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PUBLIC SERVANTS

Anti-graft laws, rules relaxed over the years

BAHARAM KHAN

For over two decades, laws and regulations meant for curbing corruption by government employees have been relaxed, creating scope for officials to indulge in irregularities with relative impunity.

Both the BNP and Awami League-led governments made amendments to the rules, lightening penalties for corruption.

Through an amendment to the Government Servants (Discipline and Appeal) Rules (1985), the authorities in 2018 included "reprimand" as a penalty for corruption that has been proven through investigations.

Before this amendment, the punishment was either "compulsory retirement", "removal from service" or "dismissal from service".

Civil service expert Firoz Mia said relaxation of the rules and regulations would have a harmful impact in the long run.

1979 As per Government Servant (Conduct) Rules, submission of wealth statement every year was mandatory	1985 As per Government Servants (Discipline and Appeal) Rules, the punishment for corruption was "dismissal" or "removal from service."
2002 The rules were amended. Govt officials now have to submit wealth statement every 5 years.	2018 The rules were amended. A provision of "reprimand" was included creating scope of lighter punishment.

"If an investigation finds that a government employee was involved in corruption, why would the person be in service? Why should other officials work alongside the corrupt individual? What message would the colleagues get?" he asked.

Instead of creating scopes for corrupt officials to evade accountability, the government should make strict corruption-busting rules that uphold transparency, he added.

In April, an investigation found that Promatha Ranjan Ghatak, now an assistant secretary, had embezzled Tk 7.35 crore while he was the land acquisition officer in Madaripur from June 2020 to June 2021.

On papers, he provided the money to five locals who owned plots of land that were acquired by the state for the Padma Bridge. But in reality, as public administration ministry investigations found, the plots were owned by the government, and there was no need to compensate anyone.

The punishment Promatha received was a demotion from the rank of senior assistant secretary to assistant secretary.

Feroz Mia said the penalty was not commensurate with Promatha's offence.

A joint secretary of the cabinet division, requesting anonymity, said, "Had the 1985 rules not been relaxed, the official would surely be dismissed. As long as he is there, his honest colleagues will feel uncomfortable."

In April, the government reduced the salary of Bir Amir Hamza, an assistant commissioner (land) of Bogura Sadar Upazila, for 12 months after he was found guilty of forgery for financial gains.

The punishment raised eyebrows as many of his superiors thought he would be sacked.

Many believe that the government provided impunity to the public servants by enacting the Government Services Act, 2018, which replaced Public Servants (Dismissal on Conviction) Ordinance, 1985.

According to the 1985 ordinance, a government employee punished for any criminal offence should be dismissed.

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PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

The roof of the platform at Narayanganj's Fatullah Railway Station is falling apart due to a lack of maintenance. This is causing suffering to passengers as they find it difficult to cover themselves from sun and rain. The photo was taken on Thursday.

2 of the killers faked identity, worked at a temple: DB

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Foysal Ali Sahazi and Mostafizur Rahman Fakir, suspects in the Jhenaidah-4 MP Anwarul Azim Anar murder case, are truck drivers. But to dodge the eyes of law enforcers, they started working as cooks at a temple.

In the morning, they would wake up and head to a kitchen market to buy vegetables. They then prepared and cooked the vegetable. Just like devout Hindus, they would work at the temple so that no one could doubt them.

Sources in the Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), who are investigating the killing of the MP from Kaliganj, revealed this.

The two suspects were arrested from a Kali temple in Chattogram's Sitakunda on Wednesday evening. They are on a six-day remand in DB custody.

Foysal and Mostafizur were shown arrested in the MP Azim abduction case

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



Rice prices up by Tk 2-3 a kg

Sellers attribute it to paddy price hike, mills closure during Eid

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and MUNTAKIM SAAD

Prices of almost all varieties of rice have gone up in the capital's kitchen markets over the last one week.

Traders said rice prices have increased by Tk 50 to Tk 100 per 50 kg sack because of the price hike of paddy and the closure of rice mills for the Eid-ul-Azha.

The prices of the staple have soared at a time when the county has sufficient stock.

Visiting several markets in the capital yesterday, The Daily Star found that retailers were selling, depending on quality, Miniket rice for Tk 62 to Tk 68 a kg, Nazirshail for Tk 65 to Tk 78, BR 28 and BR-29 for Tk 54 to Tk 56, coarse grain rice for Tk 54, and coarse hybrid rice for Tk 48.

Before the Eid on June 17, the retail prices of these varieties were lower by Tk 2-3 per kg.

Nayeem Hossain, a private service holder, said he had bought Miniket rice from a store in East Shewrapara at Tk 72 a kg before the Eid. For the same variety of rice, he had to pay Tk 75 yesterday.

Abul Hashem, owner of Hashem General Store at Ibrahimpur Bazar in Kafrul, said he sold Miniket rice for Tk 68 a kg a week ago, but the staple sold for Tk 70 yesterday. Similarly, the price of BR 28 rice has gone up to Tk 55 per kg from Tk 53 a week ago.

"The price hike in the wholesale markets is having an impact on the retail prices," he said.

Alamgir Hossain, manager of Suchana Rice at Mohammadpur Krishi Market, attributed the rice price hike to the increase in paddy prices.

He said the prices of Miniket and Nazirshail rice have gone up by Tk 100 per 50 kg, while the price of BR-28 rice has increased by Tk 50 per 50 kg.

Kamal Sarder, proprietor of Makbul Traders at Mirpur-II kitchen

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Maiden triumph or return to glory?

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ninth edition of the ICC T20 World Cup will draw to a close today with a never-seen-before matchup in the final, as inaugural champions India take on first-time finalists South Africa for the right to call themselves the best in the world in the shortest format of the game.

The match, set to take place at the Kensington Oval in Barbados starting from 8:30 pm Bangladesh time, will draw the curtains on perhaps the most unique edition of the T20 World Cup so far.

The tournament was set to be different from the onset, with 20 teams competing, the most in any cricket World Cup, and the USA co-hosting the event for the first time alongside the West Indies.

More surprises got unravelled as the tournament kicked into gear, with the drop in pitches in the USA and the sluggish wickets in the Caribbean making way for some low-scoring yet exciting encounters throughout the competition.

A number of shocking results also took place, with the USA's stunning win over Pakistan and qualification to the Super Eight and Afghanistan triumphing over Australia and making it to the semifinals for the first time topping the list.

After four weeks of action across North America, India and South Africa, the two undefeated sides in the tournament, are the final two standing.

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GANGA WATER-SHARING

Indian foreign ministry refutes Mamata's claim Says Centre consulted state govt about treaty's renewal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Indian foreign ministry yesterday refuted West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's claim that the Centre did not consult the state government on the renewal of the Ganga water-sharing treaty with Bangladesh.

"The facts do not bear out the assertions [by Mamata]. The representative of the West Bengal government has attended all the meetings of an internal committee set up on the issue (of the Ganges water-sharing accord with Bangladesh) consisting of all stakeholders. In fact, on April 6, 2024, a communication was received from the West Bengal government indicating its requirement of drinking water and industrial water under the treaty beyond 2026," Ministry of External Affairs Randhir Jaiswal told the weekly media briefing in New Delhi.

His remarks came after Mamata wrote a letter to Indian Prime Minister

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Democrat candidate, US President Joe Biden, and Republican candidate, former president Donald Trump, attend a debate ahead of the presidential election, in Atlanta, Georgia, US, on Thursday.

PHOTO: AFP

US PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE

Flop show rocks Biden campaign

AFP, Atlanta

A badly wounded Joe Biden looked to get his re-election campaign back on track yesterday after a debate performance that unnerved supporters and left allies of Donald Trump unable to conceal their glee.

Democrats had hoped to see the president defiantly answering critics who say he is too old for a second term while hammering Trump on his criminal record and the threat they say he poses to democracy.

Instead, many acknowledged, they got a faltering display from a candidate who sounded hoarse for much of the showdown, stumbled over words, pulled punches, often stared open-mouthed and looked confused.

"There are no two ways about it - that was not a good debate for Joe Biden," Democratic former White House communications chief Kate Bedingfield told host network CNN as the curtain came down on the match-up.

David Axelrod, a senior advisor in Barack Obama's administration, said Biden's performance had "confirmed people's fears" about an 81-year-old being too old for the Oval Office.

The president, who had spent days in mock debates at his Camp David retreat, was scheduled to begin the clean-up yesterday with his largest event of the campaign, in the battleground state of North Carolina.

Facing tough questions over his performance and

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

3 Ansar Al Islam members arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT,
Cox's Bazar

Three suspected members of the banned militant organisation Ansar Al Islam were arrested in the Chowfaldandi area of Cox's Bazar.

The arrested Zakaria Mandal, 19, of Jamalpur, Md Niamat Ullah, 21, of Bhola, and Md Ozair, 19, of Feni, are active members of the banned militant outfit, said Rab.

Ten extremist books, 29 leaflets, 1 diary, 2 madrasa identity cards, 2 NIDs, 2 mobile phones and Tk 4,590 were seized from their possession.

Teams from the intelligence wing of Rab headquarters, Rab-15 and Rab-7 conducted the operation Thursday night, Commander Arafat Islam, director of the legal and media wing of Rab, told journalists yesterday.

After the Eid holidays, the arrestees left home and gathered in Cox's Bazar to conduct secret meetings, Arafat said.

They joined Ansar al-Islam after being inspired by the rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan, he added.

"The activities of Ansar Al Islam almost came to a standstill in the face of regular operations by Rab and other law enforcement forces. Due to disruption of activities in the name of this organisation [Ansar Al Islam], they formed a new militant group named 'As Shahadat' with the ideology of Ansar al-Islam and are carrying out recruitment activities."



MY DHAKA

The unknown tomb in Mohammadpur

SK MEHEDI HASSAN

Between Shia Mosque and Mohammadpur Bus Stand, a mausoleum stands at Banshbari, easily visible on the left. On the other side of the road is the historic Sat Gambuj Mosque and today, surrounded by numerous modern buildings, the sepulchre stands out because of its unique design and structure.

"Whose grave is this?" – I often wonder. With utmost curiosity, I asked several locals this very same question, but no one could provide a clear answer.

From the outside, the structure looks like a Nawab's house. The old building evokes a forgotten past with its style, shape, and use of materials, intriguing people about the story behind it.

Archaeologists and historians suggest that the building belongs to the Mughal era. Buildings of that era have a uniform pattern of structure and character, including large bulbous domes, slender minarets at the corners, massive halls, large vaulted gateways, and delicate ornamentation.

Regarding the mausoleum, Nuruzzaman Sheikh, a resident of Mohammadpur, said, "I see the structure regularly but never



PHOTO: STAR



thought about whose grave it might be. When the government itself doesn't know, how would I?"

The Department of Archaeology has a signboard that reads: "Unknown Tomb:

The tomb appears to be an inseparable part of Sat Gambuj Masjid. According to the legend... one of the daughters of Nawab Shaista Khan was buried in it."

Shaista Khan governed Bengal for 24 years (1664-1688), with a break for a little over one year in 1678-79. His tenure as subahdar was the longest. Of Iranian origin, his family was connected with the Mughal royal family.

As even the Department of Archaeology cannot determine who is buried there, a mystery always shrouds the structure.

Besides, there are two more graves on the tomb premises, but no statement clarifies who they belong to. It is assumed that the graves are of those who took care of the tomb.

On a sunny afternoon, I visited the spot. The gate was open, and the premises were

fenced with iron bars, with no one around the structure.

There are four doors on four sides. I got close to one of the doors. Amid the chaotic life outside, an eerie silence existed inside the building. A large grave with a green cloth covering the surface was visible.

In a dimly lit, ancient tomb, several candles flickered, casting eerie shadows on the walls. Amidst the glow, a man seemed to pray.

The air was thick with mystery as if the secrets of the past were silently watching over the scene.

While I was getting out, I looked back. The mysterious tomb of Mohammadpur stood as an enigmatic relic of history – its silent walls echoing with unanswered questions and forgotten tales from centuries past.

Indian foreign ministry

FROM PAGE 1
Narendra Modi on June 24 opposing any water-sharing talks with Bangladesh without the state's involvement, reports our New Delhi correspondent.

Jaiswal said India's internal committee on the renewal of the Ganges water-sharing treaty has submitted its final report. He, however, did not disclose its content.

India and Bangladesh signed the Ganga water-sharing accord in 1996. The 30-year treaty is due to expire in 2026 but may be extended by mutual agreement.

Last Saturday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi after meeting his Bangladeshi counterpart Sheikh Hasina in New Delhi announced that the two countries will begin technical-level discussions on the renewal of the treaty.

In the letter to Modi, Mamata had claimed that the decision to start talks for the renewal of the Ganges water-sharing treaty with Bangladesh was "unilateral" and urged him not to hold any discussion with Bangladesh without involving the West Bengal government.

Asked if any payment of fees and deployment of security personnel were discussed while signing the MoU allowing Indian railways to access Bangladesh territory, Jaiswal said those can only be answered by technical experts.

"These are technical questions and these will be addressed by technical experts at the right time."

The MEA spokesman said India and Bangladesh are working to enhance connectivity to promote bilateral trade and in other areas to take the relationship to a higher level.

AL to hold

FROM PAGE 1
The AL announced its programme yesterday saying that it will hold a discussion at 3:00pm today in front of its central office on Bangabandhu Avenue, around 1.6km away from the BNP headquarters.

This is the third time since the January 7 parliamentary polls the ruling party is organising a programme to counter BNP's.

On January 30, the BNP took out black flag processions in the capital calling for dissolution of the 12th parliament. On the same day, the AL organised nationwide rallies protesting "undemocratic activities" of the BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami.

The ruling party held "peace rallies" since December last year apparently to counter the BNP's demonstrations demanding general election under a non-party neutral administration.

Anti-graft laws, rules relaxed over the years

FROM PAGE 1
As per the 2018 act, an employee can be in service even after being sentenced to up to 12 months in prison for a criminal offence.

The 2002 amendment to the Government Servant (Conduct) Rules 1979 is yet another example.

According to Section-13 of the rules, civil servants had to submit their wealth statement to their departments every year.

But now the employees have to do it every five years, thanks to an amendment to the rules during the tenure of the BNP-led alliance government in 2002.

Many officials do not bother with submitting their wealth statements at all, sources said.

Besides, the public administration ministry has taken an initiative to further relax this provision. The ministry proposes that the

government collect the employees' wealth statements from annual tax returns if necessary.

Former secretary Badiur Rahman said that weakening the law means encouraging corruption.

The lenient rules and laws send a message to the government employees that they can get away with corruption, he said. "These amendments are a step in the wrong direction."

Only stringent laws can deter corruption, he added.

Supreme Court lawyer Arif Khan said, "Enacting laws or regulations that encourage corruption is tantamount to ignoring the Constitution."

The Constitution states that the government will enact laws so that no citizen can possess illegal wealth. According to Article 20(2) of the Constitution, "The State shall endeavour to create conditions in

which, as a general principle, persons shall not be able to enjoy unearned incomes..."

Over the last few weeks, corruption by several government officials hogged the headlines.

Awami League leader and lawmaker Mahbul Alam Hanif on June 25 told parliament that corruption had eclipsed the government's achievements.

"The government has repeatedly announced its zero-tolerance policy against corruption... The rules and regulations have been relaxed and made more lenient. There is scope for errand officers to be on job with the bare minimum penalties."

He said the Government Services Act, 2018, could be "considered a law to protect criminals."

On June 26, lawmaker Kabirul Haque said corruption had become institutionalised.

2 of the killers faked identity

FROM PAGE 1
filed with Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station by his daughter.

According to investigators, all the suspects of MP Azim's murder went into hiding after detectives arrested Amanullah alias Shimul Bhuiyan, the coordinator of the killing mission, on May 19.

"Foyzal and Mostafiz are the followers of Amanullah, a leader of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party. They worked as two main associates of Amanullah in the murder of the MP," said DB chief Harun Or Rashid, also an additional commissioner of the DMP, yesterday.

He said the duo were involved in different criminal activities on Amanullah's instructions.

Regarding the hideout in the temple, the detectives said Foyzal and Mostafiz returned to Bangladesh on May 19 from Kolkata after the killing of the MP on May 13. They then called Aktaruzzaman, one of the masterminds of the murder, over the

phone to pay the blood money.

Aktaruzzaman, now believed to be hiding in the US, then gave them Tk 30,000.

With the money, the duo first went to Chandranath Temple on the Chandranath Hill of Chattogram and tried to stay there.

Investigators said there is a police outpost on the hill. The area is also under the coverage of CCTV cameras, they said.

When the two approached the on-duty police personnel, they were told that they could not stay at the temple.

But at their request, the police personnel asked the duo to go to Patal Temple at the foot of the hill saying that they could stay there at night, said investigators.

The two then went to the temple. Posing as cousins, they identified themselves as Shimul Roy and Polash Roy.

Quoting devotees at the temple, the detectives said no one could doubt their activities.

Rice prices up by Tk 2-3 a kg

FROM PAGE 1
Majumdar Traders, a leading rice market, said millers have hiked the rice prices gradually since the reopening of the mills after the Eid.

"Prices of paddy have been increasing for the last two-three days, but the millers started hiking the rice prices after the Eid," he added.

Chitta Majumder, owner of

he said even though rice is cheaper in India compared to Bangladesh, they cannot import the staple.

"This is because the selling price of the imported rice would be higher by Tk8-10 per kg than the price of a similar variety of local rice as we have to pay import taxes and VAT," he added.

BOGURA JAILBREAK

Deputy jailer, chief prison guard suspended

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

A deputy jailer and the chief prison guard of Bogura District Jail have been suspended from their posts over negligence in duty following the jailbreak of four death row convicts early Wednesday.

Md Hosenuzzaman, deputy jailer, and Farid Uddin, chief prison guard, were suspended on Thursday, jail authorities told 'The Daily Star'.

Earlier on June 26, prison authorities also suspended three other prison guards, Bogura District Jail Superintendent Anwar Hossain said.

The prison authorities also evacuated the "Jailong cell" and shifted the 10 death row convicts and 16 other prisoners, including militants, to another building following the jailbreak.

They have been kept under a special arrangement in another cell of the jail, said the jail superintendent.

The investigation committee which was formed after the incident considers the building risky, he added.

Three held with foreign liquor worth Tk 2 crore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

The Narcotics Control Department arrested three people along with large quantities of illegal foreign liquor worth about Tk 2 crore in Patuakhali early yesterday.

A lorry along with 26,880 cans of Chinese beer were seized in a raid at the toll plaza area of Patuakhali Bridge on the Patuakhali Barishal highway, said Patuakhali Narcotics Control Department Assistant Director Enayet Hossain.

The arrestees are Mehedi Hasan Rabbi, 23, of Nachnapara Chowrasta area of Patuakhali's Kalapara upazila, lorry driver Rubel Munshi, 27, of Barishal's Kaunia area, and Basirul Islam, 28, of Dinajpur's Fulbaria Municipality area.

Of them, Basirul and Mehedi are working for Patuakhali's Payra Power Plant's contractor Chinese company, Oriental Pearl.

Enayet said the consignment was seized based on a tip-off. It is believed that these beers came from China to Kalapara via Payra Port. This is the biggest consignment of illegal beer seized in Barisal division.

A case has been filed with Patuakhali Sadar Police Station over the incident.

Quoting the lorry driver, the DNC official said each can contain 330ml of beer and the market value of the seized beer is around Tk 2.15 crore.

Flop show rocks Biden campaign

FROM PAGE 1
immediate future, he told reporters he had done "well" as he stopped off at an Atlanta Waffle House with First Lady Jill Biden after coming off stage.

He added that he was croaking because of a "sore throat" and that, in any case, it is "hard to debate a liar."

Although Biden managed to pin down Trump on abortion rights and his role in the violence that marred the 2021 handover, he waited bafflingly long – almost 45 minutes – to bring up Trump's felony convictions and other legal woes in any detail.

He spoke under his breath and appeared at times to lose focus, pausing for several seconds after stumbling in the opening stages.

Trump's performance was far from accomplished – his verbal fusillades were littered with falsehoods and he dodged several times when asked what he would do about the opioid crisis ravaging middle-class families.

He also refused to clearly commit to accepting the results of November's election, playing into the narrative that he has little respect for democracy or the rule of law.

CNN reported that while Biden made nine false or misleading statements, Trump made a staggering 30, including "egregious" falsehoods on abortion, the US Capitol insurrection, health care and NATO.

But the Republican – who is countering Biden's rally with an appearance of his own in Virginia on Friday – largely avoided the rhetorical landmines that exploded under Biden.

At one point, the president bizarrely declared that "we finally beat Medicare," as the discussion turned to funding the health insurance program for seniors.

A Biden replacement?

As the disappointment of Biden's showing registered with Democrats, there was even talk of finding a new candidate before the party's convention in August.

Democrats – "including members of his own administration – traded frenzied phone calls and text messages within minutes of the start of the debate as it became clear that Mr. Biden was not at his sharpest," the New York Times reported.

Some also "privately discussed among themselves whether it was too late to persuade the president to step aside in favor of a younger candidate," the paper added.

