



CARDIAC IMPLANTS FOR CHILDREN

Top hospitals using unauthorised devices

Experts raise alarm over patient safety

MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN

Unauthorised companies are smuggling a number of cardiac medical devices into the country and selling those to some of Dhaka's top public and private hospitals without proper vetting, raising questions about health regulations and patient safety.

Over the last one and a half years, these unauthorised devices were used to treat children with congenital heart defects at the government-run National Institute of Cardiovascular Disease and Hospital (NICVD) and National Heart Foundation Hospital as well as private hospital Labaid in the capital, documents show.

Hospital sources and business insiders say a significant number of cardiac medical devices for children is in fact supplied illegally at different hospitals across the country.

Some of these devices are marketed without the permission of the drug regulatory body, the Directorate General of Drug Administration, the documents show, exposing regulatory flaws in medical

device business.

Experts say unregulated medical devices may jeopardise patient safety and raise concerns about the efficacy and safety of cardiac treatments.

"It is highly likely that unauthorised cardiac products will be of poor quality. They may cause serious harm to patients," said Dr Chowdhury Meskat, a professor of cardiology at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University.

A RAID ON HEARTON

On March 31, the Directorate General of Drug Administration raided the office of Hearton Bangladesh, a medical equipment supplier, in Mirpur and seized devices that are used to treat congenital heart defects among

children. The seized cardiac devices were worth Tk 27 lakh.

According to the Registration Guidelines for Medical Device, marketing these devices requires a Maximum Retail Price (MRP) certificate from the DGDA. Hearton Bangladesh did not have the certificate.

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Over the years, structures have been built razing hills in many areas of Chattogram city. The same has happened in Bayazid area where the Nagin Pahar has been cut to make room for buildings. This has caused serious damage to the environment and also exposed the locals to landslides. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

KHALEDA'S TREATMENT ABROAD

Family waiting for govt nod

'Contacted several hospitals in Germany, UK'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's family members are waiting for the government permission to take her abroad for better treatment, according to sources.

Her brother Shamim Iskandar on September 25 wrote to the home ministry seeking permission to take the former prime minister abroad for treatment.

Khaleda has been admitted to the capital's Evercare Hospital since August 9. As her condition deteriorated yesterday, she was taken to the CCU from her cabin and then she was taken back to the cabin.

Her family members have contacted several hospitals in Germany and the UK, sources said.

"Everything depends on the government decision. We are making preparations so that if we get the permission we won't spend more time communicating with hospitals," said a family member, wishing not to be named.

Law Minister Anisul Huq on Thursday said, "An application has recently been submitted to the home

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COMBATING AIR POLLUTION

\$2.3b int'l fund fails to improve situation

Global report says Bangladesh 3rd top recipient of funds; air quality remains hazardous half the year

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The air quality in Bangladesh remains toxic nearly half the year even after the country received a whopping \$2.3 billion to curb air pollution.

Bangladesh received the fund in several phases between 2017 and 2021 to curb air pollution, becoming the third top recipient of international funds after China and the Philippines for clean air projects, says a global study.

The study titled "The State of Global Air Quality Funding 2023" has been conducted by Clean Air Fund (CAF), a UK-based global, philanthropic organisation working with governments, funders, business and campaigners to create a future where everyone breathes clean air.

"It's encouraging to see that \$2.3 billion of outdoor air quality funding has been

channelled to Bangladesh between 2017-21. However, that does not match the level of air pollution to be addressed or the harm it inflicts," Clean Air Fund CEO Jane Burston told The Daily Star recently.

Outdoor air pollution, which was the focus of the Clean Air Fund report, caused 240,000 deaths in Bangladesh and 4.2 million premature deaths in 2019, according to WHO.

On top of that, this air quality funding is far outweighed by the \$6.4 billion that went to air-polluting and fossil fuel-prolonging projects in Bangladesh during this same period, he noted.

"We need to ensure that international development funders and policymakers put more and better funding into air quality, otherwise our interventions will not keep pace with increases in air pollution and continued fossil fuel funding," he added.

Outdoor air pollution, which was the focus of the Clean Air Fund report, caused 240,000 deaths in Bangladesh and 4.2 million premature deaths in 2019, according

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“It is highly likely that unauthorised cardiac products will be of poor quality. Those may cause serious harm to the patients.”

Dr Chowdhury Meskat, professor of cardiology at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University

“Anyone involved in illegally importing or marketing these devices should be brought to book. And that's where the drug administration has a role to play.”

Prof Dr Rashid-E-Mahbub, chairman of Bangladesh Health Rights Movement

Around one third of unauthorised devices are supplied illegally at different hospitals in the country, say business insiders.

Supply chain of these devices involves some companies, marketing professionals and doctors.

Marketing of these devices without necessary permission from the drug administration raises concerns about their safety and efficacy.

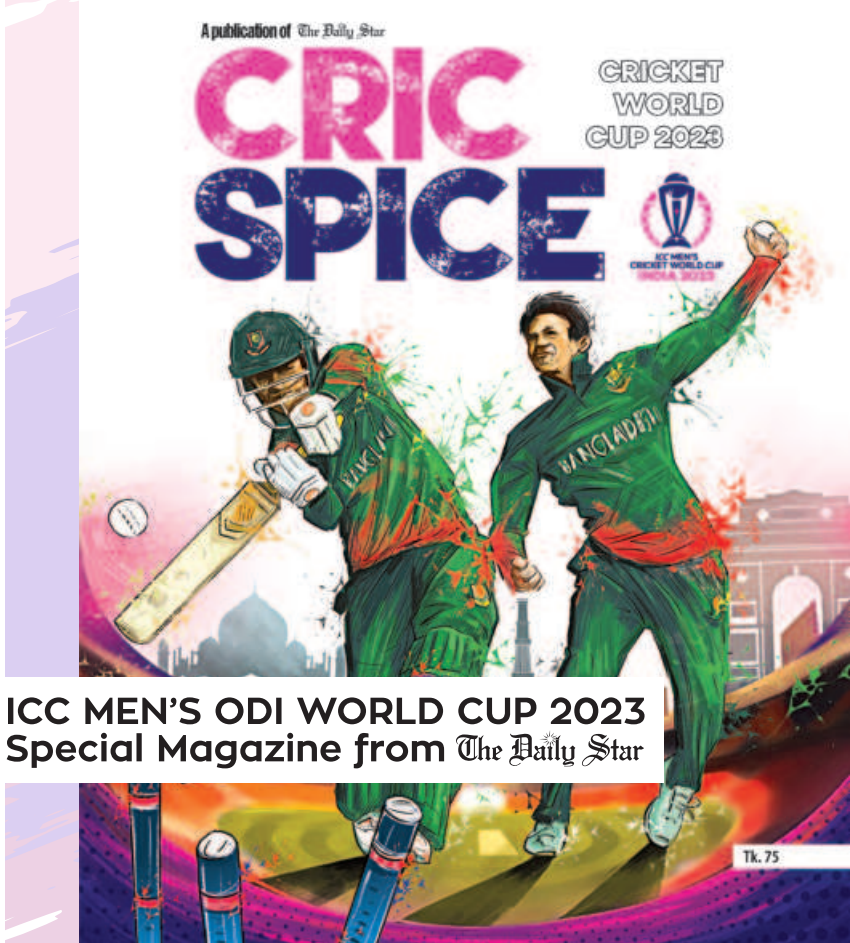
Procurement of such devices points to regulatory flaws.



Small boats ferrying passengers across the Buriganga, putting people's lives at risk as they might get hit by cargo vessels passing by. There had been several incidents of large vessels hitting small boats in the river, resulting in deaths. The photo was taken in Babubazar of Old Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

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Work to brighten the country’s image further

PM tells Bangladesh embassy officials in Washington DC

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has asked officials of the Bangladesh embassy in Washington DC to work with sincerity and professionalism to brighten the country’s image further.

“Discharge duties with utmost sincerity, professionalism, honesty, and patriotism to enhance the country’s image further,” she said.

The prime minister made the remarks during an exchange of views with the officials while visiting the embassy on Wednesday.

She also went around different sections of the embassy, including the Shaheed Minar and Bangabandhu

“Discharge duties with utmost sincerity, professionalism, honesty, and patriotism to enhance the country’s image further.”

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to Bangladesh embassy officials in Washington DC

Corner.

On her arrival, Ambassador Muhammad Imran welcomed Hasina with a bouquet.

The prime minister paid homage to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman by placing a wreath at the base of his sculpture and standing in solemn silence at the Bangabandhu Corner.

In 1997, the prime minister laid the foundation stone for the Chancery Building, and later in 2000, she inaugurated the newly constructed building.

During the visit, the PM was accompanied by Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen, Ambassador-at-Large Mohammad Ziauddin, Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen, and PMO Secretary Mohammad Salahuddin, among others.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is received by Muhammad Imran, Bangladesh ambassador to the US, upon her arrival at the Bangladesh embassy in Washington DC on Wednesday.

PHOTO: PID

Canada committed to ‘closer ties’ with India

Says Trudeau amid row over Sikh leader’s murder

AGENCIES

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said that Canada is still committed to building closer ties with India, despite “credible allegations” of the Indian government’s involvement in the killing of Sikh leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar, Canada-based National Post reported.

Pointing to the increasing influence of India worldwide, Trudeau said that it is “extremely important” that Canada and its allies continue to engage with India.

Speaking at a press conference in Montreal on Thursday, Trudeau said that he thinks it is “extremely important” that Canada and its allies continue to engage “constructively and seriously” with India

given its growing importance on the world stage, reports NDTV online.

“India is a growing economic power and important geopolitical player. And as we presented with our Indo-Pacific strategy, just last year, we’re very serious about building closer ties with India,” he told reporters.

“At the same time, obviously, as a rule of law country, we need to emphasize that India needs to work with Canada to ensure that we get the full facts of this matter,” National Post quoted Trudeau as saying.

Meanwhile, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken urged India to cooperate with the Canadian investigation into the murder during a meeting with Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar on Thursday, a US official said.

India has dismissed Canada’s allegations as absurd, and ties have become strained with both governments expelling a diplomat in a tit-for-tat move, reports Reuters.

“Blinken raised the Canadian matter in his meeting, (and) urged the Indian government to cooperate with Canada’s investigation,” the US official said.

Jaishankar yesterday confirmed that he spoke to Blinken and the US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan about Canadian allegations on the killing of the Sikh leader in Canada.

“They shared US views and assessments on this whole situation and I explained to them at some length ... a summary of the concerns which I had,” Jaishankar said at a Hudson Institute event in Washington DC.

Medical assistant found hanging from bridge

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chuadanga

The body of a rural medical practitioner was found hanging from the railing of a bridge in Chuadanga’s Alamdanga yesterday.

Medical assistant Touhidul Islam, 40, was from Dumbalpur village. Informed, police recovered his body around noon and sent it to Chuadanga Sadar Hospital for autopsy, said Alamdanga Police OC Biplab Kumar Nath.

Locals said Touhidul was last seen at a local tea stall around midnight. When he didn’t return home even very late into the night, his family started looking for him. Later, locals found his body hanging from the railing of a bridge on Dumbalpur-Madhavpur road.

2 killed in autorickshaw-bus collision

BSS, Gopalganj

Two people died and five others were injured in a collision between a bus and a battery-run autorickshaw on the Dhaka-Khulna highway in Gopalganj’s Muksudpur upazila yesterday.

The deceased are Ranu Begum, 60, of Maheshpur village under Kashiani upazila, and Hayat Sheikh, 65, of the same village.

Bhanga Highway Police Sub-Inspector Abu Noman said a bus of Dola Paribahan, heading towards Khulna from Dhaka, collided head-on with the autorickshaw coming from the opposite direction, while overtaking another bus around 11:30am.

The accident left an autorickshaw passenger dead on the spot and six others injured, said SI Noman. The injured were taken to Muksudpur Upazila Health Complex, where another passenger died, he said.

2 siblings die in mud wall collapse

UNB, Brahmanbaria

Two siblings died while their parents and sister sustained injuries in a mud wall collapse in Brahmanbaria’s Bijoynagar upazila early yesterday.

The deceased are Rafin, 12, and his younger sister Mishu, 10. Their parents, Mannaf Miah, 42, and Roksana Begum, 35, and their 10-year-old sister, Isu, were injured.

The five went to bed after dinner in their mud house last night. Suddenly, a wall of another abandoned mud house fell onto their house, which had already weakened due to the overnight downpour, leaving the five critically injured.

They were taken to Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital, where the siblings died from their injuries.

Top hospitals using unauthorised devices

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The company claimed the products they were selling were produced by Lifetech Scientific, a China-based company, and imported by another local company.

That local company, Rahman Medical Services, has no authorisation for distribution of Lifetech products since 2020, multiple sources have confirmed.

Following the DGDA raid, The Daily Star has learnt that a number of local companies, marketing professionals and doctors are involved in selling these devices to several city hospitals.

Usri Ghosh, an Indian national, brought these devices into the country and marketed them through Hearton Bangladesh, said sources at the NICVD and Heart Foundation.

Usri did not return our requests for comments.

The Daily Star has documents showing both the NICVD and the Heart Foundation purchased devices without necessary authorisation on a number of occasions.

Every year, an estimated 1,200 children require cardiac implants in Bangladesh. This year alone, around 30 percent of the devices worth around Tk 3 crore have been supplied by Hearton, sources with direct knowledge of the market said.

From January to September this year, 127 Lifetech devices illegally imported by Hearton were implanted at three top hospitals – 102 at NICVD, 12 at Heart Foundation and 13 at Labaid, the sources have confirmed.

Between September 23 and 27 alone, NICVD used 50 Lifetech cardiac devices to treat as many children.

Earlier on July 7, Lifetech products were used to treat heart defects of 13 children at the Cath Lab of the Labaid Hospital in the capital, documents show.

Brig Gen (retired) Prof Nurun Nahar Fatema, who performed the procedures, shared details about the products on her LinkedIn profile recently.

Contacted, she said she got the devices from her previous supplier, Rahman Medical Services.

“They provide me implants when I need them. But I do not have any idea about the legal issues,” said Prof Nurun Nahar.

Mizanur Rahman, owner of Rahman Medical Services, said his company no longer supplies Lifetech products.

THE WORKSHOP THAT NEVER HAPPENED

Hospital sources say after Usri Ghosh had flown in with unauthorised Lifetech Scientific devices on January 16, customs officials at Hazrat

Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA) held those for not having the required paperwork and asked her to pay duties to collect those.

The same day, NICVD’s Head of Paediatric Cardiology Department Prof Abdullah Shahriar wrote to the HSIA customs commissioner, requesting duty-free release of the products, “meant for a technology transfer workshop” to be held the next day.

Subsequently, the items were released and used to carry out minimally invasive cardiac intervention procedures on 10 children on January 17.

Sources said no international workshop was held that day, but Usri Ghosh was present when cardiac intervention procedures were carried out on the children using those devices.

Prof Shahriar wrote the letter on the letterhead of Labaid Diagnostics, a private hospital where he is a consultant. The Daily Star has a copy of the letter.

The letter also mentioned that an Indian paediatric cardiologist named Dr Neeraj Awasthy would conduct the workshop.

Dr Awasthy declined to comment and asked this correspondent to speak to the authorities.

Prof Shahriar said he had no idea that Hearton had no authorisation from the DGDA.

“We had been using Lifetech products for the past one and a half years. We stopped using their products as soon as we learnt about this,” he told The Daily Star.

Asked why he wrote the letter, he said, “Horton officials approached me, saying the NICVD director referred them to me as he [NICVD director] was unavailable at the time.”

NICVD Director Prof Mir Jamal Uddin denied having any knowledge about the letter.

He also said he was not aware of any “international workshop” taking place on January 17.

As for scrutinising suppliers’ documents, he said the director’s office does not have any role in purchasing devices that are used commercially on patients.

“We just procure devices for the hospital stock, which is supplied free of cost for poor patients, and the funds for those come from the government or donors. The unit chiefs are responsible for allowing any company to sell their products to the patients inside the hospitals.”

A MERRY-GO-ROUND

In early March, Lifetech products supplied by Hearton were used at the NICVD to treat at least 47 children

with heart conditions during a weeklong charity campaign funded by Qatar Red Crescent Society.

The Daily Star has copies of all the invoices approved by the NICVD for the campaign.

In May, Hearton Bangladesh received around Tk 50 lakh against 47 invoices signed by Prof Abdullah Shahriar.

This newspaper has also obtained a screenshot of a WhatsApp group conversation among prominent cardiac surgeons where Lifetech products were discussed. Dr Muhammad Ataul Haqq, associate professor at NICVD’s paediatric cardiology department, favoured these products in the conversation.

“In Bangladesh, we comfortably use Amplatzer devices and Lifetech devices as per the registration with the drug administration. Lifetech products are a little bit cheaper ... We can’t judge the quality as we don’t have any testing facility. But we are comfortable with both the brands,” he told the group.

Contacted, Dr Ataul Haqq, who leads the paediatric cardiology department’s “green unit,” said there was another Dr Ataul Hoque who had taken part in the WhatsApp conversation.

His namesake, who has the same position at the same department, said he was not a member of the Qatar Red Crescent campaign committee, and so there was no question of his involvement in this.

He also said he leads the department’s “blue unit,” not the “green unit.”

These units – green and blue – are two groups created by the hospital authorities to facilitate job distribution among physicians and other medical staff.

NICVD sources said the Ataul who leads the “green unit” was the one in the WhatsApp conversation.

Asked about the use of unauthorised Lifetech devices on multiple occasions at the NICVD, Prof Mir Jamal Uddin said, “The issue has been brought to our notice. I have already issued directives to the doctors concerned not to allow the products that lack proper authorisation from the drug administration.”

CUT FROM THE SAME CLOTH

The National Heart Foundation Hospital received devices from Hearton for the whole of 2022.

“Horton submitted relevant documents including the product registration certificate, but they could not provide the MRP certificate from the DGDA. So, we stopped using their products from January this year,” said Shahajadee Sultana Doly, additional

director of public relations at the Heart Foundation.

Asked why they permitted Hearton for a year, she said Usri Ghosh, manager of Lifetech Scientific in India, introduced Hearton Bangladesh to them.

“Usri Ghosh has been representing different foreign cardiac device makers at Heart Foundation for the last 15 years. In recent years, she started campaigning for Lifetech products. She also sponsored several scientific seminars and supplied many devices for free here,” Doly said.

But Heart Foundation Director Brigadier General (retired) Younusur Rahman denied using unauthorised products at the hospital.

ANOTHER COG IN THE WHEEL

Anamul Haque Prince, owner of Hearton Bangladesh, said all of the products they supplied were legally imported by Rahman Medical Services Ltd, former distributor of Lifetech Scientific in Bangladesh.

In 2020, Hearton received 93 devices from Rahman Medical Services, according to an agreement, seen by this paper, between the two parties.

