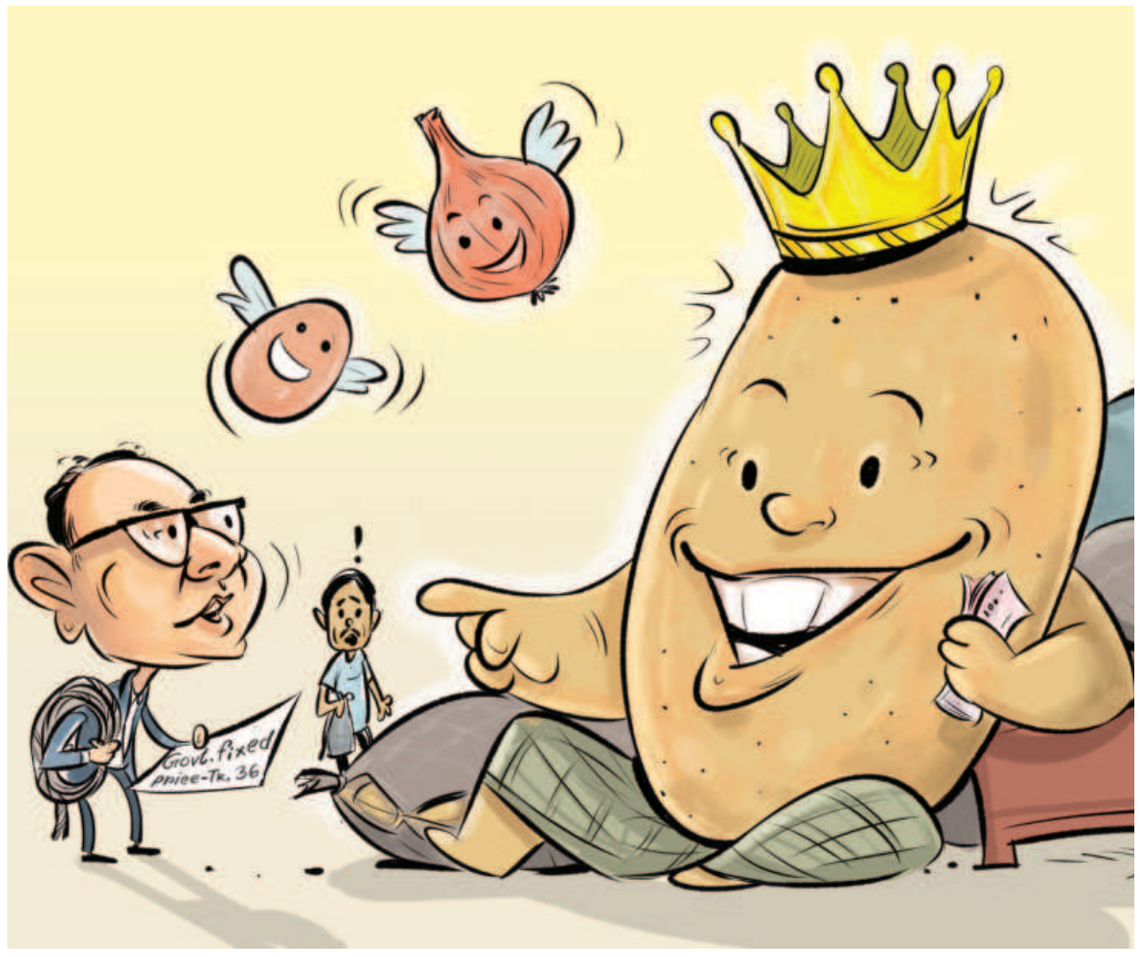

Govt finally okays import of eggs

4 crore eggs to hit the market soon

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

The government yesterday approved the import of four crore eggs from India in efforts to bring stability to the volatile local egg market.

The commerce ministry gave approval to four firms to import one crore eggs each, a top ministry official told The Daily Star.

Sources at the ministry said that in the initial phase, the government will monitor if the market is stable after the import and take further decisions considering the market situation.

The imported eggs will be sold at Tk 12 per piece at the retail level -- the rate fixed by the government.

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BNP to go all out to unseat the govt

The party to announce fresh programmes today

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

While the ruling Awami League is already gearing up for the election, opposition BNP is concentrating its efforts on forcing the government to accept the demand for polls under a non-partisan interim administration.

BNP sources say the party would intensify its movement in the coming days to press home its demand.

As part of this, it will announce a series of rallies and road marches for this month to build up a momentum for the final push.

Sources said the party wants to achieve the goal of its movement -- resignation of the government and formation of a nonparty administration -- ahead of the announcement of the election schedule, expected in November.

The general election is slated for early January next year.

"Our programmes in September and mid-October will prepare the ground for the final phase of the movement," said a BNP standing committee member, wishing anonymity.

He said the programmes will be announced in phases to bring people on board its movement for a non-partisan polls-time government.

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12 hurt as microbus torched in Natore

Claims BNP

STAR REPORT

BNP leaders in Natore yesterday alleged that Awami League activists set fire to a microbus of BNP activists while they were going to join the party's road march in Bogura.

A team of police and firefighters rushed to the spot and brought the fire under control around 10:30am in Dalsarak area of Natore, said Akhter Hamid Khan, deputy assistant director of Natore fire service.

Natore district BNP convener Shahidul Islam Bachchu said, "Led by Awami League activist Rashidul Islam Koyel, ruling party activists attacked BNP leaders and activists and set fire to the microbus. At least 12 leaders and activists of Bagatipara upazila unit of Chhatra Dal were injured."

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Potato price keeps ticking up despite cap

SUKANTA HALDER *and* TANJIL HASAN

The price of potato went up further after the government on Thursday announced a price cap for the tuber and began market drives to check the soaring price of the tuber.

On Thursday, the government fixed the price of potatoes, long considered the cheapest staple on the dinner table, at Tk 35-36 a kilogram, after prices were going beyond the reach of the poor and the low-income demographic at Tk 42 to Tk 45 a kg.

After the government announced the price cap, potato sales at the various cold storages in Munshiganj district, which accounts for about one-third of potato supplies, have almost stopped.

Yesterday, a kg of potato sold for Tk 45 to Tk 50, the highest since October 2020, according to data from the state-run Trading Corporation of Bangladesh.

Wholesalers and retailers say that it is not possible to bring down the price of potatoes without increasing the supply.

"You cannot bring down the price in this way," said Mohammad Sabur, a wholesaler in Karwan Bazar.

Sabur has been able to procure half the quantity of potatoes that he normally does.

"This is why the price is rising," he said.

What cost Tk 2,900 last week cost Tk 3,000 yesterday, said Humayun Kabir, a retailer in the West Tejturi Bazar area at the capital's Farmgate.

He is selling potatoes, which he sources in sacks of 65 kg, at Tk 46-50 a kg.

"The price keeps rising at the wholesale level -- what can I do other than raise the price too? I bought a sack of potatoes last week for Tk 2,900. Today, I got the same sack for Tk 3,000," he said yesterday.

And it is unlikely that the price would be coming down any soon.

After the government announced the price cap, potato sales at the various cold storages in Munshiganj district, which accounts for about one-third of potato supplies, have almost stopped.

No one took out their potato from the cold storage in the last two days, said Abdul Malek, manager of Tongibari Cold Storage at East Mukterpur in Munshiganj.

"Maybe they are not able to sell their potatoes or did not want to," he added.

On September 13, potatoes from the cold storage were selling at Tk 36-37 per kg, said

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Star BUSINESS

Eskayef's 3rd unit wins FDA nod

Eskayef Pharmaceuticals Limited, one of the top pharmaceutical companies in Bangladesh, has received approval from the United States Food and Drug Administration (US FDA) for its third manufacturing unit located in Gazipur's Tongi.

The company got the go-ahead recently for its sterile manufacturing unit at Faraaz Ayaaz Hossain Building from the most stringent regulatory authority in the world.

Eskayef secured approval for its Sterile Unit-1 in September 2022 and Oral Solid Unit in March 2022, becoming the lone company in Bangladesh to have won approval for three manufacturing units from the FDA.

It has become the only Bangladeshi company to have injectable manufacturing units approved by the FDA.

STORY ON B1

Siraj sets up India's 8th Asia Cup crown

AFP, *Colombo*

Pace bowler Mohammed Siraj returned figures of 6-21 to lead India's rout of Sri Lanka by 10 wickets as they clinched their eighth Asia Cup title on Sunday.

Siraj got four wickets in one over to help skittle Sri Lanka out for 50, a total the Indian openers Ishan Kishan and Shubman Gill surpassed in 6.1 overs for an impressive victory ahead of next month's ODI World Cup at home.

Sri Lanka's miserably low total in the 50-over contest left a nearly packed house disappointed after they witnessed just 116 minutes of play.

The hosts elected to bat first following a delayed start due to rain and pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah struck first with the wicket of Kusal Perera, caught behind for a duck in the first over.

Siraj soon took over as

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Mohammed Siraj jumps in the air as Virat Kohli and Shubman Gill join in celebration following one of his six wickets during India's 10-wicket victory over Sri Lanka in the final of the Asia Cup at the R Premadasa Stadium in Colombo yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

UNIVERSAL PENSION SCHEME

About 13,000 sign up in first month

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

About 13,000 people enrolled on the universal pension system in the month since Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina flagged it off, with private sector employees making the majority.

As of 5:00pm yesterday, 12,972 people enrolled for the UPS, depositing a total of Tk 7.7 crore, according to the National Pension Authority (NPA).

The Progoti scheme, which is meant for private sector employers, saw 6,194 enrolments. They deposited a total of Tk 4.1 crore.

The Surokkha scheme, which is designed for the self-employed and the informal sector workers like farmers, rickshaw pullers and day labourers, saw the next highest number of enrolments: 5,020.

Some 1,360 people signed up for the ultra-poor group's Somota scheme, while the Probash scheme for the expatriates had 398 takers.

People belonging to the 31-40 age group have so far enrolled the most for the month-old pension scheme, according to NPA officials.

Two separate funds will be created: one to meet the administrative expenses of the NPA and the other will be created with the money deposited by the subscribers, said finance ministry officials.

The money deposited by the subscribers will be invested in profitable ventures and a set of rules will be formulated soon in this regard, they added.

Citizens above the age of 18 can register for the scheme at the dedicated portal www.upension.gov.bd.

People will have to submit an application through the online portal of the pension authority for enrolment.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

PM leaves for New York to attend UNGA

UNB, *Dhaka*

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina left Dhaka for New York last morning to attend the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

A VVIP flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines carrying the PM and her entourage departed from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport at 10:10am.

The flight is scheduled to land at John F Kennedy International Airport in New York at 10:50pm local time after a four-hour stopover at Heathrow Airport in London.

Bangladesh Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the UN Muhammad Abdul Muhith and Bangladesh Ambassador to the USA Muhammad Imran will receive the prime minister at the airport.

During her stay in New York from September 17-22, the premier will attend the first day of the high-level General Debate of the 78th UNGA session at the General Assembly Hall of the UN Headquarters on September 19. She will address it on September 22 between 1:00pm to 2:00pm local time.

Hasina has also been invited to join a dinner hosted by US President Joe Biden on September 19.

On the sidelines of the UNGA session, she will also attend a number of high-level side events, including Rohingya and climate change, sustainable development goals (SDGs), universal health, and finance alongside taking part in several bilateral and courtesy meetings.

She is expected to deliver a keynote speech at a high-level conference titled "Thought for Food - Collaborating for Food Supply Chain Innovation to Accelerate the SDGs," organised by the UNIDO and Deloitte at Rockefeller Center, New York, on September 18.

She will also address another conference titled "SDG Summit -Leaders' Dialogue 4 (strengthening integrated policies and public institutions for achieving the SDGs) at the Trusteeship Council Chamber on the same day.

In the evening, the PM is likely to attend a high-level private dinner to mark the UN's 2023 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Summit hosted by Gordon Brown, UN Secretary General's Special Envoy for Global Education and WHO Ambassador for Global Health Financing and Sarah Brown Executive Chair of the Global Business Coalition for Education at Lexington Venue, New York.

MY DHAKA

PHOTO: LS ARCHIVE/ SAZZAD IBNE SAYED

Barbershop tales

AAQIB HASIB

On a Friday afternoon, you sit there in one of the most comfortable chairs you have ever sat on. Your eyes are closed as you relax after a long week of school or work, with the only noise in the background being a 30-year-old Bollywood film and the relentless snip-snip-snap, almost like ASMR.

As the kids would say, the vibes are immaculate.

The scene I am describing is that of a quintessential, local barbershop. Not the fancy high-end ones that charge you Tk 500 to give you a light trim but the old-school neighbourhood one, where you can get a haircut or a shave for just Tk 100.

These barbershops are institutions that hold culture and history, shaping the lives of men and boys.

As a child, I remember being rather hesitant to visit these salons. My young mind hated having to sit still for 30 minutes to an hour, as back then I always felt I could make better use of that time by playing video games or watching TV.

However, as I grew older, I learned to value this age-old ritual. See, that one hour of sitting in that ridiculously

comfortable chair while someone takes care of my hair almost feels like an act of meditation. It gave me the opportunity to let all the thoughts in my head play out and process until it was fully organised.

For almost 20 years, I went to the same barbershop in Mohammadpur, sometimes once a month, other times once every two months.

My barber, Riaz mama, always knew what cut would suit me best and kept my trim on point. I only switched barbershops once they closed, but those countless hours spent at my local one, listening to Bollywood hits or watching everyone trash talk over a cricket match are core memories to me.

With my barbershop gone, I bounced around between different barbers for a couple of years.

I even ventured into the fancier shops and while the haircuts were great, I struggled to find the same connection I had with my old salon.

One correlation I discovered was that more upscale a barbershop the more it lacked that homely feeling one would get at their neighbourhood counterpart.

The services were the same, albeit pricier, but it only felt like a detached transaction. There was no classic banter between the barbers, no cricket or Bollywood playing like white noise and definitely no Riaz mama.

Last year, a friend took me to this new barbershop called Dallas Salon. After stepping foot in Dallas, I have not gone to another barbershop since.

It almost felt like my ratatouille moment, where I had a flashback to five-year-old me stepping inside my childhood salon.

After speaking with the person cutting my hair, I learned that Dallas had been around for 15 years. Over this decade and a half, they have preserved that quintessential barbershop culture that many of us have grown up loving.

For so many of us who have grown up with the classic neighbourhood barbershop, we do not simply go there for a haircut or a shave.

Rather, it has become a meditative and relaxing ritual.

Though childhood nostalgia comes with memories of mostly old friends and moments, the times spent in these barbershops are often overlooked for what they contribute to our lives.

With Dhaka rapidly growing, these institutions may soon all be replaced by corporate, high-end salons. But we can hope they receive the appreciation they deserve while they are still around.

Two children drown

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Cumilla*

Two children drowned in a pond in Cumilla's Chandina upazila yesterday afternoon.

The victims are Afnan, 7, son of Abdullah Al Noman Shiblu, and Adnan, 8, son of Shariar Sumon, of Mohonpur village in Batagachi union.

They were cousins, said Shahabuddin Khan, officer-in-charge of Chandina Police Station.

Quoting locals, the OC said the incident took place around 2:00pm when the two cousins went to take a bath in a pond after returning home from school. When they did not come home, locals searched for them and found their bodies floating in a pond.

Recovering the bodies, the families rushed them to Cumilla Medical College Hospital, where doctors declared them dead.

The OC said the bodies were handed over to the families without an autopsy.

19kg gold seized in Panchagarh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Thakurgaon*

Border Guard Bangladesh on Sunday recovered 19 gold bars, each weighing around a kilogramme, while they were being smuggled to India through the border at Haribhasha Prodhanpara village in Panchagarh Sadar upazila.

Md Juwel, 32, of the upazila's Modhupur village, was detained at that time.

Acting on a tip-off, BGB men from Ghagra border outpost intercepted Juwel's motorbike in the morning near Haribhasha border pillar 755/4-S and recovered the gold bars worth about Tk 15.12 crore from his possession.

Tk 24,690 in cash and a cell phone were also seized from his possession.

Contacted, Lt Col Md Asaduzzaman Hakim, commander of BGB-56 (Nilphamari), said Juwel was handed over to police.

He added that the gold bars would be handed over to customs officials after completing the necessary formalities.

Man sentenced to death for rape, murder

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Narayanganj*

A Narayanganj court yesterday sentenced a man to death in a case filed over the killing of a 9-year-old girl after rape in Rupganj upazila two years ago.

Judge Nazmul Haque Shyamal of the Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal announced the verdict in presence of the convict, Md Mosharaf Mia, 45, of the upazila.

The court also sentenced the convict to five years imprisonment for hiding the girl's body after the murder, said Public Prosecutor Rakibuddin Ahmed.

On October 22, 2021, Mosharaf abducted the girl and raped her at an isolated place near her home before murdering her and subsequently hiding her body, according to the case statement.

A day later, a case was filed when her body was recovered.

On March 29, 2022, police filed a chargesheet against Mosharaf.

The court gave the verdict after hearing the testimony of 11 witnesses, PP added.

Potato price

FROM PAGE 1

Mostafa Azad Chowdhury, president of the Bangladesh Cold Storage Association.

Three days later, the Directorate of National Consumers' Rights Protection instructed the potato traders to sell at Tk 26 to 27 per kg from September 17.

The traders say that they will incur huge losses if they sell at the price instructed by the DNCRP.

"For this reason, many businesspeople have stopped selling potatoes -- they are observing the situation," Chowdhury added.

Price control does not go with the concept of a free market economy, said Ghulam Rahman, president of the Consumers Association of Bangladesh.

"The government should create a formal supply chain. Then many problems will be solved and consumers will also benefit," he said, adding that the government's current steps are doomed to failure.

About 13,000

FROM PAGE 1

Upon successful registration, the beneficiaries will be able to pay instalments at a bank branch or through the mobile financial service platform, online bank transfer or a bank card.

Primarily, Sonali Bank has been selected to receive money from subscribers. Later, more banks will be included for this purpose, officials said.

Under the Surokkha scheme, people can deposit Tk 1,000, Tk 2,000, Tk 3,000 or Tk 5,000 in monthly instalments.

The monthly instalment fee under the Somota scheme is Tk 1,000 whereas under the Probash scheme, the monthly fee is Tk 5,000, Tk 7,500 or Tk 10,000.

For the Progoti scheme, monthly instalment options are Tk 2,000, Tk 3,000 and Tk 5,000.

As per the rules, anyone paying monthly instalment fees for 10 consecutive years is eligible to receive the monthly pension.

BNP to go all out to unseat

FROM PAGE 1

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir is likely to announce the programmes at a press conference today.

Sources said the party will announce public rallies and road marches from Tuesday, which will continue till October 3.

The BNP has already decided in principle to hold road marches in Sylhet, Khulna, Barishal and Chattogram regions.

Three front and associate bodies of the party have already held road marches over the last two days in some northern districts where Fakhrul announced they won't quit road marches until the government is deposed.

"Through these programmes, we want to complete the mass campaign aimed at making people aware about our programmes to ensure their participation," he said.

After October 3, the party will announce fresh programmes mainly for Dhaka city and its periphery, which will continue until the announcement of the election schedule.

