



Eid vacation puts Dhaka at dengue risk

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1.6m marooned in Sylhet flood

Major rivers swell amid heavy downpour

DWOHA CHOWDHURY and MINTU DESHWARA

Eid has not brought joy to many in the Sylhet region as homes of more than 1.6 million people were flooded and nearly 30,000 had to move to shelter centres.

Many families with children and elderly left their inundated homes and took shelter on roads with nothing but plastic sheets to protect them from rain.

"Flood water entered my home the night before the Eid. As the water rose, I left the earthen hut with my grandchildren and waded through knee-deep water to this road," 60-year-old Mosammat Begum, who was by the Sylhet-Bhologanj road in Tukerbazar area, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Her three grandchildren, aged less than 10, were with her under a shed the family built with plastic sheets and sticks by the road.

"We can see our hut from here. There is chest-high water inside. It may collapse anytime. Our food and belongings are

already damaged," said the woman whose son is a farm worker.

Many families were seen by the side of roads in Sylhet, Sunamganj, Moulvibazar and Habiganj over the last two days.

On Sylhet-Tamabil and Sylhet-Bhologanj roads, people took shelter on empty trucks and lorries.

In vast areas and hundreds of inundated villages, dinghies are the only means to go from one place to another in monsoon.

Since many poor families do not have one, they are not able to move to government shelters.

Samad Ahmed, a farmer of Meghargao area in Sylhet's Companiganj, said he, his wife and children went to a primary school near their village the day before Eid, but it was already overcrowded.

"Then we went to a kitchen market where a shopkeeper let us stay in his shop," he said.

In Sylhet district, almost 75 percent of areas, including 23 wards of the city and 1,548 villages in 13 upazilas, have been

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Heavy rains and onrush of water from upstream have flooded most of the areas of Sylhet city. This intersection in the city's Taltala area has gone under water, affecting people and businesses alike. The photo was taken yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Air pollution caused most deaths in 2021

2.36 lakh people died in Bangladesh, says global study; children under 5 years particularly vulnerable

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Air pollution has become the leading cause of death in Bangladesh, outpacing fatalities from high blood pressure, poor diet and tobacco use, found a new study.

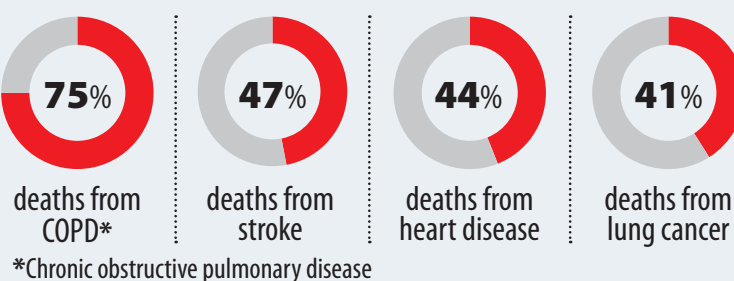
In 2021, at least 236,000 lives were lost in Bangladesh due to air pollution, according to the fifth edition of the State of Global Air report, which was released yesterday.

In contrast, there were 200,000 deaths linked to high blood pressure, 130,100 deaths linked to tobacco use and 130,400 deaths linked to poor diet. Children in Bangladesh are particularly vulnerable to air pollution: the country ranked fifth globally in 2021 in the total number of deaths among children under the age of five due to air pollution.

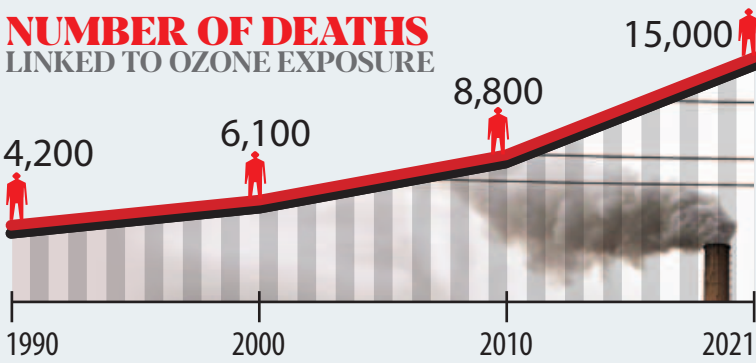
As many as 19,000 children under five years old died due to air pollution, said the report, which was produced by the State of Global Air Initiative, a collaboration between the Health Effects Institute (HEI) and

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AIR POLLUTION IN BANGLADESH LINKED TO



NUMBER OF DEATHS LINKED TO OZONE EXPOSURE



SCORCHING HEAT

Hajj death toll surges past 900

AFP, Riyadh

Friends and family searched for missing hajj pilgrims yesterday as the death toll at the annual rituals, which were carried out in scorching heat, surged past 900.

Relatives scoured hospitals and pleaded online for news, fearing the worst after temperatures hit 51.8 degrees Celsius (125 Fahrenheit) in Makkah, Islam's holiest city, on Monday.

About 1.8 million people from all over the world, many old and infirm, took part in the days-long, mostly outdoor pilgrimage, held this year during the Saudi summer.

An Arab diplomat told AFP that deaths among Egyptians alone had jumped to "at least 600", from more than 300 a day earlier, mostly from the unforgiving heat.

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Workers unloading hilsa from a boat at the wholesale fish market in Barishal city's Port Road area yesterday morning. The fish, caught from the Meghna river, was sold for Tk 20,000 to Tk 40,000 per maund, depending on size and quality.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

MP AZIM MURDER AL leader Mintu assured plotter of blood money Says DB report to court

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Saidul Karim Mintu, general secretary of Jhenaidah Awami League, promised to pay a plotter of lawmaker Anwarul Azim Anar murder, says a forwarding report submitted to a court on June 16.

Mintu's involvement was mentioned

in the confessional statement of key accused Amanullah, according to the report by Assistant Commissioner (DB) Mahfuzur Rahman.

D h a k a Metropolitan Magistrate Anan Sumi sent Mintu to jail after receiving the report.

Kazi Kamal Ahmed Babu, Jhenaidah AL welfare affairs secretary, also told investigators about Mintu's role in the abduction and murder.

Amanullah confessed that Mintu and another key accused Aktaruzzaman talked on WhatsApp in early May about a financial

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Azim

Landslides kill 9 in Ukhiya camps

Seven of them Rohingyas; refugees being evacuated from hilly areas amid heavy rain

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

At least nine people, including seven Rohingyas, were killed in landslides, while another Rohingya died after the wall of his house collapsed on him, due to torrential rain in Cox's Bazar's Ukhiya yesterday morning.

Confirming the number of deaths, Mohammad Samsuddouza, additional refugee relief and repatriation commissioner, told The Daily Star that while landslides occurred in several camps, the deaths took place in camps one, eight, nine, 10 and 14.

Around 1.2 million Rohingyas have been living in 33 camps of Ukhiya and Teknaf of Cox's Bazar, most of them since 2017 after fleeing persecution by the Myanmar military.

"So far, 10 bodies have been recovered," Samsuddouza said, adding that two of the dead are locals. He also said refugees living in the risky, hilly areas are being

evacuated.

Atish Chakma, deputy assistant director of Cox's Bazar fire service, said the landslides began early Wednesday and continued till 7:00am.

"We first received a message around 3:00am about several landslides at camp 9. We recovered two bodies there and then conducted another rescue operation at camp 10, where four members of a family were killed around 6:00am. At least 10 people have died."

Hamid Ali, a Rohingya of camp-10, said the hill near his house suddenly collapsed around 6:00am, killing the four family members.

"If tarpaulin was used on the hills slopes, the deaths could have been avoided."

According to sources of the Office of the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner, one person, whose wall had collapsed, died in camp 1; two were killed

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PM'S INDIA VISIT

Defence, Teesta project, port likely to be on agenda

Both sides finalising several deals, MoUs, say diplomatic sources

PORIMOL PALMA and PALLAB BHATTACHARYA

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's upcoming visit to New Delhi on June 21-22 will focus on some key issues in bilateral relations that have regional geopolitical significance.

Issues such as water, port and defence will be discussed, The Daily Star has learnt from diplomatic sources in Dhaka and New Delhi.

Fresh loans from India under a new framework will also be high on the agenda of the bilateral talks as Bangladesh grapples with a crunch in foreign currency reserves, they said.

Besides, the Myanmar crisis, especially the intense

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NOTICE

Star Business has not been published today since economic activities are yet to gain momentum following Eid-ul-Azha holidays. It will come out tomorrow.



Homes in Khagail area of Sylhet's Companiganj upazila submerged as the region grapples with floods caused by continuous rains and the swelling of rivers. *Right top:* Two families yesterday set up a tent on a highway for shelter in Companiganj upazila's Borni area, after their homes went under water. *Right bottom:* Flood victims waiting in line for relief, distributed by the Red Crescent, at the Companiganj Thana Sadar High School shelter.

PHOTOS: SHEIKH NASIR

1.6m marooned

FROM PAGE 1
flooded, directly affecting over 8.25 lakh people, said Deputy Commissioner Sheikh Russel Hasan.

While poor people are the most vulnerable, the comparatively well-off farmers also lost their stored grain to the flood.

In Sunamganj, homes of 5.6 lakh people have been flooded as the Surma flowed 145cm above the danger mark in Chhatak, 43cm in Sunamganj town and 21cm in Derai.

Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Rashed Iqbal Chowdhury said new areas were flooded yesterday.

Officials in Moulvibazar said nearly half of the district was flooded, affecting 1.93 lakh people.

Urme Binte Salam, deputy commissioner of Moulvibazar, said, "As more rainfall is in the forecast, we are preparing for an even more devastating flood."

In Habiganj, homes of thousands of people have been flooded and more villages are at risk as rivers have been swelling since Wednesday night.

The floods are caused as the Surma, Kushiya, Manu, Dhalai, Kalni, and Gowain rivers have swelled, said Bangladesh Water Development Board officials.

In Sylhet, the Surma was flowing 94cm above the danger level at Kanaighat and 36cm in Sylhet city; the Kushiya was 56cm above in Zakiganj, and 99cm in Fenchuganj; and the Gowain was flowing 5cm above in Gowainghat.

In Moulvibazar, the Juri river was flowing 199cm above the danger level in Juri; the Dhalai was 23cm above in the town; and the Kushiya 20cm in Sherpur.

In Habiganj, the Khowai River in Chunarughat's Balla was flowing 131cm over of the danger level with 75cm in Habiganj's town and 21cm in Sayestaganj. The Kushiya was also flowing 21cm above the danger level in Baniachang's Markuli with Kalni-Kushiya 31cm in Ajmiriganj.

Officials say the rivers are swelling due to torrential rains in Meghalaya, which is upstream from Sylhet. The Indian Met office yesterday morning said it rained 111.4mm in Meghalaya's Mawsynram and 109.8mm in Cherrapunji in just 24 hours.

Besides, Sunamganj town saw 100mm rainfall, Habiganj 115mm, Sylhet city 94mm, and Moulvibazar's Sherpur 75mm.

The Met office in Bangladesh forecasts heavy and very heavy rains in Sylhet division, starting from today.

Officials said many areas were at risk of landslides.

US forces destroy eight Houthi drones in Yemen

AFP, Washington

American forces destroyed eight drones belonging to the Houthi rebels in Yemen over the past 24 hours, the US military said later on Tuesday.

The Houthis have been targeting vessels in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden since November 2023 in attacks they say are in solidarity with Palestinians during the ongoing Israel offensive in the Gaza Strip.

The United States and Britain have carried out strikes in Yemen aimed at degrading the Iran-backed rebels' ability to carry out the attacks, while there is also an international military effort to intercept drones and missiles fired at ships.

Defence, Teesta project, port likely to be on agenda

FROM PAGE 1

The two countries will feature prominently during the delegation-level meeting between Hasina and her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi.

The Bangladesh premier is scheduled to reach New Delhi in the afternoon tomorrow. On June 22, she will hold the delegation-level meeting centring on a new phase in the bilateral relationship, a diplomat told The Daily Star yesterday.

The two countries are finalising several agreements and memorandums of understanding that may be signed during Hasina's tour of India.

TEESTA PROJECT

The issue of funding for the "Teesta River Comprehensive Management and Restoration Project" will feature prominently in the talks, according to diplomatic sources in Dhaka and New Delhi.

The agreement was finalised in 2011, but could not be inked due to opposition from West Bengal.

The Economic Relations Division sought a \$983.27 million loan from China to implement the Teesta project, which includes river dredging, setting up reservoirs and building townships along the river.

On October 13, 2022, then-Chinese ambassador to Bangladesh Li Jiming said his country was serious about implementing the project, but also had a sense of reluctance due to sensitive issues surrounding it.

During a visit to Dhaka on May 9, Indian Foreign Secretary Vinay Mohan

Kwatra told Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud that India was interested in financing the Teesta project.

On June 13, Hasina told the parliament that the government was considering a proposal for a detailed feasibility study for the Teesta project as China's evaluation pointed out that there was a lack of detailed proposals on land development and water navigation.

"Our government needs to know whether India would sign the Teesta water sharing agreement because the river restoration and management project would depend on this," said Faiz Ahmad, a former ambassador of Bangladesh to China.

India and China also can fund different components of the project, said Ahmad, also a former chair of the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies.

A diplomat in New Delhi said the two prime ministers will also discuss the renewal of the Ganges Water Sharing Treaty that was signed in 1996. The treaty is set to expire in 2026.

MONGLA PORT

India is keen to manage the Mongla river port, which is crucial for better connectivity between Kolkata and India's north-eastern states, said a diplomatic source in New Delhi.

According to a report in India's The Economic Times, India has shown interest in managing Mongla port as it aligns with the country's broader strategy to counter China's expanding influence in the region.

Air pollution caused most deaths in 2021

FROM PAGE 1

The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation's Global Burden of Disease project in partnership with Unicef.

India tops the list with 169,000 deaths in children under 5, followed by Nigeria (114,000), Pakistan (68,000) and Ethiopia (31,000).

"In the last 20 years, we have talked a lot about air pollution but when it comes to action, we rarely see any action -- even the interventions that we saw are very insignificant," said Abdus Salam, one of the reviewers of the study.

The study focuses on the danger of both indoor and outdoor pollution and the vulnerability of children due to indoor air pollution in Bangladesh, said Salam, a professor of chemistry at Dhaka University.

As much as 36 percent of preterm births in Bangladesh in 2021 were linked to exposure to air pollution.

Air pollution impacts children's health in many ways -- from pregnancy through early childhood -- through impacts on newborns including preterm birth, as well as through lower respiratory infections and asthma in children, said Pallavi Pant, head of global health at HEI.

The study found South Asia to be the most polluted region in the world in terms of air: about 18 percent of the total deaths in the region are linked to air pollution.

Bangladesh also featured in the top 20 countries with the highest outdoor PM2.5 exposures.

More than 92 percent of the country's population live in areas that exceed the least stringent interim target for PM2.5 (35 µg/m3) from the World Health Organisation, the report said.

Exposure to household air

pollution caused by the use of solid fuels for cooking is also linked to the development of cataracts, a debilitating disease that affects many across South Asia, Pant told The Daily Star.

Across South Asia, residential solid fuel use continues to be an important contributor to outdoor PM2.5, together with energy, industry, agriculture and transportation sectors.

"It is promising to see progress including reductions in PM2.5 levels and exposure to household air pollution over the last few years. However, exposures to various pollutants remain high in much of South Asia, and the data brings into focus the need for sustained and science-based local and regional action to improve air quality," said Pant, who oversaw the report's release.

While there is a silver lining with the stabilisation and even reduction of annual average PM2.5 levels of air pollutants at the national level, another threat looms large: ozone pollution, according to the report.

For the first time, this year's report includes exposure levels and related health effects of nitrogen dioxide (NO2), including the impact of NO2 exposures on the development of childhood asthma.

Since 2000, deaths linked to exposure to ozone have more than doubled, with 15,000 deaths in 2021 compared with 6,200 deaths in 2000.

Traffic exhaust is a major source of NO2, which means densely populated urban areas, particularly in high-income countries, often see the highest levels of NO2 exposure and health impacts.

It should not be an issue if Bangladesh gives the port handling work to India, Ahmad said.

