



PM'S VISIT TO CHINA Dhaka to seek \$20b fresh loans from Beijing

PORIMOL PALMA, REJAU KARIM BYRON and JAGARAN CHAKMA

Bangladesh will seek fresh loans amounting to \$20 billion during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's upcoming visit to China, which Beijing hopes would be a "game changer" in the bilateral relationship.

Of the sum, \$15 billion would be for infrastructure projects and \$5 billion -- which would be disbursed in yuan -- would be to facilitate payments for imports from China, according to the officials involved in preparing the proposals.

"We have reached consensus on several aspects but are yet to finalise it -- we will finalise it by July 7," one of the officials told The Daily Star yesterday.

The foreign ministry yesterday held an inter-ministerial meeting for finalising the joint statement that will be adopted by Bangladesh and China during the PM's visit from July 8 to July 11.

The visit comes just two weeks after Hasina's first state visit to India after she was sworn in as the PM for a fourth straight term.

The trip to China, Bangladesh's largest trading partner, is viewed as a balancing act by Hasina, who hopes to be in the good books of two competing regional powers.

Bangladesh will seek Chinese support for the Southern Integrated Development Initiative (SIDI) centring the Payra Port in Patuakhali, according to finance ministry officials.

This will be an integrated development plan for the southern region involving projects on transport and communication, ICT, power and energy, logistics and a special economic zone.

SIDI will see the establishment of an electric vehicle plant, a hi-tech park and a logistic hub at a strategic location, said a finance ministry official. Japan is supporting the Moheshkhali-Matarbari Integrated Infrastructure Development Initiative (MIDI) and the BIG-B Initiative (The Bay of Bengal Industrial Growth Belt).

"Similarly, Dhaka wants Beijing to support SIDI," said a foreign ministry official.

Bangladesh earlier sought a loan in Yuan worth \$5 billion to facilitate importers to make payments for goods and services procured from China amid Bangladesh's strained dollar stockpile.

Bilateral trade between Bangladesh and China stands at \$23 billion, SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Bangladesh will seek Chinese support for the Southern Integrated Development Initiative (SIDI) centring the Payra Port in Patuakhali, say finance ministry officials.



Thousands of university students yesterday thronged the Shahbagh intersection in the capital for the second consecutive day, protesting the reinstatement of the quota system in government jobs. Story on page 12. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



What's the harm if India given transit?

Asks PM in JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said Bangladesh cannot keep its doors shut in this era of globalisation and she wondered what the loss would be if India is given transit facilities.

"There are objections about why we gave transit facility to India. We have already given this facility. What is the harm in this? Rather, we are getting tolls for the use of roads. The people of our country are having benefits. We are earning some money," she said in her concluding speech of the budget session in parliament.

Blasting those who criticised her recent visit to India, Hasina said the opposition parties continue saying many things about her tour.

She said Bangladesh needs to join Trans-Asian Highway. "We have also secured transit facilities from India for [carrying goods to and from] Nepal and Bhutan."

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

S Alam Group's rejoinder and our reply

S Alam Group has sent a rejoinder to our story headlined "Two S Alam firms evaded Tk 3,500 crore in VAT, says NBR" published in The Daily Star's online version on June 30, 2024, and print version on July 1, 2024.

We received the rejoinder on July 2, 2024, a day after the Group sent an identical protest note to various newspapers, and about a dozen national and local dailies ran the rejoinder as adverts on July 2, 2024. Below we are running the full, unedited rejoinder (paragraph numbering is ours) along with our response. SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

Ensure same pension scheme for all

Say experts about equal-contribution plan; 'thrusting it on certain section discriminatory'

AHSAN HABIB

A pension scheme in which the employee and employer make equal contributions is welcome in this economy, but it has to apply to all, be they public university teachers, bureaucrats or other government employees, economists say.

But imposing this scheme on certain types of entities is discriminatory, they

add.

Faculty and staff at 35 public universities have been on strike since Monday, protesting a pension scheme which will require those joining on or after July 1 to make contributions to the pension funds.

Experts say public university teachers and government officials should all be under the same pension scheme. SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



Palestinians go past buildings destroyed during Israeli bombardment in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

Univ teachers likely to sit with govt

Vow to carry on abstention until pension demands met

STAR REPORT

The government is likely to hold a meeting today with the representatives of the public university teachers over pension benefits amid their strike.

Teachers, however, said they will continue their indefinite work abstention and negotiate simultaneously until their demands are met.

They criticised Finance Minister Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali for terming their protest "unreasonable". They also challenged the minister to sit down for talks.

Teachers of 35 public universities SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

ACC sues Rajuk official, his wife over illegal assets

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission yesterday filed two cases against Rajuk Director Mobarok Hossain on charges of acquiring assets through illegal means.

In one case, filed under section 109 of the penal code, his wife Shahana Parveen is the main accused and he is the second accused. The other case, under the Anti-Corruption Commission Act-2004, was filed only against Mobarok.

Asif Al Mahmud, the commission's assistant director at the Dhaka Integrated District Office-1, filed the cases, ACC Public Relations Officer Aktarul Islam told The Daily Star.

In the wealth statements submitted by Mobarok, the ACC found evidence of acquisition of assets inconsistent with his income of Tk 41.46 lakh, according to a case statement.

It said Mobarok declared that he has movable and immovable assets worth Tk 1.86 crore in the wealth statement he submitted to the ACC. By reviewing the records obtained during the verification, the ACC found authenticity in the wealth statement submitted.

Against this wealth, the total SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Labour predicted to eject Tories as UK goes to polls

AFP, London

Britain's political leaders made a final push for votes yesterday on the last day of an election campaign expected to return a Labour government after 14 years of Conservative rule.

Ex-premier Boris Johnson staged an 11th-hour rallying call for the flagging Tories but an ally of Prime Minister Rishi Sunak conceded their party was staring at an "extraordinary landslide" defeat.

Voters will cast ballots from 7:00am (0600 GMT) today, with polls predicting that Labour will win its first general election since 2005 -- making its leader Keir Starmer prime minister.

That outcome would see Britain swing leftwards back to the centre ground after almost a decade and a half of right-wing Conservative governments.

Starmer was crisscrossing the UK on Wednesday with visits in England, Scotland and Wales in a bid to shore up Labour support and warn against complacency in the campaign's final hours.

"If you want change, you have to vote for it," the 61-year-old told reporters, adding that he was "not taking anything for granted". SEE PAGE 11 COL 5



Labour majority expected after 14 years of Conservative rule

A party needs 326 seats of the 650-seat parliament to secure a majority

Economy, healthcare, immigration are among the most important issues

Final results are expected in the early hours of Friday

The Tories have been going all out to play upon people's fears, warning of tax rises and weaker national security if they are voted out, in what Labour sees as a desperate last stand to cling on to power.

They have also increasingly urged voters in recent weeks to stop the prospect of Labour winning a "supermajority" -- a claim Labour fears is intended to hit turnout.

Work and Pensions Secretary Mel Stride, one of Sunak's closest allies, said Wednesday the electorate would "regret" handing Labour "untrammelled" power without an effective Tory opposition.

"If you look at the polls, it is pretty clear that Labour at this stage are heading for an extraordinary landslide on a scale that has probably never, ever been seen in this country before," he told right-wing broadcaster GB News.

Labour has enjoyed a consistent 20-point lead in the polls over the past two years with many voters dissatisfied with the Conservatives' handling of a range of issues including the cost of living, public services, immigration and the economy.

Advertisement for MyPrime mobile app. Features a cartoon character holding a smartphone and text in Bengali: 'আমি বাংলায় কথা বলি' (I speak in Bengali). Includes logos for MyPrime and Google Play, and a QR code.

NORTHERN MYANMAR Clashes break out near military regional command

AFP, Yangon

Clashes broke out near a regional military command in northern Myanmar yesterday, residents and local media said, in what appeared to be a widening offensive against junta troops.

Gunfire has rocked the northern Shan state town of Lashio, home to the military's northeastern command, since late Tuesday, one resident told AFP.

"Since last night we have been hearing shooting targeting the regional military command... we dare not to go outside," they said, requesting anonymity.

Fighting was happening outside the town, another resident told an AFP correspondent, who heard one explosion down the phone.

She said the military had closed all roads into Lashio but that some shops in the town were still open.

Videos uploaded to social media showed a wooden building destroyed and partly in flames, and local media reported six civilians had been killed in shelling.



Parimita Ghosh delicately picking some collard greens from a waterbody near her home in Beel Pabla area of Khulna's Dumuria upazila yesterday. The swelling of small waterbodies during the monsoon triggers the growth of various semi-aquatic plants, including different kinds of spinach and edible greens. From morning to noon, Parimita collects these, bundles them up and then sets off to the local market in the afternoon to sell them. Through this, she earns Tk 250-300 per day.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Landslides kill two in Ukhiya refugee camps

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Two people, including a child, died in separate incidents of landslides at two Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar's Ukhiya upazila early yesterday.

The incidents occurred at camps 8 and 11, said Shamim Hossain, officer-in-charge (OC) of Ukhiya Police Station.

The deceased were identified as Sifat Ullah, 13, belonging to the host community living in the eastern zone of Camp 8 at Balukhali's Jumerchhara, and Rohingya refugee Anwar Hossain of Block A in Camp 11, added the OC, quoting locals.

Meanwhile, a hill slide temporarily disrupted traffic movement on Marine Drive in Himchari Point since early morning. However, the road was cleared by a team of the Bangladesh Army before noon.

On June 19, ten people, including eight Rohingyas, were killed in separate landslides at the refugee camps in Ukhiya.

Incessant rains since last week have exacerbated landslide risks for Cox's Bazar residents, especially for people who are living in hilly areas.

About 1.2 million Rohingya, most of whom fled for their lives in 2017 facing atrocities by Myanmar's junta forces, live in 33 camps in Ukhiya and Teknaf in Cox's Bazar. Many of them live in hilly areas prone to landslides.

What's the harm if India given transit?

FROM PAGE 1

Noting that Bangladesh brings fuel from India's Assam to the Parbatipur depot through a pipeline, the leader of the House said this enabled Bangladesh to purchase fuel at a cheap rate.

Hasina, also the Awami League president, said the government has a plan to bring fuel to Natore through a pipeline.

She described how the interest of the country was neglected during the rules of military dictators Ziaur Rahman and HM Ershad, and also during the tenure of Khaleda Zia's government.

The PM said Zia had opened Bangladesh market for Indian goods. She said Zia and Ershad did nothing to resolve the enclave and Tin Bigha Corridor issues with India.

She said Khaleda forgot to raise the Ganges water-sharing issue during her visit to India in 1990s.

Hasina said she objected to selling gas to India ahead of the 2001 general election, but Khaleda agreed to it.

"As a result, my party Awami League could not win a large number of seats despite securing larger percentage of votes.

"We couldn't form the government because of my unwillingness to sell gas. So, who sells the country? Khaleda Zia, HM Ershad and Ziaur Rahman did it. Awami League doesn't do it."

The premier sought cooperation from the MPs so the national budget for 2024-25 fiscal and the Annual Development Programme are properly implemented.

Talking about the Ashrayan project, she said a total of 8,68 lakh landless and homeless families have been rehabilitated. The total number of beneficiaries is more than 43.39 lakh, she added.

This year, the budget session of the 12th parliament began on June 5. The session was prorogued yesterday evening after 19 sittings.

Finance Minister AH Mahmood Ali placed the Tk 7.97 lakh crore proposed national budget for 2024-25 fiscal in parliament on June 6. The Finance Bill-2024 was passed on June 29 and the national budget on June 30.

A total of 228 MPs took part in the discussion on the proposed budget.

ACC sues

FROM PAGE 1

amount of legal sources, including savings and loans, and excluding family and other expenses from income from various sectors during the service, is found to be Tk 69 lakh.

"In this case, he could not show any legitimate and acceptable sources of income for the additional Tk 41.46 lakh," it said.

On the other hand, although Shahana is a homemaker, there is evidence of non-income assets of Tk 1.58 crore in her name.

According to the statement of the case in which she was accused, "In the wealth statement submitted to the ACC, Shahana showed her movable and immovable properties are worth Tk 1.99 crore. However, the total legal and acceptable income, including net savings and other legal receipts, and excluding family and other expenses from the income mentioned in the name of Shahana Parvin, is Tk 41.2 lakh.

"It was found that the accused Shahana Parvin possessed movable and immovable assets worth Tk 1.58 crore inconsistent with her known sources of income."

The ACC said Shahana bought her properties with her husband's ill-gotten money, which is why she is the main accused in the case filed over abetting the acquiring of illegal wealth.

S Alam Group's rejoinder and our reply

FROM PAGE 1
THE REJOINER

1. It has come to our notice that a renowned newspaper namely The Daily Star has published a news report in its online version on 30.06.2024 at 4:25 PM and subsequently published in its print version on 01.07.2024 with the headline "Two S Alam firms evaded Tk 3,500 crore in VAT, says NBR". In the said News Report, it has been falsely stated that S. Alam Vegetable Oil Limited and S. Alam Edible Oil Limited have unpaid Value Added Tax, and consequent penalty worth over Tk. 7,000 crore which they allegedly evaded through various means in three years between 2019-20 to 2021-2022. The said news report made further false allegation that during the period from 2019 to 2022, these two companies evaded Tk. 3,538 crore in VAT for which these two companies have been imposed penalty of Tk. 3,531 Crore. In the said news report, it has falsely been alleged that these two companies evaded revenue by showing lower value of raw material purchase in VAT Return than that reported in their annual reports during the three financial years. In the said news report, further false allegation has been made that the said two companies evaded VAT by deducting less amount of VAT at source. It is further falsely alleged that despite selling edible oil to different purchasers, the said two companies did not pay VAT on those sale transactions. In the said news report it is further falsely alleged that in order to evade VAT, soybean and palm oil were sold after producing the items with the ingredients procured from local sources or collected by any other means. It is further alleged that Tk. 8100.39 core worth of raw materials have been procured locally against which the company failed to submit any VAT challan or Bill of Entry.

2. All the above allegations are absolutely false, frivolous, baseless and the said report has been published with ulterior motive. Both the companies submitted reply to the VAT authority on 27.12.2023 and thereafter submitted an explanation to their reply on 18.03.2024. In the explanation dated 18.03.2024, both the companies produced a clear picture that firstly the said two companies deducted VAT at source in accordance with law and no VAT was evaded which is supported by the evidence produced before the Commissioner of VAT.

3. Secondly, Tk. 10,320 Crore and Tk 9,207 Crore were shown in the respective audit report as sale which were actually received as advance money by issuing DO letters in favour of the intending purchasers for future sales which ultimately did not take place and the amounts so received by the aforesaid two companies were ultimately returned to the buyers through their respective bank accounts. The context of advance sale is a common practice in the local market of edible oil and is recognized business practice all over the country. The return of the amount of those advance sales are well documented.

4. Thirdly, the raw materials for production of edible oil are not available in the local market and those have to be imported by way of L/C. All these explanations were sufficiently placed before the Commissioner of VAT with relevant documents. However, the Commissioner of VAT deliberately avoided from reflecting the same in his determination order. However, in the said news report as

well as in the order passed by the VAT Commissioner on 09.06.2024, this explanation of the two companies have willfully been suppressed only to scandalize the said two companies. During the proceeding before the VAT Commissionerate, these two companies requested to allow them opportunity of personal hearing as well as for producing their detailed evidence in supporting their explanation.

5. Lastly, on 04.06.2024 both the companies filed applications before the Commissioner of VAT for fixing the date of hearing on 10.07.2024 or any day thereafter. However, the VAT Commissionerate passed an order on 09.06.2024 without affording these two companies the opportunity of hearing which is a clear violation of section 73 read with 85 of the VAT and Supplementary Act, 2012 as well as of principles of natural justice. Interestingly, the Commissioner in his orders both dated 09.06.2024 totally suppressed the fact of filing of application by these companies on 04.06.2024 only to justify his order.

6. These two companies never evaded any amount of VAT whatsoever and we are confident that if we are given a proper opportunity to produce our explanation along with the supporting documents, we will be able to establish the fact that no VAT has ever been evaded. These two companies challenged the said orders of the VAT Commissioner by filing two writ petitions before the Hon'ble High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh on 30.06.2024. The Hon'ble High Court Division vide order dated 01.07.2024 was pleased to issue Rule Nisi in the said two Writ Petitions. We already informed the newspaper authority about the pendency of the said two Writ Petitions at 02:00 PM on 30.06.2024. However, the Daily Star published the said news report on their online edition at 4:25 P.M on 30.06.2024 and subsequently published in print version on 01.07.2024 totally concealing the fact that the said order passed by the Commissioner of VAT was already sub-judice before the Hon'ble High Court Division. This amounts to frustration of administration of justice and therefore, is a serious contempt of the Hon'ble High Court Division.

7. We strongly deny and object to the said false, frivolous, baseless and motivated news report published in The Daily Star. We reserve our right to take appropriate legal action against the said false news report.

OUR RESPONSE
Firstly, the content of our news report was based on findings of an audit by the field office of NBR's Customs, Excise & VAT Commissionerate, Chattogram, and a subsequent review by a five-member committee headed by an additional commissioner, Chattogram VAT Commissionerate. The Daily Star simply reported on the VAT Commissionerate's findings that the said two companies have unpaid VAT and consequent penalty worth Tk 7,000 crore.

So the claim in the second paragraph of the rejoinder that "all the above allegations are absolutely false, frivolous, baseless and the said report has been published with ulterior motive" is totally untrue. The Daily Star published the story in public interest, and with no other motive whatsoever.

The VAT demand adjudication order by the VAT Commissionerate came in June 2024, about eight

months after the field office submitted its audit report in October 2023. During the audit and review process, the two S Alam firms were given the opportunity to explain the discrepancies in sales and purchase data they presented in their audited annual financial reports and in their VAT returns. This mismatch between two sets of data, presented by the two companies themselves to the authorities, were discovered by the government's VAT wing, and not by The Daily Star.

In its own admission to the VAT authorities, the two companies said that they "presented inflated values in their audited financial reports to avail bank loans," to which the NBR review committee said that "if this is true, they have clearly committed a criminal offence." The review report further said that the related bank has also "acted very unprofessionally" if it sanctioned loans based on an "imaginary and untrue" financial statement.

We reported these findings and observations of the revenue collector, and not a single word more.

As is our practice in line with internationally accepted standards, we approached their parent company on June 27, 2024, three days before we went online and four days before we ran the report in our print version. Between our first contact and the publication, we have spoken to S Alam Group Executive Director (Finance) Subrata Kumar Bhomik and the Group's legal counsel Md Mustafizur Rahman multiple times over the phone and exchanged eight text messages via WhatsApp. Md Mustafizur Rahman also sat with The Daily Star at its office on June 29, 2024, to offer their explanations. The meeting lasted about 80 minutes.

In fact, much of the explanations offered in paragraph 3, 4 and 5 of this rejoinder have been included in our story, quoting Mustafizur. We even sent a draft of his comments before publication, asking him to see if it reflected the company's version, and he said by phone "it's okay" and did not suggest any changes, deletion or addition.

To be clear, we dedicated 442 words for the Group to clarify their position in our story. This is only from our telephonic and face-to-face conversations with the Group representatives. If we count the 347 words that we also have incorporated in our story from the NBR's VAT wing report as their explanation on the VAT evasion allegation, we have dedicated 789 words for the Group in our 2830-word story.

