

REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XXXIV No. 163

ASHAR 21, 1431 BS

www.thedailystar.net

ZIHLAJJ 28, 1445 HIJRI

16 PAGES: TK 15.00



Govt reveals
austerity
measures
for FY25
B1



Mbappe or
Ronaldo: Who
will prevail?
P11



India, China
FM's agree to
work on border
issues
P7



One murder,
too many
questions
P3

Anti-quota protests swell across univs

For now, HC verdict not stayed; protesters vow tougher demos

STAR REPORT

Anti-quota protests intensified across the country yesterday as students of more universities joined in, and the demonstrators announced fresh programmes to press for scrapping of the quota system in government jobs.

Earlier in the day, the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court decided to uphold until further orders the June 5 High Court verdict. The HC verdict reinstated the quota system after terming illegal a 2018 government circular that abolished it. The decision was announced around 10:00am.



Protesters said they will bring out processions on college and university campuses on Saturday and boycott classes and exams on Sunday, demanding the reinstatement of the government's 2018 circular.

University students in and around Dhaka were demonstrating against the HC verdict for the last several days.

As part of the demonstrations, they blocked key intersections in the capital and highways for several hours, causing sufferings to the commuters.

Nahid Islam, an organiser of the movement, said the mainstay of the country's constitution and spirit of the Liberation War is equality for all.

"The crisis over the quota system should be resolved keeping in mind the public opinion. But we are seeing the system is being reinstated, ignoring public opinion. We'll continue our movement until our demands are met," he said during a procession at Dhaka University.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Graft suspects
getting
promoted in
civil service

Allege secretaries
during meeting

BAHARAM KHAN and
MD ABBAS

Secretaries at a meeting yesterday said some government officials facing allegations of corruption were getting promoted and posted to key positions at different ministries, divisions, and departments.

They observed that secretaries must take strict measures to ensure those officers are not considered for promotion in the future, according to sources present at the meeting held at the secretariat.

"We have enough laws and regulations to stop corruption, but these are not properly implemented, which is why corruption has become a burning issue," said one of the speakers.

"Officers who indulge in irregularities while providing public service need to be identified and held accountable," said a secretary.

A few corrupt officers are tainting the reputation of all government officials and they are the cause of criticism in the media, said another speaker.

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1

\$14b export data puzzle is unnerving

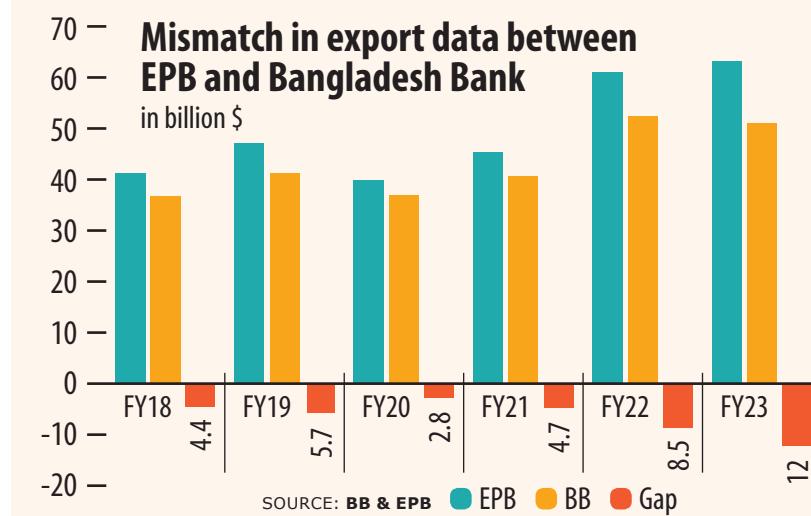
AHSAN HABIB

You can lie with data or illuminate the truth with data. And there's something in between - half-truths.

A \$14 billion correction in export figures by the central bank is necessary because it addresses one economic

silent.

What's clear is that the discrepancy in export figures again underscores the importance of accurate macroeconomic data. A lack of statistical accuracy can upend many indicators. The calculation of gross domestic product is one of them.



half truth.

But half-truths are unnerving.

The data revision that came on Wednesday through a regular update on the balance of payments raises disturbing questions about the country's economic performance and the policy that revolved around it.

The shocking revelation has sent economists scrambling for answers, but there are more questions than answers as the authorities are almost

Such a big discrepancy is "unbelievable", said MK Mujeri, an economist and former director general of the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies.

Export and import data calculation is a simple task, but big mistakes such as this by officials raise questions over the authenticity of other components of the economy. "Entire GDP estimates should be revisited," said Mujeri.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



People using a bamboo raft to go to the WDB dyke for shelter at Hatirmela village in Kurigram's Ulipur upazila yesterday. Almost all the homes in the village have been flooded due to continuous rains and an onrush of water from the upstream.

PHOTO: S DILIP ROY

TEESTA PROJECT
Beijing open to working with Delhi
Says Chinese envoy ahead of Hasina's China visit; Dhaka's proposal seeking budget support likely to be considered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Chinese ambassador yesterday hinted that Beijing may consider Bangladesh's proposal seeking budget support that will ease pressure on the country's foreign reserves.

China is open to working with India for the Teesta restoration and management project, but it is Bangladesh which has to make the decision in this regard, Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Yao Wen told reporters at the Jatiya Press Club.

Regarding this, the ambassador said, "We too talk about these issues.

It is expected that during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to China next week, multiple "cooperation documents" will be signed and the two countries will jointly announce major cooperation achievements, according to the ambassador.

Bangladesh sought around \$5 billion from China in budget support in addition to loans for a number of mega projects, finance ministry officials said.

About Teesta project, he said "The Teesta river is within the territory of Bangladesh. So, it is your river. Any

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



Maintaining Steady Growth with Excellence

Dhaka Bank has kept its service pattern for last 29 years suiting to the demand of our valued customers in the rapidly changing digitalized global banking transformation. We always remain fully compliant under regulatory directives for our steady growth with excellence.



DHAKA BANK PLC.



মাইপ্রাইম - এখন বাংলায়



আমি
বাংলায়
কথা বলি

GET IT ON
Google Play



প্রাইম ব্যাংক

2018 BNP PROTEST Charges framed against Alal, Tuku, 87 others

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court framed charges yesterday against 89 leaders and activists of BNP and its affiliated organisations in a case filed over instigating destructive activities during a demonstration in 2018.

The demonstration was held ahead of a court's verdict on BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia in the Zia Orphanage Trust graft case in 2018.

BNP leaders Sved Moazzem Alal and Tuku Hossain Alal, AKM Fazlul Haque Milon, Shamsur Rahman Shimul Biswas, Sultan Salauddin Tuku, Habibun Nabi Khan Sohel and Saiful Alam Nirob are among the accused in the case filed with Ramma Model Police Station in February 2018.

Alal, Milon, Shimul Biswas, Tuku, Solel, Nirob and 82 others, now on bail and Enamul Haque, SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



Palestinians walk past the rubble as others search for belongings in the aftermath of an Israeli strike near a UN-run school sheltering displaced people in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Anti-quota protests swell across univs

FROM PAGE 1

He added, "We're not against the freedom fighters; rather, we have no objection to increasing the facilities for those who are real freedom fighters. But we want the quota system gone."

Their demands include the formation of a commission to reform the quota system and also to ensure vacant positions are filled with candidates selected on merit in the absence of quota candidates.

Also, they demand that individuals be allowed to use the quota system only once in their lifetime for any type of competitive public examinations, including university entrance tests.

THE SC SAYS

Yesterday morning, a six-member bench of the Supreme Court's Appellate Division, headed by Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan, held a hearing on the government's petition for a stay on the HC verdict that termed its 2018 circular abolishing quotas illegal.

However, much to the dismay of the protesters expecting a stay, the apex court asked the government to submit a leave-to-appeal petition after the full text of the HC judgment is released.

The HC verdict came on June 5 this year, following a 2021 writ petition that challenged the legality of the quota abolishment.

Since then, students have taken to the streets demanding the reinstatement of the government circular.

PROTESTS ESCALATE

Once the news of the Appellate Division's decision spread, students of Dhaka University began gathering in front of the Central Library from 11:00am.

They brought out processions on different roads on the campus and around 12:20pm blocked the Shahbagh intersection, for the third consecutive day. They stayed there till 6:00pm.

Despite bouts of rain, the students

stayed put, chanting slogans like "Bury the quota system", "No place for discriminations in my golden Bangla", "No more tears for the meritorious", and "Keep the country's talent in the country, abolish the quota system".

They also sang patriotic songs and recited poems.

Meanwhile, traffic came to a halt on the roads leading to Bangla Motors, Science Lab and Kakrail due to the blockade.

On the other hand, leaders and activists of Chhatra League, the pro-ruling party student body, took position at different dormitories, including Zahirul Huq Hall and Surja Sen Hall, to prevent students from joining the protests.

Asaduzzaman Farid, joint secretary of Zahirul Huq Hall BCL, said they were on alert to prevent the anti-quota demonstrations at the hall.

Sharjis Alam, a master's student of Zoology and one of the leaders of the anti-quota protesters, was allegedly forced to vacate the Amar Ekushey Hall of DU around 10:00pm.

He claimed that Chhatra League leaders in the dorm forced him to leave.

As the news spread, hundreds of students from different halls gathered in front of the dorm around 11:45pm and started chanting slogans.

Hall provost Prof Ishtiaq M Sayed was seen trying to calm the students.

Saddam Hossain, president of Amar Ekushey Hall unit of Chhatra League, said they did not force anyone to leave the dorm. "Who stays or not depends on the hall authority, not them."

Around 1:00pm, students of Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University blocked the Agargaon thoroughfare for an hour, said Ahad Ali, officer-in-charge of Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station.

Jagannath University students also blocked roads near their campus on Chittaranjan Avenue and Ray Saheb Bazar for over an hour and half

since 12:00pm. They too shouted anti-quota slogans such as "No place for discriminations in Bangabandhu's Bangla", "Rise again with the spirit of '18", "Let the meritorious be free!".

The blockade caused traffic congestion on both roads.

Halal Ahmed, one of the protesters, said, "We'll continue our movement until the quota system is abolished."

Students of Jahangirnagar University brought out a procession on campus and then blocked the Dhaka Aricha highway around 12:20pm for almost an hour, leading to traffic jams.

AFM Sayeed, officer-in-charge of Ashulia Police Station, said though the blockade was lifted around 1:00pm, it took time for traffic to go back to normal.

Cumilla University students blocked the busy Dhaka-Chittogram highway, a commercial artery between the capital and the port city, in Beltai area of south sadar upazila for three hours from 12:30pm.

They lifted the blockade only after Deputy Commissioner Khandaker M Musfiqur Rahman and Superintendent of Police Abdul Mannan ensured that the protesters' message would be conveyed to the higher authorities.

After a procession on their campus, several thousand students of Rajshahi University braved the rain and blocked the Dhaka Rajshahi highway for over two hours from around 10:00am. Slogans like "Let the weapon of 2018 roar again", "We want merit-based recruitment, no quotas except for the disabled" were chanted.

Hundreds of Chittagong University students blocked the Chittagong-Khagrachhari highway for around two hours from 11:45pm.

Fatema, a sociology student, said, "Because of the quotas, meritorious students are not being recognised. It's unacceptable that a talented student with high exam scores may not get a

job while some others can benefit from the quota system."

The Barishal-Kuakata highway was also blocked by students of Barisal University for five hours.

QUOTA SYSTEM

The quota system has long been criticised as the reason for bureaucracy being devoid of merit in the long run.

While giving a lecture at Dhaka University in January 2018, the late Akbar Ali Khan, a former adviser to a caretaker government and former cabinet secretary, had said it was "the biggest problem in the cadre service".

He said, "No other country in the world has such a bizarre system."

A study conducted by Akbar Ali Khan and Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmad, also a former secretary and former chief election commissioner, recommended reducing the number of quotas.

In the report, which they submitted to the Public Service Commission in 2008, they termed the system "unjust".

In 2018, the government issued the circular, abolishing the quota system, in the wake of massive student protests for reforms.

Until then, about 56 percent of government jobs had been reserved for candidates from various quotas. Of this, 30 percent were for the children and grandchildren of freedom fighters; 10 percent for women; 10 for people from underdeveloped districts; five for members of indigenous communities, and one percent for persons with physical disabilities.

The quota system was introduced through an executive order in 1972 and had been amended several times since.

From 1972 to 1976, 20 percent were recruited on merit.

Merit-based recruitment then increased to 40 percent in 1976, which continued till 1985 before it was further upped to 45 percent.

The country's image as a garment powerhouse defined by the sheer volume of shipments will be seriously dented. Clothing exports, which make up about 10 percent of the economy, are an important indicator that sets the country apart from its peers.

SOME ESTIMATES ARE OBSOLETE NOW

It is going to create serious data chaos. Whatever Bangladesh has estimated in the past has now become "mostly irrelevant", said Fahmida Khatun, executive director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue.

The EPB publishes figures based on the data from the customs department. Apparently, for procedural reasons or otherwise, the customs department took into account the same export data more than once in many cases, known as double or triple counting.

As per the EPB data, exports were \$47.47 billion in the July-April period of fiscal 2023-24. However, the amount stood at \$33.67 billion after the correction, according to data released by the central bank on Wednesday.

But it's not clear for how long such wrong data entry has been going on.

Good policy framing depends on authentic data. Poor quality data gives wrong signals to the policymakers.

"If policymaking is done based on unreliable data, then policies become irrelevant and defunct," Fahmida said. Unfortunately, citizens have been misled about the real economic situation due to such anomalies perpetuated by government organisations, she said.

These errors show the extent of data governance or a lack of it

in Bangladesh. Without quality information, informed policy-making is difficult, said MA Razzaque, chairman of the Research and Policy Integration for Development.

