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Sylhet floods worsening

Five lakh more affected

DWOHA CHOWDHURY and MINTU DESHWARA

The flood situation in Sylhet has been deteriorating fast with the rivers inundating vast tracts of land and upending the lives of millions.

An additional 500,000 people were affected yesterday as large parts of Moulvibazar and Habiganj got flooded.

Hundreds of neighbourhoods in Sylhet and Sunamganj districts were inundated the night before Eid.

The number of people affected by the floods rose to 2.1 million, and 103,776 moved to 1,685 shelters.

According to Bangladesh Water Development Board, water level of the Surma, a major river in the region, fell a bit, but was still above the danger level yesterday while the Kushiara swelled fast, crossed the danger level, and then started to fall slowly.

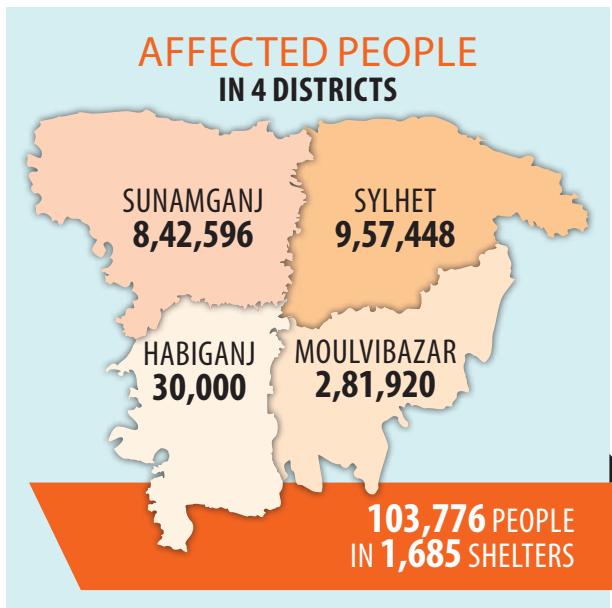
In Moulvibazar, the Manu, Dhalai and Juri rivers swelled fast and were flowing above the danger levels, while the Khowai in Habiganj and the Sari and Gowain in Sylhet were below danger levels.

Debojit Singha, additional divisional commissioner of Sylhet, said, "More areas are being inundated. Our focus is on relief efforts to ease people's sufferings."

Thousands of people in the districts were eating dry food as cooking was not an option in the flooded villages.



Houses of an Ashrayan project are almost submerged in floodwater in Islampur area of Sylhet's Companiganj upazila. A large part of the upazila was flooded over two weeks ago due to downpours and an onrush of upstream waters. The photo was taken on Wednesday afternoon. PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR



Primary students drop by over eight lakh

Govt census cites Covid-19 fallout, declining birth rate and removal of duplicate student data as reasons

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The number of students in all primary-level educational institutions has decreased by over 8.32 lakh in 2023 from the previous year, a government report reveals.

According to the Annual Primary School Census (APSC) 2023, prepared by the Department of Primary Education (DPE), the number of students at just government primary schools dropped by over 10 lakh.

On the contrary, the number of kindergarten and Ebtedayee madrasa students rose by around 2.56 lakh and 36,000 respectively, said the census, which came out this week.

Farid Ahmed, secretary of the primary

and mass education ministry, said a dip in the country's birth rate and the DPE's new software, which removed duplicate student data, were two of the main reasons behind the drop in the numbers.

He added that some students moved to Qawmi madrasas after the Covid-19 pandemic due to financial struggles - another reason for the decreased number of students at primary schools.

The APSC-2023 data shows there were 1,97,13,685 students in 1,14,630 government and non-government primary schools, kindergartens, Ebtedayee madrasas and others last year.

In 2022, there were 2,05,46,091 students in 1,14,539 primary-level educational institutions, it added.

YEAR	PRY SCHOOLS	STUDENTS
2019	1,29,258	2,01,22,337
2020	1,33,002	2,15,51,691
2021	1,18,891	2,00,90,057
2022	1,14,539	2,05,46,091
2023	1,14,630	1,97,13,685

SOURCE: DIRECTORATE OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

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PM leaves for Delhi today

on 2-day visit

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is scheduled to leave Dhaka for New Delhi today on a two-day visit aimed at advancing the bilateral relationship following the general elections in both countries this year.

During the state visit, Bangladesh and India are likely to sign about a dozen agreements, memorandums of understanding and letters of intent in the areas of economy, power,

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Dhaka, Delhi may sign rail transit deal

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Bangladesh and India are likely to sign a memorandum of understanding for using each other's railway lines to boost cross-border connectivity.

The deal is expected to be inked during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's two-day India visit starting today, Bangladesh Railway (BR) officials said.

As per the MoU, India will have access to BR tracks and Bangladesh will be able to use Indian Railways (IR) lines to operate passenger and freight trains up to Nepal and Bhutan borders, they said.

"An MoU on railway transit and transshipment is expected to be signed," BR Director General Sardar Shahadat Ali told The Daily Star yesterday.

Railways Secretary Humayun Kabir will accompany the prime minister to the signing ceremony, he said.

With the transshipment facility, Indian trains currently carry goods and passengers up to the India-Bangladesh border. From there, BR locomotives pull the coaches into Bangladesh and drop off passengers or unload goods before taking the coaches back to the border.

If India is allowed rail transit through Bangladesh under the new MoU, its trains will be operated from one part of India to another via Bangladesh.

The move comes at a time when India is set to develop an alternative railway network through

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GRAFT CLAIMS

Discussions on former DMP chief speculative

Says home boss

STAR REPORT

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal yesterday said the discussions about former Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner Asaduzzaman Mia's graft allegations appeared to be based on speculation.

"As far as I know, the discussions are speculative. No formal allegations have been brought against him yet. Regarding the claims about his illegal properties, he hasn't been summoned yet. If he's summoned, we'll understand, and he'll definitely have some explanation," UNB reported him as saying while speaking to journalists at the Secretariat.

About ex-IGP Benazir

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Rickshaws were seen neatly parked on the roadside in the capital's Tejgaon industrial area yesterday, as many rickshaw-pullers, along with other Eid holidaymakers, have not yet returned to Dhaka from their village homes. PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Israeli forces pound central Gaza camps

Deepen invasion of Rafah in south; 35 more Palestinians killed

REUTERS, Cairo

Israeli forces pounded areas in the central Gaza Strip overnight, killing three people and wounding dozens of others, according to medics, while tanks deepened their invasion into Rafah in the south, residents said yesterday.

Israeli planes struck a house in Al-Nuseirat camp, killing two people and wounding 12 others, while tanks shelled areas in Al-Maghazi and Al-Bureij camps, wounding many other people, health officials said. Nuseirat, Maghazi, and Bureij are three of Gaza's eight historic refugee camps.

In Deir al-Balah, a city packed with displaced people in the central Gaza Strip, an Israeli air strike killed one Palestinian and wounded several others yesterday, medics said.

The Israeli military said on Wednesday forces were continuing their operations across the enclave targeting Hamas and military infrastructure in what it described as "precise, intelligence-based" activities.

More than eight months into the offensive in Gaza, Israel's advance

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

- Hamas fighters battle Israeli forces with anti-tank rockets
- Israeli authorities free 33 Palestinians detained during past months
- Gaza death toll rises to 37,431

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CYBER SECURITY ACT Man sent to jail over FB post

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A man was sent to jail yesterday after being arrested under the Cyber Security Act over a Facebook post in Dinajpur's Hakimpur upazila.

The post was about the 30 percent quota for government jobs for children of freedom fighters.

Zahangir Alam, 43, a former employee of Hili Land Port, was arrested from his home in the upazila after Liakat Ali, former commander of the upazila's Muktiyoddha command, filed the CSA case with Hakimpur Police Station on Wednesday afternoon.

Dulal Hossain, officer-in-charge of the police station, confirmed that Zahangir was produced before a court, which sent him to jail.

According to the case statement, his post, made on June 17, "belittled freedom fighters and their children" with regard to the quota system for government jobs.

It sparked widespread criticism and protests on social media, prompting Liakat Ali to file the case, the statement added.



An overloaded truck on the road near Doyel Chattar on the Dhaka University campus yesterday morning. Bamboos sticking out could cause a major accident as they hide the vehicle's tail lights.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

HSC, equivalent exams deferred under Sylhet division

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to defer the upcoming Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) and equivalent examinations under the Sylhet division in light of the prevailing flood situation in the northeastern part of the country.

All exams scheduled up until July 8 have been postponed under the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Sylhet, Bangladesh Madrasah Education Board, and Bangladesh Technical Education Board, reads a press release issued by the Inter-Education Board Coordination Committee yesterday.

The exams on July 9 and subsequent exams will be held as per schedule, added the release signed by Prof Tapan Kumar Sarkar, chairman of the Inter-Education Board Coordination Committee and chairman of Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Dhaka.

The schedule for the deferred exams will be announced later, the release also added.

The HSC and equivalent exams set to begin on June 30 will proceed as planned elsewhere in the country, the press release mentioned.

In 2022, the government similarly postponed the SSC and later the HSC exams under the Sylhet division due to a worsening flood situation in the northeastern part of the country.

Traffic collisions claim two lives in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two unidentified persons lost their lives in separate road accidents in the capital's Paltan and Jatrabari areas early yesterday.

Police said the victims, both middle-aged males, were likely vagrants.

A man, believed to be in his 30s, who was sleeping near the road divider at Paltan intersection was run over by a truck around 5:30am, said Abdul Aziz, sub-inspector (SI) of Paltan Police Station.

He was taken to the emergency department at Dhaka Medical College and Hospital at 6:20am, where doctors pronounced him dead, Aziz said. "We have detained the truck driver and impounded the vehicle," he added.

In a separate incident, another man, believed to be in his 40s, was killed after being hit by an unidentified vehicle on the Jatrabari Flyover, said Sub-inspector Hiran Biswas of Jatrabari Police Station.

On information, police recovered his body around 1:30am and sent it to the DMCH morgue.

Necessary legal steps are being taken regarding the accident, he added.

EXTREME HEAT Hajj death toll tops 1,000

AFP, Riyadh

The death toll from this year's hajj has exceeded 1,000, an AFP tally said yesterday, more than half of them unregistered worshippers who performed the pilgrimage in extreme heat in Saudi Arabia.

The new deaths reported yesterday included 58 from Egypt, according to an Arab diplomat who provided a breakdown showing that of 658 Egyptians who passed away, 630 were unregistered pilgrims.

All told, around 10 countries have reported 1,081 deaths during the annual pilgrimage, one of the five pillars of Islam.

The figures have come via official statements or from diplomats working on their countries' responses.

The hajj, whose timing is determined by the lunar Islamic calendar, fell again this year during the Saudi summer.

The national meteorological centre reported a high of 51.8 degrees Celsius (125 Fahrenheit) this week at the Grand Mosque in Makkah.

According to a Saudi study published last month, temperatures in the area are rising 0.4 degrees Celsius each decade.

Each year tens of thousands of pilgrims attempt to perform the hajj through irregular channels as they cannot afford the often costly official permits.

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Russia strikes Ukraine energy sites in 'mass' attack

4 killed; Romania to send Patriot missile system to Kyiv

AFP, Kyiv

Russian attacks overnight damaged a Ukrainian power plant and several energy facilities, Kyiv said yesterday, the latest in a series of bombardments that have pushed its power grid to the brink.

In the eastern Donetsk region, meanwhile, Russian cluster munitions and glide bombs killed four civilians and wounded four more in separate attacks, the regional governor said.

Targeted missile and drone attacks over recent months have crippled Ukraine's electricity generation capacity, and forced Kyiv to impose blackouts and import supplies from European Union states.

"The enemy attacked a number of energy infrastructure facilities," the energy ministry said, adding that the Russian projectiles targeted sites in four regions, including near Kyiv.

The largest private energy company in Ukraine, DTEK, said the attacks caused "serious damage" at one of its plants, without disclosing its location.

"This is already the seventh mass attack on the company's thermal power plant in the last three months," the company said.

Meanwhile, Nato member Romania announced yesterday that it would send a Patriot missile system to Ukraine, which Kyiv has requested to help its fight against Russia's invasion.

Ukraine's DTEK's CEO Maxim Timchenko echoed the calls for more military aid, and said the power plant struck early yesterday had already been damaged in a previous attack.

"We urgently need to close our skies or Ukraine faces a serious crisis this winter. My plea to allies is to help us defend our energy system and rebuild in time," he said.

Cruise ship rescues 68 migrants off Spain's Canaries

AFP, Barcelona

A cruise ship rescued 68 migrants from a fishing boat spotted adrift south of Spain's Canary Islands with five bodies on board, Spanish authorities and the ship's operator said yesterday.

Rescuers were alerted on Wednesday afternoon to the vessel drifting in the Atlantic some 800 kilometres (500 miles) south of the island of Tenerife.

The cruise ship, the Insignia, was sailing in the area and was called on to head to the boat's location to pick up the survivors, Spain's maritime rescue service said in a statement.

It took on board 68 sub-Saharan African migrants, including three women and three minors, and recovered three bodies from the fishing boat. However, "bad weather" prevented it from collecting the other two bodies, the statement said.

Discussions on former DMP chief speculative

FROM PAGE 1

Ahmed, he said, "The value of land has increased significantly. Benazir Ahmed was on a mission for a long time. He might have an explanation. If he doesn't, then questions of corruption will arise."

Benazir has recently come under the spotlight due to reports of his unusually large amounts of property, including land, houses, and apartments, which are beyond his known sources of income.

Former DMP commissioner Asaduzzaman Mia has now come into discussion regarding his assets following a newspaper report published the day before Eid-ul-Azha.

It said the former senior police official's wife owns a house and two apartments in Dhaka, while his son owns a house and his daughter an apartment.

Additionally, his wife and children have 67 decimals of land in Dhaka, Gazipur, and Narayanganj. His family members collectively own another 166 decimals of land in these three districts, according to the report.

In response, Asaduzzaman Mia claimed in various interviews said all his assets were acquired through legal means and emphasised that his children are capable of acquiring the properties with their own lawful earnings.

Dhaka, Delhi may sign rail transit deal

FROM PAGE 1

Bangladesh to connect its Northeastern states with the rest of the country.

India plans to reduce reliance on the existing rail route through the Siliguri Corridor, commonly known as "Chicken's Neck", according to the Times of India.

The 22-km wide strip, hemmed in by Nepal to the north and Bangladesh on its south, connects the seven northeast Indian states to the rest of the country.

According to a report run by Times of India online on June 16, the planned project will feature 14 new routes connecting Bangladesh, spanning 861km, and alternative routes to the Northeast, bringing the total length of sanctioned tracks to 1,275.5km.

The initiative will involve gauge conversion of existing tracks and construction of new ones in Bangladesh, reads the report.

In November 2010, India and Bangladesh for the first time signed a transit agreement for waterways.

The two neighbours in 2015 inked a protocol allowing India to use four river routes via Bangladesh. The routes would link Kolkata and Murshidabad to Assam, Tripura and Meghalaya.

RAIL TRANSIT

Before the partition of India in 1947, there was seamless railway communication between different regions of India and Bangladesh

through eight interchanges. Five of them -- Benapole-Petrapole, Darshana-Gede, Rohanpur-Singabadh, Biral-Radhikarpur and Chilahati-Haldibari -- have been revived in recent years.

