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Gaza bleeds as Israel pounds enclave

20 children among 370 killed in Gaza so far in retaliatory strikes; death toll on Israeli side reaches 600

AGENCIES

Israel battered Gaza yesterday after suffering its bloodiest attack in decades, as Hamas fighters rampaged through Israeli towns killing 600 and abducting dozens more.

Israeli air strikes hit housing blocks, tunnels, a mosque and homes of Hamas officials in Gaza, killing more than 370 people, including 20 children.

Gaza was hammered by Israeli air strikes on 800 targets ahead of what many feared may be a looming ground invasion as Israel formally declared war on Hamas yesterday.

In a sign the conflict could spread beyond blockaded Gaza, Israel and Lebanon's Iran-backed Hezbollah militia exchanged artillery and rocket fire, while in Alexandria, two Israeli tourists were shot dead along with their Egyptian guide.

In southern Israel, Hamas gunmen were still fighting Israeli security forces 24 hours after a surprise, multi-pronged assault of rocket barrages and bands of gunmen who overran army bases and invaded border towns.

- ➊ Israel formally declares war on Hamas, ground invasion looming in Gaza
- ➋ Militants took 'dozens' of Israeli hostages to Gaza: reports
- ➌ Over 20,000 in Gaza sought refuge in UN-run schools
- ➍ Hezbollah says its 'guns and rockets' stand with Hamas

Israel's military, which faces questions over its failure to prevent the attack, said it had regained control of most infiltration points along security barriers, killed hundreds of attackers and taken dozens more prisoners.

"We're going to be attacking Hamas severely and this is going to be a long, long haul," an Israeli military spokesperson told a briefing with reporters.

According to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel's "first phase" of retaliation has ended with the "destruction of the majority of the enemy forces that penetrated our

territory."

It will be followed by an "offensive formation," he said.

His government has decided to stop the supply of electricity, fuel and goods to Gaza.

The military said it had deployed tens of thousands of soldiers around Gaza, a narrow strip that is home to 2.3 million Palestinians, and was starting to evacuate all Israelis living around the frontier of the territory.

The attack by Hamas launched at dawn on Saturday represented the biggest and deadliest incursion into Israel since Egypt and Syria launched a sudden assault in an effort to reclaim lost territory in the Yom Kippur war 50 years ago.

At least 600 people were killed, according to reports by Israeli TV stations. Israel has not released an official toll.

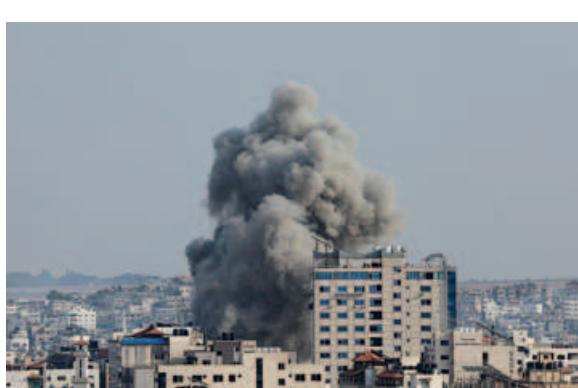
The conflict could undermine US-backed moves towards normalising relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia - a security realignment that

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(From top, clockwise) The ruins of a building destroyed in Israeli strikes in Gaza city; relatives carry the bodies of children killed in the strikes on Rafah; and smoke rises from a building following air strikes on Gaza yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP, REUTERS



Kohli, Rahul steer India

REUTERS, Chennai

India launched their home World Cup campaign with a six-wicket victory over Australia after Virat Kohli and KL Rahul guided them through a jittery run chase on Sunday.

The hosts probably expected their chase to be a cakewalk after their spin-heavy attack bundled out the five-time champions for 199 with three deliveries left in the Australian innings.

India, however, made a shocking start to their reply with three of their top four batters falling for ducks -- for the first time in an ODI -- inside two overs.

Dropped on 12 by Mitchell Marsh off Josh Hazlewood, Kohli went on to make 85 as he masterminded yet another successful chase for India.

His partner in the 165-run fourth-wicket stand, KL Rahul, produced a chancless knock of 97 not out as India reached the target in 41.2 overs.

Australia would be particularly unhappy with their batting as no one reached fifty though David Warner (41) and Steve Smith (46) got decent starts after Pat Cummins elected to bat.



Not living up to hype as yet

AL-AMIN

There was one thing common after the first five games involving all the 10 participating teams in this World Cup -- a lack of contest.



New Zealand thumped holders England by nine wickets in what had promised to be a blockbuster opening game in Ahmedabad after a never-experienced-before nail-biting final between

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KL Rahul and Hardik Pandya embrace each other after guiding India to a six-wicket victory against Australia in their opening World Cup fixture at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS



Experiencing cricket like never before:
priceless



Money launderers enemies of nation

Observes court sentencing PK Halder to 22yrs in jail for money laundering, possessing illegal wealth

CHAITANYA CHANDRA HALDER and EMRUL HASAN BAPPI

crore to Canada.

PK Halder, now in an Indian jail awaiting trial also for money laundering, will serve the jail time one after another.

Judge Mohammad Nazrul Islam of the Special Judge's Court 10 of Dhaka in his verdict called upon all to resist money launderers.

"They [money launderers] should be collectively resisted for the sake of national interest and country's ongoing economic development. Consequently, accused Proshanta Kumar Halder deserves no leniency for the greater interest of the state," the judge said.

The accused have illegally built second homes abroad as they do not have any love for the country, he added.

The court also fined PK Halder, arrested in India on May 14 last year, Tk 1,044.11 crore.

Yesterday's verdict is the first

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Don't want to see judiciary politicised in any manner

Says chief justice

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan yesterday said the judiciary and courts should not be politicised in any manner.



In light of the constitution, let the judicial administration be transparent, independent, free from corruption, and congruent with the idea of social justice," he said.

"A corruption-free judiciary is the pride of a country and nation. While discharging my duties, I will try my best to ensure that the judiciary is corruption-free and follow the well-thought-out path of my fellow learned judges and learned lawyers. I want to make a long term judicial plan to modernise

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

IMF mission worried about state banks' default loans

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The visiting IMF staff mission yesterday raised questions about the swelling defaulted loans in the state-run banks in their meeting with the financial institutions division.

At the end of June, the six banks' classified loans stood at Tk 74,454 crore, which is 25 percent of total outstanding loans, according to the central bank's latest published data. Six months earlier, it was Tk 56,460 crore, which is 20.28 percent of their total credit.

The financial institutions division, led by secretary SM Salim Ullah, told the IMF mission that the defaulted loans have soared after the relaxed accounting on loan classification extended during the pandemic was withdrawn.

The mission, led by its chief Rahul Anand, sought the government's plan to bring down the defaulted loans in the state banks and the capital restoration process.

The IMF team also enquired about the banks' recent performance, risk management, planned reforms and recapitalisation.

The Bangladesh Bank and the financial institutions division are regularly monitoring the six banks and have set some targets to rebuild their health.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

CAPITAL SHORTFALL IN Q2 15 banks fall short of Tk 33,744cr

MD MEHEDI HASAN

A record 15 banks, including seven state-run lenders, faced capital shortfall in the second quarter of 2023, in yet another indication of the worrying state of the financial sector.

Together, they logged in capital shortfall of Tk 33,744 crore in the quarter that ended on June 30, according to the latest data from Bangladesh Bank. This is the second-highest volume of capital shortfall seen by the banking sector. The highest one - Tk 34,640 crore - was recorded in the last quarter of 2021.

As per Basel III, which is the international regulatory framework for banks, the minimum capital adequacy ratio (CAR) is 10.5 percent with an added 2.5 percent conservation buffer. The 15 banks failed to maintain the minimum CAR.

Bangladesh's banking sector has maintained the lowest CAR in South Asia, according to the central bank's Financial Stability Report 2022. At the end of June, the banking sector's CAR was 11.19 percent.

In the second quarter of the year, there were four new entrants other than the usual suspects of BASIC, Agrani, Janata, Rupali, Sonali, Bangladesh Krishi, Rajshahi Krishi Unnayan, National, Padma and ICB Islamic Bank.

The three-year-old Bengal Commercial Bank -- whose chairman and vice-chairman are Mahbubul Alam and Md Jashin Uddin, the current and immediate past presidents of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce & Industries respectively -- logged in a capital shortfall of Tk 87.93 crore.



SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

TCB to sell onion at nearly one-third of market price

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) will start selling onion at Tk 35 per kilogramme -- nearly one-third of the existing market price -- to family cardholders in Dhaka.

Onion was selling for Tk 85-95 in Dhaka's retail markets yesterday, which is 125 percent higher than the price last year, according to TCB data.

Each of the cardholders will be able to buy two kg of onions at a time, the state-run agency said in a press release yesterday.

The sale of the cooking ingredient will continue depending on the arrival of imported onions, it said.

Former Jubo League leader shot, hacked to death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Chittagong*

A former Jubo League leader was shot and hacked to death by unidentified criminals in Rangunia upazila of Chittagong yesterday.

Manjur Hossain, 35, of Sanirvar area, was the former publication affairs secretary of Rangunia union Jubo league, said police.

His friend was also injured in the attack and admitted to the upazila health complex, Asaduzzaman Rubel, additional superintendent (crime) of police in Chittagong district, told The Daily Star.

The incident took place in the Shantiniketan area of Rangunia municipality, when criminals shot Manjur first and then hacked him indiscriminately with sharp weapons, leaving him injured critically, he said.

He was taken to Rangunia Upazila Health Complex, where doctors declared him dead, he said.

The reason behind the killing could not be ascertained immediately, he said, adding that police are trying to arrest the killers.

Local sources said Manjur and one of his friends were sitting at a roadside shop when a group of miscreants opened fire on them.

When Manjur fell to the ground, the criminals hacked him indiscriminately, they added.

Gaza bleeds

FROM PAGE 1

could threaten Palestinian hopes of self-determination and hem in Hamas' main backer, Iran.

Tehran's other main regional ally, Lebanon's Hezbollah, fought a war with Israel in 2006 and said its "guns and rockets" stand with Hamas. "We recommend Hezbollah not to come into this and I don't think they will," Israel's army spokesperson said.

The debris from Saturday's attack still lay around southern Israeli towns and border communities yesterday and Israelis were reeling from the sight of bloodied bodies lying on suburban streets, in cars and in their homes.

Palestinian fighters escaped back into Gaza with more than 100 hostages, including soldiers and civilians. Hamas said it would issue a statement later yesterday saying how many captives it had seized.

The capture of so many Israelis, some filmed being pulled through security checkpoints or driven, bleeding, into Gaza, adds another layer of complication for Netanyahu after previous episodes when hostages were exchanged for many Palestinian prisoners.

Hamas fired more rocket salvos into Israel yesterday, with air raid sirens sounding across the south, and the Israeli military said it would combine an evacuation of border areas with a search for more gunmen.

Israeli air strikes on Gaza began soon after the Hamas attack and continued overnight and into yesterday, destroying the group's offices and training camps, but also houses and other buildings.

Gaza's health ministry said 370 people had been killed and 2,200 wounded in the retaliatory strikes.

More than 20,000 Palestinians in Gaza have sought refuge in schools run by the United Nations, the UN's Palestinian refugee agency said.

US President Joe Biden has voiced "rock solid and unwavering" support for Israel and warned "against any other party hostile to Israel seeking advantage in this situation".

US Secretary of state Antony Blinken told CNN "we have reports that several Americans were killed" and others missing and "we're working to verify those reports".



DHAKA AIRPORT THIRD TERMINAL

Promising great travel experiences

RBR

An airport is like a mirror of a nation, where the image it reflects says a lot about the country to the citizens of the world. After being harassed and traumatised by the snail-paced efficiency of the second terminal, our new third terminal at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport is a facelift we badly needed.

The architecture of the terminal focuses on volume and minimal ornamentation with the use of modern amenities. The structure goes with established architectural styles of recent times. Celebrated architect, Rohani Baharin, who played a leading role in the development of Singapore Changi Airport Terminal 3, designed HSIA's third terminal, with construction undertaken by Mitsubishi and Fujita of Japan and Samsung of Korea.

Every day, while commuting from Uttara to Farmgate, I saw how high-paced the construction work was being done. The contemporary terminal, with its three storied terminal building, is being constructed with a floor space of 230,000 sqm.

The terminal's working space lengthwise is over 750 metres with 115 check-in counters, 64 departure and 64 arrival immigration desks, 27 hold baggage X-ray screener machines, 11

body scanners, 25 central departure security screening, 16 conveyor luggage belts for arrivals, 8 departure carousal belts, 12 boarding bridges, and 4 travelators.

What is really impressive about this mega-project, it addresses the callous woes of our current air travel. There are stories of waiting hours to get the luggage in both the domestic and international terminals. Among the troubles we faced with terminal 2, the faulty parking facility and



connectedness to the town side were the worst.

After that painful luggage wait, you needed to lose another 45 minute for your car to come to the arrival parking lot or to avail of a reliable taxi service. Then of course road traffic, considering all the time wasted, it takes you much longer to reach home than your actual flight travel hour to arrive in Dhaka.

Hopefully, with the construction of this new terminal, all these will be

addressed. The third terminal can accommodate 1,230 vehicles at any given time in its multi storied car park. There is also an access tunnel that links with the First Dhaka Elevated Expressway and with Mass Rapid Transit; there is a network of roads to connect terminal 3 with the adjacent Dhaka-Mymensingh Highway.

For me, the main attraction of air travel is the duty-free shopping experience. Needless to say, terminal-2 neither had elaborate duty-free shopping areas nor a decent food court. However, terminal 3 is equipped with modern amenities and vouches to provide seamless operations and ensure the comfort of passengers with good food and a great shopping experience.

Also, the project, after its full implementation, is expected to significantly enhance the passenger service and cargo handling capacity of the airport.

Terminal-3 is scheduled to be fully operational by December 2024, after fine-tuning all the details needed to ensure a working international airport terminal.

I, along with millions of others, am in high spirits and waiting eagerly to see our aesthetically pleasing airport terminal run smoothly and bring us good fortune in regard to trade and uplifting the image of a country.

Couple, infant hurt in N'ganj gas blast

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Narayanganj*

A couple and their 19 month old infant suffered burn injuries in an explosion in the kitchen of their house in Narayanganj's Araihazar upazila early yesterday.

The injured are Arizit, 35, an NGO employee, his wife Rinku, 28, and their son Kabbo.

Their neighbours suspected that the explosion originated from a gas cylinder leak.

They were admitted to the Sheikh Hasina National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery.

Doctors at the Emergency Department of the Burn Institute stated that Rinku's condition was critical, with 80 percent burns on her body. Her husband suffered 14 percent burns, and the child 20 percent.

The incident occurred around 3:00am at Nagerchar area when Rinku went to the kitchen to heat up some milk for the child.

As she lit the cooking stove, an explosion took place, spreading fire in the house located on the ground floor, said neighbour Arman Ali Molla quoting the victim Arizit.

Hearing their screams and seeing the fire, neighbours rescued the three from the house and took them to hospital, he said.

The neighbours also put out the fire.

MEGHNA TRAWLER CAPSIZE 3 more bodies found, 2 still missing

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Munshiganj*

Three more bodies were recovered 48 hours after a trawler capsized in the Meghna near Gazaria ghat of Munshiganj.

