



Health, education face spending cuts again

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

Education and health sectors are set to get less Annual Development Plan allocation than prescribed in the eighth five-year plan.

This is a continuation of the downward trend seen over the last four years, even though the two sectors are crucial for a well-educated and healthy population.

According to the draft development budget, which is likely to be placed before the National Economic Council

previous four fiscal years than what was fixed in the five-year plan.

Noted educationist Rasheda K Choudhury said education and healthcare are two of the most vital factors for human development.

"We have been hearing from policymakers that they are putting emphasis on health and education and even the prime minister said so repeatedly. But it is unfortunate that we are not seeing the reflection in the development budget.

"We are implementing many mega projects and developing infrastructure.

Make budget tight, control inflation
PM asks finance ministry



REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday directed the finance ministry to formulate a contractionary budget for the upcoming fiscal year to control inflation.

During a meeting with officials from the finance ministry, Bangladesh Bank, and the National Board of Revenue (NBR) at the Gono Bhaban, PM Hasina mentioned that developed countries like the United States and Japan increased their policy interest rates to curb inflation and suggested similar measures in Bangladesh.

She asked for prioritising pledges made in the government's election manifesto while preparing the next budget and directed the continuation of the existing austerity measures for different ministries and divisions.

The PM also directed the NBR to broaden its tax net rather than putting

SECTOR	SHARE IN ADP	SHARE IN 5YR PLAN
Education & technology	13.70pc	16.50pc
Health	7.80pc	11.1pc
Agriculture	4.99pc	11.50pc
Transport and communication	26.67pc	17.40pc

for approval on Thursday, the health sector will get 7.80 percent of the ADP allocation in fiscal year 2024-25. The eighth five-year plan, for fiscal years 2020-21 to 2024-25, prescribed 11.1 percent of the ADP allocation for fiscal year 2024-25.

The education and technology sector is to get 13.70 percent of the ADP allocation, against the plan's proposal of 16.5 percent.

Health and education sectors got similar allocations in the current fiscal year as well.

Planning Commission officials said several sectors, including health, education, agriculture, and social protection, got less allocation in the

These play important roles in the country's progress. But if we fail to enhance human capacity, these developments will not be sustainable," said Rasheda, also executive director of Campaign for Popular Education.

If the country cannot properly develop the capacity of its people, it will need to hire experts from abroad, she said, pointing out that the RMG sector alone pays several billion dollars in salaries and allowances to foreign employees. The money eventually goes out of the country as Bangladesh does not have the skilled manpower, she said.

Less allocation for health and education can lead to substandard

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

After the DMP on May 6 banned the illegal parking of buses in the capital's Mohakhali Bus Terminal area, traffic jams there have eased significantly. However, those buses are now parked along the road from Nabisco Mor to Satrasta, causing gridlocks there instead. The photo was taken at the Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmad Sharani yesterday.

THE BUSINESS

Food inflation crosses 10pc

Food inflation rose to a five-month high in April as the measures of the government and the central bank aimed at reining in elevated consumer prices are yet to take hold, official figures showed yesterday. According to BBS data, food inflation jumped 35 basis points to 10.22 percent last month from 9.87 percent in March. This was the first time in five months that food inflation hit double digits.

STORY ON B1

MPs may lose duty waiver for car imports

NBR to place proposal before PM today for ending import duty exemptions

MOHAMMAD SUMAN and MD ASADUZZAMAN

The National Board of Revenue seeks to impose 25 percent import duty on cars for lawmakers, reversing a practice of tax exemptions that amounted to Tk 5,147 crore over the last 15 years.

According to the NBR's import data, lawmakers imported 572 vehicles under the duty-free benefit between January 2009 and April 15 this year.

The customs value of the vehicles was estimated at Tk 397.38 crore, shows the data.

The NBR officials said the government gave tax waiver of at least Tk 5,147 crore for these vehicles under the facility.

They further said the NBR's proposal for withdrawal of the benefit will be placed at a meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office today.

Import duty on the MPs' cars could be imposed in the budget for fiscal 2024-25 if the prime minister agrees to the proposal, they added.

Seeking anonymity, a NBR official said the proposal suggests replacing the waiver as part of efforts to improve Bangladesh's low tax-GDP ratio.

"According to the conditions of the International Monetary Fund, we cannot continue the duty-free benefit in the days to come."

Customs duty should be imposed on all types of products, except for 20-25 essentials such as rice, wheat and fertilizer, the official mentioned.

The NBR officials will present before the PM a summary of the facility under which the lawmakers received duty-free benefits of Tk 816 crore on car imports in fiscal 2022-23 and Tk 351 crore till March 30 in the current fiscal year.

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Donald Lu due today

Climate crisis, economic and Indo-Pacific issues to top the agenda

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

On the third leg of his visit to South Asia after India and Sri Lanka, US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Donald Lu will be arriving in Dhaka for a two-day visit to strengthen bilateral cooperation and demonstrate US support for a free, open, and prosperous Indo-Pacific region.

During the visit, he will meet with Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud, Prime Minister's Private Industry and Investment Adviser Salman F Rahman, Forest and Environment Minister Saber Hossain Chowdhury, Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen, and civil society leaders.

According to a statement from the US State Department, Lu will discuss US-Bangladesh cooperation, including addressing the climate crisis and deepening economic ties.

This will be the highest-level US official to visit Dhaka after the January 7 national election that Washington termed not free and fair. He last visited Bangladesh in January last year.

Speaking to reporters at the foreign ministry yesterday, Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud said that issues related to visa policy and Dhaka's call for the withdrawal of sanctions on Rab may come up for discussion during Lu's visit.

He said Bangladesh maintains excellent relations with the United States, and the two countries will work together to take the relations further.

The US had been very vocal about free and fair elections ahead of the parliamentary polls in Bangladesh earlier this year. It also announced a visa policy last year, nearly two years after imposing a sanction against Rab and some of its officials.



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Saudi Ambassador Essa Youssef Essa Al Duhaian meets Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Gono Bhavan yesterday. PHOTO: PTD

How to wean Bangladesh off LNG addiction

Use of efficient captive power generators could save \$460m a year, says energy research thinktank IEEFA

ASIFUR RAHMAN

Bangladesh can reduce its liquefied natural gas (LNG) imports by 21 percent and save \$460 million a year by replacing ageing, inefficient industrial captive power generators with more efficient models and harnessing the waste heat produced by generators for other applications, says a study.

The Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA) has prepared the report based on available evidence and a survey of 51 industries with a combined generation capacity of about 250 megawatts (MW).

Analysing data from 73 gas fired captive power generators in these industries, the study finds that the average efficiency of these generators is 35.38 percent.

It says if the generators are replaced

with efficient models, the efficiency rate can be increased up to 45.2 percent.

Additionally, the use of a waste heat recovery boiler and jacket cooling water in a chiller or heater can save up to 50.18 billion cubic feet (BCF) of gas every year, the study also says.

The study found that 44.22 percent of industries do not use waste heat released by generators, and 79.6 percent do not use jacket cooling water in productive applications.

Waste heat recovery is the process of reusing heat energy that would otherwise be released into the atmosphere. The jacket cooling water system is used to cool the cylinder liners, cylinder covers, and exhaust valves of the main engine, which increases engine efficiency.

Replacing old generators would take 1.5 to 5 years to recoup the investment, while

waste heat recovery takes only one year, the study said.

A captive power plant is a facility that provides a localised source of power to energy users, like industries, large offices, or data centres.

Currently, the capacity of captive power generators is 4,723MW, of which 2,943MW is gas fired. The captive power plants consumed 164.27 BCF or 17.6 percent of total gas usage in the country in 2022-23.

In Bangladesh, industrial units usually produce electricity by themselves through captive power plants amid the lack of reliable and uninterrupted electricity supply from the national grid, said Prof Mohammad Tamim, dean of the chemical and materials engineering faculty at the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet).

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

Rohingya leader shot dead in Ukhiya camp

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A Rohingya community leader, locally known as "head majhi", was shot dead at a refugee camp in Ukhiya upazila of Cox's Bazar early yesterday.

The deceased Mohammad Ilias, 43, was a head majhi of Camp 4 extension. He was also an active member of the armed group Rohingya Solidarity Organisation (RSO), said police.

This murder, which allegedly took place over establishing dominance in the camp, occurred within 23 hours of the killing of Rohingya youth Syed Noor at Camp 4 early Sunday morning.

With the latest murders, a total of five Rohingyas were killed in the last eight days in Ukhiya and Teknaf camps.

Myanmar-based armed group the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) has been accused of committing the four murders in Ukhiya while the murder at Teknaf camp was allegedly committed by a gang of robbers.

Meanwhile, Rohingya refugees are becoming increasingly concerned about their safety as a result of recent murders in the camps.

Ukhiya Police Station Officer-in-Charge (OC) Shameem Hossain said some 10-15 armed assailants broke into Ilias's house and shot him dead after taking him behind a nearby NGO office.

The body of the deceased has been sent to Cox's Bazar District Sadar Hospital morgue for post-mortem.

Bangladeshi shot 'by BSF' in Benapole

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

A Bangladesh national was shot allegedly by Indian Border Security Force (BSF) along Putkhal border in Jashore's Benapole area this morning.

Amjad Ali, 32, of Krishnapur village, received injuries when BSF personnel fired at him on zero point of the border, said brother of the victim, Amir Ali.

"Amjad along with his associates went to India to bring cattle through the Putkhal border last night. The BSF troops under India's Kaliani camp opened fire while Amjad and his fellows were returning home with cows in the morning. My brother received injuries in his left leg," he added.

His associates brought him back to the Bangladesh border and then he was admitted to Jashore General Hospital, Amir added.

The injured is currently undergoing treatment at the hospital.

Border Guard Bangladesh Battalion-21 Commanding Officer Lt Col Khurshid Alam said, "I'm looking into the matter. Action will be taken after investigation."

Health, education face spending cuts

FROM PAGE 1

healthcare and human resource development and it also increases people's out-of-pocket expenditure, said the eighth five-year plan midterm review report placed before the Planning Commission in January.

The low allocation for healthcare is a "historical concern", the report said.

The health sector has been getting allocations less than 1 percent of the GDP against a recommended 3 percent of the GDP, the report said.

Low allocation has serious implications on individuals in Bangladesh, as reflected in high and increasing out-of-pocket expenses, the review said.

It said an out-of-pocket expenditure of 72 percent on healthcare is very high. In India, Bhutan, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, it is much less.

"This is also an indicator of high inequality in healthcare services and a cause of poverty and vulnerability," the review said.

Families bear 71 percent of the total education expenditure in Bangladesh, as per Unesco's Global Education Monitoring Report 2022.

The issue of financing education remains the core of the problem.

In 2023, government expenditure on education was only 1.64 percent of the GDP, whereas most upper middle-income countries spend around 5-6 percent of their GDPs on education, the review said.

If public funding cannot be managed, the government must explore innovative financing mechanisms such as public-private partnerships to mobilise additional resources for the education sector, it said.

Manzoor Ahmed, founder of BRAC University Institute of Educational Development, said the gap between prescription of the five-year plan and actual allocation shows that there is an inconsistency between planning and implementation.

He said education and healthcare should be for all, but only the well-off can afford them.

Planning Commission officials say that education and health ministries get lower allocations as the ministries cannot spend the money. Cost overruns and delays in implementing the projects are also to blame, they say.

The commission's data shows development projects in the health and education sectors had 13 percent and 27.5 percent cost overruns over the last five years.

As much as 55 percent of the health ministry projects and 34 percent of the education ministry projects had to have their deadlines extended.

Rasheda said people should not suffer for management weaknesses. Governance and capacity of implementation of the budget should be improved.

MA Mannan, chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on the planning ministry and a former planning minister, admitted that the allocations for health and education are lower than many other countries and that the budget for them should be increased.

He said budgetary constraints often do not allow greater allocations for these two sectors.

Mannan, however, said vested quarters sometimes do not allow the government to cut allocations elsewhere. "Now it is time to realign the expenditure on health and education."

62.9pc turnout in fourth phase

FROM PAGE 12

some booths in West Bengal and Odisha.

Stray violence marred the fourth phase polls in the eight parliamentary constituencies of West Bengal as TMC and BJP workers clashed in various parts of Birbhum and Bardhaman-Durgapur seats.

Clashes also broke out between supporters of TMC and BJP in Monteswar's Susunia area of Bardhaman-Durgapur Lok Sabha seat around noon, as BJP candidate Dilip Ghosh was on his way to a polling booth following complaints of booth jamming.

But despite that, the turnout in the eight constituencies of West Bengal yesterday was the highest (75.66 percent) followed by Madhya Pradesh at 68.01 percent.

Among other states, Andhra Pradesh saw 68.04 percent polling, Bihar 54.14 percent, Jharkhand 63.14 percent, Odisha 62.96 percent, Telangana 61.16 percent and Uttar Pradesh 56.35 percent.

Srinagar, the main city of troubled Kashmir Valley, also voted for the first time yesterday since Prime Minister Narendra Modi's August 2019 decision to scrap Article 370 which gave Jammu and Kashmir a special status and remove the region's semi-autonomy with a turnout of 35.75 percent.

The BJP is not contesting there, as analysts said the outcome was likely to contradict Modi's narrative of a peaceful, more integrated Kashmir.

"I voted after over two decades ... just to get relief from what we are facing here," said Bashir Ahmad Lala, 67, a Srinagar resident.

Police imposed restrictions on gatherings ahead of the vote in the militarised region, while opposition parties said their workers were arrested, which police denied.

Former Jammu and Kashmir state Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah, president of the National Conference party, said Modi and Shah "will definitely get defeated" nationally.

Asaduddin Owaisi, a prominent Muslim lawmaker from the southern city of Hyderabad, which also voted yesterday, said the BJP had fewer supporters after Modi's recent "venomous" comments against minority Muslims.

Analysts have raised doubts over whether the BJP and its allies can win the landslide predicted by opinion polls and said the lower turnout had prompted Modi to change the tack of his campaign after the first phase.

Modi has shifted focus from his economic record to accusing the Congress of planning to extend welfare benefits to Muslims at the expense of disadvantaged tribal groups and Hindu castes.

Last month, he said the Congress planned to redistribute the wealth of majority Hindus among Muslims, who he referred to as "infiltrators" who have "more children".

Congress has denied making any such promises and has said Modi is rattled by the turnout, which the BJP denies.

MPs may lose duty waiver for car imports

FROM PAGE 1

"As per the proposal, 25 percent import duty, along with other taxes, will be imposed on the vehicles imported by lawmakers," he added.

The NBR data shows that of the 572 cars imported by the MPs since 2009, at least 563 were brought from Japan. They included Toyota Land Cruisers, Range Rovers, and Mitsubishi Pajeros. Most of these cars have engine capacity above 4.5 litres.

An importer has to pay 89 to 850 percent duty on a vehicle, depending on engine capacity.

Welcoming the NBR move, Prof Mustafizur Rahman, a distinguished fellow of the Centre for Policy Dialogue, said, "It's a timely and right step."

"I don't know if such a benefit is offered anywhere else in the world."

"We saw in the past that some MPs misused the facility... They sold their imported cars and bought new cars at lower prices."

"It [the duty-free benefit] should be immediately scrapped."

According to NBR officials, the duty-free facility was first given to MPs during HM Ershad's rule in 1987

to please them and keep them loyal to the regime. A notification in this regard was issued on May 24, 1988.

Later, the BNP and the Awami League maintained this facility upon assuming power.

Many members of the eighth parliament sold their luxury cars though the law didn't permit so within three years of purchase.

In the wake of gross abuse, the provision was scrapped during the last caretaker government's tenure through an ordinance in 2007.

However, it was reintroduced by the AL government in 2009.

JnU student gets 5yrs

FROM PAGE 12

to be recorded in writing, instead of sentencing the person at once, make a probation order, that is to say, an order requiring him or her to be under the supervision of a probation officer for such period, not being less than one year or more than three years.

Judge AM Julfiker Hayet of Dhaka's Cyber Tribunal yesterday delivered the verdict in Tithy's presence at the courtroom.

During the probation, she will be allowed to stay home but her activities will be monitored by a probation officer, Mamun told the Daily Star, adding that if the officer's report on her is satisfactory, the court will reconsider her penalty.

Speaking to this correspondent on the court premises yesterday, Tithy said, "I regret the incident and I am already facing a great loss in my life... I want to go back to studying."

Her elder aunt Sheba Dasi Sarker, among others, accompanied her to the court.

"Tithy has been living with us since her sister got married. Her father has become mentally disturbed due to the incident while her husband left her because of it."

Tithy's lawyer Babulur Rahman

said, "My client [Tithy] was granted probation considering her studentship and other circumstances. She confessed, pleaded and said she would not do such a thing again.... She wants to return to her normal life."

During the trial, six prosecution witnesses testified in the case.

On October 23, 2020, screenshots of Tithy's posts and comments "hurting people's religious sentiments" went viral on Facebook.

The same day, she filed a general diary with Pallabi Police Station, claiming that her Facebook profile was hacked.

However, her posts and comments triggered protests at the university and students demanded her punishment.

Tithy was consequently suspended from her post as the office secretary of JnU Bangladesh Chhatra Odhikar Parishad that same day. She was also suspended from the university.

On October 25, 2020, her family told journalists that she "went missing" in the morning, after leaving home to go to the police station.

Two days later, her elder sister Srity Rani Sarker filed a missing person's report with Pallabi Police Station.

