

"A worrisome new arms race is brewing. The number of nuclear weapons could rise for the first time in decades."

UN chief Antonio Guterres

The Daily Star

YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW

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BB moves to stem slide in reserve

Plans some short-term measures ahead of nat'l election

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and MD MEHEDI HASAN

The Bangladesh Bank will not be making any drastic policy changes ahead of the national election scheduled for January, putting all its focus on tackling the depleting foreign exchange reserves and refraining from printing money to give loans to the government.

But after the polls, the banking regulator will be embarking on its long-term plan to reform reserve management and the banking sector under the new government.

The recommendations were made yesterday by Sadiq Ahmed and Ahsan H Mansur, vice-chairman and executive director of the Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh respectively.

The banking regulator and finance ministry have started to take opinions from economists and other stakeholders to ride out the twin challenges of a strained dollar stockpile and elevated inflation since last year. Last week, BB met with the Wahiduddin Mahmud, a former adviser to the caretaker government.

"They are basically in agreement with what we said. They also said they cannot do much before the polls, which we understand. But after the election, there has to be a major overhaul -- it is not a choice -- and they want to prepare for that," Mansur told The Daily Star after the meeting.

The immediate tasks are to stem the drop in reserves and to put curbs on government borrowing from the central bank.

At the meeting, Finance Secretary Md. Khairuzzaman Mozumder said the government will not borrow from the central bank and they have already taken initiatives to bring down public expenses.

But stemming the drop in reserves is turning out to be an unwinnable battle.

Despite a series of measures, reserves continue to fall. In the first nine months of the year, gross reserves declined 19 percent, according to estimates by the American credit rating agency Fitch.

As of September 26, which is the latest published data by the BB, SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Farmers transporting Aush paddy to their homes by boats in Hathgachha Beel of Jashore's Monirampur upazila. Farmers in Bhabadaha region can grow only one crop a year because the area remains waterlogged for most part of the year due to the authorities' failure to manage water flows from local rivers. The photo was taken yesterday.

Bashundhara seeks to invest in Teletalk

MAHMUDUL HASAN

Struggling state-run mobile operator Teletalk is evaluating a proposal from Bashundhara Group to become its strategic investor, in a move that can shake up the country's mobile landscape.

The proposal, which was submitted to the Post and Telecommunications Division from Bashundhara Telecommunication Limited, outlines a plan to develop the network, enhance customer service and upgrade the systems of Teletalk, which has made losses

in all but the first two years of its 19-year existence.

On Telecom Minister Mustafa Jabbar's instruction, Teletalk, whose net loss widened 27.2 percent to Tk 223.1 crore in fiscal 2021-22, formed a committee to assess the proposal.

"We are scrutinising the proposal -- some of our officials are looking into it," Nurul Mabud Chowdhury, the operator's managing director (current charge), told The Daily Star.

Chowdhury declined to share details of the proposal and how much Bashundhara intends to invest as the matter is still in the

early stages.

Bashundhara Group's bid to step into Bangladesh's mobile landscape comes when local conglomerates have steered clear due to the capital-intensive nature of the business. Both Banglalink and Robi were founded by local owners, who sold off their businesses to foreign parties with bigger financial muscle in 2004 and 2007 respectively.

For Bashundhara Group, whose concerns range from real estate to construction materials, from fast-moving consumer goods to

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



Hasina's birthday today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sheikh Hasina, the longest-serving prime minister of the country and also the Awami League president, turns 77 today.

The eldest among the five children of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib, Hasina was born in Tungipara of Gopalganj on September 28, 1947.

After Bangladesh's independence, Bangabandhu along with most of his family members was brutally killed in a coup by some army personnel on August 15, 1975. Hasina and her younger sister Sheikh Rehana had been abroad at that time.

The torchbearer for her father's ideals, the AL chief survived many attempts on her life, including the grisly grenade attack on August 21, 2004.

After 1975, when the AL plunged into a crisis due to rifts within the party and a lack of enthusiasm

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan shares a light moment with teammates at the BCB headquarters in Mirpur yesterday afternoon prior to their departure for India to play the World Cup. They will play the first of their two practice matches against Sri Lanka tomorrow in Guwahati.

PHOTO: STAR

Miladunnabi today

BSS, Dhaka

The holy Eid-e-Miladunnabi, marking the anniversary of the birth and demise of Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SM), is being observed across the country today with due religious solemnity.

On this day in 570, the 12th of Rabiul Awal of the Hijri calendar, Prophet Muhammad (SM) was born in Makkah of Saudi Arabia with divine blessings and messages of peace for mankind. He also passed away on the same day in 632.

The day is a public holiday.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

'Nasty game, not injury, behind my exclusion'

Says Tamim

AL-AMIN

A day after being excluded from the World Cup squad on fitness grounds, Bangladesh opener Tamim Iqbal said that a nasty game, not injury concerns, played a key role in his last-minute omission.

In a video statement on his Facebook page, the left-hander also claimed that a lot of lies circulated in the media to obscure the truth. He said that he never declined to play the third one-day against New Zealand on Tuesday, nor did he say anything about being available for five World Cup games as reported.

Things were set in motion after a Monday midnight meeting between coach Chandika Hathurusingha and captain Shakib Al Hasan at board president Nazmul Hassan's residence, where Shakib reportedly said he would not captain the side if unfit players were selected.

The Daily Star reached out to the Bangladesh Cricket Board, but nobody wanted to speak on the matter.

In a 12-minute-plus recorded statement, posted after the national team's departure for India at around 4:00pm, Tamim said that nowhere in the latest medical report did it say that he was unfit for the World Cup.

The medical report even detailed Tamim's injury management leading up to the first World Cup game against Afghanistan on October 7, according to Tamim.

The crux of the problem was a telephone conversation with a top board official, during the course of which the left-hander was asked to bat down the order and sit out the first World Cup game.

While baring his soul, the most successful Bangladesh opener said: "In the last two or three days, what has happened and what was written is completely different from what actually happened."

Narrating the events since his return to national team for the New Zealand series, he said: "You all know I announced my retirement (on July 6 this year) and there was a reason for it.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



আল্লাহ সর্বশক্তিমান

জয় বাংলা
জয় বঙ্গবন্ধু

২৮ সেপ্টেম্বর

বঙ্গবন্ধুকন্যা, মাননীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী, সফল রাষ্ট্রনায়ক

জননেত্রী শেখ হাসিনার

৭৭তম জন্মদিনে

শুভেচ্ছা

এ.এইচ.এম খায়রুজ্জামান লিটন

সভাপতিমণ্ডলীর সদস্য, বাংলাদেশ আওয়ামী লীগ

মেয়র, রাজশাহী সিটি কর্পোরেশন

HOLIDAY NOTICE

The Daily Star office will remain closed today on the occasion of Eid-e-Miladunnabi. Therefore, there will be no issue of the newspaper tomorrow. Stay tuned to our website for round-the-clock news coverage.

STUDYING ABROAD Bangladeshi students need not worry about US visa policy Says Dipu Moni

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Education Minister Dr Dipu Moni said the US visa policy will not affect the students who want to study at US universities.



She also said the government is not feeling any pressure because of the visa restrictions imposed on some Bangladeshis.

She made the remark while talking to the journalists after the inauguration ceremony of the 50th National Summer Sports Competition in Sylhet yesterday.

"The [US] visa policy will not affect students going abroad [for

"Many of their [US] universities depend on foreign students' fees,"

Education Minister Dipu Moni

studies]. Because they want our students to go to their country. Many of their universities depend on foreign students' fees," the minister said.

She also said, "The government is not feeling any pressure. We are committed to conducting a free, fair, neutral and transparent election under the leadership of Bangabandhu's daughter Sheikh Hasina."

The minister added, "We have an independent Election Commission, and it will conduct the election. According to the constitution, the government will give full support to the commission and the people of Bangladesh will elect their next government through a free and fair election."

Washington on September 22 said it had begun applying the visa restrictions the US announced on May 24 this year. It said it imposed visa restrictions on members of law enforcement, the ruling party, and the political opposition.

On May 24 this year, the US said it would impose visa restrictions on individuals and their immediate family members "if they are responsible for, or complicit in, undermining the democratic election process in Bangladesh."



Even footpaths are not spared from traffic jam, as motorcycles and bicycles illegally occupy the space meant for pedestrian movement. The photo was taken near the capital's Bangla Motor yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

India to look into any 'specific' info

Says Jaishankar on Sikh leader's
murder in Canada

REUTERS

India's Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar said on Tuesday that India has told Canada it was open to looking into any "specific" or "relevant" information it provides on the killing of Sikh separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said last week that Ottawa had credible intelligence linking Indian agents to the murder, prompting an angry initial reaction from New Delhi, which denies the allegation.

Asked about the allegations at a Council on Foreign Relations event in New York, Jaishankar detailed India's response in diplomatic engagements.

"One, we told the Canadians that this is not the government of India's policy," he said. "Two, we told the Canadians saying that look, if you have something specific, if you have something relevant, you know, let us know - we are open to looking at it."

India last week suspended new visas for Canadians and asked Ottawa to reduce its diplomatic presence in the country, citing

what it called a deteriorating security environment.

India had been "badgering the Canadians" about its claims that organized criminals are based there, a reference to separatists like Nijjar, he said, adding that India had made "a large number of extradition requests."

"The picture is not complete without the context," he added. "You also have to appreciate that in the last few years, Canada actually has seen a lot of organized crime, you know, relating to, you know, the secessionist forces, organized-crime, violence, extremism, they're all very, very deeply mixed up."

Allies of Canada, including the United States, have cautiously expressed concern over the claims and urged India to cooperate with Canada's investigation.

The US ambassador to Canada told Canadian television that some information on the case had been gathered by the Five Eyes intelligence alliance, which includes the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the UK.



US VISA CURBS

Inclusion of media not 'a right choice' Says Shahriar Alam

UNB, Dhaka

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam yesterday said the inclusion of media under the US visa restrictions does not seem to be "a right choice, or right thing to do or say."

"There, you have a say, too. We expect they will not take any steps that interfere in the freedom of the media or limit its freedom," he told reporters.

The state minister hopes that the US administration will look into why the US ambassador in Dhaka, Peter Haas, mentioned the media when talking about visa restrictions.

He said this was not an issue that should worry general people.

Bangladesh expects the new US visa policy will not be applied arbitrarily or in a non-objective manner, he added.

The United States has said its visa restriction policy can be applied to anyone "found to be undermining" democratic elections in Bangladesh.

Bodies of mother, 2 sons recovered from river

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

The bodies of a woman and her two children were recovered from the Tinnoi river in Thakurgaon's Ranisankail upazila yesterday.

The deceased are Nasiman Begum, 35, wife of Abdur Rahim of Kashidanga village, and her two sons Shawon, 8, and Sifat, 4.

Quoting locals, UP Chairman Atiqur Rahman said that Nasiman went to the river with her two sons in the afternoon.

The bodies of the boys were later found floating about 200 yards away from the spot where they were last seen. Nasiman's body was also later recovered.

Contacted, Inspector Mohosin Ali of Ranisankail Police Station confirmed the deaths and said, "We are investigating the matter."

The bodies will be sent to the morgue for autopsy, the inspector said.

The reason behind their death will be ascertained after investigation, he added.

Truck helper, biker killed in road crash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chattogram

Two people were killed after a bus hit a motorcycle and a mini truck on the Chattogram-Cox's Bazar highway in the Ansar camp area of Chattogram's Patiya upazila early yesterday.

The deceased were identified as Azizur Rahman Khokon, the motorbike rider, and Syed Azam, the helper of the mini truck, Patiya Highway Police Station Officer-in-charge (OC) Snehanshu Bikash Sarker told The Daily Star.

The accident happened around 1:00am when the mini truck was taking a u-turn on the highway with the motorcycle stopped behind it.

At that moment, a Chattogram-bound Eagle Paribahan bus rammed both the motorcycle and truck from behind, leaving Khokon and Azam dead on the spot.

On information, police rushed to the spot and recovered the bodies. Both bodies were handed over to their respective families after completing legal procedures.

4.5 tonnes government rice seized from UP chairman's relatives

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A total of 135 sacks containing 4.5 tonnes of government rice were seized from the houses of two relatives of a union parishad chairman in Lakhai upazila of Habiganj late Tuesday night.

The upazila administration found the rice sacks while raiding the kitchens at the houses of Churuk Molla and Ismail Molla, cousins of Morakari UP Chairman Abul Kashem Molla Faisal, said Lakhai Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Nahida Sultana.

The rice was supposed to be distributed to poor people through the Vulnerable Women Benefit (VWB) programme.

Upazila Women's Affairs Officer Piara Begum filed a case against Churuk and Ismail following the raid.

UNO Nahida, who led the operation, said, "Legal action will be taken against the UP chairman if there is any evidence of his involvement found in the incident."

BB moves to stem slide in reserve

FROM PAGE 1

gross foreign currency reserves stood at \$21.15 billion, which is enough to meet four months' import bill at best.

"We forecast foreign exchange reserves to stay under pressure, driven by rising imports and foreign currency intervention by the central bank," Fitch said in a report earlier this week.

Reserves cannot be allowed to drop any further, said Mansur, also a former economist of the International Monetary Fund.

"There are both short-term and long-term issues with reserves. In the short term, which is until the election, you have to monitor it very closely and you cannot let it fall too far such that market sentiment is disturbed. If needed, you send teams to monitor in both morning and evening."

The government has already failed to maintain the minimum net international reserves of \$24.46 billion at the end of June to get the second tranche of its \$4.5 billion loan from the IMF sanctioned.

While not much can be done before the polls, after the election various measures must be taken to reform the banking sector, particularly the state banks, said Mansur, also a former chairman of Brac Bank.

The government will have to cut its expenditure so that the central bank would not need to print fresh money, he said.

Last fiscal year, the government took a record Tk 98,000 crore in loans from the BB to run its operations.

The injection of such funds, known as high-powered money, stokes inflationary pressure and Bangladesh is already witnessing an extended run of elevated inflation because of that.

Inflation advanced 23 basis points

in August to 9.92 percent propelled by food inflation, which hit a 12-year-high.

"The central bank officials have informed us that they have already stopped funding to the government by printing fresh money," Mansur said, adding that the BB is prepared to take a raft of measures for the betterment of the banking sector.

23 types

FROM PAGE 12

Turkey's Armed Personnel Carrier (APC) and Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS), Singapore's Automatic Grenade Launcher (AGL), Serbia and Turkey's Regimental Field Artillery Weapon System, Spain's Fixed Wing Medium Utility Aircraft, South Africa's Semi-Automatic Grenade Launcher (SAGL), Turkey's Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV), and China's Surface to Air Missile (SAM) System.

Eight types of combat equipment have been added to the navy. These include Khulna Shipyard- and China-made Patrol Craft (PC), Chinese frigate, various types of Chinese missiles and accessories, Italian utility helicopters, and Landing Craft Tank (LCT) made in Khulna Shipyard.

Four types of combat equipment have been added to the air force. These include the UK's MK-5 aircraft, France's air defense radar, Italy's Fixed Wing Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) and Germany's primary trainer aircraft.

Standing committee members Muhammad Faruk Khan, Motahar Hossain, Nazmul Hasan, Nasir Uddin, Mohibur Rahman and Naheed Ezaher Khan attended the meeting, with committee Chairman Muhammad Shubid Ali Bhuiyan in the chair.



PHOTO: REUTERS

Rescuers remove debris from a house heavily damaged by recent shelling in the course of Russia-Ukraine conflict in Donetsk, Ukraine yesterday.

Hasina's birthday today

FROM PAGE 1

among its grassroots, Hasina emerged as a symbol of party unity. She was elected unanimously as the AL president while living in exile in New Delhi.

On her return home on May 17, 1981, Hasina was greeted by a mammoth crowd in the capital. She addressed a public rally.

The leaders and activists of the party were invigorated upon her return to the country.

Hasina, who then focused on reorganising the party, made numerous visits to the rural areas, talked to the grassroots leaders, and encouraged them to be united.

She also waged a movement against the then autocratic government to restore democracy in the country.

With hard work and perseverance, Hasina helped the party assume power. She became the prime minister for the first time in 1996.

Hasina is now serving a fourth term as the PM. She has been in charge of the prime minister for three consecutive terms since 2009.

Despite her many achievements, some controversies and initiatives take some shine off the PM's glorious legacy. She faces the biggest criticism over the growing lack of public trust in

the electoral system and rule of law. The weakening of the country's democratic institutions and enactment of laws shrinking the freedom of expression and the media have also been criticised.

Hasina is now in the USA. She had left the country on April 17 to join the 78th United Nations General Assembly in New York.

In her absence, the AL and its associate and front organisations, including Chhatra League, have drawn up elaborate programmes to observe the day.

The AL will organise a milad and dua mahfil marking the premier's birthday and Eid-e-Miladunnabi at the party headquarters on the capital's Bangabandhu Avenue today.

Special prayers will be held at mosques across the country, including the Baitul Mukarram national mosque, and other places of worship seeking good health and long life of the PM.

Marking the occasion, a discussion will be held at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre at 3:00pm tomorrow.

Meanwhile, President Mohammed Shahabuddin yesterday in a message wished sound health, long life, peace, progress and continued wellbeing of PM Hasina on the occasion of her 77th birthday anniversary, reports BSS.

Nasty game, not injury

FROM PAGE 1

I returned at the request of the prime minister.

Tamim, who is carrying a recurring back injury, said he worked very hard for the past two months to get fit.

"Those who were involved in the process, physios and trainers, will all agree that there was no session or exercise that they wanted me to do which I did not comply with," he said.

He said the New Zealand series was a real test for him to see how his fitness had improved.

After missing the chance in the first game due to rain, Tamim scored a fluent 44 in the second match.