During a high-level meeting with a BR delegation in April 2022, an Indian delegation discussed rail transit issues. Both sides agreed to work out the finer details and obtain necessary approvals from the authorities concerned, show documents.

Besides, the Indian authorities placed the transit proposal during then Bangladesh railways minister Nurul Islam Sujan's meeting with his Indian counterpart in New Delhi in June that year and the Bangladesh side agreed to examine the proposal.

Last year, Indian Railways put forward a proposal to the BR for carrying out trial runs of a freight train from West Bengal's Gede to Haldibari via Bangladesh.

The proposed route is Gede (West Bengal)-Darshana-Ishwardi-Abdulpur-Parbatipur-Chilahati-Haldibari (West Bengal).

Following an inter-ministerial meeting in May last year, BR sent a letter to Indian Railways seeking a comprehensive proposal with clarification. Indian Railways clarified saying it wants transit facility.

This year, IR has once again sent the proposal, through the Indian High Commission in Dhaka, for trial

runs of empty freight trains. India this time proposed extending the route up to Dalgaoon, a station near Bhutan border, from Haldibari of West Bengal.

WHAT BR SAYS

BR DG Shahadat said apart from Dalgaoon, Bangladesh have sought access up to Hasimara railway station at Bhutan border.

This would enable BR to transport goods and passengers to and from Bhutan, he said.

At present, Bangladesh Railway can use Indian rail transit routes to Nepal only for transporting goods. Under the MoU, BR seeks to operate both freight and passenger trains, a BR official said seeking anonymity.

Replying to a question, Shahadat said a committee will be formed to finalise the modalities, routes, charges and other issues related to the railway transit.

"Making the railway transit routes operational will take more time."

He said both BR and the Bangladesh government would be benefited from the transit.

Asked whether BR infrastructures would be able to accommodate additional trains from India once the transit facility would be available, he said there would be no big problem.

There may be some problems regarding passenger trains as the Abdulpur-Parbatipur track is a single line. "However, the transit will be mainly for freight trains."

PM leaves for Delhi today on 2-day visit

FROM PAGE 1

port, railway, and digital technology.

Hasina and her Indian counterpart Narendra Modi may also discuss the key issues on the Teesta management project, renewal of the Ganges water sharing treaty, trade and tariff, Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), Myanmar conflict and regional and sub-regional cooperation.

"This visit will give a vision for the bilateral relationship in the years ahead as well as how the two countries can work together amid new global geopolitical shift," said a foreign ministry official informed with the proceedings.

This will be Hasina's second trip to the Indian capital in less than 15 days. She attended Modi's swearing in ceremony on June 9.

Hasina's visit, which is the first by any foreign head of government to India after the formation of the new

government, takes place before her scheduled trip to Beijing on July 9-12.

Hasan Mahmud, foreign minister; Salman F Rahman, prime minister's adviser on private industry and investment; Ahsanul Islam Titu, the state minister for commerce; Zunaid Ahmed Palak, the state minister for posts, telecommunications and information technology; Abdur Rouf Talukder, Bangladesh Bank governor; Lt Gen Mizanur Rahman Shameem; Armed Forces Division principal staff officer; secretaries of Power Division, Economic Relations Division and railway ministry will accompany Hasina.

"The presence of the ministers and officials indicates the type of deals that might be signed during the visit," said a diplomatic source in New Delhi.

Hasina will depart Dhaka for New Delhi on a chartered flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines at 2:00pm and reach the Indian capital at 4:00pm.

S Jaishankar, India's minister of

external affairs, will call on Hasina at her place of residence in the evening.

On Saturday morning, Modi will host a reception at the Rashtrapati Bhavan for Hasina. After that, she will go to Raj Ghat to pay tribute to the father of the Indian Nation Mahatma Gandhi by placing a wreath at his Samadhi.

Later, Hasina will hold a one-to-one meeting with Modi followed by delegation-level talks at the Hyderabad House.

The two leaders will witness the signing of the MoU and agreements and then deliver press statements.

Hasina will then attend a banquet luncheon hosted by Modi.

In the afternoon, she will call on Indian President Droupadi Murmu at the Rashtrapati Bhavan and Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar at his Secretariat.

She will depart New Delhi for Dhaka at 6:00pm. The premier is scheduled to arrive in Dhaka at 9:00pm tomorrow.

Primary students

FROM PAGE 1

The census further said that over the years, Bangladesh has experienced a gradual decline in its population growth rate. In the 2011 census the population growth rate was at 1.46 percent, which dropped to 1.22 in 2022.

With the decline in population growth, the enrollment of students in primary schools began slowing down, it added.

The DPE's software -- Integrated Primary Education Management Information -- is a data storage and monitoring process that manages school management, teacher management, student management, annual census of primary schools, stipend management and annual book distribution activities.

It has significantly improved the cross-checking of multiple data, reducing the possibility of wrong or duplicate data entry of students.

"Due to this, the total number of enrollments declined in the APSC-2023 compared to APSC-2022," the census stated.

According to DPE sources, government primary schools saw a huge drop in the number of students in 2023, when there were 1,09,85,815 students in 65,567 government primary schools. The year before, there were 1,19,95,222 students in 65,565 of them.

Israeli forces

FROM PAGE 1

is now focused on the two last areas its forces had yet to storm: Rafah on Gaza's southern edge and the area surrounding Deir al-Balah in the centre. The operations have forced more than a million people to flee since May, the vast majority already displaced from other parts of the enclave.

In Rafah, near the border with Egypt, Israeli tanks stationed deep in the western and central areas of the city stepped up bombardment, forcing more families living in the far coastal areas to flee northward. Some residents said the pace of the raid has been accelerated in the past two days.

Rafah housed over half of Gaza's 2.3 million people until May 7 when Israeli forces began the ground offensive into the city. Fewer than 100,000 are now believed to be left behind.

The health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said yesterday that at least 37,431 people have been killed in the territory during more than eight months of offensive. The toll includes at least 35 deaths in the past 24 hours,

On the other hand, the number of students shot up to 48,73,375 in 26,461 kindergartens in 2023, which was 46,08,679 in 26,478 kindergartens in 2022.

KM Enamul Hoque, advocacy adviser of Adult Education and Lifelong Learning in the Asia South Pacific, said the number of students in mainstream primary schools dropped as many guardians opted for Qawmi madrasas and English medium schools.

"Many families, especially from the lower socio-economic groups, suffered financial hardships due to the Covid-19 pandemic and so they shifted their children to Qawmi madrasas as the education expenses there are significantly lower."

DPE officials said that as Qawmi madrasas are not under any government authority regulation, they do not have much information in this regard.

Meanwhile, though the number of primary level institutions decreased in 2021 and 2022 owing to the Covid-19 fallout, it saw a slight rise again in 2023.

Last year, there were 1,14,630 government primary schools, kindergartens, NGO-run schools, Ebtedayee madrasas and other private schools in the country.

The number was 1,33,002 in 2020; 1,18,891 in 2021; and 1,14,539 in 2022.

a ministry statement said.

There has been no sign of let-up in the fighting as efforts by international mediators, backed by the United States, have failed to persuade Israel and Hamas to agree to a ceasefire.

The armed wings of Hamas and Islamic Jihad said fighters battled Israeli forces with anti-tank rockets and mortar bombs, and have in some areas detonated pre-planted explosive devices against army units.

Yesterday, Israeli authorities freed 33 Palestinians who had been detained during the past months by Israeli forces in different areas of the enclave. The freed detainees were admitted into Al-Aqsa Hospital in Deir Al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip after they complained of torture and mistreatment by Israeli jailers.

Israel denies mistreatment of Palestinian detainees. Palestinian and international human rights groups have criticised what they say is Israel's ill-treatment of Gaza detainees and repeatedly demanded it disclose their whereabouts and information about their well-being.

Monsoon triggers landslide threat

The risk of landslides looms large for thousands living on foothills in Sylhet, Cox's Bazar and Chattogram amid the ongoing monsoon rain. Unabated hill razing has heightened the danger. Experts have warned that the situation resembles a ticking time bomb and anything can happen at any time if people living on foothills are not evacuated immediately.

6,558 families live illegally on Ctg hills

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

At least 6,558 families are still living on 26 hills in various parts of Chattogram city, violating the law and endangering the hills, according to the Hill Management Committee of Chattogram.

The committee revealed the data at its 28th meeting at the Circuit House in the port city yesterday.

At the meeting, Tofayel Islam, convener of the committee and divisional commissioner of Chattogram, asked the authorities concerned, including Power Development Board, to disconnect utility services within the next 15 days.

Over 20,000 people currently reside on these hills, which are being subjected to indiscriminate hill razing, said Abul Basar Mohammad Fakhruzzaman, deputy



DEATHS IN ROHINGYA CAMP

Safety fences not repaired in two years

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Unmaintained safety fences led to loss of lives from landslides in Rohingya camps on Wednesday, said Refugee, Relief, and Repatriation Commissioner Mohammad Mizanur Rahman yesterday.

Due to a fund crisis, the agencies concerned did not repair the safety fences and sandbags in place to protect the camps from landslides for two years, he added.

Ten people -- including eight Rohingyas -- were killed in Camp 1 West, Camp 8, Camp 9, and Camp 14 in Ukhiya of Cox's Bazar due to the landslides caused by torrential rain on Wednesday.



commissioner of Chattogram.

According to documents revealed in the meeting, most of the families live on seven hills owned by Bangladesh Railway.

When asked, Stujan Chowdhury, estate officer (east) of BR, claimed that they have removed over 1,700 illegal structures from these hills in the past two years, but no action has been able to deter grabbers, as people just return to the hills following evacuation drives.

Fakhruzzaman claimed that they evacuated grabbers from three state-owned hills recently. "We fenced these hills to protect them from grabbers," he added.

At the meeting, participants demanded that the administration make life imprisonment the sentence for hill-cutting.

CAMPAIGN ONGOING TO EVACUATE HILL RESIDENTS TO SAFETY

Meanwhile, the Chattogram district administration has started a publicity campaign in different hills to raise awareness among people about hillslides during the monsoon. A total of six teams, led by executive magistrates, have been campaigning through loudspeakers and asking people living on risky hill slopes to evacuate their homes and come to the shelter centres.

Campaigns were conducted in the hills near Akbar Shah Jheel areas, Bijaynagar Hill, Shantinagar Hill, Tankir Pahar, Paharika, Ambagan, Debarpar, and Railway Hill areas in the city.

Tanvir al-Nasif, additional deputy commissioner (land acquisition) of Chattogram District Administration, said according to the forecast, heavy showers will continue for the next two to three days, so we have taken preparations to evacuate the people living on risky hill slopes."

The schools, colleges, and madrasa buildings are ready to be used as shelter centres in the respective areas.

Yusuf Hasan, executive magistrate of AC Land (Chandgaon circle), said the district administration has allocated dry food for the people taking shelter there.

Dwelling in death trap

Thousands living in landslide fear in Moulvibazar, Habiganj

MINITU DESHWARA

Suleman Ali, a resident of Dahpara village in Juri upazila, Moulvibazar, lives in fear after parts of his house were damaged by a recent landslide from a nearby hill.

"We are living in constant fear amid the looming threat of landslides. The persistent rainfall and flooding are exacerbating the situation further. We are desperately seeking a way out of this situation," he said.

Jashim Uddin, 35, from Saheb Tila village in Rajnagar upazila, echoed Suleman's concerns. Like them, thousands of residents in the hilly areas of Moulvibazar and Habiganj districts fear landslides amid the inclement weather.

The Met office issued a landslide warning for the hilly areas of Chattogram and Sylhet.

Rafiq Uddin, chairman of North

Shahbazpur Union Parishad in Barlekha upazila, advised people to avoid foothill areas for safety.

On June 18, a hillock collapsed on Nirala Punjee road in Sreemangal upazila, Moulvibazar, following

Low-lying areas are submerged, and continuous downpours worsen the flood situation and raise the threat of landslides."

He called for strict enforcement of laws and effective local authority



We are living in constant fear amid the looming threat of landslides. The persistent rainfall and flooding are exacerbating the situation further. We are desperately seeking a way out of this situation.

a daylong downpour and onrush of hilly torrents, halting vehicular movement. Earlier, three of a family died in a landslide in Majortila Chamelibag of Sylhet on June 10.

Besides, a female tea worker named Gita Kahar, 30, died and three others were injured in a landslide in Kamalganj on May 31.

Tofazzal Sohel, coordinator of Habiganj Sankhubdo Andolon, said hilly soil, saturated with rainwater, is turning into loose mud, increasing the risk of sudden collapses.

Abdul Karim Kim, general secretary of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon's Sylhet chapter, said, "This is the fourth round of flooding in Sylhet within 20 days.

vigilance to curb hill razing.

Shah Shaheda Akhter, coordinator of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association in Sylhet, echoed him.

Badrul Huda, assistant director of the Department of Environment in Sylhet, said, "Over 30 percent of Sylhet's hills have been razed in the last two and a half decades. Due to recent heavy showers and indiscriminate hill cutting, landslides may occur at any time."

Najratun Naem, UNO of Barlekha upazila, said the administration has been alerting residents living on foothills to move to safety as incessant rain increases the likelihood of landslides.



A total of 233 makeshift shelters were completely damaged while 702 shelters were partly damaged in those incidents. More than 1,300 Rohingyas were evacuated, while a total of 1,500 people are at risk of landslides, said Mizanur Rahman.

The RRRRC feared that more such incidents would happen in the future if protection measures are not repaired regularly.

A total of 543 landslides occurred in the camp on Wednesday due to the heavy rain, according to the RRRRC office.

A total of 233 makeshift shelters were completely damaged while 702 shelters were partly damaged in those incidents. More than 1,300 Rohingyas were evacuated, while a total of 1,500 people are at risk of landslides, said the RRRRC.

Most of the Rohingyas living under landslide risk were sent back to their houses since there was no rain yesterday, according to some of them. "We have no place to relocate the 1,500 Rohingyas living under threat, providing them new shelters. They will be transferred to safer places when the risk of landslides rises," said Mizanur Rahman.

AL gears up for grand 75th founding anniv

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League has planned a series of events, including rallies, processions, discussions, and food distribution across the country in the lead up to its 75th founding anniversary on June 23.

Special programmes like seminars, art exhibitions, discussions, and documentary screenings are also planned. Cultural programmes at Rabindra Sarobar, a boat race, and a cycle rally at Hatirjheel are also scheduled.

The theme of this year's celebration is "Green World".

Various banners, festoons, placards, and arches will be displayed across Dhaka. To save power, the party will not illuminate streets or infrastructure.

The anniversary celebrations will kick off today with a procession that will start from the Institution of Engineers Bangladesh and end at Dhanmondi 32.

On June 23, Prime Minister and party President Sheikh Hasina will officially inaugurate the anniversary programme in front of Bangabandhu Bhaban after returning from New Delhi on June 22.

A discussion meeting and cultural

event will be held at Suhrawardy Udyan on the same day, with Hasina addressing as the chief guest.

A boat-shaped stage has been constructed at Suhrawardy Udyan for the event.

Later, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy will organise a light and sound show, followed by a cultural programme at the Rose Garden.