"Japan is already working on Matarbari deep sea port, and China can manage the Payra Port in Patuakhali. But we need to be careful so that we don't upset anyone by satisfying another," he added.

India is also keen to develop an alternative network of railway routes through Bangladesh to connect its northeast with the rest of the country. This would reduce India's reliance on the existing route through Siliguri, according to a report by The Times of India.

"Detailed negotiation on such projects is needed to know whether Indian trains will run on Bangladesh's territory and whether Bangladesh's trains can use India's territories," Ahmad said.

According to sources, India may in principle approve the supply of electricity from Bhutan to Bangladesh using its power grid.

India is also likely to push for defence equipment sales to Bangladesh under the \$500 million line of credit.

Bangladesh will seek smooth supply of essentials like wheat, sugar and onions from India.

The two leaders may also announce the launch of formal negotiations for a comprehensive economic partnership agreement (CEPA), said Bangladesh foreign ministry sources.

The issue of border killings will also be on the agenda.

4 arrested

FROM PAGE 12

was undergoing treatment at Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital yesterday.

Among the named accused are Sayed Sarzeel Ahmed Tipu, member of Bogura Zilla Parishad and also the secretary of ward-1 Awami League and Md Meheddi Hasan Himu, former publicity affairs secretary of Swechhasebak Dal and also a councillor of Bogura municipality's ward-1.

Sarzeel is the younger brother of arrestee Kabir Ahmed Mithu.

Kabir was arrested by Rab-12 while the three others were picked up by police, said Bogura Sadar Police Station Inspector Shahinuzzaman, also the investigation officer of the case.

AL leader Mintu assured plotter of blood money

FROM PAGE 1

transaction regarding the murder, says the report.

Babu also confessed that he and Amanullah met in person to discuss the same matter and one of them provided the other with photos of the crime scene.

Babu was supposed to collect a part of the assailants' payment from Mintu and pay Amanullah, it adds.

Arrested on June 12, Mintu was later placed on an eight-day remand. Lawmaker Azim went to Kolkata on May 12. Nine days later, India and Bangladesh police said he was murdered at a Kolkata flat.

Of the accused, Amanullah, Tanvir Bhuiyan, Celesty Rahman and Kazi Kamal Ahmed Babu made confessional statements.

West Bengal CID arrested two suspects named Siam Hossain and Jihad Howlader.



Landslides kill 9 in Ukhiya

FROM PAGE 1

in a landslide at camp- 8; two in camp- 9; four members of family in camp-10; and one in camp-14.

The four of a family who died in camp-10 were identified as Abu Meher, 25, Shahana, 22, Abul Kalam, 50 and Selima Khatun, 45. The two in camp-9 were Mohammad Hossain, 50, and Anwara Begum, 18.

The RRRC could not confirm the names of the other victims.

Mohammad Samsuddouza said

the locals who died in landslides are of camps eight and 14.

Locals said a Bangladeshi child, Abdul Karim, 12, was killed in the landslide at camp-8. They said he was a sixth grader at Thayangkhalai High School in Ukhiya.

Cox's Bazar has been witnessing heavy rainfall since yesterday.

Abdul Hannan, Met officer at Cox's Bazar, said his office recorded 63mm rainfall in 24 hours till 12:00pm yesterday.



The wreckage left behind by a landslide in Ukhiya camp of Cox's Bazar yesterday morning.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Hajj death toll surges past 900

FROM PAGE 1

That figure brought the total reported dead so far to 922, according to an AFP tally of figures released by various countries.

Mabrouka bint Salem Shushana of Tunisia, in her early 70s, has been missing since the climax of the pilgrimage on Saturday at Mount Arafat, her husband Mohammed told AFP yesterday.

Because she was unregistered and did not have an official hajj permit, she was unable to access air-conditioned facilities that allow pilgrims to cool down, he said.

"She's an old lady. She was tired. She was feeling so hot, and she had no place to sleep," he said. "I looked for her in all the hospitals. Until now I don't have a clue."

Facebook and other social media networks have been flooded with pictures of the missing and requests for information.

Those searching for news include family and friends of Ghada Mahmoud

Ahmed Dawood, an Egyptian pilgrim unaccounted for since Saturday.

"I received a call from her daughter in Egypt begging me to put any post on Facebook that can help track her or find her," said one family friend based in Saudi Arabia.

In addition to Egypt, fatalities have also been confirmed by Jordan, Indonesia, Iran, Senegal, Tunisia and Iraq's autonomous Kurdistan region, though in many cases authorities have not specified the cause.

A second Arab diplomat told AFP yesterday that Jordanian officials were looking for 20 missing pilgrims, though 80 others who were initially reported missing were located in hospitals.

An Asian diplomat told AFP there were "around 68 dead" from India and that others were missing.

"Some (died) because of natural causes and we had many old-age pilgrims. And some are due to the weather conditions, that's what we assume," he said.

Russia, N Korea sign

FROM PAGE 12

After talks, Putin drove Kim around in a luxury Russian limousine. They then switched places and Kim drove Putin. Later, they watched a concert together.

Putin accused the United States, South Korea and Japan of raising tensions on the Korean peninsula and said North Korea had a right to strengthen its own defences.

Kim said the pact would expand cooperation in politics, economy and defence, calling it "strictly peace-loving and defensive" in nature.

"Our two countries' relations have been elevated to the new higher level of an alliance," Kim said.

At the start of their summit, Kim expressed "unconditional support" for "all of Russia's policies", including "a full support and firm alliance" for Putin's war with Ukraine.

Putin said Moscow was fighting the hegemonic, imperialist policy

of the United States and its allies, Russian media reported.

"We highly appreciate your consistent and unwavering support for Russian policy, including in the Ukrainian direction," Putin said.

The countries' partnership was an "engine for accelerating the building of a new multi-polar world", North Korea's state news agency KCNA said.

Russia has used its warming ties with North Korea to needle Washington, while heavily sanctioned North Korea has won political backing and promises of economic support and trade from Moscow.

The United States and its allies say they fear Russia could provide aid for North Korea's missile and nuclear programmes, which are banned by UN Security Council resolutions, and have accused Pyongyang of providing ballistic missiles and artillery shells that Russia has used in its war in Ukraine.



On the third day of Eid, thousands thronged Dhaka's parks, historic places and other recreation centres. The National Zoo in Mirpur was abuzz with children's laughter and excitement. The capital yesterday was relatively empty as people have just started to return from their hometowns after spending time with family members. Meanwhile, a welcoming rain in the afternoon drenched the city.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS, ANISUR RAHMAN



Most of capital cleaned up promptly



Dhanmodi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The combined efforts of Dhaka residents and the two city corporations saw most part of the capital cleaned up within three days of Eid-ul-Azha.

Residents were also encouraged to dispose of animal wastes properly and keep surroundings clean with bleaching powder, and they were seen following the instructions in many areas.

"After sacrificing our cattle, we cleaned up the slaughtering area and left the wastes bagged by the roadside, which was then collected by conservancy workers

quickly," said Mujahidul Islam, a resident of Shyamoli area.

Masum Ali of Narinda area echoed him.

Earlier, the two Dhaka mayors announced that they would ensure the city to be completely cleaned soon after the Eid.

Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh promised to clean DSCC areas within 24 hours and Dhaka North City Corporation Mayor Atiqul Islam announced to do so within six hours.

According to the city corporations' public relations departments, DSCC completed cleaning up 23,958 tonnes of

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



Mohammadpur

Eid vacation puts Dhaka at dengue risk

Many under-construction buildings, offices, educational institutes turn into breeding sources of Aedes mosquitoes

HELEMUL ALAM

While Dhaka has worn a deserted look, giving some respite to the dwellers from traffic jams and usual hassles, the six-day holiday for Eid-ul-Azha has increased the risk of spreading dengue in the city.

During this time, many under-construction buildings, empty houses, offices, and educational institutes in the capital have turned into breeding sources of Aedes mosquitoes, causing the mosquito-borne disease to spread.

Experts asked city dwellers as well as city corporations to take effective measures, as intermittent rains during this time may exaggerate the situation.

Many under-construction buildings became breeding grounds because the owners or developers preserved water on the newly constructed roof to strengthen it.

A recent pre-monsoon survey by Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS),



Water accumulating on the roof of an under-construction building on Indira Road.

PHOTO: STAR



larvae in 29 wards of Dhaka South City Corporation and 12 wards of Dhaka North City Corporation.

Among the Aedes larvae-positive houses, 42.33 percent are high-rise buildings, 21.6 percent are individual houses, 21.6 percent are under-construction buildings, 12.74 percent are semi-concrete houses, and 1.73 percent are

open spaces.

Among Aedes breeding sources, 18 percent were found in plastic drums, 15 percent in floors with retained water, and 14 percent in plastic buckets.

Meanwhile, according to DGHS data, at least 40 people died of dengue, while 3,218 were hospitalised across the country till yesterday morning.

"The chances of increasing new breeding sources are heavy as the holidays span around a week, which is a suitable time to create a new generation of Aedes mosquitoes," said Entomologist GM Saifur Rahman.

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ROAD ACCIDENTS Bikes, 3-wheelers major causes Says Quader

UNB, Dhaka

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday said motorcycles and easy bikes are causing the highest number of road accidents across the country.

Quader said this during the exchange of Eid greetings at his ministry's conference room in the Secretariat.

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Army working for people's welfare Says outgoing army chief at farewell reception

UNB, Savar

Despite challenges, every member in Bangladesh Army is working for the welfare of the country, outgoing Chief of Army Staff General SM Shafiuddin Ahmed said yesterday.

He said this while attending his farewell reception at Savar Cantonment in the afternoon.

He further said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina

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Full-scale rawhide trade yet to start

Tanners point at rain, delay in animal sacrifice

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA, SUKANTA HALDER and JAGARAN CHAKMA

Full-scale rawhide procurement across the country has yet to begin due to rainfall and subsequent delays in animal sacrifices.

Tanners and merchants expect the salt-applied rawhide sales to gain momentum on Saturday, as seasonal traders are preparing them to be sold to the major haats after procuring most rawhide without salt from the field level.

Nearly 85 lakh pieces of cowhides are expected to be sold in 42 designated major haats across the country this year, said Altaf Khan, president of Bangladesh Hide and Skin Merchants' Association.

Khan also said nearly 20 percent of animals were sacrificed after two days of Eid due to inclement weather and rainfall, delaying the arrival of rawhide from the countryside.

In recent years, most of the rawhides have

been bought either directly by tanners or by their appointed agents across the country. As a result, the traditional rawhide trading system through merchants has broken down.

"We have already bought eight lakh pieces of rawhide from Dhaka and its adjacent areas," said Shaheen Ahmed, president of Bangladesh Tanners Association (BTA).

Shaheen also said rawhides will be processed in rationing at the Savar Tannery Industrial Estate (STIE) in Hemayetpur, where the Central Effluent Treatment Plant (CETP) is situated.

The estate's capacity is not high enough to accommodate and process all the rawhide at a time, he added.

Annual production capacity at STIE is 900 million cubic feet, while around 400 million cubic feet are produced there per year, he said.

However, during Eid ul Azha, over 200 million

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PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

ROHINGYA REPATRIATION

Current conflict in Myanmar may stall the process

MOKAMMEL SHUVO

While the World Refugee Day is being observed today across the globe, Rohingyas living in Cox's Bazar are still passing days amid uncertainty regarding their repatriation to Myanmar.

Around 1 million Rohingyas, most of whom had fled to Bangladesh facing persecution by Myanmar junta forces in 2017, have been living as refugees in camps in Cox's Bazar for the last seven years.

The ongoing armed conflict in Myanmar may stall the process of their repatriation, feared Rohingyas in Cox's Bazar.

Fierce clashes between Myanmar junta forces and rebel Arakan Army have been going on in Rakhine state along the Bangladesh border since February this year.

The Arakan Army has captured a vast part of the state including the areas once populated by Rohingyas before they faced persecution and displacement in 2017.

Many Rohingyas at Cox's Bazar camps are worried about a safe and dignified return to their homeland.

Mohammad Hossain, who lives in



WORLD REFUGEE DAY

Rohingyas at a camp in Teknaf.

PHOTO: STAR

Camp-1, is one of them.

"Amid the ongoing clashes in Myanmar, I am not sure how our repatriation process might progress, while many of our brothers and sisters are in great danger there," he said.

Mohammad Zubair, chairman of Arakan Rohingya Society of Peace and

Human Rights, said they want to be repatriated under the agreement with the junta government, not with the Arakan Army.

However, without a treaty with the Junta government, the agreement would not be valid, he also said.

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Full-scale rawhide

FROM PAGE 3
 cubic feet of rawhide are collected just within a week, which is half the entire year's production, he said, adding, "So, the rawhide will be tanned in three months and merchants and tanners will preserve them by applying salt during this period."

However, local tanners are compelled to sell the tanned hide mainly to Chinese traders at nearly 60 percent lower than international price level because of poor compliance at STIE.

The BTA chief also said they are selling the tanned hides at 70 cents per square foot, down from US \$1.50 per square foot a few years ago, as the sector has been affected following the pandemic and Russia-Ukraine war.

The association has set a target to procure 80 lakh pieces of rawhide this year, 10 lakh lower than the previous one, said Shaheen

at a press conference in the capital yesterday.

Robiul Alam, president of Dhaka District Hide Merchants Association, said around 25 percent of rawhide will get damaged this year due to not preserving them on time.

Currently, the CETP can treat 25,000 to 30,000 cubic metres of liquid waste per day. But during Eid-ul-Azha, the generation of waste climbs to 40,000 cubic metres as the number of rawhides shoots up.

Md Golam Shahnewaz, managing director of Dhaka Tannery Industrial Estate Waste Treatment Plant Company Limited, which runs the CETP, said various upgrades have been done to increase the CETP's capacity, and two ponds have been excavated for solid waste removal.

This will help curb the pollution caused by the rawhide processing, he added.

Most of capital

FROM PAGE 3
 wastes within around 10 hours and DNCC cleaned up 20,105 tonnes of wastes in around six hours.

Visiting different areas in the capital on the second day of Eid, this correspondent found Agargaon, Farmgate,

Kawran Bazar, Bangla Motor, Shahbagh, Segun Bagicha, Paltan, Gulistan, Wari, Tikatuli, Doyagonj and Gandaria areas clean.

The residents of those areas said they heightened their sense of responsibility towards managing sacrificial wastes this year compared to previous occasions.

"The city corporation provided poly-bags to residents and sanitation workers for waste collection. Individuals who did not receive poly-bags from the city corporations later purchased bags themselves and collected the wastes," said Rezaul Hasan, a resident of Agargaon Taltola area.

Some residents even took it upon themselves to clean the bloodstains left

from animal sacrifices.

"Through proper planning, we managed to complete the task successfully on the first day, and even after sacrifices continued on the second day of Eid," said DSCC Mayor Taposh.

DNCC Mayor Atiul expressed gratitude to the residents for their cooperation in cleaning up the wastes within the scheduled deadline.

However, animal wastes were still seen emanating bad odour in a few areas of the capital including Dinanath Sen Road in Gandaria, Dayanath intersection, Bangshal Road, and Sutrapur's Kagajitola area, where cattle markets were set up.

In this regard, Taposh said, "People sacrificed the animals at different times as per their conveniences. Therefore, after we cleaned up in different areas, many people disposed of wastes from animals slaughtered later. These are isolated incidents. The remaining wastes will be cleaned too."

Bikes, 3-wheelers

FROM PAGE 3
 "It's very unfortunate that lately, motorcycle accidents have become more frequent. Looking at the accident data, motorcycles account for the highest number of accidents, followed by easy bikes. Reckless driving also plays a significant role. We can't ignore this. I urge the secretary (concerned) to expedite the formulation of a policy," he said.

The minister further

mentioned that the lack of regulation for millions of three-wheelers and motorcycles is disrupting order on the roads, highlighting the urgent need for a policy.

Quader also noted that while the Eid journeys on roads have been relatively smooth, the return trips remain a concern.

"We must prioritise discipline to reduce road accidents," Quader said.



A child sits on one side of a dried tree branch while another pulls it -- that's pretty much all these children needed to have a joy ride. The photo was taken in Barishal Sadar upazila recently.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

ASI among 4 bullet-hit in Narsingdi clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narsingdi

Four people including a policeman suffered bullet wounds in a clash in Narsingdi Sadar upazila yesterday morning.