The BNP started its one-point movement on July 12, and has since been holding various programmes, including sit-ins at the entry points of Dhaka on July 29.

Party leaders said they want to hold peaceful programmes. But if the government does not pay heed to their demand, they will go for tougher programmes from October.

"From now on, we will hold nonstop programmes. There will be no pause in our movement till our goal is achieved," said BNP Standing Committee Member Iqbal Hasan Mahmud Tuku.

BNP's programmes

- Sept 19 -- Rallies in Keraniganj, Tongi
- Sept 21 -- Road march from Bhairab Bazar to Sylhet
- Sept 22 -- Rally by pro-BNP professional bodies in Dhaka
- Sept 23 -- Rallies in Jatrabari, Uttara
  Road march from Barishal to Patuakhali
- Sept 25 -- Rallies in Nayabazar, Amin Bazar
- Sept 26 -- Road march in Khulna division
- Sept 27 -- Rallies in Gabtoli, Narayanganj's Fatullah
- Sept 29 -- Women's rally in Dhaka
- Sept 30 -- Krishak-Sramik rally in Dhaka
- Oct 1 -- Road march from Mymensingh to Kishoreganj
- Oct 3 -- Road march from Cumilla to Chattogram

Govt finally okays

FROM PAGE 1

The imported eggs are expected to reach the market within a week after opening a Letter of Credit (LC), which should happen in a couple of days, the ministry official said.

According to the commerce ministry, the country requires four crore eggs a day.

Notably, chicken eggs were sold for 26 rupees (Tk 34.29) per four pieces in Kolkata yesterday, or Tk 8.5 per piece.

On September 14, the government fixed the price of eggs at Tk 12 per piece at the retail level amid a price hike of the essential protein source.

While making the announcement, Commerce Minister Tipu Munshi said the government also decided to import eggs if the price on the local market does not come down.

The price cap on eggs barely made an impact on the runaway prices, as shopkeepers in the capital have not complied with the order.

At different kitchen markets across the capital, only a few shops were selling an egg for Tk 12, while most were demanding Tk 13.50.

EC, AL already in election mode

FROM PAGE 1

Amendments to an electoral law have also been made.

Election Commissioner Brig Gen (retd) Ahsan Habib Khan said, "We are making preparations to hold a free, fair, acceptable and participatory election in line with our roadmap announced in September last year."

Political parties are presumably making their own plans and policies for their preparations, he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Election Commissioner Anisur Rahman at a programme in Kishoreganj yesterday said the schedule for the polls would be announced in November.

"The participation of all parties in the election does not depend on us. Parties are to decide individually if they want to take part in the polls. But we will create a conducive atmosphere for elections," he said.

The current parliament expires on January 29. According to the constitution, the national election must be held anytime during the final 90 days of the parliament's tenure. The 90-day countdown starts on November 1.

EC'S PREPARATIONS

The EC has approved 66 local observers to monitor the polls and invited more organisations to observe the elections. It is also at the final stage of changing the policy for approving international observers and journalists.

The procurement of election materials like transparent ballot boxes, seals for the ballot boxes, stamp pads, indelible ink markers, official seals, and marking seals will be completed between this month and November, EC officials said.

THE AL CAMPAIGNING

The ruling party's manifesto will highlight the government achievements. It will organise concerts in every district town to publicise the achievements.

Teams are being formed to run social media campaigns highlighting the achievements and "misrule during the BNP-Jamaat alliance".

The promise of a "Smart Bangladesh" by 2041 will also be prominent in its manifesto.

The AL has conducted several surveys to find suitable candidates and another survey is going on. It wants to make sure no disgruntled AL leader runs against the party nominees. The AL plans to field independent candidates so that the election appears participatory even if the BNP shuns it.

AL's top leaders are in talks with like-minded political parties to bring them under its fold and with other parties to get them to take part in the polls and make the election look participatory.

It has also had preliminary talks with allies over the share of seats in parliament.

"After the PM returns from the US, she will start campaigning across the country," said an AL praesidium member.

Hasina will inaugurate a number of mega projects before November to impress the voters.

An AL insider said, "An election-time government with a small number of cabinet members will likely be formed in the first half of November."

THE JP GETTING READY

The JP is asking its probable nominees to get ready for the election, according to sources.

It is looking for the best candidates in areas where there are not many supporters of the party. It believes that without a good number of MPs in parliament, the party will become weak, said a JP leader.

"We want to make the party vibrant through holding local councils," JP Chairman GM Quader told this newspaper.

"We will try our best to field candidates in all 300 constituencies," he added.

President of AL ally Workers Party of Bangladesh Rashed Khan Menon yesterday said, "We are collecting names of probable candidates from the districts." He said they were in discussion with AL over seat-sharing but no final decision has been made.

BRTC buses

FROM PAGE 12

is passenger demand. These buses will leave Farmgate's Khejur Bagan and take the expressway to Uttara's Jasimuddin Road before returning to the Khejur Bagan area," he explained.

The BRTC service has been launched for the convenience of passengers so that they can travel quickly on Dhaka's first Elevated Expressway. The buses will only ply on the expressway, said BRTC officials.

Passengers won't have to pay extra to use the expressway, just the usual fare, BRTC sources said.

The BRTC chairman also told journalists that no toll will be added to the fare for the time being. "Later, when the toll is added, the government will set a fare, and that is the fare we will charge."

The toll for buses on the expressway is Tk 160.

The usual bus fare from Khejur Bagan to the airport is Tk 35 for 15km and the fare for 17km to Jasimuddin has been set at Tk 40.

The per km fare is Tk 2.45. As there is e-ticketing, there is no scope for charging extra fare, said BRTC sources.

On September 2, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the Dhaka Elevated Expressway from Kawla in the airport area to Farmgate.

Don't refer

FROM PAGE 12

are engaging in deceptive practices for financial gains. We have directed the health authorities to take decisive measures, such as imposing fines and, if necessary, involving law enforcement agencies to ensure accountability."

He said that while the number of dengue patients in hospitals has remained static for the last few days, it has been rising outside the capital.

Yesterday, 18 dengue patients died across the country.

With the latest count, dengue fatalities rose to 822 and cases to 1,67,684.

9TH WAGE BOARD

BFUJ urges Noab, BSP to pay arrears

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) yesterday urged the Newspaper Owners' Association of Bangladesh (Noab) and Bangladesh Sangbadpatra Parishad (BSP) to pay the arrears of the 9th Wage Board Award.

"The government announced the 9th Wage Board Award on September 12, 2019. But Noab immediately filed a case against the award, even though Noab and BSP leaders participated in the preparation of the recommendations for the award," BFUJ President Omar Faruque and Secretary General Dip Azad said in a joint statement yesterday.

As the court did not impose any restrictions on the wage board award, there was no obstacle in implementing it, they said.

"Despite repeated

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

While one bus is parked in the background illegally, waiting to pick up passengers, another crashes into a rickshaw. Witnesses alleged that the bus hit the three-wheeler intentionally. The photo was taken near Gulistan yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Protect the ozone layer

Speakers urge compliance with Montreal Protocol

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has been phasing out use of Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS), by setting a specific timeframe to comply with Montreal Protocol—an international treaty designed to protect the ozone layer, said Md Shahab Uddin, Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

The minister shared this remark at an event organised by Department of Environment (DoE), marking World Ozone Day, at DoE headquarter in Agargaon, yesterday.

Md Shahab Uddin said they will phase down HCFC (Hydrochlorofluorocarbon) by 67.50 percent by 2025. HCFC is an Ozone Depleting Substance, which is widely used in fire extinguishing equipment, refrigerators, and air conditioning devices.

The minister also said that all alternative technologies, which will protect the ozone layer, are encouraged. By implementing this plan, Bangladesh will enter a new era in the field of air cooler production, opening the door for export of manufactured products.

Manufacturers who use energy efficient technology in refrigeration and air conditioning devices are receiving incentives from government, he said.

He also noted that Bangladesh has been praised by United Nation's Environmental Programme for implementing the clauses stipulated in the Montreal Protocol.

Ziaul Haque, Director of DoE (Air Quality Management) gave the keynote presentation in the event.

Habibun Nahar, Deputy Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, also emphasised the need to protect the ozone layer.

3 fraudsters held from Uttara: PBI

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Police Bureau of Investigation arrested three members of a gang involved in fraudulent activities from Dhaka's Uttara on Saturday.

The arrestees are -- Abdul Bari, 65: Rashed alias Rasel, 37; and Naeem, 43. They used to scam people by pretending to be businessmen, said Jahangir Alam, special superintendent of PBI (North) yesterday.

Abdul Bari was identified as the mastermind of the group, who used fake identities while scamming unsuspecting individuals.

This gang has swindled over a crore taka from victims, the official estimated.

The PBI was tasked with investigation of a case filed against the fraud gang with Airport Police Station on July 30.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

3 defunct airlines owe CAAB Tk 1,192cr

Novoair, currently in operation, also owes it Tk 29cr

RASHIDUL HASAN

Four domestic airlines, three of which are now defunct, owe BDT 1,222 crore to the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) for various aeronautical and non-aeronautical fees.

The four airlines are Regent Airways, United Airways, GMG Airlines and Novoair. Of them, only Novoair is now in operation.

CAAB is owed over Tk 1,192 by the three defunct airlines.

CAAB yesterday placed this information before the parliamentary standing committee on the Civil Aviation Ministry during a meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

Sources in CAAB said the aviation authority is owed the money by the four airlines in landing, parking, housing of aircraft and route navigation and embarkation fees.

The CAAB solely depends on the fees to meet its revenue expenses and finance its development projects.

Earlier, the committee wanted to know how much money CAAB would get from the country's domestic airlines in arrears.

As of last May, two other private airlines, US Bangla and Air Astra, both of which are still in business, have no dues.

According to the CAAB report, the regulatory authority will get a total of Tk 1,222 crore 98 lakh 25 thousand from Regent Airways, Novo Air, United Airways and GMG Airlines.

As of last May, two other private airlines, US Bangla and Air Astra, both of which are still in business, have no dues, it added.

In its report, CAAB said Regent Air owes it more than Tk 408 crore and GMG Airlines owes more than Tk 394 crore. United Airways has arrears of more than Tk 388 crore while Novoair owes more than Tk 29 crore.

The parliamentary watchdog recommended taking necessary measures to realise the money from the respective private airlines, meeting sources said.

In the meeting, Mokammel Hossain, secretary of the civil aviation ministry, informed that Biman has identified 4 new routes -- Male, Chennai, Rome and Sydney -- based on passengers' demand.

However, he said the purchase of new aircraft is a must to launch those.

Mokammel said discussions are going on with Airbus, a European multinational aerospace corporation, to procure new aircraft.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Participatory polls not on EC

Says commissioner

UNB, *Dhaka*

The participation of all political parties in the next general election would be determined by the political parties themselves, rather than by the Election Commission, Election Commissioner Anisur Rahman said yesterday.

"We are determined to create an election-friendly environment and we'll do it. In the past one and half years we have urged the political parties to participate in the election and we are urging them repeatedly even now," he said, while talking to reporters at Kishoreganj Circuit House.

"Whether the election would be participatory will depend on the decision of the political parties. The EC has no scope to interfere in it. We have taken preparations to hold elections as per the constitution," he added.

Canadian cops, FBI official allowed to testify in Niko case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday allowed the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) to produce an official of Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and two officials of Royal Canadian Mounted Police as witnesses in the Niko graft case.

The officials are Debra LaPrevotte Griffith of FBI and Kelvin Duggan and Lloyd Schoepp of Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Judge Sheikh Hafizur Rahman of the Special Judge's Court-9 passed the order after a hearing from the prosecution and defence on an application submitted by ACC on September 12.

Later, the judge set October 10 for next hearing of the case, ACC lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan said.

Attorney General AM Amin Uddin on September 12 submitted the application with the court seeking permission to produce the three officials as witnesses in the Niko graft case.

The ACC filed the case in December 2007, accusing Khaleda and several others of abusing power to award a gas exploration and extraction deal to Canadian company Niko when she was prime minister between 2001 and 2006.

On May 5, 2008, the ACC pressed charges against 11 people, including Khaleda Zia, accusing them of causing a loss of more than Tk13,000 crore to the state exchequer by signing that deal.

Ensure gender-inclusive infrastructures

Speakers tell workshop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Infrastructural designs and implementation must be inclusive and accessible for all genders, especially women and non-binary individuals, to enhance gender equality and achieve SDG 5, said speakers at a workshop yesterday.

They made the remarks at an event titled "Pathways to Progress: Strengthening Bangladesh through Gender Responsive and Resilient Infrastructure", jointly organised by United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and UN Women, held at a hotel in the capital.

The chief guest, Dr Md Sarwar Bari, director general of the Local Government Division's Monitoring, Inspection, and Evaluation Wing, said gender-responsive infrastructure is a fundamental aspect of sustainable development.

"We need to acknowledge that infrastructure is not gender-neutral. So, we must ensure that our infrastructure-related investments promote gender equality and social inclusion," he said.

Infrastructure should enhance the safety and security of women and girls. Adequate street lighting, well-maintained public spaces, and reliable public transportation are essential to minimise the fear of violence and harassment, he added.

Gwyn Lewis, UN resident coordinator in Bangladesh, said gender mainstreaming in infrastructure is vital because it is not just about physical structures but also about meeting the diverse needs of the communities, ensuring equal access to essential services, and uplifting

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

A group of women gather at an OMS truck, after waiting for hours to purchase daily essentials at lower prices. The continuous rise in prices of commodities has left many people struggling to make ends meet. The photo was taken in the capital's Khilgaon area yesterday.

First test-tube baby doing well at DMCH

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Doctors at Dhaka Medical College Hospital recently reported that their first ever "test-tube baby" is in good health. The girl is the first child to be born using the in vitro fertilization (IVF) method at any public hospital in the country.

"This marks the first successful attempt. Both baby and mother are doing well," Prof Dr Fatema Rahman, head of the Infertility Department at DMCH told The Daily Star yesterday.

She shared that the success rate of IVF is around 30 percent.

"Given that IVF is an expensive and lengthy procedure, having such facilities at DMCH can offer hope to many infertile couples, who cannot afford the costs at private facilities," she added.

According to Dr Fatema, the primary cost associated with IVF is related to medication.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Raisul Huq Bahar's death anniv today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

Today is the fifth death anniversary of AKM Raisul Huq Bahar, a freedom fighter and journalist.

Bahar was born on April 1, 1952 at Companiganj, Noakhali.

He died of cardiac arrest at a hospital in the port city on September 18, 2018.

Bahar was a guerilla commander and led many operations including Kaibalyadham Railway Bridge Operation at Pahartoli, Chattogram in the 1971 Liberation War.

Before joining journalism in 1972, he was an accounts officer of Chattogram Port. He was the Chattogram bureau chief of The Daily Star (2010-2015). He also served the Suprobhat Bangladesh and Dainik Purbokone as associate editor.

BFUJ urges Noab

FROM PAGE 3

requests, the wages of journalists and employees are not being paid as per the latest wage board award and those remain in arrears," they said in the press release.

Noting that Noab members alone owe approximately Tk 9 billion to journalists and newspaper employees, the BFUJ leaders said that they already sent letters to Noab and BSP with the demand for payment of the arrears.

At present, among different professionals, journalists and employees working at media outlets are most deprived, said Omar Faruque and Dip Azad. Therefore, if they get their dues, a little comfort would come to their lives, they added.

The BFUJ leaders sought cooperation from the government to realise the just dues of the journalists and newspaper employees.

Rajshahi OC closed

FROM PAGE 5

When she went to the police station to file a complaint against the trio, OC Alam took her to his house and demanded money, according to the statement.

"If you can give me Tk 2 lakh, I will record the case and arrest them," her complaint quoted the OC.

Besides, the OC asked for an additional Tk 5.70 lakh from her so that she didn't have to face any narcotics cases herself, it added.

Sahara recorded the conversation with the OC on her mobile phone, which she mentioned in her complaint.

3 fraudsters held

FROM PAGE 3

According to the case statement, one Saiful Islam, a trader from Chandpur, and his relative Abdul Mannan were duped into giving the gang Tk 20 lakh as an investment to become partners in their supposed 'watch company.'The duo also sold their land to the fraudsters, unaware of the fact that the so-called company didn't even exist in the first place.

Soon after Saiful handed over the money, everyone involved in the scheme switched off their phones and vanished in thin air. Realising that they had been conned, Saiful managed to track down one of the gang members in Uttara and informed the police.

Later, Abdul Mannan filed the case with Airport Police Station on July 30.

Bari has six fraud cases against him and was out on bail.

The PBI official said that Bari used to introduce himself as a big businessman. He used to live in Malaysia. After returning from there in 2013, he started scamming people.

CAAB owes Tk 1,192cr

FROM PAGE 3

"Necessary steps will be taken following a feasibility study," he added.

Meanwhile, the parliamentary committee yesterday also recommended widening the road from Cox's Bazar airport to the city on an urgent basis. It also recommended beautification of the road.

It also suggested maintaining the cleanliness of the Cox's Bazar beach and directed coordinated actions of authorities concerned to implement the recommended works.

Awami League MP RAM Obaidul Muktadir Chowdhury chaired the meeting. Committee members Mosharraf Hossain, Ashek Ullah, Syeda Rubina Akhtar, Kaniz Fatema Ahmed participated in the meeting.

JS BODY ON ROADS

Meanwhile, the parliamentary committee on the road, transport and bridges ministry yesterday wanted to know why the same contractors get work under the roads and highway ministry repeatedly.

The parliamentary watchdog asked the ministry to submit an investigation report in the next meeting in this regard.

Jatiya Party MP and chairman of the standing committee Rawsan Ara Manna presided over the meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

Committee members Md Abu Zahir, Md Salim Uddin Tarafder, Sheikh Salahuddin, Rabeya Alim and Marina Jahan participated in the meeting.

Three women

FROM PAGE 5

and whose contributions and achievements require renewed emphasis."

The event featured songs, recitations, dance performances, and theatrical presentations. Excerpts from Nurjahan Murshid's writings, as well as writings about her life, were presented by Nishat Jahan Rana, Ajoy Roy, and Sharmeen Murshid.

Nurjahan Murshid (May 22, 1924-September 1, 2003) is remembered for her activism and writings aimed at empowering women.

She also served as a minister in the first cabinet of post-independence Bangladesh and was one of the initial members of parliament for the Jukta Front in 1954.

CHT students want

FROM PAGE 5

Dhaka University campus yesterday.

"The educational institutions, especially schools and colleges in CHT, do not have enough teachers and developed infrastructure. As a result, students in the CHT are not receiving proper education they deserve," said Dipok Shil, president of Bangladesh Chhatra Union, demanding the issue to be resolved promptly.

Rumel Chakma, assistant general secretary of PCPCP, said, "The education system in the CHT is in a fragile state due to a shortage of teachers, classroom crises, and housing issues in primary and secondary schools, and colleges."

According to the CHT Peace Accord, primary and secondary levels of education were supposed to be handed over to the Hill District Councils, but only primary level education has been delegated so far, he said.

Rumel alleged that the district councils are hiring unskilled teachers through corrupt practices.