Political parties from neighbouring countries, development partners, and supporters of the Liberation War have been invited to the event, according to the Awami League sources.

The AL has also invited the BNP and other opposition parties to the celebrations.

Besides, a nationwide tree plantation campaign, "Sabuj Dharithri", will also be inaugurated on June 23.

AL Joint General Secretary AFM Bahauddin Nashim said, "This year's celebration will highlight aspects of Awami League's long history, tradition, movement, birth of Bangladesh, independence, Liberation War, and struggle."



Vendors sit idle in front of closed shops at AGB colony in Motijheel. With the capital still not returning to its usual state due to many leaving the city on Eid vacation, shops and markets are seeing fewer customers. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Siam bought meat grinder to dispose of body: India CID

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

A meat grinder, suspected to have been used to dispose of the body of murdered Awami League MP Anwarul Azim, was purchased by the assailants from a shop in Kolkata's New Market, West Bengal CID sources have claimed.

Investigators said Siam Hossain, one of the suspects, bought the grinder for Rs 2,200. Siam is in the custody of West Bengal CID after being brought from Nepal following his arrest in the Himalayan country.

CID sources claimed since the entire lump of flesh could not be minced with the grinder, small pieces were flushed into the septic tank of the New Town apartment where the MP was suspected to be killed.

CID recovered flesh from the septic tank. The forensic test has established that the flesh was that of a man.

CID is trying to ascertain the exact places from where the murder weapons

were procured so that they can collect corresponding CCTV footage and build a case using electronic evidence in the court.

The investigators have recovered the entire conversation between the lawmaker and Celesty Rahman, who is suspected of having lured him to the New Town flat, and found out that it was Siam who handled the MP's WhatsApp messages after his murder.

Sources said West Bengal CID has decided to request Dhaka Metropolitan Police to track down another woman who had reportedly accompanied Azim on his visit to Kolkata in either January or March this year. The questioning of this woman, who was found to be sharing messages with Celesty, may help reveal the extent of the criminal conspiracy behind the murder, claimed the sources.

Lawmaker Azim went to Kolkata on May 12. Nine days later, India and Bangladesh police said he was murdered at a Kolkata flat.



At the break of dawn, these workers start the process of rolling jutes manually. After a day's hard work, the labourers make Tk 700. The photo was taken in Barishal's Babuganj yesterday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

CLIMATE ADAPTATION Loans to raise debt distress

Says CEO of Global Center on Adaptation

PORIMOL PALMA

It is an injustice when countries like Bangladesh that are not responsible for the climate crisis have to take loans for adaptation programmes, said Prof Patrick Verkooijen, CEO of Global Center on Adaptation (GCA).

"The countries like Bangladesh, Kenya and Senegal of the Global South do not cause climate crises. They don't want loans for climate adaptation as it increases their debt distress. This is a profound climate injustice in the system," he told a selected group of journalists at a Dhaka hotel on Monday during his three-day visit to Bangladesh.

He also met Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Gono Bhaban on Wednesday.

Previously, Verkooijen helped shape the climate agenda of the World Bank Group in his role as the special representative on climate change.

The countries like Bangladesh, Kenya and Senegal of the Global South do not cause climate crisis. They don't want loan for climate adaptation as it increases their debt distress. This is a profound climate injustice in the system.

PROF PATRICK VERKOOIJEN

Verkooijen said Bangladesh will be graduating out of LDC by 2026, which is great, but there are also risks that the development partners may decrease financial support for adaptation.

"So, what we at the GCA can do is to ensure that the developed countries provide adaptation funds despite the LDC graduation. A country does not want a loan for climate adaptation," he said.

At the moment, Bangladesh is the only country that is yearly investing \$1.2 billion of the taxpayers' money in adaptation whereas the need is \$8.5 billion.

The GCA head said as per the Paris Agreement on climate, the world committed to mobilise \$100 billion for the Global South,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

GHOST LOANS!

Krishi Bank issues loans in name of 4 persons who died before 1971

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

Zainal Howlader, a resident of Kalikapur village under Patuakhali's Bauphal upazila, died in 1969.

In 2014, 45 years after his death, an agricultural loan of Tk 50,000 was issued to his name with Bangladesh Krishi Bank. Recently, the bank's Keshabpur branch sent a notice to Zainal's family asking for repayment of that loan, leaving the family members shocked.

"I recently received a notice from Krishi Bank saying that my father had taken a loan of Tk 50,000 in 2014 from the bank. But my father died in 1969, how could he take the loan in 2014? I urge the government to conduct a fair investigation and take action over this matter," said Zainal's son Abul Bashar, 64, a retired policeman.

This is not a standalone incident. The bank's Keshabpur branch recently issued notices regarding repayment of loans taken in 2014 to 14 persons. Of them, four passed away even before independence.

According to the bank's notices, three sons of Ketab Uddin Howlader of the village -- Javed Ali, Hazrat Ali and Raham Ali -- took agriculture-related loans from that branch in 2014.

Among them, two loans of Tk 25,000 and Tk 30,000 were in the name of Javed Ali, and one each of Tk 45,000 and Tk 50,000 in Hazrat Ali and Raham Ali's names respectively, according to documents.

However, Javed Ali passed away in 1960, Hazrat Ali in 1963 and Raham Ali in 1966, said family members.

"The notices from the bank were in the name of my grandfather and his brothers. But all of them died during the Pakistan period. We are shocked!" said Bajlu Howlader, grandson of Javed Ali.

Abul Mridha, 75, of the village, said, "Javed, Hazrat and Raham Ali died long before independence. I was surprised to hear about loans issued to their names in 2014. The issue should be investigated properly to find out the reasons behind this fraudulence."

Anwar Hossain, chairman of Suryamoni

Union Parishad, raised questions about how the deceased could have taken loans.

He demanded exemplary punishment for those involved.

According to sources at the bank, a field officer checks the borrower and reviews his documents before approving any loan as per rules.

If everything goes well, he recommends the loan to the branch manager, who then verifies and approves the loan in presence of the borrower taking his signature or fingerprint in

I recently received a notice from Krishi Bank saying that my father had taken a loan of Tk 50,000 in 2014 from the bank. But my father died in 1969, how could he take the loan in 2014?

ABUL BASHAR
A retired policeman

this regard.

Contacted, Md Taif Hossain, current manager of Keshabpur branch of the Krishi Bank, said he joined the branch on February 20 this year and came to know of the matter after some of the victims' families informed them of this.

"Upon receiving the complaints, we found that the loans were approved in 2014. The then field officer, Md Shafiqur Rahman, has been summoned in this regard," he said.

However, Noor Hossain, the then branch manager, is unavailable, he added.

Noor Hossain is currently staying abroad and could not be reached for comments despite repeated attempts.

Mohammad Shafiqur Rahman, who retired in 2019, claimed that he did not recommend giving loans to any person using the addresses of the deceased men.

Contacted, Ashfaqur Rahman, chief regional manager of Krishi Bank, said they are looking into the matter seriously.

"Necessary action will be taken after a thorough investigation," he told this correspondent.

TIPU MURDER

Trial begins with deposition of complainant

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The trial of the case filed over the murder of Awami League leader Jahidul Islam Tipu and college student Samia Afran Jamal Prity began at a Dhaka court with deposition of the complainant yesterday.

Judge Muhammad Ali Hussain of the Special Judge Court 3 of Dhaka recorded the statement of Farhana Islam Dolly, wife of Tipu and also complainant of the case.

During the deposition, the complainant sought justice for her husband.

After that, defence for accused Kamruzzaman Bablu, also an AL leader, cross-examined the witness, Farhana.

As the defence could not complete cross-examining the witness, the court set July 18 for the next hearing.

The complainant narrated what she had heard

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Upazila chairman sent to jail over domestic violence

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

A Narayanganj court yesterday sent an upazila chairman to jail in a case filed by his second wife over domestic violence.

It passed the order after rejecting the bail petition of Maksud Hossain, Bandar upazila chairman, said Public Prosecutor Rakibuddin Ahmed.

Maksud appeared in court as his eight-week anticipatory bail expired, he said.


On April 23, his second wife Sultana Begum filed a petition with a tribunal, alleging that her husband demanded dowry and tortured her.

After hearing the petition, the court ordered Bandar police to investigate the matter after recording the case. Later, the case was recorded with the police station.



Abdur Rashid, 45, risks his life cutting a 60 feet high tree branch without safety gear in Moddho Karpur of Barishal. He works from dawn till dusk and makes around Tk 800-1,000 daily. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

বাংলাদেশ কৃষি গবেষণা ইনস্টিটিউট		Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute		কৃষি সমৃদ্ধি		
সংগ্রহ ও ভান্ডার শাখা		গাজীপুর-১৭০১।		Email: dd.procure@bari.gov.bd Younusali.hari@gmail.com Phone: 50350,49270140		
Memo No. 12.21.0000.007.03.086.24.5466			Date: 13 June 2024			
e-GP: Tender Notice No. 39 (2023-2024)						
e-Tender is invited in the e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of the following goods. Details are given below:						
Sl No.	Package No.	Tender ID & Ref No.	Description of goods	Tender documents last selling (date & time)	Tender closing date & time	Tender opening date & time
01.	PN-GD-01	998604 & IRN: 086	Research Materials (Office Equipment) 06 (Six) Items.	27.06.2024 14:30	27.06.2024 15:30	27.06.2024 15:30
The interested persons/firm may visit the website www.eprocure.gov.bd to get the details of the tender. This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copy will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).						
Project Name: Program on Agricultural and Rural Transformation for Nutrition Entrepreneurship and Resilience in Bangladesh (BARI Component) Revenue Budget.						
 Md. Younus Ali (BARI-0663) Deputy Director (In-Charge) On behalf of Director General						
GD- 1016						



'Golam Mamun': A compelling spin-off of crime, betrayal, and societal reflections

SAEED KHAN SHAGOR

The web-series *Golam Mamun* has recently premiered on the OTT platform Hoichoi. Despite being a spin-off, the series is not a typical character-driven story. In Ayan Chakrabarty's plot, police officer Golam Mamun is accused of murdering a delinquent named Nasir. Concurrently, Mamun's colleague Sakib and Sakib's wife, journalist Tania, are murdered, with all fingers pointing at Mamun. While on duty, Mamun is presented in court but escapes, becoming a fugitive who investigates the connections between these murders. He eventually discovers a link to his brother-in-law's murder, another police officer.

In his quest to uncover the mysteries, Mamun faces betrayal, distrust, and the disguised faces of those around him. Can he rise above these challenges, or will his astute colleague, officer Robin, catch him? Are Robin and Mamun rivals or allies? The series answers these questions.

The screenplay, written jointly by Shihab Shaheen and Mezbah Uddin Shumon, opens with a tragic scene: a little girl narrates her deceased mother's condition over a phone call, setting a gloomy tone. The series interweaves numerous events, maintaining a cohesive pattern without becoming irrelevant. Shaheen aimed to present this story on a wide scale, introducing peripheral issues through brief dialogues. Some parts were effective, but not all. For instance, the attempt to address national issues like power outages through dialogues was commendable, but the absence of a generator in such a flat seemed unrealistic.

The attempt to introduce the narrative of domestic violence in the marital relationship of Mamun's brother-in-law and sister was praiseworthy. Shaheen avoided the common trope of unnecessary smoking and drinking to make the characters relevant to violence,

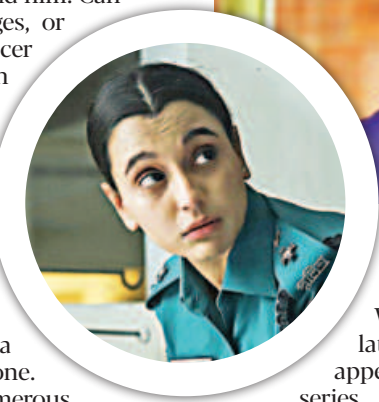
instead telling a different story.

Ziaul Faruq Apurba reprises his role from *Baker Moddhye Agun* and portrays the character Golam Mamun in this spin-off. He maintains his signature style, delivering a performance free from overacting, and shines in action scenes—a genre his fans haven't seen him tackle before. This fresh portrayal is a delightful surprise for his die-hard fans. However, outside the action and thrilling moments, Apurba appears somewhat subdued.

adds an attractive touch.

Nazmus Sakib portrays tourist police officer Milon. Though Sakib acts regularly, he seldom gets ample screen space. In this series, he has that space, and the role of Milon has the potential to add a new dimension to the story, enhancing its excellence. However, he needs to pay more attention to clichéd dialogue delivery and forced comedy.

Masum Basher delivers an impeccable performance as the chief. Rashed Mamun Apu and Sabrin Azad also make strong



Intiaz Barshon plays the role of police officer Robin. With the addition of this latest series, Barshon has now appeared in three consecutive series, including *Sharey Showlo*, and *Kaalpurush*, as a cop—each time portraying a distinct character with different roles, appearances, and nuances. His versatility leaves no room for doubt. In *Golam Mamun*, he matches Apurba's performance, creating a compelling antagonist whose ruthlessness contrasts sharply with the protagonist Mamun, garnering audiences' sympathy for Mamun.

Sabila Nur plays police officer Rahi, an intriguing role in this series. She seamlessly transitions from a temperamental officer to a soft-spoken assistant, and then to an unknown identity at critical moments, showcasing her professionalism. Her urban Bengali accent

appearances. However, Sharlin Farzana fails to make a significant breakthrough after a long hiatus.

Even though *Golam Mamun* is a spin-off series, Shihab Shaheen uses it to reflect our current socio-political realities through fiction and brief dialogues, highlighting numerous inconsistencies in our surroundings. However, we should question his portrayal of everything under an invisible shadow, or 'h ukumat'. This 'invisible' aspect implants a spectral reality in our minds, which eventually seems insurmountable. The ruling apparatus takes full advantage of this, becoming more active in masking their failures.

Storytelling plays a significant role in creating such narratives, leading to a gradual decline in the audience's tendency to question authority. This decline is certainly not beneficial for any governance system or the state itself.

Warfaze's Tipu named official artiste for Zildjian drum brand



Sheikh Monirul Alam Tipu, co-founder and band leader of Warfaze, has been named an official artiste for the drum brand Zildjian, marking a significant recognition of Bangladesh's music scene.

Tipu, born on July 15, 1970, is celebrated not only as a drummer but also as a rhythm composer, lyricist, and music producer.

Tipu's endorsement by Zildjian marks a career milestone, showcasing his talent and global influence. Known for his distinctive setup with Zildjian cymbals, including the 14" A Custom Hi-Hats, 16" A Custom Medium Crash, and 22" K Series Heavy Ride, his preference for quality resonates with musicians worldwide.

Raihan Rafi announces 'Toofan' sequel with original cast

The release of *Toofan* during Eid has captivated audiences across Bangladesh, with theatres experiencing overwhelming responses. In a thrilling development, director Raihan Rafi has



announced a sequel is in the works, following the film's dramatic cliffhanger ending.

Starring Shakib Khan, *Toofan* carried high expectations even before its release and has not disappointed. Since premiering this Eid, the film has already broken records.

Toofan 2 began before the first film's release, but Rafi waited for audience reactions. "The film ends in a way that makes a sequel essential," he said. The script is ready, with the main cast returning and potential new additions.