Even a German official coordinating cooperation with the United States told a German newspaper that Democrats should consider replacing Biden as their candidate.

"There's been a lot of chatter in our circles about Newsom," one party strategist told political outlet The Hill – although California governor Gavin Newsom quickly shut down suggestions that he could take Biden's place.

In the Trump corner, pundits revealed at how the night turned out.

Keith Nahigian, a Republican veteran of six campaigns who helped prepare multiple election candidates including John McCain for debates, told AFP that Biden's performance was "the worst I've ever seen."

"Biden called for this debate a few months ago. He pushed for this debate. I think he just sunk his presidency," he added.

Ralph Reed, chairman of the conservative Faith and Freedom Coalition, compared the debate to a prize fight "that should have been stopped in the early rounds."

Maiden triumph or return to glory?

FROM PAGE 1
India's journey to the final has been smooth, as barring the first round match against Pakistan, which they won by six runs, they have hardly been tested, overpowering every opponent en route to their third T20 World Cup final.

By comparison, South Africa's road to the final has been bumpy and full of obstacles.

The Proteas edged Nepal and Bangladesh by one and three runs respectively in the first round in low-scoring thrillers, held their nerves against West Indies in their final Super Eight game which had turned into a virtual quarterfinal and then thrashed Afghanistan in the semifinals – their first win in a World Cup semifinal after seven unsuccessful attempts.

The win over Afghanistan lifted a weight which had been weighing down the South African team since the 1992 ODI World Cup, when their dreaded streak of semifinal defeats began.

Now, Aiden Markram's side will be stepping into uncharted waters in the

final, while Rohit Sharma's team will come face to face with a hurdle they have come to dread in recent years.

India have enjoyed a dominant phase in the last decade across three formats, reaching the knockout stage in nine ICC tournaments and making the final five times – T20 World Cup in 2014, ODI World Cup in 2023, ICC Champions Trophy in 2017 and the ICC Test Championship in 2021 and 2023.

However, in all five finals, the Men in Blue got bested. The defeat to Australia in last year's ODI World Cup final in front of over 130,000 home fans in Ahmedabad was particularly scarring for Rohit's team, a side that had come into that final undefeated, much like they have done in the current event.

Today's final in Barbados is an opportunity for Rohit and his team to exorcise the past demons and take India back to the top of the mountain in T20s for the first time since 2007. Meanwhile, for South Africa, the match is the chance to pass over the 'chokers' moniker to India and replace it with champions.



A butterfly relishes nectar from a flower. Skipping from flower to flower, these winged insects collect nectar, aiding pollination for new flowers to bloom. The photo was taken in Doulatpur Rail Station area, Khulna.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Uphold ideals of Liberation War

Chief justice urges journos; 3 get Bazlur Rahman Smrity Padak

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan yesterday called upon journalists to adhere to the principles of those who sacrificed their lives during the 1971 Liberation War in their professional work.

Speaking as the chief guest at an award ceremony, he commemorated journalists such as Shahidullah Kayser, Shaheed Saber, Sirajuddin Hossain, and Selina Parvin, who laid down their lives for the country's independence.

Highlighting the contribution of the Liberation War Museum, Hassan praised the institution's efforts to educate future generations.

He said without such institutions, many aspects of the Liberation War would have been lost.

He urged the audience, especially the public representatives present, to establish research centres at the grassroots to spread the spirit of the Liberation War.

The Liberation War Museum organised the event to present the Bazlur Rahman Smrity Padak-2023 awards for journalism.

Ahmad Istiak, a reporter from The Daily Star, and Jharna Moni, deputy chief reporter of the Bhorer Kagoj, jointly received the award in the print media category.

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PHOTO: STAR

The awardees with the dignitaries at the event yesterday.

Govt 'sheltering the corrupt'

Alleges BNP leader Farroque

UNB, Dhaka

The Awami League government is providing shelter to numerous corrupt individuals like Aziz Ahmed and Benazir Ahmed, alleged BNP chairperson's advisory council member Zainul Abedin Farroque yesterday.

"Where is Benazir [former police chief Benazir Ahmed], Aziz [former army chief Aziz Ahmed], Matiur [revenue officer Matiur Rahman] today?" he questioned.

Speaking at a demonstration, the BNP leader said new corrupt individuals like National Board of Revenue first secretary [Taxes Legal and Enforcement] Quazi Abu Mahmud Faisal have emerged.

"In Bangladesh, there are numerous individuals thriving under the shelter of the government, who have amassed crores of taka by plundering. These people must be exposed, or the people of Bangladesh will never forgive you [government]," the BNP leader said.

Farroque, a former opposition chief whip in parliament, criticised the AL general secretary for his political rhetoric supporting the government amid increasing allegations of corruption against government officials. "The people are very conscious. You're in power with the support of a few bureaucrats. You have not been able to win over the people," he claimed.

Projonmo Bangladesh, a pro-opposition platform, organised the programme in front of Jatiya Press Club, protesting the government's agreement with India.

The BNP leader strongly opposed the Indian government's plan to develop a network of railway tracks through Bangladesh to connect the northeast region with the rest of India.



Vendors take up almost the entire footpath in front of Dhaka Medical College Hospital, leaving little to no room for patients and pedestrians to walk. The photo was taken yesterday.

'Take action to prevent child marriage'

UN under-secy-general urges to invest in girls' education

PORIMOL PALMA

Child marriage in Bangladesh is deeply troubling, and effective and immediate action is required to put an end to it, said UN Under-Secretary-General Dr Natalia Kanem.

"We have seen girls aged just 12 who are pregnant. This is deeply worrying, and society needs to realise it and take action in this regard," said Dr Kanem, who is also executive director of the UN Population Fund (UNFPA).

She was in Dhaka recently for a two-day global dialogue on demographic diversity and sustainable development, marking the 30th anniversary of 1994's landmark International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo.

In an interview with The Daily Star, she spoke on the progress made since the ICPD in Cairo and the challenges and ways out in the days to come.

She said ICPD put women and girls at the centre of development, and there has been remarkable progress in women's development, alongside their sexual and reproductive health.

"For example, maternal mortality fell by one-third. In Bangladesh, it fell by 38 percent. There



The dividend comes when you invest in girls' education. This will ultimately lead to multiple benefits in health, productivity, and income.

NATALIA KANEM

were many policies and laws enacted, like the Prevention of Oppression Against Women and Children Act 2000 in Bangladesh," Kanem said.

However, the ICPD agenda remains largely unfinished, with child marriage being one of them, she added.

According to UN data, 51 percent of girls in Bangladesh are married before their 18th birthday and of them, 15 percent are married before the age of 15. Additionally, at least four percent of boys are married before the age of 18.

"It is very risky to have a pregnancy at such a young age. Teaching them safe sexuality and delaying pregnancy are of critical importance," Dr Kanem said.

When such young women give birth to children, they face health risks, alongside higher risks of gender-based violence, she said.

If the mother is educated, a family enjoys better health and economic conditions, eventually leading to a better-off future generation, while the opposite happens otherwise, she added.

"The dividend comes when you invest in girls' education. This will ultimately lead to multiple benefits in health, productivity, and income," she also said.

Another objective of ICPD was to end maternal and child deaths, but that goal is far from being achieved despite notable progress.

Sharing her experience of visiting facilities at the Santal community in Gaibandha, where UNFPA-trained midwives deliver babies, Dr Kanem said before only three percent of women used to go to the facility but now it has gone up to 20 percent.

"Three midwives delivered 494 children there. The people were so happy," she said, noting that pregnant women visiting such facilities for deliveries and pregnancy-related advice help in a great way.

In general, 33 percent of deliveries take place at homes, which is dangerous. The challenge now is how to decrease it, she said, adding, "Bangladesh has leadership, but massive social awareness is required and media can play a role here."

AUG 21 GRENADE ATTACK

Road to justice still not over

HC yet to conclude hearings on death references, appeals

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

It is still uncertain when the August 21 grenade attack cases will reach the eventuality although the High Court has so far held hearings on death references and appeals for 91 working days since December 5, 2022.

The cases were filed after the gruesome attacks on an Awami League rally at Bangabandhu Avenue in Dhaka on August 21, 2004, leaving at least 24 people dead and 300 injured.

The then opposition leader Sheikh Hasina, now the prime



An unexploded grenade at the scene.

STAR FILE PHOTO

minister, narrowly escaped death in the incident.

The state counsels (deputy attorney generals and assistant attorney generals) have read out from the paper books, which contain all the details of a case, trial proceedings, statements, evidence, verdicts and other documents of the cases, for 61 days before the HC bench of Justice Shahidul Karim and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman.

Then the defence counsels have placed arguments for 30 days till June 12 before the bench on behalf of 24 convicted accused out of total 49.

The HC bench will resume the hearing on June 30, court

sources said.

Once the defence lawyers finish placing arguments, the state counsels will make arguments against the convicted accused and then the defence will give reply to their (state) arguments. Deputy Attorney General Bashir Ahmed told The Daily Star on June 20.

After concluding the hearings, the HC bench will deliver a verdict on the death references, and the appeals, filed by the convicted accused challenging the trial court judgement.

DAG Bashir said after the HC will release the full text of the verdict, both the state

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

A Dhaka court on October 10, 2018 sentenced 19 people, including former state minister for home Lutfozzaman Babar to death in two cases. Nineteen others including BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman were given life imprisonment.

'Introduce ration for RMG workers'

DU CORRESPONDENT

A rationing system must be introduced for ready-made garment (RMG) workers and low-income people, demanded participants at rallies in Dhaka yesterday.

Bangladesh Garment Sramik Sanghati and the National Garment Workers Federation organised the separate programmes in front of Jatiya Press Club.

The speakers also sought the cancellation of tax exemptions for illegal "wealth earners and money launderers".

They said although the lion's share of remittance comes from the RMG sector, no budget allocation is kept for them, they said.

Low-income people are intimidated when the new budget comes, as taxes on goods increase every year, said the participants.

Taslina Akhter, president of Bangladesh Garment Sramik Sanghati, and Babul Hossain, its general secretary, were among those present.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

SHARIFA'S TALE Removing it from textbook was a submissive decision Says Nirmul Committee

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ekattorer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee yesterday condemned the education ministry's decision to remove the story titled "Sharifa's Tale" from the seventh grade textbook under the new curriculum, terming the decision "submissive".

In a statement, the pro-Liberation War platform demanded that the ministry immediately withdraw the decision, calling upon the government to make the curriculum inclusive.

The education ministry recently decided to remove "Sharifa's Tale" from the seventh-grade textbook following recommendations of a probe committee and instructed the National Curriculum and Textbook Board to take necessary steps regarding the decision.

Nirmul Committee said the new curriculum has been formulated based on pluralism but is facing a setback because of such recommendations. It said communal forces have been creating obstacles to implement the curriculum, demanding legal action against those who were running campaigns both online and offline against it.

"Sharifa's Tale" was included in the history and social science book for seventh grade in a section on "human similarities and differences". This chapter was designed under the new curriculum to raise public awareness about transgender people.

Prof Md Moshuazzaman, acting NCTB chairman, recently told The Daily Star the story would be replaced in the next academic year. The textbook would still have a topic for the same learning outcome, but with a different narrative.

The story drew significant attention after an adjunct faculty member of BRAC University tore out the pages containing it during an event. A video of this incident went viral on social media.

On January 24, the education ministry formed a five-member committee to review "Sharifa's Tale". The committee recommended dropping the story in May.

Poet Abul Hussain's death anniversary

CITY DESK

Today is the 10th death anniversary of poet Abul Hussain, said a press release.

On this day in 2014, he passed away.

Poet Abul Hussain authored 25 books.

Naba Basanta was his first book of poetry. Birash Sanglap (1969), Duswapna Te Duswapne (1985), Haoa Tomoy Ache (1982), Ekho Shomoy Ache (1997), Aar Kirsheer Opekkha (2000), Kaler Khatae (2008), and Selected Poems by Abul Hussain (1986) are some of his notable works.

Born in Khulna on August 15, 1922, he was educated at Kolkata Presidency College and Kolkata University in Economics.

Poet Abul Hussain received Ekushey Padak, Bangla Academy Award and Padabali Award.

12-year-old boy drowns in river

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A boy drowned while he was swimming in the Old Brahmaputra river in Mymensingh's Galargaon upazila yesterday morning.

The victim is Masum Billah, 12, son of Saidul Islam. Quoting locals, Md Abu Bakar Siddique, officer-in-charge of Galargaon Police Station, said Masum Billah, a student at a local madrasa, along with five other boys went to swim in the river in Char Bhatipara.

Masum suddenly drowned in the river. His body was recovered around noon.



'We demanded concrete bridges, got wooden ones'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

The local authorities have constructed a total of 12 wooden bridges to replace makeshift bamboo ones over canals and streams across Roumari and Char Rajibpur upazilas in Kurigram.

Of those, nine bridges were constructed in Roumari and three in Char Rajibpur with funds from the Rural Infrastructure Maintenance (Test Relief) Programme under the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief.

Separated by the Brahmaputra river, the two upazilas are dotted with canals and small rivers and are largely affected by river erosion and flooding. The residents of the villages face immense difficulties in commuting to the upazila headquarters due to poor communication.

For years, the residents have been using makeshift bamboo bridges to cross the waterbodies crisscrossing through the two upazilas. They have long been demanding the construction of permanent concrete bridges to ease their suffering.

"We had demanded construction of concrete bridges, but the authorities built these wooden ones. These will not last long. At least these are less risky than

bamboo bridges. However, we urge the authorities concerned to construct concrete bridges to enhance communication in these areas," said Atiar Rahman, a school teacher in Kalapani area under Char Rajibpur upazila.

"Earlier, local farmers had to carry their produce to markets on Akkel Ali, a farmer from Char Lalkura village under Roumari upazila, echoed him.

According to Mohammad Shamsuddin and Lutfar Rahman, project implementation officers of Roumari and Char Rajibpur upazilas respectively, each wooden bridge is 50-100 feet long and was



foot using the bamboo bridge on the Jalchhera river. Now the newly constructed wooden bridge will allow battery-run easy-bikes to ply, making things a bit easier. We are happy, but would have been happier if our demand for a permanent concrete bridge was met," said Nur Mandal, a farmer from the upazila's Khajarghat area.

built at a cost of Tk 2.4 lakh.

Contacted, Biplab Hasan, lawmaker from Kurigram-4 constituency, said letters have already been sent to the authorities of the relief department and Local Government Engineering Department to construct concrete bridges on several small rivers and canals in phases.

20 shops gutted in Bagerhat fire

UNB, Bagerhat

At least 20 shops were gutted in a fire that broke out in a market in Sarankhola upazila of Bagerhat on Thursday night.

The fire-hit shops included grocery, electronics and plastic goods.

Owners and fire services said the fire erupted in one of the shops of Rayenda Panch Rasta intersection in the upazila around 10:30pm.

Moniruzzaman Babul, general secretary of Rayenda Bazar Committee, urged the government to compensate the affected shopkeepers.

Sarankhola Fire Service and Civil Defence's Station Officer Md Aftab E Alam said it took an hour to bring the fire under control.

Man dies after being hit by train

UNB, Chuadanga

A man died after being hit by a train at the unguarded railway gate of Chhotadhapatila in Hauli union of Chuadanga upazila Damurhuda upazila yesterday.

The deceased Alamin Hossain, 29, was the son of Zhanu Ali of Dihhi Krishnapur area.

Locals said the Dhaka-bound Maitree Express train from Kolkata hit Alamin while he was crossing the rail line around 11:30am. Alamin died on the spot.

On information, a team from Damurhuda Model and Darshana Railway police stations visited the spot.

Later, the body was taken for post-mortem.

<p>ফ্ল্যাট বিক্রয়</p> <p>লালমাসিয়া বি-ব্লক-এ ১৬০০ বর্গফুটের শতভাগ রেডি ব্রাড নিউ ফ্ল্যাট।</p> <p>ম্যাজিক প্রিক্স হোল্ডিংস লিঃ।</p> <p>০১৭০৪-১৭০০৭৬ ০১৭০৪-১৭০০৭৭</p>	<p>ফ্ল্যাট বিক্রয়</p> <p>বসুন্ধরা এফ-ব্লকে একটি বিল্ডিং -এ ১৫০০ বর্গফুটের টি-শতভাগ রেডি ফ্ল্যাট।</p> <p>ম্যাজিক প্রিক্স হোল্ডিংস লিঃ।</p> <p>০১৭০৪-১৭০০৭৮ ০১৭০৪-১৭০০৭৭</p>
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আশুগঞ্জ পাওয়ার স্টেশন কোম্পানী লিঃ
ASHUGANJ POWER STATION COMPANY LTD.
(An Enterprise of Bangladesh Power Development Board)
ISO 9001:2015, ISO: 14001:2015 & ISO 45001:2018 Certified Management System.

স্মারক নং: ২৭.২৫.১২৩৩.২১১.১১.০০৩.১৮(এড-১).০৩৬৬
তারিখ: ১৩ আশ্বিন ১৪৩১ বঙ্গাব্দ
২৭ জুন ২০২৪ খ্রিস্টাব্দ

নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

আশুগঞ্জ পাওয়ার স্টেশন কোম্পানী লিঃ (এপিএসসিএল) বাংলাদেশের অন্যতম বৃহৎ বিদ্যুৎ উৎপাদনকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান। উক্ত প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিম্নোক্ত পদসমূহে নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে বাংলাদেশের প্রকৃত নাগরিকদের নিম্নোক্ত হতে নিম্নবর্ণিত শর্তসাপেক্ষে অনলাইনে <http://apscl.teletalk.com.bd> ওয়েবসাইটে এ) দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে। অনলাইন ব্যতীত কোন প্রকার আবেদন গ্রহণ করা হবে না।

ক্রমিক নং	পদের নাম, সংখ্যা ও প্রারম্ভিক মূলবেতন	শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা
১	সহকারী প্রকৌশলী (মেকানিক্যাল) (পদের সংখ্যা: ৭টি), মূল বেতন: ৫২,০০০/-	কোনো স্বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে মেকানিক্যাল ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং বিষয়ে স্নাতক ডিগ্রি।
২	সহকারী প্রকৌশলী (ইলেকট্রিক্যাল) (পদের সংখ্যা: ৭টি), মূল বেতন: ৫২,০০০/-	কোনো স্বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে ইলেকট্রিক্যাল এন্ড ইলেকট্রনিক্স ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং বিষয়ে স্নাতক ডিগ্রি।

সকল পদে বাংলা ও ইংরেজি ভাষায় দক্ষতা অত্যাবশ্যিক, কম্পিউটার চালানায় পারদর্শী ও অশেখহনমূলক নেতৃত্বের গুণ থাকতে হবে।

ফ্রিজ বেনিফিট/সুবিধা:

- ফ্রিজ বেনিফিট/সুবিধার মধ্যে রয়েছে মূল বেতন, পাওয়ার স্টেশন ভাতা, নিয়মিত আবাসন (খালি থাকে সাপেক্ষে) বা সংস্থার বিবি অনুসারে বাড়ি ভাড়া ভাতা, দুটি উৎসব ভাতা, নববর্ষ ভাতা, মেডিকেল সুবিধা (প্রতিপূরণ), শিক্ষা ভাতা এবং কোম্পানির বিবি অনুসারে অন্যান্য ফ্রিজ বেনিফিট প্রাপ্য হবেন।
- প্রারম্ভিকভাবে শিক্ষানবিশ (Probationer) হিসাবে নিয়োগপত্র ০১ (এক) বছরের জন্য প্রদান করা হবে এবং শিক্ষানবিশ কালের সন্তোষজনক মূল্যায়নের ভিত্তিতে শিক্ষানবিশ কাল ০১ (এক) বছরসহ ০৩ (তিন) বছরের জন্য চুক্তিভিত্তিক নিয়োগ নিশ্চিত করা হবে। প্রতি ০৩ (তিন) বছর পর সন্তোষজনক মূল্যায়নের ভিত্তিতে চুক্তি নবায়ন করা হবে। অবসর গ্রহণের বয়স ৬০ (ষাট) বছর।

শর্তাবলী:

- বয়সসীমা: ১৫ জুন ২০২৪ তারিখে প্রার্থীর বয়সসীমা ১৮ হতে ৩০ বছর হতে হবে (মুক্তিবোধক কোটায় তাদের সন্তানদের ও শারীরিক প্রতিবন্ধী প্রার্থীদের বয়সসীমা সর্বোচ্চ ৩২ বছর)।
- শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা: কোন পরীক্ষায় ন্যূনতম ২য় বিভাগ অথবা সিজিপিএ ৪.০০ এর স্কেলে ন্যূনতম ২.৫০ অথবা সিজিপিএ ৫.০০ এর স্কেলে ন্যূনতম ৩.৫০।
- নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে পদের প্রার্থীগণ পরীক্ষার ফি বাবদ ৬৬৯/- টাকা টেলিটক প্রিপেইড মোবাইল মারফত SMS এর মাধ্যমে জমা প্রদান করবেন।
- অনলাইনে আবেদন করার লিঙ্ক এপিএসসিএল এর ওয়েবসাইটে <http://www.apscl.gov.bd> এবং টেলিটক এর ওয়েবসাইটে <http://apscl.teletalk.com.bd> পাওয়া যাবে। এছাড়া বাংলাদেশের একমাত্র রাষ্ট্রীয় মোবাইল অপারেটর টেলিটকের জবপোর্টাল <https://alljobs.teletalk.com.bd> ওয়েবসাইটে সরাসরি প্রবেশ করেও বিজ্ঞপ্তি পাওয়া যাবে। আবেদনপত্র পূরণ ও পরীক্ষার ফি জমাধানের অন্তিম তারিখ ও সময়: ০১ জুলাই, ২০২৪ খ্রি.; সকাল ১০:০০টা এবং শেষ তারিখ ও সময়: ১৫ জুলাই, ২০২৪ খ্রি., বিকাল ৫:০০টা।
- কোন সরকারি/আধা সরকারি/স্বায়ত্বশাসিত/বিদ্যুৎ সেক্টর প্রতিষ্ঠানে চাকুরীরত প্রার্থীগণকে অবশ্যই যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের অনুমতিক্রমে আবেদন করতে হবে এবং অনুমোদনের কাগজ মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় দাখিল করতে হবে।
- মুক্তিবোধক সনদপত্র/শারীরিক প্রতিবন্ধী সনদপত্রের সত্যায়িত কপি মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় দাখিল করতে হবে।
- নিয়োগের ক্ষেত্রে কোটা সন্তোষজনক সরকারী নীতিমালা/বিবি-বিধান অনুসরণ করা হবে।
- কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন আবেদনপত্র এবং নিয়োগ প্রক্রিয়া বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করে।
- নিয়োগ পরবর্তী পদায়নের ক্ষেত্রে বাংলাদেশের যে কোন স্থানে কাজ করার মানসিকতা থাকতে হবে।
- পদের সংখ্যা হ্রাস/বৃদ্ধি হতে পারে।
- যে কোন প্রকার তদবীর/সুপারিশ প্রার্থীর অযোগ্যতা হিসাবে গণ্য হবে।

অনলাইনে আবেদন এবং টাকা জমা দেয়ার কাজটি প্রার্থী নিজে করবেন। এক্ষেত্রে অন্য কোন মাধ্যম থেকে উক্ত কাজটি সম্পন্ন করে প্রার্থী প্রতারণিত হলে কর্তৃপক্ষ দায়ী থাকবে না। শেষ তারিখ (১৫/০৭/২০২৪) ও সময়ের জন্য অপেক্ষা না করে হাতে যথেষ্ট সময় নিয়ে online এ আবেদনপত্র পূরণ ও আবেদন ফি জমাধান করতে পরামর্শ দেয়া যাচ্ছে।

S. M. Zayed
২৭.০৬.২০২৪
(সালাউদ্দিন মোহাম্মদ জাকির)
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যোগাযোগ: email: hrm@apscl.org.bd

Road to justice still

FROM PAGE 3
and defence will have scope to move appeals before the Supreme Court.