The

export data mismatch will have an impact on GDP estimates because value addition from exports is included in the GDP calculation. The ratio of value addition is nearly 60 percent. So, the GDP impact will be as much as \$6 billion, Razzaque said.

Md Deen Islam, associate professor of economics at Dhaka University, said this correction would lower the GDP growth rate, with exports contributing less to overall economic output, GDP growth rates for the period will need to be revised downward, and future projections for economic growth will need to be adjusted to reflect the more accurate export figures, potentially leading to more conservative growth estimates.

The significant revision could create temporary confusion and mistrust among stakeholders, including businesses, investors and international partners, he said.

"Revisions might lead to questions regarding the credibility and reliability of economic data published by national agencies," he added.

Deen Islam said policymakers may need to reassess their strategies to stimulate economic growth and stabilise the macroeconomic environment as the revised export figures indicate a significant decline.

However, the reconciliation of export data provides a more accurate picture of Bangladesh's economic landscape, which is crucial for effective policy-making and strategic planning, said Deen Islam.

Asked about the previous mismatch in data between the BB and the EPB, he said there was no problem with the past data. There was a problem with the method of reporting. He did not elaborate.

Despite the big reset, the economy's health remains unchanged. The correction addresses anomalies but does not fundamentally alter the economic landscape.

[Refayet Ullah Mirdha and Md

Mehedi Hasan contributed to this report]

Biden vows to stay 'to the end' Rejects pressure to quit race

REUTERS, Washington

US President Joe Biden vowed to stay in the 2024 presidential race during calls with campaign staff and meetings with Democratic lawmakers and governors on Wednesday evening, as he sought to shake off calls for him to drop out after his shaky debate performance last week.

Biden dialed in to a call with worried members of his campaign team and told them he wasn't going anywhere, according to two sources familiar with the call.

"No one is pushing me out. I'm not leaving. I'm in this race to the end," Biden said in a separate email blast by his campaign, urging supporters to "pitch in a few bucks" to help defeat his Republican rival Donald Trump in the November 5 presidential election.

The president met virtually and in person with 24 Democratic governors and the mayor of Washington, DC, on Wednesday evening to reassure them he is up to the job of standard-bearer for the party after the faltering debate performance.

Only three of the governors - the leaders of New York, Minnesota and Maryland - met with reporters afterwards, vowing to stand with Biden after what they called an honest discussion about his bad performance in last week's debate.



Beijing open to working with Delhi

FROM PAGE 1

project regarding the Teesta river is for Bangladesh to decide upon. That decision must be respected by all of us."

In 2020, Bangladesh's water resources ministry wrote to the Economic Relations Division seeking a \$983.27 million loan from China to implement the Teesta project that includes dredging, creating reservoirs, and building townships along the river.

But, after her India visit last month, Hasina told reporters that her government will implement the Teesta project with assistance from India and it has got assurances from the neighbouring country in this regard.

At yesterday's event organised by the Diplomatic Correspondents Association, Bangladesh, the Chinese envoy replied in the negative when he was asked whether there was tension between India and his country over the project.

He said China placed a proposal regarding the Teesta project following a request from Bangladesh and was awaiting a response.

When asked if India and China could work jointly on the Teesta project, he said: "We are ready. We are open... But it's Bangladesh [which] has to make decision in this regard. China is open about whatever proposal Bangladesh gives."

Asked how many documents could be signed during Hasina's China visit, he said China highly appreciates Bangladesh's humanitarian spirit in sheltering more than one million Rohingya refugees, he said.

He said China is actively persuading all parties involved in the conflict in Myanmar to achieve a ceasefire and dialogue, thus paving the way for the repatriation at an early date.

Asked whether Bangladesh and China are going to sign any defence deals during Hasina's visit, he said he was not sure.

The countries will have more defence cooperation in future, he said, adding that defence cooperation serves as a pillar of the relations of the two countries.

DCAB President Nurul Islam Hasib and General Secretary Ashiqur Rahman Apu also spoke at the event.

It's time for serious stocktaking

FROM PAGE 1

important riddle: despite reports of solid showing in the export market month in and month out, why was the foreign currency reserves not bouncing back?

At the same time, the dwindling dollar stockpile was not due to rampant capital flight through trade mis-invoicing: the discrepancy between the NBR data and the central bank data is not too wide.

More importantly, the balance of payment adjustment has raised a few uncomfortable questions.

Was there no oversight on the EPB's data collection practice? Why did the EPB and the NBR not sit down at the close of a fiscal year to reconcile their entries? Who should be held responsible for this scandal? Or, was this intentional all along and the authorities are doing a mea culpa now that they were caught by the IMF?

The event also gives rise to a bigger existential question: was the oft-peddled narrative of Bangladesh being an economic star performer over the past decade or so a sham?

Exports and remittance are the two big drivers of the Bangladeshi economy. The stellar GDP growth reported over the years was pinned on the impressive growth registered by the two sectors.

Surely, Bangladesh's actual GDP is markedly lower than what was reported all this while. About one-third of the country's GDP comes from industrial output, which is dominated by merchandise for the export market.

This also raises another question: is Bangladesh really ready for graduation from the least-developed country bracket in 2026?

Bangladesh's LDC graduation was determined by its economic performance and now that it needs revision, surely the scheduled timeframe for graduation should be calibrated too.

With graduation from the LDC bracket, Bangladesh will lose all the trade benefits it currently enjoys. With

the trade privileges, Bangladesh's exports flattered to deceive. Will the exporters be able to manage without it? Can the Bangladeshi economy afford a further drop in exports?

There must be serious stock-taking by the Awami League government of more than 15 years to this end.

And yet, the biggest damage the readjustment of the balance of payment data has done is not material - there is no change in the net balance of payment and foreign exchange reserve scenarios -- but psychological: it raises questions on the credibility of all data provided by the government.

If the export data was inflated, what about the other components of the economy? What about the reported progress on poverty alleviation and remarkable gains made in social development indicators?

All the achievements made over the past decade will be called into question -- all that glitters may not be gold.

Ack



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at a meeting with Spanish Ambassador Gabriel Maria Sistiaga Ochoa de Chinchetru at Gono Bhaban yesterday. At the meeting, the premier stressed the need for robust trade and commerce between Bangladesh and Spain for mutual benefits.

RAFIUL ISLAM

At least 41 people were killed in incidents of political violence in the first six months of 2024, which is three times higher than first six months of 2023, according to rights body Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK).

Fourteen people were killed and 2,422 were injured between January and June last year. The number of deaths rose to 45 by December last year.

ASK prepared the report on information based on news reports published in national dailies, alongside its own findings.

The rights body said the killings in political violence increased this year centring the general election on January 7, city corporation elections, and upazila polls held in four phases across the country.

Many opposition parties, including BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami, boycotted the polls.

So, the killings mostly took place among supporters of Awami League candidates and independent AL candidates during national polls, while during local elections, they took place among supporters of candidates affiliated with AL.

Besides, the deaths in custody of police and Rab have doubled between January and June this year, compared to the same period in 2023, it also said.

At least eight individuals, including two women, died in custody. One of the victims, Afroza Begum, 40, died in police custody in Jashore's Abhaynagar, hours

The rights body said the killings in political violence increased this year centring the general election on January 7, city corporation elections, and upazila polls held in four phases across the country.

after she was picked up from her residence on June 2.

Family members alleged that police first implicated Afroza in a false drug case and tortured her to death for money. Police, however, denied the allegations.

Thirteen people were killed and 11

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

'Happy that I was not put in a cage'

Bail of Prof Yunus extended till Aug 14

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka tribunal yesterday extended bail of Nobel Laureate Professor Muhammad Yunus and three directors of Grameen Telecom till August 14 in a labour law violation case.

MA Awal, chairman (in-charge) of Labour Appellate Tribunal, passed the order, Khaja Tanvir Ahmed, a lawyer for Yunus, told The Daily Star.

Around 11:00am, Yunus, chairman of Grameen Telecom, along with his three colleagues appeared before the tribunal and filed a petition, the lawyer said.

Talking to journalists afterwards, Yunus said, "The complaints against me are that I laundered money, set up many companies abroad, evaded taxes etc. These are matters for investigation, not for debate. It is a judicial matter... I think I have nothing to say about it."

"The things she [PM] raises as complaints, we have answered those many times... we made a list of 29 Grameen Bank questions and answers

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

3 out of 6 retract confessions; family yet to get authorisation for DNA test; probe into gold smuggling link stalled

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

The detectives have come up with multiple theories since Jhenaidah-4 MP Anwarul Azim was killed over a month ago.

Initially, law enforcement officials said the MP was killed due to a gold smuggling related feud, placing suspicion on a fellow lawmaker and a powerful businessman -- both allegedly part of the same syndicate as Azim.

Was Azim eliminated in a gold-smuggling power struggle? Was he killed by his political rivals? Or is there something more sinister at play? -- these questions now surround the murder mystery.

The probe into the gold smuggling issue remained stalled.

The investigation has taken so many twists and turns since then that it has raised some doubts and confusion in the public mind.

Suddenly, political rivalry came into the mix as a possible reason for the murder following the arrest and confession of Kazi Kamal Ahmed Babu, relief and social welfare affairs secretary of the Jhenaidah Awami League.

Suspects appeared and were held from far-flung corners of the country, each with a purported motive for the MP's demise.

Adding to the confusion is the mystery surrounding the remains found in a Kolkata apartment.

Though suspected to be Azim's, his family is yet to get the green light to visit Kolkata for DNA tests.

Abdur Rauf, a personal assistant of Azim, told The Daily Star, "We were supposed to go Kolkata on July 3, but we did not get any authorisation. We do not

know when the authorisation will come."

Further complicating matters, three individuals who initially confessed to the crime, yesterday recanted their statements, claiming they were coerced in custody.

Confirming the developments, Advocate Ehsanul Haque Samaji said the accused applied for treatment as they were sick due to torture in remand. The court ordered the jail authorities to provide treatment as per the jail code, he added.

Abdul Ahad, deputy commissioner of (Wari division) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, told The Daily Star that he is unaware of the matter.

Meanwhile, Mustafizur Rahman Fakir and Foysal Ali Sahabi have given confessional statements in the court on Tuesday and Wednesday.

In addition to arranging for their visa, passports and travel arrangements, Aktaruzzaman, one of the masterminds behind the murder, also provided the two with chloroform and other weapons used for the murder through his personal assistant Siam.

The two also cleaned the flat after murdering the MP, said Harun Or Rashid, additional commissioner (Detective Branch) of DMP.

Drives are underway to arrest more suspects whose names are emerging from the investigation, he added.

Azim went to Kolkata on May 12 and stayed at a friend's house overnight. He left the house the next day saying he would visit a doctor.

On May 22, police from India and Bangladesh said Azim was killed in a Kolkata flat.

MP AZIM MURDER

Babu yesterday applied to a Dhaka court to withdraw his confessional statement. He was coerced, he claimed.

Two others, including the alleged killing mission coordinator Amanullah alias Shihul Bhuiyan and his cousin Tanvir Bhuiyan also applied to withdraw their confessional statements over similar reason.

Their confessional statements were pre-written by the cops, they just put their signatures on them due to torture, the three said.

Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Mahbubul Haque ordered the applications to be kept on record.

Drives are underway to arrest more suspects whose names are emerging from the investigation, he added.

Azim went to Kolkata on May 12 and stayed at a friend's house overnight. He left the house the next day saying he would visit a doctor.

On May 22, police from India and Bangladesh said Azim was killed in a Kolkata flat.

Metro fare won't increase this month
Govt forms committee on VAT-related issues

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday formed a technical committee to submit a report on VAT-related issues for metro rail service.

The committee, led by Neelima Akhter, executive director of Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority (DTCA), will have to submit the report within a month.

The authority will not increase metro rail fares until a decision is taken following the committee's report, said ABM Amin Ullah Nuri, secretary of the Road Transport and Highways Division (RTHD).

The decision was taken at an inter-ministerial meeting held at the division yesterday with Nuri in the chair. Representatives of National Board of Revenue, Finance Division, and Dhaka Mass Transit Company Ltd (DMTCL), among others, participated in the meeting.

The meeting was held when confusion arose regarding whether the metro rail fare would be hiked, as NBR decided not to extend the 15 percent VAT exemption for metro rail service after June 30 this year.

The NBR in April

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Relatives of MPs dominated UZ polls: Shujan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Wealthy individuals and businessmen with close ties to the members of parliament govern the majority of upazila parishes across the country, said speakers at a press conference yesterday.

This raises concerns about huge power being concentrated in the hands of a few people, they added.

Sushashoner Jonno Nagarik held the event at Jatiya Press Club, presenting an analysis of the sixth upazila parishad election.

They examined data obtained from 470 elected upazila chairmen. It showed 360 (76.6 percent) are businessmen, followed by 48 agriculturists, 19 lawyers, and 15 teachers.



Out of 470 elected upazila chairmen, 360 (76.6 percent) are businessmen, followed by 48 agriculturists, 19 lawyers, and 15 teachers.

Additionally, 42 of these chairmen have an annual income exceeding Tk 1 crore.

Shujan highlighted that lower-income candidates had a significantly lower chance of winning, while higher-income candidates had double the success rate. The report also pointed out that the elections were neither participatory nor competitive, with voter apathy being a major issue.

The results might lead to internal conflicts within the Awami League, as around 90 percent of the winning chairmen are from the ruling party.

The report said 114 of the elected chairmen currently face cases, 182 had cases in the past, and 75 have both past and current cases.

Shujan Secretary Badiul Alam Majumdar expressed concerns about the large amounts of money spent illegally in elections.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Biman only profits from 11 out of 21 int'l destinations

Reports national flag carrier to JS body

RASHIDUL HASAN

The national flag carrier is only earning profits in 11 of its 21 international routes.

They are: London, Toronto, Dubai, Jeddah, Madina, Riyadh, Dammam, Bangkok, Kathmandu, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore.