NEWS

Super 8 brings

FROM PAGE 12
defending 119 against Pakistan and South Africa defending 115 against Nepal and 113 against Bangladesh respectively.

The lowest successful defense, however, belongs to the Tigers, who bundled out Nepal for 85 after posting just 106 in St Vincent.

Bowlers' iron grip on batters was slipping as the first round was coming to a close. Two of the three 200-plus totals in the tournament so far came in the final two days of the first round—West Indies posting 218-5 against Afghanistan and Sri Lanka making 201-6 against the Netherlands.

This trend of higher scores continued in the first two matches of the Super Eight as well. In Group 2, South Africa posted 194-4 against the USA, who in reply made 176-6 in Antigua where Bangladesh are scheduled to play against Australia and India in the Super Eight.

On Thursday, hosts West Indies were blown out of the water by defending champions England despite posting a commendable 180-4 as Jos Buttler's side chased that down in just 17.3 overs in St Lucia.

Scores north of 170 being scored and chased down is signaling a change of tide in the tournament, which could very well add to the challenges of Bangladesh in the Super Eight.

The Tigers begin their Super Eight journey today against Australia, with the match starting at 6:30 am Bangladesh time.

The Tigers have heavily banked on their bowlers so far in the tournament, who have been making up for the shoddy performances from the batters.

However, the Tigers' bowling attack still hasn't been tested on a flat surface, and containing the belligerent Aussie batting line-up on a flat surface would be a huge challenge.

Less than 48 hours after the Australia match, the Najmul Hossain Shanto-led side will face India at the same venue.

The Tigers would be hoping for a return to first round's playing conditions in Antigua for the next few days, otherwise, they might risk seeing their misfiring batting get exposed by two superior teams in quick succession.

Elderly couple murdered

FROM PAGE 12
Bloody footprints were spotted up to the fourth floor, police said.

As the underground water tank at Shafiqur's house started overflowing, neighbours went to notify someone at the building.

When a tenant from the third floor came down to switch off the water pump, he found Shafiqur lying in a pool of blood on one side of the garage. She called the neighbours for help and then dialed 999 to report the incident.

The police found the key to the main gate of the building with Shafiqur. The building can however be accessed by jumping over the back boundary wall.

Emon said the killers ransacked the almirahs, but no valuables were missing. His laptop, which was inside

Putin seeks security

FROM PAGE 12
should not be given a stage on which to defend Russia's war in Ukraine.

Russia and Vietnam signed agreements on issues including energy, underlining Moscow's pivot to Asia after the West imposed sanctions on Moscow over the conflict in Ukraine.

"We are firmly committed to deepening the comprehensive strategic partnership with Vietnam, which remains among the priorities of Russia's foreign policy," Putin was quoted as saying by Russian media.

He was quoted by Russia's TASS news agency as saying the two countries shared an interest in "developing a reliable security architecture" in the region based on not using force and peacefully settling disputes with no room for "closed military-political blocs".

The II pacts signed in Hanoi were not on the same level as the landmark mutual defence agreement in North Korea.

But Putin's warm welcome was a public relations achievement for the Russian leader, who has an outstanding International Criminal Court arrest warrant against him over alleged war crimes in Ukraine, charges he denies. Neither Russia nor Vietnam is a member of the ICC.

The military ceremony put on to

an almirah, was found on the bed.

He went on to say that they didn't have any enmity with any neighbours, but had a land dispute in their village.

Meanwhile, the bodies of the victims were sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Speaking to reporters, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Wari division) Iqbal Hossain said the modus operandi suggests that this was a planned murder. "It's not a case of theft or robbery."

"The killers inflicted many blows to Shafiqur's neck and head to ensure his death. Nothing was missing from the house. The killers tried to pass it off as a robbery."

He said the double murder could have occurred due to previous enmity or family enmity.

greet Putin, who was embraced by both Vietnamese President To Lam and Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh, was the kind reserved for the highest heads of state and rolled out when US President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Vietnam last year.

The two presidents witnessed the exchange of II cooperation agreements and memorandums of understanding, including deals on oil and gas, nuclear science and education.

At another event, Lam said Putin continued to lead Russia "overcoming all difficulties and challenges, at the same time contributing to the peace, stability and development in the region and the world."

Vietnam's hosting of Putin was criticised by the United States, now an important partner which upgraded diplomatic relations with Hanoi last year and is Vietnam's top export market, and by the EU.

A US embassy statement this week said no country should be giving Putin a platform to promote Russia's war in Ukraine.

An EU delegation spokesperson in Vietnam said Hanoi had the right to develop its own foreign policy, but said Russia's war in Ukraine proved Moscow did not respect international law.

Hajj death toll

FROM PAGE 2
Saudi authorities reported clearing hundreds of thousands of unregistered pilgrims from Makkah this month, but it appears many still participated in the main rites which began last Friday.

This group was more vulnerable to the heat because, without official permits, they could not access air-conditioned spaces provided by Saudi authorities for the 1.8 million authorised pilgrims to cool down after hours of walking and praying outside.

"People were tired after being chased by security forces before Arafat day. They were exhausted," one Arab diplomat told AFP yesterday, referring to Saturday's day-long outdoor prayers that marked the hajj's climax.

The diplomat said the main cause of death among Egyptian pilgrims was the heat, which triggered complications related to high blood pressure and other issues.

In addition to Egypt, new fatalities were confirmed yesterday by Pakistan and Indonesia. Out of around 150,000 pilgrims, Pakistan has so far recorded 58 deaths, a diplomat briefed on the tally told AFP.

"I think given the number of people, given the weather, this is just natural," the diplomat said.

Indonesia, which had around 240,000 pilgrims, raised its death toll to 183, according to the ministry of religious affairs, compared with 313 deaths recorded last year.

Deaths have also been confirmed by Malaysia, India, Jordan, Iran, Senegal, Tunisia, Sudan and Iraq's autonomous Kurdistan region. In many cases authorities have not specified the cause.

We'll retaliate

FROM PAGE 12
to navigate the waters in Myanmar's territories of the Naf river, prompting firing either by the Myanmar military or the Arakan Army, he said.

The minister, however, said the situation has improved of late.

"Currently, they are not shooting at the boats in Bangladeshi waters. The two ships on the Myanmar side [of the Naf river] have been withdrawn," he said referring to the deployment of those Myanmar ships.

He expressed optimism that there would be no further shooting. "However, those who cross the area are taking necessary precautions."

Locals in St Martin's said gunshots were fired from across the border at trawlers and speedboats on the Naf river since June 6.

'Swiss banks not so lucrative now to park money'

FROM PAGE 12
ago after tax probes by the US, France and Germany and a new system of bank data exchange between governments has scuppered the traditional "no questions asked" approach by Swiss banks to serving rich clients living abroad, Bloomberg reported in 2016.

The development of the Common Reporting Standards (CRS) in 2014 by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) also brought about a major shift in global tax transparency.

This is because by signing up, countries agree to automatically exchange financial account information. As a result, it has become harder for individuals to conceal their wealth offshore without the rest of the world knowing about it. Before this, countries generally had to request this information from other nations.

Data from the Swiss National Bank showed that Bangladeshi nationals saved 13.96 million CHF in Swiss banks in 2023, the lowest since 1997. The amount was 78 percent of the total deposits of 17.71 million CHF, or \$19.86 million.

The deposits were Tk 233 crore in Bangladeshi currency. In the case of Bangladeshi nationals, the deposits amounted to Tk 184 crore.

Iftekharruzaman, executive director of the Transparency International Bangladesh, said Switzerland is one of the many destinations for illicit fund transfers.

Switzerland is a conventional destination, but since it joined

the global efforts against money laundering and corruption, it has lost its shine, he added.

"Many destinations for illegal money transfers have sprouted, and they are more attractive," he said, citing the names of Malaysia, Singapore, and the Middle Eastern countries.

Plus, there are offshore destinations to park money, he said.

"One can buy properties in the UK, the US, Canada, and the Southeast Asian and Middle Eastern countries. This is not easy in the case of Switzerland," added Iftekharruzaman.

"So, the falling deposits in the Swiss banks belonging to Bangladeshi citizens and banks do not provide any relief that illegal capital flight has declined."

In 2022, the Tax Justice Network's Financial Secrecy Index, the UK-based organisation, named the US as the top destination for stashing money illegally. The country overtook traditional tax havens Singapore, Switzerland, Luxembourg, the Bahamas, and the Cayman Islands.

Mansur, a former economist at the International Monetary Fund, said Switzerland had once kept the information of depositors confidential. "Now it is not maintaining the secrecy. It provides information if any government seeks."

Bangladeshi living in Switzerland may hold a portion of the deposits. A part of the foreign currency reserves of Bangladesh are also kept there, he added.

US, UK, EU express

FROM PAGE 12
dedicated efforts to provide essential services for Rohingya refugees and Bangladesh's host communities.

"We continue to advocate for global attention for this protracted crisis, amid emerging new crises and growing global humanitarian need," they said.

In the camps, improved opportunities for refugees to pursue meaningful education and livelihoods could build essential resilience and

self-reliance, the statement said. "This is important to overcome cycles of poverty and marginalisation for future generations."

"We remain committed to ensure a better and more dignified life for the Rohingyas while they remain in Bangladesh. We will continue to pursue regional coordination and collective efforts towards sustainable solutions for Rohingya refugees, partnering with the government of Bangladesh."

UK's Sunak faces call for polls date betting probe

AFP, London

UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak yesterday faced calls to launch an inquiry after a member of his security detail was arrested for allegedly betting on the timing of the general election.

London's Metropolitan Police said it was told by the Gambling Commission that a close protection officer was being investigated over the alleged bets.

The regulator had already been looking into claims that Conservative party candidate Craig Williams, who served as Sunak's ministerial aide, placed a bet on when the election would be held.

A second candidate from Sunak's party, Laura Saunders, is now also under investigation about an alleged bet on the date of the poll, the BBC reported on Wednesday evening.

Saunders is married to the Tories' director of campaigns, it added.

MYANMAR CRISIS Ethnic armed groups accuse junta of breaking truce

AFP, Yangon

An alliance of Myanmar ethnic armed groups have accused the junta of repeatedly violating a China-brokered ceasefire in the north of the country this month and causing civilian casualties.

Beijing brokered a truce between the junta and the so-called "Three Brotherhood Alliance" in January after months of fighting that displaced more than half a million people near China's southern border.

The ceasefire allowed the alliance — made up of the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA), the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA), and the Arakan Army (AA) to hold swathes of territory it had seized in northern Shan state.

Junta troops on Wednesday launched an air strike on territory the TNLA holds near the ruby and gem mining hub of Mogoke, the group said.

"In this incident, one civilian was killed and 3 wounded including a 10-year-old child," the TNLA said in a statement posted to the alliance's Telegram channel on Wednesday.



Palestinians ride in the back of a pick-up truck in a displacement area of al-Mawasi in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday, as Israel continues bombardment and ground assault in the Palestinian enclave. PHOTO: AFP

Nowhere in Israel will be spared in case of war

Lebanon's Hezbollah chief warns; Israel army spokesman says Hamas can't be eliminated

AFP, Beirut

Fears of a regional war rose yesterday after Lebanon's powerful Hezbollah movement said none of Israel would be spared in a full-blown conflict, and Israel said it had approved plans for a Lebanon offensive.

Experts are divided on the prospect of wider war, almost nine months into Israel's vow to eradicate Hamas, the Palestinian group in the Gaza Strip.

On Wednesday Israel's top army spokesman said Hamas, as an ideology, cannot be eliminated. Others, including US Secretary



Hezbollah chief also threatened Cyprus if it opened its airports to Israel "to target Lebanon".

of State Antony Blinken, have also pointed to the difficulty of destroying the group.

In a televised address, Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah said "no place" in Israel would "be spared our rockets" if war began.

Nasrallah's Iran-backed group has exchanged near-daily fire with Israel since Israel began offensive in Gaza on October 7, but the fire from Hezbollah rockets, Israeli warplanes and other weapons has escalated in the past few weeks.

The Hezbollah chief also threatened the nearby island nation of Cyprus if it opened its airports or bases to Israel "to target Lebanon".

Cyprus, a European Union member, is home to two British bases, including an airbase, but they are in sovereign British territory and not controlled by the Cypriot government.

Cypriot President Nikos Christodoulides denied his country's involvement in the offensive and said it was "part of the solution". He pointed to its role in a maritime humanitarian corridor to Gaza.

Warplanes from the British airbase in Cyprus have, along with United States forces, carried out reprisal strikes against Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels who

have for months been attacking shipping in nearby waterways.

On Wednesday, US military said its forces destroyed two Houthi sites in Yemen. The Houthis and Hezbollah both say they are acting in response to Israel's actions in Gaza. On Tuesday Israel's military announced that "operational plans for an offensive in Lebanon were approved and validated", and Foreign Minister Israel Katz warned of Hezbollah's destruction in a "total war".

US envoy Amos Hochstein called for "urgent" de-escalation.

On Tuesday Hezbollah published a more than nine-minute video showing drone footage purportedly taken by the movement over northern Israel, including parts of the city and port of Haifa.

4 in 5 people want more climate action

UN survey finds

AFP, United Nations

Four in every five people want their country to strengthen its commitments to addressing climate change, according to a global poll of 75,000 participants published yesterday.

The survey by the UN Development Program, Oxford University and GeoPoll posed 15 questions by randomised telephone calls to people in 77 countries representing 87 percent of the world's population.

The key finding was that 80 percent of respondents want their governments to increase efforts to fight against global warming.

Poorer countries beat this drum the loudest, with 89 percent in favour, though appetite is also high in G20 nations (76 percent), according to the survey.

China (73 percent) and the United States (66 percent) — the world's biggest greenhouse gas emitters — also saw a majority of respondents in favour of climate action.

"As world leaders decide on the next round of pledges under the Paris Agreement by 2025, these results are undeniable evidence that people everywhere support bold climate action," said Cassie Flynn, UNDP global climate director.

DIRECT PASSENGER FLIGHT

India shuns China's calls to resume service

REUTERS, New Delhi

China is pressing India to restart direct passenger flights after a four-year halt, but New Delhi is resisting as a border dispute continues to weigh on ties between the world's two most populous countries, officials said.

India-China relations have been tense since the biggest military confrontation in decades on their disputed Himalayan border killed 20 Indian and at least four Chinese soldiers in June 2020. Thousands of troops remain mobilised on each side.

Since the clash, India has made it difficult for Chinese companies to invest, banned hundreds of popular apps and severed passenger routes, although direct cargo flights still operate between the Asian giants.

Direct flights would benefit both economies, but the stakes are higher for China, where a recovery in overseas travel after the Covid-19 pandemic is lagging, while India's aviation sector booms.

Several times over the past year or so, China's government and airlines have asked India's civil aviation authorities to re-establish direct air links, two people with direct knowledge of the matter told Reuters, with one saying China considers this a "big issue".

"We hope the Indian side will work with China in the same direction for the early resumption of direct flights," China's Foreign Ministry told Reuters in a statement last week.

India boosts Sri Lanka's maritime monitoring centres

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka launched an upgraded naval monitoring centre yesterday, funded by its powerful neighbour India as New Delhi pushes to counter China's expanding regional influence.

The Maritime Rescue Coordinating Centre — able to track shipping across vast areas — was backed by a \$6 million Indian grant, a statement from President Ranil Wickremesinghe's office said.