Then few years' time may be needed by the Appellate Division for disposing of the appeals, and later on, the parties will have an option to move review petitions challenging the apex court judgement.

That is why, it cannot be said at this stage how much time will be needed for reaching the finality of the cases, he added.

A Dhaka court on October 10, 2018 sentenced 19 people, including former state minister for home Lutfozzaman Babar to death in the two cases filed in connection with the grenade attacks.

Nineteen others including BNP acting

chairman Tarique Rahman were given life imprisonment and 11 people were handed different terms in prison.

Eighteen of the convicted accused, including Tarique, who is in London, are absconding and 31 are in jail.

The death references of the cases reached the HC on November 27, 2018, for examination of the trial court's verdict.

On January 13, 2019, the HC accepted the appeals filed by the convicts for hearing. The same day, the HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim (now a judge of the Appellate Division) and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman also stayed parts of the trial court verdict that fined the convicts.

Mithachhara

FROM PAGE 5
Officials of the BWDB admitted that the waterbody has been filled up by silt from upstream again after excavation.

Visiting the areas along the canal recently, this correspondent observed that the canal has turned into a drain in many places, while agricultural lands on its banks lie barren due to a lack of water for irrigation.

"Siltation has hindered the canal's flow, leading to a shortage of water for irrigation, so we are unable to cultivate crops on our lands," said Ramjan Ali Sayem, a farmer from Uttara Housing area.

Abul Kalam, a resident of Devannagar area, said, "Even a little rain triggers waterlogging as the canal cannot drain away rainwater."

Monjurul Alam Chowdhury, administrator of Hathazari municipality, said he has urged a high official of BWDB to re-excavate the canal and free it from occupiers.

Some structures including a culvert built by grabbers over the canal

were demolished in 2023, he added.

Contacted, Mohammed Sohag Talukder, sub-divisional engineer of BWDB (Hathazari sub-division), said the canal was filled up by siltation due to natural causes.

"At present, there is no fund for re-excavating the canal. However, we are trying to get allocation for it as the canal is important for local agriculture and drainage in the area," he said.

Uphold ideals

FROM PAGE 3
Layla Nawshin, staff correspondent of Channel i, received the award in the electronic media category. Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, former vice-chancellor of Dhaka University, who chaired the programme, emphasised the need for continued journalism on the Liberation War.

Dr Sarwar Ali and Modiful Haque, trustees of the Liberation War Museum, also spoke at the event.

SHEIKH RUSSEL PARK IN N'GANJ Once abandoned, now a green haven

SAURAV HOSSAIN SIAM, N'ganj

Sheikh Russel Park stands as a lush green oasis, providing much-needed respite to residents of the densely populated Narayanganj city.

Once an abandoned 18-acre plot beside a waterbody in Deobhog area, the park is now a vital recreation space under the supervision of the Narayanganj City Corporation.

Originally owned by Bangladesh Railway, the land was left unused for years before plans emerged to sell it as residential plots.

Protests by city dwellers led to a change in plans, and Rajuk identified

ample open space, a swimming pool with nominal fees, and a free swimming facility in Gymkhana Lake, an extension of the park.

"Earlier, there were hardly any open spaces to sit in peace in this city. This park has become a blessing in the middle of this concrete jungle," said Bithi Poddar, a visitor.

NCC's monitoring devices show that areas in and around the park have better air quality and lower temperatures compared to other parts of the city, said town planner Moinul Islam.

The park, with its over 10,000 trees and 670-metre natural lake, is



it as a recreation space in its 2010 Detailed Area Plan.

In 2011, Mayor Selina Hayat Ivy initiated the excavation of the waterbody and the establishment of the park at a cost of Tk 57.67 crore. The park was named after Sheikh Russel, the youngest son of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated it in November last year.

The park features a lake with clear water and blooming lilies, surrounded by a walkway. It boasts a playground,

also set to include bamboo bushes and fruit trees to create a sanctuary for birds and other species.

Jahirul Islam, joint secretary of Narayanganj Nagorik Committee, said, "For making a positive impact on the overall environment, it would be apt to call the park the lungs of city."

Locals urged the authorities to keep the park accessible by avoiding commercialisation.

Contacted, Mayor Ivy said, "This park is a major step towards making the city more child and eco-friendly."



PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Workers load bags of fly ash, imported from India, onto trucks. For each truck they load, the group is paid Tk 1,200. Fifteen workers load around eight trucks per day, meaning the group earns Tk 9,600, leaving each worker with Tk 640 to their name. This labour intensive task often leads to these workers suffering from respiratory problems and other diseases. The photo was taken at Chai Point in Khulna recently.

'Be united to ease misery of Gazans'

Foreign minister calls for strong Muslim Ummah

UNB, Gazipur

Criticising the Israeli occupation in Gaza, Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud yesterday said what's going on in Gaza is unbearable and such incidents occur because of lack of unity among Muslim Ummah.

He made the remarks at the 36th convocation of the Islamic University of Technology in Gazipur yesterday morning.

Addressing students, the minister said, "Currently, people have become self-centered. As a result, humanity is nonexistent now. I urge you not to become like machines."

The convocation ceremony, held at the university's auditorium, was presided over by Vice-Chancellor Prof Mohammad Rafiqul Islam.

Organisers said 543 students from 14 countries graduated in the convocation. Of them, 480 were from Bangladesh and 63 international students.

WATERLOGGED KULaura HEALTH COMPLEX

Walkway brings relief to patients, visitors

MINTU DESHWARA

Persistent rain in Kulaura of Moulvibazar district has left the upazila health complex severely flooded over the past 15 days.

The entire area is now waterlogged, causing immense hardship for patients and their families.

In response to this crisis, a group of volunteers took swift action and constructed a temporary 250-foot walkway in front of the hospital. This initiative has greatly alleviated the suffering of those affected, earning widespread praise from locals.

Three traders of Kulaura took the initiative to construct the makeshift platform on the upazila health complex premises.

They are Atiqur Rahman Akhoi, Iqbal Hossain Sumon and Abdul Qayyum.

Seeing their initiative, members of some social organisations also came forward with support. The long walkway was built with everyone's efforts, said locals.

Dipak Biswas, a relative of a patient, said he was regularly getting sick after having to cross knee-deep dirty water in the hospital yard. If he crossed using a rickshaw, then he had to pay triple the regular fare. However, this

platform has alleviated the issue.

Mihta Mia, a resident of East Karergram area, said her grandson was admitted to the hospital due to pneumonia. It was difficult for her to travel to the hospital amidst flooding for over five days.

Now, she is able to visit her grandson without any challenges.

Another patient's relative,

By doing this, people's suffering was reduced to some extent.

Even during the flood of 2022, the traders association took the same initiative in this hospital, he added.

Dr Ferdous Akhtar, upazila health and family planning officer in Kulaura, said as the hospital premises is about one and a half feet lower than the main road, waterlogging



Husna Begum said her daughter was under treatment in the hospital for four days. She had already spent excessive rickshaw fare a few times to visit her daughter. However, construction of the platform spared her further unnecessary expenses.

Atiqur Rahman Akhoi said the walkway was built voluntarily.

occurs even if it rains a little.

In the last financial year, a proposal was sent to the ministry through the health engineering department to raise the drain and road in front of the hospital, but it was not addressed, she said.

The matter has been informed to the local lawmaker, she added.

Heavy vehicles putting Teesta bridge in danger

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Due to excessive plying of stone-laden trucks, the Sheikh Hasina Teesta Bridge over the Teesta river and its connecting roads are getting dilapidated and risky.

Even two months ago, the 15-kilometre connecting roads on both sides of the bridge had three barrier posts to prevent heavy vehicles from plying it. The authorities of Local Government Engineering Department removed those and opened the bridge to all types of vehicles.

Since then, around 300 trucks, loaded with 30-50 tonnes of stones each from Burimari Land Port, started using the bridge daily. Due to this, the bitumen cover of the bridge's road, as well as of the connecting roads, is getting removed, leaving the road surface dilapidated and prone to accidents, said locals.

Kakina-Mahipur road is a very important route for residents and traders of four upazilas in Lalmonirhat to connect to the land port and other areas including Rangpur city.

More than 10,000 light vehicles ply the bridge daily.

Since the past two months, the bridge and connecting roads have become risky for lighter vehicles due to the damage

to the roads caused by the stone-laden trucks.

The 850-metre bridge was constructed over the Teesta River at a cost of about Tk 131 crore at Mahipur in Rangpur's Gangachhara upazila.

The prime minister inaugurated it on September 16, 2018. Its connecting roads were widened and renovated spending over Tk 22 crore this year.

"Businesspersons with political backing pressed the LGED authorities to remove the barrier posts and allow heavy vehicles to ply the bridge and use the connecting roads.

The move has led to the roads getting damaged and making it risky for lighter vehicles," said Shamsul Alam, a trader in Mahipur area.

Nazrul Islam, a truck driver, said, "We use this route as it reduces our distance by around 50km, saving us time and money, instead of going to Rangpur through Lalmonirhat town. There is also no toll on the bridge, which benefits us."

Contacted, Mohammad Shahjahan Ali, executive engineer of LGED in Rangpur, said, "We are taking preparations to repair the bridge's bitumen cover. Also, heavy vehicles will be barred from using the bridge. A meeting was held at Rangpur divisional commissioner's office in this regard recently."



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Mithachhara on DEATHBED

Excavated 4 years back, siltation and encroachment fill up canal again

SIFAYET ULLAH, Ctg

The Bangladesh Water Development Board excavated a six-kilometre stretch of Mithachhara canal in Chattogram's Hathazari upazila in 2019 at a cost of Tk 49.96 lakh.

However, within just four years, the canal has been filled up with silt, hindering its flow of water and triggering waterlogging in adjacent areas.

The seven-kilometre-long canal, which flows through the upazila and

Chittagong University's hilly areas to join Boalia canal to fall into the Halda river, was vibrant around 30 years back, with local farmers largely dependent on it for irrigation.

Rampant encroachment, including by two brick kilns in Dewannagar area, alongside siltation, left it shrunk and gradually dying between 1995 and 2010.

After the excavation, the canal briefly returned to its former glory around 2020, before siltation began filling it up once again, said farmers.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



Due to siltation and encroachment, the canal has turned into a drain in many places, while agricultural lands on its banks lie barren due to a lack of water for irrigation.

PHOTO: STAR

Resist all evil forces: Quader

BSS, Dhaka

The country's young generation should come forward to resist all evil forces, said Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday.

He made the call while inaugurating a cycle rally, marking the 75th founding anniversary of the AL.

The AL second-in-command also kicked off the "Cycling for Health" campaign during this time. Dhaka North City Corporation Mayor Md Atiqur Islam organised the campaign at Manik Mia Avenue in the capital.

Speaking on the occasion, Quader said India is a tested friend of Bangladesh.

He also called upon the youth to join AL, saying AL led the country's independence struggle.

"We will honor our commitment to creating job opportunities for the youth. The Awami League is dedicated to guiding the nation's youth towards a brighter future," he said.



PRAYER TIMING
JUNE 29
Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-05 12-45 5-00 6-54 8-17
JAMAAT 4-40 1-15 5-15 6-57 8-45
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

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CITY VIEWS | Khilgaon
01 MONTH AHEAD

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btibd.com

China planning 'major' reforms Says Xi Jinping

AFP, Beijing

Chinese President Xi Jinping yesterday said the ruling Communist Party was planning and implementing "major" reforms, ahead of a closely watched political conclave that is expected to put economic recovery high on the agenda.

The world's second-largest economy is beset by a debt crisis in the property sector, low consumption and high youth unemployment.

Xi said in a speech policymakers "are planning and implementing major measures to further deepen reform in a comprehensive manner".

It was announced on Thursday that the Third Plenum -- a meeting historically watched for signals on economic policy direction -- will take place in Beijing in mid-July.



Rescuers work at the collapsed terminal roof of New Delhi's international airport after heavy rains in New Delhi yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

Roof collapse at Delhi airport kills one, injures 8

Heavy rain disrupts Indian capital

REUTERS, New Delhi

Heavy rainfall and winds brought down a roof at the main airport in New Delhi yesterday, killing one person and disrupting flights from a domestic terminal, while flooded streets and traffic snarls threw daily life out of gear in India's capital.

The airport area received about 148.5 millimetres of rain over three hours in the early morning, more than the average for all of June, according to India's weather office. Experts blame climate change for extreme heat followed by heavy rain.

The city of 20 million people, who faced searing heatwaves earlier this month, received 228.1 mm (9 inches) of rainfall at its main Safdarjung weather station in the 24 hours ending 8:30am (0300 GMT) on Friday, a 266 percent departure from

normal.

A portion of the canopy and supporting beam at the departure area of Terminal 1 collapsed and flight operations were shut down until 2:00pm (0830 GMT), India's aviation minister told reporters.

The entire terminal, one of three at the country's biggest and busiest airport, was evacuated and an inquiry ordered into the collapse, said the minister, Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu.

Rescue work had been completed and eight injured people were taken to hospital, Atul Garg, the director of Delhi Fire Service, said.

At least eight flights were cancelled and 47 were delayed while departures from Delhi airport were running late by an average of 40 minutes, according to data from flight tracking platform Flightradar24.

3 die in Ctg market fire

FROM PAGE 12

Razzaq, deputy assistant director of the Fire Service and Civil Defence in Chattogram.

"Eight fire engines rushed to the spot and doused the blaze around 5:30am."

Razzaq also said the fire gutted five shops and caused a loss worth Tk 30 lakh.

Since the market remained closed on Fridays, most employees and owners closed up shops on Thursday night and headed back to their village homes, with some staying back.

Minhazur Rahman, a resident on the fourth floor, first smelled smoke and alerted others of the fire around 1:40am. Thick smoke blocked the stairs, so around 20 residents went to

the roof and escaped to an adjacent building.

Sajjad Miah, owner of Ajwad Telecom of the market, also a resident on the fourth floor, said he had gone to his village home at Satkania on Thursday night.

The deceased Shahed was a staffer of his shop and also his roommate. "Shahid's friend Ismail was staying the night with him as I was not there."

Sajjad said Shahed had called him after the fire broke out.

"Shahed told me a fire caught on the ground floor of the market. I told him to go to the roof, but he said he could not see anything due to thick smoke."

"I was on the phone with him for around 20 minutes before the call got disconnected."

Climate change

FROM PAGE 12

DROID did not explain the extent of this month's heatwave and that climate change had made it more intense.

The assessment also found that similar past events in Saudi Arabia occurred in May and July, but now June experiences more severe heatwaves.

"The deadly heat during this year's hajj is directly linked to fossil fuel burning and has affected the most vulnerable pilgrims," said Davide Faranda, a scientist at France's National Centre for Scientific Research who worked on the ClimaMeter analysis.

Climate change has made heatwaves hotter, more frequent and longer lasting. Previous findings by scientists with the World Weather Attribution group suggest that, on average globally, a heatwave is 1.2 C (2.2 F) hotter than in preindustrial times.

Rain likely as low

FROM PAGE 12

centre of the Low and thence northeastwards to Assam across southern part of Bangladesh. Monsoon is active over Bangladesh and strong elsewhere over north Bay.

Panchagarh logged the country's highest rainfall of 51mm in 24 hours till 6:00am yesterday.

The country's highest temperature was recorded in Chuadanga at 37.5 degrees Celsius over 24 hours till 6:00am yesterday while the lowest temperature was in Madaripur at 23 degrees Celsius.

Day and night temperatures may fall slightly over the country in the next 48 hours beginning at 9:00am today.

Bielsa wants more

FROM PAGE 12

but Bielsa feels they still have much to prove.

"Without underestimating the strengths of the two teams we faced, those teams are not among the main competitors for the title," the former Leeds United boss said.

"Respectfully, I think that there are some very significant steps to be taken. Drawing conclusions today would be incorrect."

"Winning two games without facing the best teams in the competition does not allow us to define ourselves as one of the most important teams, that is a long way from being confirmed."

Uruguay now have a three-point cushion at the top of their group after the United States lost 2-1 to Panama, meaning a draw against the hosts in their final match will secure top spot.

Asked how well the players were adapting to his style, Bielsa added: "As for the identification with our way of playing, that is being verified game by game."

"In the previous match we had 15 minutes of the second half with a different performance than the rest of the match, today there was also a similar period where the production was different, for a certain time we stopped creating danger for the opponents."

Two brothers

FROM PAGE 12

his injuries around 9:30am.

Sub-Inspector (SI) Tajul Islam of Cantonment Police Station said the truck driver fled the scene after the accident and efforts were underway to identify the vehicle.

The bodies were handed over to the family without autopsy, as per the family's request, he said.

The other victim, Alfaz, lived in Mirpur-12 area with his family. He was travelling on a pickup truck when the driver of the vehicle lost control, causing it to overturn in Khilkhet area around midnight.

With severe injuries, he was rushed to a local hospital from where he was shifted to DMCH, where he was declared dead around 1:00am, his brother Mahfuz Hossain said.

Children dying of starvation

FROM PAGE 12

city of Rafah as Israel ramped up its attacks there. These days, they struggle to survive, living along the polluted coastline of Asda'a -- near the Al-Mawasi tent camp -- where they cannot find enough food, water, or even shade from the Gaza heat.

"We have to keep moving from one area to the other because of the war and the invasion... Life is difficult," his mother said. "We don't even have a tent over our heads."

Israel's war in Gaza has depleted the territory's health system, leaving staff unable to treat malnourished children. Doctors told CNN they are being forced to turn away parents begging for baby milk, unable to even triage young patients with chronic illnesses compounded by severe hunger.

And as Israel continues its siege on Gaza, preventing aid groups from getting enough food into the enclave, parents say they have no choice but to watch their children starve to death. More than eight months of bombardment has shredded infrastructure, wiped out communities and laid waste to entire neighbourhoods. Sanitation systems -- already stressed by water shortages from extreme heat -- have been heavily destroyed, according to the UN, diminishing access to clean water.

A report published Tuesday by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), which assesses global food insecurity and malnutrition, warned that almost all of Gaza will face famine within the next three months.

Almost all of Gaza will experience crisis or worse levels of food insecurity in the next three months, according to a projection by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification. And nearly half a million people are at risk of starvation amid Israel's siege of Gaza.