The incident took place around 11:30am at Najarpur, said Md Tanvir Ahmed, officer-in-charge of Sadar Police Station.

The injured are Joy Banik, assistant sub-inspector, Saiful Islam, Dawod Mona, and Faruk.

Mahmudul Kabir Bashar, resident medical officer at Narsingdi Sadar Hospital, said the four injured were released after treatment.

According to police and locals,

there has been a longstanding dispute between two locals – Ismail Hossain, vice-president of Najarpur union Awami League unit, and Shah Jahan Mona, former organising secretary of the same unit – over establishing supremacy in Alipura area under Najarpur union.

Due to the dispute, their supporters locked into a clash yesterday.

Police rushed to the spot to control the situation but the four including ASI Banik suffered bullet wounds, the OC said. Additional law enforcers have been deployed in the area, he added.

"No one filed any complaint yet. We are investigating the incident and will take further steps after the probe," he said.

Idrakpur Fort

FROM PAGE 5

the treasury. However, I cannot say how many idols there are in total."

Recently, one Vishnu idol was found on April 13 and two more on May 17 and May 20 in Munshiganj. The discovered idols were deposited in the Munshiganj District Treasury. According to the news published in various newspapers, at least 12 idols were recovered from different places of Sadar and Tongibari upazilas of Munshiganj in 11 years from 2013 to 2024.

Afroza Khan Mita, regional director of

the Department of Archaeology, said, "The Department of Archeology has written letters to the district administrators of all districts to know how many statues, inscriptions or other antiquities are there in the district treasury."

"After receiving information from them, we will arrange for the preservation of the antiquities through the court. Arrangements will be made to exhibit one or two idols at Idrakpur Fort Museum in Munshiganj," she added.

Eid festivities cut

FROM PAGE 5

"This season of litchi has posed significant challenges due to adverse weather conditions and early harvesting. However, higher market prices have provided some relief to farmers," said Nuruzzaman.

For example, Mosaddek Hossain from Dinaipur Sadar upazila is selling Madrazi and Bombay litchis at Tk 350 to Tk 400 per 100 pieces, Bedana at Tk 8,000 to Tk 10,000 per 1,000 pieces, and China-3

litchi at Tk 12,000 per 1,000 pieces at the Kalitola market.

However, wholesale buyers from Dhaka, Cumilla, Bhairav, Ashuganj, Barishal, Khulna, Rajshahi, and Chattogram have expressed dissatisfaction with the high prices.

Poet Asim Saha

FROM PAGE 5

shock and sorrow at his demise.

Born on February 20 in 1949 at his maternal uncle's house in Netrakona district, Saha completed his secondary education in 1965 and his higher secondary at Madaripur Government Nazimuddin College in 1967.

He pursued higher studies at Dhaka University, where he obtained a postgraduate degree in Bangla literature in 1973.

His poetry, known for its depth and sensitivity, had earned numerous accolades. He was honoured with 12 awards for his contributions to Bangla literature.

He was honoured with the Bangla Academy Literary Award in 2012.

Meanwhile, the government recognised his contributions to the Bangla language and literature by awarding him the Ekushey Padak, the country's second-highest civilian award in 2019.

Asim Saha has written over 20 poetry books and novels.

PRAYER TIMING
JUNE 20

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4-05	12-45	5-00	6-52	8-17
JAMAAT 4-40	1-15	5-15	6-55	8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Some were given chance to loot: Rizvi

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi yesterday alleged that some individuals have been given the opportunity to loot in the name of "so-called" development.

"Some people have grabbed the land and property of ordinary poor people," he alleged.

The BNP leader said this while speaking at a demonstration in front of the BNP's Nayapaltan central office, demanding unconditional release of party Chairperson Khaleda Zia. He said the prime minister used to say not to spare anyone involved in corruption, but her government allowed former IGP Benazir Ahmed to leave the country.

"We don't know how much money Benazir's family has amassed here and abroad," he added.

He also said the prices of utility services and all commodities have risen due to the anti-people policies of the government.

He mentioned that people who went to their village homes to celebrate Eid-ul-Azha faced serious ordeals due to poor electricity supply.

Sal forest shrinking

FROM PAGE 5

Officer in Tangail revealed that around 21,000 acres of encroached forest land had been recovered through drives till December last year. The drives are continuing, according to officials.

At present, social afforestation is being done on around 30,000 acres of the forest land.

Meanwhile, several organisations, including Bangladesh Forest Industry Development Corporation, Bangladesh Forest Research Institute, Bangladesh Army, and Bangladesh Air Force, have been granted permission to use a total of 15,342 acres of the forest land for various purposes in Madhupur, Ghatail, and Sakhipur upazilas.

Now, the natural forest remains on less than 40,000 acres. Environmentalists,

however, claim the amount of remaining natural forest is even less than 20,000 acres.

Prof Asm Saifullah, a teacher of environment science and resource management department at Mawlana Bhashani Science and Technology University, said the Sal forest sustained significant damage over the years and prompt measures are necessary to restore it.

Contacted, Sajjadur Rahman, DFO in Tangail, said they are doing their best to protect the forest despite having a limited workforce and logistics.

"Cases were filed to reclaim around 14,000 acres of grabbed forest lands and the process to recover the rest is on. We need support from all concerned to this end," he added.

Current conflict

FROM PAGE 3

"We want to return home with dignity and recognition of our ethnicity," Zubair said.

Visiting the camps arranged by the UNHCR recently, this correspondent witnessed the plight of Rohingyas living there in densely packed makeshift shelters made using tarpaulin and bamboo.

The heat wave was unbearable living under the tarpaulin, even though the camp area is now much greener compared to previously, said Mohammad Solim of Camp 4.

Over 2,500 hectares of forest land in Ukhiya and Teknaf had been cleared for building the Rohingya camps and to provide firewood for cooking.

Tostop the deforestation, cylindered gas was later distributed among around 200,000 Rohingya families in the camps.

Simultaneously, under

a reforestation project, greenery returned to around 700 hectares of land in the camps, according to UNHCR.

According to Unicef data, around 3 lakh Rohingya children now have access to education up to grade 10 taught in the Myanmar curriculum.

Per capita ration for Rohingyas was cut into phases from \$12 to \$8 per person per month 2023, before it rose to \$10 in 2024.

Around 5,000 Rohingya youths have been provided life-skill trainings including sewing, plumbing, electrical, masonry, etc.

"We are happy that the Bangladesh government has given us safe shelters. However, we don't want to be burden to Bangladesh. We want dignified repatriation to Myanmar. We feel our lives are stuck in these dense camps," said Maulana Abdul Hamid, a Rohingya from Camp-1 East.

Eid vacation puts

FROM PAGE 3

He said if there were monitoring cells to look after this, then the risk would be less. "But unfortunately, there is no such monitoring," he added.

Everyone who will return after vacation needs to carefully destroy all breeding sources and containers carrying stagnant water, Saifur also said, suggesting they use mosquito repellent to kill adult mosquitoes after getting into the house.

Similarly, educational institutions and offices must also take necessary initiatives to kill adult mosquitoes before starting activities, he said.

The city corporations can play a vital role here and spray mosquito repellent at educational institutes before classes start following a long vacation, Saifur said.

"Creating more awareness in this regard is very necessary, as dengue is a sustainable problem in Bangladesh," he added.

Saifur warned that the number of infections may increase after the vacation, and said city corporations

will have to intensify their mosquito control activities.

Entomologist Kabiru Bashar said Aedes mosquitoes will breed at construction sites and under-construction buildings as construction activities are stopped for some time, so the buildings adjoining those sites and buildings are at very high risk and will have to be careful.

Residents of under-construction sites or buildings will have to take the initiative to destroy the breeding sources, he said, adding that kerosene or bleaching powder should be applied to stagnant water to kill Aedes larvae.

Army working

FROM PAGE 3

has modernised the Bangladesh Army.

Earlier, the army chief went to the Savar Cantonment and held a views-exchange meeting with the army personnel and inaugurated a mosque in the DOHS area and planted trees.

He was later given a farewell reception by the 9th Infantry Division.



সিলেট গ্যাস ফিল্ডস লিমিটেড
 (পেট্রোবাহার একাউন্ট কোম্পানী)
Sylhet Gas Fields Limited
 (A Company of Petrobangla)

বিশ্বাস ও আত্মশ্রম নিরাপত্তা
 সর্বোচ্চ আদর্শবিশিষ্ট

পালন স্বাভাবিক সম্পদ। এর অপব্যয় রোধ
 করে স্বাভাবিক নীতি পালন করুন।

Ref No.: 28.20.9153.276.28.521.24/Corrigendum
Date: 13-06-2024


Corrigendum Notice

Subject: Amendment of e-Tender Ref No. 28.20.9153.276.28.521.24 Dated 30-05-2024

Tender ID	Description of Works	Existing	Amended As
895272	Design, Engineering, Procurement, Supply, Construction, Installation, Hook-Up, Testing, Commissioning, Startup and Hand-over of One 100 cubic meter/day capacity Water Treatment Plant (WTP) with 300 cubic meter RCC water storage tank & associated facilities at 4000 BPD CFP, Bahubal, Habiganj under Sylhet Gas Fields Limited.	100 Cubic Meter/Day Capacity Water Treatment Plant	100 Cubic Meter/Hour Capacity Water Treatment Plant (WTP)
		100 Cubic Meter/day in all tender documents.	100 Cubic Meter/hour in all tender documents.

Sd/-
Md. Kamrul Islam Sarder
 General Manager (P&D)
 E-mail: gmpnd@sgfl.org.bd

GD- 1012



Khulna City Corporation
 E-mail: pe.civil.xen2@khulnacity.org

"শেখ হাসিনার মূলনীতি
 গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি"

e-Tender Notice: Invitation for Tender (Works)

Reference No. KCC/LGCRRP/XEN-Zone-A/2023-24/1281
Date: 13/06/2024

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

Sl No	Name of work	Tender security	Tender/proposal document last selling/ downloading (date & time)	Last date & time for tender/ proposal security submission	Tender proposal closing (date & time)	Tender / proposal opening (date & time)	e-Tender ID No.	Tendering method
1	Construction of Chitrali Khalishpur Kitchen Market (1 st Floor) (Ward-10)	16,00,000/-	14/07/2024 17-00	15/07/2024 11-50	15/07/2024 12-00	15/07/2024 12-00	996583	OTM
2	Repair & Maintenance of Munshipara 3 rd lane (Ward-22) Installation of GI Pole and Light of Munshipara 3 rd lane (Ward-22) Repair & Maintenance of Diabetic Centre Adjacent to Sir Iqbal Road, (Ward-23) Repair & Maintenance of Najirghat Main Road Bylane and Pathan Bari Goli Bylane (ward-26), Upgrading of Rupsha Bazar Road with Drain (ward-30)	6,50,000/-	14/07/2024 17-00	15/07/2024 11-50	15/07/2024 12-00	15/07/2024 12-00	996610	OTM
3	Repair & Maintenance of Modhodanga Main Road (Ward-03) Construction of Mosheswarupash Graveyard Boundary Wall & Internal Road (Ward-03) Construction of Office Building at Deyana Morolpara Graveyard (Ward-4) Repair & Maintenance of Muzgunni Residential Area Road No-10 (Ward-9)	6,50,000/-	14/07/2024 17-00	15/07/2024 11-50	15/07/2024 12-00	15/07/2024 12-00	996612	OTM
4	Repair & Maintenance of Khalishpur 223 No. Road with Partial Drain (Ward-10) and Upgrading of RCC road with drain Jayanty Para Karai Company Road (Main road to Rani Shikari house) (Ward-9)	2,00,000/-	14/07/2024 17-00	15/07/2024 11-50	15/07/2024 12-00	15/07/2024 12-00	996592	OTM

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd). These Scheme will be implemented under the Project "Local Government Covid-19 Response and Recovery Project (LGCRRP) in Khulna City Corporation" Bill will be paid after receiving the fund of this project.

Sd/-
Shaikh Mohammad Masud Karim
 Executive Engineer-Zone-A
 Khulna City Corporation
 Phone No. 01911-149177

ক্রেসিসি/জন-৫৩ (৩) (২০২৩-২০২৪)

GD-1013



PHOTO: STAR

Idrakpur Fort: a museum without artefacts

TANJIL HASAN

Abdur Rahman Mustakim, a student from Narayanganj, visited the Idrakpur Fort Museum in Munshiganj with his relatives on Tuesday. While he was impressed by the fort itself, he was deeply disappointed by the museum's lack of antiquities.

"I traveled a long way expecting to see many traditional artefacts unearthed in Munshiganj," he said. "But there is nothing traditional in the museum. I expected something better."

Other visitors, including madrasa student Naeem, teacher Mizanur Rahman, and homemaker Sonia Akhtar, shared similar sentiments. They all demanded that the antiquities found in Munshiganj be exhibited at the fort museum.

Idrakpur Fort is a Mughal structure. According to the Archaeological Survey Report of the Department of Archeology (published in April, 2000), Mughal Subedar Mir Jumla of Bengal built the fort in 1660 as an outpost to guard the water route to Dhaka against the raids of the Portuguese and Mogh pirates.

The fort stands on the northern bank of the dried up Ichamati river in Munshiganj, 24 kilometers south-east of Dhaka.

Since the British era, the fort has been used as the residence of the

sub-divisional officer and later, after independence as the residence of the district commissioner.

The fort complex also housed the district jail.

In 1993, the residence of the DC was shifted from the fort to a new place. After that, the jail was also shifted to a new building.

On March 19, 2022, the Department of Archeology established the Idrakpur Fort Museum in the old jail building. But there is nothing in the museum except some pictures and terracotta replicas. While visitors are enamoured by the more than 400-year-old fort, the museum leaves them bitterly disappointed.

Meanwhile, various ancient statues have been discovered at regular intervals in Munshiganj. But none of those artefacts are on display in local museums.

Sufi Mustafizur Rahman, professor of Archeology at Jahangirnagar University, said, "The Vishnu idols found in Munshiganj recently are from the 19th century. They are invaluable resources made of black basalt stone. Since there is a museum in Munshiganj, these idols should be kept there."

Omar Sharif Fahad, assistant commissioner (treasury branch) of Munshiganj District Administration office, said, "There are some idols in

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



From left, a truckload of logs seized by forest guards. Meanwhile, vested groups tried to grab a large part of the natural forest by turning it into commercial fruit orchards. Miscreants allegedly set fire to the forest to clear forest land for grabbing and collecting firewood. The photos were taken recently.

PHOTO: STAR

Sal forest shrinking fast

Tree felling, land grabbing continue unabated

MIRZA SHAKIL, Tangail

The Sal forest under Madhupur National Park in Tangail is disappearing at an alarming rate due to unabated tree felling and grabbing of land.

According to the Forest Department, the Sal forest -- scattered across several districts including Gazipur, Tangail, and Mymensingh -- has a total area of 1,21,000 hectares, around 2.4 percent of the country's forest area.

In Tangail, the Sal forest cover is the largest in Bangladesh. In 1925, it was spread across more than 1,22,876 acres of land in Madhupur, Sakhipur, Ghatail, Mirzapur, and Kalihati upazilas, of which 58,206 acres were part of the reserve forest.

It was once home to diverse flora and fauna -- including tigers, bears, peafowl, and langurs.

Over the years, the decimation of the natural forest has allegedly been going on right under the nose of the authorities concerned.

In fact, a section of unscrupulous forest officials and community forest workers are assisting those

destroying the forest in exchange for unethical personal benefits, locals alleged.

Around 25,000 people, including those belonging to ethnic minority communities, live in 41 villages in the vicinity of the forest in Madhupur upazila.

Around 26,048 acres of the forest have been grabbed in Sakhipur upazila and around 19,861 acres in Madhupur, according to the Forest Department's data.

"A section of foresters are helping vested groups to grab, clear, and turn a large part of the natural forest into commercial fruit orchards in the name of social afforestation," alleged Prince Edward Mangsang, a local resident. Lawyer Jhon Jetra, a leader of

the local Garo community, said compared to the extent of damage caused to the forest, the foresters' efforts are inadequate.