Based in Sri Lanka's naval headquarters in Colombo, it also includes seven remote stations along the island's eastern seaboard.

One lies in the far south of Sri Lanka — close to the Chinese-run port of Hambantota — overseeing major international east-to-west shipping routes.

Sri Lanka's maritime rescue region covers an area of 1.77 million square kilometres (683,400 square miles) stretching from India to Indonesia, Australia and the Maldives.

India's Foreign Minister S Jaishankar opened the facility during his first foreign visit since the formation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's new government this month.

Jaishankar said on social media that Colombo was a key part of India's "neighbourhood first" and maritime security policies.

India is suspicious of China's growing presence in the Indian Ocean, including in Sri Lanka as well as the Maldives, which signed a military assistance pact with Beijing in March.

That deal came as a garrison of Indian soldiers, who had been stationed in the upscale holiday destination to assist with maritime patrols, was ordered by pro-Beijing President Mohamed Muizzu to leave.



China coast guard personnel a 'band of barbarians'

Says Philippine navy official

REUTERS, Manila

China's coast guard personnel acted like a "band of barbarians" during a Philippine resupply mission to a contested shoal in the South China Sea this week that led to injuries and damage to vessels, a senior navy official said yesterday.

A Philippine sailor suffered serious injury after what its military described as "intentional high speed ramming" by the Chinese Coast Guard, aiming to disrupt a resupply mission for troops stationed on the Second Thomas Shoal.

China's Coast Guard personnel, which Philippine military officials said were carrying knives and spears, looted firearms and "deliberately punctured" Philippine boats involved in the mission.

"We were unprepared for that kind of response," Philippine navy spokesperson Roy Trinidad said in a phone interview yesterday. "We stuck with the rules of engagement. They were not allowed to use guns except for self defence."

Trinidad said China's "illegal, aggressive and deceptive" actions raises the risk of miscalculation at sea.

But China's foreign ministry disputed the Philippines' statement, with a spokesperson saying yesterday that the necessary measures taken were lawful, professional and beyond reproach.

"The Philippine ships not only carry building materials, they also smuggled weapons and equipment and deliberately rammed Chinese ships," said ministry spokesperson Lin Jian.



Students holding placards protest outside the Ministry of Education against the cancellation of the UGC-NET examination in New Delhi, India yesterday. India's opposition parties and the country's students have hit out at the new government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi for irregularities in recent government-run tests for college admissions and government teaching jobs. PHOTO: REUTERS

GRAFT CASE

Delhi CM Kejriwal gets bail

NDTV ONLINE

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has been granted bail in the liquor policy case. Kejriwal's lawyer had argued the Enforcement Directorate (ED) had no evidence against him.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief is likely to come out of jail today, as the bail order has to reach jail first.

His lawyer told the Delhi court that the ED's entire case against the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief rested on statements given by those who turned approver in the case.

The court denied the ED's request to allow at least 48 hours to sign the bail bond in order for the central agency to challenge it before the relevant court.

The ED arrested Kejriwal on March 21 over money laundering allegations while framing the Delhi liquor policy for 2021-22, which was later scrapped after the Lt Governor raised red flags.

Air pollution now the biggest killer

Take legal action against those responsible

It is alarming to know that air pollution has become the leading cause of death in Bangladesh, outpacing fatalities from high blood pressure, poor diet, and tobacco use, according to a newly unveiled global study. The study found that in 2021, at least 236,000 lives were lost due to air pollution in the country. By comparison, 200,000 deaths occurred due to high blood pressure, 130,100 due to tobacco use, and 130,400 were linked to poor diet. This deserves critical attention.

Unlike other major causes of deaths, air pollution is something that affects everyone, particularly children. In fact, in 2021, the country ranked fifth globally in terms of deaths among children under the age of five due to air pollution. And as much as 36 percent of preterm births in Bangladesh were also linked to it. Aside from deaths, air pollution impacts children's health in many ways and at many levels, starting from pregnancy through early childhood. These issues may continue to affect an individual throughout their life.

Despite these severe health impacts—and the resulting burden on the nation—we wonder why the government has failed to make any significant progress in reducing air pollution. A number of previous studies have shared similar findings, which make it obvious that this has turned into a silent killer that must be urgently addressed. According to a study by Clean Air Fund (CAF), between 2017 and 2021, Bangladesh received \$2.3 billion to curb air pollution. Where did this fund go? What was it used for? Does the government have any notable achievement to show that it was properly utilised?

Major pollutants like construction dust, traffic fumes, factory emissions, and brick kilns continue to be unchecked to this day. According to Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA), of the 60 lakh registered vehicles in the country, about 6.17 lakh run with no or expired fitness certificates. Additionally, Bangladesh produces about 30 lakh tonnes of e-waste every year—most of which contain carcinogenic elements. Brick kilns, too, continue to heavily pollute the environment. In other words, the government has done little to nothing to address the killer air that citizens are breathing in.

Last year, the High Court rightly lambasted the Department of Environment (DoE) for failing to take effective steps to control air pollution in Dhaka despite its repeated directives. But even that seems to have changed nothing. It is high time, therefore, for the relevant state institutions as well as polluting entities to be held responsible for their negligence or contributions in this regard. Perhaps then they will finally start to act as they are legally bound to do, and help prevent needless deaths of citizens.

A tragedy lurking in the shadow

Ukhiya landslides bring the horror to Rohingyas

We are saddened by the tragic deaths of ten people, including eight Rohingyas, in landslides at the refugee camps in Cox's Bazar's Ukhiya upazila early Wednesday. According to a report, the landslides occurred after heavy downpour overnight, affecting multiple camps including camps 1, 2, 9, 10, and 14 where the deaths have been confirmed. The authorities are reportedly taking steps to evacuate at-risk camp dwellers from hazardous, hilly areas to prevent further casualties. While heavy rainfall has been a significant factor in these deadly landslides, it just goes to highlight the precariousness of the living condition of the Rohingyas.

Such landslides have occurred in the past as well. Around 12 lakh Rohingyas have been living in 33 camps of Ukhiya and Teknaf in Cox's Bazar, most of them since 2017 after fleeing persecutions in Myanmar. Their living arrangement, with many residing in perilous conditions on hill slopes, may put them at a natural disadvantage during monsoon. Those at risk should be evacuated, but where would they be evacuated to and then what? It's a terrible and tricky situation. While the authorities are moving them to temporary locations for now, Bangladesh, which has been bearing an enormous burden by hosting so many refugees, cannot be expected to resolve the issue on its own. The international community must come up with a solution that simultaneously ensures the long-term well-being of the Rohingya community and protects our interests.

The Ukhiya landslides add to the growing casualties caused by the recent deluge and mountain runoff that already combined to set off a flood in Sylhet and Sunamganj and threaten to inundate many other areas. With the Met office warning of further rains and potential landslides in Chattogram and Sylhet divisions, it is likely that more such incidents will occur. Heavy rainfall since Tuesday night has caused extensive damage in many areas, submerging homes, roads, poultry farms, fish enclosures, etc. However, apart from Ukhiya, there have been no reports of fatalities from landslides yet, but that may change if preventive actions are not taken. The authorities in Chattogram and Sylhet, where most of the landslides usually occur because of fragile, often illegal settlements, must remain especially vigilant and relocate at-risk families.

Given the severity and frequency of landslides, the higher authorities also must take a critical look at our state of preparedness and undertake comprehensive measures. Timely warnings and immediate response are crucial in such scenarios. Structural reinforcements and proper land management are equally important to mitigate the risk of future disasters. Without such actions, this seasonal threat will continue to lurk in the shadow and endanger people every monsoon.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY



Birth of Benazir Bhutto

On this day in 1954, Pakistan's first woman Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto was born. Belonging to a politically influential family, she co-chaired the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and became the first woman to lead a Muslim majority country. She was assassinated in 2007.

The constitutionality of building kitchen markets over bulldozed homes



PSYMHE WADUD
teaches international human rights law at the University of Dhaka and is in charge of Law & Our Rights at The Daily Star.

PSYMHE WADUD

The Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) recently went on to evict 87 families in the Miranzilla sweeper colony. One DSCC official told this daily that the eviction measures were being carried out to implement a decision made some eight years ago.

As a law student and an academic, I am still naïve to recall judicial interpretations of our constitution and laws. Indeed, more than two decades back, the High Court categorically observed that no eviction is constitutional if alternative rehabilitative measures are not adopted (*ASK v Bangladesh*, 1999). Later, there were multiple other decisions along the same line of interpretation, landmark among which is *BLAST v Bangladesh* (2008).

Shelter, among others, is not a judicially enforceable right under the Bangladesh Constitution. It falls within the purview of the judicially unenforceable policy principles that nonetheless are supposed to be "fundamental to the governance of Bangladesh" and to "form the basis of the work of the state." However, the Supreme Court has gone on to enforce shelter through reimagining the margins of the fundamental right to life. Indeed, the court held that the right to life, as enshrined in the constitution, cannot be construed as a vegetative existence only, but ought to be interpreted as a dignified life.

The decisions mentioned above constitute the primer for constitutional law lessons 101. These are rather primary cases for understanding and teaching right to life in law schools (at least I can speak for the University of Dhaka). The Dalit, on the other hand, are a major category to study and research into equality and non-discrimination law. They are the paradigmatic subaltern



Eviction from ancestral homes of hundred years strikes at the very root of a community's existence, and rehabilitation can hardly restore the status quo ante.

FILE PHOTO: MD ABBAS

class about whom discussions abound in civil society seminars and symposia. What the Miranzilla eviction measures underscore for us afresh is the gap between our studies, activism, and reality. It also shows how only the courts are sites of constitutionalism for us.

However, the discursive notion of constitutionalism ought to be rooted in multifarious sites, including parliamentary and executive spaces of state governance, and the decisions emanating from the courts ought to be taken seriously by the decision-makers. Why should every (unconstitutional) action get remedially treated with stay orders from the court (as happened at the present instance as well), when we already have categorical observations and holdings from the court to pre-emptively inform the decisions of different branches of the state?

For purposes of international

human rights law, adequate housing is a paradigmatic economic right having both cultural and social connotations. This right can be restricted only in accordance with law, and only in pursuance of a legitimate aim. In the case of Miranzilla, such aim is the expansion of a kitchen market. Tenets of human rights law require that the restriction and the legitimate aim are

the *status quo ante*. The fact that we advocate for rehabilitation as a minimum for the would-be evicted people too in a way empowers the top-down narrative defined by hegemony. Nonetheless, when even the bare minimum is not complied with, we get to see the unclad face of power.

The recent eviction measures tell us two things: first, how the Dalit

community lies at the lowest stratum of the power hierarchy, and second, that those in decision-making power view them exactly as such. The decision-makers also are entirely unmindful to the existence of elderly, children, and persons with disabilities within such families. The disparate impact that the measures are having on them is unsurprisingly not accounted for.

The Dalit, the identity they embrace "as a matter of assertive pride and resistance"—are indeed the outliers, falling outside the four-fold caste schema. The eviction reifies their identity as Dalits—as opposed to "children of God" or Harijans, as Gandhi had called them—a term that I personally find rather supercilious and patronising (as did Ambedkar). In any case, can homes of the children of God be bulldozed to expand a kitchen market?

Let's honour the Rohingya refugees and their hosts



SUMBUL RIZVI
is the representative of UNHCR in Bangladesh.

SUMBUL RIZVI

Over 12 crore people are forcibly displaced by conflict or persecution—across borders or within their countries. Among refugees, three-quarters are hosted by low- and middle-income countries like Bangladesh, which will soon mark the seventh year of hosting nearly one million Rohingya refugees.

This displacement, in the words of UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi, is driven by "the international community's inability to solve conflicts or prevent new ones." In 2017, Bangladesh provided protection to one of the world's most persecuted communities. The generous people of Cox's Bazar were on the ground joined by UNHCR, United Nations, and NGO partners, offering food, clothing and shelter to traumatised Rohingya families.

Some refugee situations are short as in 1971, while others may take longer. The Rohingya yearn to quickly return, but are unable to until it is safe. The international community, especially regional entities, must work towards a political solution and resolution of the conflict. In the meantime, providing protection and support is how states demonstrate solidarity and shared humanity.

Seven years on, we watch in alarm the escalating conflict in northern Rakhine, while refugees await its cessation, anticipating voluntary repatriation to a peaceful homeland. As the warring parties battle for control of the Rakhine state, the inevitable viciousness of conflict is apparent, impacting civilians including the Rohingya. The stateless Rohingyas once again have nowhere to go. In May, UNHCR issued a guidance note urging all states neighbouring Myanmar to respect the principle of non-refoulement and allow fleeing civilians access to safety.

While the Rohingya situation is not on the scale witnessed in 1971, memories are evoked of one crore uprooted Bangladeshis seeking asylum with India during the Liberation War. Asylum is universally applicable, enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and embedded in state traditions from time immemorial, especially in this part of the world.

Protection includes safety and security while fleeing, and when in the receiving state. Pushback of civilians approaching international borders and deportation/refoulement of those desperately seeking protection with

on all reported incidents, this is not enough. Concerted state action is imperative to reverse the tide of insecurity and protect the vulnerable. With 80 percent women, children and elderly having survived unimaginable trauma, refugee mothers clamour for attention to their plight, demanding a safe environment. A proposed Joint Peace Campaign is raising hopes as efforts commence.

I am inspired by the Rohingya community's incredible courage—in the face of historical prejudice and targeted violence and living amid the impacts of climate change and natural disasters. If the majority lacked basic education and urban skills when they arrived from Myanmar, they are now active participants in education, skills, and community empowerment programmes. Seeking self-improvement, they access online courses, English lessons, vocational trainings; operate community blood drives, camp libraries for women, youth environment groups, and so much more... Steadily, the

slur—synonymous with criminals and primitive people. History has shown how dehumanising language, seemingly harmless, can prove dangerous for all concerned. Today, social media and technology further amplify that harm.

The challenges are myriad, but collective advocacy and a common vision have overcome enormous constraints. In 2023, after 33 percent drop in food rations, UNHCR and humanitarian partners sounded the alarm, linking the cuts to increased malnutrition and health risks, as well as child marriage, child labour, and dangerous boat journeys in search of hope. This year, with new funding, the UN World Food Programme (WFP) was able to raise the value of food vouchers twice from \$8 to \$10 on January 1, and to \$11 on June 1. The 2023 funding appeal, too, received higher funding compared to most refugee situations in a year of competing global priorities. The 2024 funding requires collective advocacy and support to sustain the refugees.

Partners are providing Myanmar curriculum classes for children in Grades KG to 10, with Grade II beginning this year. In June, 90,000 Rohingya school children took end-of-year learning assessments. Four years ago, there was no formal education for the Rohingya. Today, through advocacy and partnership, girls and boys are enrolled across grades. Through collective efforts, the tree cover in camps has been restored and deforestation for firewood is a memory. Slopes, streambanks, drainage systems, and forests have been rehabilitated by Rohingya volunteers and donor funds.

Local communities and refugees will further benefit from much needed funds that will flow from the World Bank IDA 2020 Window for Host and Refugees. Based on the MoU between UNHCR and the World Bank, aimed at supporting developing economies with large refugee populations, the \$700 million grant and extremely concessional loan is key to enhancing the local context. By uplifting refugees alongside its own people, Bangladesh continues a tradition of solidarity and protection, and invests in a vibrant relationship with its Rohingya neighbours when they one day return to a stable Rakhine.

