



PM'S INDIA VISIT

Dhaka eyes fresh loans from Delhi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

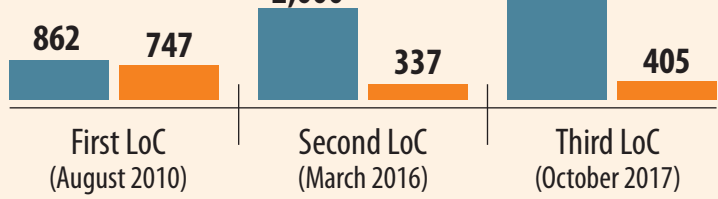
India may offer Bangladesh fresh loans under a new framework, as implementation of the projects under the existing loan programme is proving difficult due to some strict loan conditions.

INDIAN LOAN UTILISATION

In millions of dollars

As of June 2023

SOURCE: ERD



The issue will be discussed during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's official visit to India next week, a top finance ministry official said yesterday.

Hasina and her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi will have a one-on-one meeting followed by delegation-level talks on June 22 at the Hyderabad House, a state guest house, in New Delhi.

However, signing of any new loan agreement is unlikely during Hasina's visit, although an announcement to this effect may come in a joint communique, the official added requesting anonymity citing diplomatic confidentiality.

Over the last few months, Dhaka and New Delhi have been discussing a new loan framework and its amount and conditionalities, official sources say.

The discussion comes as Bangladesh faces challenges to utilise the existing conditional loans from India.

Since 2010, India committed \$7.36 billion in loan to Bangladesh. Of this, Bangladesh has been able to utilise only \$1.73 billion, or 23 percent of the commitment, till April this year.

The conditions of the existing Indian Line of Credit (LoC) are very strict. For example, around 65-75 percent of goods or services for each project must be procured from India, causing delay in project implementation, according to officials.

Appointment of Indian contractors along with bureaucratic red-tape on both sides also limits the project's progress.

Though Bangladesh signs project-based loan agreements with other development partners, in case of India, credit deals have been inked for a cluster of programmes under a framework.

This means, once a loan deal is signed, implementation period of all projects under that deal gets started. Also, as per the loan conditions, the

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Pilgrims pray at dawn on Saudi Arabia's Mount Arafat during the climax of the Hajj pilgrimage yesterday. Over 1.5 million Muslims prayed there in soaring temperatures.

PHOTO: AFP

Benazir wrote to Boat Club from abroad

Confirm its two executive members

DIPAN NANDY

Former police chief Benazir Ahmed has recently written to Dhaka Boat Club, stating that he is out of the country and cannot serve as its president during his "temporary absence".

He sent an email on June 13 after a month of speculation that the former inspector general of police had left the country while the Anti-Corruption Commission



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Major shakeup in BNP, 'seniors kept in dark'

Tarique moves to take 'full control' of the party; 39 leaders given new positions

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

BNP reshuffled its central executive committee yesterday, a day after dissolving some city units over their failure to make the anti-government movement a success.

A total of 39 party leaders got new positions.

This sudden reshuffle has caused commotion within the party as acting chairman Tarique Rahman is restructuring the committees, keeping the senior leaders in the dark, BNP insiders said.

They said the issue was not discussed at the meetings of the standing committee, the party's highest policymaking body.

According to the party charter, the acting

chairperson will discharge all the duties of the chairperson in the absence of the latter.

And Tarique is now invoking that provision, said party sources.

The BNP charter gives the chairperson the authority to scrap any committee anytime, and the decision would be approved at the subsequent council.

The reshuffle brought younger leaders to important positions, while those with strong organisational abilities have been made advisers to the chairperson, BNP insiders said.

Some leaders who were selected for advisory roles believe they were assigned these positions as a form of punishment.

Apart from the executive body, BNP's

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EID MUBARAK

The Daily Star wishes its valued readers, patrons, advertisers and well-wishers a happy Eid

HOLIDAY NOTICE

The Daily Star offices will remain closed for 3 days from today on account of Eid-ul-Azha. There will be no issue of the newspaper from June 17 to 19. However, we will be available online 24/7 during the holiday.



'Plot afoot to isolate govt from people'

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said a vested quarter is still hatching conspiracies against the government to isolate it from the people.

Recalling the artificial famine in 1974, Hasina said Bangladesh had a bitter experience that year when

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Aching to go home to celebrate Eid-ul-Azha with friends and family, several hundred people were waiting for a train at Dhaka Airport Railway Station yesterday morning.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

EID JOURNEY HOME

Northbound people suffer

Others have hassle-free trip

SAJJAD HOSSAIN and TUHIN SHUBHIRA ADHIKARY

Tens of thousands left Dhaka to celebrate Eid-ul-Azha with their families, with those heading north complaining of a dearth of transport, overcharging by bus operators and long tailbacks.

However, those who were headed to the eastern, northeastern and southern parts of the country had a relatively hassle-free journey as no traffic congestion was reported from major highways linked to those areas.

Bus passengers yesterday said they had to pay Tk 100 to Tk 400 above the fare set by the government.

For instance, the bus fare from Dhaka to Dinajpur is usually Tk 800. But Sarower Hossain had to pay Tk 1,100 yesterday for a ticket on the Shah Fateh Ali Paribahan from Mohakhali bus terminal.

"When I asked why the price was higher, the bus staffer did not answer," Sarower said.

Similar scenes were seen at Sayedabad and Gabtoli bus terminals.

Mujibar Rahman shelled out Tk 1,000 to buy a ticket of Meghna Travels to go to Betagi of Barguna - Tk 350 more than normal. "I have no choice but to purchase this ticket as I have to go home for Eid," he said.

When the correspondent asked Mohammad Mintu, a staff of Meghna Travel at Sayedabad Bus Terminal, about overcharging, he said: "The bus will return to Dhaka empty, so we have to factor this in. That's why the extra fare is being charged."

Similarly, Rashed Rahman, a

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KASHMIR SPEECH

Arundhati to face trial under anti-terror law

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

India's authorities have sanctioned the prosecution of award-winning author-activist Arundhati Roy and former professor at the Central University of Kashmir Showkat Hossain under a stringent anti-terror law for allegedly making provocative speeches at an event in New Delhi in 2010.



The sanction to try Roy, the author best known for her novel "The God of Small Things" which won the Booker Prize in 1997, and Hossain under Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) was granted by Delhi's Lt Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on Friday, officials in his office said.

Last October, Saxena had granted sanction to prosecute Roy and Hossain in the same case under section 196 of CrPC for commission of offences punishable under a milder law of Indian Penal Code:

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1st Death Anniversary of Arshad Waliur Rahman

October 2, 1965 - June 16, 2023

It has been a year since you have passed away, and your sudden departure left us in deep grief. We hold you close in our thoughts and hearts, dearly missing your presence. We take solace in the beautiful memories you have left behind.

To everyone, you were known as Arshad Waliur Rahman, but to us, you were our beloved Reaz. Although you are no longer with us, yet your essence resides eternally within our hearts.

To all who have stood by us, we thank you for your love and support. Please keep our beloved Arshad Waliur Rahman in your prayers. May Allah (SWT) grant him the highest place in Jannatul Firdaus.

Shahnaz Rahman & Family



Gulshan-2



Mohammadpur

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Civic duties during Eid-ul-Azha

RBR

The sacrifice of animals on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha commemorates a sacrifice, which symbolises utmost loyalty and complete submission to the Almighty – this is the first part of the Eid rituals.

The second is to remember the important principle in Islam that “cleanliness is half of faith”. However, the aftermath of Eid-ul-Azha is a messy affair.

I am afraid this is the truth.

This is an act which defies Islamic doctrines on cleanliness. These religious teachings benefit both society and us. It is up to Muslims to be aware of this guidance and learn and apply it anywhere and everywhere. Let us for once keep our environment clean and maintain proper hygiene.

For reasons only known to Dhakaites, they forget their civic sense. Our lack of civic sense baffles me hence my laments. The importance of a prompt clean-up after slaughtering animals is something

we should not forget.

There is also an unspoken race to flaunt affluence. The street in front of luxury apartments becomes personal cattle grounds, where a minimum of 10 bulls are stationed. One can imagine the powerful stench of manure and urine produced.

Come Eid day, they are laid down on the very same street for the slaughter; the untidy, chaotic mess we tend to make on the open streets is beyond comprehension.

Kudos to our mayors and city corporations that for the last few years they undertook prompt action to clean up after the rituals were completed. The city corporations have taken elaborate measures to make the city clean

within hours of the slaughter. We do have slaughterhouses but they are ill-equipped to handle the Eid pressure and thus citizens take up the streets as their own.

The deployment of thousands of sanitation workers, along with the distribution of eco-friendly biodegradable polythene bags, bleaching powder, jute bags, and disinfectants show their commitment to maintaining cleanliness.

Requisitions have been made for extra dump trucks, water tanks, and garbage trucks.

However, we as citizens must cooperate and dispose of our qurbani waste responsibly. It is also up to us to

clean up the streets, garages, staircases and lifts with cleaning agents.

Eid-ul-Azha is very important if you consider the economic side of it. The cattle farms, and villagers target this festival while rearing the cows and goats. Cattle rearing is an expensive affair. I know a person working as a driver in this city, who takes cattle rearing as a side business. He buys cattle and lets his father at the village take care of it. Young green grass with grass hay, straw, silage, compressed and pelleted feeds, oils and mixed rations, and sprouted grains and legumes are fed to the animals. These villagers and farmers are struggling yet they target this festival to cover the cost.

Then this is the time when tanners get to buy, in bulk, precious cowhide in the natural, unbleached form. There are other economic implications and business turnovers of this festival that cannot be ignored.

So, do not litter your streets and garages; treat your cattle well and help the business in one of the biggest Muslim festivals of the year.



Patuatuli in Old Dhaka

Major shakeup in BNP

FROM PAGE 1

international affairs committee has also been restructured. Party sources said the move was made because of the previous committee's failure to maintain close ties with the western countries, China and India.

BNP standing committee member Abdul Moyeen Khan has been made the chief of the committee to strengthen the relationship with those nations.

Soon after the January 7 national election, Tarique started working on restructuring the party's executive committee. There will be significant changes in the full committee in phases, with the introduction of new members, said a BNP leader familiar with the issue.

“Young leaders loyal to Tarique Rahman will be given important positions,” said a senior BNP leader wishing not to be named.

A number of mid-ranking influential BNP leaders said Tarique is in fact building his own circle by restructuring the committees to establish his absolute control over the party.

“He is doing this to make sure

nobody challenges his decisions in future,” said a BNP leader.

Many committees have already expired since the party held its last national council in 2017.

The BNP constitution stipulates that a council should be held every three years. However, restructuring of its committees are being announced through press releases.

“The issue of reorganising was discussed at the party forum, but we were not informed when and how it would happen,” a senior leader told The Daily Star yesterday wishing anonymity.

Goyeshwar Chandra Roy, a standing committee member, said the decision on revamping the party was made earlier and is now being put into action.

On Thursday night, BNP dissolved the convening committees of its Dhaka south and north city units. It also announced dissolution of the convening committees of its Chattogram and Barishal city units.

The central committee of Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal, led by President Sultan Salahuddin Tuku and General Secretary Abdul Monayem Munna,

has also been dissolved.

Some BNP leaders, including Zahir Uddin Swapan, Mahbub Uddin Khokon, Mujibur Rahman Sarwar, Syed Moazzem Hossain Alal, and Ruhul Quddus Talukder Dula, have been made adviser to the party chairperson.

Some party leaders said Swapan, Khokon, Sarwar and Alal have been punished through these appointments.

Syed Emran Saleh Prince and Shahiduddin Chowdhury Annie have been promoted to joint secretaries general from organising secretaries.

Meanwhile, Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, BNP's student front, announced its full fledged 260 member committee yesterday, about three and a half months after the formation of its partial committee.

Rakibul Islam Rakib and Nasir Uddin Nasir have been made president and general secretary of the new committee respectively.

As many as 41 leaders have been given the posts of vice president, one has been made senior joint general secretary, and 111 have been named as joint general secretaries.

Northbound people suffer

FROM PAGE 1

private service provider, had to pay Tk 490 more for his ticket to Bogura on a Rozina Enterprise bus.

When the correspondent asked Kausar Hossain, a staff of the Rozina Enterprise counter at Gabtoli bus terminal, about the higher fare than the previous day, he said: “It's Eid time. So, we have no other option.”

Despite paying higher fares, the journey home was not smooth and swift for northbound passengers by road.

In the early hours of yesterday, the Dhaka-Tangail-Rangpur Highway witnessed a 13 kilometre-long tailback due to the increased number of northbound vehicles and suspension of toll collection on the Bangabandhu bridge multiple times since Friday night.

The toll collection had to be stopped several times as several vehicles broke down on the bridge, said Ahsanul Kabir Pavel, executive engineer of the site office of Bangabandhu Bridge.

At 9:00am, there was a seven-km-long tailback on the Dhaka-Tangail-Rangpur Highway, Sajedur Rahman, the in-charge of Elenga Highway Police, told our Tangail correspondent.

“This is very normal during Eid rush,” he added.

However, the traffic situation on

the highway improved afterwards, with no tailback observed as of 6:00pm yesterday.

The Dhaka-Nabinagar-Chandra Road that connects with the Dhaka-Tangail-Rangpur Highway at Chandra intersection had gridlock from 4:00pm yesterday after the closure of garments factories in the area, reported our Gazipur correspondent.

The huge number of vehicles caused traffic congestion in Nabinagar, Baipail and Ashulia areas, Ayub Ali, the officer in charge of Savar Highway Police Station, told our Savar Correspondent at 7:00pm.

Many people were seen desperately looking for vehicles as the number of passengers outnumbered the vehicles in the areas.

The traffic congestion on the Dhaka-Tangail-Rangpur Highway held up the buses, said Subhankar Ghosh Rakesh, joint secretary of the Bangladesh Bus Truck Owners Association.

“So, the bus schedule was delayed by two to three hours on the route,” he told The Daily Star yesterday.

However, no major traffic congestion was reported from the Dhaka-Mawa-Bhanga Expressway, Dhaka-Chattogram and Dhaka-Sylhet Highways, he said.

Those who caught the train,

however, had a smoother journey home as almost all trains left the capital on time.

“Eid rush via railway reached its peak today. More people are coming to the station in the evening and it would be a big challenge for us to maintain a schedule at night,” Shah Alam Kiron Shishir, divisional commercial officer (Dhaka division) of Bangladesh Railway, told The Daily Star at 6:30pm yesterday.

Over at the Sadarghat launch terminal, a huge crowd was seen in the evening after the garment factories broke for Eid yesterday afternoon.

As of 7:00 pm, 80 launches left the terminal.

Meanwhile, the mobile courts of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority fined six launches a total of Tk 27,000 for various violations, including the absence of railings on stairs, illegal anchoring and overloading of passengers.

Among them, five launches were fined Tk 16,000 for lacking railings on stairs and Tk 1,000 for illegal anchoring at the capital's Sadarghat.

Additionally, one launch was fined Tk 10,000 for passenger overloading at Chandpur's Maju Chowdhury Hat launch terminal.

Eid will be celebrated on Monday in Bangladesh.

Benazir wrote to Boat Club from abroad

FROM PAGE 1

was investigating him, his wife and two daughters.

He did not mention which country he is currently in.

Benazir wrote to Bakhtiar Ahmed Khan, member (administration) of the club, saying, “Please be advised that I'm now out of the country along with my family for some urgent family needs. This incapacitates me to run the day-to-day business of the club which may prolonged [sic] for an indefinite period.”