On November 11, 2020, police

arrested Tithy from Narsingdi's Madhabdi area and her husband Shiplu Mallik from Kaptan Bazar in Dhaka.

The next day, the Criminal Investigation Department of police said she had faked her own abduction to divert attention from the allegations against her.

"After leaving her Pallabi home on October 25, Tithy contacted Shiplu and went to Bagerhat, where they got married. They came back to Dhaka on November 9. Tithy later went to her in-laws' house in Narsingdi," Deputy Inspector General Jamil Ahmed told a press conference at the CID office in the capital's Malibagh.

On November 14, 2020, the couple was shown arrested in a case filed on November 2 by police under the Digital Security Act with Paltan Police Station.

On May 19, 2021, Investigation Officer Mehedi Hasan, also a sub-inspector of the CID, pressed charges against the two.

On November 4, 2021, the tribunal framed charges against Tithy and discharged Shiplu after scrutinising the case documents and other relevant materials.

On August 7, 2022, Tithy secured bail around 21 months of her arrest.

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Nation bids adieu to Rano

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prominent leftist leader and Marxist theorist Haider Akbar Khan Rano was laid to rest at Banani Graveyard next to his parents yesterday afternoon.

He was buried around 3:00pm, his niece, Ananya Laboni told The Daily Star.

His namaz-e-jaanaza was held at Dhaka University Central Mosque after Zohr prayers, around 1:30 pm.

Earlier in the day, he was given a guard of honour at Central Shaheed Minar in Dhaka, around 11:20 am.

People from all walks of life paid homage to Rano as his body was taken to Shaheed Minar around 11:15am.

Renowned academicians, theatre personalities, and artists paid rich tributes.

Dhaka University Professor Emeritus Serajul Islam Choudhury and theatre personalities Ramendu Majumdar and Mamunur Rashid were among them.

Prof Sejarul said, "We cannot define Rano in a word. Rano's lifelong pursuit was to fight for the liberation of the people. He [Rano] was engaged in that war until his death. He left the world fighting."

An Awami League delegation team, led by AL Joint General Secretary Mahubul Alam Hanif along with AL Presidium member Shahjahan Khan, AL Liberation War Affairs Secretary Mrinal Kanti Das, State Minister for Shipping Khalid

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



A guard of honour being given to veteran leftist leader Haider Akbar Khan Rano at Central Shaheed Minar in Dhaka yesterday morning. He breathed his last on May 11. He was laid to rest at Banani Graveyard next to his parents at 3:00pm in a peaceful burial ceremony.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

All pending hajj visa applications to be expedited

Saudi envoy tells PM

UNB, Dhaka

Saudi Ambassador Essa Yousef Essa Alduhailan yesterday assured that he will take steps to clear all pending hajj visa applications from Bangladesh.

The ambassador made the assurance during a meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her official residence Gono Bhaban, according to PM's speech writer M Nazrul Islam.

This year more than 83,000 Bangladeshis are scheduled to perform hajj. According to a report, more than 10,000 of them are yet to get visas due to some complications.

The prime minister requested the envoy to extend the visa approval time so all the aspirants can go to Saudi Arabia to perform hajj.

The Saudi envoy conveyed to the PM the interest of his country's investors and companies to make investments in some projects in Bangladesh. He also handed a list of those projects to the prime minister.

Hasina said her government will take steps following scrutiny of the proposals.

On the Palestine issue, the prime minister said Bangladesh is preparing another consignment of assistance for

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Development not possible without India tie: minister

BSS, Dhaka

Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud yesterday said

Bangladesh's development is not possible without good relations with India as both the countries share common border of several thousand kilometres.

He said this while talking to reporters at the foreign ministry in Dhaka.

The minister said it is not possible to maintain peace and stability in Bangladesh without good relations with the neighbour.

Hasan made the remarks while responding to a question regarding BNP's programme on boycott of the Indian products.

"Their efforts [call for boycotting Indian products] went unsuccessful. They know it, too. It will be refused by the people of the country again if BNP comes up with

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Make gender budget transparent: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a press conference yesterday urged the government to ensure the effective allocation, implementation, and evaluation of the gender budget designated for women's empowerment in the 2024-25 national budget.

They also highlighted that despite the increased allocation, doubt persists regarding whether the budget formulation and implementation processes effectively promote gender equality.

Titled "National Budget 2024-2025: Expectations from Women's Society," the press conference was organised by Bangladesh Nari Pragati Sangha at the Tofazzal Hossain Auditorium of Jatiya Press Club.

Dr Sayema Haque Bidisha, professor of economics at Dhaka University, said, "Gender-sensitive programmes of ministries often receive disproportionately low budgetary allocations and are not frequently aligned with the strategic objectives of women's development policies."

She advised that annual progress reports on gender budget

activities should be ensured for accountability and effectiveness.

Dr Sharmin Neelormi, professor of economics at Jahangirnagar University, noted that although the government budgets are gender-friendly, there is a lack of significant review or survey on actual progress.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ Annual reports on gender budget activities
- ▶ Collateral-free loan for women
- ▶ Making gender budget focal points accessible
- ▶ Sharing dev policy with public annually

Rokeya Kabir, executive director of BNPS, stressed the need for equitable resource distribution, stating, "With women constituting half of the population, it's imperative to ensure resource flows in an equitable and effective manner towards the vast majority of those who are resourceless, powerless,

have limited income opportunities and are dependent."

She urged for policies that will provide loans to women without collateral.

Speakers also called for ministries concerned to improve their understanding of gender budgeting, integrate gender perspectives into planning and service delivery, and enhance transparency by making information about gender budget focal points easily accessible on their respective websites.

They also demanded quantitative and qualitative analysis to determine the extent to which the strategies for women empowerment meet gender needs and progress.

Additionally, they called for progress reports on how gender budget activities align with the action plan of women's empowerment and national women's development policy to be presented to the public annually.

They emphasised the need for the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs, as the lead ministry, to enhance conceptual and monitoring capacity on gender budgeting.

Atiqul vows to go tough on grabbers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In the final year of his five-year tenure, Dhaka North City Corporation Mayor Atiqul Islam wants to prioritise working for the newly-added 18 wards.

"In my last year of this term, the newly-added 18 wards will be my priority. We have a master plan for those wards, and the first phase of work is ongoing," he said.

Mayor Atiq made the remarks at a press conference on the occasion of fourth anniversary of the DNCC mayor and councillors at Gulshan Nagar Bhaban yesterday.

He said the waste management department is managing the Amin Bazar landfill by collecting and transporting an average of 3,500 tonnes of waste every day.

He said the drive against illegal occupation of canals in Dhaka city will continue.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

DEATH IN ROAD CRASH HC directs Rab to arrest those responsible

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the Rapid Action Battalion to immediately arrest the accused persons responsible for a road accident in Mymensingh in which Zayed Akhter died and her one-year-old son got severely injured.

The bench of Justice Md Rezaul Hasan and Justice Fahmida Quader passed the order following a petition filed by Supreme Court lawyer Manzill Murshid on behalf of Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

3RD PHASE UZ POLLS 130 withdraw candidacy

UNB, Dhaka

A total of 130 candidates have withdrawn their candidacy from the third phase of Upazila Parishad elections scheduled to be held on May 29, the Election Commission said yesterday.

Md Shariful Alam, director (public relations) of the EC, also said due to the withdrawal of candidacy, six aspirants will be elected unopposed.

Of those who have withdrawn candidature, 73 are chairman candidates, 43 vice-chairman

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DONALD LU'S VISIT

It is not
important
to BNP
Says Nazrul Islam

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Donald Lu's Dhaka visit is not important to BNP, said the party's Standing Committee Member Nazrul Islam Khan.

"We are more concerned about the situation in the country," he said while responding to journalists' questions after a meeting of the BNP's Liaison Committee at the party chairperson's Gulshan office yesterday.

He said the people of the country have always solved their own problems.

"We thank those who want to

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Outside
patronage
can't help BNP
Says Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader said patronage from outside the country cannot make BNP active now.

"He [Donald Lu] is coming; we don't know if they have any intentions, but someone will come to our country and patronise BNP to strengthen the party again. However, I think the situation is not favourable for them in the context of global politics," said Quader.

The dominance of those who would patronise BNP has been reduced in the Middle East and there is no reason to think that it will

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



Officials from Keeron Limited, an upskilling platform, and IDP Education Bangladesh Private Limited, a global leader in international education services and a co-owner of IELTS, signed a memorandum of understanding at the capital's The Daily Star Centre on May 12. The initiative aims to enrich educational opportunities for students in Bangladesh.

PHOTO: STAR

Keeron, IDP join hands to uplift education

CITY DESK

Keeron Limited, an upskilling platform, and IDP Education Bangladesh Private Limited, a global leader in international education services and a co-owner of IELTS, have forged an alliance through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enrich educational opportunities for students in Bangladesh.

The signing ceremony was held at the capital's The Daily Star Centre on May 12, said a press release.

This partnership aims to harness the expertise and resources of both Keeron and IDP to meet the evolving needs of students and educational institutions in Bangladesh.

Through this collaboration, Keeron subscribers will benefit

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Outside

FROM PAGE 3

expand here, he also said. He was speaking at a press conference at the AL president's Dhanmondi political office in the capital.

He said US Assistant Secretary of State Donald Lu is coming to Bangladesh to further the relationship between the two countries.

"We will see the implementation of what US President Joe Biden wrote in the letter sent to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina," added Quader.

Quader said, "We are not thinking about who is coming here. Israel does not listen to their [US] president. Why would we, who are the government elected by the people's votes, have anything to fear?"

Asked whether the absence of BNP in elections and politics is harmful to democracy, he said, "We have not prevented BNP from coming to the polls in any way. They will have to pay for the big mistake they made by not coming to the polls."

130 withdraw

FROM PAGE 3

candidates and 14 vice-chairman candidates for posts reserved for women, he said.

Six candidates who will be elected unopposed are Pirojpur's Bhandaria upazila candidates in all three posts, Shariatpur's Gosaitat upazila vice-chairman candidate and candidates of Feni's Sonagazi and Daganbhuiyan upazila vice-chairman posts reserved for women, he added.

In the third phase of the elections, 570 candidates submitted nomination papers for chairman post, 618 for the vice-chairman post and 400 for the vice-chairman post reserved for women.

According to the EC schedule, the third phase upazila election will be held in 112 upazilas on May 29, while second phase will be held in 160 upazilas on May 21.



A truck remains stuck on Sakhipur-Sagardighi Road in Tangail after hitting a submerged pothole yesterday. The road has been in a dilapidated condition for a long time due to heavy traffic and lack of maintenance.

PHOTO: STAR

HC directs Rab to arrest those

FROM PAGE 3

Zayed Akhter, 32, died in an accident in the Square Master Bari Ideal Mor area on the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway, Manzill Murshid told reporters.

The accident reportedly took place around 1:00pm on May 10 and she died in the hospital the next morning.

Her one-year-old son, who was with deceased

Zayed, was also injured, and he is undergoing treatment in the hospital, he said.

The HC bench also ordered the superintendent of police of Mymensingh and officer-in-charge of its Valuka police station to investigate the case filed in connection with this incident and to identify and arrest the persons and vehicle responsible.

The court asked them to submit a report on May 20. It ordered the deputy inspector general of police in the area to supervise the case proceedings.

The director general of RAB has been directed to take quick steps to arrest the accused.

The authorities concerned have been asked to temporarily hand over the child to his maternal uncle for care and custody.

Nation bids adieu to Rano

FROM PAGE 3

Mahmud Chowdhury, and AL Cultural Affairs Secretary Ashim Kumar Ukil, paid tribute to Rano on behalf of AL.

Hanif said Rano was a great leader, and his contribution to the country's politics is undeniable. With his passing, a void has been created in the country's politics, he said.

A BNP delegation team, consisting of its Secretary-General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, vice-chairman Barkat Ullah Bulu, Dhaka South City Convenor Abdus Salam, and Chairperson Khaleda Zia's special assistant Shamsur Rahman Shimul Biswas, paid homage on behalf of the party.

Fakhru said Rano was firm in his ideology until his last breath. Rano was one of the organisers of the Liberation War. Unfortunately, his dream of a developed country remained unfulfilled.

Later, other political and left-leaning parties, their student bodies, and socio-cultural organisations also paid their tributes to the veteran leader.

A mourning rally was held later, during which his daughter Rana Sultana, niece Ananya Laboni, CPB central committee member Mujahidul Islam Selim, its president Shah Alam, and general secretary Ruhin Hossain Prince spoke.

Before taking the body to Shaheed Minar, his body was taken to the office of Communist Party of Bangladesh at around 10:00 am, where party leaders and workers paid tributes.

Rano, 81, an adviser to the CPB, had been suffering from chronic lung disease for several years. He was admitted to Health and Hope Hospital in the capital on May 6. He breathed his last at the hospital early Saturday.

Rano has left behind a daughter and two grandchildren.

In 2010, he switched from the Workers Party of Bangladesh to the CPB over disagreements with party leaders. By 2012, he had risen to become a presidium member of the CPB, later transitioning to an adviser role in 2022.

It is not

FROM PAGE 3

support the legitimate movement of the people. And we condemn anyone who opposes it," he said.

Nazrul said BNP is in discussions with like minded parties that are part of the movement to restore democracy in the country.

"Neither the BNP nor our alliance believes in violent movements. The government engages in violence and has blamed us for it in the past," he added.

Atiqul vows

FROM PAGE 3

Regarding dengue, he said, "We cannot control Aedes mosquito population without raising awareness. This year, we are providing Tk 50,000 to every councillor monthly for conducting mosquito control drives. Besides, DNCC is buying discarded waste to put an end to Aedes breeding."

DNCC will import BTI directly from the mother company this year, he added.

The mayor also said, "We have broadened the range of online services. Holding taxes and granting commercial licences are done electronically. Cashless transactions have been implemented at Gulshan-1 and Taltola markets. We've also introduced smart parking."

Development

FROM PAGE 3

the agenda afresh," he said.

The AL leader said there are Indian products in many of their (BNP leaders) houses.

The main aim of BNP's boycotting Indian products campaign was to create a crisis in the domestic market to create instability in the country's economy, he said.

A disappearing

FROM PAGE 5

after stealing them from the forest. At least 25 cases have been filed in the last two years in this connection.

Shafiqul Islam, divisional forest officer in Patuakhali, said, "At present, only 1,300 acres of the once 3,387-acre forest area now remain while the rest have been lost to the sea. Over the years, around 10,000 trees of different species have disappeared from the forest."

Due to climate change and the rise in sea level, higher tidal water and sand accumulation in the forest area have been causing the trees to die, he said.

"A project aimed at mass forestation in the Kuakata area will begin soon," he added.

Trauma centre yet

FROM PAGE 5

After completion of the construction work in 2013 at a cost of Tk 3.18 crore, it took the Public Works Department nine years to hand over the facility to Habiganj health department as the building did not have utility connections.

In 2022, after addressing the infrastructural issues with an additional expenditure of around Tk 25 lakh, the trauma centre was officially handed over to the health department on February 2, and later inaugurated on June 11, in 2023.

However, since then, the centre still remains out of service due to a shortage of doctors, manpower, and essential equipment.

"About 82 km stretch of Dhaka-Sylhet highway lies within Habiganj district, between Madhabpur and Nabiganj upazilas. Many accidents occur on the highway, but the victims cannot be taken to the trauma centre for immediate treatment as it remains inactive," said Tofazzal Sohel, coordinator of Habiganj Sonkhubdo Nagorik Andolon.

Babul Kumar Das,

health and planning officer of Bahubal upazila, said, "A letter was sent to the Directorate General of Health Services through the Habiganj civil surgeon's office regarding appointment of required manpower."

Dr Md Nurul Haque, civil surgeon of Habiganj, said the process to appoint doctors and other necessary manpower, and installing equipment for the trauma centre is yet to be completed.

Keeron, IDP

FROM PAGE 3

from various promotional offers and access to special sessions on IELTS and studying abroad.

Key attendees at the signing ceremony included Md Tajdin Hassan (COO), Mizanur Rahman (CFO), and Arafat Hossain (Head of Marketing) from Keeron Limited, and Razib Mahbubul (Country Director), Muhammad Momenur Rahman (Assistant Business Development Manager) and Elora Shahab Sharmee (IELTS Operations Manager) from IDP Bangladesh.

All pending

FROM PAGE 3

the Palestinian people in addition to two previously sent shipments.

"The whole world is behind the Palestine except the US and a few of its allies," she said.

The Saudi ambassador mentioned that there are some 32 lakh Bangladeshis in Saudi Arabia who are contributing to the economies of both Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia.

The PM requested the ambassador to take steps that would encourage Bangladeshi expatriates in Saudi Arabia to send their remittances home through legal channels.

PRAYER TIMING

MAY 14

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

ফ্ল্যাট বিক্রয়

ধানমন্ডি ৭/এ, ২২১০ বর্গফুটের নতুন ফ্ল্যাট বিক্রয় হবে।
কিয়ারিত: ০১৯১৫-৭৯০৪১১

brac

Invitation for Tender (IFT)
For Online X-ray Report

Project Name	An Integrated Tuberculosis Care and Prevention for Enhancing Case Findings Health System Strengthening and Sustainability	
Tender Name	Online X-ray Report	
Tender Package No.	BPD/2024/IFT-1011 (Online X-ray Report)	
Reference No.	BPD/2024/IFT-1011	
Source of Fund	The Global Fund	
Name of Tender	Procurement of Online X-ray Report	
Time of Delivery	As Per Tender Schedule	
Price of Tender Schedule (Non-Refundable)	BPD/2024/IFT-1011 (Online X-ray Report)	BDT 1,000.00

Tender schedule fee to be paid through Bkash including cash out charge. (Bkash No.-01719262589-personal), must share company name & Tender Ref. in Bkash Ref.