The Daily Star is also in possession of documents that show Hearton supplied many devices to its clients that were collected from sources other than Rahman Medical Services.

Mizanur Rahman, owner of Rahman Medical Services, said, “Lifetech terminated its contract with us in 2020. We have had no business with them since.”

He also denied selling or distributing any other devices to Hearton.

A certificate of registration, issued by the DGDA, also confirms termination of the contract between Rahman and Lifetech. It also shows that another company, Bangladesh Healthcare and Pharma Solution, has obtained registration for distribution of Lifetech products.

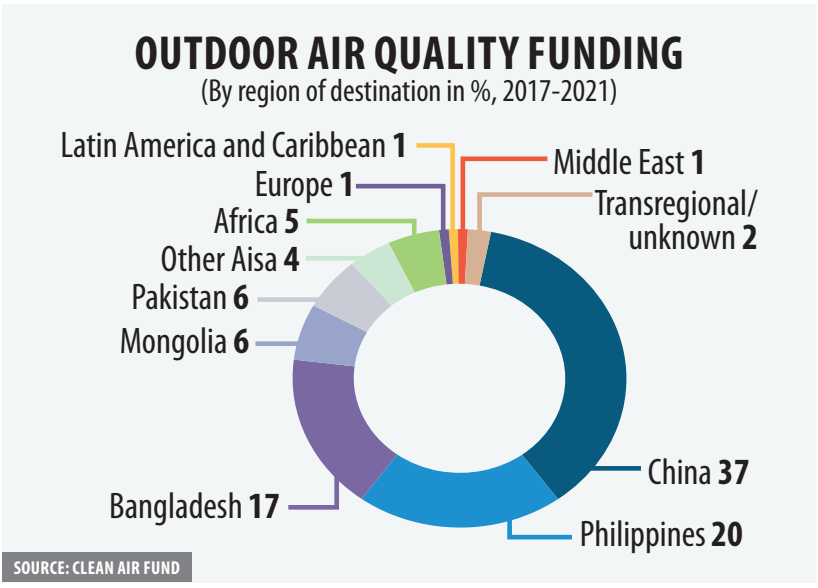
However, sources at the DGDA said Bangladesh Healthcare and Pharma has not yet started marketing any Lifetech products.

Since 2020, sales and distribution of Lifetech products through any company other than Bangladesh Healthcare and Pharma Solution are illegal.

This means, Hearton lacks not only the MRP certificates to sell medical devices but also a legal contract with a registered distributor.

“No company can supply products without getting an MRP ceiling from us. We have been investigating the issue,” said DGDA Director General Mohammad Yousuf.

\$2.3b int’l fund fails to improve situation



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to the World Health Organization (WHO).

There are many different sources of air pollution in Bangladesh, including emissions from brick kilns, vehicles, construction sites, and transboundary air.

Saber Hossain Chowdhury, special envoy of the prime minister on environment and climate change, said he was not aware of the size of the fund but he was aware that Bangladesh had received some financial support.

“We have identified sources of both indoor and outdoor pollution. We now have clean air rules in place, we have a revised timeline and action plan to move away from brick kiln fires to blocks. We also recognise that air quality has transboundary aspects and we are open to working with other countries in the region. Preliminary discussions have been held in this regard,” he said.

He, however, said of course much more needs to be done to combat this silent killer, which is also severely impacting the quality of life and taking away years from the lives of Bangladeshi people.

Experts have said that as there are multiple sources of air pollution, a comprehensive, multi-sectoral air quality management plan is required to address air pollution in Dhaka and other parts of Bangladesh.

Air quality remains very poor for nearly half the year and hits extremely unhealthy heights in

winter. As a result, the average life expectancy of Bangladeshis is being cut short by 6.8 years due to their continuous exposure to polluted air, according to a report from the Air Quality Life Index of the University of Chicago.

Md Ziaul Haque, director of Air Quality Management at the Department of Environment, said there is no denying that the air quality situation in Bangladesh is still not good but the government has taken up a number of initiatives whose positive impacts will be visible shortly.

The CAF study report also said for the first time in history governments, agencies, and development banks have spent more aid money on clean air than fossil fuels – an estimated \$2.3 billion was spent on tackling outdoor air pollution in low- and middle-income countries, compared to \$1.5 billion on fossil fuel projects such as oil and gas extraction and production.

Although five of the top 10 countries with the highest levels of air pollution are in Africa, the African countries received only 5 percent (\$0.76 billion) of all air quality funding in the same period (2017-2021).

The report, however, said spending targeted at clean air made up just one percent of international development funding and two percent of international public climate finance between 2015 and 2021.



Every day, these locally improvised battery-operated auto-rickshaws carry passengers through the Babu Bazar Bridge over the Buriganga amid speeding vehicles. Such slow moving and overloaded vehicles can lead to accidents. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

2 Rohingyas held with over 10,000 yaba pills in Savar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) detained two Rohingyas with 10,300 yaba pills at New Market in Savar early yesterday.

The detainees were identified as Rafiq, 18, and Mamunur, 23. Both are Myanmar citizens and staying at Kutupalong refugee camp in Cox's Bazar.

Lt Commander Rakib Mahmud Khan, company commander of Rab-4, told The Daily Star that two Rohingyas, posing as transgenders, were carrying a huge consignment of yaba tablets in the New Market area around 7:30am.

Acting on a tip-off, a Rab team conducted a drive in the area and detained them, said the Rab official.

After searching them, 10,300 yaba pills wrapped with some poly bags were found on them.

During interrogation, Rafiq and Mamunur admitted that they used to smuggle the yaba from Myanmar and sell it to Dhaka and its adjacent areas.

The process to file a case against the two is underway, he added.

Mild heatwave sweeping across country

BSS, Dhaka

A mild heatwave is sweeping over parts of the north, south, north-eastern, and central parts of the country, including the capital.

"Mild heatwave is sweeping over Sylhet and Mymensingh divisions, and the districts of Dhaka, Khulna, Kushtia, Faridpur, Tangail, Kishoreganj, Manikganj, Bogura, Sitakunda, Narayanganj, and Nilphamari. It may become less intense in some places," said a Met office forecast for the 24 hours from 9:00am yesterday.

Day temperatures may remain nearly unchanged over Rangpur and Rajshahi divisions.

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers, accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at most places over Dhaka, Khulna, Barisal, and Chattogram divisions and many places over Rajshahi, Rangpur, Mymensingh, and Sylhet divisions, with moderately heavy to very heavy rainfall at places over southern parts of the country.

VIOLENCE IN RAMU

11 years on, justice still pending

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

Eleven years on, victims of the communal attack on the Buddhist community in Ramu of Cox's Bazar are still waiting for justice.

In late September 2012, attackers unleashed violence on the minority community on the pretext that a Buddhist man, Uttam Barua, demeaned Islam on Facebook.

A subsequent investigation by The Daily Star found that the Facebook account of Uttam Barua may have been hacked to post a photoshopped picture to create the ground for the attack.

On September 20, the attackers set fire to Buddhist temples, vandalised and looted more than 50 houses in Ramu. They also attacked Mushurikhola crematorium at Khurushkul village in Cox's Bazar Sadar upazila and tried to attack the houses of Hindus in Kharulia village.

The following day, they



The debris around a Buddhist temple in Ramu, Cox's Bazar after the violent attacks in 2012.

FILE PHOTO: STAR

attacked and ransacked five Buddhist temples in Ukhiya upazila and damaged two Hindu temples in Palongkhali union of the upazila. They also torched and vandalised Buddhist houses in Hoaikong union of Teknaf.

As many as 18 cases were filed following the coordinated attacks. All of the cases are still under trial, with all accused on

bail.

No significant progress has taken place in the proceedings of cases, which had been moved before the High Court and lower courts seeking justice, as the lawyers concerned have not taken extensive initiatives to get the matters settled.

It is still uncertain when the HC will deal with the probe reports,

which in 2013 had identified the attackers and inaction of nonchalant local officials responsible for the communal attacks.

Contacted, Advocate Md Faridul Alam, the public prosecutor of Cox's Bazar District and Sessions Judge's Court, said all the 18 criminal cases remain pending as the witnesses don't appear before the courts on scheduled dates.

Besides, the victims have little interest in pursuing the cases as the government built them new homes and pagodas, he told The Daily Star.

Investigators pressed charges in some cases, while investigations into some other cases are yet to be completed, he added.

Replying to a query, Faridul Alam, who is an inhabitant of Cox's Bazar, said Uttam Barua remains missing since the incident.

On October 2 and 3, 2012, Supreme Court lawyers Md Eunus

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Mastermind of online gambling racket held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Criminal Investigation Department on Thursday arrested the mastermind of an online gambling racket at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka, while he was fleeing to Nepal.

The arrestee, Matiuur Rahman, is a suspect in a case filed with Paltan Model Police Station, after six members of his group were arrested in the city and Sirajganj on August 3. They were accused of facilitating gambling through online platforms Mel Bet, 1x Bet and Bet Winner.

"We had information that Matiuur used to travel between Dhaka and Russia, from where the betting sites are operated. So, we alerted all airports and land ports to arrest him if he tries to enter or leave the country," said Muhammad Rezaul Masud, special superintendent of CID's Cyber Intelligence and Risk Management wing, yesterday.

Rezaul said Matiuur had a plan to go to Russia from Nepal. Matiuur was later produced before a Dhaka court, where he gave a confessional statement, said the CID officer.

During primary interrogation, Matiuur mentioned that he went to Russia in 2017 for studies and completed graduation there.

In 2021, he joined 1xBet and Bet Winner. He collected money from gamblers in Bangladesh using SIM cards issued to his associates and sent it to betting site operators through hundi, said CID additional special superintendent of police Azad Rahman.

Hasina, a symbol of democracy

Speakers tell event marking PM's birthday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said the national election will be held according to the constitution and there will be no election in the country unless it is held under Sheikh Hasina.

Quader made the remark while addressing a discussion organised by the AL on the occasion of the birthday of party President and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Bangabandhu International Conference Center BICC in the capital.

"The Awami League does not care about sanctions or visa policy...", said Quader.

He also asked the party leaders and activists to remain careful to deal with the arson terror following the 48-hour ultimatum issued by the BNP.

"We will not leave the streets and deal with the conspiracy. For the next 36 days, we will not rest. You [party activists] will have to remain careful and take to the streets once our captain calls," Quader, also the road, transport and bridges minister, said.

Addressing the BNP, Quader said, "How will you occupy Dhaka? We are ready for that; we will not leave the streets."

Speakers at the event also termed Hasina a symbol of party unity and democracy.

Among others, Awami League presidium members Mosharraf Hossain, Abdur Razzaque, Jahangir Kabir Nanak, Abdur Rahaman, and joint general secretaries Mahbubul Alam Hanif and AFM Bahauddin Nasim spoke at the programme.

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System digital, operation manual

Even after 8 months of launch, ACC yet to start digitisation programme

MD ABBAS

Even though eight months have passed since the Anti-Corruption Commission launched its digitisation programme, it is still reliant on a manual system.

All arrangements for digitisation have been completed already and the authority has purchased specialised software and provided training to 650 ACC officials and employees, involving a total expenditure of Tk 4 crore for the entire process.

Contacted, ACC Secretary Md Mahbub Hossain mentioned that it takes time to get accustomed to using this new software.

Sources have indicated that once the digitisation process is implemented, every level of work in the ACC is supposed to be completed using software -- including receiving complaints, conducting investigations, handling cases, and preparing reports for submission to the court. The software is called Investigation and Prosecution Management System (IPMS), which will allow ACC officials and employees to access the latest progress of the file with just one click.

According to some officials, the ACC has all the arrangements to run activities through the IPMS software for all official procedures in a digital manner. However, they

have mentioned that the process is still being operated manually, due to a lack of willingness of the authorities concerned.

Some ACC officials, who chose to remain anonymous, informed The Daily Star that once digitisation is implemented, any complaint filed will be immediately added to the ACC server. Subsequently, the progress of the complaint can be tracked based on its merits, which

integrate eight divisional and 36 integrated district offices under one network. Despite this, the ACC is yet to use the digital system for its internal activities.

The Asian Development Bank has provided technical assistance to the ACC for launching the IPMS software. Training and other activities were completed over the past year using their funding.

There are four modules for



“Gradually, all the official work of the commission will be conducted online. Since it [the system] is new, it will take some more time for everyone to get used to it.”

MD MAHBUB HOSSAIN, ACC Secretary

would enhance people's confidence in the ACC, expedite work, and promote transparency.

Under the existing manual system, there is no way to learn the outcome of a complaint, investigation, or mid-level enquiry.

Earlier, the ACC issued directives instructing all officials to send letters as e-documents to ministries or offices, including the Cabinet Division. The directive added that letters cannot be sent as hard copies in any way.

Furthermore, the ACC is set to

the use of the IPMS software, with arrangements made to handle corruption cases through management, investigation management, investigation, and prosecution management modules.

"IPMS is the latest addition to the commission. We began using it a few days ago, and it's an ongoing process. Gradually, all the official work of the commission will be conducted online. Since it's new, it will take some more time for everyone to get used to it," stated Mahbub Hossain.



“The development of an effective and tetravalent dengue vaccine is a very high priority for the large population of Bangladesh, which is now seeing severe dengue outbreaks.”

RASHIDUL HAQUE
Senior scientist at icddr,b

Antibodies to all four dengue serotypes were found in most volunteers after vaccination; individuals who had been infected previously with dengue had higher antibody counts," the study found.

It said this data moves the TV005 dengue vaccine closer to widespread use in endemic populations, while garnering support for ongoing large, phase III efficacy trials.

The UVM VTC has been evaluating

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Name of Work	Period of Sale		Date of Submission & Opening
	From	To	
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Vice President & Head
Facility Management Division

Prime Bank

Jahanara Rob's ninth death anniv

CITY DESK

Yesterday was the ninth death anniversary of Jahanara Rob, a veteran politician, women's rights activist, and a lawmaker.

Rob was a member of parliament from Pabna and Bogura from 1973 to 1975 (until Bangabandhu and his family were assassinated).

Born in 1930 in Faridpur, she was involved in various social and political activities.

She became the chairperson of Nari Punorbashon Shangstha in 1972.

She was also involved in relief and humanitarian works. After the 1947 partition, when a series of riots broke out in Pabna, she helped the minority families who took shelter in their home. Also, when she lived in Kolkata, she extended her helping hands to the deprived community.

She was the wife of late Abdur Rob alias Boga Mia, a freedom fighter, Liberation War organiser, socio-political activist and ex-member of Constituent Assembly of Pabna.

She passed away on September 29 in 2014 in Dhaka.

2,000 hectares of Aman fields flooded

Farmers worried about losing harvest

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Over 2,000 hectares of Aman paddy fields have been submerged in floodwater, in the riverside areas of Lalmonirhat and Kurigram, since last Tuesday. The floods were a result of continuous heavy rains over several days in these areas.

Now, if floodwater does not recede by tomorrow (Sunday), the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) and farmers fear that the crops will be permanently damaged.

Abdul Malek, 67, a farmer of Kodalkhata village in Lalmonirhat

Sadar upazila, told The Daily Star that due to continuous rains, water level of the Ratnai river has increased and floodwater has entered the arable lands on the banks of the river.

Since last Tuesday, eight bighas of his Aman fields have been submerged. If the floodwater does not recede soon, the Aman paddy will be damaged.

Similarly, Majidul Islam, 60, a farmer of Sardob village in Kurigram Sadar upazila, said floods on the banks of Dharla river left four bighas of his Aman fields submerged since Tuesday.

Now, his dream of a successful

harvest looks grim, he added.

DAE officials said Aman fields on 700 hectares of land in Lalmonirhat and 1,300 hectares in Kurigram are still submerged.

The crop can only survive 6-7 days under floodwater.

Hamidur Rahman, deputy director of DAE in Lalmonirhat, said farmers are very concerned. Only if the water recedes quickly, their paddy will be saved.

Abdullah Al Mamun, executive engineer of the Water Development Board in Kurigram, said they are hoping that the floodwater will recede by tomorrow.



In Lalmonirhat and Kurigram, 700 and 1,300 hectares of Aman fields lay submerged in floodwater, respectively. If the water does not recede soon, thousands of farmers may lose their harvest completely.

PHOTO: STAR

YOUTH PEACE CAMP 60 cyclists reach Gandhi Ashram in Noakhali

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

A 60-member cyclist team from the Indian state of Maharashtra has reached Gandhi Ashram in Noakhali's Sonaimuri upazila to participate in the International Youth Peace Camp.

Of them, 52 arrived at the Gandhi Ashram on Thursday and eight others reached yesterday riding cycles along the Ramganj-Noakhali Chatkhil regional highway, said Jeevan Kanai Das, chairman of the Gandhi Ashram Trust in a press conference yesterday.

The Gandhi Ashram Trust arranged the three-day peace camp, starting from today, marking the 155th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and the 75th founding anniversary of the trust, the chairman said.

Over 350 youths from Saarc countries as well as Kenya, Sweden, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the US will take part in the event, he added.



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D-126

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যোগাযোগ : ০১৯১৮-১৩৮৮৮০, ০১৮৯৪-৮৮৬৩০০

INDEPENDENT UNIVERSITY, BANGLADESH (IUB)

CAR AUCTION

We invite potential buyers to submit sealed bids for the sale of a vehicle. Details of the offering are:

Vehicle Description:
Type: Sedan - Hyundai Sonata
Model: 2012, Engine: 2,000 CC
Color: Blue, Registration: DM Ga 33-9707
Condition: Well-maintained, with all documentation updated until 2024.

Tender Schedule: October 1-12, 2023, 11:00 am to 3:00 pm, Sunday through Thursday
Fee: Taka 3,000/- (non-refundable). Payment is to be made at the Accounts Office.

Submission & Opening: Bids will be accepted at the office of the undersigned until 2:00 pm on October 12, 2023.

Bid opening: 2:30 pm on the same day, in the presence of bidders who wish to attend.

The university's management holds the right to either accept or decline any bid without providing reasons.

Contact:
Head, Facilities Department & Convener, Auction Committee
Address: Plot 16, Block B, Aftabuddin Ahmed Road, Bashundhara Residential Area, Dhaka 1229.

11 years on, justice

FROM PAGE 3

Ali Akond and Jyotirmoy Barua separately filed two writ petitions with the HC, seeking actions against the perpetrators and the local administrative officials who were negligent in preventing the incidents.

Following the petitions, two separate inquiries were conducted into the incidents in line with HC orders.

The HC is yet to hold the final hearing on the

petitions and deliver any verdict on them due to reconstitution of its bench and apparent lack of willingness of the lawyers concerned in moving the petitions before the court.

Akond told The Daily Star that he will not take any initiative for hearing of his petition, as no bench of the HC wanted to hold hearing of the matter.

Barua could not be reached for his comments.