The UN's food agency earlier warned that southern Gaza could soon see the same "catastrophic levels of hunger" recorded previously in the north, where Israel concentrated its military offensive in the early days of the war.

At least 34 children have already died of malnutrition in Gaza, the government media office reported on June 22. The true number could be higher, as limited access to Gaza has impeded aid agencies' efforts to fully assess the crisis there. More

than 50,000 children require treatment for acute malnutrition, the UN's agency for Palestine refugees (UNRWA) said earlier this month.

Since October 7, Israeli offensive in Gaza killed 37,658 Palestinians and injured another 86,237 people, according to Gaza health officials.

As Younis suffers in his mother's arms in Gaza's south, children in the north have been dealing with food shortages even longer. In the Jabalya refugee camp, they queue at a water truck, beads of sweat rolling down their faces, as they weave through the rubble-filled streets.

Dozens of other Gazans crowd together to access water as aid workers nearby distribute thick, steaming red soup from large saucepans.

It's rare access to food and clean water. Those in the north told CNN they have resorted lately to drinking polluted water, which does little to help dehydration and spreads infectious diseases.

Earlier this year, the UN warned that Israel is creating an "entirely man-made disaster" in Gaza. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has denied allegations by the International Criminal Court's chief prosecutor that he has used "starvation of civilians as a method of warfare."

The impact on the ground is visceral.

Newborn babies and pregnant women are among the most at risk of malnutrition and dehydration in Gaza, according to aid agencies and health workers. Undernourished mothers are more likely to give birth prematurely, with newborns dying because they weigh too little.

At the Kamal Adwan Hospital in northern Gaza, doctors were unable to keep baby Amal alive just four days after her birth.

CNN filmed the moments before her death, showing Amal drawing heavy breaths in an incubator, after her mother, Samaher, gave birth two months prematurely. Her tiny pink toes are covered in plastic tubes.

"These babies are dying. It is God's decision, but it is caused by people," her father, Ahmed Maqat, told CNN, after she died on Saturday. Samaher had endured months of her pregnancy without sleeping, eating or drinking, Maqat said.

"Everyone in these beds today is at risk of dying. We are waiting for them to die one by one," he added, his voice quivering with grief. "We have no life."

advancing in western Rafah.


Israeli warplanes

FROM PAGE 12

strikes that killed "dozens" of militants in the north.

Hamas's armed wing, the Al-Quds Brigades, yesterday said it was fighting in the northern Gaza neighbourhood of Shujaiya and had targeted Israeli troops with mortar shells.

Meanwhile, Gaza's civil defence agency said Israeli forces had targeted the agency's headquarters while



Office of the Benapole Pourashava

District: Jashore.

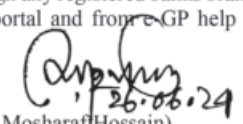
Memo No.41.08.02.001.070.00.2024-271 Date: 26.06.2024

e-Tender Notice (OTM) No-05/2023-24

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

Tender ID No.	Package No.	Description of Work	On-line (e-GP System) tender publication date & time	On-line (e-GP System) tender closing date & time
1000018	LGCRRP/B enapole/202 3-24/W-07	a) Up grading of BC Road from Daulatpur road Abu Sham's moor-Hapu's house at ch. 0.00-425.00m. b) Construction of RCC road from Altaf sarder's house to Jiaur Rahman's house at Boro Anchra Dakhin Para at ch.0.00-125.00m.c) Construction of RCC Drain from Altaf sarder's house to Jiaur Rahman's house at Boro Anchra Dakhin Para at ch.0.00-125.00m under Benapole Pourashava.	30-Jun-2024 9:00:00	31-Jul-2024 13:00:00
1000100	LGCRRP/B enapole/202 3-24/W-08	a) Upgrading of Uni-Block Paver road from Boro Anchra Hamid's House to Julu's house at ch. 0.00- 160.00m.b) Construction of RCC Drain from Boro Anchra Hamid's House to Julu's house at ch. 0.00- 170.00m.c) Up Grading of RCC Road from Sadipur-Namazgram main Road to Namazgram Slum at ch.0.00-165.00m d) Upgrading of Uni-Block Paver Road from Boro Anchra Mayor's House to Eidgha Boundary wall at ch.0.00-68.00 m under Benapole Paurashava.	30-Jun-2024 9:00:00	31-Jul-2024 13:00:00
1000161	LGCRRP/B enapole/202 3-24/W-09	a) Up grading of Uni-block Paver road from Boro Anchra Behey's house Mastafa's house via Doctor Kota's House at ch. 0.00-195.00m b) Construction of RCC Drain road from Boro Anchra Behey's house Mastafa's house via Doctor Kota's House at ch. 0.00-195.00m under Benapole Paurashava.	30-Jun-2024 9:00:00	31-Jul-2024 13:00:00
1000179	LGCRRP/B enapole/202 3-24/W-10	a) Upgrading of Uni-Block Paver Road from Boro Anchra Eidgha To Doctor Haider's house at ch. 60.00- 294.00 m b) Upgrading of Uni-block Paver Road from Boro Anchra (1) Ebras's House to Mostafa Alom Molla Sarder house at ch. 0.00-78 m and (2) Polish's house to adam's house at ch.0.00-67.00m under Benapole Paurashava	30-Jun-2024 9:00:00	31-Jul-2024 13:00:00
1000187	LGCRRP/B enapole/202 3-24/W-11	a)Up Grading of RCC Road at Gazipur from Fisheries office to hakor river (Near H/O Chair Boxlur Rahman) at) at ch. 0.00-90.00m b) Construction of RCC Drain at Gazipur from Fisheries office to hakor river (Near H/O Chair Boxlur Rahman at) at ch. 0.00-90.00m c) Up Grading of RCC road from Jashore-Kolikata road at Gazipur (H/O Faruk to H/O Babul) at ch.0.00-78.00m d) Construction of RCC Drain from Jashore Kolikata road at Gazipur (H/O Faruk to H/O Babul) at ch. 42.00.00-99.00m e) Upgrading of RCC Road from Jashore-Kolikata road (Shamoli N-R Counter) to Hakor river at ch. 0.00-130.00m f) Construction of RCC Drain from Jashore-Kolikata road (Shamoli N-R Counter) to Hakor river at ch. 0.00-130.00m g) Up Grading of RCC road from Jashore-Kolikata road (Saidur's Market) to Hakor river at ch. 0.00-106.00m h) Construction of RCC Drain from Jashore- Kolikata road (Saidur's Market) to Hakor river at ch. 0.00-106.00m under Benapole Paurashava.	30-Jun-2024 9:00:00	31-Jul-2024 13:00:00
1000206	LGCRRP/B enapole/202 3-24/W-12	a) Up Grading of RCC road from Tripurapara road Habib Molla's house to Haider's house at ch. 0.00-173.00m b) Up grading of RCC Road from Durgapur road (H/O Kabir Ahmed to H/O Ahsan kabir) at ch. 0.00-68.00m c) Construction of RCC Drain from Durgapur road (H/O Kabir Ahmed to H/O Ahsan Kabir) at ch. 0.00-68.00m d) Up grading of RCC Road from Durgapur road (H/O Nazrul to H/O Abul Hossain) at ch. 0.00-40.00m e) Construction of RCC Drain from Durgapur road (H/O Nazrul to H/O Abul Hossain) at ch. 0.00-40.00m under Benapole Paurashava	30-Jun-2024 9:00:00	31-Jul-2024 13:00:00
1000211	LGCRRP/B enapole/202 3-24/W-13	a) Upgrading of Uni-Block Paver Road at Sadipur Road (H/O Sajedul) to Nazmul's house at ch. 0.00-334.00 m b) Upgrading of Uni-Block Paver Road at Sadipur Primary school (H/O Julfikar Fakir) to Khoka's house at ch.0.00-318.00 m under Benapole Paurashava.	30-Jun-2024 9:00:00	31-Jul-2024 13:00:00
1000215	LGCRRP/B enapole/202 3-24/W-14	a)Up Grading of RCC Road from Dighirpar-Goira road (H/O Mithu Master) to abdul ahad's house and shahin's house to Jamsar's house at ch.0.00-213.00m & part A=20.00m, part B 108.00m Part C 20.00m b) Construction of RCC Drain Up from Dighirpar-Goira road (H/O Mithu Master) to abdul ahad's house and shahin's house to Jamsar's house at ch.0.00-213.00m & part A-20.00m, part B 108.00m, Part C 20.00m under Benapole Paurashava	30-Jun-2024 9:00:00	31-Jul-2024 13:00:00
1000217	LGCRRP/B enapole/202 3-24/W-15	a) Up Grading of RCC road from Kagospukur- Gaira road (H/O Abul) to Serajul's house at ch. 0.00-361.00m & ext ch. 0.00-30m b) Construction of RCC Drain from Kagospukur-Gaira road (H/O Abul) to Serajul's house at ch. 0.00-361.00m & ext ch. 0.00-30m under Benapole Paurashava.	30-Jun-2024 9:00:00	31-Jul-2024 13:00:00
1000219	LGCRRP/B enapole/202 3-24/W-16	a)Up Grading of RCC Road at Bhababer west para from Serazul's house to Tipon's house via Ansar and Moshiar's house at ch. (part a) 0.00-302.00mm & (part B) Ch 0.00-71.00 m b) Construction RCC Drain at Bhababer west para from Serazul's house to Tipon's house via Ansar and Moshiar's house at ch. (part a) 0.00- 302.00mm & (part B) Ch.0.00-71.00 m Under Benapole Pourashava	30-Jun-2024 9:00:00	31-Jul-2024 13:00:00
1000222	LGCRRP/B enapole/202 3-24/W-17	a)Up Grading of RCC road from Choto Anchra H/O Councilor Tazin to Mosque at ch. 0.00-125m b) Construction RCC Drain at the side of from Choto Anchra Putkhali road from Saidul's house to Rase'l's store part ach. 0.00- 168.00m & part b ch.0.00-125.00m c) Construction of RCC Stair (Ghatla) at Choto-Anchra Mondir pond, Under Benapole Pourashava.	30-Jun-2024 9:00:00	31-Jul-2024 13:00:00

There are an online tender, where only, e-tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no off line/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-tender registration in the National e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-tendering documents from the national GP portal have to be deposited on line through any registered banks branches up to 30-07-2024 at 12.00 AM. Further information and guideline in the National e-GP system portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).



(Md. Mosharaf Hossain)
Executive Engineer
Benapole Pourashava

GD-1050

TRUMP-BIDEN DEBATE FACT CHECK

AFP, Washington DC

US President Joe Biden and Republican challenger Donald Trump traded barbs Thursday in the first debate of the 2024 election campaign.

AFP fact-checked what the candidates said on key issues.

'MIGRANT CRIME'

Trump falsely claimed that under Biden, "we don't have borders anymore."

"Because of his ridiculous, insane and very stupid policies, people are coming in and they're killing our citizens at a level that we've never seen. We call it 'migrant crime.' I call it 'Biden migrant crime.'"

Following criticism over record border crossings and a bipartisan immigration bill that faltered in Congress, Biden signed an executive order early this month to temporarily shut down the border to asylum seekers after certain daily limits are hit.

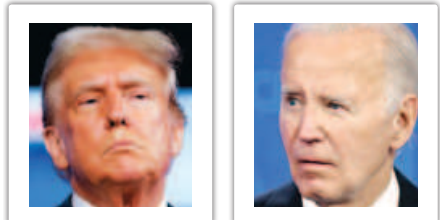
Violent and property crimes are near the lowest levels in decades, according to FBI data from 2022, the most recent year for which figures are available.

Other research has also found migrants commit fewer violent crimes than US citizens, including a Cato Institute report published this week that found migrants are less likely to be convicted of murder in the state of Texas.

INFLATION BLAME

Both Trump and Biden sought to defer blame for rising prices by criticizing each other's economic policies.

"He causes inflation. I gave him a country with essentially no inflation," Trump said after reciting his favorite, but false, line about ushering in the greatest



economy in US history.

Biden countered by saying Trump "decimated the economy" and there were "no jobs" when he took office.

When Trump left office, inflation was around 1.4 percent.

Unemployment was about 6.4 percent, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, down from its peak of 14.8 percent in April 2020.

Inflation started to climb in April 2021. It continued to balloon under Biden's presidency, hitting a peak of around nine percent in June 2022 before falling to its current level of about three percent.

REWRITING JANUARY 6

Trump attempted to deflect blame for the January 6, 2021 attack on the US Capitol, over which he was impeached, by pointing to former House speaker Nancy Pelosi.

"I offered her 10,000 soldiers, or National Guard, and she turned them down," he falsely claimed.

The House committee that investigated the January 6 attack wrote in its final report that Trump "never gave any order to deploy the National Guard."

Trump also insisted again that "the fraud and everything else was ridiculous" in the 2020 election he lost to Biden, claims officials from both parties have refuted.

Dozens of lawsuits aimed at overturning the election failed, while audits and recounts in battleground states reaffirmed Biden's win.



An injured girl is comforted by her relatives at the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir el-Balah yesterday, following Israeli bombardments in the central Gaza Strip.

PHOTO: AFP

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Limited choices as Iranians vote

Vote unlikely to alter policies, may shape Khamenei succession

REUTERS, Dubai

Iranians yesterday voted for a new president following the death of Ebrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash, choosing from a tightly controlled group of four candidates loyal to the supreme leader at a time of growing public frustration and Western pressure.

The election coincides with escalating regional tension due to war between Israel and Iran's allies Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon, as well as increased Western pressure on Iran over its fast-advancing nuclear programme.

While the election is unlikely to bring a major shift in the Islamic Republic's policies, its outcome could influence the succession to Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's 85-year-old supreme leader, in power since 1989.

Khamenei called for a high turnout to offset a legitimacy crisis fuelled by public discontent over economic hardship and curbs on political and social freedom.

"The durability, strength, dignity and reputation of the Islamic Republic depend on people's presence," Khamenei told state television after casting his vote. "High turnout is a definite necessity."

The next president is not expected to usher in any major policy shift on Iran's nuclear programme or support for militia groups across the Middle East, since Khamenei calls all the shots on top state matters.

However, the president runs the government day-to-day and can influence the tone of Iran's foreign and domestic policy.

A hardline watchdog body made up of six clerics and six jurists aligned with



Khamenei vets candidates and approved only six from an initial pool of 80. Two hardline candidates subsequently dropped out.

Three candidates are hardliners and one is a low-profile comparative moderate, backed by the reformist faction that has largely been sidelined in Iran in recent years.

Critics of Iran's clerical rule say that low and declining turnouts in recent years show the system's legitimacy has eroded. Just 48% of voters participated in the 2021 presidential election and turnout plumbed a record low of 41% in a parliamentary election in March.

State television showed queues inside polling stations in several cities. Polls were due to close at 6:00pm. (1430 GMT), but are usually extended as late

as midnight. Authorities said the result would be announced today.

If no candidate wins at least 50% plus one vote from all ballots cast, including blank votes, a run-off between the top two candidates is held on the first Friday after the result is declared.

Prominent among the remaining hardliners are Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, parliament speaker and former commander of the powerful Revolutionary Guards, and Saeed Jalili, a former nuclear negotiator who served for four years in Khamenei's office.

All four candidates have vowed to revive the flagging economy, beset by mismanagement, state corruption and sanctions re-imposed since 2018, after the United States ditched Tehran's 2015 nuclear pact with six world powers.

ELECTION IN FRANCE

Far-right extends lead ahead of polls

REUTERS, Paris

France's far-right National Rally (RN) extended its lead in a poll published on the last day of campaigning before tomorrow's (Sunday) first round of parliamentary elections, with another survey showing it in sight of a slim majority.

Marine Le Pen's anti-immigrant, eurosceptic party has led polling since President Emmanuel Macron called a surprise snap election this month that has plunged France into uncertainty and unnerved European neighbours and financial markets.

A new OpinionWay poll published by Les Echos newspaper on Friday showed the RN could reach as much as 37 percent of the popular vote, up two percentage points on its score a week ago.

Macron's centrist bloc Together party was seen reaching 20 percent, down by two points from the last publication. The New Popular Front leftwing alliance stood at an unchanged 28 percent of the vote.

BFM TV, in a different poll compiled by Elabe, calculated that the RN and allies could end up with 260-295 seats in the new parliament - potentially crossing the 289-seat bar for an absolute majority giving them a clear mandate to govern.

Accurate seat projections are tricky because the outcome depends on results in 577 constituencies across France. Moreover, after Sunday's first round, rivals to the RN may team up and withdraw candidates in tactical moves to defeat far-right candidates in the July 7 second round.



TOP EU COMMISSION POST

EU leaders back Von der Leyen for 2nd term

AFP, Brussels

EU leaders struck a summit deal Thursday to return Ursula von der Leyen as head of the powerful European Commission, while tapping Estonia's prime minister Kaja Kallas as the bloc's top diplomat.

The late-night accord carves up the EU's top institutional jobs for the five years to come, with former Portuguese prime minister Antonio Costa to head the European Council bringing together member states.

All three nominees hail from the centrist alliance that dominates the EU parliament following elections this month, despite gains by the far right including Italy's Giorgia Meloni, who put up public resistance to the top jobs deal.

While Costa, 62, will automatically succeed Council president Charles Michel this year, both von der Leyen, 65, and Kallas, 47, need to lock in majority support in the European Parliament, starting with a July vote on the commission chief that is predicted to be tight.

Von der Leyen expressed her "gratitude" to the leaders gathered in Brussels for backing her for a second term - telling reporters she would soon outline her political priorities with a view to winning the confidence of parliament.

POST-COUP MYANMAR CRISIS

Rebels battle junta in ruby mining hub

MSF to halt work in northern Rakhine

AFP, Yangon

A Myanmar ethnic minority armed group was battling junta troops in a ruby and gem-mining hub yesterday, the group and residents told AFP, with reports of civilian casualties in shelling and air strikes.

The Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) launched attacks on junta troops earlier this week in Mandalay region and neighbouring Shan state, shattering a ceasefire brokered by China in January.

Its fighters were inside Mogok, a town surrounded by hills rich with rubies, sapphires, spinel, aquamarine and other semi-precious stones, General Tar Bhone Kyaw told AFP, without giving details.

Mogok residents told AFP the town had been hit by artillery shelling and air strikes by military planes since fighting in the area started on Tuesday. Fighting was ongoing in Kyaukme town in neighbouring Shan state, a local rescue worker told AFP yesterday.

At least 10 civilians had been killed and more than 20 wounded since clashes broke out on Tuesday, he said.

Meanwhile, the charity Doctors Without Borders will halt medical activities in Myanmar's northern Rakhine state due to an "extreme escalation of conflict" between an ethnic armed group and the military, it said.

Clashes have rocked Rakhine state since the Arakan Army (AA) attacked security forces in November, ending a ceasefire that had largely held since a military coup in 2021. AA fighters have seized swathes of territory, piling further pressure on the junta as it battles opponents elsewhere in the country.

MSF was suspending "medical humanitarian activities" in northern Rakhine due to the "extreme escalation of conflict, indiscriminate violence, and severe restrictions on humanitarian access," it said on Thursday.



People carry the body of a protester in a procession in Nairobi yesterday. Hundreds of people attended the funeral ceremony of the 19-year-old who was one of 20 people killed during a nationwide protest against a controversial now-withdrawn tax bill.

PHOTO: AFP

SOUTH AFRICA Tensions delay unveiling of new gov't

AFP, Johannesburg

South Africa's weakened African National Congress (ANC) and its biggest coalition partner are squabbling over key jobs in the new cabinet, media reports say, nearly a month after elections.

President Cyril Ramaphosa has called for the opening of the new parliament on July 18 to address MPs, the government said yesterday.

But no indication was given on when the announcement of a new cabinet would be made.

The ANC has accused coalition partner Democratic Alliance (DA) of making "outrageous demands" for cabinet positions in documents leaked to the press.

Several other documents detailing disagreements on positions between Ramaphosa and DA leader John Steenhuisen have circulated on social media.

Has Dhaka's fate become sealed?

Govt cannot keep ignoring the city's woes

Every year, we are reminded that Dhaka is one of the worst cities to live in, and this year is just slightly different, as the metropolis has reportedly gotten worse. In the Economist Group's Global Liveability Index 2024, Dhaka has slipped two notches, from last year's 166th to 168th. To illustrate just how abysmal that is, Kyiv, the war-torn capital of Ukraine, ranks three places higher. Like before, experts and citizens have expressed their grievances, but successive rankings show that these concerns have fallen on deaf ears. This means the government has not done what it can to build a liveable Dhaka, and for the umpteenth time, we ask: why?

The annual global survey assessed the liveability of 173 cities based on stability, healthcare, culture and environment, education, and infrastructure. A cursory glance at newspapers will reveal how we are failing at these sectors. Take the environment, for instance: Dhaka continuously ranks among the cities with the worst air quality. The situation is so terrible that air pollution has become the leading cause of death in the country, even surpassing high blood pressure, poor diet, and tobacco use. Meanwhile, heatwaves have taken the city hostage, in absence of any semblance of greenery. And yet, government agencies cut down over seven lakh trees across the country last year in the name of development work, Dhaka being among the victims. All this has happened amid dwindling playgrounds, from 150 to only 24 over the last 22 years.