He requested Rubel Aziz, an adviser to the club, to be the acting president

“until my return and resumption of the duties of the club president”.

When contacted by this correspondent, Bakhtiar said, “Benazir Ahmed emailed me. He has asked Rubel Aziz to perform the duties of the [club's] president as he is staying outside the country.”

The development was also confirmed by Prof Nizamul Haque Bhuiyan, an executive committee member of the club. The Daily Star has a copy of the letter.

Rubel, the person Benazir recommended to be the acting president, is a former president of the

club. He is also the managing director of Partex Group.

The ACC on April 18 launched an investigation into allegations that Benazir and his family members amassed huge wealth through corruption.

Citing immigration police sources, The Daily Star earlier reported that Benazir and his family members flew to Singapore on May 4 night on a flight of Singapore Airlines.

The government authorities, including several ministers, had said they did not know about Benazir's whereabouts.

'Plot afoot to isolate govt from people'

FROM PAGE 1

food grains purchased with cash were blocked from entering the country.

“An artificial famine was created at that time to isolate Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman from the people. When they failed to do so, they made the August 15, 1975 incident to occur,” she said.

The PM's comments came at a programme marking the inauguration of the three-month tree plantation programme of Bangladesh Krishak League at the Gono Bhaban.

Hasina, who is also the president of Awami League, said her party has been carrying out tree plantation programmes since 1985 following the footsteps of Bangabandhu to save Bangladesh from the adverse impacts of climate change.

She said BNP founder Ziaur Rahman had cut trees in the name of so-called development and his wife did the same

thing in the name of anti-government movement in 2013.

She went on to urge the people to make a “Green Bangladesh” by planting trees in large numbers.

The premier reiterated her call for the people to grow more food by bringing every inch of land under cultivation.

She said her government had been able to acquire self-sufficiency in food production after assuming power in 1996.

“We have achieved success in food production due to extensive research in this sector.”

Stressing the need for planned industrialisation, she said her government is building 100 economic zones across the country to protect arable land from unplanned industrialisation.

The PM said the government wants

to bring irrigation completely under the solar power system.

“Initially, it might require some investment. But it would cut the overall cost in the long run.”

At the function, the premier awarded several Krishak League leaders for their contribution to pursuing the nationwide tree plantation campaign.

Hasina planted three saplings at the Gono Bhaban on the occasion of the programme.

She said she has planted over 2,000 trees at the Gono Bhaban since assuming power.

Krishak League President Samir Chanda and acting general secretary Bishwanath Sarker Bitu also spoke at the programme.

This year, Krishak League has set a target of planting 52 lakh saplings across the country during its three-month programme.

No respite for Gazans

FROM PAGE 12

backed by Iran and allied with Hamas, launching waves of rockets and drones against Israeli military targets.

Hezbollah said intense strikes since Wednesday were retaliation for Israel's killing of one of its commanders.

Israeli forces responded with shelling, the military said, also announcing air strikes on Hezbollah infrastructure across the border.

Two women were killed in a strike on Jannata in southern Lebanon, village official Hassan Shur said, the latest deaths in near-daily exchanges of fire between Hezbollah and the Israeli military since the Gaza war began.

On Friday plumes of smoke still billowed over the village.

Lightning strikes claim four lives

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

At least four people were killed in separate lightning strike incidents in Rangamati's Langadu upazila yesterday.

The deceased are Rina Begum, 35, Bacchu Miah, 30, Ziaul Haque Shamshu, 40, and Obaidul, 30, confirmed Harun or Rashid, officer-in-charge of Langadu Police Station.

Locals said Bacchu, Ziaul, and Obaidul died on the spot after a lightning bolt struck their boat on the Kaptai Lake. They were travelling to Minabazar from Mainimukh Bazar around 5:00pm. They were residents of Bhasanaydam area.

Meanwhile, Akkas, who was also on the same boat, fell into the water and went missing during the lightning strike incident.

Earlier in the afternoon, Rina, wife of Atarakchara UP Chairman Tilar Ibrahim, died after a thunderbolt struck her in the yard of her house in Karalyachhari village, confirmed Atarakchara UP Secretary Al Amin.

5 cops suspended over extortion allegations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five policemen from Narayanganj were suspended yesterday after a report broadcasted on a private TV channel accused them of extorting money from trucks transporting sacrificial animals for Eid.

They are Sub-Inspector Sheikh Nazrul Islam of Rugganj Police Station; and SI Md Asaduzzaman, and Constables Nazir Sheikh, Jugal Mondal, and Tanvir Hossain Akash of Narayanganj Police Lines.

In a press release, Enamul Haque Sagor, assistant inspector general (media) of police headquarters, said IGP Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun reiterated that no members of the Bangladesh Police would be spared if found involved in criminal activities. The force maintains a policy of “zero tolerance” towards such misconduct.

A probe committee has been formed, led by Narayanganj district's additional police superintendent (crime), to investigate the matter. The committee will recommend departmental actions based on its findings.

The statement said stringent measures would be taken if allegations of bribery at livestock markets during Eid or any form of harassment were found to be true.

Immediate actions will be taken against wrongdoers, it added.



Overcrowded launches set sail from Sadarghat terminal in Dhaka yesterday carrying Eid holidaymakers as home rush takes its final stride. The photo was taken from Postogola Bridge in the afternoon.
PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

CRISIS IN ST MARTIN'S ISLAND



We are ready. We won't attack [first]. But we will not spare anyone if attacked. We have no antagonism with Myanmar. The door of discussion is open.

OBABDUL QUADER AL, General Secretary



There is a food crisis in Saint Martin's Island. The government does not seem to care about this. Can't we even say anything to a country like Myanmar?

MIRZA FAKHRUL BNP Secretary General



They are trying to come into our land. But we are not seeing any roles of the armed forces in this regard.

GM QUADER, Leader of Opposition

Cattle prices STILL HIGH

HELEMUL ALAM and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Though the price of sacrificial animals has dropped slightly due to a lack of customers, it remains high compared to the same time last year.

With only a day left before Eid-ul-Azha, the number of buyers was still low, despite a large supply of bulls.

High inflationary pressure on the middle- and lower-middle classes is believed to be behind the poor turnout at different cattle markets in Dhaka.

In the fiscal year 2022-2023, the average inflation rate was 9.02 percent. However, many traders remain hopeful for a surge in customers on Saturday night and Sunday, the last days before Eid-ul-Azha.

"I have purchased a bull for Tk 92,000, which is still high as sellers are not willing to reduce the price," said Nafur Rahman Asif, a resident of Wari.

Md Sakib Hossain, a resident of Malibagh, said, "I bought three bulls for Tk 9.5 lakh, which is high compared to last year."

Traders are unhappy as they were forced to reduce prices because of less customers. They said cost of rearing cattle was significantly high due to soaring fodder costs.

"I have already faced losses by selling six of my 28 big bulls as I am not getting satisfactory customers," said Abul Kashem Sheikh, who came to Kamalapur cattle market from Natore.

Rashid Mollah, a trader at Gabtoli



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

who brought 24 bulls from Manikganj, said he sold six of his bulls for between Tk 1 lakh and 1.50 lakh, facing some loss.

"I am sensing more loss on the last day if I do not sell, so I have started selling without thinking about the profit," he told this correspondent.

Many residents are not sacrificing bulls this year. Ruhul Amin, a private job holder in Ibrahimpur, purchased beef from a meat trader instead.

"I will not sacrifice animals this year as the Tk 30,000 bonus I received is not enough due to the increase in my daily expenses,"

Ruhul Amin said.

Amzad Hossain, another trader at Gabtoli who brought two camels and five dumbas (sheeps) from Pakistan, managed to sell one camel for Tk 23 lakh and two dumbas for Tk 2 lakh each.

"I am asking Tk 26 lakh for each camel. I have two dumbas priced at Tk 2 lakh each, along with a big one for Tk 4 lakh," he said.

He also claimed to have spent Tk 30 lakh to bring the animals from Pakistan by aeroplane.

Meanwhile at Gabtoli cattle market, a bull weighing 38 maunds was priced at Tk 16 lakh.

"There is an expenditure of Tk 7 lakh, and I am considering selling it with a minimum profit due to poor customer turnout," said the owner.



'Why fix prices if you can't enforce it'

Decry customers as govt fails to curb rising cost of essentials

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

The government efforts to control rising commodity prices by setting fixed rates are failing, as essential items are being sold at much higher prices in Dhaka's major kitchen markets.

Despite the Department of Agriculture Marketing (DAM) setting fair prices for 29 products on March 15, consumers are still paying exorbitant prices for daily essentials. With Eid-ul-Azha approaching, prices have soared further.

During recent visits to Karwan Bazar, Kathalbagh, and Malibagh markets, traders were found openly flouting government-mandated rates.

Take the case of potato for example. Although the production cost of this vegetable is Tk 14 per kg and the retail price set by the government is Tk 29 per kg, potatoes were selling for Tk 60 per kg at Karwan Bazar.

Hamidul Islam, a private employee, managed to bargain the price down to Tk 55 per kg but still

FOOD PRODUCTS	FIXED PRICE (TK)	MARKET PRICE (TK)
Chili pepper	60.2	150
Garlic	120.8	220
Ginger	180.2	300
Cabbage	28.3	40
Onion	65.4	80
Beef	664.39	780
Potato	29	60

paid almost double the fixed price. "Four days ago, I purchased potatoes at Tk 48-49 per kg. Prices have only soared since," Hamidul said.

Traders blamed higher wholesale costs and lack of supply. They said selling at government fixed rates would incur losses.

The price disparities are even more noticeable for other essential items. Local garlic is being sold at

Tk 220 per kg, 82.2 percent higher than the fixed rate of Tk 120.80. Ginger sells for Tk 300 per kg instead of Tk 180.20 (66.5 percent increase), chilli for Tk 150 against Tk 60.20 (149.2 percent increase), and cabbage for Tk 40 compared to Tk 28.30 (41.3 percent increase).

Other items like beef, lentil, chicken, and onions have also witnessed double-digit price hikes. Although the government fixed

the production cost of beef at Tk 588 per kg with a Tk 664 retail ceiling, it sells for Tk 780 at Karwan Bazar, nearly 18 percent higher.

"It's been three months since they fixed rates, but we see no intent to actually implement the directives on the ground," rued Shanaj Begum, a homemaker. "If they won't enforce the prices, why fix them at all? We are ultimately suffering for their failure and indecision."

Ghulam Rahman, president of the Consumers Association of Bangladesh, criticised the government's strategy, saying, "Commodity prices depend on market dynamics like production costs and the demand-supply chain. Fixed rates alone cannot control these unless by effective monitoring."

Masud Karim, director general of DAM, said, "Our directives are not fully implemented on the ground. Sellers don't follow them. We try to ensure they don't collect excess profits. We don't want to destabilise markets by any unwarranted intervention."

ANIMAL WASTE

Cities plan quick disposal

STAR REPORT

The authorities of Chattogram, Rangpur, Mymensingh, Sylhet and Khulna city corporations are gearing up for prompt disposal of all wastes from sacrificial animals on Eid-ul-Azha.

The Eid-ul-Azha will be observed across the country on Monday.

CHATTOGRAM

The Chattogram City Corporation will deploy 4,500 conservancy workers and 322 vehicles to clean up a total of around 5,000 tonnes of wastes from 8:00am to 5:00pm on Eid day from six city zones, each led by a ward councillor, said Mobarak Hossain, chairman of CCC's Standing Committee on Waste Management.

A central monitoring cell led by CCC mayor Rezaul Karim Chowdhury has been formed to this end.

CCC panel mayor Gias Uddin said 20 tonnes of bleaching powder and 55,000 polythene bags have been allocated to 41 wards of CCC for distribution among people.

RANGPUR

Rangpur City Corporation has planned to clean sacrificial animal wastes within 12 hours.

A total of 66 slaughtering spots have been designated to the 33 wards under three zones of RCC, said mayor Mostafizar Rahman Mostafa.

Also, 42 waste-carrying trucks and 550 workers will be engaged in removal of wastes.

MYMENSINGH

In Mymensingh, 650 conservancy workers, 24 dump trucks and seven water vehicles will be engaged in cleaning wastes from a total 508 designated slaughtering spots in 33 wards from 2:00pm.

Residents have been distributed eco-friendly biodegradable bags, bleaching powder and disinfectants for cleaning wastes from the spots, said Mohabbat Ali, conservation inspector of MCC.

His plan is to remove wastes within 12 hours, he added.

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PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Customers feel the heat as spice prices spike

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

With consumers already feeling the pinch from soaring spice prices, the costs of many items have gone up further just before Eid-ul-Azha.

Over the past week, the price of coriander has surged from Tk 100 to Tk 360 per kilogramme at the capital's Karwan Bazar wholesale market.

Last year, coriander was sold at Tk 160 per kg ahead of Eid-ul-Azha, according to the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh.

The price of cardamom, a must have item for cooking meat during the festival, has shot up to Tk 4,000 from Tk 3,800 per kilogramme.

The price of cinnamon has increased by 1.70 percent to an average of Tk 600 per kilo while

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Rise in 'extreme rainfall' behind flash floods in Sylhet

Study points to climate change

DWOHA CHOWDHURY

A recent research paper has identified single day extreme rainfall events as the primary cause of recurring flash floods and waterlogging in the Sylhet region. The study found that climate change has significantly increased the frequency of these heavy monsoon rains in Bangladesh and northeast India.

Officials from the Bangladesh Meteorological Department and Bangladesh Water Development Board have observed this pattern in recent years. For example, on June 17, 2022, a flash flood submerged almost all of Sylhet and Sunamganj districts, triggered by a record rainfall in Cherrapunji, India, which is located just uphill from Sylhet.

On May 29, 634mm of rain in Cherrapunji caused another flash flood, submerging five upazilas in Sylhet the next day. More recently, a flash flood was triggered on Friday after 349mm of rain fell in Cherrapunji over 24 hours.

In Sylhet city, two recent waterlogging incidents were caused by extreme rainfall over a short period. On June 9, 220mm of rain fell within three hours, causing severe waterlogging. On June 13, 186mm of rainfall in six hours submerged many parts of the city.

The research, conducted by scientists from NASA Goddard Space Flight Centre, North Carolina State University, the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, and Jahangirnagar University, was published in the Journal of the Royal Meteorological Society in February.

The study analysed extreme rainfall events,

defined as 150mm or more in a day, from 1950 to 2021.

It found that while overall monsoon rainfall is decreasing, single day extreme rainfall is increasing. These extreme rain events have become four times more common due to climate change.

Dipak Ranjan Das, executive engineer of BWDB in Sylhet, said, "Single day extreme rainfall in Meghalaya, located right uphill from the region, is responsible for the recurring flash flood situation. The river system here cannot handle that much water in a short period."

A flood hazard mapping of the Surma River basin in Sylhet city by researchers from Shahjalal University of Science and Technology calculated the maximum peak discharge through the Surma river at Sylhet city as 321.35 cubic metres per second, indicating the river's limited capacity to manage excessive rainwater.

Prof AKM Saiful Islam of the Institute of Water and Flood Management at Bangladesh University of Engineering Technology said, "Haors (wetlands) and rivers are crucial for holding and discharging rainwater from upstream. However, ongoing development projects like road construction are disrupting these haors, prolonging the flood situation."

"Waterbodies and canals in city areas are being filled up, causing waterlogging due to excessive rainfall. Hillcutting and tree felling are major reasons behind the filled-up waterbodies and canals," he added.

"As single day rainfall events are increasing, we must act now to protect waterbodies. Otherwise, we will suffer more intensely in the future," he warned.