About two hours before we were ready to go online, S Alam Group sent a notice asking us not to publish the story since they have filed writ petitions against the orders of the VAT Tribunal. Since we did not comment upon or discuss the merits of the writ petition, we went ahead with our publication which reports on the findings of the NBR field office as provided in its orders.

The Daily Star never engages in "motivated" reporting as the last paragraph of the rejoinder falsely claims. We repeat, we publish stories in public interest, and a story on allegations of VAT evasion worth Tk 3,538 crore and consequent penalty amounting to another Tk 3,531 crore have huge public interest.

The rejoinder does not dispute any facts or present any proof to counter the content of our story. We stand by our report.

Dhaka to seek \$20b

FROM PAGE 1

with imports by Bangladesh accounting for almost the entire sum.

A team of Chinese Exim Bank yesterday met with officials of the Economic Relations Division, the finance ministry wing that negotiates foreign loans, to discuss the terms and conditions for the loan, The Daily Star has learnt from officials informed with the proceedings.

The other projects for which Dhaka will be seeking loans from China include: the Dhaka Mass Rapid Transit Development Project (Line 2), the Bhanga Kuakata rail line, bridge over the Kocha river at Pirojpur, the renovation of Dhaka Medical College Hospital, and Maheshkhali-Matarbari Bakhrabad 3rd parallel gas transmission pipeline.

An announcement on starting negotiations for a free trade agreement may also come up during the visit as Bangladesh is eager to boost exports to China to reduce the trade gap.

Beijing wants to upgrade the relationship with Dhaka to a "comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership" from "strategic partnership" that was declared during the visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2016, according to officials involved with the proceedings.

Stakeholders, however, advised putting national interests at the centre of the negotiations.

Ensure same pension

FROM PAGE 1

Besides, all teachers should have better packages during their service as well as in retirement, so that the best minds are attracted to the profession, they say.

The finance ministry in a gazette in March announced a pension scheme titled Prottoy for recruits joining the autonomous, self-governing, nationalised, statutory, or such organisations, including public universities, on or after July 1.

Under the scheme, 10 percent of the monthly basic salary of an employee, up to Tk 5,000, will be deducted and given to their pension fund. The employing organisation will contribute the same amount to the fund. The government will pay the authorities managing the pension. There will be no one-time gratuity for the retiring employee.

The government will invest the money, and the proceeds will be added to the fund.

Under the existing pension system, employees do not need to contribute to their pension funds. Faculty and staff recruited before July 1 this year will be under the current pension scheme.

Finance Minister Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali announced in his budget speech on June 6 that government officials, including bureaucrats, would be under a new pension scheme, which the finance ministry later said would be named Shebok. Employees joining after July 1 next year would be under this scheme.

The government has yet to publish terms of Shebok.

University teachers, meanwhile, are concerned that their retirement benefits will be cut by Prottoy while government officials under Shebok will be better off, said Prof Muhammad Shahadat Hossain Siddiquee who teaches economics at Dhaka University.

He is also a member of a committee of protesting teachers formed to review the new pension scheme.

TEACHERS' DEMAND IS LOGICAL.
It is good that the government is heading towards a system in which the employee contributes to the pension funds, said AB Mirza Azizul Islam, former adviser to a caretaker government.

The government must manage the fund carefully and meticulously so that it does not turn into a losing concern.

Retired employees should not be kept waiting for the monthly pension.

The government spending in pension and gratuities was Tk 4,395 crore in fiscal year 2009-10 – 4.3 percent of the budget. For the 2024-25 fiscal year, the government allocated Tk 36,902 crore,

which is 4.63 percent of the total budget, according to the Ministry of Finance.

Azizul, also a former chairman of Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission, said, "The teachers' demands seem logical."

There should be no discrimination and division in the pension of public servants, added Azizul, also a former Dhaka University teacher.

Prof Shahadat said under the new scheme, new teachers and staffers of public universities would enjoy fewer benefits than they would have under the current one.

The brightest students may not choose to be teachers, he said.

The officials who will now be separated under the Prottoy and Shebok categories were all under the same pension scheme for years, he said.

"So, why is this separation all of a sudden?" he asked, adding that teachers were being downgraded from other government officials.

He said he realised that the government's spending capacity had diminished.

"But the government separated us from other officials."

All government officials should be brought under the same scheme, he said.

A finance ministry official, who wished to remain anonymous, said schemes like Prottoy were common across the world.

A similar scheme was introduced in India in 2004, with 10 percent of basic salaries being deducted and transferred to the pension authority, he said.

The government will not be able to continue bearing the growing pension costs, the official added.

The National Pension Authority said in a press release on Tuesday that out of 403 autonomous, self-governing, nationalised, statutory, or such organisations, 90 are currently under one pension scheme. The rest are under the contributory provident fund (CPF) system with employees getting a one-time fund after their retirement. The new schemes will be effective to ensure pensions for all.

Although under the Prottoy scheme pensions will be provided after employees reach the retirement age of 60, the retirement age of university teachers is 65. The National Pension Authority press release said the government will make corrections in the rules.

The new scheme will not provide any one-time pay after retirement, but the monthly allowance will be multiple times higher than that of the existing system.

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16TH JUDICIAL SERVICE RECRUITMENT Gazette delay leaves candidates in limbo

ARAFAT RAHAMAN

Rashed Ahmed, a former student of Rajshahi University, was provisionally recommended to become an assistant judge following the final results of the 16th Bangladesh Judicial Service (BJS) exams.

After getting the recommendation, Rashed thought his days of uncertainty and anxiety would finally come to an end, as he would be joining a government job, which would help him finally start providing for his family.

But to his utter dismay, even after nine months of the results being published, he has yet to join the office due to the delay in publishing the official gazette.



Over 37 lakh cases are pending in the country. If the recommended candidates could join their positions sooner, it would help alleviate some of this backlog.

Due to that, a total of 104 candidates have yet to join their positions as assistant judges, despite being provisionally recommended.

Bangladesh Judicial Service Commission (BJSC), which is responsible for overseeing the appointment of assistant judges, published the recruitment notice for the 16th BJS on February 7 last year.

According to the BJSC website, the preliminary exams were held on March 18, followed by written exams from May 21-31. Oral exams were completed on September 19 and the final results were published on September 24.

Despite the completion of these stages, the final step -- publishing the gazette -- remains pending, causing significant distress among the selected candidates.

"Being recommended for a job and then waiting for nine months is unbearable and truly disheartening. Many people ask me where I have

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Freedom fighters' quota not constitutional
GM Quader tells JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Not all freedom fighters are under-privileged, therefore, keeping quotas



in the name of freedom fighters in government jobs is unconstitutional, Opposition Leader GM Quader told parliament yesterday.

Opposing the freedom fighters' quota in jobs, the JP chief said making the freedom fighters' quota permanent to a large extent destroys the main purpose of the spirit of our independence.

GM Quader said this in his winding-up speech at the third budget session of parliament.

Highlighting the various statements of students protesting against the quota system, GM Quader said, "In my view, permanently setting a large number of quotas for the employment of the upcoming generation of freedom fighters undermines the

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Militants using prisons to run operations

Smuggling in phones with help of guards for communication, say police intel report

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Neo JMB, the IS-inspired militant group responsible for the 2016 Holey Artisan Café attack, has been using cell phones from prisons for communication and operations, as per a recent police intelligence report.

The outfit is also increasing its funds through foreign donations and agricultural earnings.

One of the top leaders of the outfit Abu Ruham alias Kunia has been smuggling cell phones in jails with the help of some prison guards, the report added.

Then the inmates install encrypted apps like Signal, Telegram, and Wicker Me for communication.

Md Asaduzzaman, chief of the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime unit, told The Daily Star that militants in jail are now under increased surveillance.

The report revealed that Neo JMB's current Ameer, Saudi expatriate and Afghan returnee Abu Bakar, maintains regular communication with jailed members in Bangladesh.

A high-ranking counterterrorism official confirmed that members provide money, SIM cards, and smart phones to inmates with help from some prison guards.

Financial support is also sent through mobile financing services, the official added.

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NEW CURRICULUM Questions of half-yearly exams 'leaked'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The question papers and their answers to the half-yearly assessment for classes 6 to 9 have been allegedly leaked on social media before the exams.

The recently introduced assessment process began yesterday involving approximately one crore students.

The leaked questions, centrally prepared by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB), were found to be identical to those used in yesterday's assessments.

Prof Md Moshuazzaman, acting chairman of the NCTB, admitted that the papers had been found on social media.

"These [question papers] were sent directly to the IDs of the headteachers around noon before the exam. Unfortunately, these questions were shared by the headteachers, leading to their distribution among the students."

"You can't call it a question paper leak," he said, explaining that during last year's evaluation, such papers were published on the official website about two weeks before the exams.

"As the evaluation process is activity-based, students won't get any advantage, even if they get the questions a week in advance. They have to perform and do tasks in front of their teachers during the evaluation," he said.

Regarding steps taken to address the leak, he said an urgent notice has been issued to headteachers, warning of strict action against anyone found responsible for future leaks.

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- ➔ Increase cyber patrolling
- ➔ Take initiative to deradicalise extremists
- ➔ Heighten vigilance in prisons
- ➔ Enhance police monitoring in CHT



Militants collected 1.5 lakh phone numbers for using those to recruit new members through text messages

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'We need better transport service for a better Dhaka'

Speakers tell BIP conference

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Institute of Planners yesterday urged the government to ensure quality bus service in Dhaka to improve its position in the global liveable city index.

Dhaka has dropped two places to 168th on the Economist Group's Global Liveability Index. This decline from last year's 166th rank has placed Dhaka just above Karachi, while Kyiv, the war-torn capital of Ukraine, ranks three places higher.

The annual survey, published on June 27, assessed the liveability of 173 cities based on stability, healthcare, culture and environment, education, and infrastructure.

BIP, during a press conference at its conference hall, recommended building new playgrounds and parks that are open to everyone.

BIP President Adil Mohammed Khan said the government is prioritising the infrastructure sector in the capital but the question is whether the infrastructure is in place to benefit more people.

Akhter Mahmud, former president of BIP, stressed the need for making all the ministries accountable.

BIP's other suggestions included taking effective initiatives to reduce waterlogging, and protecting waterbodies.

Four to die for killing B'baria AL leader in 2012

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A Chattogram court yesterday sentenced four persons to death and 10 others to life term imprisonment for killing Brahmanbaria's Sarail upazila Awami League vice president AKM Iqbal Azad in 2012.

Judge Mohammad Halim Ullah Chowdhury gave the verdict. The death row convicts are Rafiq Uddin Thakur, Mafuz Ali, Mokkarm Ali Sohel, and Ismat Ali.

Public Prosecutor Ashok Kumar Das said the court sent the convicts — all leaders and activists of AL and its associate wings — to jail.

Iqbal Azad was stabbed and hacked to death by his political rivals on October 12, 2012. The PP said Iqbal was murdered in a planned way so that the convicts could grab tender businesses and others political benefits.

SUNDARBANS Mangroves along rivers to be restored

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The Forest Department has taken an initiative to reforest the lost mangroves on the banks of 52 rivers and canals adjacent to the Sundarbans in Khulna, Bagerhat, and Satkhira.

Under the initiative, only the plants that grow naturally in the Sundarbans will be planted on the banks of the rivers and canals that flow through Sharankhola, Morrelganj, Mongla, Dacope, Koyra, and Shyamnagar upazilas of the districts.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Bangladesh and the Forest Department will jointly implement this initiative titled "Upper Sundarbans Restoration Programme" with funding from the French Development Agency.

The initiative will enhance the region's capacity to adapt to the impacts of climate change by bringing back the lost mangroves. It will be implemented following the model of mangrove afforestation done across five acres of land on the banks of the lake at Sheikh Russel Eco Park in Khulna's Batiaghata upazila.

Dr Abu Nasser Mohsin Hossain, divisional forest officer, said from July 6 to 8, officials of the department, members of the French Development Agency and IUCN Bangladesh will visit the cyclone-affected areas and the mangrove model created in the eco park.



PHOTO: STAR

Encroachment, pollution killing Burai beel

MIRZA SHAKIL, Tangail

Burai Beel, an important natural swamp in Tangail district town, is quickly shrinking due to pollution and illegal encroachment.

Once a vast waterbody, locals used it to commute to the district town, providing livelihood to local fishermen.

Tangail municipality, which is responsible for protecting waterbodies in the areas under its jurisdiction, has been dumping municipal wastes into Burai through several drains, thereby polluting its water. Moreover, some local influential people, including those with political backing, have been encroaching the swamp by filling it with different structures and claiming ownership using forged documents.

As a result, the swamp is now on its death bed. It can no longer drain away the accumulated rainwater of

the town during monsoon, leading to waterlogging in neighbouring areas.

"We used to bathe in Burai's clean water decades back. Now the water is as polluted and dirty as it gets. It was also full of indigenous fish species," said Rafiqul Islam, a local.

Gautam Chandra Chanda, divisional coordinator of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association, said Burai Beel and waterbodies in Tangail are disappearing due to people's greed and authorities' irresponsibility.

Ratan Ahmed Siddique, general secretary of Committee to Protect Waterbodies in Tangail, said many areas in the town have become prone to waterlogging due to poor drainage system, and loss of waterbodies.

Contacted, SM Sirajul Haque Khan Alamgir, mayor of Tangail municipality, said they are aware of the issue and steps are underway to recover and protect all waterbodies in the town.

Gazette delay leaves candidates

FROM PAGE 3

been posted, and it's frustrating not being able to provide them with satisfactory answers," Rashed told this newspaper.

"It has even led me to avoid public gatherings. Some of the recommended candidates didn't even go home for Eid. Those who did, stayed away from social programmes just to avoid answers," he added.

Maruf Rahman, another candidate, said being unable to start their roles, they are missing out on practical experience that could increase their

skills and knowledge, which is crucial given the huge number of pending cases that need to be resolved.

AGM Al Masud, deputy secretary of BJSC secretariat, said, "We already did our part a long time ago. However, it sometimes takes a prolonged time for police verification reports and other bureaucratic processes."

Contacted, Md Rezaul Karim, public relations officer of the law ministry, said, "We haven't gotten the police verification files yet. It is contributing to

the delay in publishing the gazette."

Citing ministry officials concerned, Rezaul said, "As soon as we get the reports, the gazette notification publication process will proceed."

Over 37 lakh cases are pending in the country — 16 lakh civil and 21 lakh criminal cases. If the recommended candidates could join their positions sooner, it would help alleviate some of this backlog, said officials concerned.

(Names of the candidates have been changed to protect their identities.)

Militants using

FROM PAGE 3

However, Md Lutfur Rahman, jailer of the Kashimpur High-Security Jail, said, "There is no possibility of militants using mobile phones, as we are maintaining high security inside the prison."

He also refuted the allegations of guards helping inmates.

Meanwhile, CTC officials have intercepted communications revealing that Neo JMB leader Saiful Islam Khaled, accused in the Gulshan café attack, used Telegram from Kashimpur high-security jail to contact IS militants in Afghanistan's Khorasan province, seeking financial support to reorganise Neo JMB in Bangladesh.

The outfit is also recruiting members inside jail, CTC sources said.

To boost finances, the group plans to buy a speedboat, CNG-run autorickshaws, and motorbikes for income generation, they added.

Abu Ahsan Habib Al Bangali, also known as Lion, who is currently on the run after being released on bail, is overseeing all these activities.

The Neo JMB has collected 1.5 lakh phone numbers and uses those to recruit new members through text messages, the intelligence report adds.

They also spread posters and PDFs on online platforms, and have formed eight social media platforms in this regard.

Abu Adnan Al Bengali, a top leader, has been designated for media operations.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner Habibur Rahman said online propaganda poses a significant challenge due to its ability to quickly spread extremist ideology with minimal cost.

The outfit intends to establish remote hill hideouts for operational activities and train new experts in bomb and arms manufacturing.

Rahmat Ullah Chowdhury, deputy commissioner of the CTC unit, said, "The outfit is altering its strategy to evade law enforcement, but we have heightened vigilance to thwart their subversive intentions."

(Our Gazipur correspondent also contributed to this report.)

Freedom

FROM PAGE 3

fundamental goal of freedom. It destroys the purpose of creating a society based on justice without discrimination."

He said the constitution talks about equality in terms of opportunities. "If the constitution is to be obeyed then it must be obeyed properly...," he added.

"The country needs talent to move forward... The world will not depend on our sentiments. We have to compete. If merit is not given priority, on what basis will we compete?" he questioned.

Quader also spoke about the movement of teachers over the pension scheme. He said such a situation has been created due to a lack of trust in the government.

PRAYER TIMING

| | Fajr | Zohr | Asr | Maghrib | Esha |
|-------|------|-------|------|---------|------|
| AZAN | 4-10 | 12-45 | 5-00 | 6-55 | 8-17 |
| JAMAT | 4-45 | 1-15 | 5-15 | 7-00 | 8-45 |

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Adulterated drugs a major challenge

Says health minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Low-quality and adulterated drugs is a major challenge for Bangladesh, said Health Minister Samanta Lal Sen yesterday.

The minister said this at a programme titled, "Meeting of the assembly members of SEARN", in the capital.

The event was organised by South-east Asia Regulatory Network (SEARN), a network of health ministers of 11 member states from the WHO South-East Asia Region.

Sen said ensuring the safety, efficacy and quality of medicines is of paramount importance to protect people's health.

"The gathering of member states created a valuable opportunity for us to exchange experiences and strengthen drug abuse control in our regions," he added.

Maj Gen Mohammad Yousuf, director general of Directorate General of Drug Administration, Dr Rokeya Sultana and DGHs Director General Abul Bashar Mohammad Khurshid Alam also spoke.

DNCC launches school bus

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka North City Corporation yesterday introduced school bus service on a pilot basis in a bid to mitigate traffic congestion and ensure safety of students.

As part of the initiative, three buses were given to Banani Bidyanketan School for transporting its students.

DNCC Mayor Md

Atiqul Islam said these buses will have modern technology including CCTV cameras and app-based tracking system to ensure safety of children.

Education Minister Mohibul Hassan Chowdhury and DMP Commissioner Habibur Rahman were present at the event.



ACC seizes six Brahma cows from Sadeeq Agro

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission yesterday seized six cows of Brahma breed from Sadeeq Agro's farm in the capital's Mohammadpur area.

A drive, led by ACC Assistant Director Abul Kalam Azad, was conducted at the farm in the presence of Dhaka District Livestock Officer Basana Akhter, ACC Public Relations Officer Akhtarul Islam told The Daily Star.

He said the cows have been placed under the custody of the Department of Livestock Services.

Brahma cows were imported from the United States, which is prohibited. During the operation, neither the owner nor the manager of Sadeeq Agro was found.

A family torn apart

FROM PAGE 5

is one of the poorest ones in the village.

Jahangir and other villagers urged the government to provide financial support to the missing fishermen's families and the village as well.

SM Agharul Islam, district fisheries officer, said they informed the coast guard so that they can recover the bodies.

"We have urged police to increase monitoring so that no fishing boat can go out to sea until the ban ends on July 23," he added.

Career Opportunity at BTMA

The Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA) is looking for 07 (seven) full-time employees for its secretariat as per the following requirements:

1. Deputy Secretary General (Banking & NBR): 01

Master's in Law/Finance/Accounting/Economics/Business Administration with a minimum of 5 years of professional experience in banking, finance, or related fields.