In fact, Dhaka has garnered many other "unliveable" attributes. Indexes report that the city is extremely expensive, for both locals and foreigners. But we don't need to look at rankings for that; the sky-high inflation, 9.89 percent as of May 2024, is evidence enough. It's also the slowest in the world in terms of vehicular movement, while still somehow achieving high numbers of road fatalities. And let's not forget that Dhaka is one of the biggest hotspots for Aedes mosquitoes, which took 1,705 lives in the country last year, breaking all records and crippling our healthcare system.

In many instances, the government has either ignored or even aggravated all these perennial issues, while many ill-thought initiatives have failed. While the metro rail is certainly a step towards creating a liveable city, the authorities have forgotten the basics: bringing discipline to the roads and improving public transport. Instead of addressing these structural issues, they opted for shortcuts, like banning battery-run rickshaws. Regarding air pollution, it achieved very little to tackle the sources: construction dust, traffic fumes, factory emissions, and illegal brick kilns. Meanwhile, the new budget reportedly lacks concrete measures to address economic concerns, which means Dhaka will continue to be just as expensive or even more. Therefore, it's time for the government to admit its failures and prepare plans that can truly resolve this city's woes to make it liveable.

Alarming trade of Indigenous women

We need to address the root cause of trafficking

It is concerning that Indigenous women are falling victim to trafficking gangs who smuggle them to China under the pretext of marriage, lucrative jobs or education opportunities. A report published in this daily mentioned several cases filed with police about gangs who forced women to marry Chinese nationals and then trafficked them to China. According to the report, these local gangs, some of which are operative in the capital's Uttara area, sell the women for Tk 10-20 lakh.

While Bangladeshi women and children are trafficked mostly to India and the Middle East, human trafficking to China came to focus six years ago when three women were rescued and brought back home. China's decades-long one child policy has created an imbalance in the country's sex ratio, which has driven the illicit trade of foreign women, mostly from Southeast Asia. In recent times, it appears that traffickers are also targeting Indigenous Bangladeshi women.

In an email responding to the most recent trafficking cases, the Chinese government reiterated its stance against human trafficking to protect the rights of women and children, which is undoubtedly a positive sign. However, law enforcement agencies in Bangladesh, too, should increase their vigilance against local trafficking gangs that are arranging these fake, coerced or exploitative marriages. We need to address the low rate of conviction and inadequate sentencing of perpetrators of human trafficking. In addition to revamping the legal process, the government as well as organisations working to curb human trafficking must run awareness campaigns on social media and in targeted areas where Indigenous women from marginalised communities might fall into traffickers' traps.

Finally, the government must address the root causes of trafficking in person: poverty, inequality, and education. Given the historical and political reality of our country's Indigenous communities, young women especially from the Chittagong Hill Tracts are vulnerable to exploitative practices. Historically, sexual violence and abuse have been used against CHT women to dispossess the community of their resources. It is not surprising that in the absence of justice for those crimes, the false promise of a better life elsewhere would interest CHT women and thus increase their vulnerability to human trafficking. To establish a sense of security among Indigenous women, the government needs to truly empower the communities and fulfil the promises of the CHT Peace Accord.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY



The first iPhone goes on sale

On this day in 2007, Apple Inc's first mobile "smartphone," the iPhone, went on sale, and it revolutionised the industry.

COSTS OF HIGH-LEVEL CORRUPTION

Further down the kleptocratic route



Dr Iftekharuzzaman
is executive director at Transparency
International Bangladesh (TIB).

IFTEKHARUZZAMAN

Mahatma Gandhi's quote that there is enough in this world to meet everyone's need but not for anyone's greed is aptly illustrated by the ongoing media and other credible exposures of evidence of corruption in Bangladesh. Confirming that sky is the limit, these revelations of high-level abuse of power, known as grand corruption, though nothing new except the procession of disclosures, have shocked and awed the nation.

Several key institutions, apparently sanctuaries of high-level corruption and related criminalities, have been exposed to risks of kleptocratic capture. These include the army, police, Rab, National Board of Revenue (NBR) and, not the least, the country's major political parties. A former army chief and his immediate family have been slapped with sanctions for "significant corruption," including assistance in evasion of accountability for criminal activity, facilitating improper awarding of military contracts, and acceptance of bribes. His actions have been assessed to have "contributed to undermining Bangladesh's democratic institutions and the public faith in public institutions and processes."

Having retired after gaining the dubious distinction of topping the list of kingpins behind sanctions against Rab for gross human rights violations, the former police chief has managed to flee the country with questionable ease, arguably as part of a suspected sinister deal. This at a time when he has been publicised to be under the Anti-Corruption Commission's (ACC) radar for amassing unbelievable amounts of income and wealth acquired across the country by ruthlessly violating entrusted institutional power coupled with political blessing, fraud and criminal extortion. In so doing, he applied the skills acquired over the years as a crime control professional and transformed himself from his mandated position of protector of law to a role model of lawbreaking. As widely expected, he was not the only instance of such brazenly normalised corruption in the police force as many other similar exposures followed, including that of the former Dhaka Metropolitan Police commissioner.

A member of NBR and president

of its Customs, Excise and VAT Appellate Tribunal came to the spotlight, catalysed by his son's goat scandal and subsequent exposure of grotesque details of his and his family's accumulation of income and properties. He did so abusing his oversight role of revenue generation



VISUAL: SHAIKH SULTANA JAHAN BADHON

for the state, which he converted into that of the tax evasion guru as an illegitimate source of income. It is again obvious that he is not the sole X person in the NBR, nor is it possible that he operated in isolation without collusion and protection of many others.

No less troubling is the case of the brutal killing of an MP allegedly as an example of fighting of political power abusers over the share of booties of gold smuggling and the related illicit business facilitated and protected over the years by those mandated to control such criminalisation of politics. Again, this is no isolated case of political corruption, as symbolised by the case of an MP serving prison term in Kuwait for transnational crimes, including money laundering and human trafficking. Nor is criminalisation of politics a monopoly of the current ruling party, as its arch-rival left behind a legacy of no less grand corruption, arms smuggling and ruthless political criminalisation, including several attempts at the life of the top leader of their rival political party, causing multiple deaths.

As scandalous as these examples are, it is no surprise at all because successive regimes have driven the state to this level through their desperate bids to ensure partisan capture of the institutions to facilitate, promote and protect power abuse and thereby grant impunity to high-level perpetrators.

Implications of such grand corruption are destabilising for the state. Their money value can be concretely measured only by the government and relevant agencies, only if done with integrity, free from conflict of interest. For some general idea, one may consider the value of compromise of the least cost, best quality principle in procurements and other public expenditures in

all these cases is also among the reasons why nothing has happened to the perpetrators. The former NBR member, for instance, conveniently outsmarted several initiatives for departmental procedure in response to allegations over the years, nor could the ACC proceed with concrete action. It's also no secret that he has been enjoying the patronage and protection of the business politics bureaucracy power structure, which also helped invincibility of the overall illegal tax evasion system.

Non-monetary costs of corruption are no less ominous for the state, the worst victim of which are the institutions in general and particularly those at the centre of recent focus. None of them has yet shown the courage to come up with any action or concrete pledge against those within their own ranks, who have pushed the respective institutions to severe reputational damage. None of them seem to care that it is time to face the mirror and undertake strategies to ensure accountability and justice in the short term, and overhaul themselves in the medium and long terms, which is indispensable to restore their credibility and uphold the spirit and values of Bangladesh's independence.

What has happened instead has only added to the already existing atmosphere of intimidation to the media, as demonstrated by the infamous statement by the BPSA, which has been viewed as nothing but an effort to grossly curtail media freedom guaranteed by the constitution. Aggrieved by the disclosures and with an apparent sense of insecurity as birds of the same feather, the association adopted the "shoot the messenger" tactic and blamed media reports as motivated, while in fact the statement itself was a motivated act to suppress disclosure of corruption information. It is also no coincidence that the home ministry reached out quickly to the information ministry with a note that practically endorsed the BPSA position.

Coming as all these do simultaneously with the creation (once again) of the provision in the national budget for an unconstitutional, discriminatory and corruption-friendly reward system for black money, the key message given to the people is that corruption enjoys systemic guarantee of impunity. Little do the power holders seem to care that by converting the commitment of zero tolerance against corruption in election manifestos and other public pronouncements into useless rhetoric, floodgates are being opened to further kleptocratic disorder of the state.

Collusive abuse of power in

Why we need a landscape design ministry



Asif Khan
is a Bangladeshi landscape architect based in
Florida, US.

ASIF KHAN

A little over a week ago, more than 16 lakh people in Bangladesh's Sylhet and Sunamganj districts found themselves marooned by escalating floodwaters. Despite the strikingly similar climates of Bangladesh and Miami in Florida, US, where I work as a landscape architect, the outcomes of heavy rainfall in these two regions are starkly different. Miami's approach harnesses nature's inherent mechanisms through creative and proactive solutions, turning challenges into opportunities. Meanwhile, the Sylhet region endured devastation due to flash floods, prompting the urgent question: why does Bangladesh still face such situations in 2024?

Bangladesh is a treasure trove of untapped landscape potential. It can transform its current challenges into opportunities by leveraging its natural assets. This requires a shift from reactive disaster management to proactive landscape design and management. Flood prevention is only one aspect; optimising the terrain and balancing human settlement with nature are equally crucial.

For Bangladesh, establishing a dedicated ministry for landscape design and management is not just visionary, but necessary. This ministry would oversee the comprehensive planning, development, and maintenance of the country's diverse landscapes, addressing long-standing challenges.

For one, the country's extensive network of rivers could be harnessed for transportation, irrigation, and flood management. Currently neglected and polluted, these rivers need strategic rejuvenation. Drawing inspiration from the Netherlands, where river systems are integral to national infrastructure, the Bangladesh government could revitalise the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna delta.

Properly managed natural resources could drive tourism, agriculture, and cultural activities, fuelling economic growth. The Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove forest, exemplifies this potential. As a biodiversity hotspot and potential ecotourism destination, its proper management and promotion could attract global tourists, generate revenue, and create jobs. Costa Rica's ecotourism success through sustainable practices serves as a model for Bangladesh.

Urbanisation and climate change threaten Bangladesh's rich biodiversity and natural habitats. Sustainable practices are essential to conserving and protecting these areas. For example, conserving the Chittagong Hill Tracts, known for their unique flora and fauna, could preserve biodiversity while supporting local communities through eco-friendly tourism and sustainable agriculture.

Effective water resource

management is critical in a flood-prone country like Bangladesh. Designing and maintaining infrastructure for efficient water management could also promote water-based tourism and recreational activities. Italy's Venice showcases how waterways can become major tourist attractions while managing complex water infrastructure.

Promoting landscape innovation and modern agricultural practices can

Landscape architects can guide the nation's landscape policies and projects with their expertise. Singapore's green, sustainable urban environments highlight the benefits of skilled landscape architects. They can design resilient cities that harmonise with natural systems, ensuring urban development does not come at the expense of environmental degradation.

boost productivity and sustainability. Integrating vertical farming and aquaponics into urban areas can combat food insecurity and reduce pressure on rural lands. Singapore's advancements in urban farming illustrate how Bangladesh could innovate in agriculture.

Raising awareness about landscape management's importance and engaging citizens in conservation efforts is vital. Educational initiatives

can foster a culture of stewardship, where every citizen feels responsible for the environment. Programmes modelled after Japan's Satoyama Initiative, which promotes sustainable rural-urban linkages through community participation, could be effective.

To realise this vision, Bangladesh must recognise the critical role of landscape architecture. Landscape architects can guide the nation's landscape policies and projects with their expertise. Singapore's green, sustainable urban environments highlight the benefits of skilled landscape architects. They can design resilient cities that harmonise with natural systems, ensuring urban development does not come at the expense of environmental degradation. They can lead projects that integrate green infrastructure, enhance biodiversity, and create public spaces that improve quality of life.

Establishing a ministry for landscape design and management symbolises a collective commitment to transforming Bangladesh's landscape. It heralds a new era where design and nature work in harmony, elevating the quality of life and dignity of every citizen. This vision transcends flood prevention and resource management—it's about creating a nation where every individual feels a sense of pride and responsibility towards their environment. A specialised ministry would help realise this vision, emphasising the optimal use and preservation of the country's natural resources. By adopting this perspective, design can significantly enhance the quality of life and sense of dignity for the people. It's time for Bangladesh to build a future where development and conservation of nature take place simultaneously.



This trust between fans and cricket players in Bangladesh has not deteriorated in one innings against Afghanistan; it has taken years of disappointment. PHOTO: AFP

Our men's cricket team is suffering from a crisis of trust



Azmin Azran is digital features coordinator at The Daily Star.

AZMIN AZRAN

Before this year's T20 World Cup, if the Bangladesh men's cricket team and its fans were offered a situation where they found themselves in the last game of the Super Eight with the opportunity to go to the semifinals, having full control of their own destiny, they would bite the hands off the person offering it. The truth is, the Tigers have exceeded pre-tournament expectations. Yet, at the same time, they have left fans bitterly disappointed.

Normally, it would be difficult for a team to do these two things at once, but this strange mess of feelings fans have been left with is possibly indicative of what the men's cricket team really is right now: a big mess.

They got the obvious things right. The squad picked was close to the best we had to offer. The captain was given a series or two before the world cup to get his team combinations right. The team even featured a couple of young, exciting talents like Towhid Hridoy, Tanzim Hasan Sakib, and Rishad Hossain.

A lacklustre series win against Zimbabwe and a shock series defeat against the USA tempered expectations too. Everyone knew that nothing should be expected of this team, and anything positive that comes out of this world cup would be a bonus. By the time the team was lining up to play Sri Lanka in Dallas, everyone was prepared for the worst.

But the thing with the Bangladesh men's cricket team these days is that it's very difficult to understand what's actually going on with them. The brilliance of young Rishad and the new-found grit of an out-of-sorts Litton Das won the game against Sri Lanka, and when Bangladesh pushed South Africa to the last ball for a narrow defeat, suddenly, they were playing well.

The Netherlands and Nepal were promptly defeated in efficient displays, and fans who expected nothing were rewarded with a surprise Super Eight appearance. The coach even came out in the press and said that the goal for this team was to get to the second round, whatever came after would be a bonus.

Fans understood that the team had exceeded expectations. The good feelings from the three victories in the group stage duped everyone into thinking that this team could be expected to do the bare minimum that one might expect from a national sports team. Yes, they were not in form before the tournament. It's true that the senior players in the team were becoming burdens. The cricket board, at this point an entity that is as dysfunctional as it's immovable, couldn't provide the team with the perfect platform. Despite all this, the national cricket team at the world stage was expected to do only one thing—try. And they failed us at that too.

There have always been fans and haters of the men's cricket team in

Bangladesh. Fans keep hoping that they will come up with the goods, while haters remain sceptical about whether they have the ability to do so. Some of us believe that one day, they will do something truly remarkable, while others believe that such a day will never come. The one thing, however, that everyone for the longest time assumed to be true is that these professional athletes will keep trying until loss is inevitable, and do their best to postpone that inevitability. If they're not good enough (or strong enough, as we keep hearing), it's natural that they will lose. But the mentality to give something an honest go is not dependent on muscles or talent.

Against India and Australia, who are clearly superior opponents, the losses felt digestible. The lack of an impetus to post a big score against Australia, or to chase one down against India was a sore sight. But most fans were still thinking that this is all extra, this team was never supposed to be here. When

Supporting a sports team is a fundamentally illogical act. These gifted athletes who live in a bubble of mainstream popularity don't care about you or me. Their lives and realities are disconnected and different from everyone else. Yet, what makes the illogical act of supporting a sports team worth it is the fact that we assume these people who represent our colours want the same things we do—to win, and if they lose, to do so with heads held high.

the difficult equations for semifinal qualification in the game against Afghanistan were revealed, then too fans might not have felt malice towards the team. The Afghans make an excellent T20 team; beating them by such margins was not likely.

But once again, this mess of a Bangladesh team surprised with a good bowling display, giving the batters a chance to chase 115 runs in 12 overs, a perfectly doable task in today's cricket. How the team reacted to this golden opportunity, however, has opened, deepened, and festered the wounds of trust between the cricket team and its fans.

Everyone knows what followed. According to the captain in a press conference following the match, the team apparently tried for six overs out of the 12. Once they lost three wickets and figured that the task at hand was too difficult, they decided that giving up semifinal aspirations and going for a comfortable consolation win was the better course of action, something they failed to do anyway by losing the game.

Herein lies the problem. The team admittedly stopped trying at a point where it was realistically possible to reach the semifinals. Whether

they did it out of fear of failure or embarrassment or lack of belief can be discussed later, but what's certain is, once again, this team breached whatever trust it had left with its fans—the people of Bangladesh.

Supporting a sports team is a fundamentally illogical act. These gifted athletes who live in a bubble of mainstream popularity don't care about you or me. Their lives and realities are disconnected and different from everyone else. Yet, what makes the illogical act of supporting a sports team worth it is the fact that we assume these people who represent our colours want the same things we do—to win, and if they lose, to do so with heads held high. This is the trust between fans and players that is the basis of the sports industry worldwide.

This trust between fans and cricket players in Bangladesh has not deteriorated in one innings against Afghanistan. While the batters' inexplicable surrender in the face of possible victory was a truly humbling blow to loyal followers, the team has chipped away at the fans' perseverance constantly since the 2019 ICC World Cup. When our best player, Shakib Al Hasan, was banned for failing to disclose an approach from a betting syndicate, this trust took a blow. When the much loved captain of the team, Mashrafe Mortaza, chose not to see his own failings and retire with grace,

the trust was pegged down a notch. When Tamim Iqbal chose himself over the team by creating pathetic off-field drama, and Shakib Al Hasan participated in it and took it further, the trust was shattered. The 2023 ICC World Cup performance was so bad that as fans, supporting this team felt criminal. This year's T20 World Cup has obliterated any goodwill left among fans.

Still, cricket in Bangladesh won't die. People may not love the team as much, but the love of the sport prevails. Whether it is this team under this inept board, or some future team under the stewardship of a more capable administration, fan trust will need to be earned back. This is not unprecedented in cricket. India went through this after Mohammad Azharuddin's match-fixing scandal in the early 2000s. Australia did it recently following a ball-tampering incident. Their players did it by playing good cricket, and by presenting a version of themselves to the public that resembled genuine human beings who understood what their efforts meant to the people of their countries. The future of cricket in Bangladesh possibly hinges on the ability of our players to do the same.

Breaking chains through whistleblowing



BLOWIN' IN THE WIND

Dr Shamsad Mortuza is professor of English at Dhaka University.

SHAMSAD MORTUZA

"Julian is free." The headline of Democracy Now! sent shivers up my spine. The news broke, unleashing a wave of chemical messengers in my brain. The system kept the WikiLeaks founder incarcerated for more than a decade. A woman in Sweden accused him in a sexual assault case in 2010, soon after his whistleblowing platform published a report on US military actions in Iraq and Afghanistan. Julian Assange jumped bail and took refuge in London's Ecuador embassy in 2012, seeking political asylum. He lived in a tiny cell in that embassy compound for seven years, during which period the rape charges were found meritless. However, the British government arrested Assange and placed him in the high-security Belmarsh Prison, forcing Ecuador to revoke its asylum decision. The US wanted him extradited on charges of espionage and leaking sensitive documents. The Australian government finally intervened, saying the case had dragged on for too long. Julian Assange is finally free after pleading guilty to one count of espionage. The court determined that he had already served his five-year sentence, given his prolonged imprisonment. Justice is restored.

Ayub Khan regime, he realised that the whole of East Pakistan was in prison. His obstinacy gave us hope and prepared us for the freedom fight. When millions of refugees displaced by our Liberation War took shelter in India, our country began with the realisation that we could be a poor country, but we needed to be rich in soul. Years later, we witnessed our prime minister providing shelter to hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees, reflecting on our common experience of displacement during wartime. The same is true for Mandela, who believed that his struggle for freedom would be incomplete without the freedom of Palestine. Years later, South Africa, inspired by the words of their visionary champion against apartheid, has taken Israel to the International Court of Justice.

Analogously, Assange's freedom can have far-reaching impacts. That makes me hopeful. I listen to Yanis Varoufakis' passionate speech, detailing the background of resistance that conditioned his freedom. The former Greek minister recounts how their allies began abandoning them under the guise of opposing an alleged rapist, despite the later exoneration of the charges. Now that Assange



FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

Why does it matter for us when a foreign individual is free after such a long time? The short answer is: Julian Assange is a symbol of hope, just like Nelson Mandela and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman were during their imprisonments. What good is symbolism when realpolitik demands much more direct action or intervention when millions are dying? When is "one" more than one? When does a man become many?

It takes real courageous individuals to blow the whistle and alert the community. WikiLeaks, responsible for what has come to be known as Cablegate, released confidential files on human rights abuse, political machinations, and corruption, leading to a diplomatic fallout and a stringent reassessment of the information gateway. The repercussions faced by Assange are not unique. Character assassination, social ostracisation, and legal battles are some of the known weapons used to castigate whistleblowers. They provoke the system's anger by raising concerns about institutional corruption or moral injustices. Still, they dare to share information to ensure transparency and accountability and become the catalysts for change.