"After that game I was very happy mentally. I was looking forward to playing again and I was looking forward to the World Cup," said the 34-year-old batter.

He said that the pain was still there after both games and that he had informed the physio and the selectors about it.

"I want to clear one thing: I never at any moment or time said that I would not be able to play more than five matches (in the World Cup). I don't know who fed this lie to media or how.

"What I told the selectors is that my body would be like this. Pain will be there. So, when you select the team, keep that in mind," he said, adding that he communicated it in good faith to avoid another controversy such as the one during the Afghanistan series, when it was circulated in the media that if someone is not fit, he should not play.

"I was surprised at that time because I played that game (first ODI against Afghanistan) after agreement with the coach and physio."

He said he would challenge anyone regarding his current medical report, which he claimed to have seen.

The report said if Tamim was rested for the third ODI against New Zealand and played the second warm-up game in India on October 2, then he would have completed his 10-week rehabilitation.

"Nowhere in the report was it said

that I would not be able to play more than five games.

"I don't think injury played a big role in my exclusion from the World Cup. I have pain but I'm not injured," he stressed.

When told to bat down the order or sit out games, Tamim responded: "I told him that we have another 12-13 days and that I would be in good condition by then. Why won't I play?"

Tamim said that such incidents made him feel that someone was intentionally putting obstacles in his path to dishearten him.

"What I said to him is that if you have such a plan then don't send me to World Cup. I don't want to be part of this nasty thing," Tamim said, adding had those terms been presented differently, his reaction perhaps would have been different.

"I'm not sure how fair it is," he said, adding that one or two episodes can be a misunderstanding, but when seven episodes happen to one cricketer in the last three or four months, it is done intentionally.

"That is what I felt."

Miladunnabi today

FROM PAGE 1

On the occasion of the holy Eid-e-Miladunnabi, Islamic Foundation has drawn up different programmes.

State Minister for Religious Affairs Md Faridul Haque Khan will inaugurate the programme today at Baitul Mukarram national mosque, said a press release.

Prior to this, the state minister will inaugurate the month-long Islamic book fair outside the national mosque after Asr prayers.

The other programmes of the Islamic Foundation include recitation of the holy Quran and doa mahfil, holding a seminar, and arranging Islamic cultural competition.

Besides, various programmes will be organised in all divisional and district offices of Islamic Foundation, 50 Islamic missions and seven imam training academies on the occasion of the Eid-e-Miladunnabi.

AL afraid of visa curbs

BNP leaders tell Gabtoli rally



BNP leaders and activists at a rally in the capital's Gabtoli yesterday. The party's Dhaka south city unit organised the event as part of its one-point movement, demanding resignation of the government and general election under a non-party interim government.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Political leaders and government officials are scared of US visa restrictions, despite publicly asserting that they are not concerned about the implications of such sanctions, said BNP Standing Committee member Nazrul Islam Khan yesterday.

"If they don't care, why are they talking about this? Why are pro-government academics issuing statements daily? Why hold two-three programmes every day? They are actually scared," he said while addressing a rally at Gabtoli in the capital.

BNP south city unit organised the

event as part of its 15-day programme to press home its one-point demand for holding elections under a non-partisan neutral government.

Thousands of BNP leaders and activists joined the rally which started at 3:00pm. The party men chanted various anti-government slogans, as they carried banners, festoons, placards, and portraits of the party's top leaders.

A long tailback was created on the Dhaka-Aricha Highway due to the event.

Speaking at the rally, Nazrul claimed that many senior government officials have had their US visa applications rejected recently.

Regarding party chief Khaleda Zia's health, he said Khaleda would "surrender after treatment" if allowed to travel abroad on medical grounds.

Meanwhile, speaking at another rally in Narayanganj yesterday, BNP Standing Committee member Abdul Moyeen Khan demanded "free and fair" elections under a non-partisan caretaker government, claiming the AL was afraid of public verdict.

"If the Awami League wins through a fair vote, I'll congratulate them. But they know people don't want them anymore, that's why they fear," he said.

(Our Narayanganj correspondent also contributed to the news.)

Won't allow BNP on streets

Says Quader at AL rally in Tongi



Leaders and activists of Awami League at a rally at Tongi Government School premises. Gazipur city AL organised the programme yesterday. The event was part of a series of rallies the ruling party rolled out to counter BNP's demonstrations on the streets.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said they will not allow BNP to take to the streets during the 36-day ultimatum they have issued to the opposition.

On September 25, Quader issued the ultimatum.

The current parliament expires on January 29 and the national election must be held during the final 90 days of the parliament's tenure. The 90-day countdown begins on November 1, which was 36 days away on September 25.

"Every area would be under the control of the soldiers of Awami League, soldiers of Sheikh Hasina,"

said Quader.

He was speaking at a rally held at Tongi Government School premises in Gazipur.

Gazipur city unit of Awami League organised the "peace rally", as part of the ruling party's series of rallies to counter BNP's programmes.

Regarding BNP's threat that they will make the government resign by October, Quader said, "They (BNP) said Hasina's term is over... our term is over. They said October will be the last... We saw 15 such 'Octobers'. Hasina will remain in power."

"You (BNP) are now plotting to occupy Dhaka. We are waiting to see who will occupy Dhaka and how," he said.

Regarding Hasina's leadership, he said, "Captain is coming. She is now in Washington, and asked us to get ready."

Quader also said there is no alternative to Hasina.

Addressing the BNP secretary general, he said, "Now Mirza Fakhrul is crying, crying out of despair... He failed as a failed secretary general. They could not even wage a movement for Khaleda Zia..."

Pointing towards the US, he said, "Why are you so worried about a small country like ours?" President Biden, you stay in power, we have no issue. But stop Trump first. Trump is still ahead in popularity in your own country."

Repeal CSA, it's anti-people

Says rights group

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Forum for Freedom of Expression, Bangladesh yesterday demanded that the government repeal the newly-enacted Cyber Security Act 2023, saying the new law is "anti-people" and repressive like the now-repealed Digital Security Act.

In a statement, the forum members said the government enacted the act "hurriedly" and without taking sufficient opinion of people.

It said the repressive DSA has been repealed in face of demand from people. However, a similar law in the name of CSA has been formulated overlooking people's expectations.

In the new law, almost all repressive provisions from the DSA have been incorporated, the forum said.

As a result, there is scope that the use of the new law could be "misused" and curb people's fundamental rights, it said.

The forum said offences under the new law are ambiguous and not sufficiently defined. Besides, the law lacks standards for different international cybercrime-related agreements.

Also, the new law does not ensure "judicial accountability" of law enforcement agency members in case of misuse, the forum said.

In the new law, almost all repressive provisions from the DSA have been incorporated.

MINORITY RIGHTS PROTECTION

Form separate ministry, commission: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government needs to form a separate ministry and a commission for the welfare and protection of the country's minority community, said speakers at a discussion yesterday.

Although minorities are considered valuable voters during different elections, issues related to their fundamental rights and protection are largely ignored, they said.

Pro-Liberation War platform Ekattorer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee organised the discussion on "The 12th National Parliamentary Election: Protection of Religious Minority Communities" at the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh in the capital, said a press release.

We have been demanding enactment of a new law for the protection of minorities, but our demand was not realised.

RANA DASGUPTA
GS, Bangladesh Hindu Bouddha Christian
Oikya Parishad

Rana Dasgupta, general secretary of Bangladesh Hindu Bouddha Christian Oikya Parishad, said they have been demanding enactment of a new law for the protection of minorities, but their demand was not realised.

Still, people from minority

communities face discrimination and oppression in the country, he said.

He urged the ruling party to implement the pledge of forming a "national minority commission" and a ministry in this regard.

Although minorities are considered valuable voters during different elections, issues related to their fundamental rights and protection are largely ignored.

Echoing the same, Aroma Dutta, an AL lawmaker from reserved seat, added the country's minority people need to be united ahead of the next parliamentary election.

Nirmul Committee President Shahriar Kabir said the government and the Election Commission must ensure that every countryman will be able to cast their vote peacefully and without fear during the next election.

He urged pro-Liberation War organisations to form a "preventive committee" consisting of social and cultural activities in the country's minority community-dominated areas.

Historian Prof Muntassir Mamoon said minority community people are oppressed everywhere across the globe and continue to struggle to ensure their rights in their own countries.

Case backlog a major concern

Says chief justice

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan yesterday urged all concerned, including judges and lawyers, to work towards clearing the huge backlog of pending cases.

"Multiple cases are generated from a single case due to the loopholes of law. There are 1,800 plus judges for 35-40 lakh cases pending with the courts across the country," he said.

"The rate of case disposal has increased in recent years. Even up to 125 percent of cases have been disposed of by some courts. If this trend continues, the backlog will be reduced to some extent in a few years," he said.

He was speaking as chief guest at a programme organised by Greater Mymensingh Association, Dhaka, at the National Museum. The event was held to accord citizens' felicitation to the CJ.

Hassan was sworn in as 24th chief justice on September 26.

The CJ said competent translators are needed to correctly translate the laws, which are written in English, into Bangla. He also said the SC has installed apps to turn the English verdicts into Bangla, but the translations are not up to the mark.

"I request the IT department to take necessary steps in this regard," he said.



493 girls raped in last 8 months

Says Advocacy Forum

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 493 girls in 23 districts were raped between January and August this year while 329 were sexually harassed nationwide, according to a National Girl Child Advocacy Forum presentation.

The data was presented by Nasima Akter Jolly, editor of the forum, at a press conference organised to unveil a report titled "Overall status of girl child: Bangladesh context 2021-2022".

The event was held at Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

Of the victims, 72 girls were gang raped. Besides, 104 were kidnapped and trafficked while two others were victims of acid attacks. Meanwhile, 30 girls were victims of child pornography.

During this period, 260 girls were victims of early marriage and 101 were subjected to attempted rape. However, a few perpetrators were arrested and many accused were bailed.

Some 26 domestic violence cases were recorded during this time and 36 girls had to face physical and sexual abuse at educational institutions. Also, 181 girls died by suicide, 136 were killed, and 11 were abandoned during this period.

Dr Badiul Alam Majumder, president of the forum, said, "Women and girls have come a long way, but they are still subjected to various forms of torture and discrimination. We need to invest more in their development."

Nasima Akter Jolly said, "Girls are deprived from birth. It's regrettable that the number of victims is huge while the number of offenders who were punished is negligible."

The presentation recommended prevention of political and administrative asylum to offenders, setting up a designated children's department, and an increase in the social safety net budget.

Country lacks 'true politicians'

Sultana Kamal tells discussion

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

There is no true politician in the country at present, said Sultana Kamal, rights activist and Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon president, yesterday.

She made this remark while addressing the programme "Tourism by protecting haors, hillocks and forests", marking World Tourism Day, at a seminar hall in Sylhet city in the afternoon.

The programme was jointly organised by Waterkeepers Bangladesh, Bapa and Environment and Heritage Conservation Trust.

Speaking as the chief guest, she said, "Politicians are the policymakers. But there is no politician with whom we can share what people are really

thinking... They lack goodwill. If they consider the upcoming election as an election, then, we might have a chance. If that happens, if the politicians come to seek votes, we will have the chance to inform them of what people are thinking."

Sultana Kamal said unplanned constructions at tourist spots are having an adverse effect on the environment.

"A working paper must be prepared on

behalf of the people so that we can present demands to politicians or policymakers [in this regard]. We have to instil goodwill in them," she added.

The programme was presided over by architect Zerina Hossain, a trustee of Environment and Heritage Conservation Trust while Sharif Jamil, coordinator of Waterkeepers Bangladesh, presented the keynote speech.

Politicians are the policymakers. But there is no politician with whom we can share what people are really thinking... They lack goodwill.

Dr Mohammad Jahirul Hoque, vice chancellor of Sylhet Metropolitan University, spoke as a special guest while Abdul Karim Kim, general secretary of Bapa Sylhet chapter, moderated the discussion.

In the programme, journalist Ujjal Mehedhi gave a speech on "haor tourism" while architect Rajon Das delivered a speech on "urban tourism".



An array of pick-up trucks, parked illegally beneath the Mouchak-Moghbar flyover, takes up a significant part of the Panthapath-Tejgaon link road. The photo was taken recently near the flyover's Karwan Bazar end in the capital.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

CHT crisis needs a political solution

Speakers tell event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon at an event yesterday stressed that the crisis in the Chattogram Hill Tracts can be solved politically and not through militarisation.

"The CHT Peace Treaty is a significant achievement... The military approach attempted by Ziaur Rahman has been replaced by a political solution. One crucial aspect of the agreement was the demilitarisation. However, under the disguise of political instability, militarisation is being increased in the CHT. We must remember that the CHT crisis cannot be resolved through militarisation; it needs to be solved politically."

Menon, also a lawmaker, said this at a views-exchange meeting titled, "Commitment and Actions of Political Parties to Implement CHT Peace Treaty," held at Jatiya Press Club. The event was organised by the Chattogram Hill Tracts Treaty Implementation Movement.

"It should be considered whether the Awami League and other parties can also engage in this initiative of the treaty implementation movement. In the current context of our country, the strength and capacity of left-progressive parties are insufficient to make this movement successful," he suggested.

Ruhin Hossain Prince, general secretary of Communist Party of Bangladesh, encouraged Jana Sanghati Samiti to step forward in this regard, emphasising on its potential role on a national level.

Bazlur Rashid Firoz, general secretary of Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal, demanded constitutional recognition for different indigenous groups.

Dhaka University Prof Khairul Islam Chowdhury, also a joint convener of the CHT Peace Accord Implementation Movement, presented five demands aimed at implementing the peace treaty and resolving the CHT issues permanently.

The demands include preparing a time-based action plan to swiftly and effectively implement the treaty, ending military authority in the hills, ensuring the proper functioning of the Parbatya Chattogram Regional Council and the three hill district councils to guarantee local governance, making the CHT Land Commission effective for a permanent land solution, and ensuring participation of indigenous people of the CHT in the country's economic progress and sustainable development.

Khairul also presented two additional demands concerning indigenous people living in the plainland: taking measures to reserve special seats for them and improving their quality of life; and forming a separate Land Commission.

PANDITPARA-HORIKISHORE ROY ROAD IN M'SINGH

Locals suffer for delay in roadwork

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Due to delayed sewage works on Panditpara-Horikishore Roy Road in Mymensingh city, residents have been suffering for over a year now.

This road is an important one in the city as it leads to several schools, colleges, district and police administration offices, Judge Court, museum, and two archeological sites.

The tender for this 16-month project was allotted to Faridpur Jannat Construction, which was supposed to complete the works by August.

However, the works were not completed within the stipulated time due to a lack of monitoring, said locals.

Meanwhile, the dilapidated condition of the under-



construction road has exacerbated the sufferings of students, traders, and job holders.

"We have been suffering losses since the work started about a year ago. We have informed the Mymensingh City Corporation of our problems numerous times, but the work is still going on at a snail's pace," said Salahuddin

Ahmed, a local trader who has been doing business in the area for the last 10 years.

Smruti Rani Sarker, a tea stall owner in the area, and Rashed, a salesman in one of the local shops, echoed the same.

"It is very difficult for students, their parents, and the teachers to reach school as the road is a

menace," said a local school teacher.

MCC is becoming busier with every passing day. In such circumstances, such delays are one of the main causes of the increased traffic congestion in the area, said Nazrul Islam Chunnun, convener of "Jonoudhygh, Mymensingh", a citizens' forum.

"We have to be careful while digging up the road as we have to look out for gas and electric lines underground. Heavy rains during the monsoon further contributed to the delay," said Md Monir Hossain, project engineer.

Md Rafiqul Islam Miah, MCC's executive engineer, said the deadline of the project was extended till December this year upon request. "We have asked the contractor to finish the work as quickly as possible," he added.

Tk 50 on paper

FROM PAGE 5

had to pay Tk 820 for a dengue test in the same hospital.

This correspondent spoke to a number of patients, all of whom said that they were overcharged by the hospital staffers.

Benzir Ahmed, a resident of Arjuntola village, said, "Even a government hospital staffer suggested doing the tests at a private hospital, where I had to pay Tk 1,100 for dengue test."

Ismail Hossain, 20, attendee of a patient echoed him.

Similarly, due to a

shortage of saline, public hospital patients were compelled to buy it from private pharmacies at higher prices.

"We have already sent a letter to the higher authorities seeking a sufficient amount of test kits and saline," said Dr Masum, Noakhali district civil surgeon.

Some 1,768 dengue cases have been detected in Noakhali so far this year, according to the civil surgeon's office.

Madhumati

FROM PAGE 5

reached the villages following a rise in the river's water level.

A similar situation was observed in several villages under Mohammadpur upazila of Magura.

Baliadi UP chairman Mofizur Rahman said they informed Water Development Board about erosion situation but they are yet to do anything to this end.

Ramananda Paul, Mohammadpur upazila nirbahi officer, said they have informed the higher authority. "I have also directed the project implementation officer to prepare a list of affected families," he added.

"To check erosion, we have built a 150-metre embankment at a cost of Tk 1.5 crore in Kashipur area, while geo bags were dumped on river bank in Harekrishnapur area last year," said Magura WDB Executive Engineer Sarowar Jahan Sujon.

Int'l Day for Universal Access to Info today

BSS, Dhaka

The International Day for Universal Access to Information will be observed in the country today like elsewhere across the globe with the theme "Importance of internet in free flow of information".

On the eve of the day, President Mohammed Shahabuddin and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina issued separate messages wishing all programmes of the day a success.