2. Assistant Secretary General (Research & Publication): 01

Master's in Textile Engineering/Statistics/Economics or Business Administration from a recognized university with a minimum of 3 years of professional experience in research/publications section in any reputed organization.

3. Assistant Secretary General (Administration & HRD): 01

Master's in Business Administration/Public Administration or a related field from a recognized university with at least 3 years in a managerial or senior HR role.

4. Officer (Research & Publication): 01

Master's in Textile Engineering/Economics/Statistics/Business Administration or a related field from a recognized university. Outstanding academic results within the given academic discipline will be an added advantage.

5. Officer (Certification & Documentation): 02

Master's in Business Administration/Business Studies/Economics or a related field from a recognized university. Experience within a similar trade organization in the textile and apparel sector in a relevant position will be preferred.

6. Officer (Cash): 01

Master's in Finance/Accounting/Business Studies or a related field from a recognized university. Experience within a similar trade organization in the textile and apparel sector in a relevant position will be preferred.

Application Process:

Interested candidates meeting the above criteria are invited to submit their CV along with a cover letter to the respective posts:

1. Email at recruitment@btmadhaka.com by July 15, 2024. Please mention the position applied for in the subject line of the email.

2. Submit a hard copy to the following address: Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA) UTC Bhaban (Level-8), 8, Panthapath, Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215

For detail, interested applicants may visit the following: <https://btmadhaka.com/>, <https://www.bdjobs.com/>

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Sources Sought Notice (SSN) for a Potential Digital Development Activity of USAID/Bangladesh

An SSN is requested from all local non-governmental organizations capable of implementing a maximum of \$5 million digital activity contract. This SSN aims to collect information and innovative ideas for planning the new Digital Development Activity designs. For detailed information, please Visit <https://www.usaid.gov/bangladesh/business-opportunities> or email mmhussain@usaid.gov and shang@usaid.gov.

Solomon Chang
Contracting Officer
USAID/Bangladesh

D-37

Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF)
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Phone: 222218331-33 Website: www.pksf.org.bd

Memo No. 53.23.0000.03.009.24.3993 Date: 03-07-2024

e-GP Tender Notice (Goods)

PKSF invites e-Tender in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following goods:

| Tender ID No | Description | Tender Publication Date & Time | Tender Opening Date & Time |
|--------------|---|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1001128 | Procurement of Laptop (12 nos.), Printer (8 nos.), Camera (3 nos.), Photocopy Machine (3 nos.), Scanner (3 nos.) and Digital Display Board/4K Android TV (2 nos.) under GCF-RHL, GCF-ECCCP-Drought and giz-Haor Project of PKSF. (Package no- PKSF/GCF/RHL/2023-2024/GD-01) | 03-07-2024 & 10:00 AM | 30-07-2024 & 12:00 PM |

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP System Portal and no offline/hard copy will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the national e-GP portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP helpdesk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Deputy Managing Director-1

CITY

3 killed, 2 hurt in road accidents

STAR REPORT

Three people were killed and two injured in road accidents in two districts yesterday, according to reports from our correspondents.

In Tangail, two people were killed and two others injured in a collision between a bus and a truck in Mirzapur upazila.

The accident occurred on Dhaka-Tangail highway in Gorai area around 5:00am when the Dhaka-bound passenger bus from Nilphamari hit a pole-laden parked truck, said Mohammad Anisuzzaman, sub-inspector of Gorai Highway Police Station.

Mugni Miah, 35, supervisor of the bus; and Forina Begum, 55, a passenger from Dimla, Nilphamari, died on the spot.

Police seized both the vehicles after the accident, said the SI.

In Joypurhat, a bicyclist was killed after a truck ran him over in Khetlal upazila.

Khairul Islam, 65, from Kashba village in Khetlal died on the way to the local upazila health complex, said police.

Meeting to decide VAT on metro fare today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Road Transport and Bridges Ministry will be holding an inter-ministerial meeting today regarding VAT-related issues of the metro rail service.

Apart from ministry officials, representatives from National Board of Revenue, Finance Division, Dhaka Mass Transit Company Ltd will join the meeting at Road Transport and Highways Division.

RTHD Secretary ABM Amin Ullah Nuri will preside over the meeting, officials said.

The meeting was called after NBR decided not to extend the 15 percent VAT exemption on metro rail fares beyond July 1. DMTC, however, has not imposed VAT on metro fares thus far.

In April, NBR decided to cancel the tax exemption on fares since the metro rail operation launched in December of 2022.

DMTC, though the Road Transport and Highways Division, wrote to NBR to review the decision.



Flood deals a blow to peanut cultivation

KONGKON KARMAKER, Dinajpur

Severe flash floods across Rangpur division since mid-June have dealt a blow to peanut cultivation in the region.

Peanut, or groundnut, is a vital cash crop for the marginal farmers in the division who cultivate it on the sandy shoal lands of Teesta river basin.

Torrential rainfall in the upstream in India caused the Teesta to swell, inundating vast stretches of croplands across five districts in the division — Rangpur, Dinajpur, Kurigram, Lalmonirhat and Nilphamari.

According to the Department of Agricultural Extension in Rangpur, 5,512 hectares of land in the division have been brought under peanut cultivation.



PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Peanut is harvested around June. The flash floods inundated our croplands when we were gearing up for harvesting our produce. My crops were washed away right before my eyes.

FOYZUR RAHMAN, a farmer from Shibdeb Char under Pargachha.



for harvesting our produce. My crops were washed away right before my eyes," said Foyzur Rahman, a farmer from Shibdeb Char under Pargachha.

"I had planted peanuts on three acres of land after borrowing money from a local lender. How am I going to pay my debts now?" he lamented.

Abed Ali, a farmer from Kaunia upazila, said, "Even if we managed to harvest some of our produce, we could not save those due to a lack of drying space after the floods."

Many other farmers echoed them, predicting that this year's production target is unlikely to be achieved due to the disaster.

Obaidur Rahman, deputy director of DAE in Rangpur region, said, "Peanut on 315 hectares of land has been damaged while over 2,300 hectares of land used in peanut cultivation have been affected due to floods."

He, however, expressed optimism that the overall production will not be affected much.

At least 2,315 hectares of land have been affected by floods.

Peanuts cultivated on 315 hectares of land were completely damaged in the flood, said DAE sources.

This year, the production target for peanut was set at 12,600 tonnes.

Visiting the shoals of Gangachara, Pargachha, and Kaunia upazilas of Rangpur district, this correspondent observed acres of sandy land used for peanut cultivation have become waterlogged following the flash floods.

"Peanut is harvested around June. The flash floods inundated our croplands when we were gearing up

for harvesting our produce. My crops were washed away right before my eyes," said Foyzur Rahman, a farmer from Shibdeb Char under Pargachha.

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PHOTO: STAR

A devastated Akabbar Shah and Amina Begum after losing their two sons to the sea within two years.

A family torn apart by the sea

One brother dies, another goes missing in the bay within two years

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

Cyclone Remal left the Choto Mastua village of Pirojpur's Mathbaria upazila devastated in its wake. With no support coming from the government, many fishers were forced to head out to the sea, despite an active 65-day fishing ban, to feed their families.

Al Amin, the only earning member of his family of six — including his elderly father, blind mother, wife and two children — was one such fisherman.

A total of 12 fishermen started their voyage on June 23 from the village.

However, tragedy struck mid sea.

Their fishing boat sank on Monday morning, around 10-

12 kilometres from Mahipur of Patuakhali's Kalapara upazila, leaving five fishermen — including Al Amin — missing.

Another fishing boat recovered seven fishermen, including the trawler's owner, and returned home on Tuesday afternoon.

Al Amin has been missing ever since.

Al Amin had taken an advance loan of Tk 10,000 from the owner on the condition that he would help them catch fish during the 65-day ban, said Al Amin's father Akabbar Shah, 75.

Akabbar alleged when his son refused to go fishing in the sea, the owner asked him to return the advance loan, leaving Al Amin with no other choice but to accompany them.

Another one of Akabbar's son, Noor Islam, also died after going out to sea one year back.

"Noor's family is leading a miserable life. We support them as much as we can... but now with Al Amin gone, I don't know how we will survive?" he said.

During a visit to the dilapidated house of missing Al Amin, this correspondent found his mother Amina Begum sitting motionlessly.

Al Amin's wife, Salma, kept crying until she lost consciousness. Their two children, yet to understand the gravity of the situation, sat beside their grandmother.

Md Jahangir Alam, a neighbour, said Al Amin's family

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

সোনালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি

এমপ্লয়ীজ ওয়েলফেয়ার এন্ড ট্রান্সপোর্ট ডিভিশন
প্রধান কার্যালয়, ঢাকা।

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

| | | |
|----|---|---|
| ০১ | সংগ্রহকারী সত্তার নাম | রাষ্ট্রীয় মালিকানাধীন ৪টি বাণিজ্যিক ব্যাংক (সোনালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি, জনতা ব্যাংক পিএলসি, অগ্রণী ব্যাংক পিএলসি, ও রূপালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি, প্রধান কার্যালয়, ঢাকা।) |
| ০২ | দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং ও তারিখ | নম্বর ...০১... ও তারিখঃ ০১/০৭/২০২৪ |
| ০৩ | সংগ্রহ পদ্ধতি | Open Tendering Method (OTM) |
| ০৪ | বাজেট ও ফান্ড প্রাপ্তির উৎস | উপরোক্ত ব্যাংক সমূহের নিজস্ব তহবিল। |
| ০৫ | কাজের নাম | ২৫/এ/১, আলামিন সেন্টার (৪র্থ তলা), দিলকুশা বা/এ, ঢাকা-১০০০ তে অবস্থিত শিশু দিব্যাত্ত কেন্দ্র- "খেলাঘর" এর সার্ভিস প্রোগ্রামের নিয়োগ। |
| ০৬ | ক) দরপত্র জামানত (ফেরতযোগ্য) খ) দরপত্র দলিলের মূল্য (অফেরতযোগ্য) | ৫০,০০০/- (পঞ্চাশ হাজার)। ১,০০০/- (এক হাজার)। |
| ০৭ | দরপত্র দলিল প্রাপ্তি স্থান | ১) ডেপুটি জেনারেল ম্যানেজার, এমপ্লয়ীজ ওয়েলফেয়ার এন্ড ট্রান্সপোর্ট ডিভিশন, ৬ষ্ঠ তলা, কক্ষ নং- ৬০৭, সোনালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি, প্রধান কার্যালয়, ঢাকা। ২) উপ-মহাব্যবস্থাপক, সাসটেইনেবল ফাইন্যান্স ডিভিশন, অগ্রণী ব্যাংক পিএলসি, প্রধান কার্যালয়, ঢাকা। ২৫/এ/১, আলামিন সেন্টার (১৩ তলা), দিলকুশা বা/এ, ঢাকা-১০০০। |
| ০৮ | দরপত্র দলিল বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ ও সময় | ২১ জুলাই, ২০২৪; বিকাল ৩.০০ টা। |
| ০৯ | দরপত্র জমা দেয়ার স্থান, তারিখ ও সময় | ১) ডেপুটি জেনারেল ম্যানেজার, এমপ্লয়ীজ ওয়েলফেয়ার এন্ড ট্রান্সপোর্ট ডিভিশন, ৬ষ্ঠ তলা, কক্ষ নং- ৬০৭, সোনালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি, প্রধান কার্যালয়, ঢাকা। ২) উপ-মহাব্যবস্থাপক, সাসটেইনেবল ফাইন্যান্স ডিভিশন, অগ্রণী ব্যাংক পিএলসি, প্রধান কার্যালয়, ঢাকা। ২৫/এ/১, আলামিন সেন্টার (১৩ তলা), দিলকুশা বা/এ, ঢাকা-১০০০। তারিখঃ ২২ জুলাই, ২০২৪; বেলা - ৩.০০ ঘটিকা। |
| ১০ | দরপত্র খোলার স্থান, তারিখ ও সময় | জনাব মিজানুর রহমান মজুমদার, জেনারেল ম্যানেজার, সোনালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি, প্রধান কার্যালয় (৪র্থ তলা), ঢাকা। তারিখঃ ২২ জুলাই ২০২৪; বিকাল ৪.০০ টা। |
| ১১ | দরদাতার যোগাযোগ | যে কোন সুপ্রতিষ্ঠিত প্রতিষ্ঠানের ডে-কেয়ার সেন্টার পরিচালনা কাজে কমপক্ষে ০৩(তিন) বছরের বাস্তব অভিজ্ঞতা সম্পন্ন হতে হবে। |
| ১২ | দরদাতার প্রতি বিশেষ নির্দেশাবলী | ক) দরপত্র উদ্ধৃত দর সমূহের বৈধতা দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ হতে ৯০(নব্বই) দিন পর্যন্ত বলবৎ থাকবে। খ) দরপত্র খোলার দিন ছুটি ঘোষিত হলে পরবর্তী অফিস খোলার দিন নির্ধারিত সময়ে দরপত্র গ্রহণ ও খোলা হবে। গ) দরপত্র জামানত হিসেবে বাংলাদেশের যে কোন তফসিলি ব্যাংক হতে শিশু দিব্যাত্ত কেন্দ্র "খেলাঘর" (রাষ্ট্রীয় মালিকানাধীন ব্যাংক সমূহ), মতিঝিল, ঢাকা-১০০০ এর অনুকূলে ইস্যুকৃত পে-অর্ডার অথবা ডিডি দরপত্রের সাথে জমা দিতে হবে। ঘ) তাহাজ্জা সংশ্লিষ্ট দরপত্রের সিডিউলের শর্তনুযায়ী সকল কাগজপত্রাদির সত্যায়িত ফটোকপি দরপত্র প্রাপ্তির সাথে দাখিল করতে হবে। |
| ১৩ | দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্মকর্তার নাম, ঠিকানা ও ফোন নম্বর | জনাব মোঃ মিজানুর রহমান মজুমদার, জেনারেল ম্যানেজার, এমপ্লয়ীজ ওয়েলফেয়ার এন্ড ট্রান্সপোর্ট ডিভিশন, সোনালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি, প্রধান কার্যালয়, ঢাকা। ফোনঃ +৮৮ ০২ ৪১০৫০৯৪৫, ০১৩২৪৪৩৩৯৩০। |
| ১৪ | কোন কারণ দর্শানো ছাড়াই যে কোন বা সকল দরপত্র বাতিল অথবা যে কোন দরপত্র আংশিক বা সম্পূর্ণরূপে গ্রহণের অধিকার ব্যাংক কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করেন। | |

মোঃ মিজানুর রহমান মজুমদার
জেনারেল ম্যানেজার
এমপ্লয়ীজ ওয়েলফেয়ার এন্ড ট্রান্সপোর্ট ডিভিশন
সোনালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি, প্রধান কার্যালয়, ঢাকা।

LALMONIRHAT-KURIGRAM

Erosion takes serious turn with recession of flood water

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

With flood water receding, erosion along the banks of the Teesta river in different upazilas of Lalmonirhat and Kurigram has taken a serious turn.

River erosions are going at 20 points in different shoal villages under 10 unions in five upazilas of the two districts, while it took serious turn in at least six points.

Currently, Water Development Board (WDB) is trying to check the erosion on a temporary-basis by dumping sand-

filled geo-bags at two points. that erosion is going on at different shoal villages along the Teesta river for over a week now.

At least 145 homesteads and about 500 bighas of arable land have already been devoured by the Teesta river since June 21.

his family members took shelter on a government road, Subas said, adding that at least 20 homesteads and nearly 80 bighas of cropland of the village have been devoured by the river till now.

Farmer Nazar Ali of Kholahati village

Kurigram WDB Executive Engineer Rakibul Hasan said sand-filled geo-bags are being dumped at Kalirmela village in an attempt to check the erosion temporarily.

A letter has been sent to the higher authorities, seeking fund allocation so



With flood water receding, erosion along the bank of the Teesta river has taken a serious turn. The photos were taken from Kalirmela village in Kurigram's Rajarhat upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

filled geo-bags at two points.

According to WDB officials, erosion by Teesta river is now going on in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila's Rajpur and Khuniyagach unions, Aditmari's Mahishkhochcha union and Hatibandha's Dawabari, Sindurna and Gaddimari unions, and Kurigram's Rajarhat upazila's Gharialdanga, Umar Majid and Bidiyanda unions and Ulipur's Thetrai union.

While erosions took serious turn at Rajpur, Tajpur, Kholahati and Barogharia villages in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila and Kalirmela and Burirhat villages in Rajarhat upazila of Kurigram.

While talking to chairmen of different erosion-hit Union Parishads (UPs), this correspondent came to know

Moreover, over 2,000 homesteads, many government and private establishments and several thousand bighas of cropland are under threat of being eroded by the river at any time, they said.

Erosion victim Subas Chandra Roy of Kalirmela village in Kurigram's Rajarhat upazila said his entire homestead and two bighas of arable land went into the river last week.

Finding no other alternative, he and

in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila said erosion by the Teesta has intensified with the receding water level.

About 25 families, including his, have already lost their homesteads and took shelter on government khas lands.

Rajarhat Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Khadiza Begum said relief materials, including rice and dry foods, have been distributed among the erosion affected families.

that they can provide adequate sand-bags in other erosion affected areas, the engineer said.

Contacted, Lalmonirhat WDB Executive Engineer Sunil Kumar said erosion has occurred at some places due to a recession in Teesta water level.

WDB higher officials have already visited the erosion affected areas, he said, adding that dumping of sand-filled geo-bags will be done to check erosion soon.

Over 50,000 stranded as flood hits new areas

FROM PAGE 16

rehabilitation officer in Kurigram, said 450 chars and low-lying riverside areas have been flooded, leaving about 50,000 locals marooned in the district.

Most residents of the affected areas have either taken shelter on boats or the WDB embankment.

"The water has been rising since yesterday afternoon. It entered our house this morning. We might have to relocate soon if the water levels keep increasing," said Mobarak Ali, a 60-year-old farmer of Char Jatrapur in Kurigram Sadar.

Contacted, Kurigram Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Saidul Arif said the district administration will provide sufficient relief materials to the flood-hit people.

Meanwhile, the water level of some rivers in the northeastern region began to recede.

The overall flood situation in various low-lying areas of the northeastern region may remain unchanged, said the FFWC bulletin.

"The Surma, Bhugai, and Kangsha rivers in the northeastern region of the country are in a falling trend, while Kushiara river is in a rising trend, which may continue in the next 24 hours."

According to the Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB), the Surma River, although above the danger level, marked a fall, while the Sari-Gowain River was flowing further below the danger level. However, the Kushiara, Manu, and Khowai rivers were still above the danger level and rising.

At 3:00pm, the Surma was flowing 81cm above the danger level at Sylhet's Kanaighat Point, the Sari-Gowain was flowing at 127cm below the danger level at Jaintiapur's Sarighat point.

At 6:00pm, the Kushiara was flowing 142cm above the danger

level at Amalshid point of Sylhet; the Manu was flowing 58cm below the danger level at the Railway Bridge point, while it was flowing 45cm above the danger level at Moulvibazar Sadar point; and the Khowai was flowing 45cm above the danger level at Balla Point.

Many flood-hit people said that they were facing a crisis of relief materials.