PHOTO: STAR



Tailback as far as eyes can see on and beneath Mayor Mohammad Hanif Flyover yesterday afternoon. With Eid only a day away, many buses were seen entering and leaving the capital.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Bangladesh College of Physicians and Surgeons (BCPS)

67, Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Sarani, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.

BCPS No. 355/2024/29458

Date: 11-06-2024

Schedule for FCPS Part-I, FCPS (Final), Preliminary FCPS, FCPS Mid-Term and MCPS written examinations to be held in July, 2024.

FCPS (Final), Preliminary FCPS and MCPS Examinations.

Subject	Paper	Date & Day	Time	Venue
All Subjects	Paper - I	01.07.2024 (Monday)	9.00 A.M. to 12.00 Noon	BCPS, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.
	Paper - II	02.07.2024 (Tuesday)		

FCPS Mid-Term Examination

Subject	Paper	Date & Day	Time	Venue
1. Anaesthesiology	Paper - I	01.07.2024 (Monday)	9.00 A.M. to 10.40 A.M.	BCPS, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.
2. Conservative Dentistry & Endodontics				
3. Dermatology & Venereology	Paper - II	02.07.2024 (Tuesday)	9.00 A.M. to 12.00 Noon	
4. Haematology				
5. Medicine & Allied				
6. Obstetrics & Gynaecology & Allied				
7. Ophthalmology & Allied				
8. Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery				
9. Orthodontics & Dentofacial Orthopedics				
10. Otolaryngology - Head & Neck Surgery				
11. Paediatrics & Allied				
12. Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation				
13. Prostodontics				
14. Psychiatry & Allied				
15. Radiology & Imaging				
16. Radiotherapy				
17. Surgery & Allied				

FCPS Part-I Examination

Subject	Date & Day	Time	Venue
Medicine & Allied	03.07.2024 (Wednesday)	9.00 A.M. to 01.00 P.M.	BCPS, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.
1. Anaesthesiology	04.07.2024 (Thursday)	9.00 A.M. to 01.00 P.M.	BCPS, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.
2. Anatomy			
3. Biochemistry			
4. Dental Surgery (Conservative Dentistry & Endodontics, Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Orthodontics & Dentofacial Orthopedics and Prostodontics)			
5. Family Medicine			
6. Forensic Medicine			
7. Microbiology			
8. Obstetrics & Gynaecology & Allied			
9. Ophthalmology & Allied			
10. Otolaryngology - Head & Neck Surgery	06.07.2024 (Saturday)	9.00 A.M. to 01.00 P.M.	BCPS, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212.
11. Pharmacology			
12. Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation			
13. Physiology			
14. Psychiatry & Allied			
15. Community Medicine			
16. Dermatology & Venereology			
17. Haematology			
18. Paediatrics & Allied			
19. Pathology			
20. Radiology & Imaging			
21. Radiotherapy			
22. Surgery & Allied			
23. Transfusion Medicine			

Program for OSCE, IOE, Oral, Clinical & Practical examinations for FCPS (Final), Preliminary FCPS, FCPS Mid-Term and MCPS examinations will be notified on the notice board and website of BCPS well in advance.

The list of the examinees and the name of the venue of the OSCE, IOE, Oral, Clinical & Practical examinations will be notified on the notice board and website of BCPS on the day before examination (after 8.30pm).

The Admit Card for FCPS (Final), Preliminary FCPS, FCPS Mid-Term and MCPS examinations will be available through online only from 20 June 2024 to 02 July 2024 (till completion of the written examination) and for the FCPS Part-I examination will be available through online from 20 June 2024 to 06 July 2024 (till completion of the FCPS Part-I examination). Please visit BCPS website (exams.bcps.edu.bd) and login password protected profile and print admit card. Please contact examination department by 27 June, 2024 if there is any problem related to download of the admit card. **Admit Card of July 2024 session is a prerequisite for entering the examination hall.**

- > No Admit Card will be issued after the deadline.
- > No Admit Card will be printed and distributed from BCPS campus.

Instructions for Examinees

- Examinees are requested to report no later than 30 minutes before the scheduled time.
- Carrying mobile phones/laptops/tablets/watch/calculator/other electronic devices/bags/packets/water bottles/beverage cans/lighters/coins/metal objects other than keys by the examinees is prohibited. Carrying such materials shall be subject to expulsion from the examination.
- Examinees are not allowed to write anything on the admit card/instruction sheet or keep any other papers. These may lead to the cancellation of the paper.
- FCPS (Final) written qualified examinees have to submit an "Information Update Form" immediately after publication of the written result through a link (<https://ads.bcps.edu.bd/bcps-erp-exam-info-update>). It is mandatory to submit the form. If found, incorrect information and an incomplete form, the examination will be held up/legal action will be taken against the candidate.


Professor Md. Billal Alam
Controller of Examination

GD- 1011

DNC seizes 7,250 yaba tablets from courier service

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) yesterday seized 7,250 yaba tablets from a courier service office in Dhaka's Kakrail.

DNC officials discovered the pills inside a parcel around 2:15pm, said DNC Assistant Director (Dhaka Metro-North) Rahul Sen.

The drive was conducted on information that a yaba consignment from Teknaf arrived at Kakrail via courier service in four containers, he said.

Rahul said the contraband drugs were hidden in different layers of flour, wheat, and rice powder inside the containers.

He further said the courier service company was supposed to send the package to Panchagarh via Dhaka.

No one was available at the phone number mentioned in the parcel, said the DNC official.

The authorities are investigating to identify those responsible for sending the yaba from Cox's Bazar. A general diary was filed with Paltan Police Station.

PRAYER TIMING
JUNE 16

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4-05	12-45	5-00	6-50	8-15
JAMAAT 4-40	1-15	5-15	6-55	8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Customers feel

FROM PAGE 3
clove prices have soared by 13.68 percent to Tk 2,000 per kilogramme, as shown in TCB's daily market report.

Within a week, the price of both local and imported garlic has risen by Tk 10-20 per kilogramme.

Local garlic was sold at Tk 230 per kilogramme, and imported garlic at Tk 250 per kilogramme yesterday.

Ginger prices have also increased by Tk 40-60 per kilogramme, with imported ginger being sold at Tk 280-320 per kilogramme.

Talking to The Daily Star, wholesale traders said that the rise in spice prices is due to higher global market prices and an increase in the value of the dollar. As the dollar's value has risen, so have import costs.

Shamima Begum, a homemaker from Dhanmondi, said, "I am furious about the soaring prices of essential spices.

It's becoming impossible to manage our household budget. "How are we supposed to cook for our families during festivals when prices are this high?"

Farida Begum, a private company employee, said she was frustrated by the high prices of garlic, ginger, and coriander. "These are basic ingredients for everyday cooking, and now they're almost unaffordable ahead of Eid."

Rahman Ali, a private job employee, said prices increase around Eid every year. "But no one seems to understand our pain," he added.

Md Enayet Ullah, president of Bangladesh Wholesale Hot Spice Traders Association, said, "Due to reduced cardamom production in India and Guatemala, the price of the product has increased in those countries. The rise in the dollar's value is also the reason for higher cardamom prices in the domestic market."

Man held for killing wife

STAR REPORT

Rab has arrested a man on charges of killing his wife in Gazipur's Sreepur.

Abdul Samad, 50, was arrested by a Rab-1 team on Friday night from Dwaibari area of Sreepur, said Rab-1 Assistant Director Mahfuzur Rahman yesterday.

He said Abdul hit Farida Yasmin, 42, on the back of her head with a bamboo during a dispute at home.

She was declared dead at Sreepur Upazila Health Complex.

Farida's father Abdul Gani filed a case accusing Abdul with Sreepur Police Station that night.

During primary interrogation, Samad confessed to the crime.

The Rab official said Abdul was handed over to Sreepur Police Station in Gazipur.

Cities plan quick

FROM PAGE 3
KHULNA

The Khulna City Corporation has planned to complete the waste disposal within eight hours on Eid day, starting from 2:00pm.

A total of 850 workers, 76 trucks and other waste-carrying vehicles will be deployed to clean up wastes from 141 designated slaughtering spots in 31 wards under KCC, said Md Anisur Rahman, chief conservancy officer of KCC.

SYLHET
The Sylhet City Corporation, facing an uphill task of

cleaning animal wastes amid waterlogging in different areas following the recent flash flood, has not declared any pre-planned time frame but expects to clean and dispose of all wastes by the next morning after Eid.

"A total of 1,200 regular cleaners and 400 contractual cleaners will be engaged in waste clean-up. Residents have been distributed 40,000 bio-degradable bags for waste collection," said Lt Col (ret'd) Mohammod Aklem Abden, chief waste management officer of SCC.

Risky but still

FROM PAGE 5

government wants to stop the launch business, we have nothing to say. We want to modernise our launches, but authorities are not permitting design modifications. We hope the government will support us."

Babu Lal Baidya, deputy director (Marine Safety and Traffic) of BIWTA's Narayanganj River Port, said, "Owners have applied for an extension of approval for these launches beyond June 30. If not extended, these launches will cease operations, and the route may close."

SUNKEN-DECK LAUNCHES

Risky but still used
on busy river routes

TANJIL HASAN, Munshiganj

On March 20, 2022, the Munshiganj-bound sunken-deck launch ML Afsar Uddin capsized after being hit by the Rupsi-9 cargo ship in Shitalakkhya River, resulting in 10 deaths.

The next day, the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority suspended all 70 sunken-deck launches operating on six routes from Narayanganj. However, on April 24, 18 of these launches were permitted to resume operations, while 52 remained banned.

A sunken-deck launch is a type of boat with a lower deck where passengers sit, but this deck doesn't have compartments that can keep water out if the boat starts sinking.

This makes it risky because if there's an accident, it's harder to evacuate passengers, said Dr Mir Tareque Ali, a professor in Buet's navigation and mechanical engineering department.

"According to route permits, these launches should operate on calm rivers. Their current routes are not calm, making them unfit and unsafe," he added.

The accident in March 2022 was not an isolated incident. On April 4, 2021, the ML Sabit Al Hasan sank in the same area, causing 34 fatalities.

Despite this, at least 34 sunken-deck launches, including 31 old ones, continue to operate on busy routes, such as Munshiganj-Narayanganj.

According to BIWTA sources, the owners were given permission to operate till June 30 this year on the condition that they convert the launches from sunken-deck to high-deck within a year, a condition that has not yet been met.

ML Afsar Uddin, which capsized in 2022, is still in operation. While it typically carries over 100 passengers, it only has 11 buoys for passenger safety.

"After these old launches were banned, we hoped for modern launches, but that did not happen," said Mithun, a Narayanganj-bound passenger.

Previously, 5,000-6,000 passengers traveled these routes daily, but the number has significantly decreased. "Currently, six launches are running on the Munshiganj-Narayanganj route, down from 24. Due to fewer passengers, all launches will eventually stop operations," said Dil Mohammad, owner of the ML Afsar Uddin.

Badiuzzaman Badal, president of the Bangladesh Inland Navigation Passenger Transport Agency, Narayanganj Zone, said, "At least 80 percent of launches in Bangladesh have sunken decks. If the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



A sunken-deck launch is a type of boat with a lower deck where passengers sit, but this deck doesn't have compartments that can keep water out if the boat starts sinking. This makes it risky because if there's an accident, it's harder to evacuate passengers. Despite multiple accidents, at least 34 sunken-deck launches, including 31 old ones, continue to operate on busy river routes.

PHOTO: STAR



The photo was taken in Cumilla's Suagazi after the accident yesterday morning.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Hit by bus, biker
dies in Dhaka

4 more killed in two districts

STAR REPORT

A motorcyclist was killed after being run over by a passenger bus in Dhaka's Banani area yesterday afternoon.

The deceased was identified as Akkas Ali, 55, from Bogura.

A bus of Binimoy Paribahan hit the motorbike of Akkas when he was taking a U-turn from Banani's Road No 27 on his way to Uttara, said Kazi Shahan Haque, officer-in-charge of Banani Police Station.

Akkas went under the wheels of the bus and was dragged for a while, said police, adding that he died on the spot.

"We have seized the bus and detained its driver. Legal action will be taken soon," the OC added.

Meanwhile, four people were killed and seven others injured in two separate accidents in Mymensingh and Cumilla yesterday.

In Mymensingh, two people were killed and five injured after a Dhaka-bound truck collided head-on with a CNG-run auto-rickshaw in Bhaluka upazila around 5:00am, said Bhoraduba Highway Police Station OC Md Shafiqul Islam.

Abdul Halim Mondol, 40, from Dhanikhola in Trishal upazila, the driver of the three-wheeler, died on the spot. The other deceased, a man aged around 45, could not be identified immediately.

In Cumilla, two people were killed and two injured after a litchi-laden truck rear ended a parked covered van on Dhaka-Chattogram highway in Suagazi upazila around 8:15am, said Mainamati Highway Police Station OC Ikbal Bahar Mazumder.

Their identities could not be known immediately. The injured – the driver and helper of the covered van – were undergoing treatment at Cumilla Medical College Hospital.

Jobs abroad see 20pc
drop in first 4 months

JAMIL MAHMUD

Foreign jobs dropped by about 20 percent in the first four months of this year compared to the same period last year mainly due to sharp decline in major markets of Malaysia and Oman.

Between January and April this year, workers' migration to other major destinations like Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and Singapore also saw decline whereas Saudi Arabia and Qatar saw an increase.

These seven countries together hired 93.58 percent of the total 13.05 lakh Bangladeshi workers who



Over 3.22 lakh workers migrated abroad from January to April this year compared to 4.01 lakh workers a year ago, a decline by 79,606 workers.

migrated to various destinations last year.

According to Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training data, over 3.22 lakh workers migrated abroad from January to April this year compared to 4.01 lakh workers a year ago, a decline by 79,606 workers.

Malaysia hired 1.01 lakh workers but the outflow dropped by 56 percent to 44,727.

Before closing its door indefinitely for Bangladesh and 13 other source countries from June, Malaysia recruited about 30,000 more workers in the previous month.

Pointing on Malaysia's intaking of workers from Bangladesh since 2022, State Minister for Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Shofiqur Rahman Choudhury recently said as of May 31 this year, of about 493,642 workers cleared by BMET, 476,672 could leave for Malaysia by the deadline.

Since the market's reopening, about 4.46 lakh workers have migrated to Malaysia.

On the other hand, Oman announced a temporary visa suspension in all categories for Bangladesh in October last year as an "increasing number of laid-off workers were illegally working there" without the full legal protection of their rights.

Affected by the suspension, the Middle East country saw only 302 workers entering there from Bangladesh this year.

In the first four months of last year, Oman recruited 56,184 workers from Bangladesh.

Although Oman recently lifted visa restrictions on several categories for Bangladeshi nationals, it was yet to lift the ban

on work visas.

In a note, the Oman embassy said both authorities concerned in Oman and Bangladesh were working towards lifting the ban on work visas, which was in progress.

Among other major destinations, 1.69 lakh workers migrated to Saudi Arabia till April this year compared to 1.57 lakh workers during the same period last year.

The number of workers migrating to the UAE dropped from 29,069 last year to 26,192 this year, Kuwait from 9,222 to 9,121, and Singapore from 16,247 workers last year to 14,964 workers this year.

However, the number of workers migrating to Qatar saw a significant jump from last year's 8,291 to 24,936 this year.

On February 27, the state minister told parliament that the government has a work plan to send 60 lakh workers abroad in the next five years.

He said Bangladesh is sending workers to around 176 countries and a total of 99.9 lakh Bangladeshi people have been employed abroad in the last 15 years.