PRAYER TIMING
SEPTEMBER 28

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4:35	12:45	4:15	6:00	7:30
JAMAAT 5:10	1:15	4:30	6:05	8:00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

TUITION WANTED
15 years of experience Maths teacher wants to teach O-A Level, (Cambridge, Edexcel), Q/P solve, Mock test. Guarantee A. B.Sc (Hons), M.Sc (Math), DU. **DIPAK BARMAN**, 0177846252, 01712-018889

Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) T20 Sports TV Production

Ref: BCB/Sports TV Production/BPL-T20/2023/649 Date: 28th September 2023

Request for Quotation (RFQ)

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) hereby invites interested, qualified and reputed Sports TV Production Companies / Firms to submit quotations for providing & delivering comprehensive International Standard Live Sports TV Production Services for a period of 02 (Two) editions/seasons (i.e. 10th and 11th seasons/editions of BPL T20 Tournament).

Eligibility Criteria :

- The eligible company should preferably have a comprehensive track record of providing professional Sports TV Production services worldwide.
- The company must have a minimum of 03 (Three) years experience of providing International Standard Sports TV Production Services in Cricket Events (i.e. ICC & ACC events/Bilateral Cricket Series / IPL / PSL / Big Bash / BPL T20 tournaments etc.).
- Interested TV Production Firm / Company must provide all 4K Standard Cameras, International Standard Graphics and Technology for live broadcast coverage / production.

RFQ Submission Procedure :

Details of RFQ submission procedure including production level will be available from 30th September, 2023 to 12th October, 2023 during working hours (10.00 AM to 5.00 PM except Friday & Public Holidays in Bangladesh).

The detailed quotation along with relevant documents prepared in accordance with the RFQ document must be submitted at the BCB Management Office at Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium, Mirpur-2, Dhaka 1216, Bangladesh by 16th of October 2023 during working hours (10.00 AM to 5.00 PM except Friday & Public Holidays in Bangladesh) and should be in a sealed envelope to be addressed to: **The Chief Executive Officer, Bangladesh Cricket Board.**

Interested participant may submit the quotation along with financial proposal electronically via email at sponsorship.rights@bcb-cricket.com.

The following documents must be submitted along with the Quotation:

- Company Profile.
- Updated auditor's report on financial statements (in case of consortium, each party's auditor's report needs to be submitted individually).
- Bank Solvency Certificate.
- Certified copy of Memorandum and Articles of Association along with Certificate of Incorporation or similar constitutional documents.
- Updated VAT Registration Certificate, Trade License and Tax Identification Number (TIN) Certificate or similar documents.
- Experience certificate in the field of sport TV production.
- The TV production Firms / Company must submit a Performance Guarantee an amount of USD 200000 or equivalent amount in BDT in the form of Pay Order / Bank Guarantee.

The BCB reserves the right to accept or reject any or all quotations at its sole discretion without assigning any reason. The BCB also reserves the right to cancel the entire RFQ process and / or modify, add or alter the terms of the document and/ or the conditions for RFQ by issuing an addendum(s) at any time prior to the submission of the proposal.

Chief Executive Officer
Bangladesh Cricket Board
Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium, Mirpur-2, Dhaka-1216, Bangladesh

Home Series - Bangladesh National Cricket Team (Men) Sports TV Production

Ref: BCB/Sports TV Production/Home Series - BD National Cricket Team (men)/2023/650 Date: 28th September 2023

Request for Quotation (RFQ)

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) hereby invites interested, qualified and reputed Sports TV Production Companies / Firms to submit quotations for providing & delivering comprehensive International Standard Live Sports TV Production Services for "Home Series involving Bangladesh National Cricket Team (Men)" from 1st of January, 2024 to 30th of June, 2027.

Eligibility Criteria :

- The eligible company should preferably have a comprehensive track record of providing professional Sports TV Production services worldwide.
- The company must have a minimum of 03 (Three) years experience of providing International Standard Sports TV Production Services in Cricket Events (i.e. ICC & ACC events/Bilateral Cricket Series / IPL / PSL / Big Bash / BPL T20 tournaments etc.).
- Interested TV Production Firm / Company must provide all 4K Standard Cameras, International Standard Graphics and Technology for live broadcast coverage / production.

RFQ Submission Procedure :

Details of RFQ submission procedure including production level will be available from 30th September, 2023 to 12th October, 2023 during working hours (10.00 AM to 5.00 PM except Friday & Public Holidays in Bangladesh).

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- Updated auditor's report on financial statements (in case of consortium, each party's auditor's report needs to be submitted individually).
- Bank Solvency Certificate.
- Certified copy of Memorandum and Articles of Association along with Certificate of Incorporation or similar constitutional documents.
- Updated VAT Registration Certificate, Trade License and Tax Identification Number (TIN) Certificate or similar documents.
- Experience certificate in the field of sport TV production.
- The TV production Firms / Company must submit a Performance Guarantee an amount of USD 350000 or equivalent amount in BDT in the form of Pay Order / Bank Guarantee.

The BCB reserves the right to accept or reject any or all quotations at its sole discretion without assigning any reason. The BCB also reserves the right to cancel the entire RFQ process and / or modify, add or alter the terms of the document and/ or the conditions for RFQ by issuing an addendum(s) at any time prior to the submission of the proposal.

Chief Executive Officer
Bangladesh Cricket Board
Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium, Mirpur-2, Dhaka-1216, Bangladesh

World Health Organization
Bangladesh

VACANCY NOTICE

World Health Organization (WHO) invites applications from the interested and eligible candidates for the following position under following contractual modality:

- National Professional Officer (EPI, Vaccine Safety & Quality)/ Fixed-term Appointment

For further details on submission of applications including detailed post description please visit our websites:
<https://www.who.int/bangladesh/about-us/employment>
<https://careers.who.int/careersection/ex/jobsearch.ftl>

Qualified **female candidates** are highly encouraged to apply.

WHO has a smoke-free environment and does not recruit smokers or other tobacco users.

PALLI KARMA-SAHAYAK FOUNDATION (PKSF)
PKSF Bhaban, E-4/B, Agargaon Administrative Area, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Dhaka-1207, Bangladesh
Tel: 02222218331-33 & 02222218335-39; Fax: 02222218341 & 02222218343 Website: www.pksf.org.bd
Memo No. 53.23.0000.001.03.127.23-7521 Date: 27.09.2023

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI) (CONSULTING SERVICES - FIRMS SELECTION)

Country: Bangladesh
Name of Project: Recovery and Advancement of Informal Sector Employment (RAISE)
Credit No: 6841-BD
Assignment Title: Selection of a Consulting Firm for Psychometric Profiling Tools Development.
Reference No: PKSF/RAISE/S-05.1

PKSF has been implementing Recovery and Advancement of Informal Sector Employment (RAISE) project jointly funded by the World Bank and PKSF and implemented through 70 POs. The objective of this project is to provide services to enhance earning opportunities for low-income youths and COVID-19 affected micro-entrepreneurs (MEs) in urban and peri-urban areas of Bangladesh. Through the project, the COVID-19 MEs get inclusive financing on a priority basis to restore their previous business and receive capacity development supports for business continuity. Besides, young MEs receive inclusive financing along with capacity development training on Entrepreneurship Development, Business Risk Management, Life-Skills Development so that they are well equipped with the skill set required for their sustainable growth. However, as new entrants, a significant number of these individuals do not have financial support mechanisms and have no credit history either, making it challenging to assess their creditworthiness. Additionally, they more often than not lack the necessary business skills and technical skills to start and sustain a venture on their own. The overall objective of the assignment is to develop behavioral science-led tool that would profile candidates on the basis of entrepreneurial capabilities, risk mitigation capabilities based on desired behavioral competencies and map the behavioral shortcoming areas specific to each entrepreneur that would guide the capacity development pathways. The tools would be used to measure entrepreneurial capability and creditworthiness of the existing microentrepreneurs, scaling up the existing microenterprises and selecting the appropriate trainees for training program.

The specific objectives are-

- To deploy appropriate and tested tool(s);
- To develop a guideline for behavioral profiling based on tested tools;
- To develop behavior competence shortcoming pathways of individual microentrepreneurs;
- To design capacity development curriculum including nudges to execute behavior modification;
- To develop tracking mechanism to register the changes over the project intervention period; and
- To familiarize/train POs, PMU and PIU staffs on the use of the solution.

I. **The shortlisting criteria are:**

- Nature of the core business and general experience of the Firm;
- Experience in similar assignments of compatible size, complexity and technical specialty in required areas;
- Financial Soundness, staffing and logistics of the firm;

II. Consultants are requested to **submit the following supporting documents** in support of the above-mentioned criteria:

- Up to Date Relevant Legal Papers of the Firm's including Trade license, TIN, VAT, Income Tax Assessment Certificate/Acknowledgement;
- JV Agreement/Letter of Intent (if applicable) along with the proposed JV agreement [Maximum of two (2)]. In case of an affiliation or management relationship with another entity, the parent company's experience and other resources will be taken into account during the evaluation process;
- Firm's brochure including staffing and logistics (Such as: permanent employees, expert pool, office nos. and space, office equipment, manpower, and other available resources);
- Strong financial capability will be required (Need to submit ONLY signed Income statement and Balance sheet from last 3 years' audit report);
- Any relevant licenses, certification, and accreditation
- All other items necessary to substantiate satisfaction of the shortlisting criteria listed above and/or included in the TOR; However, Key experts will not be evaluated at the shortlisting stage.

III. The attention of interested IT/Consulting firms is drawn to Section III, paragraphs-3.14, 3.16 and 3.17 of the World Bank's "Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers" November 2020 ("Procurement Regulations"), setting forth with the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest.

IV. Consultants may associate with other firms to enhance their qualifications, but should indicate clearly whether the association is in the form of a Joint Venture and/or a Sub-consultancy. In the case of a joint venture, all the partners in the joint venture shall be jointly and severally liable for the entire contract, if selected.

V. A Consultant will be selected in accordance with the Fixed Budget Selection (FBS) method set out in the procurement regulations.

VI. Further information can be obtained at the address below during office hours, 09:00 to 16:00 hours. The detailed Terms of Reference (TOR) for the assignment can be downloaded from www.pksf.org.bd website or can be obtained upon request from the address below or either by e-mail or in person during the office hours (Local Time: 09:00 to 15:30 hours).

VII. Expression of Interest (EOI) must be delivered in a written form to the address below (in-person, or by mail) by **16 October, 2023 on or before 14:00 hours (UTC+6 hours)**.

VIII. The Procuring Entity (PE) reserves the right to accept or reject any or all EOIs without assigning any reason whatsoever.

AQM Golam Mawla
Deputy Managing Director, PKSF
PKSF Bhaban, Plot: E-4/B, Agargaon Administrative Area
Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207
Tel: 02222218331-33 & 02222218335-39; Email: raise.procurement@gmail.com



Several villages in Jhenidah and Magura are on the verge of disappearing from the map due to the Madhumati river erosion. Inset, the situation is similar in Kurigram and Lalmonirhat where the Teesta has continued to devour homesteads and arable lands. The photos were taken recently.

PHOTO: STAR

Madhumati devours roads, homesteads

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

The erosion of Madhumati river has taken a severe turn in Magura and Jhenidah districts, engulfing roads, crop lands and homesteads.

In Jhenidah, several villages under Shaikupa upazila — Charparia, Moheshpur, Gopalnagar, Harekrishnapur, Armajhi, Raoypur, Ruijani and Bholanathpur — are fast disappearing from the map due to erosion.

More than two-kilometre stretch of land on the river bank has been lost to erosion already, while many houses, shops and establishments, and crop lands are at risk.

Panic is prevailing among the residents of Gopalnagar, Moheshpur, and Armajhi areas, where enough preventive measures have not been taken.

This correspondent visited the areas recently and found that erosion has

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

LALMONIRHAT, KURIGRAM Teesta erosion worsens

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

The Teesta river has continued eroding homesteads and arable lands at 12 places in Lalmonirhat and Kurigram districts, after water level rose following heavy rains.

At least 50 homesteads and about 150 bighas of arable lands have already been devoured by the river in the last two days, while around 200 more homesteads and about 1,000 bighas of arable lands are under serious threat.

Marijana Begum, 70, a resident of Kalmati village under Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila, lost her homestead on five decimal lands to the river on Tuesday noon, and has since then been living under the open sky.

"I don't know how I will move on," she said.

Amjad Hossain, 67, of the same village also lost his homestead and two bighas of arable land to erosion on Tuesday morning, and is now facing a similar plight.

"Teesta has left me destitute," he said.

Executive Engineer of WDB Kurigram Abdullah Al Mamun said they have been dumping sand-filled geo bags at vulnerable places to check erosion. Due to a rise in Teesta water level, the erosion has turned severe, he added.

Mashiar Rahman, project implementation officer in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila, said he visited the erosion-hit areas and prepared a list of affected families, who will be given support from the government.

I lost my homestead and two bighas of arable land to erosion on Tuesday morning. Teesta has left me destitute.

AMJAD HOSSAIN
Resident of Kalmati village in Lalmonirhat

DENGUE TESTS IN NOAKHALI Tk 50 on paper, up to Tk 1,500 in reality

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

Dengue patients are being over-charged by a syndicate at Noakhali General Hospital, capitalising on the shortage of test kits and intravenous (IV) saline.

While the government fixed dengue test kit prices at Tk 50, with private hospitals charging Tk 300, many patients in Noakhali claimed that they were forced to pay up to Tk 1,500 for the test.

A syndicate of hospital staffers, fourth

class employees, Ansar members, and brokers is cashing on the helplessness of the dengue patients by demanding whatever they can from them for the tests or convincing them to conduct dengue tests at private hospitals instead, alleged locals.

Md Selim, 40, who was admitted to the hospital on Monday, said, "Even though this is a public hospital, I was charged Tk 400 for the dengue test."

Meanwhile, Anis Mahmud, 22, said he

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Program on Agricultural and Rural Transformation for Nutrition, Entrepreneurship, and Resilience in Bangladesh (PARTNER-DAM Part)
Department of Agricultural Marketing
Khamarbari, Farmgate, Dhaka-1215.

Request for Expression of Interest (EOI)

1. Ministry/Division	: Ministry of Agriculture
2. Agency	: Department of Agricultural Marketing (DAM)
3. Name of Procuring Entity	: Agency Program Director, Program on Agricultural and Rural Transformation for Nutrition, Entrepreneurship, and Resilience in Bangladesh (PARTNER-DAM Part), Department of Agricultural Marketing (DAM)
4. Invitation for	: Selection of Firm for "Planning, Design, Development, Upgradation, Deployment, Support & Maintenance of Smart Krishi Market System".
5. Invitation Reference	: 12.02.0000.549.43.017.23.49 Date: 27/09/2023
6. EOI Submission Deadline	: EOI shall be submitted on or before 11/10/2023 at 4:00 PM in sealed envelope delivered to the undersigned and be clearly marked on outer envelope "Request for Expression of Interest for Design, Development, Upgradation, Deployment, Support & Maintenance of Smart Krishi Market System".
7. Procurement Method	: Selection under a Fixed Budget Selection (SFB)
8. Budget and Source of Fund	: GOB (Development), IDA (World Bank)
9. Project Code	: 224374700
10. Name and Address of Receiving EOI Document	: Agency Program Director, Program on Agricultural and Rural Transformation for Nutrition, Entrepreneurship, and Resilience in Bangladesh (PARTNER-DAM Part) Room 513, Front Building, 4 th Floor, Department of Agricultural Marketing, Khamarbari, Farmgate, Dhaka-1215.
11. Place of Opening EOI Document	: Room 513, Front Building, 4 th Floor, Department of Agricultural Marketing, Khamarbari, Farmgate, Dhaka-1215.
12. Brief Description of the Assignment	: The proposed Smart Krishi Market System is to be developed high-quality and high-capacity software for an integrated and automated Smart Krishi Market System and implement it in all offices under Department of Agriculture Marketing (DAM), including at the field level. To increase dynamism and transparency in all activities by implementing software called "Smart Krishi Market System" for an integrated Krishi Market Management. The system has the following modules: Portal Development, Wholesale Management, Retail Management, Farmer Profile management, Wholesaler / Buyer Management, Admin / Super admin features, others user management, Product Management, Order Management, Communication Management, Reports and Analytics, Dashboard, Common Module Management, Capacity Development, Support & Maintenance Service.
13. Eligibility of Firms	: 1. Must have 8 years experiences in working experience in software development. 2. Must have Valid RJSC Incorporation Certificate, Updated Trade License, TIN, VAT, BASIS Membership certificate. 3. Must have a minimum turnover of 2 crore in each of last three years financial audit report. 4. Must have project completion certificate of a minimum of 5 (five) projects in last 5 (five) years in the field of web or application development out of which at least 3 (Three) projects must be in digitization/automation of a government service/function where all the design, development, implementation and maintenance support (covers SDLC full cycle) service were provided. 5. Each completed project shall have a minimum value of Tk. 50 (fifty) lacs 6. Must have three web application/software development in government public service delivery sector with completion certificate. 7. Documents demonstrating the management and operational capacity of the firm (Brochure, Company Profile and other documents describing company expertise, strength and experience, core functions, products and services, similar assignment or project experience, availability of relevant professional staff and experience among applicants' staff/resources to carry out this assignment.) 8. List (Name, designation, years of experience, number of projects, expertise) of IT personnel who will be engaged to perform the assignment. 9. The minimum amount of Liquid asset/Line (s) of Credit of the firm shall be Tk. 75 lacs (certificate for proving available liquid asset must be issued 03 (three) Months from the date of tender invitation). 10. ISO 9001/ ISO 27001/CMMI L3/CMMI L5 Certified firms will be given preference. NB: Joint Venture not allowed.
14. Details Information of EOI and Proposal	: Firms are requested to submit 01 (one) original copy of EOI with necessary documents at the Program office between 9.00 a.m-4.00 pm within the deadline. In addition, soft copy of EOI (in zipped folder) must be submitted at partner.dam@gmail.com . The procurement shall be regulated as per PPA-2006 and PPR-2008. For submitting proposal details Terms of Reference (ToR) can be obtained from notice board at www.dam.gov.bd .
15. Name of Official Inviting EOI	: Dr. Mohammed Abdullah Al-Faroque
16. Designation of Official Inviting EOI	: Agency Program Director
17. Address of Official Inviting EOI	: Room No-513, Front Building, 4 th Floor, Department of Agricultural Marketing, Khamarbari, Farmgate, Dhaka-1215.
18. Contact Details of Official Inviting EOI	: Dr. Mohammed Abdullah Al-Faroque Agency Program Director, Telephone: 02-55028448 E-mail: partner.dam@gmail.com
Note	: The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any packages or all EOI.