WikiLeaks has brought to light numerous cases of bribery, extortion, corruption, murder, and other crimes committed by Bangladeshis, enabling them to amass a staggering amount of money, which they then syphoned out of the country. And to think that some of our culprits have more money abroad than our foreign exchange reserves speaks volumes about our institutional weaknesses. The whistleblowers' bravado often forces the system to address its leaks. Their bullheadedness gives us hope—a hope that is contagious.

When Bangabandhu was in prison during the

is free, the system will need to undergo numerous adjustments and deal with the consequences. Similar systemic readjustments were required in the political arena after Edward Snowden exposed the National Security Agency's (NSA) mass surveillance programmes. Or when Frances Haugen, a former Facebook employee, exposed her company's harmful practices by leaking internal documents. There are many other instances.

Let me end on a lighter note, though. A hill of corruption collapsed when a goat turned out to be a whistleblower. An animal trader was running a notorious racket, adding pedigree to his stocks to inflate their prices. Like a true trickster, he would boost his clients' egos by creating a false consciousness about his cattle. He would charge a crore for a cow and about Tk 15 lakh for a goat. Somehow, the price of the goat was too much to stomach for the audience. People were curious about the individual who was willing to spend such a significant amount of money on a goat. The goat became the unlikely whistleblower to expose the buyer and his family, who were relishing a mountain of ill-gotten wealth. The drama did not end with an incomplete purchase. The trader who boasted about his animals' pedigree is now on the run, as the whole system has come after him, possibly for exposing one of their own kin. The ordinary public, which lacks decent earnings and livelihoods, enjoys the show as the goat becomes the unsung hero.

I hope there is no connection between the recent announcement of lower loan rate incentives given to goat farming and the practice of goatheadedness as a form of resistance to corruption. It will take more than a goat to break the chains through whistleblowing.

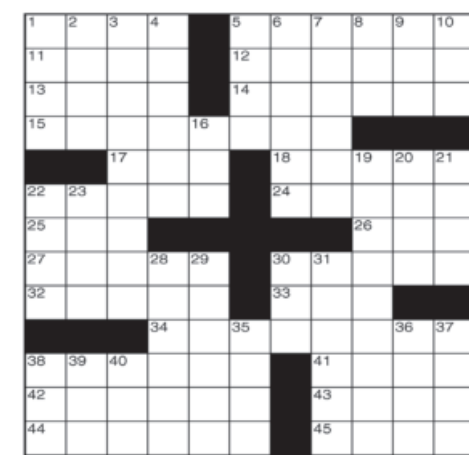
CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Gone under
- 5 Ax wielders
- 11 Huron neighbor
- 12 Twist of fiction
- 13 Sneaker part
- 14 Central American nation
- 15 Waving in the breeze
- 17 Old roadster
- 18 Number unit
- 22 Tangle
- 24 Clue room
- 25 Summer mo.
- 26 Swiss peak
- 27 Turns about
- 30 San —, California
- 32 Shop tool
- 33 Day before
- 34 Gum flavor
- 38 Central American nation
- 41 Unexciting
- 42 Makes amends
- 43 Guinness of film
- 44 Correct an online comment
- 45 Army level

DOWN

- 1 Egotist's focus
- 2 River of Russia
- 3 Central American nation
- 4 Quarterback play
- 5 Pueblo people
- 6 African grazers
- 7 Improvise
- 8 Longoria of TV
- 9 Sleep state
- 10 Mrs., in Madrid
- 16 Campaign pro
- 19 Central American nation
- 20 Not busy
- 21 Keyboard goof
- 22 Shocked sound
- 23 Empty
- 28 Los Angeles suburb
- 29 Grabs
- 30 Gents
- 31 Film set on Pandora
- 35 Forest home
- 36 Sign
- 37 Bottle part
- 38 Butter unit
- 39 Summer, in Paris
- 40 Cut off



YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS



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



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

Are you thinking of getting into VOLUNTEERING?

ADRIN SARWAR

Many students have opted for volunteering as an activity to enhance their CVs and better equip themselves for securing future opportunities. Universities and employers value volunteer experience as it demonstrates commitment and a willingness to help others. However, many often jump at the first opportunity without considering whether it aligns with their goals and values. This is one of the reasons why many students are unable to make the most of their volunteer work. After all, it requires constant dedication and effort into a cause that a lot of people feel strongly about. So, finding a volunteering role that aligns with one's interest is important. Here's what you should know before diving in.

Find your passion

Volunteering entails that you aren't

bound to carry out any specific tasks. This means that there is a chance you may lose interest in the work over time. To prevent this, search for organisations that work towards a cause that aligns with your passions. Whether it's helping children, supporting environmental causes, or aiding disadvantaged communities, choose work that resonates with you. This alignment will keep you motivated and engaged for a long time.

Be ready to adapt

Most volunteering positions don't have rigid work hours. However, in crucial times, immediate action is required. In such situations, showing responsibility and dedication can be an opportunity for growth. Be prepared for challenges and for taking on an increase in workload as you become a more active member of the organisation.

Whether you want a small break or need to take on fewer responsibilities, communicate with the team and be sensitive about it. As a privileged member of society, you should acknowledge that you have the luxury of distancing yourself from these issues as opposed to entire communities who do not. And these very issues impact all facets of their lives.

Mind your mental health

A lot of volunteering work involves dealing with issues like humanitarian crises and social injustice. These are tough issues and have severe consequences on the people that it affects.

Even if it's an issue that you feel strongly about, you can feel emotionally drained from working around them. In such cases, consider what you need to do. Whether you want a small break or need to take on fewer responsibilities, communicate with the team and be sensitive about it. As a privileged member of society, you should acknowledge that you have the luxury of distancing yourself from these issues as opposed to entire communities who do not. And these very issues impact all facets of their lives.

Staying motivated

While public recognition of volunteers'

efforts is a huge motivation boost, it may not be enough to keep everyone incentivised. Oftentimes, there isn't any tangible recognition, which can feel rather demotivating. This is precisely why you should work towards a cause that you care about and spurs you on. There is no greater reward than striving to make a positive difference, especially when it involves a noble cause.

Understanding these aspects of volunteering will prepare you for what to expect and how to navigate the challenges that may arise. While volunteering can be emotionally taxing, it's also gratifying. Your commitment and dedication can make a real difference in the lives of others.

Adrin Sarwar is a writer, a student of Printing and Publications, and an illustrator

ADOPT, DON'T SHOP

The case against buying pets

A love that transcends language and understanding – sounds imaginary, but is very easily obtained when you have a four-legged best friend. There are hundreds of Facebook groups and resources promoting adoption, and it takes only one to realise Dhaka's massive problem of overpopulation of animals.

TINATH ZAEBA

Stray cats and dogs live a life marred by abuse and normalised cruelty, often passing away from extreme starvation and malnutrition. One adoption is one more animal saved from a short life and a painful death. Adopting a pet is the obvious choice in a city overpopulated by stray animals constantly looking for food and safety. After all, it could save their lives, and you have a loyal buddy for life. Yet, there are still uncountable families purchasing animals while adopting none – developing a new problem and leaving an old one unsolved.

A common reason for purchasing a pet is for the "aesthetics" – the claim that a foreign breed will look nicer. But it's important to realise that a living creature is not an accessory. A pet is a living thing, not a showpiece, and most rescue animals flourish under a caring hand. Each animal has its own unique beauty and personality when loved and cared for.

When it comes to affordability, adoption is entirely free of charge. It requires no payment to welcome a pet into your home, and in the long term, they require less maintenance as there is generally little to no need for professional grooming or fur maintenance. On



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

the other hand, purchasing a pet, such as a Persian cat, could cost up to BDT 30,000-40,000 and in the long run, grooming and maintenance become a regular financial investment, as they are more prone to risks of developing fungal infections if not taken care of properly.

Additionally, adoption is the more ethical choice as well. The business of breeders in Dhaka is revolting. Breeders purchase kittens and puppies, and as soon as they are of age, they are forced to be in proximity to the opposite gender to produce litter as quickly as possible. After the offspring are

born, they only spend a few weeks with their mother before they are whisked away to be sold, and the cycle almost immediately repeats, disregarding any health concerns of the mother or their babies. Neglect of pets is ordinary and not even a secret in the breeding industry. When you adopt a

pet, you are not condoning this practice and ensuring that you are not contributing to the endless cycle of abuse that could be easily prevented.

We share the city with these animals. They are voiceless, subject to abuse, and yet have so much love to give. Choosing to purchase rather than adopt is choosing to abandon them when all they want

A common reason for purchasing a pet is for the "aesthetics" – the claim that a foreign breed will look nicer. But it's important to realise that a living creature is not an accessory.

is to be our best friend forever. It's time for us to start a new generation of compassion and adopt our new furry family member.

Tinath Zaeza is an optimistic daydreamer, a cat mom of 5, and a student of Economics at North South University. When she is not cuddling with her pets, you can contact her at tinathzaeza25@gmail.com

SPORT

What to WATCH

NAGORIK TV
T20 World Cup final
India vs South Africa
Live from 8:30 pm

T SPORTS
Euros Last 16
Italy vs Switzerland

Live from 10:00 pm
Germany vs Denmark
Live from 1:00 am (Sunday)
Copa America
Argentina vs Peru
Live from 6:00 am (Sunday)



The final showdown between India and South Africa in the grand finale of the T20 World Cup 2024 will be the ninth final of the showpiece event. This will be the first time that the two sides will meet in an ICC final. They did face off in the semifinal of the 2014 edition in which India came out victorious but the Men in Blue lost against the Proteas in the 2022 edition in Australia.

● VENUE: KENSINGTON OVAL, BARBADOS ● TIME: 8:30 PM BANGLADESH TIME

HEAD-TO HEAD

INDIA: 14
SOUTH AFRICA: 11
NO RESULT: 1
IN T20 WORLD CUPS
INDIA: 4
SOUTH AFRICA: 2

SOUTH AFRICA

T20 world ranking: 5
Best result: Semi-finalists (2009, 2014)
Coach: Rob Walter
Captain: Aiden Markram
Top-ranked batter:

Markram (8)
Top-ranked bowler: Anrich Nortje (9)
ROAD TO FINAL
GROUP-STAGE
Wins against Sri Lanka, Netherlands,

Bangladesh, Nepal
SUPER 8
Wins against USA, England, West Indies
SEMIFINAL
Win against Afghanistan

INDIA

T20 world ranking: 1
Best result: Champions (2007)
Coach: Rahul Dravid
Captain: Rohit Sharma
Top-ranked batter: Suryakumar Yadav (2)

Top-ranked bowler: Axar Patel (8)
ROAD TO FINAL
GROUP-STAGE
Wins against Ireland, Pakistan, USA
*Match abandoned

against Canada
SUPER 8
Wins against Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Australia
SEMIFINAL
Win against England

Only courage can take Tigers forward

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's performances in the Super Eights of the T20 World Cup showed that team is lacking in many crucial aspects. But lack of courage was again evident, especially in how Bangladesh threw in the towel thinking they would not be able to chase down Afghanistan's total in 12.1 overs in the third Super Eight fixtures, with semifinals at stake.

The team returned home yesterday following a disappointing campaign despite picking up three wins in the group stages. Vice-captain Taskin Ahmed, while talking to media, spoke highly of the youngsters. The youngsters in the bowling unit played to their potential and held their own in a campaign where a lot of the experienced names did not fire.

Rishad Hossain picked up 14 wickets in seven matches while Tanzim Sakib took 11 and both youngsters gave a positive image of themselves.

"Tanzim Sakib, Rishad [Hossain] were among the top wicket takers and in top five. Rishad is still there. Overall they did well and it's a positive for Bangladesh that youngsters for the future will come up. It will show the world that we have different kinds of abilities," Taskin said.

A bulk of the blame for the effort in the



Afghanistan game would fall on the coaching staff and think tank, including head coach Chandika Hathurusingha. The batting unit looked like they were chasing a moving target, their plans changing from over to over. Taskin said they tried as a batting unit.

If the coaches did not however plan for it, individual batters' intent will not always pave the way. Bangladesh failed to use Towhid Hridoy or Rishad Hossain further up the order in the game. Many believe that Hridoy, who had performed sporadically but not without impact in this World Cup, could have been promoted up the order and not sent in at number six where the game had already become difficult.

If Bangladesh are to bring in youngsters, coaches too must have belief in fearless cricket. Thus while Hathurusingha should be credited for playing Rishad, he will have to bear responsibility for baffling planning during the Super Eights.

Following Australia's loss to India, some former and current players were talking about an overhaul. Taskin said that senior stars Shakib Al Hasan and Mahmudullah Riyad not performing had an impact. It remains to be seen if Bangladesh do move on from them.

"Both seniors not being in flow had an impact, although not outside the field since they are great teammates out of it. It's normal when key players do not perform," he said.

The batting unit altogether did not find form in the tournament. "I haven't seen such a long bad patch for the batters in my 10 years playing for Bangladesh. I hope it goes away quickly," Taskin added.

In T20s, however, one or two batters can often make the difference. Bangladesh need courage going forward, backed by actual skill. A lot of restructuring needed as well, and it has to begin with the think tank which failed to use resources tactically and plan a better World Cup.

More than a title at stake

REUTERS

India will be out to end their global title drought while South Africa will be seeking to bury their 'chokers' tag at Kensington Oval on Saturday when the tournament's two unbeaten sides clash in the Twenty20 World Cup final.

Their blemish-free campaigns and comprehensive victories in the semifinals leave no doubt that the 20-team tournament's best two sides have made the final in Bridgetown, but both sides will still have a point to prove as they look to get rid of their own ghosts in the final showdown.

A day after South Africa stopped Afghanistan's fairytale run in the first semi in Trinidad, India ended England's title defence in Guyana to make the third consecutive final of a global event across all formats.

Skipper Rohit Sharma will hope India, who lost in the finals of the World Test Championship and the 50 overs home World Cup last year, will make it third time lucky.

Both Rohit, 37, and stalwart Virat

● It is a historic occasion for South Africa as they will be playing in their first-ever final in ODI or T20 World Cups.

● India have not won a World Cup title since their triumph in the 2011 ODI World Cup at home.

● India are also without an ICC silverware since the 2013 Champions Trophy.

● This is the first time that both T20 World Cup finalists have made it through unbeaten -- South Africa have won all eight matches

while India won seven and saw their group game against Canada washed out.

● South Africa skipper Aiden Markram is yet to lose a game while in charge in World Cups. He guided the Proteas to victories in all six matches in the Under-19 World Cup in 2014, won two as a stand-in captain in the 2023 ODI World Cup before marshalling his troops to this World Cup final unbeaten.

● The average first-innings total at Kensington Oval in Bridgetown for completed matches in this World Cup is 150.

Kohli, 35, are playing what could be their last T20 World Cup, and winning the trophy would be a perfect farewell for them.

It will be a test of nerves for their opponents as well as South Africa look to shed their baggage from having reached their first World Cup final in any format after seven semifinal heartbreaks.

Their pace attack has been on the money, bailing them out whenever their

batters failed.

Opener Quinton de Kock has used his Caribbean Premier League experience to good use, while there is significant firepower in their middle order.

In Aiden Markram, South Africa also have a composed leader who has gone 10 matches unbeaten as captain.

"We feel and we believe that we can compete with the best in the world and we can win trophies," said Markram.

Euro knockout kings Germany ready for another deep run

AGENCIES

Germany's remarkable record in the knockout stages of the European Championship enters a new chapter in Dortmund on Saturday, with Denmark standing in the way of more glory for "Die Mannschaft", as they are known at home, at the tournament.

Of the 10 times the Germans have made it out of the group stage at the Euros, they have gone on to reach the semifinals on nine occasions and the final six. They are level with Spain with three titles.

Germany also boast the only man to win the tournament as a player and a coach in Bertie Vogts, who was victorious in 1972 and as manager in 1996, beating the Czech Republic 2-1 after extra time at Wembley.

However, that victory, almost 28 years ago to the day, remains the last time the Germans lifted the Henri Delaunay trophy, but even if Germany coach Julian Nagelsmann does not bring the cup home, his job is likely secure.

Their only three group-stage exits came in 1984, 2000, and 2004, and a round-of-16 loss in 2020 coupled with another group-stage departure at the 2022 World Cup in Qatar had lowered expectations ahead of this tournament.

A 5-1 win over Scotland and a dramatic late equaliser against the Swiss sent them through as Group A winners, however, setting them up for their last-16 clash



against the Swiss, said after that match.

Germany won just three of 11 games in 2023 but are yet to lose in 2024, winning five times and drawing twice, thanks at least in part to Nagelsmann picking the same starting XI.

The coach only deviated from his starters when forced through injury or unavailability.

The policy may have given Germany stability, but it cost him centre-back Jonathan Tah for the Denmark clash, after the defender picked up a second yellow card against Switzerland.

In his place, Borussia Dortmund's talented yet unpredictable central defender Nico Schlotterbeck will line-up on Saturday.

What bodes well for the Germans is that defender Antonio Rudiger returned to training on Friday ahead of their clash with Denmark, having missed earlier sessions with a hamstring strain that he picked up towards the end of Germany's 1-1 draw with Switzerland but managed to complete the game.

Denmark however will be forced to sweat on the fitness of midfielder Christian Eriksen, who did not take the pitch in the Danes' pre-match training session.



Key Italy midfielder Nicolò Barella (L) and forward Federico Chiesa (R) were in jovial mood in training yesterday alongside centre-back Gianluca Mancini, who is likely to replace the suspended Riccardo Calafiori, ahead of tonight's Last 16 tie of Euro 2024 against Switzerland. The defending champions will need a much-improved performance from their group-stage showing against the Swiss, a side they beat 3-0 in group stages of the last edition before drawing twice on their way to be eliminated from the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qualifiers.

PHOTO: INSTAGRAM



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Rain likely as low-pressure area forms in the Bay

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Meteorological Department predicts light to moderate rainfall in all divisions, including the capital, over the next 48 hours, beginning at 9:00am today.

"Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely to occur at most places over Rangpur, Mymensingh, Chattogram, Barishal, and Sylhet divisions and at many places over Rajshahi, Dhaka and Khulna divisions with moderately heavy to heavy falls at places over the country," said a met office bulletin yesterday.

A low-pressure area has formed over the northwest Bay and adjoining areas. The axis of the monsoon trough runs through Bihar,

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3



An excavator of the Dhaka North City Corporation removing waste from the Ramchandrapur canal in the capital's Mohammadpur yesterday. The move came a day after the corporation knocked down illegal structures of Sadeeq Agro for encroaching on the canal. PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

3 die in Ctg market fire

5 shops gutted; electrical short circuit caused the blaze

ARUN BIKASH DEY

Three people were killed in a fire that broke out at the six-storey Mohammadia Plaza in the port city's Riaz Uddin Bazar area early yesterday.

Mobile phone repair and accessory shops occupied the first three floors of the building, while its employees and other bachelors lived on the floors above.

The deceased were identified as Md Ridwan, 45, Md Shahed, 18, and Ismail Hossain, 19, of Satkania upazila, said police.

Kotwali Police Station Sub Inspector Toma Akter said Ridwan and Shahed worked at shops in the market and lived on the floors above; while Ismail was Shahed's friend, who was staying the night in his room.

The victims died due to asphyxiation, said a physician of Chattogram Medical College Hospital (CMCH).

A 35-year-old woman and a nine-year-old girl, who lived in the residential building next to the market, fell sick after inhaling smoke from the fire and were admitted to CMCH's burn and plastic surgery unit.

Later, the woman was shifted to the intensive care unit (ICU) as her health condition deteriorated, said Rafique Uddin Ahmed, head of the burn unit.

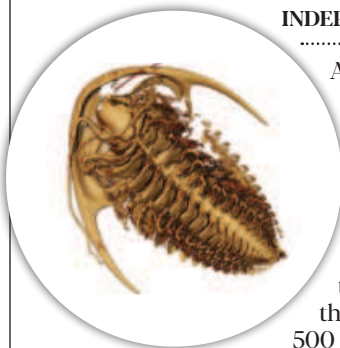
"The two injured suffered inhalation injuries."

The fire originated from a shop on the ground floor around 1:35am due to an electric short circuit, said Abdur

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

500-million-year-old sea creature discovered

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK



A sea creature that lived 500 million years ago has been discovered in a "remarkable state of preservation" by scientists.

Even though trilobites swam the oceans some 500 million years ago, researchers said the animals still look as though they "died yesterday".

The creatures met their end after becoming completely encased in ash after a volcanic explosion, preserving soft tissue and other parts of the body in pristine condition.

Dr Greg Edgecombe, a palaeontologist at the Natural History Museum, said: "I've been studying trilobites for nearly 40 years, but I never felt like I was looking at live animals as much as I have with these ones."

"I've seen a lot of soft anatomy of trilobites, but it's the 3D preservation here that is truly astounding," he added.

Trilobites are some of the most widely studied fossil marine animals, with more than 20,000 species identified over the past 200 years.

Dr Edgecombe said studying trilobites is important because they provide scientists with "one of the most comprehensive datasets" for analysing the evolutionary history of an extinct species.