Tender Security	As Per Tender Schedule	
Documents Availability on e-tender platform & Tender Dropping (Online), Date & Time	https://tender.brac.net (Go to live tender from the dashboard after entering the above URL and search for the Tender Ref. No.) BPD/2024/IFT-1011 15-05-2024 to 29-05-2024, 2:30 pm	
Tender Opening Place, Date & Time (Online Opening)	BPD/2024/IFT-1011	29-05-2024, 3:00 pm through Google meet, link: https://meet.google.com/xau-ydam-oag

BRAC Centre, 75, Mohakhali, Dhaka- 1212
Phone: 02222281265-72, Ext No 5473 or Mob: 01740284030

RE-INVITATION FOR INTERNATIONAL TENDER (RE-IFIT)

1	Procuring Entity Name	IsDB-BISEW
2	Invitation for	Procurement of Power Substation and Diesel Generators including other Electrical Works
3	Invitation Ref. No.	IsDB-BISEW/Tender-IDB Bhaban-2/TP-03
4	Publication Date	14 May 2024
KEY INFORMATION		
5	Procurement Method	Competitive Tendering among eligible Tenderers: One Stage Two Envelope Tendering Method (OSTETM) under Least Cost Basis (LCB).
FUNDING INFORMATION		
6	Source of Funds	IsDB-BISEW and Government of Bangladesh
PARTICULAR INFORMATION		
7	Project Name	Construction of IDB Bhaban-2 comprising of Multi-Storied Twin Tower and 4-Storied Multi-Purpose Business Center with Common 3-Level Basement at Agargaon Administrative Area, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka, Bangladesh.
8	Tender Package No.	Tender-IDB Bhaban-2/TP-03
9	Tender Package Name	Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of Power Substation and Diesel Generators including other Electrical Works.
10	Last Date of Issuing Tender Documents	26 May 2024 up to 3:00PM
11	Date & Time of Pre-bid Meeting	5 June 2024 at 11:00AM
12	Place of Pre-bid Meeting	Office of the Chief Executive Officer, IsDB-BISEW, IDB Bhaban (4th Floor), E/8-A, Rokeya Sharani, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207, Bangladesh.
13	Last Date & Time of Tender Submission	30 June 2024 up to 12:00 Noon
14	Opening of Technical Offer of Tender (Date, Time & Place)	30 June 2024 at 12:30 PM at the Office of the Chief Executive Officer, IsDB-BISEW, IDB Bhaban (4th Floor), E/8-A, Rokeya Sharani, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207, Bangladesh. Intending Tenderers or their Authorized Representatives may remain present during opening of Technical Offer.
15	Name and Address of the Office Selling Tender Documents	Office of the Chief Executive Officer, IsDB-BISEW, IDB Bhaban (4th Floor), E/8-A, Rokeya Sharani, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207, Bangladesh.
16	Name and Address of the Office for Receiving Tender	Office of the Chief Executive Officer, IsDB-BISEW, IDB Bhaban (4th Floor), E/8-A, Rokeya Sharani, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207, Bangladesh.
17	Brief Description of Works	Lot-1: Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Power Substation and other Electrical Works comprising of supply, installation, testing & commissioning of 11/0.415KV, 50Hz Power Substation having Cast Resin Transformer (CRT), 11KV AVR, HT Incomer & Outgoing Feeders, LT & ELT switchgears, PFI Plant, BBT system, Solar Power System, Distribution Boards and Light Fittings. Lot-2: Diesel Generators sets with ATS & Synchronizing Panel.
18	Price of Re-Tender Document & Issuance of Re-Tender Documents	Issuance of Re-Tender Documents: i. New Tenderers intending to obtain Re-Tender Documents shall have to apply along with a Non-refundable Pay Order/ Bank Draft for an amount of BDT 100,000 (One Lac) or equivalent in USD in favour of IsDB-BISEW (IDB Bhaban-2). ii. Tenderers who purchased Tender Documents against earlier Advertisement dated 28 February 2024, during Original Tender may obtain Re-Tender Documents Free of Cost upon submission of Copy of the Money Receipt of the Previous Purchase of Original Tender Documents along with their Application.
19	Tender Security Amount	Lump Sum BDT 5.00 (five) million or in equivalent USD in the form of Pay Order/Irrevocable Bank Guarantee from any Scheduled Bank of Bangladesh in favour of IsDB-BISEW (IDB Bhaban-2). The Tender Security furnished by a Foreign Bank must be counter guaranteed by a Scheduled Bank of Bangladesh.
20	Experience Criteria of Tenderer	a) General Experience: i. Lone Local Tenderer/Lead Firm (Foreign)/Lead Firm (Local) of Joint Venture (JV) must be a bonafide Contractor having minimum 10 (ten) years of experience in supplying and installation of Power Substation; preferably with BBT system and Diesel Generators including ATS and Synchronizing Panel. ii. The Joint Venture Local Partner (Limited to 1 number only) having minimum 5 (five) years of general experience in Installation, Testing & Commissioning of Power Substation; preferably with BBT system, Diesel Generators including ATS and Synchronizing Panel.
21	Financial Criteria of Tenderer	b) Specific Experience for Lot-1: i. Lone Local Tenderer / Local Lead Firm of JV must have successfully completed minimum 1(one) work of supply, installation, testing & commissioning of minimum 1500KVA, 11/0.415KV, 50Hz Substation with BBT system completed in Commercial/Industrial Building in last 7(seven) years prior to the date of Publication of Re-IFIT in Newspapers/ Website. ii. Foreign Lead Firm of the JV must have completed 2(two) Nos. works of supply, installation, testing & commissioning of minimum 2500KVA, 11/0.415KV, 50Hz, CRT with BBT system; 2(two) Nos. 630KVA Diesel Generators including ATS & Synchronizing Panel etc. for high rise Commercial building projects in last 3(three) years prior to the date of Publication of Re-IFIT in Newspapers/ Website. iii. The other Partner of the JV (Limited to 1 number only) having successfully completed at least 1(one) work of supply, installation, testing & commissioning of 1500KVA, 11/0.415KV, 50Hz, Sub-station with BBT system in Commercial/Industrial Building in last 7 (seven) years prior to the date of Publication of Re-IFIT in Newspapers/Website c) Specific Experience for Lot-2: Lone Local Tenderer / Local Lead Firm of JV must have successfully completed minimum 1(one) work of supply, installation, testing & commissioning of minimum 500KVA Diesel Generators including ATS and Synchronizing Panel . d) Foreign Joint Venture (JV) may be formed between 2(two) Firms only of which the Lead Firm shall be Foreign Firm and the JV Partner shall be a Bangladeshi Firm or Joint Venture (JV) of two local Bangladeshi Firms may be formed of which one must be designated as Lead Firm. a) Minimum Average Annual Turnover: i) Lone Local Tenderer / Lead Firm of Local JV must have minimum Average Annual Turnover only for Power Substation with BBT and Generators including ATS & Synchronizing Panel works of BDT 150 (one hundred fifty) Million in last 5(five) years. ii) Foreign Lead Firm of the JV must have minimum Average Annual Turnover only for Power Substation with BBT and Generators including ATS & Synchronizing Panel works of USD 5(five) Million in last 5(five) years. iii) The JV Partner of a JV Tenderer shall have minimum Average Annual Turnover only for Power Substation with BBT and Generators including ATS & Synchronizing Panel works of BDT 100 (one hundred) Million in last 5(five) years. b) Liquid Asset/ Working Capital/ Credit Limit: i) Lone Local Tenderer / Foreign Lead / Local Lead Firm of the JV must have a Liquid Asset/ Working Capital/ Credit Limit for an amount of BDT 100 (one hundred) Million or Equivalent in USD for this particular project. ii) The JV Partner of a JV Tenderer must have a Liquid Asset/ Working Capital/ Credit Limit for an amount of BDT 50 (fifty) Million for this particular project.
22	Name, Designation, Address & Contact Details of Official Inviting Tender	Neaz Khan Chief Executive Officer IsDB-BISEW, IDB Bhaban (4th Floor), E/8-A, Rokeya Sharani, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka, Bangladesh. Tele phone No. +88029183006; Fax No. +88029183001-2, e-mail: tender@isdb-bisew.org Website: www.isdb-bisew.org
23	Any further changes/up-date/modifications regarding this Tender	Shall be available in the official Website of IsDB-BISEW (www.isdb-bisew.org) in the form of Corrigendum and Addendum. Link for Tender information: www.isdb-bisew.org/tender
24	Special Instructions and Conditions:	a. The Tender package is divided into 2 (two) Lots, of which, submission of offer for Lot-1 is mandatory. b. If the Government declares holiday on the opening day of Tender, Tender shall be received and Technical Offer shall be opened at the same time on the next working day. c. Applicants without having the requisite experience and qualification need not apply for issuance of Tender Document. d. This Invitation for Re-Tender can be seen in the Website of IsDB-BISEW. e. The Procuring Entity reserves the right to accept or reject all Tenders or annul the Tender proceedings without assigning any reason(s) whatsoever.



Neaz Khan
Chief Executive Officer
Islamic Development Bank-Bangladesh Islamic Solidarity Educational Wakf (IsDB-BISEW)
IDB Bhaban (4th Floor), E/8-A, Rokeya Sharani, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka
Phone No.: +88029183006, Fax No.: + 88029183001
Website: www.isdb-bisew.org, Email: tender@isdb-bisew.org

Three killed in road crashes

STAR REPORT

At least three people were killed in road accidents across the country yesterday. In Thakurgaon, a motorcyclist was killed when a truck hit his bike on Thakurgaon-Gorea road in Salondor Madrasa area.

The identity of the deceased could not be known immediately, said police.

Officer in Charge of Thakurgaon Police Station BM Firoz Waheed said the truck's driver and its staffers fled the scene with their vehicle.

Meanwhile, in Gopalganj, one person was killed and two others were injured in a road accident on the Dhaka-Khulna Highway in College Mor area under Muksudpur upazila yesterday.

The deceased is Sher Ali Khan, 45, of Rupnagar Residential area of Mirpur-2 in Dhaka.

OC Md Arshaful Alam of Muksudpur Police Station said the accident took place when a Naril Express bus collided with a private car.

Police seized the bus, but the driver had fled.

In Faridpur, a man was killed after a truck hit his bike at Kapuriya Sodordi train line underpass area.

The deceased is Nishat Sikdar, 28, of Kapuriya Sodordi area, said SI Abdullah Hel Baki of Bhanga Highway Police Station.

A disappearing forest

Trees on Kuakata beach dying in hundreds owing to climate change

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

At a time when efforts to combat climate change repercussions have intensified through forest conservation and extensive tree plantations, thousands of trees, across different species, are succumbing to adverse effects of climate change in the reserve forest area of Kuakata sea beach in Patuakhali district.

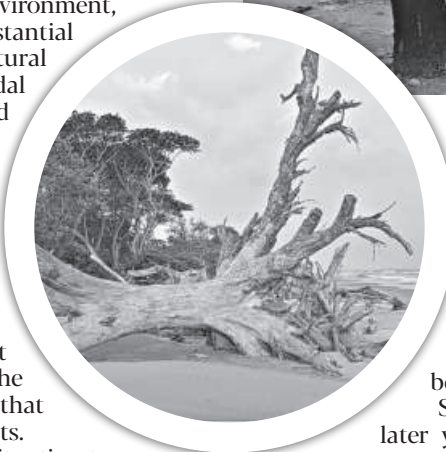
Alongside illegal tree felling by locals, the forest area is also shrinking gradually due to the trees dying in thousands, causing a further impact on the environment, and raising risk of substantial damage from natural calamities, including tidal surges, cyclones, and floods.

According to the Forest Department in Patuakhali, at least 10,000 trees die annually, mostly Kewra and Akashmani, across 20 acres of the forest area adjacent to the beach, due to the accumulation of sand that gets stuck to the tree roots.

They attributed this situation to climate change.

What was once a vast forest cover adjacent to the 18-kilometre-long beach, has lost around 2,000 acres of its area to the sea over the last 17 years since Cyclone Sidr in 2007.

Patuakhali Forest Department built an eco-park at a cost of Tk 2.76 crore across 13,984 hectares of forest area along Gangamati, Latachopoli, Khajura, and Fatra points on the beach in the 2005-2006 fiscal year. They also planted 42,000 trees of different species.



It had picnic spots, wooden bridges, culverts, and earthen roads. However, just around a year later, Cyclone Sidr destroyed many trees in the park, leaving behind a trail of devastation along the beach.

Subsequent calamities in later years, including cyclones Aila, Mahasan, and Amphan, further deteriorated the situation.

Around 2,00,000 trees, including coconut and palm trees that once adorned the forest, have disappeared during this time, as per the forest department data.

According to locals and forest officials, after Cyclone Sidr, the tidal water has risen significantly higher than before, flooding the forest area and causing sand accumulation.

"The trees on the beach saved our lives and properties during the cyclones. These

trees began dying after Cyclone Sidr. As the number of trees is decreasing, our risk from calamities is growing," said Abul Hossain, a local fisherman.

Yunus Gazi, another local, said, "A section of people are felling the dead trees for wood while others are collecting the smaller logs and branches for firewood."

Rumman Imtiaz Tushar, president of Kuakata Tour Operators' Association, said, "The forest area and eco-park along the seashore had enhanced the beauty of Kuakata beach to a great extent. However, continuous erosion due to tidal water damaged the forest significantly over the years, and as such, the beach is also losing its natural beauty."

According to the Mohipur Range Office of the forest department, around 10,000 Akashmani trees were planted in 2008-09 in the Gangamati area, but those started dying as the roots got covered by sand brought in by tidal water.

A local gang sold many of those dead trees

BAHUBAL UPAZILA Trauma centre yet to open after 11 years

MINTU DESHWARA

Saddam and Sunil, two youths, suffered critical injuries in a motorcycle accident in Rashidpur area of Habiganj's Bahubal upazila recently.

By the time they were taken to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital, about 90 kilometers away, one of them succumbed to his injuries.

But there is a trauma centre in Bahubal upazila, barely three minutes away from the accident site. However, even though it was established about 11 years back to provide medical treatment to accident victims, it is yet to begin its services due to lack of necessary equipment and manpower.

Mizanur Rahman, a shopkeeper next to the trauma centre, said accidents often happen on the Dhaka-Sylhet highway, but the victims cannot be taken to the centre for immediate medical attention as it is yet to commence its services.