3 X-ray machines

FROM PAGE 5

will also stop working if not used, said hospital officials.

"After getting the new X-ray machine, I have sent several letters to the higher authorities to appoint technicians," said Ferdous Akhter.

Patients from the upazila and surrounding remote areas rely on the hospital for healthcare. An average of 500-600 outpatients and 100-150 emergency patients are treated daily at the hospital. Around 50 of these patients require X-rays on average.

Such patients, including emergency ones, are sent to get X-rays done from private hospitals in the area. They also have to pay extra for the X-rays as private hospitals charge more than government ones.

"I was recently injured in a road accident. But, since there is no X-ray service at the hospital, I paid Tk 1,000 to a diagnostic centre and showed the report to the doctor at the upazila health complex," said Tarek Hasan, a resident of Hajipur union of Kulaura, who came to the hospital for a follow-up.

Moulvibazar Civil Surgeon Chowdhury Jalal Uddin Murshed said, "Technicians are recruited centrally from the DGHS. The authorities and the civil surgeon's office are working to solve the issue."

The authorities will also fix the X-ray room soon, he added.

Hasina

FROM PAGE 3

At a separate programme, Information Minister Hasan Mahmud also said Hasina is not only a politician, rather a symbol of democracy. He said this while speaking at a discussion at AL's Bangabandhu Avenue central office in Dhaka.

Krishak League organised the event marking the 77th birthday of the prime minister.

Hasan, also AL joint general secretary, said Hasina never does politics for power. She always does politics for establishing people's rights and progress of the country.

About contemporary politics, Hasan said now BNP-Jamaat clique wants to hand over the country to those who kill democracy in different countries, but they won't get any benefit by carrying out the evil efforts.

The minister also said attempts are being made to thwart the next elections.

Polls can't be

FROM PAGE 5

Afroza Abbas, president of Jatiyatabadi Mohila Dal, presided over the meeting.

"The government said it does not comply with the visa restrictions imposed by the US. Why would it comply with this? You [govt] don't care if the people cannot eat and die as you are not elected by the people," she said.

Among others, BNP standing committee members Mirza Abbas, Gayeshwar Chandra Roy, Abdul Moeen Khan, and Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury were present at the event.

50 hurt in AL

FROM PAGE 5

The programme was held by the supporters of local AL lawmaker HN Ashiqur Rahman, Jubo League, Krishak League, and Chhatra League.

Meanwhile, Jakir Hossain Sarkar, also chairman of Mithapukur upazila, and his supporters brought out a procession from Shathibari. They were set to hold a rally to celebrate the PM's

birthday.

As soon as the activists reached in front of the upazila parishad office, supporters of the other group began to hurl brick chips and stones at them, triggering a clash between the factions.

The clash lasted for about one and a half hours, said locals and police.

President of Mithapukur upazila AL could not be contacted for comments.



Dengue vaccine trial

FROM PAGE 3

dengue vaccines developed by the US National Institutes of Health (NIH) since 2009.

"The development of an effective and tetravalent dengue vaccine is a very high priority for the large population of Bangladesh, which is now seeing severe dengue outbreaks," said Rashidul Haque, a senior scientist at icddr.b.

He hoped that their work would accelerate the development of dengue vaccines for Bangladesh.

The third phase trial of the vaccine has already started in India and some other countries.

Mohammed Shafiul Alam, a scientist who participated in the study, said it may take at least three to five years for the vaccine to hit the market if everything goes smoothly.

"The vaccine was put on trial in 42 phases in different countries. It is a great prospect for Bangladesh, which is obviously good news for the country," he said.

Bored waiting for train? Read books

Library set up at Tangail Railway Station

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Like other days, Altaf Hossain was waiting to board the Silk City Express train at Tangail Railway Station to travel to Dhaka.

He arrived early at the station and had nothing much to do.

A passenger sitting next to him was reading a book. He looked at Altaf and told him he could read one as well to kill the time.

Altaf replied he did not have any books on him.

To his surprise, the passenger said he can just take one from a library set up at the station and then return it once his train arrives.

A library with 50 books of different genres was inaugurated on Thursday at Tangail Railway Station, offering waiting passengers an opportunity to spend their pass time by reading.

"This is a meaningful way to utilise the time I spend waiting at the station. Now, we can happily pass the time by indulging in books," said Altaf.

Sub-inspector Kamruzzaman Sohag and his associates are behind this initiative.

Sohag's commitment to promoting education and literacy dates back to his time as a student at Mawlana Bhashani University of Science and Technology, when he established "Batighar Adarsha Pathagar" in his

village in 2010.

The library, set up at Tangail Sadar upazila's Chowrakara village, with the motto "Come and read books, enlighten yourself", not only fosters educational activities but also conducts various social initiatives, including setting up sub-libraries at salons, bus stops, and railway stations.



The new library at the railway station is the latest addition to their offerings.

Contacted, Sohag said commuters often endure lengthy waiting times at the station, during which they typically engage in unproductive activities.

"By introducing books at the station, I envision that passengers can transform their idle moments into an opportunity for joyful reading," he said.

Air Force celebrates founding anniv

UNB, Dhaka

The Bangladesh Air Force (BAF) celebrated its 52nd founding anniversary on Thursday as "Air Force Day".

The BAF started its journey on this day during the Liberation War in 1971. This journey named "Kilo Flight" started with one Otter aircraft, one Dakota aircraft and one Alouette helicopter provided by the Indian government at Dimapur of Nagaland in India.

The unit comprised 57 members including Bangalee pilots, airmen of technical trades and civil aviators, according to an Inter Services Public Relations Directorate (ISPR) media release.

A cultural programme and fireworks were organised in the evening on the occasion.

Chief of Air Staff of the Bangladesh Air Force Air Chief Marshal Shaikh Abdul Hannan attended the programme.

2 workers crushed to death by truck

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

Two labourers were crushed to death under the wheels of a sand-laden truck in Barishal city early yesterday.

The victims, Yunus, 50, and Habib, 25, used to live in West Kaunia area (ward-1), said police.

The incident happened on a road adjacent to Hazera Khatun School in West Kaunia around 1:00am.

According to police and locals, Yunus, Habib, and some other workers were trying to move a truck that got stuck in the sand. As the truck reversed suddenly, the two were crushed under its wheels and died on the spot.

The labourers lived in a rented house of a contractor, he said.

Police and fire service recovered the bodies this morning and sent them to Barishal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital for autopsy.

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
EDUCATION ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT
JASHORE.
Web: <https://eed.jessore.gov.bd/>

Invitation for e-Tender (IFT)

TENDER NOTICE NO: Ver. Ext/e-GP/EED/JASHORE/2024-25/10 **Date: 27.09.2023 Eng.**

This is an online Tender [Limited Tendering Method (LTM)] where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. The Tender who has registered in the National e-GP portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is eligible to participate in this Tender. The fees of downloading the e-Tender documents of following Packages from the National e-GP System portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank's branches up to the following date and time.

Sl.	Tender ID	Name of Works
1.	879407	Horizontal 1-Classroom & Vertical Extension (Toilet Block, Classroom) of Existing Academic Building including Sanitary Water Supply & Electrification Works at Singari Model Secondary School under Abhaynagar Upazila of Jashore District.

Last Date & Time of Selling Documents : 15-Oct-2023 16:00
Last Date & Time of Submission Documents : 16-Oct-2023 13:00
Date & Time of Tender Closing & Opening : 16-Oct-2023 13:00

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

(Md. Hadiuzzaman Khan)
Executive Engineer
Education Engineering Department
Jashore.
E-mail: ee_jas@eedmoe.gov.bd

GD-1504

Polls can't be fair under AL govt

Fakhrul tells Nayapaltan rally

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday alleged that elections can never be free, fair and credible under the current Awami League government.

Fakhrul said this while addressing a rally in front of BNP's Nayapaltan central office.

The event, held by Jatiyatabadi Mohila Dal, women's wing of BNP, was part of the party's 15-day programme to realise its one-point demand for the resignation of the ruling AL.

Pointing to the price hike of commodities, he also said syndicates associated with the AL are prevalent everywhere.

"Prices of all essentials are skyrocketing. No one complies with the prices fixed by the government. Syndicates of Awami League are everywhere. Women are struggling to run their families. No one is safe under this government," he said.

Speaking as the chief guest, Fakhrul said, "The person [Khaleda Zia] who fought for democracy all her life is now under house arrest. She is not being treated well.

We hope that the government will accept her family's request to send her abroad for better treatment."

He went on to say, "Khaleda Zia has been detained because it will be difficult for Awami League to stay in power if she is free. If she is free, the country's democracy will be free. If she is free, people's right to vote cannot be taken away.

"Now the people of the country have risen against this fascist government... Our mothers and sisters are not even safe from the oppression of the ruling government. They are being detained in the name of the Cyber Security Act, and they are being beaten to death for writing the truth."

Reiterating their demand for the caretaker government, the BNP leader said, "This government has destroyed everything. It has destroyed democracy and the country. It does not care about the people."

"Let's oust this government through a united movement and establish a people's state."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



Boatmen row their vessels, overtaking one another in hopes of crossing the finish line first. The Bhairab river yesterday played host to the long-running tradition of boat racing, better known as Nouka Baich. People flocked to the riverbanks to cheer for their favourite teams. The photo was taken in Khulna's Dighalia area.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

300 INDIGENOUS FAMILIES IN BANDARBAN

Healthcare, education still elude them

MONG SING HAI MARMA

Many residents of Remakri union in Bandarban's Thanchi upazila still lack access to healthcare and education, this correspondent observed after visiting 18 villages in ward 6 and 9 of the union recently.

More than 2,000 people from at least 300 families of Mro, Tripura and Marma communities have been living in these villages near the Bangladesh-Myanmar border for the last 30 to 35 years. Among them, 250 are children and adolescents.

The villages include Menhat Mro Para, Bulu Para, Tangkhwai Mro Para, Kowaing Khyong Para, Yong Dong Para, Yang bong Para, Mra khyang Para, Chandra Mohan Tripura Para, Loikkri Para, Ruiwai mro Para, Kongkong Tripura Para, Yong Klang Mro Para, Mangbase Marma (Malumgya) Para, Suryamani Tripura Para and Lai Pung Para Yangbong Para.

Health workers never visit the villages even when the government runs any national immunisation campaign, the villagers claimed. Besides, they remain illiterate as no government educational institutions have been opened there so far.

Mui Tong Mro, 75, head of



Laikei Para, told The Daily Star that about 30 years ago, over 100 members of 20-22 families settled in Laikei Para. At present, about 250 people of 37 families of the Mro community live in this village.

"No health worker has visited us in 30 years," he claimed.

A woman in Kowaing Khyong Para gave birth to a baby only five days back without any supervision or help by any doctor and nurse. She did not have access to any prenatal care either, he said.

Also, no public school has

been established at the village in the last three decades. A non-government organisation, opened a school for the students up to class-4 in Laikei Para in January this year.

This is the only school in the 18 villages.

Two other locals -- Chandra Mohan Tripura and Kaing Yai Mro -- said no residents of the villages have ever been brought under the coverage of any national vaccinations programme and no pregnant woman ever received any healthcare or medical advice.

Manchong Mro, member of ward-6 in Remakri UP, told The Daily Star that as the area is very remote, transport cost is high. The only way to reach the villages is using the waterway via the Sangu river.

That's why health workers are not interested in visiting the villages, he said.

However, Bandarban district Health and Family Planning Department has won the national award for three consecutive years from 2020 for providing comprehensive health services

to seven upazilas of the district, including Thanchi, sources at the department said.

According to the 2022 census, the population of Remakri union is 8,600, but according to the information of the union parishad, the figure is around 13,000.

Bandarban Civil Surgeon Mahabubur Rahman said all people have the right to have access to healthcare.

"I have come here recently. I don't know much about those areas. As far as I know, those areas are quite remote," he said.

To ensure health services for all, arrangements will be made to provide services under a special programme so that health workers visit the villages at least once in three months, the civil surgeon said.

District Primary Education Officer Md Abdul Mannan said according to the government policy, children in those villages will be brought under primary education if anyone donates a property for setting up a school and files an application as per the rules.

CHUADANGA

Bangladeshi shot dead 'by BSF'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chuadanga

A Bangladeshi national was shot dead allegedly by members of India's Border Security Force (BSF) at Thakurpur border point in Chuadanga's Damurhuda upazila on Thursday night.

The deceased was identified as Rabiul Haque, 40, a cattle trader and son of Rahmat Ullah of Pirpurkullah village in the upazila, said Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) officials.

They said BSF troops from Rangiarpota camp opened fire on Rabiul when he entered the Indian territory illegally, leaving him dead on the spot.

Later, the BSF members recovered the body and sent it to a hospital in Krishnanagar, West Bengal, for autopsy, they said.

Contacted, Lt Col Syed Mohammad Zahidur Rahman, commanding officer of BGB Battalion 6, said Rabiul was shot dead by BSF men. The process of handing over the body to Bangladesh through a BGB-BSF flag meeting is going on.

BGB has also sent a letter to BSF Battalion-81 Rangiarpota camp protesting the killing, Zahidur Rahman added.

On September 15, another Bangladeshi named Mizanur Rahman, 50, was killed by BSF at the Benipur border of Jibannagar upazila in Chuadanga.

PRAYER
TIMING
SEPTEMBER 30



Fajr	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

KULaura HEALTH COMPLEX

3 X-ray machines gathering dust for 28 years

MENTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

An upazila health complex, responsible for providing medical care to at least five lakh people in and around the upazila, has been unable to perform X-rays for the past 28 years due to the lack of a technician.

Kulaura Upazila Health Complex, established in 1972, currently has three X-ray machines, worth around Tk 70 lakh in total, allocated by the government at different times. However, none of them are in operation, said Upazila Health and Family Planning Officer Ferdous Akhter.

According to health complex sources, former finance minister M Saifur Rahman inaugurated the first X-ray machine worth Tk 14 lakh in 1995. Later, in 2006, another X-ray machine worth Tk 35 lakh was allocated. A digital X-ray machine worth Tk 23,19,000 was allocated just three months ago.

However, the government failed to appoint a technician for the hospital in all these years.

The X-ray room has been turned into a storeroom. The first two machines have become non-functional due to lack of use, the newest one

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

50 hurt in AL factional clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinaipur

At least 50 people were injured during a clash between two factions of the Awami League in Rangpur's Mithapukur upazila yesterday afternoon.

The injured were admitted to a local hospital for treatment, said Mithapukur Police Station Sub-inspector Monibur Rahman.

"Eight to ten police personnel, including Officer-in-Charge Mustafizur Rahman, were among the injured," he added.

The situation is currently under control, and additional police have been deployed at the spot, the SI said.

Contacted, Jakir Hossain Sarkar, general secretary of Mithapukur upazila AL unit, said, "Nearly 50 to 60 of my supporters were injured during the attack [carried out by supporters of an Awami League faction]."

According to the police and locals, the clash happened around 4:00pm when a discussion was organised at the upazila parishad's auditorium over celebration of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's birthday.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



UNIVERSITY OF DHAKA: Applications in prescribed form, obtainable from the office of the Registrar are invited from the Bangladeshi nationals for filling up 01 (One) temporary post of Lecturer against 01 (One) permanent post of Associate Professor in the Department of Population Sciences. Pay scale of Tk. 22,000-53,060/- (National pay scale 2015).

QUALIFICATIONS FOR LECTURER: Candidates must have a minimum CGPA 3.50 out of 4.00 both in Bachelor (Honours) and Master degrees in Population Sciences with 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 highest CGPA in both Bachelor (Honours) 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 website of University of Dhaka).

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, University of Dhaka, should reach him on or before 22/10/2023. Applicants already in service must apply through the proper channel.

GD-1503



ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় গ্রন্থাগার

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় গ্রন্থাগারে অনলাইন ইউপিএসের ১৬টি ব্যাটারি, ২টি কম্পিউটার ও অন্যান্য আনুষঙ্গিক সরবরাহে আগ্রহী প্রতিষ্ঠান থেকে দরপত্র আহবান করা হচ্ছে।

১. দরপত্র প্রাপ্তির স্থানঃ তথ্য প্রযুক্তি শাখা, ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় গ্রন্থাগার
২. দরপত্র বিক্রয়ের তারিখ ও সময়ঃ ০১ অক্টোবর হতে ১৬ অক্টোবর ২০২৩, সকাল ০৯:০০ থেকে বিকাল ০৪:০০টা (সরকারি ছুটির দিন ব্যতীত)
৩. দরপত্র দাখিলের শেষ তারিখ ও সময়ঃ ১৭ অক্টোবর ২০২৩, সকাল ১১:০০
৪. দরপত্র উন্মুক্তকরণের সময়ঃ ১৭ অক্টোবর ২০২৩, বেলা ১২:০০টা
৫. দরপত্র দলিলের মূল্যঃ ৩,০০০/- (তিন হাজার টাকা মাত্র) অফেরতযোগ্য
৬. যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ অথবা বাতিলের পূর্ণ ক্ষমতা কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করে
৭. দরপত্র সংক্রান্ত যে কোন বিষয়ে জানার জন্য ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় গ্রন্থাগারের তথ্য প্রযুক্তি শাখায় যোগাযোগ করা যেতে পারে।

গ্রন্থাগারিক

জিডি-১৪৯৫

ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়



UNIVERSITY OF DHAKA: Applications in prescribed form, obtainable from the Office of the Registrar, are invited from Bangladeshi nationals for filling up 01 (one) permanent post of Assistant Professor in the Department of Printing & Publication Studies. In the pay scale of Tk. 35,500-67,010/- for Assistant Professor (National Pay Scale-2015).

QUALIFICATIONS FOR ASSISTANT PROFESSOR:

Candidates must have a first class/a minimum CGPA 3.50 out of 4.00 in both Honours and Master degrees in Printing & Publication Studies with a first division/a minimum GPA 4.25 out of 5.00 both in SSC and 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 must have at least 03 (three) years of teaching experience at a university or at least 02 years as post doctoral research or at least 06 (six) years research experience as a research/scientific officer or an equivalent position in a reputed research organization. Candidates with a Ph.D. should have at least 01 (one) year of teaching experience at a university. Applicants must have at least 03 (three) research publications in the indexed/quality journal with a DOI (Digital Object Identifier)/double blind peer review policy. Relevant notes and conditions apply. (For details, see the University of Dhaka 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 22/10/2023. Applicants already in service must apply through the proper channel.

GD-1502

US democracy in peril from ‘extremist’ Trump: Biden Republicans begin impeachment inquiry hearings

AFP, Tempe

President Joe Biden launched a blistering personal attack on “extremist” Donald Trump Thursday, accusing his likely 2024 challenger of plotting to subvert the US constitution if he wins a return to power next year.

The Democrat said in a speech in the battleground state of Arizona that Republican frontrunner Trump was driven by “vengeance and vindictiveness”, and he urged Americans to stand up for democracy before it was too late.