Shamsun Nahar of Rahimpur under Moulvibazar's Kamalganj upazila

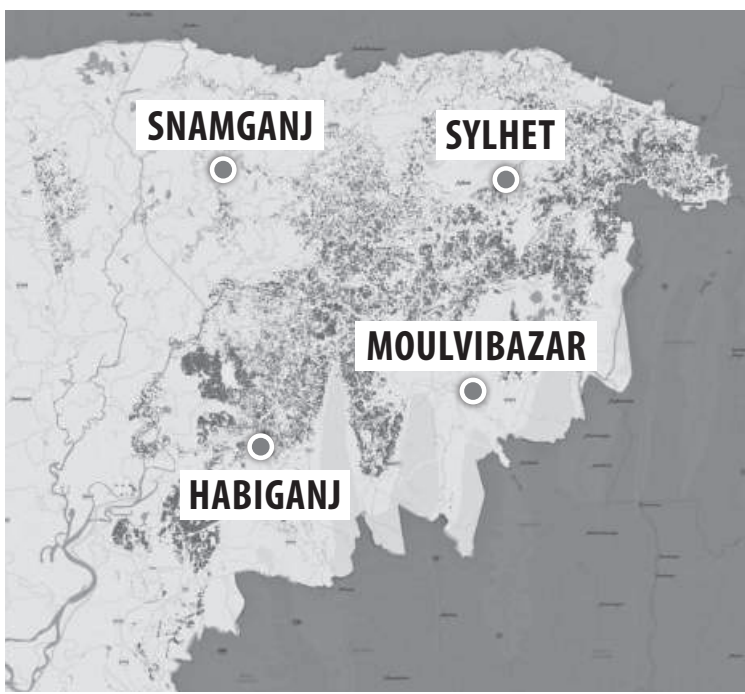
said, "The swelling Dhalai river almost destroyed my house. I sent my children to a relative's house. Otherwise, they would be starving as we have not received any relief aid yet."

Contacted, Sylhet Divisional Commissioner Abu Ahmad Siddique said the administration is working to provide sufficient relief materials to the flood-victim people.

[Our correspondents from Sylhet, Moulvibazar, and Lalmonirhat contributed to this report.]

INUNDATED AREAS OF SYLHET DIVISION

JUNE 29, 2024



SATELLITE IMAGE SOURCE: UNOSAT 5-1 FLOODAI MONITORING DASHBOARD

No provision for staying conviction

FROM PAGE 16

Dhaka in the case and also asked the chairman of the Labour Appellate Tribunal to dispose of the appeals as early as possible.

The HC delivered the verdict following a criminal revision petition moved by Advocate Khurshid Alam Khan on behalf of the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE) against the Labour Appellate Tribunal order.

In the full text, the HC observed

that the chairman of the Labour Appellate Tribunal has not assigned any reason for staying the operation of the judgement and order passed by the chairman of the Third Labour Court of Dhaka which on January 1 this year convicted and sentenced Prof Yunus and the others to six months in prison.

"As per Section 426(l) of Code of Criminal Procedure, there is no provision for staying the conviction passed by the learned Chairman,

3rd Labour Court, Dhaka but the Chairman, Labour Appellate Court, Dhaka, contrary to law, initially at the time of admission of appeal stayed the conviction which, in our view, is against the mandate of law and is ex-facie illegality that cannot sustain in the eye of law," reads the full text.

Contacted, Yunus's lawyer Abdullah Al-Mamun said his clients will move an appeal before the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court challenging the HC verdict.

Anti-quota demos rage on across the country

FROM PAGE 16

The demonstrations began around 2:30pm in front of Dhaka University's Central Library. They marched to the Shikha Chirantan and then to the TSC and Doyel Chattar.

The procession reached Shahbagh at 3:45pm and blocked the intersection, disrupting vehicular movement on key roads leading to Bangla Motors, Science Lab and Kakrail.

Hasib Al Islam, an organiser of the "Boishommo Birodhi Chattra Andolon" (Anti-Discrimination Students Movement), said, "The High Court recently declared the 2018 quota cancellation circular illegal. The government has filed a writ petition, and the court is set to deliver a verdict on the quota system tomorrow [today]. We're waiting for that. If the quota system is reinstated, we will wage tougher movements."

A significant number of police personnel were present at the intersection ahead of the protesters' arrival.

JU, JNU DEMOS

Meanwhile, students of Jahangirnagar

University blocked the Dhaka-Aricha highway in front of the university as part of the same protest.

Several hundred students brought out a procession from the JU Central Library around 3:00pm. They then moved towards the highway and blocked it around 3:15pm, halting vehicular movement and causing traffic congestion on both sides.

Jagannath University students also held a procession from the university premises to the Taantibazar intersection and blocked the road from there to Jatrabari, obstructing vehicles from entering the capital for about an hour.

Students from other public universities too blocked different regional highways throughout the day as part of the ongoing movement.

Barisal University students blocked the Dhaka-Patuakhali highway, while Bangladesh Agricultural University students halted train movement on the Dhaka-Mymensingh railway for an hour.

In Rangpur, students of Begum Rokeya University blocked the Dhaka-Rangpur highway.

Additionally, Chittagong University students demonstrated at their main gate and blocked the Chittagong-Khagrachari highway for about 40 minutes.

MOVEMENTS FOR QUOTA SYSTEM
On the other hand, student platform "Muktijoddha Quota Reinstatement Movement" held a rally in front of the National Museum in Shahbagh, in support of the quota system.

They then marched to the Raju Bhashkarjo at DU, making a seven-point demand, including the enforcement of the HC verdict and the issuance of a new circular in this regard.

In Rajshahi, members of the "Muktijoddha Sontan O Projonmo" of Rajshahi University formed a human chain to defend the quotas and protest derogatory remarks about the Liberation War and families of freedom fighters.

They held up placards with messages such as "Those who made the country independent, why should they be insulted?" and "Quota system does not create discrimination but provides equality".

BNP leader stabbed on way to rally

FROM PAGE 16

convener Sabbirul Islam Chapal – were undergoing treatment at Natore Sadar Hospital.

The criminals also threw crude bombs at the rally around 10:00am.

Rahim Newaz, member secretary of the district BNP, said the chief guest of the rally, Mosaddek Hossain Bulbul, forest and environment affairs secretary of the party's central committee, was injured in the blast. Mosaddek, who was also the former mayor of Rajshahi City Corporation,

took first aid.

Asked, Rashedul denied the allegation of his involvement in the attack.

Amirul said, "I was not involved in the attack. The incident happened due to internal feud of BNP."

Tariqul Islam, superintendent of Natore police, said BNP had a pre-scheduled programme. BNP leader Shahidul and three others were attacked by criminals on the way to the event. Police identified those involved in the attack.

"Action will be taken against the attackers if a case is filed," he said.

Police had been deployed in front of the BNP office since morning. It is being investigated whether there was any negligence on part of police. If so, they will be punished.

Shariful Islam Ramzan, general secretary of Natore AL, said those who attacked the BNP leaders are identified criminals. None of them are members of their party or its affiliated organisations.

"So, the Awami League will not take

the responsibility of this attack. The criminals carried out the attack in front of police."

He added that the incident happened due to inaction of police. Natore AL had no political programmes yesterday.

In Patuakhali, at least five BNP activists were attacked allegedly by AL men on the way to a rally on Swanirbhar Road in the district town yesterday.

The rally was held as part of BNP's central programme.

Injured Rubel Hawlader, senior

vice-president of Swachhasebak Dal Rangabali upazila unit, took treatment at Patuakhali Medical College Hospital, while others took first aid.

Snehanshu Sarkar Kutti, member secretary of district BNP, alleged that a group of AL activists were involved in the attack.

Denying the allegation, Abdul Mannan, secretary of the district AL, said it was BNP's internal conflict.

[Our correspondents in Natore and Patuakhali contributed to this report.]

Univ teachers likely to sit with govt

FROM PAGE 1

under the banner of the Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers' Association (FBUTA) have been refraining from work since Monday demanding reinstatement of the previous pension facilities instead of the newly introduced "Prottoy" scheme of the Universal Pension System.

FBUTA Secretary General Nizamul Haque Bhuiyan yesterday said Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader spoke to them over holding a meeting this morning to discuss their demands.

"We will join the meeting, but our movement will continue," he told The Daily Star.

Teachers have been demonstrating since May 26 protesting the government decision to include all officers and employees, joining the service of autonomous, self-governing, nationalised, statutory, or similar organisations and their subordinate institutions on or after July 1, 2024, under the Prottoy pension scheme.

Teachers said that the newly recruited teachers will suffer financial loss and many people will not take up teaching at universities if the new pension scheme is introduced.

They also demanded a separate pay scale for university teachers and inclusion of professors in the pay grade equivalent to that of a senior secretary.

PROTESTS CONTINUE

Skipping classes and exams, Dhaka University teachers under the banner of Dhaka University Teachers' Association (DUTA) staged demonstrations for the third straight day yesterday.

Addressing a sit-in in front of the arts faculty building, the teachers rejected the finance minister's statement and a press release from the National Pension Authority regarding the universal pension system.

Prof Zeenat Huda, general secretary of DUTA, called upon the finance minister to sit down for talks.

"Why is the finance minister avoiding discussion?" she asked.

Boycotting administrative activities, staffers under the banner of Dhaka University Karmakarta Karmachari Oikya Parishad held a sit-in in front of the administrative building.

As a result, many former and current students of the university could not collect their certificates and mark sheets yesterday.

No classes and exams were held at BUET, Rajshahi, Jahangirnagar, Chittagong, Jagannath and other universities yesterday. The university authorities either kept the transport service suspended or significantly reduced trips to and from campuses.

Meanwhile, 107 university teachers under the banner of University Teachers' Network yesterday called for scrapping of the "Prottoy" pension scheme and urged the authorities concerned to implement a separate pay scale for them.

In a statement, the teachers' platform said imposing a new pension scheme on the teachers without any discussion or consultation with the stakeholders is yet another "blatant display of the current government's arbitrary behaviour".

We have to be prepared

FROM PAGE 16

But Tuesday's draw means Brazil will face a titanic showdown in Las Vegas on Saturday against archrivals Uruguay, winners of Group D with a perfect record.

Brazil goalscorer Raphinha insisted the five-time world champions would be unfazed at the prospect of playing Uruguay.

"Our team is evolving with each game, with each training session and we think we're on the right track," Raphinha said.



Mousumi Mou, always radiant with her ever-present smile, has become one of the busiest and most acclaimed anchors today. Her spontaneous and engaging style has earned her widespread praise over the years. Demonstrating remarkable versatility, she has successfully anchored a wide range of programmes, including cricket talk shows, lifestyle segments, and entertainment-based broadcasts.

EVER-SMILING MOUSUMI MOU SOLDIERS ON

SHARMIN JOYA

The multi-talented artiste has also mastered mime art and been featured in fiction and web projects. She has been involved with dancing, singing, recitation, and debating, from a young age.

In a recent conversation with The Daily Star, the artiste shared about her recent works, upcoming plans with her career, and more.

"Usually, Eid is one of the busiest seasons for entertainment-related programmes. However, this time, I did only one live show as the T20 World Cup was going on," shared Mou. Even on Eid day, Mou did three live cricket shows as a part of the tournament package. She hosted three shows on cricket namely: Banglalink presents *Cric Café*, bKash presents *Free Hit* powered by Banglalink, and Banglalink presents *Catch the Match* for the channel Toffee. Meanwhile, she hosted another show for DBC News, titled *Bat e Ball e Bishwo Kapey*. In her career, she spent the busiest time in this T20 World Cup 2024.

"Due to my heavy schedule, I couldn't return home for 48 hours and even had to stay back at Nagorik Television's office. I slept on the divan in Rubana Huq's office room," she said, "It is because their show's call time was 3am, and after finishing a late-night programme, it was not possible to return home and then show up again at that time."

After keeping up with the tournament's pressure, she travelled to Chattogram with her parents, where her father was honoured with the Bhubonjoyee Baba Award. "It is an exceptionally emotional and win-win moment for me when my parents are honoured for my achievements," she added.

After that, she hosted the *Shikho GPA 5 Reception* for the third consecutive year, where all the students' earning GPAs are generally appreciated and celebrated through a grand reception.

While maintaining her busy schedule, she also manages to spare time to nourish her passion for acting. She has already worked in two web-films, which are awaiting release. "One of the web-films is for the platform iScreen, titled *Shodh*, directed by S Shariar Nazim Joy. It features the director himself, along with Runa Khan, Tangia Zaman Methila, and me," she shared.

"Another web-film, *Tribhuj Prem*, is directed by Alok Sen. It tells the story of three couples who belong to different socio-economic classes in society. It features Shohel Mondol alongside me, while the other pairs are Shariar Nazim Joy and Anika Kabir Shakh; and Imtiaz Barshon and Farin Khan. film will o n

Award at the 35th International University Theatre Festival 2023 in Casablanca, Morocco, last July. On her future plans with mime, she shared, "I have collaborated in various mime performances, but this time, I have a plan to do my solo show. It is currently underway and if all goes well, I will be doing it soon."

Discussing the art of mime, the artiste shared that it is a challenging discipline with few practitioners in modern times. "Unfortunately, the investment required for this art form, and the lack of support from related associations, make it difficult to sustain," she explained. Financial constraints are a major reason for mime's limited popularity, and female artistes in this field are especially rare. "When I began performing mime, I was the only woman on the team, but now more girls are being encouraged and showing interest." She expressed her gratitude to Dhaka University Mime Action (DUMA) for their efforts to expand the reach of mime.

She also spoke about her recent on-stage performance in the show *Adore Gora Bhobishshot*, sponsored by Meril. Directed by Tariq Anam Khan, the show features the veteran actor himself, Sumon Patwary, and herself. "It has a unique style, different from the conventional ones. We performed as hosts in the drama, addressing various issues typically faced by new parents. It was fun to be a part of such a unique project," she concluded.



This be released DeceptoPlay". Mou has done several international shows— not just hosting but mime shows. She won the Best Female Performer

Kushum Sikder makes directorial debut with 'Shoroter Joba'

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

After a five-year hiatus, Kushum Sikder is returning to the spotlight, taking on the dual role of director and actress. She is set to make her directorial debut this year with the film *Shoroter Joba*, in which she also stars.

The film has already received its censor certificate and is slated for release in September. The actress-turned-director managed the entire shoot in the Narail district, overseeing every detail. "This experience is new for me as an actress and quite challenging as a director," she shared.

Once a familiar face in dramas and films, Kushum stepped back from the industry five years ago due to depression and a heavy work schedule. In *Shoroter Joba*, Kushum teams up with Yash Rohan, marking their first collaboration on screen. The cast also includes Shahidul Alam Sachchu, Naresh Bhuiyan, Jeetu Ahsan, and others.



Chanchal starrer 'Padatik' release date finalised

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

After winning hearts with his superb performance in *Toofan*, Chanchal Chowdhury is once again set to impress fans in theatres with his first Indian film, *Padatik*, directed by Srijit Mukherji. After much delay, the film has finally locked in its release date.

Earlier on Tuesday, Srijit announced the release date of the movie along with its poster. The film will be released in theatres this August 15.

Padatik is the biopic of renowned Indian film director Mrinal Sen. Chanchal Chowdhury takes on the role of the protagonist in the movie.

The teaser of the movie was released last May.

The actor has been praised for his extreme dedication and ability to embody the character. People are also appreciating the director for the movie.

Chanchal revealed that playing the role of a famous person like Mrinal Sen is a significant achievement for him. "The entire credit for my acting in *Padatik* belongs to the director. I acted as he wanted," shared the actor with The Daily Star.

Regarding his character, the *Hawa* famed actor revealed that it was also challenging to portray Mrinal Sen on the silver screen. "I have given my best, and I am sure the audience will see how much effort I put into the role," said Chanchal.



'Despicable Me 4' premieres in Bangladesh simultaneously with global debut



The much-anticipated *Despicable Me 4* premiered in theatres worldwide yesterday, including a simultaneous release in Bangladesh at Star Cineplex. This marks an exciting moment for Bangladeshi fans who have followed the beloved animated series since its inception.

Despicable Me first captured audiences' hearts in 2010, followed by successful sequels in 2013 and 2017. Directed by Chris Renaud and produced by Universal Pictures, the fourth instalment continues the adventures of the reformed super-villain Gru, voiced by Steve Carell. The film also features voice talents from Kristen Wiig, Miranda Cosgrove, Steve Coogan, Chris Renaud, Dana Gaier, and Pierre Coffin.

In just two days of dropping the trailer of *Despicable Me 4*, it amassed over 1.5 million views on Universal Pictures' YouTube channel.

In this new chapter, Gru and Lucy welcome their newborn son, Gru Jr. The story introduces a new antagonist, Maxime Le Mal, who has integrated cockroach parts into his body. After escaping prison, Maxime seeks revenge on Gru's family. To protect them, the Anti-Villain League (AVL) relocates the family, assigns three minions to them, and moves the rest to AVL headquarters.

ARBOVIRUS will tour Canada with original lineup

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Arbovirus is gearing up for their inaugural Canada tour, starting with Bangladesh Rockfest on August 17 at the Toronto Pavilion.

The band will perform their popular hits and debut a single from their forthcoming album, *Nikhoj Songbad*. Joining them on stage will be Bangladeshi pop-rock band Shunno and Bangladeshi-American hip-hop band Stoic Bliss.

On August 18, Arbovirus will take the stage at the Giovanni Caboto Club in Windsor, Ontario, under the auspices of AIA Productions. Fans can expect a special treat as original drummer Farhan Tanim and bassist Ishtiaq Hossain Jishan, are rejoining the band for this tour after 16 years, marking a significant reunion.

Guitarist Asif Asgar Ranjan shared his excitement, saying, "Our Canada tour, starting with Bangladesh Rockfest, is significant in many ways. We're reuniting after a long time, and original members Ishtiaq Hossain Jishan and Farhan Tanim, who our longtime fans have missed, are joining us."

"This makes it a fantastic reunion. We haven't performed together in years, and we're thrilled to kick off our show with the debut single from our fourth album, *Nikhoj Songbad*.

Most of the album is completed; we're just wrapping up a few final takes and doing the mixing and mastering. So, this show also announces the start of every time, and this show will be no exception."

The day after, Arbovirus has another show in Windsor under finalising details with sponsors and organisers and will return to Bangladesh for those events," stated Ranjan.

"We're incredibly excited about the Canada tour and being together again is indescribable. We're preparing diligently and will have a full week of rehearsals once we arrive in Canada. It's a fantastic time for us," he said.

Farhan Tanim, conveyed, "I'm thrilled to rejoin Arbovirus after so many years, with the original members on stage together again.

"Our Bangladeshi fans can look forward to us performing several big shows. We're





AMBASSADOR'S MESSAGE

Today, we honor the Declaration of Independence, which was promulgated on July 4, 1776. Today, we celebrate the birth of a nation founded on the principles of freedom, rule of law, and the pursuit of happiness. And today, we renew our commitment to a government of the people, by the people, and for the people.

The central role of the people, of each and every American citizen, is deeply enshrined in our democracy. Our Constitution, signed almost 250 years ago, gives the idea that the basis of



His Excellency Peter Haas
US Ambassador to Bangladesh

We appreciate a bolstered BANGLADESH-US BILATERAL RELATIONS

Remarks by the Hon'ble Foreign Minister Dr. Hasan Mahmud, M.P. at the Celebration of the 248th Independence Day (04 July 2024) of the United States of America

○ DATE: 25TH JUNE 2024 ○ VENUE: LE MERIDEN, DHAKA

His Excellency Ambassador Peter Haas,
Hon'ble Cabinet Colleagues, Hon'ble Members of Parliament,
Distinguished Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,
As-salamu Alaikum & Good Evening

It is my great pleasure to be here today to celebrate the 248th anniversary of the Independence of the United States of America. On behalf of the Government of Bangladesh and on my own behalf, I would like to congratulate you and the people of the United States on this momentous occasion.

