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Dhaka, Beijing to ink 20 MoUs but loan deal unlikely

Says foreign minister; PM leaves for China today

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka and Beijing will sign around 20 MoUs, including some on trade and economic cooperations, during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to China that begins today.

However, the two countries may not sign any loan agreement on reserve or budget support.

"There is no loan agreement on the list. An MoU will be signed on economic cooperation. If parameters are met under this MoU, we may go for a loan in future," Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud said at a press briefing at the foreign ministry yesterday.

He said different countries make different proposals for loans, but Bangladesh does not accept all. For example, the World Bank had offered a loan after refusing fund for the Padma Bridge project, but Dhaka did not accept it.

"The reserve situation is improving in Bangladesh and the trend will continue," he said.

Dhaka and Beijing were discussing a loan of \$5 billion in Yuan for trade facilitation amid foreign currency shortage. However, the countries were yet to agree on the terms and conditions of the loan. Besides, there were also discussions on budget support from China, according to diplomatic sources.

Hasan Mahmud said the two countries will announce the inauguration of some development projects.

The MoUs expected to be signed will be on economic and banking sectors; trade and investment; digital



Thousands of anti-quota protesters took over and blocked the capital's Shahbagh intersection yesterday afternoon as part of the "Bangla Blockade" programme

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

BUSINESS

Annual inflation hits 12-year high

The annual average price spike in Bangladesh surged to its highest level in 12 years in the just-concluded fiscal year despite easing in June, reflecting the persistent erosion of real income and the deterioration of living standards of low-income groups.

Annual inflation rose to 9.73 percent in 2023-24, the highest since 2011-12 when it was 10.62 percent, overshooting the government's target of containing it to 7.5 percent, according to Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.

This is the second year the Consumer Prices Index, a measure of the increase in the prices of a basket of products and services, stood at more than 9 percent.

STORY ON B1



"There is no loan agreement on the list. An MoU will be signed on economic cooperation. If parameters are met under this MoU, we may go for a loan in future."

FOREIGN MINISTER
HASAN MAHMUD

Hasina to meet Chinese president, premier on July 10

Development, economic cooperation to get priority

Quota protests bring city to a standstill

Agitating students to hold fresh programme today

STAR REPORT

Dhaka was virtually paralysed yesterday as students ramped up their protests against the quota system for government jobs on the sixth day, blocking as many as six busy intersections in the capital.

The demonstrators announced a fresh programme for blocking important intersections in the capital and highways adjacent to colleges and universities across the country from 3:30pm today.

"We have been staging protests with a four-point demand, but now we have only one demand," said Hasnat Abdullah, a student of Dhaka University and an organiser of the protests that began on July 4.

He said their lone demand now is that all illogical and discriminatory quotas in public service are scrapped through the passage of a law in parliament, keeping a minimum quota for

backward citizens in line with the constitution.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina termed the protests irrational and said the issue should be settled at the apex court.

The protests intensified after the Supreme Court on July 4 upheld a

system for children of freedom fighters.

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

Until then, about 56 percent of

Our lone demand now is that all illogical and discriminatory quotas in public service are scrapped through the passage of a law in parliament, keeping a minimum quota for backward citizens in line with the constitution.

Hasnat Abdullah, DU student and organiser of the protests

High Court verdict that declared a 2018 government circular abolishing the quota system in public service illegal.

The students are demanding the reinstatement of the circular that abolished the 30 percent quota

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 percent for people

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MORE STORIES ON PAGE 3

'It's for the apex court to settle'

PM says there's no logic behind ongoing anti-quota demo

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said quota issue for government jobs should be settled in the apex court.

"The High Court gave a verdict regarding the quota system and the movement is being conducted on a sub-judice issue. We can't say anything... Since the High Court gave the verdict, solutions should come from the court," she said.

The prime minister said this while Jubo Mohila League leaders met her at the Gono Bhaban marking the organisation's 22nd founding anniversary.

She said there is no logic for such a movement against the apex court verdict regarding restoration of the quota system in the public services.

"What is now going on in the name of movement [against quota] is a waste of study time. I don't think it has any logic," she said.

Hasina reminded all that her government earlier rescinded the quota system in public services.