The creatures were also geographically diverse, making them excellent index fossils for geologists calculating the age of the rocks in which they are found.

Two brothers among three killed in road crashes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two brothers were among three people who died early yesterday hours after being injured in accidents in Dhaka's Cantonment and Khilkhet areas.

The deceased were identified as Sifatur Rahman Safin alias Rahul, 21, a delivery man, his brother Md Rafi, 18, a transport worker, and Allaz, 25, an employee of an event management organisation.

In Cantonment on Thursday night, the two brothers were heading towards Kalshi area from their house in Mirpur Bawniabandh area to refuel their motorcycle, their uncle Monir Hossain said.

On their way, a speeding truck hit their motorcycle near ECB Chattar area around 11:30pm, leaving them critically injured.

Passersby took them to Kurmitola General Hospital. From there doctors referred them to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Rahul was pronounced dead shortly after midnight while Rafi succumbed to

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

FAMINE IN GAZA

Children dying of starvation in parents' arms



CNN ONLINE

Younis lays disorientated on a green mattress in Nasser Hospital, in southern Gaza. His long brown eyelashes rest delicately on his pale sunken face, as he drifts in and out of sleep.

The 9-year-old Palestinian boy lies in his mother's arms, clearly wasted from severe malnutrition and suffering from dehydration. His blue jogging bottoms hang off his

emaciated legs, as his tiny ribcage protrudes from his billowy orange T-shirt.

"I call on people with conscience to help me find health care for my son, so that he can go back to normal," his mother, Ghanima Juma'a, told CNN last week at the hospital in Khan Younis. "I am losing my son in front of my eyes."

Two months ago, the family was forced to flee the southern

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Israeli warplanes strike north Gaza

Numerous casualties reported

AFP, Palestinian Territories

Israel's military on Friday said it was conducting raids backed by air strikes in northern Gaza, killing "dozens" of fighters in an area where it had declared the command structure of Hamas dismantled months ago.

The operation in Shujaiya, on the edge of Gaza City, caused numerous casualties, witnesses and medics said on Thursday when it began.

Renewed fighting in Gaza's north followed comments on Sunday by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in which he said the "intense phase" of the war was winding down after almost nine months.

Experts say they foresee a potentially prolonged next phase.

Omer Dostri, a military expert at the Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security, said he expects the army to reduce its ground presence and to increasingly use drones and fighter jets "to further dismantle Hamas".

Yesterday in the Shujaiya area, an AFP correspondent witnessed an air strike and saw smoke rising. Artillery fire boomed.

In a statement, Israel's military said that, overnight Thursday, troops "started to conduct targeted raids" in the Shujaiya area as part of an operation that began earlier in the day.

Intelligence had indicated "the presence of terrorists and terrorist infrastructure in the area of Shujaiya", the military said, in its first details of the operation.

As troops went in, warplanes struck dozens of Hamas targets, it said, following other "significant"

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Israeli forces targeted the headquarters of Gaza's civil defence agency while advancing in western Rafah.

COPA AMERICA Bielsa wants more from 5-star Uruguay

AGENCIES

Marcelo Bielsa believes Uruguay have more to do to mark themselves out as one of the favourites to win the Copa America, despite crushing Bolivia 5-0 to make it two wins from two games.

Facundo Pellistri, Darwin Nunez, Maximiliano Araujo, Federico Valverde and Rodrigo Bentancur all scored as Bielsa's team ran riot in their second Group C game on Thursday.

It was Uruguay's biggest win in the Copa America since 1959, when they beat Argentina by the same scoreline in the group stage.

Having opened their campaign with a 3-1 win over Panama, they have won their first two matches at a Copa America tournament for the first time since 1995, when they went on to lift the trophy.

A figure of 2.74 expected goals (xG) from 18 shots to Bolivia's 0.06 (four shots) spoke to Uruguay's dominance,

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3



An injured girl reacts while lying on a stretcher on the ground as women mourn the death of their relatives at the Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir el-Balah yesterday, following Israeli bombardments in the central Gaza Strip. PHOTO: AFP

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

Climate change boosted deadly Saudi hajj heat by 2.5C

REUTERS, London

The heatwave in Saudi Arabia blamed for the deaths of 1,300 people on the hajj pilgrimage this month was made worse by climate change, a team of European scientists said yesterday.

Temperatures along the route from June 16 to 18 reached 47 degrees Celsius (117 degrees Fahrenheit) at times and exceeded 51.8 C at Makkah's Great Mosque.

The heat would have been approximately 2.5 C (4.5 F) cooler without the influence of human-caused climate change, according to a weather attribution analysis by ClimaMeter.

ClimaMeter conducts rapid assessments of the role of climate change in particular weather events.

The scientists used satellite observations from the last four decades to compare weather patterns from 1979 to 2001 and 2001 to 2023.

Although dangerous temperatures have long been recorded in the desert region, they said natural variability

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3



Coastal women and their woeful walk for water



I have to walk more than two kilometres to fetch water from a pond. Since I can't make the trip twice a day, I carry a bigger pitcher, which causes back pain and sometimes makes me sick.

Sushama Sarkar

DIPANKAR ROY

At the break of dawn, women of all ages – daughters, mothers, homemakers – set out in search for safe drinking water.

They carry not one, but several large water pitchers, balanced on their heads and backs.

Their journey stretches for hours, and often ends in a different village far away from home, where they can finally find some water that is safe to drink.

For many years now, such has been the case for many women in Khulna, Satkhira and Bagerhat. In recent years, rising sea levels and erratic weather patterns have pushed saltwater further inland, contaminating more groundwater sources.

For these women in Southwestern Bangladesh, reaching a source of safe water, however, is only half the battle. There, they join a long line of equally affected women, all waiting their turn to fill their pitchers. The wait can be agonising, stretching into more hours stolen from their

health, especially for women. Sushma Sarkar, 53, from Dacope upazila of Khulna, said, "I have to walk more than two kilometres to fetch water from a pond. Since I can't make the trip twice a day, I carry a bigger pitcher, which causes back pain and sometimes makes me sick."

"Can you imagine someone carrying a 25-litre pitcher along a four-kilometre road on a sunny day? It's really unbearable for us," she added.

The rich buy water. But this is not an option for people like Sushma. So, they keep their eyes on the sky for rain, which allows them to harvest rainwater.

But climate change has also led to less rainfall, pushing people like Sushma into further despair.

Rina Sarkar, who also struggles to find potable water, said they often drink saline water from the pond directly out of desperation.

"If the government could supply drinking water through pipelines, we would be saved from this curse. They supply electricity through poles and wires, so why not water through pipes?" she asked.

health, especially for women.

CURSE OF SHRIMP ENCLOSURES

The large-scale shrimp cultivation since the 80s has increased soil and water salinity in the coastal region, said Gournanga Nandy.

Shrimp enclosures need saline water to thrive and as a result, salinity intrusion increases with the expansion of shrimp culture. The extent of salinity in groundwater is also increasing because of continuous shrimp cultivation in the fresh agricultural land.

When Sonaban Bibi, 62, got married 46 years ago, there was a pond next to her house, from which she managed to fetch drinking water.

However, some 20 years ago the water of that pond in Betbunga village of Khulna's Paikgacha upazila became unsafe for consumption, due to salt intrusion caused by a nearby shrimp enclosure.

So, for the last 20 years, Sonaban has been fetching drinking water from a pond in nearby Golbunga village, 1.5km away from her house.

Paikgacha, said shrimp farming is being conducted on a large scale in 10 unions and one municipal area of the upazila.

"It is the largest saltwater shrimp farming zone in Khulna. This year, 3,940 saltwater shrimp gher [enclosure] is being cultivated on 17,075 hectares of land. Out of this only Soladana Union has 1,037 shrimp enclosures on a plot of 3,495 hectares," he added.

According to the Khulna Divisional Office of the Water Development Board, local shrimp traders have constructed approximately 3,000 unauthorised sluice gates in the Khulna division, leading to the drilling of at least 10,000 holes in river protection dams. The embankments have significantly weakened, making them prone to breaches under increased water pressure, particularly during cyclones.

The area affected by salt intrusion has expanded dramatically from 833.45 hectares in 1973 to 1,056.26 hectares in 2009.

violence.

Outsiders, who settled in villages for the shrimp business, have harassed and committed violence against women, especially when they are alone.

Besides, reproductive health problems due to prolonged exposure to saline water are common in coastal Bangladesh, she said.

To escape these health problems, many women undergo surgeries to remove their ovaries. Besides, child marriage is also increasing, Shilu said.

She emphasised the need for societal change. "Men should come forward to assist women and help with household chores."

During a recent visit, this correspondent also spoke to Sonaban Bibi's husband Abdul Majed Dafadar.

He said they got married when he was 22. Sonaban was much younger, although her parents did not mention her exact age at the time of their wedding.

"For 46 years, Sonaban has been fetching water for our family. She now suffers from headaches,



For these women in Southwestern Bangladesh, reaching a source of safe water, however, is only half the battle. There, they join a long line of equally affected women, all waiting their turn to fill their pitchers. Many coastal women carry not one, but several large water pitchers, balanced on their heads and backs.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Experts say climate change and shrimp enclosures have not only stolen safe water, but also amplified the existing inequalities, leaving these women on the frontline of a battle for survival.

day. Finally, after securing their precious water, they begin the long trek back, with fully loaded pitchers on their backs and heads.

This daily struggle comes at a heavy cost. Backache and fatigue are their constant companions.

Walking under the harsh sun everyday takes its toll, leading to frequent bouts of illness.

Yet, they cannot afford to rest. Skipping this daily "pilgrimage" means their families go thirsty. And there is always the risk of waterborne diseases.

The freshwater crisis across the southern coast of Bangladesh affects over 40 lakh people. But it is the marginalised women who bear the brunt of the suffering.

Experts say climate change and shrimp enclosures have not only stolen their clean water, but also amplified the existing inequalities, leaving these women on the frontline of a battle for survival.

Panchanon Mondal, chairman of Sutorkhali Union Parishad in Dacope, Khulna, said, "Almost 70 percent people in my union lack access to safe drinking water and rely on pond water or other sources."

"Urgent action is needed to alleviate their sufferings, including increased investment in water infrastructure and sustainable solutions to combat salinity intrusion," he added.

According to Dr Md Mehedi Newaz, vice principal of Khulna Medical Hospital, illnesses linked to salinity, like hypertension and kidney ailments, are becoming more common, particularly among women.

Gouranga Nandy, researcher and chairman of the Center for Environment and Participatory Research, said climate change is gradually extending salinity into inland water and soil, threatening coastal biodiversity and human

Fetching three to four pitchers of water daily for her family of nine is a strenuous task.

"It's a year-round routine, whether it's winter, summer, or rainy season, we need to fetch water from Golbunga," said Sonaban, when she was returning home after fetching water with a big pitcher last week.

Rafuza Begum, a resident of Betbunga, said, "Earlier there were five ponds around our village. Now you can't drink water from any of them. Saline water from shrimp enclosures has contaminated the ponds."

The story is the same for around 34,000 people living in 32 villages of Soladana union.

Abdul Mannan Ghazi, chairman of Soladana union, said, "All 32 villages are saltwater-prone areas. Saltwater shrimps are cultivated everywhere, which has caused the water in the ponds to become salty."

Saikat Mallick, fisheries officer of

SALINE WATER AND GENDER INEQUALITY

Men, traditionally paddy field workers, have been forced to migrate to urban areas in search of better opportunities, leaving women to shoulder the increasing burden of household and farm responsibilities.

This out migration has left the women who stayed back alone under increasingly difficult circumstances.

Besides, those men who stay back mostly don't help out their other halves in collecting water, due to gender stereotypes.

Shamima Sultana Shilu, a woman leader and activist in Khulna, said, "Women have to do all the housework. Waterborne diseases are very common for rural women who are in contact with saline water for household chores and other work like netting, fishing, or agricultural tasks."

The migration of men has also left women vulnerable to gender-based

hypertension, and breathing difficulties," he said.

"Our two daughters-in-law now help her. I have told my sons to help their daughters, which I regret not doing. I should have been more aware. I don't want the two young girls to end up like my Sonaban," he added.

Contacted, Md Akmol Hossain, executive engineer of Department of Public Health Engineering, told The Daily Star that deep tube wells are not functioning anywhere in 10 unions and one municipal area of the upazila.

There are 42,000 shallow tube wells in all the upazilas, one-third of which are functional, while others are lying idle, he added.

He said they are trying to come up with alternative solutions to potable water such as setting up water tanks for rainwater harvesting, pond sand filters and reverse osmosis.

FICTION

Storm child

SARAZEEN SAIF AHANA

Then you stirred. Your tiny forehead wrinkled, and you cried. That first, piercing cry that announces the arrival of a new soul in this world. And then your mother shivered at that sound, and she opened her eyes.

You must have heard the story of your birth a thousand times by now, sweetheart. Your mother and I—home alone. The others were out watching Ana's dance recital, but your mom had been feeling tired, so she stayed back, and I stayed with her. She was just seven months along, but she went into labour. The storm struck, and the rest of the family were forced to stay at the school. Your father ignored the weather warnings and drove home anyway, to find he now had a beautiful little girl to love. Your parents' joy was immense.

What we never told you was that you were stillborn.

Your mother went into labour, and it was the fastest delivery I've ever seen in my life. She bled like a river, and I thought I might lose my own daughter.

I lifted you from her and quickly wrapped you in towels and placed you on the bed. I was panicking, and your mom was bleeding and she had fainted. The storm was raging, and I was watching my own baby girl die in front of me.

and happy, nothing else mattered.

"My life for theirs. My soul for theirs. Whatever it costs, I'll pay it a thousand times over. Just give them back to me. Let them live. Let them be healthy and happy and whole." I said it like a mantra, again and again until my voice gave out.

Then you stirred. Your tiny forehead wrinkled, and you cried. That first, piercing cry that announces the arrival of a new soul in this world. And then your mother shivered at that sound, and she opened her eyes.

"The baby?"

My joy was a thing so vast it drained me. I carefully, wearily, placed you on her chest. She held you, and she began to cry. Your father burst into the room and started laughing and crying at the same time. I left the three of you there, but just before I closed the door, I met your gaze. It was not the gaze of a newborn infant at all. It was the look of a soul a thousand years older than me.

I went to my own room and slept. Never before had I felt so tired, and never since. When I woke up, the storm had cleared and everyone

was old enough to understand, and then we told him about you.

And we kept a very careful eye on you as you grew.

You could feel things. Strange things. Your Granddad's friend was a madman who attacked and murdered a little boy, wrapped the body in curtains and threw him into a landfill. You sensed the evil in him and told us.

Your Uncle Sam began associating with a rough crowd, and he was slowly being drawn into their world. You heard their voices, and you asked about them. He stopped hanging out with them shortly afterwards. They were human traffickers.

The house next door caught fire a few days after you told Cam you'd seen smoke coming from under the door of the locked room.

Two bullies attacked a little boy in your school six months after you ran to your teacher, saying someone was hurt in the stairs. We convinced the principal to install a security camera there. Your teacher got to the child just before he fell down the steps.

A woman broke into the zoo when you were a child and attacked a lot of the animals there. You knew that, somehow, and you told your father to look for the tiger's tail. The police found the woman's tooth, and she confessed.

Your sister overheard you talking in your sleep one night, that your father and one of your uncles were going to have a terrible argument. A fight that would tear the family apart. Your parents moved out just days later.

And then, last week, sweetheart, you left a message on my phone. Here...

Gramma held out her phone, and I took it from her.

I was shaking. My thoughts were a mass of chaos, chasing each other, screaming wordlessly. My mouth was painfully dry, and I couldn't swallow past the lump in my throat. My heart was a drum in my ears. Very dimly, I could hear a high-pitched keening, like someone screaming. Maybe it was my mind, rebelling at what I'd just heard. Maybe it was nothing. Maybe it was everything. Because the keening burst from my throat in a roar of horror and disbelief when I looked at my Gramma's phone.

It was a selfie of me holding up one of my sketches. I remembered sending her that picture, very proud of the mountain scene I'd worked for days over. But it was not a peaceful river valley I'd drawn at all. It was Gramma's living room, done up in Christmas decorations with the tree in the background, and fairy-lights everywhere. In the foreground was my family. My parents, sister, brothers, uncles, aunts and Gramma—on the floor. Their throats slashed open. Their eyes staring sightlessly forward. And there stood I, in the middle of those bodies, smiling serenely, blood on the knife in my hand, blood dripping down to my white dress from my mouth.

I broke the phone.

This is part two of "Storm Child", to be serialised here on Star Literature.

Sarazeen Saif Ahana is an adjunct member of the faculty at Independent University, Bangladesh where she teaches English and has a small cult of friends similarly obsessed with genre fiction.



DESIGN: MAISHA SYEDA

And then I realised you hadn't cried.

You were lying there, in those towels, ashen-faced and as silent as the grave. This tiny, beautiful little angel. And beside you was your mother, bleeding her life away.

I held you in one arm and her in the other, and I stared out of the window into that hurricane, and I begged for your lives. You know I was never very religious, but I guess there comes a point in every person's life where you give up trying to be strong and just want some higher power to help you. I cried like a madwoman and I begged for the lives of my daughter and granddaughter, whatever the cost.

I do not know how long I stayed that way. I do not remember what I offered for your lives. It did not matter. As long as my family was safe

was home. We took you and your mother to the hospital because you were premature, and I was still worried about the blood your mom had lost. You were both released from the hospital a few weeks later, safe and healthy.

Yet every time I looked at you, I knew. I knew I'd done something terrible. I knew I'd called on something I did not even understand in my desperation to protect you and your mother. And I knew, if I were to keep you safe, everyone had to be aware. I sat them around the dining table and told everyone clearly what had happened. We swore to keep this secret. We locked the door of the room you were born in, and we agreed never to let you in there.

When your little brother was born a year later (normally, thank goodness, in a bright hospital full of doctors and nurses), we waited until he

POETRY

Omniscient

H. AZAD

Skin sticky with perspiration from a long month of June
I sit in the ruins of half of this year that has left
I am a ghost, fuzzy and melted down to a whirlpool
Passing through walls of people that walk, waltz, run, or crash into me as I drift Like a bus with its rotating wheels akin to Bambi's flailing legs
I know anger like they know grief
Watching kids grow into these fleshy bits, lanky limbs
They grieve the death of kids that they once loved

It's tragic/ but see, change is beautiful
As long as you grow as you change
Two sides of a same coin to represent it that would let you grow/ or not Cause when a thing doesn't grow, it starts to rot
I know rotten people/ I know lack of consideration
I know entitlement and lack of reciprocation
I know things you put up in a shelf for later/ just so that it doesn't seep into your skin, from some three to four millimeters under
I know that your words meant for me are sharp and that you don't mean for them to be but I know compassion
And I know what's it like to keep a secret because I know when the heart of a friend who lives thousands of miles away flutters

And I know when a friend who lives close presses across her bony wrist the sharp blade of a cutter

I know of women close to me staying in loveless contracts/ and that they didn't bump into a door when they talk about bumping into one as a response to the burning question/ they say it doesn't really matter

And I know of infidelity that sinks its claws into a ripe chest filled with love only to hollow it out into the gutter
I know know know know
All I do is know things
Things/secrets that float into my ears like razored confetti and make them bleed And I hear the honeyed words that do nothing to soothe the grating feeling of the omniscience that for the longest time I have fathered
You know how to handle things so well, very reliable

Lips splitting in two/in false gratitude/as something inside me screams I left people to bleed because it's simply not my battle to win
And then as it dies down, a small voice in the back of my mind mutters The less I know, oh, the less I know the better

H. Azad is a poet from Central Dhaka. They deal with themes of grief and gore, and they do hope to walk readers through it with them one day, rather than just holding the readers' chins and forcing them to stare it in the face. Find them on Instagram @qo2375.

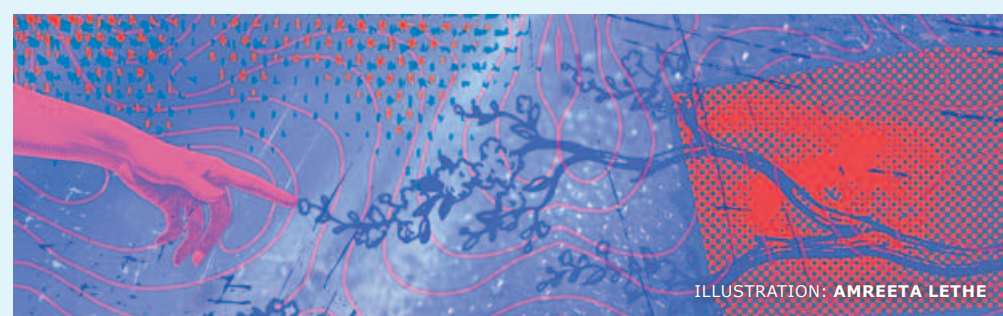


ILLUSTRATION: AMREETA LETHE



DESIGN: AMREETA LETHE

MAISHA SYEDA

What I wish I didn't know is that when your dear friends whisper the word "psycho" behind your back, you'll grow up accepting it. / I wish I didn't know that cats sometimes eat their newborns for nutrients and that human beings sometimes kill their daughters when they are born; that, I wish I knew why. / I wish I didn't have to know that parents grow old and at some point, we're meant to take care of the child version of them and not the other way around. / I wish it didn't know that would make me angry (don't ask me why). / I wish I didn't know that when you don't have a parent, everyone tries to be your missing parent; they would somehow know what's best for you even though they were never around and they hardly know you; and would point out all the ways your missing parent failed to "parent the right way" because they were away most of the time (figuratively or literally). But what they don't know is that your missing parent taught you everything you needed to know to survive before they went missing—either themselves or by being away. Regardless, you turned out great. / But, I really wish I didn't have to know what it's like to be in what is now half of what was once a beautiful and happy home.