Biman Bangladesh Airlines is incurring operational losses in six international destinations -- namely Manchester, Kuwait, Delhi, Kolkata, Guangzhou and Narita.

The other four international routes -- Abu Dhabi, Muscat, Doha and Sharjah -- are gradually turning profitable by reducing the load penalty through coordination of excess baggage weight with airfare.

The airline placed the information before a meeting of the parliamentary standing committee on civil aviation ministry yesterday.

Awami League MP and chief of the parliamentary watchdog Sajjadul Hassan chaired the meeting.

Efforts to increase profitability including optimising revenue per passenger, improving on-time performance, and



minimising operational costs were discussed at the meeting.

Besides, how to maximise and utilise newly acquired Boeing aircraft and enhancing passenger service quality were also discussed.

The lawmakers expressed concerns over service quality, flight punctuality issues, and technical faults affecting schedules.

They urged Biman management to address these promptly.

Looking forward, Biman aims to expand its network with new international routes to destinations like Male, Sydney, and Seoul, alongside efforts to resume the Dhaka-New York route.

Domestically, plans are underway to introduce new flights connecting major cities including Chattogram, Sylhet, and Cox's Bazar.

Civil Aviation Minister Muhammad Faruk Khan, alongside committee members and Biman officials, emphasised the need for stringent supervision to tackle challenges and optimise operational efficiency.

Discussions also focused on manpower structure and recruitment processes to streamline operations further.



Hundreds of university students thronged the Shahbagh intersection in the capital for the third consecutive day yesterday, protesting the reinstatement of the quota system in government jobs.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Justice Ansar
Ali's death
anniv today
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the
29th death
anniversary
of Justice
Muhammad
Ansar Ali.

A 1 i
passed away while he was
on duty at the Supreme
Court on this day in 1995.

Qurankhwani and a
doa mahfil will be held
at his home in Naogaon
and at Banani graveyard
in Dhaka to mark the
occasion.

3, including
mother and
son, die inside
septic tank

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Dinajpur

Three people, including a
mother and her son, lost
their lives after falling
into a septic tank in
Mithapukur upazila of
Rangpur yesterday.

The deceased are
Delwara Begum, 55, her
son Ida Mia, 35, and their
neighbour Iblul Mia, 35.

According to Abdur
Rashid, chairman of
Gopalpur union, the
incident occurred early
in the morning when
Delwara Begum set a
ladder beside the septic
tank and climbed it to
collect vegetables from the
tin roof.

She slipped and fell into
the open tank.

Her son Ida Mia entered
the tank in an attempt to
rescue his mother.

When both failed to
respond to the calls of
locals, Iblul Mia, their
neighbour, also entered
the tank to help them, but
he met the same tragic
fate.

Fire Service and Civil
Defence recovered the
bodies around 7:30am,
said Moshiur Rahman,
inspector of Mithapukur
fire service.

**PRAYER
TIMING**
JULY 5
Fazr Juma Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-10 12-30 5-00 6-55 8-17
JAMAAT 4-45 1-15 5-15 7-00 8-45
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

জমি বিক্রয়
বাগড়াছাড়ি জেলার মানিকছাড় ও
মারিয়াম্পুর উপজেলার আমার নিজ
নামে বেঙ্গল করা খামার ও বাগান
সহ জমি বিক্রয় করা হচ্ছে। প্রকৃত
ক্রেতানে বোগায়েগে করা বন।
01770-484687 D-38

ফ্ল্যাট বিক্রয়
লালমাটি বি-ব্রক্ট-এ ১৬০০ বর্গফুটের
শৃঙ্খলাগ রেডি প্রাই নিউ ফ্ল্যাট।
ম্যাজিক বিল্ড হোল্ডিস লিঃ।
০১৭০৮-১৭০০৭৬
০১৭০৮-১৭০০৭৭

TO-LET
Fully Furnished 1800 SFT
apartment (3rd Floor) at a
Corner Plot of North Banani
for Rent.
Mobile: 01720-122422
0175-4083935

ফ্ল্যাট বিক্রয়
বসুন্ধরা এফ-১৮কে একটি বিল্ড-এ-
১৫০০ বর্গফুটের এটি শৃঙ্খলাগ রেডি ফ্ল্যাট।
ম্যাজিক বিল্ড হোল্ডিস লিঃ।
০১৭০৮-১৭০০৭৭
০১৭০৮-১৭০০৭৮

To-Let
Single building of 20,000 sft open
space in 7.5 floors for rent with
common toilet in each floor, lift,
generator, 10 parking. Next to
Gausam Azam Mosque. Add-
GP-28, Mohakhali C/A. Contact:
01712680229, 01784333253

**TRANSPARENCY
INTERNATIONAL
BANGLADESH**
Social movement against corruption

RE-ADVERTISEMENT

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) is inviting
applications for filling up the following vacancy.

Sl. No.	Position	No.	Posting Place
01.	Deputy Executive Director	01	Head office

For detailed job description and to apply, please visit:
<https://career.ti-bangladesh.org/> TIB follows an equal
opportunity policy and actively encourages diversity.
Applications from women, ethnic, religious and other
minorities and people with disability are especially welcome.
Age limit at the time of application is maximum 60 years. Only
shortlisted candidates will be invited for interviews.

Last date of application: July 20, 2024

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

POSITION: GENERAL MANAGER (HEAD OF FACTORY).

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES:

- To look after the overall production, function, training & development of departmental employees.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERIENCES:

- Bachelor's Degree in Engineering (Computer Science /Electrical/Electronics/Mechanical/Industrial) or related fields.
- Minimum 12-15 years of experience in a Senior management role. Preferably served Bangladesh Government Civil services, Overseas Bangladesh Missions, International development agencies, Other Major trade association with similar role or served a job which has significant verbal and written communication experience to articulate an effective relationship development between trade bodies.

The deserving candidates will be offered attractive
remuneration package with world class working environment.
Your complete Resume should reach the following address on
or before July 11, 2024:

Head of Human Resources
EXCEL TELECOM (PVT.) LIMITED
House # 11/B, Road # 55, Gulshan # 02, Dhaka-1212, Bangladesh.



AEDES LARVAE
DSCC fines 9
establishments
Tk 1.71 lakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka South City Corporation yesterday fined owners of nine establishments Tk 1.71 lakh for finding Aedes mosquito larvae on their premises.

Seven mobile courts conducted the drives at Kamrangirchar, Panthapath, Narinda, Shwamibag, Kratia Road, Surulia, Demra, Ranimahal, Nandipara M Block, Banasree and Khilgaon.

DSCC mobile teams visited 458 houses and structures and found Aedes mosquito larvae at nine houses including a construction building.

Meanwhile, 32 dengue patients were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning.

The total number of dengue cases this year rose to 3,844 while the total number of deaths stood at 46 till yesterday.

CTG ELEVATED EXPRESSWAY
Probe committee
finds error in
construction work

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A parliamentary probe body -- formed to investigate irregularities in the Chattogram Expressway project -- found some errors in the work during its investigation yesterday.

The committee also found inconsistency in the works while visiting the under-construction expressway.

MA Latif, an Awami League lawmaker and head of the sub committee, told reporters after visiting the expressway that they will include technical experts in their committee to investigate these errors.

"Then we will submit our report to the ministry concerned through parliament," he said.

Latif said they informed the project officials about the errors, who assured them of rectifying those soon.

After some cracks were found at multiple pillars of the expressway, the parliamentary standing committee on the Ministry of Housing and Public Works on June 10 formed the probe body.

Contractor firm Max-Ranken (Joint Venture) is constructing the expressway.

Mahfuzur Rahman, director of the project and executive engineer of Chattogram Development Authority, said there are some air cracks in pillars but nothing major. "We already examined and asked contractors to level the cracks. We also found some errors in the finishing work. We will solve them as soon as possible."

The construction work of the much-awaited Chattogram Elevated Expressway is nearing completion. The project was initiated in 2017. The project's original cost was Tk 3,250 crore and was scheduled to be completed in June 2020.

However, the government had to extend the deadline as the CDA failed to implement the project within the stipulated time. At present, the cost of the project is Tk 4,298.95 crore.

**Mother, daughter
die as microbus
hits auto-rickshaw**

STAR REPORT

Three people were killed and two injured in road accidents in two districts yesterday.

In Natore, a woman and her three-year-old daughter were killed in a head-on collision between a microbus and a battery-run auto-rickshaw in Lalpur upazila.

The accident happened around 1:00pm on Lalpur-Bagha regional highway at Rahimpur Jamta, said police.

Rubina Khatun, 33, from Udhampara area in Lalpur; and her daughter Rokeya Khatun -- who were on the auto-rickshaw -- died on the spot, said Lalpur Police Station OC Nasim Ahmed. The microbus was seized but the driver fled the scene.

In Dinajpur, a microbus driver was killed and two people were injured as his vehicle and a pickup collided head-on on Dinajpur-Phulbari regional road at Buritala village.

Jewel Mondal, 49, of Ghoraghata upazila, died at M Abdur Rahim Medical College Hospital, said Sadar Police Station OC Farid Hossain.

**World Health
Organization**
Bangladesh

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

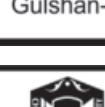
The World Health Organization in Bangladesh invites proposals/bids from the interested Companies in Bangladesh for the following service:

1. **RFP/BAN/2024/024 (Re-1):** To provide support on "Vulnerability and adaptation assessment of climate change impact on nutrition in Bangladesh".
Deadline for the submission of RFP: 14:00hrs, 10 July 2024 (Dhaka time).

2. **RFP/BAN/2024/026:** Development of Implementation Roadmap to Promote Active Living in Bangladesh.
Deadline for the submission of RFP: 14:00hrs, 18 July 2024 (Dhaka time).

Interested Companies can view and download the relevant RFP documents from:
<https://www.who.int/bangladesh/about-us/procurement-notice>.

Interested bidders are requested to submit their financial and technical proposals in two separate sealed envelopes as per the instructions provided in the RFP documents at the Reception of WHO Bangladesh, House-SW(I)1/A, Road-8, Gulshan-1, Dhaka.



Chittagong Independent University

Minhaj Complex, 12 Jamal Khan Road, Chattogram-4000, Bangladesh.

CAREER OPPORTUNITY

Chittagong Independent University (CIU), one of the leading private universities in the country, invites applications for the position of **Director, Finance & Accounts**.

Experience and Qualification:

- Minimum Master's in Finance / Accounting, MBA or equivalent
- Preference will be given to the candidates with full or partial certification in CA/CMA /FCA/FCMA/CC
- At least 10-12 years experience in the field of Finance & Accounts at a public or private university

Responsibilities:

- Provide fiscal leadership with budget development and management
- Decision-making of budgetary and financial affairs
- Execute and monitor the university's treasury functions
- Be responsible for meeting all statutory compliance issues as well as reporting timely to the University Grants Commission, Ministry of Education, Tax Authorities, and other statutory bodies
- Deal with the auditors, bankers, regulatory authorities, external & internal advisers, and other representatives of different bodies effectively
- Execute any other assignment as and when required by the University authority

Others Skills:

- Excellent interpersonal, communication, negotiation and presentation skills in both English & Bangla
- Detail oriented, excellent time management and organizational skills, ability to develop priorities and meet deadlines
- The candidate is expected to be familiar with concurrent accounts related software.

Remuneration: Negotiable

Application should reach: The Registrar, Chittagong Independent University

12 Jamal Khan Road, Chattogram on or before 15 July 2024

Any form of persuasion will lead to disqualification

Bangladesh-German Chamber of Commerce & Industry

The Bangladesh-German Chamber of Commerce & Industry (BGCCI) is an independent, member-driven bilateral trade organization which promotes bilateral economic trade relations between Germany and Bangladesh since 2003. BGCCI provides services to Bangladesh and German companies and acts as a strategic partner between the two economies.

We are inviting applications from deserving candidates for following position:

Position : Executive Director
Location : Dhaka, Bangladesh
Reports to : Board of Directors
Job Type : Full-Time

Key Responsibilities:

- Develop and maintain effective relationships with Government agencies, International development agencies, German/ European Agencies working of Sustainable development, Trade promotions and other relevant organizations for business development between Bangladesh and Germany.
- Organize and manage trade promotional events, including conferences, seminars, and networking events.
- Develop and implement strategic plans to advance the chamber's mission and objectives
- Formulate sectorial reports and make recommendations based on findings.
- Ensure the effective operation of the chamber in accordance with the established policies and strategic plans.

Qualifications and Skills

- Bachelor's degree in business administration, International Relations, Economics, or a related field. A master's degree or equivalent experience is preferred.
- Minimum of 12-15 years of experience in a Senior management role. Preferably served Bangladesh Government Civil services, Overseas Bangladesh Missions, International development agencies, Other Major trade association with similar role or served a job which has significant verbal and written communication experience to articulate an effective relationship development between trade bodies.

Interested Candidate can send their CV along with recent Photograph within July 10, 2024

To:
The President
Bangladesh German Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BGCCI)
House # 10/B – 5th Floor; Road # 90; Gulshan 2, Dhaka – 1212, Bangladesh
(e-mail: maksud.corona@gmail.com, wps@weberbd.com)

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

POSITION: GENERAL MANAGER (HEAD OF FACTORY).

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES:

- To look after the overall production, function, training & development of departmental employees.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERIENCES:

- Bachelor's Degree in Engineering (Computer Science /Electrical/Electronics/Mechanical/Industrial) or related fields.
- Minimum 12 years of experience in a Senior management role. Preferably served Bangladesh Government Civil services, Overseas Bangladesh Missions, International development agencies, Other Major trade association with similar role or served a job which has significant verbal and written communication experience to articulate an effective relationship development between trade bodies.

The deserving candidates will be offered attractive remuneration package with world class working environment. Your complete Resume should reach the following address on or before July 11, 2024:

Head of Human Resources
EXCEL TELECOM (PVT.) LIMITED
House # 11/B, Road # 55, Gulshan # 02, Dhaka-1212, Bangladesh.

