

FOUR YEARS OF DHAKA MAYORS

Failures stifle successes

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE and DIPAN NANDY

Dhaka's two mayors, who step into the fifth year of their tenure this week, have largely failed in their fight against mosquitoes.

Before taking charge, Sheikh Fazle Nur Taposh and Atiqul Islam made promises of lowering air pollution. But Dhaka air continues to be among the worst in the world.

The mayors, however, can be lauded for promptly removing

the waste generated during Eid-ul-azha. Last year, most neighbourhoods were cleaned within hours. They also freed several canals from grabbers, and re-excavated the old channel of the Buriganga.

Mayor Atiqul took the helm of Dhaka North City Corporation on May 13, 2020, and Mayor Taposh of Dhaka South City Corporation three days later.

Before the election held on February 1 that year, Atiqul and Taposh, both nominated by the

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'People will judge our deeds'

The two mayors of Dhaka – Atiqul Islam of Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) and Barrister Sheikh Fazle Nur Taposh of Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) – have completed four years of their five-year tenure.

DNCC Mayor Atiqul took office on May 13, 2020, while DNCC South Mayor Taposh assumed office three days later.

In exclusive interviews with Partha Pratim Bhattacharjee and Dipan Nandy of The Daily Star, the two mayors talk about their achievements as well as failures, the challenges they faced, and their visions for the future.

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Students of Rajuk Uttara Model College celebrate after the results of the SSC exams were released yesterday. Of the 780 students who sat for the exams from this school, 758 got GPA 5. PHOTO: PARBIR DAS

Stuck in lift, patient dies at hospital

Family alleges she died from suffocation

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

A patient of Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Medical College Hospital in Gazipur died yesterday allegedly by suffocating after being stuck in a hospital lift for 45 minutes.

The deceased was identified as Mumtaz Begum, 53, of Barigao village in the district's Kapasia upazila.

The incident occurred around 11:00am, the victim's family said.

Shahadat Hossain Salim, a relative of the patient,

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Girls ace SSC again

Outshine boys both in terms of pass rate and GPA-5

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and ARAFAT RAHAMAN

Girls have done better than boys in terms of pass rate in the SSC exams eight years in a row, and they have also outdone boys in achieving GPA-5 for seven consecutive years.

The results of SSC exams, released yesterday, show a rise in pass rate – to 83.77 percent from 80.94 percent of last year.

The number of students achieving GPA-5 and schools with cent percent pass rate have also increased.

Sadly, the number of schools with zero percent pass rate has also gone up to 51 from last year's 48.

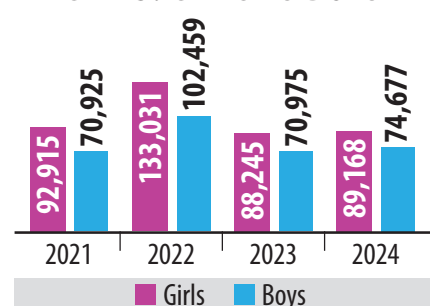
Students did better in English and Mathematics and outstanding results of Dhaka and Jashore boards boosted the overall pass rate, said educationists and board chairmen.

The pass rate of Dhaka and Jashore

boards rose by 6.40 and 6.16 percentage points.

They said girls were more sincere in their studies and got stipends, which require regular class attendance. They

GPA-5: GIRLS VS BOYS



said these were among the key reasons for them doing better.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said

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BEYOND NILKHET Dhaka's second-hand book markets

ASHIF AHMED RUDRO

The second-hand book market is a buoyant one and there are places in Dhaka, other than Nilkhet, where your desire to buy books meets affordability. With a keen eye and some bargaining skills, it is possible to make a deal at these places.

PURANA PALTAN

The Purana Paltan book market is quite paltry in size. It's located on Topkhana Road, across the street from the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque, basking under the shade of the metro construction. The shops stand on the footpath and the feeling of congestion is very real but they make up for it with



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN



their collection.

The market is surprisingly busy for such a compact size and every person who walks by cannot help but steal a look. In the large pile of old books,

one can hardly track the title they are looking for. But setting aside their collection, the best thing about this place is how reasonable the prices are.

"I bought four books at Tk 80. The shopkeeper said to me whatever I pick, it's Tk 20 only. I got classics of Bangla literature including Kazi Nazrul Islam and Rabindranath Tagore. That's unbelievable," said an excited Tahsin Ahmed, who added that he was going to scout the market a bit more and see what else he could find.

An avid reader in his early 50s was seen buying 67 books at once! And it only cost him less than Tk 2,000. "He's a regular customer. He works at

the secretariat and likes to collect. He comes by every few weeks and always buys in such bulk," explained Md Anwar Hossain, one of the shopkeepers.

Unlike Nilkhet, this place only offers old books.

"If we start keeping new books then we will have to charge a lot more. And then there is this huge gap between the prices. The walking customers turn away when they hear high prices so we just deal in used books," added Md Anwar Hossain.

STADIUM GATE BOOK MARKET AT MIRPUR 2

Starting at Gate #5 of Sher-E-Bangla National Cricket Stadium at Mirpur,

this book market expands towards the Mirpur-10 roundabout.

Along the footpaths, the market is an alluring walk for the bookworms as here the stalls are on both sides of the walkway. The specialty of this place is that it has a large collection of academic books.

Non-academic books – both Bangla and English novels and with some luck, one can find rare books here as well. There are some new books too but the collection of used books outweighs the new books by a hefty number.

So, where do all these books come from? A young seller by the name of Md Babu says, "We have a few parties," which is another way of saying "I know a guy who knows another guy."

"Sometimes students come to sell their used books. Sometimes people return novels after they have read them. We are more than happy to buy those. But mostly we buy from the parties. There is no hard and fast rule," he elaborated.

Both of these markets start at 10:00am and keep going till 10:00pm. Seven days a week, without any holidays. If you have a list of books to buy, you can certainly achieve that but the wiser method is to start browsing with an open mind with plenty of time on your hands. If you browse long enough and can bargain properly, you can strike an amazing deal for sure.

BCL factions clash at RU

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A clash erupted between two factions of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) at Rajshahi University (RU) Saturday night.

The clash took place between supporters of RU unit BCL President Mostafizur Rahman and Suhrawardy Hall unit BCL President Niaz Morshed around 11:00pm over the use of guest room in the hall, sources at RU said.

At least five BCL men were injured in the clash, involving cocktails and brickbats, according to Mostafizur.

University Proctor Professor Ashabul Haque and Student Advisor Professor Zahangir Alam intervened around 1:00am to bring the situation under control. The clash finally subsided around 3:00am.

Mostafizur said, "We will discuss the incident with BCL central committee."

However, our university reporter could not contact with Niaz for his comment.

Professor Ashabul said, "It was an unwanted incident. The administration will investigate the matter."

Hall Provost Zahangir Hossain said, "We searched few rooms. Some broken bricks and broken chairs, tables were found."

DEFAULT LOAN

Travel ban imposed on 4 sons of ex-minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chattogram

A Chattogram court yesterday issued a travel ban against four businesspersons, also sons of former minister Nurul Islam, from leaving the country on charges of defaulting on a loan of Tk 30 crore.

Judge Muzahidur Rahman of Chattogram Money Loan Court passed the order following an application of the plaintiff in a case in this regard filed by the Uttara Bank of Chattogram's Agrabad branch on November 26, 2023.

The accused are Mujibur Rahman, managing director of Sanowara Dairy Foods Limited, and its three directors – Jahidul Islam, Kamrul Islam, and Wahidul.

Nurul Islam is an Awami League politician who served as the minister of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment.

Failures stifle successes

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ruling Awami League, pledged in their manifestos to rid the city of mosquitoes.

Atiql's other promises included making the northern part of the city healthy, vibrant and modern while Taposh's campaign said the southern part would be beautiful, well-governed and developed.

Experts and urban planners said at the time that the two candidates made many promises that city corporations had no jurisdiction or capacity to implement.

Atiql promised to set up an Integrated Vector Management System that would work with the help of the health ministry, the Wasa, and the DSCC to effectively tackle mosquitoes.

Taposh said he would destroy the mosquito breeding grounds on a regular basis.

But in 2023, at least 980 people died of dengue in the city and many others were seriously ill. The city corporations spent over Tk 500 crore on mosquito control efforts, but the health directorate in a pre-monsoon survey found the highest density in mosquito population in five years.

Taposh told The Daily Star last week that so many people died because they did not get proper care. He argued that other countries

also see dengue outbreaks but fewer people die there.

Regarding air quality, Atiql pledged to cut pollution through mist blowers and modern technology while Taposh also made similar promises.

But the World Air Quality Report 2023 named Dhaka as the second worst capital.

Both mayors told this newspaper that they would reduce air pollution and plant a large number of trees.

Atiql added that his office would be paperless, and thanks to technology, people would not have to go there in person to get services.

In the last four years, the DNCC evicted grabbers and removed garbage from Lautala and Ramchandrapur canals in Mohammadpur, Paris canal in Mirpur and Shutibhola canal in Satarkul. It also evicted grabbers from 26 parks and playgrounds.

The DSCC has excavated and ensured water flow through the Old Channel of the Buriganga, started restoration and beautification along 8.7 kilometres of Manda canal. The corporation is currently removing waste and evicting grabbers from Jirani canal in Manda, Kalunagar canal in Hazaribagh, and Shyampur canal in Shyampur.

The mayors also hope to generate electricity from waste.

On their campaign trails and on different occasions, Atiql and Taposh said flooded neighbourhoods would be a thing of the past.

The corporations clean the drains and have breathed new life into the canals, but city dwellers still see waterlogged streets in monsoon.

To reduce traffic congestion, Taposh's camp said they would regulate public transport by having separate lanes for fast and slow-moving vehicles, while Atiql vowed to introduce dedicated transport for students. Both of them pledged to implement late mayor Annisul Huq's plan for Bus Route Rationalisation (BRR), which they said would bring discipline on roads. The BRR project started with 150 buses, but currently has 30.

A study by the US-based National Bureau of Economic Research last year ranked Dhaka as the slowest city in the world. The World Bank and Buet's Accident Research Institute in a report said average speed of vehicles on Dhaka streets was 4.8km/h in 2022.

Taposh made good on his promise of increasing revenue without raising taxes. DSCC collected Tk 703 crore in 2020-2021, Tk 879 crore in 2021-2022, and Tk 1,031 crore in 2022-23 fiscal years.

Both of them said they would

evict vendors from footpaths. The corporations conducted several drives, but the footpaths still remain occupied.

Adil Mohammed Khan, president of Bangladesh Institute of Planners (BIP), said, "The mayors were sincere in combating mosquitoes. But their programmes were ineffective because they were not taken on time."

Adil lauded DNCC for receiving citizen's complaints through an app. Local governance expert Tofail Ahmed said everyone who participated in city elections made pledges beyond their jurisdiction.

"Candidates make lofty promises on their manifesto, knowing that they can't implement those. It has become a tradition. It is nothing but betrayal to the voters," he added.

In 1608, Dhaka was made a provincial capital during the Mughal era. It was declared a municipality in 1864. After Bangladesh became independent, Dhaka was made the capital of the country. In 1990, a city corporation was formed to run it.

On November 29, 2011, the government split the city corporation through the Local Government Amendment Bill-2011, saying that bifurcation would improve civic amenities. On February 1, 2012, DNCC and DSCC started their journey.

96 constituencies

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opposition alliance is seeking to corner the government on issues relating to jobs and price rise.

An engrossing battle is expected in West Bengal where some prominent candidates are trying their luck in the fourth phase.

Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury of Congress is contesting from Baharampur constituency against Trinamool Congress' candidate and former cricketer Yusuf Pthan. Trinamool Congress lawmaker Mahua Moitra, who has been a outspoken critic of the ruling BJP, is contesting from Krishnanagar while actor-turned-politician Shatrughan Sinha is trying his luck from Asanol.

The other leading politicians in Iray tomorrow include federal minister Giriraj Singh of BJP, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, BJP's Arjun Munda and G Kishan Reddy.

The fourth phase also features Hyderabad where actress Maadhavi Latha of BJP is contesting against Asaduddin Owaisi, a four-time MP from the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen party.

The first three phases of the election, which were held on April 19, April 26 and May 7, saw a voter turnout of 66.1, 66.7 and 65.68 percent respectively compared to corresponding phases in the 2019 polls.

A total of 969 million people are registered to vote in 543 parliamentary constituencies this time.

Akhilesh Yadav is contesting in Kannauj constituency in Uttar Pradesh eyeing to wrest the seat held by Subrata Pathak of BJP who had defeated Akhilesh's wife Dimple in the previous general elections in 2019.

Baharampur constituency in West Bengal is also poised for a significant

contest. Here, Congress and TMC, allies in the Opposition's INDIA bloc, will compete against each other. Following the failure in seat-sharing negotiations, TMC fielded Yusuf Pathan as its candidate from this constituency.

Mahua Moitra is trying her luck from Krishnanagar where she faces the challenge of returning to parliament after her suspension last year due to her alleged involvement in a controversy over cash for asking questions in Lok Sabha last year. Moitra, who secured this parliamentary seat for the first time in 2019, aims at a big win against BJP nominee and debutant Amrita Roy who hails from a royal family.

The fourth phase will see voting completed in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Madhya Pradesh.

Other states which are going to polls tomorrow are Uttar Pradesh (13/80 seats), Maharashtra (11/48 seats), Madhya Pradesh (8/29 seats), West Bengal (8/42 seats), Bihar (5/40 seats), Jharkhand (4/14 seats), Odisha (4/21 seats) and Jammu and Kashmir.

So far, voting has concluded for all seats in the states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Meghalaya, Assam, Manipur, Karnataka, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tripura; the Andaman and Nicobar islands; and the Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman, Diu, Lakshadweep and Puducherry union territories.

The fifth phase will kick off on May 20 and the sixth on May 25, before the election heads towards the seventh and final phase on June 1.

Separately, all 175 seats in Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly and 28 seats in Odisha Legislative Assembly will go to polls today.

Girls ace SSC again

FROM PAGE 1

more girls sat for the exams than boys. "We have to look into the reasons for not performing as well as the girls."

SHINING AGAIN

Unveiling the results at a press conference in the capital, Education Minister Mohibul Hassan Chowdhury said this year, 85 percent of the girls passed the SSC exams while the boys' success rate was 82.39 percent.

At least 89,168 girls and 74,677 boys achieved GPA-5.

Board officials said since 2017, girls have been outperforming boys in terms of the pass rate, and since 2018 in achieving GPA-5 as well.

In 2017, the pass rate of girls was 0.85 percentage point higher than that of boys. This year it is 2.61 percentage points higher.

In 2018, at least 399 more girls got GPA-5 than boys. This year, 14,491 more girls got GPA-5.

Prof Tapan Kumar Sarker, chairman of the Dhaka education board, and Prof Gazi Hasan Kamal, former chairman of Mymensingh education board, agreed that girls were more sincere in studies.

Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) Executive Director Rasheda K Choudhury said girls have continued to outperform boys. Stipends and tuition fee waivers for girls are paying off.

Girls are sincere in studies as they need to continue with their education, overcoming hurdles like child marriage, insecurity, and other issues, she said.

She said, "But girls' improvement should be made sustainable. Besides, there should not be any reverse discrimination toward boys. We can think about introducing stipends for

boys as many of them are working."

Board	Pass rate (in %)	GPA-5
Dhaka	83.92	49,190
Rajshahi	89.26	28,074
Cumilla	79.23	12,100
Jashore	92.33	20,761
Chattogram	82.80	10,823
Barishal	89.13	6,145
Sylhet	73.35	5,471
Dinajpur	78.43	18,105
Mymensingh	85.00	13,176
Total	83.77	1,63,845

BETTER RESULT

Minister Mohibul said 83.04 percent out of the 20,13,597 students who sat for this year's SSC, Dakhil, and SSC vocational exams passed.

He said under nine general education boards, 83.77 percent passed out of the 16,06,394 who sat for the exams.

Prof Tapan, who is also the chief of the Inter-Education Board Coordination Committee, said the pass rate increased by 2.83 percentage points.

He said academic activities were almost normal after the pandemic since the exams were held on full syllabus and marks, and the students had plenty of time to prepare.

"We gave emphasis on English and Mathematics, which helped students to do better," he said.

In Dhaka board, 96 percent and 88 percent of the students passed English and Mathematics this year. Last year, only 91 percent and 81 percent passed the subjects.

Jashore Education Board had the best pass rate – 92.33 percent – of all nine general education boards and Sylhet board had the worst – 73.35 percent.

Dhaka board had the most GPA-5 achievers – 49,190 – and Sylhet board had the fewest – 5,471.

Prof Rama Bijoy Sarker, chairman of Sylhet Education Board, said, "The poor pass rate in General Science and Mathematics of Humanities group affected the overall pass rate. He said there was a lack of quality teachers, especially in rural and haor areas.

Across all 11 education boards, 2,968 schools achieved a cent percent pass rate, 614 more than that of the previous year.

Asked if any action would be taken against schools from which no students passed, Minister Mohibul said only a few students sat for the SSC from those schools. "If we take action against them, students might suffer. We will need to think about alternatives for solving the problem."

Hit by bike, girl dies on her way to school

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

A schoolgirl was killed as a motorbike hit her bicycle on Atwary-Panchagarh road at Jugikata village in Atwary upazila, Panchagarh yesterday.

The victim – Tithi Rani, 12, daughter of Pares Chandra Barman from Jugikata – was a fifth grader at a primary school in Goalpara, said police.