The victims were identified as Sabbir Hossain, 40, Jannatul Marwa Sabiha, 8, daughter of Kazi Burhanuddin, and Mawa, 6, daughter of Sumana Akter, who was also killed in the tragedy. All were residents of Munshiganj's Gazaria.

Jannatul and Sabbir's bodies were recovered in the morning from the river near Shatral of Chadpur. Mawa's body was recovered in the afternoon off the Char Kishoreganj ferry ghat.

With yesterday's recoveries, two children still remained missing, said police.

The trawler with 11 passengers, which was touring Meghna, capsized after being hit by a Narayanganj bound bulk carrier.

Bangladeshi man dies in Malaysian factory

STAR REPORT

A Bangladeshi national was killed after falling into a mixing machine at a factory in Klang, Malaysia, yesterday.

Selangor Fire and Rescue Department Assistant Director Ahmad Mukhlis Mukhtar said they responded to the distress call at a factory in Bandar Sultan Sulaiman.

"Medical officers confirmed the death at the scene," he said, adding that documents showed that the victim had a temporary employment pass as a construction worker.

Source: The Star, a member of the Asia News Network (ANN)

Money launderers enemies of nation

FROM PAGE 1

instance of a Dhaka court convicting PK Halder, who faces 40 more graft and money laundering cases in Bangladesh.

A talented citizen can play a role in building the nation by using his talent. On the other hand, if he gets involved in criminal circles, he becomes dangerous for the nation.

PK Halder is a shining example of that," the judge said.

The court also sentenced 13 others to seven years' imprisonment and fined them various amounts of money on two counts -- assisting PK Halder in money laundering and helping him possess the illegal wealth. They were given four years on the first count and three years on the second count.

They are Sukumar Mridha, a lawyer for PK Halder, and his daughter Anindita Mridha, PK Halder's mother Lilabati Halder and

brother Prithik Kumar Halder; and associates -- Abantika Baral, Shankha Bepari, Purnima Rani Halder, Amitav Adhikari, Rajib Som, Subrata Das, Ananga Mohon Roy, Uttam Kumar Mistry and Swapna Kumar Mistry.

Among the convicts, Sukumar, Anindita, Abantika and Shankha are now behind bars, while the remaining 10, including PK Halder, are absconding.

All accused other than PK Halder will serve the jail sentences concurrently.

The punishment of the fugitive convicts will be effective from the day of their arrest or their surrender before the court, said the judgement.

The period during which Sukumar, Anindita, Abantika and Shankha were in jail custody would be deducted from the jail term.

The court confiscated four flats, 6,419 decimals of land, 11 vehicles and Tk 1.87 crore deposited in 41 accounts

of various banks. The properties and the money were owned by PK Halder and two other convicts.

The court directed the convicts to pay their fines within 60 days, or serve one year's additional rigorous imprisonment.

Prosecution lawyer Mir Ahmed Ali Salam expressed satisfaction over the verdict.

As per the rules, PK Halder and the other absconding accused had no legal representation in the court.

The Anti-Corruption Commission filed the case against PK Halder on January 8, 2020.

Investigation Officer Md Salahuddin, also a deputy director of ACC, on February 10 last year submitted a charge sheet to a Dhaka court against PK Halder and 13 others.

On September 8 last year, the court framed charges against them. As many as 114 prosecution witnesses testified in court against the accused.

Not living up to hype as yet

Not living up to hype as yet

FROM PAGE 1

the two teams at Lord's four years ago.

Pakistan quite predictably thrashed the Netherlands by 81 runs, although the ICC associate member nation were expected to put up a better fight after restricting the former champions to 286.

Bangladesh won the third game by six wickets against an Afghanistan side whose batting collapsed to 156 all out after a good start. Then there were plenty of fireworks in the fourth game where South Africa thrived on three centuries to post a record World Cup total of 428 against Sri Lanka. Despite a blistering 79 from Kusal Mendis, the Lankans lost the game by 102 runs.

The fifth game last night between five-time champions Australia and hosts India promised a cracker. But the game in Chennai failed to live up to its billing after the Aussies were bundled out for 199 against the three-pronged Indian spin attack.

The Aussies gave India an early scare by claiming three wickets for two runs in the first two overs and almost had Virat Kohli, who mistimed a pull shot while on 12. But Mitchell Marsh, who had a forgettable outing with the bat, dropped a sitter.

After that reprieve, India were hardly troubled in reaching the victory target of 200, riding on excellent knocks from Kohli and KL Rahul.

Although the five games are only the beginning of a long 45-match first-round fixture, the early indication suggested that the toss played a role in deciding the results.

In the first four games, the team that won the toss decided to chase a target with the wicket appearing more bat-friendly in the second innings. Three of those were successful, except the Lankans who

were blown away by the brute Proteas force.

Australia are the only team who have opted to bat first on a tricky surface at the MA Chidambaram Stadium, anticipating the wicket to become more bat-friendly in the second innings. But the Aussies saw everything going horribly wrong for them. They were simply outclassed by a versatile Indian spin attack.

The results so far are disappointing for neutral fans, who want competition and close finishes more often than not. However, with the teams settling their nerves after those early jitters, we can only expect the showpiece event to start unfurling all the excitement and magic moments sooner rather than later.

Kohli, Rahul steer India

FROM PAGE 1

Defending a paltry total, Australia's pace attack decided to fight fire with fire and Starc set the tone by removing Ishan Kishan for a first-ball duck.

India's poor start became a veritable nightmare as Josh Hazlewood began with a double-wicket maiden.

Hazlewood trapped Rohit lbw with his third ball and Shreyas Iyer with the third Indian to fall for a duck when he slapped the ball to Warner at short cover.

It could easily have been 20-4 for India had Marsh not dropped Kohli in what proved a costly mistake.

While Kohli absorbed pressure at one end, Rahul released it by hitting Adam Zampa for three boundaries in one over as the batters focused on risk-free accumulation of runs.

Kohli fell to Hazlewood but Rahul held firm to seal India's victory with his second six.

Don't want to see judiciary politicised

FROM PAGE 1

our judicial system and to make it accessible to the general public."

Justice Obaidul Hassan, who was sworn in as the 24th chief justice on September 26, said these in his address to a felicitation programme organised for him by the attorney general's office and the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) at the Chief Justice's Courtroom at the Supreme Court.

"The goal of justice can only be reached through collective and talented efforts made by the judges and lawyers, and thus the dignity of the judiciary will remain untainted."

REQUIREMENTS



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Drives against illegal weapons ahead of polls

Says DMP chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police will conduct special drives to recover illegal weapons ahead of the upcoming national election, said Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner Habibur Rahman yesterday.

"The drive against illegal weapons is a regular activity of the police. However, these operations are intensified on special occasions," he said while speaking at a workshop at Cirdap auditorium in the capital.

If militants want to spoil the election, they will be resisted and police have that capacity, he said.

People's participation, alongside police and media, is needed to eradicate militancy and extremism, he added.

Security measures will be taken ahead of Durga Puja, the commissioner said during a meeting at DMP headquarters.



Students planting trees on the divider along Mirpur Road near Dhanmondi 27 yesterday. Earlier this year, DSAC renovated the road island and in the process felled many trees that existed there. Following protests over the issue, they planted new trees which soon expired. So these students of a nearby private university took things into their own hands and planted the trees.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Rail links to Cox's Bazar, Mongla to open in November

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Cox's Bazar is going to be connected to Chattogram through a railway network on November 12.

Mongla, which has the country's second important sea port, will also come under rail network with Khulna on November 9.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will inaugurate both the projects in person, Mofizur Rahman, additional director general (infrastructure) of Bangladesh Railway, confirmed to The Daily Star yesterday.

The 102km dual gauge line from Chattogram to Cox's Bazar will connect the tourist spot with the rest of the country by rail and will have nine new stations.

The fast-track project, funded by the Asian Development Bank, is being implemented by dividing the line into two parts -- Dohazari to Chakaria and Chakaria to Cox's Bazar.

The government initially planned in 2010 to lay a metre-gauge rail line from Chattogram to Gundhum in Cox's Bazar spending Tk 1,852.35 crore, but later opted to have the dual-gauge line to Cox's Bazar town, which shot up the cost to Tk 18,034.47 crore.

Dhaka to Cox's Bazar train service is also being planned.

Meanwhile, the 63.5km broad gauge rail line between Khulna and Mongla with seven new stations is expected to boost rail connectivity in Bangladesh and trade with India, Nepal and Bhutan.

BANGLADESH-INDIA
Fares of three trains to go up again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Railway is going to hike the fare of three trains to and from India from November 10 due to travel tax and the rise in the US dollar rate.

The fares of the three trains -- Moitree Express, Mitali Express, and Bandhan Express -- will increase by up to Tk 150, according to an order signed by Mihrabur Rashid Khan, deputy director (interchange) of BR, on October 5.

This is the second time in four months that BR is hiking the fare of inter-country trains. On July 1, BR hiked the fares of the three trains between India and Bangladesh by up to Tk 655.

Although the BR circular cited travel tax as one of the two reasons for hiking the fares, the travel tax remains the same at Tk 1,000 that it had set in July after raising it from the previous Tk 500.

394 lives lost on roads last month

16 more than August, shows Road Safety Foundation report

UNB, Dhaka

As many as 394 people died in 398 road accidents across the country last month, according to data compiled by the Road Safety Foundation.

Among the casualties, 48 were women and 53 children. According to the foundation, 378 lives were lost in 403 road accidents in August.

The foundation prepared the report based on information from nine national dailies, seven online news portals, and electronic media, according to a press release. Among the casualties, 151 (38.32 percent) were motorcyclists; 16 (4.06 percent) bus passengers; 15 (3.80 percent) riders of trucks, covered vans, pickups; and 68 (17.25 percent) riders of three-wheelers.

According to the foundation's analysis, 139 (34.92 percent) accidents occurred on national highways, 183 (45.97 percent) on regional roads, 49 (12.31 percent) on rural roads, 22 (5.52 percent) on urban roads, and 5 (1.25 percent) in other places.

The report reveals that in September, Dhaka division saw the highest number of accidents, with 121 reported accidents resulting in 116 fatalities. Sylhet division recorded the lowest number of accidents, with just 20 incidents, while Mymensingh division had the lowest number of fatalities, totaling 23. At least 17 people died and 21 were injured in 23 accidents in Dhaka.

The organisation identified several factors including, reckless driving, slow-moving vehicles on highways, absence of fixed pay and working hours for drivers, and inadequate traffic management.

Regional cooperation can deter global powers

Security analysts tell event on increasing geostrategic influence in Indo-Pacific region

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Security analysts have suggested South Asian countries to increase trade and development cooperation among themselves as the global powers' struggle for geostrategic influence is increasing in the Indo-Pacific region.

They were speaking at a session titled "Security Architecture of the New Asia Pacific" on the second day of the three-day Bay of Bengal Conversations organised by the Centre for Governance Studies at a city hotel yesterday.

They said disputes over territories like Ladakh and Arunachal, South China Sea, East China Sea, Korean Peninsula, and Taiwan could intensify unless they are resolved through arbitration.

The possibilities of such conflict escalations have gone up as the Russia-Ukraine war has increased the US-China rivalry, they said. They

cautioned relevant stakeholders against a potential arms race in the region.

"It is the poor who suffer most because of the arms race. So, military is not the solution," said former air commodore Ishaq Ilahi Choudhury.

US-based Hudson Institute Fellow Satoru Nagao said, "While China invests extensively in the military to control maritime areas including the South China Sea and Taiwan, Japan is partnering with the US, and the US is partnering with other countries like Australia to deter China."

"Japan is depending on a network-based security architecture for dealing with China," he said.

Ishfaq Ilahi said China can follow Bangladesh's example of maritime conflict resolution with India and Myanmar.

"An India-China war over Ladakh or Arunachal will affect Bangladesh. Bangladesh will

continue to promote cooperation rather than taking sides," he said.

Despite pressure from global powers, Bangladesh is still maintaining a balance. Bangladeshi ports are gateways for Northeast India, Tibet, Nepal, and Bhutan, which can benefit from the ports of Chattogram, Mongla, and Payra to boost trade, the security analyst said.

Former Indian Army commander Arun K Sahn advised South Asian regional states to prioritise self-reliance and resilience above military intervention.

Despite Indo-China tension, their bilateral trade is worth \$130 billion, while US-China trade is close to \$700 billion. The world today is heavily interdependent, so trade and development should be encouraged, he said.

At the session moderated by Australia's La Trobe University Associate Professor Bec Stratton,

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Ansar Al Islam nayeb-e-amir, 4 others held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Metropolitan Police's Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit on Saturday evening arrested five members of banned militant outfit Ansar Al Islam, including its nayeb-e-amir, from Jatrabari in Dhaka.

The arrestees are Nayeb-e-Amir Sakhawatul Kabir alias Anis alias Rafique, 45, military wing chief of Dhaka region Ihsanur Rahman alias Murad alias Saif, 26, and members Bakhtiar Rahman alias Nazmul, 30, Yusuf Ali Sarker, 31, and Jahedul Islam alias Ashraf, 35, said CTTC Chief Md Asaduzzaman at a press briefing at the DMP Media Centre yesterday.

Two foreign pistols and 15 rounds of bullets were recovered from them.

Asaduzzaman said the arrestees had gathered in Jatrabari to carry out sabotage at different places in Dhaka.

In response to a query from journalists, the CTTC chief said one of the two death row convict militants who escaped from police custody last year sought refuge at the residence of one of these arrestees. As of now, both of them are still within the country.

About the arrestees, Asaduzzaman said Shakhawatul became involved in militancy in 2002 when he joined an organisation known as "Jamayatul Muslimeen," led by his sister-in-law, Ejaz Kargil. Over time, he established connections with top militants across the country.

In 2010, Ejaz assumed leadership as the first amir of

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Country's people are our strongest poll observers
Says EC Rashida Sultana

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has local observers and media to monitor the next parliamentary polls if there are no international observers, said Election Commissioner Rashida Sultana at her office yesterday.

People of the country are our strongest election observers, she said while answering a reporter's query on whether the national elections will lose credibility in absence of adequate international observers.

The European Union recently said it will not send a fully-fledged election observation team for the Bangladesh national polls.

"International observers are important regardless they come to monitor elections or not. If they don't send observers, don't we have observers in our country?" she asked.

Rashida said the EC has committed to hold a free and fair election. "We will need assistance from the government to hold a free and fair election. If they don't help, a fair election is not possible. The government also wants a good election," she added.

Meanwhile, the visiting US pre-election assessment mission is scheduled to meet the EC officials on Tuesday.



A sight like this has become common in the busy streets of Dhaka. Motorcycles and rickshaws start getting on footpaths once they encounter a slightest bit of traffic, making it difficult for pedestrians to move freely. The photo was taken in Dhanmondi's Jhigatola area yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Man killed as truck hits bike

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Jamalpur*

A medical officer was killed as a sand-laden truck hit his motorbike in Jamalpur's Sadar upazila yesterday.

The accident took place on Nandina Jamalpur highway, said Shah Newaz, officer-in-charge of Jamalpur Sadar Police Station.

Dr Hafizur Rahman, 38, from Masta village was declared dead at Jamalpur General Hospital.