Questioning what benefit had come from the



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A woman walks through waist-deep water to return home after collecting drinking water from a tubewell some miles away on a higher land in Uria Char of Gaibandha's Phulchhari upazila recently. Around 65,000 families have been marooned due to floods caused by the swelling of the Brahmaputra, which is currently flowing 70cm above the danger level. Stories on page 5.

PHOTO: MOSTAFA SHOBUJ

The state has been captured by a select few

Says noted economist Rehman Sobhan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A class of people have evolved in Bangladesh who have not just captured the state but have become the state itself, said noted economist Rehman Sobhan.

"It is going to be very difficult to do anything about it because this class has now joined hands with the bureaucracy," he said at a seminar yesterday on "Political Economy of Banking Sector of

issue of effective interest rates.

If a loan is not repaid in 10 or 15 years, then the actual interest rate becomes much lower.

"The interest rate is widely unequal depending on whether you are actually repaying your loans."

The default culture has created a distortion in the setting of interest rates.

"Political patronage became the main criteria for lending. If you were lending to a



"What we classified at the time of Bangladesh's creation as an intermediate regime has become a fully-fledged capitalist regime fully captured by not just by the capitalists in general but by a segment of that particular class."

Bangladesh".

The virtual event was organised by Samaj Gabeshana Kendra.

"What we classified at the time of Bangladesh's creation as an intermediate regime has become a fully-fledged capitalist regime fully captured by not just by the capitalists in general but by a segment of that particular class."

Sobhan, also the chairman of the Centre for Policy Dialogue, also touched upon the

politically patronised class that patronage would then become a political resource. And that political resource would then be used to ensure that your loans were not effectively collected. Once that happened, that class then became more empowered."

They then acquired political capabilities and political strength.

"And you then evolved from a fabricated capitalist class into a perfectly strong and well-established capitalist class that would

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

SHILPAKALA ACADEMY

A cultural oasis in the city

RBR

Situated in the old neighbourhood of Segunbagicha, near the lush Ramna Park, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy has always been the go-to place for theatre, exhibitions, and cultural programmes. It is the National Institute of Fine and Performing Arts and a cultural hub in Dhaka.

I still remember my first visit to this premises in the late seventies when Chinese cultural groups came to perform in Dhaka and how in their soft, low tone voice sang Bangla songs. And then there were acrobats doing impossible feats and Russian performers that enthralled the audience with their songs and acts. Today, after so many decades, the place still invokes nothing but fond experiences for me.

The academy promotes the arts and culture and the creation of necessary facilities for their development. The activities of the academy also include organising workshops, seminars, discussion meetings, short-term

specialised training, providing scholarships and financial grants for talented artists, and organising competitions in the various fields of fine and performing arts.

The place has now expanded into a maze of galleries, theatres, and seminar halls and people are always in queue to avail the tickets for whichever play is being performed. Come rain or shine the place is buzzing with activities and enthusiastic art shows.

What made me happy was that the place attracted a young, trendy crowd. There is always more than one play, exhibition or workshop going on within the premises. Art appreciation course, recitations, dance dramas – almost everything that is art – Shilpakala Academy is your trusted choice.

“Big halls allow the performer’s charisma to come across as larger than life. The current crop of young directors who love riotous experimental work all opt for these halls. Experienced directors with their classy sophisticated

plays prefer Shilpakala Academy at one go for their show dates. It is a perfect place to go on dates, for ladies’ evening out, or friends’ day out – I even took my mother to enjoy a play on Mother’s Day,” says Aziza Ahmed, who regularly goes to the place with her family.

Having done praising, academy regulars like Meher Nigar feel the Experimental Hall should be renovated and modernised and particular emphasis must be given to the seating arrangements.

NB Mansoor on the other hand loves the arty ambience with like-minded people who seem very interested in drama, film, music, poetry, or painting.

“But in the middle of a performance, you hear the creaking sound of the old wooden platforms, it is kind of off-putting. I think some government funds should be allocated to modernise the old halls of the Academy, where performing art is played. However, the exhibition halls are state-of-the-art as it is comparatively a new infrastructure,”

she adds.

The waiting lounge has a sad look of the eighties with litter and cobwebs making it more lacklustre; an interior consultant can be hired to give the place a contemporary edgy look.