Alik Mri, president of Bangladesh Adivasi Chhatra Sangram Parishad, Imran Noor, organising secretary of Bangladesh Chhatra Maitree, Moushumi Chakma, organising secretary of Dhaka City Hill Women's Federation, and Aung Shwe Sing Marma, general secretary of Bangladesh Marma Students' Council, also addressed the event, among others.

First test-tube

FROM PAGE 3

"We utilised government funding to supply a significant portion of the medication, which minimised the overall cost," she added.

The first test-tube baby in Bangladesh was born in 2001 at a private facility.

Ensure gender

FROM PAGE 3

women, girls, and marginalised groups.

Gitanjali Singh, UN Women's country representative, said gender-sensitive infrastructure is required for a smart Bangladesh.

Sudhir Muralidharan, country manager of UNOPS Bangladesh, said, "Women and girls often bear the brunt of gender-blind infrastructure, facing disproportionate challenges and barriers. Gender mainstreaming must be prioritised at all phases of our infrastructure projects."

The workshop also showcased its ground-breaking Gender Marker Toolkit, aimed at increasing gender mainstreaming in all aspects of infrastructure development.

Students suffer

FROM PAGE 5

and have been advocating for the construction of a new building that could double as a flood shelter, with the ground floor for sheltering flood-affected people and upper floors for conducting classes," she explained.

"I applied for it last year as well. Even during a severe flood in 2021, no action was taken. This year, I have once again sent school pictures to the relevant authorities. If they don't take the necessary steps, what can I do?" she questioned.

"I've heard that this school ranks 27th on the list of schools needing new buildings. If this one is at 27, then who should be at the top of the list?" she said.

"Hopefully, we will be able to resume classes next week if the situation improves," she added.

"Although I recently took office, I have already visited the school. Rashra Government Primary School is not the only one in this situation; several other schools in the upazila are also submerged," said Anjum Ara Begum Bithi, the Basail upazila education officer.

"These schools need to be rebuilt like flood shelters," she emphasised.

When contacted, Abul Kalam Azad, the district primary education officer in Tangail, stated that they are aware of the problem and that new buildings, similar to flood shelters, will be constructed for the schools in the area.

বাংলাদেশ মুক্তিযোদ্ধা কল্যাণ ট্রাস্ট
শিল্প ও বাণিজ্য বিভাগ
স্বাধীনতা ভবন
৮৮, মতিঝিল বাণিজ্যিক এলাকা, ঢাকা-১০০০

দরপত্র স্মারক নম্বর ৪৮.০১.০০০০.২০১.২২.১০৪.১৯.২৫৩ — তারিখঃ ১৭/০৯/২০২৩

০১	যা বিক্রয়ের জন্য বিজ্ঞপ্তি	ট্রাস্ট আধুনিক হাসপাতালের যন্ত্রপাতি ও অন্যান্য মেডিক্যাল ইকুইপম্যান্ট মালামাল বিক্রয় বিজ্ঞপ্তি।
০২	দরপত্র সিডিউলের মূল্য	৫০০/- (পাঁচশত) টাকা (অফেরতযোগ্য)।
০৩	সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের স্থান	অর্থ বিভাগ, বাংলাদেশ মুক্তিযোদ্ধা কল্যাণ ট্রাস্ট, ৮৮, মতিঝিল বা/এ, ঢাকা।
০৪	সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের তারিখ	আগামী ০২.১০.২০২৩ তারিখ পর্যন্ত (অফিস চলাকালিন সময় ক্রয় করা যাবে)।
০৫	দরপত্র দাখিলের স্থান	শিল্প ও বাণিজ্য বিভাগ, বাংলাদেশ মুক্তিযোদ্ধা কল্যাণ ট্রাস্ট, ৮৮, মতিঝিল বা/এ, ঢাকা।
০৬	দরপত্র দাখিলের সময়	আগামী ০৩-১০-২০২৩ তারিখ বেলা ২-০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
০৭	দরপত্র খোলার সময়	আগামী ০৩-১০-২০২৩ তারিখ বেলা ২-৩০ ঘটিকায় দরদাতাদের সম্মুখে (যদি কেউ উপস্থিত থাকেন)।

সকল দরপত্র আংশিক অথবা সম্পূর্ণ গ্রহণ বা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করেন।

উপ-মহাব্যবস্থাপক
ফোনঃ ৯৫৬৪৯০৩

জিডি-১৪৩১

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation
7-9 Kawran Bazar, Dhaka 1215, Bangladesh

Memo No. 24.03.0000.103.73(4).110.22-131 — Date: 17 September 2023

Corrigendum

Subject:

Corrigendum to the Invitation for Bid (IFB) " Development of Magura Textile Mills Site at Magura, Bangladesh through Public Private Partnership (PPP)"

The following change is hereby made against the IFB issue dated 13 July 2023 on the above project:

Reference Section	Existing Clause	Revised Clause
IFB Page 34, Clause 6.4.1	Bids shall be submitted on or before 12:00 hours BST, on **18 September 2023,** i.e. the "Due Date" to the address provided in section 6.3.11 above, in the manner and form as detailed in this IFB.	Bids shall be submitted on or before 12:00 hours BST, on **18 October 2023,** i.e. the "Due Date" to the address provided in section 6.3.11 above, in the manner and form as detailed in this IFB.

This corrigendum will be the part of IFB Document.

17-9-23
(Kazi Feroz Hossain)
Project Director
Mob: 01781-180656, E-mail: feroz775@gmail.com

ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন
নগর ভবন, ঢাকা
www.dscc.gov.bd

শেখ হাসিনার মূলনীতি
গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি

স্মারক সংখ্যাঃ ৪৬.২০৭.০০০.০৩.০২.২৭১৯.২০১৯-৮১৬ — তারিখঃ ২ আশ্বিন ১৪৩০ বঙ্গাব্দ, ১৭ সেপ্টেম্বর ২০২৩ খ্রিস্টাব্দ

মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সংশোধিত বিজ্ঞপ্তি

ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশনের সহকারী প্রকৌশলী (পুরঃ) পদে ১৮.০৯.২০২৩খ্রিঃ তারিখে অনুষ্ঠেয় মৌখিক পরীক্ষা অনিবার্য কারণবশতঃ পরিবর্তিত সময়সূচি অনুযায়ী গ্রহণ করা হবেঃ

ক্রমি নং	পদ নাম	মৌখিক পরীক্ষার জন্য নির্বাচিত প্রার্থীদের রোল নাম্বারসমূহ					মৌখিক পরীক্ষার তারিখ, সময় ও বার	স্থান
১।	সহকারী প্রকৌশলী (পুর)	১৩০০০১০	১৩০০০৩৪	১৩০০০৪৪	১৩০০০৫৩	১৩০০০৫৯	৯.১০.২০২৩ সোমবার বিকেলঃ ৩:০০মিঃ	মেয়র সভা কক্ষ, নগর ভবন, ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন
		১৩০০০৬৫	১৩০০১০০	১৩০০১১৭	১৩০০১১৮	১৩০০১২৬		
		১৩০০১৩১	১৩০০১৩৭	১৩০০১৪১	১৩০০২০৮	১৩০০২১৭		
		১৩০০৪৬৫	১৩০০৫০২	১৩০০৫১২	১৩০০৫৯০	১৩০০৬১৭		
		১৩০০৬২১	১৩০০৬২৯	১৩০০৭২৯	১৩০০৭৪২	১৩০০৭৭২		
						= ২৫ জন		
২।	সহকারী প্রকৌশলী (পুর)	১৩০০৭৯৩	১৩০০৮২০	১৩০০৯২৫	১৩০১১১৪	১৩০১১৩০	৯.১০.২০২৩ সোমবার বিকেলঃ ৫:০০মিঃ	মেয়র সভা কক্ষ, নগর ভবন, ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন
		১৩০১১৩৪	১৩০১১৬৭	১৩০১১৭২	১৩০১২৪০	১৩০১২৯২		
		১৩০১৩৯২	১৩০১৩৯৭	১৩০১৪০৯	১৩০১৪২৫	১৩০১৫৭৮		
		১৩০১৬১৫	১৩০১৬৩৯	১৩০১৬৪৩	১৩০১৬৭২	১৩০১৭০৪		
		১৩০১৭৫০	১৩০১৭৫৩	১৩০১৭৬৮	১৩০১৭৭৪	১৩০১৭৭৮		
						= ২৫ জন		

২। নিম্নবর্ণিত শর্তাবলী মৌখিক পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের ক্ষেত্রে আবশ্যিকভাবে অনুসরণ করতে হবেঃ

(১) সকল শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতার সনদপত্র, জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র/জন্মনিবন্ধন সনদ ও নাগরিকত্ব সনদ এর মূলকপি প্রদর্শন করতে হবে। প্রথম শ্রেণীর গেজেটেড কর্মকর্তা কর্তৃক সত্যায়িত সকল সনদপত্রের একসেট ফটোকপি এবং Online-এ পূরণকৃত আবেদনপত্রের একটি প্রিন্ট কপি দাখিল করতে হবে;

(২) সরকারি/আধা-সরকারি/স্বায়ত্বশাসিত প্রতিষ্ঠানে কর্মরত প্রার্থীকে নিয়োগকারী কর্তৃপক্ষ প্রদত্ত অনাপত্তি/ছাড়পত্রের মূলকপি মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় জমা দিতে হবে;

(৩) পরীক্ষার জন্য নির্ধারিত সময়ের ৩০ মিনিট পূর্বে যথাস্থানে উপস্থিত থাকতে হবে;

(৪) পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের জন্য কোন প্রকার টিএ/ডিএ প্রদান করা হবে না।

আকরামুজ্জামান
সচিব
ঢাকা দক্ষিণ সিটি কর্পোরেশন

ডিএসসিসি/পিআরডি/৭৪/২০২৩-২০২৪
জিডি-১৪২৮

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D-117

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Invitation for Tender

Tenders are invited from interested Bangladeshi registered firms/authorized dealers for supplying of one reconditioned microbus with the following minimum technical specifications:

Vehicle type: Toyota Esquire, Hybrid, GI, Year- Not before 2018, White/Pearl/Silver color, Led head lamp, 7 seat including 2 captain seats, 5D,AT,AAC,PS,PW,Air Bag, ABS, Fog, Navi, Back Monitor, Audio Steering, Precrash safety System, 1790cc, Cruise control, left & Right Power Slide Door, Seat Heater, Winker Mirror, Nickle Handle, Idling stop, Alloy wheel, wheel base, mm 2850, turning radius, m 5.5 wheel spacing front 1480 rear 1480.

The tender schedule may be obtained from the AF website **www.arannayk.org**

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer
Department of Public Health Engineering
Rangamati Division, Rangamati

উন্নয়নের গণতন্ত্র
শেখ হাসিনার মূলমন্ত্র

Invitation e-Tender

Tender Notice Memo No. 46.03.2200.061.14.026.23-323 — Date: 17/09/2023

1	Ministry/Division	Local Government Division
2	Agency	Department of Public Health Engineering
3	e-Tender ID	ID No: 875011, 875020, 875160, 875165, 875171
4	Description of works: Installation of deep tube well with submersible pump/Installation of community base piped water supply scheme with submersible pump/Construction of twin pit latrine, Repair of Ringwell/Repair of Gravity Flow System (GFS) under UNICEF supported emergency WASH response program of Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE), Rangamati District.	
5	Name, designation & address of official inviting tender	Engr Parag Barua, Executive Engineer, DPHE, Rangamati Division, Rangamati.
6	This is online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and on offline/hard copies will be accepted. Interested persons/firms can see details in the: www.eprocure.gov.bd	

Engr. Parag Barua
Executive Engineer
Department of Public Health Engineering
Rangamati Division, Rangamati

GD-1425

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation
7-9 Kawran Bazar, Dhaka 1215, Bangladesh

Memo No. 24.03.0000.103.06(5).110.22-132 — Date: 17 September 2023

Corrigendum

Subject:

Corrigendum to the Invitation for Bid (IFB) "Development of Dost Textile Mills Site at Feni, Bangladesh through Public Private Partnership (PPP)"

The following change is hereby made against the IFB issue dated 13 July 2023 on the above project:

Reference Section	Existing Clause	Revised Clause
Page 34, Clause 6.4.1	Bids shall be submitted on or before 12:00 hours BST, on **18 September 2023,** i.e. the "Due Date" to the address provided in section 6.3.11 above, in the manner and form as detailed in this IFB.	Bids shall be submitted on or before 12:00 hours BST, on **18 October 2023**, i.e. the "Due Date" to the address provided in section 6.3.11 above, in the manner and form as detailed in this IFB.

This corrigendum will be the part of IFB Document.

17-9-23
(Kazi Feroz Hossain)
Project Director
Mob: 01781-180656, E-mail: feroz775@gmail.com

Janata Bank PLC
Estate Department
Head Office, Dhaka

Invitation for Enlistment.

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Finance/Finance Division
2	Agency	Janata Bank PLC.
3	Procuring Entity Name	Deputy General Manager
4	Procuring Entity District	Dhaka
5	Invitation for	New Enlistment (Civil, Electrical & Mechanical group)
6	Invitation Ref No.	JBPLC/ED/Contractor Enlistment/2023/562
7	Date	17/09/2023
8	Procurement Method	Limited Tendering Method
9	Budget and Source of Funds	Janata Bank PLC's own fund.
10	Application Selling Date and Time Application Receiving Date and Time	Before 05.00 PM of 10/10/2023. Up to 02.30 PM of 11/10/2023.
11	Name & Address of the office(s) -Application Form Availability - Receiving Application Form	 Estate Department, Janata Bank PLC, Head Office, Dhaka. Tender boxes at Estate Department, Janata Bank PLC, Head Office (5th floor), 110-Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000.
12	Eligibility of Applicant	1. The contractor firm should be Proprietorship/ Partnership/Limited Company. In case of Limited company it should be registered in Joint Stock Company. 2. The contractor firm should have up-to-date trade license, VAT & Income Tax certificates. 3. The contractor firm should have at least one office set up either in own space or on a rental space (at least 02(two) years of rental agreement should be remained), which will be physically visited by the bank authority. 4. The contractor firm should have minimum 01(one) no. of Diploma Civil/Electrical/Mechanical Engineer having minimum 05(five) years of Experience for the enlistment of Civil/Electrical/Mechanical group respectively. All firms should have minimum 02 (two) nos. of skilled labours having minimum five years of Experience & 03(three) nos. of non-skilled labors 5. The contractor firm must have previous 03(three) years of working Experience in the related field in Government /Semi-government/ Autonomous body/Scheduled Banks in a single Experience certificate including work order. Those who have not 03(three) years of experience need not to apply.
13	Brief Description of Goods or Works	Design & decoration (civil works) for all branch/office premises; supplying-fitting-fixing of Electrical related works; supply and installation of Air Conditioners, for all branch/office premises of Janata Bank PLC.
14	Brief Description of Related or Physical Services	Repair & Maintenance of own buildings, all branch/office premises; servicing of Air Conditioners for all branch/office premises of Janata Bank PLC.
15	Price of Application Form (Tk.)	Tk.500/-(five hundred) only in the form of Cash.
16	Name & Designation of Official Inviting Application	Md. Monzurul Alam, Deputy General Manager.
17	Address & Contact details of Official Inviting Application	Estate Department, Janata Bank PLC, Head Office (5th floor), 110-Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000. Phone: 02-55110085
18	a. The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all the applications. b. Contractors are requested to collect and submit different applications for 3(three) different groups (Civil, Electrical and Mechanical). c. No application will be received after 02.30 PM. of 11/10/2023.. d. Application **including any kind of false or fabricated documents, information or hiding any information** will be treated as void and invalid.	

17.09.2023
Md. Monzurul Alam
Deputy General Manager

GD- 1427

Three women honoured for remarkable contributions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three pioneering women were honoured with the Uttarsury-Nurjahan Murshid Smrity Padak-2023 yesterday for their remarkable contributions to education, rights, and culture.

The awards were presented during a programme titled "Ek Jiboner Alo", commemorating the 20th death anniversary of Nurjahan Murshid, a prominent women's rights activist, at the Chhayanaut auditorium in the capital.

The awardees are: language movement activist and educationist Pratibha Mutsuddi; artiste and mentor Krishnakumari Sinha, for her role in preserving the Manipuri culture by ensuring the continuation of the Raashleela and other traditional performances; and human rights activist Hameeda Hossain, who worked towards rehabilitation of the Biranganas and for development of traditional handicraft sector by co-founding Karika.

Sharmeen Murshid, the secretary of Uttarsury: Nurjahan-Sarwar Murshid Cultural Centre, remarked, "We are recognising individuals who emerged as architects of the future during the 1950s and 60s. Their cultural, political, artistic, literary, and scholarly contributions have led the nation towards an era of enlightenment. This award signifies our commitment to acknowledging those who are less celebrated

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Students from Gausia Muniria Tahfizul Model Academy take to the beach to play football on their holiday. Their faces flush with joy, it is clear that activities like these bring people closer together. The photo was taken at Gohira, Anwara in Chattogram recently. PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Rajshahi OC closed over extortion allegation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Rajshahi*

Officer-in-charge of Rajshahi's Charghat Model Police Station has been closed for his alleged attempt to extort money from a woman.

He has been attached to the district police lines for the incident on Saturday after an audio clip went viral, said Additional SP Md Rofiqul Alam yesterday.

The step against OC Mahbubul Alam came hours after the woman lodged a complaint with Superintendent of Rajshahi Police Md Saifur Rahman, he added.

"We found the allegations true in our primary investigation, and the OC's voice in the audio clip is authentic," said the additional SP.

In her complaint, the plaintiff, Sahara Begum, 27, said that OC Mahbubul demanded Tk 7.7 lakh from her and threatened to implicate her in a narcotics case otherwise.

Sahara's husband, Abdul Alim Kalu, has long assisted law enforcement agencies in drug arrests and seizures, developing an enmity with three top drug kingpins in Charghat, she told The Daily Star.

The OC Alam himself controls the upazila's narcotics trade through the trio, and her husband is languishing in jail in a false drug case because of them, states her complaint.

After her husband was jailed, the kingpins came to her house, demanded money, and threatened to send her to jail too if she didn't pay, the complaint added.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

CHT students want 5pc quota at univs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Students from Chattogram Hill Tracts (CHT) at a rally yesterday demanded the authorities concerned to introduce a five percent education quota for them at all universities.

They also demanded appointment of skilled teachers and construction of new infrastructures at schools and colleges in CHT areas that are currently running amid shortage of teachers and poor facilities.

They called upon the authorities concerned of the government for full implementation of the CHT Peace Accord.

Parbatya Chattogram Pahari Chhatra Parishad (PCPCP) and Hill Women's Federation jointly organised the students' rally at the base of Aparajeyo Bangla on

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Students suffer as school stays submerged

Construction of new building demanded

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Tangail*

As the floodwaters receded a couple of days ago, following several weeks of flooding due to rising water levels during the monsoon, Tanzila Akhtar Tanni went to her school, only to find it still closed and waterlogged. Water hyacinths had completely taken over the entire compound.

"While other schools are open, ours remains closed. The compound is still underwater, and water hyacinths are floating everywhere. It's even difficult to navigate a boat near the school," said Tanni, a fourth-grader at Rashra Government Primary School in Tangail's Basail upazila.