He was going to Nandina Government Health Centre from his house. Police seized the truck but the driver managed to flee.

Driver found dead in Sherpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Mymensingh*

An auto-rickshaw driver was found dead in Sherpur yesterday, a day after he had gone out of home with his vehicle.

Police recovered the body of Shah Alam, 50, a resident of Dhatua in Sreebordi upazila, from a paddy field in Jhenaigati upazila.

Jhenaigati Police Station Officer-in-Charge Monirul Islam Bhuiyan said the body bore injury marks on the neck. He said miscreants might have strangled the driver, snatched away the auto rickshaw, and left the body in the field. A murder case was filed.



Demanding a stop to harassment of girls, students, teachers and guardians of Khairullah Govt High School in Gafraoan of Mymensingh formed a human chain in front of local press club yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR



Amid the ongoing dengue crisis, waterlogged areas like this become a breeding ground for Aedes mosquitoes. Located near Khilgaon Bazar, the area had been dug up by the railway authorities for expansion, but now lies in this current state. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Dengue cases, fatalities on the rise outside Dhaka

DIPAN NANDY

Dengue cases outside Dhaka are continuing to rise than those in the capital, as the country grapples with a record outbreak of the mosquito-borne disease.

According to the latest report from the DGHS, Bangladesh has seen 2,23,564 dengue cases and 1,086 fatalities so far this year. Among these cases, 88,194 were reported in Dhaka, while 1,35,370 (66.56 percent) outside.

The top 10 districts with the highest infection rates are Dhaka (88,194 cases), Chattogram (10,757), Barishal (9,718), Manikganj (6,907), Pataukhali (5,946), Lakshmipur (4,974), Pirojpur (4,588), Faridpur (4,546), Chandpur (4,091), and Gazipur (4,082).

However, the number of deaths in Dhaka (685) is still higher than those

outside the capital (401).

In the past seven days, from October 1 to October 7, there have been 17,416 hospitalisations and 46 deaths outside the capital due to dengue. In comparison,

From October 1 to October 7, there have been 17,416 cases and 46 deaths outside the capital while Dhaka reported 4,360 cases and 44 fatalities.

Dhaka city reported 4,360 hospitalisations and 44 fatalities during the same period.

In the last 24-hour till yesterday morning, the nation witnessed an additional 2,742 cases and 7 fatalities.

Local Government Minister Tazul Islam recently said many buildings have been erected in rural regions, leading to

the formation of stagnant water sources that serve as an ideal breeding ground for Aedes mosquitoes.

"It is important to promote awareness among all and take measures to eliminate these breeding sites," he added.

Dr Saifur Rahman, entomologist at the National University, said urban sprawl has been a major contributing factor to the spread of dengue in districts surrounding the capital.

"Besides, a significant number of individuals commute to Dhaka for work on a daily basis, and upon their return, they may unknowingly carry the dengue virus with them," he added.

Public health expert Dr Mushtaq Hussain told The Daily Star, "No significant measures were taken to reduce infection or deaths. Besides, extended monsoon has also contributed to the menace."

"We hope that the infection and deaths will decrease within one and a half to two months after the rain stops."

Regional cooperation

FROM PAGE 3

Sahni stressed the importance of South Asian countries working together to build resilience to deter global powers.

While China's Belt and Road Initiative is a strategy for ensuring its resource sources, the US must recognise that the world is changing and that global financial organisations must become more inclusive, analysts said.

In a separate session,

speakers said the recent BRICS summit in South Africa made attempts to decrease the US dollar's influence. However, there are questions about what the alternative currency would be.

Chinese RMB can be used, but certain restrictions must be lifted for that. However, de-dollarisation is unlikely anytime soon given global GDP size and the dollar's share of currency reserves, they said.

Ansar Al Islam

FROM PAGE 3

Ansar Al Islam Bangladesh, and it was during this period that Shakhatul took on the role of nayeb emam within the group and later moved to Pakistan.

When Ejaz was killed in an anti-terror operation in Pakistan in November 2014, Shakhatul fled Pakistan and returned to the

country. Upon his return, he resumed managing the organisational activities of Ansar Al Islam and was subsequently elected as a Shura member of the outfit in 2019. Due to his prior connections, Shakhatul was tasked by Ansar Al Islam with establishing contact with Jamaatul Ansar Fil Hindol Sharqiya.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Upazila Engineer
Patiya, Chattogram
www.lged.gov.bd



Memo No. 46.02.1561.000.99.002.16-977

e-Tender Notice-07/2023-2024(LTM)

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit Tender, registration in the National e-GP System portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents of following packages from the National e-GP System portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks' branches upto 25/10/2023 at 4.00 PM

SI No.	Tender ID	Last Date & Time of Selling Documents	Last Date & Time of Submission Documents
1	884978	25/10/2023 16.00PM	26/10/2023 25.00 PM

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

Kamal Kanti Paul
Upazila Engineer
Local Government Engineering Department
Upazila: Patiya: District: Chattogram
e-mail: ue.patiya@lged.gov.bd

GD-1557

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

Department of Immigration and Passports
E-7, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar, Agargaon, Dhaka
www.dip.gov.bd

Ref No- 58.01.0000.102.55.001.20(Part-2)-826

Date: 08/10/2023

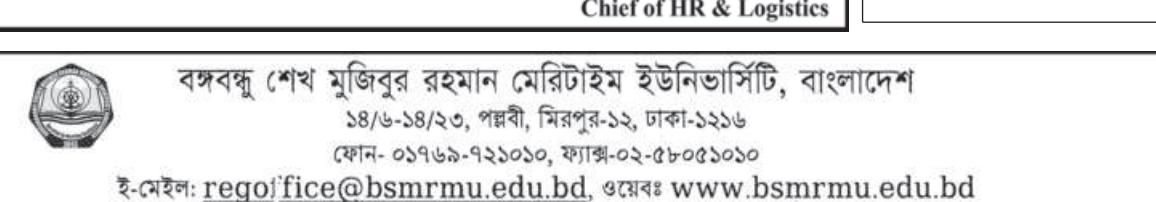
Corrigendum

Subject: Amendment of DIP Tender No. 58.01.0000.102.55.001.20(Part-2)-812, Date: 01/10/2023 For Procurement of 1.5 Million Machine Readable Passport Booklets and 2 Million lamination Foil.

Tender No. & Date	Description	Existing	Amended As
58.01.0000.102.55.001.20(Part-2)-812, Date: 01/10/2023	Tender Security Amount(USD) (Tender Notice SL. No. 25)	1,50,00000 (One Core Fifty lacs)	1,40,000 (One Hundred and Forty Thousand) USD

All other terms and conditions shall remain unchanged.

Jm
10/10/23
(Abu Nayem Masum)
Deputy Director (Procurement)
For Director General



তারিখ: ০৯ অক্টোবর ২০২০

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি (চুক্তিভিত্তিক)

বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান মেরিটাইম ইউনিভার্সিটি, বাংলাদেশ
১৪/৬-১৪/১৩, পল্লবী, মিরপুর-১২, ঢাকা-১২০৫
ফোন: ০১৭৬৯-৭১০১০, ফ্লাক্স-০২-৫৮০৫১০১০

ই-মেইল: regofice@bsmrmu.edu.bd, ওয়েবসৈট: www.bsmrmu.edu.bd

স্থানক নং-বিশ্বশিক্ষার মেইলাইট/ফোন-৩৩৬/২৩/০৮

বিষয়: নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রক্রিয়া এবং প্রতিক্রিয়া প্রক্রিয়া

Community clinics in crisis

184 centres out of 230 in Patuakhali need urgent repair

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Most of the community clinics in seven upazilas of Patuakhali are in a dilapidated state and in dire need of renovation.

According to sources at Patuakhali Civil Surgeon's Office, 230 clinics were established in 2011 with one-story building for each.

Of these – 48 in Baufal upazila, 46 in Patuakhali Sadar upazila, 44 in Galachipa, 37 in Kalapara, 21 in Mirzaganj, 19 in Dasminda and 15 in Dumki – 184 are in a poor state and are thereby disrupting healthcare services at grassroots.

At least 108 of the clinics need new buildings while 76 need repairs and 46 are in good condition, said Ashok Kumar Halder, deputy assistant engineer of Patuakhali Health and Engineering Department, who is responsible for the maintenance of these clinics.

At present, 19 community clinics are undergoing renovation works in the district.



Badarpur Community Clinic in Patuakhali Sadar.

PHOTO: STAR

said they have to work with an umbrella during rains and major accidents can happen at any time due to the dilapidated state of the building.

Birajla Community Clinic of the same upazila was also found in a similar state.

"The building is unusable as beams are exposed and rusty, while floor moldings have been removed. We are working here amid risk. I have reported the matter many times to the higher authorities but no measures have been taken yet to this end," said Arifur Rahman, a service provider of the clinic and general secretary of Community Clinic Service Providers' Association (Patuakhali unit).

Meanwhile, 229 service providers working at the clinics have not received their salaries for four months since June.

Amid increase in the prices of essentials, they are facing immense hardships to bear their family expenses and continue their services.

"We joined in 2011 on the scale of Tk 10,200

and in total we get a monthly salary of Tk 16,700. However, in the last 12 years, our salary has not increased by even one taka," said Faisal Hossain, president of the service providers' association.

"Although the employees working in the government and private sector get a five percent increase in salary from July every year, we were not fortunate enough to get that opportunity."

Dr Kabir Hasan, civil surgeon of Patuakhali, said community clinics are in a very fragile state due to lack of renovation for a long time. Employees have to work at risk of life and patients are also not safe there. The matter has been brought to the attention of higher authorities several times, he said.

"The service providers' salaries are allocated directly from Dhaka to the upazila level under a scheme, so they are deprived of an annual increment in salary. However, shifting their jobs to the revenue sector may solve this issue," he added.

Lipi Akhter, a service provider at the clinic,

Government of The People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of The Director
Chittagong Medical College Hospital
www.cmch.gov.bd

Date: 08-10-2023.

Memo No: CMCH/Re-Tender/2023-24/Non-MSR (Non-Diet) 11916

Invitation for e-GP Tender (Re-Tender)

This is an online tender, where only e-tenders will be accepted in e-GP portal and no offline/ hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-tender, please register on e-GP system portal ([https://www.eprocure.gov.bd](http://www.eprocure.gov.bd)). For more details, please contact support desk contract numbers. e-Tender are invited in e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by Brigadier General Md. Shamim Ahsan, Director, Chittagong Medical College Hospital, Chattogram for the Procurement of:

SL. No.	Tender Id	Name of Goods	Tender/ Proposal Last Selling Date & Time	Tender/ Proposal Closing Date & Time	Tender/ Proposal Opening Date & Time
1	884693	Procurement of Broadband Internet Services and Hosting for Website for the Fiscal Year 2023-2024	18-Oct-2023 15:00	19-Oct-2023 14:00	19-Oct-2023 14:00

For pursuer e-Tender details can be downloaded on e-GP system portal ([https://www.eprocure.gov.bd](http://www.eprocure.gov.bd)). e-tender will be accepted only as stated in above list, accepted tenders will be opened online as stated in above list.


(Brigadier General Md. Shamim Ahsan)
Director
Chittagong Medical College Hospital
Telephone: +8802333360179.
E-mail: cmch@hospi.dghs.gov.bd

GD-1553

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
HEALTH SERVICES DIVISION
CENTRAL MEDICAL STORES DEPOT (CMSD)
30 SHAHEED TAJUDDIN AHMED SHARANI, TEJGAON, DHAKA-1208.

IFT No: CMSD/GD-2304/NCT/2023-2024/Proc-2/01

Date: 08-10-2023

e-Tender Notice

E-Tender is invited in the e-GP system Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of the following goods. Details are given below:

Sl. No.	Package no.	Tender ID No.	Description of goods	Tender Documents Last selling (Date & Time)	Tender Closing date & Time	Tender Opening date & Time
01	GD-2304	883352	Vitamin A Capsule	05/11/2023 17:00	06/11/2023 11:30 A.M	06/11/2023 11:30 A.M

The interested persons/firms may visit the website www.eprocure.gov.bd for the details of the tender.

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no offline/hard copy will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP system portal is required.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal and e-GP help Desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Mohammad Hasan Arif
Director
Central Medical Stores Depot (CMSD),
Tejgaon, Dhaka.
Tel: 88-2-48115486; Fax: 9126547,
e-mail: cmsdstore@dhaka.net

GD1554

Of the community clinics -- 48 in Baufal upazila, 46 in Patuakhali Sadar upazila, 44 in Galachipa, 37 in Kalapara, 21 in Mirzaganj, 19 in Dasminda and 15 in Dumki -- 184 are in a poor state and are thereby disrupting healthcare services at grassroots.

'Protect Chattogram'
Environmentalists place 48-point demand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon and Bangladesh Environment Network yesterday placed a 48-point demand to protect the environment of Chattogram.

They placed the demands at a press conference titled "Fresh environmental disasters, perspective Chattogram," held at Chattogram Press Club.

To mitigate waterlogging and floods, they placed 16 demands including saving waterbodies and rivers from pollution.

They also placed several demands to protect hills and forests. Their other demands included afforestation and putting a stop to erecting structures grabbing forest land.

In order to curb air pollution in Chattogram, the environmentalists also recommended enforcing and implementing stricter emission standards for industries, with a focus on reducing the release of harmful pollutants.

"We placed the demands to the authorities concerned to protect Chattogram," said Mohammed Bakhtiar, secretary of Bapa (Chattogram chapter).

Environmental activists and university professors spoke at the event among others.

PRAYER TIMING
OCTOBER 9

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 4-45 12-45 4-15 5-53 7-30

JAMAAT 5-20 1-15 4-30 5-56 8-00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Upazila Engineer
Upazila: Keshabpur, District: Jashore.
www.led.gov.bd



Memo No. 46.02.4138.000.07.001.18.819

Dated: 08/10/2023

e-Tender Notice: 03/2023-24

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

SL No.	Package No.	Name of Scheme	e-TID No.	Tender Method	last date & Time of Selling Document	Last date & Time of Submission Document
1.	INF-2021-22-404138-01	1. Supplying Laptop and Multimedia Projector at 13 nos Hi-school Under Keshabpur, Jashore 2. Supplying Medical Equipment at Upazila Health Complex Under Keshabpur, Jashore	882943	OTM	26-10-2023 13:00 pm	26-10-2023 16:00 pm
2.	INF-2021-22-404138-02	Construction of public toilet at Shikarpur High School (Mojidpur up), Hasanpur Bazar (Hasanpur up) & Garvanga Bazar (Pajia up), Bausala Dakhil Adarsa (Biddanandankati up) under Keshabpur Upazila, Dist: Jashore (JIIKA Project)	882944	OTM	26-10-2023 13:00 pm	26-10-2023 16:00 pm

This is an online Tender: where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches up to 26-10-2023 at 13:00 PM. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System portal and also from e-Mail: ue.keshabpur@led.gov.bd or call to 02477767014. For any queries interested tenderer are requested communicate with the undersigned during office hours.