RAWHIDE TRADE
DMP chief for
stern actions
against extortion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Stern actions will be taken against extortion and undue influence in the rawhide trade during Eid-ul-Azha, said Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner Habibur Rahman yesterday.

The DMP will oversee the entire process of rawhide collection, storage, and marketing, said Habibur Rahman at a coordination meeting at its headquarters.

The meeting focused on strategies for securing vehicles transporting rawhides, ensuring smooth traffic flow, and preventing illegal activities.

The commissioner assured that measures will be taken to prevent the formation of any syndicates within the leather trade. The sale of rawhides on bridges or roads in areas such as Jatrabari, Hazaribagh, New Market, and Gabtoli will be prohibited, he added.



Additionally, intelligence surveillance will be in place to monitor and control salt prices, he said.

The DMP chief mentioned that checkpoints will be set up and patrolling will be intensified on all exit routes from Dhaka to prevent rawhide smuggling.

Rawhide-laden vehicles will be allowed to travel to Hemayetpur via Gabtoli, he said, emphasising that the hides must not leave their respective districts as directed by the inspector general of police.

Regarding security for city dwellers during Eid, the commissioner said safety measures, including checkpoints, patrols, foot patrols, and intelligence surveillance, will be implemented.

Coordination with local security guards will also be part of the strategy, he said.



People cast their nets to catch fish in a lowland in Sylhet's Jaintapur upazila yesterday. With incessant rain and consequent flooding, many areas in Sylhet remained inundated lately.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

*Eid al-Adha
Mubarak*

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Samrat with his father, Nayak Raj Razzak.



Chanchal Chowdhury with his father.



Apurba with his father.

FATHER'S DAY SPECIAL

'If I could embrace him one more time'

Fathers play a great role in a child's life. They are the shadow, guide, and often the most reliable friend one can have. Commemorating Father's Day today, stars who have lost their father have expressed feelings that remain untold, and what they would say if they got another chance.

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

I would share all my good news with him: Apurba

Not just for any special occasion, I remember him every day. Whenever I receive good news, I wish that I could share it with him, but he is far away. My father was a simple man, and I have always said that he is my hero!

I was quite close to him, and we used to talk a lot about so many things. He left us so early, and there are so many things I want to share with him every day. Only a child who lost their father can understand the void.

I wish I could say 'baba' one more time: Chanchal Chowdhury

Whenever I went to my hometown, I used to hear *baba's* voice. Now that he is gone, I can't hear his voice, neither I can say the word *baba*. Without him the house is empty.

My father was a teacher, and all of my siblings and I were his students. I have always tried to



Aruna Biswas with her family

live with my father's ideals, and want to keep them until my last breath.

I have lots of things to share with my father, and it hurts that I cannot share anything with him now. A father sacrifices a lot for his children, and I pray for all the fathers in the world on this Father's Day, and wish that they always remain happy.

My father was my friend: Samrat
I miss him all the time. Baba was my friend and confidant. He had all the solutions to all of my problems. Baba was a family-oriented person and loved his family. He would spend quality time with us. After he retired from the film industry, all of his time was for the family.

Whenever we gather for a

family programme, we deeply feel his absence. Even today, some of his friends come over to meet us, and at that time, we miss him more. If he were alive today, I would hug him and say 'I miss you all the time baba'.

I can still feel his presence: Aruna Biswas

I never want to forget my baba. He will always be in my thoughts. I can still almost feel how he smelled, walked, and talked and drank tea. Baba was a teacher and an actor. I took the initial acting lessons from him, as did many renowned actors in the country. He was known as 'Jatra Samrat' Amalendu Biswas. He was a freedom fighter, and sacrificed a lot for the country.

My father was a bookworm and he used to read all night and go for a walk early in the morning. After that, he would have a cup of tea and take rest. During that time, I used to wake up from sleep and run to his bed and lying on the bed with him and taking his smell was one of my favourite things to do.

Minar lends voice to Tollywood film 'Babli'

Minar Rahman, who made us fall in love with his melodious voice, will be lending his voice to Raj Chakrabarty's upcoming film, *Babli*.



The film is based on a novel by Buddhadeb Guha. For the first time, popular actor Abir Chatterjee and actress Subhashree Ganguly are set to star together in a film.

The first song from the movie, *Dube Achi*, was released yesterday. The song has been composed by Indradip Dasgupta and written by Subrata Barishwala.

Mila drops another item song

From *Bapuram Sapure* to *Chera Pal*, Mila's songs have made us groove to her peppy songs and upbeat rhythms. For a long time, she was missing from the music scene but now she has made a roaring comeback with her second item song.

This Eid-ul-Azha, as part of G-Series' Eid surprise, Mila surprised her fans with special new song which was released, yesterday. Mila made her comeback with the song *Tona Tuni*. Not only did she sing, but she also wrote the lyrics and composed the music for the song. Maruf Chowdhury stars alongside her in the music video, which was directed by Ilzar Islam.



"Rupban" was my first item song. I haven't been seen in a song of that genre since. Many a time, my fans have expressed interest in seeing me perform another item song, but no one could provide lyrics that resonated with me. Finally, I decided to write the lyrics myself and arranged the tune and music in my style," revealed the singer.

NEWS

Rain likely on Eid day

FROM PAGE 12
warned of "short-term" flooding in the country's northern and northeastern regions due to heavy rainfall.

The northern, northeastern, and adjoining upstream parts of the country are expected to experience heavy to very heavy rainfall over the next 24 to 72 hours. As a result, the Surma-Kushiyara, Sarigowain, Someswari, Jadukata, and Jhalukhali rivers in the northeastern region may rise rapidly and cross the danger level at some places, according to the FFWC bulletin issued at 9:00am.

In that case, the low-lying areas of Sylhet, Sunamganj, and Moulvibazar may experience short-term flooding, it added.

At the same time, Teesta, Dharla, and Dudhkumar rivers in the northern region may also rise rapidly and cross the danger level at some places, resulting in short-term floods in the adjoining low-lying areas, the bulletin also said.

The major rivers in the northeastern region are already on a rising trend and may continue to rise in the next 72 hours, it added.

The water level of the Brahmaputra and the Jamuna rivers may also rise in the next 72 hours, according to the FFWC bulletin.

Meanwhile, the Teesta's water level is already rising quickly, and thousands of people who live along its banks and in its char areas fear that flooding may occur at any moment.

On Friday, authorities concerned opened all 44 sluice gates of the Teesta Barrage at Dalia Point in Nilphamari as the river was swelling due to incessant rain and the onrush of water from upstream India.

"It is alarming how fast the Teesta has been swelling since Friday evening! If this situation continues, flooding will occur in our area at any moment and damage our homes and cropland," said Aftab Ali, a resident of Charganai village in Rangpur's Kaunia upazila.

[Our Dinajpur correspondent contributed to this report.]

Mangoes from 4 continents in one single orchard

FROM PAGE 12
Africa, Australia and America]."

He established the Matri Bagan, including a nursery on a three-bigha land, with 150 mango plants.

A marketing graduate, Shibli aspires to develop his career as an agro entrepreneur with focus on fruit varieties, especially mangoes, from across the globe.

"Twenty-six mango varieties are already giving great output. The remaining 16 have been planted and will soon start bearing fruits.

"Whenever I learn about a new variety of mango from anywhere in the country, I rush there to get it! My dream is to turn my orchard into the only one in the country that grows the most variety of mangoes from around the world!"

Visiting Matri Bagan recently, this correspondent saw mangoes of different shapes and colours swinging from tree branches. Many were covered in fruit bags to ensure pests and birds do not affect them.

A lot of research also goes into the work to determine conducive atmospheres for each variety.

"The mangoes from different countries have different characteristics. But since we're growing them all in the same orchard, we're taking special care. We use the fruit bags also to ensure they get their proper shape and colour," Shibli added.

In his Matri Bagan, each tree - mostly two to two and half years old - bears at least 20-40kgs of mangoes.

"Though my orchard is new and the trees are young, we're satisfied with the production from each of them ... We'll get more yield from each tree as they get older."

Shibli gets orders from different supershops for mango supplies, "But I am not going for commercial sales yet. Maybe next year, if production increases. However, if someone separately wants to buy mangoes from me, I sell the foreign varieties

at Tk 500-1,000 per kg."

Shibli also produces seedlings of various fruits by grafting the mother trees in his nursery. Including the 42 varieties of mangoes, there are 200 varieties of fruits growing in his nursery.

Grafting or graftage is a horticultural technique whereby tissues of plants are joined so as to continue their growth together.

Many fruit and plant lovers also buy saplings of different fruit varieties from Matri Bagan.

"When I began the nursery five years ago, I earned around Tk 70,000-80,000 a year from selling saplings. Now, with my varieties widened, I get Tk 40-50 lakh a year.

"Along with growing my agro business, I want to help people with job opportunities in my area through my orchard."

Speaking to The Daily Star, Sheikh Mehedi Hasan, a resident of Shahapar village in the upazila, said he often goes to Shibli's orchard to observe the beautiful mangoes from different countries.

"It's not possible for us to go to all these countries, but Shibli has at least made it possible for us to get the taste of mangoes from there! It's rare to get so many varieties in one single orchard."

A gold medalist farmer from the upazila, Md Sajahan Ali Badsha said, "It's not easy to grow fruits or crops from different countries on one single field, but Shibli has shown how to make it possible.

"Many farmers try to cultivate foreign varieties together but, in most cases, they don't succeed. What Shibli is doing will revolutionise the agro business."

Mita Sarker, agriculture officer of Ishwardi upazila, said, "Shibli is inspiring all those around him with this work. He is successful in grafting trees and also growing the fruits from so many countries. With time, all those varieties will be able to tolerate our weather and we can get more production."

Crisis eases

FROM PAGE 12
had not received daily supplies since June 6.

Yamin Hossain, additional district magistrate, said, "Residents of St Martin's Island will not face any shortage of food as they have just received a month's worth of food supplies."

He also mentioned that special arrangements would be made to reach the mainland in the event of a medical emergency.

Meanwhile, as of last morning, there had been no sound of gunshots or explosions from the Myanmar side.

Political feud

FROM PAGE 12
Aktaruzzaman by demanding a bigger cut from their gold smuggling racket, they said.

Amanullah, the main hitman hired by Aktaruzzaman, is a leader of Purbo Banglar Communist Party. In his confessional statement made on June 5, Amanullah said his party decided to kill him 26 years ago because of his involvement in smuggling and land grabbing.

Investigators said they are verifying the claims.

Tanvir Bhuiyan, who assisted the killing under Amanullah's command, mentioned in his confession that the lawmaker travelled to Kolkata after he was told that the business conflicts would be solved there.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan recently said, "We never said Azim was killed over gold smuggling. We have always been saying that the MP's constituency is a crime-prone area. We must know what happened there. We are investigating, we will tell you everything after the probe is done."

Intelligence officials say the puzzle can only be solved after Aktaruzzaman, believed to be in the US, is caught.

Bangladesh's National Central Bureau of the Police Headquarters sent a letter requesting Interpol to issue a red notice for Aktaruzzaman, said its Assistant Inspector General Ali Haider Chowdhury.

"Interpol has yet to respond. Considering the importance of the matter, we are trying again and again," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Investigators hope that India can bring the key suspect back by using its extradition treaty with the US. The probe will be incomplete otherwise, they said.

Habibur Rahman, commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, yesterday said, "There is no interference in the investigation. We are investigating independently."

Tigers' chance to seal

FROM PAGE 12
beaten South Africa in this format.

However, a comprehensive 25-run win against the Netherlands in their penultimate group-stage match has given Chandika Hathurusingha's men breathing space ahead of their game against Nepal, an opposition they beat by eight wickets in Chattogram in the only encounter between the two teams during the 2014 T20 World Cup.

Nepal, though, have come a long way since their maiden appearance in Bangladesh, having finished second behind Oman in the Asia Qualifiers ahead of the ongoing edition. The associate nation may not have registered a victory in their first three matches, but they showed they can create a lot of problems for any side on their day as they pushed South Africa to the brink on Friday but eventually succumbed to a heartbreaking one-run defeat.

Nepal skipper Rohit Paudel said he did not want to go home empty-

handed and wanted to give their fans something to cheer about with a win against Bangladesh.

"We will play for pride. We wanted to beat a Test playing country. It didn't happen today, so we want to do that in the next game. The confidence that we got today, we want to carry that," Paudel said at the post-match press conference following the defeat against South Africa in Kingstown.

But Bangladesh would feel that they have passed the more difficult hurdles and would want to seize the golden opportunity of securing qualification.

Veteran all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, who played a match-winning knock of 64 not out against the Dutch following a lengthy lean patch with the bat, certainly felt that way.

"Obviously, the match against Nepal is very important for us. If we win, we will go to the second round which will be a big achievement for us," Shakib had said after the Netherlands victory.

Arundhati to face trial

FROM PAGE 1
153A (promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language and doing acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony), 153B (imputations, assertions prejudicial to national-integration) and 505 (statements conducing to public mischief).

Under Indian Penal Code sections 153A, 153B and 505, a maximum sentence of up to three years is provided, reports our New Delhi correspondent.

However, section 13 of UAPA relates to unlawful activities for advocating, abetting or inciting any unlawful activity and is punishable with imprisonment of up to seven years.

It was alleged in the 2010 FIR that the accused had strongly propagated that Kashmir was never part of India and was forcibly occupied by the Indian armed forces and every possible effort should be made for the independence of the state of Jammu and Kashmir from the State of India.

The FIR was registered on a complaint by social activist Sushil Pandit on October 28, 2010, following the orders of the Court of Metropolitan Magistrate, New Delhi, they added.

It accused Roy and Hossain

of delivering the "provocative" speeches at a conference organised under the banner of 'Azadi-The Only Way' on October 21, 2010, at the Little Theatre Group (LTG) Auditorium on Copernicus Marg in central Delhi.

Besides Roy and Hossain, those who delivered speeches at the conference in 2010 included Kashmiri separatist Syed Ali Shah Geelani, S A R Geelani (anchor of the Conference and prime accused in the Parliament attack case), and pro-Maoist cultural activist Varavara Rao.

However, the decision to try Arundhati Roy and Hossain under the tough anti-terror law has triggered a war of words between the opposition parties and the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party yesterday.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) condemned the move and claimed that the move "defies logic except the fascist kind".

Senior Congress leader B K Hariprasad said, "Fascism thrives on crushing dissent, particularly from intellectuals, artists, writers, poets & activists. BJP manufacture crises daily to distract and overwhelm dissenters enabling them to divert attention from their failures. This assault on free expression & democratic values is unacceptable," Hariprasad posted on X.



Palestinian children play on the site of a destroyed building in the Nuseirat refugee camp, in the central Gaza Strip yesterday. As Muslims worldwide prepare to mark Eid-ul-Azha starting today, Gazans lamented the shortages of essential goods and the lack of an Eid spirit amid Israeli bombardment. PHOTO: AFP

UKRAINE-RUSSIA WAR

World leaders join Swiss peace summit for Ukraine

US VP announces \$1.5b Ukraine aid; Sweden accuses Russia of airspace violation

AGENCIES

World leaders were joining Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in Switzerland yesterday for a summit on peace in his country, but with Russia staying away it is seen as the first step in a long process.

The Swiss hosts have sought to temper expectations at the two-day gathering, with an agenda laying the groundwork for a path to peace, with future summits envisioned, eventually involving Moscow.

The conference, convening exactly 100 countries and global institutions, comes at a perilous moment for exhausted Ukrainians and outgunned soldiers, more than two years since Moscow launched its full-scale invasion in February 2022.