I've received more than I expected in my acting career: Totini

SHAH ALAM SHAZU



Tanjim
Saiara Totini, a rising showbiz star of her generation, has quickly garnered immense popularity and critical acclaim in the Bangladeshi entertainment industry. Despite her relatively short career, Totini has already made a significant impact with her remarkable performances in various dramas.

PHOTOS:
SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSED

Her recent drama *Nayantara*, which aired during Eid, was a massive hit, with Totini's stellar performance captivating audiences. Directed by Mohammad Mostafa Kamal Raz, the drama resonated deeply with viewers.

Reflecting on her success, Totini shared, "Playing the role in *Nayantara* brought me immense love and praise from the audience. It touched the hearts of many, and that makes me very happy."

Another notable drama featuring Totini, *Vitore Bahire*, directed by the acclaimed Mizanur Rahman Aryan, also received a warm reception during Eid.

The actress expressed her satisfaction, saying, "Honestly, only a few dramas aired last Eid. Among them, *Vitore Bahire* gave me a sense of fulfilment and joy. It resonated with everyone just like *Nayantara* did."

Discussing her journey in the media industry, Totini remarked, "Overall, I've been in the media for five years, but I've only been acting for a few years."

When asked what she has received in her relatively short acting career, Totini humbly replied, "I've received more love than I ever expected in my acting career. Considering the few years I've been working, the amount of love from people has been overwhelming and humbling."

Regarding her dreams and aspirations, Totini said, "I want to continue acting and remain in the audience's hearts. I aspire to become a complete artiste."

She also expressed her desire to work on OTT platforms, mentioning an upcoming web series shoot. "I'll share more once the shooting begins. I haven't started shooting anything significant post-Eid, but I'm hoping to kick off work with something great soon," she revealed.

Throughout her career, Totini has worked with several actors, but her pairing with Yash

Rohan has been particularly well-received by viewers. Speaking about her co-actor, Totini commented, "Yash is a very calm person and an excellent actor. I enjoy working with him."

When asked about her view on the concept of on-screen pairs, Totini stated, "The concept of on-screen pairs isn't bad. It's actually good. It depends on the audience's preference. If they like it, then it's possible. From this perspective, I see it positively."

Earlier in February, Totini took on leading roles in four Valentine's Day special projects—Jahid Preeton's directorial *Buk Pocketer Golpo*, Ragib Raihan's *Pori*, Rafat Mazumdar Rinku's *Bolte Chai*, and Vicky Zahed's *Chinno*.

The actress began her journey in the showbiz world in 2019. Her popular works include *Ei Muhurte, Bachibar Holo Tar Sadh*, and *Shomoy Sob Jane*, among others.



Meher Afroz Shaon to return to screen after 17 years

Meher Afroz Shaon, a media figure since her debut in *Notun Kuri* and known for her roles in Humayun Ahmed's works, is returning to cinema after 17 years. She stepped back from acting to focus on family and, since Ahmed's passing in 2012, has made occasional musical appearances.

Now, she is set to return with the government-funded Fakhrul Arefeen Khan directorial film *Neel Jochona*. The film is adapted from Mustak Ahmed's parapsychology novel *Neel Jochonar Jibon*.

She starts shooting *Neel Jochona* in Dhaka today, with co-stars Tariq Anam Khan, Intekhab Dinar, Partha Barua, SM Naeem, and Paoli Dam.



Fawad Khan to return to Bollywood after eight years

Famed actor Fawad Khan is all set to return to Bollywood in a romantic comedy film opposite Vaani Kapoor.

According to reports by the Indian news agency IANS, the still-untitled film, directed by Aarti Bagdi, will be shot entirely in the UK.

Fawad Khan's last appearance in a Hindi-language film was eight years ago. The versatile actor has featured in Indian movies like *Ac Dil Hai Mushkil, Kapoor & Sons*, and *Khoobsurat*.

Fawad Khan, a top Pakistani actor, starred in 2022's *The Legend of Maula Jatt*, the highest grossing Pakistani film ever, while also debuting in the Marvel Cinematic Universe with *Ms Marvel*.



NEWS

He was in plain sight

FROM PAGE 12

directors Ayrin Islam and Shariful Islam; director Rashel Mirza; and shareholder Ziaur Rahman to recover due licence fees and revenue share.

BTRC took the decision to file the case against in the 16th Commission meeting. It also decided to send a letter to the ministry concerned for cancellation of its licence, documents show.

The court issued arrest warrants against Asif, Ayrin, Shariful, and Rashel between September 23, 2021, and November 30, 2021.

Since then, the four have been fugitives, according to the case records.

Locals said Asif has regularly attended various political and government programmes, and election campaigns between May 2022 and June 23 this year.

A Facebook page named "Adv Asif Shams Ronjon" shows Asif was live at least on 120 occasions in Bera between the time the arrest warrant was issued and yesterday.

According to locals, a rally led by Asif Shams paraded Bera streets, marking the AL founding anniversary on June 23. He also sought votes for candidates in the Bera upazila parishad polls on May 6.

He took part in his father's campaign for the 12th national elections.

According to BTRC documents, Vision Tel Ltd got its licence on April 12, 2012.

A BTRC official said the case was filed to recover the dues arisen from



Asif in a procession marking the founding anniversary of Awami League in his hometown in Pabna on June 23.

PHOTO: SOCIAL MEDIA

revenue sharing and annual licence fees, which has now become over Tk 235 crore with interest.

The last hearing on the case was on June 26, said a court staffer, adding that since there were no developments regarding arrests, the court set August 25 for the next hearing.

Contacted, Asif yesterday said, "I have severed links with Vision Tel Ltd in 2013 with the BTRC's permission. The case was filed against the company.

"I was not informed about the court's notices and the arrest warrant earlier," he told The Daily Star by phone.

His personal assistant told this newspaper that the mayor last worked at his Bera office on June 28.

Fun trip turns fatal

FROM PAGE 12

He drove to his village home in Azampur village a day earlier. He then met up with his friends, they wanted to go to Ishwardi in his car.

They went on a drive in the evening, said police.

On the way back home, Nayeem was driving fast. At one point, he lost his control over the steering and the vehicle skidded off the slippery road and hit a tree.

Three of them died on the spot, said OC Rafiqul, adding that the two others were declared dead at Ishwardi Upazila Health Complex.

Nayeem and Shahid were transferred to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital for better treatment, said the OC.

Labour landslide

FROM PAGE 12

forecasting its biggest ever victory.

But Starmer was taking nothing for granted as he urged voters not to stay at home. "Britain's future is on the ballot," he said. "But change will only happen if you vote for it."

Voting began at 7:00 am (0600 GMT) in more than 40,000 polling stations across the country, from church halls, community centres and schools to more unusual venues such as pubs and even a ship.

Sunak was among the early birds, casting his ballot at his Richmond and Northallerton constituency in Yorkshire, northern England. Starmer

voted around two hours later in his north London seat, shortly before Liberal Democrat leader Ed Davey.

Hannah Tinsley, 26, a trainee lawyer who was voting in south London, told AFP that it was "important" for young people to cast their ballots.

"The voter turnout for young people compared to older people is really low and obviously, it's going to affect us in the long term," she added.

In Saint Albans, north of London, 22-year-old student Judith told AFP: "I don't really trust any of them but will vote. A lot of my friends feel the same."

On the way back home, Nayeem was driving fast. At one point, he lost his control over the steering and the vehicle skidded off the slippery road and hit a tree.

Three of them died on the spot, said OC Rafiqul, adding that the two others were declared dead at Ishwardi Upazila Health Complex.

Nayeem and Shahid were transferred to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital for better treatment, said the OC.

Charges framed against Alal, Tuku, 87 others

FROM PAGE 2

who is now in jail custody, pleaded not guilty after Judge Md Aminul Islam of Dhaka Metropolitan Special Tribunal-16 read out the charges to them yesterday.

Before that, the tribunal dismissed the petitions seeking to have them cleared of the charges in the case.

According to the prosecution, it was alleged that around 12:25pm on February 8 of 2018, a group

of leaders and activists of BNP and its front organisations led by Alal held a demonstration in the city's Moghbazar area ahead of a judgment against Khaleda Zia, her elder son and BNP's then senior vice chairman Tarique Rahman and four others in the Zia Orphanage Trust graft case.

They also chanted slogans against the government, instigated destructive activities, obstructed

movement of vehicles and prevented law enforcers from discharging their duties, the prosecution said.

Following the incident, Sub-Inspector of Ramna Model Police Station Abdul Kuddus filed a case against Alal, Shimul Biswas and 178 others in this connection.

After an investigation, police pressed charges against 90 people, including Alal, Tuku, Sohel and Shimul.

Hezbollah rains rockets on Israel

FROM PAGE 12

areas near Khan Yunis and Rafah after the military on Monday issued a sweeping evacuation order that the UN said impacted 250,000 people.

Witnesses reported air strikes and intense artillery shelling in western Rafah yesterday.

The health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said yesterday that at least 38,011 people have been killed during nearly nine months of offensive. The toll includes at least 58 deaths over the past 24 hours, a ministry statement said.

US President Joe Biden, under growing domestic pressure over

Washington's support for Israel, in late May outlined a roadmap for a six-week ceasefire and exchange of hostages for Palestinian prisoners held by Israel.

There has been little progress since, but Hamas said later on Wednesday it was communicating with officials in Qatar and Egypt as well as Turkey with an eye to ending the conflict.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was due to convene his security cabinet yesterday evening to discuss new Hamas positions on a possible ceasefire deal in Gaza, reports Reuters.

Before the cabinet meets, Netanyahu will have consultations with his ceasefire negotiations team, a source in Netanyahu's office said.

Israel received Hamas' response on Wednesday to a proposal made public at the end of May by Biden that would include the release of about 120 hostages held in Gaza and a ceasefire in the Palestinian enclave.

A Palestinian official close to the mediation effort told Reuters that Hamas has shown flexibility over some clauses, that would allow a framework agreement to be reached should Israel approve.

Univ teachers carry on strike

FROM PAGE 12

Though academic buildings remained open in most of the universities, students were hardly seen. Most classrooms and examination halls were locked.

Additionally, the university authorities either kept the transport service suspended or significantly reduced trips to and from campuses.

Teachers at the public universities said that they will continue their indefinite work abstention until their

demands are met.

Teachers of 35 public universities under the banner of 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.

They have been demonstrating against 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 in the "Prottoy" pension scheme.

Teachers said the newly recruited teachers will suffer financial loss, and many 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.

Messi, Ronaldo and plenty more

FROM PAGE 12

Messi had hurt his right hamstring and skipped Argentina's final Group A match against Peru, which the defending champions won 2-0 to qualify for the last eight as group champions.

Even if Messi ends up a no-show,

Albiceleste fans will feel optimistic about their side's chances of progressing to the semifinals as the reigning world champions are playing

like a well-oiled machine under long-serving coach Lionel Scaloni.

After watching some of the best football action South America has to offer, football fans are set to tune in at night to watch four heavyweights clashing in two high-stakes matches of the Euro Championship.

First up, two former World Cup and Euros champions, hosts Germany and Spain, will face off in Stuttgart at 10:00 pm.

Both teams topped their respective groups before Germany broke down a resolute Denmark to pick up a 2-0 win, while Spain came from behind to trounce Georgia 4-1 in their respective Round of 16 fixtures.

The weekend of fascinating football fixtures will end with Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal taking on Kylian Mbappe's France in Hamburg, starting at 1:00 am.

Flood victims need urgent support

Govt must ensure adequate food and shelter for them

It is worrying to see the flood situation in northern districts, especially in Kurigram, worsen due to continuous rainfall and onrush of water from upstream. According to a report by this daily, vast low-lying areas have been inundated due to the rise in the water levels of Teesta, Brahmaputra, Dharla, and Dudhkumar rivers. In Kurigram, along the Brahmaputra, some 450 chars and low-lying areas have been flooded, leaving an estimated 50,000 stranded. This is a fluid situation as the water level is projected to continue rising before it recedes. What this means for the affected and at risk populations is that they have a dual crisis in hand—flooding and erosion—which demands proper attention from the authorities.

The evolving situation with the simultaneous rise and fall in water levels at different river points, and consequent erosion along their coast, is something that the authorities should be observing closely, considering the intensity of such events in recent years. But the immediate priority, of course, is to ensure proper relief efforts. Reports indicate a significant gap between the needs of the affected and available aid. Many flood victims are struggling without adequate relief supplies. Lack of shelter is another major issue, especially in parts of Lalmonirhat and Kurigram where floodwater is showing a falling trend. According to a report, erosion is active at 20 points in five upazilas of the two districts. As a result, many villagers there are taking shelter on government khas lands, roads, boats, or embankments. Ensuring that relief materials, including food, clean water, and medical supplies, promptly reach them all is imperative.

The increasingly frequent cycle of flooding and erosion in Bangladesh also demands a proper response from the higher authorities. There is a clear need for more resilient infrastructure in flood-prone areas that doesn't make people so helpless, or destitute overnight. While erosions occur every year, its growing trend, especially along the Ganges, Jamuna, Padma, and Lower Meghna rivers, highlights the urgency of more comprehensive and long-term interventions, such as enhancing drainage systems, constructing sufficient flood shelters, reinforcing embankments with durable materials, and regulating river flows.

In short, the government's approach needs to be twofold: immediate stabilisation of the most critical areas and the development of a comprehensive, sustainable plan to mitigate the impacts of future floods. For now, it must direct local authorities to improve their response to the evolving situation in northern districts. Besides ensuring sufficient relief materials in flood hit villages, particularly those in remote locations, they should also consider deploying additional resources and personnel to manage the crisis more effectively.