Ladies and gentlemen,
The Fourth of July is not only a date on the calendar; it is a symbol of freedom, democracy, and the enduring spirit of a nation that has continually inspired people around the world. We may be oceans apart geographically, but our shared spirit of freedom binds us closely together. Our journey towards independence under the visionary leadership of our Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was inspired by the same yearning for freedom and self-determination.



quickly deployed more than 8000 naval and marine personnel under its "Operation Sea Angel" program to help Bangladesh respond to the crisis. As I was also conducting relief operations at that time from my party, Awami League, I personally witnessed that act of support and compassion by the US.

More recently, the USA once again emerged as the largest partner of Bangladesh to combat COVID-19 pandemic. More than 137 million doses of COVID vaccines donated by the US was a mainstay of our fight against the virus.

Dear Audience,
Under the dynamic leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Bangladesh has emerged a miracle of development. During the last three terms of Awami League government, extreme poverty has fallen from 25% in 2006 to 5% today. The poverty rate has fallen from 41% to 18.6% during the same period, while life expectancy increased by 7 years. Bangladesh is set to graduate from LDC in 2026 and a forerunner in achieving SDGs.

With the rapid growth of our economy, trade between our countries flourished. Trade surpassed 14 billion dollars in 2022 and investment reached the 4 billion dollars mark. The United States is the largest single export destination for Bangladeshi goods, and a significant source of our FDI.

As we continue to march forward to realize the dream of Bangabandhu's 'Sonar Bangla' - a golden Bengal - we anticipate stronger partnership of the US in fulfilling our journey towards a smart developed country by 2041.

Excancellencies, Distinguished Guests,
The Rohingya crisis continues to loom large on us. Sheltering 1.2 million Rohingyas for 7 years has been heavily draining our resources and creating multipronged challenges. Thankfully, the United States has been a leading partner in our humanitarian response to this crisis. We seek

continued and renewed support of our international friends to bring an end to this protracted crisis.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Despite being one of the least polluters, Bangladesh is one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change. Bangladesh is pledge-bound to pursue a low carbon growth path in spite of its insignificant carbon footprint and huge development need. We appreciate existing US support and look forward to a stronger and deeper collaboration in implementation of our National Action Plan 2023-50 and the Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan through increased investment in areas like energy efficiency, cleantech/green energy, smart grid, transfer of technology, and climate-smart agriculture.

Dear Audience,
As we celebrate American Independence Day, let us also rejoice the strong people-to-people ties that bind our nations. The vibrant Bangladesh-American community has enriched the cultural tapestry of the US and contributed to the economic enhancement of both our countries.

Dear Friends,
We appreciate the renewed commitment of a bolstered Bangladesh-US bilateral relations as expressed by President Joe Biden in his letter to our Prime Minister after her electoral victory this year. Together, we can continue to promote peace, stability, and prosperity for our peoples, in our respective regions, and beyond. Let us celebrate the spirit of independence and the enduring friendship between Bangladesh and the United States. Happy Independence Day to the United States of America! Long live Bangladesh-USA friendship.

I thank you all.

Joy Bangla. Joy Bangabandhu.
May Bangladesh Live for Ever.

government derives from the people. The preamble of that document says, We, the people of the United States of America, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

In his very first speech as President of the United States of America, George Washington re-emphasized the point. He declared that the continuation of America's democracy was entrusted to the American people. Democracy in the United States is not, never has been, nor will ever be perfect. We are not above reproach. We must strive continually to achieve our more perfect union. Our Declaration of Independence boldly declared that all men are created equal. That was simply not the case in 1776. It took us until 1865 to abolish slavery. Women did not have the right to vote until 1920. In 1964, we finally outlawed major forms of discrimination against racial, ethnic, national, religious minorities, and women. And only in 2015 did our Supreme Court affirm the constitutional right of LGBTQI+ couples to marry.

Clearly, our democratic journey has been a winding path, reflecting aspirations and imperfections that come with the pursuit of a more perfect union, and a more perfect democracy. 2024 is an unprecedented year for elections. More people are voting this year than at any time in history. In fact, national elections this year will involve nearly one-half of the world's population. As we know, Bangladesh's elections have already taken place, and ours will take place in November of this year. As those elections take place, it is important to ensure that the voice of the people is heard and that everyone be committed to the idea of striving for ever more perfect democracy.

Today I would also like to express the desire to build an ever more perfect relationship between the United States and Bangladesh. Both of our nations were founded on the principles of democracy, human rights, and national sovereignty. Both of our nations earned our independence through the sacrifice of brave patriots. And both of our countries need brave patriots to help us consolidate and advance our democracies.

But who are these brave patriots? They are the dissidents. They are the journalists. They are the human rights activists. They are the opposition politicians. They are civil society activists. In short, they are anyone willing to challenge the status quo, to point out our shortcomings, and to fight for change. Just because they disagree does not mean that they are disloyal.

As we celebrate American independence tonight in Bangladesh, I am reminded that we are on a collective journey. As a partner, and with humility, the United States has cooperated with Bangladesh over the past 53 years to advance the rights, well-being, and prosperity and security of our respective peoples, and we will continue to do so.

Thank you very much.



I recall with great conviction the contribution of the people of the United States during our Liberation war. They raised their voice against the genocide committed against our people. The concert for Bangladesh at the Madison Square Garden in New York in 1971 touched the chords of many hearts of the American people. I recall, with great honour, Senator Edward Kennedy, Consul General Archer K. Blood and so many like them who stood up for Bangladesh in 1971.

Dear Friends,
Our bilateral relationship with the US over the past five decades is a story of cooperation and mutual respect. I must thankfully acknowledge the sustained support and assistance of the United States during both crisis and peace time.

When the southern part of Bangladesh, including my district Chattogram was devastated by a category-5 cyclone in 1991, the US government



STRENGTHENING PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE TIES

Bangladeshi Students in US Higher Education

THERE WERE 13,563 INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS FROM BANGLADESH AT US HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN 2022/23. A 28.0% CHANGE FROM THE PREVIOUS YEAR.

OPEN DOORS INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS DATA

LEADING PLACES OF ORIGIN OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AT ALL-TIME HIGHS, 2022/23



Source: The Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange is a comprehensive information resource on international students and scholars at higher education institutions in the United States and U.S. students studying abroad. It is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State with funding provided by the U.S. Government and is published by IIE. For more information, visit www.opendoorsdata.org.



SOURCE: [HTTPS://OPENDOORSDATA.ORG/DATA/INTERNATIONAL-STUDENTS/LEADING-PLACES-OF-ORIGIN/](https://opendoorsdata.org/data/international-students/leading-places-of-origin/)

13th Largest Sending Country: Bangladesh is currently the 13th largest sending country of international students to the United States, showcasing the strong educational ties between the two nations.

RECORD NUMBER OF BANGLADESHI STUDENTS IN THE US

All-Time High Enrollment: The U.S. Embassy is pleased to announce that 13,563 Bangladeshi students chose to study in the United States during the 2022-2023 academic year, as reported

by the 2023 Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange.

Significant Increase: This number represents a 28% increase from the previous academic year (2021-2022), one of the highest overall increases in the world.

Cultural and Academic Contributions: Bangladeshi students bring incredible experiences to U.S. classrooms, enriching campus life through cultural programs and engaging in groundbreaking research.

Recognition and Gratitude: The

U.S. appreciates the contributions of Bangladeshi students and is grateful for their increasing presence in American universities. Their participation strengthens the people-to-people ties between the two countries.

Value of US Education: The high demand for U.S. degrees is due to the exceptional quality of the U.S. education system and the global

value of an American degree.

AMERICAN SPACES IN BANGLADESH

Six American Spaces: EducationUSA operates through six American Spaces across Bangladesh, providing free access to information about studying in the United States. These are:

- The American Center at the U.S. Embassy, Baridhara, Dhaka
- Edward M. Kennedy (EMK) Center in Gulshan, Dhaka
- American Corner Chattogram (I/A O R Nizam Road Prabartak, circle), Chattogram
- American Corner Rajshahi (Paba, Kharkhari Bypass Road), Rajshahi
- American Corner Khulna (Shib Bari More), Khulna
- American Corner Sylhet (Shamimabad, Bagbari, Sylhet)

Extensive Network: EducationUSA is part of a global network of over 430 advising centers, providing virtual and in-person sessions.

UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE STUDENTS

Undergraduate Growth: The number of Bangladeshi undergraduate students increased by more than 50%, with 2,500 students enrolled in undergraduate programs.

Graduate Enrollment: Nearly 10,000 Bangladeshi graduate students are studying in the U.S., making Bangladesh the seventh largest source of graduate students in the United States.

DECADE OF GROWTH

300% Increase in a Decade: Over the past decade, the number of Bangladeshi students in the United States has increased by more than 300%, from 3,314 students in the 2011-2012 academic year to 13,563 in the 2022-2023 academic year.

INCREASING ENGAGEMENT AND VISITS

More US College Visits: The number of U.S. colleges and universities visiting Bangladesh has increased dramatically. In 2023, 58 HEI representatives visited Bangladesh, marking an over 200% increase from 2022.

Continued Growth Anticipated: This positive trend is expected to continue, further boosting the number of Bangladeshi students choosing to study in the United States.



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4TH OF JULY

Celebrating

INDEPENDENCE
THAT SHAPED THE LAND OF OPPORTUNITY

REMARK LLC, USA

Labour set to surpass 1997 landslide in election: poll

AFP, London

The UK Labour party is 99 percent "certain" to secure more seats in today's general election than when it won a landslide victory in 1997, a major new poll said on Tuesday.

The centre-left opposition party — out of power since 2010 — is predicted to claim 484 out of a total of 650 seats in what would be an unprecedented victory in modern British history, pollster Survation said.

Meanwhile, the right-wing ruling Conservatives and the centrist Liberal Democrats (Lib Dems) are in a close race to come a distant second and form the country's official opposition, it added.

The prediction is the latest in a series of so-called MRP polls — which use large national samples to forecast results for every UK constituency — that estimate Labour will win emphatically today.

Such a scenario would see its leader Keir Starmer replace the Conservatives' Rishi Sunak as prime minister.

Labour has led the Tories in the polls by double-digit margins for nearly two years, and the gap has failed to narrow during a six-week election campaign widely seen as having gone badly for Sunak.

Survation said its data indicated that Labour would win around 42 percent of the overall vote, ahead of the Conservatives on 23 percent.

However, due to the UK's winner-takes-all electoral system in each of its 650 constituencies, that would see the Conservatives capture just 64 seats, with the Lib Dems predicted to claim 61.

Labour's estimated 484 seats would exceed the 418 won by ex-prime minister Tony Blair in 1997, and even top the Tories' landslide haul of 470 in 1931.

The pollster also predicted that Labour would again become the largest party in Scotland, winning 38 of its 57 seats.

2024 UK ELECTION

Sunak: Conservative leader still hoping for unlikely win

AFP, London

The UK Conservatives hoped Rishi Sunak would stabilise the party and country when they made him leader following his predecessors' chaotic tenures. Instead, he has led them to the brink of electoral wipeout.

The party's MPs installed the 44-year-old former financier in October 2022, after Liz Truss's 49-day premiership imploded when spooked markets moved against her tax-slashing plans.

Sunak succeeded to a point in stabilising the country's economy, but failed to stop bitter Tory infighting, or to make a dent in the persistent polling lead held by the opposition Labour Party. Buoyed by rare pieces of economic good news, Sunak called today's election in late May, despite not having to face the voters until early 2025.

He hoped the shock announcement would catch right-wingers Reform UK by surprise, and Labour's 20-point polling lead would shrink during the campaign.

But Sunak's campaign has lurched from one disaster to another.

By far the most damaging was Sunak's decision to leave early from D-Day commemoration events in France, provoking unilateral outrage and alienating right wing whose votes he desperately needs.



Starmer: Britain's next prime minister?

AFP, London

Labour leader Keir Starmer is a former human rights lawyer turned-state prosecutor whose ruthless ambition and formidable work ethic look set to propel him to Britain's highest political office.

The 61-year-old, named after Labour's founding father Keir Hardie, is the centre-left opposition party's most working-class leader in decades.

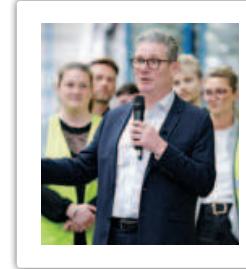
"My dad was a toolmaker, my mum was a nurse," Starmer tells voters often, countering depictions by opponents that he is the epitome of a smug, liberal, London elite.

With his grey quiff and black-rimmed glasses, Starmer remains an enigma in the eyes of many voters, who are predicted to propel him to Downing Street after today's general election.

Detractors label him an uninspiring opportunist, but supporters insist he is a managerial pragmatist who will approach being prime minister the same way he did his legal career: tirelessly and forensically.

"Politics has to be about service," Starmer said in a recent campaign speech, repeating his mantra to put "country first, party second" following 14 years of Conservative rule under five different prime ministers.

Sometimes appearing uncomfortable in the spotlight, the devoted Arsenal fan, who came to politics late in life, has struggled to shed his public image as buttoned-up and boring.



Britain's Liberal Democrat party leader Ed Davey, right, and Liberal Democrat candidate for Winchester Danny Chambers pose for a photo during a visit to the Winchester Abbey Gardens, in south England, yesterday, as part of a party general election campaign event in the build-up to the UK general election today.

PHOTO: AFP

Key issues at stake in UK polls

AFP, London

Here are some key issues at stake in the UK general election today:

WILL JADED VOTERS TURN OUT?

The main opposition Labour party is widely predicted to win and has been determined not to take any risks, making for a lacklustre election campaign.

For the past two years, polling has suggested that Labour is 20 points ahead of the Conservatives, and no amount of campaigning has managed to shift the dial. But if that indicates a desire for change after 14 years of Tory government, there does not appear to be much enthusiasm for Labour's plans.

Indeed, Labour has repeatedly warned that it does not have a "magic wand" to change the country overnight.

The apathy extends to both leaders, with 72 percent having an unfavourable opinion of Tory leader Rishi Sunak and 51 percent of Labour's Keir Starmer, according to a YouGov poll this month.

That has prompted questions about whether voters will turn out in large numbers spurred on by the promise of change or remain at home jaded by years of chaos and no great love for party leaders.

LUCKY NUMBER EIGHT FOR FARAGE?

An unexpected addition to the campaign, Nigel Farage — the Brexit figurehead who has now become the spokesperson of hard-right, anti-immigration views — entered the race as the leader of Reform UK.

Despite a surge in the polls, the UK's first-past-the-post system makes outright victory for the 60-year-old former European parliamentarian and his party unlikely.

If he succeeds at his eighth attempt to get a seat in parliament as the MP for Clacton-on-Sea in east England, Farage — a Donald Trump ally — will have even more visibility.

If he fails, his startup Reform UK party, currently polling around 19 percent, would still play a decisive role in the race between the Tories and Labour in several constituencies.

TORY WIPEOUT?

Several polls suggest the party of Winston Churchill, Margaret Thatcher and Boris Johnson will win fewer seats than the 141 it secured in 1906, in what would be the worst result since its creation in 1834.

Speculation has already started about who would succeed Rishi Sunak to lead the fragmented party. It remains to be seen how many big names will save their seats and what direction the party, which was centrist under David Cameron (2010-2015) and then drifted to the right, can take. In the event of Reform's success, some Tories would not object to an alliance.

WEAKENED SCOTTISH NATIONALISTS?

Nothing seems to be going right for the Scottish National Party (SNP), which has dominated the devolved nation's politics for the last 15 years.

The surprise resignation of first minister Nicola Sturgeon in 2023 destabilised the party. Her successor Humza Yousaf only lasted a year.

The left-wing party is still the target of a probe into its finances in which Sturgeon's husband was implicated and does not have a viable strategy to deliver independence, a fight that was revived by Brexit but blocked by London.

First Minister John Swinney insists that winning in a majority of Scotland's 59 constituencies would be a green light for him to launch fresh negotiations on another referendum with the new government in London.

Russian forces advance in Ukraine's eastern region

Kill five in Dnipro strikes; dozens injured

AFP, Kyiv

Russia said yesterday its forces had captured a district in the key hilltop town of Chasiv Yar near Bakhmut in eastern Ukraine, where Moscow has been pressing for months.

The claim from Moscow came just after Kyiv said that Russian strikes on the industrial city of Dnipro had killed five people and wounded nearly three dozen more including a 14-year-old girl.

The defence ministry said its troops had "liberated" the Novy district of Chasiv Yar, but it was unclear if it was claiming its forces had crossed a canal which runs through the eastern part of the town.

The capture of Chasiv Yar — a prized

military hub that was once a sleepy town home to some 12,000 people — would pave the way for Russian advances towards the last Ukrainian-controlled civilian centres in the Donetsk region.

Russia's capture of the district was also reported by the DeepState military blog, which has links to the Ukrainian army.

It said the area had been flattened by Russian bombardments, and that withdrawing was "a logical, albeit difficult decision." There was no immediate reaction from officials in Kyiv.

The Russian attack on Dnipro prompted Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky to call on allies to help bolster its air defences and provide more long-range weapons to thwart Russian strikes.

CENTRAL ASIAN SUMMIT

Putin, Xi vie for influence

AFP, Astana



AFP, Astana

The leaders of Russia and China were in Kazakhstan yesterday for a regional summit, seeking to harden anti-Western alliances and press their influence in the strategic Central Asian region.

Russian President Vladimir Putin touched down in the Kazakh capital of Astana yesterday morning for a meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) — a Beijing-led regional bloc that covers Central Asia, India and Iran.


Moscow and Beijing have deepened their political, military and economic ties since Russia launched its invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

Alongside Chinese leader Xi Jinping, who arrived in Kazakhstan on Tuesday, the pair see the SCO as a key forum for advancing their strategic interests across Eurasia. "We attach great importance to partnership cooperation within this organisation," Kremlin aide Yuri Ushakov told Russian state media outlets ahead of Putin's arrival.

"We believe that the SCO, as well as the second major association of BRICS, are the main pillars of the new world order, a locomotive in the context of establishing genuine multilateralism in world affairs," he added.

Both Russia and China have railed against what they call a US-led "hegemony" on the world stage.

China's Foreign ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said earlier this week that Beijing believed the SCO summit would "help build more consensus among all parties and make contributions to promoting security, stability and development of member countries", and advance "lasting peace and common prosperity in the world".