Meanwhile, hundreds of acres of the forest have been razed in at least 50 fire incidents in and around the forest in April and May this year. In most cases, miscreants set fire to the forest to collect firewood or to clear forest land for grabbing, locals alleged.

The Forest Department, however, blamed local population growth and their dependence on forest resources for their livelihoods as reasons for the forest destruction.

"Some locals are involved in tree felling and forest land grabbing. The forest guards find it difficult to take action against them with a limited workforce," said Abdul Hamid, ranger of Dokhala Range in Madhupur National Park.

Around 26,048 acres of the forest have been grabbed in Sakhipur upazila and around 19,861 acres in Madhupur, according to Forest Department's data.

The office of the Divisional Forest

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Poet Asim Saha no more

BSS, Dhaka

Ekushey Padak-winning poet and novelist Asim Saha passed away on Tuesday afternoon while undergoing treatment at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University hospital in the capital. He was 75.

"He was undergoing treatment at the intensive care unit of the BSMMU with Parkinson's disease, constipation, and diabetes," his family friend poet Mahbuba Rahman Laki told the news agency.

He left behind his wife Anjona Saha, also a noted singer and poet, and two sons -- Avro and Aorga, and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina expressed deep

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



Eid festivities cut short litchi season



PHOTO: STAR

KONGKON KARMAKER, Dinajpur

Although litchi is grown all over the country, the little red round spheres of sweetness coming from Dinajpur are renowned for their taste and flavour.

However, Dinajpur's litchi is experiencing a challenging season this year.

The season for litchi typically lasts between 45 and 60 days from the start of its harvest. However, this year's season is expected to be shorter as growers expedited harvesting to avoid transportation hassles before and after Eid-ul-Azha.

Mominul Islam, a wholesale trader in Dinajpur's Kalitola litchi market, expressed concerns about demand decreasing after the Eid festival as consumers' attention will be elsewhere during the festival.

Additionally, the suspension of truck services during Eid will complicate litchi transportation, prompting growers to hasten their harvest to ensure timely sales, said traders.

Despite the challenges, the litchi markets in Dinajpur are bustling.

According to Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) officials, harvesting usually begins at the end of May and lasts for at least two months. This year, however, harvesting started about a week earlier, leading to an ample supply in the market.

Dinajpur's largest litchi markets, located around the Kotwali Police Station and New Market, are vibrant with activity.

Wholesalers from across the country are purchasing litchis in bulk and transporting them to their

respective regions.

Some wholesalers even buy directly from the orchards.

The adverse weather conditions, including severe heat and lack of rain, have significantly impacted this season's litchi yield. According to Nuruzzaman, Deputy Director of the Dinajpur DAE, last year's production was around 30,000 tonnes.

Although this year's yield is lower, specific figures are unavailable. With over 5,500 hectares dedicated to litchi cultivation, varieties like Bombay and Madrazi have shown resilience, while Bedana and China-3 varieties have seen yields drop by 50 percent due to the prolonged heatwave and drought-like situation.

Besides, the large number of litchi orchards were affected by storms that hit several times this season.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

In loving memory of



DR. TOUFIQ M. SERAJ

(1956-2019)
FOUNDER MANAGING DIRECTOR
SHELTECH GROUP

Five years have gone by since you left us. The impact of your extraordinary life still lingers, deeply touching our hearts. You live on in our cherished memories, always our beloved inspiration.




SHELTECH
SINCE 1988





Alka Yagnik
suffering from
hearing loss



Popular playback singer Alka Yagnik has recently announced on her Instagram account that she has been diagnosed with a rare hearing disorder.

“To all my dear fans, friends, followers, and well-wishers: A few weeks ago, as I stepped off a flight, I abruptly found myself unable to hear. It took some time to gather the courage, but I now want to address my absence for those who’ve been wondering,” read her post.

“My doctors have identified it as a rare sensorineural hearing loss brought on by a viral infection,” she shared in her post.

Alka Yagnik, the iconic voice behind several Bollywood hits, shared a cautionary note with her followers. “To my fans and younger peers, I urge you to be mindful of exposing yourselves to very loud music and frequent use of headphones,” she wrote.



Apart from ‘Toofan’, other Eid releases include ‘Agantuk’, ‘Dark World’, ‘Moyurakkhi’, and ‘Revenge’, offering diverse choices for cinema enthusiasts during the festive season.

EID BLOCKBUSTERS

Top films, songs, and OTT hits steal the show

ZAHID AKBAR

Several movies, songs, and OTT content have hit the screens and digital platforms during Eid ul-Azha, garnering significant attention and applause from audiences. Among them, the spotlight has prominently shone on the movie *Toofan*, directed by Raihan Rafi.

Since its release on Eid day, *Toofan* has premiered in approximately 123 theatres across the country. Post-release, Star Cineplex has expanded its showings from 21 to 47 daily screenings, while Jamuna Blockbuster is screening the film 14 times a day, a record for any Bengali film prior to this Eid.

Shakib Khan starrer *Toofan* also includes Tollywood's Mimi Chakraborty, Masuma Rahman Nabila, Fazlur Rahman Babu, Gazi Rakayet, Misa Sawdagar, Salahuddin Luvlu, and Chanchal Chowdhury, among others. The production companies behind *Toofan* are Alpha-i Studios and Chorki.

The film's title song, *Laage Ura Dhura*, composed by Pritom Hasan

with vocals by Pritom Hasan and Debosrie Antara, has particularly caught fire, trending on YouTube and further fueling interest in the movie. The song's chorus is derived from the late musician Rajjak Dewan's renowned piece *Morar Kokiley*, blending nostalgic appeal with contemporary flair. The first part of this specific version is penned by Shorif Uddin, while Rasel Mahmud wrote the rest.

Additionally, the title song from *Toofan*, composed, arranged, and programmed by Naved Parvez, with vocals by Arif Rahman Joy, lyrics by Tahsan Shuvo, and rap by Rapsta Dadu, is also a favourite among listeners.

Apart from *Toofan*, other Eid releases include *Agantuk*, *Dark World*, *Moyurakkhi*, and *Revenge*, offering diverse choices for cinema enthusiasts during the festive season.

In addition to cinemas, several

OTT platforms have also debuted a variety of content. Notable mentions include web series like *Golam Mamun*, *Female 4*, *Baaji*, and *Poison*.

Golam Mamun, featuring Ziaul Faruq Apurba in a new avatar and directed by Shihab Shaheen, has garnered praise for its storyline, acting, and action sequences, receiving positive reviews across social media. Apurba's performance, appearance, and action scenes have been particularly appreciated by audiences both domestically and internationally.

Female 4, directed by Bachelor Point famed director Kajal Arefin Ome and produced by Bongo, has also captured audience interest. The series saw over 200,000 subscribers paying to watch it within 24 hours of its release, accumulating 15 million minutes of paid watch time from over 100 countries.

The cast of *Female 4* includes Ziaul Hoque Polash, Marzuk Russell, Saraf Ahmed Zibon, Pavel, Shimul, Sumon Patwary, Shiblu Mridha, Iresh Zaker, and Neelanjona Neela, among others.



Ben Affleck, Matt Damon to reunite for crime thriller

Ben Affleck and Matt Damon are set to share screen again with a crime thriller called *RIP*. Affleck and Damon will also produce the film through their Artists Equity banner.

The duo recently produced and starred in the Air Jordan movie *Air*, which Affleck also directed. Artists Equity recently struck a deal with Lionsgate to distribute the drama *Small Things Like These*, starring Cillian Murphy, which premiered at the Berlin Film Festival.

Matt Damon and Ben Affleck have been close friends since childhood and founded Artists Equity in 2022, promising to focus on smaller dramas rather than the “assembly line process” of filmmaking used by corporations like Netflix.

COUNTRYWIDE

Rescue boat in dire need of rescue

MINTU DESHWARA

At a time when a life-saving equipment is so much in need, a rescue boat worth several lakhs has just been lying neglected in Sunamganj's Tahirpur upazila for nearly two years.

Local people, however, pointed to a lack of monitoring to the vehicle by the authorities concerned.

Aiming to deploy in the remote areas where rapid relief is crucial, two rescue boats, including Tangua-Sunamganj-1, was handed over to Sunamganj district in 2022.

But sadly, one of those vital resources Tangua-Sunamganj-1 is currently facing destruction due to mishandling of the authorities concerned.

In 2021, Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief built 60 such rescue boats for haor areas and different coastal districts.

Of those, eight boats were handed over to different districts the same year.

The following year, the other 52 rescue boats were handed over to different upazila and district headquarters, including two in Sunamganj Sadar and Tahirpur upazila.

During the flood in 2022, rescue boat Tangua-Sunamganj-1 was used for various purposes like distributing public and private relief among the flood affected and displaced people.

But since the recession of the flood water, the important life-saving



This life-saving equipment is on the verge of ruin, thanks to the negligence of the authorities concerned. The photo was taken from in front of Sunamganj's Tahirpur Police Station.

Impactful Sakib needs

FROM PAGE 12

according to ESPNcricinfo.

Be it through words or his actions, Sakib has not made a secret of how he wants to operate in this tournament.

“I just want to be aggressive and execute my plans,” Sakib had said after the Nepal win -- a game in which the right-arm quick was rewarded with the player of the match award for his career best figures of four for seven and was also levied a 15 percent fine for code of conduct violation, relating to the confrontation he had with Nepal skipper Rohit Paudel during a fiery opening spell.

Interestingly, the inclusion of Sakib, who has now turned into one of the main heroes behind the Tigers' progression to Super Eight, was the major talking point following the T20 World Cup squad announcement. He was left out of the main 15 in the initial squad submitted to ICC, but a bold call from

EPIC Group

FROM PAGE 12

Bangladesh, generating around 85 percent of its export earnings, and is the second-largest employment generator in India, accounting for approximately 18 percent of the manufacturing jobs.

In addition to financing, IFC is providing EPIC Group with advisory support to help the company develop its environmental, social, and corporate governance capacity, as well as to meet its gender targets.

“IFC is committed to supporting a robust textile and apparel value chain across Asia,” said Riccardo Puliti, IFC vice president for Asia and the Pacific.

The investment announced on June 17

Nvidia eclipses

FROM PAGE 12

Nasdaq to record highs, some investors worry that unbridled optimism about AI could evaporate if signs emerge of a slowdown in spending on the technology.

“It's Nvidia's market; we're all just trading in it,” said Steve Sosnick, chief market strategist at Interactive Brokers.

Nvidia has also become by far the most traded company on Wall Street, with daily turnover recently averaging \$50 billion, compared to around \$10 billion each for Apple, Microsoft and Tesla, according to LSEG data. The chipmaker now accounts for about 16 percent of all trading in S&P 500 companies.

Israel may have violated

FROM PAGE 12

Witnesses and the civil defence agency in the Hamas-run Gaza Strip reported Israeli bombardment in western Rafah, where medics said drone strikes and shelling killed at least seven people, reports AFP.

The Israeli military has announced a daily humanitarian “pause” in fighting on a key road in eastern Rafah, but a UN spokesman said days later that “this has yet to translate into more aid reaching people in need”.

The Rafah border crossing between Gaza and Egypt has been shut since Israeli troops seized its Palestinian side in early May, while nearby Kerem Shalom on the Israeli border “is operating with limited functionality, including because of fighting in the area”, said UN deputy spokesman Farhan Haq.

“Fighting is not the only reason for being unable to pick up aid ... The lack of

Nvidia eclipses

Nvidia's stock has nearly tripled so far this year, compared with a rise of about 19 percent in Microsoft shares, with demand for its top-of-the-line processors outpacing supply.

Tech giants Microsoft, Meta Platforms and Google-owner Alphabet are competing to build out their AI computing capabilities and add the technology to their products and services.

An insatiable appetite for Nvidia's AI processors, viewed as far superior to competitors' offerings, has left them in tight supply, and many investors view Nvidia as the greatest winner to date from surging AI development.

Israel may have violated

any police or rule of law in the area makes it very dangerous to move goods there,” he said.

The health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said yesterday that at least 37,396 people have been killed in the territory during more than eight months of offensive. The toll includes at least 24 deaths in the past 24 hours, a ministry statement said.

The offensive has sent tensions soaring across the region, with violence involving Iran-backed Hamas allies, reports Reuters.

The Israeli military, which has traded nearly daily cross-border fire with Lebanon's Hezbollah since October, said late Monday that “operational plans for an offensive in Lebanon were approved and validated”.

Yesterday, the military said its warplanes had struck Hezbollah sites in southern Lebanon overnight, while reporting a drone had infiltrated near the border town of Metula.

Russia ups attacks after ‘lull’: Kyiv

AFP, Kyiv

Russian forces have escalated attacks near Toretsk, a frontline town in eastern Ukraine that has remained relatively calm over recent months of fighting, officials said yesterday.

Ukrainian forces lacking critical manpower and arms have struggled to hold the line in the eastern Donbas region, which the Kremlin claims is part of Russia.

The military said in a briefing late Tuesday that Russia had “intensified” its assaults near Toretsk and “launched five assault operations at once,” targeting surrounding towns and villages.

Military analysts reported Russian advances towards Toretsk.

One resident of the town, 67-year-old Oleksandr told AFP journalists by telephone that he had experienced an uptick in Russian bombardments, corroborating official reports.



Palestinians rush during Israeli bombardment in the area of Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday. Israeli tanks backed by warplanes and drones advanced deeper into the western part of Rafah, killing eight people, according to residents and Palestinian medics. PHOTO: AFP

India floods, heatwaves kill 11 people

Four buried alive in landslide

REUTERS, Guwahati

India was battling extreme weather yesterday that caused severe heatwaves, landslides and floods, killing at least 11 people this week, among them a woman and her three daughters buried alive in a northeastern state, officials and media said.

The capital, New Delhi, sweltered through its hottest night in six years on Tuesday, with hospitals in the city of 20 million reporting at least five deaths from heatstroke this week, the Times of India newspaper said.

Floods and landslides triggered by incessant rain in the northeastern state of Assam killed at least six people on Tuesday night, officials said.

“A landslide buried a woman and her three daughters alive,” a disaster management official said.

“Their house was on a slope, and they died on the spot around midnight,” he said, adding that the bodies were retrieved after a three-hour search operation by rescuers. “A three-year-old was killed too.”

Billions across Asia are grappling with extreme heat this summer, in a trend scientists say has been worsened by human-driven climate change.

Israel ready for ‘all-out war’ in Lebanon

Say officials after Hezbollah releases threatening drone footage of the Israeli port city of Haifa

AGENCIES

Israel is ready for an “all-out war” in Lebanon and has plans approved for an offensive targeting Hezbollah, officials said.

The claims from Israel’s foreign minister and military late on Tuesday followed Hezbollah’s release of threatening drone footage. The climbing tension conflicts with United States efforts to avert an escalation amid months of low-level hostilities across the Israel-Lebanon border.

The nine-minute drone footage of the Israeli port city of Haifa filmed in daytime, showed civilian and military areas,

More than 400 people have been killed in Lebanon over the past eight months, with 25 deaths in Israel.

including malls and residential quarters, in addition to a weapons manufacturing complex and missile defence batteries.

Israel’s Foreign Minister Israel Katz responded vehemently in a post on X, calling out Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah for boasting about filming the ports of Haifa, which are operated by foreign companies from China and India.

“We are very close to the moment



of decision to change the rules against Hezbollah and Lebanon. In an all-out war, Hezbollah will be destroyed and Lebanon will be severely hit,” he wrote.

Later, the Israeli military said in a statement that Ori Gordin, head of its Northern Command, which includes the front line with Hezbollah, has approved plans to mount a ground assault across Israel’s northern border, reports Al Jazeera online.

“As part of the situational assessment, operational plans for an offensive in Lebanon were approved and validated, and decisions were taken on the continuation of increasing the readiness of troops in the field,” it said.

Israel and Hezbollah have been

engaged in border fighting since the start of the offensive on Gaza on October 7. The confrontation is increasingly expanding, with both sides saying they are ready to go to war. Nasrallah has said in the past that Hezbollah will only stop its attacks if Israel halts its invasion of Gaza.

Hezbollah recently said that it has carried out more than 2,100 military operations against Israel since October 8 in what it says is an effort to support Palestinians.