Tithi was going to school on a bicycle. She fell onto a road after being hit by the bike and then a three-wheeler ran her over, said Atwary Police Station Officer-in-Charge Musa Mia.

She died on the way to Panchagarh Sadar Hospital, added the OC.

Stuck in lift

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told The Daily Star, "The lift abruptly stopped as we were descending from the 11th floor to the fourth. We were stuck for 45 minutes, until people at the hospital opened the lift and escorted us out. Our patient died before we could get out."

A hospital worker named Alauddin, who was in the lift, said there were 18 to 20 people stuck there.

Mumtaz's son Abdul Mannan was also stuck inside with her.

"Once it got stuck, I called the numbers written down inside the lift for emergency. Despite several tries, no one responded. We were stuck for 45 minutes and my mother suffocated to death."

Kamal Hossain, 40, who was also in the lift, alleged that some of the people they called for help had misbehaved with them instead of helping.

Biplab, an Ansar member on duty at the gate, said the hospital has eight lifts.

"When too many people get on, the lift faces problems due excessive weight. Meanwhile, there is no one in charge of the lifts in case of an emergency."

Abdur Rahim, a patient's attendant at the hospital, said, "I was sitting on the 10th floor where my son is admitted. I heard the people crying when they were stuck inside the lift. But nobody came to their immediate aid."

Meanwhile, the hospital authorities have formed a five-member probe body, headed by Professor Rubina Yasmin of the medicine department, to investigate the incident.

The hospital's Resident Medical Officer Hasneen Jahan said, "The death of a patient inside the lift is currently under investigation. Further details will be shared after the probe is complete."

The committee has been asked to submit a report within three working days, said Md Jahangir Alam, deputy director of the hospital.



It was a day full of joy and excitement for students all over the country as the results for SSC and equivalent exams were published yesterday. *Clockwise from top*, students in Chattogram, Barishal and Dhaka celebrate their results alongside their friends.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN, PRABIR DAS, TITU DAS

TECHNICAL BOARD

Lowest number of GPA-5 in 12 years

ARAFAT RAHAMAN

After witnessing two consecutive years of record numbers of GPA-5 achievers from the technical board, this year's Secondary School Certificate (SSC) exam saw the lowest number of GPA-5 achievers from the board in 12 years.

This year, only 4,078 students from the technical board have secured the highest grade point average (GPA-5), representing a significant drop compared to 2023.

A total of 18,145 students achieved

GPA-5 in 2023 and 18,655 in 2022, which were marked as the highest in the board's history.

While 1.22 lakh students appeared for SSC this year, with 99,721 achieving passing marks, the number of highest GPA achievers fell dramatically.

The last time the technical board witnessed such a low number of GPA-5 recipients was in 2012, with only 3,524 students achieving the top score.

The following year it saw a slight increase to 4,172, but the numbers have

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Changing curriculum to discourage memorising Says PM

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said her government is bringing changes to the curriculum

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

SC clears way for GM Quader to act as JP chairman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court yesterday upheld a High Court order clearing the way for Ghulam Muhammad Quader, known as GM Quader, to perform the responsibilities as Jatiyo Party chairman.

A four-member full bench of the Appellate Division headed by Justice M Enayetur Rahim dismissed a leave to appeal petition filed by JP leader Ziaul Haque Mridha challenging the HC order.

There is no legal bar for GM Quader to perform as the JP chairman following the SC order, his lawyer Md Ozi Ullah told The Daily Star.

SHAHBAGH DEMO 12 job seekers get bail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday granted bail to 12 job seekers in a case filed over their Saturday's demonstration in the capital's Shahbagh.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Mahub Ahmed passed the order after they filed bail petitions with the court, said a court police.

Earlier in the day, Shahbagh Police Station Sub-inspector Alamin produced the 12 -- Rima Akter, Sharmin Akter Bristy, Manik Das, Mamun Rashid Ratan, Al-Amin, Abdul Hakim, Azam Mohammad, Fatema Akter, Humayun Kabir, Saddam Hossain, Sheikh Farid and Mohammad Rasel -- before the court.



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

People use a wooden step-ladder to get over this high divider on the Dhaka-Narayanganj link road. In an ideal world, this divider should have prevented such dangerous actions, but locals opted to keep this step-ladder so that they could cross to the other side faster. The photo was taken near the Bhuighar area yesterday.

'A green, clean Dhaka by 2050'

City corporations announce Climate Action Plans for the capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Aiming to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 70.6 percent, Dhaka north and south city corporations have initiated first-ever Climate Action Plans towards 2050.

The city corporations have also incorporated 100 percent removal of encroachment and restoration of all canals by 2050 in their respective plans.

Within the same period, all public transport in Dhaka will be electric, and all new buildings will be climate resilient, according to their action plans that were unveiled yesterday at a programme at Dhaka University.

The plans also aimed to transform 95 percent of existing private cars into electric vehicles, while turning 80 percent of existing residential buildings and

70 percent of existing commercial buildings into green buildings.

At the event, Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Saber Hossain Chowdhury said this

WHAT'S IN THE PLAN

Reducing emissions by up to 70.6pc

100pc restoration of canals

Making all public transport electric

Climate resilient buildings

Transforming 95pc existing private cars electric

Implementing urban afforestation

is the beginning of environment-friendly development.

"It will play an important role in building a clean, green and vibrant

Dhaka. Although Dhaka has two city corporations, this action plan will treat the city as one. It was fitting to declare 'One Dhaka' to reduce climate change impact on the city of 20 million people," he said.

A certain amount of greenery is necessary to keep the environment of Dhaka habitable and the temperature bearable, said the minister.

"We are trying to implement an urban afforestation project. Special satellite image is being developed for Dhaka, which will be used to decide where trees need to be planted," he added.

Currently, the two city corporations emit around 13.31 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, with the energy sector accounting for 56 percent, waste for 32 percent, and transport for 12 percent.

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Discussion to amend labour law ongoing

Says law minister after meeting ILO delegation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Anisul Huq yesterday said discussions are underway with the International Labour Organization (ILO) to amend the Bangladesh Labour Law.

"Discussions are ongoing about 41 points to amend the Labour Law. Among those, 17 points were discussed for about two and a half hours today [Sunday]. The remaining 24 points will be discussed

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Lu's visit to take forward bilateral relationship

Says Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Donald Lu will come to Bangladesh in order to take forward the bilateral relationship between the two countries, Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader said yesterday.

"He [Lu] will hold talks with the government. Now, BNP may think that a fresh sanction will be imposed.

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Trafficked to India for kidney harvest

MUNTAKIM SAAD

A kidney-trafficking syndicate used to target underprivileged people and take them to India with fake job offers. Upon arriving in Delhi, the gang took these victims hostage and forcibly removed their kidneys.

The gang has trafficked at least 10 people to India and harvested their kidneys, claimed Dhaka Metropolitan Police yesterday after arresting three members of the gang.

Recently, a man named Robin filed a case with Dhanmondi Police Station under the Human Organ Transplant Act, leading to the arrests.

The arrestees are Raju Hawladar, 32; Shahed Uddin, 22; and Atahar Hossen Bappi, 28.

They were arrested in front of Ibn Sina Diagnostic Center in Dhanmondi and from Bagerhat in separate drives on Saturday and yesterday, said Kh Mahid Uddin, additional commissioner of DMP.

Three of their accomplices -- Masum, 27, Shahin, 35, Sagar alias Mostafa, 37, along with 10-12 others, are now absconding.

In April 2023, behind Shah Ali Market in Mirpur-10, Robin was having tea with a friend at a tea stall. They were discussing how difficult it was to put food on their families' plates amid the rising cost of essentials. At that time, Masum (absconding accused) was also having tea nearby. Upon hearing their conversation, Masum told Robin that he had a business in India and could offer him a job there. Eventually, Robin exchanged phone numbers with Masum. They maintained regular communication for 10-15 days. Later, Robin agreed to work in India.

Masum informed Robin that he would need to undergo some medical examinations before going to India. Then, in September, Masum took him to a hospital in Dhaka. There, they introduced Robin to Raju (arrested accused). They took his passport for visa processing after the health check-up. After confirming the visa, they introduced the victim to the two other arrestees, Shahed and Atahar. Masum informed Robin they were business partners and operated businesses in both Bangladesh and India. Robin was then flown into

The gang has trafficked at least 10 people to India and harvested their kidneys, claimed Dhaka Metropolitan Police yesterday after arresting three members of the gang.

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Syed Amir-ul-Mulk passes away

CITY DESK

Syed Amir-ul-Mulk, former secretary of Banking Division under the Ministry of Finance, passed away on Friday. He was 86, said a press release.

He suffered a cardiac arrest around 11:00am on the day at his Baridhara residence.

Mulk left behind his wife, two sons, and a host of relatives and well-wishers to mourn his death.

He started his career as a CSP officer and also served as a secretary of information and environment ministries.

His namaz-e-janaza was held after the Maghrib prayers at Hoglakandi village in Manikganj. He was buried at his family graveyard in Hoglakandi.

All are requested to pray for the salvation of his departed soul.

Extending

FROM PAGE 5

under its "Songrami Ma" initiative to help them earn a livelihood. It also provided 10 domestic animals to other rural women under another initiative.

"I make bags and sell those to earn a living. My elder daughter is now a high school student. The sewing machine has helped me bear my family's expenses," said Marjina Khatun, a widow with two children from Haridhali union.

Anirban Library began its journey as a rural library, and eventually grew into a platform that supports those in need.

"A group of local youths established this library. Many of them are working in different parts of the country. However, they still contribute to keep the library active and expand its scopes for social services," said Rahima Akhter Shampa, president of the platform.

Simultaneously, over a hundred people visit the library daily to read books and newspapers. At present, it has a collection of around 7,000 books on various topics.

"Although we began as a local platform, our initiatives are now being conducted across the country," said Joydeb Kumar Bhadra, one of the founding members of Anirban Library.

"We even launched quick response services, in case of any disasters, to help those at risk. We even responded to the recent floods in Sunamganj," he added.

PRAYER TIMING

MAY 13
Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4:10 12:45 5:00 6:36 8:00
JAMAAT 4:45 1:15 5:15 6:40 8:30
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

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ISLAMPUR UPAZILA HEALTH COMPLEX Lone govt hospital grapples with doctor crisis

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

The 50-bed Islampur Upazila Health Complex in Jamalpur district, the lone government-run hospital in the area, has been running with inadequate facilities for years due to an acute shortage of doctors.

At present, the health complex is operating with only eight medical officers and five consultants, although it needs a total of 34 medical officers and consultants to provide services to patients seamlessly.

Of the eight doctors, one is on maternity leave while another is doing a foundation course in Dhaka.

The hospital does not have a single doctor for its surgery, medicine, cardiology, dental and physiotherapy departments.

As such, its modern operation theatre with equipment lies idle for years, said hospital sources.

The hospital's diagnostic facilities are also largely ill equipped. Patients with chest pain and cardiac complications cannot get their ECG tests done as the hospital's ECG machine is not working.

As a result, patients from the upazila have to depend on private clinics to get their tests done at a higher cost.

Visiting the health complex recently, this correspondent noticed



that only two doctors were working. A long queue of patients was seen there.

A number of middlemen were seen roaming around the hospital compound, even near the emergency department, trying to convince patients to go to their private clinics instead.

The hospital was also seen in a dirty, unhygienic state, unsuitable for a place where patients go for medical facilities.

Asaduzzaman, 65, was seen waiting outside the doctor's chamber for 30 minutes for his turn to get consultation.

Patients often have to wait for long before they can avail of any

service at the health complex amid its crisis of doctors.

"The health complex is the lone government-run medical facility for around 500,000 residents of the upazila. Due to the acute shortage of doctors, sometimes we find it difficult to cope with the situation and provide services to patients adequately," said Dr Abdul Aziz Ahmed, resident medical officer at the hospital.

Confirming the matter, Dr AAM Abu Taher, upazila health officer, said the higher authorities have been informed in this regard and steps will be taken to appoint more doctors and resolve the existing issues soon.

Mango harvest in Rajshahi starts May 15

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Rajshahi's district administration yesterday announced this year's mango harvest calendar, prohibiting bringing mangoes to market before May 15.

The announcement came after a meeting with mango growers, businessmen, and agriculturists held in the DC's conference room with the deputy commissioner in the chair.

On May 15, the growers can start harvesting guti varieties of mango and bring them to the market.

The schedule for harvesting gopalbhog, laukhna, and ranipasad varieties was fixed for May 25, while himsagar and khirsapat varieties can start hitting markets on May 30.

The growers were allowed to harvest the much-coveted local variety langra and hybrid variety Banana mangoes on June 10.

Fazli and popular hybrid variety amrapali can start hitting markets on June 15.

BARI-4 variety will hit markets on July 5, while ashwina and gourmati varieties on July 15, and the ilamati variety on August 20.

Katimom and BARI-II varieties are allowed to be harvested year-round.

In the meeting, Rajshahi's DC Shamim Ahmed said executive magistrates will watch over the mango orchards and markets, and will take legal action if any violation of the mango calendar is found.

The district administration has been fixing mango calendar every year since 2015 to prevent immature and adulterated mangoes from hitting the market.

Department of Agricultural Extension's Acting Deputy Director Umme Salma expected 2,60,315 tonnes of mango production from 19,602 hectares of land in the district.

Deena Parveen Forkan no more

CITY DESK

Dr Deena Parveen Forkan passed away on May 11 at her residence in Gulshan 2, Dhaka. She was 70, said a press release.

She had been suffering from cancer.

She left behind her children, sisters, nephews, nieces, and grandchildren.

Deena Parveen contributed to the field of English Language Teaching, and academia.

She earned her PhD from the University of Toledo. She joined the Department of English and Modern Languages at North South University in 1997.

Her efforts were recognised with a Lifetime Achievement Award in Dubai for her contributions to ELT.

Dr Forkan had a career as a teacher and author, with a certification in writing and communication from Harvard. She had published a book of short stories, titled "Fire on the Hills".

Her Qulkhani will be held on May 17 after Asr prayers at her Gulshan residence.

Trafficked to India

FROM PAGE 3

India on December 22, 2023.

Upon arrival, Shahed and Bappi received Robin and took him to a rented house in Faridabad area where he was kept confined for about 20-25 days. They also took away his passport.

Then Masum went to India and coerced Robin into donating a kidney. He said Robin won't be able to return to the country without his passport.

Robin was taken to a hospital in New Delhi for various kidney-related examinations.

Then he was taken to a house in Muktinagar, Gujarat. In the meantime, the gang sent Tk 3 lakh to Robin's wife and assured Tk 3 lakh more, which they never paid.

On March 4 this year,

they took Robin to a Gujrat hospital and transplanted his kidney.

Robin was released from the hospital after four days. Later, he was held captive for 10-11 days at an unknown location. There, he overheard his captives saying that Robin's kidney was sold for Tk 50 lakh.

Robin returned to the country recently.

The kidney recipients or customers of this gang are also Bangladeshis, said police. They made contacts with the syndicate through social media pages.

According to the Transplant of Human Organ Act (amendment) 2018, a patient can obtain a kidney either from a "close relative" or from a brain-dead patient, with consent from the kin.

Lowest number

FROM PAGE 3

steadily climbed since then, according to data from Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics.

Students under this board also recorded the lowest passing rate in the last four years - 81.38 percent. In 2020, the rate was 72.70 percent.

Asked about low performance, Chairman of Technical Education Board Prof Md Mamun Ul Hoque said, "It's unexpected, but we have to consider the fact that this batch had to appear for the exam under the full syllabus, which is a first after the pandemic."

"These are the students who suffered from the pandemic, which caused significant learning gaps.

Changing curriculum

FROM PAGE 3

and the method of education mainly to cut dependency on learning through memorisation.

"We want our children to get scope to flourish talents and creativity so they can move ahead with their merits. So, changes are being made in the curriculum and education method," she said.

The premier made the remarks while unveiling the results of the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) and equivalent examinations-2024 at Gono Bhaban.

She said her government has introduced pre-primary education to teach the children through playing.

"There is a way to educate

We need one or two more years to recover from this gap and reach normalcy," he said.

While the technical board suffered, the madrasa board saw a significant increase in achieving the highest grade in this year's SSC.

This year, with 2.84 lakh students attending the exams, 14,206 of them secured GPA-5, which is over two times higher than last year's 6,213.

It is also the third highest in the last 13 years.

The passing rate of madrasah students also increased to 79.66 percent from last year's 74.7 percent.

In both of these boards, girls did better in both passing and achieving GPA-5.

the children through toys and we are creating that scope," she said.

She said her government has attached topmost priority to education.

"Our target is to eradicate poverty. Poverty alleviation is not possible without an educated nation. So, we consider expenses in education as investment," she said.

She also asked the authorities concerned to find out the reasons - why boys are declining in number and lagging behind girls in their academic results.

Hasina said her government is establishing a technical training school in every upazila to spread technical education.

Discussion to amend

FROM PAGE 3

tomorrow [Monday]," he said.

He was speaking to reporters after holding a meeting with a six-member delegation of the ILO led by its Country Director Tuomo Poutiainen at the law ministry.

Anisul said ILO has given some suggestions to amend the labour law.

Juri, a river turned

FROM PAGE 5

over time and harms the soil's fertility and pollutes nearby waterbodies. Over time, these break down into smaller particles, which then get consumed by fish and different animals, eventually entering the food chain.