We must stop abuse of public offices

Expedite justice process, apply strict measures to root out corruption

The narratives of corruption coming out of public offices nowadays will defeat any movie script. The slyness of tactics that corrupt officials often use to misappropriate public funds and then exempt themselves from legal consequences would shock anyone. The alleged shenanigans of Cox's Bazar's former deputy commissioner Ruhul Amin to exonerate himself from corruption charges is a case in point.

According to a *Prothom Alo* report, in 2014, Amin, along with 27 others, had been charged for misappropriating approximately Tk 20 crore in the land accusation process of a power plant project in Matarbari of Maheshkhali. Taking the case into cognisance, the court ordered the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) to investigate it. But several court officials, including the then District and Sessions Judge Sadiqul Islam Talukdar, allegedly colluded with Amin to delete his name from the list of accused in case documents and forged the plaintiff's signature before sending the documents to the ACC. When the plaintiff learned about the alleged forgery, he filed another case against Amin and seven others, including the judge and his own lawyer. The ACC found proof of forgery subsequently and filed the investigation report with the court on Monday—10 years after the case was filed.

In 2017, Ruhul Amin, suspended from office by then, was sentenced to jail in another corruption case in relation to land acquisition for the Matarbari power plant. The case was about misappropriation of compensation funds allocated for shrimp farms affected by the acquisition, which was apparently done by showing 25 non-existent shrimp farms on paper. Amin and several others were accused but they are all currently on bail in that case.

The extent of the abuse of office in Amin's story starts from the land acquisition process and climbs all the way up to the court, the ultimate place of trust for ordinary citizens. But if a DC can use his power to influence even a judge and forge case documents, who would the public turn to for justice? This fits with the ongoing trends of lack of accountability mechanisms in public institutions, lenient and protective provisions for government employees, collusion among public officers to cover up each other's wrongdoings, lengthy judicial processes, etc.—which are all equally troubling as they make a mockery of rule of law. We must break these trends. Abuse of public offices for any personal gain, legal or financial, must be prevented at any cost.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Israel's Law of Return passed



Passed this day in 1950 by the Knesset, the Law of Return granted Jews the freedom to immigrate to Israel and receive immediate citizenship, but it proved controversial when the question "Who is a Jew?" raised other issues.

'Govt should not be swayed by the opinion of an extremist minority'

In light of the recent removal of 'Sharifa's Tale' from the seventh-grade textbook, Maheen Sultan, senior fellow of Practice, Gender and Social Transformation at BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD), shares her insights with Tamanna Khan of The Daily Star on an ongoing study on the backlash against promoting comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) in Bangladesh.

What led you to explore the resistance against comprehensive sexuality education?

All over the world, we have been noticing a backlash against the progress made by the women's movement to ensure women's rights and gender equality, and measures taken by the government to protect and promote them. Our research team is part of a regional programme which includes four South Asian countries—India, Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh. In each country, we have chosen different case studies in areas where we think there has been very strong opposition to what women's movements are trying to achieve. For example, we looked at the case of rape law reform, child marriage, struggle for decent wages in the RMG sector and CSE as well.

The latest controversy with the Sharif Sharifa text shows that teaching CSE is still a sensitive matter. Opposition to CSE is always not as visible or outspoken as it was in this case. However, it is very evident that teachers do not want to teach the curriculum, parents are often resistant, and people sometimes stigmatise teachers who teach these courses. There is a collective reluctance to talk about issues which go beyond health. Most people do not want to talk about issues surrounding sexual health, sexuality or access to contraception. They keep the discussions limited to reproductive health instead of talking about sexual and reproductive health and rights.

What's your reaction to the removal of "Sharifa's Tale" from the national curriculum?

Including Sharifa's story in the curriculum, I think, was a very positive step to try and introduce the concepts surrounding gender diversity. It was a well-researched piece of text. The idea was that students should be aware of the various gender identities and be more open to others who find themselves unable to fit into the binary identities of "boy" or "girl". The hope was that teachers would introduce the topic sympathetically and sensitively.

The government in its policies is very open to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and is committed to including CSE in the curriculum. However, it is sometimes scared of the reaction of people that it considers extremists. And often, it is

only the most conservative people who have been loud enough for the authorities to hear them, but they might still be a minority in this matter. Most people might not have any issues with the text. So, the question remains whether the government should be swayed by the opinions of a small extremist minority. People who have been opposing the text have said that it promotes homosexuality. This is a clear misrepresentation of the message of the story. Unfortunately, the government was influenced by this kind of reaction. I believe that the committee which took the final decision in this matter did not include a wide range of people with a diverse set of opinions. If more people had been consulted,

their outreach programmes, they talk about reproductive health education and topics like menstrual health regulation, and access to services. They don't go around talking about sexual orientation and gender identity. Those topics are avoided because they know that they might face very strong reactions from the community, the authorities and the schools.

However, organisations that are more explicitly dealing with sexual orientation and gender identity have to be very careful. A lot of misinformation was spread on social media following the Sharif Sharifa debacle. Both individuals and organisations were labelled and threatened for their work on sexual orientation and gender identity.

There is a collective reluctance to talk about issues which go beyond health. Most people do not want to talk about issues surrounding sexual health, sexuality or access to contraception. They keep the discussions limited to reproductive health instead of talking about sexual and reproductive health and rights.

their sexuality and reproductive health. They need to know how to protect themselves. They need to understand the concept of consent and their rights to decide with whom, if and when to have a relationship, as well as the kind of relationship to have.

Another reason why CSE is so important and urgent is that we still have very high rates of child marriage. Early marriages lead to early pregnancies because young women don't have access to birth control and are discouraged from using it. Oftentimes, these pregnancies are unwanted and they resort to unsafe abortions.

When they cannot get abortions, they have to go through the process of childbirth when their bodies and minds are not ready for it. This leads to increased rates of maternal and child mortality. So, there are severe health-related consequences as well of ignoring CSE.

What is the way out?
Parents have to be involved in the process, so that they do not resist when their children receive CSE. If they understand what it is about, they are more likely to want schools to teach it. This would also lead to the eventual phasing out of the stigma surrounding the issue.

It is also important that youth leaders and volunteers with correct information and proper knowledge reach out to other young people. I think the youth are more likely to talk and listen to others in their age group. They will face fewer barriers there. Youth volunteers can also educate adults in their community to destigmatise the issue of CSE.



MAHEEN SULTAN STAR FILE PHOTO

perhaps the committee wouldn't have recommended removing the story from the curriculum.

Do organisations working to promote CSE receive threats of violence?

BRAC, Naripokkho, and Nagorik Uddog are all part of the Right Here Right Now coalition that promotes CSE in schools and increased access to adolescent health services. The coalition also contributes to changing social and gender norms by developing influencers and mobilising the youth to interact with the local government authorities, teachers and schools to promote CSE. It has been very careful in not exposing the youth volunteers to any kind of risks. In

Unfortunately, there's not much legal recourse available for such hate crimes and cyber harassment, which have detrimental effects on activists' physical and mental well-being. Citizens don't usually file cases under the Cyber Security Act for fear of not protecting their privacy and personal data.

Why is it important to talk about CSE?

It is important because there is so much misinformation surrounding the issue. Adolescence is a period of life when young people are curious about their bodies. It is a period when they are discovering themselves and others, and they need to have access to the right kind of information regarding

Can teachers use respect as a substitute for money?



Mahabuba Rahman
is an assistant professor,
Department of English, Shahjalal
University of Science and Technology.

MAHABUBA RAHMAN



"You are teachers. Shouldn't you be satisfied with the respect you get from students in classrooms? Why are you on the streets, running after money?" This is a common statement we are being bombarded with from people of other professions following the teachers' strike, which makes us uncomfortable and surprised at the same time.

Coming from a family where my father is a retired administrative officer of a public university, and my brother is an assistant professor at a college, my one and only dream was to be a teacher. I never sat for the BCS exams or worked in any sector except education, because all I wanted to do was spread the little knowledge I acquired from my teachers, and to learn more from my students.

I remember my father and my brother whom I never saw leading a



DU teachers' sit-in programme at the Arts Building as part of the protest.

PHOTO: PROTHOM ALO

luxurious life, driving a fancy car, or living in a bungalow; and that, I knew from childhood, is the way of life of a middle-class family. As a teacher, I started in the ninth grade, and the salary I received was barely

enough to maintain a family of two. In fact, I had to ask for money from my family, even though I was living alone. That is when I realised how necessities most often become luxuries to the family of a teacher.

Many teachers from different public universities, including my friends and colleagues, are pursuing

applying to different international universities to buying plane tickets—is almost never understood by others because, according to many, the passion for learning should be paying the bills!

The questions that come to mind are, why should we feel embarrassed for wanting a secure financial future? Why are we being trolled for asking for a salary without any deduction? Why are we being mocked for supporting the existing pension scheme?

Yes, we have already accepted that our policymakers assume that we do not need a fancy car or a bungalow with numerous domestic help. All we want is to be financially secure after our retirement and for our nominees to feel safe when the pensioner is no more. Isn't that the bare minimum we are asking for?

It shouldn't come as a surprise that the respect we receive does not pay our bills, nor does it allow us to bargain a lower fare with a CNG driver. The admiration and nobility of this profession alone cannot ensure a secure future for our next generation. And, sure, it does not suit "honourable" teachers to be on the streets month after month to regain the minimum rights they had. If it is too difficult to grant us what we deserve, may we use our "passion for learning," "respect for teaching," and "our dignity" as a substitute payment method, please?

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Israel's Law of Return passed



Passed this day in 1950 by the Knesset, the Law of Return granted Jews the freedom to immigrate to Israel and receive immediate citizenship, but it proved controversial when the question "Who is a Jew?" raised other issues.

The incredible 'goatness' of being



NO STRINGS ATTACHED

Aasha Mehreen Amin
is joint editor at The Daily Star.

AASHA MEHREEN AMIN

The saga of a Tk 15 lakh goat with an impressive pedigree, followed by the unfolding of the jaw-dropping accumulation of wealth of an NBR official, may make us rethink our derisive attitude toward this misunderstood animal. I mean the goat, of course.

After all, we cannot deny that in Bangladeshi culture, we often refer to people who do dumb things as a "chhagol" (goat), going as far as calling someone the offspring of a goat (chhagoler bachcha), a term lost in translation; in English, it would be calling someone a "kid" (baby goat), which does not carry the same degree of humiliation.

We may have to rethink our "goat" dismissiveness".

The town is abuzz about how the astronomical price of a goat the size of a small horse led to the opening of a gigantic can of worms and, for the media, a treasure trove of sensational stories. It was the son of the mysterious NBR member who had spilled the first beans that led to the revelation of his father's enormous real estate acquisitions and piles of cash made from shares. Like a typical rich spoilt brat, he made the mistake of bragging about the Tk 15 lakh goat he had acquired at a bargain price of Tk 12 lakh. A video clip of this went viral on social media, leading to intense speculations about the source of his father's wealth. The NBR official was eventually transferred to a post in another ministry as a reprimand for the embarrassment he caused his organisation, one presumes.

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) is investigating allegations of corruption against the official whose basic salary was Tk 78,000 a month. According to media reports, the person under investigation and

He even talked about his success in the stock market in an earlier TV interview, surprisingly revealing that he had inside information about these companies, which is a violation of capital market regulations.

The goat incident also sparked off quite a bit of family drama when the official against whom these allegations were made initially claimed that the young man was not his son (just like the Michael Jackson song "Billie

stupidity of his offspring for exposing him, albeit unintentionally, it cannot be denied that he has been a generous father giving him a bevy of fancy cars and enough cash to allow him to buy 50 plus lakh taka worth of sacrificial animals, which obviously he also bragged about and was gleefully reported by the media.

He is also, no doubt, a generous husband considering the queenly lifestyle of his first

to her home named after herself, according to a *Daily Star* report.

In fact, all the highly placed public officials against whom there are allegations of acquiring illegal wealth through dubious means (corruption is such a boring, overused word these days) seem to be ultra-devoted to their families. They buy luxury flats and resorts for their wives and children and go as far as bestowing lavish "gifts" upon their in-laws. Another official the ACC is investigating bought Tk 30 lakh and Tk 29 lakh worth of saving certificates for his father-in-law and brother-in-law, respectively. Meanwhile, his mother-in-law, a homemaker, has 10 bank accounts with transactions amounting to Tk 7 crore, as detected by ACC, no doubt thanks to her charming son-in-law. Now who wouldn't want a "jama'i" like that?

These individuals are also champions of local tourism, building luxury resorts in the unlikeliest of places on acres and acres of land, giving the fun-starved public a nice place to go to. Sure, some of them may have forcefully taken away the lands of the poor and marginalised, but one must look at the bigger picture and see the bigness of their hearts (and wallets) that have given us these beautiful spots to visit.

The series of reports on the unaccounted-for wealth accumulation of public officials, some being the top bosses of very important government entities, gives the impression that the state's "zero tolerance for corruption" policy is finally in action. Maybe, but one cannot help but be a little sceptical of the official repercussions these individuals have faced—transfers to a different ministry, or a slight demotion to a lower grade, which seem a mere slap on the wrist for what would be considered a serious crime. The ACC, meanwhile, seems to be the lone hero in this saga—investigating the cases, freezing assets and accounts and sharing its juicy findings with a hungry media. Oh, and of course, let's not forget the unlikely heroes like our giant, magnificent goat which has definitely given these neglected animals a far more elevated status than ever before.



VISUAL: SHAIKH SULTANA JAHAN BADHON

his family's wealth include luxury resorts, a shooting spot and multiple bungalows. A report by *The Daily Star* reveals he also has three crore shares in at least 10 companies.

Jean") naming only the two children from his first wife. The media reported that the young goat connoisseur was his second wife's son. While he may have reacted badly to the

wife, a retired government college teacher and upazila parishad chairman who lives in a white, two-storied mansion in Raipura and has even managed to get the road that leads

Heroes and villains of the climate crisis

Zain Omar Ali
is a PhD student in genetics at Lund University.