I wish I didn't know that beautiful flowers wither sometimes even after a rainy day. / And that some of those magnificent looking flowers stink—because, well, what a waste. / And I wish I didn't know that when you give up yourself to make a home in the palm of someone's hands, your home is bound to wash away. And you'll end up trying to build that same home forever.

Maisha Syeda is a writer, painter, and lecturer at North South University.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

POETRY

All that I'd despicably known / Things I wish I didn't know

TABASSUM HASNAT

All that I'd despicably known / Things I wish I didn't know—

That my childhood would be a prelude to the calamitous chronicles of this adulthood.

That the then enticing eagerness to grow up would become today, one nonchalant noose around my adult self.

That the melodies my younger self mindlessly hummed and cavorted about, would become so hard to even call to mind as I manoeuvred through life.

That the embers of curiosity once coruscating through my mind would be extinguished by the everlasting bouts of over-scrutinising.

That the heart that used to pulsate a few beats harder in wonderment of the world would become hardened to the ways of that very world.

That my favourite person who breathes at the core of all my tenderest tales of life, would become a stranger one day with the bitterest aftertaste in my mind.

That the opportunity I spend my whole life looking for, would knock upon my threshold as if a trouvaile in the middle of some random day—

only to slip off my fingers, emulating the classic trope of "almost" from movies and novels.

That I'd inevitably become a daughter drinking from my mother's fountain of sorrow, onboarding the selfsame passengers of pain, putting upon pedestals the parasites that have only known to dine on the dainty life I hold.

That grief would always find its way to me, even in moments of grave bliss, even amidst bustling crowds, even in the arms—of my loved ones, even when the light at the end of the tunnel seemed unblemished and brilliant.

That to be able to crusade against the travails of the world outside, would require me to cease being at a war with my insides.

That the unloved, crestfallen whiff of the little girl from my childhood would still tantalisingly, wheeze out her dearth of tenderness in my instances of lovingness, leaving them marred.

That all the love every thread of my being retained, after being poured into the heart of a wrong person, would render me incapacitated of loving—a terrible lover, is all I must have become now.

That all the wrong trains do not end up at right stations, for here I am—pursuing pursuits yet to make sense to myself, chasing chaos in the name of having purposes, checking myself in at starting points only with no finishing lines in sight.

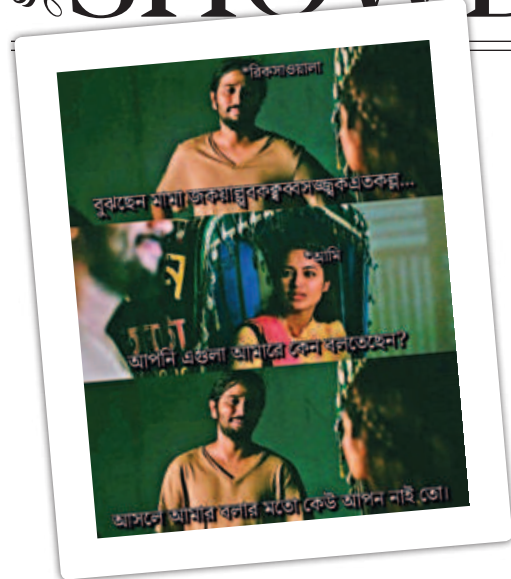
That the fairytales I grew up reading before my stubborn eye gave in to sweet slumber would grow edges like knives becoming anecdotes of detestable realities that keep rewinding behind the same eyes leaving me now sleepless.

That the girl who only walked holding her father's pinky, would become a woman dragging her way through her life with fists clenched.

That loving myself is something I needed to learn everyday for the world makes me abominate my own skin every other day.

That my words would fail me, as mortals become unkind, and life—a running radio of grating malice, and as I write this unending list of all that I'd despicably known.

Tabassum Hasnat is a Bangladeshi freelance content and creative writer of short form/fictional genres. Aside from having her own personal blog on the global platform of Storymirror Pvt Ltd, she has co authored multiple anthologies and book compilations that have been published on Amazon, Kindle, Google books, Kobo, Barnes & Noble, and Notion Press.



AN UNLIKELY PARTNERSHIP

How internet humour is reshaping film marketing

Cultural sensitivities must be navigated carefully, as a meme that misses the mark can quickly backfire, generating negative publicity.

MAHIYA TABASSUM

In an era where attention spans are shrinking and social media dominates, film studios are turning to an unexpected ally in their promotional arsenals: memes. Once dismissed as mere online frivolity, memes have become a potent force in the marketing arsenals of production houses and streaming platforms worldwide. This shift is particularly evident in the burgeoning entertainment industry of Bangladesh, where meme marketing has propelled several productions to unexpected heights of popularity.

Meme marketing involves creating and sharing humorous, relatable content that can spread rapidly across social media platforms. For film projects, this often means crafting images or short videos that reference the movie in a way that resonates with online communities.

The appeal is clear: memes are shareable, adaptable, and can quickly go viral, potentially reaching millions of viewers at a fraction of the cost of traditional advertising. They also allow for a more organic, word-of-mouth style of promotion that can feel more authentic to younger audiences who are often sceptical of conventional marketing tactics.

ubiquitous in their social media feeds. This curiosity-driven viewership represents a new paradigm in audience engagement, one where the line between marketing and entertainment is increasingly blurred.

Sheikh Korashanee from Chorki, one of the spearheads behind the OTT platform's strategists, provides insight into how this meme marketing approach evolved. "It all started with *Syndicate*," Korashanee explains. "We found the character Allen Swapan intriguing and made a few memes based on him and launched them from our house. It became a hit, leading to a significant increase in the series' engagement."

This initial success laid the groundwork for their future meme marketing strategies. The show's release was accompanied by a meme competition hosted in partnership with Rantages, a popular Bangladeshi meme-sharing platform. The result? An astounding two crore minutes of viewership in just eight days, setting a new record for the streaming platform.

Rumman Kalam, the founder of Rantages, sheds light on the mechanics behind this success. "The first step is for OTT platforms to reach out to us for their new releases, which Chorki did last year," Kalam explains. "And then we coordinate with them to make the content." This collaboration allows for the creation of timely, relevant memes that are ready to deploy as soon as the content is released. It's a strategy that extends the lifespan of promotional content far beyond traditional marketing methods.

Korashanee elaborates on their process, explaining, "Upon finalisation of a project, we provide the meme platform around 15-20 templates, and then memes are made adding a variety of contexts to those templates." This approach comes in response to the meme platform's active cooperation in ensuring the well-timed dispensation of readily formed memes across social media.

The genius of meme marketing lies in its ability to circumvent the limitations of traditional social media promotion for audio-visual content. While platforms typically restrict the sharing of clips from streaming services, memes offer a workaround. "Memes allow us to reuse the same clip multiple times and keep the content on the top of our minds," Kalam notes. This repetition, far from being monotonous, keeps the production firmly in the public consciousness, driving continued interest and viewership.

However, the path to meme marketing success is not without its pitfalls. The rapidly

changing nature of internet culture means that what's viral today may be passé tomorrow. Cultural sensitivities must be navigated carefully, as a meme that misses the mark can quickly backfire, generating negative publicity. Moreover, as Kalam candidly admits, "Over the years, Rantages worked with many campaigns, but success wasn't always a guarantee."

Budget constraints also play a significant role in the adoption of meme marketing. Traditional production houses often lack the resources for extensive marketing campaigns. This financial limitation has, paradoxically, fueled the rise of meme marketing as a cost-effective alternative. It's a strategy that aligns perfectly with the needs of emerging streaming platforms and independent productions, allowing them to compete for attention in an increasingly crowded media landscape.

Looking to the future, the integration of meme marketing into film and series promotion strategies seems set to deepen. We may see the emergence of AI-generated memes, tailored to individual viewer preferences, or interactive meme experiences that blur the line between promotion and content. There's even speculation that the popularity of memes might influence content creation itself, with writers and directors crafting scenes with "meme-ability" in mind.

As the entertainment industry continues to grapple with changing viewer habits and the dominance of social media, meme marketing stands out as a uniquely 21st-century solution.

In Bangladesh and beyond, the success of productions like *Kacher Manush Dure Thuiya* and *Myself Allen Swapan* suggest that meme marketing is more than just a passing trend. It represents a fundamental shift in how audiences interact with and share content. As the digital landscape continues to evolve, those in the film and streaming industry who can master the art of the meme may find themselves with a significant advantage in capturing the ever-elusive attention of modern viewers.

Ultimately, the future of film promotion via meme marketing is bright, but it requires a delicate balance of creativity, cultural awareness, and technological savvy. When done right, meme marketing has the power to turn a modest production into a cultural phenomenon. In the coming years, we can expect to see this approach refined and expanded, potentially revolutionising the way films and series are promoted in the digital age. In this new landscape, the next viral sensation could be just one clever meme away.



VISUAL: MAHIYA TABASSUM

In the global arena, there are numerous examples of TV and film projects that have seen tremendous success with meme marketing. For example, the simultaneous release of *Barbie* and *Oppenheimer* in 2023 sparked the "Barbenheimer" phenomenon, a meme-driven marketing bonanza that boosted both films' profiles.

Take, for instance, last Valentine's Day special release - Shihab Shaheen's directorial web-film *Kacher Manush Dure Thuiya*. What began as a modest release quickly snowballed into an online cultural phenomenon, driven largely by a flurry of memes that flooded social media platforms. These bite-sized pieces of humour, often featuring stills or short clips from the film overlaid with witty captions, did more than just amuse - they intrigued. Viewers, including this author, found themselves drawn to watch the film; if only to understand the context behind the memes that had become

TRENDY STREAMS

Netflix
Kota Factory



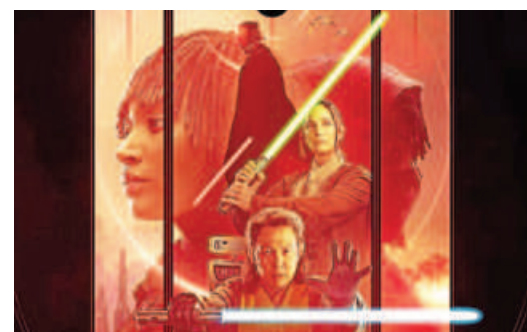
Amazon Prime
I am Celine Dion



Hoichoi
Boka Bakshote Bondi



Disney Plus
The Acolyte



Hulu
The Bear



OUT AND ABOUT IN DHAKA



Shesher Kobita- Photo Story Exhibition

June 29-30 | 11 pm-8 pm

Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, Dhaka



Let's Vibe Banter & Beats

July 4 | 7 pm

Cielo Rooftop Banani, Dhaka



Miftah Zaman: Odhoray Arekbar

July 5 | 5 pm-10 pm

KIB Complex, Dhaka

WHAT'S PLAYING

PERFECT DAY



Lou Reed's *Perfect Day* is a deceptively simple ballad that has become one of his most iconic works. Released on his 1972 album *Transformer*, the song presents a stark contrast to Reed's typically edgy and experimental style. On the surface, it's a tender portrayal of a romantic day out, inspired by Reed's experiences with his then-fiancee in New York City.

However, the song's apparent simplicity belies deeper, more complex themes. Reed's somber delivery and the repeated line *You're gonna reap just what you sow*, referencing biblical text, adds a layer of foreboding to the otherwise idyllic scenario.

This multifaceted nature of *Perfect Day* has led to ongoing debates about its true meaning, while making it a timeless classic that continues to intrigue and resonate with listeners decades after its release.

WHAT'S ON THE GRAM

ALIA BHATT AND RANBIR KAPOOR

Bollywood's cutest couple Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt brought their A-game at Anant Ambani and Radhika Merchant's masquerade party, on the basis of Bhatt's recent Instagram post.

Alia looked stunning in the long gown in a light teal dress regally displaying the greyish green hues, adorned with olive green and silver embroidery. The flowy chiffon gown features a draped dupatta in the same colour. She wrapped up the look with minimal jewellery, and a sleek bun, making for a classy appearance.

Ranbir Kapoor, on the other hand, was dressed in a flamboyant maroon velvet blazer paired with a white shirt, a bow tie, tuxedo pants, and a sleek black masquerade mask - opting for a classy look.



1-MINUTE REVIEW

Monkey Man's tale of retribution

Dev Patel brings a frenetic energy to his remarkable debut as writer and director in *Monkey Man*, with Jordan Peele serving as producer. The film is an outrageously over-the-top action thriller set on the bustling and refreshingly unconventional streets of Mumbai.

Patel plays "Bobby", named ominously after a bleach brand. Raised in a forest by his single mother, who fascinated him with tales of Lord Hanuman, their peaceful life is shattered when a greedy property developer, posing as a spiritual guru, conspires with a populist right-wing politician to seize the forest.

Corruption under the police chief played by Sikander Kher leads to tragedy. Seeking vengeance, Bobby eventually joins a criminal group through underground bare-knuckle boxing matches - wearing a monkey mask.

The fight choreography throughout remains phenomenal, enhanced by a sweaty, improvised dynamic energy. Moreover, the unpredictable narrative grips your attention, thanks to editors David Jancso and Tim Murrell, along with cinematographer Sharone Meir's fluid camera work.

LDC EXIT

A win for the nation, but a loss for trade

Experts suggest more homework to offset potential losses

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

Bangladesh's graduation from the group of least-developed countries (LDCs) to a developing nation in 2026 has become a point of national pride, underlining the substantial economic strides that the country has made.

Not only does the accomplishment signify that the nation has improved income levels, reduced poverty, and raised living standards, but it also represents improvement in social conditions.

Bangladesh was included in the LDC group in 1975 by the United Nations, with the country languishing from the havoc wreaked by the Pakistani army during the Liberation War of 1971.

The UN Committee on Development Policy, the body which assesses the graduation process, has confirmed Bangladesh will graduate in November 2026. It examined the country's economic performance across three criteria: gross national income (GNI) per capita, human assets index (HAI), and economic and environmental vulnerability index (EVI).

Bangladesh has outperformed all previously graduated LDCs in the three criteria in all reviews.

Although the exit will brighten the image and prestige of the country, it will also bring serious challenges for exports, especially due to the erosion of trade benefits.

BENEFITS FOR LDCs

Since becoming an LDC, Bangladesh has enjoyed zero-duty benefits on exports to different countries, including developed and developing nations. It receives preferential treatment in 38 countries. Of the total merchandise shipped from Bangladesh annually, 73 percent is LDC-induced.

It also qualifies for trade preference on shipments to its largest destination, the European Union, under its generous "Everything but Arms (EBA)" scheme. It has helped Bangladesh turn into the second-largest garment supplier to the bloc after China.

Except for the US, all other developing and developed countries have granted Bangladesh zero-duty benefits under the declaration of the Hong Kong Ministerial of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), where global leaders agreed to implement the Doha Development Agenda by approving duty exemptions for all goods originating in LDCs.

The US government did not comply with the declaration and had instead allowed duty-free access for 97 percent of the products of the LDCs. Unfortunately, garment items, the mainstay of the export basket of Bangladesh, were included in the three percent that was subject to duties.

As a result, Bangladeshi garment exporters have always had to face a 15.62 percent duty on apparel exports to the markets in the world's largest economy.

Washington suspended Bangladesh from the generalised system of preference (GSP) in June 2013 for its failure to meet

statutory eligibility requirements related to worker rights. The US GSP programme for all countries expired in December 2020 and the US Congress is yet to take up a new scheme. As a result, it has no duty benefit for LDCs currently.

Since gaining the LDC status, Bangladesh has been performing strongly in merchandise exports,

may witness a higher inflow of foreign direct investments after it becomes a developing nation because the change in the status will brighten the country's image. There will also be enhanced access to finance because of better credit ratings.

But the real question is whether the country will be eligible for the same

have already agreed to continue LDC-linked benefits for Bangladesh for three more years after 2026.

HOW TO REMAIN COMPETITIVE

According to experts, if Bangladesh can take proper steps, the country will be able to offset the financial losses from graduation. "The government has formed seven sub-committees on LDC graduation, and they should work efficiently so that the country can ensure a smooth transition," Prof Rahman added.

Once the country graduates, it will lose foreign assistance. So, the government has initiated measures and is bringing in changes to the budget and policies.

The principal secretary of the Prime Minister's Office has constituted a committee and seven sub-committees involving private sector stakeholders and researchers to identify potential challenges in the post-LDC era and carry out reforms in order to insulate the economy.

In order to tackle challenges stemming from the loss of preferential market access, Bangladesh is



especially in the shipment of apparel. Now, the country is the second-largest garment exporter worldwide, accounting for a 7.9 percent share of the global market.

Bangladesh is also the biggest beneficiary of the duty privileges afforded to LDCs, with the country alone availing more than 67 percent of the benefits extended to the group.

Furthermore, Bangladesh enjoys trade benefits on a broader scale. For instance, it gets a 12 percent preferential margin on its sales to European countries, which provide a substantial price advantage.

WHAT AFTER LDC GRADUATION

Since Bangladesh will lose preferential market access, the loss of exports may primarily be worth \$7.77 billion annually if merchandise exports of the fiscal year 2022-23 are considered.

"LDC graduation will have the greatest impact on the exports of Bangladesh," said the WTO in a study report. Bangladesh is projected to lose 14.28 percent of its exports.

Once the country leaves the bloc, local exporters may face an 11.5 percent duty in major export destinations in the EU if the GSP Plus facility can't be secured.

This duty will not only be imposed on exports to the EU but also to some emerging markets. For example, duties will be levied at 20 percent in India and 18 percent in Japan.

Apart from the impact of direct tariffs, the industrial sector, especially the garments industry, will face consequences. This may be reflected in workers losing their jobs as exports fall and exporters lose their competitiveness in global trade.

IS THERE ANY SILVER LINING?

The graduation will act as a source of pride and serve as recognition for the nation as it becomes a member of the developing countries.

On the positive side, Bangladesh

trade facilities once it exits the group and whether there is any possibility of retaining the benefits in the years after 2026. The straightforward answer is no, but two important developments need to be considered.

First, the EU will grant a three-year grace period to graduating LDCs, meaning Bangladesh will be allowed duty-free access up to 2029.

Second, at the 13th WTO Ministerial Conference in Abu Dhabi this year, it was decided that graduating LDCs would be given the facilities for three more years. In this case, graduating countries will have to negotiate with trading partners and it will not be flat like it is today.

Mustafizur Rahman, a distinguished fellow of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), said the think-tank's study found that around 14 percent of Bangladesh's exports will be affected following graduation. "Moreover, Bangladesh will have to rationalise tariffs for other countries by withdrawing regulatory and customs duties."

In the absence of the duty-free export facility, Bangladesh will have to sign trade pacts with other countries in order to keep the preferential market access. However, such deals will come at a cost. For example, if free trade agreements (FTAs) are signed, the country may lose a major source of revenue in the form of import duties.

The country's income from import duties stood at Tk 96,259 crore in the last financial year, accounting for 29 percent of the total revenue collections.

Experts suggest the government make the most of the trade benefits of the LDCs and continue negotiations with major partners to sign FTAs, Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreements (CEPAs), Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), and Preferential Trade Agreements (PTAs).

If a graduating nation can negotiate efficiently, it may enjoy trade benefits for more than three years after the transition. For example, China has retained benefits for Samoa although the latter graduated in 2014. Therefore, the extent to which preferences can be availed will depend on the negotiation capacity of Bangladesh.

The EU and some countries such as Canada, Australia and the UK



COSTS OF LDC GRADUATION

- ❑ Bangladesh will lose access to LDC-specific duty-free and quota-free schemes
- ❑ LDC-specific preferential rules of origin will go
- ❑ Significant impacts are expected in the EU, Japan and other markets, affecting especially garments
- ❑ No significant impacts are expected in the US considering current rules
- ❑ Bangladesh will no longer benefit from extension given to LDCs on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS)
- ❑ The TRIPS-related development may lead to higher medicine prices in Bangladesh and other countries



- ❑ LDC graduation may leave limited impact on development cooperation in Bangladesh
- ❑ Bangladesh may lose international support measures in trade, official development assistance and others
- ❑ There will be no travel support to UN meetings and no benefit from LDC-specific support measures

BENEFITS OF LDC GRADUATION

- ❑ Achieving the status will be an important development milestone though the gain is sometimes unquantifiable
- ❑ More FDI is expected due to better image of the country
- ❑ Bangladesh may obtain easy loans because of better credit ratings

SOURCE: UN