“There should be proper toilet facilities and a good food court inside the premises besides the old canteen serving tea and shingara, and attention must be given to cleanliness,” Ahmed feels.

The area surrounding the premises is lively with pop-up eateries, selling quintessential Bengali favourites like puri, hot tea, piyajua, lentil fritters and so much more. With puris, you can choose assorted sides like duck curry, fried tripe, and chicken jalrezi. There is a fried noodle or chow mein option. You can gulp it all down with fresh coconut water or hot tea.

So, the next time you have nothing fun to do, visit Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy. Dhaka is thriving with entertaining activities. You just need to know where to go and when.

11 killed in Nepal floods, landslides

Eight missing

REUTERS, Kathmandu

Heavy rains triggered landslides and flash floods killing at least 11 people in the last 36 hours in Nepal and blocking key highways and roads, officials said yesterday.

Eight people were missing, either washed away by floods or buried in landslides, while 12 others were injured and being treated in hospitals, police spokesperson Dan Bahadur Karki said.

“Rescue workers are trying to clear the landslides and open the roads,” Karki told Reuters, adding heavy equipment was being used to clear debris.

In southeastern Nepal, the Koshi River, which causes deadly floods in the eastern Indian state of Bihar almost every year, was flowing above the danger level, a district official said.

“The flow of Koshi is rising and we have asked residents to remain alert about possible floods,” Bed Raj Phuyal, a senior official of Sunsari district where the river flows, told Reuters.

He said at 0900 hours (0315 hours GMT) water flow in Koshi River was 369,000 cusecs per second, more than double its normal flow of 150,000 cusecs.

Authorities said all 56 sluice gates of the Koshi Barrage had been opened to drain out water compared with about 10-12 during a normal situation.

Authorities said the flows of Narayani, Rapti and Mahakali rivers in the west were also rising.

In hill-ringed Kathmandu, several rivers have overflowed their banks, flooded roads and inundated many houses.

Local media showed people wading through waist-deep water or residents using buckets to empty their houses.

At least 50 people across Nepal have died in landslides, floods and lightning strikes since mid-June when annual monsoon rains started.

Hundreds of people die every year in landslides and flash floods that are common in mostly mountainous Nepal during the monsoon season which normally starts in mid-June and continues through mid-September.

The state has been captured by a select few

FROM PAGE 1
move into exercising political power. Here, cronyism became a very important factor because whilst all capitalist classes are created dominant, some amongst them are more dominant than others and that was the nature of the problem,” Sobhan added.

Bangladesh’s banking sector is bearing the brunt of the political bias towards the wealthy and the influential, said Biru Paksha Paul, professor of economics at the State University of New York at Cortland.

“The banking sector is paying the price of political favouritism toward the superrich.”

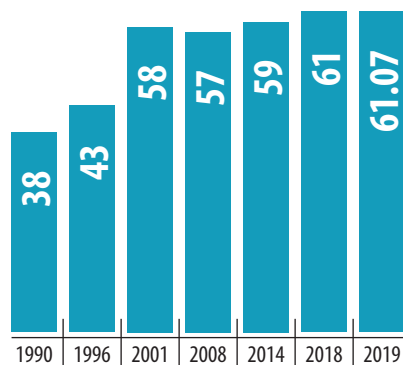
This started with the interest rate cap imposed in April 2020.

“The interest rate cap came into effect during the pandemic although it had no connection with Covid. The businessmen’s hidden agenda was to get loans at effectively zero real interest rate and they made it happen.”

The finance ministry tried to justify the cap in the name of private investment, which arguably did not show any sign of improvement following the adoption of the lending rate cap, as reflected in the private investment-GDP ratio, he said.

“It facilitated the tycoons to siphon off funds from banks at near-zero real interest rates,” he said while presenting a paper on ‘Bangladesh’s Banking Sector: the interest rate cap, and govt’s borrowing from the banking sector’.

BUSINESSMEN IN PARLIAMENT (IN %)



The 9 percent interest rate cap made the real interest rate negative, and that outcome finally induced the partial dehydration of the financial account of the balance of payment.