Md. Shaiful Islam Molla
Upazila Engineer
Keshabpur, Jashore.
Phone: 02477767014
e-mail: ue.keshabpur@led.gov.bd

GD-1556

ইস্টার্ণ রিফাইনারি লিমিটেড

Eastern Refinery Limited
(A subsidiary of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation, North Patenga

Invitation for National Tender

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources/Energy and Mineral Resources Division.
2	Agency	Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation.
3	Procuring entity name	Eastern Refinery Limited (ERL).
4	Procuring entity district	Chattogram
5	Invitation for & Invitation Reference no.	RENOVATION OF SECURITY BUILDING AT ERL MAIN GATE FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF LUGGAGE SCANNER. [Ref. No. ER/C-06/2023-2024]
6	Invitation for Tender No.	ER/TN/Civil-06/2023-2024

Key Information:	One Stage Two Envelope Tendering Method.
Funding Information	EASTERN REFINERY LIMITED'S OWN FUND.
Particular Information:	
9 Tender package no.	ER/C-06/2023-2024
10 Tender publication date	09 October 2023
11 Tender last selling date	25 October 2023, 15:00 Hrs
12 Tender closing date and time	26 October 2023, 15:00 Hrs
13 Name & Address of the office(s):	Manager (Finance), ERL, North Patenga, Chattogram-4204, Bangladesh. 02333301261-7, Ext-644/555.
Selling tender document (Principal)	Office of the Deputy General Manager (Development) Room 225, Training Building (1st floor), Eastern Refinery Limited, North Patenga, Chattogram.
Receiving tender document	Office of the Deputy General Manager (Development) Room 225, Training Building (1st floor), Eastern Refinery Limited, North Patenga, Chattogram.
Opening tender document	Office of the Deputy General Manager (Development) Room 225, Training Building (1st floor), Eastern Refinery Limited, North Patenga, Chattogram.

14	Major eligibility and qualification of tenderer	(i) The minimum specific experience as a Prime Contractor or Subcontractor or Management Contractor in reputed organization with at least [one] contract(s) of identical (RENOVATION/ CONSTRUCTION OF BUILDING) successfully completed within the last [05] years, with a value of at least Tk. 26,30,000.00 (Twenty Six Lac Thirty Thousand). [Year will be calculated from tender publication date to backward]. (ii) The required average annual turnover shall be greater than Tk. 87,68,000.00 (Eighty Seven Lac Sixty Eight Thousand) over the last 05 (Five) years. [In support of average annual construction turnover, certified payments for contracts in progress or completed during last 5 (five) years will be taken into account]. (iii) The minimum amount of liquid assets i.e. working capital (Profit & Loss Statement) or credit line (As from PW3A



Badhan, despite being cast opposite a veteran like Tabu, held her ground and came up with a stellar performance.

PHOTOS: COURTESY

Badhan breaks barriers

Strange she was. Shrouded, like a sin. Obvious, like a sacred deed. And sometimes, illogical like fate. She had a habit of tugging at the sleeves of her pullover. Due to superstition, she always sneezed thrice in a row. The crevice in between her collarbones housed a beautiful mole.

RAKSHANDA RAHMAN MISHA

Khufiya's starting scene introduced Tabu, aka Krishna Mehra, describing her lover, secret agent Octopus, in an intimate manner. Usually, we get to see a man describe his lover with such intricate details, but Vishal Bhardwaj, famous for weaving strong feminine characters, changed the dynamics by introducing a romance between two agents who found love across borders.

Khufiya was released on Netflix on October 5. Above all else, Bangladesh's own Azmeri Haque Badhan's and Tabu's chemistry became the focal point of the film. The tension-filled interactions between Octopus and KM culminated in an atmosphere that could be cut through with a blunt butter knife.

"I truly didn't have to act to fall in love with Tabu. I was already in love with her. She is so down to earth and humble, it really mesmerised me."

One of the more iconic scenes from **Khufiya** is the awakening of Tabu's true desires, which

Badhan does a masterful job of poking, prodding and teasing until the truth reveals itself.

"The kitchen sequence was shot with just Tabu, me, Vishal Bhardwaj, and cinematographer. Everyone was told to go away from that set and the monitor was set in the ground. We did that in one take, and when we did that there was pin drop silence. Vishal said that he loved it. I never kissed anyone on screen and he described the scene so beautifully. Everyone at the set clapped for us," added the actress.

During the filming of the movie, Vishal Bhardwaj was looking for a Bangladeshi actress



to play the role of Heena Rahman. The web film had a bold and daring plot and thus it wasn't easy to find actress for the role of secret agent Octopus. However, Badhan was hell bent on essaying the character as it had unparalleled

layers to it.

"As an artiste, I have the right to choose what kind of roles I would want to play. Till I was 35 years old, I lived the way society wants their women to follow. I tried my best to be the 'ideal woman' and when I failed, and I had to fight for my daughter's guardianship. I realised that I had no existence as a human being in this society. I see no reason why I wouldn't want to work with Vishal Bhardwaj and Tabu in a film as an artiste. I wanted to take this challenge and prove my merit," said the actress.

The director of **Pink**, Aniruddha Roy Chowdhury personally messaged her to compliment on her acting. After the release of the film, Tabu also informed Badhan about how people in Bollywood are commanding her work in the espionage thriller.

Indian media has applauded Badhan for her bold portrayal of agent Octopus.

"I know that there are lots of people in society who have different orientations. All human beings, despite their limitations or gender identity, should have their basic rights be given to them. I was never really worried about portraying my character as I believe she has her freedom and social rights as well. I really can't comprehend why one class of people should have all the rights while the others are shunned from the society," concluded the actress.

Pritom Hasan's solo concert upcoming



With his impeccable talent, young musician Pritom Hasan has created a huge fanbase over the years. The multi-talented singer, music director, model and actor has announced his first ever solo concert, through his verified Facebook page. Titled, **The Night of Pritom Hasan**, the concert will be held on October 26 at Hall 4 of Bashundhara International Convention City.

The artiste turned to social media to connect with his fans. He asked them to share their favourite songs, and based on their responses, he curated a playlist of 18 beloved tracks. This carefully selected list includes hits like **Shorgohara, Bhenge Porona Ebhabe, Ami Amar Moto, Sharoter Shesh Thekey, Rajkumar** and **Shotti Naki Bhul** amongst others.



Swastika Mukherjee, Afzal Hossain collaborate for 'One Eleven'

Noted actor Afzal Hossain will be pairing up with Swastika Mukherjee in his upcoming thriller-based film, **One Eleven**. Directed by Kamrul Islam Refat, the movie revolves around a mysterious murder and the way numerous characters will take turns to put together the missing pieces of the gruesome crime.

Afzal Hossain will portray the role of a writer in this psychological thriller. Swastika Mukherjee, who has also worked in Bollywood, expressed her excitement about collaborating with Afzal Hossain as, "a Bangladeshi actor she admires".

This marks Swastika's second Bangladeshi film, following her appearance in **Shobar Upore Tumi** in 2008, opposite Shakib Khan.

NEWS

15 banks fall short of Tk 33,744cr

FROM PAGE 1
Similarly, Citizens Bank has a capital shortfall of Tk 97.10 crore.

Both the banks, which were awarded the licences by the BB along with Community Bank in 2020, blamed the new central bank requirement of having a minimum paid-up capital of Tk 500 crore from June 15 – up from Tk 400 crore previously – for the shortfall.

"We are not actually in capital shortfall because the central bank increased the capital requirement after awarding the licence to us," said Tarik Morshed, managing director and chief executive officer of Bengal Commercial Bank.

The BB has given the bank until December to meet the capital requirement, he said, adding that Bengal Commercial Bank has virtually no defaulted loans.

The shortfall is because the regulator raised the minimum capital requirement, said Mohammad Masoom, the MD and CEO of Citizens Bank.

"That is why this is not an actual capital shortfall. We have been given

until June next year to raise the capital of our bank. Now, our capital is at Tk 403 crore, which has increased from the Tk 400 crore when we started our operation," he added.

For the new capital requirement, the local operations of Pakistan's Habib Bank and National Bank of Pakistan are also facing a capital shortfall of Tk 36.33 crore and Tk 42.45 crore respectively, according to BB officials.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Krishi Bank continues to log in the highest capital shortfall in the banking sector. This time, its shortfall is Tk 15,540.72 crore, up by Tk 1,447 crore in the three months to June.

Agrani's capital shortfall rose by 12 percent to Tk 3,767.84 crore.

The state-run commercial banks provide a large number of services to the general people and the government free of cost and if those banks claim service fees for those, there would be no capital shortfall, said Mohammad Shamsul Islam, a former Agrani MD.

"The government and the central bank can find a way to meet their capital shortfall," he added.

Since the fuel price is high in the international market, the mechanism may further fuel inflationary pressure.

Inflation averaged 9.75 percent in the first three months of the fiscal year, according to data from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.

The mission sat with the senior officials of the commerce ministry, where they wanted to know the update of tariff policy. In response, the officials informed that the government will adjust the tariff policy gradually.

The visiting mission also wanted to know the reason behind the discrepancy between the export shipment and export proceeds, which is about \$3 billion. The ministry informed that a committee

is working on it.

They also wanted to know about the recent changes in natural gas and petroleum product prices following the import prices and the

Scam-hit lenders BASIC and Janata's capital shortfall rose to Tk 2,352.37 crore and Tk 2,899 crore respectively.

At the end of June, Rupali's capital shortfall was Tk 2,230 crore and Sonali's Tk 10.61 crore. State-run specialised lender Rajshahi Krishna Unnayan Bank's shortfall was Tk 2,385 crore.

The shortfall of Bangladesh Commerce Bank, where Chattogram-based conglomerate S Alam Group has a stake, stood at Tk 1,313.81 crore. ICB Islamic Bank, which was born out of the scam-riddled defunct Oriental Bank, has a shortfall of Tk 1,812 crore.

Troubled private lenders National and Padma's shortfall was Tk 1,379 crore and Tk 497 crore respectively.

The capital shortfall in the usual suspects is due to loan irregularities, according to experts.

"The banking regulator will have to take strict action against those who are involved in the loan irregularities and it must have a strong commitment for the betterment of the sector," said Mustafa K Mujeri, a former chief economist of the central bank.

He further said that in the previous year, there was a surplus of onions and potatoes, but farmers struggled to sell their produce. However, the situation has reversed this year, with cold storage owners and wholesalers capitalising on the low production to reap significant profits.

The minister placed the blame on cold storage owners and wholesalers saying that they are not fulfilling their supply obligations, which is a major impediment to price stability.

"When our officials apply pressure on them at the field level, some of these suppliers even cease their deliveries. However, we're trying to address this situation," he added.

Asked if there will be any new restrictions from the US as reported by the media, Momen said US officials mentioned no such thing when the prime minister and he went there last month.

"You are inviting such restrictions. No one spoke of any restrictions," he added.

The visiting mission also wanted to know the reason behind the discrepancy between the export shipment and export proceeds, which is about \$3 billion. The ministry informed that a committee

is working on it.

They also wanted to know about the recent changes in natural gas and petroleum product prices following the import prices and the

implementation status of the periodic formula-based price adjustment mechanism of petroleum products.

Energy ministry officials sought some more time to implement the formula-based adjustment mechanism instead of the previously committed timeframe of December this year.

Momen informed the US delegation that the government has a legal framework for elections and there is an independent Election Commission that can transfer and sack police or other officers who violate laws.

The voter list with photo IDs and the transparent ballot boxes can prevent fake voting, he said.

Besides, agents from all the parties, foreign and national observers will have access to the polling stations, he said.

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No need to worry about reserves: PM

FROM PAGE 12
considering them as the people's servants.

"Don't consider the service as a job merely, rather a scope to serve the country. You will have to keep this thing in mind always," she said.

Hasina also asked government officials to implement development schemes, keeping balance with the environment by protecting canals, beels, and other water bodies.

She asked them to work so that the fruits of different social safety schemes reach the right beneficiaries properly. She also asked to ensure

diversification of the export basket to reduce dependency on single products such as readymade garments, explore new export markets, and ensure development works sustainably.

Noting that there is a scarcity of land in the country with a large population, she said the large population should be considered a resource.

Hasina said Bangladesh is now a role model for development. She said her government has successfully implemented Vision 2021 and wants to build the country into Smart

Bangladesh by 2041.

The PM asked the newly recruited officers to build themselves into the main craftsmen and soldiers of Smart Bangladesh.

Talking about the "My Village My Town" programme, she said her government's target is to ensure civic amenities in every village so that the villagers don't need to go to the town to avail the civic facilities.

The premier asked all to work so that the ongoing development trend continues and Bangladesh does not fall behind its present position.

Politics now an instrument of material gains

FROM PAGE 12
manipulated the placements in the judiciary by putting in people who are sympathetic to their politics."

Brigadier General (retd) M Sakhawat Hussain blamed the faulty democratic process and faulty political system and culture for the current situation.

He said no political parties practise democracy within themselves.

"We have polluted the entire election system and there is a lack of faith. We don't have faith; we don't have institutions," said Sakhawat, who was an election commissioner in the commission that held the much-praised 2008 national election.

"When we talk about an independent Election Commission, it is supported by various institutions, but unfortunately, our institutions have not been able to grow or we have broken all our institutions," he said, also speaking in English.

"If there is no free and fair election accepted by international standards, I am afraid that we will see many more disasters in the country," he added.

Stressing the importance of healthy politics, Sharmin Murshid, election observer and CEO of Brotee, an NGO, said, "Perhaps politics is not broken, but certainly it needs repair."

Talking about the dominance of businesspeople in politics, she said politics is now commercialised and commoditised, and it has become a

matter of profit and loss.

BNP leader Tabith Awal said, "The state and the way it's being managed are certainly broken. That's why the BNP proposed a 31-point solution to mend the state."

Manisha Chakrabarty, a central member of the Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal, said, "Politics is never broken. What we witness in Bangladesh is a broken system that can lead to a troubling transition of power from one party to another.

"We believe the [politicians'] commitment to people has been replaced by a commitment to power. They are committed to staying in power. This is the problem in our politics."

Dhaka-17 lawmaker Mohammad A Rafat, also a member of the Awami League central committee, said politicians need honesty and genuine intentions to sit down together to find solutions for the problems in politics and the electoral process.

The seminar was moderated by Dhaka Tribune Editor Zafar Sobhan where BNP leader Tabith Awal, Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal's central committee member Manisha Chakrabarty and Awami League lawmaker Mohammad A Rafat also spoke.

Norway's Ambassador to Bangladesh Espen Rikter Svendsen delivered the welcome speech at the seminar.

IMF mission worried

FROM PAGE 1

The central bank is evaluating their performance on the basis of the targets every three months and has appointed observers in most of the state-run banks.

At the meeting, the mission also wanted to know the update on their suggested amendments to the bank company act.

The amended bank company act has been enacted, and the rest of their recommendations are in the works, the finance ministry officials said.

The visiting IMF mission also sat with the managing directors of the Sonali, Rupali, Janata and BASIC Bank separately at the Sonali Bank head office.

The mission also met with the Md Nurul Alam, secretary of the ministry of energy and mineral resources, and sought the financial situation of Petrobangla and the Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation.

They also wanted to know about the recent changes in natural gas and petroleum product prices following the import prices and the

US assessment team

FROM PAGE 12

participatory If enough people participate in it, he said, adding that the government wants all parties' participation.

Momen said he sought US support in educating people to create a culture of debate on the political parties' performance.

Momen informed the US delegation that the government has a legal framework for elections and there is an independent Election Commission that can transfer and sack police or other officers who violate laws.