More than 400 people have been killed in Lebanon over the past eight months, with 25 deaths in Israel. At least 90,000 people have been displaced in Lebanon, and more than 60,000 have been forced from their homes in northern Israel.

Taiwan ‘won’t bow’ to China’s pressure

Says President Lai

AFP, Taipei

Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te said yesterday that China was attempting to force the self-ruled island into submission but that it would not bow to pressure.

China claims Taiwan as part of its territory and has said it will never renounce the use of force to bring it under Beijing’s control.

In recent years, Beijing has upped military and political pressure on the Taipei government, with the latest show of force coming three days after Lai’s inauguration, when China conducted war games around the island.

Speaking at a press conference marking his first month in office, Lai said: “The annexation of Taiwan is a national policy of the People’s Republic of China”.

“In addition to military force, they have increasingly employed non-traditional methods of coercion to try to force Taiwan into submission,” he said.

“However, Taiwan will not bow to the pressure. The people of Taiwan will resolutely defend national sovereignty and uphold the democratic and free constitutional way of life,” he added.

US lawmakers meet Tibet’s Dalai Lama

Pressure China on talks

REUTERS, Dharamsala

A group of US lawmakers who met the Dalai Lama in India yesterday said they would not allow China to influence the choice of his successor, comments expected to anger Beijing, which calls the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader a separatist.

The remarks come as Washington and Beijing seek to steady rocky ties while India pushes China to secure lasting peace on their disputed Himalayan frontier, four years after a military clash strained ties.

The lawmakers also signalled that Washington would pressure Beijing to hold talks with Tibetan leaders, stalled since 2010, to resolve the Tibet issue, with a bill they said President Joe Biden would sign soon.

Although Washington recognises Tibet as a part of China, the bill appears to question that position and any change would be a major shock to Beijing, analysts said.

The bipartisan group of seven, led by Michael McCaul, a Republican representative from Texas, who also chairs the House foreign affairs committee, met the Nobel peace laureate at his monastery in the northern Indian town of Dharamsala.

“It is still my hope that one day the Dalai Lama and his people will return to Tibet in peace,” McCaul told a public reception after the meeting.

SHIPWRECK OFF COAST

Italy coastguard recovers six migrant bodies

Over 60 reported missing

AFP, Rome

Italy’s coastguard said yesterday it had recovered six bodies after a migrant boat sank this week off the southern coast with more than 60 people reported missing, including many children.

Twelve people were rescued after the sailing boat sank around 120 nautical miles off the coast of Calabria overnight Sunday-Monday, although one of them died after disembarking.

Italy’s ANSA news agency reported that she was a 25-year-old woman of Iraqi origin.

The coastguard said yesterday it continued to search the area around the semi-submerged boat, which is still visible, on sea and in the air.

“Following the searches carried out so far, six lifeless bodies have been recovered,” it said.

ANSA said they were four

men and two women. Doctors Without Borders (MSF) has been helping the survivors, who reported that 66 people had been missing after the shipwreck, “including at least 26 children, some of them a few months old”.

Shakilla Mohammadi, cultural mediator for the medical charity, on Tuesday said those rescued were “traumatised, their pain tangible”.

“I talked to one young man who had lost his girlfriend,” she said.

“Entire families from Afghanistan are believed to have died. They left Turkey eight days ago and had been taking on water for three or four days,” she added.



Biden relaxes visa rules in election-year move

REUTERS, Washington

US President Joe Biden on Tuesday announced a sweeping effort to provide a path to citizenship to hundreds of thousands of immigrants in the US illegally who are married to US citizens, an election-year move that contrasts sharply with Republican rival Donald Trump’s plan for mass deportations.

At a White House event, Biden criticised Trump for separating migrant families at the US-Mexico border and using incendiary language about immigrants in the US illegally, including comments that they were “poisoning the blood of our country.”

“It’s hard to believe it’s being said, but he’s actually saying these things out loud. And it’s outrageous,” Biden said. “I’m not interested in playing politics with the border or immigration. I’m interested in fixing it.”

The new Biden program will be open to an estimated 500,000 spouses who have lived in the US for at least 10 years as of June 17, officials said on Tuesday. Some 50,000 children under age 21 with a US-citizen parent also will be eligible.

Biden, a Democrat seeking a second term in the November 5 presidential election, took office vowing to reverse many of Trump’s restrictive immigration policies. But faced with record levels of migrant arrests at the US-Mexico border, Biden has toughened his approach.

Earlier this month, the president barred most migrants crossing the US-Mexico border from requesting asylum, a policy that mirrored a similar Trump-era asylum ban and drew criticism from immigration advocates and some Democrats.



Local residents look at damage at the site of a Russian drone attack, amid Russia’s attack on Ukraine, on the outskirts of Lviv, Ukraine yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

Chad ammo depot blaze kills nine

Dozens hurt

AFP, N’Djamena

A fire that tore through a huge military ammunition depot in Chad’s capital N’Djamena killed at least nine people and wounded dozens more, officials said yesterday, warning the toll could rise.

The blaze, which started late on Tuesday, sent powerful blasts into the night sky and exploding ordnance shook buildings miles away.

Chad’s Health Minister Abdelmadjid Abderahim told journalists that the toll was in danger of rising as many of the 46 wounded were in an “extremely serious” condition. A visit to the scene yesterday revealed unexploded shells and other munitions scattered on the ground.

Government spokesman Abderaman Koulamallah said the cause was not “criminal” but an investigation was under way.

Fast-moving floods in Sylhet raise alarm

Tens of thousands plunged into a crisis as flooding intensifies

The Eid holiday has not been the joyful experience that people in Sylhet and neighbouring areas had probably expected it to be thanks to the evolving flood situation there. The region was just beginning to recover from the flash flood that hit on May 29 and lasted until about June 8. But any relief experienced was short-lived, as a second wave of flooding has hit the region amid Eid celebrations after torrential rains combined with onrush of water from upstream India. Reportedly, large parts of Sylhet and Sunamganj districts have been inundated, affecting lakhs of residents. With a forecast of continued rainfall over the next two days, the situation is likely to worsen further.

Sylhet is particularly vulnerable. According to the district administration, 21 out of the 42 wards in the city have been flooded. Additionally, floodwaters have entered 102 unions in all upazilas of the district, inundating a total of 1,323 villages. The situation in Sunamganj is no better, as major rivers in the two districts continue to swell. With many vital roads submerged, and neighbourhoods under knee-to-waist-deep water, life has come to a standstill. Power outages and communication disruptions could further complicate the situation. Many are predicting a repeat or even exacerbation of the devastating flood Sylhet had experienced in 2022. Driving this fear is the fact that in the first 18 days of this June, Sylhet recorded more rainfall than the entire month of June in 2022. The total rainfall by the end of this month might exceed 2,000 millimetres, according to an estimate, setting a new record.

We don't need a reminder of the sufferings that this may result in. The authorities are doing what they can to help the affected but, clearly, they need to do more, both short-term and long-term. Beyond Sylhet, there are risks of flooding in a number of districts in Rangpur, Mymensingh, Barishal and Chattogram divisions. June, thus, is increasingly becoming a month of hardship caused by rains and mountain runoff. This is a challenge that goes beyond regular flood preparations, and with typical safeguards like embankments and polders too prone to damage, we must consider our long-term future. There is an argument, increasingly pertinent, about whether relying on what worked in the pre-climate-change era can stand up to the more intense flooding seen these days. Should we continue to try containing the formidable rivers and deltaic nature of Bangladesh through often-fragile structural defences, or should we go for a blended approach that balances the restorative and destructive powers of floods through proper adaptations?

We must explore these questions, and pursue solutions, with a more open mind. Right now, the priority is to respond properly to the fast-moving floods, particularly in Sylhet division, and minimise damage and suffering. The authorities must ensure that those stranded by water receive shelter, food, and drinking water.

We can't afford to lose UAE labour market

Govt must deal with irregularities in overseas recruitment

After the recent freezing of recruitment of Bangladeshi migrant workers in Malaysia, the possibility that job opportunities in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) might also be shrinking for our citizens is quite worrying. Losing a market like the UAE, from where we received the highest amount of remittance in the first 10 months of the ongoing fiscal year, would deal a severe blow to our remittance inflow, not to mention the many thousands whose lives rely on it.

According to a report by *Prothom Alo*, after Saudi Arabia, the UAE has the largest base of Bangladeshi migrant workers. In fact, more than 17 percent of our migrants are employed in the UAE, as per an estimate by the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET). Between July 2023 and April 2024, we received more than \$3.65 billion in remittance from the UAE—the highest from any destination country. Meanwhile, workers in Saudi Arabia sent \$2.16 billion during the same period.

However, employers in the UAE are reportedly growing reluctant to recruit Bangladeshi workers due to fraudulent activities on our end, raising the chances of us losing a strong source of foreign currency. According to industry insiders, some unscrupulous manpower agents and agencies have been abusing a post-Covid provision enforced by the Gulf country that allows workers to enter the country on a tourist visa and then convert it to work visa through the recruiters. This has led to many workers getting cheated and stranded in the UAE with no work. Employers, too, don't want to risk getting fined for recruiting illegal workers.

It is a familiar story: fraudulent activities by agencies led to Malaysia freezing recruitment of Bangladesh workers, too. Over the past several years, many issues regarding overseas recruitment have been flagged and irregular activities regularly reported, with demands for appropriate remedies, yet the authorities have done little in this regard. Their inertia is leading us towards the potential loss of another key labour market, especially at a time when we need the precious dollars to replenish our dwindling reserves. It is, therefore, high time the authorities stopped dilly-dallying, and did what's necessary to overhaul our overseas employment sector by getting rid of rampant corruption and mismanagement.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY



'Jaws' released in theatres

On June 20, 1975, Steven Spielberg's thriller *Jaws* was released in theatres, and it was a huge success, essentially creating the genre of summer blockbusters.

Is the budget just another attempt at 'youthwashing'?



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M NIAZ ASADULLAH

The recently proposed budget has been disappointing for job seekers, especially the youth. People expected allocations favouring jobs and quality education for young people, yet the announced national budget fell short in both aspects.

According to a recent citizen survey entitled "New Government, National Budget and Citizens' Aspirations" conducted by the Centre for Policy Dialogue, three top priorities were decent jobs (22 percent), quality education (17.5 percent) and social protection (12 percent). Among those who prioritised decent jobs, almost half wanted reduced unemployment, while one-third wanted increased job opportunities. This year's budget didn't reflect these priorities.

This is all the more surprising considering that the Awami League's 2024 election manifesto listed "ensuring job-oriented education and employment for youth" as the second most important focus. Moreover, one of this year's election campaign slogans was "The Power of Youth—Prosperity of Bangladesh." A decade ago, the 2014 Election Manifesto of Awami League also made bold claims that, "illiteracy will fade away, educated and trained human resources will abound, [and] unemployment will be reduced to zero with crores of young people getting employed."

In fact, in the last 15 years, more than a dozen plans, policies, acts and rules have been introduced concerning the youth. The National Youth Policy 2017, National Skills Development Policy 2011, the Seventh Five Year Plan 2016-2020, the Expatriate and Overseas Employment Policy 2016, and the Overseas Employment and Migrants Act 2013—all have acknowledged and addressed the issue of youth employment. The A2i project has promoted the idea of the smart youth of Smart Bangladesh while the Department of Youth Development of the Ministry of Youth and Sports also has published a supplementary report entitled "Smart Youth, Prosperous Country, Bangabandhu's Bangladesh." Since January 2020, we have also adopted a specific plan of action for the implementation of the National Youth Policy 2017.

So why does a pro-youth budget still remain elusive? One explanation might be "youthwashing."



VIUSAL: TEENI AND TUNI

Speech writers and political event organisers are more than happy to make lofty pro-youth promises and encourage youth participation for the sake of good publicity and annual reports. Yet when it comes to delivering on promises, they are missing in action.

Youthwashing is on the rise. Take for instance the 2024 election manifesto of the Awami League. It painstakingly catalogued the government's achievements in youth development—over 13 million young individuals were provided with skill development training and close to a million young people are engaged in self-employment. We are told that, owing to various motivational programmes, training, self-employment projects, youth loan schemes, and poverty alleviation initiatives, there is a sharp decline in the unemployment rate from 6 percent in 2009 to 3.6 percent in 2022.

Yet, the reality is that the majority of our unemployed population is between 15 and 24 years old. Not only does Bangladesh have a double-digit youth unemployment rate of over 10 percent, the rate of people not in education, employment, and training (NEET) is also nearly double the global average of 21.7 percent.

According to Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics data, the share of youth aged 15 to 24 years who fall into the NEET category has increased from 28.9 percent in 2017 to 39.88 percent in 2022. Paradoxically, university degree holders also continue to suffer

from a high rate of unemployment. But this is not a new phenomenon. A 2014 comparative study jointly conducted by the British Council and the Economist Intelligence Unit reported that nearly five out of every 10 graduates in Bangladesh were unemployed against approximately three out of 10 in India and Pakistan. Given the high NEET rate,

political campaigns?

Or is youthwashing only a symptom? Perhaps the broken interlinkage between education and employment despite the propaganda of youth power as the driver of prosperous Bangladesh is reflective of a more fundamental gap in policy making, i.e., the lack of credible and accountable political leadership.

That said, youthwashing is not unique to Bangladesh. Similar to exploiting the green agenda for popular publicity and rhetoric, politicians in authoritarian regimes are increasingly exploiting young people's voices but doing so in a performative way while de facto paying little attention to them, or failing to act on concerns raised by this group. But this practice is likely to be particularly costly for Bangladesh given that our first demographic dividend window will close between 2030 and 2042. Youthwashing must be resisted as a strategy for political elites to cover up underinvestment in education and employment.

Globally, the youth has had a long legacy of facilitating social transformation processes through active involvement in democratic uprisings. Future-focused movements such as fighting climate change have also attracted young voices who are collectively campaigning to save the planet and protect their future. Recognising their transformative potential, international development partners are also supporting concrete measures for youth policy development to facilitate young people's access to rights and social opportunities. The UN, too, recognises youth action as key to SDGs such as Quality Education, Decent Work and Economic Growth, and Reduced Inequalities. Given this recognition, young people must collectively bargain for their future and hold governments accountable for delivering jobs and quality education.

Bangladeshi policymakers, therefore, must not underestimate the youth's ability for public action, as evidenced in the nationwide protests demanding fair, quota-free access to public sector jobs in 2018. At a time of gradual democratic backsliding worldwide, the growing practice of using young people as popular propaganda tools must be challenged. Politicians must be held accountable for their election-time promises of reducing youth unemployment. We must not forget that young people are the main stakeholders of the Smart Bangladesh Vision 2041 as well as the Delta Plan 2100. It is time for them to take charge of the public campaign for the formulation of a "national youth budget" as well as a national strategy for youth employment.

WORLD REFUGEE DAY

A call for true solidarity with the Rohingya community



Hasina Rahman is country director of The International Rescue Committee.

HASINA RAHMAN

This month, UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, published its flagship Global Trends Report, which has not brought any immediate hope to the world. The report published on June 12 in Geneva found that forced displacement rose to 120 million in May 2024, marking the 12th consecutive annual increase—a result of ongoing crises and newly emerging and evolving conflicts. The figure would make the global displaced population equivalent to the 12th largest country in the world, around the size of Japan. One in every 69 people, or 1.5 percent of the entire world's population, are now forcibly displaced.

This is nearly double the one in 125 people who were displaced a decade ago. The increase to 117.3 million at the end of 2023 constitutes a rise of 8 percent, or 8.8 million people compared to the end of 2022—and is a continuation of the year-on-year increases over the last 12 years. When every day, more people are

facing forced displacement globally, the world's attention is rapidly shifting from one crisis to another. And unfortunately, globally, the focus on the Rohingya crisis is fading. It has been seven years since the massive influx happened in 2017 and the Rohingya community was forced to flee their homes and leave their country—Myanmar—to come to Cox's Bazar for safety and survival. Since then, they have been enduring dire conditions in the camps. The entire population depends on relief and food aid. Young people are facing challenging situations, spending their time idly without quality life experiences. We can't imagine how their lives are in the camps. In the last couple of months, around one million Rohingya have endured extreme heat waves, two fire incidents, and a cyclone. During the fires, many lost their shelters and had to live under the open sky. During the heat wave, they lived in tarpaulin shelters.