Sadly, a new trend of stereotypes and toxic public narrative dehumanises the Rohingya, blaming them for all and sundry woes, whether inflation, illicit yaba trade, climate impacts, and more. 'Rohingya' is used as a slur—synonymous with criminals and primitive people. History has shown how dehumanising language, seemingly harmless, can prove dangerous for all concerned. Today, social media and technology further amplify that harm.

their relatives in Bangladesh's refugee camps are contrary to the shared history of humanity and asylum tradition in South Asia.

Since 2022, the security situation in the refugee camps has deteriorated—including killings, kidnapping, gender-based violence and child protection incidents. Rival criminal organisations feeding on despair are responsible, persuading refugee youth lacking prospects of livelihoods and education, by force or by lure. The conflict across the border further aggravates security in the camps.

While UN agencies and NGOs have stepped up protection monitoring, and UNHCR intervenes with authorities

Rohingya are building capacity to provide for themselves. They are at the forefront, delivering services in camps, including mental health counselling, manufacturing menstrual hygiene products, documenting camp life through photography and art, fighting fires, and protecting from natural disasters.

Cohesion with local host communities have allowed Rohingya coexistence over the last seven years. Sadly, a new trend of stereotypes and toxic public narrative dehumanises the Rohingya, blaming them for all and sundry woes, whether inflation, illicit yaba trade, climate impacts, and more. "Rohingya" is used as a

A teacher who inspired generations of architects



THE GRUDGING URBANIST

Dr Adnan Zillur Morshed is an architect, architectural historian, urbanist, and professor. He teaches at the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC, and serves as executive director of the Centre for Inclusive Architecture and Urbanism at BRAC University.

ADNAN ZILLUR MORSHED

Do we have a national fetish to celebrate accomplished people around us only after they perish? How often do we express gratitude to our teachers when they are still around? Being an educator myself, I understand, even if imperfectly, how much students' appreciation means to a teacher.

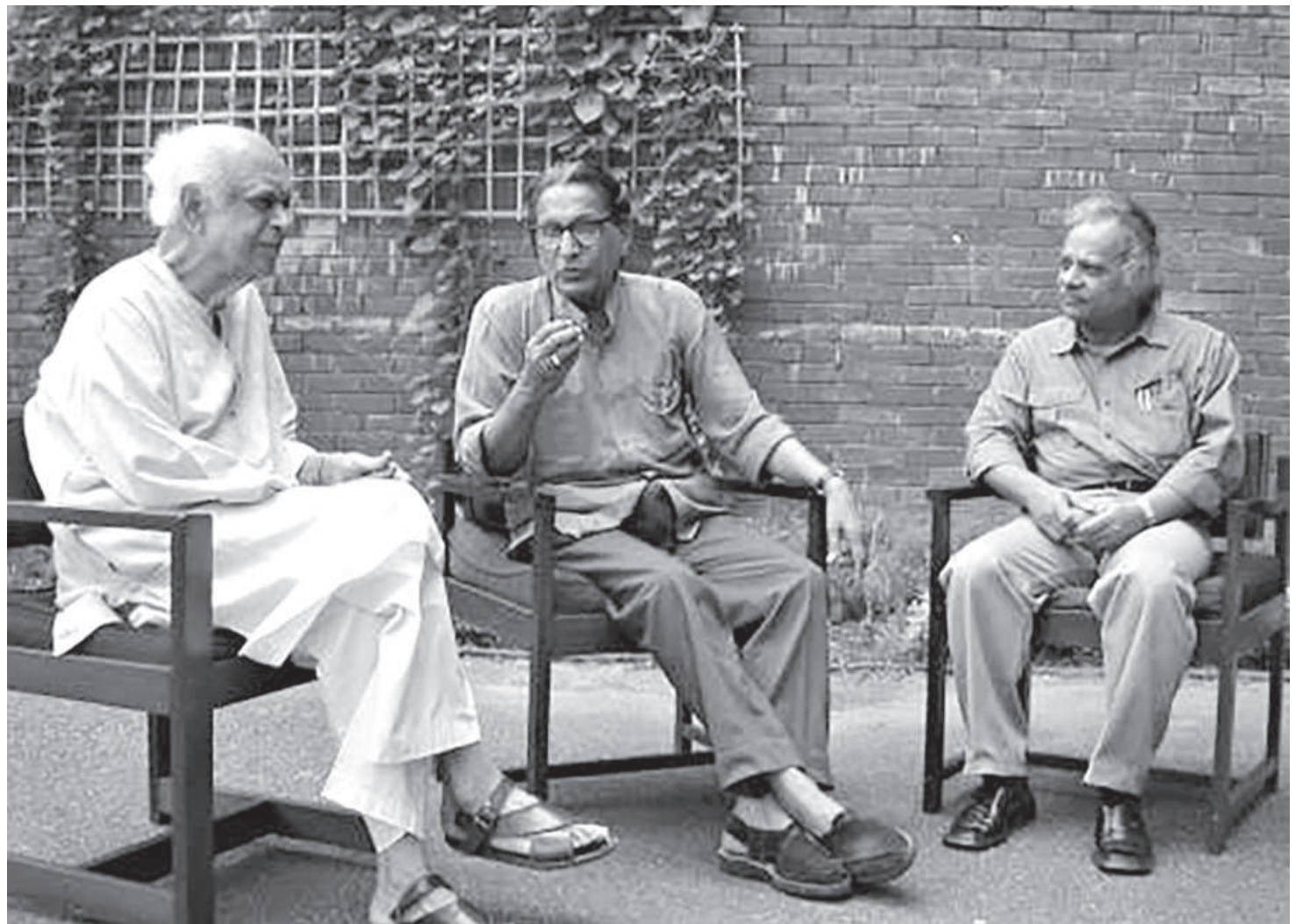
Today, I would like to thank a professor who inspired generations of architects in Bangladesh.

Shamsul Wares is known as a fiercely passionate teacher who professes architecture as a philosophy of modernism—one that views the challenges of space-making through the lens of 20th century aesthetic experiments in abstraction, platonic clarity, and humanism. His growth as an iconic teacher in the Department of Architecture at the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) paralleled the trials and tribulations of a post-independent country and the evolution of its built environment.

As an architect, Shamsul Wares has produced a robust body of design work, ranging from residential houses to urban parks, from factories to institutional buildings, from cinema halls to shopping malls and apartment complexes. "Wares sir" built an intellectual bridge between the aggregate design legacy of Muzharul Islam, Louis

an unmistakable symbol of democracy, a timeless Parliament Building that captures the highest expression of modernism. The most dramatic part in all of this was not Wares's "genius father" statement, but the tears that rolled down his cheeks while stating it. Nathaniel Kahn stated on several occasions that, for him, the Shamsul Wares moment in the documentary unexpectedly became his project's intellectual epicentre. Many people agreed.

It is hard not to wonder what Wares's tears meant both for the documentary and the state of architecture in Bangladesh. Were they tears of gratitude? Joy? Emotion? Days after I first watched the documentary in New York City, I ran into India's celebrated architect Charles Correa at a soiree hosted by MIT professor Stanford Anderson at his beautiful waterfront house in Boston. Upon hearing that I was from Bangladesh, Correa asked me about Shamsul Wares, particularly the reason for his tears in *My Architect*. Kahn's work is great, but why cry, Correa asked. I was at a loss for words but found myself ruminating on the question, too. I tried to convince Correa that Bangladeshis become sentimental while talking about Kahn's Parliament. There are several potential reasons for this: the edifice parallels the country's political journey to



Shamsul Wares (right) with Muzharul Islam (left) and Indian architect BV Doshi.

PHOTO: COURTESY



Prof Shamsul Wares

PHOTO: COURTESY

Kahn, Constantinos Doxiadis, Paul Rudolph, and Stanley Tigerman during the Pakistan era and the generations of architects that contributed to the development of what has been called a "Bengal Stream" in architecture in post-independence Bangladesh. The kind of architecture he advocated in his classroom is deliberately abstract, where overt social and historical representations are muted in favour of platonic formal expressions. We learnt from his position on aesthetic modernism, one that is cognitively powerful without having to resort to any kind of semiotic adventures or show gratuitous associations with the power structures of history and society.

Towards the end of Nathaniel Kahn's acclaimed documentary, *My Architect: A Son's Journey* (2003), there is a perplexingly poignant moment. I reflected on it in a review of the documentary, "Inside the Capitol building... Shamsul Wares delivers a startling, if not the ultimate, message: that personal failings should not blind us to the genius of a great artist and that a son must seek his father not always in the father's fulfilment of familial duties, but sometimes in the humanity of his aesthetics." To describe the genius of a great artist, Wares likened Louis Kahn to "our Moses" who, in his view, gave Bangladesh

independence; Kahn had a monumental influence on the architectural evolution in this country; and the country had found a national symbol of architectural pride in this building. This is emotional stuff, I argued with Correa, who seemed unconvinced. Years later, I told Sundaram Tagore, director of *Louis Kahn's Tiger City* (2019), that weeping inside Kahn's Parliament has not been uncommon.

Shamsul Wares's tears also reveal his quintessential pedagogy: architecture is a lifestyle, an abstraction of life itself. As his students, we found such teaching inspirational and contagious. In our young minds, he was our Plato, who made us conscious of *praktike* (doing) and *gnostike* (knowing) in design education. Wares's metaphysics of the art of buildings had a profound influence on us. Architecture is an arduous journey, one that requires perseverance, determination, and love. Architecture must simultaneously undertake the archaeology of the aggregate human experiences of the past, while endeavouring to forge ahead into the future. This is probably the reason why he often cites the Danish existential philosopher Soren Kierkegaard, "Life can only be understood backwards, but it must be lived forwards." Wares demonstrates a deep understanding of the project of history—his panoramic, nuanced, and non-conforming history classes

used to spellbind us—yet he steadfastly remained committed to architecture's ability to shape a humane future.

Shamsul Wares grew up in Chandpur, a small city southeast of Dhaka, near the confluence of two mighty rivers of the Bengal delta: the Meghna and the Padma. The geographic energy emanating from the meeting of two delta-shaping rivers must have left an indelible impression on his worldview, one that accommodates and triggers multiple lines of thought as a critical vantage on life.

When he arrived in Dhaka in the early 1960s to pursue higher studies and visited the East Pakistan University of Engineering and Technology (EPUET), his chance encounter with the newly minted programme of architecture there determined what his lifelong passion would be. The decade of 1960s was a period of "great transformation" for the then East Pakistan, politically and socially.

Development" in Pakistan. Vrooman and his colleagues were supported by, among others, expatriate architects like Daniel C Dunham (1962-67) and Jack R Yardley (1966-68). Part-time faculty included East Pakistan's first professionally trained architect Muzharul Islam. Joan C Walden taught basic design and Mary K Donaldson art history. Prominent artists like Rashid Chowdhury, Hamidur Rahman, and Abdur Razzak also taught in the architecture programme. Abdullah Abu Sayeed introduced Bangla literature, while Mary Frances Dunham lectured on European art and music. Roy Vollmar and Gus Langford, two of Louis Kahn's associates stationed at his local office in Dhaka during the construction of the Parliament Building, were occasional instructors. This was a time of extraordinary academic fertility that characterised architecture education at EPUET.

Shamsul Wares was an intellectual product of this vibrant and cosmopolitan environment, as well as the political consciousness of

phenomenological symbolism of placeness in the built environment. While acknowledging the significance of the place in making architecture meaningful, he resolutely and deliberately wanted to transcend its causal influence, in the same way Rabindranath celebrated Bengal and its people, nature, rivers, and rain only to ultimately surpass them all to reach a universal milieu of humanity. In *The Apu Trilogy* (1950s), Satyajit Ray depicted an intimate portrayal of life in rural Bengal while narrating a universally understood sapiens story. There is a reason why his *Pather Panchali* (1955) won the Best Human Document award at the Cannes Film Festival in the year of its release. In a similar vein, Wares's modernism aspires to a universal value system that neither glorifies nor rejects the place.

Asked to suggest one book to an aspiring architect, Shamsul Wares's answer was bewilderingly beautiful, "If it is concerned with architecture, I do not know of one book that surpasses all other books. Thirty years ago, I would have suggested *Space, Time and Architecture* by Sigfried Giedion. Right now, I think we are in a much diversified state, and one book is too few to understand the dynamics of architecture today. However, if I must pin down my suggestion to one book, I would suggest a novel... *The Bicycle Thief*." Recommending Luigi Bartolini's haunting novel (1946) portraying the urban despair of postwar Rome—transformed into a devastatingly poignant film (1948) by Vittorio De Sica—to students of architecture is one instance of Wares's cosmopolitanism, enlightenment, and wisdom. Learning about architecture through iconic buildings may be too parochial or didactic a suggestion. The ability to see the promises and perils of architecture through the humanity of a father-son saga, as in *The Bicycle Thief*, or through the existential angst of city life, shows the irresistible allure of Shamsul Wares's design pedagogy.

Aristotle once said, "Those who know, do. Those who understand, teach." Shamsul Wares understood, and hence taught. Being his student has been our privilege.

This essay is an excerpt from a forthcoming book titled Shamsul Wares: Teacher, Mentor, and Architect.

The decades of 1970s and 1980s were a time of a regionalist spirit in architecture around the world as the idea of a universal 'modern' was challenged for its alleged failure to incorporate local characteristics of a place. Wares, however, maintained a sophisticated distance from the discourse of regionalism in architecture. He never advocated any comforting and phenomenological symbolism of placeness in the built environment.

The political and economic asymmetries between West Pakistan and East Pakistan that disempowered the people of the eastern wing of the state created a robust culture of protest and resistance in East Pakistan. For the people of East Pakistan, this was a time of national soul-searching.

Richard "Dik" Vrooman, an American architect and academic from the Texas Agricultural and Mechanical University (Texas A&M University), came to Dhaka in 1961 for eight years to create a faculty of architecture at EPUET. Other Texas A&M University professors who joined Vrooman included James C Walden, Jr (1962-66) and Samuel T Lanford (1963-65). The mission was to educate local architects, filling the void of architectural design expertise warranted by the burgeoning building industry, particularly during Ayub Khan's "Decade of

1960s East Pakistan. He graduated with a Bachelor of Architecture degree in 1968, during the height of Bangalee agitation for self-rule in East Pakistan. After graduation, he worked at Vastukalabid, the acclaimed architectural office of Muzharul Islam. In 1972, he joined the architecture programme as a lecturer at the age of 26. His pedagogy began to demonstrate the cosmopolitanism, modernism, and multidisciplinary of the programme that had trained him.