Signed/-

(Dr. Mohammed Abdullah Al-Faroque)
Agency Program Director

Program on Agricultural and Rural Transformation for Nutrition, Entrepreneurship, and Resilience in Bangladesh (PARTNER-DAM Part)
Department of Agricultural Marketing (DAM)
E-mail: partner.dam@gmail.com
Phone: 02-55028448

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১১৬, কাজী নজরুল ইসলাম আভিনিউ, ঢাকা-১২০৫
www.bscl.gov.bd
ফোন: ৯৯৬০০০০, ৯৯৬০০০১, ৯৯৬০০০২, ৯৯৬০০০৩, ৯৯৬০০০৪, ৯৯৬০০০৫, ৯৯৬০০০৬, ৯৯৬০০০৭, ৯৯৬০০০৮, ৯৯৬০০০৯, ৯৯৬০০১০, ৯৯৬০০১১
তারিখ: ২৬ সেপ্টেম্বর ২০২৩

বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বিষয়: সেপ্টেম্বর-অক্টোবর, ২০২৩ মৌসুমি আবহাওয়া প্রকল্পের স্যাটেলাইট-১ এর সম্প্রচার কার্যক্রমে সাময়িক বিজ্ঞপ্তি ঘটা হলো। উপর্যুক্ত বিস্তারিত জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, সেটা ব্যতিক্রম (Sun Outage) এর কারণে আনুমানিক ৩০ সেপ্টেম্বর, ২০২৩ হতে ০৭ অক্টোবর, ২০২৩ পর্যন্ত নিম্নলিখিত সময় অনুযায়ী বন্ধকৃত স্যাটেলাইট-১ এর সম্প্রচার কার্যক্রমে সাময়িক বিজ্ঞপ্তি ঘটাতে পারে।

Date	Start time (local)	Stop time (local)	Duration (min)
30-Sep-23	9:33 AM	9:40 AM	7
01-Oct-23	9:31 AM	9:41 AM	10
02-Oct-23	9:30 AM	9:42 AM	12
03-Oct-23	9:29 AM	9:42 AM	13
04-Oct-23	9:29 AM	9:42 AM	13
05-Oct-23	9:29 AM	9:41 AM	12
06-Oct-23	9:30 AM	9:40 AM	10
07-Oct-23	9:31 AM	9:37 AM	6

০২: প্রাকৃতিক কারণে ঘটিত এই সাময়িক বিস্তারিত জানা বাংলাদেশ স্যাটেলাইট কোম্পানি লিমিটেড (বিএসসিএল) আন্তর্জাতিকভাবে মুদ্রা প্রকাশ করে। বিজ্ঞপ্তি আপনাদের সময় অপব্যয়/প্রয়োজনীয় ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণের জন্য বিশেষভাবে অনুরোধ করা হলো।

স্বাক্ষরিত
মোঃ শফিকুল ইসলাম
ব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালক (অতিরিক্ত দায়িত্ব)
ইমেইল: managing.director@bscl.com.bd

জিডি: ১৪৯৩

Visa policy imposed for political purposes

Says agriculture minister

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Agriculture Minister and Awami League presidium member Md Abdur Razaque yesterday said the United States may have imposed the visa policy due to political purposes.

The minister said this while interacting with local journalists, after inaugurating the agricultural fair at Madhupur Upazila Parishad premises in Tangail.

"Sheikh Hasina will be the prime minister during the election period based on our constitution. We don't care about anyone's visa policy. No one can spoil the election with or without visa restriction," the minister said.

Regarding BNP's 48-hour ultimatum, the minister said, "No matter how many ultimatums BNP gives, they will not succeed in anything."

"I feel sad that BNP's movement will fail again and its activists will sink into despair," he further said.

UNIVERSITY OF DHAKA: Applications in prescribed form, obtainable from the office of the Registrar, are invited from Bangladeshi nationals for filling up 04 (four) permanent posts of Lecturer in the Department of English in Pay scale of Tk. 22,000-53,060/- (NPS-2015).

QUALIFICATIONS: Candidates must have a first class/a minimum CGPA 3.50 out of 4.00 both in B.A. (Honors) in English and M.A. in English Literature of Applied Linguistics & ELT with a first division/a minimum GPA 4.25 out of 5.00 in both SSC & HSC examinations. Requirements for either the SSC or HSC examinations may be relaxed for the candidates who have obtained the first position/the highest CGPA in both Bachelor and Master degrees. Candidates having a Ph.D. in the relevant field and research publication(s) in a quality journal may get preference. Relevant notes and conditions apply. (For details, see the Dhaka University website).

Eight copies of application together with attested copies of certificates, testimonials, mark-sheets and proof of experience along with a Pay Order/Bank Draft of the value of Tk. 750/- (seven hundred fifty) only, payable to the Registrar, should reach him on or before 18/10/2023. Applicants already in service must apply through the proper channel.

GD-1496

ঢাকা পাওয়ার ডিস্ট্রিবিউশন কোম্পানি লিমিটেড
DHAKA POWER DISTRIBUTION COMPANY LIMITED
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Memo No: 87.404.401.08.01.001.2023.122 Date: 26.09.2023

JOB OPPORTUNITY

Name of the Post: Sub-Assistant Engineer-Number of posts 15*.
Required Qualifications: (i) Diploma in Engineering in Electrical Technology-12 posts.
(ii) Diploma in Engineering in Power Technology-03 posts.
Please visit www.dpdc.gov.bd for detail job circular & submit online application by 15.10.2023.
Deputy General Manager, Employee Management (Administration), HR, DPDC

GD-1500

AZAD ABUL KALAM

going strong amidst 3-decade career



ANTARA RAISA

Azad Abul Kalam is not only a seasoned actor, but also a multi-talented individual. With a career spanning over three decades, he has graced the stage, television and silver screen with his exceptional talent, presenting audiences with unforgettable characters. Recently, he portrayed the titular character in the web-series *Puff Daddy*, which captured everyone's attention.

How did the audience respond to 'Puff Daddy'?

The response has been wonderful. People are talking about my character, 'Muri Baba', and it's quite heartwarming. I usually don't take on such roles, which made this experience even more enjoyable.

Given that this isn't your typical genre, how challenging was it?

It was indeed challenging. We filmed the entire series in scorching heat, and I had to wear cloaks with long sleeves. I also sported matted hair, which wasn't comfortable in the sweltering weather. Moreover, the character 'Puff Daddy' is morally ambiguous. Typically, cult leaders are depicted as deceitful, but in this web series, there's a compelling backstory to his actions. It was challenging to portray this complex character.

You've been a part of this industry for three decades. How do you view the changes in the media landscape over time?

The roles and opportunities have become more diverse now. I began my career in theatre and then transitioned to television. With advancements in technology, budgets, and opportunities, we can now experiment more with our roles.

What's your take on the flourishing OTT platforms?

OTT platforms are thriving, but I've noticed a trend towards crime-thriller genres. It seems like our content has become somewhat limited in terms of variety.

You once mentioned your desire to become a writer. Is that aspiration still alive?

Absolutely. I've been writing long before my acting career took off. Writing has always been a passion of mine, and I've published my storybooks. While I may not be a professional or write regularly, I'm continually engaged in the process. Acting, directing, and writing—all bring me equal joy. Whenever I'm immersed in any of these, I enjoy them the most.

What are your recent ventures?

Lately, I've directed two plays for Prachyanat, *Achalayatan* and *Agunjatra*. I'm also eagerly awaiting the release of two films, *Jole Tara*, directed by Arun Chowdhury, and another directed by Gias Uddin Selim. I have also directed a short film for Projonmo Wave, which will be released soon.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

The roles and opportunities have become more diverse now. I began my career in theatre and then transitioned to television. With advancements in technology, budgets, and opportunities, we can now experiment more with our roles.



International Emmy Awards 2023: Shefali Shah, Vir Das and Jim Sarbh nominated

The nominees for the 2023 International Emmy Awards have been announced, with 56 nominees from 20 countries representing 14 categories. This time, Indian actors Jim Sarbh, Shefali Shah, and Vir Das have made it to the list.

Shefali has been nominated for best actress' performance in the second season of the critically acclaimed series *Delhi Crime* while Jim was nominated for best actor's performance for his role in *Rocket Boys* as nuclear physicist Homi Bhabha. Comedian Vir Das' stand-up special *Landing* has been nominated under the comedy category.

On November 20, the International Emmy Awards will be hosted in New York City. In addition, film producer Ekta R Kapoor will get the Directorate Award for her trailblazing career and impact on the Indian television landscape.

Apurba to debut in Tollywood

Ziaul Faruq Apurba has gained a massive fan base in Kolkata following his popular tele-fictions, including *Boro Chele* and *Batch 27*. Now, the actor is all set to debut in Tollywood with the thriller film, *Chaalchitro*. The film is directed by Pratim D Gupta and has been produced by Friends Communication.



The cast began shooting for the film on Wednesday. The film also stars Tota Roy Choudhury, Shantanu Maheshwari, Raima Sen, and Swastika Dutta, amongst others.

Chaalchitro revolves around the life of four police officers in Kolkata.

NEWS

Some quarters trying to whip up bitterness

FROM PAGE 12

about Bangladesh.

The foreign minister was speaking at a views exchange meeting organised by the Bangabandhu Foundation in New York's Bangladesh-dominated Jackson Heights on Tuesday.

The foreign minister said, "We have remarkably friendly relations with the United States. America believes in the same principles and values we believe in. Bangladesh is the country where we have fought for democracy. Although we won the popular vote, we were not allowed to form the government in 1971. Rather, genocide was unleashed on us, and then Bangabandhu declared independence."

Momen said Bangladesh declared independence to establish democracy, justice, and human rights.

"Because of this, we had to sacrifice three million lives during the Liberation War. Nowhere in the world have so many people sacrificed themselves for democracy and human rights in such a short period of time. We are the only nation in the world that has made such great sacrifices for democracy and human rights," he added.

Referring to the replacement of the Digital Security Act, he said the government accepted the suggestions provided by the United States as a friendly country.

"The United States expects free

and fair elections, and we are also committed to free and fair elections. But there are some people in our country who want to boycott the elections; they fear elections," the foreign minister said, referring to the opposition, saying that they are trying to thwart the election.

The foreign minister said Bangladesh is now the 35th largest economy in the world.

"If Bangladesh's current economic development continues, we will become the 26th largest economy in a few years. We have 17 crore people, so our own market is huge. That's why many people are interested in our country because our per capita income has increased five times," he said.

Bashundhara seeks to invest in Teletalk

FROM PAGE 1

media, this is its second bid to become a strategic investor in an establishment. In September last year, ABG Limited, a subsidiary of Bashundhara Group, became the strategic partner of the Chittagong Stock Exchange by picking up 25 percent stakes for Tk 240 crore.

"We are neither granting consent nor expressing dissent to the proposal at this time — it is now subject to review," said Telecom Secretary Abu Hena Morshed Zaman, who is the chairman of the Teletalk board.

The committee will evaluate whether the proposal would be beneficial for the government and Teletalk, he added.

Contacted, Telecom Minister Mustafa Jabbar said: "[Bashundhara Group] has sent a letter expressing their interest to invest in Teletalk, but the letter is not a detailed one. Anyone can have interest, but we have to know what exactly they want."

Since its inception in 2004, Teletalk, whose market share stood at 3.4 percent as of August, has received several investment proposals, mainly from abroad, but the government did not give the green light to any of those pitches.

For instance, in April 2008, the

Emirati carrier Etisalat expressed interest in buying a stake in Bangladesh's state-run mobile operator.

In 2019, Vietnam's Viettel also wanted to invest \$250 million in Teletalk. However, nothing came of it.

A year later, Korean company LGU+ offered a \$1.2 billion loan at 3 percent interest for 25 years and without the need for any sovereign guarantee. Once again, nothing came of it.

In recent years, the government has been pumping huge amounts of money into Teletalk — all to keep pace with the nimble private operators, who have cornered 96.5 percent of the market between them.

A Tk 2,204 crore project began last year to take the operator's 4G network to village levels by setting up about 2,500 towers.

A Tk 519 crore project has been running since March last year to expand Teletalk's haor coverage. The project's money comes from a social obligation fund, whose contributions mostly come from Grameenphone, Robi and Banglalink. The three private operators have to contribute 1 percent of their gross revenue to the fund.

Besides, the government has recently implemented a Tk 520 crore project to expand Teletalk's mobile

broadband network services in the coastal hills and other remote areas.

And yet, Teletalk continues to lose subscribers, while private operators continue to add to their numbers. As of August, which is the latest published data by the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission, Teletalk's subscriber count stood at 64.5 lakh, down by 2.7 lakh from a year earlier.

At the end of last month, there were about 18.9 crore active mobile connections.

"Any investor can express interest to invest in any company, but Teletalk is not like any other company — it is a state-owned company whose funding comes from the finance ministry," said Abu Saeed Khan, a top telecom expert.

Therefore, before making any decision regarding investment in Teletalk, the parliamentary standing committees for finance and telecom ministries should be consulted.

"Unanimous decisions of the two parliamentary standing committees as well as BIDA should set the guiding principles of such a unique investment proposal in the history of Bangladesh," he added.

Bashundhara Group did not respond to The Daily Star's request for comment.

Records tumble every month since May

FROM PAGE 12

mosquitoes didn't work and thus, we're experiencing higher numbers of cases and deaths every month compared to the last.

"We're now at the mercy of nature. If October doesn't experience as much rainfall [as September], the number of dengue cases will fall."

Asked about a solution, he said, "Our mosquito-control activities need to be successful. However, it's not possible to achieve this overnight."

The monthly death-toll started out with only six in January and the number varied throughout February, April and May, with no deaths recorded in March.

However, in June the number jumped to 34 and then shot up all the way to 204 in July.

According to statistics provided by the Directorate General of Health Services, there has been an average of 2,704 hospitalisations per day this month.

The gravity of the situation is further underscored by recent records. September 26 saw record-

CASES AND DEATHS THIS YEAR

MONTH	CASES	DEATHS
September (Till 27th)	73,023	365
August	71,976	342
July	43,854	204
June	5,956	34
May	1,036	2
April	143	2
March	111	0
February	166	3
January	566	6

SOURCE: DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF HEALTH SERVICES (DGHS)

breaking single-day hospital admissions — 3,123 — across the country, while it was 3,122 on the 17th.

On September 2, the DGHS reported a distressing milestone — the highest number of single-day deaths, which stood at 21.

On September 20, the number was the same.

Meanwhile, at least 15 more people died from dengue in the 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, with eight of them outside the capital, according to DGHS data.

Around 2,950 dengue patients were hospitalised in the same period. The data also showed 9,697 patients were undergoing treatment at different hospitals across the country, while 1,85,906 people have recovered from the infectious disease so far this year.

Dr Mushtaq Hussain, consultant at the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research, told The Daily Star, "Normally, the rainfall decreases around this month, but this time there has been rainfall in September. As a result, Aedes mosquitoes are being able to breed, leading to an increase in dengue cases."

"What we have control over is our healthcare system and we have to strengthen it so that we don't face such a dreadful outbreak in the future."



Migrants from Venezuela make their way through the razor wire after crossing the Rio Grande into the United States in Eagle Pass, Texas, US on Tuesday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

CLIMATE CHANGE

6 youths take 32 nations to Europe court

AFP, Strasbourg

The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) yesterday began hearing a case brought by six Portuguese youths against 32 nations for not doing enough to stop global warming, the latest bid to secure climate justice through the courts.

The group, aged 11 to 24, say they are suffering from anxiety over their health and "having to live with a climate that is getting hotter and hotter" with more disasters.

The move to file a complaint with the Strasbourg-based court was sparked by the massive wildfires that struck Portugal in 2017, killing more than 100 people and charring swathes of the country.

Some plaintiffs claim allergies and breathing problems both during the fires and after, conditions at risk of persisting if the planet keeps warming.

"European governments are not managing to protect us," said Andre Oliveira, 15, one of the six involved.



Refugees from Nagorno-Karabakh region ride in a truck upon their arrival at the border village of Kornidzor, Armenia yesterday. More than a third of population has fled the enclave since Azerbaijan crushed the rebels' decades-long fight for an independent state last week.

PHOTO: REUTERS

STADIUM ROW

IAS officer retired by Indian govt

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
New Delhi

A senior bureaucrat of the Indian government, who had reportedly ordered the emptying of an entire stadium of athletes so that her pet dog can take walks, has been compulsorily retired.

The officer Rinku Dugga, a 1994 batch officer of Indian Administrative Service, was working as principal secretary, Indigenous Affairs in the north eastern state of Arunachal Pradesh before Indian government retired her.

She and her husband Sanjeev Khirwar, who is also a 1994 batch IAS officer and is currently posted in Ladakh, were transferred out of Delhi last year following a newspaper report that they emptied a stadium of athletes to walk their dog.

Dugga has been retired compulsorily under the Fundamental Rules of Central Civil Services (CCS) Pension Rules, 1972, after an assessment of her service record, PII reported yesterday.