"We want to study in a pleasant environment, but here we are falling behind others; because our school is shut due to waterlogging," she lamented.

Basail is primarily a low-lying area among the 12 upazilas in the Tangail district. Every year during the monsoon, educational institutions, along with other structures, become submerged under rising water levels, preventing students from accessing their schools and colleges, and thus disrupting their academic activities.

Locals, as well as teachers and students, have been requesting for the construction of new buildings for the institutions, similar to flood shelters, but their pleas have gone unanswered.

Meanwhile, teachers and students must use boats to reach their schools during the monsoon.

Rashra Government Primary School is one such institution facing this predicament.

Confirming the situation, Abdul Kader, the former president of the school's management committee, said, "For the past two years, we have been hearing promises of a new school building. However, no progress has been made in this regard."

He added, "A new school building should be constructed soon for the sake of the students."

"The school building is submerged under a foot of water. There are water hyacinths floating all over the school premises. Recently, we had to arrange three tests of the second terminal examination at a nearby kindergarten," said Hosne Ara Akhtar Popy, the head teacher of the school.

"I joined this school in 2018

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

Nazrul Islam's death anniv today

STAR REPORT

Today is the 52nd death anniversary of Shaheed Engineer Nazrul Islam, a freedom fighter, said a press release.

His wife Prof Hazera Nazrul has arranged a Qurankhwani and a milad mahfil before Maghrib prayers at 204/A, Gulshan Tejgaon Link Road, Dhaka.

During the 1971 Liberation War, he conducted an operation to blow up five power stations in Dhaka. He was also an adviser on electrical and power issues to the then newly-formed Bangladesh government in 1971.

The Hatkhola road has been officially named after him and Shaheed Nazrul Girls School was established in his own district Shariatpur.

Office of the Brahmanbaria Pourashava
Dist: Brahmanbaria
Improving Urban Governance and Infrastructure Programme (IUGIP)
Memo No. Brah.Poura./Engg./2023/338 Date: 17/09/2023

e-Tender Notice: 04/2023-2024 (OTM)

e-Tender are invited through e-GP Portal (https://www.eprocure.gov.bd) by Executive Engineer, Brahmanbaria Pourashava for the procurement of following package, which will be available at e-GP website (https://www.eprocure.gov.bd) from date: 18-Sep-2023 12:00.

SL No.	Tender ID	Package No.	Scheme name	Last selling date & time	Closing, opening date & time
1.	865530	IUGIP/BRAH/ UT-DR/ 02/2023	Construction/Improvement of Roads of 3,601m in 5 locations, RCC Cross Drain of Three (3) Nos. (Size: 1m X 1m), and RCC Drains of 1,665m in 3 locations at Brahmanbaria Pourashava, District: Brahmanbaria.	22-Oct-2023 16:00	23-Oct-2023 14:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP System Portal (https://www.eprocure.gov.bd).

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

Md. Kawsar Ahmed
Executive Engineer
Brahmanbaria Pourashava
Brahmanbaria
Tel: 0851-58828

GD-1430

PRAYER TIMING
SEPTEMBER 18

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

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

"শেখ হাসিনার নির্দেশ জলবায়ু সহিষ্ণু বাংলাদেশ"

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Bangladesh Forest Department.
Sustainable Forests and Livelihoods (SUFAL) Project
Chattogram South Forest Division, Chattogram

Memo No: 22.01.0000.731.29.001.23. Date: 17/09/2023

e-Tender Notice

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

Tender ID No.	Package No	Description	Online Notice Publication date & time	Online Tender last selling Date and Time	Online Tender Closing Date
875318	GD-1	Supply of Poly-propylene bags for Nursery raising	18-09-2023 10.00 AM	01-10-2023 17.00 PM	02-10-2023 14.00 PM
875315	GD-2	Supply of Decomposed Cowdung, Loamy Soil, Chemical Fertilizer & Insecticide for Nursery raising	18-09-2023 10.00 AM	01-10-2023 17.00 PM	02-10-2023 14.00 PM
875320	GD-3	Supply of Bariala Bamboo, Bamboo Chatai, Sungrass, Temporary Shed, MS Wire, Nursery Equipment's & Water Supply materials for Nursery raising.	18-09-2023 10.00 AM	01-10-2023 17.00 PM	02-10-2023 14.00 PM

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP system portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required.

The fees for selling/downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP system portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd, +8809609112233, +8801762625528, +8801762625529)

17.09.23
Abdullah-Al-Mamun
Divisional Forest Officer
Chattogram South Forest Division, Chattogram
Phone: 02333- 357328

GD- 1429

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Upazila Health & Family Planning Officer
Dakshin Surma, Sylhet
Email: southsurma@uhfpo.dghs.gov.bd

Ref No. UHC/DakshinSurma/e-tender/2023-24/672 Date: 16.09.2023

e-Tender Notice

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline/ Hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-tender, please register on e-GP system portal (https://www.eprocure.gov.bd), For more details, please contract support desk contract numbers.

e-Tender are invited in e-GP system portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd) by Dr. Md. Mainul Ahsan , UH&FPO, Dakshin Surma, Sylhet for the Procurement of;

Tender Id	Name of Goods	Tender/Proposal Last Selling Date & Time	Tender/Proposal Closing/Opening Date & Time
875240	Procurement of Medicine (Non EDCL) for the F.Y 2023-2024 at Upazila Health Complex, Dakshin Surma, Sylhet.	02-Oct-2023 16:00	03-Oct-2023 13:00
875241	Procurement of Medical Equipment for the F.Y 2023-2024 at Upazila Health Complex, Dakshin Surma, Sylhet.	02-Oct-2023 16:00	03-Oct-2023 13:00
875242	Procurement of Gauge, Bandgae, Cotton etc for the F.Y 2023-2024 at Upazila Health Complex, Dakshin Surma, Sylhet.	02-Oct-2023 16:00	03-Oct-2023 13:00
875243	Procurement of Linen for the F.Y 2023-2024 at Upazila Health Complex, Dakshin Surma, Sylhet.	02-Oct-2023 16:00	03-Oct-2023 13:00
875244	Procurement of Chemical Reagents for the F.Y 2023-2024 at Upazila Health Complex, Dakshin Surma, Sylhet.	02-Oct-2023 16:00	03-Oct-2023 13:00
875245	Procurement of Furniture for the F.Y 2023-2024 atUpazila Health Complex, Dakshin Surma, Sylhet.	02-Oct-2023 16:00	03-Oct-2023 13:00

e-Tender details can be downloaded on e-GP system portal (https://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for pursuer.

e-Tender will be accepted only as stated in above list; accepted tenders will be opened online immediate as stated in above list.

16/09/023
(Dr. Md. Mainul Ahsan)
Upazila Health & Family Planning Officer
Dakshin Surma, Sylhet.

GD- 1426

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

'1971: Shei Shob Din'

Hridi Huq's herculean effort brings Liberation War to life

A lot of the times, producers and directors tend to neglect their own product while making government-granted films, and tend to just get done with it without accounting for the actual quality, which was far from the case in *1971 Shei Shob Din*.

RAFI HOSSAIN

There has been a stereotype established amongst the audience that the directors, who emerge into the world of cinema from television medium, fail to bring a cinematic essence in their works.

To my understanding, one of the major reasons behind that is—they fail to understand that the way of representing a story on the silver screen has significant additional elements that need to be paid attention to. These are—framing, art direction, costume, makeup and sound design—which create an individualistic language in cinema.

The reason that I bring this up is, after watching ***1971 Shei Shob Din*** (initially released on August 18, countrywide), I had to give Hridi Huq her due props for nailing all the essential elements of cinema, that too on her first try.

A lot of the times, producers and directors tend to neglect their own product while making government-granted films, and tend to just get done with it without accounting for the actual quality, which was far from the case in ***1971 Shei Shob Din***.

Hridi Huq's cast selection, and each crewmembers deserve salute. For instance, we have always known Litu Anam as an actor. Although he acted in this film, he is also the art director of the project, which many were unaware of.

Personally, I became nostalgic due to the ambience and costume of the film, since I have personally witnessed the post-Liberation time of Bangladesh while growing up. I could feel the essence of the time through the visual depiction of the film's environment, the way the female characters draped sharee, and much more. The entire film was shot in Thakurgaon, and I have to appreciate their choice of the location.

Kamruzzaman Ronnie, the chief assistant director, also played the role of one of the cinematographers. Not only that, he also lent his voice to the beautiful song ***Jachchho Kothay*** in the film, and his efforts were herculean.

Coming back to the captain of the ship, the way she managed and controlled the entire team is commendable. Her research on the script was top notch and this reflects on the screen very well. Although the story has originally been written by her father, Enamul Haque, Hridi has completely scripted the film from the ground up.

Even though all of the cast did their job well, a special mention for Ferdous is absolutely necessary, as I feel like it was his most believable work since ***Hothath Brishty***.

I felt this is the right approach to present the Liberation War to the new generation, who have been brought up by listening to stories of the horrific event.

Of course, there will be research and documentaries on the event, but to reach a wide range of masses, films are noteworthy, to say the least. We really need more formidable efforts like this, if we are to retell the stories of our great Liberation War.

Rafi Hossain *is a journalist and former Editor of Star Showbiz, The Daily Star.*

'Jawan 2': Vikram Rathore to get spin-off, SRK as lead

Director Atlee's Bollywood debut, ***Jawan***, smashed box office records by raking in over Rs 735 crore globally within just nine days. The movie's overwhelming success has prompted Atlee to announce his plans for ***Jawan 2***, once again featuring Shah Rukh Khan.

During an exclusive interview with Pinkvilla, Atlee also revealed his eagerness to create a spin-off centred around Vikram Rathore's character.

"Without a doubt, Vikram Rathore is my hero, and I aspire to craft a spin-off for him someday. I have a deep affection for strong father characters, as I am a daddy's boy," the filmmaker remarked.

Jawan concludes with a promise for a sequel, as Azad and Vikram Rathore prepare to embark on another mission, this time targeting corruption within the Swiss Bank system.

Pori Moni and Mahfuz Ahmed to pair up for Chayanika Chowdhury's web film

Renowned director Chayanika Chowdhury has informed The Daily Star recently that she is counting the days until she begins filming her scheduled web-film, starring Pori Moni and Mahfuz Ahmed.

The ***Prohelika*** director added that she is still considering a suitable title for the web-film.

Chayanika confessed to being rather exuberant about the story of the production, revolving around a commoner falling in love with a superstar. She also hinted that the genre of it will mostly be a love story mixed with thrills.

COUNTRYWIDE

Barguna road in awful condition

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Patuakhali*

Hundreds of villagers in Barguna's Taltali upazila have been suffering immensely since an important road at Baro Amkhola village has not been repaired for long.

Protesting the delay in repair work, local people have continued their agitation and even planted paddy seedlings on the muddy road on Saturday to press for their demand.

Villagers said about 2,500 residents of the village use the awfully dilapidated two-kilometre-long road to go to their destinations including the upazila headquarters.

During the monsoon, villagers have to suffer a long as the road turns muddy and becomes completely unusable.

School and college going students, elderly ones and critical patients are the worst sufferers due to the present condition of the road.

Moreover, local farmers have to bear the brunt as most of them cannot take their agricultural products to nearby markets.

One of the villagers Mosharraf Hossain said despite their suffering for long, no initiative has been taken to repair the road.

"We have urged the local chairman and members on several occasions to repair the road, but nothing has been done so far," Mosharraf said.

Finding no other alternative, agitated locals planted paddy seedlings on the muddy road on Saturday to press home their demand, he added.

Aleya Begum, another resident of the village, said the road needs to be renovated immediately to reduce the sufferings of hundreds of villagers.

Mizanur Rahman, assistant teacher at Dr AKM Majumdar Government Primary School, said the school kids have to suffer immensely to reach the institution during the rainy season. Sonakata Union Parishad (UP) Chairman Yunus Faraji said decision has been taken to repair the unpaved road within the current fiscal year.

People of Baro Amkhola village in Barguna's Taltali upazila plant paddy seedlings on the muddy road protesting the authorities' indifference to repair it. PHOTO: STAR

Gita Mehta

FROM PAGE 12

Critiquing the exoticisation of India, Mehta writes, "The upmarket Indian hoteliers didn't try to make India a home away from home. They set out to show that India was infinitely more glamorous than anything at home."

Mehta wryly observed how for "an enchanted travel expert" such spectacle confirms that this is how they always "dreamed India would be".

Her other notable titles include "Raj" (1989), "A River Sutra" (1993), and "Snakes and Ladders" (1997).

To the Bangladeshi audience however, Mehta is perhaps better known for her coverage of the 1971 Liberation War for the American television network NBC, where she worked as a war correspondent from 1970 to 1971.

She also directed the documentary film "Dateline Bangladesh" based on her time stationed in Bangladesh during the war.

It opens with the immortal lines from Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who asked, "Do you know that nobody can suppress 70 million people? That when 70 million people are determined to achieve something, nobody can suppress it?".

A powerful documentary detailing the critical and crucial history of the birth of a nation, Dateline Bangladesh bears witness to both the horrors and the triumph of 1971.

Born in 1943, Mehta studied in India and later at the University of Cambridge. She was married to Sony Mehta, former head of the publishing house Alfred A Knopf. She leaves behind a son.

With Mehta's passing, Bangladesh loses a valued friend and the literary world, a powerful voice.

Siraj sets up India's 8th Asia Cup

FROM PAGE 1

he made the ball swing and seam in overcast conditions to easily surpass his previous ODI best of 4-32.

He got Pathum Nissanka for two and then struck on successive balls to send back Sadeera Samarawickrama (0) and Charith Asalanka (0), but a hat-trick was averted.

Dhananjaya de Silva hit a boundary but Siraj had him caught behind with the next ball, much to the delight of the Indian fans.

Siraj got his fifth with the wicket of Sri Lankan captain Dasun Shanaka, equalling an ODI record for the fastest five-wicket haul from his first 16 balls of the match.

Kusal Mendis hit three boundaries before becoming Siraj's sixth wicket, although Sri Lanka avoided the lowest-ever ODI total of 35 by Zimbabwe.

After Virat Kohli's overthrow went for a boundary, and six more runs to the total, Sri Lanka pushed past their lowest ODI total of 43 scored against South Africa in 2012.

Hardik Pandya took three wickets to wrap up the innings in just 90 minutes.

Mendis' 17 and an unbeaten 13 by Dushan Hemantha were the only double-digit scores in an innings that featured five ducks.

Shubman Gill, a centurion in the previous match, began with a boundary in the opening over on his way to an unbeaten 27 and fellow opener Ishan Kishan (23) soon joined the party.

The left-handed Ishan smashed fast bowler Matheesha Pathirana for two successive boundaries, and three more in a row from Gill gave India victory in the tournament's shortest final.

Rohit Sharma's India dropped just one match in the tournament after they lost an inconsequential Super Four contest against Bangladesh.

Sri Lanka, who won the previous edition of the Asia Cup played in the T20 format, came in as underdogs and snuck into the Super Fours with a dramatic win over Afghanistan but went down without a fight in their 11th final.

12 hurt as microbus

FROM PAGE 1

However, Natore Sadar Police Station Officer-in-Charge Nasim Ahmed told our correspondent that the microbus did not belong to BNP activists and that there were no casualties.

AL activist Koyel denied the allegation and said he had been with local lawmaker Shafiqul Islam Shimul at various programmes since morning.

Asked about a photo in which he was seen searching a vehicle, Koyel said they searched vehicles at Madrasa intersection in the morning to see if BNP activists were leaving Natore. No untoward incident occurred, he added.

Natore district AL General Secretary Shariful Islam Ramzan said neither BNP nor AL had any scheduled programmes in Natore. BNP leaders themselves might have set fire to the microbus or there might have been an explosion, he added.

Fire service official Akhter said, "The actual reason for the fire is not known. It will be known after investigation."

Meanwhile, speaking at a programme before the road march in Arulia of Bogura, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said the biggest theft is the theft of the right to vote and the AL was planning to steal again.

He said people would not allow their right to vote to be stolen again.

Three pro-BNP bodies--Jubo Dal, Swechchhasebak Dal, and Chhatra Dal-- organised the road march to press home the party's one-point demand, the resignation of the government and general elections under a neutral interim government.

Fakhrul said, "After 52 years of independence, we have to struggle again. Why do we have to struggle? We have to fight to get our right to vote, right to have rice; and right to live."

He said if Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is in power, fair polls are impossible.

"People across the world now believe that the last two elections in Bangladesh were not fair.

"But what are they doing? They are filing false cases and arresting people like before so that the opposition party cannot run in the election. They filed false cases against 40 lakh people," Fakhrul said.

Alleging that the government is not providing treatment to BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, he said, "The doctor said that she needs a liver transplant if she is to be saved. It is not possible without going abroad .... "

Fakhrul demanded immediate release of Khaleda so that she could have treatment abroad.

The road march started around noon and traversed 129km to Rajshahi.

Our Bogura and Natore correspondents contributed to this report.

7-year-old murdered

FROM PAGE 12

Road area for a passenger around 8:45am, a girl came to me and said that my daughter was found dead at the house."

"I rushed to the house and found my daughter lying on the bed. My cousin and neighbours had already reached the spot. They told me that her hands and legs were tied and a black bruise was found on her neck.

"My cousin lives beside our house, and she went to see my daughter but found the door locked from inside. When she kept knocking, the door was suddenly opened, and a man came out and ran away," said Baker.

Sub-Inspector Riyadus Salehin of Chandgaon Police Station told The Daily Star, "On information we went to the spot and found the body on the bed. Locals chased the man and spotted him in a pond 500 metres from the victim's house. Later, we detained him and took him to CMCH for primary treatment.

"Primarily, we suspect that she was strangled after rape. But without a post-mortem, it is difficult to confirm," he added.

Libya flood survivors face risks from mines

Death toll rises to 11,300 in Derna, with another 10,100 missing

REUTERS, *Derna*

People whose homes were swept away by flooding in Libya's eastern city of Derna a week ago faced the dilemma yesterday of whether to stay despite a lack of fresh water or flee through areas where landmines have been displaced by the torrents.

Thousands of people are feared to have died after two dams above Derna broke on September 10, bringing down residential blocks lining a usually dry river bed as people slept. Many bodies were washed out to sea and more than 1,000 have already been buried in mass graves, according to the UN.

A report by the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said Libyan authorities had detected at least 55 children poisoned from drinking polluted water in Derna,

where the homeless were surviving in makeshift shelters, schools or packed into the houses of relatives or friends.

Floodwaters had shifted landmines and other ordnance left over from years of conflict, posing an extra risk to the displaced people on the move, it said.

The OCHA report said at least 11,300 people had died and another 10,100 people were missing in Derna after Storm Daniel swept over the Mediterranean and into the city and other coastal settlements.

Sunrise yesterday revealed a scene of quiet devastation, with piles of rubble cleared to the sides of empty roads along with tangled metal including pieces of wrecked cars. Hamad Awad sat on a blanket on an empty street with a bottle of water and bedding alongside him.

"I am staying in our area trying to clean it and trying to verify who is missing," he said. Entire districts of Derna, with an estimated population of at least 120,000, were swept away or buried in brown mud.