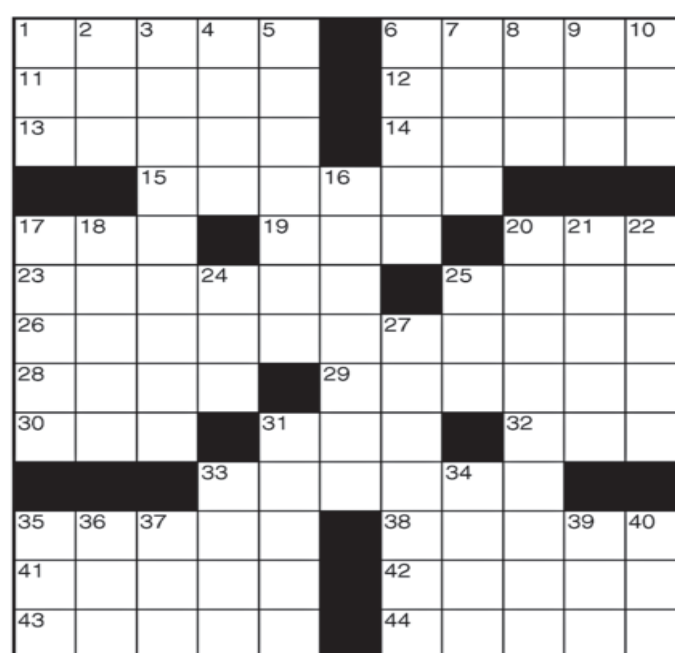
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CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
1 Radius end
6 Football team
11 Feudal lord
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SUNDAY'S ANSWERS



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CONSTITUTIONAL LAW

Secularism and state religion in the Bangladesh Constitution

Justice Haider notes, "[t]he conferment of status of 'State Religion' on its own does not tantamount to an action on the part of State to grant political status in favour of Islam. Article 2A must be read as a whole and once read, it becomes obvious that the insertion of the concept of Islam being the state religion does not, on its own, affect the constitutional rights of others having different religious beliefs."

NAFIZ AHMED

One of the most unique features of the Bangladeshi Constitution is that it pledges to conserve secularism (Article 12) while also declaring Islam as its state religion (Article 2A). The promise of secularism was present in the original Constitution. The state religion was added later through an amendment. Secularism was removed from the Constitution but was later restored through another amendment. Currently, both secularism and state religion co-exist in the Bangladeshi Constitution. If their meanings are taken literally, the existence of secularism and a constitutionally recognised state religion seem mutually exclusive, as there is an intrinsic conflict between the two. However, in a recent judgment (decided in 2016), the High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh held that secularism and state religion can co-exist without contradicting each other. This short essay examines how the recently published judgment changed the meaning of secularism and state religion in Bangladesh.

Through the *Anwar Hossain Chowdhury and others v Bangladesh* case, the Supreme Court of Bangladesh incorporated the doctrine of basic structure into the constitutional law jurisprudence of Bangladesh. According to the basic structure doctrine, the Constitution of Bangladesh cannot be amended in a way that destroys the basic structure of the Constitution. A provision or principle connected to the constitutional identity of Bangladesh Constitution is part of its basic structure. Secularism was one of the primary motivators of the emergence of independence Bangladesh and the adoption of its autochthonous Constitution. The readers of the Bangladesh Constitution would generally agree to call it a secular constitution. Thus, secularism is undoubtedly connected with the constitutional identity of Bangladesh. The Supreme Court of Bangladesh had made similar remarks in *Bangladesh v Advocate Asaduzzaman Siddiqui and Ors*.

Through the Writ Petition No. 1434 of 1988, *Swairachar O Sampradaiyikata Protirodh Committee, along with prominent public intellectuals of that time, challenged the constitutionality of the insertion of a state religion in the Constitution. The writ was finally heard in 2016. However, the hearing only lasted for 10/12 minutes, as noted by*

Justice Ashraf Kamal in the full text of the judgment. The writ was dismissed because the first petitioner did not have *locus standi* (the right to sue), as per the Court. The full text of the judgment became available to the public in 2024. Quite interestingly, the full text of the judgment discusses the substantive issues of the petition, although only the issue of *locus standi* was argued before the Court. In the full text of the judgment, the Court held that the inclusion of state religion does not affect the basic structure of the Constitution and does not violate the constitutionally guaranteed freedom of religion. It also held that the inclusion of state religion "does not offend the concept of secularism, as provided for in the Constitution."

Secularism has been given different meanings in different jurisdictions. Three meanings of secularism are worth mentioning. Firstly, it may mean that the state has a negative obligation not to endorse the practice of any religion (the idea associated with the Constitution of the United States of America). This version of secularism prohibits the state from conflating religion with public life. Secondly, secularism may mean that the state must regulate religion (the idea associated with the French Revolution). This version of secularism requires the state to prohibit the people from bringing religious practices and symbolisms into the public sphere (e.g., banning hijabs and abayas in public schools). The second version of secularism requires the state to govern and restrict, if necessary, religious practices through laws. Thirdly, secularism may mean that the state has a positive obligation to take measures to ensure that all religions can be practiced freely. This may be done by funding the establishment of places of worship, providing state-funded security in places of mass religious gatherings, and so on.

Justice Naima Haider, writing for the majority in *Swairachar O Sampradaiyikata Protirodh Committee vs Bangladesh*, observed that the third meaning of secularism is its true meaning in the context of the Bangladeshi Constitution. She noted that Article 2A "places an obligation upon the State to ensure equal status and equal right in the practice of the Hindu, Buddhist, Christian and other religion." (Emphasis added) Justice Haider also observed that "Article 12 as drafted... would impose an obligation upon the

State to ensure [that] religious authorities of any particular religion cannot dominate over the State..." Thus, according to Justice Haider, although Article 2A recognises Islam as the state religion, it creates a positive obligation on the state to ensure the religious rights of the minorities.

While interpreting Article 2A, Justice Haider held that the constitutional recognition of Islam as the state religion does not create any legal obligation on the state. She noted that the recognition of a state religion may be of two types: 'recognition with establishment' and 'recognition without establishment'. A recognition is 'with establishment' where state religion may be enforced by placing religious laws in the legal hierarchy or giving special privileges to that religion's followers (such as becoming President or Monarch). Justice Haider wrote, "...recognition with establishment will occur when the State maintains a formal connection with any specific religion which is 'established' in the sense of being supported, funded by the State". According to Justice Haider, the recognition of state religion in Bangladesh is recognition without establishment. Thus, according to the Court, the recognition of state religion has no legal consequence. Justice Haider notes, "[t]he conferment of status of 'State Religion' on its own does not tantamount to an action on the part of State to grant political status in favour of Islam. Article 2A must be read as a whole and once read, it becomes obvious that the insertion of the concept of Islam being the state religion does not, on its own, affect the constitutional rights of others having different religious beliefs."

The above-discussed case begs a few questions. For instance, one might ask if all petitioners must have *locus standi* for a writ petition to be maintainable. One might also ask how a clearly justiciable constitutional provision can be without legal consequences. The Court also did not address how the recognition (even without establishment) of a religion as the state religion may affect the believers of other religions. Nevertheless, the judgment provides us with a new understanding of secularism in Bangladesh and the consequences (or lack thereof) of recognising Islam as the state religion.

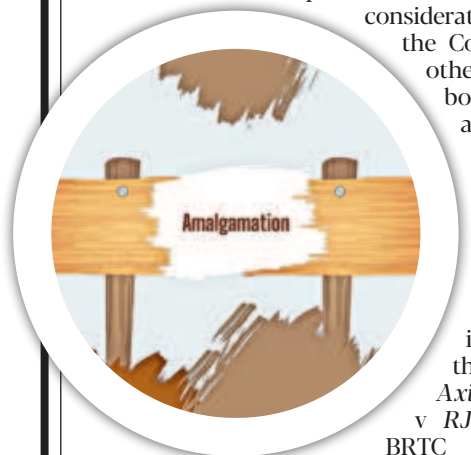
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LAW VISION

Role of the Supreme Court in an amalgamation process

MOHAMMAD FOYSAL

Under the scheme of the Companies Act 1994, sections 228 and 229 require a scheme of amalgamation, be it for merger or acquisition, to get approved by the High Court Division (HCD or Court). Central to an amalgamation process is the application procedure and consideration of application by the HCD, as the HCD is vested with the authority to either approve or reject such an application. The HCD might reject such an application, if it considers that the scheme is in asymmetry with the core of public interest or even when it finds the scheme not to be generally beneficial. In certain cases, the Court may choose not to outrightly reject a scheme and direct the applicant to revise the scheme in line with public interest and other lawful considerations. Further, the Court may direct other regulatory bodies to take appropriate measures to assess the viability of a scheme and its potential impacts.



As an instance, in the case of *Robi Axiata Limited v RJSC 2016* the BRTC was entrusted with the same task and conducted an expert evaluation of the proposed merger as well as a public hearing on the merger and amalgamation as per section 87 of the Bangladesh Telecommunication Act. In this case, the Court considered several key aspects of post-amalgamation effects. While considering the effects of the merger through socio-economic lenses, the Court allowed several intermediaries including some employees of airtel to secure

The HCD plays a catalyst role in an amalgamation process and approves an amalgamation process after a thorough perusal of the application and being satisfied that the amalgamation will not bring any evil for anybody.

justice and protect public interest by applying its inherent jurisdiction. Thereafter, the Court also considered the issue of consumer rights and directed the BTRC to assess the effects of merger on the consumers in terms of charges imposed and access, quality and variety of services available, deter unfair practices of operators to secure and promote healthy competition, ensure market accessibility of new operators etc. In the language of the court, the BTRC conducted a thorough investigation and public hearing to guard against "total chaos in the telecommunication industry of Bangladesh". Indeed, there should be certain yardsticks to assess the socio-economic impact of any amalgamation process, particularly whether the scheme of amalgamation will monopolise the business affecting other corporations in the same business arena. Also, in the case of *Summit Power Limited v Summit Narayanganj Power Ltd (2018)*, the Court directed the petitioner to revisit some clauses of the scheme so as to enable them to merge the corporations.

Thus, the HCD plays a catalyst role in an amalgamation process and approves an amalgamation process after a thorough perusal of the application and being satisfied that the amalgamation will not bring any evil for anybody.

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COURT CORRIDOR

Judicial discretion as a potent tool

MOBASHSHIRA TABASSUM RAHI

When a legal rule is not adequate to reach a conclusion, honorable judges use their discretionary power by seizing assistance from legal principles, which they are entitled to do. Although statutes of our country repeatedly mention judicial discretion, they do not precisely specify its limits. In the *BLAST and Others v Bangladesh & Others (2015) 1 SCOB (AD)* case, it was suggested that courts tend to passively echo statutory punishments. However, the same case also recognised those discretionary powers embedded in Bangladesh's penal provisions allow judges to adapt sentences based on the unique facts of each case. Civil cases in Bangladesh allow judges greater flexibility in handling preliminary issues and determining financial penalties, unlike criminal cases with stricter guidelines. However, one may ask: in the presence of clear and valid legal rule, does judicial discretion still hold any



weight? The very essence of judicial discretion lies in its application when multiple permissible options coexist within the legal framework. While multiple lawful options may exist, discerning the one with the highest

moral weight stands as the core function of judicial discretion.

The perception of discretion may vary among individuals, as it is influenced by personal values, cultural norms, and lived

experiences. It hinges on what one person considers a discreet action that might differ enormously from another's perspectives. Contextual and individual experiences further influence how discretion is applied, making it a nuanced subjective judgment.

Despite conflicting legal provisions, in *Riggs v Palmer*, 115 N.Y. 506 (1889) the court (New York Court of Appeals) considered morality and societal norms using discretionary power. The core legal question in the case revolved around whether William A. Palmer, who murdered his grandfather, could still inherit his estate. The court, ultimately, decided against inheritance, ruling that his unlawful and morally

unacceptable actions forfeited any benefits granted by the will. Judge Robert Earl speaking for the majority, sided with the plaintiffs. The court, guided by timeless principles of law and recognised maxims, determined that granting Elmer any advantage from his criminal act would be fundamentally unjust. Justice demands that no one be allowed to exploit their own wrongdoings, profit from their deceit, or leverage their injustice for personal gain. Acquiring property through criminal means is similarly condemned. When important judgments like this one arise, a disconnect between legal rulings and societal norms poses a serious concern. While strict interpretations safeguard order,

clashes with fundamental morals necessitate judicial flexibility. After all, courts exist within a social fabric that grants them legitimacy, and their decisions should reflect shared social values.

Discretion permits legal actors to interpret and apply laws in a way that aligns with the contemporary perspectives. This adaptability supports maintaining the relevance and legitimacy of the legal system, as it can respond to changing public attitudes and expectations. However, while discretion is a potent tool, it must be utilised within the bounds of established laws and regulations. Meandering beyond these boundaries can undermine the principles of justice and fairness. Therefore, a delicate balance must be struck, permitting discretion without renouncing the overarching framework of legal principles.

While discretion is a potent tool, it must be utilised within the bounds of established laws and regulations. Meandering beyond these boundaries can undermine the principles of justice and fairness.

The writer is student of Law, North South University.

Tigers target 'unconventional paths' in 'bonus' quest

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh had specific dreams going into this T20 World Cup: to make the Super Eight stage by qualifying from Group D. With that target achieved, a bigger mountain now stands before them.

What coach Chandika Hathurusingha said at the press conference on Wednesday may not reflect the team's overall sentiment, but it remains to be seen whether it can ignite the passion required for the task ahead.

While the likes of Towhid Hridoy and Soumya Sarkar had oozed optimism in going far ahead of the tournament, Bangladesh skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto remarked that fans should not have high expectations since the Tigers often wear expectations like a burden. Past World Cups and many big tournaments, especially finals, are cases in point.

There are no Associate teams in Bangladesh's way in the Super Eight. First comes Australia, shortly followed by India, before the Tigers take on Afghanistan in their final Super Eight game.

"Yeah, I mean, when we came into the tournament, our first target was to get into this Super Eight. So, I think



we achieved that with... what can I say, our bowlers kept us in the game? So, we played the conditions really well, used the conditions in our favor," Hathurusingha said.

"So going forward for us, being here, we're very happy to be here. And then anything from here for us is a bonus. So, we play with a lot of freedom. And we are going to challenge all three teams the best we can," he further claimed.

It might be that he wanted to downplay the pressure. For Bangladesh, as they are not one of the Associate

nations at this World Cup, winning is the only target. But given Bangladesh's lackluster performances in the T20I format, even making the Super Eight was a big achievement.

Thus, along with the freedom to express their game, Hathurusingha reminded the players that they would have to play the roles they are responsible for.

"This game, why do we start playing this game? To enjoy," Hathurusingha said about why players come into cricket. "So that fact of enjoyment, we don't

take it away from the players. How big is the game? That doesn't mean that they have a free license to go and do whatever they want. So, the enjoyment factor is always at the forefront, but they have to do their role for the team," he added.

But this World Cup has served playing conditions that helped Bangladesh's cause so far. Going forward, there is no guarantee of that happening. Bangladesh had not been able to see the wicket for the game but were able to assess conditions with wind directions coming into play in quite a few games. Clear planning with the ball has been evident in this tournament. Hathurusingha said they might do something unique when asked if they want to beat Australia.

"Planning and decision-making give them a lot of belief that if you are not afraid to make decisions and be brave, you can compete with them [Australia]. We will probably take some unconventional paths to beat some teams," he added.

It remains to be seen whether Hathurusingha's downplaying pressure is the first step in the Tigers' "unconventional path" as they look to secure a maiden berth in the knockout stage of the premier event.

India to open next home season against Tigers

AGENCIES

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) confirmed on Thursday that India will be kicking off their upcoming home season against Bangladesh in September before hosting New Zealand in October and England next year.