The government has the right to retire any government servant "if it is of the opinion that it is in the public interest to do so", added the report.

RUSSIAN RESISTANCE IN SOUTH

Ukraine evacuates children from towns

AFP, Kyiv

Ukrainian officials said yesterday they had evacuated all children from several towns and villages near the front line in the southern Zaporizhzhia region, a focal point of Kyiv's counteroffensive.

Kyiv launched its push to recapture territory in June but Russian forces have put up fierce resistance and Ukraine has ordered evacuations from several regions as their forces wrest back land.

"We have fulfilled the task set by the Ukrainian government... and evacuated all children and their families" from five settlements in Zaporizhzhia, the deputy head of the region Yevgen Myronenko said.

Local media cited regional officials as saying a total of 59 children had been removed from the towns.

The evacuations from the five settlements — Gulyaipole, Stepnogirsk, Preobrazhenka, Yegorivka, and Novopavlivka — were announced in August due to what officials described as a "difficult" security situation.

Ukrainian forces over recent weeks have reported limited gains in the Zaporizhzhia region where they are coming up against entrenched Russian positions.

General Oleksandr Tarnavskiy, who is leading the counteroffensive in the south, said last weekend that Ukraine's army had broken through Russian lines in Zaporizhzhia.

Kyiv last month declared a strategic victory when it recaptured the southern village of Robotyne.

Meanwhile, the Kremlin said yesterday that underwater explosions that ruptured the Nord Stream gas pipelines in the Baltic Sea were organised by the United States and Britain.

"They are involved, one way or another, in this terrorist attack," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told a regular news briefing in response to a question about the September 2022 blasts, without providing any evidence.

Poland's agriculture minister said yesterday talks with Ukraine were on track as the two countries try to resolve a dispute about a ban imposed by Warsaw on Polish grain imports.

Warsaw and Kyiv are allies, but relations have soured since Poland, Hungary and Slovakia decided to extend a ban that was introduced to protect farmers from a surge in grain and food imports from Ukraine after Russia's invasion last year.

The Polish government is also under pressure from the far right to take a tougher stance on Ukraine before an election on October 15.

"I am glad that we are talking about the future, that we are building mechanisms for the future and we are calming certain emotions that have not served us well, and this is probably a good direction," the Polish minister, Robert Telus, told a press conference after online talks with Ukrainian Agriculture Minister Mykola Solskiy.



NEW YORK CIVIL CASE

Trump found liable for fraud

REUTERS, New York

A New York judge found Donald Trump and his family business fraudulently inflated the value of his properties and other assets, in a major defeat for the former US president that could severely hamper his ability to do business in the state.

The scathing decision by Justice Arthur Engoron of New York state court in Manhattan will make it easier for state Attorney General Letitia James to establish damages at a scheduled October 2 trial.

Engoron also ordered the cancellation of certificates that let some of Trump's businesses, including the Trump Organization, operate in New York, and ordered the appointment of a receiver to manage the businesses' dissolution.

The judge described how Trump, his adult sons Donald Jr and Eric, the Trump Organization and other defendants made up valuations and inflated Trump's net worth to suit their business needs. "That is a fantasy world, not the real world," Engoron wrote.

The judge also sanctioned the defendants' lawyers for making "preposterous" legal arguments and fuelling their clients' "obstreperous" conduct.

Trump and the other defendants have argued that they never committed fraud, and that the challenged transactions were profitable. They plan to appeal Engoron's decision.

"Today's outrageous decision is completely disconnected from the facts and governing law," Christopher Kise, a lawyer for Trump, said in a statement. "President Trump and his family will seek all available appellate remedies to rectify this miscarriage of justice."

In a post on his Truth Social platform, Trump called accusations that he committed fraud "ridiculous and untrue," and blasted Engoron as a "DERANGED" judge doing the bidding of James, a Democrat.

"This is Democrat Political Lawfare, and a Witch Hunt at a level never seen before," Trump wrote. "If they can do this to me, they can do this to YOU!" Trump has repeatedly asserted without evidence that indictments he faces are "witch hunts."

VIOLENCE IN MANIPUR

India declares the entire state 'disturbed area'

AGENCIES

The government of India's northeastern state of Manipur yesterday declared the entire state a 'disturbed area' under the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) for a period of six months in the wake of the prevailing law and order situation.

However, the status will not be implemented in areas under the jurisdiction of 19 police stations including the capital Imphal, reports Hindustan Times online.

The state government, in a notification, said that the "violent activities of various extremist/insurgent groups warrant the use of Armed Forces in aid of civil administration in the entire state".

Meanwhile, the government has reimposed an internet ban on the restive state after violent protests erupted following the circulation of photographs of two dead students killed during the months-long conflict, officials said.

More than 150 people have been killed in the remote northeast state since armed clashes broke out in May between the predominantly Hindu Meitei majority and the mainly Christian Kuki community.

The far-flung state has fractured on ethnic lines with rival militia groups setting up blockades, reports AFP.

US halts Gabon aid after coup

AFP, Washington

The United States said Tuesday it would halt assistance to Gabon after the military took charge last month. "The US government is pausing certain foreign assistance programs benefiting the government of Gabon while we evaluate the unconstitutionality of intervention by members of the country's military," Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a statement. He said that the United States was maintaining diplomatic and consular operations in the oil-rich Central African country. The move is temporary as the State Department considers a formal determination that Gabon experienced a military coup, which under US law would snap off assistance. US officials have previously said that US assistance was minimal to Gabon, run by the Bongo family for more than half a century.

EYE VIRUS OUTBREAK

56,000 Pakistan schools shut

AFP, Lahore

More than 56,000 Pakistan schools will shut for the rest of the week in a bid to curb a mass outbreak of a contagious eye virus, officials said yesterday. Millions of students will stay home from today after Punjab announced blanket closures having recorded 357,000 conjunctivitis cases since the start of the year. The fast-spreading eye infection causes redness, itchiness and discharge from the eyes and contamination can spread through hand contact, as well as coughing and sneezing. "The closure has been announced as a proactive measure to give maximum protection to students against the infection," Punjab education department spokesman Zulfiqar Ali told AFP.

Expression of Interest (EOI)

Official Drinks and Beverage Partner

Bangladesh Cricket Board

Ref No: BCB/ Official Drinks and Beverage Partner /2023/648 Date: 28th September 2023

Expression of Interest (EOI)

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) hereby invites full proposal along with financial offers from reputed Companies/ Corporate Houses / Firms / Agencies for accruing the **Official Drinks and Beverage Partner Rights** of Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) starting from **1st November 2023 to 31st October 2025**.

Area of Rights:
A detailed EOI documents has been developed incorporating all necessary EOI details and information for acquiring the **Official Drinks and Beverage Partner** of Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) starting from **1st November 2023 to 31st October 2025**.

Eligibility Criteria:

- a) Companies related to / directly or indirectly involved in Tobacco, Alcohol (surrogated and non-surrogated), Betting, Online Betting & Online Betting Surrogate shall not be eligible to participate in the EOI process.
- b) Any person(s) or entities with an existing unresolved dispute or regarded as non-compliant in its previous involvement (e.g. Financial, Disciplinary etc.) with BCB or ICC on a point of law or fact shall be ineligible to acquire the aforementioned rights or to participate in the EOI Process or to obtain EOI Document.

EOI Submission Procedure:

- a) Interested parties need to obtain a copy of the EOI Document (General Guidelines) related to EOI will be available at the BCB Management Office (Marketing & Commercial Department) and BCB's Official Website: www.tigercricket.com.bd.
- b) The details of the EOI process, all details of Official Drink & Beverage Partner, tentative Home Series schedule, Bank Guarantee Format, Copy of the Agreement etc. are set out in the EOI Document (General Guideline) which will be available for collection from **30th September 2023 to 12th October, 2023** (Except Friday & Public Holidays in Bangladesh).

The EOI along with financial offer (prepared in accordance with the EOI Document) must be submitted in a sealed envelope addressed to: **The Chief Executive Officer, BCB Management Office, Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium, Mirpur-2, Dhaka 1216, Bangladesh** during office hours (between BST 1000 to BST 1700) on or before **16th October, 2023**.

The EOI needs to be accompanied by the following documents:

1. Company Profile and Individual Directors' / Owners' Profile.
2. Updated auditor's report on financial statements (In case of consortium, each party's auditor's report needs to be submitted individually).
3. Bank Solvency Certificate along with bank Statement.
4. Certified copy of Memorandum and Articles of Association along with certificate of Incorporation or similar constitutional documents.
5. Updated VAT Registration Certificate, Business Identification Number (BIN), Trade License and Tax Identification Number (TIN) Certificate or similar documents.
6. In case of Consortium, notarized Consortium Agreement.

The BCB reserves the right to accept or reject any or all offers at its sole discretion without assigning any reason. The BCB also reserves the right to cancel the entire EOI process and / or modify, add or alter the terms of the document and/ or the conditions for EOI by issuing an addendum(s) at any time prior to the submission of the EOI.

Chief Executive Officer
Bangladesh Cricket Board
Management Office: Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium, Mirpur-2, Dhaka 1216
Tel: +880 2 8031001-4, Fax: 803 1199

Team Kits Partner Rights

Expression of Interest (EOI)

Bangladesh Cricket Board

Ref No: BCB/Team Kits Partner Rights / 2023/651 Date: 28th September 2023

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) invites Expression of Interest (EOI) along with financial offers from the reputed Companies/ Corporate Houses/ Firms / Agencies for acquiring the Team Kits Partner Rights for the period mentioned below:

Period: 1st January 2024 to 31st July 2027 (Excluding ICC Events).

Area of Rights:
A detailed EOI document has been developed incorporating all the necessary EOI details and documents for acquiring Team Kits Partner Rights of Bangladesh National Cricket Team (Men's & Women's), "A" Team (Men's & Women's) and Bangladesh Under-19 Team (Men's & Women's).

Eligibility Criteria:

- a) Companies related to Tobacco, Alcohol (surrogated and non-surrogated), Betting, Online Betting & Online Betting Surrogate shall not be eligible to participate in the EOI process.
- b) Any person(s) or entities with an existing unresolved dispute (i.e. Financial, Disciplinary and any other) with BCB or ICC on a point of law or fact shall be ineligible to acquire the aforementioned rights or to participate in the EOI Process.

Document Purchasing Procedure:

- a) Interested parties need to obtain a copy of the EOI Document from BCB Management Office (Marketing & Commercial Department) on payment of the Non-Refundable fees of **BDT 50,000 (Fifty Thousand Taka Only)** in the form of Pay-Order/ Bank Draft/ Cash or for the Overseas participants **USD 500 (Five Hundred US Dollar only)** to be remitted to BCB (Account No. 01-7537131-01, Account Name : Bangladesh Cricket Board, Bank : Standard Chartered Bank, Dhaka, Bangladesh, SWIFT : SCBLBDDX). Please send your request for the EOI Document (Soft copy or printed version) along with the evidence of Bank Transfer /Payment receipt referred to above at the following email address: sponsorship.rights@bcb-cricket.com.
- b) The details of the EOI process, Tentative Itinerary, Bank Guarantee Format etc. are set out in the EOI Document. EOI document will be available from **30th September 2023 to 12th October 2023** during working hours (10.00 AM to 5.00 PM except Friday & Public Holidays in Bangladesh).

EOI Submission Procedure:
The EOI along with financial offer (prepared in accordance with the EOI Document) must be submitted at the BCB Management Office at **Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium, Mirpur-2, Dhaka 1216, Bangladesh** by **16th October 2023** during office hours (between BST 1000 to BST 1700) and should be in a sealed envelope to be addressed to: **Chief Executive Officer, Bangladesh Cricket Board**.

The EOI needs to be accompanied with the following documents:

1. Company Profile and Individual Directors' / Owners' Profile.
2. Updated auditor's report on financial statements (In case of consortium, each party's auditor's report needs to be submitted individually).
3. Bank Solvency Certificate along with bank Statement.
4. Certified copy of Memorandum and Articles of Association along with certificate of Incorporation or similar constitutional documents.
5. Updated VAT Registration Certificate, Trade License and Tax Identification Number (TIN) Certificate or similar documents.
6. In case of Consortium, notarized Consortium Agreement.

The BCB reserves the right to accept or reject any or all offers at its sole discretion without assigning any reason. The BCB also reserves the right to cancel the entire EOI process and / or modify, add or alter the terms of the document and/ or the conditions for EOI process by issuing an addendum(s) at any time prior to the submission of the EOI.

Chief Executive Officer
Bangladesh Cricket Board
Management Office: Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium, Mirpur-2, Dhaka 1216
Tel: +880 2 8031001-4, Fax: 803 1199

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

Stop exploitation of Barind farmers

Comprehensive measures needed to address region's crippling water crisis

It is distressing to see the continued plight of farmers in parts of the Barind region, known as the "rice bowl" of the country, where rapidly depleting groundwater levels have caused a catastrophic water crisis. A recent report by this daily shows how the distribution of irrigation water, through deep tubewells, has become a tool for individuals with political clout to exploit vulnerable farmers, particularly those from ethnic minority communities. This is what we can call "a crisis within a crisis", its magnitude exemplified by several farmer suicides, which calls for urgent interventions from the authorities.

The roots of the crisis can be traced back to the 1990s when deep tubewells were introduced, enabling farmers to cultivate multiple crops annually and transforming the Northwest into a thriving grain-producing hub. Ironically, it is this very success – on the back of excessive groundwater extraction – that contributed to the water crisis and attendant troubles. Although the Barind Multipurpose Development Authority (BMDA), responsible for overseeing irrigation, ceased installing new tubewells in 2012, unregulated private operators have continued to thrive. Today, these operators as well as the ones appointed by the BMDA are primarily responsible for much of the suffering being caused.

According to our report, farmers are supposed to pay a nominal fee for water under the BMDA management, which is Tk 85-125 per hour of irrigation. For context, there are approximately 16,000 government-run and 56,000 privately run deep tubewells in 16 districts of Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions. However, tubewell operators frequently sell water at higher rates to affluent farmers, breaching the "first come, first serve" policy. Marginal farmers are most at risk – sometimes the operators take away their smart cards and force them to enter into direct contracts with them, which means paying 6-28 times more than the government-fixed rate. Often, they are also denied water, leading to suffering and desperation. Despite some attempts to prevent it, however, political connections have continued to enable exploitation.

All this – against a backdrop of climate change and the region's crisis of groundwater, whose levels alarmingly fell by at least two feet over the last year alone – serves as a wake-up call for the authorities. Ridding the water irrigation/distribution process of exploitation, and ensuring equitable access for all farmers, is indeed the priority. Equally important, however, is finding a comprehensive solution that takes the bigger picture into account and addresses the water and livelihood crises in the region.

Stop risky living on hill slopes

Authorities must protect people and hills in Chattogram

Despite the well-documented risks of cutting or compromising the integrity of hills in Chattogram, it is disheartening to see this continuing to happen due to a lack of proper interventions from the authorities. According to a report by this daily, over 3,000 illegal structures have been constructed on nine hills owned by the Bangladesh Railway in various parts of the city. It is well-known that building such structures increases the risk of deadly landslides. Yet, over 5,500 people currently reside on these state-owned hills, while the latter are being subjected to degradation in various ways. Clearly, those enabling and profiting off of this risky venture, including politically connected individuals and corrupt government officials, care little about the danger residents face.

As per a study, some 400 people have been killed in landslides in Chattogram between 2000 and 2017. Subsequent years have seen little improvement in this scenario. The question is: Why are the authorities failing to prevent this? Just last month, two people died in a landslide at the Soloshohor Hill, where people are still living. This is partly because of a general lack of awareness, and partly because of the increasingly high house rent that drove many families to such settlements in landslide-prone areas. Reportedly, several syndicates of powerful individuals in collusion with corrupt government employees are responsible for the construction and maintenance of these buildings, violating relevant laws.

Similarly, land grabbers have been inflicting irreversible damage to the environment and biodiversity of hills under the nose of the local administration. Over the past 40 years, according to an estimate, some 120 hills have been lost in the port city. If the trend continues, we dread to think what will become of this still environmentally rich region. Experts have long blamed corruption and political interference for the lack of effective measures to stop the practice of hill razing. This must stop. We urge the authorities to undertake stern measures, including regular drives, to take down risky structures and rehabilitate residents, and also punish those responsible for this situation.

Switching to renewables is easier than we think



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

SELIM RAIHAN

Energy produced from natural resources (that is, renewable energy) regenerates over the span of a human's life without depleting the planet's resources. These resources, which include biomass, tides, waves, sunshine, wind, rain, and thermal energy stored in the earth's crust, have the advantage of being accessible in some capacity from almost everywhere. They are practically inexhaustible. More importantly, they don't harm the climate or the ecosystem as much. Renewable energy is gradually becoming more affordable; it is equitable and secure, and has the potential to create jobs.

In contrast, fossil fuels like oil, coal, and natural gas are only found in finite amounts. They eventually run out as we continue to extract them. Even if they are created through natural processes, they are not replenished quickly enough to make up for what is consumed by humans. More emissions are produced by burning fossil fuels than by producing electricity from renewable sources. The key to solving the climate catastrophe is switching from fossil fuels – which now produce the majority of emissions – to renewable energy.