The speech came as House Republicans launched impeachment inquiry hearings into the 80-year-old president, based on unproven allegations that he lied about his son Hunter’s business dealings.

“We should all remember:



democracies don’t have to die at the end of a rifle,” Biden said. “They can die when people are silent, when they fail to stand up, or condemn threats to democracy.”

In this speech Biden finally took off the gloves after months in which he has largely steered clear of any direct comment on the multiple criminal indictments against his hard-right populist predecessor.

Biden has sought to avoid any appearance of interference in the cases stemming from Trump’s efforts to overturn his 2020 election loss – culminating in the attack by a mob of his supporters on the US Capitol.

But in Arizona Biden took the unusual step of addressing Trump by name.

“Trump says the constitution gave him ‘the right to do what he wants,’” said Biden, referring to statements by Trump about how he saw his powers in office. “I’ve never even heard a president say that in jest – not guided by the constitution or by common service and decency towards our fellow Americans, but by vengeance and vindictiveness.”

Caught

FROM PAGE 12

and blamed BNP men for his death.

Without provocation, BNP men assaulted AL and Chhatra League activists who were having a casual conversation at the bazar, he alleged. “They beat and pushed Jahid into the pond.”

Some six Chhatra League activists were also injured in the attack, he said.

Sayed Chowdhury, convener of Mirsarai Upazila BNP, said his party arranged a rally near the bazar as part of their preparations for an upcoming road march.

When the activists were returning home after the rally, AL and BCL men attacked them, he alleged.

“Some 10 BNP activists were injured in the attack.”

He claimed Jahid to be a BNP supporter and alleged that AL activists hit him and threw him into the pond.

Jahid’s uncle Abul Hossain told reporters that his nephew was not involved in politics.

Shakib

FRM PAGE 12

chief physician Debashish Chowdhury would have been consulted but it appears to be a slight niggle.

Shakib had arrived at the ground yesterday during the match.

After playing their final official warm-up game against the defending champions on October 2, the Tigers will kick off their campaign in the mega event when they face Afghanistan on October 7 in Dharamsala.



People stand around at the Church Avenue subway station as subway service is stopped amid heavy rain in the Flatbush neighbourhood of Brooklyn borough New York City, US yesterday. Flash flooding is expected in the counties of Nassau, Queens and Kings, which includes Brooklyn, according to the state’s National Weather Service office as remnants of Tropical Storm Ophelia reaches the Northeast.

PHOTO: AFP

Seven EU nations order arms to aid Ukraine

Putin tasks ex-Prigozhin aide to oversee volunteer fighters

REUTERS, Brussels

Seven EU countries have ordered ammunition under a landmark European Union procurement scheme to get urgently needed artillery shells to Ukraine and replenish depleted Western stocks, according to the EU agency in charge.

The orders – placed under contracts negotiated by the European Defence Agency (EDA) – are for 155mm artillery rounds, one of the most important munitions in the intense war of attrition between Ukraine’s troops and Russia’s invading forces.

The scheme was set up as part of a plan worth at least 2 billion euros, launched in March with the aim of getting 1 million artillery shells and missiles to Ukraine within a year.

Some officials and diplomats have expressed scepticism that the target will be met but the initiative marked a significant step in the EU’s growing role in defence and military affairs, spurred by the war in Ukraine.

Until now, defence procurement has largely been the preserve of the bloc’s individual 27 member governments.

“Seven Member States have already placed orders for 155mm ammunition through the EDA’s fast-track procedure,” the agency said in an email in response to questions from Reuters.

“More orders, for instance for national replenishment purposes, could materialise in the

coming weeks and months.”

Meanwhile, Russian President Vladimir Putin has tasked a former aide of late Wagner chief Yevgeny Prigozhin to oversee volunteer fighter units in Ukraine, according to a Kremlin statement yesterday.

“At the last meeting we talked about you overseeing the formation of volunteer units that can carry out various tasks, first and foremost of course in the zone of the special military operation,” Putin was quoted as saying to Andrei Troshev, using Moscow’s name for its offensive in Ukraine.

The meeting, also attended by Deputy Defence Minister Yunus Bek Yevkurov, underlined the integration of fighters from the mercenary Wagner Group into Russia’s regular military in the wake of Prigozhin’s aborted mutiny in June.

Putin also signed a decree setting out the routine autumn conscription campaign, calling up 130,000 citizens for statutory military service, a document posted on the government website showed yesterday.

All men in Russia are required to do a year-long military service between the ages of 18 and 27, or equivalent training while in higher education.

Putin’s move comes as Russia’s armed forces press on with their “special military operation” in Ukraine, now in its 20th month.

The president said this month he was bracing for a long war in Ukraine.

Russia hosts Taliban talks

Seeks regional influence

AFP, Moscow

Russia hosted Taliban leaders for talks on regional security yesterday as it seeks to forge ties with Afghanistan’s new rulers and assert itself as a major power in the region.

Since US forces pulled out of Kabul in August 2021, Russia and China have taken advantage of the vacuum, holding talks with the Taliban despite deep ideological and historical rifts.

“For our part, we will continue to develop multifaceted contacts with Afghanistan,” Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said in a written greeting to participants of the talks, held in the city of Kazan.

The Taliban seized control of Afghanistan shortly after US troops left, imposing their strict interpretation of Sharia law.

ETHNIC TENSIONS

Mob did not storm home of Manipur CM

Say India police

REUTERS, Guwahati

Indian police have dismissed as “false and misleading” reports that a mob attacked the private residence of Biren Singh, chief minister of the strife-torn northeastern state of Manipur, adding that it was protected by “adequate security”. Thursday’s comments followed reports by media, including Reuters, as protests rocked the state capital of Imphal, injuring more than 80 people, before the return of an uneasy calm yesterday. “News of the chief minister’s personal residence being mobbed is false and misleading,” the state police said on social media platform X, formerly known as Twitter. “Adequate security is already in place.” Ethnic violence has plunged the state bordering Myanmar into what many security experts describe as an intense civil war fought over land, jobs and political clout between its majority Meitei and minority tribal Kuki communities. There was no violence yesterday, despite some protesters defying curfew in parts of city, as police and paramilitary troops stood on guard to keep situation under control. Mobile internet services have been suspended in the state for five days.

EXODUS FROM KARABAKH Over 88,000 cross into Armenia: UN

REUTERS, Geneva



Over 88,000 people have crossed into Armenia from Nagorno-Karabakh and the total could reach 120,000, said a UN refugee agency official yesterday, a figure matching estimates of the entire population of the breakaway region recaptured by Azerbaijan last week. Kavita Belani, UNHCR representative in Armenia, told a UN press briefing by video link that huge crowds of tired and frightened people were gathering at registration centres. “This is a situation where they’ve lived under nine months of blockade,” she said. “We are ready to cope with up to 120,000 people. It’s very hard to predict how many will come at this juncture,” she added in response to a question about refugee numbers. Initial planning figures were for between 70-90,000 refugees but that needs updating, she added. “The major concern for us is that many of them have been separated from their family,” said Regina De Dominicis, Unicef regional director. International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies representative Hicham Diab said there was a massive need for mental health support for refugees. “The situation often involves families arriving with children so weak that they have fainted in their parents’ arms,” he said.

Family waiting for govt nod

FROM PAGE 1

ministry seeking permission for Khaleda Zia to travel abroad for treatment. The home ministry has sent the application to my office... I have not seen the application yet. I will give my opinion on the matter after seeing it.”

On September 25, Anisul told reporters that the government has little to do about the matter because

Khaleda’s jail sentence remained suspended through an executive decision under Section 401 (I) of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC).

One of the conditions was that she would not leave the country.

The law minister said Khaleda’s conditional release must be revoked before the terms of her release can be changed.

The BNP chief has been suffering from liver cirrhosis, arthritis, diabetes, and diseases in the kidneys, lung, heart and eyes.

On February 8, 2018, Khaleda landed in jail after a court sentenced her to five years in prison on charges of corruption.

On March 25, 2020, the government suspended her sentence.

Dhaka ranked slowest in world

FROM PAGE 12

India has the most cities in the top 20, with eight in total.

Researchers used data from Google Maps to analyse traffic in more than 1,000 global cities with populations over 300,000.

According to Google Maps, a 9-km trip from Dhaka airport to Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed Park, in Gulshan-2, can take as long as 55 minutes, whereas a trip of the same distance

in Flint, Michigan, the world’s fastest city, from the airport to the Sloan Museum of Discovery, takes about nine minutes, writes Time magazine in its report published on this particular study.

Mentionable, 19 of the top 20 fastest cities are in the United States.

However, according to the study, the speed of travel in a city is only partially related to the amount of traffic on its

roads. Other factors, such as the layout and quality of a city’s roads and natural obstacles like hills and rivers, play a significant role in how fast cars can drive, the report adds.

“The slowest cities aren’t necessarily the most congested, and most congested aren’t the slowest,” Prottoy Akbar, an economist at Aalto University in Finland and the lead author of the paper, told Time magazine.



Migrants cross the Rio Grande river in an attempt to seek asylum into the US, as seen from Piedras Negras, Mexico on Thursday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Country crosses grim milestone

FROM PAGE 12

may come down if October sees less rain than September.

The country has been battling a surge of dengue infections since June and the number of infections kept rising over the months. Hospitals and clinics, especially in Dhaka, are struggling to accommodate a large number of patients.

Bangladesh witnessed the first dengue outbreak in Dhaka in 2000.

According to DGHS data, the number of dengue cases was 50,000 on July 31 this year. Within 20 days,

the figure topped 100,000 and it reached 150,000 on September 11.

This year, the total

daily death rate of 13 in the last 30 days, the number of deaths may top 1,000 within the next one week.

DENGUE CASES DATE	
200,000	September 29
150,000	September 11
100,000	August 21
50,000	July 31

SOURCE: DGHS

number of 975 deaths are already higher than the combined 853 deaths in 23 years from 2000.

Considering the average

The DGHS said 9,526 dengue patients were undergoing treatment at different hospitals across the country yesterday

morning.

A total of 190,480 patients have so far been released from hospitals this year, it added.

There is no vaccine or drug that specifically treats dengue, which is common in South Asia during the June-to-September monsoon season when the Aedes aegypti mosquito, the carrier of the deadly virus, thrives in stagnant water.

Doctors say patients with comorbidities such as diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, high lipid levels, arthritis, asthma, and sleep apnea are more at risk of serious illness.

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The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

How did our air get even worse?

Govt can no longer ignore this growing health hazard

Despite the mounting evidence declaring Dhaka's air to be deadly, a new study by the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) shows that all the statistics and warnings on air pollution over the years have fallen on deaf ears. We are concerned to find that since 2020, air pollution has actually increased by 13 percent. From 2018 to 2021, Dhaka remained the second most polluted city in the world, and even now, it continues to be among the cities with the worst air. These pollution figures translate into all kinds of disasters for people. The latest study has found that seven out of 10 Dhaka residents suffer from respiratory issues, like breathing problems and chest pain. All these health complications add up, with Bangladeshis losing almost seven years of life expectancy due to air pollution. According to a World Bank report, toxic air is killing around 80,000 people every year in the country.

Research shows that 30 percent of Dhaka's pollution originates from construction, 29 percent from brick kilns and factories, and 15 percent from vehicles. We are witnessing unprecedented levels of development work and industrial expansion in the hopes of bolstering the economy. But air pollution, brought on by this rampant growth, is squashing those very hopes. Last year, Dhaka residents took 2,117 days off work due to sickness attributable to air pollution, which of course does not bode well for the economy. In fact, the World Bank says air pollution is wiping out around four percent of the country's GDP.

As air pollution has been wreaking all kinds of havoc for so long, surely the government has incentives to address this critical issue, but the numbers belie this notion. In February, the High Court censured the government for not complying with a nine-point directive it issued in 2020 to curb air pollution in Dhaka. Some of the initiatives, like the 2012 Air Pollution Reduction Strategy, largely still remains on paper, and the Clean Air Act is yet to be enacted. At the end of last year, four South Asian countries – Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan – agreed to drastically curb air pollution, including transboundary pollution, by 2030. But clearly that is not bearing fruit as well.

The government has to get its priorities straight; it cannot keep on ignoring this health crisis and solely concentrate on infrastructure development for the sake of the economy. As air pollution is an all-encompassing issue, we urge all relevant ministries, divisions and departments of the government to address this menace collectively. The existent strategies, policies and acts must be implemented and enforced; only then would people breathe in fresh air again.

Can BCL always do as they please?

The ruling party must check BCL influence at public universities

That the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) members have been exerting undue influence at public universities – intimidating and harassing students, teachers and staff members, engaging in criminal activities, and creating an environment of political repression while administrations turn a blind eye – should not come as a surprise to anyone. Time and again, we have seen media reports detailing such incidents. However, after recent events at Chittagong University (CU), one would think the situation had finally come to a head.

After clashes between rival BCL factions, the assault of a *Prothom Alo* journalist by BCL men and the recovery of weapons from one of the residential halls following a police search, the CU authorities issued a directive on September 24 ordering those who had finished their academic sessions and who had been expelled for their violent activities to vacate student halls within 24 hours. In the meantime, reports of the BCL's reign of terror at CU, which involved frequent clashes, extortion of contractors implementing development projects at the university, illegally occupying hall rooms, beating administrative officials, sexually harassing female students, vandalising university property and even threatening teachers, began to surface.

Despite all of these serious allegations, and the dissolution of its committee at Chittagong University by central BCL authorities, the order to vacate halls has so far been limited to paper. According to media reports, there are at least 30 BCL members who are inhabiting residential halls on university premises despite no longer being students, some of them for as long as 11 years! Such orders to vacate have also been issued before – most recently on February 27 – and have been promptly ignored in the past as well.

The blatant disregard for university authorities demonstrates just how easy it has become for BCL members to abuse their power on campuses. The continued political patronage they have received has allowed them to believe that the rules do not apply to them. Will the ruling party finally demonstrate their commitment to democratic principles and the rule of law by disciplining its student wing, and empowering the university authorities and law enforcement to take actions against them, or will BCL continue to enjoy this culture of impunity?

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

letters@thedailystar.net

Ensure mental well-being of students

Amid the academic whirlwind, students confront not only textbooks and exams but also an often-hidden foe: mental health issues. They may silently wrestle with anxiety, depression and more, yet outwardly appear fine, leading to underreporting and a lack of support. Therefore, educational institutions, students, families, and society must collaborate to create a supportive environment where students feel safe, prioritising their mental well-being.

Roksana Wazed
Dhaka

NATIONAL GIRL CHILD DAY

We must radically reimagine girls' rights



Shuprova Tasneem is a journalist. Her X handle is @ShuprovaTasneem

SHUPROVA TASNEEM

What would you consider to be a good life for a little girl? Would she be safe? Healthy? Would she have a roof over her head and food in her stomach? Would she be free from exploitation and abuse?

So far, I think everyone would agree that these are very basic rights that should be enjoyed not just by girls, but by every citizen in a democratic country. But unfortunately for Bangladeshi girls, even in 2023, there are a number of these very basic rights that we are still unable – and perhaps unwilling – to afford to them.

Should girls have education? Should they have sexual and reproductive rights? Do they have the right to refuse marriage? Do we respect their right to refuse, to give and to take away consent? Do they have bodily autonomy? What about agency, independence, and free will?

Of course, in reality, these are not simple things to achieve, and the situation is not so black and white. When trapped in poverty, struggling to recover from one climate-induced disaster after another, with the threat of sexual violence hanging over the heads of girls across the country, one can hardly pretend to have the luxury of choice. Often, the choices are child marriage, child labour, poverty or violence.

However, it also cannot be denied that the very same choices that even the most deprived boys and men are often faced with are simply not available to girls and women in similar situations. Nowhere is this contrast more stark than in the case of child marriages in Bangladesh.

According to a Unicef report from May, which pulled data from the Bangladesh Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2019, more than 51 percent of young women in the country were married in their childhood. This means that the country now potentially holds 38 million women and girls who were married before the age of 18. Among them, 13 million were married before the age of 15. This makes Bangladesh the country with the highest prevalence of child marriage in South Asia, and the eighth highest prevalence in the world.

Another report on child marriage from Bangladesh Mahila Parishad (BMP), which collected data from over 2,000 people in 37 districts from 2018 to 2021, found that 53 percent of the



ILLUSTRATION: REHNUMA PROSHOON

girls in question were forced to marry due to family and societal pressures. While there is no denying that poverty is still one of the greatest drivers of child marriage, instead of dealing with the circumstances – like natural disasters and gender-based violence – that are making our girls vulnerable, we tend to opt for the “easy” solution of marriage for the sake of economic solvency and safety. The fact that the Child Marriage Restraint Act, 2017 actually allows for child marriage under “special circumstances” is an example of this.

Traditional notions of honour, with “modesty” being the most valued asset owned by any woman or girl in the country, only make the situation worse. In our society, too many still consider “love marriages” and “affairs” to be morally more egregious than marital rape and teen pregnancies. While being forced into marriage is the worst case scenario, we cannot deny that in almost every aspect of a girl's life in Bangladesh – whether she is trying to participate in sports or use public transport – her “virtue” is constantly being scrutinised, effectively creating

local government body members were complicit. Kazis and notaries were also directly responsible.

While Bangladesh has a National Action Plan to Eliminate Child Marriage by 2030, which holds a number of lofty strategies that commit to justice, accountability, positive social values and norms, and the empowerment of adolescents, the reality is that there is a significant gap between our ambitions and our actions. In Digital Bangladesh, we have still not managed to properly digitise marriage registration, which would make it harder to falsify documents for child marriages. We want the future generations to take their fates into their own hands, but we are not willing to provide them with the sexual health education that would allow them to make informed decisions about their future. We believe in the constitutionally guaranteed gender equality, but we do not believe in women's right to inheritance, even though greater financial control would reduce their dependence on marriage as a means to economic stability.

Research suggests that child marriage begins to decline among

barrier here is the sexual harassment faced by girls and young women in educational institutions. In 2021, a national-level study from Plan International Bangladesh revealed that 73.8 percent of girls and women had faced such abuse. Yet, most schools have no functioning anti-sexual harassment cells or complaint committees to deal with this, despite there being clear directives from the High Court.

This does not only reflect a general apathy towards improving the lives of girls in Bangladesh, it demonstrates that those who are responsible for improving their lives are yet to take the first simple step of acknowledging that our girls are human beings with agency, not just vessels holding their families' and communities' reputations. It is clear that before we can take any real action in dealing with child marriage, there has to be a radical shift in how we as a nation perceive the rights of girls and women. This is necessary for us to finally see child marriage for what it is – not a tool to protect the “honour” of our young girls, but a form of sexual violence.