This picture taken yesterday shows a raging fire at the Greater Nile Petroleum Oil Company Tower in Khartoum, Sudan. Battles between the regular army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces intensified, resulting in several key buildings in central Khartoum being set alight.

PHOTO: AFP

'Future of Europe is at stake'

Italy's PM warns after droves of migrants landed on Mediterranean island of Lampedusa

AFP, *Lampedusa*

Italy's prime minister warned yesterday that the "future of Europe is at stake", after droves of migrants landed on the Mediterranean island of Lampedusa.

Thousands of migrants on vessels from the North African coast landed on Italy's southernmost island this week, sparking a crisis that has rekindled debate over the division of responsibility among the EU nations.

At a press conference with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen during a visit to the island, Giorgia Meloni said the bloc needed to work together to face the challenges of uncontrolled migration.

It is "the future that Europe wants for itself that is at stake here, because the future of Europe depends on Europe's capacity to face major challenges," Meloni said.

Between Monday and Wednesday, around 8,500 people -- more than the island's entire local population -- arrived in 199 boats, according to the UN migration agency.

"Irregular immigration is a European challenge that needs a European response," von der Leyen said, calling on other members of the bloc to take in some of the migrants.

The Italian Red Cross, which runs the overcrowded Lampedusa migration centre, said yesterday that 1,500 migrants remained there despite having a capacity for just 400.

Transfers of migrants to Sicily and the mainland have not kept up with the flow of new arrivals, although further transfers were expected to be made yesterday, the Red Cross said.

The officials were met on arrival at the airport by residents unhappy with the mass arrivals, threatening to block their motorcade.

"We are doing everything possible," Meloni had said in response.

Large vessels operated by NGOs like the Geo Barents by Doctors Without Borders (MSF), which have rescued nearly 500 migrants in 11 operations, are headed for major Italian ports.

But dozens of small boats continue to make the perilous sea-crossing to Lampedusa, where the migrant management system has come to the brink of asphyxiation.

INDIA'S MANIPUR

Army soldier abducted, killed

TNN, *Imphal*

The body of an Indian Army soldier identified as Sepoy Serto Thangthang Komwas was found at Khuningthek village in Manipur's Imphal East district yesterday, officials said.

The deceased soldier belonged to the Army's Defence Security Corps platoon at Leimakhong in Kangpokpi district, they said. He hailed from Tarung in Imphal, officials said.

Unidentified armed men abducted Sepoy Kom, who was on leave, from his home around 10:00am on Saturday. According to his 10-year-old son, who was the only eyewitness to the crime, three men entered their home while his father and he were working on the porch.

China flies 28 warplanes around Taiwan

AFP, *Taipei*

China flew 28 warplanes around Taiwan yesterday, with most crossing the median line of the Taiwan Strait for unspecified "long range" missions, Taipei authorities said. Taiwan's defence ministry said 20 of the aircraft detected since yesterday morning crossed the median line of the waterway separating Taiwan and mainland China, and entered the self-ruled island's southeast and southwest air defence identification zone. China was conducting "missions such as long range exercises and training", the defence ministry said in a statement, adding that it was monitoring the situation with patrol aircraft and ships. Beijing claims democratic Taiwan as its own territory to be seized one day, by force if necessary. It has stepped up military and diplomatic pressure on the island in recent years as relations have soured. Last week, Taipei reported an increased number of incursions by Chinese warplanes and ships, after Beijing said its troops were on "high alert" following two ships belonging to the United States and Canada transiting through the Taiwan Strait this month. Taiwan's defence ministry said 68 Chinese aircraft and 10 naval vessels were detected around the island between Wednesday morning and Thursday morning.

'Happy birthday PM Modi'

Amit Shah, Rahul Gandhi joined by leaders in extending greetings

HINDUSTAN TIMES ONLINE

Wishes poured in from political circles to wish Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on his 73rd birthday yesterday. Several leaders including his colleagues and cabinet members Amit Shah and S Jaishankar wished him success and lauded his leadership while Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath hailed him as "the architect of 'New India." Congress MP Rahul Gandhi said: "Wishing PM Narendra Modi a happy birthday." Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said: "My best wishes to PM Shri Narendra Modi ji on his birthday. May he be blessed with good health and long life." Meanwhile, to mark his birthday, the party has planned various celebrations including Sewa Pakhwada' programme.

Crowds march during a "Walk for Yes" rally in Melbourne, Australia yesterday. Thousands joined "Walk for Yes" events in major cities to support recognising the country's Indigenous people in the constitution, a proposal that is struggling ahead of a referendum next month.

PHOTO: AFP

Anti-terror op in J&K drags on for over 100 hrs

NDTV ONLINE

The encounter with terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir's Anantnag has stretched to the fifth day, with thousands of troops including para commandos locked in an endless gunfight deep inside the dense forests of Gadol.

Trained in jungle warfare, the terrorists are making use of the treacherous terrain and forest cover to keep the forces at bay and prolong the encounter.

The faceoff that continues for over 100 hours now began Wednesday and three officers were killed in action in an attempt to neutralise the terrorists.

The heavily armed terrorists, believed to be two-three in number, are hiding in a tactically favourable location in the dense and steep forest. This indicates a new pattern being used by the terrorists to take on the security structure in Kashmir.

ANNIV OF AMINI DEATH

Iran guard fatally shot dead

AFP, *Tehran*

A member of Iran's Basij paramilitary force linked to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps was shot dead during events falling on the anniversary of Mahsa Amini's death, state media reported yesterday.

Amini, a 22-year-old Iranian Kurd, died in police custody on September 16, 2022 following her arrest for an alleged breach of the Islamic republic's strict dress code for women.

Her death triggered months-long demonstrations which saw hundreds killed, including dozens of security personnel, in what Tehran labelled as "riots" fomented by foreign governments and "hostile media".

"One person was martyred and three people were injured" on Saturday evening in a "blind shooting" by two unknown assailants towards Basij guards in the city of Nurabad in Southern Fars province, state news agency IRNA reported.

The news agency did not immediately elaborate on the assailants' identity or the motivation for the shooting.

"The intelligence, security and law enforcement agencies of the province are trying to arrest the assailants" who fled after the shooting, it said.

গ্রন্থাগারিকের অফিস
ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
ঢাকা-১০০০, বাংলাদেশ
ফোনঃ ৮৮০-৯৬৬৬৯১১৪৬৩/৪২৬২
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উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি (OTM)

০১	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	শিক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়
০২	প্রতিষ্ঠান	ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
০৩	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারীর নাম ও ঠিকানা	গ্রন্থাগারিক, ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, ফোনঃ ০২-৯৬৬৬৯১১৪৬৩/৪২৬২ ও ৪২৬৫, librarian@du.ac.bd
০৪	জেলার নাম	ঢাকা
০৫	কাজের নাম	২০২৩-২৪ অর্থবছরে ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ১০টি অনুষদভুক্ত বিভিন্ন বিভাগের জন্য বিদেশী পুস্তক সংগ্রহ
০৬	দরপত্র আহ্বানের কারণ	প্রকাশক কর্তৃক নির্ধারিত মূল্যের উপর বাট্টার (Discount) হার উল্লেখপূর্বক পুস্তক সরবরাহকরণ
০৭	স্মারক নং	লাই-১০৯৬/২০২৩-২৪ (তারিখ ১৭/০৯/২০২৩)
০৮	সংগ্রহের পদ্ধতি	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (OTM)
০৯	টাকার উৎস	ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের রাজস্ব খাত
১০	দরপত্র প্রকাশের তারিখ	১৮/০৯/২০২৩খ্রিঃ
১১	দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের তারিখ	১৯/০৯/২০২৩ থেকে ০২/১০/২০২৩ পর্যন্ত (অফিস চলাকালীন সময়)
১২	দরপত্র দলিল/সিডিউল বিক্রয়কারীর নাম ও ঠিকানা	উপ-গ্রন্থাগারিক, সংগ্রহ শাখা, ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় গ্রন্থাগার, ঢাকা-১০০০, বাংলাদেশ
১৩	দরপত্র গ্রহণের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়	০৩/১০/২০২৩ সকাল ১১:০০ পর্যন্ত
১৪	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	০৩/১০/২০২৩ সকাল ১১:৩০, দরপত্রদাতা বা তাঁদের মনোনীত প্রতিনিধির (যদি কেউ উপস্থিত থাকেন) সম্মুখে দরপত্রের বাক্স খোলা হবে
১৫	দরপত্র গ্রহণ ও খোলার স্থান	গ্রন্থাগারিকের অফিস কক্ষ, ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, ঢাকা
১৬	দরপত্রদাতার প্রাক-যোগ্যতা	সরকারী/আধা-সরকারী/স্বায়ত্তশাসিত প্রতিষ্ঠানে দেশী ও বিদেশী পুস্তক সরবরাহের কমপক্ষে ০৫ বছরের অভিজ্ঞতাসহ গত ০৩ বছরে গড়ে কমপক্ষে Lot-1 এর জন্য ২৪,০০,০০০/-, Lot-2 এর জন্য ২৭,০০,০০০/-, Lot-3 এর জন্য ১৩,০০,০০০/-, Lot-4 এর জন্য ১৫,৫০,০০০/-, Lot-5 এর জন্য ১৯,০০,০০০/- টাকার পুস্তক সরবরাহের অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে। দরপত্রদাতার Lot-1 এর জন্য ৩০,০০,০০০/-, Lot-2 এর জন্য ৩৪,০০,০০০/-, Lot-3 এর জন্য ১৭,০০,০০০/-, Lot-4 এর জন্য ২০,০০,০০০/-, Lot-5 এর জন্য ২৪,০০,০০০/- টাকার লিকুইড অ্যাসেট থাকতে হবে। পুস্তক সরবরাহকারীদের নিম্নলিখিত কাগজপত্র দরপত্রের সাথে জমা দিতে হবেঃ (ক) বিদেশী পুস্তক সংগ্রহের জন্য ইমপোর্ট লাইসেন্স/ইমপোর্টারের সাথে সরবরাহকারীর চুক্তিপত্র (খ) হালনাগাদ আয়কর সনদপত্র (গ) হালনাগাদ ভ্যাট নিবন্ধন সনদপত্র (ঘ) হালনাগাদ ট্রেড লাইসেন্স ও (ঙ) হালনাগাদ ব্যাংক সচ্ছলতার সনদপত্র।
১৭	দরপত্রের মূল্য	৮,৫০০/- (আট হাজার পাঁচশত) টাকা (অফেরতযোগ্য) জনতা ব্যাংক, ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় শাখার হিসাব নং ৩৬০০০৩৯২-এ জমা দিয়ে প্রতিষ্ঠানের প্যাডে আবেদনপত্র ও ব্যাংক জমার রসিদসহ উপস্থিত হয়ে দরপত্র দলিল/সিডিউল সংগ্রহ করতে হবে।

১৮	প্যাকেজ বিবরণী	সরবরাহের স্থান		বিবরণ	দরপত্র জামানত	সরবরাহের সময়কাল
১৯	স্থানীয় সরবরাহকারী, এজেন্ট প্রকাশক ও পরিবেশকদের কাছ থেকে ২০২৩-২০২৪ অর্থবছরে ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ১০টি অনুষদভুক্ত বিভিন্ন বিভাগের জন্য বিদেশী পুস্তক সংগ্রহ	ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় গ্রন্থাগার	a)	Lot-1: Arts and Fine Art	89,000/-	ক্রয়াদেশ প্রদানের তারিখ থেকে ১২০ দিন
			b)	Lot-2: Science, Biological Sciences and Pharmacy	1,00,000/-	
			c)	Lot-3: Law, Earth & Environmental Sciences and Engineering & Technology	49,000/-	
			d)	Lot-4: Business Studies	58,000/-	
			e)	Lot-5: Social Sciences	71,000/-	

২০	পুস্তক সরবরাহ প্রক্রিয়া	ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় গ্রন্থাগারে ২০২৩-২০২৪ অর্থবছরে উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতির (OTM) মাধ্যমে পুস্তক সরবরাহের নিমিত্ত স্থানীয় সরবরহকারী, এজেন্ট, প্রকাশক ও পরিবেশক নিয়োগের জন্য বিজ্ঞপ্তিটি প্রকাশিত হলো।

✱ যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিলের ক্ষমতা ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করেন।

অধ্যাপক ড. মো. নাসিরউদ্দিন মুন্সী
গ্রন্থাগারিক (ভারপ্রাপ্ত)
ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়

জিডি-১৪২৩

The Daily Star
FOUNDER EDITOR: **LATE S. M. ALI**

Lead pollution is killing us

Where is the action plan to stop this poisoning?

Lead poisoning has been a global problem for decades, having devastating effects on people's health, especially that of children. Bangladesh happens to be the fourth most affected country in terms of the number of children affected, according to a report launched in 2020 by Unicef and Pure Earth. Last Tuesday, the Lancet Planetary Health journal published the World Bank's study on the health and economic burden of lead poisoning around the world.

The harm caused by lead exposure has turned out to be far worse than previous estimations. The report has found that lead poisoning causes cognitive deficiency in children and fatal cardiovascular diseases among adults. In specific terms, children below five years of age lose around 20 million IQ points and the economic cost is estimated at $10,897 million or 3.6 percent of the country's GDP. Lead damages the brains of children below five, causing lifelong neurological, cognitive, and physical impairment. It also causes heart diseases and strokes in adults. Exposure to lead damages the foetuses of pregnant women. In Bangladesh, the sources are ubiquitous: used lead acid battery recycling, lead in paints, aluminium cookware, ceramic crockery, spices, toys, cosmetics, food, electronic waste, fertilisers, and cultured fish feed. Around 35.5 million children are affected.

Despite local and international studies with such frightening findings, there does not seem to be any comprehensive plan of action to address this silent killer that is practically everywhere. Has the government, for instance, made any effort to stop children from working in informal battery recycling plants and factories where they are directly exposed to lead and other toxins? Why are we still using lead paint to paint our walls? Why have we not devised safe waste disposal of batteries and electronics? Why is there lead in turmeric powder? The questions are endless.

It is a gross understatement to say that we are far behind in addressing such a debilitating health crisis that has huge implications for the nation's future. The study has recommended a 10-point plan to reduce lead pollution. This includes analysing the sources of lead, designing specific interventions, developing an efficient blood lead level surveillance, reviewing existing policies and enforcing laws and regulations, identifying and cleaning toxic sites as well as raising public awareness about the issue. It is mind-boggling that previous studies and expert recommendations have not had any impact in terms of provoking the government to take immediate steps to reduce lead pollution and exposure. Given that the situation has worsened markedly, it is high time that the government gives this issue the greatest priority and implements an action plan.

Bay of Bengal drowning in plastic

When will authorities implement policies to stop plastic pollution?

It is extremely distressing that, despite repeated warnings about the grave dangers of plastic pollution in the Bay of Bengal, unsustainable waste management continues to wreak havoc in our nation's most treasured natural resource. According to a recent study conducted by Enhanced Coastal Fisheries in Bangladesh (ECOFISHBD) – an initiative funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) – around 15 tonnes of non-biodegradable waste are dumped into the sea by fishermen alone. The waste includes plastic bags, bottles, and polythene bags, all of which are disastrous for the environment, wildlife, and human health. The latest study undoubtedly serves as yet another reminder of the dangerous and persisting lack of awareness resulting from the lacklustre implementation of environmentally sustainable policies.

Just last year, another study by ECOFISHBD found that around 22.77kg of non-biodegradable waste is dumped daily on the Kuakata sea beach by tourists and locals. Experts have warned that the large-scale plastic pollution and proliferation of harmful bacteria are likely to make the Bay of Bengal unusable in the next 30-50 years. It goes without saying that the nation would not have descended to this situation had authorities implemented the bold steps taken to protect our environment since 2002, when Bangladesh became the first country in the world to ban polythene bags. Furthermore, in 2010, the country adopted the Jute Packaging Act to promote alternative packaging – with little effect 13 years later. In 2020, the High Court ordered the government to impose a ban on single-use plastic products by 2021, yet no effective measures have been taken to promote multi-sectoral change.

As destruction from plastic pollution continues to plague the environment, all the strides in policy and legislative arrangements have only served as mere rhetoric. It's time we put the jute packaging law into effect to replace the widespread use of plastic. Authorities should also diligently conduct regular drives to stop the indiscriminate use and illegal production of polythene bags and single-use plastics. Measures should also include multi-ministerial monitoring divisions to rigorously prevent the dumping of non-biodegradable waste into water bodies. It is of utmost importance to protect the Bay of Bengal against environmental degradation.

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

Odhikar duo's convictions are regrettable

Kamal Ahmed
is an independent journalist. His X handle is @ahmedka1

KAMAL AHMED

Most recently, Bangladesh again found a place in global media headlines. Sadly, it was for convicting and imprisoning two of its most prominent human rights defenders, Adilur Rahman Khan and Nasiruddin Elan of Odhikar. This is the first awarding of jail term to any human rights defender in Bangladesh since independence. Adilur founded human rights organisation Odhikar in 1994. With an initial slow start, it soon became a leading independent rights monitoring group. Since then, it has been diligently documenting all kinds of violations of human rights by both state agencies and non-state actors.

Odhikar's annual reports on rights dating back to 2004 are still available on the organisation's website. These reports contain well-sourced data about custodial deaths, crossfires, extrajudicial killings, detentions without trial, use of force to break up political and union protests, violence against minorities and women, border killings, and most other violations of citizens' rights. It also monitored the two national elections held in 2001 and 2008, and documented post-poll violence particularly targeted at members of minority communities. In its 2001 election monitoring report, Odhikar mentioned that poll-related violence had caused 52 people to die and 867 to be injured, which I quoted in one of my columns in *Prothom Alo* when Adilur was first arrested in 2013.

In its 2004 annual report, Odhikar stated, "The year 2004 witnessed an alarming escalation in human rights violations. From 01 January to 31 December 526 people were killed, 6235 injured, 2918 arrested and 28 abducted in incidents concerning political violence. 240 people were killed at the hands of law enforcers. Of them, 149 were killed in crossfire." Can anyone cite a better compilation of rights' violation data dating back to those years, when the BNP-Jamaat alliance was in power?

Adilur, despite being the secretary of Odhikar, was then working as one of the deputy attorney generals. A former student activist belonging to the student wing of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD), led by Hasanul Haq Inu, Adilur has never been a member either of the BNP or Jamaat. But in the era of alternative truths, ministers and leaders of the ruling Awami League have relentlessly been trying to delegitimise his role as a human rights defender, claiming Adilur's service to the state under a different regime as proof that his work was politically motivated. Perhaps this reflects the workings of their own minds, as they have long ago erased the fine line that should exist between the state and the party in power by capturing all the state institutions using loyalists.

PHOTO: **COLLECTED**

It is no wonder that 72 global human rights organisations have termed the duo's conviction as a punishment for their work.

Adilur Rahman Khan and Nasiruddin Elan have been convicted of criminal offences for allegedly harming the nation's image by falsely claiming that 61 people died in the mayhem following Hefazat-e-Islam's Dhaka siege on May 5, 2013. This figure is almost five times higher than the government's official count of 11. But there were other tallies that also showed huge variations and, till now, there has been no attempt to establish the full facts of one of the most unsettling incidents in Bangladesh's history.