Two Israelis, one Egyptian shot dead in Alexandria

REUTERS, Cairo

Two Israeli tourists and their Egyptian guide were shot dead yesterday in the Egyptian city of Alexandria, Israeli foreign ministry said.

A policeman alleged to have carried out the shooting in the Sawari district of Alexandria was in custody, two Egyptian security sources said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

One Egyptian was injured in the shooting, the first such attack on Israelis in Egypt in decades. The Egyptian interior ministry did not respond to a request for comment.

The shooting happened one day after an attack against Israel by Islamist group Hamas, for which Israel vowed "mighty vengeance" in response. According to one of the Egyptian sources, the policeman said he lost control and fired randomly on the tourist group after being provoked.

London police step up patrols after Israel-Gaza violence

AFP, London

London police said yesterday that they had boosted patrols across parts of the city following the attacks on Israel by the Palestinian militant group Hamas.

"We are aware of a number of incidents... in relation to the ongoing conflict in Israel and the border with Gaza," the Metropolitan Police said on social media.

"The Met has increased policing patrols across parts of London in order to provide a visible presence and reassurance to our communities," it said.

Britain's interior minister Suella Braverman said there should be "zero tolerance for anti-Semitism or glorification of terrorism on the streets of Britain".

"I expect the police to use the full force of the law against displays of support for Hamas, other proscribed terrorist groups or attempts to intimidate British Jews," Braverman wrote on X, formerly Twitter.

There was visible security around one synagogue in northwest London, an AFP journalist saw. Police in Germany and France also said they had reinforced security around synagogues and Jewish schools and monuments.



A plume of smoke rises above buildings in Gaza City during an Israeli air strike yesterday. Inset, a Palestinian man reacts next to the ruins of a house destroyed in Israeli strikes in Khan Younis, in the southern Gaza Strip.

PHOTO: AFP, REUTERS

'It was a security failure'

Israeli forces face questions after Hamas attack lays bare intelligence gaps

REUTERS, Jerusalem

As Israel reeled from a deadly attack by Hamas who broke through barriers around Gaza and roamed at will, killing scores of civilians in Israeli towns, defence chiefs faced growing questions over how the disaster could have happened.

A day after the 50th anniversary of the start of the 1973 Yom Kippur war, when Israeli forces were caught off guard by Syrian and Egyptian tank columns, the military appeared once again to have been surprised by a sudden attack.

"It looks quite similar to what happened at that time," said retired General Giora Eiland, a former head of Israel's National Security Council.

"As we can see it, Israel was completely surprised, by a very well-coordinated attack," he told a briefing with reporters.

An army spokesman said there would be discussions on the intelligence preparation "down the road" but for the moment the focus was on fighting. "We'll talk about that when we need to talk about it," he told a briefing with reporters.

Israel has always regarded Hamas as its sworn enemy, but since inflicting heavy damage on Gaza in a 10-day war in 2021, Israel had adopted a mix of carrot and stick to maintain stability in the blockaded enclave.

It offered economic incentives including thousands of work permits allowing Gazans to work in Israel or the occupied West Bank, while maintaining a tight blockade and the constant threat of air strikes.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's right-wing government has always made great play of its security credentials and taken an uncompromising stance towards the Palestinian factions including Hamas, which has controlled Gaza since 2007.

INTELLIGENCE FAILURE

However, when the time came, Israel's security apparatus appeared to break down as a force of Hamas gunmen estimated in the hundreds by the military broke through security fences and scattered into towns.

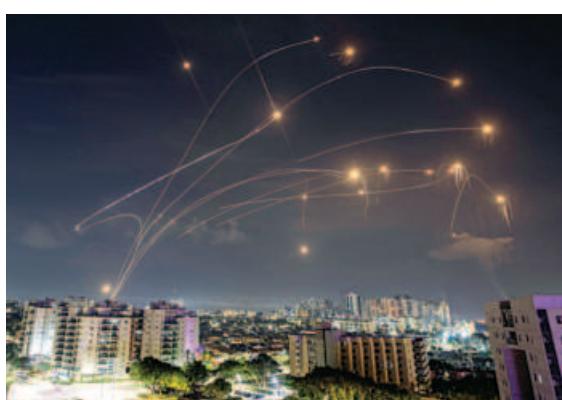
"This was an intelligence failure; it could not

be otherwise," said Jonathan Panikoff, the US government's former deputy national intelligence officer on the Middle East, who is now at the Atlantic Council think tank.

"It was a security failure, undermining what was thought to be an aggressive and successful layered approach toward Gaza by Israel," he said.

For Israelis, images of dead bodies lying in the streets or groups of civilians being driven or marched into captivity in Gaza came as a profound shock.

More than 250 Israelis were killed and over 1,500 wounded, an unprecedented number of Israeli victims in a single day. The military suffered significant losses and Palestinian groups said they had captured dozens of soldiers.



The gunmen also seized security posts including a police station in the southern town of Sderot and overran the Erez crossing, a high security facility that channels people entering and leaving Gaza through a tight series of controls.

On Saturday, Hamas media circulated footage showing fighters ranging through abandoned offices and running past the high concrete walls of the site.

"They've been planning this for a long time," said former Israeli National Security Advisor Eyal Hulata. "Obviously this is a very coordinated attack, and unfortunately they were able to surprise us tactically and cause devastating damage."

Major airlines cancel dozens of flights to Tel Aviv

AFP, Paris

Major airlines have cancelled dozens of flights to Tel Aviv this weekend after the Palestinian militant group Hamas launched a surprise large-scale attack against Israel.

American Airlines, Air France, Lufthansa, Emirates and Ryanair are among those pulling flights to Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion airport.

However, airport authorities did not stop commercial air links with Israel's second international airport at Eilat, a tourist destination on the Red Sea.

And Israeli flag carrier El Al said yesterday that it was maintaining its Tel Aviv flights for now, though some flights operated by foreign partners had been cancelled.

"We might cancel flights to places where we don't have a lot of Israelis to help other Israelis in other places," a spokeswoman told AFP.

In a statement, El Al added that it was operating "in accordance with the instructions of the Israeli security forces", with all flights now departing only from Terminal 3 at Ben Gurion airport.

Like most other airlines, it said clients could change their tickets without charge.

INCURSION INTO ISRAEL

Hamas forces detour from Saudi-Israel momentum

AFP, Washington

With its surprise attack against Israel, Hamas has violently shifted the world's eyes back to the Palestinians and dealt a severe blow to momentum to secure a landmark US-brokered deal between Israel and Saudi Arabia.

The Iranian-backed Islamist group who run the impoverished, blockaded Gaza Strip on Saturday fired thousands of rockets and infiltrated forces into Israel, 50 years after Arab states' assault on Israel during the Jewish holy day of Yom Kippur.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel was at war. Just weeks earlier he had brushed aside the Palestinian issue during a speech at the United Nations and said normalization in 2020 with three other Arab nations in the so-called Abraham Accords had "heralded a new age of peace."

Netanyahu also said Israel was on the cusp of a bigger prize — recognition by Saudi Arabia, guardian of Islam's two holiest sites.

President Joe Biden, eager before next year's US election for a major diplomatic win, has pushed for a deal, and more talks were expected in coming weeks — despite skepticism from some of Biden's fellow Democrats about the proposed security guarantees to the conservative kingdom, whose rights record has long been under scrutiny.

"It was always a tough hill to climb, and that hill just got a lot steeper," said Brian Katulis, vice president of policy at the Middle East Institute in Washington.

The violence throws a spotlight on disputes between Israel and the Palestinians and "makes it harder to sweep those complicated issues under the rug the way the 2020 Abraham Accords did," he said.

Saudi Arabia's de facto ruler, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, has spoken recently of progress with Israel but also insisted on movement on the Palestinian cause, seen as a priority for the aging King Salman.

Saudi Arabia's foreign ministry returned to familiar language Saturday, saying in a statement that the kingdom had been warning of an "explosive situation as a result of the continued occupation and deprivation of the Palestinian people's legitimate rights."

Aziz Alghashian, a Saudi expert on Saudi-Israeli relations, said the statement was intended to dispel any notion that the kingdom would prioritize normalization at the expense of supporting the Palestinians.

"This kind of situation has made Saudi Arabia go back to its traditional role," he said.

"Netanyahu put another obstacle to these normalization talks because he said this is now a war. I don't anticipate normalization is going to take place against the backdrop of war," Alghashian said.

A US official said it was "premature" to discuss the violence's effect on normalization, as Secretary of State Antony Blinken discussed the conflict with his Saudi counterpart, Prince Faisal bin Farhan, by telephone.

A Saudi readout of the call said Prince Faisal stressed "the kingdom's rejection of targeting civilians in any way and the need for all parties to respect international humanitarian law."

Netanyahu has cast diplomacy with the Palestinians as antiquated and described a future of friendship with Gulf Arabs, who share Israel's hostility toward Iran's clerical rulers.

UKRAINE'S KHERSON REGION Dozen hurt in Russian attack

REUTERS

A dozen people were wounded, including a 27-year-old woman and her 9-month-old baby, in a Russian attack on the southern Ukrainian region of Kherson, its governor said yesterday.

"The Kherson region experienced another terrible night," Governor Oleksandr Prokudin wrote on the Telegram messaging app.

The woman and the infant were hospitalised with moderate wounds, he said, adding that a 33-year-old Red Cross medic was also wounded. Several houses and gas pipelines were damaged in the attack.

Over the past 24 hours, Russian forces carried out 59 attacks on Kherson, the region's administration said on Telegram, including 19 instances of shelling of Kherson city, the region's administrative centre.

Russia has frequently carried out air strikes and shelling on Ukraine since the start of its full-scale invasion in February 2022. Ukraine says its counteroffensive in the south and east is gradually making progress.

Both sides deny targeting civilians, but thousands of civilians in Ukraine have been killed in attacks that have hit residential areas as well as energy, defence, port, grain and other facilities.

Russia's defence ministry said the country's air defence systems had "detected and destroyed" two Ukrainian S-200 anti-aircraft missiles, thwarting attacks it said Kyiv attempted four hours apart on the Crimean Peninsula on Saturday.

At 10:25 pm in Moscow, Ukrainian public broadcaster Sputnik quoted a resident as saying two explosions rang out in the area of Yevpatoria in the west of Crimea.



Protesters hold Spain's, EU's flags and 'No to amnesty' signs during a right-wing protest against plans to grant Catalan separatists an amnesty in order to form Spain's next government, in Barcelona, Spain yesterday.

150 trucks stopped, few destroyed, in Manipur

TNN, Imphal

As many as 150 trucks were stopped, a few destroyed, and keys snatched from some of them during an indefinite economic blockade on NH 2 imposed since Thursday by Senapati District Students' Association, which is from Manipur's hill district abutting Nagaland.

This was in protest against the ongoing ban on mobile net services in Manipur, where the government extended the restriction on Friday until October 11.

NH 2 connects Dimapur in Nagaland with Imphal and is a crucial lifeline for Manipur, especially the Imphal valley, as it facilitates transportation of essential commodities such as food, medicines, fuel, cooking gas, and other necessities.

The students' union had issued an ultimatum to the government, demanding lifting of the ban by Friday.

The world cannot afford another war

The international community must call for ceasefire between Israel and Palestine

After months of rising tensions between Israel and Palestine, aided by criminal neglect from the international community towards the Palestinians' calls for justice, the conflict ridden region is now spiralling into a full-blown war. Palestine's militant group Hamas, backed by Iran, launched the deadliest attack in Israel in 50 years, killing more than 600 people as of 8:30pm Sunday. In retaliation, Israel launched strikes in the Gaza Strip; the Palestinian death toll has already crossed 350. While we condemn the senseless violence at any cost, the violence committed by Hamas cannot be judged by the same yardstick as the violence that Israel has committed over the years for the maintenance of discrimination and oppression in the Palestinian lands. We must acknowledge the root cause behind the so-called "surprise" attack by Hamas, which lies in decades of systemic destruction committed by Israel.

Palestinians have been protesting against Israeli occupation and the violence that has engulfed their lives in what they call an "open-air prison." This year alone, before the latest escalation, more than 200 Palestinians were killed by Israelis, in largely unprovoked attacks. And each time, the West supported it on the grounds of "self-defence." While the Arab League and mostly non-Western states have condemned both attacks by Hamas and Israel, the European Union, the US, Canada and the UK have only condemned the violence by Hamas, once again showing their bias. What's most worrying is that instead of calling for non-violent measures, they have echoed their support for Israel's right to defend itself, which will lead to more suffering for the oppressed community of Palestinians.

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has declared war, while the Israeli Defense Forces are initiating a large-scale operation. Israel has obliterated the supply of electricity in the besieged territory, leaving two million Palestinians to fear for their lives in darkness. The US has offered Israel "all appropriate means of support." Given Israel's superior military resources and with aid from powerful nations, we know that the continuance of this violent cycle will result in a disproportionate death toll of Palestinians. But if the international community is truly serious about the two-state solution, it is now high time to address the Israel-Palestine crisis with honesty, holding both sides equally accountable for violence and putting an end to Israel's illegal occupation of the Palestinian lands. We call on the international community to take urgent action and call for a ceasefire to stop a further escalation of violence.

The boons promised by the Third Terminal

Existing inefficiencies and irregularities must not re-emerge

The opening of Dhaka airport's much awaited Third Terminal is indeed exciting news for Bangladeshis. Although travellers will have to wait till the end of next year to enjoy its facilities, this grand, state-of-the-art structure promises to offer exponential improvement in the quality of services and hopefully an end to the numerous miseries they face at the existing international terminal of the airport. Foreign trade, especially, will be greatly facilitated, which is welcome news for the business community.

The new facility is expected to significantly improve the capacity of the cargo village – the area used for transport, logistics and distribution of cargo for national and international transit. The airport currently has a very small cargo village, and this has led to many bottlenecks in cargo handling and storage, including complaints of goods being stolen, quality of products deteriorating and delays in the release of goods. The RMG sector has been particularly affected, with garment samples arriving late leading to delays in manufacturing, missed deadlines, cancellation of orders and delayed payments. Sometimes exporters alleged that they did not get the exact quantity of goods as some of them were stolen. These serious bottlenecks are expected to be eliminated at the new terminal, where more airlines will be able to handle a higher number of cargo flights.

The fully automated export and import cargo complex with expanded capacity has the potential to bring about a dramatic change in international trade for Bangladesh. Business leaders are optimistic that this increased and improved capacity will make the local businesses more competitive globally and increase the confidence of international partners.

That the terminal will be managed by a Japanese company under a public private partnership gives us confidence that the highest standards of maintenance and efficiency will be employed. We sincerely hope that the chaos, inefficiencies, corruption and lackadaisical maintenance that we face now will all be eliminated at the new terminal. This will only be possible if the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) makes sure that such anomalies do not re-emerge in the new facility.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

letters@thedadilystar.net

Political engagements online

It is time for our political parties to consider conducting their public engagement events, such as rallies, assemblies and processions, virtually. Many major cities in Bangladesh, especially the capital Dhaka, are already struggling with severe traffic jams. We, the normal citizens, find it difficult to justify the hours of traffic jams and additional suffering caused by street demonstrations that do nothing but attack the rival parties or praise their own. If political parties truly want to serve the people, they should abandon their street shows of strength and engage citizens with substantial and persuasive reasoning. Virtual engagements will be easy, cost-effective, broad in reach, and trouble-free for citizens.