The 10-bed trauma centre inside Bahubal upazila health complex was constructed under the Physical Development Project in 2010 to provide better and faster treatment to accident victims on the 82-kilometre stretch of Dhaka-Sylhet highway.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
তুলা উন্নয়ন বোর্ড
কৃষিই সমৃদ্ধি
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তুলা উন্নয়ন বোর্ড (সিডিবি)'র নিম্নবর্ণিত ৬ (ছয়) ক্যাটাগরি পদের লিখিত পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ প্রার্থীদের মৌখিক পরীক্ষা নিয়ে উল্লিখিত তারিখ ও সময়সূচি অনুযায়ী নির্বাহী পরিচালকের কার্যালয়, তুলা উন্নয়ন বোর্ড, তুলা ভবন, কৃষি খামার সড়ক, ফার্মগেট, ঢাকায় অনুষ্ঠিত হবে।

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
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জেলা সমাজসেবা কার্যালয়, ঠাকুরগাঁও
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দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি
১ মন্ত্রণালয়/ বিভাগ : সমাজকল্যাণ মন্ত্রণালয়
২ এজেন্সি : সমাজসেবা অধিদফতর, ঢাকা।
৩ সংগ্রাহক সবার নাম : উপতত্ত্বাবধায়ক, সরকারি শিশু পরিবার (বালিকা), ঠাকুরগাঁও
উপতত্ত্বাবধায়ক, শব্দলহাট ফজিলাতুননেছা সরকারি শিশু পরিবার (বালক), ঠাকুরগাঁও
রিমোর্সে শিক্ষক, সমন্বিত দৃষ্টি প্রতিবন্ধী শিক্ষা কার্যক্রম, ঠাকুরগাঁও
৪ সংগ্রাহক সবার জেলা : ঠাকুরগাঁও
৫ যে কাজের দরপত্র : ২০২৪-২০২৫ অর্থ বছরে সমাজসেবা অধিদফতর পরিচালিত সরকারি শিশু পরিবার (বালিকা), ও শব্দলহাট ফজিলাতুননেছা সরকারি শিশু পরিবার (বালক) এবং সমন্বিত দৃষ্টি প্রতিবন্ধী শিক্ষা কার্যক্রম, ঠাকুরগাঁও এর নিবাসীদের ক, খ, ঘ ও গ গুণ বিবিধ মালামাল সরবরাহ।
৬ দরপত্র নম্বর ও তারিখ : নম্বর: ৪১.০১.১৪০০.০০০.১৮.০০৮.২৪.৭১০ তারিখ: ১৩/০৫/২০২৪ খ্রি:
৭ দরপত্র প্রচারের তারিখ : ১৩/০৫/২০২৪ খ্রি:
৮ সংগ্রহ পদ্ধতি : উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (ও টি এম)
৯ বাজেট এবং তহবিল উৎস : রাজস্ব বাজেট (জি ও বি)
১০ দরপত্রের প্যাকেজ নং : ক-২ টি, খ- ২টি, ঘ-১ টি ও গ-৩ টি = মোট ৮ (আট) টি।
১১ দরপত্রের প্যাকেজ নাম : ২০২৪-২০২৫ অর্থ বছরে সমাজসেবা অধিদফতর পরিচালিত সরকারি শিশু পরিবার (বালিকা), ঠাকুরগাঁও ও শব্দলহাট ফজিলাতুননেছা সরকারি শিশু পরিবার (বালক), ঠাকুরগাঁও এবং সমন্বিত দৃষ্টি প্রতিবন্ধী শিক্ষা কার্যক্রম, ঠাকুরগাঁও এর নিবাসীদের ক, খ, ঘ ও গ গুণ বিবিধ মালামাল সরবরাহ।
১২ দরপত্র সিডিবি বিক্রির শেষ তারিখ : ২৯/০৫/২০২৪ খ্রি: অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত।
০২/০৭/২০২৪ খ্রি: অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত। (১ম পুন: দরপত্র প্রয়োজন হলে)
৩০/০৭/২০২৪ খ্রি: অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত। (২য় পুন: দরপত্র প্রয়োজন হলে)
১৩ দরপত্র দাখিলের তারিখ ও সময় : ৩০/০৫/২০২৪ খ্রি: সকাল ১০:০০ টা হতে দুপুর ১২:০০ টা পর্যন্ত।
৩০/০৭/২০২৪ খ্রি: সকাল ১০:০০ টা হতে দুপুর ১২:০০ টা পর্যন্ত। (১ম পুন: দরপত্র প্রয়োজন হলে)
৩১/০৭/২০২৪ খ্রি: সকাল ১০:০০ টা হতে দুপুর ১২:০০ টা পর্যন্ত। (২য় পুন: দরপত্র প্রয়োজন হলে)
১৪ দরপত্র উন্মুক্তকরণের তারিখ ও সময় : ৩০/০৫/২০২৪ খ্রি: দুপুর ১২:৩০ ঘটিকা
৩০/০৭/২০২৪ খ্রি: দুপুর ১২:৩০ ঘটিকা (১ম পুন: দরপত্র প্রয়োজন হলে)
৩১/০৭/২০২৪ খ্রি: দুপুর ১২:৩০ ঘটিকা (২য় পুন: দরপত্র প্রয়োজন হলে)
দরপত্র বা তার মনোনীত প্রতিনিধির উপস্থিতিতে খোলা হবে যদি কেহ উপস্থিত থাকেন।
১৫ কার্যালয়ের নাম ও ঠিকানা : সংশ্লিষ্ট প্রতিষ্ঠান ও জেলা সমাজসেবা কার্যালয়, ঠাকুরগাঁও।
জেলা সমাজসেবা কার্যালয়, ঠাকুরগাঁও এবং জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, ঠাকুরগাঁও।
জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, ঠাকুরগাঁও।
১৬ দরপত্রের ব্যয়গত : (১) সংশ্লিষ্ট কাজের বৈধ সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান।
(২) সিডিবি ক্রয়ের টেন্ডার চালাবার মূল্যকপি, দরপত্র দাখিল অনুসারে অভিজ্ঞতার সনদপত্র, ব্যাংক স্বাক্ষরতার সনদ (ব্যাংক স্টেটম্যানসহ), হালনাগাদ ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, আয়কর সনদ এবং ভাট প্রদান সনদ। প্রয়োজনীয় অন্যান্য দলিলসমূহ (টেন্ডার ডকুমেন্টে উল্লেখিত) দাখিল করতে হবে।
১৭ দরপত্র সিডিবির মূল্য : টেন্ডার চালাবার এর মাধ্যমে কোড: ১১-২৯৩১-০০০০-২৩৬৬ তে (অফেরতযোগ্য) জমা দিতে হবে।
গুণ সংক্ষিপ্ত বিবরণ সিডিবি মূল্য দরপত্র জামানতের পরিমাণ মন্তব্য
ক খাদ্য ও খাদ্যানুষ্কাশিক (গমনশীল ও অপচনশীল) ১০০০/- (এক হাজার) টাকা ৮৬০০০/- (ছিয়াশি হাজার) টাকা শিশু পরিবারের জন্য
খ শিক্ষা, স্বাস্থ্য, প্রশাসনিক ও অন্যান্য ৫০০/- (পাঁচশত) টাকা ৩০০০০/- (ত্রিশ হাজার) টাকা শিশু পরিবারের জন্য
ঘ খাদ্য ও খাদ্যানুষ্কাশিক (গমনশীল ও অপচনশীল) ৫০০/- (পাঁচশত) টাকা ১৪০০০/- (চৌদ্দ হাজার) টাকা সমন্বিত দৃষ্টি প্রতিবন্ধী শিক্ষা কার্যক্রম এর জন্য
গ বিবিধ মালামাল (শিশু পরিবার) ৫০০/- (পাঁচশত) টাকা ৩০০০০/- (ত্রিশ হাজার) টাকা শিশু পরিবারের জন্য
ঙ বিবিধ মালামাল (সমন্বিত দৃষ্টি) ৫০০/- (পাঁচশত) টাকা ৬০০০/- (ছয় হাজার) টাকা সমন্বিত দৃষ্টি প্রতিবন্ধী শিক্ষা কার্যক্রম এর জন্য
১৮ দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার নাম : মো: মাহবুবুর রহমান
১৯ দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার পদবী : জেলা প্রশাসক, ঠাকুরগাঁও
২০ দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার ঠিকানা : জেলা প্রশাসকের কার্যালয়, ঠাকুরগাঁও
২১ দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার সাথে যোগাযোগের নম্বর : ০২৫৮৯৯০১০১১
শর্তাবলী:
(ক) পি, পি, এ-২০০৬ এবং পি, পি আর-২০০৮ (সংশোধিত) এ প্রদত্ত ক্রয় সংক্রান্ত পদ্ধতি যথাযথভাবে অনুসরণ করা হবে।
(খ) 'গ' গুণের ক্ষেত্রে বরাদ্দ প্রাপ্তি সাপেক্ষে কার্যদেপ প্রদান করা হবে।
(গ) কর্তৃপক্ষ কার্য দর্শনারে ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ অথবা সকল দরপত্র বাতিলের ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।
(ঘ) দরপত্র দাখিলের উল্লেখিত তারিখ ও সময়েই দরপত্র দাখিল করা যাবে।
(ঙ) বিশেষ নির্দেশনা: বিস্তারিত তথ্য দরপত্র ডকুমেন্টে বর্ণিত আছে।

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
মহিলা ও শিশু বিষয়ক মন্ত্রণালয়
ডিনএ ল্যাবরেটরী ব্যবস্থাপনা অধিদপ্তর
জাতীয় মহিলা সংস্থা ভবন (৭ম তলা)
১৪৫, নিউ বেইলী রোড, ঢাকা।
Email:dnalabmanagementbd@gmail.com
তারিখ:১২/০৫/২০২৪ খ্রি:।
স্মারক: ৩২.০৫.০০০০.০০২.০৭.৭৪.২৪-৮৬০
ডিনএ ল্যাবরেটরী ব্যবস্থাপনা অধিদপ্তর এবং এর আওতাধীন ডিনএ ল্যাব সনুয়ের জন্য ইলেক্ট্রনিক, কম্পিউটার, আসবাবপত্র, পরিষ্কার পরিচ্ছন্ন সামগ্রী, টেন্ডার, ব্যবহার্য সামগ্রী (শোণ), অফিস সরঞ্জামাদি ও কম্পিউটার সফটওয়্যার ক্রয়ের উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি।

CURTAINS OPEN ON CANNES FILM FESTIVAL

Cinematic brilliance, iconic returns, and surprise entries

This year's Cannes boasts a stellar lineup, with esteemed filmmakers from across the globe converging on the French Riviera to showcase their latest creations. Visionaries such as Andrea Arnold, Francis Ford Coppola, Yorgos Lanthimos, and George Miller headline the roster, promising an eclectic mix of cinematic brilliance.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

As the illustrious Cannes Film Festival unfurls its red carpet once again, the anticipation amongst cinephiles reaches a crescendo. Following the resounding success of last year's edition, which catapulted several films into the limelight of Oscar glory, the 77th Cannes Film Festival promises to be an event of unparalleled cinematic grandeur.

In retrospect, the echoes of last year's Cannes still resonate strongly. Films such as *Anatomy of a Fall*, *Killers of the Flower Moon*, and *The Zone of Interest* emerged as darlings of both Cannes and the subsequent Oscars, solidifying Cannes' stature as a harbinger of cinematic excellence.

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The Godfather director Francis Ford Coppola's return to Cannes after

half a century, with his magnum opus *Megalopolis*, is a momentous occasion that highlights the enduring allure of this cinematic mecca. The festival's opening, orchestrated by Quentin Dupieux's comedy *Le deuxième acte (The Second Act)*, sets the stage for a fortnight of cinematic splendour and intrigue.

At the heart of Cannes' allure lies its esteemed jury, tasked with discerning the crème de la crème of cinematic achievements. Four-time Oscar nominee Greta Gerwig will serve as president of the Feature Film Jury, making her the first female director from America to do so. The Jury also includes Oscar-nominated actress Lily Gladstone, along with actors Pierfrancesco Favino, Eva Green and Omar Sy, filmmakers Juan Antonio Bayona, Kore-eda Hirokazu and Nadine Labaki, and screenwriter and photographer Ebru Ceylan. Their choice for the Palme d'Or will be announced during the closing ceremony on May 24.

In a landmark achievement, the acclaimed Bangladeshi filmmaker Adnan Al Rajeev finds himself at the forefront of cinematic recognition



as his co-produced Filipino short film, *Radikals*, secures a coveted nomination for its world premiere at this year's Cannes. Collaborating with fellow Bangladeshi filmmaker Tanveer Hossain, Adnan brings his creative vision to life in this compelling project. Set to debut at the esteemed 63rd Semaine de la Critique of Cannes, *Radikals* is helmed by Filipino director Arvin Belarmino, who, in tandem with co-writer Kyla Romero, has crafted the narrative.

This year, eight Indian films will grace the festival's lineup, representing a diverse array of narratives and genres. The films are—*All We Imagine as Light*, *Santosh*, *In Retreat*, *The Shameless*, *Sister Midnight*, *Manthan: A Cinematic Gem Reborn*, *Sunflowers Were the First to Know*, *Kooki*. Bollywood actors Aishwarya Rai and Aditi Rao Hydari are all set to join the festival as ambassadors of L'Oréal Paris and are expected to highlight the growing influence of Indian cinema around the world. Additionally, the *Made in Heaven* famed actress Sobhita Dhulipala and musician King are also expected to walk the red carpet.

In this latest Cannes edition, a total

of 22 films will compete for the Palme d'Or, including *Anora*, directed by Sean Baker, *The Apprentice* by Ali Abbasi, *Bird* by Andrea Arnold, *Grand Tour* by Miguel Gomes, *Kinds of Kindness* by Yorgos Lanthimos, *Megalopolis* by Francis Ford Coppola, *Parthenope* by Paolo Sorrentino, *The Most Precious of Cargoes* by Michel Hazanavicius, and *The Seed of the*



Sacred Fig by Mohammad Rasoulof, amongst others.

Amidst the fervour of cinematic revelry, Cannes takes a moment to pay homage to legends of the industry. The festival will award three Honourary Palmes this year—the legendary actress and three-time Oscar winner Meryl Streep, to the iconic filmmaker

George Lucas, and to the acclaimed Japanese animation studio, Studio Ghibli.

However, this year's Cannes is not all about glitz and glamour, as there lies darker narratives over the proceedings.

France's film industry grapples with a belated MeToo reckoning, as accusations against prominent figures like Gerard Depardieu surface, hinting at further revelations on the horizon. Against this backdrop, actress Judith Godrèche unveils her poignant short film, *Moi Aussi (Me Too)*, shedding light on her own experiences and advocating for others to speak out.

Moreover, in a sobering twist, Iran's award-winning director Mohammad Rasoulof has just been jailed in his home country on security charges days before he was due to present *The Seed of the Sacred Fig*. Adding to the tumult, festival employees voice grievances, threatening a strike over pay and conditions, potentially disrupting the festival's proceedings.

The festival is scheduled to take place from May 14 to May 25 at the Palais des Festivals et des Congrès, the traditional home of the festival on the French Riviera.



PHOTOS: COLLECTED

NEWS

Solitary confinement

FROM PAGE 12
sentence, considering it inhuman and cruel.

In the verdict, the bench gave the example of the Indian High Court allowing a prisoner sentenced to death to marry and have a child for his aftermath formalities, and the Supreme Court of India has not interfered in that HC order.

The HC judges said prisoners, who have been sentenced to death by the trial courts, cannot be kept in condemned cells until their appeals, review petitions and mercy petitions are finally disposed of by the HC, and Appellate Division of the Supreme Court and the president of the republic respectively.

Considering exceptional circumstances, any particular prisoner under the death sentence may be kept in solitary confinement if he or she has a contagious disease or mental health issues, only in the interest of security of themselves or other prisoners. However, they must be given the opportunity to give their statements to the jail authorities before they are moved to condemned cells, the HC said.

Such prisoners may be kept in isolation for a limited period of three months as provided under Section-73 of the Penal Code and, in that case, they should be given relevant facilities, it said, adding that prisoners sentenced to death must be treated like other ordinary prisoners.

The HC bench said the prisoners should be allowed to file bail applications like other prisoners to seek bail from this court.

The court, in appropriate cases, should grant them bail under section 426 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, it said.

According to figures from November 1, 2022, submitted to the HC by the office of the inspector general of prisons, 2,162 convicts were kept in solitary confinement, among whom 2,099 were men and 63 women.

The number of the condemned cells was 2,657 at that time—2,512 for men and 145 for women. The HC passed this ruling yesterday based on a petition filed on August 31, 2021, by three convicts given death sentences.

The first petitioner is Zillur Rahman, who has been incarcerated in a condemned cell in Chattogram

Central Jail since December 13, 2020, when he was sentenced to death by a Speedy Trial Court in Chattogram for murder.

The second is Abdul Basir from Sylhet Central Jail, who was sentenced to death for murder on March 16, 2020, by a sessions court in Sunamganj. He too has been kept in the condemned cell.

The third is Shah Alam from Cumilla Central Jail, who was sentenced to death by a tribunal in Khagrachhari on January 22, 2020, for a dowry-related killing.

During the hearing of the rule, the writ petitioners' lawyer Mohammad Shishir Manir told the HC that condemned cells are inhumane and therefore unconstitutional.

Attorney General AM Amin Uddin, Deputy Attorney General Amit Talukder and Assistant Attorney General Golam Sarwar Payel represented the state during the hearing.

AG Amin Uddin told this correspondent that he will make a decision about challenging the rule after a discussion with the government.

Hospital blames

FROM PAGE 12
take the lift to a floor manually. It took around 10-15 minutes to complete the process, the letter added.

Mumtaz, who was suffering from heart diseases, was immediately taken to the emergency department where doctors declared her dead, the letter said.

A five-member committee was formed to find the cause of the incident, the letter said. "The hospital authorities' claim is not true. We were stuck for around 45 minutes," said Shahadat Hossain Salim, a relative of Mumtaz, who was also in the lift.

Asked about banging on the door, he said, "There were 16 to 18 people in the lift. It was chaos inside after the lift got struck."

Seeking anonymity, another person, who was in the lift, said, "A liftman came after around 10 to 15 minutes after we got stuck. But he went back quickly. Then, we tried to communicate with others over phone. We were pulled out around 30 minutes after the liftman left."

MV Abdullah's turbulent passage ends

FROM PAGE 12
The ship transported 56,000 tonnes of limestone from the UAE.

A portion of the cargo would be unloaded to smaller lighter vessels at Kutubdia and then the vessel would go to the outer anchorage of Chattogram port, sources said.

In a text message sent to this correspondent yesterday afternoon, Tanveer Ahmad, the fourth engineer at the ship, said he is very happy to have come home.

Josna Begum, mother of the young mariner, said she could not express how happy she was. She plans to prepare her son's favourite dishes,

Govt yet to drop the word

FROM PAGE 12
of Investigation (PBI), wrote a letter to the law secretary on February 4, requesting the law ministry to drop the word "kumari" from the Kabin Nama in line with the HC directive.

"In many cases, divorced women filled up the Kabin Nama stating their marital status as 'kumari'. They sometimes did it willingly while on other occasions this was done upon mutual consensus among the brides and grooms when they remarry," the letter read.

But whenever there is a dispute between a husband and wife, the groom's side files a criminal case on charges of fraudulence and breaching trust over stating "kumari" in the Kabin Nama despite being a divorcee or widow, it added.

Husbands also often use it as an excuse for not giving alimony to their wives, said PBI officials.

In the letter, the PBI chief also requested the law ministry to add an additional query under clause 21 of the Kabin Nama.

If the marriage registration form is amended in line with the PBI request, a groom already married will have to state under clause 21 how many wives he has.

The PBI chief said news of people having several wives breaching the Shariah law often goes viral on social media. Such incidents are also widely reported by the print and electronic media.

including beef curry, on his arrival.