On May 7, Amnesty International said that unofficial figures from hospitals obtained by them confirmed 22 deaths in Dhaka and 22 more in places outside of Dhaka. In total, Amnesty International claimed that it was able to confirm the protest-related deaths of at least 41 civilians and three police or security force personnel across the country on May 5-6.

US-based global rights group Human Rights Watch (HRW), in its August 2013 report titled "Blood on the Streets," said, "Based on hospital logs, eyewitness accounts, and well-sourced media reports, Human Rights Watch believes that at least 58 people died on May 5 and 6, seven of whom were members of the security forces. However it is likely the death toll was even higher."

Ekattorer Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee, an advocacy group closely linked with the ruling party and campaigning for trials of suspected war criminals of the Liberation War, in its white paper published on November 8, 2013, claimed that 39 people had been killed during the rally and sit-in programmes of Hefazat-e-Islam. Of them, it added, 24 were killed between morning and 8pm on May 5 in Hefazat activists' clashes with law enforcers and Awami League activists. And, according to the group, another nine people were killed on the morning of May 6 during clashes between Hefazat and Jamaat activists and law enforcers at Kanchpur on Chittagong Road, Madanipur, and Narayanganj.

All these figures are much higher than the officially admitted numbers. Yet, the government sued only the two executives of Odhikar. In July 2013, the information ministry asked Odhikar for the addresses and names of the relatives/family members of the deceased persons that it had listed. Odhikar declined that request, claiming that doing so could jeopardise the family members' safety. This wasn't unreasonable as we have heard of such allegations of intimidation and harassment by members of the security forces from the families of enforced disappearance victims. Odhikar, however, said if the government formed an independent inquiry commission, it would hand over the names and addresses to the commission.

Though Odhikar did not publish the list of victims, ruling party activists and a section of the media claimed that they had traced some victims listed by Odhikar to be alive and commenced a smear campaign against Adilur, Odhikar, and the fact-finding report. Some ruling party supporters are now arguing that Adilur had 10 years to clear his name, but have conveniently forgotten that the latter's computers and server were taken away by police, making them inaccessible.

Odhikar's defence team and many national and foreign observers of the trial have alleged that the trial did not follow due process. In this regard, they have pointed out that they weren't afforded full and timely access to discoveries made by the prosecution. They've also alleged that, in an unusual and rare move, the judge allowed the prosecution to reinvestigate the case after the completion of witness testimonies. The lead prosecutor, Nazrul Islam, responding to a post-verdict query, told *Prothom Alo* that the supplementary investigation (after 10 years) was necessary for the conviction.

The verdict under the ICT Act, a law which has already been replaced twice and is still being criticised as unfair and repressive, is another reason for it to be seen as unfair. Besides, the ruling party's policies of appeasing Hefazat in the years following makes one wonder whether their aggrievement towards Odhikar can be justified any longer.

It is no wonder that 72 organisations working across the globe to defend human rights have termed the Odhikar duo's conviction as a punishment for their work. The organisations stated that the hearings had been accelerated following the designation of US sanctions against Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and its officials in December 2021, and that this acceleration was based on allegations that Odhikar was behind these sanctions.

The European Parliament's resolution, and concerns expressed by at least four Western governments – namely the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and Germany – should not be taken lightly. The regret expressed in the France-Germany joint statement for convicting the Odhikar duo may prove regrettable for us sooner than the government may believe.

Rich countries can gain a lot by helping Bangladesh

RMG NOTES

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MOSTAFIZ UDDIN

Did you know that nearly 60 percent of Bangladesh's population is exposed to high risk of floods, much higher than any other country except the Netherlands? Climate change is worsening the situation and the financial and humanitarian costs brought by this calamity are racking up.

This is one of the headline findings of a new report by the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment, part of the prestigious London School of Economics.

The report is timely and arrives on the back of a sustained period of extreme weather patterns. It also comes just before a major conference, Bangladesh Climate Action Forum, which will analyse climate change in context of the global fashion industry – an industry critical to the country's economic prospects.

According to the findings, Bangladesh is highly prone to flooding because of its location in the Bengal Delta and its low-lying, flat topography. Meanwhile, several factors linked to climate change are increasing the country's flood risk, including the increasing frequency of extreme precipitation and more erratic rainfall. Therefore, effective flood policies are ever more important to increase resilience and adaptation and reduce the likelihood of cascading humanitarian and economic impacts.

While the report focuses on Bangladesh, anybody with business ties to our country should sit up and take notice. The fact is that climate change is an existential threat that transcends borders and affects every corner of our planet. However, it disproportionately burdens the poorest and most vulnerable nations.

I will argue that rich countries, with their historical contributions to greenhouse gas emissions and greater economic capacity, have a moral and practical obligation to assist developing countries such as Bangladesh in addressing the adverse impacts of climate change. Fashion retailers can play an integral role in this.

One of the most compelling arguments for this is historical responsibility. The majority of the emissions causing climate change have originated from developed nations during their industrialisation. These emissions have led to the current global crisis, which impacts poor countries disproportionately. Thus, rich nations bear a significant moral responsibility; they must take proactive steps to help rectify the situation.

Moreover, climate change is not constrained by national borders. The effects of greenhouse gas emissions in one part of the world can have far-reaching consequences globally. Hurricanes, droughts, rising sea levels, and other climate-related disasters do not respect geopolitical boundaries. Rich countries should recognise that they too are vulnerable to the spillover effects of climate change, so by helping developing countries adapt and build resilience, rich countries ultimately protect their own citizens from the consequences of a warming planet.

Assisting developing countries in addressing climate impacts can also yield economic benefits for rich nations. Climate change can disrupt global supply chains, affect agricultural production, and lead to increased market volatility. By helping developing countries, rich nations can stabilise the global economy and safeguard their own economic interests. Moreover, investing in clean technologies – in garment production, for example – and green infrastructure in poor countries can open up new markets for rich nations' products and services, creating economic opportunities for both sides.

Climate change has a disproportionate impact on vulnerable populations within poor countries, exacerbating existing inequalities and causing significant human suffering. Rich nations, guided by principles of empathy and humanitarianism, should assist those who are most affected.

Addressing climate change is a collective endeavour that requires global cooperation. The Paris Agreement, signed by nearly every nation, emphasises the need for wealthy countries to provide financial support to developing nations to help them reduce emissions and adapt to climate impacts. Fulfilling these commitments is essential for achieving international climate goals. Rich nations should not only meet their financial obligations but also go beyond them, as this is crucial for the success of global climate efforts.

By working collaboratively to combat climate change and reduce its disproportionate impact on poor countries, the global community can move closer to a more equitable, sustainable, and resilient future for all. It is not only a matter of ethical duty but also a strategic investment in the well-being and prosperity of our shared planet.

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What if an earthquake of 6.9 magnitude hits Dhaka?

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ADIL MOHAMMED KHAN

Shortly after noon on Sunday, Tangail and its nearby areas were struck by an earthquake of 4.4 magnitude. While this was a minor quake and resulted in no casualties, earthquakes have been observed at a higher rate recently not only in Bangladesh, but worldwide. On the afternoon of September 9, for instance, a 4.4-magnitude quake shook Sylhet. Another 3.9-magnitude earthquake, the epicentre of which was in Bhulta of Narayanganj, hit Dhaka on April 25.

Against the background of such frequent quakes, we must ask: is Dhaka adequately prepared to face a 6-7 magnitude earthquake? Are we planning our cities, buildings, and infrastructure in a way that would make the capital safe for our lives and properties, given its vulnerability to earthquakes? Are our development authorities diligently enforcing planning laws and building codes?

Unlike cyclones, earthquakes cannot be accurately predicted. Hence, requisite preparations are needed from urban development authorities. Unplanned urbanisation, unsafe building development, coupled with the expansion of urban areas in low-lying or marshy areas have greatly aggravated the capital's earthquake vulnerability, which has a population of nearly 20 million people. We must remember that a large portion of this population dwells in poorly built structures, and even in semiformal and informal housing in unsafe and precarious conditions.

Better preparation in terms of maintaining building codes and planning rules could save lives to a great extent, which has been seen in the experiences of recent earthquakes in Chile, Haiti, and Turkiye. In 2010, Chile experienced a quake of 8.8 magnitude, which killed 700 people, while the Haiti 7.0-magnitude earthquake killed around 220,000 people in the same year. Chile established strict building codes in 1985 following a 7.8-magnitude earthquake; and Haiti had no national building code and no means of checking building safety.

The 7.8-magnitude earthquake that hit Turkiye on February 6 resulted in a death toll of over 50,000, while more than 160,000 buildings collapsed or were severely damaged. This gave rise to questions about whether the natural disaster's impact was made worse by a lack of building and planning compliances.

Reports on the Turkiye-Syria earthquake revealed that unplanned urbanisation, material weaknesses, insufficient inspection processes, and illegal constructions were the main factors behind the extensive destruction. These factors are also prevalent in the urban development and building construction practices for urban areas in Bangladesh.

At least 65 percent of Dhaka and its surroundings are at high risk of earthquakes, as the buildings have been constructed on landfills due to unrestricted urbanisation, and have not taken into consideration the nature of the soil or earthquake vulnerabilities of the area in general. Rapid construction of housing and high-rise infrastructure on weak land, without carrying out proper study on geological features, have alarmingly increased the risk of earthquakes and other urban disasters in Dhaka.

The expansion of Dhaka city to the east and southwest has therefore made it more vulnerable to liquefaction during earthquakes, since buildings in these areas are erected by filling up water reservoirs and wetlands, in violation of building codes.

In order to ensure building safety, we have the Bangladesh National Building Code (BNBC), updated in 2020, and the Dhaka Building Construction Rules, 2008. There are also physical plans like the Detailed Area Plan that provide detailed guidelines for urban development in different land-use zones in Dhaka. Despite this, a large number of buildings in the capital have not been designed properly or have been constructed violating land use guidelines, which may turn out to be dangerous in case of a moderate to strong earthquake.

According to a survey by the Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk), nearly 865,000 buildings would collapse in Dhaka city if an earthquake of 6.9 magnitude strikes at Madhupur fault in Tangail. Additionally, 210,000 people would die and another 229,000 would sustain injuries if the quake strikes during the day. As per a survey conducted by Rajuk in 2018, an alarming 67 percent of buildings were found violating building codes, out of 1.95 lakh buildings surveyed.

We may recall the March 13 declaration by Rajuk relating to the evacuation and demolition of 42 dangerous buildings identified by its Urban Resilience Project. It also listed around 342 buildings, owned by various government organisations, as being risky for living. But no significant progress has been made since Rajuk provided the notice to the owners of the buildings to vacate the structures. This is proof of the utter disregard and apathy towards building safety and earthquake preparedness from different authorities and building owners.

A devastating earthquake could hit anytime and would be quite catastrophic for us. Yet, we are wildly ill-prepared to face something like this. A specific authority should be formulated on an urgent basis to enforce the Bangladesh National Building Code in order to increase building safety. Urban development in low-lying areas should be strictly prohibited, even for government projects. The government should no longer allow the violation of planning guidelines and building codes, and must take appropriate measures against violators. Planning and investment is required so that our utility services and facilities do not collapse in the case of a major earthquake.

The corruption in the supervision and monitoring system of Rajuk and related bodies must be checked. We welcome recent directives from Rajuk to mandate the submission of architectural, structural, fire safety, electrical, and plumbing plans before building construction. However, making planning permits – which still does not exist in Bangladesh – mandatory is required as well to increase building safety and urban resilience. Third-party monitoring of building construction, as planned by Rajuk, could help push this forward. However, there is no scope for laxity by development authorities and urban bodies in monitoring the overall urban development process. We cannot prevent earthquakes; but we should be properly prepared against them to save invaluable lives.

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এম.এস.আর দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি (OTM)

সিভিল সার্জন কাম তত্ত্বাবধায়ক, ২৫০ শয্যা জেলা হাসপাতাল মাদারীপুর এর জন্য ২০২৩-২০২৪খ্রিঃ আর্থিক বৎসরের এম.এস.আর সামগ্রী ক্রয়ের নিমিত্তে গণখাতে সংগ্রহ আইন/বিধিমালা ২০০৩, ২০০৬, ২০০৮ ও ২০০৯ এবং তৎপরবর্তী সংশোধিত বিধিবিধান অনুযায়ী নিম্নোক্ত "ছক" মোতাবেক গ্রুপ ভিত্তিক পৃথক পৃথকভাবে সীলমোহরকৃত গালাযুক্ত খামে দরপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছে।

১	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিবার কল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়, বাংলাদেশ সচিবালয়, ঢাকা-১০০০।		
২	এজেন্সি	২৫০ শয্যা জেলা হাসপাতাল, মাদারীপুর।		
৩	সংগ্রাহক সংস্থার নাম	সিভিল সার্জন কাম তত্ত্বাবধায়ক, ২৫০ শয্যা জেলা হাসপাতাল মাদারীপুর।		
৪	সংগ্রাহক সংস্থার জেলার নাম	মাদারীপুর।		
৫	দরপত্রের নাম	এম.এস.আর, সামগ্রী ক্রয়/সংগ্রহ।		
৬	দরপত্র সংগ্রহের পদ্ধতি (ওটিএম)	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি।		
৭	বাজেট এবং অর্থের উৎস	(ক) রাজস্ব ও অন্যান্য।		
৮	দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ, সময় ও স্থান	১৭/১০/২০২৩খ্রিঃ অফিস চলাকালীন সময় (সকাল ০৮.০০ ঘটিকা হতে দুপুর ০২.৩০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত)। সিভিল সার্জন কাম তত্ত্বাবধায়কের কার্যালয়, ২৫০ শয্যা জেলা হাসপাতাল মাদারীপুর।		
৯	দরপত্র দাখিলের তারিখ, সময় ও স্থান	১৮/১০/২০২৩খ্রিঃ দুপুর ১২.৩০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত। সিভিল সার্জন কাম তত্ত্বাবধায়কের কার্যালয়, ২৫০ শয্যা জেলা হাসপাতাল, মাদারীপুর ও পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, মাদারীপুর।		
১০	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ, সময় ও স্থান	১৮/১০/২০২৩খ্রিঃ দুপুর ১.০০ ঘটিকায় সিভিল সার্জন কাম তত্ত্বাবধায়কের কার্যালয়, ২৫০ শয্যা জেলা হাসপাতাল, মাদারীপুর।		
১১	দরপত্রদাতার যোগ্যতা	এম.এস.আর, সামগ্রী স্ব স্ব গ্রুপে অভিজ্ঞতাসম্পন্ন সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান (দরপত্রের শর্তাবলী মোতাবেক)।		
১২	কাজের সংক্ষিপ্ত বিবরণ	এম.এস.আর, সামগ্রী সরবরাহ।		
১৩	গ্রুপ নং	গ্রুপের নাম	দরপত্র সিডিউলের মূল্য (অফেরতযোগ্য)	দরপত্রের সহিত দাখিলকৃত জামানতের পরিমাণ (বায়নার টাকা) (ফেরতযোগ্য)
	"ক"	ঔষধ (ইডিসিএল বহির্ভূত)	১০০০/- (এক হাজার টাকা মাত্র)	১,৯০,০০০/- (এক লক্ষ নব্বই হাজার টাকা মাত্র)
	"খ"	সার্জিক্যাল যন্ত্রপাতি	১০০০/- (এক হাজার টাকা মাত্র)	১,৪০,০০০/- (এক লক্ষ চল্লিশ হাজার টাকা মাত্র)
	"গ"	লিলেন সামগ্রী	১০০০/- (এক হাজার টাকা মাত্র)	৬০,০০০/- (ষাট হাজার টাকা মাত্র)
	"ঘ"	গজ, ব্যান্ডেজ ও তুলা	১০০০/- (এক হাজার টাকা মাত্র)	৬০,০০০/- (ষাট হাজার টাকা মাত্র)
	"ঙ"	কেমিক্যাল রি-এজেন্ট	১০০০/- (এক হাজার টাকা মাত্র)	৩৫,০০০/- (পঁয়ত্রিশ হাজার টাকা মাত্র)
	"চ"	আসবাবপত্র	১০০০/- (এক হাজার টাকা মাত্র)	২৫,০০০/- (পঁচিশ হাজার টাকা মাত্র)
১৪	দরপত্র আহবানকারীর নাম	ডাঃ মুনীর আহমদ খান।		
১৫	দরপত্র আহবানকারীর অফিসের ঠিকানা	সিভিল সার্জন কাম তত্ত্বাবধায়ক, ২৫০ শয্যা জেলা হাসপাতাল, মাদারীপুর।		
১৬	দরপত্র আহবানকারীর সাথে যোগাযোগ	টেলিফোন নাম্বার-০২৪৭৮৮১০৬১৪		
১৭	সংগ্রহাক সত্ত্বার ক্ষমতা ও বিশেষ নির্দেশাবলী	ক) আগ্রহী দরপত্রদাতাগণ বিজ্ঞপ্তি পত্রিকায় ও সিপিটিইউ এ প্রকাশের তারিখ এর পর হতে প্রতিদিন অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে (সকাল ০৮.০০ হতে দুপুর ০২.৩০ মিনিট পর্যন্ত) সংশ্লিষ্ট গ্রুপের দরপত্র দলিলের মূল্য বাবদ অর্থ কোড নং-১-২৭১১-০০০০-২৩৬৬ এ ট্রেজারী চালানের মাধ্যমে সোনালী ব্যাংক, মাদারীপুর প্রধান শাখায় জমাদানপূর্বক চালানের মূলকপি ও সিটিআর কপিসহ এবং প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিজস্ব প্যাডে সিল ও স্বাক্ষরসহ সরবরাহকারী নিজে অথবা প্রতিনিধি প্রেরণ করলে তার নমুনা স্বাক্ষর সত্যায়িত প্রদানপূর্বক দরপত্র প্রাপ্তির আবেদনপত্র জমা দিয়ে অত্র কার্যালয়ের হিসাব শাখা হতে সিডিউল সংগ্রহ করা যাবে। খ) কোন কারণ দর্শানো ছাড়াই দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা দরপত্র মূল্যায়ন কমিটি সংরক্ষণ করেন। দরপত্র মূল্যায়ন কমিটির সিদ্ধান্ত চূড়ান্ত বলে গণ্য হবে।		

ডাঃ মুনীর আহমদ খান
সিভিল সার্জন কাম তত্ত্বাবধায়ক
২৫০ শয্যা জেলা হাসপাতাল মাদারীপুর

জিডি-১৪২৪

VISUAL: **SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR**

Our cities need animals

Naimul Alam Alvi
is a member of the editorial team at The Daily Star.

NAIMUL ALAM ALVI

"I have a surprise for you!" – I think I was four or five that morning when I was trying to: rub the morning sleep out of my eyes, and figure out what surprise Ammu had for me under the blanket. I was ready to put an end to my curiosity right then and there. But Ammu said hush, and not to wake him up. The big reveal came with a story – there came a kitten in our kitchen. He came down the window to have some rice. But he was so small, and his belly so full, that he tried and tried but couldn't get out. So, he was going to live with us.