The energy sector in Bangladesh is heavily dependent on fossil fuels. Both domestic and imported fossil fuels play a significant role in our energy production. In 2022, more than 98 percent of all energy production originated from natural gas, oil, diesel, and coal. Less than two percent of the energy mix consisted of renewables. Over the years, the reliance on fossil fuels has intensified. However, the Renewable Energy Policy of Bangladesh, which was introduced in 2008, aimed at harnessing the potential of renewable energy resources and technologies in the country. The policy set a target of meeting five percent of total power demand by 2015 and 10 percent by 2020 using renewable sources. These targets were never met. There are, however, conflicting targets in various governments' policies and plans. The Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan (MCPP) was introduced in 2021 to enhance the nation's resilience against climate change. This plan aims to reach 30 percent renewable energy share by 2030 and at least 40 percent by 2041. In contrast, under the draft Integrated Energy and Power Master Plan (IEPMP), Bangladesh has

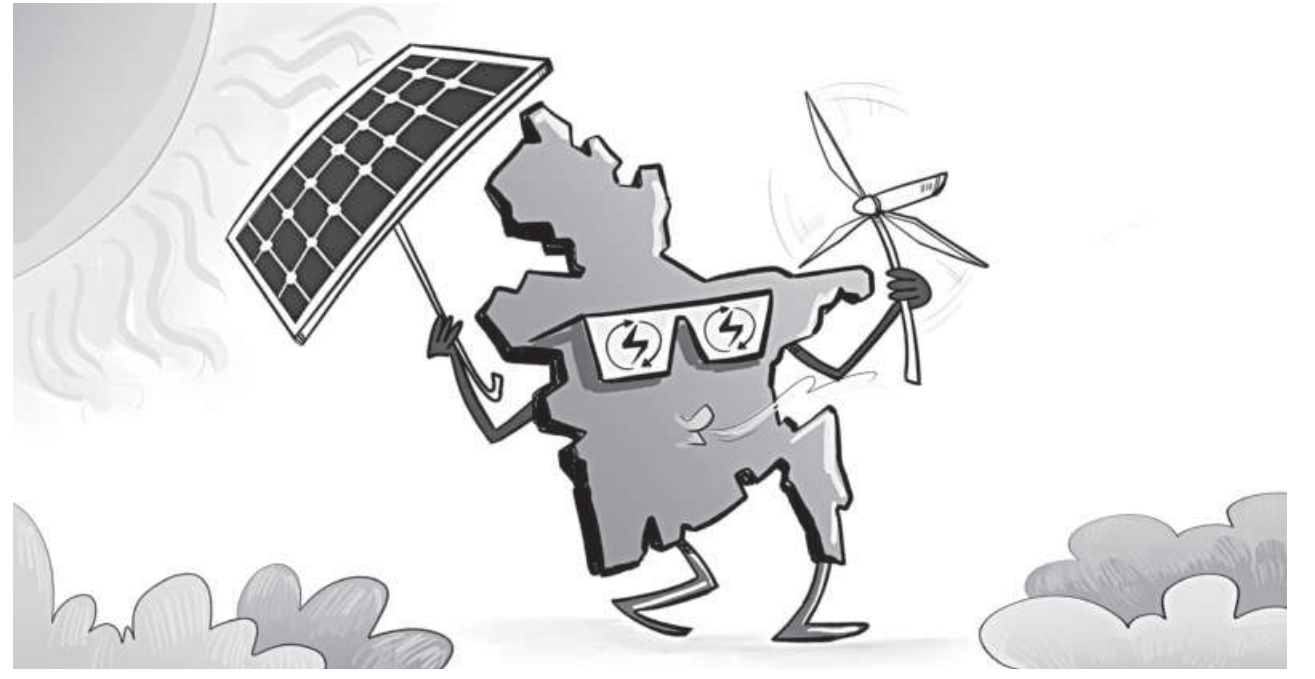


ILLUSTRATION: REHNUMA PROSHOON

set a clean energy (renewable and nuclear) target of 40 percent by 2041. Also, the government's annual budget documents set different targets. The real picture shows that Bangladesh's progress towards switching to renewable energy has remained slow and uncertain.

There is no denying that the viability of renewable energy in the country will depend on the market price or value of renewable energy, the costs of renewable energy in comparison to those of other energy resources, policies to promote renewable energy, and environmental goals that increase the costs of using fossil fuels and/or subsidise the costs of renewable energy. As such, the wider adoption of renewable energy is hindered by pressure from fossil fuel lobbies, ineffective governmental regulations, outdated infrastructure, expensive initial installation costs, a lack of proper battery storage systems, a lack of knowledge and awareness, and a lack of relevant policies and subsidies.

To transform Bangladesh's energy systems and speed up the shift to renewable energy in the next decade or so, a few critical actions need to be prioritised. In line with the statements of the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, the following actions can be suggested.

Firstly, there is a need to ensure

easy access to renewable energy. Renewable energy technology needs to be accessible to everyone and not just for the wealthy. Energy from renewable sources, such as solar and wind, can be stored and released whenever people, communities, and businesses need power thanks to technologies such as battery storage

be accelerated by the availability of modern energy transmission infrastructure, clear and strong policies, transparent processes, and public support.

The country needs to switch energy subsidies from fossil fuels to renewable energy. One of the largest financial obstacles preventing the

country's transition to renewable energy is fossil fuel subsidies. The cost of subsidising the fossil fuel industry alone is enormous and includes direct subsidies, tax benefits, and costs for health and the environment that weren't factored into the pricing of fossil fuels. Subsidies for fossil fuels are unfair and inefficient. Subsidising renewable energy instead reduces emissions and has the potential of fostering sustainable economic growth, job creation, improved public health, and greater equality, especially for the poorest and most vulnerable people.

It is also critically important to make considerable investments in renewable energy. There is a need for commitment and accountability, especially from the banks and other public and private financial institutions, which must direct their lending portfolios toward hastening the transition to renewable energy.

Finally, resources must be shifted between competing industrial sectors and political constituencies as part of a sustainable energy transition. As stakeholders in this process hold varying degrees of political and economic power, understanding how political and economic factors influence the transition to renewable energy is crucial in order to formulate effective policies and facilitate the shift to sustainable energy systems.

Secondly, a steady supply of raw materials and components for renewable energy is crucial in order to ensure broader access to all the necessary resources. In addition, the management of renewable energy waste is important in order to create supply chains that safeguard ecosystems.

Thirdly, there is a need to create a level playing field for technologies utilising renewable energy. Domestic policy frameworks need to be quickly changed to streamline and accelerate renewable energy projects and spur private sector investments. Policies and procedures must be put in place to lower market risk, enable investment, and provide incentives – including by streamlining the planning, permitting, and regulatory processes and avoiding bottlenecks and red tape. The adoption of solar and wind energy technologies can

Semiconductors can be the new RMG



Mohammed Enayetur Rahman is the founder, CEO, and president of ULKASEMI. He can be reached at rahman@ulkasemi.com.

MOHAMMED ENAYETUR RAHMAN

With the consistent growth of our IT sector in recent years, Bangladesh's endeavour to become a knowledge-based economy has already gained significant momentum. While labour-centric sectors like the ready-made garment (RMG) industry remain a key driver in our economy, it is important now to expand the focus to skill-intensive sectors so that we can stay globally competitive and can create employment for the educated masses. The emerging semiconductor industry can play an instrumental role in this regard.

It may sound like an overstatement to say that the semiconductor industry has the potential to gain the same status as the RMG industry in the future. However, in view of the global and local prospects of this booming industry, we can definitely hope to witness such a scenario.

A lifeline for all electronic devices and systems, the global semiconductor industry is set to grow exponentially in the coming decade. According to Precedence Research, the market value of this industry stands at \$664.2 billion at present, and is expected to rise to over \$1.88 trillion by 2032,

reflecting a remarkable compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 12.28 percent.

Bangladesh currently earns around \$5 million annually from the semiconductor industry, mostly by providing integrated circuit (IC) designing services, while high-end services such as fabrication, packaging, assembly, and testing remain untapped by local semiconductor companies. But our achievement is not negligible either. Virtually non-existent two decades ago, the nascent industry has gained traction rapidly in recent years. If the revenue has been able to reach \$5 million over such a short period, we can definitely set our sights high and hope for the semiconductor industry to catch up with the RMG industry in the long run.

Most importantly, our demographic dividend is already a big advantage for this endeavour. A country with a 28 percent youth population, Bangladesh sees around 20,000 students graduate with computer engineering and electrical and electronic engineering (EEE) degrees every year. If trained properly, they can provide

the necessary fuel for the growth of semiconductor industry.

However, a series of challenges stand in our way of achieving this goal, the biggest being the massive investment required for its development. Like most tech-based sectors, the semiconductor industry is highly capital-intensive, making it extremely challenging for companies to expand operations without the government's support.

Considering the immense potential of this sector, many countries around the world have taken initiatives to grow their respective semiconductor bases. For instance, the Indian government launched a programme named Semicon to promote the production of semiconductors in the country, with an incentive of 76,000 crore rupees. In order to take our industry forward, the Bangladesh government should mull over similar steps for the days to come. It can also accelerate semiconductor expansion by initiating bilateral dialogues with experts such as Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan.

The lack of an adequately trained workforce is another key challenge for the country's semiconductor industry. Back in 2007, I started Ulkasemi in Bangladesh with only four engineers. Creating a pool of trained professionals in line with our gradual expansion was a Herculean task. The workforce problem mainly stems from the lack of hands-on experience of our engineering students. Their academic knowledge of semiconductors is not sufficient to

meet the professional requirements in the industry. Therefore, rigorous training is necessary to turn them into competent professionals.

The most effective way to overcome this challenge is to strengthen government-academia-industry collaboration. By engaging with academia, semiconductor experts can encourage students to take an interest in the field. It is equally important to include semiconductor-related topics such as advanced-level VLSI courses in the students' academic curriculum so that they can develop their knowledge of IC design, production, packaging and fabrication at an earlier stage.

The government recently declared its ambition to build a \$10 billion semiconductor industry by 2031. If provided with the necessary support, Bangladesh's semiconductor industry could even surpass this target. The kind of support the RMG industry received during the 1980s-1990s, such as subsidies for electricity and gas supply, can lend impetus to our industry.

Currently, over \$40 billion in gross revenue is earned annually by Bangladesh's RMG industry. However, it requires five million workers to generate this revenue, whereas the semiconductor industry could earn the same amount by employing only around 100,000 engineers. It shows the tremendous potential Bangladesh has in this thriving industry. It is high time we started shaping it as our gateway to a knowledge-based economy and a prospective alternative to the long-serving RMG industry.

New Message

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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!

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On September 24, French President Emmanuel Macron said that French troops would be withdrawn from Niger in the next couple of months, in the wake of a coup d'état in the Western African country this summer. PHOTO: AFP

Is this the end of French neo-colonialism in Africa?

Zoe Alexandra
is co-editor of Peoples Dispatch.

Vijay Prashad
is an Indian historian, editor, and journalist. He is a writing fellow and chief correspondent at Globetrotter. He is an editor of LeftWord Books and the director of Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research. He has written more than 20 books, including 'The Darker Nations and The Poorer Nations'.

ZOE ALEXANDRA and VIJAY PRASHAD

In Bamako, Mali, on September 16, the governments of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger created the Alliance of Sahel States (AES). On X, the social media platform formerly known as Twitter, Colonel Assimi Goita, the head of the transitional government of Mali, wrote that the Liptako-Gourma Charter which created the AES would establish "an architecture of collective defense and mutual assistance for the benefit of our populations." The hunger for such regional cooperation goes back to the period when France ended its colonial rule. Between 1958 and 1963, Ghana and Guinea were part of the Union of African States, which was to have been the seed for wider pan-African unity. Mali was a member as well between 1961 and 1963.

But, more recently, these three countries – and others in the Sahel region such as Niger – have struggled with common problems, such as the downward sweep of radical Islamic forces unleashed by the 2011 North Atlantic Treaty Organization (Nato) war on Libya. The anger against the French has been so intense that it has provoked at least seven coups in Africa (two in Burkina Faso, two in Mali, one in Guinea, one in Niger, and one in Gabon) and unleashed mass demonstrations from Algeria to the Congo and most recently in Benin. The depth of frustration with France is such that its troops have been ejected from the Sahel, Mali demoted French from its official language status, and France's ambassador in Niger (Sylvain Itte) was effectively held "hostage" – as French President Emmanuel Macron said – by people deeply upset by French behaviour in the region.

Philippe Toyo Noudjenoume, the President of the West Africa Peoples' Organisation, explained the basis of this cascading anti-French sentiment in the region. French colonialism, he said, "has remained in place since 1960." France holds the revenues of its former colonies in the Banque de France in Paris. The French policy – known as *Françafrique* – included the presence of French military bases from Djibouti to Senegal, from Côte d'Ivoire to Gabon. "Of all the former colonial powers in Africa," Noudjenoume told us, "it is France

that has intervened militarily at least 60 times to overthrow governments, such as [that of] Modibo Keita in Mali (1968), or assassinate patriotic leaders, such as Felix-Roland Moumnie (1960) and Ernest Ouandie (1971) in Cameroon, Sylvanus Olympio in Togo in 1963, Thomas Sankara in Burkina Faso in 1987 and others." Between 1997 and 2002, during the presidency of Jacques Chirac, France intervened militarily 33 times on the African continent (by comparison, between 1962 and 1995, France intervened militarily 19 times in African states). France never really suspended its colonial grip or its colonial ambitions.

Breaking the camel's back
Two events in the past decade "broke the camel's back," Noudjenoume said: the Nato war in Libya, led by France, in March 2011, and the French intervention to remove Koudou Gbagbo Laurent from the presidency of Côte d'Ivoire in April 2011. "For years," he said, "these events have forced a strong anti-French sentiment, particularly among young people. It is not just in the Sahel that this feeling has developed but throughout French-speaking Africa. It is true that it is in the Sahel that it is currently expressed most openly. But throughout French-speaking Africa, this feeling is strong."

Mass protest against the French presence is now evident across the former French colonies in Africa. These civilian protests have not been able to result in straight forward civilian transitions of power, largely because the political apparatus in these countries had been eroded by long standing, French-backed kleptocracies (illustrated by the Bongo family, which ruled Gabon from 1967 to 2023, and which leeches the oil wealth of Gabon for their own personal gain; when Omar Bongo died in 2009, French politician Eva Joly said that he ruled on behalf of France and not of his own citizens). Despite the French-backed repression in these countries, trade unions, peasant organisations, and left-wing parties have not been able to drive the upsurge of anti-French patriotism, though they have been able to assert themselves

France intervened militarily in

Mali in 2013 to try to control the forces that it had unleashed with Nato's war in Libya two years previously. These radical Islamist forces captured half of Mali's territory and then, in 2015, proceeded to assault Burkina Faso. France intervened but then sent the soldiers of the armies of these Sahel countries to die against the radical Islamist forces that it had backed in Libya. This created a great deal of animosity among the soldiers, Noudjenoume told us, and that is why patriotic sections of the soldiers rebelled against the governments and overthrew them.

Anti-intervention
After the coup in Niger, the West hoped to send in a proxy force – led by the Economic Commission of West African States (ECOWAS) – but the African military leaders demurred. Across the region, people set up solidarity committees to defend the people of Niger from any attack, with the threat provoking "revolt and indignation among the populations," Noudjenoume explained. Nigerian President Bola Ahmed Tinubu was even forced to back down from ECOWAS's crusade when his country's Congress rejected the measure and mass protests occurred against militarily intervening in the neighbouring country. As ECOWAS's ultimatums to restore the deposed Nigerian leader Mohamed Bazoum expired, it became clear that its threat was empty.

Meanwhile, not only did it appear that the people of Niger would resist any military intervention, but Burkina Faso and Mali immediately promised to defend Niger against any such intervention. The new AES is a product of this mutual solidarity.

But the AES is not merely a military or security pact. At the signing ceremony, Mali's Defense Minister Abdoulaye Diop told journalists, "This alliance will be a combination of military and economic efforts [among]... the three countries." It will build upon the February 2023 agreement between Burkina Faso, Guinea, and Mali to collaborate on a fuel and electricity exchange, to build transportation networks, to collaborate on mineral resource sales, to build a regional agricultural development project, and to increase intra-Sahel trade. Whether these countries would be able to develop an economic agenda to benefit their peoples – and therefore guarantee that France would have no means to exert its authority over the region – is to be seen.

This article was produced by Globetrotter.

Why solar irrigation pumps are the future of agriculture



Mostafa Shabuj
is a journalist at The Daily Star.

MOSTAFA SHABUJ

Changes in weather patterns over the last few years have become a cause for concern globally – particularly because these changes have led to a decline in food production in many countries, including Bangladesh. The Russia-Ukraine war also disrupted the global food supply chain from Russia and Ukraine. As a result, in Asia, India is under pressure to export crops to many countries. But due to internal political pressure ahead of the upcoming national election, the Indian government decided to stabilise the domestic market and, to this end, suspend the export of staple crops like rice and wheat, and increase export duties on other food items like sugar and onion. As a result, Bangladesh, who depends mostly on India for

12.15 days after waiting for rainfall. Agriculturists say if farmers don't plant their saplings at 22-28 days of age, the production will decrease by three to four maunds of paddy for each bigha of land.

However, an exception has been seen in areas where solar irrigation pumps (SIPs) have been used. Farmers in these areas have managed to plant paddy at the right time and at lower costs, despite having a drought. As a result, they will harvest crops on time, expecting good yields. Though SIPs have many benefits, a very small amount of land is being cultivated using these pumps.

As per data from the Sustainable and Renewable Energy Development

paddy said the irrigation cost was almost half of that from fuel- or electricity-powered pumps. The cost of irrigating one bigha of land with a solar pump from the planting stage to the harvesting stage is Tk 1,000-1,500. On the other hand, it takes Tk 3,000-3,500 per bigha for diesel or electricity pumps.

There are multiple benefits of using SIPs for poor farmers. They do not need any capital to install solar pumps privately. Besides, farmers do not need any labour costs to irrigate crops. SIPs have a minimal maintenance cost compared to electricity or oil machines. A solar pump, once installed, can run uninterrupted for at least 20 years. Around 100-150 bighas of land can be cultivated with an SIP of appropriate capacity.