"The polythene wastes dumped in Juri river will flow into the haor areas during monsoons, adversely affecting the haor ecosystem," he added.

Contacted, Lusikanta

Hajong, UNO of Juri upazila, said, "The Kaminiganj market is under lease, and its committee has been asked several times by the upazila administration to curb littering. A stricter stance with eviction will be taken if they continue damaging the environment."

"However, since the Bhabaniganj market is not under lease, its committee cannot be pressured directly," he added.

A green, clean Dhaka

FROM PAGE 3

In the plans, the city corporations looked forward to a waste-free Dhaka, while ensuring sustainable water supply with wastewater treatment.

By 2050, all the buildings will use energy-efficient electronic or electrical appliances and lighting, and around 85 percent of grid electricity supply will be renewable, the plans also said.

DNCC Mayor Md Atiqul Islam said they have been increasingly bearing the brunt of climate change in recent years.

"Heavy and sudden rainfall - leading to flooding, waterlogging, and drainage congestion, extreme heat events, and increased risk of vector-borne diseases such as dengue has demonstrated the significance of applying localised mitigation and resilience strategies," he said.

"If Dhaka is the centre of problems, we will also be the centre of solutions. We will re-excavate all the canals in Dhaka and it will be the Venice of the East," said Mayor Atiq.

DSCC Mayor Sheikh

Fazle Noor Taposh said they have planned to plant 45,000 trees, including 10,000 on both sides of the Buriganga.

"DSCC views climate change as a major humanitarian crisis, and we have prioritised strategic environmental protection measures," he said, adding that they have already renovated some parks and have plans to renovate others.

"Climate migrants arrive in Dhaka every day. By 2050, the city will be more habitable, climate resilient, and eco-friendly for everyone," he added.

Mark Watts, executive director of C40 Cities, a network of nearly 100 mayors of world's leading cities, congratulated both city corporations on their commitment to responding to the climate crisis through the launch of climate action plans.

Dhaka University Vice Chancellor Prof ASM Maksud Kamal, Deputy High Commissioner at the British High Commission at Dhaka Matt Cannell, and Gazipur City Corporation Mayor Jayeda Khatun also joined the programme.

No departmental

FROM PAGE 5

secretary of the Ministry of Public Administration to take departmental disciplinary action against the UNO, considering her to have misbehaved," mentioned the decision letter.

Officials of the field administration wing of Ministry of Public Administration declined to comment on what decision is being taken in this regard.

Contacted, Sherpur DC Abdullah Al Khairum told The Daily Star that he had no information on the matter.

"It's our job to implement the decisions that come from the higher-ups," he said, adding that there is no scope to take any step in this regard from our level.

Asked, Mymensingh Divisional Commissioner Ommy Salma Tanzia said they too have no information about the issue, saying that the public administration ministry is entitled to comment on this.

According to the public administration sources, they were yet to take any steps in this regard. However, the sources said a decision will be taken soon.

Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF)

PKSF Bhaban, E-4/B, Agargaon A/A, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207.
Phone: 222218331-33 Website: www.pksf.org.bd

Memo No. 53.23.0000.03.050.24.2948 Date: 12-05-2024

e-GP Tender Notice (Goods)

PKSF invites e-Tender in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following goods:

Tender ID No	Description of Tender	Tender Publication Date & Time	Tender Closing/Opening Date & Time
977101	Supply & Installation of Generator (02 nos.) for PKSF's Shyamoli Building (Package No-PKSF/Shyamoli Building/2023-2024/G-02).	07-05-2024 & 15:45 PM	03-06-2024 & 12:30 PM
977139	Supply & Installation of AVR for PKSF's Shyamoli Building. (Package No-PKSF/Shyamoli Building/2023-2024/G-03).	07-05-2024 & 17:00 PM	03-06-2024 & 13:00 PM
977102	Supply & Installation of Fire Fighting Pump for PKSF's Shyamoli Building (Package No-PKSF/Shyamoli Building/2023-2024/G-04).	07-05-2024 & 18:00 PM	03-06-2024 & 13:30 PM
977186	Supply & Installation of AC (VRF System) for PKSF's Shyamoli Building (Package No-PKSF/Shyamoli Building/2023-2024/G-05).	07-05-2024 & 18:15 PM	03-06-2024 & 14:00 PM

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

A.T.M. Hemayet-Ur-Rahman
Deputy General Manager (Admin)



VACANCY NOTICE

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

- National Professional Officer (Injury Prevention and Health Promotion) TNP

For further details on submission of applications including detailed post description please visit our websites:

<https://www.who.int/bangladesh/about-us/employment>
<https://careers.who.int/careersection/ex/jobsearch.ftl>

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

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

ANIRBAN LIBRARY IN PAIKGACHHA

Extending support to those in need

SHEIKH TAJUL ISLAM TAJ

After being admitted to the Khulna University of Engineering and Technology, Krishnapada Roy from Raruli union was struggling to bear the cost of education, due to his family's financial constraints.

As such, uncertainty shrouded his aspirations for higher education. "When I first came to Khulna, I searched for tuitions to earn enough to bear my educational expenses. However, I couldn't find any," he said.

It was then that a ray of hope appeared, as Roy received a scholarship of Tk 30,000 from Anirban Library.

"The scholarship helped me to bear my expenses and thrive in my first year at Kuet," he added.

Anirban Library is a platform for educational, cultural and social services based in Paikgachha upazila. It also provides computer training to youths, runs a language club, conducts tree plantation to create habitats for birds, alongside various other initiatives.

The platform gives financial assistance to meritorious students from poor families. More than 100 students from secondary and higher secondary levels have so far benefitted from the initiative.



Juri, a river turned into wasteland

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

The Juri river in Moulvibazar's Juri upazila has transformed into a wasteland over the years due to negligence.

The trans-boundary river originates in the Jampui hills of India's Tripura and enters Bangladesh through the Fultala union of Juri upazila and flows through Hakaluki Haor, eventually falling into the Kushiara river.

Over time, villages and bazars developed along the banks, ruining its serenity.

"The Bhabaniganj and Kaminiganj markets are situated on opposite banks of the Juri river. None of these markets have any waste disposal systems, not even waste bins. So, all sorts of wastes are thrown into the river. The town's garbage is also dumped along the river's

banks, which are washed away by rainwater," said Khursed Alam, a local resident.

Visiting the area recently, this correspondent saw shocking amounts of waste — including plastic and polythene — have accumulated there. A number of dead animals were seen floating in the water, producing a putrid stench. A huge pile of garbage was also seen under the bridge on Juri-Fultola road.

"Although polythene was banned in the country in 2002, it is still being used. Rather, use of polythene has risen over the years," said Lutfur Rahman Shahan, an environmentalist.

Dr MA Aziz, professor of zoology department at Jahangirnagar University, said, "Plastic and polythene wastes are non-biodegradable, so these don't mix with soil. It accumulates



Anirban Library has also supported 25 girls in rural areas, by providing them with bicycles so that they can attend schools that are far from their homes.

Brishti Ghosh, a student of Kapilmuni College and resident of Mahmudkathi village, received one of these bicycles. Now, she can easily go to her college, which is five kilometres from her house.

Moreover, the platform provided 25 sewing machines to rural women

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

'Can't wait to be home'

Says crewmember of MV Abdullah; vessel likely to reach Kutubdia tonight

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The Bangladeshi ship MV Abdullah, which was released by Somali pirates on April 14, may reach Kutubdia anchorage with 23 sailors and crewmembers tonight.

Meherul Karim, chief executive officer of the ship's owning firm SR Shipping Limited, told The Daily Star that the ship was around 350 nautical miles away from Kutubdia around 3:50pm yesterday.

At its current speed the ship may reach Kutubdia by tonight, he assured.

Once it arrives, a new batch of sailors and crewmen will be sent to the ship to replace the current crew, said Karim.

All 23 crewmembers will be brought to KSRM



Lighter Jetty at Sadarghat in Chattogram by a lighter ship tomorrow (Tuesday).

From there, they will be sent to their respective homes, he added.

The crewmen on board the ship are overjoyed to be returning home after a long voyage. They were held captive by Somali pirates for around 33 days.

Meanwhile, this correspondent contacted Tanveer Ahmad, the 4th Engineer of the ship.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

TK 1.41CR GRAFT Ex-BNP MP Giasuddin sent to jail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sent former BNP lawmaker from Narayanganj-4 Mohammad Giasuddin Ahmed to jail in a case filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission over amassing Tk 1.41 crore illegally.

The court passed the order after Giasuddin surrendered before it seeking bail, said his lawyer Anwar Zahid Bhuiyan.

According to the prosecution, the ACC issued a notice asking the lawmaker to submit his wealth statement on November 2, 2020. When he submitted his wealth statement to the ACC on December 23 of the same year, the ACC found that the former lawmaker amassed a wealth of Tk 1,41,86,931 illegally.

On December 19, 2021, ACC Deputy Director Jahangir Alam filed a case against Giasuddin with its Integrated Office-1 in Dhaka.

OBSTRUCTION OF INFO

No departmental action against the UNO yet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

More than a month has passed since the Information Commission's recommendation to take departmental action against Sherpur's Nakla Upazila Nirbahi Officer Sadia Ummul Banin for misconduct with a local journalist, but no action has been taken against her so far.

Following such a recommendation, the officials concerned usually get removed from the post, and a committee is formed to investigate such misconduct.

However, the public administration ministry has not paid heed to the information ministry's recommendation as of now.

On March 7, local journalist Shafiquzzaman Rana of the Bangla daily Desh Rupantor applied to the Nakla UNO office seeking information. Instead of providing information, UNO Sadia directed an assistant commissioner (land) to set up a mobile court, and the journalist was sent to jail.

Information Commission investigated the incident and found evidence of the UNO's reluctance to provide information, which is tantamount to misconduct.

According to sources, the commission has only investigated the issue of not providing information, as the matter of the mobile court is not under their jurisdiction.

Information Commissioner Shahidul Alam Jhinuk investigated the incident.

On April 2 last month, UNO Sadia appeared at the hearing of the Information Commission and presented her argument. Later that day, the commission made its decision.

The investigation found evidence that Sadia obstructed the delivery of information as a UNO of the upazila.

The decision taken by the Information Commission states, "The Commission has investigated the matter of its own volition. After reviewing the hearing and investigation proceedings, it was found that the Designated Officer (RTI) refused to accept the request for information without any reasonable reason under Section 27(l) of the Right to Information Act, 2009."

The commission, in its decision, also said UNO Sadia, and the RTI officer in charge have obstructed access to information mentioned in Section 27(3) of the Right to Information Act, 2009.

"It was recommended to the senior

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

Office of the Divisional Forest Office
Chittagong Hill Tracts South Forest Division
Rangamati Hill District

Memo No -22.01.0000.856.10.001.24.1289

Date: 12-05-2024

e-Tender Notice: 2023-2024
Open Tendering Method (OTM)

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

SL No	Tender ID	Name of Work & Package No	Last selling Date & Time	Closing Date & Time	Opening Date & Time
01.	982547	01) Making and Supply Uniforms, Shoes/Sneakers, Winter Clothes and other related materials for Office and Field Level Staffs/Employees of CHT South Forest Division Rangamati.	29-May-2024 16:00	30-May-2024 15:00	30-May-2024 15:00

This is an online Tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and offline/hard copies will not 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 Bank's Branches.

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

(Dr. Md. Zahidur Rahman Miah)
Divisional Forest Officer
Chittagong Hill Tracts South Forest Division
Rangamati.
Phone No: 02333371485
E-mail : dfcohts@gmail.com

GD- 768

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তারিখঃ ২৯ বৈশাখ ১৪৩১
১২ মে ২০২৪

দরপত্র আহ্বান বিজ্ঞপ্তি

জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, নরসিংদী-এর সম্মেলন কক্ষের জন্য Video Conferencing System and included related equipment সরবরাহের নিমিত্ত পূর্ব অভিজ্ঞতাসম্পন্ন টিকাদার/সরবরাহকারীদের নিকট হতে পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট আইন, ২০০৬ ও পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা, ২০০৮ (সর্বশেষ সংশোধনকৃত) অনুযায়ী নিম্নবর্ণিত শর্তনুসারে সীলমোহরকৃত বামে দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

তফসিল-ক'

ক্রমিক	বিবরণ	বিস্তারিত তথ্য
১.	মন্ত্রণালয়/ বিভাগ	জনপ্রশাসন মন্ত্রণালয়, বাংলাদেশ সচিবালয়, ঢাকা
২.	দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান	জেলা প্রশাসন, নরসিংদী
৩.	ক্রয়কারীর নাম	জেলা প্রশাসক, নরসিংদী
৪.	লটার সর্বমুখ্য বিবরণ	লট-১: Video Conferencing System and included related equipment সরবরাহ
৫.	সরবরাহকারী/টিকাদারের যোগ্যতা ও প্রয়োজনীয় শর্তাবলী	বিস্তারিত শর্তাবলী দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তির 'খ' তফসিলে বর্ণিত আছে

মূল তথ্য

৬. ক্রয় পদ্ধতি

উদ্বৃত্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (OTM)

অর্থায়ন তথ্য

৭. অর্থায়নের উৎস

২০২৩-২৪ অর্থবছরের রাজস্ব খাত

নির্দিষ্ট তথ্য

৮.	দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রির তারিখ (দরপত্র দাখিলের দিনের পূর্ব দিন পর্যন্ত)	১৩ মে হতে ২৬ মে ২০২৪খ্রিঃ (অফিস চলাকালীন)	দরপত্র দাখিলের তারিখে কোন সিডিউল বিক্রয় করা হবে না।
৯.	দরপত্র সিডিউল দাখিলের সর্বশেষ তারিখ ও সময়	২৭ মে ২০২৪খ্রিঃ বেলা ১২:০০টা পর্যন্ত	
১০.	দরপত্র সিডিউল উদ্বৃত্তকরণের তারিখ ও সময়	দরপত্র দাখিলের দিন দুপুর ০১:০০টা	
১১.	দরপত্র সিডিউলের মূল্য	১,০০০/- (এক হাজার) টাকা	

অফিসসমূহের নাম ও ঠিকানা

১২.	দরপত্র দাখিল বিক্রয়	কক্ষ নং-২০৬, জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, নরসিংদী
	দরপত্র দাখিল গ্রহণের স্থান	কক্ষ নং-২০৬, জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, নরসিংদী
	দরপত্র দাখিল উদ্বৃত্তকরণের স্থান	জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, নরসিংদী

তফসিল-খ'