Bareesh Hasan Chowdhury
works on environment and climate and is interested in the sustainable energy transition.

**ZAIN OMAR ALI AND
BAREESH HASAN CHOWDHURY**

In Alexander Ward's book *The Internationalists*, there is an account of a debate between the United States Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry and National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan on how the United States should address the issue of China in climate negotiations. Kerry argues that America and China must cooperate. Sullivan disagrees—they should focus on "boxing China out" and make deals with other countries. Sullivan argues that they should instead present China as the main climate villain, and force them to the negotiating table on US' terms.

Economist Raghuram Rajan recently wrote an article for the *Financial Times* in the aftermath of the Indian elections, arguing that the Modi administration's focus on expanding manufacturing is misguided: "The world does not have political or climatic room for another China-sized economy exporting manufactured goods." Notably, the lack of room is both "political" and "climatic". The unspoken "political" factor here is the recent American anxiety around Chinese overcapacity—G7 economies are worried about losing advanced manufacturing capacity to competitors in all emerging markets (not just China).

The "climatic" factor brings us back to the question of climate justice.

Who is the real "climate villain"?

Historical emissions and global inequality

How can one measure climate villainy? If we were to take annual carbon emissions, then the primary villain is very clear—it is the People's Republic of China, followed by the United States of America. If we measure "climate villainy" on this scale then one can even present the US as a relative "climate hero"—it's an example of a large, high-population economy that can sustain a higher quality of life than China while producing fewer emissions. Thanks to the radical green agenda in Biden's Inflation Reduction Act (gloriously endorsed by progressives) and the visionary entrepreneurialism of Elon Musk, it will be the US that saves the world from the climate crisis, just as it saves the world from every crisis.

This is the story US progressives would like to tell—of the climate hero America saving the world from the climate villain China.

The problem with looking only at annual carbon emissions is that carbon has accumulated over time. The climate crisis is not caused by present-day emissions, it is caused by the sum total of historical emissions. Once we account for the issue of historical emissions, we confront the heart of the matter: the benefits of historical carbon

consumption are restricted to a small handful of advanced economies, former Warsaw Pact countries and Gulf Arab petrostates, but the costs have to be borne by us all.

Consider the figure given, taken from a *Nature Sustainability* paper by climate scientist Jason Hickel:

The y axis shows the cumulative GDP per capita from 1960-2018. The x-axis measures how much each country has overshoot or undershot the global carbon budget needed to restrict warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, relative to a hypothetical world where historical carbon consumption was divided

overshoot its fair share. But the main climate villain when we take historical emissions into account is very clear—it is the US.

Liability vs generosity

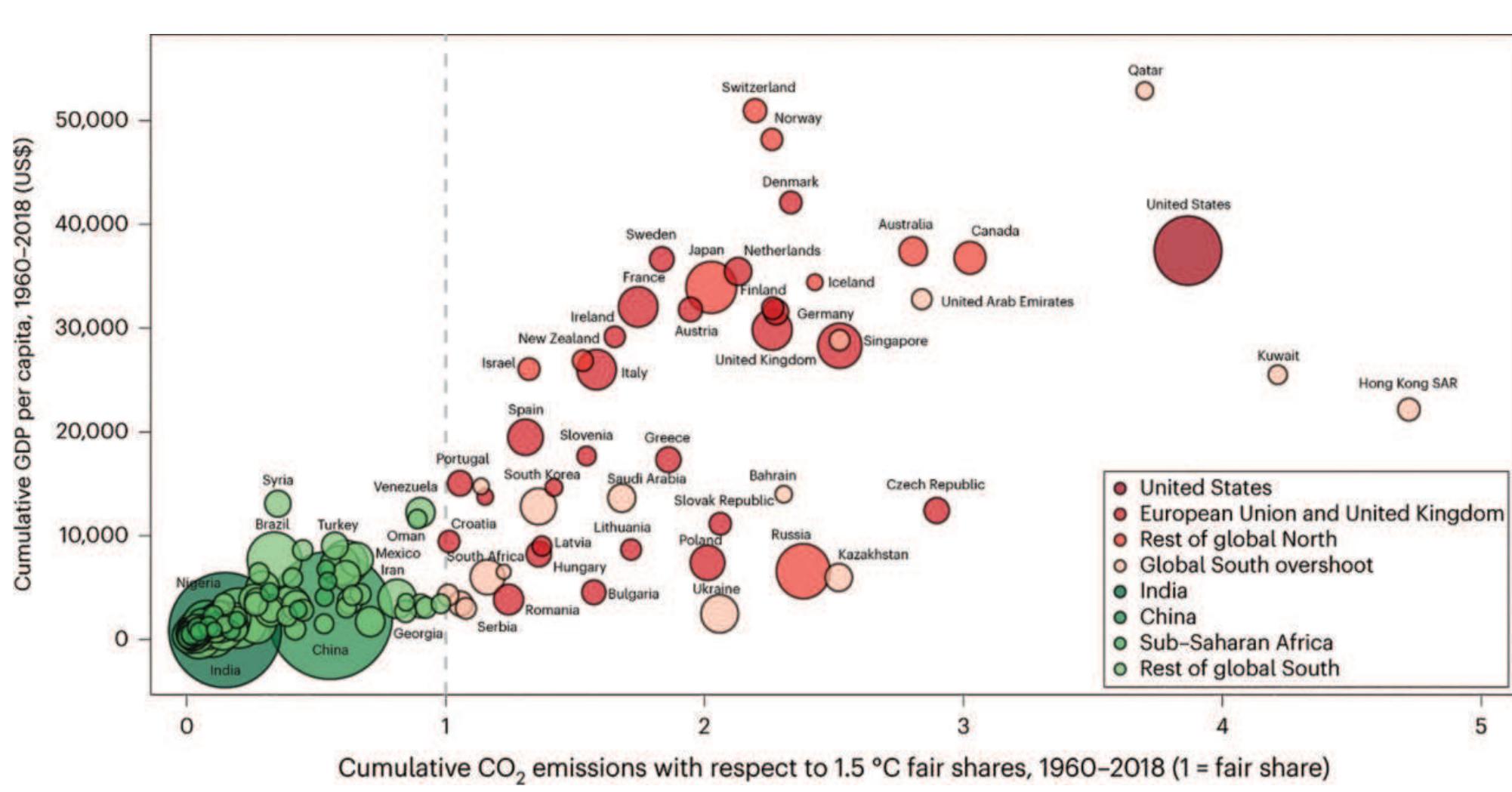
The solution to the problem of historical emissions is quite straightforward—Global North (red in the graph) countries owe liability payments to Global South (green) countries for exceeding their fair shares of the atmospheric commons. This would enable emissions reductions while still allowing for "catch up" growth in the Global South, and help solve long standing issues of global inequality. COP would be the ideal venue to

development. It is also essential to preserve as we pursue climate justice. Jake Sullivan's strategy for climate negotiations with China suggests that senior American policymakers have abandoned it completely, choosing instead to use climate politics to suppress economic development in Global South competitors.

Let us return to Raghuram Rajan's prescriptions for the Indian economy. "Climatic" factors are only a barrier to industrial development in India if we take the US position that only present-day emissions matter in determining climate responsibility.

economic competitor.

We speak of Bangladesh in terms of "climate vulnerability". This is how the Global North would like to see us, as "vulnerable" people who exist only to be saved by their generosity and benevolence. This is the language of NGOs and aid dependency. This language also directs us away from the issue of liability payments that we are owed by the Global North. The climate crisis was not caused by Bangladesh, but the lives it claims will be disproportionately from Bangladesh. When you are not owed liability, you can only be grateful for generosity. We need to break



Cumulative CO2 emissions with respect to 1.5 degrees Celsius fair shares versus cumulative GDP per capita, 1960-2018.

SOURCE: JASON HICKEL

equally according to population—a value of 1 represents a country that has consumed exactly its fair share of global carbon.

negotiate these payments.

However, the topic of liability payments at COP is consistently blocked by the Western negotiating bloc, particularly the US. The concept of Common but Differentiated Responsibility (CBDR) was enshrined into international climate law in the Paris Agreement to acknowledge the issue of historical emissions but is under attack every year from Western nations. CBDR acknowledges that while all countries must act on climate change, the nature of our responsibilities is different and corresponds to our historic emissions. This framework is essential to protecting every sovereign nation's inherent human right to

A historical emissions framework gives countries in the Global South room to grow and to reach some kind of parity in economic prosperity with the advanced economies. Liability payments offer a mechanism to achieve that parity.

By now I hope the readers can fully comprehend the dark motivations behind the consistent blocking of liability payments at COP. We should recognise this for what it is—an attempt by the Global North to use the climate crisis to lock in current patterns of global inequality and maintain their position of privilege in the commanding heights of the world economy. In the context of China, it was even to be used as a way to neutralise an

out of this paradigm.

Look again at the figure given. Don't look at it through the lens of personal self-sacrifice and bleeding heart activism. Don't look at it through the eyes of NGOs. Look at it through the lens of your material self-interest. The emergence of China as a peer competitor to the United States creates the scope for the formation of a counter-hegemonic Global South bloc that can exercise coercion on Global North countries to demand liability payments and an acceptance of the historical emissions framework. In the present moment, this is the clearest path forward to climate justice.

LAW VISION

Challenges and prospects of enforcing foreign decrees in Bangladesh

SHISHIR MANIR

The recognition of foreign decree is essential for fostering cross-border trade and investment and protecting the rights of foreign investors in Bangladesh. Recognition of foreign decree contributes to building confidence in foreign traders and acts as a deterrent to borrowers who attempt to dishonor their obligations towards the creditors or evade the jurisdiction upon default.



In today's globalised world order, cross-border transactions and consequent disputes have been a common phenomenon. Bangladesh as a developing country has witnessed the same in recent years. The disputes that ensue from cross-border transactions are dealt with in foreign courts. The decree thus awarded can then be executed in the native country of the parties. The Code of Civil Procedure 1908 (CPC) defines foreign court and foreign decree in sections 2(5) and 2(6), respectively. Essentially, foreign decree means a decree of a foreign court and a foreign court means a court established outside the jurisdiction of Bangladesh. This article delves into the challenges and prospects of enforcing foreign court decrees in Bangladesh taking into account the legal framework and the practical realities of the country.

Bangladesh lacks an exhaustive legislation on the enforcement of foreign decrees. At present the process is governed by the CPC. Sections 13, 14, and 44A of the CPC deal with the process of execution of foreign decrees in Bangladesh. Section 13 points out six exceptions when foreign decrees will not be conclusive. Additionally, section 14 ensures the presumption of competency of the foreign courts unless the contrary appears on the records. Section 44A stipulates the process of executing a decree of a reciprocating country in Bangladesh if it does not fall within the exceptions specified in section 13.

The rule of conclusiveness of foreign decree is founded upon the principle of sanctity of decrees. Where a foreign court of competent jurisdiction has adjudicated upon a claim, a legal obligation arises to satisfy that claim in the country where the

decree needs to be enforced. The general rule is that the native court shall presume that the decree is awarded by a court of competent jurisdiction upon the production of a certified copy of a foreign decree. However, this presumption must follow two pre-conditions. First, the decree is pronounced by a superior court of the reciprocating countries of Bangladesh. Hence, the foreign decree of non-reciprocating countries is not executable in Bangladesh. Before enforcing a foreign decree, a reciprocating agreement with that country is required. Next, the judgment must survive the exceptions outlined in section 13 of the Code. If the judgment fulfills these two preconditions, then the executing court shall presume that the judgment is given by a court of competent jurisdiction and it shall be executable in Bangladesh. The foreign decree will fall into *res judicata* under section 11 of CPC if the decree has been previously awarded by a Bangladeshi court.

The general principle of law is that any decision of a foreign court, tribunal, or any other quasi-judicial authority is not enforceable in a country unless such decision is embodied in a decree of a court of that country. Moreover, the limitation period for enforcing the foreign

judgment has been specified in the Limitation Act 1908. Article 117 of the First Schedule of the Act stipulates that an action to enforce a foreign decree shall commence within six years of the date on which the foreign decree was pronounced. The decree will be executed per section 51 of the Code.

Inadequate legal framework and lack of clarity pose a great challenge towards enforcing foreign decrees in Bangladesh. Bangladesh should enact a specific legislation on this matter similar to the Foreign Judgment Enforcement Act 1933 of the UK. There are some practical difficulties too. Excessive delays, bureaucratic red tapism, and corruption beat the process and hinder efficient and timely enforcement of foreign decrees. Moreover, no specialised courts or tribunals exist on this matter in Bangladesh. The unavailability of the list of reciprocating countries of Bangladesh is another glaring example of complete disregard of the responsible authority.

In sum, the recognition of foreign decree is essential for fostering cross-border trade and investment and protecting the rights of foreign investors in Bangladesh. Recognition of foreign decree contributes to building confidence in foreign traders and acts as a deterrent to borrowers who attempt to dishonor their obligations towards the creditors or evade the jurisdiction upon default. Despite the challenges, there is still room for improvement. By reforming the legal framework, establishing specialised courts, and advancing international cooperation, Bangladesh can overcome the obstacles and create an effective and efficient system for enforcing foreign decrees.

The writer is Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh.

LAW IN DENIAL

Genocide, denial, and Gaza

SADIKA NOUSHEEN

Genocide denial is deeply rooted in socio-political, and historical complexities and manifests in many forms across instances like the Armenian, Holocaust, Roman, Rwandan, Bangladesh, and Rohingya genocides, to name a few. The genocide unfolding in Gaza is live streamed before the world and yet its continuance is being vehemently denied by Israel and its allies.

Gregory Stanton, founder and President of Genocide Watch, argues that genocide is a complex process that unfolds across ten predictable but non-linear stages (often occurring simultaneously), where preventive actions at any stage can halt its progression. Even though argued as "the final stage" of genocide, "denial" is a continuous process that happens before, during, and after persecution. Understanding it is essential as it indicates that more atrocities will continue.