It was through him, I think, that I started to truly grasp the concept of the "self" – that you don't have to talk, dress or look like us to deserve care and affection. You can be even more of an "other" than our house-help Khala's son and still not be timid about demanding food, attention or distance. No amount of moral lessons, criticisms or "*Ah! Dushtumi kore na loke ki bolbe?*" could manipulate him. The only way to come to terms with his Nawabi self was with careful interaction. He didn't have the slightest care about our family hierarchy, or the concrete walls that restricted us. He would go out at his will and only return if you offered a liveable place. And there he was, a curled-up thief sleeping on my mother's lap – an object of jealousy (why wasn't it me the one sleeping there?!) and fascination; and a free individual where I can proejct my "self" and pretend to explore reality from different perspectives. I wonder, when we complete our endeavours of cleansing our urban space from animals, how will it affect us and our society?

When I was growing up in Tongi, it still had some wildlife left. We didn't hear jackals howling at night like the stories our elders told us, but in the pond behind our home, I used to see snakes coiling around fish, in an attempt to eat them. I'd get mixed feelings – a sense of excitement for the snake and a lump in my throat for the fish. After asking around, I eventually learned that this is just nature. I'd see birds of all kinds sitting on my veranda, snails scaling the walls, goats running around, and sometimes even monitor lizards. But within just 15-20 years, that place has lost almost all of its biodiversity. Our "development" has detached my niece's sense of reality from the stories of her grandparents, along with our fables, poems, songs, philosophy, and cultural legacy. This is not just the story of Tongi but the countless places in Dhaka that have died within decades.

The core problem is that we have placed development against conservation, civilisation against nature, and separated humans from natural environments. In urban Western philosophy, which we try to blindly copy, this segregation perhaps took root when Descartes started considering animals as non-living objects. In our part of the world, although our Central Asian conquerors initiated the reduction of animals into objects, it was the British colonisers who brought their capitalist worldview and started the wildlife genocide.

Just like us non-Caucasian humans, nature was also just an infinite source of profit for them. Vast forestlands were cut down for wood, and the cleared grounds were used for agricultural spoils. The East India Company disregarded native traditions of replantation and cohabitation. The colonisers persecuted entire communities when there were protests. After the crown took over, they created forest departments and conservation laws – not because they cared for nature, but because their once seemingly infinite source was extorted to near extinction. For them, native animals served three purposes: tools you can control (elephants and cows); games that you hunt for food and sport; and beasts that you must kill as a Sahib saviour. Tigers were hunted down to such an extent that the Raj had to make protected areas to try and keep some for the European customers travelling for a fun week of hunting.

We are creating roads and railroads that cut through habitats, industries that poison water, construction works that make the air toxic, and "development" that excludes animals. Maybe we humans can somehow survive living in the most unliveable place in the world, but animals can't. Our policymakers are oblivious to the layers of life inside the forests and under the rivers.

Unfortunately, like many other things, we inherited this culture from our oppressors. Deforestation and destruction of biodiversity continued and even escalated after our independence. We are creating roads and railroads that cut through habitats, industries that poison water, construction works that make the air toxic, and "development" that excludes animals. Maybe we humans can somehow survive living in the most unliveable place in the world, but animals can't. Our policymakers are oblivious to the layers of life inside the forests and under the rivers. They don't seem to notice the greens declining and rivers dying until someone points out that a species has gone extinct. Isn't it surprising that we've somehow become more ruthless in colonising our nature than the British, and turned one of the most fertile and biodiverse patches of land in the world into an ecologically dead city?

If we really want to move away from this path of destruction, we need to ensure environments where wildlife and humans can harmoniously coexist. We have to focus on places like Dhaka, where wildlife has been completely uprooted; new cities or city extensions, where relatively conserved areas will eventually be urbanised; and rural areas, where village and (toxic) city life are melding. But first and foremost, we must include biodiversity as an essential part of development. It has to be incorporated into our policies, city regulations, and urban designs. For instance, it's commendable that there are certain percentages of green patches reserved in the designs of the new economic zones and city extensions. But that is nowhere near what is required. None of the designs addresses how the establishments will affect migration, food sources, life cycles of different species, or how the city interacts with wildlife. And what about when a city needs to expand further? Will it just "save" another small percentage of green and conquer the rest? When you put "development" against nature, it's always "development" that wins.

There's a German development company that is advocating the philosophy of "animal-aided design" – using which urban planners incorporate biodiversity as a foundational block, not a late addition that designers have to somehow manage, making compromises. If we, the people who barely raise such issues, adopt a similar policy, it will make us take a hard look at our geography, weather, biodiversity, and society. We can even study native traditions, get inspired by "Aranya Sanskriti," a social order that revolves around forests, from the Maurya and Gupta empires, or come up with a new design philosophy of our own.

I know it sounds bizarre to hope for a human-nature utopia in this country, given the track record. But this delta is now once again at the crossroads of becoming an economic powerhouse. This is the time to decide what path we will take in our journey towards a developed nation. And even if we fail to make proper implementations, the mere acceptance of cohabitation in our policy can push our environmental standards higher. Animals are great environmental health indicators, even for the aspects we don't usually consider to be important, like sound or light pollution. During Covid, we've seen how mere days of non-interference brought back dolphins to our coast. Why can't I hope to see dolphins in our rivers like my father used to on his way to Bhola? Maybe places like Dhaka can never bring back many that are already lost, but if we invest in reparation for all the wrongs we've done – maybe there's a chance squirrels, owls, and monkeys will come out of the last remaining sanctuaries in the city.

We must realise we can't afford the audacity to exclude ourselves from the ecosystem. We need animals to have a liveable environment, even in the artificial worlds we create.

Souls performing the song "Bhule Gecho Tumi" in 1977 at Hotel Agrabad, Chittagong

(From L to R) Subrata Barua Rony- Tajul Imam- Sazed Ul Alam- Rudy Thomas- Ahmed Newaz

SOULS

Through the eyes of its founder, Sazed Ul Alam

It's true that I created Souls, but Souls would never have become what it is, if it wasn't for all of us and the many people inside and outside the band we met.

ASRAR CHOWDHURY

PART I: THE BIRTH OF SURELA

I returned to Chattogram from the Liberation War on December 20, 1971 with my nephew, Shahed Ul Alam. After signing at MA Aziz Stadium, we went home to Kajir Dewri, which was a walking distance. My home would soon become the centre of many tales and memories.

Over the next few weeks, I became friends with the Indian officers who were stationed in Bangladesh. Some of them used to visit our house. Seeing my love for music, one of the officers invited me to the 31st night at Chittagong Club.

I reached Chittagong Club at 7pm. Lightnings, one of the leading bands of Chattogram, performed that evening. Chattogram was a small place. We all knew each other. That night, for the Lightnings band, Noel Mendes (rhythm guitar), Neo Mendes (drums), Shakil (lead guitar) and Farid (bass) performed. They did covers of Beatles and other songs.

Sazed Ul Alam playing sitar.

One day Rudy proposed that the name of the band needs to be in English. We all bought his idea. I asked my nephew Fariadul Islam to choose ten English names. Among them, I liked 'Bound Souls'. I went upstairs and asked my elder brother, Moyeen Ul Alam. He dropped 'bound'. From that day on, the band was Souls.

The Lightnings performance put a spell on me. I decided to do something like them. Since childhood, I've been adventurous. When I set a target, I would go for it.

***

Later, I approached my cousin, Moudud Ul Alam and nephew, Fariadul Islam. I proposed, 'let's start a group'. The name 'Amra Jara Jegechhi' came to mind because the country had just become independent. Soon Prabal and Uma joined. We used to perform patriotic songs here and there. That initiative didn't go too far.

In mid-1972, I attended a concert at St Mary's Church with Moin, my Collegiate School friend. The Mendes brothers of Lightnings, Nibnet (keyboard) and Norman (drums) performed. Moin introduced me to his uncle, Lulu. After the concert, we first went to Lulu's house. And then to my house.

My father, litterateur, Mahbub Ul Alam, once visited the USA on the invitation of President Eisenhower. He brought us an accordion from that trip. When I was eight years old, an Aunty would come once a week and take me to Chattogram Betar where I would play the accordion. Chattogram Betar remunerated me a princely sum of Tk 30 per month.

Lulu looked at the accordion. He said he would be able to play it. That night, we decided to form a band.

The next morning, I asked my father for a name. He spontaneously said, 'Surela'. And that was it. Surela was born.

I thought of Subrata Barua Rony, another friend from Collegiate School. Rony played beautiful tabla in our school days. Lulu told me that Rony was living as a tenant in their house. I invited Rony to my house for practice.

I wondered if Rony could play the conga (congo) like Giovanni Hidalgo. There was one problem, though. Congas weren't available in Chattogram. We collected a picture of a conga and went to a tabla maker near St Placid's. He made a conga for us.

The initial line-up of Surela included: Subrata Barua Rony (conga), Momtazur Rahman Lulu (accordion), my cousin Tauhid Ul Alam, and me (lead guitar). My Bhabi, Nargis Ul Alam played the sitar. My niece, Selina Baby was on vocal.

***

We now had one single target. Surela would perform at the 31st night of 1972 at Chittagong Club. I met the Director, Mr Shahzada. I convinced him.

A few days later, Wadudul Islam visited my house. He was a friend of my elder cousin, Anwar Ul Alam. Wadudul lived in the UK. Seeing our practice, he gifted us an accordion and two maracas on one of his return trips from the UK.

We now needed to do what all bands do, practice, and stay focused.

The 31st night finally arrived. Our line-up at Chittagong Club was me (accordion & guitar), Lulu (the same), Rony (conga), and Tauhid (bongo). I remember, we played two tunes that made the crowd go ecstatic. 'Dum Maro Dum', and 'Nishithe Jaiyo Phoolo Bone'.

Little did we realize that night, the band was destined for bigger things.

PART II: THE BIRTH OF SOULS

Rony's sharp eye for spotting talent influenced changing line-ups and character of the band.

Rony brought his friends Rudy and Lorenjo. We jammed on 'Cotton Fields' by Creedence Clearwater Revival. Their harmonization blew me. Rudy and Lorenjo joined the band.

At a birthday party, Rony introduced me to Tapan Chowdhury. He said Tapan had a good voice. I asked Tapan to sing. He sang a ghazal. I asked him to sing a Bangla song. Tapan sang Kishore Kumar's 'Akash Keno Dake'. That was it. Tapan was on board.

External factors also contributed to changing line-ups. Tauhid left. The line-up was now: Rony, Lulu, Rudy, Lorenjo, Tapan and me. Tapan specialized in Bangla songs. Rudy and Lorenjo specialized in English songs.

One day Rudy proposed that the name of the band needs to be in English. We all bought his idea. I asked my nephew Fariadul Islam to choose ten English names. Among them, I liked 'Bound Souls'. I went upstairs and asked my elder brother, Moyeen Ul Alam. He dropped 'bound'. From that day on, the band was Souls.

PART III: THE FIRST SOULS CONCERT

At the end of 1973, Rudy and Lorenjo convinced the Father of St Mary's Church to rent us their hall for the first concert of Souls. We decided to sell tickets and market through word of mouth. We were amazed. All the tickets sold out.

There was a twist. Soon after the concert started, fighting broke out. There were gunshots. People got scared. It was our first concert. We didn't know what to do. The concert was cancelled.

The next day, Souls was on the front page of Azadi newspaper with photos from the concert. The title read, 'Souls-er Shurute Londo Bhondo' (Souls in dire straits as they start). Rony was heartbroken. He decided to give up. I said, 'No. We will carry on'.

That front page story was a blessing. People now knew who we were. Slowly, we started to get offers for shows. The commercial beginning of Souls would have twists for me some years later.

PART IV: SOULS BECOMES A NATIONAL BAND

Balark was a popular band in those days. I was good friends with them. Balark had a super-hit commercial instrumental introduction in Chattogram Betar. I was a part of that piece.

Souls was 'envious' of Balark. They had a beautiful keyboard with a wonderful amplifier. Naquib Khan was their keyboard player. Naquib and I developed a good synergy in music collaboration. When Balark disbanded, Souls managed to acquire their keyboard. I invited Naquib to join Souls.

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At the end of 1974, Souls decided to arrange a big concert. We wanted Souls to look good. My photographer friend, Newaz, did a wonderful poster with the band in long-hair and bell-bottom trousers, the fashion of the day.

The venue was the Concert Hall of Muslim Institute. Once again, tickets were sold out. This time, Souls was forced to open gates to the public.

Members of the Lightnings Band.
Top- Farid Rashid- Neo Mendes.
Bottom- Noel Mendes- Shakil.

Hasan Zaman Rumi and three others came from Dhaka for a few days. They stayed at my house. Rumi said that they would like Souls to participate in the All Bengal Rock Concert in Dhaka later that year.

Initially, we were in two-minds. Souls was extremely popular in Chattogram. The thought of Dhaka never crossed our minds. In the end, we decided to go. Like the 31st night in Chittagong Club, the competition was our next single target.

We were focused from day one. We practiced and organized each move with careful planning.

Souls was one of the last acts. We sang, 'Mone Koro', and 'Bhule Gechho Tumi'. We harmonized the songs in the style of Crosby, Stills and Nash. This was new in Bangladesh at the time. We got this idea from a group of Danish development workers, Klaus Laurssen, Poul Erik Rasmussen and Helle Rasmussen. They worked for DANIDA and were based in Chattogram. They were close to Souls. They suggested we do Bangla numbers in Western harmonization.

(From L to R) Sitting- Naquib Khan, Sazed Ul Alam, Rouf Chowdhury, Ahmed Newaz. Standing- Shahed Ul Alam, Subrata Barua Rony, Tapan Chowdhury, Asiful

People were standing on rickshaws to watch and hear us. Once again, in the middle of the concert, there was fighting. This time, I had a presence of mind. I told Tapan to start singing, 'Mon Amar Deho Ghori'. The audience calmed down. The concert ended successfully.

***

It was now 1976. Lorenjo had left Souls. After joining an airline, Rudy became irregular. I called on my nephew, Shahed. I trained him in bass. Again, Rony came to the rescue. He introduced Tajul to the band.

Souls was to encounter another watershed moment.

It clicked. We won the competition. That night, Souls became a national band.

***

After the All Bengal Rock Concert, Souls never looked back.

We met Mr Hakim Ali of Agrabad Hotel. Souls became their Saturday night band. The band got national exposure thanks to Bangladesh Television. The band won critical acclaim thanks to concerts at the Shilpakala Academy.

Souls soon became the highest paid band in Bangladesh. Numerous times we would do three shows in a day. We once went from Chattogram to Jashore to attend a concert. We went by plane and returned by plane. This was unheard of at the time. Fans waited at the airport to greet us. Fans saw us off when we left. The feeling was not too far away from Beatlemania.

This brings me to the end part of my story with Souls.

PART V: THE BEGINNING OF AN END

I think it was 1977. Rauf Chowdhury was at my house. I played 'Born on the Bayou' by Creedence Clearwater Revival on the guitar. Rauf spontaneously started singing. I was astonished at how well he could hit the high notes in the song. He sounded just like John Fogerty of CCR. To cross-check his high-pitch, I then played 'Hotel California' by the Eagles. Rauf's mesmerized me again. We had to have him in our band.

By the end of 1979, the commercial pressure of Souls became too much for me to handle. Music was no longer a soul-searching experience. I was looking for an exit. Klaus proposed on going to Denmark to learn music. I liked the idea. The problem was, how do I let go of Souls? Klaus, Poul and Helle gave me an idea. I kept it secret from Souls.

***

It was now July 1980. I invited Souls, Klaus, Poul and Helle to a Chinese restaurant at Agrabad. During dinner, I declared I was leaving Bangladesh in a few days for Denmark to study music.

Everybody was shell-shocked. In my own words, I told Souls what Klaus, Poul and Helle advised.

'It's true that I created Souls, but Souls would never have become what it is, if it wasn't for all of us and the many people inside and outside the band we met'.

'I'm leaving Souls to you on the condition you won't break Souls. The band will continue to exist and create music. In return, I shall not ask for any royalty the band makes from this day on'.

I entrusted the management to Rony. I asked Tapan to carry on singing Bangla songs and Rauf to carry on singing English songs. I asked Naquib to do his mastery with chords on the keyboard. As a final request, I asked Souls to take Ayub Bachchu in my place as the guitarist of the group.

On July 17, 1980, I left Bangladesh for another journey in music.

***

I'm indebted to Souls. Today I am where I am because of Souls. Souls taught me a big lesson in life. How to start small and stay focused to achieve a large goal.

Because of Souls I met many talented musicians. Happy Akhand for his overall talent, and Larry Bernavi of Windy Side of Care for his musicianship with the guitar are two special friendships I will always cherish.

In hindsight, I'm happy I did what I did. Souls kept their word. For fifty years, the band has kept the memory of many of us alive. I pray the band remains active to celebrate a Centennial Jubilee.

Sazed Ul Alam resides in Spain. He is the owner of Dolça Bellas Artes. His latest project in Bangladesh is the Dreams of Artist Society based in Chattogram. Email: sandmusic_es@yahoo.es

Asrar Chowdhury *is a Professor of Economics at Jahangirnagar University. He has contributed to the Daily Star since 1993. Email: asrarul@juniv.edu*

Scan the QR code to watch Sazed Ul Alam's interview

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'It's like a dream'

India romped to a 10-wicket victory with 263 balls remaining against co-hosts Sri Lanka in the Asia Cup final in Colombo yesterday. This is the highest-margin victory in terms of wickets and balls remaining in the Asia Cup final.

Sri Lanka were bundled out for 50 in just 15.2 overs – their second-lowest total in ODIs behind 43 all out against South Africa in 2012.

It is also the second-shortest innings for a full-member nation.

In terms of balls played, this was the shortest Sri Lanka lasted in a full-length ODI. They played 92 deliveries.

India finished the chase in 6.1 overs, making it the third-shortest full-length ODI ever. The game lasted all of 129 legal deliveries.

It is also the lowest total in ODIs against India.

It took India's Mohammad Siraj only 16 deliveries to complete a fifer, the joint-quickest with Chaminda Vaas and USA's Ali Khan, since 2002, which is when the definitive ball-by-ball records were started to be recorded.

Siraj got four wickets in the fourth over yesterday, making him only the fourth bowler, since 2002, to have done so in ODIs.

Siraj's six for 21 is the second-best bowling figure in the Asia Cup final behind Ajantha Mendis' six for 13 against India in 2008 in Karachi.

SPORTS REPORTER

India kept their best reserved, or, Sri Lanka their worst, for Sunday's one-sided final of the Asia Cup, a tournament played as a prelude to the World Cup in India next month.

With the game lasting a total of 129 deliveries, the third-shortest in terms of balls bowled in ODIs, the Rohit Sharma-led side not only portrayed their ruthlessness but also sent a warning to nine other nations who would be travelling to their home for the World Cup in less than a month's time.

The destroyer in chief yesterday was Mohammad Siraj, only the fourth bowler to take four wickets in an over in ODIs.

After breaking the backbone of the Lankan batting lineup with the wickets of Pathum Nissanka, Sadeera Samarawickrama, Charith Asalanka, and Dhananjaya de Silva in the fourth over to have the co-hosts reeling at 12 for five in Colombo, Siraj went on to finish with career-best figures of six for 21 in seven overs, including a maiden.