TVET and our skills ‘fetish’



EDUCATING EDUCATION

Rubaiya Murshed is a PhD researcher at the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge. She is also a lecturer (on study leave) at the Department of Economics, University of Dhaka.

RUBAIYA MURSHED

It was a joyous celebration when I got GPA 5 in my SSC examination, as is the case in most homes in Bangladesh when the results of this milestone exam come out. I remember being sent to visit elderly relatives with sweets in the evening, a feeling of relief and content in my heart. Our driver *chacha* was also very happy, not only for my result but also for his son's result. His son had studied in a school in their village home far from Dhaka, and he had obtained GPA 5 too. His achievement, I knew, was more special than mine, because he had not studied with as many facilities as I had.

That day, both of us were celebrating the same achievement, but two things differed greatly between us – our journeys leading up to that point and our journeys from thereon. I wondered whether he, like me, was continuously being asked what I wanted to become, which field I was heading towards. Out of interest, I excitedly asked driver *chacha* what his son's aspirations were, and he replied with a fallen enthusiasm, “For him, there aren't

many options, *Ma*. He must quickly get a job. He's smart but the reality is that students like him, like me, need to be practical. I think he should just try to pick up a skill, in a vocational institution maybe.” I could almost hear the despair in his voice, his far-off look reminiscent of imagining his son being given the bright opportunities I would automatically be given. The air reeked of unfairness, and I didn't feel so proud anymore. Why was I entitled to more options than someone my age, just as talented as me, just because I was born to more privilege?

If you look closely, you will find, like I have, that there is an inherent bias in our thinking when we imagine the aspirations and career trajectories of students from different socio-economic backgrounds. While who chooses to pursue technical and vocational education and training (TVET) as an educational route over general or religious education is an important question, an equally important – if not more important – question is for whom TVET was imagined. Also, who gets to

make these decisions of who goes to which education stream? Is it the case that only a handful of our elite and powerful are making these decisions for countless lives without often hearing or understanding the voices of different groups? Indeed, it very well may be that there is an underrepresentation of voices in this sort of decision-making, especially at the topmost levels. At the end of the day, the question that becomes important is whether there is a “privilege” factor at play within the system and, thereby, an inherent bias and inequality in our thinking. We must ask, and answer, why privilege or poverty should filter individuals into either TVET or general education.

The TVET route is undoubtedly a necessary educational option for countries like Bangladesh that are looking to “upskill” and turn humans into “human capital.” However, it's important to remember the “human” part of it and not get lost in the “capital” of it all. The most common and established narratives around education and skills today is that we need to invest more in TVET, and we need to “attract” and “normalise” pursuing TVET. But do we mean for everyone or only for the lesser privileged? Would we send our own children to TVET?

Also, it's important to be aware of the origins of TVET and the global, more Western, push for countries in the Global South to strongly promote TVET. Sadly, there is little criticality from the receiving end – from us.

The possibility that too much and blind focus on TVET may have more costs than pros rarely comes to our mind. We, the Global South, in a way, are still colonised in our minds by the Global North because we blindly follow their lead without realising that our context, culture and history are different from theirs. There's also a lot to think about in terms of what we mean by skills and whether the more “one size fits all” approach of TVET is the right step towards the right direction. Educationist Lisa Wheelahan talks about this in her article on the reification of skills and identifies one of the key issues as the fetishisation of skills, meaning that we have turned the need for skills into more of a fetish without understanding what we actually mean by the term. Then there's the related nuances that we remain unaware of – who should have what skills, what skills are the need of the time, and for what type of work. All this has led to the reification, as Wheelahan et al (2022) calls it, of the whole concept.

There's something wrong in the way we've been thinking of these educational routes in Bangladesh, and we must change our thinking if we want to match our actions to what we say about inclusive development. For any inclusive development to be indeed inclusive, we must first learn to imagine all of us on a same-level platform, deserving of the same educational opportunities and the same standard quality of life.



VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

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BLOWIN’ IN THE WIND

Dr Shamsad Mortuza is a professor of English at Dhaka University.

SHAMSAD MORTUZA

This is the time of the year when newspapers tell universities what they need to do. The butterflies of an influential magazine in the UK has fluttered their wings to air the news of who’s who in the educational landscape. The centrifugal force of the wings flapping has created a storm in our local news outlets and newsweld. A section of the local press cried havoc in a classic half-empty rhetoric, “No university from Bangladesh in the top 800 global rankings.” The news, however, could have mentioned that there are two new entries from Bangladesh in the top 1,000 universities of the world, according to the Times Higher Education (THE) World Rankings 2024. Brac University (BracU) and Jahangirnagar University (JU) have joined their compatriots, the University of Dhaka (DU) and North South University (NSU).

THE has widened the net to incorporate 1,904 universities from 104 countries. Until 2011, before

I know how difficult it is to be on the list. University rankings are complex and multifaceted. The parameters through which the quality and performance of a university are measured are far from simple. To be successful, they require a combination of resource allocation, research output, academic perception, international collaboration, funding opportunities, quality of education, breaking the language barriers, and institutional policies. The process leads to a competition, often unhealthy, that has forced universities to join a “numbers game where administrators are incentivised to manipulate figures, game the system, and focus on parameters of dubious importance while paying scant attention to what happens in the classroom.” One scandalous instance of manipulation became apparent when Columbia University was found guilty of doctoring data. From being the

there are three key criteria that institutions must meet to be considered for enlistment: teaching at the undergraduate level; at least 1,000 publications in the past five years and 150 each year in journals listed in Elsevier; and less than 80 percent research in one single subject. The second criterion acts as a gatekeeper, as the participating universities must build a research portfolio over a long period of time. Sadly, our universities were designed to be teaching institutions with a value system that did not necessarily match the ranking benchmarks with their heavy research orientation. Higher education in Bangladesh has been viewed as a public good that benefits the individual receiving it and their broader community in turn. A quick glance at the ranking metrics will tell you that many of the categories put our local universities in a disadvantageous position. The grades for institutional income and industry income are cases in point.

The four foundational pillars of this year’s THE World Rankings include teaching (29.5 percent), research environment (29 percent), research quality (30 percent), industry (four percent), and international outlook (7.5 percent). There is 59 percent emphasis on research, which includes metrics on the citation impact and the income, reputation, productivity, strength,

Ranking	Uni	Overall	Teaching	Research Environment	Research Quality	Industry	International
801–1000	BracU	32.7-36.9	14.8	12.3	71.1	15.7	42.2
801–1000	DU	32.7-36.9	17.5	10.0	68.8	18.1	48.5
801–1000	JU	32.7-36.9	24.1	8.9	71.9	19.5	49.7
801–1000	NSU	32.7-36.9	12.9	10.0	76.1	15.8	43.3
1001-1200	BAU	28.3-32.6	29.5	9.9	45.2	22.6	49.5
1001-1200	Buet	28.3-32.6	21.7	15.8	50.7	35.2	29.8
1001-1200	RU	28.3-32.6	15.9	9.3	59.3	17.6	39.6
1201-1500	KU	22.8-28.2	17.0	9.5	46.9	17.1	43.7
1201-1500	Sust	22.8-28.2	13.2	8.4	43.4	16.6	44.8

THE partnered with Thomson Reuters Foundation for data analysis, it published a coveted list of 200 universities under the old methodology. DU got featured on the list for the first time in 2016 in the 601-800 bracket. The university was pushed outside the top 1,000 circuit on the THE world ranking lists of 2018, 2020 and 2021. In 2022, DU returned to the club of 801-1000 universities. In 2023, it moved up the ladder to be placed in the 601-800 band, only to slip back to its present 801-1000 position.

Last year, eyebrows were raised when a 30-year-young private university, NSU, breathed on the neck of the century-old DU in the 601-800 ring. DU is likely to feel more pressure with two new challengers. But it is encouraging to see that Bangladeshi universities are making strategic efforts to be on the world map. A total of 21 universities submitted data to be ranked by THE World Rankings; only nine made the final cuts. Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU), Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) and Rajshahi University (RU) are in the 1001-1200 slots, while Khulna University (KU) and Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (Sust) are placed in the 1201-1500 slots.

As an academic administrator,

number one US university, Columbia was subsequently downgraded on the ranking list of News & World in 2022. Ranking agencies rely on the data submitted by the institutions

Last year, eyebrows were raised when a 30-year-young private university, NSU, breathed on the neck of the century-old DU in the 601-800 ring. DU is likely to feel more pressure with two new challengers. But it is encouraging to see that Bangladeshi universities are making strategic efforts to be on the world map. A total of 21 universities submitted data to be ranked by THE World Rankings; only nine made the final cuts.

and the research data available in the international repository.

So, I congratulate all the participating universities for their efforts. For THE World Rankings,

influence and excellence of research work. The dataset for this category comes from one digital repository: Elsevier. So our finest scholar, with his monograph written in Bangla over a 10-year period, may have no impact on the university’s research health card prepared by THE.

In a blog featured on the THE website, David Matthews warns us of the digital monopoly, where these new big data bosses have their “tentacles everywhere, from the laboratory to the research grants office to academic personnel, which makes the switching costs potentially enormous.” Universities are becoming slaves to these new corporate marketing ploys. While university rankings serve as crucial tools for students and parents to make informed choices before investing in their higher education, overemphasis on rankings may change institutional priorities and lead to a hollowing out of the educational experience for its stakeholders. At the same time, these supposedly well-intentioned pursuits of evaluating academic excellence through rankings may inadvertently create unhealthy competition. In this race, universities vie for higher positions on the leaderboard, marking frenzied attempts to outmanoeuvre their peers.

The question of translation

Faridul Alam teaches at the City University of New York.

FARIDUL ALAM

On May 24, 2017, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution declaring September 30 as International Translation Day, commemorating the feast of St Jerome, a multilingual with a mastery of Greek, Hebrew, and Latin, canonised as the “Patron Saint of Translators.” He was commissioned by Pope Damasus I in 382 to revise the Latin translations of the Bible by revisiting and reviewing the original texts in Hebrew and Greek (Septuagint) by 404, resulting in the Vulgate Bible, to be officially

complex world is inconceivable without translation. As millions of people keep moving, migrating and fleeing across the world in the 21st century – more than ever before – for a wide array of variables including, but not limited to, unemployment, underemployment, famines, persecution, natural disasters, environmental calamities, warfare and tourism, prompting displacement or “deterritorialisation,” to borrow from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1972), the global significance of translation inexorably springs to the fore.

Nonetheless, a double entendre has always been imputed to translation. The Italian adage, “Traduttore Traditore” or “Translator, Traitor” obtains unabated. The translator, Ricoeur postulates, serves two masters –

practices, as Lawrence Venuti (1998) so cogently argued.

The search for the holy grail of perfect translation from the source language to the target language has been likened by Walter Benjamin to the “messianic echo” of the original. In spite of its inevitable pathways of digression/dispersion/dissonance/distortion, translation tends to (re)constellate into an afterlife or incarnation of the original text at best. In other words, translation embarks on an intercultural and intertemporal endeavour, bearing the trace of the original, carried over to the present through metamorphosis. In Benjamin’s own words, translated from the German original (as *mise en abyme*), the translator’s task is “to find the intention towards the language into which the work is to be translated, on the basis of which an echo of the



VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

used by the Roman Catholic Church henceforth.

Suffice it to say, this belated recognition of the translators was long in the making. The International Federation of Translators advocated for marking this day from its very inception in 1953, until its official celebration kicked off in 1991. It was intended as an acknowledgment of the profession, historically instrumental in bringing about a bridging network among an ever-growing number of language communities, cultures, and nations arguably to facilitate meaningful dialogues and public discourses that potentially beef up international cooperation and security, and bolster and enhance alterity, diversity, equity and inclusivity. The essence of this enterprise is captured in the theme of this year’s theme for the day: “Translation unveils the many faces of humanity.”

Accolades for and invectives/innuendoes against translation were never in short supply. The growth of world culture, the development of comparative literature, and the civilisation in Western Europe were deservedly attributed to the shaping influence of translation. French philosopher Paul Ricoeur (2004) describes the role of a translator as an arbiter, or cultural mediator, imbued with the art and ethics inherent in translation, considered invaluable within the confounding context of unending ethnic and religious conflicts. He argues that translation not only spreads knowledge, but also transforms what it means to know, to the extent that the notion of navigating an increasingly

the foreign author and the reader who speaks the same language as the translator, propelled by the pressing need to appropriate, resulting in the paradox of being “doubly sanctioned” in which the “vow of faithfulness” is undercut by “a suspicion of betrayal.” The plight of Afghan translators following an abrupt pull-out of the US from Afghanistan in 2021 epitomises a blatant case in point.

There is no denying the truism that translation historically served the best interest of the colonisers anywhere from intelligence-gathering to sustaining colonial rule through persuasion, knowledge and exoticisation of the colonised “other,” by definition without history and unable to represent itself before being rendered (translated, better still) adequately compliant and subservient as a faithful subject to be counted on contemporaneously and prospectively, consistent with the discursive construction and formation underpinning how power is complicit with knowledge. Translations from the non-Western originals to the Western target texts were found replete with deep-seated Orientalism, reflected in their caricature, denigration, distortion, oversimplification, trivialisation, stereotyping, subjugating, subsuming, and domesticating of the irremediable “other.” More to the point, regardless of how translation has been scandalously exploited and sidelined as a discipline and an enterprise, it indefatigably served as a powerful site of resistance by interrogating the contradictions and hypocrisies implicit or explicit in the dominant cultural values and

original can be awakened in it.”

In this process, the survival or afterlife of the original text hinges on the transitional space between the two languages/cultures, generating hybridity, analogous to the “international space of discontinuous historical realities” (Bhabha, 1994:217), requiring iterative disambiguation. “It is not about the passage from one language to another, but about the crossing of a threshold characterised by blurred limits,” suggests Maria Teresa Costa (2022, Pg 17-18). The putative echo turns out to be “a complex figure of resonance that cannot be reduced to the repetition of a stable entity” (Pg 216).

Derrida’s rereading of Benjamin reduces the text’s survival, or afterlife, through translation into one “living on the boundary, on borderlines, on the edge” (Bassnett, 2013, Pg 342). It resonates with Hans Georg Gadamer’s (1989) framing of translation that dispenses with the original’s reproduction by embracing empathy and distance. Ricoeur treads the fine line to posit that “a fantasy of perfect translation takes over from... (the) banal dream of the duplicated original” (Pg 5). Extending the dialogic underpinning of Gadamer’s hermeneutics, Ricoeur also comes up with a heterodox exegesis that “the self only knows itself through the other.” In this hermeneutics of selfhood, oneself is understood as both selfhood and an(other), adding to the problematics of the illusory origin associated with translation.

This is an excerpt from a larger article.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 Roll call answer

5 Historic event

10 Early hr.

12 “Skyfall” singer

13 “The Taming of the Shrew” city

14 Network points

15 Print units

16 CDs’ forerunners

18 Bowler, e.g.

19 Handles

21 Snug

22 Some time in the future

24 Famed fur tycoon

25 1970s scandal

29 Green shade

30 Church sights

32 Avenue tree

33 Fabric color

34 In what way

35 Select group

37 Move smoothly

39 Showed over

40 Quite full

41 Flight makeup

42 Prudent

DOWN

1 Aspirations

2 Tooth layer

3 Sight from Yemen

4 Mer makeup

5 Stadium group

6 Swearing in vow

7 Scorching

8 Tabloid content

9 Peevish

11 Blue-gray cat

17 Depict

20 Country division

21 Rock unit

23 Angled golf holes

25 Spot for a ten-spot

26 Look up to

27 Where Gauguin painted

28 Undermines

29 Mocks

31 Nobel, for one

33 Bears’ lairs

36 Call on

38 Bar study

WRITE FOR US. SEND US YOUR OPINION PIECES TO dsopinion@gmail.com.

WEDNESDAY’S ANSWERS

B	A	T	H	E		M	I	T	T	S
E	T	H	E	R		A	D	H	O	C
A	R	E	N	A		K	E	E	N	E
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Williamson to miss World Cup opener

AFP, Hyderabad

New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson will miss the opening match of the ODI World Cup next week to recover from a knee injury, the country's cricket board said Friday.

Williamson was part of the team's Friday warm-up match against Pakistan in Hyderabad but only as a batsman and will aim to bat and field in the second warm-up fixture on Monday.

New Zealand cricket said in a statement that the captain would "continue to progress his knee rehabilitation".

"Right from the start we've taken a long-term view on Kane's return to play," head coach Gary Stead said.

"His recovery is tracking well and it's now a matter of making sure he can cope with the rigours and intensity of international cricket," he added.

"We'll continue to take a day by day approach to Kane's rehabilitation and certainly won't be putting any pressure on him to return before he is ready."

Wicketkeeper-batsman Tom Latham is leading New Zealand against Pakistan.

Williamson was included in the team despite concerns over his injury from this year's Indian Premier League.

He comes off a six-month lay-off as New Zealand look to build on their runners-up finish in the last edition of the 50-over World Cup in 2019, when they lost a dramatic final to England.

The Black Caps will play their second and final warm-up against South Africa in Thiruvananthapuram before the tournament opener on October 5 in Ahmedabad.

'Unfair on Maxi to say he's not a specialist spinner'

REUTERS

Australia will head into the 50-over World Cup in India with only one specialist spinner in Adam Zampa, but chief selector George Bailey said on Friday that all-rounder Glenn Maxwell could also be considered a frontline option.

The five-times champions finalised their squad on Thursday and were forced to leave out left-arm spinner Ashton Agar, who was in their preliminary group of 15 players but failed to recover from a calf injury.

Bailey said Maxwell, who claimed a career-best 4-40 in Wednesday's win over India to help Australia avoid a series whitewash, was always in their plans as a spin option.

"It's unfair on Maxi to say he's not a specialist spinner. His Twenty20 and one-day international spinning record is pretty handy and you can very much consider him a frontline option," Bailey told reporters.

Australia brought in batsman Marnus Labuschagne instead of Agar and opted to carry injured opener Travis Head with the hope that he will be fit for the latter part of the tournament.

"More broadly across the squad, when you're limited to 15 players, there are compromises," Bailey added. "We also wanted to make sure we have the option of having Travis later in the tournament so effectively it's 14 for a period of time."

"It was about trying to balance up the immediate needs. We think Zampa and Maxwell can do a really good job and we've still got plenty of options there for quicks and backup all-rounders as well."

Bailey said he was impressed by Labuschagne's solid displays in recent matches against South Africa and India.

Australia begin their campaign against hosts India in Chennai on Oct. 8.



Bangladesh batter Liton Das, who has been struggling for form in the build-up to the World Cup, appeared to have found his rhythm with a 56-ball 61-run knock against Sri Lanka in the Tigers' first World Cup warm-up match in Guwahati yesterday. [Bottom] Liton was aptly supported by a young Tanzid Hasan Tamim, who smashed an 84-ball 80, as Bangladesh's openers showed promise for the first time in a long while.