On March 12, the Somali pirates hijacked the ship when it was carrying 55,000 tonnes of coal from the Mputo port of Mozambique to Al Hamriyah port in the UAE.

The pirates freed the vessel on April 14 after reportedly receiving ransom.

Getting released, the ship went to Al Hamriyah port on April 22 and unloaded the cargo. After that, it went to another UAE port Mina Saqr for loading cargo for Bangladesh.

The vessel left the port on April 30 and then went to a nearby port to refuel before heading for Chattogram.

A law ministry official, who is aware of the PBI chief's letter, said the ministry has already taken an initiative to amend the marriage registration form. He, however, refused to go into detail as he was not entitled to talk on the issue.

Giving an example of how the word "kumari" is being misused, the PBI chief said a male and a female, both celebrities and divorced, got married on February 27, 2020.

As a dispute arose among the couple—Zahid and Sumona (not their real names)—a few months later, Zahid filed a case with a Dhaka court on August 10 that year accusing Sumona and her parents of fraudulence and breaching trust.

In the case statement, he said though Sumona was a divorcee, she in connivance with her parents stated in the Kabin Nama that she was a "virgin".

Upon a court order, the PBI investigated the case and found that Sumona mentioned herself as "virgin" in the Kabin Nama at the insistence of Zahid. The PBI submitted a report to the court, clearing Sumona and her parents of the charges and the court subsequently dismissed the case.

Zahid divorced Sumona later that year. "Such cases are being filed nowadays and women are being subjected to disgrace," Banaj Kumar told The Daily Star recently.

How to wean Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 2
He said that in many process industries, machinery can suffer damage if the power supply experiences fluctuations or interruptions during operation.

"The government or regulatory body should make compulsory use of technologies like combined heat and power (CHP) which can reuse the produced heat and increase efficiency," he said.

Bangladesh began importing LNG from the international market in 2018. In just five years, the country saw a seven-fold increase in imports, reaching 238.72 BCF of gas by 2023.

Over the past six years, rapidly rising imports in a volatile global market exposed Bangladesh's energy sector's weak financial health earlier than anticipated, the study said.

The high dependence on gas is raising import bills and subsequently increasing tariffs for consumers. Bangladesh must urgently re-evaluate its energy strategy and take steps to improve energy efficiency to contain the growing demand for gas, it added.

Shafiqul Alam, the lead analyst at IEEFA Bangladesh and author of the recent study, said an insatiable appetite for gas could lock Bangladesh into a vicious cycle of spiralling prices and supply issues,

Donald Lu due today

FROM PAGE 2
Though Washington termed the January 7 polls not free and fair, it promised to work with Bangladesh in the areas of economic development, promoting democracy, human rights, climate change, Rohingya, and security.

According to Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen, the scope and thrust of Donald Lu's visit are likely to differ greatly from before the general election in Bangladesh.

He said all issues relating to mutual relations—political, economic, and even security will be discussed.

"We have many mechanisms, platforms, and dialogues with them [US]. It will be looked into how all these can be reactivated and what are the mechanisms we can take forward," said the foreign secretary in

and eventually, it may threaten its economic transformation.

"The plan to import sufficient energy for development was not designed to cope with the high level of volatility in the international fuel market, depreciation of the local currency, and weak fiscal conditions," he said.

As the era of cheap energy comes to an end, improving energy efficiency will be more financially rewarding as the government is likely to make energy pricing more competitive soon, he added.

According to the study, any complacency in undertaking energy-saving measures will likely erode the competitiveness of industries in the international market.

Insufficient investment in local gas exploration has left Bangladesh with a hefty shortfall between demand and supply, the study said, adding that the country is at a fundamental disadvantage as it does not produce enough energy apart from gas.

"Full energy independence may be a utopian dream, but the country must find ways to rein in its import dependence," it wrote.

The study noted that local gas production was reduced to 2,201 Million cubic feet per day (mmcf/d) from 2,663 mmcf/d in 2016.

Dhaka last week.

In recent months, the US has been emphasising the importance of labour rights and promoting civil society groups.

Diplomatic sources said the Rohingya crisis, the conflict in Myanmar, and economic and security cooperation will be some of the important issues that will be discussed during Donald Lu's visit.

Lu may reiterate the call for signing the US Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) on logistics and the General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) to advance enduring security and defence relationships.

Washington wants Bangladesh to be a net security provider in the region, a US official recently told media in Dhaka.

INTERNATIONAL

PRO-GAZA PROTEST
Protesters
occupy univ
buildings in
Dutch cities

REUTERS, Amsterdam

Pro-Palestinian protesters yesterday occupied university buildings in the Dutch cities of Amsterdam, Groningen and Eindhoven, condemning Israel's offensive in Gaza, the Dutch protest group behind the action said in a statement.

A spokesperson for the University of Amsterdam (UvA) confirmed the occupation and said it advised people who are not affiliated with the protest to leave the building.

The Eindhoven University of Technology confirmed that there were "dozens of students peacefully protesting outside next to ten to 15 tents". Students in the Netherlands have been protesting against Israel's offensive in Gaza since last Monday and Dutch riot police previously clashed with protesters at the University of Amsterdam.



Men, women, and children queue to receive food rations from a public kitchen in Deir el-Balah in the central Gaza Strip yesterday. Israeli operations in Rafah, which borders Egypt, have closed a main crossing point for aid, which humanitarian groups say is worsening an already dire situation. PHOTO: AFP

LEBANON'S TH
Hezbollah
claims strikes
that hurt
Israeli soldiers

AFP, Beirut

Lebanon's Iran-backed Hezbollah group yesterday claimed responsibility for a strike that Israel said wounded four soldiers in the country's north, the latest cross-border fire in more than seven months of clashes.

Israel and Hamas ally Hezbollah have exchanged near-daily fire following the Israel's offensive in Gaza since October 7.

Hezbollah fighters fired "a guided missile" at an Israeli Merkava tank across the border yesterday morning, destroying it "after closely monitoring the enemy's movements," the group said in a statement.

The Israeli army said "two anti-tank missiles" crossed from Lebanon into the area of Yiftah, a kibbutz community less than two kilometres (1.2 miles) from the border.

The missiles wounded four Israeli soldiers, the army said, one of them moderately and the rest lightly. Earlier yesterday, Hezbollah said it launched "a swarm of explosive drones" targeting tents and "sleeping quarters" for an Israeli artillery battalion.

1,000 Hamas members
hospitalised in Turkey

Claims Turkey's Erdogan, says US, Europe not doing enough to pressure Israel into Gaza truce

REUTERS, Ankara

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said yesterday that more than 1,000 members of the Palestinian group Hamas were being treated in hospitals across Turkey, reiterating his stance that Hamas was a "resistance movement".

Speaking at a press conference after talks with Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis in Ankara, Erdogan also said he was saddened by the Greek view that deems Hamas a terrorist organisation.

On Sunday evening, Erdogan said that the United States and European countries were not doing enough to pressure Israel to agree a ceasefire in Gaza, after Palestinian group Hamas' move to accept a truce proposal.

Turkey has denounced Israel's attacks on Gaza, called for an immediate ceasefire, and criticised what it calls unconditional support for Israel by the West.

Ankara has halted all trade with Israel and said it had decided to join South Africa's initiative to have Israel tried for genocide at the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

Speaking to Muslim scholars in Istanbul, Erdogan said on Sunday evening that Hamas had accepted a ceasefire proposal by Qatar and Egypt in a "step in the path toward a lasting ceasefire", but Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government did not want the offensive to end.

"The response of the Netanyahu government was to attack the innocent people in Rafah," he said, referring to the Gaza city that Israel is targeting. "It has become clear who sides with peace and dialogue, and who wants clashes continuing and more bloodshed."

"It has become clear who sides with peace and dialogue, and who wants clashes continuing and more bloodshed."

Says President Erdogan

"And did Netanyahu see any serious reaction for his spoiled behaviour? No. Neither Europe nor America showed a reaction that would force Israel into a ceasefire."

Erdogan's intelligence chief Ibrahim Kalin met with Hamas leaders in Doha on Sunday to discuss ceasefire talks and the access of humanitarian aid into Gaza, a Turkish security source said.

Israel's military conduct in Gaza has come under increasing scrutiny in recent weeks, as the civilian death toll and devastation in the enclave mount.

India, Iran sign
deal to develop
port project

AFP, Tehran

India and Iran yesterday signed a 10-year contract to develop and equip the strategic Chabahar port in Iran as India seeks to grow trade in west and central Asia.

The agreement will give India 10-year access to use the port, located close to Iran's southeastern border with Pakistan, according to Iran's Ministry of Roads and Urban Development.

The contract will in turn see India Ports Global Limited (IPGL) invest \$370 million into "providing strategic equipment" and "developing the transport infrastructure of the port". Iran's urban development minister Mehrdad Bazrpush and India's ports and shipping minister Sarbananda Sonowal signed contract in the town of Chabahar.

India in 2016 agreed to finance the development of the Iranian port as a trading hub for central Asia as Prime Minister Narendra Modi sought to revive economic ties with Tehran.

Modi and former Iranian president Hassan Rouhani oversaw the signing of a memorandum of understanding for the provision of a line of credit from India's EXIM Bank to develop the port.

The development of the port however stalled, despite waivers to sanctions that the United States began re-imposing in 2018 after withdrawing from a landmark 2015 nuclear deal with Iran.

'We will make
Pakistan wear
bangles'
Modi tells polls rally

TNN, New Delhi

Mining no words, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday attacked the opposition INDIA bloc, calling its leaders "cowards" who were "scared of Pakistan's nuclear power". During an election rally in Bihar's Muzaffarpur, Modi made a veiled reference to a remark recently made by National Conference leader Farooq Abdullah, without mentioning him by name. "The INDIA bloc seems to have leaders who are scared of Pakistan and have nightmares of its nuclear power," he said. The remarks come in the backdrop of comments by Abdullah about Pakistan having atom bombs and not wearing bangles. "If Pakistan does not wear bangles, we will make the country wear these. I knew they did not have foodgrains. Now, I come to know they do not even have adequate supply of bangles," he said. "But, we must look carefully at the opposition which seems to be full of cowards and timid people, who give a clean chit to Pakistan on terrorism, raise doubts on surgical strikes... their Left allies even want our nuclear arsenal to be dismantled," he said. In an earlier rally, Modi highlighted the significant increase in funds recovered by Enforcement Directorate during his tenure. He emphasised that the money belonged to the poor and reiterated his commitment to preventing the opposition from giving away reservations to Muslims for vote bank politics.

DB officer points

FROM PAGE 12

A DB team led by Sub-Inspector (SI) Rezaul Karim went to Saudi expat Nurul Alam Nuru's house to arrest him after a case was filed against him for misappropriating gold ornaments sent by another expat, Abdul Quddus, several months ago.

Quddus, who is now in Bangladesh, filed the case with Brahmanbaria Sadar Police Station, alleging that he gave Nurul gold ornaments weighing around 400 grams to deliver those to his family, however, Nurul didn't deliver all of it.

On Friday evening, the DB team reached Nurul's house and got into an argument and scuffle with the female members of his family.

A video footage of the incident went viral on social media. At one point, SI Rezaul is seen pointing a pistol at the head of Nurul's wife, Bonna Begum.

Talking to our local correspondent, Bonna said the family of Quddus framed her husband, as he did not make Quddus a partner in his business in Saudi Arabia.

"During a family gathering, five to six people in plainclothes arrived and started searching the

house. As my daughter screamed in fear, a DB man hit her on the head with a gun, leaving her injured.

"As I protested, the DB official pointed a pistol at my forehead and later fired a blank round. We want a fair trial of this incident."

Nuru's brother Sarwar Alam said Quddus, while in Saudi Arabia, did not give gold to his brother directly, rather, a middleman gave the gold to him to hand over to the family.

"My brother handed over the amount of gold that he got from the middleman. If something happened, it was done by the middleman, not by my brother," he said, adding that they had conveyed the same message to Sadar police after a case was filed against Nurul.

SI Rezaul said DB Inspector Mofazzal Ali, along with a constable, first went there to arrest the accused, but he was prevented from searching by family members.

"Later, I went there, and they misbehaved with me and helped the accused escape. This led to a scuffle with them," he said.

"I did not point a firearm at anyone. I was holding the firearm, and my hand went in that direction due to the scuffle," he claimed.



"Our country stands at a crossroads."

Says UK PM Rishi Sunak citing Russia's war in Europe, Iran's firing of missiles in the ME.

AFGHAN FLOODS

Survivors
hunt for the
missing

WHO warns of rising cases of water-borne diseases

AFP, Fulool

Survivors of flash floods in Afghanistan's northern Baghlan province were still searching for the missing yesterday, days after torrents of water ripped through villages, killing hundreds.

Heavy rains sparked flash flooding in multiple Afghan provinces on Friday, killing more than 300 people in Baghlan alone, UN agencies and Taliban officials said.

Rescue workers and aid have been struggling to reach some of the worst affected areas with World Health Organization echoing Taliban government and non-profit organisations warnings that the death toll could rise significantly. Samiullah Omari found the bodies of seven of his relatives.

"We have been searching but we haven't found them," the 24-year-old day labourer told AFP in his village of Fulool.

Chittagong Dry Dock Limited
Bangladesh Navy
East Patenga, Chattogram, Bangladesh

Phone: +88 02333301117, Mobile: +8801769744450
Fax: +88 02333301123, E-mail: commerce@cddl.gov.bd, contact@cddl.gov.bd,
Website: www.cddl.gov.bd

23.02.1565.341.53.006.24.1020 Dated: 12 May 2024

INVITATION FOR TENDER

1. Procuring Entity	Chittagong Dry Dock Ltd
2. Invitation for	Tender Documents For Mobile Hydraulic Crane (Capacity 30-35 Tons)-01 nos (Detail Technical Specifications Mentioned in Tender Document)
3. Reference No	23.02.1565.341.53.006.24.1021 Date: 12 May 2024
4. Tender Closing	10 July 2024 at 12.15 PM
5. Tender Opening	10 July 2024 at 12.30 PM

N.B. All other relevant terms and conditions are available at CDDL website (www.cddl.gov.bd)

Head of Commerce & Purchase Department

For Managing Director

GD-777

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer
Department of Public Health Engineering
Sirajganj District, Sirajganj
E-mail: ee.sirajganj@dphe.gov.bd

Memo No :46.03.8800.061.16.005.22-1258 Date: 13 May 2024

Invitation for e-tender notice

1. Ministry/Division	Local Government Division
2. Implementing Agency	Department of Public Health Engineering
3. Project/Program Name	Revenue Budget
4. e-Tender IDs and Package no:	984644 and Package no.: MBTW1509
5. Description of works	Installation of 40 Nos. Shallow Tubewell with #6 pump at the house built for the landless and homeless families for Mujib Borsho (4th Phase) at different Upazillas in Sirajganj District under Revenue Budget of DPHE during the FY 2023-2024.
6. Name, designation & Address of official Inviting Tender	Name: Md. Rokonujjaman Executive Engineer Sirajganj District, Sirajganj Tel. No.: 02-588831838, E-mail: ee.sirajganj@dphe.gov.bd
7. Information	This is online tender, where only e-tenders will be accepted in the national e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. Interested persons/firms can see details in the website: www.eprocure.gov.bd.

(Md. Rokonujjaman)
Executive Engineer, DPHE
Sirajganj District, Sirajganj.

GD-775



ESSENTIAL DRUGS COMPANY LIMITED

395-397, Tejgaon Industrial Area
Dhaka-1208



PRESS TENDER NOTICE

Sealed Tender are hereby invited from Genuine importer/ Reputed Suppliers/ Authorized Dealers for supply and Installation of following item at EDCL, Dhaka on urgent basis:

S.L No.	Tender No. & Date	Name of the Item	Cost of Tender Schedule
01.	EDCL(Dhaka)/Pur./Press Ten/2024/198 Date: 13/05/2024	158 (One hundred fifty eight) Pcs CC Camera. For Store Deptt. & Nasrin Tower at EDCL, Dhaka Plant. (Details as per Tender Schedule)	Tk. 1,250.00/set (Non-refundable)

Tender schedule will be sold from the Accounts Department of Essential Drugs Company Limited, Dhaka on payment as stated above during office hours on all working days (except Friday, Saturday and Govt. Holidays). No tender schedule will be sold on the opening date of the tender.

The Tenders may drop their offer in tender box kept at the Procurement Department, EDCL, Dhaka office till 12.00 noon on 27/05/2024 which will be opened on 27/05/2024 at 12.30 PM in Presence at the tenderers/Their representatives (if any).

The tender will be accompanied by an amount of Earnest Money @ 2.5% through of Bank Draft/Pay Order from any Schedule Bank of Bangladesh in favour of "Essential Drugs Company Limited" without which the tender will be considered as non-responsive.

Essential Drugs Company Limited authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.

General Manager
Procurement Deptt.
For: Managing Director

Size- 6 1/4 col.

How to rank mayors of an unliveable Dhaka?

We need a radical reimagining of city planning and management

The two Dhaka mayors may be patting themselves on the back for doing a good job of maintaining the capital city during their four-year tenure, but the statistics—to say nothing of city dwellers' individual experiences—tell a different story. Over the period, Dhaka has consistently found itself among the top 10 least liveable cities in the Global Liveability Index. Its air, too, frequently makes it to the top of the global list of cities with the worst air. Its traffic jams are so deadly that, on average, city dwellers spend a whopping 276 hours a year wasting away their productive lives, earning the capital the not-so-prestigious title of the slowest city in the world. When it rains, Dhaka drowns, and during heatwaves, Dhaka burns. How should one rank the mayors of a city which consistently tops the list for all the wrong reasons?