"It's like a dream," Siraj said during the innings break.

"I got four early wickets last time I played Sri Lanka (earlier this year) but unfortunately I could not register a five-wicket haul.

"I realised you get whatever is in your destiny. I just tried to bowl my line and length, and wickets kept coming.

"The ball did not swing much in the early matches here but today it swung a lot. My effort was to draw the batters forward and make them play the ball," Siraj added.

Siraj also credited his pace-bowling partners Jasprit Bumrah and Hardik Pandya, who accounted for one and three wickets, respectively.

"I was missing the edges earlier but found them today. The wicket was seaming earlier, but there was swing today. When there's good bonding between fast bowlers, it's helpful for the team," Siraj said.

Sri Lanka coach Chris Silverwood bemoaned his team's "below-par" performance with the bat, probably hinting at making some adjustments when they announce the 15 for the World Cup. Sri Lanka played the tournament without four of their regular starters.

"The way we got dismissed is very disappointing. I think there's a lot of reflection to be done in the dressing room. I think we need to sleep on this and make some decisions tomorrow, best to assess this in the morning and discuss with the other coaching staff as well.," he said.

SCORES IN BRIEF

Asia Cup final
SRI LANKA VS INDIA
Sri Lanka: 50 all out in 15.2 overs (Mendis 17; Siraj 6-21, Hardik 3-3)
India: 51 for no loss in 6.1 overs (Gill 27 not out, Ishan 23 not out)
Result: India won by 10 wickets
Player-of-the-match: Mohammad Siraj
Player-of-the-tournament: Kuldeep Yadav

TOP RUN SCORERS
SHUBMAN GILL: **302**
KUSAL MENDIS: **270**
SADEERA SAMARAWICKRAMA: **215**

TOP WICET-TAKERS
MATHEESHA PATHIRANA: **11**
MOHAMMAD SIRAJ: **10**
DUNITH WELLALAGE: **10**

'Unsung heroes' rewarded

AFP, *Colombo*

All too often ignored in favour of the big name sport stars, cricketing groundstaff who kept the rain-hit Asia Cup running were promised a $50,000 shared bonus by organisers on Sunday.

Mohammed Siraj, who lead India's rout of Sri Lanka, also vowed to donate his $5,000 man of the match prize winnings to those who looked after the pitches.

The nearly three-week-long event was only saved by an army of around 100 Sri Lankan groundstaff wearing

orange tops, who sprinted out with the covers each time rain halted play kin the tournament.

Jay Shah, president of the ACC and BCCI, said the ACC and SLC were "proud to announce a well-deserved prize money of $50,000 for the dedicated curators and groundsmen."

Kiwis to train today

SPORTS REPORTER

The New Zealand team arrived in Bangladesh yesterday to play a three-match ODI series, slated to begin on September 21, and the visitors will have their first practice session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur today.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh's first practice session for the series will be held on Monday. The Tigers returned from the Asia Cup on Saturday.

Bangladesh will be without skipper Shakib Al Hasan, with Liton Das set to lead the side in the series against the Kiwis.

With the ODI series being played just days before the World Cup, beginning on October 5 in India, it should provide the team management an opportunity to assess the side and finalise the team combinations before the mega event. Stand-in skipper Liton himself would love to get some runs under his belt before the World Cup.

Eyes will be on the two veteran returnees to the side -- former ODI skipper Tamim Iqbal and Mahmudullah Riyad. Both stalwarts will be back in the fold after a long gap.

Tamim was expected to feature from the beginning of the New Zealand series after recovering from a back injury while Riyad, who last played in the home series against England in March, will have a final opportunity to make his case for the lower-middle-order after Afif Hossain and Shamim Hossain failed to flourish in the role during the Asia Cup.

New Zealand, led by right-arm quick Lockie Ferguson, do not have the batters who will be featuring in the upcoming World Cup but their pace attack also includes an experienced Trent Boult.

With the Tigers hoping to sort out their combinations, especially in terms of finding backup openers and a suitable lower middle-order batter, the duo of Boult and Ferguson should provide enough challenges ahead of the World Cup.

Bangladesh batter Mahmudullah Riyad trained at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday to ramp up preparations for the ODI home series against New Zealand starting on September 21. The 37-year-old was named in the 15-member squad for the first time since March and will be looking to make his point for a place in the Tigers' World Cup squad. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Brook makes it into England World Cup squad

REUTERS

England named batter Harry Brook at the expense of Jason Roy on Sunday in the squad for their 50-over World Cup title defence.

Brook, who was left out of England's provisional World Cup squad, made the cut despite a string of failures in the recent series against New Zealand.

But he was impressive in the Indian Premier League and the Hundred so skipper Jos Buttler has kept faith with the 24-year-old.

Dawid Malan, who plundered 277 runs in three ODIs against New Zealand to be named player of the series, also made the squad, with Roy sidelined due to a back injury.

"We have selected a squad we are confident can go to India and win the World Cup," England men's national selector Luke Wright said in a statement.

"We are blessed with an incredibly strong group of white-ball players which was underlined by the performances in the series win against a very good New Zealand team.

"The strength of the group has meant that we have had to make some tough decisions on world-class players, with Jason Roy missing out and Harry Brook coming into the squad."

England Test captain Ben Stokes also returns having reversed his decision to retire from ODIs.

Joty and Co expect 'best result'

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh women's cricket team embarked on their Asian Games journey on Sunday night, having undergone a camp in Sylhet where fitness, apart from skills, was high on the agenda. The team left for China's Hangzhou and will play from the quarterfinal stage as one of the top-ranked ICC T20I outfits.

Captain Nigar Sultana Joty said that she and the rest of the team were satisfied with the work they had done in the camp.

"It's important for the team how we prepare. I would say that we have worked extremely hard in the last one month and we will see the result of our hard work going forward. The new faces are not really new at the moment. They played the India series and gained lot of experience. They are here because they are capable. We are in good shape and our goal would be to do well as a team," Joty told the media in Mirpur yesterday.

The Tigresses have won silver medals in the past two Asian Games and for Joty, the feeling of winning a gold medal would a different experience compared to winning a trophy. Joty, who would be appearing in the Asian Games for the first time, was hopeful of getting the desired result.

"I feel that there is a big difference between winning a trophy and winning a medal. We won the gold medal in the 2019 South Asian Games and I felt that the enjoyment factor was different compared to winning a trophy. I would say that everyone's wish is to get the best result for Bangladesh. Bringing gold would be a big achievement and there are expectations," she said.

The Bangladesh team would play their first game on September 22 against quarterfinal opponents, who would be determined following draw after the initial group stage matches. India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka are the other sides to have been seeded directly to the quarterfinal stage.

N Korean athletes travel to Asian Games

AFP, *Seoul*

North Korean athletes have travelled to China for the Asian Games, state media said, signalling an end to the country's more than three-year isolation from global multisport competitions.

The country closed its already-tight borders in early 2020 following the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic and skipped the Tokyo Olympics, which were pushed back to 2021 because of the coronavirus.

It was then banned from the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, for failing to take part in Tokyo.

But Pyongyang said late Saturday it had sent athletes to the Asian Games, to be held in the city of Hangzhou later this month.

"A DPRK team left here on Sept. 14 to take part in the 19th Asian Games to be held in China," the Korean Central News Agency reported, using the country's official name.

North Koreans are also listed on the Games' website as competing in sports including athletics, gymnastics, basketball, football, boxing and weightlifting.

They were similarly down to compete at a weightlifting tournament in Cuba in June, but failed to show.

Japan tie excites Sabina, Titu

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh women's football team captain Sabina Khatun is excited about the prospect of playing against former World champions and Asian Games winners Japan in debut Asian Games appearance IN in Hangzhou, China next week.

The women in red and green would kick off their campaign against the 2011 World Cup winners on Friday, a day before the official inauguration of Asia's biggest sporting extravaganza.

"Personally, I'm very excited about the Japan match because they are one of the top teams in the world and I also supported them during the World Cup. Besides, it will be a huge experience for us," Sabina told reporters during a press conference at the BFF House yesterday, hours before flying out to China.

"Playing against Japan and Vietnam will be new experience which could help us to progress further. It will make the players more passionate to perform better," Sabina added.

Bangladesh will play their second match on September 25 against Vietnam – another World Cup participant – before wrapping up the group campaign against familiar foes Nepal three days later.

Although Nepal (101) are 41 places above Bangladesh in FIFA ranking, the victory over the Himalayan nation in last year's SAFF Women's Championship and the two draws against them at home this year will give Bangladesh some confidence.

Coach Saiful Bari Titu, who represented the country in the 1990 Asian Games in Beijing as a player, said that beating Nepal will be their main target while

the matches against Japan and Vietnam would be learning experience.

"It will be the first time Bangladesh football team will play against a world champion. It would be a unique experience and a test for us to know our level. But our main target would be to win against Nepal and it would be more than a realistic target," said Titu, who has been given charge of the women's team for the Asian Games following the resignation of long-term coach Golam Rabbani Choton earlier this year.

Don't refer dengue patients to Dhaka

DGHS directs health officials outside capital, says local hospitals have adequate facilities; record 3,122 hospitalised in a day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The health directorate has instructed all health officials outside the capital not to send any dengue patients to Dhaka for treatment.

The Directorate General of Health Services issued the instruction as 3,122 dengue patients were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, marking the highest single-day hospitalisations ever recorded.

Of them, 849 were in Dhaka.

"We have strictly instructed all health officials outside Dhaka to ensure the treatment of critical patients instead of sending them to Dhaka. All public hospitals, including upazila health complexes, have adequate arrangements to treat dengue patients," Prof Ahmedul Kabir, additional director general (planning and development) of the DGHS told a press briefing after a meeting in this regard yesterday.

Civil surgeons, upazila health and family welfare officers and other health officials from across the country joined the virtual meeting.

Kabir said wasting time transporting critical dengue patients to Dhaka was futile.

"This puts the patients' lives at risk."

He also said there is no shortage of normal injectable saline in the country.

"But some dishonest people are trying to create an artificial crisis. We have instructed civil surgeons to take action against those involved in the malpractice."

About patient exploitation in ICUs, Kabir said, "Numerous private hospitals

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

Four-year-old Eva was trying to cheer up her elder brother Raihan, 6, when she went to see him at Dhaka Shishu Hospital yesterday. Raihan was first admitted to a clinic in Kishorganj after being diagnosed with dengue. As his condition deteriorated, he was brought to Dhaka on an emergency basis. PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

7-year-old murdered 'after rape'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

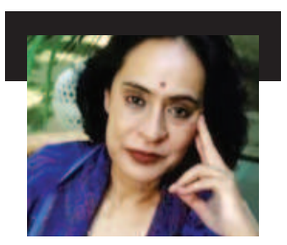
Police in Chattogram yesterday detained a 21-year-old man for allegedly murdering a seven-year-old girl "after raping" her last morning.

The victim's father is a rickshaw-puller and her mother is a worker at a garment factory. The family lives in a tin shed house in the port city's Chandgaon area.

Talking to The Daily Star in front of the Chattogram Medical College Hospital (CMCH) morgue around 3:00pm, the victim's father said, "We left our house for work around 7:30am.

"I gave her some money to have some snacks before I left for the rickshaw garage. When I was waiting on the Moulavi Pukurpar

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



Gita Mehta no more

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Writer, journalist, and documentary filmmaker, Gita Mehta passed away in Delhi on Saturday evening.

She was 80.

A renowned author of novels, short stories, and collections of essays, Mehta's work has been translated into 21 languages.

Her first book "Karma Cola" (1979) brilliantly satirises the western desire to get instant spiritual enlightenment by visiting India and getting a guru.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

Prepare for a long war in Ukraine

Nato chief warns; Russia says Ukrainian drones strike Crimea, Moscow, oil depot

AFP, *Frankfurt*

Nato chief Jens Stoltenberg has warned there will be no swift end to the Ukraine war, in an interview published yesterday, as Kyiv pushes on with its counteroffensive against Russia.

"Most wars last longer than expected when they first begin," Stoltenberg said in an interview with Germany's Funke media group. "Therefore we must prepare ourselves for a long war in Ukraine."

The conflict began in February, 2022 when Moscow sent its forces into Ukraine, bringing war back to Europe for the first time in decades.

"We are all wishing for a quick peace," said Stoltenberg. "But at the same time we must recognise: if President (Volodymyr) Zelensky and the Ukrainians stop fighting, their country will no longer exist.

"If President (Vladimir) Putin and Russia lay down their weapons, we will have peace."

On Ukraine's ambitions to join the alliance, Stoltenberg said: "There is no doubt that Ukraine will eventually be in Nato."

Kyiv had "moved closer to Nato" at a summit of the alliance in July, he said. "When this war ends, we need security guarantees for Ukraine. Otherwise, history could repeat itself," he added.

Meanwhile, Russia said it had thwarted a coordinated Ukrainian attack on Crimea early yesterday, while drones also targeted Moscow, disrupting air traffic in the capital, and caused a fire at an oil depot in the southwest of the country.

Ukraine in recent days has launched a series of strikes on Russian military targets in occupied Crimea, including the Russian Navy Black Sea Fleet's facilities, seeking to undermine Moscow's war efforts in the critical region.

UTTARA-FARMGATE

BRTC buses to start using expressway today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) will begin operating buses on the Uttara-Farmgate route via the Dhaka Elevated Expressway today.

Initially, eight shuttle buses will ply on a trial basis from 11:00am.

Speaking to this newspaper yesterday, BRTC Chairman Tazul Islam said, "From tomorrow [today], eight buses will start plying on the expressway at 11:00am. The number of buses will be increased based on passenger demand."

"Buses will run from 7:30am daily and continue to operate as long as there

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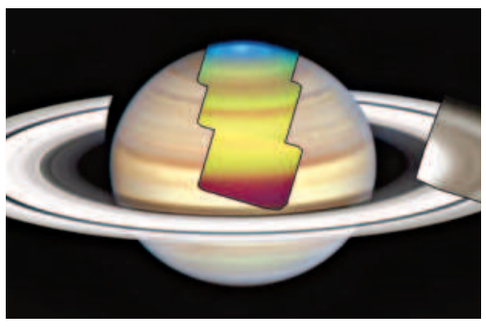
New Saturn images show a change of seasons



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

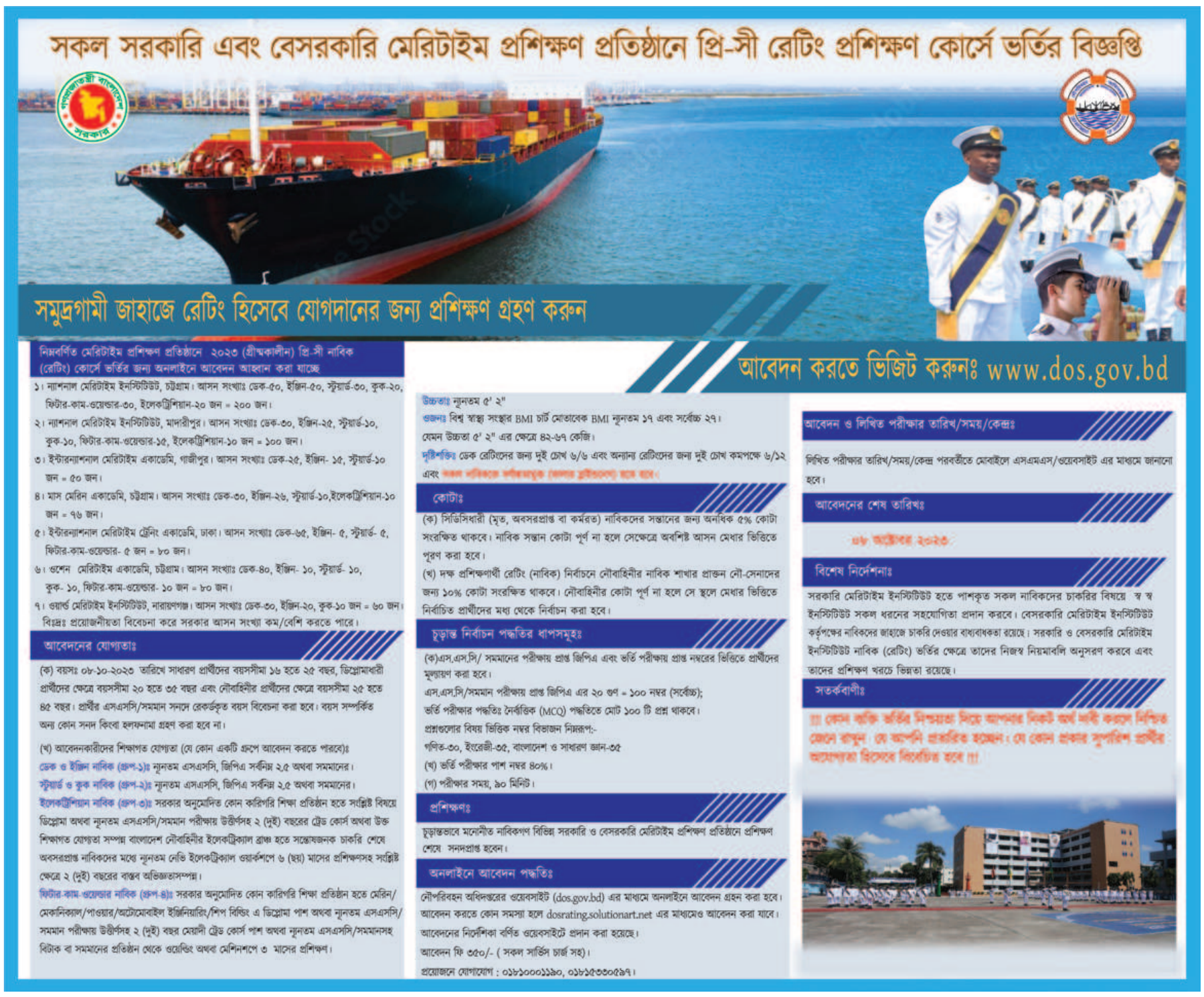
As much of Europe has experienced an unusually warm September, Saturn's late northern summer is experiencing a cooling trend, scientists have found.

The new observations have also provided a last glimpse of Saturn's north pole, with its enormous warm vortex filled with hydrocarbon gases, before the pole begins to recede into the darkness of polar winter.

The weather report is thanks to new images analysed by a team led by the University of Leicester from the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST).

Published in JGR: Planets, the researchers have provided new insights into the changing seasons on the massive outer planet, famous for its icy rings.

Professor Leigh Fletcher, from the University of Leicester School of Physics and Astronomy, said: "The quality of the new data from JWST is simply breathtaking – in one short set of observations, we've been able to continue the legacy of the Cassini mission into a completely new Saturnian season, watching how the weather patterns and atmospheric circulation respond to the changing sunlight.

"JWST can see in wavelengths of light that were inaccessible to any previous spacecraft, producing an exquisite dataset that whets the appetite for the years to come.

"This work on Saturn is just the first of a programme of observations of all four giant planets, and JWST is providing a capability beyond anything we've had in the past – if we can get so many new findings from a single observation of a single world, imagine what discoveries await."