PHOTO: AFP

Liton-Tanzid find the right cue from warm-up win

SPORTS REPORTER

Over the course of the last 12 months, the highest stand by a Bangladesh opening pair had been 102 that Liton Das and Tamim Iqbal had notched. Without Tamim in the World Cup squad, and amidst the ongoing form concerns of openers ahead of the World Cup, youngster Tanzid Hasan and the formidable Liton finally found the runs they needed under their belt ahead of a huge tournament during the first warm-up fixture against Sri Lanka in Guwahati yesterday.

Bangladesh's opening partnerships have averaged just a tad above 20 across the last 10 ODIs. Yesterday, in chase of the Lankans' 263, the two openers strung together a 131-run stand, the highest in the last two years.

With Mehedi Hasan Miraz -- a makeshift opener -- the only backup at the moment, the way the two openers began with composure reflected the confidence the team management had projected on them, especially through Tanzid's selection.

Liton had been struggling over the course of a year, averaging just over 24 in ODIs across 20 matches.

Both openers played well within themselves at the start of the chase, perhaps taking a cue from how the Lankan openers had begun the previous innings. With not much movement on offer for the bowlers, the left-right combination



remained organised.

What both had in common was allowing the ball to come to them, Liton exhibiting that trait to particular effectiveness, putting away deliveries on his legs, even waiting for the movement before flicking Kasun Rajitha for four. Tanzid slashed one through the off-side to get things going before coming up with a controlled pull for another four. Once set, he looked like he had all the time to pull Lahiru Kumara for four.

Once Liton got the start, the familiar strokeplay came, hitting a spinner over extra cover for four. That seemed to settle him and amidst some streaky boundaries, he reached his fifty in just 39 deliveries. Liton fell after a 56-ball 61, laced with 10 fours.

Tanzid missed out on a ton,

falling after an 88-ball 84 but he would look to carry on that momentum into the tournament proper.

Tawhid Hridoy fell for a duck but Miraz struck a 64-ball 67 with Mushfiquur Rahim unbeaten on 35 in an unbroken 76-run stand to take Bangladesh to a seven-wicket win with eight overs to spare.

Shakib Al Hasan sat out the game but he had high hopes about the opening pair.

"I would expect just one thing from them [Liton and Tanzid] which is that on the day that they get a start, they win the match,"

SCORES IN BRIEF

Bangladesh vs Sri Lanka
Sri Lanka: 263 all out in 49.1 overs (Nissanka 68, de Silva 55; Mahedi 3-36, Miraz 1-32)
Bangladesh: 264 for three in 42 overs (Tanzid 84, Miraz 67*, Liton 61; Kumara 1-30, Hemantha 1-45)
Result: Bangladesh won by seven wickets

Shakib had said during an exclusive interview with T Sports recently.

The captain and team management have kept the instructions simple for the opening pair and with some momentum, the top-order too would find some relief if both openers carry on with some consistency.

Rain frustrates Proteas, Afghans

AFP, Thiruvananthapuram

The World Cup warm-up match between South Africa and Afghanistan at Thiruvananthapuram was abandoned without a ball being bowled on Friday.

Heavy rain frustrated both sides who now have one further warm-up to get the plans in order before the tournament gets underway next week.

The Proteas, whose captain Temba Bavuma has had to travel home for family reasons, will hope the weather improves in Thiruvananthapuram before their final warm-up against New Zealand on Monday.

Bavuma is expected to re-join the squad for South Africa's opening match of the tournament against Sri Lanka in Delhi on October 7.

Afghanistan have a final warm-up against Sri Lanka in Guwahati on Tuesday before opening their tournament against Bangladesh in Dharamshala, also on October 7.

Confident Imranur moves into semis

SPORTS REPORTER from Hangzhou

Bangladesh sprinter Imranur Rahman expectedly qualified for the semifinals of 100m sprint in the Asian Games after finishing third in Heat 5 at Hangzhou Olympic Centre Stadium last night.

Courtesy of a timing of 10.44 seconds, he finished overall 17th among 33 athletes to qualify for the 24-athlete semifinals.

"This performance was not amazing ... but I am hopeful to do better in the semifinals," Imranur told the reporters in the mixed zone.

Both the semifinals and the final are scheduled to be held today.

"I think if I can clock my career best of 10.11 seconds, it is possible to go to the final," said Imranur, who became the third Bangladesh sprinter in 25 years to reach Asiad semis in 100m event.

Golfer Siddiquir loses momentum

SPORTS REPORTER from Hangzhou

Siddiquir Rahman failed to maintain his first-round momentum into the second round of the Asian Games' individual golf event at West Lake Golf Course yesterday.

Siddikur, who was 11th overnight, started the day with a bogey but bounced back with two birdies in the front nine. The ace Bangladesh golfer kept mixing birdies and bogeys to eventually settle for an even-par score for the day, finishing with a total of 137 after two rounds.

Siddiquir is placed 25th, while compatriot Jamal Hossain stands 39th with an overall score of 143.



Fencing team eliminated

Bangladesh yesterday suffered elimination from the first round of the fencing women's sabre team event in Hangzhou Dianzi University Gymnasium after falling 45-17 to superior Hong Kong.

SA Games gold medalist Fatema Mujib, Rokhsana Khatun, and Farjana Easmin represented Bangladesh, with Nipa only putting up a good fight against Wing Kiu Chu in one of the three games but ended up losing 5-4.

Swimmer Sonia produces a mixed bag

Sonia Akhter finished 27th out of 32 swimmers in the 50m butterfly event after she failed to match her personal best timing at the Hangzhou Olympic Sports Centre Aquatic Sports Arena yesterday.

The Army swimmer, however, improved her timing in the 50m freestyle, recording 30.11 seconds, which was 00.11 less than what she had clocked during the 2022 Commonwealth Games.

"I am happy with my timing because I bettered my timing in freestyle on the back of only five-month training," said Sonia.

Shooters continue to disappoint

In the women's 10m Air Pistol event yesterday, Anjila Amjad Antu, Fahmida Alam, and Armin Asha finished 33rd, 44th, and 53rd out of 56 shooters, respectively, and their combined points resulted in to Bangladesh finishing 13th out of 14 teams with a score of 1670.

The men's 50m Air Rifle team event saw Bangladesh finish last among 14 participating nations following a score of 1705. Robiul Islam (571), Abdullah Hel Baki (570), and Shovon Chowdhury (564) finished 34th, 36th, and 42nd among 54 shooters, respectively.



Mohammad Rizwan was on song yesterday, smashing a hundred in Pakistan's official World Cup 2023 warm-up game against New Zealand in Hyderabad. Rizwan and Pakistan captain Babar Azam stitched together an innings-rebuilding 114-run third-wicket stand in a game that was played behind closed doors due to security concerns.

PHOTO: AFP

Furry pitch invader steals the show, and the ball

REUTERS

A pitch-invading dog gave ground staff the runaround after the slippery canine stole the ball and charged around the pitch in a Mexican second-tier game between Alebrijes de Oaxaca and Dorados de Sinaloa on Wednesday.

Oaxaca beat Dorados 4-0 but the highlight of the match came as the clock hit 90 minutes.

The dog sprinted on to the pitch and demanded the ball from Sinaloa keeper Hernan Mendoza, who reluctantly tossed it aside when the referee stopped the game so stewards could enter the pitch and usher the animal away.

But as a steward approached the dog with a leash, the furry pitch invader managed to tightly hold the football in its mouth before running towards the centre circle, evading ground staff desperate to take him away.

Within seconds, the dog had transformed the 16,000-capacity stadium into its own personal bull ring as 'Ole's rang around the arena when several members of the ground staff tried -- and comically failed -- to catch it.

As players also joined the chase, the agile pooch kept possession for more than a minute and masterfully skirted several challenges before one player finally caught him and ground staff lured him off the pitch with a spare ball.

"Our new best friend is fine and with us in Templo Alebrije after having debuted in @LigaMXExpansion," Oaxaca said on X, formerly known as Twitter.

"Our new reinforcement went to undergo his medical tests to be officially loaned in the coming days," they added.



The Premier League will see a top-four clash take place today as second-placed Liverpool will travel to London to face Tottenham Hotspur. Following a draw against Chelsea in their opening league fixture, Liverpool have gone on a streak of five straight wins and would look to close their two-point gap with league leaders Manchester City, who are yet to lose a point from their first six matches.

PHOTO: INSTAGRAM

Spurs test for Liverpool

AFP, London

Liverpool's Premier League title credentials face a stiff test at a resurgent Tottenham on Saturday as the Reds aim to keep pace with relentless leaders Manchester City.

Defending champions City have taken maximum points from their opening six games and can set a new club record should they extend that streak to seven at struggling Wolves.

Liverpool lead the chasing pack, two points back, with Brighton, Tottenham, Arsenal and Aston Villa all within six points of the top.

Szoboszlai shines for Liverpool

After years of going toe-to-toe with City for major honours, Liverpool slumped to fifth last season, prompting a full midfield rebuild during the transfer window.

The investment has paid immediate

dividends, with seven consecutive wins in all competitions.

Dominik Szoboszlai has been the pick of four new midfielders and scored a sensational goal in Wednesday's 3-1 League Cup victory over Leicester.

"Since the first minute of training, it was pretty impressive," said Jurgen Klopp of the Hungarian's adaptation after a £60 million (\$73 million) move from RB Leipzig.

"A very naturally confident boy. That helps and a super-hard worker and that's what you see."

But Klopp's men will need to inflict Tottenham's first league defeat under Ange Postecoglou to keep that fine run going.

The Australian has shrugged off the loss of Harry Kane to transform the mood at the north London giants.

Spurs are just two points behind Liverpool and claimed an impressive 2-2 draw away to Arsenal last weekend.

Challenging the top four

Brighton have made light of losing star players including Alexis Mac Allister and Moises Caicedo and sit third in the table with five wins from their opening six league games, including impressive victories over Manchester United and Newcastle.

Roberto De Zerbi's men face another side with ambitions of breaking into the top four on Saturday in Aston Villa.

Transformed since Unai Emery took charge just under a year ago, Villa have won four of their past five league games to climb to sixth.

However, both clubs face the challenge of maintaining their Premier League challenge alongside the demands of competing in Europe.

After naming much-changed sides in midweek, both Brighton and Villa crashed out of the League Cup but in the long run that could prove a bonus.

"I've felt not the slightest bit of insecurity regarding (my own safety)... but obviously, I wish (Peng) the best and I hope that she's doing well.

US tennis star Coco Gauff on the well-being of China's Peng Shuai



Sabalenka 'super motivated' to remain on top

AFP, Beijing

Newly crowned world number one Aryna Sabalenka said Friday she is "super motivated" to finish the year in top spot as she prepares to compete in the China Open in Beijing.

The Belarusian lost the US Open Final to homegrown talent Coco Gauff this month but has found succour in rising to the summit of the rankings for the first time.

But the 25-year-old is not content to stop there.

"It's also about finishing the year as world number one and staying there as long as I can," Sabalenka said in response to a question from AFP.

"It's good that I was able to achieve this goal, but there's another goal and so I'm super motivated right now," she said.

"The expectation here in Beijing is to bring my best tennis and do everything I can on court."

The China Open is being held for the first time since 2019 after Beijing abandoned its stringent zero-Covid policy.

The women's tour has also returned to China after its global governing body ended its boycott of the country.

Milosevic named Bosnia coach

AFP, Sarajevo

Former Serbia striker Savo Milosevic was appointed coach of Bosnia and Herzegovina on Friday, their third manager since the start of a floundering Euro 2024 qualifying campaign.

Milosevic, 50, succeeds Meho Kodro, who was appointed in August and sacked after two qualifying matches. Kodro's predecessor Faruk Hadzibegic was dismissed in June, just five months after his appointment.

"I sincerely believe that this team can get a place at the Euros, that it has enough quality to be there," Milosevic told a press conference.

Bosnia struggled to a 2-1 win over Liechtenstein earlier this month before losing to Iceland 1-0, a defeat which sealed Kodro's fate.

Milosevic, a former Partizan Belgrade and Aston Villa forward, began his coaching career at Partizan (2019-2020), before briefly coaching the Slovenian team Olimpija Ljubljana in 2022.

Russian athletes to compete as neutrals at Paris Paralympics

REUTERS

Russian athletes will be able to compete as neutrals at next year's Paris Paralympics after the International Paralympic Committee members voted against a full ban of Russia on Friday.

The IPC members first narrowly voted against a complete ban of the Russian Paralympic Committee (74-65) and then voted 90-56 in favour of a motion to partially suspend Russia for two years, subject to reassessment at a next general assembly.

"As a result of the General Assembly's decision, (National Paralympic Committee) Russia's membership rights are suspended for two years," the IPC said in a statement.

"With the exception that its athletes (and related support personnel) will be eligible to participate in an individual and neutral capacity in the Paralympic Games and World and Regional Championships and sanctioned competitions in the six sports for which the IPC acts as international federation."

Competing as neutral athletes means doing so without a national team or emblems, flags and anthems.

The IPC also voted not to suspend Belarus, which has been a staging ground for Russian troops and weapons during the invasion.

The decision comes two weeks before the International Olympic Committee session in Mumbai where it will also discuss Russia's and Belarus' participation at the Paris Olympics next year.

The IPC had last year suspended the paralympic committees of both countries and banned their athletes from competing following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Belarus has acted as a staging ground for Russian troops and weapons.

Although an appeal against the suspension of the committees was upheld this year, Russian and Belarusian para-athletes remain banned from competitions to this day.

The IOC has not sanctioned the Russian or Belarus Olympic Committee or Russian members of the IOC. It did ban athletes following last year's invasion of Ukraine, which Russia calls a special military operation.

In March, however, it issued a first set of recommendations for international sports federations to allow Russian and Belarusian athletes to return.

The IOC has said athletes should not be punished for actions of governments.



A top-of-the-table clash awaits today as Real Madrid travel to the Estadi Montilivi to take on league leaders Girona, who have won six games and drawn one in their first seven fixtures. Real, on 18 points, sit second and are a point off Girona and a win would take them to the top of LaLiga.

PHOTO: INSTAGRAM

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MIRSARAI UPAZILA IN CTG Caught in AL-BNP clash, teen dies

Both parties claim 16-yr-old was their supporter

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A teenager died after being caught in a clash between the activists of BNP and Awami League in Chattogram's Mirsarai upazila yesterday evening.

The incident took place at Azimpur Bazar under Osmanpur union.

The deceased, Jahid Hasan Ruman, 16, was a resident of Joraganj union under the same upazila. He used to live with his uncle in Azimpur area and worked at a shop in the bazar, said locals.

Although police said Jahid was a bystander, local BNP and AL leaders claimed that he was their supporter and blamed each other for his death.

The clash ensued after BNP activists attacked AL men in the area, said Abdul Halim, inspector (investigation) of Joraganj Police Station.

"We heard that Jahid was an epilepsy patient and that he jumped into a pond out of fear," said the police official.

Following the clash, locals rescued Jahid from the nearby pond and took him to Mirsarai Upazila Health Complex, where he was declared brought dead.

Khondkar Noman Shayeri, emergency medical officer at the health complex, said there was an injury mark on the victim's head.

Meanwhile, Mirsarai Upazila AL President Jahangir Kabir claimed that Jahid was a supporter of their party,



Jahid Hasan

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

TRAFFIC MOVEMENT Dhaka ranked slowest in world

Mymensingh 9th, Ctg 12th on list of slowest cities, shows study of US-based research firm



STAR REPORT

Dhaka is the slowest city in the world, according to a new study that analysed traffic in over 1,200 cities in 152 countries.

Apart from the capital, two other cities in Bangladesh – Mymensingh and Chattogram – are on the list of 20 slowest cities in the world, said the study, published as a working paper by the US-based National Bureau of Economic Research.

The cities ranked ninth and 12th on the list, respectively.

Two Nigerian cities, Lagos and Ikordu, ranked second and third on the list, followed by Manila, the capital of the Philippines, Biwandi, a town in India, and Kolkata, the capital of West Bengal.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

DENGUE OUTBREAK Country crosses grim milestone of 2 lakh cases

Eight more die in a day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The number of dengue cases crossed a grim milestone yesterday with the figure topping 200,000, the highest ever cases logged in a year in Bangladesh.

As many as 1,793 dengue patients were hospitalised in 24 hours preceding 8:00am yesterday, taking the total caseload to 200,981, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

The previous all-time high of 101,354 cases were recorded in 2019.

The number of fatalities is also nearing 1,000 this year as eight more people died from the mosquito-borne disease during the 24-hour period, raising the death toll to 975.

"The efforts to prevent dengue were not much successful. The city corporations have failed to prevent the disease," Dr Benazir Ahmed, a former member of the National Immunization Technical Advisory Group of the health ministry, told The Daily Star.

He, however, said the number of cases

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2



A protestor burns tyres during clashes with Israeli forces following a demonstration against the expropriation of Palestinian land by Israel in the village of Kfar Qaddum, in the occupied West Bank yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

57 killed as suicide blasts rip thru two Pak mosques

Over 60 injured; death toll may rise; no group has claimed responsibility

REUTERS, Quetta

Suicide bombings ripped through two mosques in Pakistan yesterday, killing at least 57 people and injuring more than 60 amid events marking the birthday of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH), police and health officials said.

No group has claimed responsibility for the blasts, one of which trapped dozens of people under rubble, media said. A surge in militant attacks has raised the stakes for security forces ahead of general elections set for January.

The first blast, in the southwestern province of Balochistan, killed 52 people, according to a district health official, Abdul Rasheed. "The bomber detonated himself near a police vehicle near Madina Mosque where people were gathering for a procession," added senior police official Munir Ahmed.

The second attack, in neighbouring northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, killed five people at a mosque, according to rescue officials. The mosque roof collapsed, broadcaster Geo News said, trapping about 30 to 40 people under the rubble.

The attack involved two explosions, one of which was at the mosque gate and the other in the compound, an official

said. "Luckily one blast was at the gate so worshippers were able to exit the mosque; as a result the casualties are low," the deputy commissioner of Hangu district, Fazal Akbar, said.

Both provinces border Afghanistan and have suffered attacks in recent years by Islamist militants, who aim to overthrow Pakistan's government and install their own brand of strict Islamic law.

The Balochistan blast is a rare attack on civilians as Islamist militants have largely targeted security forces in the recent surge of attacks.

Television images showed hundreds of people helping the injured into ambulances in its aftermath. At least 58 people were wounded, said Abdul Rasheed, the health official, adding that the toll could rise as many of the injuries were serious.

Militant attacks have surged since

2022 when a ceasefire broke down between the government and the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), an umbrella body of hardline Sunni Islamist groups.

The TTP, responsible for some of the bloodiest attacks in Pakistan since its formation in 2007, denied responsibility for yesterday's blasts. Previous attacks denied by the outfit have been claimed by splinter organisation loosely linked with them.