More than 50 heads of state and government figure among the attendees, including all of the G7 leaders who have been meeting in Italy, with the exception of Biden.

The leaders of Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy and Japan are attending, as is the European Union chief and the leaders of Colombia, Chile, Finland, Ghana, Kenya and Poland.

Argentinian President Javier Milei and the presidents of Ecuador and Fiji were among the early arrivals.

Russia's BRICS allies Brazil and South Africa are meanwhile only sending an envoy, and India will be represented at the ministerial level.

China is absent, insisting it will not take part without Moscow's presence.

The summit aims to find paths towards a lasting peace for Ukraine based on international law and the United Nations Charter; a possible framework to achieve this



US Vice President Kamala Harris shakes hands with Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky during a meeting on the sideline of the Summit on peace in Ukraine in Stansstad yesterday.

goal; and a roadmap as to how both parties could come together in a future peace process.

US Vice President Kamala Harris announced more than \$1.5 billion in aid in part for Ukraine's energy sector and its humanitarian situation as a result of Russia's 27-month invasion of Ukraine.

The \$1.5 billion includes \$500 million in new funding for energy assistance and the redirecting of \$324 million in previously announced funds toward emergency energy infrastructure repair and other needs in Ukraine, the vice president's office said.

She also announced more than \$379 million in humanitarian assistance from the State Department and the US Agency for International Development to help refugees

and other people impacted by the war.

Harris, who will spend less than 24 hours at the gathering in Lucerne, Switzerland, will be standing in for President Biden at the event.

Elsewhere, a Russian SU-24 bomber violated Swedish airspace near the strategic Baltic Sea island of Gotland, leaving only after Sweden scrambled two JAS 39 fighter jets, Sweden's military said yesterday.

The incident on Friday occurred three months after the Scandinavian country became a full member of NATO, dropping two centuries of military non-alliance.

"The Russian actions are not acceptable and demonstrate a lack of respect for our territorial integrity," the head of Sweden's air force, Jonas Wikman, said.

China-Aussie ties 'back on track'

Says China PM Li

REUTERS, Sydney

Chinese Premier Li Qiang arrived in Australia yesterday, saying relations were "back on track" as he started the first visit by a Chinese premier to the major trading partner in seven years.

Australia is "uniquely positioned to connect the West and the East" and stands as "an important force of economic globalization and world multipolarity", Li said at Adelaide's airport, according to a statement from the Chinese embassy.

Bilateral relations are "back on track after a period of twists and turns", Li said.

During his four-day visit, Li will also visit the capital Canberra and mining states in Western Australia.

"A more mature, stable and fruitful comprehensive strategic partnership will be a treasure shared by the people of both countries," Li said.

The ebb in bilateral ties resulted in the suspension of AS20 billion (\$13 billion) in Australian agriculture and mineral exports to China through last year.

Li arrived from New Zealand, where he highlighted Chinese demand for New Zealand's agricultural products.

N Korea building roads, walls inside DMZ: report

AFP, Seoul

North Korea's (DPRK's) military has been building roads and walls inside the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) that separates it from South Korea (ROK), the Yonhap news agency reported yesterday.

The construction activities are taking place north of the Military Demarcation Line (MDL) that runs through the middle of the DMZ, the South Korean agency said, citing an military source.

The report follows an incident last week when South Korean forces fired warning shots after North Korean soldiers briefly crossed the MDL.

South Korean authorities said it was likely accidental, and Yonhap quoted a military spokesman as saying some of the North Koreans were carrying work tools.

"Recently, the North Korean military has been erecting walls, digging the ground and constructing roads in some areas between the Military Demarcation Line (MDL) and the Northern Limit Line in the DMZ," the military source said, according to Yonhap yesterday. It was not clear what they were building, the source told Yonhap.

When asked about the report, the South Korean military said in a statement that it was "closely tracking and monitoring the activities of the North Korean military", and that "further analysis is required".

South Korea's spy agency told AFP this week that it had detected signs that North Korea was demolishing sections of a railway line connecting the two countries.

S AFRICA ELECTIONS Ramaphosa re-elected after coalition deal

REUTERS, Cape Town

The African National Congress and its largest rival, the controversial white-led Democratic Alliance, agreed on Friday to work together in South Africa's new government of national unity, a step change after 30 years of ANC rule.

Once unthinkable, the accord allowed President Cyril Ramaphosa to win a second term in office. He was re-elected by lawmakers with 283 votes.

The deal between two sharply antagonistic parties is the most momentous political shift in South Africa since Nelson Mandela led the ANC to victory in the 1994 election that marked the end of apartheid.

The ANC lost its majority for the first time in an election on May 29 and spent two weeks in talks with other parties.

The National Assembly had earlier elected a DA lawmaker as deputy speaker, after choosing an ANC politician as speaker, the first concrete instance of power sharing between the two

parties. The DA wants to scrap some of the ANC's Black empowerment programmes, saying they have not worked and have mostly benefited a politically-connected elite. It says good governance and a strong economy would benefit all South Africans.

Ramaphosa first came to power in 2018 after his predecessor Zuma was forced out under the cloud of corruption allegations.

Under his watch South Africa suffered from record power cuts, the economy languished and crime remained rife. Unemployment is at almost 33 percent.



SOUTH CHINA SEA ROW New China rules allow detention of foreigners

AGENCIES

New Chinese coast guard rules took effect yesterday, under which it can detain foreigners for trespassing in the disputed South China Sea, where neighbours and the G7 have accused Beijing of intimidation and coercion.

Beijing claims almost the entirety of the South China Sea, brushing aside competing claims from several Southeast Asian nations including the Philippines and an international ruling that its stance has no legal basis.

From yesterday, China's coast guard can detain foreigners "suspected of violating management of border entry and exit", according to the new regulations published online. Detention is allowed up to 60 days in "complicated cases", they say.

Meanwhile, the Philippines filed a claim with the UN yesterday to an extended continental shelf (ECS) in the South China Sea, a waterway where it has had increasingly confrontational maritime disputes with China.

The Philippines sought to register its entitlement to an extended continental shelf in the West Palawan Region facing the South China Sea. The submission, cleared by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr, follows a comprehensive technical and scientific study of continental shelf in the West Philippine Sea, the foreign ministry said.

Earlier, the Group of Seven bloc on Friday criticised what it called "dangerous" incursions by China in the waterway. "We oppose China's militarisation, and coercive and intimidation activities in the South China Sea," read a G7 statement at the end of a summit on Friday.



Demonstrators, including one with a placard, take part in an anti-far-right rally, after French President Emmanuel Macron called legislative elections following far-right parties' significant gains in European Parliament elections, in Strasbourg, eastern France, yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

Singapore oil slick closes beaches on resort island

REUTERS, Singapore

Beaches on Singapore's Sentosa island were closed yesterday after an oil spill spread from a nearby shipping terminal to the tourist haven south of the city-state.

The oil spill had spread from Pasir Panjang Terminal, less than 10 km from the island popular with tourists and locals, after a Netherlands-flagged dredger struck a stationary Singapore-flagged bunker vessel on Friday afternoon.

The Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore said patches of oil were observed off Pasir Panjang Terminal and along Tanjong, Palawan, and Siloso beaches. It said it has deployed 16 oil spill response craft to contain the oil spill.

"There is no impact on navigational traffic. Berthing operations at Pasir Panjang Terminal remain unaffected," the authority said.

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

Let this Eid be one to remember

We wish our readers and patrons a safe, happy Eid!

As we prepare to celebrate this year's Eid-ul-Azha, it is crucial to reflect on the deeper meanings behind its rituals: sacrifice, sharing, and unity. We cannot overstate the significance of these values at a time when our nation is going through multiple challenges ranging from economic turmoil and rising inflation to democratic decline and environmental degradation.

Firstly, the spirit of sacrifice is more relevant than ever. Our nation has faced significant trials recently. Many of our fellow citizens have been severely affected by the rising prices of essentials, making it difficult for them to afford basic necessities. Reportedly, prices have gone further up in the week leading up to Eid—which is not unusual during festivals—but for a people seeing the average inflation rate hover above 9 percent for the past two years, it means more painful adjustments. Moreover, many in the coastal regions are yet to recover from the devastating effects of Cyclone Remal and recent floods. In such times, it is crucial to extend our hands to those in need—a burden shared is really a burden halved. This is, however, not to take away from the responsibilities of the government which must roll out special measures to help the most vulnerable.

Speaking of sharing, it is also vital to remember our workforce, particularly those in the garment and textile industries, where the issue of unpaid wages and bonuses continues to be persistent. Reportedly, many factories have not properly fulfilled their financial obligations to workers. Ensuring that workers receive their rightful earnings not only upholds justice but also allows them to celebrate Eid with their families.

The movement of home-bound people across the country also demands continued monitoring. With millions traveling to their home districts, it is essential to ensure their safety on the roads. We have seen too many tragic incidents mar the festivities in previous years. Already, we have had reports of some accidents and also of a surge in bus fares, which speaks to the lack of regulations in transport sector. Many have also suffered on major highways and at exit points in the capital due to traffic congestions. Therefore, the authorities must take all necessary measures to manage traffic, ensure compliance of traffic/transport rules, and prevent accidents throughout the holiday period.

We also feel obligated to highlight the importance of cleanliness and hygiene, especially considering the risks of dengue as rainfall events become more frequent. Both citizens and the municipal/local authorities must ensure prompt and proper disposal of animal waste following the sacrificial rites. We also urge on-duty law enforcement officials to ensure that the festive atmosphere is not marred by any untoward incidents. Together, through sharing and caring, we can all make this Eid an enriching experience for everyone.

Khulna's brave girl footballers need help

Govt and society must ensure their dreams are not crushed

We are disturbed to know that a group of under-17 female footballers of the Super Queen Football Academy in Khulna have stopped playing the game they are so passionate about, as per a report by this daily. Last year, these girls were viciously attacked by locals who considered the idea of girls playing football to be against the traditional norms of society. They sustained serious injuries, and there was widespread media coverage and outrage at the time. But although many promises were made then, these inspiring women were later forgotten. They are now facing financial hardship and social stigmatisation. Consequently, their practicing days have been rudely cut short, and their dreams of playing for the national team someday are all but over.

Reportedly, four of the footballers had to be married off in order for their families to save face, while the others had to make ends meet by working in croplands or as domestic workers; one of them used to drive an easy bike which was stolen.

In a society still plagued by the misogyny of certain groups, for girls to play any outdoor sport is difficult enough. But withstanding these challenges, these footballers managed to join the academy to become professional footballers. For that, the Tentultala Super Queen Football Academy deserves our praise and support for providing opportunities to around 30 to 40 girls. That they have had to suspend training because of financial constraints should prompt the government, members of the society, and corporations to come forward and provide all-out support for this academy. The authorities should also provide financial assistance to the girls who come from underprivileged backgrounds.

That said, it is disturbing to know that those accused of the vicious attack are out on bail now. Some of them are even threatening the girls with acid attacks. The police, too, have stopped providing them with protection with the excuse that since the girls have stopped practicing, they don't need security anymore.

The government must make sure that the accused are punished, that the police provide necessary protection to the girls, and that the latter can continue practicing their favourite sport without intimidation or humiliation. We have a collective responsibility to encourage women in sports and nurture these budding sportswomen, who are willing to fight all odds just to play. The accolades won by our women cricketers and footballers both at home and abroad are evidence of the positive results of such collective support.

Disinformation is a destabilising force for the capital market



MOHAMMAD JAHIDUR RAHMAN

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Disinformation can be defined as proven false information that is created and disseminated with the intent to deceive, while misinformation is inaccurate information given without malice. Distorted information, whether misinformation or disinformation, is a pivotal factor in today's financial landscape.

An article on an Indian news platform boldly stated on May 14 that hackers from their own country were likely responsible for the hacking of billions of dollars from the Bangladesh Bank reserves this month. The report claimed to be a follow-up on the investigation of the incident, stating that security agencies of both Bangladesh and India were investigating the massive digital theft.

The heading and the report were written in a way that struck the relevant financial stakeholders in Bangladesh like a thunderbolt. This happened at a time when the country's stock market was already in a volatile position due to several issues, including an increase in the central bank policy rate, the introduction of a six-month moving average rate of the treasury bill to make the interest rate of lending competitive, the introduction of a crawling peg in determining the exchange rate of foreign currency, and the probable withdrawal of the waiver in capital gain taxes.

The increase in the central bank policy rate makes borrowing from the central bank costlier for commercial banks by raising the cost of funds. Simultaneously, making the lending rate of commercial banks competitive forces lending to brokerage houses and merchant banks to become more expensive.

A significant number of foreign investors quit the Bangladesh stock market after the dollar price started to increase in early 2022. Typically, an increase in the dollar price encourages foreign investors to bring more investments, as it allows them to convert their home currency into a larger volume of local currency, enabling them to purchase a larger volume of stocks. However, in this case, the fear of further devaluation of the local currency caused them to wait. At the same time, existing foreign investors were losing money when they



VISUAL: SHAIKH SULTANA JAHAN BADHON

tried to repatriate their investments, as the local currency's depreciation reduced the amount of foreign cash they had originally invested.

On May 8 this year, the central bank introduced a Crawling Peg Exchange Rate System for spot purchases and sales of US dollars, setting a Crawling Peg Mid Rate (CPMR) at Tk 117 per US dollar. Scheduled banks may purchase and sell US dollars freely around the CPMR with their customers and in interbank deals. The jump in the dollar rate from Tk 110 to Tk 117 caused panic among local investors in the stock market, fearing more disinvestment by foreign investors as experienced before.

To mitigate the longstanding foreign exchange crisis, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) extended their loan support on the condition of complying with some reform strategies in the financial sector, one of which is the withdrawal of concessions on income tax, VAT, and tariff. A Statutory Regulatory Order (SRO) dated July 1, 2015, granted individual investors an exemption from paying capital gains

tax on listed stocks, mutual funds, bonds, and debentures. To comply with the conditions given by the IMF, there was a buzz in the market that the National Board of Revenue (NBR) was planning to withdraw the exemption of the capital gain tax facility from the next fiscal year, which has already been proposed in the national budget of FY 24-25.

2020 suggests that they can also be used to promote specific stocks, resulting in speculative trading campaigns. There has yet to be a study for the Bangladesh market determining the volatility rate caused by different forms of misinformation or disinformation. A survey in 2012 found that 15.79 percent of respondents believed that price

All these factors contributed to the decline of the stock market index. Following this, the disinformation about the central bank reserve heist emerged with malicious intent to further deteriorate the market condition, forcing marginal investors to sell their portfolios at a lower price.

The news was published on a low-profile Indian news portal which was registered on November 26, 2022—a registration that is set to expire on November 26, 2024. The portal, with only 6.3k followers, clearly lacks the credibility to be making such sensitive financial claims.

Any reduction in forex reserves pushes the dollar price up. In the context of the current deteriorating situation in the stock market, this disinformation about the reserve heist acted like the addition of fuel to a fire.

Misinformation or disinformation have been found to increase abnormal stock trading activity and stock price volatility by more than 50 percent and 40 percent respectively in the United States, according to research published in 2019. Research from

fluctuations in the Bangladesh stock market were due to the spreading of fake news. This report, however, does not include the quantitative outcome of volatility caused by misinformation or disinformation. A 2023 study revealed that stock prices of targeted firms respond to fake news even if its informational content is non-existent. Negative false news items have significant short-term negative effects on returns in the US and European markets.