Besides these disasters, women and adolescent girls are experiencing difficult day-to-day realities. More than 80 percent of them face gender-based violence by their intimate partners. Child marriage is prevalent. They have limited access to justice and very often do not seek it. The safety and security situation in the camps is inadequate. Women and girls constantly live in fear.

A few days ago, I met Ramicha, a young girl in the Rohingya camps who loves creating henna art. When her neighbours ask her to apply henna, she feels happy to adorn the hands of young girls and women. She loves being appreciated for her art. Like Ramicha, over 400,000 children are living in the Rohingya camps. Despite the lack of things to do, children have found many ways to continue to laugh and live.

The Rohingya camps are examples of how, despite significant efforts from the Bangladesh government and international community, it is still far from sufficient to meet the basic needs of displaced people. The global scenario is not any better than this. This is the situation in which the world will observe World Refugee Day on June 20, 2024. This year's theme, "Solidarity with Refugees," calls for actionable support beyond mere words. Solidarity means keeping our doors open, celebrating their strengths and achievements, and reflecting on

the challenges they face.

We urge the global community to truly demonstrate solidarity with the Rohingya community, who are facing very difficult challenges every day in refugee camps.

International stakeholders, the philanthropic community and private sector actors should increase financial aid to these people so that more sustainable and impactful support can be provided. While food, health care, safety, and fundamental rights must be provided, we must prepare them for the next phase of their lives. Education, livelihoods and skills development are crucial now to develop the young Rohingya population so that when they voluntarily return to their country, they will have the suitable skill sets to contribute economically and socially. Recently, the conflict inside Myanmar has reached a new height. These conflicts are bringing countless human tragedies, and it must be brought to an end. The global community should put more effort into ending this conflict and bringing peace to Myanmar so that all the displaced people can return to their homes and live safe and dignified lives.

By taking these tangible steps, the global community can move beyond rhetoric to enact meaningful changes, embodying true solidarity with refugees and honouring their resilience and contributions.

The stakes are too high for the world to fail Palestine



Ruby Amatulla
is executive director of the US based Muslims for Peace, Justice and Progress, and the Bangladesh-based Women for Good Governance.

RUBY AMATULLA

Martin Luther King Jr said that injustice anywhere threatens justice everywhere. That warning has never been so relevant as today, when the global powers are themselves violating the rule-based world order established after the Second World War, with goals to avoid wars, maintain peace, uphold human rights, and assure security and justice to every nation-state and every people in this global society.

The horrible genocide in Gaza has slaughtered over 37,000 people—two-thirds of them women and children, injured over 85,000, and buried alive countless people under the 220,000 collapsed buildings in the tiny strip of land just 25 miles long and about five miles wide. This ethnic cleansing, and the crimes against humanity are being carried out with the full military and political support of none other than the US—once the architect, founder, and supposedly the de facto defender of the international rule of law. Such a monstrous injustice to a defenceless and long persecuted people who endured ethnic cleansing by the settler colonial state, Israel, for the last 75 years under the patronage of the West, especially of the superpower of our time, is undoubtedly giving messages to the entire world that the “might is right” policy of the dark ages is back, and no one is safe.

The Rohingya genocide in 2017 occurred in Myanmar while global powers watched. Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022 and inflicted scorched earth destruction, mass murders, and inhuman atrocities. There are other examples of massive human rights violations by global powers. If the global community does not take measures to hold them accountable, the ultimate victim of this dangerously irresponsible pattern will be humanity in its entirety.

Washington’s polished mask is removed, and its ugly and rotten state is exposed to the world as it repeatedly counters and vetoes resolutions at the UN General Assembly

and the Security Council, cares little about world opinion, undermines the verdicts of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and opposes the International Criminal Court’s requests for arrest warrants against top Israeli officials including the Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. These actions are sending alarms to the rest of the world that the world order based on universal principles is becoming dysfunctional. It is utterly disgraceful that the US Congress has invited Netanyahu to speak before a joint session.

Realising the stakes of the failure to address the current Gaza genocide, millions of people are coming to the streets to protest. They know that politicians and decision makers operate in a socio-political environment that must be changed by the people.

It is a dangerous signal to many states and non-state actors who struggle peacefully and within the law because they believe the international community will effectively address their issues. However, as they see the present hopeless state of affairs, these people and organisations often resort to illegal and violent means, abandoning peaceful resistance.

On the other hand, authoritarian regimes and predatory elites all find encouragement in a lawless world in which they can promote their vested interests by exploiting, subjugating, and victimising countless people. The alarming rise in authoritarian regimes and dysfunctional democracies in the world is an outcome of vicious geopolitics created by the global and regional powers under the heavy influence of predatory elites.

The US President John F Kennedy warned the world, “Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable.”

This explains the desperate events of October 7, when Hamas attacked Israel. All peaceful means have been systematically blocked for decades.

As Ilan Pappé, a renowned Israeli historian,

clearly exposed in his work: terrorism did not exist among the Arabs in the Middle East. Terrorism was introduced to the region by the Zionist forces by creating fierce organisations like the Hagenah in 1920, the Irgun in 1930, the Stern Gang, and others later, all to terrorise the Palestinians to drive them out of their homes and homeland, where their forefathers had lived for centuries. The project of establishing a settler colonial state started

created in the mid-1960s. The Palestinians waited patiently and peacefully, hoping the international community would address their issues. When the oppression continued, violent resistance started its course from the state of utter hopelessness and frustrations for which the inaction or inadequate actions of the global community were responsible.

During the last few decades, especially since 9/11, the “War on Terror”—a two-decade-

with each other to consolidate their collective power, establishing “strangleholds” on many Western governments, most dangerously on the US government. It’s not only the Palestinian people, but the whole world—directly or indirectly—who is a victim of this corrupt and repugnant state.

Today, the world is again at a crossroads. The enormously powerful transnational elites and their alliances are hijacking Western democracies and the international rule of law. On the other hand, the people of this global society are ever more determined to establish their rights and dignity. Two mega confrontational forces are dangerously approaching each other—one for the rule of law and justice and the other for authoritarianism, exploitation, and subjugation of the masses.

Europe’s might-right policy caused the two most devastating wars of the 20th century, bringing the world to its knees. That is why, right after WWII, the world leaders reached a consensus to establish the new world order in 1945. The international rule of law recognises the equal rights of all nation-states with respect to their sovereignty, territorial integrity, and security. Since the UN adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 to mandate each member-state to uphold the rights, new optimism and vigour swept the world. As a result, 36 countries became independent during the post-WWII period, ending the colonial era.

The global rule of law ensures our collective well-being, freedom, and dignity. We, the people, are threatened when these universal ideas are undermined or trampled. The people of this global society are the stakeholders, and consequently, we all must fight to preserve, protect, and defend the world order that aims to help us achieve justice and peace.

Israel’s fanatic and extremist government has already conflagrated the Middle East, a region where the global powers and the regional powers are increasingly getting entangled, each moving in their own way, failing to see the bigger picture and pushing the world “sleepwalking” into World War III.

A people-to-people global movement to restore the rule of law, reclaim democracies from the mouth of monstrous forces, and establish good governance that upholds human rights and sustains stability worldwide is the paradigm shift that is needed now, an imperative necessity for a healthy global community.



A man gestures as Palestinians search for casualties a day after Israeli strikes on houses in Jabalia refugee camp in the northern Gaza Strip, on November 1, 2023.

PHOTO: REUTERS

more than one hundred years ago when the Palestinians were persecuted as these Jewish terrorist organisations were trained and armed by Britain and funded by the wealthy Zionist elites of Europe. Arabs were no match for the Zionist forces.

Israel was created in 1948 after destroying half of Palestine, perpetrating 31 massacres, and driving 750,000 Palestinians—then half of the population of the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea—out of their homes and homeland to make space for the immigrant Jews from Europe.

Four decades later, after the Hagenah was created to terrorise the Palestinians, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was

long Western military onslaught without addressing the root causes of grievances and inhuman sufferings of countless people of the region—has been enormously painful, deadly, unjust, and in the end most counterproductive.

These are all tactics and agendas of transnational predatory elites to exploit, subjugate, and vilify targeted people to serve their mutual vested interests. The Palestinians are the worst and longest victims of this heinous agenda.

The people in the top positions of the military-industrial complex of Western powers and big businesses are the strongest allies of the pro-Israel elites, who all collude

When violence hits home Death of Bangladeshi youth in America



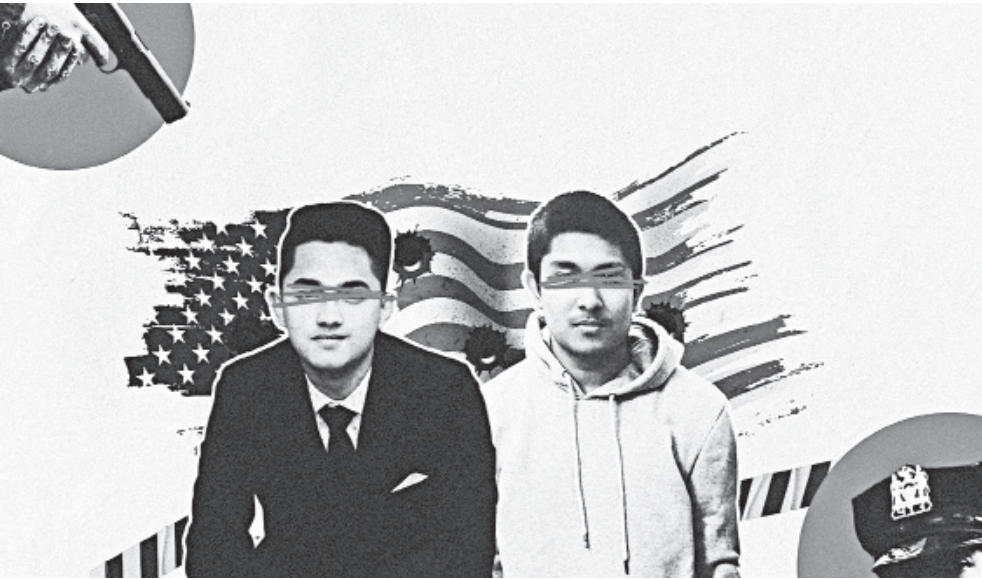
Sarziah Yeasmin
is a Boston-based Bangladeshi writer. She works at Harvard Kennedy School and is currently pursuing a micro-master’s in data and economics at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

SARZAH YEASMIN

The police killings of Win Rozario and Sayed Faisal, Bangladeshi American youth, have been devastating for the diaspora. In both incidents, killing came as a response to a mental health crisis. Both Faisal and Win were shot as a response to non-criminal calls, when they needed help. The instances of non-criminal domestic disturbance calls ending in police killings are numerous. The American Public Health Association posits that police violence limits the minority community’s ability to achieve good health outcomes. The rampant and poignant crisis of police killings is a case of double jeopardy for the Bangladeshi American community: the Bangladeshi community’s help seeking behaviour is limited as mental health and help seeking are generally discouraged and stigmatised in a system that is disinclined to provide social support and health services particularly to communities living on the margins.

Shahana Hanif, the first Bangladeshi American member of New York City Council and a leading progressive voice in the community, mentioned how there are many Bangladeshis serving the law enforcement establishment at different levels and before police killed Win, there was a dearth of critical discourse on police violence on minority communities. She mentioned that police officers are trained to de-escalate but they continue to harm communities of colour. The crisis for the community is intensified further when the city continues to cut funding for social services and go above and beyond to fund the police.

Bangladeshi Americans make up one of the fastest growing low-income communities in cities like New York. The long history of documented immigration of Bangladeshis goes way back but the recent profile of the Bangladeshi migrant community is defined by the migration pattern starting in during the third wave of Bangladeshi immigration post 1981, when more working-class Bangladeshis started migrating to major urban centres. This community experiences acute health disparities and neglect, coupled



VISUAL: SHAIKH SULTANA JAHAN BADHON

with high rates of discrimination and low social support—added to the stressors of being in a recently settled immigrant household. Lack of meaningful access to resources also derails help seeking in the community. Win’s and Faisal’s deaths should not be moments of reckoning for the Bangladeshi community only, but for the whole of America as the processes that led to these heartbreaking outcomes sit on matrix of systemic bias, neglect, discrimination, inequality, and model minority mindset where “positive” stereotypes of Asians as hardworking, docile and apolitical migrants pushes the South Asian and Bangladeshi diaspora in the United States to excel at the expense of meeting their needs.

The negative verdict on Faisal’s case is not surprising: a Massachusetts judge found that the officer was justified in shooting Faisal. Oftentimes the rationale of self-defence, police being responsive to their training rules, overvaluation of police witness and narrative over non-police witness play pivotal roles in decision making. Bringing

guns and safety advanced by special interest groups, police unions and politicians that need to be considered to comprehend the intricacies around police violence. If the police officer “reasonably” believes that use of lethal force must be used to prevent harm to self or others, then that is seen as enough of a justification for violence resulting in death. The cost of police killing is not as well documented, but it is mainly borne by the victim’s family and the health care system, in some cases the city government if the case reaches a settlement—very small percentage of claims ever reach settlement. Killing comes at a minimal cost to the police department as many cases are squashed in the administrative reviews and procedures. The officers responsible for killing are usually put on paid administrative leave or modified duty and are eventually reassigned. If there are any sanctions on the police officer, they are usually recorded as disciplinary expenditure on the police department budget—not categorised as cost related to the use of lethal force.

Law enforcement officers can only use life threatening force when responding to a threat or use of deadly force. Win had a pair of scissors and Faisal had a knife. Would holding a knife or a pair of scissors in the presence of police officers armed with high calibre weapons count as using deadly force? What relative capacity of harm do these weapons possess compared to a gun used by a trained police officer with far more capacity for harm and damage? Knife is considered to be a weapon of deadly force under the twenty-one-foot rule which posits that the holder of a knife can cover a distance of 21 feet in the time it takes to fire two shots. All such minute technicalities and rules stand in favour of the police officer who decides to use force. Did Win’s and Faisal’s reaction triggered through unaddressed mental health issues constitute grave danger for the police? Did the victims substantially provoke police’s use of lethal force?

Pointing a weapon or something that reasonably looks like a weapon is seen as one of the most common triggers for the police to use their firearm. One detail about police misconduct is important to note: any police misconduct is counted as a single act of applying deadly force—if the first shot from the police’s gun is seen as justified, then that covers all subsequent shots and use of force and justifies any additional aggression. Liam McMahon shot Faisal a total of six times—and regardless of how many times the police would shoot, if the first shot is concluded as a justified shot, so are all the shots, even

Bringing a criminal charge resulting in an ultimate criminal conviction in cases of police killings is an uphill battle—with bottlenecks on every step of the legal system that confirm systemic bias and provide broad impunity to the police.

though death rate is much higher in cases where multiple shots are fired. Number of gunshots has a predictive value for death. Therefore, there is no disincentive for the police officer to use additional force or shoot additional times that lead to deaths.

Recent innovations in monitoring police conduct are only making incremental and

gradual changes. In my conversation with Tanvir Chowdhury, President of Bangladesh Association of New England, he mentioned how pleading for justice for Faisal pushed the Cambridge police to improve their policies, wear body cameras and led the city to consider alternate social service for emergency response. Regardless of minor innovations, issues of poor governance remain unaddressed, and the police continue to have major control over visual evidence. Public who film violence also put themselves at risk of being subjected to police misconduct—ultimately undermining non-police public witness narrative.

According to the US Bureau of Justice Statistics, the main reasons for the police wearing body cameras is to improve officer safety and reduce liability of police departments. However, small scale experimental studies have shown that the use of body cameras has the potential to improve police conduct. Video evidence has been pivotal for garnering public reaction, but it does not guarantee ease in bringing criminal charges or prosecution. Evidence would also not weigh in as much in instances where there are irregularities in disclosure. The bone chilling last moment of Win’s life is recorded, the public can hear his mother repeatedly pleading to the police not to shoot her son. It is yet to be seen how public reaction and the video evidence of violence shapes the investigation and verdict in Win’s case, but it has the potential to boost and prolong the campaign for justice. It was only in 2020 that Section 50-a of New York City’s Civil Rights Law, which kept disciplinary records of police officers hidden from the public, was repealed after almost a decade-long fight. Any change is hard-won. While the avenue for criminal prosecution might be exhausted with the ruling in Faisal’s case, Tanvir sees possibilities in civil litigation. The way Faisal was portrayed in the media in the aftermath of his undue death, caused his family severe distress. It is critical to pursue justice in the face of this gridlock to continue to honour and humanise our people.