Whatever ambitious promises that the two mayors made in their election manifestos have remained unrealised for the most part, and along with it, people's dreams of an accessible, safe and healthy city. For instance, both the mayors had pledged to rid Dhaka of mosquitoes, but the city has only become deadlier with each passing year. Despite spending Tk 500 crore over mosquito control, dengue claimed more than a record-breaking 900 lives alone in the city last year, and experts are already predicting that the outbreak this year will be even worse. Our repeated calls for a coordinated and scientific approach for dengue control by engaging entomologists and other experts have fallen by the clogged drain, with the same tried-and-failed methods being implemented half-heartedly by the city corporations to contain an escalating crisis year after year.

And it's not just dengue. Take any perennial problem of Dhaka—traffic, waterlogging, air quality, sound pollution, walkability—and we seem stuck in an endless loop of failed promises on the end of policymakers and frustration on the end of the public. Look at any public amenity, and we are confronted with mismanagement, inefficiencies, and a lack of collaboration and foresight of the authorities, to say nothing of corruption at every stage of the process. Meanwhile, our open spaces, canals and natural reservoirs are disappearing at alarming speeds, being replaced with buildings and structures constructed flouting basic fire and building safety rules.

While we credit the city mayors for taking some notable initiatives over the past four years, such as DNCC's waste management or DSCC's reclamation of occupied rivers, what we need are not ad hoc solutions but a radical reimagining of city planning and management. Dhaka's current state is far too alarming for the mayors to be happy about their "many" achievements over the past four years. It's time they inhabited the same Dhaka as we do—one where even the most basic of human needs, such as breathing, is a fight for survival.

Make people aware of 109 hotline

Adequate resources should be ensured to run this vital service

We are disappointed to learn that, even after 12 years of operation, the national helpline for women and children who are victims of violence is not serving its intended purpose. The hotline, which can be accessed through the short code 109, was launched in 2012 to provide appropriate support and resources to the victims of domestic violence, child marriage, child abuse, sexual violence, physical assault, dowry, etc. But an analysis of call records has revealed that the 109 hotline is limited to mostly providing information.

Between January 1 and April 16 this year, the helpline received 2,68,430 calls, more than 95 percent of which were related to seeking information on topics such as how to handle violent situations, dowry or alimony, divorce proceedings, reconciling relations, etc. Only five percent callers sought specific services, and of those, only two percent requested legal assistance and one percent sought police intervention. A similar pattern was observed in 2023 and 2022 as well.

While we appreciate that people can rely on this platform to access important information, we are also concerned that perhaps there is a lack of public awareness regarding its true capacity. The national helpline, which is accessible round the clock, is equipped to provide guidance to the victims regarding legal provisions and actions, and to connect them to other platforms operated by government agencies and NGOs. Yet, such a small segment of the callers ask for specific services. This is concerning because violence against women and children have certainly not declined. According to an Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) report, between January and March this year, 114 women were raped, 137 women were subjected to domestic violence, and 325 children were abused, among others. The ASK executive director was quoted as saying that, as data suggests, incidents of violence against women and children are on an alarming rise.

This means the authorities need to put more effort into publicising the usefulness of this hotline, because it is providing vital support to victims of violence. We urge the government to bolster this crucial platform with adequate resources so that more victims of violence can get the help they need through it.

New Message

To: _____

Subject: _____

Facing issues in your area? Want your opinions about events around you to be published in *The Daily Star*? Send us a short letter with your name and city!

Write to us: letterstothedailystar.net

Implications of recent central bank policy measures



MACRO MIRROR

Dr Fahmida Khatun is the Executive Director at the Centre for Policy Dialogue and Non-Resident Senior Fellow of the Atlantic Council. Views expressed in the article are the author's own.

FAHMIDA KHATUN

The Bangladesh Bank (BB) announced some important monetary policy measures on May 8, 2024, in an attempt to rein in inflation and improve the declining foreign exchange reserve of the country. Indeed, this decision has been taken by the central bank prior to the release of the third tranche from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) under its ongoing support of \$4.7 billion to Bangladesh. The IMF had suggested market-based interest and exchange rates earlier, but the central bank shied away from adopting those measures until the situation eventually aggravated.

As a last resort, the BB has hiked the policy rate by 50 basis points to bring it to 8.5 percent. In January 2024, the policy rate was increased from 7.75 percent to 8 percent. This decision gives a signal to the market about the upcoming interest rate hike in the commercial banks. In its Monetary Policy Statement for July-December 2023, the BB introduced the reference lending rate, namely Six-month Moving Average Rate of Treasury bills (SMART), to determine the lending rates. Banks and non-bank financial institutions (NBFIs) used to have a margin applied to this rate by three percent and up to five percent, respectively. With the announcement of a policy rate hike and the abolition of the SMART mechanism, lending rates will now be determined by commercial banks. The lending rate will depend on the efficiency, liquidity situation, market demand, competitiveness, and bank-customer relationship. Naturally, efficient banks will be in an advantageous situation due to their reputation and can offer a more competitive rate than the weaker ones.

The interest rate cap imposed in April 2020 by the BB for both lending and deposit, at nine percent and six percent, respectively, has been unsuccessful in containing inflation. Money became too cheap as the inflation rate far exceeded these low lending rates. This illogical cap was also discriminatory since depositors

became net losers by keeping their money in banks with the inflation rate above nine percent. This harmful interest rate cap should have been eliminated and a pragmatic monetary policy should have been in place much earlier to address the ongoing inflationary challenge.

The other monetary policy measure—introduction of Crawling Peg Mid-Rate (CPMR) and setting the exchange rate at Tk 117 for \$1—aims to stabilise the value of the taka against the US dollar. The crawling peg gives the banks the freedom to buy



FILE VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

and sell US dollars at their own rates within a certain corridor. The BB has attempted to set the CPMR at a point which reflects the market rate, this is, of course, not fixed, and adjustments may be needed in the future to reflect actual market rate. During the last two years or so, the taka has depreciated by more than 29 percent. Now with this crawling peg rate, the taka has depreciated by over six percent in one go. The Bangladeshi taka has long been overvalued against US dollar to keep import costs low. However, the Real Effective Exchange Rate (REER) was much higher than what was fixed by the central bank. As the exporters

relative to other countries. That is why a flexible market-based exchange rate is important so that exports and remittances remain attractive while the reliance on unnecessary imports decline. Of course, we are yet to see a market-based exchange rate. The CPMR is probably a prelude to it. Meanwhile, the market has to mature.

The new exchange rate will have an implication for government expenditures as well. Earlier, even if the private importers were buying US dollars at a higher rate, the government was importing oil, fertiliser and a few other commodities at Tk 110 per US dollar. Now, the

government expenditure on imports will rise. High import costs could further increase inflationary pressure. Increase in government expenditure will also increase budget deficit which could lead to more bank borrowing by the government. In recent months, the government has been borrowing heavily from the banking sector. This has put pressure on domestic debt.

The new monetary policy will have varied implications for the economy. That is why the BB has to continue to review the situation and adjust interest rates and other policies accordingly. For positive outcomes, these measures also require coordination with each other, and special care needs to be taken over implementation.

Due to lack of coordinated and coherent measures, inflation continues to rise, notwithstanding the abolition of the interest rate cap since July 2023. On the other hand, fiscal policy has not been commensurate with a contractionary monetary policy since the government could not control spending successfully. Last year, the government borrowed from the BB and fuelled inflation further instead of containing it. This year the government is borrowing from commercial banks. Though there is not much demand from the private sector now and thus the possibility of crowding out is low, the interest payment liability of the government for these loans is increasing. As it is, the external debt service liability of the government has been piling up and the government is servicing some of these loans by borrowing from other external sources.

Of course, no single policy can satisfy everyone. The new exchange rate is expected to provide some predictability. But the crawling peg rate is set to have a knock-on effect on the cost of business for the private sector. The private sector has also been apprehensive of increased cost of doing business due to high interest rates. Then again, cost of doing business also depends on many factors such as good governance, quality of public service delivery, efficient infrastructure, technological adoption, and skilled human resources. Without making improvement on these, businesses cannot be competitive. Therefore, the interconnectedness of policies and their implications must be recognised and worked on. Policy consistency is critical, so is the timely adoption and proper implementation of appropriate policies.

Time to strengthen the fight against dengue



Tamanna Khan is a member of the editorial team of The Daily Star.

TAMANNA KHAN

Earlier this month, the sound of thunder and lightning with torrential rain brought much relief from the month-long heatwave of April. But my joy was cut short by the high-pitched buzz of a mosquito. It was a reminder that dengue season was around the corner. According to a recent report in this daily, experts are predicting a worse dengue situation this year compared to last year.

Such a prediction is concerning as Bangladesh already witnessed a record number of dengue-related deaths and hospitalisations last year. According to data from the Directorate General of Health Services, more than 1,700 people, including 170 children, died from the vector-borne disease last year with hospitalisations surpassing three lakh across the country.

The number of dengue-related deaths in the first four months of this year is almost double of what it was during the same period last year. Additionally, the disease, which is mostly prevalent in urban and semi-urban areas because of the widespread presence of stagnant water bodies—which are the favourite breeding grounds of Aedes mosquitoes—appears to have made its way to the villages too. A few years ago, experts warned about a certain type of Aedes (Aedes albopictus), which lay eggs on the edges of forested or vegetated

areas, besides containers with stagnant water. They suspected an association between those Aedes mosquitoes and the increasing number of cases in rural areas. This is a development that adds to the level of concern.

Although plenty of rest, liquid intake and painkillers can be used to treat mild dengue, severe cases that may include breathing difficulty, persistent vomiting or bleeding through gums require hospitalisation. Patients with such symptoms often need intravenous fluid, constant medical monitoring, and even blood transfusion. Unlike the cities, healthcare facilities in villages are often not well-equipped or even well-staffed, rendering them incapable of treating dengue patients. If an endemic breaks out in the villages, people will have little choice but to move to the already overwhelmed hospitals in the cities for treatment. Last year's situation had pushed the city hospitals to their limits with cases mostly from urban centres and surrounding areas. One can imagine what the situation will be if dengue spreads in the villages at the same rate as it occurs in urban areas.

Although last week's report in this daily quoted the director of Communicable Disease Control Programme at the DGHS saying that they had instructed upazila level doctors not to refer patients to the

capital unless necessary, the question remains as to whether our upazila-level healthcare facilities are equipped to treat serious patients. Rather than ad hoc instructions, a clear guideline for our healthcare system to tackle severe outbreaks should be implemented. But are we preparing any such strategy at the national level?

Dengue has been affecting public

Dengue has been affecting public health in Bangladesh for decades, yet we do not have an effective national prevention strategy in place. Unscientific methods have often been floated as solutions to control the vector. Besides, there is no coordination between different institutions that are responsible for prevention and control of dengue.

health in Bangladesh for decades, yet we do not have an effective national prevention strategy in place. Unscientific methods have often been floated as solutions to control the vector. Besides, there is no coordination between different institutions that are responsible for prevention and control of dengue. Multiple experts at various times have called for implementation of measures successful in cities of neighbouring countries with weather patterns similar to Dhaka. There is no reason to believe that those suggestions have

been taken into account.

Even the job of creating awareness among people to keep possible Aedes breeding grounds clean does not appear to happen year-round. It is hard to find a road, street or electric pole without a political poster praising some leader or congratulating them for something. More lives could perhaps have been saved had those posters displayed preventative methods for dengue instead. Not just posters, broadcasting infomercials on dengue prevention in mass media should not be limited to just when the disease claims lives in dozens. More efforts should be given to continue raising awareness throughout the year in a coordinated way. Additionally, city corporations and municipal offices themselves should take stock of their buildings, equipment, and assets and set examples by making sure that those do not become mosquito breeding grounds.

Lastly, the government should take up funding research projects on dengue and Aedes mosquitoes, and not shy away from publishing the findings or implementing recommendations by experts from diverse sectors. It may be a little late to start doing what the authorities have stalled for so long, but it is not too late. Each and every life lost from dengue is preventable, at least it should be in the 21st century. Besides, Bangladesh has succeeded in eradicating several diseases in the past. Why not dengue? Why should we open the newspaper and are faced with a news report predicting a deadlier scenario, not a hopeful one?

Imagine reading a report that mentions experts forecasting a declining trend of the disease because of effective measures taken by the authorities in a coordinated way. Is that an impossible dream?

Why settle for a Jashore without trees?

Development does not equate to ecological disaster. But disingenuity does.



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NAUSHAD ALI HUSEIN

While the world is finally waking up to the dangers of wrecking ecosystems, and engineers and policy makers around the world are finding ways to minimise the impact of development on the environment, Bangladesh is cutting trees like there's no tomorrow.

In Jashore, Chattogram, Dinajpur and Gaibandha, trees are to be axed to make way for roads and highways. In Faridpur, they will be cleared for a state-owned luxury resort. In Rangpur and Kushtia, they are being sacrificed at the altar of greed. In Habiganj, over a hundred trees are being cut in the name of "beautification". In Naogaon, a lush, dense forest is being cleared in the name of "restoration and conservation of biodiversity", leaving behind a desert.

Yes, there are circumstances under which cutting trees is unavoidable, or even beneficial for people and the environment. But unfortunately, in all of these cases, we are being asked to accept unimaginative, short-term development solutions—if not outright greed, corruption and deceit.

A lack of imagination

In 2018, the Road Transport and Highways Division (RTHD) wanted to cut down 2,312 trees lining the famous Jashore Road—to make way for a four-lane highway. The centuries-old trees lining Jashore Road have a special historical, literary, and cultural significance, having inspired poets and songwriters from around the world, and having shaded the paths of millions of dispossessed and displaced migrants as they fled to India in 1971. Felling these trees would have been an affront to the memory of the Liberation War.

But significantly, we saw that it wasn't trees that were standing in the way of better roads. It was a lack of ingenuity and foresight. Across the Indian border in Petrapole, the old trees were preserved in a median, and the road was expanded without cutting trees. Environmentalists and academics asked why



A tree-lined road in Benapole, Jashore

PHOTO: STAR

the government in Bangladesh had not even considered the possibility of a dual-carriage road, with a parallel road (or roads) on the outside of the trees lining the highway. The RTHD conceded that the government in fact had land available on either side of the highway.

After widespread opposition, the Jashore

Road tree felling plans were scrapped. Unfortunately, other highways and other trees simply don't have the star power that Jashore Road has. But the solutions proposed for Jashore Road certainly hold true elsewhere. There must be an earnest effort to find alternatives to cutting trees or damaging the ecosystem in any infrastructure development project.

And what if there are no alternatives? The

Los Angeles, a distance of 1,249 kilometres of harsh terrain including a mountain range. The project is not free of politics, corruption or controversy. But throughout this mammoth project, there is the commitment to conserving the diverse and complex ecosystems that the railway traverses. The ecological footprint of every aspect is taken into consideration, from emissions to waste management, contamination of water and

of ambition? People will say we're a "poor country". But the World Bank reported that Bangladesh spends more money per kilometre of roads or highways than most other countries in the world. The four-lane highway from Bhanga to Benapole cost \$14 million per kilometre, over 10 times the average cost in India or China. One may compare the roads in China with ours, as well as the landscapes, and ponder where the resources go. It's safe to say that we are a nation of great resources flowing to the wrong pockets.

And yet, when we do manage to properly direct the resources, we build megaprojects that are worth boasting about. The Padma bridge is paraded as an engineering marvel (not very eco-friendly, perhaps, but we're talking about ambition), and indeed, it is a remarkable accomplishment, featuring daring innovations to uniquely Bangladeshi geological challenges, and the country can be proud of the result. But pride won't save lives or fill bellies.

My humble contention is that if my country is capable of producing a work of engineering at the cusp of human capability, then I am unprepared to accept such mediocre and short-sighted thinking as "must cut trees to widen the road" any more. Especially when the cost is especially high in our case.

Cost-benefit analysis

Fewer trees means less rain, more heat and erosion, which leads to poor health, salinisation, desertification, and displacement. If this is difficult to imagine in a place so lovely as Jashore, just go one district south to Satkhira, to Protapnagar, Padmapukur, Gabura, to the vast desert landscapes, the clamour of NGO signboards, and the stories of ruin.

Preserving trees is only a start. For a country whose life and culture are so closely tied to its soil and its environment, Bangladesh should be a leader in eco-friendly development. The fact is that we need the roads as badly as we need the ecosystem. So, the trees, shrubs, canals, flora and fauna—must all be integrated into projects, rather than being replaced by them.

Bad connectivity and unsafe highways are unacceptable in the 21st century. But if we build, we should build like world leaders. Every infrastructure project in Bangladesh should be an example in efficiency, foresight and eco-friendly design. What's lacking is not solutions. It's the desire and drive to find and demand them.

SOLAR STORM AND AURORA

A dazzling display of colourful lights



Dr. Quamrul Haider is professor emeritus at Fordham University in New York, US.