Misinformation and disinformation pose significant risks to the financial sector. Key risks include market volatility, stock price fluctuations, panic selling, poor investment choices, erosion of trust, economic slowdown, operational risk, reputation damage, compliance complexity, policy missteps, increased scrutiny, and higher costs. Addressing these risks requires a coordinated approach involving fact-checking and verification processes, enhancing media literacy, regulatory measures, public education, and technological collaboration.

FATHER'S DAY

Understanding the person and the parent



SUMAYA MASHRUF A
is sub editor at The Daily Star.

In a culture where parents are often put on a pedestal, it seems redundant to have designated days to remind ourselves of the people who made us. We are constantly reminded of that regardless. In recent times, Mother's Day has gained momentum here and become more of a mainstream idea.

Here, even if people know of these days, they are still more of an idea than something one actually celebrates. And in a country where there are so many woes and hardships, one perhaps cannot but cynically look at it. However, there can be a scope for localisation that isn't sponsored by a neoliberal profit-making scheme.

Father's Day can be a chance to look at fathers to see what's really going on with them. This is also an attempt to articulate how it feels to seek reconciliation when fathers are no longer with us.

Growing up, for the longest time, I didn't identify my father as a man. He was just my father, and then there was this world of men—men who, in my opinion as a teen, were mucking up my every plan to be gloriously sixteen, seventeen. While I was frowning trying to figure out why a girl is the worst enemy these men can have, and why my laughter and joy was the bane of their existence, my father ceased to

exist. And he remained just that, my father, for a ridiculously long time.

And then, it hit me—my father was a man.

I don't think parents realise how powerful they are. It truly boggles my mind how people remain so nonchalant and do not see that if there is anything miraculous left, it is that they can just decide to bring another human being into this world. That is a power akin to that of being able to say, "Let there be light." So, no wonder it doesn't register easily that these people you call *Amma* and *Abba* are people too, that they are human beings whom some other folks once decided to bring into this world, that one's father is just a man, made in this culture with language that wouldn't let him be a full human being.

I'm sure it is somewhat true for every culture, but living in a country such as ours, the relationship between a father and a daughter is a very strange one. The majority consensus for the daughters of Bangladesh is that beware of men. Newspaper articles, TV screens and cinemas all come as precautionary messages of what can happen to you as a girl. Here, fathers have a very panic-inducing job to do.

They are the representative of the clan of men. They have a working

knowledge of what array of members their clan consists of. They fear the members they don't know well. While I was growing up, I thought women feared men. I had no idea how much men fear men, too.

While I was diagnosing myself and the society out there, I saw my father. A man who had me when he was at my age. He had seventeen years to talk to me. I'm sure he thought he had time. There's no need to even mention that I thought we had time. Time was still a concept that proposed infiniteness.

It is a little harder, though not impossible, to reach reconciliation with fathers who are no longer here. Especially if one loses their father at an early age, one becomes quite a detective. It's like their life is spread in front of you and the last entry on the diary has been made. Now make what you want to make out of it. You cannot interrogate, you cannot interview, and no one is going to talk back. You just have to take versions of events from eyewitnesses and examine the existing entries and reach a point.

Reconciliation is needed because the rapture of life tears us apart and bars us from seeing the stage where there is forgiveness and compassion.

Because I couldn't reach my father, quite subconsciously, I developed this habit of looking at as many fathers as I could. It was a hobby, like collecting stamps; I would collect memories of my female friends with their fathers.

I've seen some wonderful fathers in my lifetime, and I saw some truly horrible ones too. I have no unrealistic romanticisation of fatherhood. In my brain, they are not kept on pedestals. I also understand that being a good father does not equal being a good husband. And I have reached that

point where I see fathers as men who were taught to put on a brave face and stride, who tried to be the fathers we deserved, and when they failed, couldn't cry.

So, there was this daughter in Washington, Sonora Smart Dodd. At age 27, she had the idea for Father's Day. Her father was a Civil War veteran who raised her and her five siblings alone after their mother died in childbirth. The first Father's Day was celebrated on June 19, 1910, the month of her father's birthday.

Though I don't buy into this very Americanised way of celebration and all that it entails, I do like this story. I try to imagine Sonora's father as well. He always comes in the image of Jo March's father in *The Little Women*. And I want to give them a hug, from our house to theirs.

In the hurry to hide true emotion in humour, I digress. I should crack a joke right about now! I want to say Happy Father's Day to Darth Vader. I want to say the most famous son is Jesus Christ. And while my brain seeks denial of grief in humour, I see my father laughing. I see him talking to my older brother, my brother reading Kahlil Gibran's poem "On Children" in a very intentional way—

"You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth."

I see my father hiding shadows of sadness in his eyes, I see him smile.

And even after knowing how it would make us both cringe, to my beautiful, brilliant father, I say, "Happy Father's Day, Abbu!" You tried your best, you can put your armour down now, and be the joyful little boy you always wanted to be.

Benazir's corruption: The crisis of accountability



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KALLOL MUSTAFA

The year was 2018. On August 30, the results of Transparency International Bangladesh's (TIB) "Corruption in Service Sectors: National Household Survey 2017" were released. According to the survey, the country's law enforcement agencies (LEAs) ranked in the highest position in terms of the experience of corruption by surveyed households. Of the households that received services from them, 72.5 percent were victims of different forms of corruption.

The Bangladesh Police Service Association (BPSA) rejected the TIB survey results in a statement issued on September 11, 2018. The statement, sent by the additional deputy commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, also the office secretary of the Police Service Association, alleged that the TIB's survey report "identified the police as a corrupt institution based on preconceived notions." It was also claimed that, "In case of any unlawful behaviour of the police, proper legal action is taken after investigation."

The story of identifying the LEAs as the "most corrupt sector" in the TIB survey and subsequent rejection by the BPSA came to my mind in the wake of the recent allegations of massive corruption against former police and Rab chief Benazir Ahmed. Documents from the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) show that Benazir and his family bought at least 204.5 acres of land between 2009 and 2023. Of these, 112 acres

were purchased during his tenure as inspector general of police (IGP) and Rab chief.

Was Benazir Ahmed's purchase of such a vast amount of land while he was head of police and Rab consistent with the legitimate income he was earning? Is it not an illegal act to force people to sell land by intimidation? Where was the process of "legal action" claimed by the BPSA when Benazir was engaging in such unlawful behaviour day after day as a senior officer in the police force? Why was Benazir's corruption exposed only after his retirement, and not when he was in office?

Not only was no action taken against Benazir's massive corruption and abuse of power when he was in office, he was also being given one reward after another. This is not only an internal problem of the LEAs. The entire government, including the ministry of home affairs, is also responsible here.

The Public Security Division of the home ministry honoured him with the Integrity Award 2020-21. But ACC data shows that he and his family bought nearly 87.9 acres of land in 2020 and 2021. The Integrity Award is supposed to be given to someone who meets the standards of scrupulousness and honesty. Where were those standards when Benazir was given the award? Apart from the Integrity Award, Benazir was awarded the highest medal of the police force, Bangladesh Police Medal (BPM), a

total of five times between 2011 and 2019. With so many intelligence agencies in the country and so much surveillance, is it at all believable that the authorities, including the LEAs, were not aware of his illegal activities? How dysfunctional could a country's institutional system be that the person who was involved in massive corruption was rewarded

of farmland by intimidating the Hindu community in the Gopalganj Sadar Upazila, and Rajoir Upazila of Madaripur. Benazir engaged a police officer named Taimur Islam to buy the land. Taimur used to go to the land owners on Benazir's behalf and pressure them to sell the land at reduced prices, threatening them that they would lose the land anyway

abroad. To avoid these complications, Benazir had repeatedly renewed his passport as a private employee while still in service. At one point in 2016, as reported by *Daily Jugantor*, when the passport directorate objected to the renewal of Benazir's passport as a private employee while he was the director general of Rab, the directorate was forced to give the passport under pressure from the Rab headquarters.

Would it have been possible for a person to do these kinds of corruption and irregularities for years if he was not in important positions in LEAs and if the authorities had not promoted and awarded him? Then, on what grounds can the authorities now avoid responsibility for his misdeeds? The incident of Benazir Ahmed's irregularities, corruption and abuse of power demand special attention because it is not just a case of Benazir's irregularities as an individual, it is also a question of checks and balances of the power and accountability of Bangladesh Police and Rab as institutions.

Benazir's case clearly shows that it is possible for top police and Rab officials to abuse power for personal gains without any accountability. They can invest in land and businesses in violation of government service rules, use police force members for personal or family business, buy land at a low price by intimidating the vulnerable communities, and travel abroad with a fake identity. What is the guarantee that such blatant abuse of power and corruption are not still being practiced by some other powerful officials?

Even after media reports about Benazir's illegal wealth started to appear, there were allegations that the authorities were not proactive enough. The *Kalerkantho* report on Benazir Ahmed's illegal assets was published on March 31, the ACC decided to form a committee

to investigate his illegal assets on April 18, and following the ACC's application, the court ordered the seizure of his assets and bank accounts on May 23. But before that, Benazir withdrew money from the bank, sold many assets, and left the country with his family on May 4. There was no action from the ACC or any department of the government to prevent Benazir from going abroad while the investigation was going on. So, what is the guarantee that his departure abroad did not happen as part of his understanding with the authorities?

This question has arisen because during the consecutive tenures of the Awami League government, Benazir Ahmed held three of the most important positions in law enforcement. He was Commissioner of DMP from October 2010 to January 2015, Director General of Rab from January 2015 to April 2020, and IGP from April 2020 to September 2022. There are questions about how much of his behaviour in these positions was that of a professional law enforcement officer, and how much was of a ruling party politician. Besides, many "crossfires" and "gunfights" occurred during his tenure as the Rab and police chief, for which the responsibility rests on him as well as the government. Investigating Benazir Ahmed's corruption is not enough. The allegations of violations of human and democratic rights against him should also be investigated, and he should be brought back to the country and punished. It is also important to uncover who were the beneficiaries of Benazir's corruption and what irregularities were legitimised through them. The most important thing is that the crisis of accountability of various institutions of the government that was exposed through the Benazir incident is also addressed.



VISUAL: STAR

time and again, instead of being punished?

The government and law enforcement agencies claim that Benazir Ahmed's corruption is his personal responsibility, that no agency or ministry will take responsibility for him. The problem with this type of claim is that when Benazir was committing the crimes, he held important positions in the agencies concerned. Moreover, he used his administrative powers and even members of the agencies under his control for his personal benefit. For example, according to a report published in *The Daily Star*, during his tenure as IGP and Director General of Rab, Benazir Ahmed purchased over 600 bighas

without getting any compensation if they did not sell that to Benazir. Benazir also engaged several police and Rab officials to supervise the construction work of one of his resorts until he went into retirement in 2022. How pathetic is it that a man whose responsibility was to protect citizens has instead used his power against vulnerable populations for his own gains?

He used his official powers not only to grab land, but even to make passports as a private employee while still in service. Government officials cannot travel abroad without prior approval. Moreover, using an official passport creates various complications in case of investing and obtaining residence permit

Is there a problem with the world of cricket?



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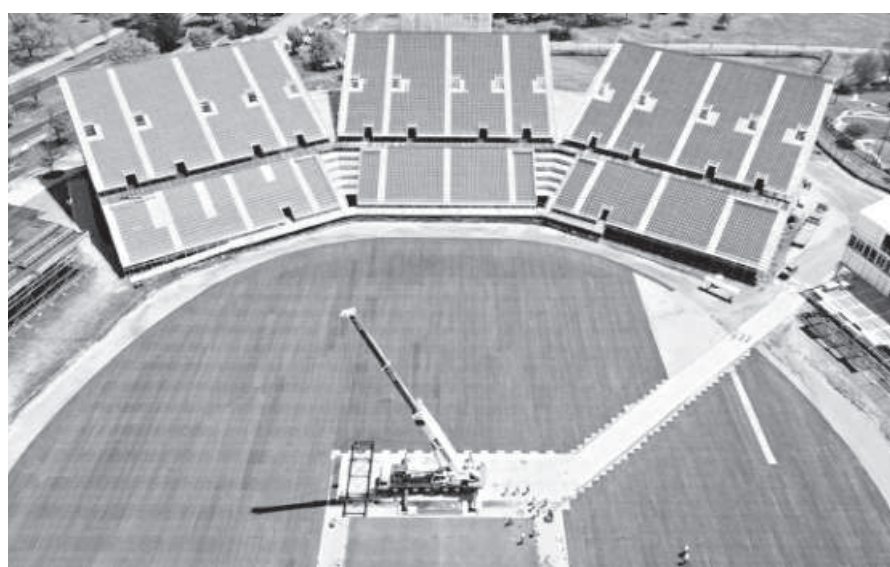
MADIHA ATHAR KHAN

A post on X (formerly known as Twitter) which gained popularity on other social media platforms as well reads, "If you want to promote cricket in the USA, then make India and Pakistan play a 5-match T20I series over there. Don't spoil the biggest cricketing event in the world for the heck of it." There are other posts about the low-scoring pitch in New York with many voicing the sentiment that these are not good enough to play T20 matches on.

The brand image of cricket as a sport has been shaped by the role played by batters. If you ask most cricket fans about their favourite matches or performances, chances are that they will name an unforgettable batting innings. Inadvertently perhaps, batters have assumed the roles of main characters in the team, bowlers the supporting characters, and the fielders have become silent extras. The advent of T20 cricket has only heightened this effect.

The Indian Premier League (IPL) has also set the tone for what to expect from T20 matches. People are accustomed to nearly every match being a 200-plus run stunner where the team batting second nearly achieves the target. There should be no trend set in a sport, to the extent that every match reads like a scripted performance. But when there is such a long tournament played in one country that has perfected its business model by securing eyeballs on every game, they are incentivised to create exactly that. This situation has prompted even the biggest names in the game like Virat Kohli to say that he does not want to see matches where the bowlers have no room to make an impact.

Just because the New York pitch—which has quite an interesting backstory of being constructed in Adelaide and then transported to New York—has failed to produce any of those high-scoring matches, people have been quick to criticise it. It begs the question: what actually is the true essence of cricket?



An aerial photo of the Nassau County International Cricket Stadium under construction in New York, USA, taken on May 1, 2024.

PHOTO: AFP

Have we become so used to only one style that we have lost the ability to appreciate cricket's many variations? The dialogue on social media makes it seem like cricket fans have solidified what they expect cricket to be and are only satisfied when those expectations are met. After all, T20 demands a short attention span and its promise has always been to deliver immediate gratification. This has also rendered Test cricket inadmissible in the race to remain relevant under modern entertainment conditions. But cricket fans with a bigger appetite for what cricket has to offer are well aware of what the 5-day format can yield: slow-burn thrillers, unpredictable pendulum swings, grit, determination, and the awe that displays of rigorous discipline can inspire. In the same vein, low-scoring T20 matches where bowlers dominate and the matches go down to the wire encapsulate much of the thrill that we may otherwise be missing out on.

All this is not to say that there isn't a

problem with cricket at the moment. But I don't think we are pointing our fingers in the right direction. Along with the quality of New York pitches, people have also raised issues with the inclusion of 20 teams in the T20 World Cup. Granted, this results in some matches where the quality of cricket from both sides is sorely unmatched but surely, we can all see the bigger picture here. If every year

is going to be saturated with multiple major cricket tournaments, we might as well invite a bigger pool of teams to partake in it. Cricket fans should rejoice at the prospect of the sport gaining wider popularity in other nations.