India will welcome Bangladesh for a two-match Test series, which will be played in Chennai and Kanpur from September 19-23 and September 27-Oct. 1, respectively. It will be followed by three T20Is in Dharamsala, Delhi and Hyderabad.

This will only be the third instance of India hosting Bangladesh in a bilateral series. Bangladesh played a solitary Test in their first-ever tour to India for a bilateral series in 2017 while the last time the Tigers travelled across the borders was back in 2019 for a similar itinerary of three T20Is and two Tests.

Bangladesh's only win – across all formats – away to India was during the 2019 tour when the Tigers beat India by seven wickets in the first T20I in Delhi.

Following the home series against Bangladesh,

BANGLADESH'S TOUR OF INDIA

FIRST TEST: September 19, Chennai
SECOND TEST: September 27, Kanpur
FIRST T20I: October 6, Dharamsala
SECOND T20I: October 9, Delhi
THIRD T20I: October 12, Hyderabad

India will then host the Black Caps for three Tests, with the first Test starting on October 16 in Bengaluru.

England will visit India in January next year to play five T20Is and three ODIs. Chennai, Kolkata, Rajkot, Pune and Mumbai will be the venues for the T20s, while Nagpur, Cuttack and Ahmedabad will host the ODIs.

England's tour of India will begin on January 22 and conclude on February 12.

Clash of hosts with survival at stake

STAR SPORTS DESK

West Indies and USA are set to collide in a high-stake Super Eight fixture of the T20 World Cup in Barbados on Saturday, in the two teams' first-ever international meeting, the result of which will leave one of the co-hosts all but eliminated.

With both the co-hosts opening their Super Eights journey on the losing side, with the former going down against South Africa before the latter succumbing to holders England, the Kensington Oval is poised to stage a spectacle.

Although a colossal gulf of experience exists between the two teams – since the two-time champions are up against a side that advanced from the group stages in their maiden World Cup appearance – the on-field show may not reflect this, given how the USA have fared in the ongoing marquee event.

USA have scripted a fairytale by coming this far on the back of a monumental win over Pakistan in Texas. Therefore, despite an 18-run defeat to South Africa, the Aaron Jones-led side have every reason to fancy inflicting another massive upset.

West Indies, meanwhile, have done justice to their pedigree as T20 specialists, having won all four group-stage encounters.

The Men in Maroon came up short against England despite having totaled 180, but their bowling exploits left a lot to be desired. Their team management may consider fielding young pace sensation Shamar Joseph, who this year had scripted the Windies' first Test win in Australia after 27 years.

Batters come alive as England take on South Africa

STAR SPORTS DESK

Batters have started to come alive in the T20 World Cup following a shift to the West Indies and a blockbuster contest between two of the best batting lineups, at least on paper, in the tournament will face off when reigning champions England take on hot favourites South Africa at the Darren Sammy Cricket Ground in St. Lucia today.

In six meetings in T20 World Cups, South Africa have had the better of England on four occasions. England won the other two.

The venue for the contest has already seen two 200-plus first-innings totals in the four matches played so far and boasts a 194.75 average first-innings total, and on that basis, another run-fest is expected to be on the cards when the two sides lock horns.

Both sides come into the contest having won their opening Super 8 contests. Despite having flirted with group-stage elimination, England seemed to have found top gear after a dominant display in an eight-wicket victory over co-hosts West Indies in St. Lucia yesterday, courtesy of a match-winning unbeaten 47-ball 87 from opener Phil Salt.

The right-handed batter smacked five sixes and seven fours and put together an unbeaten 97-run stand with Jonny Bairstow (48 off 26) to help England



chase down an 181-run target with 15 balls to spare.

England will be further boosted by the fact that their encounter against South Africa will be at the same venue whereas the Proteas played their last match in Antigua.

On the other hand, South Africa qualified for the Super 8s with a 100 percent record but barely got over the line in at least three of the four encounters – a four-wicket win against the Netherlands, a four-run win over Bangladesh, and a one-run victory against Nepal. South Africa batters struggled to get going on wickets in New York, where they played three matches, as well as in Kingstown where they beat Nepal to cap off the group stage. Batting first in two of those contests, the South Africa batters managed a best first innings total of 115.

Against the USA, however, South

Africa's batters were able to get rid of their shackles as they posted 194 for four – their highest total this tournament so far. Opener Quinton de Kock found his mojo as he smashed five sixes and seven fours in a 40-ball 74 while skipper Aiden Markram notched up his highest score in the tournament – a 32-ball 46 which was followed by a 22-ball 36 from Heinrich Klaasen.

England are expected to go unchanged from their eleven that played against the West Indies, while Markram has a big call to make – whether to continue with two spinners or to go with an extra pace option. Tabraiz Shamsi took a solitary wicket but went for 50 runs in his four overs against the USA and should the Proteas skipper opt to go with one spinner, it would likely mean that Ottneil Baartman will return to the lineup.



Mbappe injury leaves France thinking

AFP, Paderborn

France boast fearsome strength in depth but remain hugely reliant on Kylian Mbappe for inspiration and are now facing the prospect of being without their injured superstar for at least their next Euro 2024 game against the Netherlands on Friday.

Captain Mbappe is recovering from a broken nose suffered in Monday's 1-0 win over Austria in Dusseldorf in their opening match at the tournament.

The French Football Federation later said Mbappe would not need an operation but did admit he would need to be fitted with a mask before he could return to action.

In any case, the lack of time between matches means the clash with the Dutch in Leipzig is set to come too soon for the 25-year-old.

And France coach Didier Deschamps will hope his team can get a positive result which could seal their last-16 place.

But can Les Bleus beat a strong Netherlands side without arguably the world's most lethal striker?

"Of course, he is an important player, the captain, a leader. So that will have an impact, but we have an

exceptional squad," midfielder Adrien Rabiot said on Wednesday.

France met the Netherlands twice in Euro 2024 qualifying, and Mbappe scored a brace on each occasion, in a 4-0 win in Paris and in a 2-1 victory in Amsterdam.

Above all, it is worth

considering how France have done in recent games without Mbappe.

Deschamps' team lost 2-1 in a friendly in Germany last September when Mbappe was left on the bench. They also laboured to a 0-0 draw against Canada in their final pre-tournament friendly when he only appeared as a late substitute.

The obvious option for Deschamps when it comes to replacing Mbappe would be to start Giroud, even if the big centre-forward is a very different player.

"Everyone knows I think about the collective before I think about myself," Giroud said after the Austria game.

Another option for Deschamps is to move Marcus Thuram in from the left wing and to a central role.

Thuram, though, has only scored twice for his country in 20 caps, and one of them came against Gibraltar.

Then there is Randal Kolo Muani, but he appears low on confidence after a difficult season in Mbappe's shadow at

● Kylian Mbappe, who is doubtful for the game with a broken nose, has scored more goals against the Netherlands (six) than he has versus any other nation.

● Mbappe, France's third highest

scorer of all time, is yet to score at Euro – he was unable to score in four games in the last edition of the tournament in 2022.

● This will be the fourth Euros meeting between the teams.

● France have, however, won seven of their last eight matches against the Dutch in all competitions, the exception being a 2-0 defeat in the UEFA Nations League in November 2018.



Luka Jovic celebrates after scoring a last-gasp header to snatch an equaliser for Serbia after Slovenia were put ahead by Zan Karnicnik in a Group C fixture of Euro 2024 yesterday. Even though the 1-1 draw kept both teams in contention for a place in the last 16, the head of the Serbian football association threatened to pull the team out of the tournament over chants, including "Kill, kill, kill the Serb", made during the draw between Albania and Croatia.

PHOTO: REUTERS




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Super 8 brings about batters' resurgence

ASHEFAQ-UL-ALAM

The end of the first round and the commencement of the Super Eight phase has seemingly brought an end to bowlers' domination in the ongoing ICC T20 World Cup, posing a fresh challenge for the teams that are vying for a spot in the semifinals.

In the first round of the T20 World Cup, which took place jointly in the USA and the Caribbean, the balance between the ball and bat was overwhelmingly tilted towards the former, in a surprising change from what usually transpires in the shortest format of cricket.

In the 37 completed games in the first round, the average run rate of teams was a mere 6.71. A record 10 times bowlers bowled 20 or more dot deliveries in a spell, a feat that had only happened twice before in the past eight editions of the tournament, once each in 2010 and 2012.

The four lowest successful defences in T20 World Cups have all come in the ongoing edition. Three of them happened in New York, with India



SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



Jasprit Bumrah celebrates after claiming the first of his three wickets against Afghanistan, which helped India bundle out the Afghans for 134 and secure a convincing 47-run win in their Super Eight match of the ICC T20 World Cup at the Kensington Oval in Barbados yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

NAF RIVER 'We'll retaliate if boats come under fire' Says Asaduzzaman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh would retaliate if the Myanmar military or the Arakan Army continued firing at Bangladeshi boats on the Naf river, said Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan yesterday.



The warring parties in Rakhine State have been warned about it, he said at a press briefing at the Secretariat.

"Occasionally, they [warring parties] have opened fire on our Border Guard Bangladesh by mistake. We have conveyed our concern to them. They said if our vessels clearly display the Bangladeshi flag, no one will fire at them."

Reaching Saint Martin's Island from the mainland by boat has become a challenging task due to poor navigability at certain parts of the Naf river, Asaduzzaman said.

This compelled Bangladeshi boats

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

BANGLADESHI NATIONALS, BANKS 'Swiss banks not so lucrative now to park money'

Their deposits fell in 2023 for second year in a row

SOHEL PARVEZ and REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Bangladeshi nationals and banks kept 17.71 million Swiss francs (CHF) in deposits last year in the banks of Switzerland, the lowest on record, reflecting the fading attractiveness of the country among the wealthy to park money.

This was a 68 percent decrease from the 55.2 million CHF Bangladeshi citizens and banks deposited in 2022, according to figures released yesterday by the Swiss National Bank (SNB), the central bank of the western European nation.

This is the second year in a row that deposits kept by Bangladeshis fell in Swiss banks. However, it does not mean that illicit outflows of capital from the country have come to an end, said two analysts.

"Of course, illegal money siphoning out of the country has increased, and it is taking place. But Swiss banks are not a favourite destination anymore. It is not a place to keep the identity secret anymore," said Ahsan H Mansur, executive director at the Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh, a local think tank.

"Now, Dubai and Singapore are the new havens. Money is laundered and is invested in real estate and businesses in the US and England too."

At a programme in Dhaka yesterday, Shamsul Alam, a former state minister for planning, said \$7 billion to \$8 billion are laundered from Bangladesh every year.

Swiss banks began to lose their lustre nearly a decade

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

Putin seeks 'security architecture' for Asia

Visits Vietnam; Moscow, Hanoi sign around a dozen cooperation agreements



Putin shakes hands with Vietnam's President To Lam at the Presidential Palace in Hanoi, Vietnam yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

REUTERS, Hanoi

Russian President Vladimir Putin said he wanted to build a "reliable security architecture" in the Asia-Pacific region during a state visit to Vietnam yesterday, part of a trip to Asia seen as show of defiance to the West.

A day after signing a mutual defence agreement with North Korea, Putin received a 21-gun salute at a military

ceremony in Vietnam, was embraced by two of its Communist leaders and lavishly praised by one of them.

Putin had contributed to "peace, stability and development" in the world, Vietnam's president said.

Putin's visit has drawn criticism from the United States and its allies, who treat the Russian leader as a pariah and have protested that he

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

Summer vacation cut short

Schools, colleges to open June 26

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to shorten the summer vacation for educational institutions by a week to make up for learning losses caused by unexpected closures earlier this year due to cold waves and heat waves, among other reasons.

The last day of the summer vacation will be on June 25 (Tuesday) and educational institutions will reopen on June 26 (Wednesday), said MA Khair, the public relations officer at the Ministry of Education.

According to the academic calendar, this year's Eid-ul-Azha and summer vacation started on June 13 and were scheduled to continue until July 2.

Meanwhile, the ministry also decided to resume the two-day weekend -- Friday and Saturday -- for educational institutions.

In May, the education ministry announced that academic activities at all secondary-level educational institutions would resume on Saturdays to compensate for the sudden closures due to the heatwaves.

Elderly couple murdered at a Jatrabari home

Police say it was a planned killing, motive not clear yet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An elderly couple were hacked to death at their residence at Momenbagh in the capital's Jatrabari area yesterday morning.

The deceased were identified as Shafiqur Rahman, 62, a retired driver of Janata Bank, and his wife, Farida Yasmin, 55.

Their son, Al Amin Emon, is a sub-inspector in the Special Branch of police. He joined the force in 2021.

Police recovered Shafiqur's body from the ground floor of the four-storey building and Farida's body from a bedroom on the first floor around 6:00am, Inspector (Operations) Ohidur Haque Mamun of Jatrabari Police Station told The Daily Star.

The bodies of both victims had multiple injuries inflicted by sharp weapons, the inspector added.

Emon said his parents lived with him on the first floor, and the second and third floors were rented out.

On Wednesday, Emon went to their village in Feni's Dagonbhuiyan, while his wife went to her father's house in Jatrabari's Matuail.

According to Emon, it was his father's routine to wake up at 4:00am every day, switch on the water pump, and perform the Fajr prayer at a local mosque.

Yesterday morning, his father went to the ground floor to switch on the water pump as usual. The killers, who were already there, first hacked his father to death in the garage, then went up to the first floor and hacked his mother, who was asleep at the time, before escaping through the roof.

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OF BROKEN WINGS & EMPTY EYES

Tangled in a protective net, a black drongo hangs dead above a fish enclosure in Madhabhakhata village in Khulna's Dumuria upazila. Farmers and fishery owners have set up such nets over enclosures and crop farms to ward off pests. When the birds come by to look for food, mainly insects, they get trapped, tangled and strangled to death. However, little do the people know that these birds play an important ecological function in controlling pests and thereby, help maintain a balance benefitting the farmers and the ecosystems. As a matter of fact, black drongos are sometimes even referred to as "symbols of good fortune" owing to their ecological role. This photo highlights the importance of awareness about the vital role these birds play in maintaining natural harmony and why they should be protected.



PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

US, UK, EU voice worry over conflict in Rakhine State

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

As many as 15 countries -- including the US and the UK -- and development partners yesterday expressed concern over the worsening situation in the Rakhine State of Myanmar and the cross-border implications.

"Today we reiterate the importance of protecting all civilians," they said in a joint statement on the occasion of the World Refugee Day yesterday.

The intense fighting between the Myanmar military and the Arakan Army in Rakhine State since November last year has left hundreds of thousands of people, including the Rohingya, displaced.

Another several thousand also took shelter along the Naf river close to the Bangladesh border.

Several hundred Myanmar border security personnel and Myanmar military along with some of their family members had also crossed the border and taken shelter in Bangladesh. They were later repatriated.

Transport through the waterway between Teknaf and St Martin's Island has remained suspended after bullets were fired targeting boats last week.

The 15 countries in their statement recognised Bangladesh's generosity in hosting more than a million Rohingya who fled their homes in 2017 and earlier.

The other signatories of the statement are Japan, Germany, Canada, Australia, Denmark, Spain, Sweden, France, Switzerland, Norway and Italy.

The donor countries said they will continue to make

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