Genocide denialism has a deep-rooted connection with the narratives of groups that justify harmful beliefs, perpetuates prejudices, distorts historical facts, and misrepresents social realities. Stanley Cohen, sociologist and criminologist, argues that "*the social conditions that give rise to atrocities merge into the official techniques for denying these realities—not just to observers, but even to the perpetrators themselves.*" This denial includes outright rejection of information, disputing the significance of events, minimising responsibility, shifting blame to victims, moral disengagement to justify dehumanisation, and fostering belligerent violence in disguise of defense.

The textbook example of the above is unfolding in the context of Gaza. Denial is exhibited in the Israeli government's use of jargon of International Humanitarian Law to justify genocide, as identified by Special



Rapporteur Francesca Albanese. Concepts such as "human shields", "collateral damage" and "proportionality" are distorted and misused to justify actions in Gaza. Articles 48 and 52 of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions mandate attacks to be limited to military targets. Specific military advantage must be weighed against foreseeable civilian harms. Article 51(5) (b) emphasises proportionality, disallowing attacks where civilian harm is excessive relative to military advantage. By accusing Palestinian armed groups of using civilians as human shields, Israel justified disproportionate killings and infrastructure destruction. The concept of collateral damage was misused to justify indiscriminate attacks as intentional harms. By twisting legal language, Israel blurred the distinction between civilians and combatants, portraying the entire population as legitimate military targets, and proceeded to obliterate the people of Gaza.

Following the US university protests, the US House of Representatives has gone on to pass a bill that would expand the federal definition of antisemitism potentially curtailing freedom of speech. The recent amendment to the State Department Foreign Operations and Related Programs Appropriations Act of 2025 prohibits US officials from using agency funding to cite any casualty figures provided by the Gaza Ministry of Health, which is often the sole source of information about the situation on the ground in Gaza. Hence, it can be argued that Israel's biggest ally, the US, has further institutionalised the genocide denial in the context of Gaza.

While the internet makes literal denial tough, in many instances, it intensifies the process. Big data regimes create filter bubbles, isolating individuals in ideological echo chambers, and reinforcing biases, particularly evident in narratives about Palestine. Tech companies wield immense control over content dissemination, potentially prioritising propaganda aligned with certain ideologies, leading to censorship of dissenting opinions and news, threatening freedom of speech. Among tech giants, Meta has been accused of censoring Palestinian voices through arbitrary content removal, suspension of accounts, and restriction of certain accounts' reaches and visibilities, without explanation or notification (i.e., shadow banning).

Genocide denialism constitutes a form of dehumanisation and oppression by creating conditions that coerce the narratives into silence. Questioning genocide denialism is crucial as it upholds the dominant group's narrative, affects the oppressed, and hinders both genocide prevention and justice for the victims. In Palestine, denial of genocide perpetuates systematic inequality and historical oppression through settler colonialism, continuing intergenerational discrimination since 1948.

The writer is an LLM candidate, University of Dhaka.

LAW UPDATE



Barrister Moin Ghani, Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh, has been appointed as member of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) International Court of Arbitration for its 2024-2027 mandate. The ICC Court of Arbitration is widely considered to be the world's leading arbitral institution. Since 1923, it has been helping to resolve international commercial and investment disputes. Members of the ICC Court are appointed by the ICC's supreme governing body, the World Council, on the recommendation of ICC national committees.

DETANGLING LAWS

Navigating jurisdictional complexities in the Anwarul Azim murder case

FARJANA YESMIN

Recently, there has been significant press coverage in Bangladesh and India regarding the heinous murder of Bangladeshi Member of Parliament Anwarul Azim in India. The majority of the accused individuals are of Bangladeshi origin and have been apprehended in Bangladesh. However, the primary culprit, who happens to be a Bangladeshi American, escaped to the United States. Therefore, three countries are now involved with this case, prompting a discussion on jurisdiction over crimes in international context.

Section 3 of the Penal Code of Bangladesh establishes the principle of extraterritorial jurisdiction, asserting that the Code applies to any person liable, by any Bangladeshi law, who commits an offence outside the country as if the act had been committed within Bangladesh. This provision allows Bangladeshi authorities to prosecute its nationals for offences committed abroad. Moreover, the Passive Nationality principle is a doctrine that confers a state with the authority to prosecute specific crimes committed beyond its borders against its citizens by individuals who are not citizens of that state. Essentially, it grants a country the authority to pursue

legal action for offences committed against its citizens, even if such offences took place beyond its borders. Bangladesh can invoke this doctrine to assert jurisdiction over the offender since the victim is Bangladeshi.

India would likely have primary jurisdiction because the crimes were committed within its territory. According to section 2 of the Indian Penal Code, anyone who performs an action or fails to perform an action that is against the rules of the code will be subject to penalty. In this context, any individual who commits an offence is held accountable for punishment regardless of their nationality, social status, caste, or religious beliefs. The sole prerequisite for incriminating an individual under this section is that they must engage in the act or omission within the geographical boundaries of India. Therefore, a non-native individual who commits an offence within the borders of the country cannot claim unfamiliarity with the legal system of India.

Again, the principle of territoriality is the dominant principle of criminal jurisdiction that allows states to exercise jurisdiction over crimes committed on their territory. Moreover, the principle of subjective territorial jurisdiction

allows states to exercise legal authority over actions initiated within their territory but completed or having effects elsewhere.

The *United States v Yousef* (1996) is a pivotal case demonstrating the application of the subjective territorial principle in criminal law. The court upheld the conviction of Ramzi Ahmed Yousef, a mastermind behind the 1993 World Trade Center bombing and the Bojinka plot. Despite Yousef's argument that much of his planning and preparatory actions occurred outside the United States, the court affirmed US jurisdiction based on the principle of subjective territorial jurisdiction. This case is significant as it reinforced the ability of the United States to prosecute international terrorists whose actions, though initiated abroad, have direct and harmful consequences within the US borders.

Therefore, while India has clear territorial jurisdiction over crimes committed within its borders, Bangladesh may also have an interest based on the nationality of the principal accused and the victim. On the other hand, the primary assailant and alleged mastermind of the crime escaped to the United States. It is imperative to bring him and ensure his presence for trial to

conduct a thorough investigation and uphold justice. Obtaining custody of him in Bangladesh will be challenging since there is no extradition treaty between Bangladesh and the USA. However, the current extradition relationship between India and the USA gives them an advantageous position in apprehending the culprit. Even if the offender flees to Bangladesh, India may request extradition under the extradition treaty between India and Bangladesh. Bangladesh would then need to decide whether to extradite or prosecute the accused under its laws.

In conclusion, the complex case surrounding the murder of Anwarul Azim in India has brought to light intricate jurisdictional challenges involving multiple countries. While Bangladesh asserts extraterritorial jurisdiction over offences committed by its citizens abroad, India maintains primary jurisdiction due to the location of the crimes. The application of principles such as the Passive Nationality principle and Subjective Territorial Jurisdiction further complicates the matter, highlighting the need for careful analysis and diplomatic cooperation.

The writer teaches law at the University of Chittagong.



PHOTO: FACEBOOK/AFP

Toughest task yet for Spain

AGENCIES

Spain have looked in imperious form in their four straight wins so far at Euro 2024, giving their eagerly anticipated quarterfinal match-up with hosts Germany on Friday the air of a "final before the final".

The squad have moved on from the possession-based "tiki-taka" style that helped them win the World Cup and back-to-back European Championships over a decade ago to a ferociously attacking approach over a year under the guidance of manager Luis de la Fuente.

This transformation may have surprised many fans, but players like midfielder Mikel Merino have seen it coming for almost a decade, as have many of his teammates who have worked with De la Fuente in their national academy system.

And that camaraderie is what gives Spain the edge, Merino felt.

"It is a huge advantage for us," Merino said. "It's a chemistry that I have only seen

- ➊ This will be the fourth meeting between Germany and Spain at the Euros. Spain hold the edge having won in 1984 and the 2008 final, while Germany clinched the contest in the 1988 edition.
- ➋ Spain are unbeaten in their last four major tournament matches against Germany (W2 D2).
- ➌ Germany went through to the semifinals in 15 of their 19 quarterfinals at major tournaments (World Cup and Euro), including wins in all four last eight appearances at the

in club football."

Indeed, Spain have been playing with lightning high pressure combined with lightning one-touch moves and precise passing, giving the impression of a squad where each player has an almost instinctive feel for the positioning of his teammates.

"I have a lot of great memories about playing against Germany. Playing them

- Euros (1996, 2008, 2012, 2016).
- ➋ No host nation has ever been eliminated in the quarterfinals of the Euros.
- ➌ Spain have scored nine goals, while Germany have 10, which is already their joint-most in a single edition of the competition.
- ➍ Toni Kroos has completed 95% of his passes at the tournament (411/431), the highest by a player to attempt 300+ passes at a European Championship since 1980. He also leads this edition for line-breaking passes (125).

it's something that make you feel your blood pump stronger in your veins," Merino said.

"We know we are going to face maybe our toughest challenge yet," Merino said.

Meanwhile, hosts Germany will be riding a wave of belief not seen in the proud football nation for almost a decade.

Germany veteran and 2014 World Cup winner Toni Kroos said Wednesday "the

goal is to win the tournament".

A player with an unblemished record of success, six-time Champions League winner, Kroos believes the will to win comes "only through experience".

"You can have a winning mentality or belief, you can live it, but it's hard to convey it in conversations."

"You have to go through experiences and that's how your belief grows more and more."

Kroos will do battle against Spain, the country he has lived in for the past decade.

He said his knowledge of the Spanish players from his time at Real was no clear advantage, saying "they are all pretty well known."

"I don't think we're expecting any big surprises."

Kroos may not be expecting big surprises from Spain, but the new-look Spanish side who have somewhat shed their decade-long style of play will definitely be the biggest thorn in the hosts' way to another European glory.

Djokovic survives major scare

REUTERS

Even though Novak Djokovic was nursing a dodgy right knee, toppling him at Wimbledon was never going to be easy for a Briton ranked 277th and so it proved as the Serb huffed and puffed into the third round with a 6-3 6-4 5-7 5 win over Jacob Farnley.

The wildcard, who was ranked outside the world's top 500 just a month ago before shooting up almost 250 spots after winning a second tier Challenger event in Nottingham, will take away many memorable moments from his Centre Court debut.

He is unlikely to forget the high-risk, high-reward strategy he employed in the final game of the third set, which ended with Djokovic hacking a forehand wide to surrender his serve and the set - to the delight of the hollering crowd.

But all the heroics from a journeyman Scot, who until this week had never won a main tour match or even competed at a Grand Slam, were simply not enough to tame a player chasing a record-extending 372nd Grand Slam match win.

A forehand winner sealed Djokovic his passage into round three and kept him on course to win a record 25th Grand Slam title.

SHORT CORNER

Erik ten Hag signs new deal at Man Utd

Erik ten Hag has signed a contract extension that keeps him at Old Trafford until 2026, the Premier League club announced on Thursday. The former Ajax manager, whose deal had been due to expire in 2025, admitted there was work to be done to close the gap on United's Premier League rivals.

Empty seats at Copa, a stark contrast to Euros

Copa favourites such as reigning champions Argentina and Brazil advanced to the quarterfinals playing in sold out stadiums but the less heralded teams have played in half-empty arenas. Games at the Euros averaged 50,000 spectators per game in the group stage.

Bangladesh, India, Pakistan in same group in proposed CT schedule

Bangladesh find themselves in the same group as archrivals India and Pakistan along with New Zealand in the draft schedule of the ICC 2025 Champions Trophy submitted by the tournament hosts Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB).

Read full stories on The Daily Star's website.

Mbappe or Ronaldo: Who will come through?

AFP, Hamburg

France and Portugal renew their European Championship rivalry on Friday night in a quarterfinal showdown in which almost all of the focus will be on the two captains, Kylian Mbappe and Cristiano Ronaldo.

The last-eight encounter in Hamburg brings together two of the most-fancied nations coming into Euro 2024, but two teams who have not been completely convinced so far in Germany.

France have reached a sixth quarterfinal in the last seven major tournaments



despite not one of their players scoring a goal in open play.

Mbappe has been hindered by the broken nose he suffered in France's first match against Austria, forcing him to miss the goalless draw with the Netherlands.

He has not been at his sharpest since returning and the spot-kick he converted against Poland is the only goal he has scored in seven appearances at the Euros.

The other side of the coin for France is that they have only let in one goal.

Meanwhile, Portugal reached this stage having needed a shoot-out to beat

Slovenia following a goalless 120 minutes.

Goalkeeper Diogo Costa ended up being their hero by saving all three of Slovenia's efforts from the spot, but the game will also be remembered for Ronaldo's tears after he had a penalty saved in extra time.

The 39-year-old's quest to become the oldest-ever goal-scorer at the tournament also led to him missing numerous attempts during that game.

It has all added fuel to the fire for those who feel Ronaldo is holding back a supremely talented Portugal side, but coach Roberto Martinez is likely to back the forward.

Portugal must now try to find a way through a watertight French defence, while Didier Deschamps needs to find a replacement in his midfield for the suspended Adrien Rabiot.

With France being one of the most solid defensive sides at the Euro, the question will be whether a misfiring Ronaldo will be able to help Portugal find that spark.

The margins will likely be fine again this tie and the outcome will possibly be determined by a moment of genius. For that, Portugal are likely to keep Ronaldo in place while French eyes will be firmly fixed on Mbappe finally delivering.

Bruzon, Kings 'AMICABLY' SPLIT

SPORTS REPORTER

After six years of remarkable achievements and a string of titles with the country's contemporary powerhouse, coach Oscar Bruzon has parted ways with five-time Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) champions Bashundhara Kings.

Bruzon revealed the news through Facebook yesterday, while Kings president Imrun Hasan also confirmed that they would not be renewing the contract with the 47-year-old coach.