Khalid Bin Sayam
Khilgaon, Dhaka

Taming the inflation monster in Bangladesh



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SELIM RAIHAN

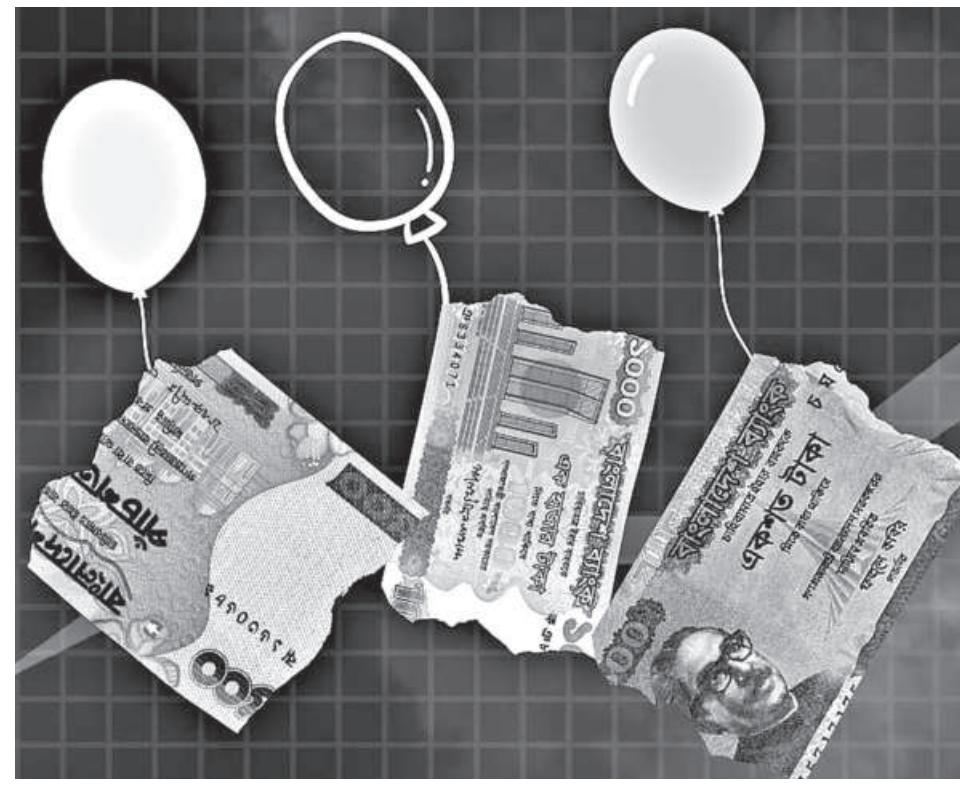
Inflation in Bangladesh has reached its highest level in a decade and has been a persistent problem for more than 18 months, starting from early last year. This situation, I believe, is the result of a failure to implement necessary measures to curb inflation in a timely manner.

Although the Russia-Ukraine war had an initial impact on inflation, it is not a valid excuse after such a long period. Other factors, such as the two rounds of fuel price hikes, have also contributed to this problem. Since fuel is an essential input for almost all sectors of the economy, its price increase affects the cost of most goods and services.

In fighting inflation, there are significant deficiencies in multiple areas coupled with a deficit in policy-making and implementation. First, the rigid interest rate policy of six to nine percent was maintained until the new monetary policy was announced in June this year. The earlier policy was not compatible with the market economy, as it did not adjust to the changing inflationary conditions. Many other developing countries in Asia (India, Indonesia, Vietnam, and even Sri Lanka) did not keep their interest rates fixed when inflation was high. Instead, they used their monetary policies more prudently and reduced the money supply in the market by raising interest rates.

But Bangladesh failed to do this. The move to a flexible regime under the Bangladesh Bank's latest monetary policy remained inadequate. The interest rates were pegged to the SMART (Six months Moving Average Rate of Treasury bill), but this did not allow the rates to rise sufficiently to curb inflation. Therefore, even after the removal of the interest rate cap, the monetary instrument remained ineffective in combating inflation.

The government also contributed to inflation by borrowing heavily from the central bank, which increased the money supply in the market. Moreover, the government adopted a policy of "managed" foreign exchange rate for several years, implemented by



the central bank, to keep the dollar exchange rate artificially "stable." This policy prevented the necessary devaluation of the taka against the US dollar when the market conditions changed. However, towards the end of last year and early this year, the taka depreciated by 25-30 percent within a very short time. This sudden and large devaluation also fuelled inflation, as it raised the prices of imported goods in the domestic market. Therefore, the monetary policy was inappropriate and insufficient.

The government could have used fiscal policy to control inflation during this crisis by giving various tax breaks on imported goods. However, it did not adjust the taxes when the prices rose in the global market due to the taka's depreciation. This resulted in higher prices of many products in the domestic market. Additionally, the domestic market has been poorly managed and monitored. There is a state of chaos and disorder. Some

unscrupulous traders have exploited the crisis by creating artificial shortages and raising prices without any justification. The government has not taken any effective measure to prevent such market manipulation.

Sri Lanka has been successful in containing its inflationary pressure, on the contrary. The island nation

in the domestic market.

Additionally, the government should enforce discipline in market management and take legal action against traders who inflate prices without any justification. It must also introduce a credible threat to market manipulators by allowing competitive import of goods in the shortest

VISUAL: TEENI AND TUNI

possible time if their prices are too high in the domestic market. The market has to be carefully monitored, and free flow of information about the demand and supply of consumer goods must be ensured, and the government should have accurate statistics on how much goods are needed and how much to import. To this end, a market monitoring mechanism should be developed involving representatives from traders, consumers, government authorities, and NGOs at the wholesale, retail, and local levels. Finally, government bodies such as the Competition Commission, which are responsible for regulating the market and preventing anti-competitive practices, must be strengthened.

The main point to remember here is that inflation cannot be controlled by any single organisation or policy. It requires a coordinated effort of sound monetary and fiscal policies, and proper market management.

Hamas assault should be a moment of reckoning for Israel



A CLOSER LOOK

Tasneem Tayeb
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TASNEEM TAYEB

As dawn broke over Israel on October 7, 2023, people woke up to the roar of rockets coming from the besieged Gaza Strip, courtesy of Hamas. The Palestinian resistance group launched Operation Al-Aqsa Flood, encompassing aerial, ground and sea operations.

According to media reports, around 6:30 in the morning on the concluding day (*Simchat Torah*) of the weeklong Jewish holiday of Sukkot – also called the "Feast of Tabernacles" or "Feast of Booths" – the first round of rockets were fired. While the rockets reached as far north as Tel Aviv, on the south, Hamas fighters infiltrated Jewish towns bordering the Gaza Strip. As of writing this column on October 8 morning, fighting was going on in the towns of Sderot, Erez, Be'er, Magen, Kfar Aza, Sufa, Nahal Oz, and the Re'im military base.

Hamas has said they have launched the attacks in response to the brutality faced by Palestinians in recent years, and against the desecration of Al-Aqsa Mosque by the Israeli forces and settlers, which has seen a significant increase in the past years. One would remember how, between April 15 and 22 last year, Israeli forces forcibly entered one of the holiest sites for Muslims and stormed the mosque,

wounding around 60 Palestinian worshippers on the first day of the attack alone. According to the Islamic Waqf Department in Jerusalem, in 2022, Al-Aqsa Mosque endured one of the most violent years in recent history, with the highest number of forced incursions and breaches.

More than 230 Palestinians were killed by Israeli forces and settlers in 2022, including 40 children. At the end of the year, 2022 was termed the deadliest year for the Palestinians since 2005. This year, even before the October 7 attacks, more than 200 Palestinians have been killed by Israelis, including more than 38 children.

Given the uptick in Israeli brutality in recent years, Operation Al-Aqsa Flood should not come as a surprise. Earlier in May, in the aftermath of Israeli bombing of Gaza that killed three Palestinian Jihad leaders and nine civilians, Hamas warned that "there will be a proportionate response whose details will be determined by the joint operations room of all factions."

While life has always been a constant struggle for Palestinians since Israel encroached their lands, under the current ultra-right-wing government headed by Benjamin Netanyahu and his cronies, survival

has become even more difficult. Israeli settlers have unabashedly ravaged Palestinian villages causing loss of lives and acres of farmlands, without any hope for justice. Israel, in all its mighty wisdom, surely could not have expected Palestinians to live day-in, day-out with a bloody axe hanging over their necks, waiting for the blow.

Israel and the world community should now face the reality: the only way forward from here is a two-state solution as per the UN resolution of 1947, where Israel returns the Palestinians their lands and minds its own territories, and Palestinians live peacefully in their own.

By pinning the Palestinians against the wall, Israel's ultra-right-wing government has brought this attack upon themselves. While Operation Al-Aqsa Flood exposes the intelligence failure of the rogue state, it also shows how they have greatly undermined the Palestinians' capacity to respond to constant ethnic cleansing and apartheid. October 7, 2023 has been termed the deadliest day of violence for Israel since the five-decade-old Yom Kippur War. More than 600 Israelis have been killed as of 8:30pm Sunday, and many Israeli soldiers and civilians have been taken hostage. Many Israeli military equipment and vehicles have

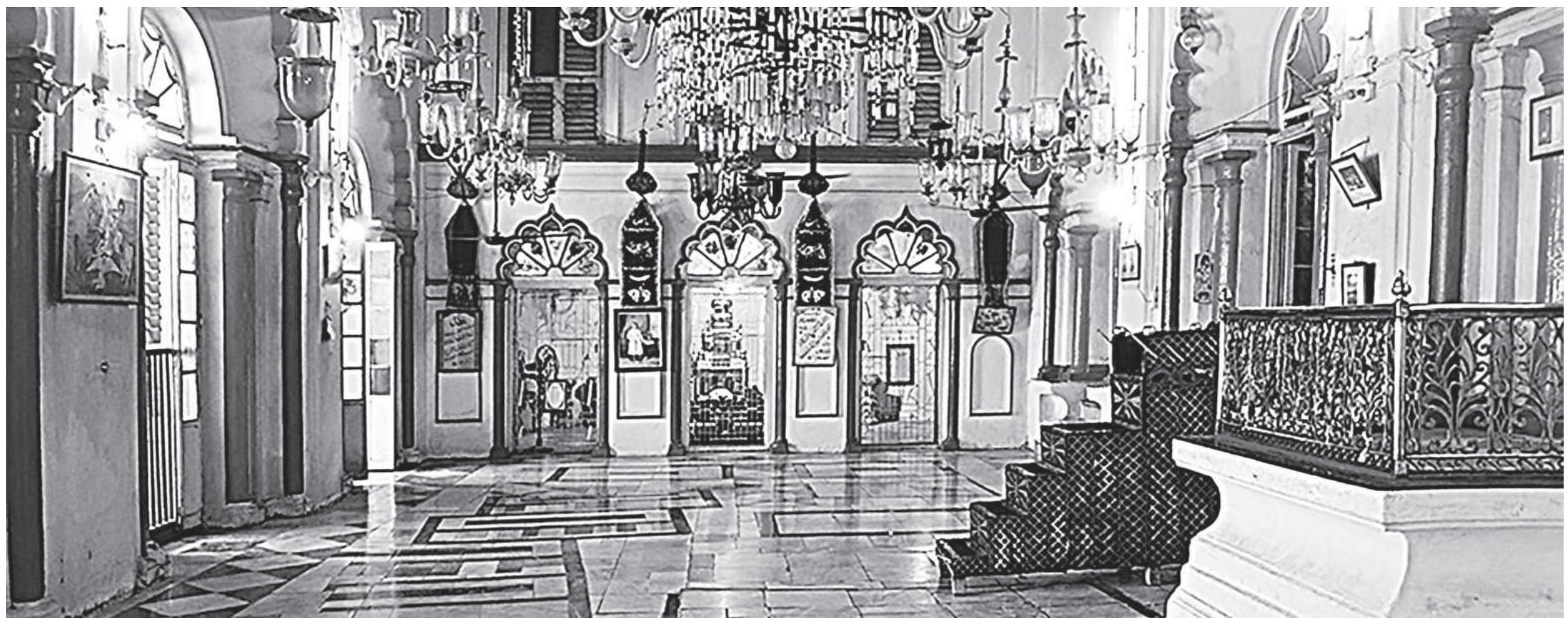
been seized by Hamas and Islamic Jihad fighters. On the Palestinian side, at least 350 people have been killed and at least 2,000 wounded, in Israeli attacks as part of Operation Iron Swords, in what Netanyahu termed a "mighty vengeance."

But this is nothing new for the Palestinians. As a result of decades of unjust subjugation, dehumanisation, and having become accustomed to enduring loss – of lives, loved ones, and belongings – the Palestinians have nothing more to lose, no hope for a dignified life. The Hamas and Islamic Jihad fighters embracing martyrdom have nothing to look back at except pain and trauma, especially because the international community has failed Palestine as well. While hypocritically the West and its allies have condemned Russia and empowered Ukraine, they have turned a blind eye to the Palestinians' plea for justice, for their right to self-determination.

Israel is not "at war," as Netanyahu has said. Rather, Israel – along with its shameless allies – is the architect and enabler of this war. Israel and the world community should now face the reality: the only way forward from here is a two-state solution as per the UN resolution of 1947, where Israel returns the Palestinians their lands and minds its own territories, and Palestinians live peacefully in their own.

Violence will beget more violence, and it will spill over to not only stain the region red, but it will have far-reaching consequences for the allies of both sides. This should not be allowed to happen.

Read the full version of this article on our website.



Inside the main hall of Sibtainbad Imambara, Matiyaburj, West Bengal. The Imambara was built by Wajid Ali Shah in 1864.

THE WEEPING KING

How Hindustani Music flourished in colonial Bengal

Music lovers and historians point to the three decades (1856-1887) Wajid Ali Shah spent at Matiyaburj as being crucial to the evolution of classical music in Calcutta. He was a tastemaker and social commentators at the time.

RICHARD DAVID WILLIAMS

In 1870, a song collector from Calcutta called Nanda Lal Sharma flicked through the pages of his newly published book, *Sangit Sutra*. In the central pages was a thumri lyric, set to the rag Alhaiya Khamaj. Thumri was becoming an increasingly popular genre in Calcutta at that time, especially in the exclusive salons where the city's most celebrated courtesans would sing and dance to lyrics in Brajbhasha Hindi, dripping with emotion and longing.

This particular song stood out though. Nanda Lal had called it a "Lucknow thumri", and it was unusual because it was not interested in the conventional poetic themes of Krishna's seductions. This lyric was an evocative lament, which drew the listener westwards to the ill-fated city of Lucknow in northern India:

The kingdom is drowned in the salt of thearem:

His Majesty is going to London.

In every palace, his ladies are weeping:

Come to the alley, in the alley the cobbles weep.

Nanda Lal was confident that his readers would immediately recognise the character this lyric was referring



Wajid Ali Shah accompanies the dance of Sarfaraz Mahal, as depicted in the 'Ishqnama', Lucknow, 1849-50. Royal Collection Trust. <https://www.rct.uk/collection/themes/publications/eastern-encounters/the-ishqnama-book-of-love>

Colonial Bengal, which came out this year, I was interested in what happened once Wajid 'Ali Shah settled in Calcutta, where he built a new court-in-exile in the southern suburb of Matiyaburj.