BANGLADESH KRISHI BANK

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Invitation for Tenders

| 1 | Ministry/Division | Ministry of Finance/Banking and Financial Institutions Division | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|------------------------------|---|-----------------|----------|----------|-----------------|---------------|----|--|-------|---|------------------------------|---|----|------------|-------|--|--|--|----|------------|-------|--|--|--|
| 2 | Agency | Autonomous Bodies and Other Institutions | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | Procuring Entity Name | Bangladesh Krishi Bank | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | Procuring Entity Code | Not used at present | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 | Procuring Entity District | Head Office, Dhaka. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6 | Invitation for | Supply of Proprietary Magstripe Plastic ATM Card, PIN Mailer & Card Pouch. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7 | Invitation Ref No | HQ/ADC/07(5)-21(3)/24-25/04 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8 | Date | 02-07-2024 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| KEY INFORMATION | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 9 | Procurement Method | Open Tendering Method (OTM) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| FUNDING INFORMATION | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10 | Budget and Source of Funds | Bank's Own Fund. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 11 | Development Partners (if applicable) | N/A | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| PARTICULAR INFORMATION | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 12 | Project / Programme Code (if applicable) | N/A | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 13 | Project / Programme Name (if applicable) | N/A | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 14 | Tender Package No. | 01/2024-2025 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15 | Tender Package Name | Supply of Proprietary Magstripe Plastic ATM Card, PIN Mailer & Card Pouch. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 16 | Tender Publication Date | 02-07-2024 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 17 | Tender Last Selling Date | 18-07-2024 within 03.00 PM. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 18 | Tender Closing | Date | Time | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | 18-07-2024 | 03.30 PM. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 19 | Tender Opening | Date | Time | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | 18-07-2024 | 04.00 PM. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 20 | Name & Address of the office(s) - Selling Tender Document | ADC Management Department Bangladesh Krishi Bank, Head Office, 3 rd Floor, 83-85 Motijheel C/A, Dhaka. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 21 | Place / Date / Time of Pre-Tender Meeting (Optional) | No Pre-Tender Meeting will be held. Time: N/A | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| INFORMATION FOR TENDERER | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 22 | Eligibility of Tenderer | According to the ITT 4 & 5 of the Tender Document | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 23 | Brief Description of Goods or Works | 5,000 Proprietary Magstripe Plastic ATM Card, 7,000 PIN Mailer & 7,000 Card Pouch. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 24 | Brief Description of Related Services | N/A | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 25 | Price of Tender Document (TK) | Tk. 1,000/- (One Thousand) + VAT(15%) (Non-Refundable) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>S/N</th> <th>Name of Product</th> <th>Quantity</th> <th>Location</th> <th>Tender Security</th> <th>Time Schedule</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>01</td> <td>Proprietary Magstripe Plastic ATM Card</td> <td>5,000</td> <td>ADC Management Department, BKB, Head Office, 3rd Floor, 83-85 Motijheel C/A, Dhaka.</td> <td>10,000/- (Ten Thousand Taka)</td> <td>04(Four) Weeks from Date of contract signature.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>02</td> <td>PIN Mailer</td> <td>7,000</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>03</td> <td>Card Pouch</td> <td>7,000</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | | | | | S/N | Name of Product | Quantity | Location | Tender Security | Time Schedule | 01 | Proprietary Magstripe Plastic ATM Card | 5,000 | ADC Management Department, BKB, Head Office, 3 rd Floor, 83-85 Motijheel C/A, Dhaka. | 10,000/- (Ten Thousand Taka) | 04(Four) Weeks from Date of contract signature. | 02 | PIN Mailer | 7,000 | | | | 03 | Card Pouch | 7,000 | | | |
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| 02 | PIN Mailer | 7,000 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 03 | Card Pouch | 7,000 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 27 | Name of Official Inviting Tender | Md. Farid Hasan | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 28 | Designation of Official Inviting Tender | Deputy General Manager(Additional Charge) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 29 | Address of Official Inviting Tender | ADC Management Department, Bangladesh Krishi Bank, Head Office, 83-85 Motijheel C/A, Dhaka. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 30 | Contact details of Official Inviting Tender | Tel. No. 88-02-9513891 E-mail: dgmac@krishibank.org.bd | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 31 | The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

স্বাক্ষরিত: অসিম দুর হোসেন
দেপুটি গেনারেল ম্যানেজার (অতিরিক্ত চার্জ)
- ব্যবস্থাপনা মন্ত্রণালয়

Sd/-
(Md. Farid Hasan)
Deputy General Manager
(Additional Charge)



Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation

Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources
Energy and Mineral resources Division
BSC Bhaban, Saltgola Road, Chittagong.
www.bpc.gov.bd

Ref.No: 28.03.0000.011.10.129.17/ Dated: 07-07-2024.

e-Tender Notice

This is an online Tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents of following package from the National e-GP system portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank up to the time given below:

| Sl No | Package No | Name of Goods | Tender ID | Last date & Time of Tender Security Submission | Last date & Time of Closing & Opening |
|-------|------------|---|-----------|--|---------------------------------------|
| 01 | JPE-02-23 | Repair & Renovation of Bungalow nos. 05 at Joypahar Estate, Sarson Road Chattogram. | 1001070 | Date: 22-7-2024 Time: 15:00 | Date: 22-7-2024 Time: 16:00 |

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

Muhammad Ashraf Hossain
Secretary, BPC

Size: 4' x 3 col

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

Another bad precedent in public service

Loosening service rules, and the grip of accountability, raises fresh concerns

In another questionable move with the potential to exacerbate corruption, the government seems set to allow public servants to engage in stock market trading, reversing a decades-old prohibition. According to a report, the law ministry has positively vetted an amendment to the Government Servants (Conduct) Rules, 1979 forwarded by the public administration ministry. If or once approved, employees will be able to legally buy or sell primary shares and bonds of registered companies. This is one of the several changes billed as necessary for a "modern and time-befitting" code of conduct. But given past experiences, we must say this is the wrong way to go about it as allowing officials to trade stocks may open a Pandora's box of unethical practices.

We don't need to go that far back to understand why. Matiur Rahman, a top NBR official now under investigation for corruption, allegedly made a fortune through stock market investments, using insider information, which is illegal. He is not alone in such pursuits. Many government employees, despite current prohibitions, are believed to be engaged in stock trading. Many have already demonstrated their willingness to exploit their positions for personal gain. Against this backdrop, legalising stock trading could widen the scope for corruption. The speculative nature of stock markets means that losses are inevitable, and when faced with losses, employees might be tempted to recoup them through illegal means.

The proposed amendment, therefore, will further weaken, rather than fortify, the ethical framework governing public officials. Unfortunately, the public administration ministry seems to be going in the opposite direction. In another editorial not long ago, we commented on its proposal to relax another provision in the Government Servants (Conduct) Rules requiring officials to submit wealth statements every five years, and how the removal of such an important layer of scrutiny could encourage dishonest officials to commit crimes with little fear of detection. Over the years, we have seen how such anti-graft rules and regulations have been relaxed, sometimes even lightening penalties for proven corruption.

As we write this, news has emerged of another top official, a former additional IGP, and his wife who illegally amassed wealth worth Tk 30.35 crore while concealing information of wealth worth Tk 36.91 crore—adding to the recent disclosures of scams involving former and current security and revenue officials. The list will only grow, whether it comes to light or not, unless we tighten relevant rules, enhance existing oversight mechanisms, and enforce stricter penalties for violations. Government employees, because of the power they exercise, must be held to the highest standards of conduct. We, therefore, urge the public administration ministry and other authorities to refrain from further relaxing service rules.

Sad plight of BSMMU specialised hospital

Govt must ensure unimpeded operation of health facilities

When it comes to public healthcare in a poor country like Bangladesh, any wastage of resources and money hits particularly hard as it deprives millions of low-cost medical care. This is why it is hard to accept what has been happening at the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University's (BSMMU) super-specialised hospital.

Inaugurated in September 2022—with world-class facilities capable of providing stem cell therapy, gene therapy and robotic operations, and a capacity to treat 5,000 patients a day—the hospital now receives less than 500 patients. This is due to shortage of doctors, technicians and support staff, and the corruption involved in their recruitment. We have commented on it before, and sadly, the situation has not changed much even in a year. What's more disheartening is that 90 percent of the medical equipment bought from South Korea with \$33 million remains unused because of the manpower shortage. The warranty period of some of the machines is nearing expiration, requiring additional maintenance cost. Add to that the burden on the public to repay the Tk 1,047 crore loan that the government had taken from South Korea to build this state-of-the-art hospital.

In short, far from providing world-class, low-cost health service as advertised, it's turning into a white elephant. A country where out-of-pocket health expenditure is among the highest in the world, and where approximately 800,000 people travel to foreign countries for medical treatment, this super-specialised facility could have been a beacon of hope. That hope has turned into despair because of systemic negligence and corruption, with visiting patients not getting to see doctors on time or having simple diagnostic tests done there. They even have to pay almost the same doctor fees as in private hospitals.

This is not the first time that public trust in the health sector has been betrayed. Thanks to the problems mentioned above, we have often seen how well-intentioned projects like this one turned into a debacle in their operation phase. It seems the projects are valued more for the money that can be spent rather than the return on investment, or the benefits owed to the public. How else can the purchase of medical equipment without even recruiting technicians to operate them be justified? We urge the higher authorities to critically look into the case of BSMMU's super-specialised hospital and make it fully operational. Longstanding issues in public procurement and recruitment that are also plaguing other health-sector projects must be resolved too.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Republic of the Philippines attained its independence



On July 4, 1946, the Republic of the Philippines was proclaimed an independent country, with Manuel Roxas as its first president.

Coasting on the 'highway to climate hell'



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

QUAMRUL HAIDER

According to Copernicus, the European Union's climate monitoring service, average global temperatures reached record highs for 12 consecutive months since June, 2023. The Director of Copernicus warned that unless planet-warming pollution caused by greenhouse gases is slashed, "This string of hottest months will be remembered as comparatively cold." The worse is yet to come, he said. Indeed, we are pumelled by the second round of blistering heatwaves across the globe that is threatening to leap to a whole new level.

This "shocking but not surprising news" has alarmed António Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations, to the extent that in a bare-knuckled speech in New York timed for the World Environment Day (June 5), he compared humans to meteors that wiped out the dinosaurs. Moreover, he called the fossil fuel conglomerates the "godfathers of climate chaos."

In response to Guterres' fiery speech about the future of our planet, US congressman John Curtis, a Republican from Utah, sarcastically quipped, "I'd be curious to ask him how he got to work in the morning. How he gets around when he flies,

Part of what makes Earth "just right" is the interplay between carbon dioxide, water vapor and the planet's energy balance. If there is too much carbon dioxide and water vapor in the atmosphere, global warming will accelerate and energy imbalance will increase, causing more ocean evaporation and baking out of carbon dioxide from rocks and oceans.

because as far as I know, there aren't any electric planes." Then again, how does Mr Curtis commute from Salt Lake City to Washington DC? Certainly not by a stagecoach, bicycle, or walking!

As a self-proclaimed "better steward" of climate change and founder of the Conservative Climate Caucus in the US House of Representatives, Curtis thinks "false narratives" that equate fossil fuels with greenhouse gas emissions are duplicitous. He speaks for approximately 75 percent of Republicans who hold that the economy should be given priority, even at the risk of ignoring climate change.



'We need an exit ramp off the highway to climate hell,' said UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres during a World Environment Day speech. PHOTO: AFP

That is why the fossil fuel industry loves the Republicans and their like-minded hucksters worldwide so much that they donate millions of dollars to them for the sole purpose of rolling back environmental regulations.

Despite what climate change deniers believe, concentration of planet-warming carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is surging "faster than ever" to a level not seen for millions of years, the administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said in a statement earlier this month. In May, the concentration hit an all-time high of nearly 427 parts per million.

A key measure of global warming is the difference between the amount of solar energy absorbed by the planet and the amount of thermal infrared radiation Earth emits back into space. A positive energy imbalance means the Earth is gaining energy, causing the planet to heat up. Due to greenhouse effect, this imbalance has doubled in the past 20 years, raising

concerns about the large amount of heat the oceans are absorbing.

Presumably, that is why Guterres also said: "We need an exit ramp off the highway to climate hell." His reference to hell may have been metaphorical, though our closest neighbour and the brightest planet in the solar system, Venus, often called Earth's evil twin because it shares similarities with our planet in size, composition and gravity, became hellish billions of years ago.

How did Venus, once a pleasant planet, become an inferno? Without going into details, Venus' thick envelope of carbon dioxide, roughly 200,000 times the amount in Earth's atmosphere, gave rise to runaway greenhouse effect, a climatic phenomenon where the greenhouse effect became so intense

temperature. This is a precursor to the onset of runaway greenhouse effect.

Part of what makes Earth "just right" is the interplay between carbon dioxide, water vapor and the planet's energy balance. If there is too much carbon dioxide and water vapor in the atmosphere, global warming will accelerate and energy imbalance will increase, causing more ocean evaporation and baking out of carbon dioxide from rocks and oceans. This added water vapor and carbon dioxide will intensify the greenhouse effect, driving temperatures a little higher. The higher temperatures will induce a positive feedback loop, intensifying the greenhouse effect even further. This self-sustaining process of intensification, most efficient in tropical ocean regions because large amounts of water vapor are pumped upwards by convective storms high in the atmosphere that, in turn, traps heat so effectively, will eventually snare the Earth into a vicious cycle of runaway greenhouse effect.

Against the ambivalence of China, Russia, the United States, and other countries equally committed to their fossil fuel industries, are we really coasting on Guterres' "highway to climate hell?" In a paper published last year in the journal *Astronomy*, scientists at the University of Geneva and France's CNRS laboratories in Paris and Bordeaux suggested that because of escalated global temperatures and the evaporation of water from seas and oceans, Earth could become an "uninhabitable hell" similar to Venus in just a few centuries, or even sooner.

Arguably, the general trend of catastrophic climate change we are witnessing currently is a bad omen for runaway greenhouse effect. Therefore, combating this threat to preserve Earth's climate stability and avert cataclysmic consequences requires urgent and collective efforts to stop the rapacious extraction and consumption of fossil fuels without further delay. However, world leaders and business magnates with stakes in the fossil fuel industry seem intent on continuing to gain morbidly vast wealth at the expense of every human and other creatures on our planet. Meanwhile, the average temperature will continue to rise, and millions of people will die as a result.

Finally, we cannot give our children and grandchildren the same number of years we had because we are all guilty to one extent or another for speeding on the "highway to climate hell." We are letting our jewel of a home be ruined by greed, stupidity and indifference. The Earth will still be here for a long, long time, spinning as a dead ball of rock.

What is wrong with business law education in Bangladesh?



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AZHAR UDDIN BHUIYAN

Imagine a business professional who does not know the laws that govern their industry in the country they operate in. How can they make smart decisions, avoid legal troubles, or lead their company effectively? The truth is, they can't. This is why business law education is so crucial. Yet, in Bangladesh, the business education system is falling short. Our business schools are not preparing students to handle the legal challenges they will face in their careers.

So, what is wrong with business law education in Bangladesh? Firstly, there's the curriculum. Business law courses in Bangladesh heavily rely on Indian textbooks about Indian laws. Sounds odd, right? It is. Because why would Bangladeshi business schools teach Indian laws? These books focus on Indian laws, which are not relevant to Bangladeshi students. Imagine learning about laws you will never use in your career. It is like training for a cricket match with football equipment. When these students enter the workforce,

they struggle with compliance issues because they have not learned the laws that apply in Bangladesh, and they are not taught how to freshly learn the laws that apply to themselves. While it is true that there is lack of good books on business law in Bangladesh, teaching Indian textbooks based on Indian laws cannot be a solution.

Secondly, who are the people teaching these courses? Surprisingly, it is not law academics. Instead, business academics, who may know a lot about business but not as much about law, are teaching these courses. This gap means students miss out on vital legal knowledge and updates that could be crucial for their careers. Because in the commercial justice sector, regulations are updated, or new regulations are introduced almost every year. Moreover, in many business schools, teaching business law is viewed as a less desirable assignment, akin to a "punishment posting" for full-time faculty members in business schools. This negative perception leads

to a lack of enthusiasm and investment in delivering up-to-date, engaging, and practical education.

Thirdly, we are missing the point of teaching business law as a core course of the business curriculum in Bangladesh. Currently, business law courses are too theoretical and contentious. They focus on disputes and litigation rather than practical, everyday business transactions and compliance. Instead of learning how to avoid legal pitfalls, students are taught how to fight them in court. Shouldn't we be preparing them to avoid these problems in the first place? Moreover, there is a lack of practical training. Students do not engage in simulation exercises or real-world scenarios. Business students need similar practical exposure to understand how to apply legal principles in real-world situations.

Now, can we fix this? If yes, then how? We need a major overhaul of how business law is taught in business schools. The pedagogy for business law in business schools must be significantly different from that of law schools because these are two different ballgames.

The business law curriculum in business schools should be based on laws relevant to Bangladesh. This way, students learn what they will need in their careers. Hiring law academics to teach business law should be the way to go as they are the people

who know it best. They can provide accurate, up-to-date information and practical insights. Shifting from purely theoretical teaching to include practical exercises is crucial as well. Simulations, case studies, and real-world scenarios can help students understand how to apply what they learn.

And why does this matter? Think about the impact a heightened awareness of the legal doctrine can have on the business environment in Bangladesh. Well-informed business leaders can drive compliance and ethical practices. This leads to a more stable and robust corporate sector. Wouldn't you prefer to work in a business environment where leaders understand the laws and navigate them confidently? By revamping business law education, we are not just improving individual careers, we are strengthening the entire business landscape in Bangladesh. Informed leaders can avoid costly legal mistakes, foster ethical practices, and ensure compliance. This contributes to the country's economic growth and stability. Isn't that what we all want?

Revamping business law education is more than just an academic exercise; it is a strategic move for the future of Bangladesh's corporate world. Let's equip our future leaders with the right legal knowledge and skills. Let's prepare them to lead with integrity and legal acumen.

The illusion of inclusion

Empty policies and promises for Bangladesh's hijra community



Sara Rashid, based in New York, is interested in how religion and politics shape art in South Asia.

SARA RASHID

In 2013, Bangladesh granted the hijra community "third gender" status, which constitutionally embedded their rights and safety, and started the process of opening economic opportunities to them. However, other than an official gender recognition, it did little to change the hijra community's historically tragic and exploited dire reality.

The acknowledgement came severely underfunded, without any policy changes, and had no impact on the social and cultural transformation needed to incorporate the historically marginalised hijra community into Bangladeshi society. In Bangla, hijras are referred to as *jouno o lingo protibondhi*, meaning "a person with sexual and gender disabilities," and this term has further ostracised the community based on their perceived sexual, physical, and gender shortcomings. Although Bangladesh has made legal changes on paper that are considered as markers of progress in a Western context, little has been done to improve the lives of the hijra community from a social and economic perspective.

The hijra community is the oldest transgender group in the world, and their fight for equality precedes the formation and subsequent split of the South Asian countries they inhabit.

The policing and criminalising of hijra communities stigmatised and alienated them across the Indian subcontinent, undercurrents of which continue to be found in South Asian countries today, including Bangladesh.

But this was not always the case. Some hijra communities were and are considered to be members of a holy caste of people, whose presumed mythical powers and physical traits led to their reverence and indispensability within the Mughal Empire.

However, the British colonial powers' quest to civilise Indian society, and their ideas of morality and traditional gender norms were in direct conflict with the existence of the hijra community. They viewed this group with disgust and frustration due to their inability to understand and place them into rigid gender categories, causing them to implement rulings that led to the community's rapid marginalisation. This is not to claim the group did not previously face discrimination or violence, but that British colonial rule hastened and exacerbated the socio-economic, cultural and political decline of the community.