However, SIPs generate electricity round the year, but it is only used for paddy cultivation. The surplus electricity can be supplied to the national grid from these SIPs throughout the year.

SIPs will also greatly help in curbing carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions in the country. According to the Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation, we import



A solar irrigation pump in Shibganj upazila, Bogura.

PHOTO: MOSTAFA SHABUJ

importing rice, pulses, ginger, garlic, onions and sugar, has a reason to be worried.

In light of this situation, the government has allowed import of these food grains from other countries at higher prices, which is putting pressure on our already depleting foreign exchange reserves.

In Bangladesh, the Aman paddy season normally starts in June-July. According to the information provided by the Bangladesh Meteorological Department, the rainfall that occurred in June was 16 percent less than usual, and that in July was 50 percent less.

On August 23, a forecast by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) said that rice production in Bangladesh in the 2023-24 marketing year may be 700,000 tonnes less than their previous forecast in March, because of which the country may have to import as much as one million tonnes of rice this year. This is mainly because there has been almost no rain during the Aush season and a drought during the Aman season.

Agricultural experts say the yield in the current Aman season may be lower than expected as farmers have delayed planting of Aman paddy by

An exception has been seen in areas where solar irrigation pumps (SIPs) have been used. Farmers in these areas have managed to plant paddy at the right time and at lower costs, despite having a drought. As a result, they will harvest crops on time, expecting good yields.

Authority (SREDA), solar power contributes 80.4 percent, or about 960 megawatts (MW), of green power in the country. Some 2,877 SIPs installed in the off-grid areas across the country account for 52.29MW so far, contributing to 1,194MW of power generated by renewable energy every year. The Infrastructure Development Company Ltd (IDCOL) has installed 1,523 SIPs, generating 42MW, while the Barind Multipurpose Development Authority has set up 792 units.

Farmers and stakeholders in the areas where SIPs are used to cultivate

about five million tonnes of diesel every year. According to IWMI data, diesel emissions in agriculture account for about 3.2 million tonnes of carbon annually in the country. The government wants to reduce carbon emissions in the country to meet the NDC target by 30 years. That's why IDCOL, a government agency, wants to install about 10,000 SIPs by 2030, but it has installed only 1,523 so far since 2010.

Now the crucial question is, why isn't the government making progress in this sector?

Nasrul Hamid, state minister for power, energy and mineral resources, recently said these kinds of solar panels take up a lot of agricultural land. Therefore, the government is not allowing such projects.

However, farmers say that since the water pipe is extended to crop land underground in the case of SIPs, the amount of land lost to install a solar pump is compensated as there is no need to make any soil-made drainage.

The bottom line is that, considering the impacts of climate change and adverse weather patterns, there is no alternative to SIPs to save our farmers from high production costs, reduce the amount of carbon in the air, and enhance food security for our people.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send us your letters to letters@thedailystar.net

Help eco-friendly products thrive

Bangladesh is experiencing the effects of global warming and climate change, as are other parts of the globe. This issue affects numerous facets of existence including ecological functions, agricultural productivity, food security, infrastructure, water availability, and human health. Affected communities must either expend more resources to adapt to the effects of climate change or relocate to urban centres in pursuit of employment opportunities. Rising sea levels and temperatures

impact Bangladesh annually. Agriculture is the foundation of our economy and a significant source of sustenance and employment for our population. Around 65 percent of the population lives in rural regions. Agriculture is especially susceptible to the effects of climate change. We must cope with a series of disasters brought on by global warming. The government's budget resources to address climate change and natural disasters are currently insufficient. It is up to the relevant

authorities to take necessary steps to facilitate and introduce eco-friendly and durable products like the Sonali Bag. Mubarak Ahmad Khan, a scientist, designed the biodegradable cellulose-based bag. It would be prudent to distribute this product to the general public. They must provide financial support to the entrepreneurs and innovators behind this product and others like it.

Nazmul Islam Joy
North South University

"শেখ হাসিনার উদ্যোগ, ঘরে ঘরে বিদ্যুৎ"

নর্থ-ওয়েস্ট পাওয়ার জেনারেশন কোম্পানি লিমিটেড
NORTH-WEST POWER GENERATION COMPANY LIMITED
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Phone : 48122117-18, e-mail : info@nwgpc.gov.bd, web : www.nwgpc.gov.bd

Office of the Project Director
Rupsha 800 MW Combined Cycle Power Plant Project, NWPGL, Dhaka.
Tel: 02-9145291-92; ext.-301. Fax: N/A. E-mail: pdlng.nwgpc@gmail.com

Ref: 27.28.0000.306.07.001.23.596 Date: 12-Sep-2023

eTender Notice

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

Sl. No.	Tender ID	Invitation Reference No.	Tender Description	Publication Date & Time	Closing Date & Time
01.	859728	27.28.0000.306.07.001.23.596	Construction of 4 storied rest house in Rupsha 800MW CCPP Project in Khalishpur, Khulna	27-Sep-2023; 09:00	30-Oct-2023; 14:30

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

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

26.09.2023
(Md. Mashur Rahman)
Project Director (Chief Engineer)
Rupsha 800 MW CCPP Project
NWPGL, Dhaka.
Mob: +8801730066987

GD-1492

OPINION

What you call your own

How reading 'Letters to a Writer of Colour' (Penguin Random House UK, 2023) shows us a possibility for Bangladeshi writers to make it big



DESIGN: MAISHA SYEDA

Interestingly, for the first two decades of my life, this didn't pose many problems for me. My English fluency gave me a good early start to what would become a lifelong career in journalism, and my Bangla was functional enough to navigate my life in Bangladesh.

SABRINA FATMA AHMAD

As an Anglophone writer in Bangladesh, I've frequently faced the rather inane question of why I write in English. I've learned it the hard way that this is a trap meant to engage the writer in a pointless debate about cultural politics, but in his essay, 'On Authenticity', from the anthology *Letters to a Writer of Colour* (Random House, 2023), Indian writer Amitava Kumar says it best, I think, when he says:

"I would say that English has been taught to us as a language in which we had to do our homework; to write fiction or imaginative non-fiction was to find liberation in language. That feeling of freedom is what now seems to make writing most real to me." He continues to say, "Authenticity, or what you call your own or adopt as your own, is to a large extent, based on your education."

My parents put me in an English medium school. During the 80's and 90's, with the exception of Bangla classes, we were expected to only communicate in English while in school. The pros and cons of this

system have subsequently been widely debated, resulting in some reforms, but what I got out of it was first language proficiency in English.

Interestingly, for the first two decades of my life, this didn't pose many problems for me. My English fluency gave me a good early start to what would become a lifelong career in journalism, and my Bangla was functional enough to navigate my life in Bangladesh.

And then I went to creative writing school in North America. Caribbean-American author Tiphonie Yanique has some wise words of advice for writers of colour attempting to do the same, in her essay 'On Character': "The creative writing workshop will destroy you if you are not prepared to stand confidently in your own clarity of thought and talent. And it is also to say that constantly having to prove yourself to people is actually no way to stand in your own clarity of thought and talent. It is emotionally exhausting, for one thing. It can also make it too treacherous for us to experience and communicate our true feelings of vulnerability—a vital and ongoing part of being a fiction writer."

By the time I signed up for my MFA, I had already been a working journalist for over a decade, with a weekly readership numbering in the thousands—I was arrogant enough to assume I was prepared to stand confidently in the clarity of my thought and talent. The next two years would disabuse me of that notion in ways I now realise are so common, I am practically a cliché.

Thrust into a predominantly white classrooms and workshops, I suddenly found myself expending energy having to defend myself against preconceived notions that my peers and professors alike seemed to have about the cultures I was writing about, or overexplaining simple things because my workshop audience was unable—or unwilling—to infer from context. There was of course the struggle of describing untranslatable emotions and scenarios to a different culture. So many translation panels at the Dhaka Lit Fest ask the question, "How do you explain 'obhiman' to a non-Bangali?" But I also began to struggle with my learned aversion to summary and exposition, with my classmates needing more context for the things

that happened in my stories, and my professors repeating "show, don't tell" in their feedback. I wondered how best to incorporate all the cultural, familial and communal histories needed for my story, without resorting to blocks of exposition.

Whatever story I had in mind took a backseat to addressing repeated concerns about mundane details, until it became increasingly tempting to sandpaper over nuance, avoid structural/narrative experimentations, and make the whole text more palatable to minds unaccustomed to BIPOC literature. Things reached peak ridiculousness when a young prof asked me to change the surname of my protagonist from 'Rahman' to "something less reminiscent of ramen, because it is so distracting". I wish I was making this up.

Tahmina Anam describes the dilemma beautifully in her essay 'On Humour':

"Here's the thing no one tells you when you're a POC writer. You are there to serve a purpose, and that purpose is to tell the world about the place you're from, whether it's a small town in Bangladesh or a council flat in East London. You are the representative of your country and your people."

I had witnessed some of the local pushback against Ms Anam's debut novel, *A Golden Age* (John Murray, 2007) when it came out, with her "authenticity" being put on trial by the deshi literati, a phenomenon discussed in detail in Amitava Kumar's essay. One of the things that all the essayists in *Letters to a Writer of Colour* want to emphasise is that just as the "rules" for writing BIPOC fiction need to take into context the colours, flavours and nuances of the cultures that these Anglophone writers come from, the rules for reading these stories by non-white writers are also different. And unless the readers are exposed to a larger variety of non-white writing, they don't necessarily develop a palate for it. Even if the writing is in English, the syntax, the pacing, the very grammar of it is affected by the work of translating these cultural details into that language, and to be able to slide into those voices and worlds is an acquired skill.

"In a world and an industry dominated by whiteness, Anglophone writers of color

make a conscious choice to use a language in which we don't often have the luxury of feeling safe or understood."

—Zeyn Joukhadar

In the last decade or so, the growth of literary fests in formerly colonised countries, international events that draw in writers, publishers, translators, and editors from all around the world have done a better job in service of diversity, by shining a spotlight on the wealth of BIPOC literature, and the nominations for major literary awards are starting to reflect that. But of course, we can do much better—and it starts with our own backyard.

A casual glance at the O' and A' level literature syllabuses for 2024-2026 shows me that the recommended reading list is still dominated by old white men. If we are ever to hope to produce Bangladeshi writers in the calibre of Salman Rushdie or Arundhati Roy, we have to first create a readership with the kind of cultural exposure to a diversity of writing. It's harder to change a syllabus set by a foreign body, but it is perfectly possible to supplement it with recommended reading lists that provide a richer diet of literature. It is perfectly possible to schedule reading events and storytelling sessions inside the classroom and around in the city. Events like the Sister Library sessions at Goethe-Institut, or readings held at The Bookworm Bangladesh, and of course, Dhaka Lit Fest are positive steps in that direction. It is more than possible for anyone—parent, teacher, or casual reader—to pick up a book by an author of colour, read it, and recommend it to someone else. *Letters to a Writer of Colour* came out years after I had managed to survive my MFA, revive some of my confidence as a writer and develop *Sehri Tales* which exposes me to a lot of fresh experimentations in craft by Bangladeshi writers writing in both English and Bangla, but reading the book felt like validation and healing. Careful, concise explanations on issues of storytelling, character growth, translation, and editing by experienced writers, supplemented by a rich variety of recommended reading texts make the collection a must-have for Anglophile writers beginning their journey.

Sabrina Fatma Ahmad is a writer, journalist, and the founder of *Sehri Tales*.

BOOK REVIEW: FICTION

Twistier than a jilapir pyatch

Book review of 'A Twisted Love Story' (Berkley, 2023) by Samantha Downing

FARAH GHUZNAVI

It's a truism to say that modern life is complicated, but even a couple of decades ago, it would have been hard to predict the things we are dealing with today. For example, while seeking a partner by meeting a person that someone you know has vouched for—or going out with a person met through circumstance—has always been a fraught issue, it is probably safe to say that romance these days has become increasingly problematic, particularly post-internet! If you don't believe me, ask the distraught parents of rural Bangladesh experiencing the phenomenon whereby their kids are running off and getting married after a Facebook "love affair"...

But even in the classic movie *When Harry Met Sally*, you find two friends entertaining each other with stories of their dating disasters before, thankfully, they figure out their mutual attraction—something that should have been evident to them years ago.

Of course, not all dating experiences result in love. And when they do, not all love stories end well. And that's the case even if your surname is neither Capulet nor Montague.

Take the couple featured in Samantha Downing's new book. Wes and Ivy have known each other for a long time, but somehow they just can't seem to work things out. And yet they are both unable to close the chapter on their relationship and move on. In fact, these two take the

whole "it's complicated" relationship status to a new level. They have one heck of a past, and a present that is deeply problematic, so does their relationship have any future at all?

In some ways, each is the love of the other's life. When the relationship between Ivy and Wes works, it works beautifully. When it doesn't, it is the stuff of nightmares. And where this couple is concerned, that is really no exaggeration.

Which is why they have told each other innumerable times that it is over, only to rescind that decision and find themselves back together again—apparently very happy.

The problem is, their happiness just doesn't last. And the fall-out can be dangerous, as it was on one memorable occasion, many years ago, binding them together in a shared secret of monumental proportions.

With each iteration of their "make-up and break up" process, the stakes get higher, as the levels of toxicity inch inexorably upwards. Both Ivy and Wes are aware of this, to some extent, but they don't seem to be able to prevent themselves from ratcheting things up further. After all, one protagonist is named after a stubbornly-rooted and poisonous plant, while another shares his name with a film director who haunts our nightmares, on Elm Street and elsewhere.

After their most recent falling-out, Ivy decides that it would be "fun" to get Wes's attention by doing something really outrageous. So she reports him as a stalker to a policewoman working in the sex

crimes unit. But this time, Ivy has gone too far, and the consequences will be devastating. As, really, they should be.

Demonstrating the profound unhealthiness of their connection, Wes finds this move on Ivy's part amusing, and it kicks off yet another round of their relationship. The point at which things spiral out of control is when Karen, the policewoman, decides to look into the matter further, on her own initiative. And it turns out, Karen has her own agenda when it comes to cases like these.

Meanwhile, things are also getting more complicated at his end than Wes realises. Bianca, an administrative assistant in his office, also has her own agenda—and an insatiable level of curiosity that is inadvertently activated by the policewoman's visit to Wes's office.

And if all this were not complicated enough, these new developments risk exposing Wes and Ivy's shared secret from the past, which would really set the pigeons.

This is an interesting

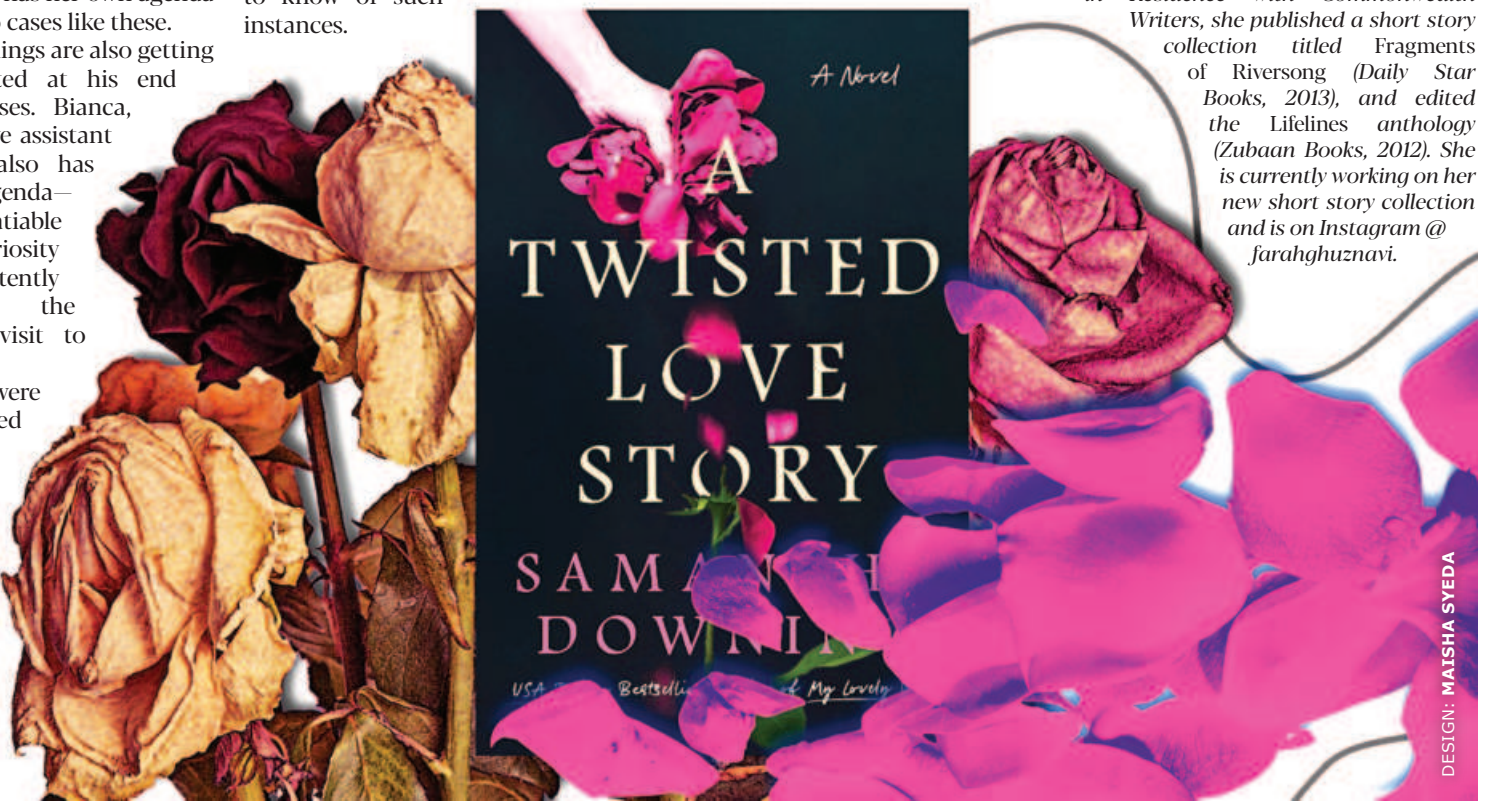
read and well worth your time, especially if you enjoy reading suspenseful stories about complicated relationships. Not least because many couples today justify some pretty bizarre behaviour in the name of love. Most of us will likely know of at least one such case. Many will know of more than one—which may or may not be as extreme as the relationship between Wes and Ivy. Chances are, the younger you are (as adults), the more likely you will be to know of such instances.