দরপত্র দাখিলের শর্তাবলীঃ

- পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা, ২০০৮ (সর্বশেষ সংশোধনকৃত) এ উল্লিখিত দরদাতার যোগ্যতা অনুযায়ী দরপত্র দাখিল করতে হবে।
- দরপত্রের সাথে নিম্নোক্ত কাগজপত্র দাখিল করতে হবেঃ
 - ক) দরদাতার সদ্য জেলা ০২ (দুই) কপি পাসপোর্ট সাইজের সত্যায়িত ছবি খ) জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র গ) হালনাগাদ ট্রেড লাইসেন্স ঘ) হালনাগাদ আয়কর সনদ ঙ) হালনাগাদ ভাট রেজিস্ট্রেশন সনদ এর সত্যায়িত ফটোকপি চ) সর্বশেষ ০৫ (পাঁচ) বছরের মধ্যে ০২ (দুই) টি আইটি সংশ্লিষ্ট সরঞ্জামের চুক্তি সফলতার সঙ্গে সমাপ্ত করার অভিজ্ঞতার প্রমাণক, যার প্রতিটি চুক্তির ন্যূনতম মূল্য কমপক্ষে ৩০,০০,০০০/- (ত্রিশ লক্ষ) টাকা চ) দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশের দিন হতে সর্বশেষ ০১ (এক) মাসের মধ্যে যে কোন এক দিনের ৩০,০০,০০০/- (ত্রিশ লক্ষ) টাকার ব্যাংক স্থিতি (লিকুইড এ্যাসেট) এর ব্যাংক কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত প্রত্যয়নপত্র।
 - ৩) সরবরাহযোগ্য মালামালের স্পেসিফিকেশন ও ক্যাটালগ ০১ (এক) সেট দাখিল করতে হবে।
 - ৪) যে কোন তফসিলি ব্যাংক কর্তৃক ইস্যুকৃত ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার এর মাধ্যমে ৫৫,০০০/- (পঞ্চাশ হাজার) টাকার দরপত্র জামানত জেলা প্রশাসক, নরসিংদী এর অনুকূলে জমা প্রদান করতে হবে।
 - ৫) নির্ধারিত সময় পর আর কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ করা হবে না। ক্রটিপূর্ণ দরপত্র গ্রহণ করা হবে না এবং দরপত্রের কোন প্রকার কাটাকাটি বা ঘষামাজা করা যাবে না।
 - ৬) দরপত্রের প্রতিটি আইটেমের দর স্পষ্ট অক্ষরে উল্লেখ করতে হবে এবং সর্বমোট উদ্বৃত্ত দর স্পষ্টাক্ষরে অঙ্কে ও কথায় লিখতে হবে।
 - ৭) দাখিলকৃত দরপত্রের ব্যাপারে টেন্ডার কমিটির সিদ্ধান্তই চূড়ান্ত বলে বিবেচিত হবে।
 - ৮) দরপত্রের উল্লেখিত যে কোন আইটেমের পরিমাণ বৃদ্ধি অথবা কমানোর বিষয়ে কর্তৃপক্ষের ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষিত থাকবে।
 - ৯) কোন কারণ প্রদর্শন ব্যতিরেকেই টেন্ডার কমিটি যে কোন অথবা সকল দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা রাখবে।
 - ১০) NOA প্রাপ্ত দরদাতাকে উদ্বৃত্ত দরের ১০% কাজের জামানত (পারফরমেন্স সিকিউরিটি) যে কোন তফসিলি ব্যাংক কর্তৃক ইস্যুকৃত ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার জেলা প্রশাসক, নরসিংদী এর অনুকূলে জমা প্রদান করতে হবে। (পারফরমেন্স সিকিউরিটি নির্ধারিত সময়ান্তে ফেরতযোগ্য)।
 - ১১) কাজের পারফরমেন্স সিকিউরিটি (জামানত) উদ্বৃত্ত দরের ১০% টাকা ০১ (এক) বছর সর্বমুখ্য করা হবে। সরবরাহকৃত মালামালে কোন প্রকার ক্রটি পরিলক্ষিত হলে পারফরমেন্স সিকিউরিটি (জামানত) বাজেয়াপ্ত/সমন্বয়পূর্বক কার্যক্রম নিষ্পন্ন করা হবে।
 - ১২) কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক গৃহীত দরপত্র দরদাতা অবহিত হওয়ার পর পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট আইন, ২০০৬ ও পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা, ২০০৮ অনুযায়ী নির্ধারিত দিনের মধ্যে ৩০০/- (তিনশত) টাকার নন-জুডিসিয়াল স্ট্যাম্পের উপর শর্ত মোতাবেক Video Conferencing System and included related equipment সরবরাহ করা হবে।
 - ১৩) সিডিউলে বর্ণিত মালামালসমূহের গুণগতমান বহিষ্কৃত হলে তা গ্রহণ করা হবে না। সেক্ষেত্রে সংশ্লিষ্ট টিকাদারের কার্যদেশ বাতিলপূর্বক জমা কৃত জামানত বাজেয়াপ্ত করা হবে। একই সাথে টিকাদার সমন্বয় Video Conferencing System and included related equipment ফেরত নিতে বাধ্য থাকবেন।
 - ১৪) গৃহীত/নির্ধারিত দরদাতার নিকট হতে বিধি মোতাবেক ভাট, আয়কর ও অন্যান্য সরকারি দায়ী কর্তন করা হবে।
 - ১৫) দরপত্র বেতন সমন্বয় ৬০ (ষাট) দিন।
 - ১৬) কাজের মেয়াদ: চুক্তি সম্পাদনের তারিখ হতে সর্বোচ্চ ০৭ (সাত) দিন।
 - ১৭) দরপত্র গ্রহণ ও মূল্যায়নসহ সকল কার্যক্রম পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা, ২০০৮ (সর্বশেষ সংশোধনকৃত) অনুসারে করা হবে।
 - ১৮) দরপত্র সংক্রান্ত বিস্তারিত শর্তাবলী নেজারত শাখা, জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, নরসিংদী হতে জানা যাবে।

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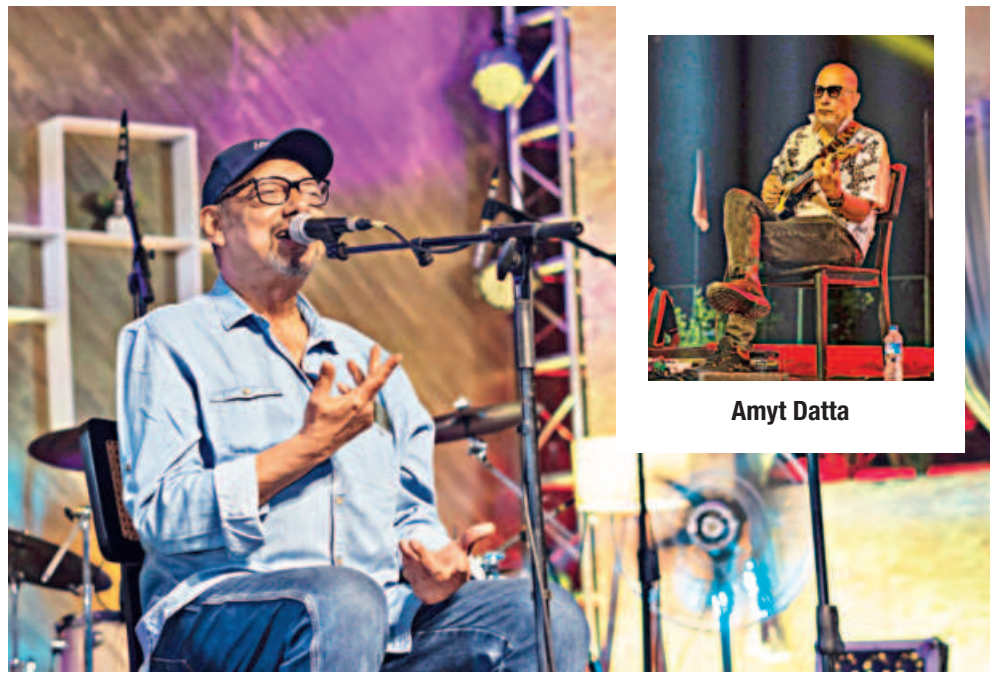
Anjan Dutt serenades Dhaka on Mala's birthday

Anjan Dutt's journey in the entertainment industry began in the early '80s, and his excellence has persisted to this day, winning the hearts of millions worldwide.

TASRIYA TRISHA

Prominent Bengali singer Anjan Dutt has graced Bangladesh with his magical voice on several occasions, but this time his visit held a special significance—Mala's birthday. Mala, much like Bela Bose and Ronjona, is a character in one of Anjan's songs. However, both the singer himself and his devoted fans have kept Mala alive throughout the years, across generations. May 12 holds particular importance, as it is referenced in Anjan Dutt's song *Mala* released in 1993, sparking annual celebrations of Mala's birthday and ongoing speculation about her identity.

Anjan Dutt identified Mala as a common girl from Kolkata who is known for wearing the traditional "jongla parer" Dhakeshwari saree. His songs resonate deeply with his fans because they reflect everyday life, particularly the experiences of the middle class. During his previous visit to Bangladesh, the singer promised to celebrate Mala's next birthday with his Bangladeshi fans, and he fulfilled that promise.



Amyt Datta

PHOTOS: ARSHADUL HOQUE ROCKY

borders, particularly amongst Bangladeshi fans, who make up a significant portion of his fan base. Anjan proudly acknowledges that 50% to 60% of his fans hail from Bangladesh, which fuels his desire for repeated visits.

Before the legendary singer took the stage, musician Ahmed Hasan Sunny and his band, Sunny and Revolution, captivated the crowd. Sunny dedicated his first song, *Amare Uraiya Dio*, to Ahsan Tanvir Pial, the vocalist of local band Odd Signature, who tragically passed away in a car accident earlier that morning. His performance of hit songs like *Amra Hoyto*, *Manush Keno Erokam*, and *Shohorer Duita Gaan* resonated deeply with the audience.

The atmosphere reached new heights when Anjan Dutt took the stage. Fans were moved to learn that despite his illness and back injury, the 71-year-old singer had visited the venue directly after landing in Dhaka for sound checks, earning him a well-deserved round of applause. Anjan Dutt treated the audience to a performance of his popular songs like *Brishti*, *241139 (Bela Bose)*, and *Ranjana Ami ar Ashbona*, leaving the crowd overwhelmed with joy.

Anjan Dutt's journey in the entertainment

industry began in the early '80s, and his excellence has persisted to this day, winning the hearts of millions worldwide.

In a final gesture of appreciation, the veteran singer performed his last song and cut the cake for Mala's birthday. Before leaving the stage, he urged the audience to stay and enjoy the performances of Kaaktaal band and other artistes, demonstrating his respect for local talent.

Popular celebrities like Afsana Mimi, Jon Kabir, and Moushumi Hamid were also spotted enjoying Anjan Dutt's musical event alongside the crowd.

Following Anjan Dutt's departure, Kaaktaal band took over the stage, thrilling the audience with their performance of five songs, including the crowd favourite *Abar Dekha Hole*. Asif Iqbal, known as AiA Lemonsky, the composer, lyricist, and vocalist of Kaaktaal, expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to share the stage with the legendary Anjan Dutt.

The concert, organised by ArcLight Events in collaboration with Assen and Zirconium, was supported by Mutual Trust Bank as the title sponsor, with Junior Chambers International Bangladesh serving as the youth engagement and outreach partner.



Tahsan to host Bangladeshi version of 'Family Feud'

The Bangladeshi version of the popular US TV show *Family Feud* is coming on local OTT platform Bongo. This family programme, which has attracted audiences in over 50 countries worldwide, is set to launch in Bangladesh for the first time. The show will be hosted by popular musician and actor Tahsan Khan.

Two families compete by guessing the results of surveys conducted with a hundred people. Contestants strive to identify the most popular survey answers to earn points. The first family to reach 300 points earns a chance to participate in the bonus round called Fast Money.

Blockout 2024: Hollywood stars' online follower count declines

This year's Met Gala, often likened to *The Hunger Games* for its opulence, faced scrutiny as celebrities adorned the red carpet seemingly detached from global suffering, notably the Israeli attacks on Palestinians.

Internet users mobilised with hashtags like #letthecatcake and #celebrityblockout, urging public figures to advocate for ceasefire. The movement gained traction post gala, prompting individuals to block celebrities silent on crises.

The extensive celebrity blocklist includes well-known names such as Kim Kardashian, Taylor Swift, Beyoncé, Kylie Jenner, Zendaya, Miley Cyrus, Selena Gomez, Khloe Kardashian, Ariana Grande, Doja Cat, Demi Lovato, Lizzo, Nicki Minaj, Travis Scott, Kanye West, Katy Perry, Zac Efron, Joe Jonas, Nick Jonas, Kevin Jonas, Justin Timberlake, and numerous others.



Ahmed Hasan Sunny

Kaaktaal band

Despite battling illness and a back injury, Anjan Dutt arrived in Dhaka to celebrate Mala's birthday eve on Saturday (May 11), with his fans at the concert titled *Anjan Dutt in Metropolis - VOL 2.0* at Dhaka Arena, Purbachal in the capital.

Anjan Dutt is a sensation amongst his fans, known for his versatility as a film director, actor, singer, songwriter, and theatre personality. His popularity extends beyond

NEWS

7 held over exam fraud

FROM PAGE 12

type of job, the gang made contracts with job seekers for up to Tk 8-10 lakh to help them cheat on their MCQ, written, and viva exams," DB Chief Harun Or Rashid told a press briefing yesterday.

The arrestees are Jewel Khan, 40, Rasel, 30, Mahmudul Hasan, 39, Abdur Rahman, 38, Ariful Islam, 35, Azharul Islam, 29, and Masum Hawlader, 25.

They were arrested from Shahjahanpur and Sher-e-Bangla Nagar areas in the capital and Dhamrai upazila under Dhaka district.

Their conversations on WhatsApp revealed their involvement in leaking questions for at least nine recruitment tests,

namely: primary assistant teacher recruitment (3rd stage), ticket collector (grade 2) and booking assistant (grade 2) at Bangladesh Railway, office assistant at Palli Sanchay Bank, office assistant at Tangail deputy commissioner's office, office assistant at fisheries department, accounts assistant and office assistant cum computer numerologist at public works department, office assistant at disaster management department, computer operator at land ministry, and assistant manager at Bakhrabad Gas Distribution Company.

Harun said the gang amassed lakhs of taka by leaking questions and supplying answers through digital devices during recruitment tests.

HOW THEY DID IT

Jewel, the mastermind, supplied the spy devices and coordinated with other team members.

Rasel, Shakil, and Abdur Rahman distributed the devices and instructed candidates on their use.

Ariful, once the exam started, leaked the question papers and sent digital copies to a team of solvers waiting outside the exam halls.

The solver team would then quickly solve the questions and feed the answers to candidates inside the hall through electronic spy devices.

The DB Chief explained that GSM-enabled receivers [that can use SIM cards] were worn discreetly under clothing, which connected to earpieces that fit inside the candidate's ear for receiving answers.

A complaint centre or an info hub?

FROM PAGE 12

In 2023, the "others" category took the lead as well – 76.64 percent.

Dr Prakash Kanti Chowdhury, director of the multi-sectoral project, noted that some callers seek information, such as legal aid contacts, which the helpline provides.

"Providing this information is also a service, as callers benefit from it even if they seek further assistance elsewhere."

Raisul Islam, in-charge and programme officer at the helpline, said 45 employees are currently works round-the-clock in three shifts, with 10 trained operators in each.

"Upon receiving a call, the operator tracks the caller's location and provides information or connects them with the local administration, such as the women and child affairs officers, UNOs, upazila education officers, AC land, and police stations."

"For urgent situations that require rescue, local police are dispatched, while medical needs are addressed through OCCs [one stop crisis centres]. Counseling is offered through psychosocial counselors, and interventions for child marriage involve support from the UNO to halt the marriage."

However, according to Raisul, on weekends and during late-night or remote-area calls, they face challenges for such activities. He also noted cases where "109"

played the role of a trusted source of support for women and children in remote areas.

Last February, a five-year-old from Jamalpur's Dewanganj, was raped by a neighbour on her way back from school. Her father, a farmer, felt helpless, while her mother was in shock.

A cousin of the victim took swift action by contacting the 109 helpline, which advised seeking medical help and involving the local authorities. Subsequently, the rapist was arrested and the child was able to receive treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

"If I hadn't made that call, we wouldn't have received such prompt support from the UNO and the police ... Relying solely on the UP members of chairman might not have yielded the same prompt results," said the cousin.

However, there are cases where 109 agents made improper suggestions to callers.

During one such call, a woman sought assistance because her roommate was experiencing cyber harassment by a man she was in a relationship with, who had been sharing her private photos and videos with friends and other roommates.

However, the male agent suggested marrying the harasser as a solution to stop the blackmail.

"When I expressed my shock, he insisted saying families often accept

such solutions. He even suggested influencing her family for the marriage. Disappointed, I thanked him and ended the call," she shared.

Termining the suggestion "inappropriate", Dr Prakash said, "This is why we're going to deploy three psycho-social counselors to train the call operators."

He said that in order to minimise call response delays, they are also planning to expand the number of operators to 80.

Govt aiding plunder

FROM PAGE 12

Six months after his last press conference, Fakhrul today said, "AL's goal is to make the country completely dependent (on others) through corruption while financially benefiting the privileged group."

"In London, a minister may own up to 300 homes. Each and every minister and MP has assets overseas. They don't care or feel disturbed as a result," he continued.

Fakhrul claimed that the government's main aim is to remove politics from the country.

"The Awami League government is not accountable to the people. The current government does not need people," he said, adding "They don't care whether the nation's economy collapses or whether people's health is safe. They just want to hold onto power."

Relationship with the US now stronger

FROM PAGE 12

Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC) in Cox's Bazar yesterday afternoon.

Regarding national politics, Hasan, also the Awami League Joint Secretary, said the BNP has started relying on invisible forces after the parliamentary elections. "They are now leaning towards amulets and prayers."

On the issue of Rohingya repatriation, Hasan said, "The Myanmar government is using the recent conflict in Rakhine State as an excuse to delay the repatriation of Rohingyas. The conflict in Myanmar has been an ongoing issue for the last 80 years and the country was never free from conflict. It cannot be an excuse not to take back Rohingyas."

"Because of the Rohingya refugees, we are facing various problems. The militant and extremist groups are recruiting members from Rohingya camps," he said.

The conflict in Myanmar doesn't have an impact on the 33 shelters in Ukhiya-Teknaf as those are far from the border, he added.

Amid the ongoing conflict in Myanmar, 138 Myanmar troops including a lieutenant colonel and two majors of Myanmar Army have taken refuge in Bangladesh, said the foreign minister, adding that they would be sent back the same way Myanmar security members were repatriated earlier.

In the morning, a six-member delegation of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs led by its chairman Dr AK Abdul Momen visited the Rohingya camp of Cox's Bazar.

The delegation visited the e-voucher centre of World Food Programme (WFP) at Camp 4, a learning centre, and met with Rohingya community leaders at Camp 5.

Later the team visited the

Ghumdhum transit camp, which is being constructed to repatriate Rohingyas to Myanmar.

During the visit, former foreign minister Abdul Momen said, "We came here to witness the ground reality in person, as the situation is becoming more complex day by day. The purpose of the visit is to find a way out of the crisis."

"We talked with the Rohingyas and they are willing to go back to their country," he added.

After the visit, the parliamentary committee will submit recommendations to the government in this regard, he added.

The delegation includes Nurul Islam Nahid, Nahim Razzaq, Shaimum Sarwar Kamal, Habibur Rahman, and Zara Jabeen Mahbub.

Refugee, Relief, and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC) Dr Mizanur Rahman along with other officials of the foreign ministry were also present during the visit.

Will renew passports of 69,000 Rohingyas

FROM PAGE 12

Saudi Arabia would not send anyone back.

"The Saudi government will not give Rohingyas citizenship. Then how will they live in the country? That's why they need some documents. We signed a deal last year in this regard. They [Saudi delegation] came here to talk directly whether we are having any difficulties [in renewing the passports]," he said.

In reply to a query, the home minister said the Rohingyas went there with Bangladeshi passports. "So, we will just renew their passports. Their names and addresses will remain the same as they are in their passports."