QUAMRUL HAIDER

Thirty-three days after the breathtaking total solar eclipse that swept through a vast swath of North America on April 8, the Sun has produced yet another dazzling celestial drama. This time it is a cosmic extravaganza of colourful lights that painted the skies across the Northern Hemisphere during the early hours of the May 11 weekend with vibrant hues of pink, green, and purple. This rare show of lights is referred to as aurora, after the Roman goddess of the dawn. In the United States, it was seen by millions of people as far south as Florida and Southern California.

What causes an aurora? The root cause of an aurora is a solar storm, a dramatic blast of electromagnetic radiation from the Sun. The storm consists of solar flares, which are the most violent form of solar activity. A flare occurs when magnetic energy that has built up in sunspots areas on the surface of the Sun that appear dark because they are relatively cooler than other parts of the Sun's surface is suddenly released. Hence, solar storms are also known as geomagnetic storms.

Flares are most common when numerous sunspots are visible on the solar surface. Near large sunspots, about a hundred flares occur each day. The number of flares also depends on the intensity of solar activity, which goes through a high-low cycle over a period of 11 years. The current cycle that began five years ago is predicted to peak in an activity called a solar maximum, in July 2025.

The intensity of solar activity is measured on a five-level scale, ranging from G1 (minor) to G5

(extreme), with the recent one labelled G4 (severe). It is expected to continue for a few more days, albeit with intensity G3 (strong) or G2 (moderate).



A solar storm caused a cosmic extravaganza of colourful lights that painted the skies across the Northern Hemisphere during the early hours of the May 11 weekend.

FILE PHOTO: AFP

The vast amounts of energy released by a typical solar flare across the entire electromagnetic spectrum heats nearby material, thereby launching a colossal amount of plasma a hot soup of charged particles and magnetic field from the Sun's corona, or upper atmosphere. The phenomenon is termed coronal mass ejections (CMEs). As the flare races towards Earth, its electromagnetic radiation and the CME rip through the upper atmosphere and ionise neutral atoms by removing electrons from them. Occasionally, charged particles

flowing outwards from a CME escape into the solar winds, which are also a stream of charged particles released from the Sun's corona. The effects of these particles on the atmosphere of a planet depend largely on whether the planet has a strong enough magnetic field to divert the charged particles in the solar wind.

On planets like Mars and Venus that do not have strong magnetic fields, charged particles in the solar wind can directly impact the surface of the

atmosphere. Fortunately, Earth's strong magnetic field creates a magnetosphere that acts like a protective bubble surrounding our planet. The magnetosphere deflects most of the charged particles around our planet, thus protecting us from their harmful effects.

Oftentimes the magnetosphere allows a few of the charged particles in the solar wind to get through, especially near the magnetic poles that are relatively close—about 10 degrees—to the geographic poles. Once the charged particles penetrate the magnetosphere, they follow

the magnetic field all the way down to the Earth's atmosphere, where collision with atoms and molecules in the atmosphere sends them into an excited state. The charged particles quickly de-excite the emitting light that creates the colourful display of the aurora dancing around the Earth's magnetic poles. In the Northern Hemisphere, the aurora is often called Aurora borealis, or Northern Lights, and is best viewed at high latitudes. In the Southern Hemisphere, it is called Aurora australis, or Southern Lights.

The energy released by the solar storm can cripple Earth's technological infrastructure, mess up satellites, radio communications, internet, navigation signals from GPS satellites, halt aviation and severely damage electric power grids. If there is a direct hit, the impact could be catastrophic, costing trillions of dollars in damage to our economic and high-tech infrastructures affecting millions of people. However, today there are systems in place to minimise the impact.

Two recent massive solar storms that pummelled the Earth

agricultural land, disruption of wildlife corridors, community health and safety risks, and trees.

The California High Speed Rail is one of hundreds of examples around the world, and it pales in comparison to what Germany and Japan are doing.

Why can't Bangladesh have this kind

are the Great Aurora of March 1989 and the Halloween Sun Storm of October 2003. The storm of 1989 blacked out lights for millions of people in Québec, Canada, whereas the Halloween storm disabled many satellites and damaged instruments on a Mars orbiter.

The largest solar storm on record occurred in 1859. It was dubbed the Carrington Event, named after the British astronomer Richard Carrington, the discoverer of solar flares. It bathed "two-thirds of the Earth's skies in a blood-red aurora a night later, and crippled all of global navigation and global communication, such as it was at that time."

Finally, doomsday prophets are worried that solar storms are an omen for the end of the world. They will, however, be disappointed because the thought of a solar Armageddon is far-fetched. This is because the thousands of miles of thick magnetosphere 40,000 miles above will not fail us. Besides, much of the CME is faced away from Earth, and consequently the danger is lessened. In fact, other than the usual inconveniences caused by solar storms, we will always be entertained by a brilliant show of the auroras. Nonetheless, in the future, we can expect a monstrous solar storm that would make the Carrington Event look like a rain shower.

সিলেট গ্যাস ফিল্ডস লিমিটেড
(পেট্রোবাংলার একটি কোম্পানি)
Sylhet Gas Fields Limited
(A Company of Petrobangla)

Ref: 28.20.9153.142.14.008.24

Dated: 12-05-2024

e-Tender Notice

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of the following goods:

Sl. No.	Package No.	Description of Goods	Tender ID	Last Selling of Tender (Date & Time)	Tender Closing & Opening (Date & Time)
1.	28.20.9153.142.14.008.24	Procurement of Paint & Thinner at Rashidpur Gas Field, Bahubal, Habiganj under Sylhet Gas Fields Limited.	981493	02-Jun-2024 15:00 Hours	03-Jun-2024 12:00 Hours

This is online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System portal have to be deposited online through any registered Banks branches.

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

(Tarak Ahmed)
Deputy General Manager (Procurement)
E-mail: dgmp@sgfl.org.bd

GD- 778

The creative industry was already suffering. Then came AI



ILLUSTRATION: ZARIF FAIAZ

Is AI truly more creative than humans? What are the ethical implications of AI-generated art that imitates existing styles? How will the rise of AI impact the job market for creative professionals?

ZARIF FAIAZ

With a seemingly endless stream of new creative tools being released almost every other week, companies like OpenAI are not only pushing the boundaries of what AI can do, but also making bold claims about its potential to surpass human creativity altogether. In a South by Southwest (SXSW) panel last March, OpenAI's Head of ChatGPT claimed boldly that "AI will make us more creative - and more human."

However, this rapid advancement in the field of AI, particularly in the creative sector, raises a multitude of questions. Is AI truly more creative than humans? What are the ethical implications of AI-generated art that imitates existing styles? How will the rise of AI impact the job market for creative professionals?

A 2023 study by the International Federation of Arts Councils and Cultural Agencies (IFACCA) revealed that 42% of cultural institutions globally are already experimenting with AI tools. This number is expected to balloon to 78% by 2027, fueled by a projected annual growth rate of 33% in the global

AI in media and entertainment market according to Grand View Research.

The creative industry, even before the whirlwind of AI, was already facing significant headwinds. This pre-existing vulnerability makes the rise of AI even more impactful, demanding a nuanced approach that acknowledges both the creative potential and potential pitfalls of this technology.

Low wages and income instability plague creative professionals worldwide. A 2020 World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) report found a shocking statistic: 60% of artists globally earn less than \$10,000 USD annually. This financial insecurity disproportionately affects freelancers and independent creators, who form the backbone of the creative workforce. The freelance nature of creative work often translates to a lack of health insurance, paid time off, and other benefits typically associated with traditional employment. A 2022 Freelancers Union study revealed that only 28% of freelance workers have employer-sponsored health insurance. Piracy and copyright issues further

erode creative profits. A 2023 U.S. Chamber of Commerce report estimates that copyright infringement costs the global economy a staggering \$2.3 trillion USD annually. This directly impacts the ability of creatives to earn a living from their work.

The creative industry faces a constant battle for fair treatment beyond just finances. Often, creative work is seen as a passion project rather than skilled labour deserving of fair compensation. This perception fuels undervaluing and low pay. Additionally, many creative projects struggle to secure funding, especially in niche areas. This lack of financial support hinders artistic expression and innovation.

Globally, the creative industries contribute nearly \$3 trillion to the global GDP, underscoring their significant economic role. The digitalisation of these industries through AI and other emerging technologies not only diversifies the creative landscape but also democratizes access to tools that were previously available only to professionals with significant resources.

The visual arts sector, in particular, has seen a significant influx of AI, where algorithms are now capable of generating art that rivals human-created works. This not only challenges the traditional boundaries of artistry and originality but also raises critical questions about copyright and intellectual property rights. The ability of AI to replicate and innovate upon existing styles can potentially flood the market with art that lacks the 'human touch', yet these tools also provide a platform for artists to experiment with new techniques and expressions that were previously unimaginable.

However, the ability of AI to mimic established styles raises ethical and legal concerns. In 2023, a heated debate erupted when the artist collective "Obvious" used AI to create an artwork that won a prestigious art prize. The incident sparked discussions about the very definition of art and the role of the artist in an AI-powered future.

The sheer volume of AI-generated content presents another challenge. Streaming services inundated with AI-

created music could make it difficult for human artists to stand out. Similarly, the constant barrage of AI-generated content could overwhelm audiences, hindering their ability to discover and connect with meaningful artistic expressions.

But often, there are larger issues at stake. A 2024 report by McKinsey Global Institute estimates that up to 800 million jobs globally could be automated by 2030, with a significant portion of those losses likely to occur in creative fields. Agencies are already streamlining workflows with AI, with tasks like image editing and video production increasingly handled by machines. This trend is likely to accelerate, potentially leading to a future dominated by "solopreneur" creatives who leverage AI tools to create content.

While this offers a degree of flexibility, it raises concerns about the long-term viability of smaller agencies and freelance creatives who may struggle to compete with the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of AI-powered content creation.

Perhaps the most fundamental question is whether AI can ever truly replicate the essence of human creativity. While AI can mimic existing styles with uncanny accuracy, it currently lacks the ability to understand and evoke human emotions. The ability to imbue art with meaning, vulnerability, and the ineffable human experience remains a uniquely human capability.

The future of AI in the creative arts is not a zero-sum game. AI has the potential to be a powerful tool in the hands of skilled artists. Educational institutions like Ohio University's School of Media Arts and Studies are already integrating AI education into their curriculum, ensuring that future generations of artists are equipped to thrive in this new paradigm.

The key lies in embracing AI as a collaborator, not a competitor. Imagine a world where AI handles the mundane tasks, freeing up human artists to focus on the conceptual, emotional core of their work. This collaborative approach could lead to the creation of entirely new art forms and experiences that transcend the boundaries of what we currently consider "human" or "machine-made" creativity.

The story of AI in the creative arts is only just beginning to unfold. While challenges abound, the potential for artistic innovation is undeniable. As we navigate this brave new world, fostering a future where human imagination and technological prowess work in tandem will be critical. After all, it is the human spirit that gives life to art, and AI, at its best, should serve as a tool to amplify, not replace, that spark.

JOBS SPOTLIGHT

British Council
Academic
Manager



Deadline: May 16

Eligibility: Undergraduate degree with Cambridge DELTA/Trinity Diploma TESOL or equivalent as recognised by the British Council.

Minimum experience: 2 years

Sajida Foundation
Research Funding
Specialist



Deadline: May 25

Eligibility: Master's degree in social science with experience in research funding acquisition, grant writing, etc.

Minimum experience: 7-10 years

City Bank
Senior Business
Development
Manager (AVP/
SAVP), Corporate
& Institutional
Liability - Wholesale Banking



Deadline: May 15

Eligibility: Bachelors/Masters degree with prior experience in cash management/institutional liability in the financial industry.

Minimum experience: 7 years

Social Marketing
Company (SMC)
Consultant/
Specialist,
Medicine



Deadline: May 20

Eligibility: MBBS with FCPS or MD in Medicine or relevant higher degree and having updated BMDC registration.

Minimum experience: 3 years

5 most in-demand soft skills for today's job market

As workplaces constantly transform in the ever-evolving job market, including the recent rise of remote and hybrid work environments, the demand for certain soft skills has surged. Here are five most in-demand soft skills you should focus on developing to thrive in the workplace of today.

Communication

No matter which field you are in, being able to communicate with your team members and higher-ups through verbal, non-verbal, and written cues is a must-have skill to possess. A blog by Dan Brodnitz, Head of Global Content at LinkedIn Learning, states that 'communication' is the top-most soft skill to have for an employee in 2024, especially in "an era of hybrid work where in-person collaboration is no longer the default".

Leadership

According to a blog on essential soft skills by Harvard Business Review, leadership is about guiding and influencing others to maximise their capabilities to achieve a collective goal. As such, being able to motivate others, delegate tasks effectively, and provide constructive feedback are skills you should develop to lead teams in any kind of workplace.



weaknesses and act with humility in the face of adversity.

Time management

Employers value individuals who can consistently meet deadlines while balancing competing demands effectively. As such, prioritising tasks and setting realistic goals are skills you should focus on if you are currently lacking them. Some easy ways to start improving time management skills are by setting time limits on tasks, creating to-do lists, writing down completed achievements, and taking a few minutes to plan your day before starting work.

Critical thinking

This includes the ability to objectively analyse and evaluate information to form well-reasoned judgments and decisions. This also means being able to identify and remove biases and present multiple perspectives to add validity to your professional reasoning. An article by the career website Indeed states that employees who engage in critical thinking are reflective, independent, and competent, thus making them more lucrative for employers.

IMAGE:
LIDIA NEMIROFF/
UNSPASH

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QUOTE OF
THE DAY



We will fail
when we
fail to try.

ROSA PARKS

City must win at Spurs to clinch title: Guardiola

AGENCIES

Manchester City have lost all four Premier League matches they have played at the Tottenham Hotspur stadium but the defending champions must change that when they visit the North London side on Tuesday, manager Pep Guardiola said.

Second with 85 points from 36 matches, City are one point behind Arsenal who have played an extra game.

If City beat Spurs, they will be able to seal the championship with a win at home to West Ham on the final day of the season on Sunday, when Arsenal host Everton, as the Citizens seek a record fourth title in a row.

"If we don't win we aren't going to win the Premier League, so this is what we have to do," Guardiola told reporters on Monday.

"It's always so demanding to play there, especially this season. They are so aggressive."

City got their first win at Spurs' new stadium in an FA Cup tie in January, ending a five-match losing streak at the venue.

Tottenham won their last four home league games against Manchester City and kept a clean sheet in each of those four encounters. But Ange Postecoglou's side lost 1-0 at home in an FA Cup fourth-round fixture in January.

City have not won their final away league game in the past three seasons.

Under Pep Guardiola, City have lost six times to Tottenham six times in all competitions – the most they have lost against a particular opposition with the Spaniard in charge.

The reverse fixture between the two teams at the Etihad Stadium earlier this season ended in an enthralling 3-3 draw.



"We know what we are playing for," Guardiola said. "We know how difficult it is to be in this position again but we have something unique in front of us."

Guardiola's men are charging towards the finishing line, hitting 28 goals in their past seven Premier League matches and conceding just five times.

"Consistency has been there and that's the reality ... I push my players and they push me," the manager said.

"We are trying to do something special so we have to do that this time. This is the time to do it otherwise Arsenal will be champions."

Spurs boss Ange Postecoglou admitted

that such a fixture at the closing stages of the season sees his side up against an intense challenge.

"Any time you're going to play Man City, particularly at the end of a season when they always seem to be at their best, it's a hell of a challenge," Postecoglou told reporters on Monday.

"We've got an opportunity to measure ourselves against the best. A team that has consistently strived for honours. We want to emulate them one day."

"My recent home record against them is one game, one loss. So I'm not going to take any confidence from that," Postecoglou said.

The manager dismissed the idea that most Spurs fans would want their club to lose in order to dent local rival Arsenal's title hopes.

"You think the majority of our fans are not going to want us to win tomorrow night? I don't see it that way," he said.

"I will never understand if somebody wants their own team to lose. That is not what sport is about. What I love more than anything is the competitiveness," he added.

High-flying Atalanta close in on CL

AGENCIES

Atalanta took a big step towards Champions League football on Sunday by beating Serie A top-five rivals Roma 2-1, a win which also guaranteed spots for Bologna and Juventus in Europe's elite club event.

A brilliant brace from Charles De Ketelaere in the first 20 minutes gave Atalanta, still on a high from reaching the Europa League final, a fully deserved win in Bergamo.

Gian Piero Gasperini's side sit in Italy's fifth and final Champions League spot, three points ahead of Roma with a game in hand against Fiorentina which they will play the weekend after the scheduled end of the season.

Atalanta, who also face Juventus in the Italian Cup final on Wednesday, looked set to sweep Roma aside in the same manner in which they dealt with Marseille on Thursday to reach their first-ever European final.

But they had to overcome a tense finale after Lorenzo Pellegrini's 66th-minute penalty gave the away side hope, despite a dominating display from the hosts who also hit the post twice.

"We weren't clinical enough in front of goal, otherwise we would have won it sooner without having to suffer so much at the end," said Gasperini to DAZN.

"I don't know if we've learned a lesson, other than we had so many scoring opportunities and did not aim properly," he added.

Defeat for Roma followed up their heartbreaking last-four elimination from the Europa League at Bayer Leverkusen.

Daniele De Rossi's team, who were missing injured talisman Paulo Dybala, have little chance of finishing fifth but can still reach the continent's top club competition even if they finish sixth, if Atalanta win the Europa League.

Thanks to Atalanta's win Bologna will make their first appearance in the modern Champions League as they and Juve, who could only draw with relegated Salernitana, are seven points ahead of Roma with two rounds of fixtures remaining.