Continuing on a serious note, this book works well as a cautionary tale about red flags. Too often, people stay in relationships that are dangerous to their mental health. And it's important to know when enough is enough, and even more important to know when to move on, however attracted or invested a person may be in a relationship. Because, like Ivy and Wes, the fall-out of staying may well be more than you bargained for.

Finally, while Wes and Ivy

undoubtedly have a toxic relationship, Bianca and Karen are pretty strange people too. The story emerges from all four points of view, and is disturbing at multiple levels. I ended up feeling very glad that this was fiction. Because clearly, it's not just the love story that's twisted here!

Farah Ghuznavi is a writer, translator and development worker. Her work has been published in 11 countries across Asia, Africa, Europe and the USA. *Writer in Residence* with Commonwealth Writers, she published a short story collection titled *Fragments* of Riversong (Daily Star Books, 2013), and edited the *Lifelines* anthology (Zubaan Books, 2012). She is currently working on her new short story collection and is on Instagram @farahghuznavi.



DESIGN: MAISHA SYEDA

Tamim 'felt obstacles in many places'

Tamim Iqbal, through a Facebook video, put forth a shocking revelation yesterday. The country's best ever opening batter stated that his injury concern was not the underlying factor behind his exclusion from Bangladesh's World Cup squad. Following are the excerpts of what he said:

You are all aware that I retired for a reason. Then, at the Prime Minister's request, I returned. I toiled really hard over the last two months to get in shape. Those involved, particularly the physios, would agree that there was not a single session or activity that I was requested to undertake but did not. When the [New Zealand] series approached, I wasn't happy mentally for whatever happened in the last four-five months. But when I resumed playing, I fielded for 30-35 overs. Fortunately, I was able to bat in the second match. After the game, I felt tremendously confident and mentally satisfied. I had forgotten about what had happened in the previous four or five months. I was excited to compete in the World Cup. You should expect some discomfort after recovering from an injury layoff. The same thing happened to me. I told the physio about how I felt after that game. The three selectors arrived in the dressing room at that point. I must clarify to you that not for once did I ever mention that I can't play

more than five matches. I am sure even [chief selector Minhajul Abedin] Nannu cleared this yesterday. This lie was somehow fed to the media. I didn't want to create another controversy, which is why, with full honesty, I told the selectors to keep my injury in mind when selecting me. When I was assessed at the [team] hotel, they saw my pain and assessed me the next day. The most important factor is the physio report. Anyone wanting to challenge me on this, they are most welcome. My condition was described in the

World Cup against Afghanistan]. Afterwards, the incident that happened, I don't think my injury or this lie about the five matches had any contribution for me to not go to the World Cup. I have pain but I don't have an injury. After a day or two, someone from the top level of the board, who stays very involved with us, called me. He said, you are going to the World Cup. We have to manage you. But do one thing, don't play the first match against Afghanistan. I said to him that you are talking about something that's going to happen after

I have never batted at No. 3 or 4. I have no experience of batting in the middle-order. So, naturally, I didn't take this conversation well. I felt that I was being forced to face obstacles in many places. I said if you have this mindset, then don't send me to the World Cup. I don't want to be in this nastiness. Overall, I think, if you really want me, then you should make me mentally free and happy. I am coming out of a very bad three, four months. It was a tough time for me. Perhaps, if all this was presented to me



One more thing, please keep me in mind, everyone. Don't forget me.

differently, maybe I would have reacted differently. Perhaps, I would have accepted it. But suddenly someone calls you and says, don't play, or if they are saying that sending you down the order is the plan, I am not too sure how fair it is. You are seeing a lot of things happening. One story may be an isolated incident, two stories may be a misunderstanding. But if there are seven-eight stories with someone in three-four months, then it is intentional. At the end of the day, I will wish the very best to the fifteen who have gone [to the World Cup]. I hope they will bring success to Bangladesh. One more thing, please keep me in mind, everyone. Don't forget me.

physio report. That I had pain after the first match and after the second match. They said if I rest for the September 26 ODI and play the second practice match before the first [World Cup] match, I would have had two weeks of rehab and complete ten weeks of overall rehab. So, I would have been in a much better position to play the first match [of the

12 or 13 days. I will be in good condition by then. Why won't I be playing? He said that if you play, we are planning that you will bat down the order. You have to consider my mindset at that moment. I had played a good innings. I was happy. Now all this talk suddenly. It was hard for me to take. I have been playing for 17 years in the same position.



Tamim not a team man, implies Shikib

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh ODI captain Shikib Al Hasan gave his opinion regarding Tamim Iqbal's exclusion from the World Cup squad in an exclusive interview with T Sports, aired last night. In a roundabout way, Shikib detailed that the decision to exclude Tamim was part of many processes and facts which he was not part of. He used Mahmudullah Riyad as an example. "Mahmudullah Riyad bhai wasn't there but suddenly he came to the World Cup team. I felt he couldn't do that but his dedication, his responsibility for the team and his urge to play for the team, those things were noticed by all. So there is a difference," Shikib said, indicating that there was a difference in attitude between Mahmudullah and Tamim. Tamim had said in a Facebook video yesterday, posted after the Bangladesh team's departure for India, that a board high-up had approached him to skip the first World Cup game and also bat lower down the order. Shikib denied involvement in such a request being put to Tamim. He, however, likened Tamim's behaviour to a child's antics at the playground. "I have not discussed anything like that so I don't know where the question is coming from...!"

For the good of the team, anyone should be ready to play in any position. It's about team first.

someone made that proposal, is there something wrong with it? Or is it like you can't make a proposal like that? Like you have to tell a particular person that 'you do whatever you want?' It's like a childish behaviour where someone is saying 'it's my bat, only I will play.' "For the good of the team, anyone should be ready to play in any position. It's about team first," he added. Shikib also said why taking Tamim would have been a difficult proposition for him. "When I don't know whether someone is playing the third game or the seventh game and I will only know in the morning of the game, then it's difficult for me to select the team." Shikib also asserted that he was willing to resign from captaincy after the Asia Cup (September 17) but didn't do so on request of BCB high-ups. During the half-hour interview, the ace all-rounder also touched upon his individual plans for future, saying he might hang up his bat soon, with next year's T20 World Cup his last in that format and the 2025 Champions Trophy might be his last outing in ODIs. He said he might give up playing Tests even sooner, even though these are not chalked out yet.



Veteran batter Mahmudullah Riyad hugs captain Shikib Al Hasan as coach Chandika Hathurusingha and the other players look on at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday ahead of Bangladesh team's departure for Guwahati for the World Cup.

PHOTO: STAR

NO COMMENTS FROM BCB

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan Papon did not pick up when The Daily Star repeatedly attempted to contact him over phone to get the board's response over Tamim Iqbal's reaction yesterday. However, BCB cricket operations chairman Jalal Yunus did respond by saying that he could only make a comment after watching Tamim's video but he couldn't be reached over phone afterwards. CEO of BCB Nizamuddin Chowdhury didn't make a comment on the issue either.

Tigers want to move on

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh team yesterday departed for India's Guwahati to play the ICC Cricket World Cup, hoping to put behind the drama that has unfolded back home following the exclusion of veteran opener Tamim Iqbal from the India-bound squad. BCB's lateness in announcing the World Cup squad added to the drama, in fact made more room for it while the midnight meeting between coach Chandika Hathurusingha, skipper Shikib Al Hasan and BCB president Nazmul Hassan added more speculation to the already hyped-up atmosphere. A BCB source told The Daily Star on Tuesday morning, on the very day of the squad announcement that Shikib had communicated to the board that he would not captain the team at the World Cup if there were unfit players in the squad. Following the squad announcement, where Tamim was dropped, plenty of criticism followed. The team also departed for India on the back of a 2-0 series loss against New Zealand at home. Team director Khaled Mahmud, prior to the team's departure for India, told media that what had transpired the day before needed to be left behind. "The team is going today and I believe the boys will be upbeat. We know we haven't performed well in the New

Zealand series and many of the main players from both sides didn't play. But World Cup is a different stage and we are getting some time ahead of the World Cup and we have two practice matches to sort ourselves [before the tournament]," Mahmud told reporters at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport. "What has happened, there is nothing to do about it anymore. We have to look forward to tomorrow and that's the hope we are harbouring," he said. "I feel that the dream is certainly alive in the eyes of these 15 [in the squad]. It's important to fulfil that dream. That's why not only the cricketers, but everyone, including the support staff, must be aligned together under one thread," Mahmud added. With many young players like Tanzid Hasan Tamim and Tanzim Hasan Sakib in the squad, Mahmud urged everyone to keep faith in them. "Many will say that the young boys are going; youngsters but they have the ability to do well and so they are going there. We have to believe these 15 cricketers selected were selected because they are the best," he said. Bangladesh will face Sri Lanka and England respectively on September 29 and October 2 in their two warm-up matches before they travel to Dharamshala for their tournament opener against Afghanistan.

Records galore as Nepal make cricket history

AGENCIES

A rampant Nepal rewrote the T20 international cricket record books at the Asian Games on Wednesday. Nepal smashed a series of records on the opening day of the men's cricket competition in a 273-run thumping of bewildered part-timers Mongolia. Nepal bludgeoned 314-3 in 20 overs, beating the previous record of 278-3 by Afghanistan against Ireland in 2019. Teenager Kushal Malla, who played an exceptional knock of 137 in just 50 balls, made the fastest century off 34 balls, suppressing India skipper Rohit Sharma's 35-ball hundred. Dipendra Singh Airee hit a scarcely believable eight sixes in an unbeaten 52 off 10 balls. The powerful 23-year-old raced to his fifty off nine balls, another T20 world record and one that should stand in perpetuity because it is mathematically impossible to reach the landmark any quicker. Former Indian batter Yuvraj Singh earlier achieved the record in 12 balls. Nepal's 26 sixes in the innings was also the best ever.





DHAKA CITY

Air pollution rose by 13pc over 3 years

Says CPD citing 2020-2022 data

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Air pollution has increased by almost 13 percent in the capital since 2020, says a study by the Centre for Policy Dialogue.

Dhaka's air quality index score rose from 145.1 in 2020 to 163.7 in 2022, adds the study released yesterday.

The study titled Reducing Pollution for Greening Cities says plastic pollution has also risen during the period.

The researchers surveyed 500 households in May and June and interviewed people about their perception of air and plastic pollution and thoughts on how to deal with the crisis.

On an average, each resident spends Tk 4,000 a year for diagnosis and treatment of symptoms thought to have been caused by polluted air.

Seven out of 10 suffer breathing problems, cough, runny nose, sore throat, chest pain and eye irritation. Over 50 percent of those who fall sick are women while 20 percent are children and the elderly.

Seventy-six percent of the respondents believe air pollution has worsened in recent years.

Syed Yusuf Saadat, research fellow at the CPD, told a discussion at the Brac Centre Inn yesterday that due to sickness attributable to air pollution, individuals in Dhaka city took 2,117 days off work last year.

Seventy-seven percent of the respondents blame vehicular emission for air pollution, 10 percent blame construction work, four percent blame brick kilns, and nine percent blame burning of waste.

Thirteen percent of the women and 32 percent of men say they would have preferred public transport over cars if the system was better.

Seventy-three percent of the respondents think plastic pollution worsened in recent years; 57 percent think their neighbourhood has extreme levels of plastic pollution; 43 percent admit that they litter.

The surveyed city dwellers are ready to shun plastic if there is an alternative.

The residents lack knowledge on waste separation at households; 47 percent of the household waste is collected by the informal sector and 44 percent is collected by the city corporation employees.

CPD Executive Director Fahmida Khatun told the discussion that strict measures like a ban on plastic bags, and penalty for defaulters should be enforced.

She also recommended phasing out single-use plastic by 2028 and establishing a recycling centre.

Begum Habibun Nahar, deputy minister for environment, said everyone must play a role in preventing plastic pollution.



➤ More plastic pollution in eastern part of Dhaka

➤ An individual loses 276 hours a year in traffic

➤ 7 out of 10 suffer breathing problems, coughing

➤ Each resident spends Tk 4,000 a year for diagnosis and treatment of symptoms caused by polluted air

➤ Due to sickness related to polluted air, individuals in the city took 2,117 days off work last year

➤ 13pc of women and 32pc of men say if the public transport was better, they would have preferred it over cars



The Shuvaddya canal in Dakshin Keraniganj has literally been turned into a dumping ground by sweatshops and traders of kitchen markets, leaving no room for water to flow. The photo was taken yesterday. PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

US-BANGLADESH TIES

Some quarters trying to whip up bitterness

Says Momen

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen has described Bangladesh's relationship with the United States as "outstandingly warm and cordial", but noted that some quarters are trying to inject bitterness into this relationship through lies.

The foreign minister said the US believes in democracy and human rights.

"So, there is a similarity in our views and thoughts with the United States. In principle, the two countries have similarities. However, some individuals may not appreciate our development," Momen said, calling upon the Bangladeshi expatriates in the US to be vigilant.

He urged the Bangladeshi diaspora to take a stand, regardless of their political affiliation, to challenge those who lie

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

DENGUE DEATHS, CASES

Records tumble every month since May

Experts blame rain, gov't failure to control outbreak

DIPAN NANDY

The dengue death toll has been record-breaking with each passing month since May this year.

While there were 342 deaths throughout August, the number was already higher yesterday with three days till September ends.

This month's number of deaths till 8:00am yesterday stood at 365.

The average daily death rate last month stood at 11.03 percent and has risen this month to 13.51.

The number of cases too has been breaking records each month, with 71,976 people admitted to hospital throughout August and 73,023 patients recorded in 27 days of this month.

According to health experts, the numbers have been rising sharply every month due to the government's failure to control the outbreak, with almost all the measures taken in this regard proving inadequate.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Dr Benazir Ahmed, a former member of the National Immunization Technical Advisory Group of the health ministry, said that due to intense rainfall this month, many Aedes breeding grounds have been created.

"Another reason is the spread of the infection outside Dhaka."

He added, "Along with these, all our efforts to control

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Tree-hugging AI to the rescue of Brazilian Amazon

AFP, Manaus

Small, artificially intelligent boxes tied to tree trunks in the Brazilian Amazon are the latest weapon in the arsenal of scientists and environmentalists battling destructive jungle invaders.

The boxes, named "curupiras" after a folkloric forest creature who preys on hunters and poachers, sport sensors and software trained "to recognize the sounds of chainsaws and tractors, or anything that could cause deforestation," project manager Thiago Almeida told AFP.

"We recorded the sound of chainsaws and tractors in the forest... then, all the collected sounds were passed on to the AI team to train (the program) so that... it would only recognize these sounds and not the characteristic sounds of the forest, such as animals, vegetation and rain," he explained.

Once identified, details of the threat can then be relayed to a central point and agents deployed to deal with it.



ARMED FORCES

23 types of military equipment bought in last five years

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 23 types of modern combat equipment have been added to the Bangladesh Armed Forces in five years between 2018 and 2023, Armed Forces Division (AFD) informed a parliamentary watchdog yesterday.

The parliamentary standing committee on the defense ministry was also informed that in light of the Forces Goal-2023, those war equipment have been purchased or added to modernise and enhance the capabilities of the army, navy and air force.

The AFD placed a report containing this information before a meeting of the parliamentary watchdog at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

According to the AFD, those equipment were procured from 12 countries. Also, two types of equipment were made in Bangladesh.

However, the report didn't mention how many pieces of equipment were purchased and how much was spent on it.

Armed Forces Division said 11 types of combat equipment have been added to the army between 2018 and 2023.

These include China's Light Tank, SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



A firefighter checks the damage in an event hall following a fatal fire at a wedding celebration, in the district of Hamdaniya in Nineveh province, Iraq yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

Over 100 killed in blaze at Iraq wedding party

REUTERS, Mosul

A fire ripped through a packed wedding hall in northern Iraq late on Tuesday, killing more than 100 people in a Christian town that had survived Islamic State occupation as authorities announced an investigation into the blaze.

Fire fighters searched the charred skeleton of the building in Qaraqosh, also known as Hamdaniya, through yesterday morning and bereaved relatives gathered outside a morgue in the nearby city of Mosul, wailing and rocking in distress.

"This was not a wedding. This was hell," said Mariam Khedr, crying and hitting herself as she waited for officials to return the bodies of her daughter Rana Yakoub, 27, and three young grandchildren, the youngest aged just eight months.

Survivors said hundreds of people were at the wedding celebration, which followed an earlier church service, and the fire began about an hour into the event when fireworks ignited a ceiling decoration as the bride and groom danced.

Nineveh province Deputy Governor Hassan al-Allaf told Reuters 113 people had been confirmed dead. The head of the province's Red Crescent branch said the death toll was not final but that it "exceeds hundreds injured and dozens killed".

The fire tore through a large events hall after flares were lit during the celebration, causing a fire in the ceiling, Interior Minister Abdul Amir al-Shammari said, according to state media.