The policing and criminalising of hijra communities stigmatised and alienated them across the Indian subcontinent, undercurrents of which continue to be found in South Asian countries today, including Bangladesh. In the last decade, Bangladesh's remarkable and unexpected economic success has outpaced all its peers. As the world watches, Bangladesh's pressure to perform continues to increase. This pressure has often led to the implementation of ineffective, hasty and incomplete policies, designed mainly to appease and cater to Western ideas of growth and advancement.

Bangladesh's recognition of the hijra community as "third gender" is one such performative policy. Since its implementation in 2013, the hijra community has been strongly persuaded, and often compelled, to identify as third gender in all official documents for data collection. From the perspective of the hijra community, this push for self-identification came with a hope to reap supposed benefits tailored to

conveniently erasing other members of the hijra community and the rituals, disciple-guru relationship and social processes that predate the rich history of the group, and the intricate ways in which they architected the social fabric of South Asia. Not only are they relegated to the margins of society, but the policies aimed at improving these

lives fail to acknowledge the existence and needs of crucial members of this group, making these political strategies ineffective, performative and superficial. Often, hijra are assigned "male" at birth, but may identify as female later in life and prefer to be recognised as hijra or third gender, as many consider themselves to transcend the traditional rigid and binary confines upheld within society. However, this preference is based on choice, and a mandated government policy strips them of a right to choose. Depriving the hijra community of their ability to choose their preferred gender orientation and coercing them into identifying as third gender not only violates their individual authority, but diametrically opposes Bangladesh's goal of bestowing more rights on the hijra community. For a country that



Members of the hijra community in Dhaka during a World AIDS day programme.

PHOTO: SHAFIQUK ISLAM KAJOL

shame to a traditional Bangladeshi family, and often become the reason they are banished from their homes and schools. It is naive and negligent to assume the complex barriers that have precluded the hijra community from gaining access to education, a family structure, basic needs, and equal employment opportunities can be addressed by the simplistic recognition of the third gender, without any additional work to address the bone deep prejudices extant in society. Family members prefer to completely sever ties with their hijra relatives, and this inevitable displacement makes them even more vulnerable and susceptible to violence and alienation. The hijra community faces a similar predicament in school, where they are physically bullied and verbally abused, called *maigya polas* (effeminate boy), and sexually exploited by their teachers who accuse them of violating school principles and social decorum.

Bangladesh has displayed its incompetence and impassivity by doing exactly that and a prime example of the country's inadequate and vapid policies lies in the first school it opened in 2020 for the transgender community. The aim was to provide education and eventual employment opportunities to release the group from a life of sex work, dancing, singing, or begging. However, the curriculum included only religious teachings and vocational subjects. The decision to not include subjects like Bangla, Mathematics, English, and Science only sets up the hijra community for failure.

In the last few years, Bangladesh has opened a handful of Islamic curriculum schools catering solely to the hijra community. However, does a separate school for this community truly work toward integrating them into larger society or does it further disparage and relegate them to the margins? Does the existence of a separate institution for hijra not label them as incapable and unworthy of mingling with larger society? A structurally inbred segregation inadvertently reinforces existing social biases and exacerbates the prejudices against the hijra community by alienating them from the mainstream education system. To effectively create space and equal opportunities for this community, the government needs to firmly enact anti-discrimination policies, build an inclusive curriculum and educate the masses to ensure the inclusion of hijra in mainstream institutions, and provide legal consequences for discrimination against the group.

Discrimination across the education and economic spaces inevitably bleed out to all extremities of the hijra community's existence, including their access to healthcare. Data shows that the community experiences extreme discrimination within the medical space, and impediments to accessing healthcare

include harassment from hospital authority, inability to disclose conditions like STDs for fear of abuse, public derision, and the absence of medical infrastructure for the third gender. Additionally, although 80 percent of the hijra community sought assistance from government healthcare facilities, the overall success rate in achieving healthcare

with corruption, Section 377 provides the country's law enforcement with easy opportunities to perpetuate the harassment and extortion of the hijra community. The homophobic legacy of British colonialism continues to paralyse marginalised groups, and despite numerous opportunities to repeal the laws, the Bangladeshi government refuses to break away from its inherited shackles to provide equal protection and rights to all its citizens.

In addition to the socio-economic and casteist rhetoric surrounding the public marginalisation of the hijra community, a discourse on disability based on their putative genital status has emerged since their legal recognition as third sex and continues to perpetuate their discrimination. Labelling the hijra community as genetically disabled is baseless and confusing for the state and wider public. The hijra community themselves question being labelled as disabled, when they do not suffer from any physical, mental or sexual impediments. The government's decision to retain the term is unclear and ambiguous, as it is rhetoric around disability that has led to the group's marginalisation. Legal and state negligence toward the hijra community and a lack of motivation to bring grassroots change for the group is evident in policy implementation.

The hijra community are a systemically and constitutionally persecuted group, and the consistent attacks on them have prevented them from enjoying basic human rights. The intricacy with which these social structures are entangled require a comprehensive approach to solving the issue and a desultory legal recognition without social inclusion tools, autonomy and security, and a rights based approach will continue to jeopardise the lives and safety of hijra people. However, this cannot be achieved without departing from the government's tokenistic approach toward them. As of now, neither the legal recognition nor the cultural understanding of the "other" has led to a communal acceptance of the group. In contrast, the hijra is perceived to be in a ridiculed state of liminality and are reduced only to their genital deficiencies. Ultimately, despite the intentions behind these policy changes, what has come to the forefront through the ostracisation and consistent conflation of this group is Bangladesh's desperate and sycophantic attempt at gaining the attention of "modern" and "liberal" hegemonies and being deemed as an upholder of neocolonial markers of progress as a means to achieve political clout.



Hijra entertainers in British India, circa 1865. PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

is used generously and with abandon; not only is it used for members of the intersex or transgender community, it is a rebuke, used to call out effeminate characteristics, shame a lack of toxic but expected machismo in men, and curb a non-conformity to traditional sexual and gender roles. Till date, the word hijra is interchangeable to a *gaali*, an insult and a curse.

Colonial powers have stripped it so extensively of its depth and nuance, that today the community not only continues to be incorrectly identified, but also has become a homogenous marker of how an individual should not operate in society. The word hijra is treated as a contagion, one that is almost impossible to recover from, and this fear has been used to administer the population's behaviour and restrict freedom of expression. This fear of social and moral corruption has consequently distanced people from the community, and in turn led to a conflation of the term hijra. This ostracisation and ignorance is bred by the government as well, who have identified the community as only members of the intersex group,

is not able to ensure the safety of its citizens and has a history of violence against the hijra community, the motivation behind enforcing a third gender ultimately becomes more symbolic and performative than substantive.

On the other hand, members of the hijra community who volunteer to self-identify as third gender face several difficulties as even after 10 years of implementing the policy, most government forms lack a third gender option. In 2016, the Election Commission updated their voter list to include 50,320,362 men and 49,578,191 women; however, no information was provided on the number of hijra or third gender voters who had been registered on the updated list. Thus, the hijra were effectively barred from registering under the third gender status and were excluded from participating in the election process under their chosen gender identity. In these instances, the failure of the government and their lacklustre attempts at implementing these policies to improve the lives of the hijra community become glaringly

services was less than 50 percent. Regardless of gender identification, there have been no changes in the provision of healthcare services for the hijra community.

Due to their lack of access to the formal workforce, the group often earn their livelihoods through prostitution, which is legal in Bangladesh. However, Section 377 of the Penal Code makes homosexuality, and possibly gender nonconformity, illegal. And law enforcement agencies are given the liberty to arrest those suspected of committing a "cognisable offense." There are no set parameters for what is considered to be an offense of this nature, and an inordinate amount of power is placed in the hands of the law enforcement, who can make arrests based on subjective legal interpretations. For a system rampant

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Restaurant unit
- 6 Kind of point or length
- 11 Got to one's feet
- 12 Chilled
- 13 In the middle of
- 14 Fashionably dated
- 15 Comfort
- 17 Japanese currency
- 18 Magnificent
- 22 Nick Charles's wife
- 23 Swindlers
- 27 Plumbing problems
- 29 Mrs. Eisenhower
- 30 Frolicking
- 32 Cairo's river
- 33 Illinois city
- 35 Flying mammal

DOWN

- 2 Airport screening org.
- 3 Scary shout
- 4 Lindbergh nickname
- 5 Painter Degas
- 6 Ula's place
- 7 Start of a count
- 8 Metropolis
- 9 Lot unit
- 10 Writer Uris

16 Attack command

- 18 Machu Picchu native
- 19 Shed feathers
- 20 Item used onstage
- 21 Usury expert
- 24 Leave out
- 25 Metric amount, for short
- 26 Spotted
- 28 Relished
- 31 Basketball's Ming
- 34 Snoots
- 35 Sacks
- 36 Skilled
- 37 Turn to slush
- 40 Galena, for one
- 42 Lingerie item
- 43 Whole bunch
- 44 Before, to bards



TUESDAY'S ANSWERS

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S | C | R | A | M | J | I | G | G | Y |
| K | O | A | L | A | A | D | E | L | E |
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| E | N | E | A | R | M | V | E | T | |
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| B | E | R | N | I | E | B | A | R | |
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| T | I | N | E | S | N | I | E | C | E |
| E | X | E | R | T | G | A | T | E | D |

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ILLUSTRATION: MAISHA SYEDA

BOOK REVIEW: FICTION

A wound in our experience

Review of Saikat Majumdar's *The Remains of the Body* (Penguin Random House, India, 2024)

SOHANA MANZOOR

"An exceptional novel that makes gender disappear to build unconventional love and friendship"

Ruth Vanita

Saikat Majumdar's latest novel, *The Remains of the Body*, is a deeply visceral and textured exploration of loss, desire, and identity. To an unsuspecting reader, the novel might start out as a love triangle rising out of marital discord, or betrayal of old friendships. *The Remains of the Body*, however, delves deeper into examining various forms of relationships reflecting the complex human psychology in an intricate and ever-changing world.

Set in Toronto and La Jolla, the storyline constantly moves not just between places, but more between times. The story is narrated from the perspective of Kaustav, who is a post-doc fellow based in Toronto. He is a bachelor, but it is hinted that he had had romantic relations with women throughout his life. The novel begins in the backyard pool of Avik's spacious home in La Jolla, California. A cautious reader might find it symbolic because human life begins in water—in the womb of one's mother. And then all three major characters, Kaustav, Avik, and Sunetra are seen playing in it. The complexity of their relationship is introduced right there as they thrash about the pool aimlessly, each revealing in different ways the dysfunctionality of their seemingly successful lives. Kaustav's position is perhaps the most vulnerable as he is caught between his love for both his childhood buddy Avik and his wife Sunetra.

Avik is a professional whom his childhood friend Kaustav describes as a big baby who never grew up. Their relationship goes far back into the past when they were mere boys and shared intimate moments and secrets. As adults, they are still forever attached, even though their relationship is dotted with occasional jealousy and doubt. Hence,

Kaustav and Sunetra can make fun of Avik and his successful friends with houses in suburbs, who seem mad about "goat curry for dinner and sausages for breakfast and their wobbly tummies" and laugh over "sad jokes and endlessly recycled memories from their engineering college hostel days."

Many readers would identify the problems of the modern-day system in Sunetra's words when she observes how the not-so-academically bright ones made it to the top and she, the best student of her class, was merely a highly paid lab assistant. And Kaustav, another top student in his discipline was barely making ends meet despite being affiliated with the best universities. When Kaustav accuses Avik of hindering Sunetra from pursuing her dreams in academia and joining instead a research-intensive biopharmaceutical company, he feels a "kick in his groin," as the latter retorts that Sunetra and Kaustav are equally impractical, and that the world does not run on theories. Here, the readers suddenly have the lens being reversed—Kaustav and Avik, the old friends, had been looking at each other through the same lens and shaking their heads and calling each other immature.

Seemingly caught between the two men in her life, Sunetra shows a strength that is characteristic of women thwarted from attaining their dreams. Bright as she is, she is quick to realise that Kaustav and her adulterous adventures were merely mistaken acts. For Kaustav, at least, it turns out to be the means to reach out to an unattainable body. Sunetra is quick to retreat because she cannot afford to make another mistake. In some ways, she may remind one of Garima Basu, a fascinating New Woman from *The Firebird*, Majumdar's second novel, who pursued her dream of stage-acting in spite of being criticised both at home and outside. Sunetra's plight and decision to finally pursue her unfulfilled dream is not altogether unusual in

a world where marriages often end in divorce because the highly qualified wife refuses to be quelled by the dictatorial husband. Her struggles also touch on an important segment of women's problems in a patriarchal world where men and women are forever set across from each other simply because of power structures.

The Remains of the Body is a very short novel, barely 172 pages. But a sensitive reader would find it fascinating, not necessarily for the storyline, but for the portrayal of a world that is both vibrant and realistic. Anyone frequenting the diasporic world and familiar with the tension between academia and the corporate world would recognise the scenes depicted in this slim volume. One will also find remnants of loss, pain, and love that keep us alive. In his "Acknowledgements," the author writes: "Sometimes we write because there is a wound in our experience of life about which we can do nothing. Writing then becomes a cry of both pain and war." The words are a reminder that life is a constant battle and there are many wounds. A wound-free life might be happier, but the wounds give meaning to our lives because each one of them has a story.

In a recent interview with *Platform Magazine*, Majumdar observes, "I think this book ends up showing that what we call queer is actually a pervasive reality, and the heteronormative ideal is just that—an ideal that is forced due to the needs of the state and the market." In some crucial ways, these words capture the spirit of our world. The characters with a Dostoevskian analytic turn of mind often make ruthless assessments of the selves, and thus are a constant reminder that there are so many contradictions and conflicts in the modern world that the word "normal" has lost its traditional meaning, as have many others.

Sohana Manzoor teaches English at the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB).

Many readers would identify the problems of the modern-day system in Sunetra's words when she observes how the not-so-academically bright ones made it to the top and she, the best student of her class, was merely a highly paid lab assistant. And Kaustav, another top student in his discipline was barely making ends meet despite being affiliated with the best universities.

BOOK REVIEW: POETRY

Speaking up for the intellectual resurgence in non-cosmopolitan Bengal

Review of Bibhas Roy Chowdhury's *Poem Continuous: Reincarnated Expressions* (Hawakal, 2024), translated by Kiriti Sengupta

MALASHRI LAL

"My reader, I dip into the water just for you."
Bibhas Roy Chowdhury

How does a poet capture a boatman singing words to the gentle wind, a child bewildered by war, and a woman identified with rain? Bibhas Roy Chowdhury is a legendary poet who is known for the strength and diversity of his Bengali poetry. The translator into English, Kiriti Sengupta, has achieved an immense feat in bringing 60 poems into a 10th anniversary edition. Roy Chowdhury writes a nuanced Bangla, often focusing on rural Bengal, haunted by memories of Partition, and remains a highly private person. *Poem Continuous: Reincarnated Expressions* is a fortuitous title as it gestures towards the challenging act of translation and the desirable creativity of a refined translator.

One can offer a specific example by commenting on the exquisite poem, "In the Monsoon", which begins with the lines, "The algae float in the song / of my tender age. / I wonder if the river / is nearing death." Bengal's dramatic kaal baishakhi and barsha defy any easy description—and here, the association with algae, which is a parasite, and water, which is an element associated with the final rites of ash immersion, are collocated to yield a magnificent spectrum. This short poem ends with a startling image: "In the song of my younger age / two blind come / across each other quite often", packing a cryptic

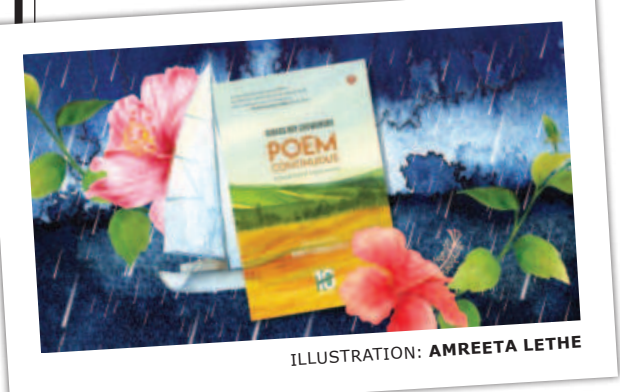


ILLUSTRATION: AMREETA LETHE

coding of "blind" relations among people. Is the Monsoon downpour from heaven a witness to social interludes, the maya or illusion of action? Such a poem is open to multiple interpretations, and I present mine as an example of the complexity of Roy Chowdhury's writing and Kiriti's translation.

If water, earth, and fire are the core elements defining human existence—as in the poems "I can Leave, but Why", "Lunatic", "The Lighthouse", among others, do the poems take a philosophical stand in re-casting this eternal interdependence? Perhaps the answer is in the negative because Roy Chowdhury never repeats himself, nor does he preach. The book's "Epilogue" comprises a significant interview between the author and translator. Kiriti asks: "Your poems mostly deal with agony and emotions..Why is this agony an essential component of your poems?" Roy Chowdhury answers obliquely, "Let my poetry capture the journey of the refugee boy from extreme distress to where I stand now. I have let my life ply behind the metaphors."

Metaphors are the greatest challenge to translators, and several poems build upon a key phrase or word. "The Poetry of a Hibiscus Flower" is a striking example, and if one reflects upon the lines, "The hibiscus lives in solitude as expected. / Lost people do exist, more or less in a similar way", a plethora of cultural references will show up. Though a common flower, the hibiscus, called 'joba' in Bangla, is sacred to Maa Kali and offered in worship at the temple; Santhal women often wear it in their hair, and Jaba-Kusum is a popular cosmetic brand. These allusions float in the literary aura of the word. Roy Chowdhury astutely associates the hibiscus with a lost mother—perhaps pre-Partition Bengal—isolation, abandonment, yet hardy survival. Interestingly, the translator, Kiriti Sengupta, has independently written a poem, "Hibiscus", with the lyrical lines: "I'll bloom / like a hibiscus: / the blush will endorse / my bloodline" that I read in the *Amethyst Review*. My point is that metaphors are powerfully suggestive, and insightful poetry hints at a backstory through a key image and allows the reader to ponder over the consciousness it generates.

This is an excerpt from the essay. Read it in full at *The Daily Star* and *DS Books'* websites.

Malashri Lal, a Former Professor in the English Department at the University of Delhi, has published 21 books, the most recent being *Mandalas of Time: Poems and Treasures of Lakshmi: The Goddess Who Gives*. She has also received several research and writing fellowships. She is currently the Convener of the English Advisory Board of the Sahitya Akademi.

FOR THE CURIOUS WRITER

Sitting in the discomfort

During the drafting stage, consider letting your first (or even second) draft simmer a bit. Return to it after a while—you decide how long a 'while' lasts—and let your writing simultaneously impress and horrify you. Give yourself a pat on the back for having a draft and snort in self-deprecating derision because the draft needs work. As for the time you spend away from your desk? Perfect for doing tasks that let your mind wander—cleaning comes to mind or even trying to keep a plant alive.

Nazia Manzoor
Editor, *Star Books and Literature*





Argentina hope for MESSI BOOST

AGENCIES

Defending champions Argentina will hope for their star man and skipper Lionel Messi to be back for their crucial Copa America 2024 quarterfinal tie against Ecuador at the NRG Stadium in Houston on Friday morning.

Messi returned to training on Monday as they prepare to face Ecuador in a rematch from the 2021 Copa America quarterfinals, in which they breezed past Ecuador 3-0 and eventually lifted the trophy.