TTP denied involvement in a Peshawar police mosque bombing in January that killed 100 people, but a faction of the umbrella group later claimed the attack.

In July, more than 40 people were killed in a suicide bombing in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa at a religious political party's gathering. The Islamic State militant group claimed responsibility for that attack.



WORLD CUP 2023 Shakib to sit out 2nd warm-up too

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh skipper Shakib Al Hasan will not be featuring in the Tigers' final World Cup 2023 warm-up against England as a precautionary measure after having picked up a niggle that saw the all-rounder also sit out the first warm-up against Sri Lanka yesterday.

The news was confirmed by the Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB) media manager Rabeed Imaam.

Shakib suffered a slight ankle sprain during training the day before yesterday and was rested for the match against Sri Lanka in Guwahati yesterday.

"Shakib's injury at the moment does not look serious," said a board official who did not travel with the side to India.

Sources claim if the injury was severe, BCB's

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



ROOPPUR POWER PLANT 1st shipment of uranium arrives from Russia

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, Pabna

The first shipment of uranium reached the Rooppur nuclear power plant in Pabna yesterday.

International guidelines on safety were followed during shipment of the nuclear fuel and the project site is now globally recognised as nuclear infrastructure, said Shawkat Akbar, project director of the power plant.

"After ensuring infrastructure, trained workforce, and equipment required by the IAEA [International Atomic Energy Agency], we got the licence for nuclear fuel import and storage," he added.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Russian President Vladimir Putin are likely to virtually attend a fuel handover ceremony on October 5.

Earlier on Thursday, a Russian chartered plane carrying the shipment landed in Dhaka.

The nuclear fuel was then taken to the project site some 270km away in four lorries guarded by dozens of vehicles of the armed forces, police, and Rab.

Officials said Bangladesh Army maintained the safety protocol during the transportation.

China debuts its first overwater high-speed train

CNN ONLINE



China's rail ambitions just keep growing.

The latest addition to the country's portfolio is a 277 kilometre (172-mile) high-speed train line along the southeastern coast, connecting the cities of Zhangzhou, Xiamen and Fuzhou, all three of which are in Fujian province.

The maximum speed of the trains along this route is 350 kilometres (217 miles) per hour, according to China Railway, the state railway operator. The first train on this line debuted on Thursday, September 28, departing from Fuzhou, the province's capital, at 9:15 am.

The new railway currently has 84 bridges and 29 tunnels, plus 20 km (12 miles) of track that goes over the sea, making it the country's first overwater bullet train.

China Railway says that it used intelligent robots and environmentally friendly corrosion-resistant steel to build out the overwater rail sections.

The new line is just one of many infrastructure projects touted by the Chinese government in 2016, when the "Eight Horizontal and Eight Vertical" rail initiative was announced. State-run media outlet Xinhua notes that ground transportation in Fujian province has been challenging due to its mountainous terrain.



BNP leaders and activists at a rally in front of its Nayapaltan central office yesterday. Jatiyatabadi Mohila Dal, the women's wing of the BNP, organised the meeting demanding unconditional release of party Chairperson Khaleda Zia and general election under a non-party administration. Story on page 5.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON



Jirani canal covered by water hyacinth in Trimohoni Bazaar area.

PHOTO: MD ABBAS

REVIVING 4 DSCC CANALS

TK 898.73CR PROJECT

yet to start after one year

“

It is a regular work of the city corporation to clean canals in order to maintain water flow. Unfortunately, it did not do so, resulting in sufferings of city dwellers.

Adil Muhammad Khan
Professor of Urban & Regional Planning
Department at JU

MD ABBAS

It has been almost a year since the Dhaka South City Corporation approved a project to recover, re-excavate, and revive four major canals under its purview, but the authorities have yet to start the work.

Meanwhile, city dwellers continue to suffer from waterlogging every time it rains.

The Tk 898.73 crore project was okayed by the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council meeting on October 11 last year. It was scheduled to be completed within December 2024.

But after almost a year, the authorities now say they are yet to demarcate (setting up boundary walls or fences) the Kalunagar, Jirani, Manda, and Shyampur canals.

The total length of the canals is 19.78km, of which, Kalanagar is 2.4km, Jirani is 3.9km, Manda is 8.7km, and Shyampur 4.78km.

Besides, 38.06km boundary walls,

FOUR CANALS
Kalunagar (2.4km)
Jirani (3.9km)
Manda (8.7km)
Shyampur (4.78)
PROJECT AT A GLANCE
Total budget Tk 898.73cr
Total length of canals 19.78km
Ecnecc okayed it on Oct 11, 2022
Time of completion Dec 2024
KEY FEATURES
38.06km boundary walls
36 pedestrian bridges
19 vehicle bridges
32.44km walkways

half kilometres and a width varying from 12 to 50 feet. While visiting the North Manda area, this newspaper observed that sections of the canal which falls in this locality had also dried up and was filled with garbage.

The same story unfolded on September 10 while visiting Kutubkhali and Jatrabari areas to check the state of the Shyampur canal.

This waterbody was also filled with trash, with no trace of water.

Similarly, during a visit to the Kalungar Canal in Hajaribag's Sluice Gate area on September 15, this correspondent found filthy black water, with garbage piled up on it.

Contacted, Chittaranjan Das, councillor of Ward 5, said both Manda and Jirani canals need to be dug immediately.

"The Jirani canal was in a good shape last year, but now it's filled



Due to a thick layer of waste, water cannot flow through Kalunagar canal in Hazaribagh Sluice Gate area.



In many places, structures have been erected encroaching upon the Shyampur canal, further blocking its flow. The photo was taken in Zia Sarani area recently.



With piled up garbage and illegally built structures, it's really hard to believe this is actually the Manda canal. The photo was taken in North Manda area recently.

demarcation of the canals according to the cadastral and revised surveys," he said. The design will be published soon.

Asked about the project delay, he said they floated a tender a month ago, and contractors were also appointed in this regard. The full re-excavation works will start soon, he claimed.

Despite Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh's assurance on May 16 that rainwater wouldn't remain on the roads for more than half an hour this monsoon, recent heavy rains, including the one on September 21 led to waterlogging in various DSCC areas.

The areas include: Babu Bazar, Nazirabazar, Kazi Alauddin Road, Green Road, Kathalbagh, Mugda, Basabo Tempo Stand, Jurain Medical Road, Muradpur High School Road, Alambagh, Kusumbagh, and Outer Circular Road. In some places, Khan of Jahangirnagar University's Urban & Regional Planning Department, said the city corporation has shown short-sightedness by not starting the re-excavation work of the four canals.

"It is a regular work of the city corporation to clean canals in order to maintain water flow. Unfortunately, it did not do so, resulting in sufferings of city dwellers," he said.

Prof Adil also said if the city corporation does not take steps against the people responsible for dumping garbage on the canals and the city dwellers themselves don't become aware in this regard, re-excavating the waterbodies will not bear any fruit.

Mentionable, DSCC and Dhaka North City Corporation formally took over the responsibilities of 26 canals and 10 kilometres of box culverts from Dhaka Wasa on December 31,

CURRENT STATE

Filled with waste, hyacinth

Dried up in many places

Murky, smelly water

Fails to contain rainwater

36 pedestrian bridges, 19 bridges for vehicular movement, 10 public toilets, 32.44km walkways, four plazas, bicycle lanes, and 771 lights will also be set up as part of the project, according to officials.

While visiting the four canals at different times during this month, this correspondent found that the waterbodies were filled with garbage and hyacinth.

In many places, structures have been erected encroaching upon the waterbodies, further blocking their flow.

The Jirani canal passes through wards 4, 5, 74, and 75 of DSCC. It starts under the Kusumbagh bridge in Sabujbagh and joins the Balu river

near Trimohani Bazar after a distance of about four kilometers.

Rainwater from Shantinagar, Naya Paltan, Motijheel, Kamalapur, Maniknagar, Sabujbagh, and Khilgaon areas of the capital flows into the river through this canal.

During a visit on September 2 in the Trimohani area, this correspondent observed that a substantial portion of the canal had completely dried up, with garbage piled up over it. After walking for a few minutes, water was finally seen in a smaller section of the canal, albeit without any noticeable flow.

The Manda canal appeared to be in a similar state. On paper, it boasts a length of approximately eight and a

with garbage. We need to remove the trash promptly and make it suitable for water to flow through it again," he said.

Akbar Hossain, councillor of Ward 75, said, "In the last two years, no efforts have been seen to remove wastes from the Jirani canal. If heavy rain, like the one on September 21, occurs in the future, parts of the city will see waterlogging again as the canal fails to contain rainwater."

Contacted, Khairul Baker, DSCC engineer and coordinator of the canal re-excavation project, told the newspaper that they have already appointed two consultant firms in this regard.

"We are now working on the



(L) A narrowed-down section of Kalunagar canal in Hazaribagh. Due to a lack of cleaning activities, the water of the canal has become murky. (R) Household waste continues to clog the Shyampur canal in Mohammadbagh area.



the water did not recede until the following day.

Contacted, Prof Adil Muhammad

2020, aiming to reduce waterlogging. Of them, DSCC took charge of 11 canals.



ILLUSTRATION : MAISHA SYEDA

FICTION

Not talking in a city of
LOUDSPEAKERS

The rickshaw blared in the distance. Rehman felt giddy hearing his name so loud. He didn't think they would be so quick. Maybe they saved the rickshawala's number from the last time he escaped. Smart move.

KAZI MAHDI AMIN

The door didn't fully click shut. That was an ordinary affair in the house because the door locked to prevent escape. But, by chance or sheer good luck, it didn't fully lock this time. The click was off. Someone hadn't done their job correctly. Bloody hell, no one does their jobs correctly in this godforsaken country.

An open door felt like a welcome into the outside world. Rehman was slightly worried about his old-timer driver, Hanif, seeing him escape his own house. Hanif was always vigilant while they both worked at the secretariat for eight hours a day; he would hurry over anytime he saw his "boro sir". But there he was, snoring peacefully and drooling over his grey beard right after his 3 PM lunch.

Then came the pungent scent of freedom in the form of annoying horns and stinky puddles. That didn't matter much. After all, in the last five minutes, no one asked him "uncle koi jan?"

"Assalamualaikum", Rehman would say once in a while if the people looked too suspicious. Some replied, some didn't, but he was being cautious.

"Koi jaben", random rickshawalas would ask, but he decided to keep his mouth shut. The only thing he had learned from his seemingly infinite time in the city was to never talk unless needed. But at 73 and a half, it was hard to remember not to talk.

"Things cost too much nowadays."

"That storm yesterday was pretty brutal."

"How much to Syedabad?"

"In my day, I could get it for just 200."

"Everything goes up when fuel costs go up."

These random conversations struck up by a frail and gentle old man were met with both amusement and neglect. But it didn't matter. Rehman was having a jolly good time. No one

was pestering him about gulping down soup, and he wasn't being looked down upon with utter disdain by his servants.

You see, Rehman once had it all. He had no worries, nor any shortage of people wanting to talk to him. Additional Director Rehman Sir had everything power could offer, and he could change fates just by signing papers. But all of a sudden, everyone stopped listening to him. That happened once he retired. No "Assalamualaikums", and no guards standing up to greet him every time he appeared. But what surprised Rehman the most was the quickness of it all—how quickly once obedient subordinates forsook their old vows and renewed their allegiances.

He even lost power over the control of his own household. Even the son he always controlled with overbearing authority had not called back in three months. And then came the imprisonment, just because Rehman wanted to walk around and went missing sometimes.

But he couldn't walk far. He knew his legs didn't work that much, not because he was old, but because he rarely used them even in his prime. In a city like this, it was better to just wait in the air-conditioned cars, generously funded by public money.

Rehman decided to sit down on a pedestal this time. Since his last escape, he knew it was gravely important to take rest once in a while if one needed to escape.

However, that momentary silence was quickly interrupted by a new sound penetrating the multitude of noises flooding this city. A rickshaw with a speaker mounted on it slowly came near him.

"Important announcement—lost person. A 70 plus man wearing white pyjamas and a brown shirt has gone missing from Mohammadpur. Lost person! Lost person!

Lost person! His name is Rehman. He was wearing white pants and a brown shirt when he was last seen. Important message... Please call this number if you see him. Important message..."

The rickshaw blared in the distance. Rehman felt giddy hearing his name so loud. He didn't think they would be so quick. Maybe they saved the rickshawala's number from the last time he escaped. Smart move.

At that moment, when the speakers labelled him lost repeatedly, Rehman truly felt rediscovered. No one had looked for him recently, but now they did, because they had to. It felt good to be powerful again. But Rehman had no intention of being found.

But it looked like the rickshawala had other plans, and he stopped right in front of Rehman while the person with the microphone kept calling his name. Rehman was terrified: thoughts of his imprisonment kept coming back to him. He had to run.

The rickshawala, however, didn't even look at him. He strayed 10 feet away, pulled up his lungi, sat down, and started peeing, devoting himself to his ancestral right of discharging wherever men could reach. The one with the microphone still kept reading out, "Lost person! Lost person! Lost person! His name is Rehman! Lost person!"

Rehman remained where he was. Amid all the noise, the announcements, and the rumble of engines, no one was looking for him. But he was happy because everyone seemed to follow his rule of not talking unless needed. No one really needed to interrupt his solitude. It was pointless to speak to anyone in a city of loudspeakers.

Kazi Mahdi Amin likes scribbling stories when there's other important work to do. He can be reached at kmahdi007@gmail.com.

POETRY

If I Speak

SHAHID QADRI

Tell me what to say when I need to speak,
If I have to say something,
So what can I say: look at that
Body of the night glowing
Like a negro woman in silver ornaments
Or if I say: sweet-voiced rivers
Still singing—
No one will listen to
These poetic words.

If I have to say something
I will say: the navigability of our rivers
Is decreasing bit by bit; in North Bengal
Winter clothing is a must-go;
America or Beijing—a helping hand
To whom to extend to? In this regard,
What does civil society think today?
Whose voice will I adorn with
This pearl pendant of poetry?

I know assassins spread around in my town.
Many a time I wanted to use poetry
As a weapon to kill them.

But poetry wanders only where
Boys tangle in afternoon playgrounds with colored balls,
Or hide its face in the darkness of women's hair.

This poem has been translated by Md Mehedi Hasan. He teaches English at North Western University, Khulna.



DESIGN: AMREETA LETHE

KA DINGA
PEPO

KAISER HAQ

It is odd that nowadays
One seldom hears the words
Convalesce, convalescent, convalescence—

Another instance of thrallldom to binaries—
Illness/wellness
And nothing in between?

We are so much the poorer
Without an interregnum—
Remember a convalescent Tagore

Amusing himself scribbling
Gitanjali (Nobel Prize, 1913)?
Convalescing from a dread disease

Thanks to a three-week break
Between Summer term and Fall
I reread (once again) The Magic Mountain

And google the wicked virus
And the words and phrases that ring
Like ominous bells

Spreading fear of the insidious thing—
The Swahili
Ka dinga pepo—

Cramp-like seizure induced by a wicked spirit—
Whence Queen Maria Luisa's use of the Spanish
homonym
Dengue, affection—

In mockery perhaps of the patient's over-cautious
movements
Like the West Indian dandy fever?
More blunt, a Puerto Rican doctor's

Quebranta huesos
Led to backbone fever
While a signatory to the American Declaration

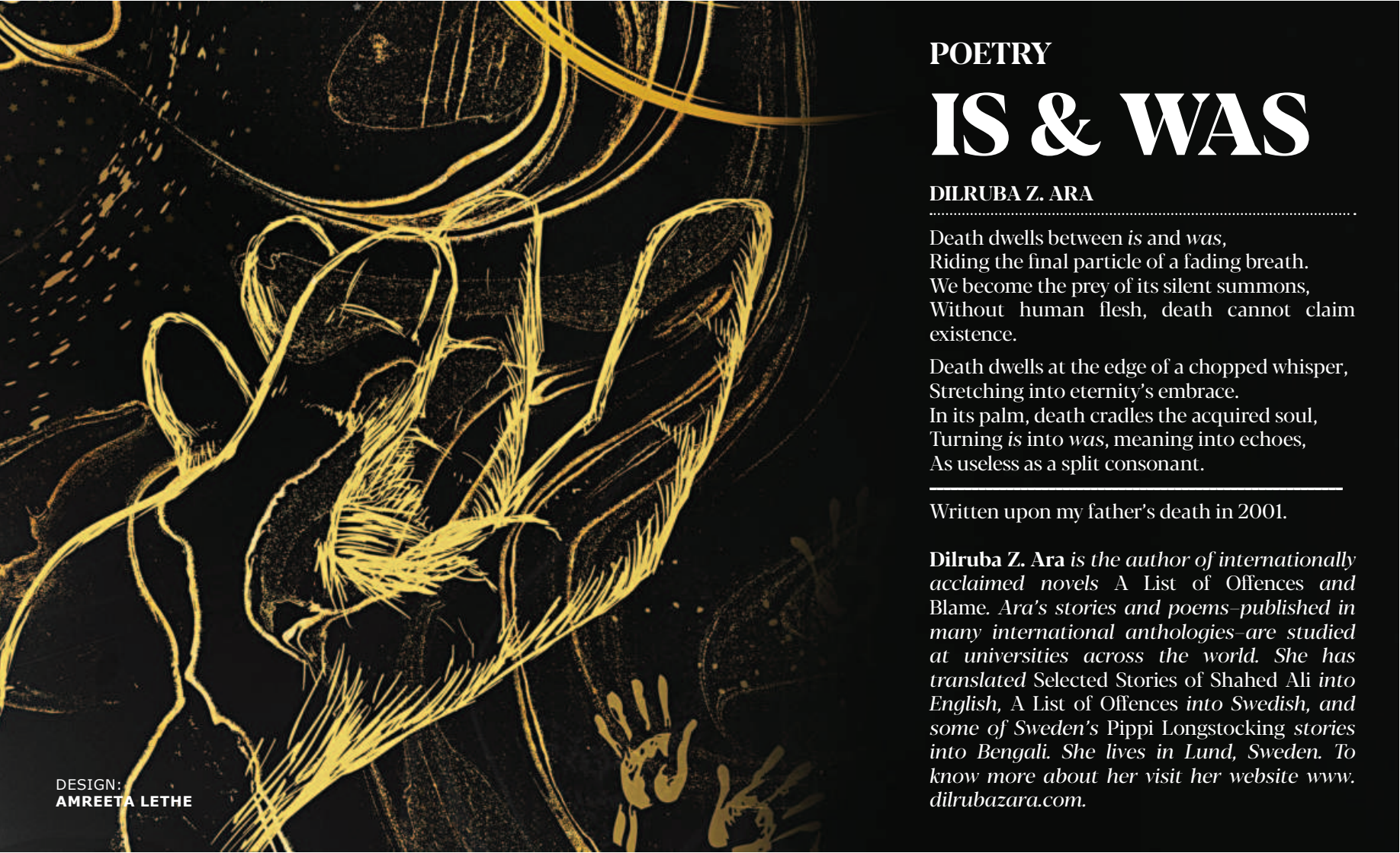
Of Independence
Suggested break heart fever
For the aftermath of fatigue and depression—

Such poetry in pain!
I'll spare you the phenomenology
Of my possession

But if you hated—really hated—someone
And wished on them
The pepo of dengue—

Of backbone—
Break heart—fever
I think I'd understand

Kaiser Haq is a Bangladeshi poet, translator, essayist, critic and academic. He is the Dean of the School of English and Humanities, University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB).