An issue with cricket right now is the number of major tournaments taking place close to each other. This does not give the teams that need it, the time to reflect, course correct and implement changes. The ICC Men's ODI Cricket World Cup 2023 ended in November of last year. With only seven months in hand, the teams had to prepare for the T20 World Cup. If we take a look at a five-year period in the cricket cycle, year one would see an ODI World Cup, year two would have a T20 World Cup, year three might have less fanfare but it could feature an ICC Champions Trophy, and possibly an Asia Cup (which would include all the teams where cricket is the most popular), year four would see another T20 World Cup and then the

ODI World Cup in the fifth. What that has led to is a simple continuation of momentum (or lack thereof). The teams who have been doing well continue to do so, and the struggling teams see little to no change.

As Bangladeshi fans, we have been immersed in bitterness and disappointment at the state of our cricket team despite their access to proper resources. We outsiders don't have any role to play in making changes but what can help us is to gain some perspective. There are teams such as Pakistan and Sri Lanka who are arguably faring worse than us currently in international cricket. West Indies did not even qualify for the last ODI World Cup. All of these three teams are former World Champions and have regressed at a more appalling rate than us. This is not meant to be a consolation for the Bangladesh team but rather an evaluation of the overall state of cricket and the system in place that has allowed teams like India, Australia, and England to remain at the top, often at the cost of others.

Having said that, there is undeniably always room for uncertainty in cricket, especially in T20s. This is the format in which the quality of cricket matters less than how well you can take advantage of the shorter match time and create upsets. This is also an opportunity for smaller teams to make their mark, while teams like Pakistan, New Zealand, and England in this edition of the World Cup are either already eliminated or struggling to qualify for the next stage.

There are other teams like the Netherlands, Ireland, and the USA of late, who despite not being regarded as serious contenders of the game and not having access to the same cricket resources, display firepower and an intention to prove themselves that is really commendable. They perform with a hunger to prove themselves, probably because it is that much harder for them to get their foot in the door. Much like in other areas of life, the underdogs are scrappy, making the most of what's available to pursue their passions. It is only fair that teams varying greatly in rankings become regular participants in major cricket tournaments. The problems presented by cricket can be offset by the changes that are being introduced. Normalising pitches that are more bowler friendly and being more welcoming to different cricket teams can build a more exciting future for the sport.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 1 Latitude
 - 6 Disorder
 - 10 Highway sections
 - 11 Entice
 - 12 Left, on a liner
 - 13 Film trophy
 - 14 Wait to pounce
 - 15 Cry to a rescuer
 - 16 Outdated
 - 17 Bro's sibling
 - 18 Sixth sense, briefly
 - 19 Kalahari critters
 - 22 Loyal
 - 23 Inning count
 - 26 Brewery sights
 - 29 Soak up
 - 32 Take a stab at
 - 33 Tourist's aid
 - 34 Penn, for one
 - 36 Renown
 - 37 Beneath
 - 38 Andrews of "Mary Poppins"
 - 39 Land units
 - 40 Add a change to
- DOWN**
- 1 Downhill course
 - 2 Montague foe
 - 3 Not yet in stock
 - 4 Make coffee
 - 5 Id —
 - 6 Interlace
 - 7 Game show host
 - 8 Ship poles
 - 9 Barber's aid
 - 11 Hit movie of 1995
 - 15 Farrow of film
 - 17 Pesky bugs, informally
 - 20 Massage
 - 21 Minivan alternative
 - 24 Mexican snacks
 - 25 Endurance
 - 27 Muff
 - 28 Ignores the limit
 - 29 Team
 - 30 Pound part
 - 31 San Diego player
 - 35 Retain
 - 36 Be enraged
 - 38 Toast spread



1-25

YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS



Write for us. Send us your opinion pieces to dsopinion@gmail.com

Antidepressant discontinuation: what you need to know

If you or someone you know is considering stopping antidepressants, it is crucial to understand potential withdrawal symptoms. A recent study published in *The Lancet Psychiatry* sheds light on this issue, providing valuable insights for patients and healthcare professionals alike.

The study, which is the most comprehensive of its kind to date, analysed data from over 20,000 patients across 79 studies. It found that approximately one in six to seven patients (15%) experienced withdrawal symptoms directly related to stopping antidepressants. These symptoms, which include dizziness, headache, nausea, insomnia, and irritability, can be challenging but are not a sign of addiction.

Furthermore, about 3% of patients experienced severe withdrawal symptoms, leading some to restart antidepressant treatment. Though not inevitable, these symptoms can vary depending on the antidepressant used.

Importantly, the study highlights the need for open communication between patients and doctors when considering discontinuing antidepressants. Joint decision-making and careful monitoring are essential to ensure a smooth transition and minimise any potential discomfort.



While previous studies have suggested higher rates of withdrawal symptoms, this new analysis provides a more accurate picture. It distinguishes between symptoms directly caused by medication cessation and those influenced by patients' or practitioners' expectations.

Ultimately, the goal is to provide patients with evidence-based information to make informed decisions about their treatment. If you are considering stopping antidepressants, speak with your healthcare provider to discuss your options and develop a plan that prioritises your well-being. Remember, you are not alone, and support is available every step of the way.

Chronic and recurrent pneumonia in children: A changing paradigm of a common disease

DR AHAD ADNAN

Pneumonia is a major respiratory problem in children, both in terms of the number of occurrences and the cause of death. The word, more specifically termed "pneumonitis", implies inflammation of lung cells. When the destructive process is at its peak, it thickens your respiratory membrane, resulting in problematic respiration along with fever, cough, and distress.

Conventionally, people believe that only various organisms can cause pneumonia, despite the existence of several non-infectious mechanisms that are alarmingly on the rise. Among the organisms are bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites, with the former two being the most common and originating from both community and hospital settings. The typical course of the disease involves an improved course with or without antibiotics, along with some supportive measures like oxygen therapy, etc.

If a child really has either recurrent or persistent pneumonia, we need to evaluate him/her thoroughly. We must clarify some important histories related to other similar diseases. Pulmonary tuberculosis (TB) should definitely come to mind at the top of the list, especially in our country. TB is somehow difficult to diagnose in children due to non-specific clinical features, difficulty in collecting samples to investigate, and the organism's scarcity.

We should take a history of weight loss, an evening rise in temperature, a persistent cough, less alertness, vaccination, and, most importantly, recent TB contact. Device-induced sputum and stool for GeneXpert are among the most commonly used samples for detecting TB organisms.

Many children used to vomit their feeds, especially liquid feeds, spontaneously or after coughing. Most of them have reflux disease, which drains the vomit from the digestive and respiratory paths and creates repeated pneumonia. We



advocate for the mother to feed the babies in a sitting or semi-sitting posture rather than lying, to offer small, frequent feeds, to prepare semi-solid to solid feed in place of whole liquid feed, and also to avoid rigorous shaking after meals. Some long-term medications help with these conditions as well.

A congenital heart defect may be a co-problem or primary culprit for recurrent or persistent pneumonia, mainly due to feeding problems and vomiting. Sometimes the aspiration of a foreign body into the respiratory tract ignites a long-lasting lung pathology. We used to have a history of choking, violent coughing during feeding, eating seeds or nuts, and also playing with small, rounded objects.

In recent times, we have observed a lot of children with congenitally deficient immunity. If a child presents with at least 4 ear infections, at least 2 serious sinus infections, or at least 2 pneumonias, along with 2 or more months on antibiotics with little

effect in a year, recurrent abscess, oral thrush, fungal infection, deep-seated infection, the same family history, and poor growth, we must think of primary immunodeficiency (PID). A PID panel assay will confirm the diagnosis.

These challenging patterns of pneumonia force the paediatric pulmonologist to use non-conventional, newer investigative techniques like fibre optic bronchoscopy. It serves both diagnostic and therapeutic purposes. Genetic testing and immune panel studies are also of critical use.

Last but not least, the old-school investigating technique, culture, and sensitivity test are crucial in detecting specific organisms and determining the appropriate antibiotic to use. More emphasis should be given to such recurrent or pneumonia cases to ensure a healthy lung and a better world.

The writer is a consultant paediatrician at the ICMI, Dhaka. Email: ahadnann@gmail.com

DID YOU KNOW? The benefits of epidural pain relief during labour

A recent study published in the *PubMed* investigated the impact of epidural pain relief during labour on serious health issues for mothers. The research included over 500,000 women who gave birth in Scotland between 2007 and 2019.

About 22% of these women opted for an epidural during labor. The study found that mothers who received an epidural were less likely to experience severe health issues after giving birth. In fact, they had a 35% lower risk of facing serious problems compared to those who did not receive an epidural.

Additionally, they were less likely to need critical care. Interestingly, the benefits of epidurals were even more pronounced for certain groups. For example, women who needed epidurals for medical reasons saw greater protection against severe health issues. Similarly, mothers who delivered their babies prematurely also benefited more from epidurals.

The study's findings highlight the potential importance of epidural pain relief during labour, especially for women at higher risk of complications. By making epidurals more accessible to these groups, healthcare providers may be able to improve maternal health outcomes and ensure safer childbirth experiences.

Overall, the research suggests that epidurals play a significant role in reducing the likelihood of serious health problems for mothers during and after childbirth. However, to fully understand the extent of their benefits and how to optimise them for different populations, further studies may be necessary.



WORLD BLOOD DONOR DAY 2024 20 years of celebrating giving: thank you, blood donors!



On World Blood Donor Day, celebrated on June 14, 2024, WHO, its partners, and communities across the world united behind the theme: 20 years of celebrating giving: thank you, blood donors!

The 20th anniversary of World Blood Donor Day is an excellent and timely opportunity to thank blood donors across the world for their life-saving donations over the years and honour the profound impact on both patients and donors. It is also a timely moment to address continued challenges and accelerate progress towards a future where safe blood transfusions are universally accessible.

The campaign's objectives are as follows:

- Thank and recognise the millions of voluntary blood donors who have contributed to the health and well-being of millions of people around the world.
- Showcase the achievements and challenges of national blood programmes, and share best practices and lessons learned.
- Highlight the continuous need for regular, unpaid blood donation to achieve universal access to safe blood transfusions.
- Promote a culture of regular blood donation among young people and the general public, and increase the diversity and sustainability of the blood donor pool.

Key messages:

- Safe blood saves lives.
- Blood is needed by women with complications during pregnancy and childbirth, children with severe anaemia, often resulting from malaria or malnutrition, accident victims, and surgical and cancer patients.

- Regular blood donation by a sufficient number of healthy people is needed to ensure that blood will always be available whenever and wherever it is needed.

- While the need for blood is universal, access to blood is not.

- Blood shortages are acute in low- and middle-income countries.

- Every single blood or plasma donation is a precious lifesaving gift; regular donation is the key to building a safe and sustainable supply.

- The wide participation of the population in regular blood and plasma donations ensures that everyone can access blood and plasma proteins when they need them.

- Ensuring the safety and well-being of blood and plasma donors is critical; it helps build commitment to regular donations.

- Thank you, blood donors. Your selfless donations have had a profound impact on the lives and well-being of hundreds of millions of people, as well as their families and communities across the world.

Source: World Health Organisation

HPV vaccine: a game changer in preventing cervical cancer

The HPV vaccine has been available to girls aged 12-13 since 2008, and catch-up programmes are available until age 19. Previous research showed that vaccinated women had significantly lower rates of cervical cancer, but uptake of the vaccine was lower in areas with more economic challenges.



A study published in the *BMJ* looked at the impact of the HPV vaccine on cervical cancer and precancerous changes in England. The study analysed data from the National Health Service's cancer registry between 2006 and




2020. It found that among women who received the HPV vaccine, the incidence of cervical cancer dropped by 83.9%, and the incidence of precancerous changes (CIN3) dropped by 94.3%. These benefits were even greater for women vaccinated at a younger age.

Interestingly, while more cases of cervical cancer still occurred in economically deprived areas, the relative reduction in cases was similar across all social classes. This means that the vaccine was equally effective in protecting women from cervical cancer, regardless of their socioeconomic background. This study highlights the importance of HPV vaccination in preventing cervical cancer and reducing health inequalities.


It emphasises that simple interventions like vaccination can have significant health benefits for individuals and communities. The researchers and editorialists urge healthcare professionals and policymakers to work together to ensure that more than 90% of girls and boys receive the HPV vaccine, thereby maximising its impact on public health.


UROLOGY



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Consultant



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“Extremely disappointed to play ourselves out of the tournament. We have a proud record in World Cups in the last ten years and it has now come to an end.”
New Zealand pacer **Tim Southee** after consolation win against Uganda

Will Shanto's willow stop snoozing?

ASHFAQ UL-ALAM

Bangladesh's campaign in this year's ICC Men's T20 World Cup has been refreshingly devoid of any off-field drama surrounding captaincy, thanks to Najmul Hossain Shanto who has taken the captaincy mantle on his stride and has done a commendable job so far.

That being said, in a playful attempt to spark some off-field spice, here's a whimsical conspiracy theory: Bangladesh have two Shantos playing in the marquee event.

At one end, there is captain Shanto, a smart leader who has been brave with his use of bowlers, excellent with his on-field decisions, has taken a number of gutsy calls, and almost all of his gambles have come off.

At the age of 26, leading the team for the first time in an ICC event as a full-time captain, Shanto has shown the wits of a seasoned veteran and has been rightfully showered with praises for it.

But at the other end stands the batter Shanto, who looks fidgety, indecisive, unsure whether to press on or grind it out in the middle.

Since arriving in North America, he has batted six times, including a warm-up match against India, and has made three, 36, zero, seven, 14 and one, in that order – the last three of which have come in the T20 World Cup.

It's not like Shanto has been struggling against a particular type of bowling either.

He has been dismissed twice against off-spinners, stumped against the USA's Steven Taylor and caught at slip to the Netherlands' Aryan Dutt, lost his stumps to India's Mohammad Siraj, got caught trying to pull

South Africa's Anrich Nortje and gave a straight-forward catch to extra cover against Sri Lanka's Nuwan Thushara.

The only time he got going was the 34-ball 36-run knock against the USA in the second T20I of the three-match series last month, which ended with a run-out dismissal.

Realistically, had Shanto not been the captain of the team, his place in the starting eleven would have been under serious threat.

But while batter Shanto has been a liability for the team so far, captain Shanto has been indispensable. Most notably, his use of leg-spinner Rishad Hossain has been inspiring, arguably the key move in Bangladesh's winning encounters against Netherlands and Sri Lanka.

Giving Shakib Al Hasan just one over and completing his quota with three overs from Mahmudullah Riyad against South Africa was another inspired decision, one that paid dividends.

In a team where former captains like Shakib and Mahmudullah are in the middle, Shanto has emerged as the clear leader on the field; always communicating with the bowlers from mid-on.

But even his excellent captaincy is not enough to hide his blushes with the bat.

Liton Das, who also came into the tournament with questionable form, contributed in the win over Sri Lanka with a steadfast 36 off 38 balls while Tanzid Hasan Tamim gave glimpses of his abilities at the top with a flashy 35 off 26 balls against the Dutch.

Shanto is the only top order batter who is yet to play an effective knock and, with Bangladesh in pole position for Super Eight,

it is imperative that the skipper regains his groove.

Next up for the Tigers are the spirited Nepal, who pushed South Africa to the limit before conceding a one-run loss.

A win will seal Bangladesh's position in the next round among India, Australia, and Afghanistan – arguably three of the best bowling attacks in the competition.

For Shanto, the match against Nepal is an opportunity to get some runs under his belt and get off the mark in leading the team from the front with the bat. If he fails to do so, who knows, the ludicrous conspiracy theory proposed above could gain some steam.