Third-placed Bologna hailed their qualification with a simple "Bologna, we did it" on social media.

Injury in limelight with WC squad imminent

SPORTS REPORTER

Ahead of Bangladesh's T20 World Cup squad announcement, there appeared to be very little doubt regarding the make-up of the side, but Taskin Ahmed's late injury has stirred debates the team management will have to settle. The Bangladesh Cricket Board has officially informed that the squad is set to be announced on Tuesday.

Yesterday, pacerman Hasan Mahmud met with head coach Chandika Hathurusingha and it was learnt that Hasan is set to board the flight to USA to play the three-match T20I series against USA, slated to begin on May 21.

Given Taskin's injury, which he suffered during the fourth T20I against Zimbabwe recently, the pacer will not be playing the three-match series against USA. The Tigers are expected to take a 17-member squad to the USA for the upcoming series and Taskin will accompany the squad. Team management sources are still hopeful that the pacer can recover in time for the World Cup.

"We are still hopeful that we will have some positive news regarding Taskin. If it was too serious, we would have been informed that there is no chance," a member of the selection panel told The Daily Star yesterday.

Taskin had not been allowed NOC to play the Indian Premier

League but the pacer had played Dhaka Premier League matches and four of the five T20I matches against Zimbabwe lately. Concerns regarding his injury had seen him sit out the fifth and final T20I in Dhaka which the Tigers lost by eight wickets.

If Taskin does not make a full recovery, it will open the door for Hasan to be included in the World Cup squad.



Changes can be made to the World Cup squad till May 24 and ICC T20WC technical committee's permission is required if any team wants to make a change to the squad after that date.

There are also suggestions from sources that all-rounder Mohammad Saifuddin's inclusion in the World Cup squad is under doubt. Saifuddin picked up eight wickets in the four matches he played in the Zimbabwe series

at an economy rate of 9.31. He, however, conceded 55 runs in four overs in the final T20I and team management is believed to be disappointed by his performance.

The all-rounder also got just one opportunity to bat during the series.

Pacer Tanzim Sakib likely has a good chance of making the cut, given doubts over Saifuddin's inclusion. Bangladesh are also mulling over the inclusion of spinner Tanvir Islam, though it remains to be seen whether he gets into the final 15-member squad.

The rest of the squad looks pretty settled. Shakib Al Hasan has made a strong return with the ball in the Zimbabwe series alongside pacer Mustafizur Rahman. Towhid Hridoy was in fine touch in the recent series and was well supported in the middle-order by Jaker Ali Anik and Mahmudullah Riyad.

Mahmudullah, who did not get a place in the 2022 World Cup, has the highest average among Bangladesh's middle-order batters in the last 12 months and his experience will be banked on heading to the global event.

Meanwhile Rishad Hossain, who has featured the most in the Tigers' T20I line-up in the last 12 months, playing 13 out of 16 T20Is and bagging 10 wickets, is being earmarked as the first specialist leg spinner in a Bangladesh World Cup squad in a while.

Big names miss out in Dutch T20 WC squad

ICC

Veteran all-rounder Roelof van der Merwe and key batter Colin Ackermann missed the cut for the Dutch as the Netherlands named their squad for next month's ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024

Selectors instead opted for the more youthful choices of left-arm spinner Tim Pringle, young seamer Kyle Klein and hard-hitting opener Michael Levitt in their squad. Levitt turned heads with a blistering hundred against Namibia in a T20I tri-series played in Nepal back in February, hitting 11 fours and 10 sixes in a knock of 135 from just 62 balls.

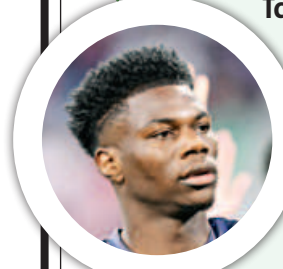
Wicket-keeper-batter Scott Edwards will once again lead the Netherlands in his regular role as skipper, with star all-rounder Bas de Leede among the key players for a Dutch side that will face South Africa, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal during the group stages at the T20 World Cup.

The Netherlands' first match comes on June 4 against Nepal in Dallas, with the European side looking to build on their impressive effort at the last T20 World Cup where they upset South Africa in one of two memorable victories during the Super 12 stage of the event.

Squad: Scott Edwards (c), Aryan Dutt, Bas de Leede, Daniel Doram, Fred Klaassen, Kyle Klein, Logan van Beek, Max O'Dowd, Michael Levitt, Paul van Meekeren, Sybrand Engelbrecht, Teja Nidamanuru, Tim Pringle, Vikram Singh, Viv Kingma, Wesley Barresi

SHORT CORNER

Tchouameni 'not ruled out' for CL final: Ancelotti



Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti said Monday injured midfielder Aurelien Tchouameni was 'not ruled out' from competing in the Champions League final. Los Blancos face German side Borussia Dortmund at Wembley on June 1 but Tchouameni is a doubt after suffering a stress fracture in his left foot last week.

Ten Hag laments Man Utd's injuries

Manchester United manager Erik ten Hag blamed an injury crisis at the Old Trafford club for a poor campaign after his side fell to a 1-0 loss to Arsenal in the Premier League on Sunday - their ninth home defeat across all competitions this season.

Germany eyes huge party as it hosts Euro 2024

Germany is gearing up to host the Euro 2024 football championship under high security as global threats cast a shadow, but on the field, the home team will be looking to prove they are finally back in form.

Livingstone leaves IPL to get 'knee sorted'

England batsman Liam Livingstone has left the Indian Premier League early to get his knee "sorted" ahead of the T20 World Cup in June, the Punjab Kings player said. Livingstone, 30, played just seven of 12 matches for Punjab, who have been knocked out of the play-off race for this season.

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PHOTO: REUTERS

PSG's Mbappe brothers -- forward Kylian and midfielder Ethan -- pose with their mother Fayza Lamari on Sunday following a price-giving ceremony marking the French club's record-extending 11th Ligue 1 title, confirmed about two weeks ago. It was the last game in Paris for Kylian Mbappe, who confirmed his exit from the club at the end of the season through a social media post on Friday. Mbappe opened the scoring after eight minutes with a fine finish into an open goal in his final appearance at the Parc des Princes but PSG were left stunned as Toulouse spoiled the hosts' title celebration with a 3-1 win to inflict only their second Ligue 1 defeat this season.

'NO RHYTHM, NO TEMPO' Djokovic risks losing top spot

REUTERS

Novak Djokovic's shock exit from the Italian Open on Sunday could prove to be a decisive moment in the race for the world number one spot, as the top-ranked Serb prepares for his French Open title defence with Jannik Sinner poised to leapfrog him.

Two days after accidentally being hit on the head by a water bottle while signing autographs in Rome, an off-colour Djokovic crashed to his earliest defeat in the tournament he has won six times after a 6-2, 6-3, third-round thrashing by Alejandro Tabilo.

Djokovic will remain 1,090 points ahead of Sinner before the year's second Grand Slam begins on May 26, but the 36-year-old is on shaky ground as he will be defending 2,000 points in Paris and winning the title may not be enough to stay on top.

"It was a very unfortunate, unlucky situation ... that guy leaned over the fence, and the bottle dropped from his rucksack and landed on my head," Djokovic said, reflecting on the freak accident that hurt his chances to pull away from Sinner.

"It was unexpected. I wasn't even looking up. Then I felt a very strong hit in the head. That has really

impacted me.

"The way I felt on the court [on Sunday] was just completely like a different player entered into my shoes. No rhythm, no tempo, no balance whatsoever on any shot. It is concerning."

With only six matches on clay, Djokovic will be slightly undercooked as he heads to Paris in search of a record 25th Grand Slam title.

Even if Djokovic goes on to win at Roland Garros, Sinner could rise to world number one for the first time on June 10 by reaching the championship match.

The 22-year-old Sinner, who skipped Rome with a hip injury, will be defending only 45 points in Paris but faces a race against time to be fully fit.

Djokovic had endured a bumpy season even before the bottle incident as the Serb's bid for a record-extending 11th title at the Australian Open was snuffed out by eventual

champion Sinner in the semifinals.

He then fell to lucky loser Luca Nardi in the Indian Wells third round before being outlasted by Casper Ruud in the Monte Carlo semifinals, sparking fear among fans that his aura of invincibility was slowly fading.

Despite winning three out of the four Grand Slams last year, Djokovic split with long-time coach Goran Ivanisevic and fitness coach Marco Panichi in a bid to rediscover his best form

ahead of Roland Garros, Wimbledon and the Paris Olympics. Talk of terminal decline

may still be premature as Djokovic could silence critics by winning a fourth title at the claycourt major, but he admitted things must improve fast after reaching May without a trophy for the first time since 2018.

"Everything needs to be better in order for me to have at least a chance to win it," said Djokovic.



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5YRS AFTER HC ORDER Govt yet to drop the word 'Kumari' from Kabin Nama

SHARIFUL ISLAM

The High Court in a 2019 judgement directed the government to drop the word "kumari", or virgin, from the marriage registration form, terming it defamatory and discriminatory against women.

It had also asked the authorities concerned to replace "kumari" with the word "unmarried", preferably within six months from the judgement copy's receipt date.

The order, however, has not yet been executed and the word "kumari" still exists in the form called "Kabin Nama".

The HC order came following a writ petition filed by Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust in 2014, challenging the legality of clauses five and 21 of the marriage registration form.

Under clause five, a bride requires to make a statement on her marital status.

Under clause 21, a groom has to say whether he has any other wife. And if the answer is "yes", then he needs to mention whether he has taken approval for remarrying from an arbitration council in accordance with the Muslim Family Law Ordinance 1961.

An arbitration council is a platform, led by mayors, chairmen and councilors of local government bodies, which hears family disputes and gives decisions.

Police said they receive many complaints where the word "kumari" is being used as a tool to file cases against women by their husbands over misunderstandings among themselves and their families.

Banaj Kumar Majumder, chief of the Police Bureau

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PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Farmers sun drying rice grains on a concrete surface near a mill in Munshiganj's Sreenagar upazila yesterday. Drying is the most critical stage after harvesting, as any delay in the process or incomplete drying can reduce the quality of the grains and result in losses for the farmers. However, with the introduction of mechanical drying, the traditional process of sun drying is slowly becoming obsolete.

DSA CASE JnU student gets 5yrs in jail with 1yr probation

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka tribunal has sentenced Tithy Sarker, a suspended student of Jagannath University, to five years imprisonment in a DSA case filed for making derogatory comments about religion on Facebook.

However, it has granted her a year-long probation on eight conditions, including regular care for her aged father, following traffic rules, not harming the environment, and more, said Mamun Sikder, stenographer of the tribunal.

This means Tithy will not have to be in jail for this one year and her behaviour during the probation period will determine if her sentence will be reconsidered.

According to section-5 of the Probation of Offenders Ordinance, 1960, a court may, for reasons

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MV Abdullah's turbulent passage ends Drops anchor in Kutubdia, 23 crewmen come ashore today

DWAIPAYAN BARUA, City

The long wait for the 23 crewmen of MV Abdullah to come home ended as the vessel dropped anchor at Kutubdia around 6:00pm yesterday.

About a month ago, the Somali pirates released the ship after holding it and its crew members hostage for 33 days.

The ship then travelled to the UAE and later set sail for Bangladesh. It reached Bangladesh's territorial waters yesterday morning.

Captain Mohammad Abdur Rashid told The Daily Star, "All the crewmen are physically fine and eagerly waiting to go back to their homes."

All the seafarers would be brought to the KSRM lighter jetty in the port city's Sadarghat area this afternoon.

Meherul Karim, chief executive officer of the ship's owning firm SR Shipping Ltd, yesterday said replacement crew members have left Chattogram for MV Abdullah on a vessel.

After crew swap, the same vessel would return with the 23 crew members, he said.

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Solitary confinement 'cruel, degrading'

Those awaiting final verdict can't be kept in condemned cells, HC says in landmark ruling

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a landmark judgment, the High Court yesterday said the prisoners who have been sentenced to death but whose appeals are still pending must not be kept in condemned cells.

The bench of Justice Sheikh Hassan Arif and Justice Md Bazlur Rahman delivered the verdict, ordering the authorities concerned to shift such convicts from the condemned cells to the ordinary cells.

The arrangements for their shifting must start immediately and be completed within two years, the bench ordered.

From the moment of conviction by a trial court, the convicts sentenced to death are kept in solitary confinement, and allowed outside of their jail cells once a day to walk around the death row block — this too depends on the authority's will.

The HC said that since conviction, 15 to 20 years is required for all the appeals, review petitions and mercy petitions to be fully disposed of.

The bench also said that keeping the prisoners in confinement for such long periods is inhuman, degrading and a form of cruelty, which are prohibited by the constitution.

If their death sentences are executed after so many years of solitary confinement, it will be like giving them double punishment.

It added that several countries in the world have banned death

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A prisoner under death sentence may be kept in solitary confinement in case of a contagious disease or mental health issues, only in the interest of security of themselves or other prisoners.

PATIENT'S DEATH Hospital blames those who were stuck in the lift

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Hours after a patient died while stuck in a lift on Sunday, the authorities of Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Medical College Hospital blamed the people inside for banging on the lift's door and causing the "door safety" system to fail.

The lift was opened manually by its operator within 15 minutes after the door went out of order, the hospital authorities said in a letter, signed by director (acting) Jahangir Alam, sent to the Directorate General of Health Services the same day.

However, the victim's family members rejected the claim and said they were stuck for around 45 minutes and chaos was created because 16 to 18 people were in the lift amid a suffocating condition.

Fifty-three-year-old Mumtaz Begum of Barigao village in Gazipur's Kapsia upazila died allegedly of suffocation.

"The lift got stuck between the eighth and ninth floors at 11:15am due to a power outage. Once the lift gets stuck, the ARD [Automatic Rescue Device] needs one minute to start working," said the letter.

"But the lift's door safety system did not function after some of those in the lift, including patients, banged on the door," it said.

Those stuck opened the door and came out before the operator could

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Israel push into Gaza from north, south 57 more Palestinians killed in air strikes, shelling

AGENCIES

Israeli forces pushed deep into the ruins of Gaza's northern edge yesterday to recapture an area where they had claimed to have defeated Hamas months ago, while at the opposite end of the enclave tanks and troops pushed across a highway into Rafah.

With some of the most intense fighting for weeks now taking place on both the northern and southern edges of Gaza, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians have again taken flight, and aid groups warn that a humanitarian crisis could sharply worsen.

Israeli forces ordered medical staff at Rafah's Kuwaiti Hospital to evacuate. Medics based at the hospital fear that an attack on the hospital would mean a "complete collapse" of the limited medical system in Rafah, reports Al Jazeera online.

In sprawling Jabalia, the biggest of Gaza's eight camps built 75 years ago to house Palestinian refugees from what is now Israel, tanks pushed towards the heart of the district. Residents said tank shells were landing at the centre of the camp and air strikes had destroyed clusters of houses.

Thick clouds of black smoke from explosions could be seen rising over northern Gaza from the Israeli border.

Palestinian health officials yesterday said they had so far recovered 20 bodies of Palestinians killed in the overnight air strikes on Jabalia, while dozens were injured.

The Palestinian death toll in the offensive has now risen to 35,091, according to Gaza health officials who fear many more bodies are lost under the rubble. The toll includes at least 57 deaths over the past 24 hours.

- 20 bodies recovered from Jabalia camp after Israeli strikes
- Medical staff ordered out of Kuwaiti Hospital in Rafah

DB officer points gun at woman's head during raid

B'baria police forms committee to probe incident

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

Brahmanbaria police has formed a three-member committee to investigate the incident involving a DB police officer pointing a firearm at a woman's head after failing to nab her husband during a raid on Friday.

Mohammad Shakhawat Hossain, superintendent of police (SP) in Brahmanbaria, said the committee, headed by additional SP Zainal Abedin, has been asked to submit its report within three working days. "Action will be taken as per the probe report."

Meanwhile, the woman yesterday filed a complaint against the police officer with a court in Brahmanbaria over the incident, said her lawyer, Shawkat Ali.

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Palestinians pack their belongings as they prepare to flee Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

62.9pc turnout in fourth phase

Sporadic incidents of violence reported in West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

India yesterday voted in the fourth phase of a seven-week long general election as the campaign rhetoric became more strident over economic disparities and religious divisions.

The world's most populous nation began voting on April 19 in a seven-phase election in which nearly one billion people are eligible to vote, with ballots set to be counted on June 4.

A voter turnout of 62.9 percent was recorded till 8:00 pm yesterday in the fourth phase of Lok Sabha polls in 96 constituencies spread over 10 States and Union Territories amid incidents of violence in Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal as well as reports of poll boycott in some Uttar Pradesh villages.

The voter turnout in the first three phases of the Lok Sabha elections held on April 19, 26 and May 7 was 66.14 percent, 66.71 percent and 65.68 percent, respectively.

Among the high profile contestants in the fourth phase were Samajwadi Party President Akhilesh Yadav in Kannauj (Uttar Pradesh), Congress' Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury (Baharampur), TMC's Shatrughan Sinha (Asansol), Mahua Moitra (Krishnanagar) and Yusuf Pathan (Baharampur) as well as BJP's S S Ahluwalia (Asansol) and Dilip Ghosh (Bardhaman-Durgapur).

There were also reports of EVMs malfunctioning at



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