Messi had not trained since sustaining a groin/thigh injury during his side's 1-0 win against Chile on June 25. He sat out Argentina's 2-0 victory over Peru on Saturday.

The Argentine football federation said the 37-year-old did some kinesiology work before training and was with the rest of the group afterwards.

The Albiceleste topped Group A with a 100 percent record while Ecuador held Mexico to a 0-0 draw, finishing second in Group B.

Statistically

COPA AMERICA 2024 QUARTERS

| MATCH | DATE | TIME |
|---------------------|--------|---------|
| Argentina v Ecuador | Jul-05 | 7:00 AM |
| Venezuela v Canada | Jul-06 | 7:00 AM |
| Colombia v Panama | Jul-07 | 4:00 AM |
| Uruguay v Brazil | Jul-07 | 7:00 AM |

All fixtures are as per Bangladesh time

speaking, the opening phase of this tournament was nearly flawless for Lionel Scaloni's men, who won their three encounters and did not concede.

All five of their goals scored in the opening phase came in the second half, and they have not fallen behind in a Copa America match since the 2019 semifinals (2-0 loss versus Brazil).

What augurs well for Argentina is the potential return of Messi in this game, even though coach Scaloni will be cautious about not overusing the little magician. But even without Messi, Argentina should have very little problem against Ecuador, a team against which the Albiceleste have dominated over the years.

Argentina have never lost to Ecuador at the Copa America while the World

Cup holders have advanced beyond this stage on four successive occasions.

Argentina's pedigree in the competition will also make them hopeful of cruising to last four.

The Argentines have won eight consecutive matches across all competitions and have only conceded two goals over that stretch.

Their last three appearances in the quarterfinals of this tournament have been a breeze, with Argentina winning those encounters by a combined margin of 9-1.

Only once in this century have we seen them lose a quarterfinal fixture at this tournament, when they hosted this event in 2011 and were beaten on penalties by Uruguay (5-4).

Meanwhile, Ecuador are capable of pulling off an upset on their day but will have to outdo themselves to stand any chance against Scaloni's troops.

Despite being on the back foot for a good portion of their previous encounter, Ecuador did enough to hold off the Mexicans and claim a spot in the knockout phase on goal difference.

It is the second successive time that La Tri have qualified for the last eight of this tournament, while they have now made the quarterfinals in three of the previous four Copa Americas.

The Taskin scenario and its timing

SPORTS REPORTER

Before an important board meeting on Tuesday, which was set to shed light on how Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) assessed the just concluded T20 World Cup performances of the national team, news broke that pacer Taskin Ahmed had missed the India game for having overslept.

A series of poor performances in World Cups is nothing new, and an explanation for the team's poor approach, especially in the Afghanistan game, should have been a top priority for the board. The timing of the news about Taskin was curious, as it took the limelight away from what was, in fact, a poor World Cup performance despite securing a place in the Super Eights.

What happens inside the team environment usually stays out of public knowledge, but this time the news about Taskin was leaked quite some time after the World Cup game in question.

Shakib Al Hasan, meanwhile, who usually keeps mum regarding anything inside the team's environment, had talked about Taskin missing the team bus on Tuesday evening before leaving for USA.

Thus, when BCB president Nazmul Hassan attended the press conference following the board meeting on Tuesday, it could be surmised



that the board felt content with what the team achieved despite carrying 'new' players. In fact, after questions related to the team's performances came one after another, Hassan said they were not willing to be too critical.

Inevitably, the question of Taskin came up. The BCB chief remarked: "I also heard that he missed the team bus. Why he didn't come on time, until I ask him directly... but I feel this report should come from the concerned department."

Why the board has not yet discussed the team's disciplinary issues before sitting down for a meeting is anyone's guess. If one were to venture a guess, it would be that the board has not sought an explanation seriously enough.

Taskin himself acknowledged in yesterday's Facebook post that he had, in fact, overslept. But he felt there was a huge "outrage" over this particular event. It would have made sense had Taskin been issued any fines or punishment.

No development has come till now on the penalty Taskin will be handed, as the board is still awaiting the coach and team manager's report regarding the matter. Instead, the news of him having overslept became public knowledge and made the rounds on social media, crucially grabbing the spotlight.

Moreover, head coach Chandika Hathurusingha's report for the World Cup is due. Bangladesh's planning in the Afghanistan game lacked conviction that they were, in fact, going for a win. Instead of addressing what caused the bad performances, it appeared BCB was content to allow a story to fuel.

While the BCB president said there were things that cannot be discussed with the media, the focus had somehow shifted to Taskin, which may have been intended.

Crown-favourite Gauff on redemption run

REUTERS, London

Coco Gauff did not look at her imperious best under the roof on Wimbledon's Court One on Wednesday, but she was always in control of an error-strewn second-round 6-2, 6-1 victory over Romanian qualifier Anca Todoni.

The US Open champion slipped and fell twice on the slick court and muttered to herself during the one-hour, six-minute match against an opponent ranked 140 places below her.

Second seed Gauff, a crowd favourite at Wimbledon after announcing her arrival on the big stage with a fourth-round run as a 15-year-old five years ago, produced 16 unforced errors in the short match and managed to land only 43% of her first serves.

But her nervous opponent, at 19 six months Gauff's junior, hit 23 unforced errors and could not find her range against the fleet-footed American, who wrapped up the match with a drop shot that Todoni could only send wide.

Gauff, who suffered a humiliating first round exit last year at the hands of compatriot Sofia Kenin, said she had learned from that disappointment and from her triumph at the US Open to manage expectations and emotions.

"Overall, I just learned about life a lot. What I do, I'm very passionate about but it's not over that serious," she said.

"It's a game, it's sport. Sometimes the world can make you feel like there is so much pressure and expectation."

The draw has opened up for Gauff after the first-day withdrawals of Belarusians Aryna Sabalenka, the Australian Open champion, and former world No. 1 Victoria Azarenka. She will next play British qualifier Sonay Kartel or France's Clara Burel.



Stacked fixtures await cricketers

SPORTS REPORTER

Following the T20 World Cup, it seems Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is waiting for their coaches and players to finish the ongoing break in order to start preparation for their next international assignment -- a two-match Test series against Pakistan, scheduled to be held in August.

Although Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is yet to confirm the itinerary of the series, which is also part of the ICC World Test Championship 2023-25 cycle, Bangladesh are expected to tour Pakistan for the first time since 2020.

According to chief selector Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu, they are planning for some practice matches during their camp for the Pakistan series in order to prepare themselves for red-ball cricket -- a format which they last played in March-April against Sri Lanka.

"The players are on a break now and after that, the schedule of the camp will be announced formally. There are some suggestions from our head coach. There are plans to play some warm-up matches," Ashraf told The Daily Star yesterday.

The BCB is currently running



two camps -- High Performance (HP) unit in Rajshahi and Bangladesh Tigers in Chattogram -- simultaneously. Nearly 50 cricketers are preparing for two scheduled High Performance and A team tours in Australia and Pakistan, respectively.

According to camp officials, national players like Shadman Islam and Shahadat Hossain Dipu, who are part of the Bangladesh Tigers camp, are set to feature in both Australia and Pakistan tours before the Test series.

The first contingent of HP unit, which will play two four-day matches against Pakistan Shaheens between July 19 and 29, is expected to leave Dhaka for

Australia on July 14. HP unit will also play a 50-over tri series and a T20 series, featuring a different set of players.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh A will leave for Pakistan, with a few players from the HP unit joining the team from Australia, to play two four-day matches and three one-day matches on August 6.

"The A team will leave for Pakistan on August 6. During the tour of the A team, our national team will arrive in Pakistan. We are actually operating all three programmes at the same time," said national selector Hannan Sarkar, who also mentioned that the HP squad will be announced in two-three days.

ROAD TO EURO QUARTERS

Showdowns, young guns and own goals

AFP, Stuttgart

Euro 2024's quarterfinals kick off on Friday with a blockbuster match between hosts Germany and Spain as the tournament heads towards its decisive final week.

Big boys clash
Germany's clash with Spain in Stuttgart pits the Euros' two best performing sides against one another at least one round earlier than fans would have liked, due to an unbalanced knockout bracket which has four serious candidates for overall victory on one side.

The winner of Friday's tie will face either Portugal or France, both former European champions.

Meanwhile, England face Switzerland on Saturday after having scraped past Slovakia in the last 16 and find themselves in the last eight having played way below expectations in each of their four matches.

Big name flops
The Euros has brought together some of the best footballers on the planet but none of the biggest stars have shone so far as the big teams -- Spain and Germany apart -- have mostly been below par.

Cristiano Ronaldo looks like he's gone one tournament too far while Kylian Mbappe has



just a group stage penalty to his name and is a long way from the phenomenal form which won him the golden boot at the last World Cup.

England pair Jude Bellingham and Harry Kane, respectively La Liga player of the year and the Bundesliga top scorer, have played way below expectations despite scoring all four of England's goals.

Young guns & ageing icons
Records have fallen in Germany at both ends of the age spectrum. Spain winger Lamine Yamal, 16, is dazzling having become the

youngest player ever to feature at a European Championship. Should he strike in the quarters or beyond, he will become the youngest scorer in the tournament's history.

By contrast Croatia's Luka Modric set a new record for the oldest at 38 by netting against Italy and Portugal duo Ronaldo, 39, and Pepe, 41 (now the oldest-ever Euros player), could yet surpass the Real Madrid midfield maestro.

Own goals on fire
While the continent's star strikers have failed to fire, there have been nine own goals at

this Euros and the record of 11 set at the last championships three years ago looks sure to be broken.

Prior to Euro 2020, there had just been 11 in the tournament's history.

The most comical came in Turkey's 3-0 thumping at the hands of Portugal, when Samet Akaydin unwittingly doubled the deficit by playing a sloppy back pass which ended with Zeki Celik and goalkeeper Altay Bayindir bundling into the net in a vain attempt to keep the ball out.

The majority, though, have come from dangerous crosses, like Riccardo Calafiori handing Spain a 1-0 win over Spain in one of the most-anticipated games of the group

stage.
Spain's Robin Le Normand, Czech defender Robin Hranac and Austria's Maximilian Woeber all found their own net in similar fashion as attempted clearances to low crosses have gone wrong.

Underdogs shine
The plodding, static performances of France, Belgium, England and Portugal -- FIFA's four highest-ranked sides before the tournament -- have been offset by some brilliant underdog showings.

Despite being the lowest-ranked team, Georgia's run to the last 16 lit up the tournament, particularly their 2-0 victory over Euro 2016 winners Portugal.

Romania had won just one of their 16 games at the championships heading into Euro 2024 but topped a group featuring Belgium, Ukraine and Slovakia, before going down to the Netherlands in the last 16.

Turkey have however emerged as the tournament's true dark horses, booking a spot in the quarterfinals with a brilliant 2-1 win over fellow upstarts Austria on Tuesday.

Vincenzo Montella's Turkey and Georgia also played the best game of the group stage, a 3-1 win for the Turks in front of a pulsating crowd in Dortmund.

EURO 2024 QUARTERS

| MATCH | DATE | TIME |
|-----------------------|--------|----------|
| Germany v Spain | Jul-05 | 10:00 PM |
| Portugal v France | Jul-06 | 1:00 AM |
| England v Switzerland | Jul-06 | 10:00 PM |
| Turkey v Netherlands | Jul-07 | 1:00 AM |

All fixtures are as per Bangladesh time



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KURIGRAM Over 50,000 stranded as flood hits new areas

STAR REPORT

The flood situation in the northern districts deteriorated yesterday due to heavy rainfall and the onrush of water from upstream.

Vast tracts of low-lying areas were inundated due to the rise in the water level of the Teesta, Brahmaputra, Dharla, and Dudhkumar rivers.

"Brahmaputra-Jamuna and the Ganges-Padma rivers are on a rising trend, which may continue in the next 72 hours," a bulletin from the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) said yesterday.

In the next 24 hours, the water level at some points of the Jamuna River along Jamalpur, Gaibandha, Bogura, and Sirajganj districts may rise and cross the danger levels," it added.

The flood situation in the low-lying areas in Kurigram along the Brahmaputra River may deteriorate at the same time, the bulletin warned.

Abdul Hai Sarkar, district relief and

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



An elderly man walks out of his submerged home in Char Bhagabatipur in Kurigram's sadar upazila. With the Brahmaputra swelling due to incessant rain and onrush of water from the upstream, at least 450 chars in the district have gone under water, causing a severe food and drinking water crisis for the locals. As of 6:00am yesterday, the Brahmaputra was flowing 12cm above the danger level.

PHOTO: S DILIP ROY

Biden expresses concerns over his candidacy to ally Says NYT report

AGENCIES

US President Joe Biden has told an ally that he knows he may not be able to salvage his candidacy if he cannot convince the public in the coming days that he is up for the job after his debate performance last week, the New York Times reported yesterday.

After the report was published, White House spokesperson Andrew Bates wrote on social media: "This claim is absolutely false".

The Times quoted the ally as saying that Biden "knows if he has two more events like that, we're in a different place" by the end of the weekend. The report described the ally as "key" but did not name the person.

The headline of the report said that Biden told the ally he is weighing whether to continue in the race. The text of the report did not include any reference to those comments.

Biden was due to hold a meeting with Democratic governors yesterday and

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1



Anti-quota demos rage on across the country

Students block several highways;
SC to hear appeal today

DU CORRESPONDENT

University students yesterday stepped up their protest demanding the reinstatement of the government's 2018 circular that abolished the quota system in public service.

Students of Dhaka University, Jahangirnagar University, Jagannath University, Chittagong University, and Bangladesh Agricultural University and more took part in the protest for third consecutive day. They brought out processions, blocked roads and highways, and held sit-ins.

Meanwhile, the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court is scheduled to hold a hearing on the government's appeal challenging the High Court verdict that declared the 2018 circular illegal.

On June 5 this year, the HC declared the verdict, consequently restoring the 30 percent quota system for the children of freedom fighters in government jobs. It did so after disposing of a 2021 writ petition that challenged the legality of the quota abolishment.

The government had issued the circular in the wake of student protests for quota reforms.

PROTESTS IN DHAKA

Thousands of students gathered at the capital's Shahbagh intersection for the second straight day yesterday.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

The SC is scheduled to hold a hearing on the government's appeal challenging the HC verdict that declared its 2018 circular, which abolished the quota system for government jobs, illegal.

No provision for staying conviction if appeal pending

HC says in full verdict

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court has observed that there is no provision for staying the conviction of an individual in a case while an appeal against it remains pending.

A conviction can either be scrapped, affirmed or modified upon disposing of the appeal, said an HC bench in the full text released yesterday of a judgement.

The bench on March 18 delivered the verdict scrapping the Labour Appellate Tribunal's stay order on the conviction and sentence of Grameen Telecom Chairman Prof Muhammad Yunus and directors Ashraf Hassan, Nurjahan Begum, and M Shahjahan and granted them bail in a case filed under the labour law.

The bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice Kazi Ebadot Hossain, however, stayed their sentences and fines until disposal of the appeals filed by the Nobel laureate and three others, challenging the verdict of the Third Labour Court in

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Gaza families seek shelter amid fresh Israeli strikes

Complain of water shortages, inflated prices for basic foodstuff; 28 more Palestinians killed

REUTERS, Gaza

Many Palestinians were seeking shelter yesterday after fleeing their homes in southern Gaza and complained of water shortages as Israel pressed on with its military offensive in the densely populated enclave.

Israeli forces carried out new military strikes in the southern city of Rafah amid fierce fighting with Hamas fighters overnight, residents said. At least 12 people were killed in new strikes in central and northern Gaza.

Israel's leaders have said they are winding down the phase of intense fighting against Hamas, and will soon shift to more targeted operations in the nearly nine-month-old offensive in Gaza.

But fighting continued overnight in two locations at the centre of Rafah, where tanks have seized several districts and advanced further west and

north of the city in recent days, and concerns about the plight of hundreds of thousands of displaced people are growing.

The Israeli military said its forces had continued targeted, intelligence-based operations in Rafah, dismantled several sites and killed Hamas members.

Hamas' armed wing said it had shelled two Israeli tanks in a neighbourhood west of Rafah and fired mortar bombs at Israeli forces attacking Shejaia, an eastern suburb of Gaza City in the centre of the enclave.

The armed wing of Islamic Jihad, an allied group, said it had shelled an Israeli military bulldozer in Rafah, and fired on Israeli army positions east of Shejaia.

In Maghazi refugee camp in central Gaza, two Israeli airstrikes killed five Palestinians, health officials said. In Shejaia an airstrike killed four and wounded 17, medics said.

- Hamas fighters shell Israeli tanks in west of Rafah
- Five Palestinians killed in Israeli raids in West Bank
- Gaza death toll rises to 37,953

BNP leader stabbed on way to rally

Fingers pointed at AL men

STAR REPORT

Acting convener of Natore BNP Shahidul Islam Bachchu was stabbed allegedly by ruling Awami League men in front of the BNP office at Alaipur yesterday morning while he was going to attend a rally near the office.

The attackers also beat up and injured five other leaders in different areas of the district town on their way to the event organised by the district BNP as part of its central programme demanding unconditional release of party Chairperson Khaleda Zia and her treatment abroad.

Shahidul came under attack near the party office around 9:45am. Mashhur Ferdous Hitlu, general secretary of BNP ward-5, who was with Shahidul, was also beaten up by the assailants, said Dewan Shahin, joint convener of the district BNP.

He alleged that AL activists Rashidul Islam Koyel, Golam Kibria Selim, and Amirul Islam Jony carried out the attack.

Shahidul was moved to Dhaka from Rajshahi Medical College Hospital in the afternoon as his condition was stated to be critical.

Three other injured -- Hitlu, Natore Sramik Dal Secretary Rafiq, and Natore municipality unit Swetchchasebak Dal

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Shahidul Islam

'We have to be prepared for anyone'

AFP, Santa Clara

Colombia came from behind to grab a 1-1 draw with Brazil on Tuesday, ensuring their qualification to the Copa America quarter-finals as group winners.

An equalizer from Daniel Munoz in first half stoppage time was enough to earn Colombia a share of the spoils after Raphinha had fired Brazil into the lead with a sublime 12th-minute free-kick at Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, California.

The result means Colombia advance to the knockout rounds as winners of Group D, where they will face Group C runners-up Panama in Glendale, Arizona, on Saturday.

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Colombia defender Daniel Munoz (M) celebrates with teammates after scoring a goal against Brazil during an action-packed Copa America group D fixture which ended 1-1 in Santa Clara yesterday (Bangladesh time). The result leaves Colombia as group leaders, while second-placed Brazil set up clash with Uruguay in quarterfinals.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Scientists discover moss can grow on Mars

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Scientists have discovered that a type of desert moss found in Antarctica can survive the extreme conditions of Mars, making it a promising candidate for colonising the planet.

The moss, *Syntrichia caninervis*, was already known to be able to withstand drought conditions, but tests by researchers at the Chinese Academy of Sciences revealed that it can also tolerate temperatures as low as -196°C and similar levels of gamma radiation to that found on the Martian surface.

"Our study shows that the environmental resilience of *Syntrichia caninervis* is superior to that of some of the highly stress-tolerant microorganisms and tardigrades," the researchers wrote.

"*Syntrichia caninervis* is a promising candidate pioneer plant for colonising extra-terrestrial environments, laying the foundation for building biologically sustainable human habitats beyond Earth."