Should the police be left out of the public safety plan then? Officers receiving training in de-escalation are quick to resort to lethal force, would calling the police for help entail an inevitable deadly outcome? Police violence, brushed off as a non-issue for the Asian and Bangladeshi community in America, has hit hard and hit home this time. For now, the only promise of change can be found in Win’s and Faisal’s families and communities that continue to fight for justice.

THE SHELF

Book-to-screen adaptations to look forward to in the second half of 2024

‘The Lord of the Rings: The War of Rohirrim’ will revolve around Helm Hammerhand, the legendary king who ruled Rohan about 183 years before the events of the ‘LotR’ trilogy, and focus on his struggle against the Dunlendings.

ADRITA ZAIMA ISLAM

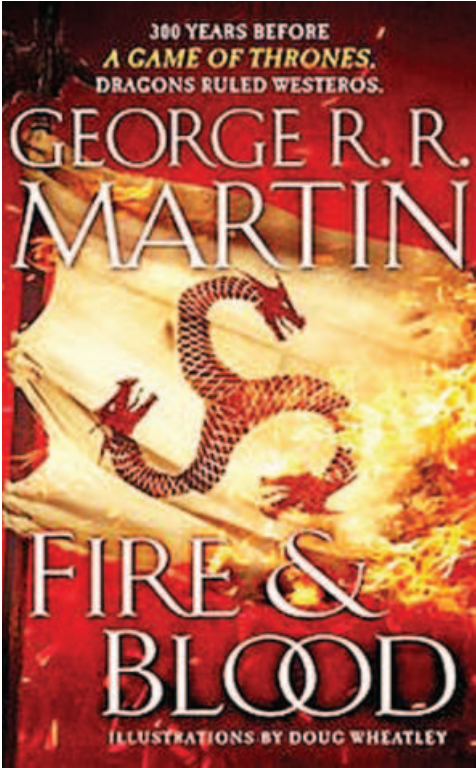
The first half of this year has treated us with some truly amazing book-to-screen adaptations like *Feud: Capote vs. The Swans*, *A Gentleman in Moscow*, and *Ripley*. The second half is also unlikely to disappoint. Here are some book-to-screen adaptations to pack the rest of your year with.

House of the Dragon (Season 2)
HBO, 2024

The first season of *House of the Dragon* left us in the thick of the brutal succession wars, the Dance of Dragons, that eventually led to the disastrous downfall of House Targaryen. The second season is set to pick up with the two warring sides scrambling to secure the alliances of the different noble houses in an attempt to solidify their positions. The final season of *Game of Thrones* and, in many ways, the first season of *House of the Dragon* (parts of the latter based on *Fire & Blood* by George R.R. Martin) left much to be desired. One can only hope this iteration will plunge fans back into the enthralling, gory world that we have come to know and love.

The Lord of the Rings: The War of Rohirrim
Warner Bros. Pictures, 2024

Peter Jackson’s *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, based on the books by J.R.R. Tolkien, was revolutionary. It paved the way for fantasy adaptations in contemporary film media. Now, more than two decades later, we are about to be immersed back into Middle-earth by means of an animated film. *The Lord of the Rings: The War of Rohirrim* will revolve around Helm Hammerhand, the legendary king who ruled Rohan about 183 years before the events of the *LotR* trilogy, and focus on his struggle against the Dunlendings. The movie will expand upon events touched upon in Tolkien’s *The Two*



Towers. An exact release date has not been announced yet.

The Uglies
Netflix, TBA

Scott Westerfeld’s *Uglies* series has had a cult following for nearly two decades. Set in a future, dystopian world where the government mandates cosmetic surgery on every citizen when they turn 16 to transform them into “Pretties”, *Uglies* explores themes of autonomy, individualism, societal segregation, and

appearances. After years spent in development hell, the film has finally been announced to be released some time this year.

The Watchers
Warner Bros. Pictures, 2024

The best sort of horror, in my opinion, is always the claustrophobic kind. That was the primary appeal of John Krasinski’s *A Quiet Place*. *The Watchers*, adapted from A.M. Shine’s eponymous novel, promises a similar brand of horror. The film follows a group of people stranded in a bunker in the middle of a forest in Ireland, trying to keep themselves safe from mysterious creatures dubbed “The Watchers” as the tensions within the group edge towards boiling over. The movie was released on June 7, 2024.

The Sandman (Season 2)
Netflix, TBA

Based on the comic book series by Neil Gaiman, the first season of *The Sandman* was a masterful demonstration of how to adapt a story to a different media without compromising the integrity of its source material. The series follows Morpheus, the personification of Dream, and his adventures across various realms and his interactions with different characters. Unlike many other comic-based media, *The Sandman* does not indulge in the villain of-the-week trope. It has a rich universe packed with fascinating characters and intricate lore that keeps the viewers wanting more. Season 2 is sure to follow in that same vein. A release date has not been announced yet.

Adrita Zaima Islam is a local workaholic who deals with her emotions by deprecating traumatised literary characters. Send her your sympathies at zaima2004adrita@gmail.com.

REFLECTIONS

Literature or sadism: The bleak picture of trauma in ‘A Little Life’

ALIFA MONJUR

There are few novelists as cruel as Hanya Yanagihara—and in *A Little Life* (Doubleday, 2015), her pen draws blood. Nine years on, the controversy of the 800-page character study of an irreparably broken protagonist is still ablaze with accusations that it sadistically exploits trauma for profit.

A Little Life begins deceptively enough, with four friends moving to New York after graduating university but as it tracks their lives for the next several decades, Jude St. Francis emerges as the black-hole centre of the story. At first, Jude is reserved and distant, a darkness amidst the friend group’s cosmic kaleidoscope of buzzing parties, dingy apartments, and bloodthirsty ambition. An enigma who divulges nothing, his friends know nothing about him, not even his ethnicity or how he really got the injury which frequently debilitates his legs.

But soon, with a growing ferocity, the reader is pulled into a horrific truth about Jude. Marred by an inconceivable childhood trauma that is he is unable to process, let alone confess or heal from, Jude sinks deeper into disturbing self-harm and self-hatred over the decades.

Yanagihara, a former *Condé Nast Traveler* editor, is a travel writer. She trades in storytelling that is so richly descriptive that the reader is transported to the deepest, darkest depths of Jude’s mind.

Jude’s character is written in such excruciating detail that you can practically feel him bleeding into



ILLUSTRATION: MAISHA SYEDA

the ink on the page; your own head echoes each self-loathing thought, every twisted conclusion. You sit powerlessly beside him on the bathroom floor as he slashes his own skin; you are locked in the room with his monstrous abusers as he relives childhood trauma.

The intense connection that Yanagihara successfully creates between Jude and the reader is a rare literary feat. Written almost completely in third person, the reader does not become Jude but becomes someone who deeply cares and worries for him. And it is precisely this written excellence that earns *A Little Life* its controversy. At what point is writing so expressive, so raw, that it makes a dangerous spectacle of human suffering?

Equipped with a powerful reader-protagonist union, Yanagihara plays a cruel game. She dangles the hope of Jude’s recovery temptingly, only to snatch it away each time.

In the end, nothing will save Jude—not success, money, friendship, romance, not even parental love. He will fear those who love him unconditionally and will never believe he is worthy of genuine human connection. Being adopted at age 30 will not console the pain of being an orphan and the terrifying power he commands as an eminent lawyer has no strength against the demons at home.

Of course, I would’ve liked it better if the book ended just one chapter earlier, but literature is more than fan service, and Yanagihara intended, for better or for worse, to elicit the reader’s misery. A happy ending would have meant closing the book with a satisfied smile; it would not have left the reader with a mass of emptiness and pure anger for how Jude’s life turned out. That is why she not only wrote an ‘unfixable’ character but did so with brute maximalism.

Make no mistake, however, of reducing Yanagihara’s graphic writing to mere profit-seeking. Different literary representations of trauma, no matter how ugly or painful, are important. As philosophy professor Eliss Marder puts it, literature is how we communicate aspects of the human experience that exceed ordinary expression and may even exceed human understanding. Similarly, Cathy Caruth, a pioneer in trauma theory, has long considered literature a vehicle for witnessing what cannot be completely known. We cannot reject pain from public comprehension because it is difficult to stomach. For some, trauma is not a backstory from which they can turn away. For some, the world is relentless, unforgiving, and there is no greater purpose nicely weaved throughout to make it all worthwhile.

A Little Life is a tormenting read, but it is so much more than its brutality. Between the lines, Yanagihara sketches an exquisite portrait of human compassion and empathy. She writes most strikingly of friendship as unconditional love, selflessness, chosen family, and a deeply transformative human connection. Undoubtedly, Jude encounters vicious adversaries throughout his life that permanently scar him but the friendship he finds is exceptional. The fact that it still could not completely “save” him does not change the love and compassion he found in so many.

There is a reason why several chapters are invested for the development of secondary characters, and why the only time Yanagihara employs a first-person perspective is from someone who loved Jude unconditionally. These characters’ humanity rises above all and their stories regale the reader with a subtle warmth unlike any other: friends and readers alike end up considering it a privilege to help carry any part of Jude’s burden he allows, even when it is extremely taxing.

Much like *A Little Life* shows, all-consuming connection is not healthy, but it is profoundly human.

Alifa Monjur is studying commerce and law in Sydney.



ILLUSTRATION: AMREETA LETHE

INTERVIEW

A LOOK AT AAPI representation in tech with Kyla Zhao of ‘Valley Verified’

TASHNUVA SUMAIYA ISLAM

This week, Kyla Zhao, the author of *Valley Verified* (Penguin Random House, 2024), graced us with an exclusive interview to give us insights into the changing trends in Asian American literature. It follows the story of Zoe Zeng, a modern Gen Z woman navigating career challenges when she switches from being a high-end fashion columnist to a tech employee in Silicon Valley. As the story unfolds, the readers get to know more about women in the tech industry and the difficulties they face behind the glitz of Silicon Valley.

As a woman in the tech industry herself, Kyla shared her experience as a young employee and the challenges many women face in the workplace and the changing tides in Asian American books.

In this part of the world, a lot of people don’t know about the Asian American Pacific Islanders (AAPI)

Month. Can you brief our readers on this event and its significance?

This lasts throughout the month of May, and is more of a concept in America. I’m not sure if it’s much of a concept in other western countries. Basically, it celebrates the AAPI community, our contributions to the world, and representation in the media. There wasn’t a lot of diverse representation in the past, and whilst it’s still not an ideal situation, we are starting to see a lot more coverage in the media of the AAPI community. That’s really heartwarming.

Has the statistics for Asian representation changed over the years or is it still lacking in many ways?

We’re definitely still in the minority. I think there has been a slight improvement in the numbers over the past decade, but we’re nowhere close to where we should be yet.

However, one thing I’ve started to see is that we are creating a variety of AAPI stories. In the past, one well-known work of Asian-American literature was *The Joy Luck Club* (1989) by Amy Tan. I adore the book and think everyone should read it. But many people started to think that’s the only kind of Asian story that could be told—it has to be an immigrant story which is quite sad and focuses on family trauma. For sure, those stories are valid because they speak about a very important part in a lot of Asian people’s lives. But we’re seeing Asians can also be part of joyful, uplifting, and upbeat stories. I think having variety in representation is incredibly important.

A lot of your audiences are Gen Z right now. How is the Gen Z female reader diaspora different from the readerbases we used to see while we were growing up?

I think Gen Z has invented the

phenomenon of ‘girl boss’. Right now, there’s a trend on TikTok and social media to reclaim your girlhood. There’s a lot more willingness to move past the traditional roles of what women are supposed to look like and what they’re supposed to do. It’s still far from the ideal situation because I think a lot of Gen Z feminism is eurocentric. But, I think we’re starting to realise women can do whatever they want. If they want to go into the workforce, they can. If they want to be the girl boss, they can. They also can stay home and be a homemaker. Each approach is equally valid.

This is an excerpt. Read the full interview on The Daily Star and DS Books’ websites.

Tashnuva Sumaiya Islam, when not reading, loves to paint, write, and share her photography on Instagram! Follow her @tea_tae93 or email her at tashnuva.i93@gmail.com.

Can Tigers’ batting thrive as a unit?

Australia have six wins to their name against Bangladesh's four in 10 T20Is. All four of the Tigers' victories came in Mirpur.

Bangladesh have never beaten Australia in the T20 World Cup, losing in five meetings.

Average first innings total at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium is 118. Pacers and spinners have had similar experiences at the venue as both have conceded runs at less than seven an over. In this T20 World Cup, however, spinners have conceded more, 8.45 runs an over, than pacers (7.74).

Bangladesh pacer Tanzim Hasan Sakib has taken seven wickets in the Powerplay, joint-most with Afghanistan Fazalhaq Farooqi for most scalps taken in the first six overs in the tournament. Meanwhile, Mustafizur Rahman's 67 dot balls is the joint-most in the group-stage of the tournament alongside New Zealand's Lockie Ferguson.

At the batting front, Marcus Stoinis (10) and Travis Head (9) both are in the top five for most sixes hit in the edition so far. Towhid Hridoy is in the top 10 with six maximums.

Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib, who will be on a hattrick whenever he comes to bowl against Australia, needs one wicket to become the first player to take 50 wickets in T20 World Cup history. He is also two wickets away from becoming only the second player after Tim Southee (164) to take 150 scalps in the format.

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

Bangladesh are set to step into the Super Eight stage against Australia on Friday at Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in Antigua, in what will be their biggest test so far in this T20 World Cup.

The bowlers have carried the Tigers through to this round, but from here on the batting will have to turn the tide of disappointments as the Najmul Hossain Shanto-led team look to make a case against far stronger opponents.

Australia, winners of the 2021 edition, have come to the Super Eight with a perfect record of four wins on the trot. They have largely not come under a great deal of pressure, and with Antigua providing some of the bouncier pitches in the Caribbean, the wicket may suit the Aussies against the slower cutters of Mustafizur Rahman, who has been incredibly difficult to hit so far in this tournament.

However, some rain has reportedly seeped into the proceedings, leading to an expected drop in zip from the surface than is the norm there. Yet, it doesn't provide much room for optimism for Bangladesh's batting, which has been in dire straits, often stretched too thin.

Despite having encountered two Associate teams in four matches, the top order is still looking for runs, with Tanzid Hasan Tamim showing some resistance on one occasion. Liton Das has not been in his elements, even



though he looked good against Sri Lanka, while skipper Shanto remains entangled in a torrid run of batting form.

On top of that, Shakib Al Hasan's batting contributions have been sporadic. The onus thus falls too hard on the likes of Towhid Hridoy and Mahmudullah Riyad, who have often had to bat to stage rescue acts rather than playing their natural game.

Bangladesh's bowling plans have worked out magnificently, but the cue now begins for the batters to share the burden of responsibility. Up against one of the best in the business, what can Shanto and company do to leave a mark?

ASSESS CONDITIONS QUICKLY

If Bangladesh bowl first, there will be enough time for the struggling batting unit to come up with a plan, but the same cannot be said if they bat first. The Tigers have lost 10

wickets in the Powerplay across four games, making them wary of a collapse at the very top. Therefore, the opening pair needs to put on a more solid effort to keep the Australian pace attack at bay in the Powerplay. The Aussies have played all their games in the Caribbean and may assess conditions better than any other side, which does not exactly play into Bangladesh's hands.

BETTER SHOT SELECTION CAN BUCK TREND

The wicket is not the only issue behind batting failures. The Tigers also need to look at some of their shot selections. Bangladesh batters repeatedly played poor shots against Nepal, leading to a score of just 105. Shanto himself reverse-swept a delivery to slip against the Netherlands, while Hridoy was also at fault against Nepal, going for a slog sweep when the ball was not there for

that particular shot. On these wickets, the batters need to show resilience and game awareness to maximize impact.