The minister added that they also discussed different bilateral issues during the meeting.

Asaduzzaman said the delegation proposed having an extradition agreement between the two countries. "Bangladesh has extradition treaties with many countries. It would be good if Saudi Arabia made this deal. We have proposed sending Ansar

members there from Bangladesh for security purpose. They will look into the proposal. As you know, we have made the Ansar as a guard regiment for VIP security," he said.

Bangladesh has deals with some Middle Eastern countries which allow on-arrival visas for Bangladeshis, he said, adding, "We are in discussion with the UAE, and the agreement with the UAE will be signed. Saudi Arabia has agreed [to ink such a deal with us]."

Asked about the management of pilgrimage this year, the home boss said the pilgrims do not need to wait for immigration at Saudi Arabia as the immigration is done in Bangladesh. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia has introduced a system called Road to Mecca, he said.

"Pilgrims will deposit their luggage here in Bangladesh. The luggage will be delivered to their hotels in Saudi Arabia. I hope the pilgrims will take this opportunity," the minister said.

The home minister said the deputy interior minister of Saudi Arabia said around 30 lakh Bangladeshis are working in Saudi Arabia.

Gaza bleeds

FROM PAGE 12

In Rafah, Gaza's southernmost city which sits on the border with Egypt, the Kuwaiti hospital said yesterday it had received the bodies of "18 martyrs" killed in Israeli strikes over the past 24 hours.

The health ministry in the territory said that at least 63 people had been killed over the last 24 hours, bringing the overall death toll from Israel's bombardment and offensive in Gaza to at least 35,034 people, mostly women and children.

Months after Israel said it had dismantled Hamas's command structure in northern Gaza, fighting has resumed in recent days in Jabalia refugee camp and Gaza City's Zeitun neighbourhood.

Military spokesman Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari said late on Saturday that "in recent weeks we have identified attempts by Hamas to rebuild its military capabilities in Jabalia, and we are acting to destroy these attempts". He also said there was an operation in Zeitun.

The military yesterday said its troops and tanks were operating in Jabalia after launching an operation overnight.

Missile hits
Russia housing
block; 7 killed
17 injured; thousands evacuated
as Moscow pounds Kharkiv

REUTERS, Moscow

At least seven people were killed and 17 injured when a whole section of a Russian apartment block collapsed after it was struck by a Soviet-era missile launched by Ukraine and shot down by Russia, Russian officials said.

In one of the deadliest attacks to date on the region of Belgorod, Ukraine launched what Russian officials said was a massive missile attack with Tochka ballistic missiles and Adler and RM-70 Vampire (MLRS) multiple launch rocket systems.

Footage from the scene showed at least 10 storeys of the building collapsing. Later, as emergency services scoured the rubble for survivors, the roof collapsed and people ran for their lives, dust and rubble falling behind them.

Russia's defence ministry said the attack, which it called "a terrorist attack on residential areas", took place at 08:40 GMT and involved at least 12 missiles.

"Fragments of one of the downed Tochka-U missiles damaged an apartment building in the city of Belgorod," the ministry said.

Russian news agencies said at least seven people had been killed and 17 injured, including two children. Others were still trapped under the rubble.

Both Ukraine and Russia say they do not target civilians, though many civilians have been killed in the war by both sides.



A displaced Palestinian woman, who fled Jabalia after the Israeli military called on residents to evacuate, carries her belongings on her head as she makes her way towards Gaza City yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

SIKH KILLING
Canada arrests
fourth Indian
national

AFP, Montreal

A fourth Indian national was charged by Canadian authorities Saturday in the 2023 killing of a separatist Sikh leader in Vancouver.

Amandeep Singh, 22, was already being held for unrelated gun charges before being charged with "first-degree murder and conspiracy to commit murder" in the slaying of Hardeep Singh Nijjar on June 18, 2023.

Three Indian nationals were arrested this month.

The killing sparked a diplomatic row between Ottawa and New Delhi when Prime Minister Justin Trudeau linked Indian intelligence to the killing.

Nijjar - who became a Canadian citizen in 2015 - had advocated for a separate Sikh state, known as Khalistan, carved out of India. He was wanted by Indian authorities for alleged "terrorism" and conspiracy to commit murder - allegations he denied.

US CAMPUS RALLIES OVER GAZA WAR

'Hot summer of protest' waiting

REUTERS, Colorado

About a dozen students arrested by police clearing a sit-in at a Denver college campus emerged from detention to cheers from fellow pro-Palestinian protesters, several waving yellow court summons like tiny victory flags and imploring fellow demonstrators not to let their energy fade.

Just how much staying power the student demonstrations over the war in Gaza that have sprung up in Denver and at dozens of universities across the United States will have is a key question for protesters, school administrators and police, with graduation ceremonies being held, summer break coming and high-profile encampments dismantled.

The student protesters passionately say they will continue until administrators meet demands that include permanent ceasefire in Gaza, university divestment from arms suppliers and other companies profiting from the war, and amnesty for students and faculty members who have been disciplined or fired for protesting.

Academics who study protest movements and the history of civil disobedience say it's difficult to maintain the people-power energy on campus if most of the people are gone. But they also point out that university demonstrations are just one tactic in the wider pro-Palestinian movement that has existed for decades, and that this summer will provide many opportunities for the energy that started on campuses to migrate to the streets.

Dana Fisher is a professor at American University in Washington, DC, and author of several books on activism and grassroots movements who has seen some of her own students among protesters on her campus.

She noted the college movement spread organically across the country as a response to police called onto campus at Columbia University on April 18, when more than 100 people were arrested. Since those arrests, at least 2,600 demonstrators have been detained at more than 100 protests in 39 states and Washington,

DC, according to The Appeal, a nonprofit news organization.

"I don't see enough organizational infrastructure to sustain a bunch of young people who are involved in a movement when they are not on campus," Fisher said.

Students in Denver say the movement's spread from the coasts to the heartland and to smaller universities shows it has staying power. Student protests also have flared outside the US. They have vowed to continue protest as long as it takes to meet their demands.

They have pledged to be on the campuses during the summer break and even after that.

Fisher thinks the current campus demonstrations foreshadow a "long, hot summer of protest" about many issues, and that the Republican national convention in July and the Democratic national convention in August will be ripe targets for massive protest.

"And then you just plop right down in the middle of all that the presidential election?" she said. "It's a crazy recipe for one hell of a fall."



There was no immediate comment from Ukraine on the attack.

After heavy shelling of Ukraine's northeastern Kharkiv region, Russian forces smashed through the border over recent days and say they have pushed Ukrainian forces out of at least nine villages in the area.

The move threatens to open up a new front and has forced Ukraine to dedicate additional troops to the area just as Russian forces advance at key points along the front in the south and the east.

Russian troops yesterday said they seized another four villages - Hatusyche, Krasne, Morokhovets, Oliynikove - in Kharkiv region in Ukraine.

Ukraine's military chief said his country's forces were facing a difficult situation in fighting in the Kharkiv region, but that they were doing all they could to hold the line.

In response to Ukrainian attacks on Belgorod, President Vladimir Putin suggested in March that Moscow could try to establish a buffer zone inside Ukrainian territory due to the attacks on Belgorod.

Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022.

FLASH FLOODS IN AFGHANISTAN

Flood-hit areas still inaccessible

AFP, Sheikh Jalal

Emergency aid and rescue teams yesterday struggled to reach areas of northern Afghanistan hardest hit by flash floods that killed hundreds, AFP journalists saw.

Heavy rains caused flash flooding in several provinces in Afghanistan on Friday.

Northern Baghlan was the worst impacted, with efforts to deliver aid hampered by destruction to roads and bridges wrought when the floods ripped through the province.

In Sheikh Jalal, about a two-hour drive

from Burka, one of the most devastated areas, AFP journalists saw aid trucks full of food, military vehicles, rescue workers and local residents stuck where roads had been completely washed out. The military was using heavy machinery to pave the way, as well as to free aid trucks stuck in the mud.

The Taliban government refugees ministry said on Sunday that 315 people had been killed and more than 1,600 people were injured in the flooding in Baghlan.

More than 2,600 homes have been damaged or destroyed and 1,000 cattle killed, it added.



INDONESIA FLOODS

At least 34 dead, 16 still missing

AFP, Tanah Datar

At least 34 people have died and 16 more were missing after flash floods and cold lava flow from a volcano hit western Indonesia, a local disaster official said yesterday.

The disaster hit two districts in West Sumatra province on Saturday evening after hours of heavy rain caused flooding and sent sweeping ash and large rocks down Mount Marapi, the most active volcano on the archipelago's Sumatra island.

"Until now our data shows that 34 people died: 16 in Agam and 18 in Tanah Datar. At least 18 others are injured. We are also still searching for 16 other people," West Sumatra disaster agency spokesman Ilham Wahab told AFP.

He said the search effort involved local rescuers, police, soldiers and volunteers.

Agam and Tanah Datar districts were hit at around 10:30 pm (1530 GMT) on Saturday, according to Basarnas search and rescue agency.

Earlier, Basarnas said 12 people had died including several children after the flash floods and cold lava flow.

Cold lava, also known as lahar, is volcanic material like ash, sand and pebbles carried down a volcano's slopes by rain.

Nine bodies were identified earlier yesterday, including those of a three-year-old and eight-year-old, head of the local rescue agency Abdul Malik said in a statement.

Authorities dispatched a team of rescuers and rubber boats to look for the missing victims and to transport people to shelters.

29th time on the top of the world

AFP, Kathmandu

Nepali climber Kami Rita Sherpa reached the top of Mount Everest for the 29th time yesterday, breaking his own record for the most summits of the world's highest mountain.

"Kami Rita reached the summit this morning.

Now he has made a new record with 29 summits of Everest," Mingma Sherpa of Seven Summit Treks, his expedition organiser, told AFP.

Sherpa, also known as "Everest Man", first summited the 8,849 metre (29,032 foot) peak in 1994.

Since then he has climbed Everest almost every year, guiding clients. Last year, Sherpa climbed Everest twice to reclaim his record as another guide, Pasang Dawa Sherpa, equalled his number of ascents.

He has also conquered other challenging 8,000-metre peaks including the world's second-highest mountain, K2 in Pakistan.

Nepal has issued 414 Everest permits to mountaineers for this year's spring climbing season, which runs from April to early June.



গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

সড়ক পরিবহন ও মহাসড়ক বিভাগ
ঢাকা ম্যাস ট্রানজিট কোম্পানি লিমিটেড (ডিএমটিসিএল)
ঢাকা ম্যাস র‍্যাপিড ট্রানজিট ডেভেলপমেন্ট প্রজেক্ট (লাইন-১)
প্রবাসী কল্যাণ ভবন, সেভেল-১১
৭১-৭২, পুরাতন এ্যালিকট্রাস্ট রোড, ইকানটন গার্ডেন, ঢাকা-১০০০
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স্মারক নং- ৩৫.০৫.০০০০.১১৬.১৪.০২৫.২৪-১০৫ তারিখ: ২৯ বৈশাখ ১৪৩১

১২ মে ২০২৪

জনসাধারণের জন্য প্রগতি সৱণি (নন্দা মেট্রো স্টেশন) রাডে ট্রাফিক সংক্রান্ত বিশেষ নির্দেশনা বিজ্ঞপ্তি

জনসাধারণের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, ঢাকা মহানগরী ও তৎসংলগ্ন পার্শ্ববর্তী এলাকার যানজট নিরসনে ও পরিবেশ সংরক্ষণে অত্যধিক গণপরিবহন হিসেবে বাংলাদেশের সর্বপ্রথম আন্তঃরাষ্ট্র মেট্রোরেল MRT Line-1 নির্মাণের লক্ষ্যে "ঢাকা ম্যাস র‍্যাপিড ট্রানজিট ডেভেলপমেন্ট প্রজেক্ট (লাইন-১)" প্রকল্পের কাজ চলমান রয়েছে। প্রকল্পের প্রস্তাবিত প্রগতি সৱণি (নন্দা মেট্রো স্টেশন) এলাকায় আগামী ১২ মে ২০২৪, রবিবার রাত ১২.০০ ঘটিকা হতে বিশেষ ব্যবস্থাপনায় পরিষেবা লাইন স্থানান্তরের কার্যক্রম গ্রহণ করা হবে।

এমতাবস্থায়, পরিষেবা লাইন স্থানান্তরের কার্যক্রম চলাকালীন প্রগতি সৱণি রুটে যানজট সৃষ্টির হওয়ার আশঙ্কা রয়েছে। উক্ত করিডোরে চলাচলরত সকল জনসাধারণ ও পরিবহনকে যথেষ্ট সময় নিয়ে বের হওয়ার জন্য এবং প্রয়োজনে সম্ভাব্য বিকল্প পথ ব্যবহারের জন্য বিশেষভাবে অনুরোধ করা হচ্ছে।

এ বিষয়ে সকলের সহানুভূতি ও সহযোগিতা একান্তভাবে কাম্য। সাময়িক অসুবিধার জন্য কর্তৃপক্ষ আন্তরিকভাবে দুঃখিত।

(মোঃ আবুল কাসেম ভূঞা)
প্রকল্প পরিচালক
ঢাকা ম্যাস র‍্যাপিড ট্রানজিট ডেভেলপমেন্ট প্রজেক্ট (লাইন-১)

GD-772

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
চীফ কমান্ড্যান্ট (পূর্ব) এর কার্যালয়
রেলওয়ে নিরাপত্তা বাহিনী
সিআরবি, চট্টগ্রাম
উল্লিখিত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি
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A double-edged sword for jobseekers

Why are BCS exams still plagued by delays at every stage?

Amid ongoing debate over age-limit extension for government jobs to 35 years, one worrying aspect of the current recruitment process in public sector, especially in Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) exams, has been highlighted by a recent report—long delays at every stage of the exams. This is not a new problem, but the fact that it has been allowed to persist for so long speaks to the inefficiency and lack of accountability at the Public Service Commission (PSC), which conducts the exams. From publishing circulars to confirming recruitment through gazette notifications, it may take over four years to finish the entire cycle of one exam, thus significantly affecting the life and career prospects of jobseekers.

For the graduates, BCS has turned into a double-edged sword. Their fixation with this most coveted of government jobs can be richly rewarding but the road to that reward is filled with uncertainties. And they can hardly focus on any other career path as they remain caught up in BCS preparations. Even successful candidates face delays after the publication of final results, because of post-exam procedures such as police verifications and medical tests. Currently, the PSC is dealing with three BCS exams—44th, 45th, and 46th—each at different stages of their cycle, meaning that many candidates too are having to deal with all three simultaneously.

The question is, why are such delays being allowed year after year, despite there being a roadmap to complete the entire examination process in one year? The convoluted processes of examination, evaluation, and verification are a key issue. The PSC cites its limited workforce and reliance on external experts for critical tasks at all stages as contributing factors. For example, the introduction of multiple examiners for script evaluation, while intended to ensure transparency, has inadvertently added layers of complexities. Moreover, lengthy post-exam verifications, including delving into irrelevant details like political affiliations of candidates, only cause further delays. There is clearly room for simplifying and expediting these processes.

While a rigorous evaluation of the eligibility of those entering public service is crucial, it is vital that the process be rid of unnecessary complications. Every year, many thousands of graduates sit for the BCS exams. But only a few are able to reach the finish line, that too after prolonged waiting periods. The authorities must overhaul and streamline the entire recruitment process so that they don't have to sacrifice crucial years of their lives unnecessarily.

Why is DSCC allowing illegal toll collection?

Authorities must stop turning a blind eye to such crimes

It is alarming how extortion in the name of collecting city tolls still continues unabated. According to a report by this daily, extortion of this nature occurs regularly in a number of places in the southern part of Dhaka, with hundreds of trucks and pick-up vans crossing these areas falling victim to unauthorised toll collection. What's worse, members of these extortion rackets are often employees of toll companies authorised by the Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) itself.

The DSCC database shows that a lease was issued to three firms in January to collect tolls from 57 locations around the Sayedabad bus terminal, the Joy Kali Temple in Gulistan, and the truck parking lots at Doyaganj and Dholaikhal. The three firms are Himachal Gold Line, its sister company 7-Eleven Enterprise, and Saddam Enterprise. Despite these companies having the authority to collect tolls only at specific spots, at least 10 people allegedly of Himachal Gold Line were arrested last year for collecting tolls illegally. Similarly, locals alleged that these firms often charge more than the designated toll fees (for various vehicles) and even extort money from unauthorised locations.

Reportedly, the extortionists carry with them rods and sticks to beat up drivers who refuse to comply with their demands. Sometimes they even use their political connections if the police try to intervene. It is quite unlikely that the DSCC is not aware of the extent of these activities given the frequent media coverage. A Prothom Alo report from two years ago, for example, covered such incidents in considerable detail. Before that, this daily had also reported on how two companies, authorised by the DSCC, were collecting tolls from commercial vehicles in the name of non-existent terminals.

The question is, why is the DSCC still allowing such practices? Why haven't those companies been made to answer for their employees' criminal behaviour? Is it because they are backed by influential quarters? Are any DSCC employees benefiting from this exercise? The authorities must give clear answers to these questions. Moreover, judging by how the toll collection system is currently operating, often using third parties, it is high time they overhauled it to modernise and streamline the process.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

letters@thedailystar.net

Hidden stories of migrant mothers

Recently, I saw a Bangla movie on a male migrant worker who toils in a foreign land to make his greedy wife happy, but she runs away with his money and remarries. Reading Nilima Jahan's article "Of true grit and a mother's love from 6,000km away," I realised that the more probable and common story is different. The stories of female Bangladeshi migrant workers might not make it to the big screen, but the truth is their husbands remarry with their earnings. Our laws do not protect these workers. These workers not only take responsibility of their own children, but sometimes they have to take care of their in-laws too. And all we do is applaud them for their sacrifices without actually helping them.