DESIGN:
AMREETA LETHE

POETRY

IS & WAS

DILRUBA Z. ARA

Death dwells between is and was,
Riding the final particle of a fading breath.
We become the prey of its silent summons,
Without human flesh, death cannot claim
existence.

Death dwells at the edge of a chopped whisper,
Stretching into eternity's embrace.
In its palm, death cradles the acquired soul,
Turning is into was, meaning into echoes,
As useless as a split consonant.

Written upon my father's death in 2001.

Dilruba Z. Ara is the author of internationally acclaimed novels A List of Offences and Blame. Ara's stories and poems published in many international anthologies are studied at universities across the world. She has translated Selected Stories of Shahed Ali into English, A List of Offences into Swedish, and some of Sweden's Pippi Longstocking stories into Bengali. She lives in Lund, Sweden. To know more about her visit her website www.dilrubazara.com.

SCALING UP

Evolving PR strategies for growing startups



Take the case of AirBnB, a company that now stands as a testament to the power of creative PR. In its formative years, AirBnB sidestepped traditional marketing avenues. Instead, it employed ingenious, cost-effective strategies to generate buzz and build a loyal user base.

SANJIDA TANNY

In the dynamic world of business, startups can be visualised as young saplings, full of potential, aspiring to mature into towering oaks. Their journey from a fledgling idea to a robust enterprise is riddled with challenges and opportunities. Central to navigating this transformative journey is the role of Communications and Public Relations (PR). Far from being mere tools in the promotional toolkit, they serve as foundational elements underpinning success, facilitating growth, and ensuring that the brand message resonates with the intended audience.

The early days: Harnessing ingenuity

Every early-stage startup faces the daunting task of carving out its niche, establishing its services, and making its presence felt in an often crowded marketplace. These initial steps are crucial, setting the tone for future growth and market acceptance. However, despite their soaring ambitions and the pressing need to make an impact, many startups grapple with financial constraints. Traditional advertising and PR campaigns, with their associated costs, might be out of reach.

This is where the power of innovative PR comes into play, acting as the catalyst for growth. While these nascent companies might lack substantial financial resources, they are invariably rich in ingenuity, passion, and a drive to make a difference. There are numerous cost-effective ways to garner media attention and generate buzz. Guerrilla PR tactics, for instance,

can create a significant impact without a hefty price tag. Directly engaging with journalists and bloggers, crafting compelling stories about the brand, and leveraging platforms like social media can amplify a brand's visibility without draining its resources.

Take the case of AirBnB, a company that now stands as a testament to the power of creative PR. In its formative years, AirBnB sidestepped traditional marketing avenues. Instead, it employed ingenious, cost-effective strategies to generate buzz and build a loyal user base. They harnessed the potential of user-generated content, coupled with compelling visuals, to narrate authentic stories and foster a sense of community. According to AirBnB, hosts equipped with professional photos can potentially earn up to 20% more than their counterparts. Their strategic use of social media, particularly through the hashtag #airbnb, cultivated a vibrant, engaged community around their brand, driving organic growth.

Thought leadership: Building trust and credibility

Central to any effective PR strategy, especially for startups, is the nurturing of thought leadership. By positioning key team members as industry experts and sharing unique insights, startups can cultivate trust and credibility not just with partners and investors, but also with their target audience. This strategy not only bridges the trust deficit inherent in new ventures but also propels sales and fosters loyalty.

Two instrumental avenues for establishing

thought leadership are guest blogging and speaking engagements. Guest blogging on reputable platforms allows startups to disseminate their insights, showcase expertise, and reach a broader audience. Speaking engagements, on the other hand, offer a more personal touch. They allow startups to interact directly with potential clients, partners, and industry peers, forging valuable connections and positioning themselves as industry frontrunners.

Transition and transformation

As startups transition from early to mid-stage, they encounter a new set of challenges and complexities. The narrative and strategies that once served them in their infancy must evolve to address the demands of a burgeoning customer base, heightened competition, and the multifaceted challenges that accompany growth.

While some companies might instinctively seek to expand their PR teams in response to these challenges, a more nuanced approach might be in order. A lean, agile PR team, harnessing the power of technology, data analytics, and strategic partnerships, can be equally, if not more, effective. In this era of digital transformation, it's imperative for startups to set clear objectives, measure outcomes meticulously, and refine strategies based on tangible results.

DIY PR strategies, although effective in the initial stages, might not yield the same results as the company grows and the market landscape shifts. With an expanding customer base, heightened competition, and the diverse challenges accompanying growth, startups must recalibrate their PR efforts. Embracing content marketing, participating actively in industry events, fostering relationships with influencers, and leveraging emerging digital platforms become paramount.

Moreover, as PR strategies scale and become more intricate, collaboration across various internal departments becomes inevitable. Marketing, sales, product development, and customer service all play pivotal roles in shaping the brand narrative. However, it's essential to remember that a structured, cohesive approach doesn't necessarily require a vast team. What's crucial is a clear vision, strategic alignment, and the agility to adapt.

The journey of a startup is exhilarating, filled with highs and lows. As they evolve, so should their strategies, especially in the realm of PR. For startups poised for growth, it's not just about scaling operations but ensuring that their PR strategies are in tandem, resonating with their evolving brand ethos and market position.

Sanjida Tanny heads the Communications department at Wagely, a financial wellness startup. She was the former Lead Storyteller at ShopUp, a B2B commerce startup.

JOBS SPOTLIGHT

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION
Programme and Operations Officer

DEADLINE: 8 October

ELIGIBILITY

- Master's or equivalent in business administration, international development, social sciences, development studies, or related field
- Ability to effectively work with government, workers and employers, non-government organisations, and UN agencies
- Prior experience working in a multicultural environment and demonstrating gender-sensitive and non-discriminatory behaviour

MINIMUM EXPERIENCE: 5 years

Apply through the Careers section of the International Labour Organization's official website.



WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

National Professional Officer (EPI, Vaccine Safety & Quality)

DEADLINE: 10 October

ELIGIBILITY:

- Medical degree (MBBS) from a recognised university
- Proficiency in grasping the fundamentals of public health, health systems, and immunisation services
- Should have expertise in conducting training sessions and facilitating interactions

MINIMUM EXPERIENCE: 5 years

Apply through the Careers section of the UN official website.



RTI INTERNATIONAL

Communications Manager

DEADLINE: N/A

ELIGIBILITY:

- Bachelor's/Master's degree plus relevant experience in the communications field
- Must have knowledge of communication strategies, including social media campaigns, marketing, and event promotion
- Should have experience working on communications on USAID projects, with an understanding of USAID branding

MINIMUM EXPERIENCE: 6-8 years

Apply through RTI International's official LinkedIn page or through the Careers section of their website.



Grab reportedly in talks to grab Foodpanda's business in Asia

Delivery Hero, the Berlin-based parent company of Foodpanda, has confirmed ongoing discussions about a partial sale of its Asian operations. Singapore's tech giant, Grab, is reportedly the front-runner in this potential acquisition. While the exact value of the deal remains undisclosed, market insiders speculate that the transaction could exceed 1 billion euros for the Foodpanda brand across several Southeast Asian nations.

Following this revelation, shares of the online takeaway food company soared, registering a significant 13.5% increase, reflecting the market's positive reception of the news.

The proposed sale would encompass the Foodpanda brand in seven countries: Singapore, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Cambodia, Myanmar, and Laos. However, both companies have emphasised that these discussions are preliminary, and there's no guarantee of a conclusive deal.

If this acquisition materialises, it would solidify Grab's dominance in the Southeast Asian food delivery sector. Currently, Grab holds a commanding 50% or more of the market share, with Foodpanda being its primary competitor, holding between 30 to 40% depending on the country. This move could potentially position Grab as the undisputed 'Google of food deliveries' in the region.

Despite its significant market presence, Delivery Hero has struggled financially since its listing on the German stock exchange in 2017. The company has yet to turn a profit and is reportedly seeking avenues for capital amidst a challenging global financial climate characterised by high interest rates and bearish stock market sentiments.

Conversely, Grab, while also not yet profitable, boasts a robust financial position with approximately S\$6.7 billion in cash and liquid investments. The company, listed on the New York Stock Exchange, reported a revenue of US\$567 million for the quarter ending June 30.

Predominantly driven by its food delivery segment, Grab has also witnessed substantial growth in its ride-sharing operations across Southeast Asia and anticipates breaking even on an adjusted core earnings basis in the forthcoming quarter.

Fostering professional relationships as a young leader

In the bustling hubs of London and beyond, the corporate landscape is undergoing a significant transformation. Young leaders, with their fresh perspectives and innovative approaches, are emerging at the forefront of industries. Yet, amidst this wave of change, one challenge remains consistent for them: building and fostering professional relationships. For many young leaders, the task of establishing credibility and trust in a world dominated by experienced professionals can be particularly daunting.

The importance of relationships in the professional realm cannot be understated. A study by the Harvard Business Review in 2020 highlighted that 58% of professionals attribute their job success to networking. This statistic underscores the pivotal role that connections play in career advancement. Moreover, individuals with robust professional networks are not only 45% more likely to be promoted but also 51% more likely to achieve high performance in their roles.

However, the journey is not without its hurdles. Being younger in a leadership position can sometimes be misconstrued as a sign of inexperience or lack of knowledge. This perception can be a significant barrier. A revealing survey by the Institute of Leadership & Management found that 37% of young leaders felt their age was an impediment to building professional relationships.

So, how can young leaders navigate this intricate maze of professional networking and relationship-building?

Active listening emerges as a cornerstone. The foundation of any relationship, be it personal or professional, is understanding. By prioritising listening over speaking,



young leaders not only gain invaluable insights but also demonstrate respect and empathy. This simple act can go a long way in establishing trust and rapport with colleagues and peers.

Mentorship is another powerful tool in the arsenal of young leaders. A survey by the American Society for Training and Development highlighted a compelling fact: 70% of Fortune 500 CEOs attributed their success to having a mentor during their early career. By actively seeking mentors, young leaders can gain guidance, learn from others' experiences, and even avoid potential pitfalls in their journey.

Continuous learning is the fuel that drives the engine of success. A report by LinkedIn shed light on the fact that 94% of employees would have a longer tenure at a company if it invested in their learning and development. By

showing a commitment to personal and team growth, young leaders can foster relationships built on mutual growth and understanding.

In the age of digital personas and online branding, authenticity remains a prized trait. A study by Deloitte brought to the fore that 83% of millennials believe businesses achieve greater success when they operate authentically. By being genuine in their interactions and staying true to their values, young leaders can build deeper and more meaningful connections.

The digital age also offers a plethora of tools to aid in relationship-building. Platforms like LinkedIn have become instrumental in this endeavour. According to a 2021 report by the platform, 80% of its members believe that professional networking is crucial to career success. By leveraging such

platforms, young leaders can connect with a global network of professionals, share insights, and even collaborate on projects.

Industry events, including seminars, webinars, and conferences, offer a golden opportunity. By attending these events, young leaders can meet peers and seniors in their field, facilitating organic relationship-building. These interactions can lead to collaborations, partnerships, or even mentorship opportunities.

Lastly, fostering a culture of feedback and open communication can be instrumental. A Gallup poll highlighted that managers who received feedback on their strengths saw an 8.9% increase in profitability. By encouraging open dialogue, young leaders can not only improve but also build trust within their teams.



Scientist invents instant transmission to alleviate VIP movement-related frustration

It is a common sight to see hordes of people waiting on the side of the road as VIP movement restricts their access to overbridges and sidewalks. In the past, the police would have to deal with the frustration of these angry throngs of people, but now, those days are over.

JEAN PAUL SATIRE

Dr Impossibru Patwary, a physicist working at the Chetona Innovation Labs at Palashi University, claims to have invented a device that can help individuals transmit their bodies instantly across short to medium distances.

The scientist held a demonstration for journalists and enthusiasts in his underground laboratory this week, and everyone waited with bated breath as the scientist showed them how his device works.

The device is a metallic L-shaped tube, with a switch near the bend of the L. The longer end of the device is pointed at the subject's head, and once the switch is pulled, or rather pressed, the subject is instantly transported to a preset destination defined on the device.

"This technology is patented under my name, thus the inner workings will remain a secret. All I can say is, I have taken the help of AI to further accelerate some accelerated

particles to achieve my goal. It's like ChatGPT," Dr Patwary explained, and everyone nodded, as if they knew what was going on.

The device has been made available to the police department, who will immediately implement it in day-to-day use as increasing VIP movement has frustrated city dwellers in the recent past. It is a common sight to see hordes of people waiting on the side of the road as VIP movement restricts their access to overbridges and sidewalks. In the past, the police would have to deal with the frustration of these angry throngs of people, but now, those days are over.

Dr Patwary showed videos of recent instances of VIP movement, where angry pedestrians were taken aside by policemen, and the L-shaped metallic tube was held to their head, and once the switch was pressed, they disappeared! The scientist claims this was proof that his instant transmission was successful.

When asked why there was no proof of the angry pedestrians arriving at their desired destinations, the scientist said, "Look, everyone wants to go to different places, so it's difficult for us to find that proof. All I can say is we made sure they went somewhere they are happy, you could say they are all in a better place."

Another reporter asked the scientist why this wasn't made available to the VIPs themselves, as that may have been an easier solution to the problem at hand. To this, the scientist replied, "The VIPs actually enjoy seeing people waiting for them on the sides of the road. It reminds them of the public they are supposed to serve, and strengthens their sense of duty. But thank you, for your wonderful question. We wanted to do a live demonstration of my invention today. Why don't you volunteer, sir? Yes you, the person who asked that last question."

Man cuts down on junk food only to be shunned by society

NUTBOLTU

Society has once again done what it was created to do: shun the minority. Young Facebook reels entrepreneur Rayhan Haythere is upset because society has recently been upset with him.

We wanted to know who is more upset and whether any of it really matters now that price of eggs is starting to stabilise.

"I have recently decided I need to cut down on fast food. Junk food. Food made by friends with food businesses. And the result? People have accused me of dieting. It is a horrible accusation. Worse than that time I was accused of plagiarising all my university reports," cried a distraught Rayhan.

It seems in our glorious city of Dhaka, the number one activity is to go out and meet someone at a food shop. Families solve property disputes at a food shop. Romance happens and dies at food shops. Sometimes at food carts. Frankly, it is all we have for entertainment and for social engagement.

Unfortunately, some people like Rayhan are seen to be bucking the trend. They want more out of life which goes against everything others want to do. People like Rayhan want to cut down on junk food only to eat less, nothing more. It also saves them a lot of money. Did you know that one plate of kachchi is so expensive now that it can feed an entire family of cats in Somalia for two months?



This man asked us not to show his face because he was ashamed of what he held in his hand.

But is society right to make such wild accusations such as dieting?

"I'm a man. Men don't diet," explained Towhid Firoz, student at some BBA place.

"Dieting suggests we are weak. It hints that otherwise we may die from various ailments like a heart attack, diabetes, poor oral hygiene, and bad grammar during texting," Firoz further explained.

Society on the other hand claimed that eating less junk food simply messes with the country's economic growth. "If you do not eat more junk food, who will help the food, medical and funeral industry? Do this for your economy. Stop dieting," implored Shomity Ahmed, standing committee member of The Society.

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He's stealing my moves, cricket chief says after captain's controversial interview

HAAT E HARI CORRESPONDENT

A recent TV interview by a current captain of a certain international cricket team has taken a drama-addicted fanbase by storm, and the chief of that particular country's cricket board is insecure because he suspects the interview was a clear sign of the captain's plan to take over his job.

The interview was aired just before a Major International Tournament. The captain smiled maniacally through the chat with a local journalist, and apparently said everything possible in each answer.

It was a Schrodinger's interview of sorts: depending on which point you happened to stumble upon the interview, the captain would be saying one thing, and then the opposite at another point.

Also, it is worth mentioning here that this correspondent may not be totally aware of what exactly the Schrodinger's cat thing entails.

Anyway, back to the cricket chief and the cricket captain. The chief was fuming after the interview aired.

"I thought only I get to do these things," he said yesterday in another TV interview, albeit one that didn't quite set the world alight like the captain's one.

"First of all, TV interviews are my thing, everyone knows that. Yes, he may be younger and he has actually played cricket, and actually knows cricket, but I am the original when it comes to saying whatever comes to my mind when a TV camera is pointed at me," said cricket chief, who we are not naming because there has been trouble in the past, and because none of this is actually true (#disclaimer).

"Think about the things he said. When asked about things that none of us owned up to, he talked about them freely as if all of it was common knowledge, then he ended with 'if that has actually happened!' That's brilliant! The captain gets to have his say



The TV camera makes a certain country's cricket chief say weird things, and now the captain has started saying even stranger things.

PHOTO: SAM MCGHEE

under the sun, quoting other people selectively, another of my moves. The captain then contradicted himself, saying that it was not right for his predecessor to quit the captaincy mere months before the Major International Tournament, but then himself admitting that he tried to resign 10 days before the team left for the tournament. That is classic me! Remember how I said I respect the players, then went on to disrespect them in the next breath? I do this deliberately to make myself more compelling, like a car crash, to the viewer."

The cricket chief said what took the cake was the captain's evident disrespect for a fellow player. "He basically called his longtime teammate, one-time friend, recent enemy a child! And he was talking about a peer. Even I, a person above all of these players, would have thought twice about saying that, and he did that with a psychotic smile on his face. That has me convinced that the captain is gunning for my job after he retires. He has all the attributes."

When asked whether the captain will get away with any of this, cricket chief said, "I'm not going to do anything. What if that angers him and he gives an interview about me?"

"First of all, TV interviews are my thing, everyone knows that. Yes, he may be younger and he has actually played cricket, and actually knows cricket, but I am the original when it comes to saying whatever comes to my mind when a TV camera is pointed at me."

on this topic – in this instance the issue of another cricketer wanting to opt out of the Major International Tournament after I called him and said he should miss the first match – but the captain can also say that he actually has no knowledge of the issue just

by saying, 'if such a thing happened'. "You know who came up with that? Me! Hi, I was the problem, it was me!" Then the cricket chief controlled himself. Or as much as that is possible. "Then he went on to say everything