SOMEONE NEEDS TO CARRY THE BAT

Just how Shakib carried the bat against the Netherlands, one from the top order must put a heavy price tag on their wicket once they get set.

MORE LOWER-ORDER MOJO

Both Netherlands and Nepal fixtures showcased some beneficial mojo from the Bangladesh lower order. While being cautious with shot selection, the Tigers

TIGERS’ SUPER 8S FIXTURES	
JUNE 21	06:30 AM
Bangladesh vs Australia	ANTIGUA
JUNE 22	08:30 PM
Bangladesh vs India	ANTIGUA
JUNE 25	06:30 AM
Bangladesh vs Afghanistan	ST. VINCENT

cannot forego aggression when required. Rishad Hossain got some crucial hits against Nepal, and so did Jaker Ali in the Netherlands game, but Bangladesh will hope that the frontline batters take the lion's share of responsibility against the mighty men from Down Under.

Foden promises ‘improved’ Bellingham partnership

REUTERS, BLANKENHAIN

After a shaky start to England's European Championship campaign that had critics questioning his starting spot, Phil Foden insists his partnership with Jude Bellingham will only flourish.

England, who sit atop Group C, face Denmark on Thursday in Frankfurt before closing out the group stage against Slovenia on June 25.

Foden was a headliner this past Premier League season, pouring in 27 goals for Manchester City across all competitions to win Premier League Footballer of the Year honours.

But lining up on the left of a front three in England's 1-0 win over Serbia, with Jude Bellingham occupying the central No. 10 position in which Foden has thrived with City, he drifted out of the game.

“Jude's obviously an exceptional talent,” Foden said in a Football Association video. “He's a leader now, I think he's turning into a leader. I think our link-up play is good at times and I think it's improving as well, and can keep getting better. So he's an exciting talent and I enjoy playing with him.”

While some chalked up Sunday's performance as just a bad game for Foden, it drew criticism from some pundits.

Former Spain midfielder Cesc Fabregas said players with Foden's talent have the quality to hold the ball anywhere on the pitch.

Spain and Italy face off to extend record Euro rivalry

REUTERS, DORTMUND

When Italy and Spain meet in Gelsenkirchen on Thursday, they will write a new chapter in what has developed into the most intense head-to-head rivalry in European Championship history.

No two countries have met more often at Euro tournaments than the Azzurri and La Furia Roja - the Red Fury - who will line up against one another for the eighth time since 1960.

It will also be the fifth edition in a



row that the two heavyweights have met head-to-head at a European Championship.

Over much of the country's sporting history, Spain's fans looked enviously across the Mediterranean Sea as Italy racked up four World Cup titles and the Azzurri battled for European supremacy with the mighty Germans.

But of the three Euro crowns won by the two countries over the last four tournaments, two have gone to Spain, underscoring their rise as a soccer superpower that also saw them crowned world champions in 2010.

In the most recent European Championship showdown, Italy defeated Spain in a nail-biting Euro 2020 semifinal that went to penalties at Wembley.

In a last-16 encounter in 2016, Italy were again victorious when defender

Giorgio Chiellini scored from close range and Graziano Pelle volleyed home in the dying moments for a 2-0 win.

But in their most important meeting in all competitions, Spain triumphed in the final of Euro 2012 when Vicente del Bosque's all-conquering team thrashed Italy 4-0 in Kyiv which remains the biggest win in a European Championship final.

The stakes will not be as high in Thursday's Group B game at the Arena AufSchalke. Spain and Italy both won their opening matches against Croatia and Albania, respectively, and look well placed to advance into the knockout rounds.

But if they finish first and second in the group, they could be on course for another meeting, this time in the final in Berlin on July 14.

SHORT CORNER

Williamson steps down as New Zealand

Kane Williamson has stepped down as captain of New Zealand's white-ball teams and opted out of a national contract for the 2024/25 season following the Black Caps' early exit from the T20 World Cup. Williamson's decision marks the end of an era for a New Zealand team which made the semi-finals of the previous three T20 World Cups and the 2021 final but ultimately missed out on a maiden white-ball title.

Suryakumar happy to temper aggression on slow tracks

Suryakumar Yadav has proved time and again the kind of havoc he can wreak with the bat but India's Lynchpin believes being able to control that aggression is equally important on the slow pitches in the ongoing T20 World Cup. The group stage of the 20-team tournament, especially its U.S. leg, proved a low-scoring affair with no batter managing to score a hundred.

Junior AHF Cup Hockey: Men's team in semifinals

Bangladesh men's U-21 team continued their winning streak in Junior AHF Cup to ensure their semifinal berth with a 4-2 win over Thailand but women's U-21 side tasted their first defeat in a 3-0 loss to Chinese Taipei in Singapore yesterday. The three wins from as many matches means the Men in Red and Green topped Pool A with nine points, which also made sure of their place in Junior Asia Cup.

*Read full stories on The Daily Star website



BRAZIL, ARGENTINA FIXTURES

Keeping in mind the massive fan following of Brazil and Argentina in Bangladesh, the two teams' group-stage fixtures, according to Bangladesh time, are as follows:

BRAZIL			ARGENTINA		
June 25	Brazil vs Costa Rica	7:00 am	June 21	Argentina vs Canada	6:00 am
June 29	Paraguay vs Brazil	7:00 am	June 26	Chile vs Argentina	7:00 am
July 03	Brazil vs Colombia	7:00 am	June 30	Argentina vs Peru	6:00 am

GROUPS	A. Argentina, Peru, Chile, Canada	C. USA, Uruguay, Panama, Bolivia
	B. Mexico, Ecuador, Venezuela, Jamaica	D. Brazil, Colombia, Paraguay, Costa Rica

Spotlight on Messi, Endrick IN 48TH COPA AMERICA

AFP

World champions Argentina get an expanded Copa America under way on Friday morning with Lionel Messi looking to add a second continental title in what is almost certainly his final appearance in the tournament.

The 108-year-old competition is being held in the United States with the host nation among six teams from the CONCACAF region joining the 10 South American nations looking for a place in the July 14 final in Miami.

Whether this is Messi's goodbye to elite international football remains to be seen, but what is certain is that the eight-times Ballon d'Or winner would relish the chance to win a third straight major tournament with his country, having won the last Copa America in 2021 which featured 10 teams and the 2022 FIFA World Cup.

“It's great to have records and continue to achieve things but I won't take part in a World Cup just to say I've done six,” Messi told ESPN last week.

After facing Canada, Argentina have Chile and Peru to deal with, but they know that tough opposition awaits in the knock-out stage with rivals Brazil and Uruguay the two expected challengers for the title.

Brazil have struggled in CONMEBOL qualifiers for the 2026 World Cup having won just two of their opening six games and they currently sit in sixth place in the standings hav-

ing lost to Uruguay, Colombia and Argentina. There are several familiar names missing from Dorival Junior's Brazil squad with Case-miro, Gabriel Jesus and Thiago Silva left out while Richarlison and Neymar are both missing due to injury.

The pressure will be on the Real Madrid attacking pair of Vinicius Junior and Rodrygo to translate their club form into success

raising expectations with wins over Argentina and Brazil.

Colombia, unbeaten in over two years, boast Liverpool's Luis Diaz and a rejuvenated James Rodriguez, making Nestor Lorenzo's team formidable.

The USA aim to regain momentum after a World Cup last-16 finish, while Mexico, Copa finalists in 1993 and 2001, look below par but

- Copa is the oldest active international football tournament, having started in 1916, with Uruguay winning the first edition of the tournament.
- Argentina and Uruguay are the most successful teams in the Copa America, with 15 titles each while Brazil,

another South American giant and the most successful team in the FIFA World Cup (with five titles) is second with nine titles.

● The Copa América which was held in the United States in 2016 to celebrate 100 years of the tournament, was the first

edition of the competition that took place outside the South American territory and had featured 16 teams.

● The 48th edition of the tournament will be held in 14 cities across the United States, with each location hosting 2 or 3 games.

for the Seleccion while there is much excitement around the senior tournament debut of 17-year-old talent Endrick, who is set to join Real next month from Palmeiras.

Meanwhile, 15-time winners Uruguay have impressed under 68-year-old coach Marcelo Bielsa, who has infused his high-energy style,

enjoy strong support in the USA. While FIFA will be looking closely at the organization of the event, two years out from the World Cup which will be co-hosted by the USA, Canada and Mexico, the tournament's rich history and prestige means it is much, much more than a 'trial event'.



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Russia's President Vladimir Putin and North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un pose for a photo during a signing ceremony following bilateral talks in Pyongyang, North Korea, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Russia, N Korea sign mutual defence pact

Putin says the deal will protect both countries from aggression; Kim hails new ties as 'alliance'

REUTERS, Seoul

Russian President Vladimir Putin yesterday signed a deal with North Korea's Kim Jong Un that included a mutual defence pledge, one of Russia's most significant moves in Asia for years that Kim said amounted to an "alliance".

Putin's pledge overhauls Russia's entire post-Soviet policy on North Korea just as the United States and its Asian allies try to gauge how far Russia could deepen support for the only country to have tested a nuclear weapon this century.

On his first visit to Pyongyang since July 2000, Putin explicitly linked Russia's deepening of ties with North Korea to the West's growing support for Ukraine and said Moscow could develop military and technical cooperation with Pyongyang.

After talks, they signed a "comprehensive strategic partnership" pact, which Putin said included a mutual defence clause in the case of aggression against either country.

"The comprehensive partnership agreement signed today provides, among other things, for mutual assistance in the event of aggression against one of the parties to this agreement," Putin said.

He said Western deliveries of advanced, long-range weaponry including F-16 fighters to Ukraine for strikes against Russia breached major agreements.

"In connection with this, Russia does not exclude for itself the development of military-technical cooperation with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea," Putin said.

Kim praised Russia for making what he cast as an enormously significant strategic move to support North Korea, which was founded in 1948 with the Soviet Union's backing.

Putin's courting of Kim, which has included gifts of limousines and a tour of Russia's new space launch centre, has alarmed the United States and its Asian allies.

Putin was greeted by cheering crowds lining the streets of Pyongyang along with children waving Russian flags and a military salute. Kim, 40, greeted Putin at the airport.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

4 arrested over double murder in Bogura

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

Law enforcers arrested four people in Bogura town yesterday over the murder of two men two days ago.

The arrestees are Kabir Ahmed Mithu, 60, general secretary of Bogura Motor Workers' Union, Azbeen Rifat, 19, a Chhatra League activist, Naim Hossain, 28, and Sheikh Sourav, 26.

They are among the 13 named accused in the murder case filed with Bogura Sadar Police Station by Hena Begum, mother of Noman Ahmed Sharif, one of the deceased.

Noman and Rumman Ahmed were hacked to death in Bogura town's Chakarpara area around 12:30am on Tuesday.

The two were killed following an altercation over a trivial matter, said police.

Hena Begum also accused 15 unnamed people of the murder.

Hossain, a friend of the deceased, sustained bullet wounds in the incident. He

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

EPIC Group to get \$100m loan from IFC

The company will spend funds on expansion in Bangladesh, new manufacturing facility in India

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

International Finance Corporation (IFC) will provide EPIC Group with a \$100 million debt financing package to support its expansion in Bangladesh and the construction of a new manufacturing unit in India.

The package includes a \$70 million sustainability-linked loan and a \$30 million green loan.

Additionally, EPIC Group will use the proceeds to upgrade its washing and wastewater treatment plant and to invest in technology and equipment that will reduce energy and water use in Bangladesh, IFC said in a statement on Monday.

IFC's funding, which includes its first green loan with sustainability-linked features in the manufacturing sector, is expected to help EPIC Group create over 10,500 direct jobs and 17,000 indirect jobs in the two countries.

The loan is structured with three ambitious corporate sustainability performance targets, including reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emission intensity, decreasing freshwater intensity, and increasing the representation of women in junior and middle management.

"Partnering with IFC is a significant step for EPIC Group in pursuit of a more sustainable and innovative textile manufacturing industry," said Ranjan Mahtani, executive chairman of EPIC Group.

"This collaboration not only allows us to expand our operations in Bangladesh and India but also reinforces our commitment to reducing our environmental footprint

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

Israel may have violated laws of war in Gaza

Says UN rights office; 24 more Palestinians killed as Israeli forces bombard western Rafah



- » UN rights office calls for investigations into attacks
- » Lawlessness in Gaza impedes aid via Kerem Shalom crossing: UN
- » Tensions soar on Israel-Lebanon border
- » Gaza death toll rises to 37,396

AGENCIES

Israeli forces may have repeatedly violated the laws of war and failed to distinguish between civilians and fighters in the Gaza conflict, the UN human rights office said yesterday.

Separately, the head of a UN inquiry accused the Israeli military of carrying out an "extermination" of Palestinians.

In a report on six deadly Israeli attacks, the UN human rights office (OHCHR) said Israeli forces

"may have systematically violated the principles of distinction, proportionality, and precautions in attack".

"The requirement to select means and methods of warfare that avoid or at the very least minimise to every extent civilian harm appears to have been consistently violated in Israel's bombing campaign," UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk said.

Israel's permanent mission to the United Nations in Geneva characterised the analysis as "factually, legally, and methodologically flawed".

"Since the OHCHR has, at best, a partial factual picture, any attempt to reach legal conclusions is inherently flawed," it said.

Meanwhile, Israeli air strikes and clashes between troops and Hamas fighters rocked Gaza yesterday, as Israel's army warned it had readied an "offensive" against the Lebanese Hezbollah movement on the country's northern front.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

Nvidia eclipses Microsoft as most valuable company

REUTERS

Nvidia became the world's most valuable company on Tuesday, dethroning tech heavyweight Microsoft as its high-end processors play a central role in a scramble to dominate artificial intelligence technology.

Shares of the chipmaker climbed 3.5 percent to \$135.58, lifting its market capitalisation to \$3.335 trillion, just days after overtaking iPhone maker Apple to become the second most valuable company.

Microsoft's stock market value was \$3.317 trillion as its shares dipped 0.45 percent. Apple's stock slipped over 1 percent, leaving its value at \$3.286 trillion.

Nvidia's stunning surge in market value over the past year has become emblematic of a Wall Street frenzy driven by optimism about emerging AI technology.

While Nvidia's rally has lifted the S&P 500 and

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

Impactful Sakib needs to carry on

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It was an easy presumption to put Bangladesh's bowling as their main weapon ahead of the T20 World Cup, especially since the batters have provided very little to be excited about in recent times.

But, very few could have predicted Tanzim Hasan Sakib to be the Tigers' lead pacer in this tournament – he is currently occupying the joint-second spot in the top wicket-takers' list alongside New Zealand's Trent Boult, Windies' Akeal Hosein, and South Africa's Anrich Nortje with nine wickets in four games.

However, what sets Sakib apart from the rest is the impact he has had with the new ball – the 21-year-old has been the most impactful bowler in the tournament so far, with a bowling impact of 251.54

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3



South Africa opener Quinton de Kock plays a shot on the leg side during their Twenty20 World Cup Super Eight match against USA at Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in North Sound, Antigua and Barbuda yesterday. De Kock's 40-ball 74 helped the Proteas post 194 for four and eventually win the match by 18 runs.

PHOTO: AFP

Reptile fossil shines new light on early marine evolution

CNN ONLINE

Scientists have discovered a 246 million-year-old marine reptile fossil, the oldest of its kind to be found in the Southern Hemisphere, shining a new light on the early evolution of marine mammals.

The greatest mass extinction event in the fossil record – known as "The Great Dying" – occurred some 252 million years ago, wiping out some 95 percent of species on land and sea.

What followed was the emergence of new creatures that evolved from those that survived, including reptiles that evolved from living on land to living at sea.

Sauropterygians were ancient aquatic reptiles that existed for around 180 million years during the Mesozoic era, 251 to 66 million years ago.

Nothosaurs were a type of Sauropterygian that lived on Earth during the Triassic period, the first period of the age of dinosaurs, 251 million to 200 million years ago.

However, their early evolution had only been known from fossils found in the Northern Hemisphere, according to the study published in the journal Current Biology Monday.