Anamika Roshni
Mugda, Dhaka

Why must the public bear the burden of capacity charges?

There is no justification for raising electricity prices four times a year



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KALLOL MUSTAFA

The government has decided to increase electricity prices four times a year over the next three years to withdraw all subsidies from the power sector. At present, the wholesale price of electricity is Tk 7.04 per unit on average. If the subsidies are withdrawn, this rate will have to be raised to more than Tk 12. In that case, the average electricity price at the consumer level, which is Tk 8.95 now, will almost double to Tk 15.

This decision has come at a time when people are already under a lot of pressure due to the increased prices of daily commodities. Last year, gas prices were increased by an average of 82 percent in January and electricity prices were increased by an average of five percent in three phases between January and March, contributing to inflation. In March this year, electricity prices were again raised by Tk 0.34 to Tk 0.70 per unit.

If this decision is implemented, this will surely add to consumer spending, more so because of the increased production costs of everything that requires electricity for production. In addition, these price hikes will affect electricity bills in residential areas, irrigation, industries, education, religious institutions and healthcare facilities, among others. A rise in irrigation costs will impact agriculture as higher production costs will in turn raise the prices of all agricultural products, including rice. This will have a ripple effect on the economy, and as a result, the lives of low and fixed-income people will be even more adversely impacted.

It is being argued that the price hike is required to reduce subsidies in the power and energy sectors to comply with IMF conditionalities. The question is: why do the subsidies have to be paid in the first place, and where does the subsidy money go? Moreover,

increasing prices is not the only way to reduce subsidies—they can also be reduced through cost-cutting. Why is the government then only interested in increasing prices, rather than reducing costs by preventing irregularities, corruption and waste?

First of all, subsidies are required because Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) has to buy power at high prices from privately owned power plants run by imported and expensive liquid fuel. The purchasing cost from the private sector is much higher than the cost of generating power from the public sector. When power generation in the private sector increases, the average cost of power generation in the country increases. According to BPDB annual reports, the average cost of power generation per unit was Tk 6.61 in 2020-2021, Tk 8.84 in 2021-2022, and Tk 11.33 in 2022-2023. In 2022-23, the generation cost of BPDB's own power plant was Tk 7.63 per unit, and the cost of other state-owned power plants was Tk 6.85. On the other hand, the average generation cost was Tk 14.62 for independent power producers (IPPs) and Tk 12.53 for rental power plants. Just a year earlier, IPP and rental electricity generation cost was Tk 11.55 and Tk 9.80, respectively (BPDB Annual Report 2021-22, page 96; PDB Annual Report, 2022-23, page 98). As a result, the BPDB is incurring losses by purchasing power from IPPs and rental power plants, and the government has to cover these losses with subsidies.

According to a report in *Bonik Barta*, the revised budget for the 2023-24 fiscal year estimated the power sector subsidies to be Tk 39,406 crore. On the other hand, the capacity charge payment has been estimated at more than Tk 32,000 crore—around

81 percent of the subsidies given to the power sector. In FY2022-23, capacity charges were paid to the tune of Tk 26,000 crore, which was 65.76 percent of the total subsidies given to the power sector.

Now, we know that a large part of the power generation capacity remains unused throughout the year. But even if the power is not purchased, as

of gas, new gas-based power plants are being constructed. Recently, two gas-based power plants of Summit and Unique groups started operating in Meghnaghat, Narayanganj with a total capacity of 1,167 MW. Aside from this, there is a 718 MW Reliance power plant waiting to start operating. All these will increase BPDB's costs even more.



VISUAL: SHAIKH SULTANA JAHAN BADHON

per the agreement, BPDB as the sole buyer of power has to pay the capacity charges to the power plants. Last year, capacity charges of more than Tk 26,000 crore were paid when 41 percent of capacity remained unused. Capacity charges have cost Bangladesh more than Tk 1 lakh crore in the last 14 years. Every year, with the increase in power generation capacity in the private sector, the amount of capacity charges keep rising and the losses incurred by the BPDB rise in tandem. To reduce these losses, electricity prices have been increased 12 times at the wholesale level and 14 times at the retail level over the last decade and a half. Yet, the losses and subsidies have not decreased; rather, pressure has been created to increase the prices of electricity repeatedly.

Meanwhile, despite the underutilisation of the existing power generation capacity, new capacity addition has not stopped. For example, while the capacity of the existing gas-based power plants cannot be utilised fully due to lack

The real problem in Bangladesh's power and energy sectors is the implementation of power and energy projects one after another, without competitive bidding, under the umbrella of the Quick Enhancement of Electricity and Energy Supply (Special Provision) Act, 2010, for the benefit of various domestic and foreign investors—without any accountability. As a result, on the one hand, power plants with excess capacity have been constructed with the provision of capacity payment. On the other hand, power generation has become more dependent on imported primary fuels like LNG, oil and coal. Meanwhile, due importance has not been given to the exploration and extraction of domestic gas reserves, as well as renewables. Without addressing the root causes, no matter how much the price of electricity is increased, the crisis in the power and energy sectors will not be solved. Rather, the country's economic crisis will deepen and people will suffer even more.

How garment exporters can navigate geopolitical risks

RMG NOTES



Mostafiz Uddin
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MOSTAFIZ UDDIN

Geopolitical tensions are on the rise in apparel sourcing hubs, with major implications for Bangladesh. For instance, the trend of "friendshoring," whereby apparel manufacturing and sourcing shift to countries that are geopolitical allies, is coming under scrutiny due to increasing political tensions. A recent report produced earlier this year, by risk intelligence firm Verisk Maplecroft, underlines that.

Maplecroft looked at trends over five years across 40 emerging markets, including major manufacturing hubs like Bangladesh, Indonesia, Mexico, Thailand, and Turkey and assessed risks related to civil unrest, government instability, and exposure to conflict and terrorism. It suggests "civil unrest" as a "primary threat to manufacturing," with more than three-quarters of the assessed emerging markets experiencing an increase in civil unrest over the past five years. Alarmingly, Bangladesh ranks seventh highest on political risk related to civil unrest, according to the report.

While Bangladesh has established itself as the world's second-largest exporter of ready-made garments, protests for higher wages in 2023 resulted in at least four deaths and significant disruption to the apparel sector. This unrest has continued into 2024, despite the agreement on a new minimum wage, with reports of garment factories terminating workers who participated in the protests.

Bangladesh is not alone on these issues. The report details how other

key apparel manufacturing hubs like Mexico, Turkey, Thailand, and Indonesia also face political risks.

So, what is driving this unrest? Economic inequality is identified as the primary driver of civil unrest, with global, regional and national issues contributing to instability. Maplecroft's report predicts that political risks in garment hubs are unlikely to decrease in 2024. This could have been the same in Bangladesh had we not been able to resolve issues related to the minimum wage increase.

There are other risk issues at play as well. Disruptions in crucial logistics routes, such as the Red Sea and Suez Canal, are posing further challenges to global apparel supply chains. Recent conflicts and attacks on cargo ships in these maritime routes have prompted companies like AP Moller-Maersk to suspend transits. This would potentially cause delays in stock delivery.

The report also raises concerns over the deepening divide between powerful nations, particularly the US and China. Sanctions and counter-sanctions between these countries pose risks to global supply chains. Their actions are much more complex beyond numbers and are something which industry leaders in Bangladesh need to keep an eye on.

As apparel entrepreneurs seek to diversify their supply chains after the pandemic, the report emphasises the importance of tracking political risks and conducting "scenario analysis" to mitigate potential disruptions.

But how can garment manufacturers mitigate against geopolitical tensions in an ever-changing and uncertain world? How can they reduce their exposure to the impacts of trade disputes, political unrest, geopolitical dynamics and other developments which are beyond their control? I can suggest five effective strategies for Bangladeshi export-oriented manufacturing companies in this context.

First, geopolitical tensions can disrupt the flow of goods and raw materials, leading to supply chain bottlenecks and production delays as well as increased costs for raw materials. To counteract this risk, garment manufacturers or companies should diversify their supply chains across multiple regions and suppliers. By reducing dependence on a single source or location and conducting thorough risk assessments and developing contingency plans for alternative sourcing, businesses can minimise the impact of geopolitical disruptions.

A second tactic is to continuously monitor regulatory changes. Geopolitical dynamics often manifest in the form of regulatory shifts and trade policies including changes in tariffs, sanctions and export controls. Moreover, maintaining open channels of communication with government agencies and industry associations enables businesses to stay informed and proactively address compliance issues.

Third, in these unstable times, building strong trustful relationships with customers, suppliers and local partners is crucial. Garment manufacturing export companies should prioritise long-term partnerships based on mutual respect, transparency, and shared values. By cultivating a network of trusted allies, businesses can navigate geopolitical uncertainties more effectively and leverage collective expertise to mitigate

risks.

Fourth, on a practical level, political risk insurance (PRI) can provide financial protection against losses stemming from geopolitical events such as expropriation, political violence, and currency devaluation. Export-oriented manufacturing companies can secure comprehensive PRI coverage tailored to their specific operations and markets. Working with reputable insurers and leveraging PRI solutions can safeguard against potential disruptions and provide peace of mind in uncertain environments.

Finally, it stands to reason that an overreliance on a single market increases vulnerability to geopolitical shocks and economic downturns. To mitigate this risk, export-oriented manufacturing companies should diversify their market exposure across regions and customer segments. This will diversify revenue streams and reduce dependence on any single geopolitical entity. While this would demand stepping into unknown space by undertaking deeper research into any new market (economy), demography or consumers' behavioural pattern and preferences, an interested company should walk that uncharted path even making social or cultural investments in a new destination (society).

In my experience, these risks are just intrinsic to the global business landscape. As much as geopolitics may paralyse export-oriented manufacturers from Bangladesh, mere criticism won't help us. By undertaking pro-active or strategic steps like diversifying supply chains, monitoring regulatory changes, fostering partnerships, enhancing political risk insurance, and diversifying market exposure, I believe, Bangladeshi garment makers can navigate geopolitical uncertainties with foresight, resilience, and agility.

FOUR YEARS OF THE DHAKA MAYORS

The two mayors of Dhaka—Atiqul Islam of Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) and Barrister Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh of Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC)—have completed four years of their five-year tenure. DNCC Mayor Atiqul took office on May 13, 2020, while DSCC Mayor Taposh assumed office three days later. In exclusive interviews with Partha Pratim Bhattacharjee and Dipan Nandy of The Daily Star, the two mayors talk about their achievements as well as failures, the challenges they faced, and their visions for the future.

‘People will judge if I have succeeded or failed’

Your first promise to your constituents was to continue the mosquito eradication programme by using Integrated Vector Management (IVM). But last year we saw the highest numbers of infection and death by dengue in the country. Do you think you were successful in controlling mosquitoes?

Whether I have succeeded or failed, people will ultimately judge. During Covid, no one dared to leave their home, but I personally worked in 54 wards to raise awareness about dengue. The Aedes mosquito breeds in clean water, not in sewage or canals. So, public awareness is very important in controlling Aedes breeding. We have brought every rooftop garden (in DNCC) under the database and under the geographic information system (GIS) map. Global warming and climate change

from waste.

You did some good work regarding waste collection and waste management, especially sacrificial waste collection during Eid-ul-Azha. What is your future plan about waste management?

I have organised a competition among the councillors to remove sacrificial waste. When I took charge four years ago, the sacrificial wastes were removed within 48 hours, but I brought it down to 24 hours and 12 hours in the following years. Last year, we removed all the sacrificial waste within eight hours. We succeeded because the people and the councillors joined the efforts. When the people take part in our work, it becomes easy for us.

I am against having sewage lines being directly connected to different city canals. For example,

was used for parking at least 1,700 trucks. We demolished several illegal establishments in Basila and constructed a park there. We also demolished a 10-storey building, and now people are moving away from the occupied place on their own.

We recovered the Shutibhola and Paris canals and constructed walkways there. When we start any eviction drive, we face cases and resistance, but we are working to recover all the grabbed land.

I have reclaimed land of 24 playgrounds and parks and modernised them. For my activities, I won the C40 Cities Bloomberg Philanthropies Awards 2022.

We are reconstructing Balur Math in Kalshi to turn it into a playground. The DNCC and Bangladesh Army (24 Engineer Construction Brigade) implemented the project at a cost of around Tk



Atiqul Islam, mayor of Dhaka North City Corporation.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

are also responsible for the increase in Aedes mosquito population. But we are continuing our efforts from our position.

Our dengue death toll (last year) was higher than other countries, but I don't want to point fingers at anybody for that. We will continue our efforts, and the health ministry should perform their duties. Last year, we conducted a mobile court to check breeding grounds and fined Tk 3.85 crore for violations of rules. We found Aedes mosquito larvae even at government offices and under-construction buildings. We all must keep our own places clean ourselves.

We cannot control the Aedes mosquito population without raising awareness. This year, we are providing Tk 50,000 to every councillor monthly for conducting a mosquito control drive. Besides, DNCC is buying discarded polythene, packets of chips, green coconut shells, unused tyres and commodes, etc [garbage in which water can gather, in which Aedes mosquitoes can breed] to curb Aedes breeding.

Last year, a substandard stock of BTI pesticide was imported to destroy mosquito larvae. Later, we blacklisted Marshal Agrovet Chemical Industries Ltd, the importer, for anomalies in the import of the pesticide. This year, the DNCC itself will import BTI directly from the mother company.

One of your major promises was to reduce air pollution in the city. But Dhaka is one of the worst air-polluted cities in the world. Do you think your initiatives bore any fruit?

We have started installation of our own real-time air quality monitoring network to facilitate policymaking and evidence-based decision-making. Ten high-quality sensors were installed to find out the sources responsible for pollution. For one, Aminbazar landfill was found to be a major source of methane gas emission. We have started constructing a power plant in Aminbazar to generate electricity

there is no sewage line in Baridhara-Uttara, for which they are dumping their sewage directly into lakes and canals. In Baridhara, 95 percent of the houses do not have sewage lines. It is not possible to clean up 50 years' garbage within a year or two.

The main challenge for us is to get land to set up Secondary Transfer Stations (STS) as land is very expensive in Dhaka. With more purchasing capacity, people are producing more waste. Earlier, the amount of daily waste produced per person was 0.3 kg on average, but it has increased to 0.65 kg now. Now, we have taken initiatives to generate electricity from that waste.

I am against having sewage lines being directly connected to different city canals. For example, there is no sewage line in Baridhara-Uttara, for which they are dumping their sewage directly into lakes and canals. In Baridhara, 95 percent of the houses do not have sewage lines. It is not possible to clean up 50 years' garbage within a year or two.

Electricity generation from garbage is set to begin within the next 24 months.

Another commitment of yours was to reclaim all the water bodies in the city and to develop parks and playgrounds. How much have you been able to fulfil your promise?

We have evicted illegal occupants of the Lautala canal in Mohammadpur's Basila area that

1,012 crore. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina gave 16 bighas of land to DNCC for the playground; recently, we named the ground after the Qatar emir.

The 70-katha open space at Paris ground in Mirpur, where the National Housing Authority allotted the land for 32 residential plots, is now being used as a playground. A playground has also been constructed beside Lautala canal.

You have completed four years of your five-year tenure—80 percent of your term. How would you evaluate your performance as a mayor?

It is the people who only can judge me and my works. But I have shown zero tolerance in reclaiming canals. I want people to start believing that Dhaka is their own town; then much of the work will become easier for the city corporation.

What is your immediate priority?

Now I am prioritising the newly included 18 wards. Those wards were neglected before; their residents have been suffering for decades. I talked about the issue with the prime minister. We will submit a master plan after consulting with the city planners and will submit a development project proposal (DPP).

Do you have any regrets from these past four years?

I have many regrets. I made a commitment to set up an animal welfare hospital. I recovered land in Mirpur for that, but I have not been able to begin the work yet. Hopefully, I can start it soon.

How do you want the city corporation to function in the future?

I want to see Dhaka North as a digital and paperless city corporation. We have introduced digital services for collecting holding tax and issuing/renewing trade licences. I want a city corporation where people don't need to go to the city corporation to avail services; they can do so online. I dream of a smart Dhaka North City Corporation.



Barrister Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh, mayor of Dhaka South City Corporation.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

‘DSCC is the most corruption-free govt org’

You have completed four years of mayorship—80 percent of your tenure. Could you talk about your achievements and failures in these four years?

Let the people be the judge of my success and failure after my tenure is complete. I will not claim to have fulfilled 80 percent of the promises that I made in my election manifesto during these four years. But I must say, I have been able to do many things that I did not think I could. Discipline has been brought everywhere. The first thing I focused on was ensuring good governance at the Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC), and I did it.

Irregularities became normal at the DSCC—the obligation to follow due process, laws and rules was absent here. Many were not discharging their responsibilities. I made changes to improve the situation. Now, I can claim that DSCC is the most corruption-free organisation among all the government institutions and organisations. We see the reflection of it in our revenue collection drive.