Music lovers and historians point to the three decades (1856-1887) he spent at Matiyaburj as being crucial to the evolution of classical music in Calcutta. He was a tastemaker and social commentators at the time, like Kaliprasanna Sinha, noted how the city's playboy babus were dressing like him and listening to Lucknow-style music. Yet while the Ex-King's influence on biriyani is well known, his contributions to music are more mysterious.

On the one hand, political histories remember Wajid 'Ali Shah as a failure:

two seemingly different narrative threads are interlaced. The British made it clear that it was the king's love of music and dance, his choosing notorious musicians for friends, and his overindulgence in creativity that made him unfit to rule.

That portrayal has persisted for over a century, although it has been challenged by writers like Srivanthi, who wrote about Wajid 'Ali Shah in Bengali in the 1990s, and Satyajit Ray, whose movie, *The Chess Players* (1977), used extensive research to nuance the way we think about that period.

But how did people react to Wajid 'Ali Shah's arrival in his own time? How did his new court in Calcutta impact the local music scene? What did it mean for artists and intellectuals who were invested in the Bengal renaissance to simultaneously focus on music from north India, and songs in Hindi and Urdu?

The appearance of "Lucknow thumri" in a Bengali song book was not an anomaly. Many Bengali writers wrote about the cultural world of north India that had landed on their doorstep, and many music students flocked to Matiyaburj to find a prestigious ustad. This was not a one-way relationship. Although he is remembered as the embodiment of all things Lucknow, Wajid 'Ali Shah also took great interest in the music and dance of Calcutta, especially the songs of local street performers. He wrote numerous musical sketch comedies, featuring water carriers, cleaners, and khemta dancing girls. Khemta was a popular, risqué dance at the time that revolved around the dancer's jerking hips. The king was entranced and had the style taught to the female performers in his court, and even wrote his own songs for it in a mixed Bengali-Hindustani.

The court of Matiyaburj was all but destroyed following the death of the king in 1887. However, there are many records available which allow us to reconstruct the court and imagine

the music and dance that happened in its rooms. The image of the king constructed in British colonial archives and legal reports is complicated by the version of him that features in Bengali memoirs and Urdu music treatises. The king even built his own printing press and published his own writings in Urdu that document in minute detail the musical experiments he concocted in exile.

To really appreciate the subtleties of what happened over those thirty years, we need to go back and consider a significantly longer period. In the mid-eighteenth century, the courts of Murshidabad, Bishnupur, and Burdwan attracted music masters from northern India who ended up settling in Bengal when they found patrons and students. The rulers of these kingdoms aspired to the prestige and cultural cachet of the Mughals and Rajputs further west, so invested in artists who knew a transregional form of exalted court music rather than focus on local, regional, and Bengali styles. This is quite striking as, in today's world, there is a much greater focus on Bangla gan; yet this was a later, more modern development, urged on by pioneering intellectuals like Rabindranath and his generation.

Musicians from these courts migrated to Calcutta in search of new sources of income and places to perform. In the early nineteenth century, there was a hunger for good quality art music, yet the scene was very mixed and the city did not have a reputation for exceptional artists, who still tended to congregate in northern India, as in Rampur, Delhi, Lucknow, and Banaras.

This hunger was sated from the 1850s onwards, when a celebrated entourage of musicians and dancers from Lucknow descended on Calcutta to accompany Wajid 'Ali Shah. These artists went on to make new connections in the city, performing across a network of rajbari aristocratic households, teaching at new academies and music societies for bhadralok music students and enthusiasts, and ultimately plugging into the brand new gramophone recording industry.

Examining the movement of musicians and dancers in this period challenges some core ideas that have come to shape our sense of South Asian music history for this period. We tend to think of a dramatic break or rupture between the world of Mughal courts and colonial cities, and often see 1857 as sounding the death knell of aristocratic patronage. The culture of Lucknow is thought to have died out, yet the survival of the court in Bengal suggests a more complicated legacy.

Some musicians went on to secure new patrons among the Bengali elites of the city and became part of their apparently modern enterprises, while others continued to work for royal courts through to the mid-twentieth century, often finding a balance between new agendas with older conventions, spaces, and aesthetics.

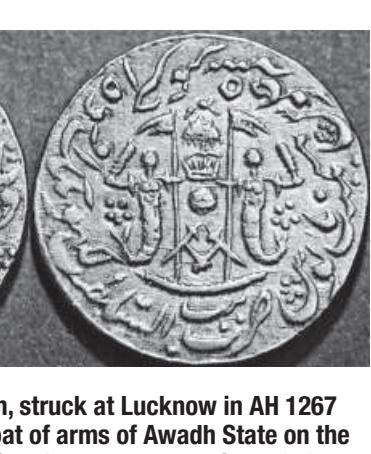
Women navigated these transitions too, but their contributions in this period have largely been forgotten. One of the subtle but long-lasting effects of colonialism in north India was a gradual shift in the way musicians were represented. By the end of the nineteenth century, male musicians were increasingly represented as the

celebrities of a modern music industry. Male artists increasingly identified themselves as representatives of gharanas - semi-hereditary lineages of musicians that cultivate characteristic techniques and musical styles. While gharana musicians did take on female disciples who became professional musicians in their own right, this was largely a twentieth-century development: the rhetoric and imagery of the gharana ultimately revolves around genealogies of charismatic, male ustad, leaving a sense that Hindustani music was primarily a man's domain.

A major exception to the rule is the courtesan: we have abundant collections of images of dancing girls, bajis, and tawaifs, who are increasingly recognised as artists and musicians in their own right. The problem with this version of history is that it creates an artificial sense of two spheres of music-making: one patriarchal and respectable (though occasionally condescending to teach women), the other feminine and potentially reprehensible (since courtesans were not expected to marry, and thus remained outside mainstream society). The implication is that until the twentieth century - which saw the rise of middle class female musicians - a woman who engaged with music must have been a courtesan, or attached to her salon.

Since women's culture was scrutinized and sanitized by male reformers, women who loved and patronised music have also been muted in the historical record. Reconstructing Matiyaburj revealed a wide range of women who were invested in musical projects. Khas Mahal, the king's most senior wife, composed volumes of song lyrics and poems while her many female attendants sang for her six nights a week. Because there was so much scrutiny over women's involvement in the arts, her love of music was quietly folded away and rarely discussed in public. Wajid 'Ali Shah also designed a network of classes for women in his court to study music and dance, based on his Parikhana (House of Fairies), a similar training academy he had built in Lucknow. While Matiyaburj was an exceptionally musical court, these were not isolated anomalies, and it seems far more women were writing songs, singing, and playing instruments than we would assume from today's vantage point.

Retracing how Wajid 'Ali Shah forged a musical relationship between northern India and Bengal reveals how much of the musical archive from this period has been discarded and forgotten. The weeping in this song conveyed the outrage felt at the king's exile and humiliation, but also the trauma experienced in the aftermath of the Uprising that followed, and the more pervasive grief of succumbing to colonial rule.



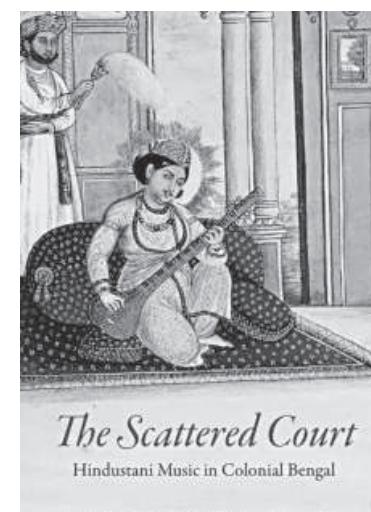
Silver Rupee of Wajid Ali Shah, struck at Lucknow in AH 1267 (1850-51 CE), showing the coat of arms of Awadh State on the reverse. The two figures holding the pennants are intended to be fish, seen also on the Awadh flag.

Retracing how Wajid 'Ali Shah forged a musical relationship between northern India and Bengal reveals how much of the musical archive from this period has been discarded and forgotten.

to: the last king of Lucknow, Wajid 'Ali Shah (1822-1887), at the fateful moment when he was deposed by the East India Company, fourteen years earlier in 1856. The Nawab had travelled to Calcutta, where he planned to take a ship to London to plead his case and demand the return of his kingdom. However, his plans went awry. His ill health prevented him from embarking on his journey, so his mother, Janab-i 'Aliyah, went instead on his behalf, and made it as far as Buckingham Palace. But just then the Uprising of 1857 rippled across northern India, and Lucknow itself was besieged and ruined. Wajid 'Ali Shah was declared the "Ex King" and was told in no uncertain terms that he would never be allowed to leave Calcutta again.

The weeping in this song conveyed the outrage felt at the king's exile and humiliation, but also the trauma experienced in the aftermath of the Uprising that followed, and the more pervasive grief of succumbing to colonial rule.

I found this song when I was carrying out research for my book, *The Scattered Court: Hindustani Music in Colonial Bengal*.



The Scattered Court: Hindustani Music in Colonial Bengal
RICHARD DAVID WILLIAMS

a decadent effete who lost control of his kingdom and paved the way for the British empire. On the other, in musical memory, he is remembered as a creative genius who ushered in new tastes and styles of music and dance that became fundamental components of Hindustani classical music as we know it today. Intriguingly, these

Richard David Williams is Senior Lecturer in Music and South Asian Studies at SOAS University of London and author of *The Scattered Court: Hindustani Music in Colonial Bengal*.

Bellingham Real's 'last piece to the puzzle'

AGENCIES

Real Madrid star Jude Bellingham has got off to a sparkling start for the Los Blancos in the 2023-24 season. The 20-year-old scored twice and produced another masterful display in a 4-0 La Liga home win over Osasuna on Saturday, with the England midfielder reaching an astonishing 10 goals in his first 10 starts for his new team in all competitions.

Eight of those goals have come in the La Liga helping Real to the top of the table with eight victories in nine games. His tally so far has taken him to the top of the goal-scoring charts in the Spanish League and his goals have proved to be decisive in six of those contests.

Ten goals scored from 19 shots showed extraordinary effectiveness from the 20-year-old Bellingham who has made his transition to Spanish soccer look ridiculously easy.

He equalled Cristiano Ronaldo's splendid start at Real Madrid with 10 goals in his first 10 games in all competitions but managed to better the Portuguese star's stats by providing three assists against Ronaldo's one. "The first came from a brutal play by Modrić and Carvajal. I got into the box, picked up the ball, looked for a gap and hit it with my left foot. It was a good shot. In the second, I linked up well with Fede and beat the goalkeeper. Two good goals thanks to team play. I was there to put that last piece to the puzzle. It's always nice to score and even more so when you win," he told Real Madrid TV after the game.

Bellingham has found the net twice in the Champions League this season for Real and both the strikes helped the 14-time winners to win their first two group-stage matches against Union Berlin and Italian champions Napoli.



"It's been a great start to my life here in Madrid. You have all helped me a lot, the club staff, my teammates and the fans. I'm very grateful. I'm not going to score in every game, but I have to try to maintain this level to try to win as much as possible," he said.

The former Borussia Dortmund skipper also shared a pre-match ritual he follows ahead of games to get him into the mindset of delivering performances for his side.

"I like to visualise the game. I see the pitch, the grass, my playing position... That way I feel calmer, I know where I'm going to be on the pitch. It's something I've been doing throughout my career and thanks to that I go into matches without nerves and am prepared for everything. I was taught this from a very young age and I still practice it."



The national wrestling championship got underway at Sheikh Russel Roller Skating Stadium in Paltan yesterday. 12 district teams and four services teams are taking part in the two-day competition. More than 100 wrestlers in men's and women's divisions will be competing in 20 weight categories. Bangladesh Amateur Wrestling Federation's general secretary Tabir Rahman Pahlawan inaugurated the championship.

PHOTO: COLLECTED



Performers participate in the closing ceremony of the 2022 Asian Games at the Hangzhou Olympic Sports Centre Stadium in Hangzhou yesterday. Hosts China racked up a record 201 gold medals in the 19th and biggest Asian, which concluded at the 80,000-capacity Olympic Stadium with China handing over to Japan for the 2026 edition. Around 12,407 athletes from 45 nations competed in 40 disciplines at the Hangzhou Games, which were delayed by a year due to COVID-19.

PHOTO: AFP

Bangladesh end another bleak Asian Games

ANISUR RAHMAN from Hangzhou

"Look at the other small countries, they have improved. But we are stuck in the same place," a frustrated Bangladeshi athlete said this at the breakfast table of the Dining Hall of Hangzhou Athletes' Village yesterday, a few hours before the closing ceremony of the 19th edition of the Asian Games.

This statement encapsulates Bangladesh's frustrating campaign in their 11th appearance at the Asian Games, where they failed to make a mark in disciplines where they were hopeful of winning a medal like kabaddi, shooting and archery and will return home with two bronze medals from cricket.

Bangladesh had sent a relatively big contingent of 180 athletes to compete in 17 disciplines in this year's Games but only cricket saved their blushes and ensured that they wouldn't have to return home empty-handed like they did after the Jakarta Games in 2018, where cricket was not included.

After another disappointing showing at a global meet, the Bangladesh contingent is going through routine self-reflection where the same old reasons like lack of proper planning and insufficient financial backing are emerging as the reasons.

While Bangladesh had an overwhelming Asian Games, its neighbours India rose to new heights.

India, who were eighth in the medals tally in the last two editions of the Asian Games, rose to fourth position in Hangzhou with 107 medals - 28 gold, 38 silver and 41 bronze.

An official of the Bangladesh Olympic Association, who asked to remain unnamed, said that the Indian government and private entities are heavily backing athletics in their country which has enabled them to take forward strides at the global stage.

"The Indian government also gives huge financial backing to sports, whereas we still haven't received the allocation for the Hangzhou Games. Why wouldn't India progress like this?"

At the breakfast table, the Bangladeshi athlete, who sought anonymity, also pointed out the difference in preparation of Indian and Bangladeshi athletes.

"The Pakistani and Indian athletes who have government jobs don't have to go to their workplaces. Instead they get to train round the year. We, on the other hand, have to be on the run for approval of documents even two days before departure."

Amidst all the disappointment, boxer Selim Hossain surprised all by reaching the quarterfinals while Bangladesh missed a chance to win a first ever medal in archery when the men's team lost to Indonesia in the bronze medal decider in recurve team event. The men's football team showed some fight, suffering 1-0 defeats to Myanmar and India before drawing against China but couldn't go past the first round. The medal-hopeful disciplines of kabaddi and shooting disappointed most in their respective events with poor performances.

With the two medals from the Hangzhou Games, Bangladesh now has overall 13 medals in the Asian Games history. Twelve of those medals have come from kabaddi and cricket and the other one came from boxing.

This edition of the Games was also marred with another example of incompetency of the Bangladesh officials as karateka Hasan Khan couldn't take part in his event as his coach and manager reportedly couldn't board the bus for the event in time.

As per sources, Bangladesh also brought a pregnant athlete for the Games as the officials claimed they did not have any alternative.

With the two medals from the Hangzhou Games, Bangladesh now has overall 13 medals in the Asian Games history. Twelve of those medals have come from kabaddi and cricket and the other one came from boxing.