The Spaniard wrote, "Dear BK family, I wanted to express my gratitude for the positive manner in which we reached a mutual agreement to terminate our contract after 6 years of continuous success including a participation this season at the prestigious Asian Champions League. I appreciate the opportunity to part ways amicably and with full understanding for both sides."

He added, "We have contributed on developing a unique football culture in



the country, key to the long-term growth and exclusively focused on excellence delivering great results including 11 Major Titles and a last season treble. Proud to have been part of the Kings dominance."

The Spaniard was successful in the domestic circuit, winning a total of 11 trophies since the Kings started their journey in the professional football league in the 2018-19 season.

However, Bruzon failed to take the formidable Kings out of the group stage in the AFC Cup four times, despite having quality foreign footballers.

It has been learned that his relationship with club officials had deteriorated last season, while the foreign players were openly involved in scuffles during BPL matches. Bruzon, however, gave a hint of it in his parting post, mentioning the need for Kings officials to "put aside their personal and particular interests" to keep the success ongoing.

"Some have to understand that the only way to achieve success is to work as one team."

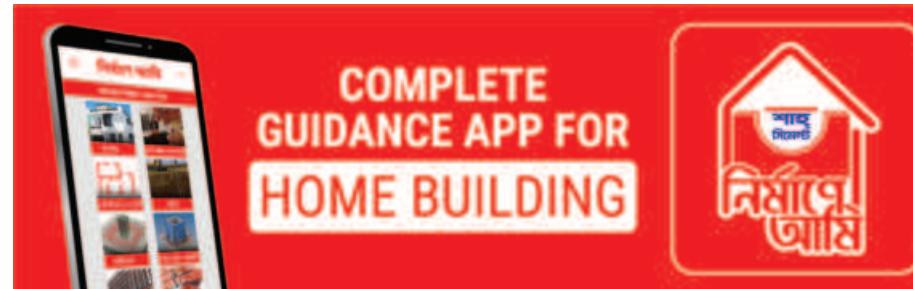


India's T20 World Cup winners returned home to a heroes' welcome yesterday, greeted by euphoric fans while parading on an open-top bus through the Marine Drive seafront in Mumbai. The Rohit Sharma-led team had first arrived in New Delhi from the West Indies and met with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The team waved to fans and danced to drums at their hotel in the Indian capital before leaving for their bus parade in Mumbai where fans gathered in huge numbers.

PHOTO: AFP

BSRM
FAST
BUILD

WITH BSRM FASTBUILD
YOUR HOME WILL BE BUILT ON TIME
WITH THE BEST QUALITY RODS

BSRM
building a safer nationGET IT ON
Google PlayDownload on the
App Store

ARREST WARRANT FOR BERA MAYOR He was in plain sight for 33 months

Court now recalls the order

EMRUL HASAN BAPPI, AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU and MAHMUDUL HASAN

Police did not arrest Pabna's Bera municipality mayor SM Asif Shams for over two and a half years, even though he had an arrest warrant against him for his company's failure to pay Tk 191.63 crore it owed the state.

All the while, Asif, also the son of Deputy Speaker of Jatiya Sangsad Md Shamsul Haque Tuku, continued his mayoral activities in public and even took part in campaigns of others running for local government offices.

Yesterday, the General Certificate Officer's Court of Dhaka recalled the arrest warrant issued against Asif, also the president of Bera upazila Awami League, after he showed up in court and submitted some documents.

On May 23, 2022, a copy of the arrest

warrant was sent to the officer-in-charge of Bera Model Police Station.

Md Rashidul Islam, OC of Bera Model Police Station, told The Daily Star on Wednesday, "After joining this station [on December 9, 2023], I learnt about the arrest warrant against him and informed my senior officials. Then I verbally told him to pay the government dues.

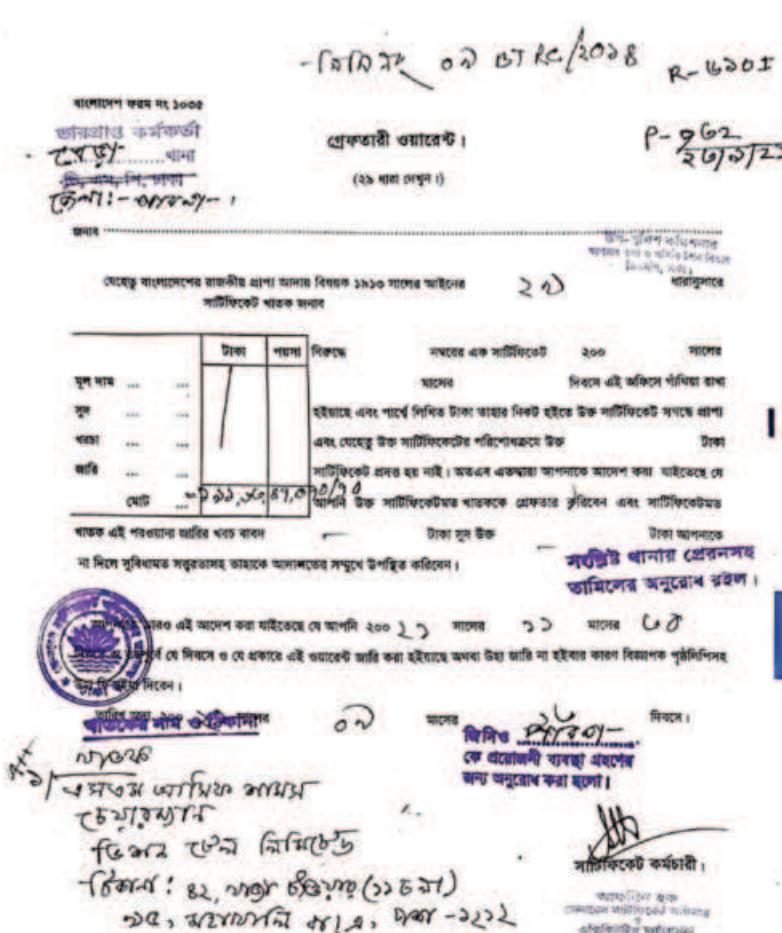
"His father is the incumbent lawmaker and the deputy speaker in parliament.... How do I dare to arrest him?" I only told him verbally, several times."

In January 2014, the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) filed the case against the International Gateway (IGW) operator Vision Tel Ltd chairman Asif; managing

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

"His father is the incumbent lawmaker and the deputy speaker in parliament.... How do I dare to arrest him?"

Bera Police Station OC



The arrest warrant, left, for SM Asif Shams issued in 2021, which was never executed by the police. The recall order of the arrest warrant, right, issued by a Dhaka court yesterday. Right bottom, Asif Shams, left in white panjabi, and his father Shamsul Haque Tuku, in Mujib coat at a tree plantation programme in Pabna's Bera upazila on June 28, 2024.

IMAGES/PHOTO: STAR/SOCIAL MEDIA



Court orders confiscation of customs official's assets

He 'amassed' wealth of Tk 10cr illegally; 4 flats, land of Matiur, his family to be confiscated

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday ordered the authorities concerned to confiscate all immovable properties of Mohammad Enamul Hoque, commissioner of the Commissionerate of Customs Valuation and Internal Audit, in a case filed over acquiring illegal wealth worth around Tk 10 crore.

The properties are 11 flats in Kakrail, Mohammadpur, and Gulshan areas of the capital, five kathas of land in Gazipur, and eight kathas in Dhaka's Badda.

Judge Mohammed Ash-Shams Jugal Hossain of the Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court of Dhaka passed the order after ACC Deputy Director Farzana Yasin, also investigation officer of the case, appealed for this. Anti-Corruption Commission Public Prosecutor Mosharrat Hossain Kajol, who moved the application, told The Daily Star.

On July 31 last year, ACC Assistant Director Mahbubul Alam in Dhaka filed

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1

UK GENERAL ELECTION Labour landslide expected as millions vote



Britain's Labour Party leader Keir Starmer and his wife Victoria Starmer arrive at a polling station to cast their votes during the general election in London, Britain, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

AFP, London

Millions of Britons voted yesterday in a general election that polls predict will hand the opposition Labour party a landslide win and end nearly a decade and a half of Conservative rule.

The first national ballot since Boris Johnson won the Tories a decisive victory in 2019 follows Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's surprise call to hold an election six months earlier than required.

His gamble looks set to backfire spectacularly, with polls throughout the six-week campaign -- and for the last two years -- pointing to a heavy defeat for his right-wing party.

That would almost certainly put Labour leader Keir Starmer, 61, in Downing Street, as leader of the largest party in parliament.

Centre-left Labour is projected to win its first general election since 2005 by historic proportions, with a flurry of election eve polls all

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

PENSION SCHEME Univ teachers carry on strike as meeting with Quader cancelled

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers' Association yesterday said it is hopeful of having a meeting with government representatives regarding their demand for reinstating teachers' pension scheme.

A scheduled meeting between the federation and Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader was cancelled yesterday, said Prof Nizamul Hoque Bhuiyan, secretary general of the FBUTA.

He said, "Minister Obaidul Quader told us that he has to sit with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to discuss some other issues. As a result, he has decided not to hold the meeting with the teachers today [Thursday]."

Prof Nizamul said, "We are still hopeful of a meeting with the government. At the same time, we will continue our protest."

The teachers under the banner of Dhaka University Teachers' Association (DUTA) continued their strike for the fourth straight day.

Teachers of other public universities, including Buet, Rajshahi university, Ruet, Jahangirnagar University, Jagannath University, Chittagong University, Barishal University, Begum Rokeya University, and Hajee Mohammad Danesh University also observed the strike.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Hezbollah rains rockets on Israel

UN chief warns of wider ME conflict
as Israel retaliates with strikes;
gun battles rock Gaza

AGENCIES

Lebanon's Hezbollah said it launched more than 200 rockets and explosive drones at Israeli military positions yesterday as tensions have soared amid the almost nine-months-old offensive raging in Gaza.

The Iran-backed group said its latest attack, which followed the launch of over 100 rockets the previous day, came in response to Israel's killing of a senior Hezbollah commander in south Lebanon.

Israel did not report any deaths in its northern border area, where most communities have been evacuated, but quickly said it had responded with strikes on targets in southern Lebanon.

Israel and Hezbollah, an ally of Palestinian group Hamas, have exchanged near-daily cross-border fire since the Gaza offensive began on October 7, stoking fears the clashes could escalate into all-out war.

UN chief Antonio Guterres is "very worried about the escalation of the exchange of fire", his spokesman Stephane Dujarric said, warning of the risk to the wider Middle East "if we were to find ourselves in a full-fledged conflict".

The Gaza offensive at the heart of the regional tensions has meanwhile raged on, and gun battles, air strikes and artillery shelling rocked Gaza City for an eighth day yesterday.

Gaza's civil defence agency said at least five people were killed in a strike that hit a Gaza City school, reports AFP.

Fears of renewed heavy fighting have also surged in Gaza's southern

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

► Witnesses report heavy shelling in western Rafah

► Israel weighs Hamas response to truce proposal

► Gaza death toll now 38,011

Messi, Ronaldo and plenty more

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Football fans in Bangladesh will wake up bright and early today and stay up way past their usual bedtime, enjoying three mouthwatering knockout matches across two continents in a dream weekend of international football.



Football-loving officegoers and students, who usually get a few extra hours of sleep on Friday mornings, will set their alarms earlier than they do on weekdays, gluing themselves in front of a screen, preferably with a hot beverage in hand, to catch Lionel Messi's Argentina take the field in their Copa America quarterfinal clash against Ecuador.

The match, taking place at the NRG Stadium in Houston, Texas, will start at 7:00 am Bangladesh time.

However, this sacrifice of sleep could go in vain for Messi fans, as there is uncertainty whether the Argentine maestro will turn up on the field.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



LIFE IN THE CITY

A troop of rhesus macaques on the hunt for some food in a residential area in the capital's Gulshan-2. Rhesus monkeys account for a large portion of the country's urban wildlife. Even in metros like Chattogram or Dhaka city, they can be spotted in certain areas, roaming comfortably among humans. Their adaptability to human-dominated landscapes has earned them the title of "commensal primates". However, more often than not, this hunt for food in urban spaces has proven to be not beneficial for them as their desperation can lead them to raid or snatch, which can put them in the face of the wrath of humans. Rhesus macaques, though hardy and adaptable, are often persecuted as "menaces" and can become victims of violent abuse. Some good Samaritans though always find some bread to hand out to the primates in need.

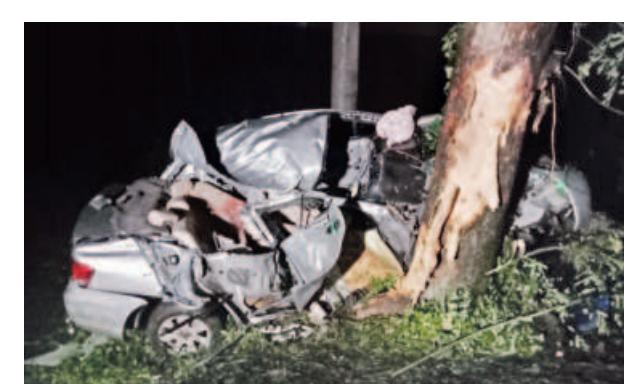
PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Fun trip turns fatal for 5 friends

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

At least five people were killed as a car hit a roadside tree in Pabna's Ishwardi upazila last night.

The deceased are Jihad, Bijoy, Shishir, Sifat and Shaon. The injured are Shahid and Nayeem.



Residents of Azampur village of the upazila, all the deceased and injured were friends and aged between 20 and 22.

The accident took place at the Pabna Sugar Mill area on the Pabna-Rajshahi highway around 9:30pm, Rafiqul Islam, officer-in-charge of Ishwardi Police Station, told The Daily Star.

Police said Nayeem used to work as a driver of a ride-sharing service in Dhaka.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3