After assuming office on May 16, 2020, I started my journey from May 17. In that fiscal year, we collected a revenue of Tk 512 crore. In the following three fiscal years, we collected Tk 720 crore, Tk 879 crore, and Tk 1,031 crore of revenue, respectively. We generated this revenue without increasing the holding tax. The DSCC that once had to struggle to pay salaries of its employees has now become self-dependent.

Many of our resources were grabbed by various quarters; we were able to recover those resources after establishing good governance. We have freed 54 acres of land worth Tk 4,800 crore. DSCC was being deprived of its own resources due to long-standing corruption and negligence. DSCC's wealth belongs to its residents.

After carrying out many administrative reforms, the enthusiasm for work is back in the DSCC now. Before, there was no framework of waste management or any scheduled working hours for cleaners. Those who neglected their work were fired and replaced. When I took charge, there were 24 secondary transfer stations (STS) in 22 wards; now there are STS in 65 wards.

One of your achievements was reclaiming the old channel of Buriganga. What is your plan in this regard?

After taking charge, we started reclaiming the old Buriganga channel, which had been filled with waste and encroached for the last 50 years. We spent Tk 50 crore to restore the channel. Now the original Buriganga river basin is back, and the river has widened.

We have now taken up a megaplan to create a healthy and aesthetic environment on both sides of the channel so that tourists can visit and enjoy their time there. We hope to start some of the project work this year. We need the government's assistance to implement this plan.

You wanted to establish a central commercial zone in Kamrangirchar, but many residents of the area said they would become landless if it was done. What do you think?

Kamrangirchar was once the most neglected neighbourhood of Dhaka. But geographically it is a very important part of the city. We want to rebuild Kamrangirchar, and thus we have taken up the goal of upgrading the communication system in the area. An eight-lane elevated expressway is being constructed to make the area a central business district. A vested group has misled residents of the area and spread false propaganda among them about the project. I sat with those who protested against the

Many of our resources were grabbed by various quarters; we were able to recover those resources after establishing good governance. We have freed 54 acres of land worth Tk 4,800 crore. DSCC was being deprived of its own resources due to long-standing corruption and negligence.

project on behalf of Kamrangirchar residents. Now they are convinced. I can claim that the people of this city will see a drastic change in 30 years.

In your election manifesto, mosquito control was one of your top priorities. But last year, we saw new records of dengue infections and deaths. Can you evaluate your achievement in controlling mosquitoes?

If we analyse the data, it shows our success. Controlling mosquitoes is always an ongoing process. In 2019, a total of 155,000 people were infected with dengue in Dhaka, and fewer than 200 died. After taking charge in 2020, I found that the mosquito control programme was not enough. Drives to control mosquito breeding were conducted when it increased. But the countries where there is a higher quantity of mosquitoes conduct drives round the year. After taking charge, I took steps to control mosquitoes round the year and engaged more manpower and purchased high-quality pesticides and equipment to curb the mosquito menace. In 2023, even though the death toll was over 900, the number of infections was brought down to 113,000. Our main target is prevention. Ensuring medical care is the health ministry's responsibility. We were successful in controlling mosquitoes, but the expected medical care was not ensured.

Curbing noise and air pollution was also in your election pledge. But as we have seen, Dhaka has become one of the top cities with the worst air quality across the globe. What initiatives have you taken to fulfil your promise?

I can admit that we have not yet taken any such initiatives to curb noise pollution as the traffic system is yet to be updated. That is why we have concentrated on upgrading the traffic signal management. We have appointed consultants to this end. Traffic management should be upgraded keeping 64 intersections in my area and movement of motorised and non-motorised vehicles in mind.

This issue was ignored before. You cannot compare Dhaka with other cities. Here, motorised vehicles ply the roads along with non-motorised vehicles. We are hoping to submit the project proposal by the end of this year and start work for implementation. This can help with curbing noise pollution, because most of the noise pollution is caused by vehicles. If we bring in proper management, noise pollution can be significantly reduced.

As for air pollution, 80 percent of it is caused by unrefined and contaminated fossil fuels. We wrote to the environment and energy ministries to look into the issue seriously. Brick kilns and construction work are also responsible for air pollution. We have asked contractors to look into the issues during construction work. We are trying to keep pollution at a tolerable level.

Do you think you have been successful in resolving the persistent waterlogging crisis?

Seventy percent of Dhaka roads used to get flooded even if there was a little rain when I took office in 2020. Then we identified 136 points including Dhanmondi Road 27, the road stretching from Azimpur to Palashi, Fakirapool, the Notre Dame College area, Motijheel, and Jatrabari. We spent Tk 103 crore of our own financing to renovate these 136 points. Where we conducted renovation work, there are no waterlogging problems. Since Dhaka has been developed in an unplanned manner, new points of such waterlogging have been created. Last year, we saw waterlogging in the New Market area, and later we found that drains were blocked inside Pilkhana that resulted in the New Market waterlogging. Some new buildings were also built over the drains inside Pilkhana, thus it took time to drain away the water. Waterlogging is a never-ending problem for Dhaka city, but we have managed to reduce waterlogging to 20 percent.

As the mayor of DSCC and a resident of Dhaka, how do you want the city to be in the future?

I don't want to see Dhaka as only a commercial city and a concrete jungle. Dhaka has its own characteristics and heritage. I want to see Dhaka with heritage, and I am working to make that happen.

Rabindranath Tagore and the Creation of National Identity

While Tagore describes the beauty of Bengal in the poem, it is only the entire poem that reveals that it is also about the political situation at the time. The last two lines refer to the boycott of foreign goods and in an almost prophetic vision foresee the hanging that would be the result – as it indeed was when Khudiram was hanged.

NAIZ ZAMAN

Rabindranath Tagore is perhaps the only poet whose songs were chosen as the national anthems of two countries: India and Bangladesh. On January 24, 1950, Tagore's song "Jana Gana Mana" was officially adopted by the Constituent Assembly as the Indian national anthem. Twenty-two years later, on January 13, 1972, an earlier song of Tagore's, "Amar Sonar Bangla," was officially recognized as the national anthem of Bangladesh. If a country's national anthem epitomizes the identity of the country, how do these two songs epitomize the identities of India and Bangladesh? Furthermore, is there something ironic in choosing these two songs that had been composed in different circumstances – one mourning the partition of Bengal and the other celebrating the annulment of that partition – as the national anthems of two countries? Does giving a song an "official" status deprive it of its richness and even complexity? Especially, as in both cases, only a few lines of the songs are the national anthems? In the case of "Amar Sonar Bangla," in particular, has its institutionalization weakened its evocative power as the rallying cry for Bengalis in 1971?

On July 20, 1905, the British Raj announced the partition of Bengal.

King George V to the Delhi Durbar, Rabindranath Tagore was asked by a friend to compose a song. While he did not write a song for the Durbar, he did write one for the annual meeting of the Congress. The wordings of the song suggest that it was written in praise of George V. The *Statesman*, for example, on December 28, 1911 stated, "The Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore sang a song composed by him specially to welcome the Emperor." The *Englishman* also noted "The proceedings [of the Congress] began with the singing by Rabindranath Tagore of a song specially composed by him in honour of the Emperor." Reba Som notes, in *Rabindranath Tagore: The Singer and His Song*, that though Tagore did not write a song for George V, "Jana Gana Mana" "was deliberately ambiguous" (103). In 1911, the dispenser of India's destiny was, in all practicality, the British ruler.

Tagore would insist that the poem was not in praise of King George and the word "Chirasarathi," which he translated as "Eternal Charioteer" in his translation of 1919, referred to Krishna. However, it is not improbable that in 1911 with the annulment of the partition of Bengal, Tagore was celebrating the reunification of India – but it was a reunification that had been made possible by the then ruler



Chhayanaat's celebration of the Bengali New Year.

PHOTO : ANISUR RAHMAN

*Jaya he, jaya he, jaya he
Jaya jaya jaya, jaya he!*

In February 1919, Tagore accepted an invitation from the Irish poet James H. Cousins, Principal of the Besant Theosophical College, to spend a few days with him and his wife, Margaret. After listening to Tagore singing the song, Margaret set down the notation which is still followed. It was here that Tagore wrote his English translation of the song, titling it *The Morning Song of India*. The first stanza describes the varied land of India and its people.

Thou art the ruler of the minds of all people, dispenser of India's destiny.

Thy name rouses the hearts of Punjab, Sind, Gujrat and Maratha, of the Dravida and Orissa and Bengal; it echoes in the hills of the Vindhya and Himalayas, mingles in the music of Ganges and Jamuna and is chanted by the waves of the Indian Sea. They pray for thy blessings and sing thy praise. The saving of all people waits in thy hand, thou dispenser of India's destiny.

Victory, victory, victory to thee.

In 1941, shortly before his death, Tagore wrote the essay "Crisis in Civilization." Despondent over the violence that attended the anti-British movement, Tagore looked forward to a time when the British would indeed leave India and man's humanity would prevail.

As I look around I see the crumbling ruins of a proud civilization strewn like a vast heap of futility. And yet I shall not commit the grievous sin of losing faith in Man. I would rather look forward to the opening of a new chapter in this history after the cataclysm is over and the atmosphere rendered clean with the spirit of service and sacrifice. Perhaps that dawn will come from this horizon, from the East where the sun rises. A day will come when unvanquished Man will retrace his path of conquest. Despite all barriers, to win back his lost human heritage.

Unfortunately, when the British left India, there was a cataclysm more violent than any Tagore had visualized. The Indian subcontinent was divided into two nation states, with India in the middle of the two wings of Pakistan: East and West Pakistan. The early patriotic fervour in East Pakistan soon faded as people started feeling that they were being treated as second-class citizens. One of the issues was that of the state language. This issue came to a head in 1952 when Governor General Khawja Nazimuddin defended the "Urdu-only" policy in a speech on January 27. Police action on February 21 led to the killing of at least six persons. The language movement and the killing of protestors was the catalyst for an awakening nationalist consciousness among the Bengalis of East Pakistan. Though the central government granted official status to Bangla in 1956, the awareness that the people of East Pakistan were Bengalis first and Muslims later led to increasing distancing from West Pakistan.

The awakened Bengali consciousness was given a boost on the cultural side when, in 1961, the government of Pakistan attempted to ban the singing of Tagore songs in East Pakistan. However, a group of intellectuals and singers defied this ban and celebrated Tagore's birthday. Subsequently, a cultural organization was formed to nurture and foster the cultural aspect of the land, including the celebration of the birthday of Tagore. Chhayanaat initiated the celebration of the Bengali New Year on the first day of Baisakh, April 14, 1963 with Tagore's song "Esho Esho He Baisakh." The song not only celebrated the coming of a new year, but also stressed the cultural unity of the people of Bengal. Thus, if Tagore recognized the multi-ethnic, multi-religious Indian identity in "Jana Mana Gana," his songs helped to create a sense of Bengali identity distinct from the Pakistani Muslim one. Subsequently, as the movement for autonomy grew and increasingly in 1971 after the crackdown, Tagore's "Amar Sonar Bangla" became popular as the song which epitomized the meaning of the land for the dispossessed Bengali.

While Tagore describes the beauty of Bengal in the poem, it is only the entire poem that reveals that it is also about the political situation at the time. The last two lines refer to the boycott of foreign goods and in an almost prophetic vision foresee the hanging that would be the result – as it indeed was when Khudiram was hanged. With "Amar Sonar Bangla" elevated to the status of the national anthem, we are deprived of the complex feelings that inspired the poet to write these lines. The poem is not just about beauty but also about separation, about the cauldron of history in which much creation occurs.

The circumstances under which "Amar Sonar Bangla" was created are interesting and reveals Tagore's openness to borrowing whatever he found good. Between 1891 and 1901, Tagore resided at the family estate of Shilaidaha, on the south bank of the Padma in Kushtia. Apart from composing poems and songs, Tagore was fascinated by the songs of the wandering baul singers. The universal message of their songs appealed to him as did their evocative tunes.

In 1905, when Tagore was writing his songs of protest, he used the tune of Gagan Harkara's "Ami Kothay Pabo Tare" to accompany the lyrics of "Amar Sonar Bangla." The song which first appeared in the September 1905 issues of *Bangadarshan* describes the beautiful land of Bengal and perhaps owes something to the baromashi, the Bengali song of separation which refers to the different Bengali months and their seasonal changes. However, the English translations of Tagore's song – perhaps to make it more understandable to readers unfamiliar with the Bengali months – use "Spring" and "Autumn" instead of "Phalgun" and "Agrahayan."

The official English version of the first stanza is that by Syed Ali Ahsan, himself a Bangla poet.

My Golden Bengal
My Bengal of gold, I love you
Forever your skies, your air set my heart in tune as if it were a flute.
In spring, my mother mine the fragrance from your mango-groves makes me wild with joy –
Ah, what a thrill!
In Autumn, Oh mother mine, In the full blossomed paddy fields, I have seen spread all over – sweet smiles!
Ah, what a beauty, what shades, what an affection
And what a tenderness!
What a quilt have you spread at the feet of banyan trees and along the bank of rivers!
Of mother mine, words from your lips are like nectar to my ears!
Ah, what a thrill!
If sadness, Oh mother mine, casts a gloom on your face,
My eyes are filled with tears.

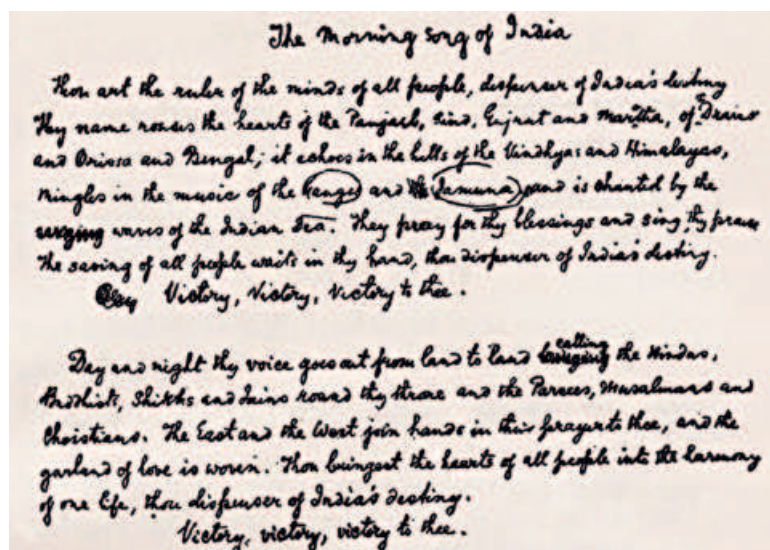
In 1972, the song that Tagore had composed in protest against the division of Bengal became the national anthem of a sovereign country, the seeds of which had perhaps been sown in 1905 with that division. While celebrating Bengal, the song, by becoming the national anthem of Bangladesh, reifies the division that had created the province of Eastern Bengal and Assam and which, after much blood shed, became Bangladesh – but a Bangladesh reduced in size because Assam had not been part of East Pakistan and was not subsequently part of Bangladesh.

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"Rabindranath Tagore and the Creation of National Identity" was first presented at the conference on "Redefining Paradigms of Sustainable Development in South Asia," organized by Sustainable Development Policy Institute, Islamabad, Pakistan, in December 2011. This is a shorter version of the developed essay published in *Chaos, IUB Studies in Literature, Language and Creative Writing*, Fall 2012.



(L) Cover of the novel *Ghare Baire*. (R) A facsimile of two verses of the translation in Tagore's handwriting



The partition would take effect from October 16 that year. The new province of Eastern Bengal and Assam would include the districts of Dacca, Mymensingh, Faridpur, Backergunge [Barisal], Tippera, Noakhali, Chittagong, the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Jalpaiguri, Rangpur, Bogra, Pabna, and Malda. While the official reason behind the partition was that the Bengal province was too large to be administered by a single governor, the division of the province into a Hindu-dominated one and a Muslim-dominated one could be considered but another example of the British "Divide and Rule" policy.

There was almost immediate reaction to the announcement of the partition. The anti-British Swadeshi movement was launched on August 7, 1905, at a public meeting at the Calcutta Town Hall, when the Boycott Resolution was passed. By September 1905, the sale of British cloth in some districts fell to between 6 and 20 per cent of original levels. Public burning of foreign cloth took place spontaneously. Earlier attempts to boycott foreign cloth had failed to elicit this response. If Lord Curzon, then Viceroy of India, meant to curb the rising tide of nationalism, he succeeded in doing just the opposite. The anti-British feeling led to a new wave of patriotism as well as increasing violence.

Rabindranath Tagore too became involved in the swadeshi movement. Though he did not approve of violent methods – as his novel *Ghare Baire* reveals – his initial reaction to the partition was an outpouring of grief over the dismemberment of his motherland. Among the songs he composed at this time were "Banglar Mati Banglar Jal," "Bidhir Badhon Katbe Tumi Emni Shaktiman," "Jodi Tor Dak Shune Keyu Na Ashe Tobe Ekla Chalo Re," and "Amar Sonar Bangla."

In the face of these protests, the partition was annulled in 1911. At The Great Coronation Durbar on December 12, 1911, King George V announced the annulment of the partition. But there was a price: From Calcutta, the capital was shifted to Delhi.

On the occasion of the visit of

of India's destiny. Tagore's anti-British feelings would not come to a head until 1919, after the Jalianwallah Bagh atrocities when he renounced his knighthood awarded by George V in 1915.

In January 1912, the Brahma Samaj journal, *Tatva Bodha Prakasika*, published the song. Below is a transliteration of the first stanza.



Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941)

*Jana gana mana adhinayaka jaya he
Bharata bhagya vidhata
Panjab Sindh Gujara Maratha
Dravida Utkala Variga
Vindhya Himachala Yamuna
Ganga
Uchala jaladhi tarainga
Tav subha name jage
Tav subha asisa mage
Ghe taba jaya gatha
Jana gana mangala dayaka jaya he
Bharata bhagya vidhata*

The wheels of Fate will some day compel the English to give up their Indian empire. But what kind of India will they leave behind, what stark misery? When the stream of their centuries' administration runs dry at last, what a waste of mud and filth they will leave behind them! I had at one time believed that the springs of civilization would issue out of the heart of Europe. But today when I am about to quit the world that faith has gone bankrupt altogether.

SPORT

What to WATCH

T SPORTS
IPL
Gujarat vs Kolkata
Live from 8:00 pm
STAR SPORTSSELECT HD1
English Premier League
Aston Villa vs Liverpool
Live from 1:00 am
(Tuesday)

Has the Saifuddin bubble burst?

SHABAB CHOWDHURY

Much of Mohammad Saifuddin's supposed reputation as a pace-bowling all-rounder is built on hype.

Sure, Saifuddin has dishd out glimpses of his talents with bat and ball in domestic competitions but can those sparks of promise in lower quality contests be used to solidify faith in the 27-year-old heading into the T20 World Cup in June?

Saifuddin got his bearings wrong and was all over the place in Bangladesh's eight-wicket loss in the fifth and final T20I against Zimbabwe yesterday in Mirpur. The right-arm seamer struggled to keep a lid on things and was picked apart for 55 runs in his four overs, including a 19-run penultimate over which helped a relatively feeble Zimbabwe pick up their only win in the tour in what has been an ordinary series for the visitors.

A bubble has been inflated by fans and experts alike around the inclusion of Saifuddin, a player who is the only pace-bowling all-round option in this current Bangladesh side.

What aspects of Saifuddin's skillset are Bangladesh looking for?

Fundamentally, the Tigers should be looking to use



Saifuddin for his bowling, particularly at the death. He has a reputation for finding the blockhole and bowling spearing yorkers in domestic competitions and this perception has often brought him to the fore whenever the Tigers have faced a death bowling crisis. But how often has he been able to deliver on his strength?

Saifuddin has often resorted to the change of pace, pitching halfway onto the pitch instead of going for what he was known for in his Under-19 days -- executing yorkers, almost at will.

The ongoing series was a test for the 27-year-old to see how he holds up in the five-match series, at least fitness-wise. He has picked up eight wickets in the four matches at an economy rate of 9.31 and has been used by skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto in all three phases of the innings.

With Shoriful Islam, Mustafizur Rahman, and Taskin Ahmed -- the latter's inclusion for the T20 World Cup being subject to his recovery from his recent rib cage injury -- making up the pace-bowling line-up, the Tigers can't really use Saifuddin as a strike bowler as he bowls at a gentle pace and would have a hard time unsettling batters with pace. He can be a useful option in the middle overs due to his expertise in changing the pace but much of his usefulness will depend on whether he can get his yorkers right.

In the Zimbabwe series, Saifuddin, despite the reputation for bowling vicious yorkers, stuck to his toothless slower-ball bouncers and often was taken for boundaries. Of the 96 balls he bowled in the series, only six were yorkers (6.25 percent). He conceded the least amount of runs -- only three -- with those deliveries and picked up two wickets.

In Saifuddin's case, often his role as a lower-middle-order batter, who can come with some lusty blows at the death, is brought to the fore. But how much can the batter Saifuddin deliver in such scenarios? He scored 101 runs in this DPL at a strike rate of 100 in 10 innings -- a stat that does very little to make his case as an explosive batter lower down the order, especially when considered the sub-standard domestic league.

Maybe it is time for the Bangladesh team management to call a spade a spade and rethink what they are looking for from Saifuddin.



Finally, the scares turned into reality as Zimbabwe, powered by fifties from opener Brian Bennett and skipper Sikandar Raza, crushed hosts Bangladesh by eight wickets in the final match of the five-match T20I series in Mirpur yesterday. Even though the Tigers took home the series 4-1, Zimbabwe had come alarmingly close in the third and fourth T20I before eventually getting the upper hand in yesterday's game. [Bottom] Following the match, Shakib Al Hasan was happy to take selfies with fans -- a sight contrasting to what had happened a few days back when a fan found his way into the ground to take a picture with the star all-rounder during a Dhaka Premier League game in BKSP.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

A hollow series win and the lingering concerns

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh fell short of completing a clean sweep over Zimbabwe in the five-match Twenty20 International series, losing the last game by eight wickets in Mirpur yesterday, however, clinched the series by a dominant 4-1 margin.

But the series was not as one-sided as the 4-1 margin would suggest with the Tigers' batting frailties getting exposed multiple times against an average bowling attack which resulted in a couple of close contests in the third and fourth T20Is, where the hosts won owing the visitors' own batting woes.

The nine and five-run victories in the third and fourth match respectively followed by the comprehensive defeat in the final game are raising concerns over the team's preparedness for the challenges that wait for them in the forthcoming ICC T20 World Cup.

However, skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto claimed that they have successfully crossed out the things they wanted to check in the series and said that winning the close contests have raised the team's confidence.

"We were serious in all the games. We didn't want to lose a game neither do we feel we needed to lose [to get a reality check]. I think we had a very good series," Shanto said at the press conference yesterday after the game.

"We had a few close games and in those scenarios, we practiced how the bowlers would execute their plans and how we can remain calm. You could say that in those close matches the game was in their hands and we were able to comeback. The way we did that

is a positive sign which will work well for us in the tournament," he added.

There were some encouraging signs in the batting department, with opener Tanzid Tamim looking confident with his approach while Towhid Hridoy remaining fluid throughout the series.

Jaker Ali Anik put finishing touches to a few innings and Mahmudullah Riyad turned up too at times, like he did with a 54 in the fifth T20I.

The bowlers performed up to expectations barring the final game with an inspired Taskin Ahmed picking up the player-of-the-series award while leg-spinner Rishad Hossain also staked his claims for a place in the World Cup side.

There were a few lose ends with Mohammad Saifuddin and Tanzim Sakib's death-over displays but Mustafizur Rahman and Shakib Al Hasan's bowling since their return showed that the bowling group has depth.

Yet, the way the batting line-up crumbled in the fourth T20I after a 101-run opening stand between Tanzid and Soumya Sarkar is a worrying sign.

Shanto, however, felt the wickets used in the series played a role in the batting woes.

"The wickets were not batting friendly throughout the series. The batters tried to play well and assessed the wickets while batting," said the skipper.

Shakib and Shanto's batting form will be added concern alongside Liton Das's exploits this series, who was dropped from the final two T20Is. Given that the World Cup is just a few weeks away, Najmul and Co have their work cut out as they have very little time to work on the shortcomings exposed in this series.



It's 50-50, says Taskin on injury

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh's pace spearhead Taskin Ahmed suffered an injury to his rib cage during the fourth game of the five-match T20I series against Zimbabwe, upsetting the team's plans for the upcoming T20 World Cup in the USA and the West Indies.

The 29-year-old pacer looked in supreme form during the first four matches of the series, taking eight wickets and winning the player of the series award.

"I still have pain. Will do the scan and later can say about the severity of the injury but it seems 50-50," Taskin, casting doubts over his inclusion for the T20 mega event starting on June 2, told reporters before leaving the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium on Sunday.

Bangladesh Cricket Board's chief physician Dr Debashish Chowdhury told The Daily Star: "Taskin has an injury on his 12th rib on the right side which he suffered while diving in the last (fourth) game. He also had considerable pain today and we are sending him for scan."

The BCB physician further said that they can only confirm whether there is a fracture after getting the scan report. "In cases of side strain, initially there is quite a bit of pain for the first two-three days whether fracture is there or not."

Talking to reporters during the match, BCB president Nazmul Hassan Papon said that they would wait for the report to take a decision on the treatment of the player as well as the announcement of the squad for the T20 World Cup today.

As things stand, a repeat of the grim event in 2019 looms when the pacer was left in tears when an injury forced him out of the squad for the 50-over that year.



Arsenal forward Leandro Trossard celebrates after scoring in his side's 1-0 win over Manchester United at Old Trafford yesterday. The win meant the Gunners kept their Premier League title dreams alive as they moved back to the top of the table. Trossard scored the only goal in the 20th minute as Arsenal won for just the second time in 17 games away at United to go a point clear of Manchester City at the summit. City still have the destiny of the title in their own hands as the defending champions have two matches left to Arsenal's one.

PHOTO: AFP

'Financial strength' biggest factor behind Kings' success

SPORTS REPORTER

As Bashundhara Kings celebrated their historic fifth consecutive top-tier league title on Saturday, their closes rivals Mohammedan and Abahani -- two of the most illustrious football clubs of the country -- were left to rue the disparaging financial stability between the champions and the rest of the teams in the Bangladesh Premier League.

Kings beat Mohammedan 2-1 in Mymensingh on Saturday, confirming their fifth BPL title on the trot with three games in hand, and in the process avenging for the only defeat of the season on the Black and Whites.

Alfaz Ahmed, who led a sort of revival of Mohammedan by leading the Motijheel club to Federation Cup title last year and already leading the team to two competitions this season -- felt the finances of Kings make it hard even for clubs like Mohammedan compete.

"When you want to become champions, you need some national players and quality foreign players along with sound financial backing. Kings have all three of those components. They have a champion



'The power of 16 driving Kings'

Read the full interview of Bashundhara Kings president Imrul Hasan on The Daily Star website.

team with 16 national players and quality foreign players," Alfaz Ahmed told The Daily Star, also admitting that Kings handle everything in a professional way and provide all the modern facilities to the players.

Alfaz, however, pointed out a pertinent aspect in Kings' strategy which he believes breaks the balance

of other teams.

"Whenever a promising player emerges in the league, Kings rope in that player to strength their squad while weakening other teams. This may be a part of Kings' strategy," Alfaz said, adding that a lot of promising young players end up warming the bench due to this practice.

Abahani manager and former national player Nazrul Islam also echoed the same sentiment.

"We are behind Kings when it comes to quality of foreign players even though there is hardly any difference among the local players. They spend big every season and sign the promising players from the current season," said Nazrul.

Country's successful coach Maruful Haque, who has not coached a club this season, was more forthright in his observation.

"No other team in Bangladesh's history had the luxury to keep so many national team players on the reserve bench. Kings formed the squad with all A-category and B-category players and no team can get those players even if they try because of the high payment to the players, which is really abnormal in the transfer market," opined Haque.

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109 HELPLINE

A complaint centre or an info hub?

NILIMA JAHAN

The toll-free 24/7 National Helpline Centre for Violence Against Women & Children 109, was introduced in 2012 to receive complaints against various forms of women and children abuse and provide services accordingly.

Initially, the helpline number was 10921 and was changed to 109 in 2017.

Established under the Multi-Sectoral Programme on Violence Against Women of the women and children affair's ministry, it was to give appropriate services to victims of domestic violence, child marriage, sexual harassment, physical abuse, dowry, detention, child custody and more.

However, according to a data analysis, the helpline seems to be restricted to providing information more than giving services.

From January to April 16 this year, 2,68,430 calls were logged. Over 95 percent of them were related to seeking information. In 2023, the figure was 97 percent and the year before, it was 95.

The information they seek range from how to handle violent situations, process of obtaining dowry or alimony, divorce proceedings, reconciling conjugal relationships, etc.

According to 2024 data, among the total calls received, only five percent sought specific services.

Among the five percent, only two percent requested legal assistance and one percent sought police intervention in instances of torture.

Additionally, 0.22 percent calls were made for emergency medical support due to violence, 0.09 percent specifically sought mental health support, and 0.31 percent calls fell under the miscellaneous categories.

Since its inception, the helpline has experienced a significant rise in popularity, now receiving between 5,000 and 6,000 calls daily.

This uptick represents a notable increase from the previous year, when the average volume of daily calls was approximately 4,500 to 5,000.

An analysis of the calls made in the first quarter of this year shows the helpline handled 230,628 calls, with domestic violence being the reason behind 11.48 percent of them.

Data from the helpline authority showed a surge in domestic violence calls – 296 per day, up from 254 calls a day in 2023.

Following domestic violence, physical assault made up for 5.96 percent of calls, while sexual assault accounted for 0.13 percent. Calls made for burn and acid injuries each were less than 0.01 percent, while those regarding child marriage and mental torture were 0.13 percent and 8.47 percent.

The largest category, "others", constituted 73.74 percent of calls, reflecting the helpline's diverse concerns.

In 2023, similar patterns were observed – domestic violence made up 9.71 percent of all calls, physical assault 5.82 percent, and sexual assault 0.16. Mental torture accounted for 7.47 percent, while burn and acid-related cases were each less than 0.01 percent. Calls regarding child marriage was 0.14 percent.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

According to 2024 data, among the total calls received, only five percent sought specific services. Among the five percent, only two percent requested legal assistance and one percent sought police intervention in instances of torture.



This small tunnel, built in the British era under a rail line, is key for various businesses in Ashuganj of Brahmanbaria to ship in and ship out goods. The old tunnel is getting damaged every day as heavy and tall trucks use the tunnel and scrape its ceiling. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Relationship with the US now stronger than ever

Says foreign minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Bangladesh's relationship with the US is now stronger than it ever was in the past, Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud said yesterday.

He also said the US president wrote a letter to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina immediately after the election. Now, Donald Lu is coming to Bangladesh to take this relationship to greater heights.

The foreign minister said this while replying to a journalist's query before a meeting of the parliamentary standing committee on the foreign ministry at the Office of the Refugee

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Gaza bleeds on as death toll tops 35,000

Israel launches new assault on northern Gaza, ups military pressure on Rafah; donors pledge over \$2b for Gaza

AGENCIES

Israel sent tanks into eastern Jabalia in the northern Gaza Strip early yesterday, after a night of heavy aerial and ground bombardments, as the death toll in the Palestinian enclave exceeded 35,000 people.

More than seven months into the Israel's war on Gaza, UN chief Antonio Guterres urged "an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, the unconditional release of all hostages and an immediate surge in humanitarian aid" into the besieged Gaza Strip.

"But a ceasefire will only be the start," Guterres told a donor conference in Kuwait. "It will be a long road back from the devastation

and trauma of this war." Later the donors pledged over \$2 billion for Gaza at the conference.

As Egyptian, Qatari and US mediation efforts towards a truce appeared to stall, US President Joe Biden said on Saturday a ceasefire could be achieved "tomorrow" if Hamas released the hostages held in Gaza.

AFP correspondents, witnesses and medics said Israeli air strikes pounded parts of northern, central and southern Gaza during the night and into yesterday morning.

The Israeli military said its jets had hit "over 150 terror targets throughout the Gaza Strip" over the past day.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

GOVERNMENT JOBS 7 held over exam fraud

They leaked questions, supplied answers via 'spy devices'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The police have busted a racket that helped candidates with ill intentions to cheat on recruitment tests for various government services.

The gang made deals with job seekers, charging hefty sums in exchange for answers fed directly into their ears from outside the exam halls via "electronic spy devices."

The Detective Branch (DB) on Saturday arrested seven members of the ring who had so far leaked questions for at least nine recruitment tests.

"Depending on the

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



Brian Bennett smashes one of his five sixes in his 49-ball 70 in Zimbabwe's eight-wicket win in the fifth and final T20I against Bangladesh at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. The right-handed batter also put away five fours and put together a 75-run stand with skipper Sikandar Raza to guide his side to victory.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

96 constituencies go to polls in 4th phase today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

A string of high-profile ruling BJP and opposition politicians will be in the fray as millions of Indians cast their votes 96 constituencies across ten states and union territories in the fourth phase of India's marathon Lok Sabha elections today.

The voting begins at 7:00am and ends at 6:00pm with a favourable environment for voting as the met office said the heatwave that was partly blamed for lower voter

turnout in the first three phases of polling will not affect the fourth phase.

In this phase, 17.7 crore eligible voters will seal the electoral fates of 1,717 candidates in EVMs in 1.92 lakh polling stations.

Polling has concluded in the three phases so far in 283 Lok Sabha constituencies across 20 states and union territories out

of the total 543 constituencies. After the seventh and last phase of polling on June 1, the counting of votes is scheduled for June 4.

The parliamentary election is being fought between Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking a record-equaling third term in office riding on a blend of development, social welfare and an aggressive Hindu nationalism. A multi-party

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



Will renew passports of 69,000 Rohingyas Says home boss after meeting with Saudi delegation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh will renew passports of 69,000 Rohingyas who went to Saudi Arabia after the country's independence with Bangladeshi passports.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan made the disclosure yesterday after a meeting with a visiting Saudi delegation, led by Saudi Deputy Interior Minister Nasser bin Abdulaziz Al-Daoud. The Saudi government urged Bangladesh to renew the passports.

Talking to reporters after the meeting held at city a hotel, the home minister said some Rohingyas from Bangladesh went to Saudi Arabia after the country's independence.

"We don't know their number. They [Saudi] told us that it is around 69,000. The Saudi Arabian rules state that if they [Rohingyas] don't have passports, they will be sent back. In that case, we had an agreement with the Saudi Arabia authorities that the Rohingyas would not be sent back and their passports would be renewed," the minister said.

Asked why Bangladesh is taking responsibility of 69,000 Rohingyas in Saudi Arabia, the minister said

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