SPORTS ON TV
During EID Holidays

NAGORIK TV AND STAR SPORTS 1,2,3
T20 World Cup
Australia vs Scotland
Live from 6:30 am
Pakistan vs Ireland
Live from 8:30 pm

June 17, Monday
Bangladesh vs Nepal
Live from 5:30 am
Sri Lanka vs Netherlands
Live from 6:30 am
New Zealand vs Papua New Guinea
Live from 8:30 pm

June 18, Tuesday
West Indies vs Afghanistan
Live from 6:30 am
June 19, Wednesday
USA vs South Africa
Live from 8:30 pm

T SPORTS & SONY SPORTS
Euro
Poland vs Netherlands

Live from 7:00 pm
Slovenia vs Denmark
Live from 10:00 pm

June 17, Monday
Serbia vs England
Live from 1:00 am
Romania vs Ukraine
Live from 7:00 pm
Belgium vs Slovakia
Live from 10:00 pm

June 18, Tuesday
Austria vs France
Live from 1:00 am
Turkey vs Georgia
Live from 10:00 pm

June 19, Wednesday
Portugal vs Czech Republic
Live from 1:00 am
Croatia vs Albania
Live from 7:00 pm
Germany vs Hungary
Live from 10:00 pm
Scotland vs Switzerland (Thursday)

Nepal's near-upset chimes CHARM OF CRICKET

AGENCIES

In a match decided by the slimmest of margins and filled with twists and turns, Heinrich Klaassen's decisive run-out from the final ball secured South Africa's unbeaten record at the ICC Men's T20 World Cup and eliminated Nepal from Super Eights contention in a thrilling one-run victory in St Vincent yesterday.

Needing two runs from the final delivery to keep their Super Eights hopes alive, Nepal's Gulsan Jha was run out at the non-striker's end by Klaassen, as the match seemed destined for a Super Over.

This heartbreaking conclusion was particularly harsh for Nepal, who had been the superior team for much of the contest. Their spinners dominated South Africa, restricting them to 115 for seven, and their top-order batsmen were in control, reaching 85 for two in the 14th over with the required rate well within reach.

Despite the narrow loss, Nepal captain Rohit Paudel expressed pride in his team's performance. "I feel like the way we played today shows that we belong here," Paudel said.

Nepal's efforts, backed by their spirited fans who continued to flock in numbers,



There have been six instances of one-run wins in Men's T20 World Cup: South Africa (SA) vs New Zealand (NZ), Lord's, 2009; NZ vs Pakistan (PAK), Bridgetown, 2010; India (IND) vs SA, Colombo, 2012; IND vs Bangladesh, Bengaluru, 2016; Zimbabwe vs PAK, Perth, 2022; SA vs Nepal, Kingstown, 2024.

Teams with multiple 1-run wins in T20Is: SA (5), England (2), IND (2), NZ (2), Ireland (2), Kenya (2).

did not go unnoticed. South African legend Dale Steyn commended the atmosphere created by the vocal and invested Nepalese fan base at the Arnos Vale Ground, which had seen international action return after almost ten years in Thursday's nail-biter between Bangladesh and the Netherlands.

"It would've been the talk of the tournament if Nepal had gotten over the line," Steyn said on ICC's Digital Daily show, hailing the match as the tournament's best so far. "It was fantastic, and they deserved to win. This was the match of the tournament. The matches have gone down to the wire in the USA, and now in the Caribbean, we've seen nail-biting thrillers. I saw people crying in the stands; it shows how much it means to them, and that's what cricket is all about."

The disappointment of a narrow loss and early exit should be hard to overcome for the Himalayan nation. However, on a global platform which could set the fate of an emerging team on course for prosperity, Nepal's near-upset against a top-tier team like South Africa has undoubtedly demonstrated their potential and belonging on the global stage.

England out to dispel Euro doubts

AGENCIES

England's attacking arsenal sees them start Euro 2024 as the bookmakers' favourites to end a wait since 1966 to win a major tournament, but doubts persist over the Three Lions ahead of Sunday's opener against Serbia.

Gareth Southgate's men have won just one of their last five matches – a run that includes a 1-1 draw with North Macedonia and a shock 1-0 home defeat to Iceland in their final warm-up match before flying out to Germany.

England are still expected to cruise through a group that also includes Denmark and Slovenia.

The biggest question over England's credentials to be European champions is at the back as injury has robbed Southgate of his settled back four from previous tournaments.

Harry Maguire failed to make the squad due to a calf problem, while Luke Shaw is included as the only natural left-back despite not having played any minutes for club or country since February.



John Stones is therefore even more crucial as the one experienced centreback at international tournament level, but the Manchester City man has also been dogged by fitness problems this season.

Kieran Trippier, a right-back by trade, is set to start against Serbia at left-back.

Crystal Palace's Marc Guehi is the leading candidate to partner Stones for his first major tournament start.

England's defensive deficiencies have already been exploited by Brazil, Belgium and Iceland in 2024.

And Serbia have the firepower to hurt them with their powerful strike pairing of Aleksandar Mitrovic and Dusan Vlahovic.

Vlahovic, who has scored 18 goals in 38 outings for Serie A side Juventus this season, is drawing inspiration from Iceland's 1-0 victory over England in a friendly at Wembley last week.

"No one is invincible," Vlahovic said ahead of Sunday's match in Gelsenkirchen. "We looked at the match against Iceland and there are things that can be copied from them, because they beat them at Wembley in front of 80,000 people. Everything is possible."

Southgate's paucity of options at the back are compensated by the abundance of weapons in attack. The quartet of Phil Foden, Jude Bellingham, Bukayo Saka and Harry Kane is the envy of Europe.

However, Southgate is still to find the right balance to help them perform on the international stage to the same level as they have for their clubs this season – the quartet scored a combined 114 goals in club football in the 2023/24 campaign.

Germany strike balance, promise resurgence

REUTERS, Munich

Germany's young attackers sent a clear message that they are ready to lead the team into a new era, with 21-year-olds Florian Wirtz and Jamal Musiala putting on a sparkling display in their country's opening 5-1 Euro 2024 win over Scotland on Friday.

The two wingers scored the opening goals in the Group A victory, while Kai Havertz, 25, converted a penalty and substitutes Niclas Füllkrug and Emre Can scored in the second half against the reeling 10-man Scots.

But it was Wirtz and Musiala who drew the eyes of the expectant, yet anxious, home fans who had been chastened by Germany's underperformance in the past decade – with the team going out of successive World Cups (2018, 2022) in the group stage and losing in the last 16 at Euro 2020.

Wirtz underlined his status as one of European football's most exciting young talents with his goal, having already tested goalkeeper Angus Gunn in the opening minutes of the match.

His 10th-minute strike was a perfect example of his play this past year, with 11 goals and 12 assists for Bundesliga champions Bayer Leverkusen, ghosting in



at the edge of the area to power the ball home, despite Gunn getting a hand on it.

It meant Wirtz became the youngest scorer for Germany at a Euros at 21 years and 42 days old, beating the previous record of Havertz who was 22 when he scored at Euro 2020.

Musiala, who grew up in England and played for their youth team but then opted to represent the nation of his birth, got a much cleaner strike when he smashed the ball high into the net nine minutes later having been teed up by Havertz in the box. The forward, given the prestigious No.

10 shirt by Julian Nagelsmann, is only 67 days older than Wirtz and ran Scotland's defence ragged with his deft technique while travelling with the ball, which has earned him the nickname "Bambi".

While stalwarts like keeper Manuel Neuer, 38, and captain Ilkay Gundogan, 33, are still in the starting lineup, there is a sense of a passing of the torch, particularly in the attacking area of the pitch where Germany have struggled in recent years.

They are ably helped by the precision passing of 34-year-old Toni Kroos. The midfield maestro, who will retire from playing after the tournament, had a 99% passing accuracy rate during his 80 minutes – though tougher opponents will come.

He has won a glut of titles at club level with Bayern Munich and Real Madrid and was part of the Germany team that won the World Cup in 2014. But helping to win their first Euro title in almost 30 years at home would be a perfect climax to his career.

Nagelsmann, who made history on Friday as the youngest coach at a Euros aged 36 years and 327 days, eclipsing Slovenia's Sreco Katancic, could have found the perfect balance between youth and experience to take his country to glory.

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Political feud now comes into focus

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Not only gold smuggling, political rivalry may have also been a key reason behind the murder of Jhenaidah-4 lawmaker Anwarul Azim Anar, investigators have said.

Two top leaders of Jhenaidah Awami League, Saidul Karim Mintu, the general secretary, and Kamal Ahmed Babu, the welfare affairs secretary, have been arrested. The former is currently on an eight-day remand while the latter is in jail after confessing to his role in the murder.

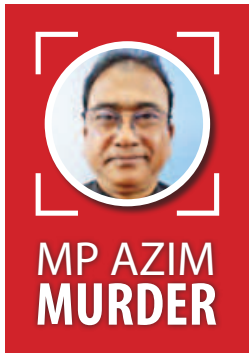
Referring to Babu's confessional statement made on Friday, investigators say that both AL leaders promised to pay the assailants.

Mintu desired to replace Azim as the lawmaker, they added.

After India and Bangladesh police on May 22 said Azim had been killed, Babu and Mintu visited the slain lawmaker's house and offered condolences to the grieving family members, they said.

The announcement of his death came 10 days after Azim went to Kolkata and remained traceless for over a week.

Besides, Azim made an enemy of his partner



This year's "noukar haat", or boat market, in Pirojpur began around a month ago in Nesarabad upazila. As people of the marshlands of Barishal, Jhalakathi and Pirojpur largely rely on boats for commuting, this market attracts a huge crowd. Each boat here is sold at Tk 3,000-8,000 depending on the quality of the wood used. Over a century old, this market operates only on Fridays and begins just ahead of the monsoon, continuing for four-five months every year. The photo was taken on Friday.

PHOTO: KM HABIBUR RAHMAN

Rain likely on Eid day

STAR REPORT

The Met office predicts rain in several divisions this week, including tomorrow, when Eid-ul-Azha will be celebrated across the country.

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by gusty winds are likely to occur at most places in Rangpur, Mynensingh, and Sylhet divisions on Monday and Tuesday, said a weather bulletin from the Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD) yesterday.

Besides, parts of the Chattogram, Rajshahi, Dhaka, Khulna, and Barishal divisions may also experience light to moderate rain or thundershowers this week, it added.

The rainfall activity may gradually increase till Thursday, the BMD bulletin added.

Meanwhile, a weather bulletin from the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) yesterday

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No respite for Gazans even ahead of Eid



- Hezbollah launches rockets, drones at Israel days after commander's death
- Crew evacuated as ship hit by Yemen rebels drifts in Red Sea
- Gaza death toll rises to 37,296
- Erdogan says Biden faces a test of sincerity in handling the Gaza war
- US preparing to temporarily remove Gaza pier due to sea conditions

AGENCIES

Israel bombed and shelled Gaza yesterday, witnesses and first responders said, with fallout from the war bringing a resurgence of tensions to the Lebanon border and Yemen.

The bombardment came a day before Eid-ul-Azha as most of the Muslim worldwide prepare to mark the occasion starting from today.

In the ninth month of the Israeli offensive on Gaza, the Civil Defence agency in Gaza City said they recovered 10 bodies from three separate homes after Israeli airstrikes pounded those.

In Rafah, in Gaza's far south near Egypt, witnesses reported clashes between militants and Israeli troops in the city's west, and artillery fire towards a refugee camp

in the city centre. AFP TV images showed streets largely deserted.

The United Nations says about one million people have been displaced from Rafah since early May, when Israel began ground operations in the Palestinian enclave.

Israel's military has also been operating in central Gaza, where on Friday at a hospital in Deir al-Balah city a middle-aged man wept over the body of a younger man. Blood soaked through a white cloth around his neck.

Israel's offensive has killed at least 37,266 people in Gaza, mostly civilians, according to the health ministry in the Hamas-ruled territory.

Fears of a broader Middle East conflict have surged again, with Lebanon-based Hezbollah fighters, who are

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

ST MARTIN'S ISLAND Crisis eases after essential supplies arrive

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

The food crisis on St Martin's Island has eased up after a tourist ship from Cox's Bazar delivered food and other essential supplies to the island early yesterday.

"The marginalised people are now being given the rice that was brought to us under the government's food assistance programme," said Mujibur Rahman, chairman of St Martin's Island.

"The prices of essential food items have now dropped as traders have brought a month's supply of food and necessities," he added.

However, locals are still unable to leave the island because communication with the mainland has been suspended for 10 days.

The chairman said if any medical emergencies arise, the administration will make special arrangements to establish communication with the mainland.

Over the last few days, several trawlers and speedboats had been fired upon from across the border when they reached the estuary of the Naf River.

St Martin's, which can only be accessed by boats through the Naf River

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Mangoes from 4 continents in one single orchard

Univ graduate Shibli's 'Matri Bagan' in Pabna offers 42 varieties

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, Pabna

American Red Palmer, Australian R2E2, Japanese Miyazaki, Brunai King Mango, Ivory Coast's Red Ivory, Thailand's "King of Chakapat" and many more - as many as 42 varieties of mangoes from four different continents can be found in one single orchard in Dhulti village of Pabna's Ishwardi upazila.

How? All thanks to young entrepreneur Mehedi Hasan Shibli. A recent university graduate, Shibli has been collecting seedlings of fruits of foreign varieties, especially mangoes, since 2019. As a college student, he had an innate passion for expanding his orchard, which now is a profitable business.

"I first collected 19 varieties of mangoes and cultivated them at my orchard 'Matri Bagan' in 2019. Within a year, the plants began giving fruits, inspiring me to further develop my garden and nursery."

"Within five years, I was able to collect 42 different varieties of mangoes from different countries of four continents [Asia,

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2



Shibli in his orchard. PHOTO: STAR

Tigers' chance to seal Super Eight spot

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh will be confident of making it to the Super Eight stage of the Twenty20 World Cup for the first time since 2007 as they square off against winless Nepal in the last match of Group D in the early hours on Monday.

The match will get underway at 5:30 am (Bangladesh time) at the Arnos Vale Stadium in Kingstown, the capital of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Najmul Hossain Shanto-led side are in pole position to go through to the next round - behind group winners South Africa - with two wins out of three. They started the campaign with a crucial two-wicket win against former champions Sri Lanka before going down by four runs against the Proteas - a result they would be looking back with some regret for some time to come, especially given that the Tigers have never

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5



Bangladesh batter Towhid Hridoy (C) would be at more ease with his batting as he leads in runs scored for the Tigers in the T20 World Cup so far. The same, however, can't be said about skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto (L) and Tanzid Tamim -- Bangladesh's opening pair in the last two matches - both of whom will be focused on stepping up in their final Group D fixture against Nepal at the Arnos Vale Stadium in Kingstown on Monday. The Tigers trained at the venue yesterday ahead of the contest.

PHOTO: BCB

Wild horse species returns to the Kazakh steppes



AFP, Arqalyk

After a few hesitant steps following a long flight from Prague, three Przewalski horses galloped off for the first time into the Kazakh steppe - the native habitat of this endangered species.

The horses emerged after being locked in containers for 20 hours and are the first of 40 which are to be released into the wild in this vast Central Asian country over the next five years.

"We have been waiting for this moment for a very long time," Albert Salemgareyev from the Association for the Conservation of Biodiversity in Kazakhstan told AFP.

"A lot of work has been carried out in recent months in order for the Przewalski horses to come to Kazakhstan."

The project run by the Prague and Berlin zoo is aimed at preserving this species of stockily built horse with large heads which share a common ancestry with modern domestic horses but are genetically different.