FASTEST ONE-DAY HUNDRED Fraser-McGurk breaks De Villiers' record

REUTERS

South Australia batter Jake Fraser-McGurk smashed a 29-ball century against Tasmania at the Marsh Cup on Sunday to register the fastest hundred in one-day cricket, eclipsing South Africa great AB de Villiers' previous record of 31 balls.

Replaying to Tasmania's mammoth 435-9, South Australia were dismissed for 398 at the Karen Rolton Oval in Adelaide, but it turned out to be a memorable outing for Fraser-McGurk, who hammered 125 runs from 38 deliveries, which included 10 fours and 13 sixes.

The 21-year-old was eventually dismissed by spinner Beau Webster in the 12th over. Fraser-McGurk reached his half-century in 18 balls, the quickest by an Australian in the 50-over format.

"I went out there with some good intent, had my plans and process, and seemed like everything went my way," Fraser-McGurk said.

"I've made a few 30s playing in twos and stuff, felt like I've been hitting them reasonably well but probably not that well so definitely surprised myself."

The record also marked Fraser-McGurk's first century in any professional format.

"It's probably an innings I'll never see maybe ever again. It was some of the cleanest ball-striking I've seen and sometimes you've just got to tip your cap to players like that that can do that," Tasmania captain Jordan Silk said.

"Whilst it was frustrating to watch it was also amazing to watch."

Milan make Giroud goalkeeper

AFP, Milan

Olivier Giroud was officially made a goalkeeper by AC Milan on Sunday after the France striker's heroics between the sticks at Genoa helped his team take top spot in Serie A.

Veteran forward Giroud took Mike Maignan's place in the Milan goal after his Les Bleus teammate was sent off in the seventh minute of injury time and did enough to ensure the away side won 1-0 and moved two points ahead of local rivals Inter Milan.

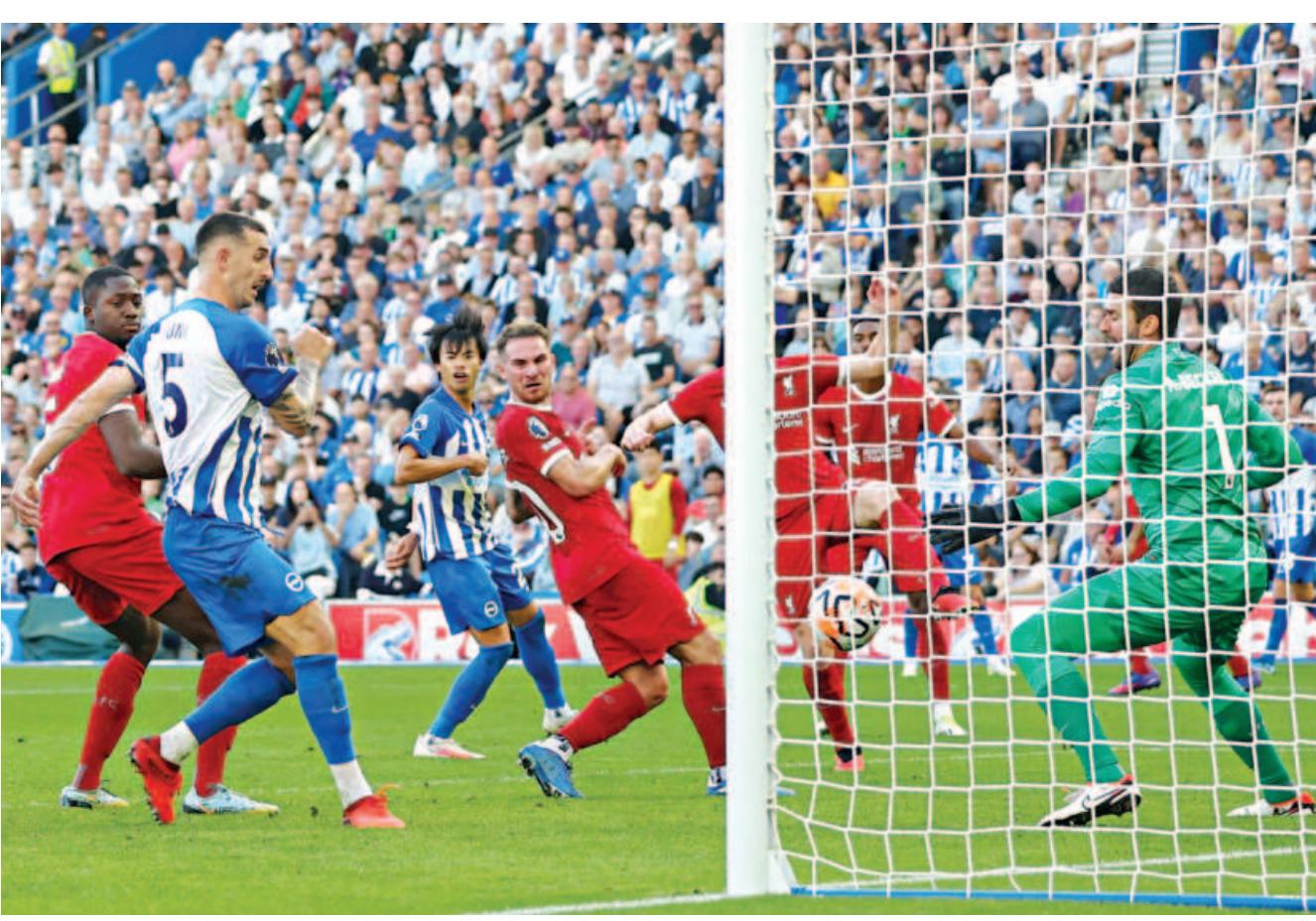
"Last night Olivier Giroud became part of Milan history by courageously defending the Milan goal in the final minutes of our match with Genoa," Milan said in a statement. "The club has decided to honour his performance in our last line of defence by putting him in the list of goalkeepers."

Milan also said that fans could buy a replica goalkeepers' jersey with "Giroud 9" on the back as an homage to an incredible ending to Saturday's tight victory.

Giroud can be seen on Milan's website smiling in the goalkeeping kit -- which on Saturday night he said he would frame -- above a perfect record of zero goals conceded in his seven league appearances this season.



Brighton captain Lewis Dunk scores from close range to cancel out Mohamed Salah's brace as the Seagulls came from behind to grab a 2-2 draw against Liverpool in the Premier League on Sunday.



Brighton's Dunk rescues 2-2 draw against Liverpool

REUTERS, Brighton

Brighton captain Lewis Dunk scored with a deft volley to cancel out Mohamed Salah's brace for Liverpool as the Seagulls came from behind to grab a 2-2 draw at the Amex Stadium in the Premier League on Sunday.

The home side took the lead in the 20th minute when Simon Adingra picked the pocket of former Brighton midfielder Alexis Mac Allister and fired home, but Salah levelled in the 40th minute, ending a flowing move with a trademark left-footed finish.

The Egyptian gave his side the lead from the penalty spot in first-half stoppage time after Dominik Szoboszlai was pulled down by Pascal Gross, and Salah struck his shot to the left of keeper Bart Verbruggen.

Brighton forced an equaliser in the 78th minute as defender Dunk volleyed home Solli March's free kick to ensure his side stayed sixth on the table with 16 points, one behind third-placed Liverpool.



No need to worry about reserves: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said Bangladesh is experiencing some difficulties due to the global economic recession and high inflation.

"Today, many say many things about the reserve. I said that there is no need to worry about the reserve. We'll cultivate crops and produce our own food. If needed, we'll spend and purchase less [reduce import] to some extent," she said.

While addressing the certificate-awarding and concluding ceremony of the 75th foundation training course for BCS officers in the city's Osmani Memorial Auditorium, they premier also asked the public servants to grow a mindset to serve the people, reaching the services to the doorsteps of the masses.

"You'll have to create a mentality to reach the services to the doorsteps of the people, engaging the people [in this process] for the people," she said.

Sheikh Hasina asked the government staff to always work for the country,



SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



A locomotive goes past Sreenagar Railway Station during a trial run. Today, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is set to inaugurate railway link between Dhaka and Faridpur's Bhanga through Padma Bridge.

PHOTO: TANJIL HASAN

ENSURING FAIR POLLS US assessment team enquires about govt steps

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The pre election assessment delegation from the US has wanted to know what steps the government had taken to hold free and fair elections.

The mission neither mentioned participatory elections nor the polls time government, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen told reporters after meeting the six-member delegation at his office yesterday.

The delegates arrived in Dhaka on Saturday on a six-day visit.

Today, the mission is scheduled to meet representatives from the Awami League, BNP and Jatiya Party.

Earlier, the EU announced it would not send a fully fledged election observation mission to Bangladesh.

At yesterday's meeting with the delegates, Foreign Minister Momen talked about Awami League's role in the Liberation War and its struggles for democracy.

"We have said we want a free and fair election that is free of violence. But we cannot guarantee that it will be free of violence because all [political] parties need to be committed to that," he said.

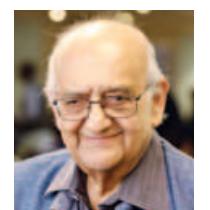
An election can be considered

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

Politics now an instrument of material gains

Rehman Sobhan tells seminar on 'broken' politics and the way out

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



People in politics now consider it an instrument of their advancement, eminent economist Prof Rehman Sobhan said yesterday.

"When politics itself and parliament itself become instrumental in perpetuating someone's business fortune, the whole dynamic of politics then becomes not public service but material advancement and this is what led to a major breakdown in the system," he said, speaking in English.

Prof Rehman made the remarks at a seminar titled "Politics is broken: How do we fix it" organised by English daily Dhaka Tribune in association with the Royal Norwegian Embassy at a city hotel yesterday.

Talking about the politicisation of the administration, he said, "Now, here this has been a continuous process, which began long ago, but became worse with each successive period.

"And even after you moved into a system of relatively free and fair elections, the politicisation process continued... The compulsion of a particular regime when it comes into power not to reverse the wrongs of what its predecessors did by institutionally correcting it, but by perpetuating that system. The way in which the psychology actually works is that this regime came and

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

Govt couldn't control onion, potato prices

Admits agri minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Agriculture Minister Abdur Razzaque has admitted that the government has failed to control the prices of onions and potatoes despite taking measures.

The minister, also a presidium member of the Awami League, made the remark to reporters after a Food Planning and Monitoring Committee meeting at the Secretariat yesterday.

"We couldn't control the price of onions and potatoes. So, we'll accept the criticism, this is our weak point. But please also highlight our strong points in the media," the minister said.

When asked if the government has given up on controlling the price of potatoes and onions, Razzaque said, "We've not given up at all. We're working on it. The production part falls to our agricultural ministry, but the commerce ministry is

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Death toll from Afghan quakes doubles to 2,000

Nearly 10,000 injured; rescue workers dig through razed villages for signs of life

AFP, Herat

The death toll from a series of earthquakes in western Afghanistan yesterday rose sharply again to more than 2,000, with nearly 10,000 injured, as rescue workers dug through razed villages for vanishing signs of life.

More than 1,300 homes were toppled when Saturday's magnitude 6.3 quake -- followed by eight strong aftershocks -- jolted hard-to-reach areas 30 kilometres (19 miles) northwest of the provincial capital of Herat, according to officials.

In rural Zinda Jan district, dozens of households were reduced to jumbles of broken masonry, where makeshift rescue teams dug trenches in the hope of unearthing survivors.

"Our people witnessed an unprecedented earthquake," said disaster management ministry spokesman Mullah Janan Sayed,

putting the number of dead at 2,053 and injured at 9,240 across 13 villages.

"For the treatment of the victims of the incident we are doing our best," he told reporters in Kabul. "On site search operations in the affected area are ongoing," he added, warning the fatality figures would likely rise higher still.

More than 1,300 homes were toppled when Saturday's magnitude 6.3 quake jolted hard-to-reach areas of the provincial capital of Herat.

One further aftershock of magnitude 4.2 hit the same area around 7:00 am (0230 GMT) yesterday morning, according to the United States Geological Survey.

In Sarboland village of Zinda Jan district, an AFP reporter saw homes ruined near the epicentre of the quakes, which shook the area for more than five hours.

Gutted homes showed personal belongings flapping in the harsh wind, as women and children lingered out in the open preparing to spend the night under an open sky.

HOLDING NAT'L POLLS EC draws up Tk 1,445cr budget

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

To organise the upcoming national polls, the Election Commission (EC) Secretariat has prepared a draft budget of Tk 1,445 crore, which is twice as large as the previous budget and also the most expensive one prepared to date.

The dramatic increase in the budget has been attributed to the sharp rise in the cost of fuel and other necessary materials.

"A draft proposal of the election budget has been prepared, and we are hopeful that it will be finalised by next week," EC Secretariat Additional Secretary Ashok Kumar Debnath told this newspaper.

The budget for the 12th parliamentary election, likely to be held in the first week of January, might increase by another Tk 200 crore as the commission is considering a two-day allowance for polling officials this time instead of the current practice of paying them allowance only for the election day.

Presiding officers, assistant presiding officers, and polling officers need to work on the eve of the election when they collect polling materials from the returning officers and safely deliver them to the polling centres, say EC officials.

Presently, a presiding officer gets Tk 4,000, an assistant presiding officer gets Tk 3,000 and a polling official gets Tk 2,000 as allowance for performing election duties on the polling day.

EC officials said that there will be one presiding officer for each polling centre; and one assistant presiding officer and two polling officers for each polling booth.

They said around 42,000 polling centres with about 260,000 polling booths will be required for the election.

EC officials also said around 60 percent of the total budget will be spent on law enforcement agencies to be deployed to maintain law and order during the polls.

Previously, EC allocated Tk 700 crore for the 11th national polls.

Research suggests the planet Mercury continues to shrink

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

New research strongly suggests that the planet Mercury is continuing to shrink.

The smallest planet in the solar system began to contract at least three billion years ago, and experts suggest it is likely that the rate of contraction has been decreasing since then.

Mercury's radius may have decreased by as much as 7km, models and observations indicate. The contracting of the planet has produced lobate scarps, which are long, tectonic structures on its surface.

But until now, evidence of tectonic activity on Mercury has been lacking.

While undertaking a global survey of Mercury using data from Nasa's Messenger mission (2011-2015), Open University (OU) research student Benjamin Man, who led the study, discovered small, fresh landforms called grabens.

Man said: "The discovery of small grabens associated with larger tectonic structures was serendipitous. As part of my doctoral studies, I have made the first geological map of a region of the planet and whilst doing so, I came across some of the most impressive examples of these.



Rows of boats in Khatunganj, Chattogram, are being loaded with goods and supplies meant for Hatiya, Maheshkhali and other islands. Shipping to the islands is almost entirely dependent on these boats.

BUSINESS

CPD for Tk 17,568 RMG wage

The Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) yesterday proposed Tk 17,568 as the minimum monthly wage for garment workers in Bangladesh.

Of the amount, Tk 9,662 or 55 percent is basic wage, Tk 1,230 or 7 percent is food allowance and Tk 4,831 or 50 percent of the basic is house rent.

CPD Research Director Khondaker Golam Moazzem and Senior Research Associate Tamim Ahmed jointly shared the proposal at a discussion at Lakeshore Hotel in Dhaka.

STORY ON B1