The dehydration of the financial account aggravated the reserve crisis, contributed to the taka’s free fall, enforced import controls and finally

brought down GDP growth.

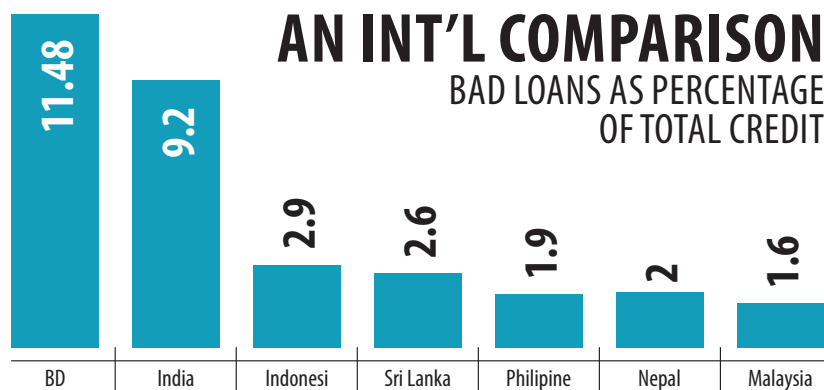
The depreciation of the taka made imports expensive, which fuelled the fire of inflation further, said Paul, also the former chief economist of the Bangladesh Bank.

The dwindling tax-GDP ratio and the ambitious development expenditure narrowed the government’s capacity to finance the budget deficit.

As a result, the government resorted to desperately using banks’ money, limiting the capacity of banks to lend as per the growing demand for credit.

However, the government’s borrowing from banks kept rising due to growing fiscal incapacity and the political philosophy of not creating pressure on the wealthy elites for direct taxes, he said.

In fiscal 2022-23, the government borrowed Tk 1.25 lakh crore from the banking sector. Of the amount, 79 percent was borrowed directly from



the BB.

As much as Tk 1 lakh crore of high-powered money was injected and that is to blame for the stubbornly high inflation, Paul said. The high-powered money saw a multiplier of 4.93 last fiscal year.

Since it was not taken from commercial banks, it fuelled monetary expansion instead of soaking up banks’ liquidity.

“The country never saw such irresponsible borrowing before this.” Overall, the lack of timely monetary tightening by raising policy rates and the utter absence of fiscal tightening via raising taxes on the wealthy and curtailing public spending jointly fuelled the flames of inflation, Paul added.

The volume of defaulted loans amounts to a staggering 11.48 percent of total credit, said MM Akash, professor of economics at the University of Dhaka. This does not include the written-off loans.

As of March, total defaulted loans stood at Tk 182,000 crore.

“However, the real situation is far graver. If we include rescheduled and written-off loans to this, the de facto aggregate default loan amounts to more than Tk 400,000 crore.”

However, hiding the true defaulted loan figure is politically convenient.

“The nexus of dishonest businessmen, bureaucrats and politicians have captured the state bodies and all institutions that could make the bad loan issue transparent and accountable.”

Some shariah-based banks are ailing due to their owners but the central bank wanted to save those banks by providing liquidity support. “This is not wise. Why did the government want to bail out the banks? Their owners are liable for their ailing financial health.”

Akash suggested making the post of the central bank governor a constitutional post. At present,

the finance ministry appoints the governor.

“There is a dual regulator for the banking sector – the finance ministry’s control on banks will have to be stopped.”

The top 100 loans defaulters’ list must be published to build public awareness against defaulters, said Akash, also the chairman of Dhaka University’s Bureau of Economic Research.

The independence of the central bank is needed, said Selim Raihan, executive director of the South Asian Network on Economic Modelling (SANEM).

“But the question is are the political elites willing to give the freedom? The political elites don’t want to.”

When talking about the interest rate cap, he said that not everyone benefited from the single-digit lending rate; only a certain segment benefited from it and a portion of the loan was laundered, he added.

Dhaka, Beijing

FROM PAGE 1
visits are Bangladesh’s way of balancing relations between the two Asian powers.

Hasan Mahmud said Dhaka is discussing Chinese cooperation on the Southern Integrated Development Initiative (SIDI), which will include the development of Mongla Port.

On Teesta project, he said, “As it is a common river of Bangladesh and India, India has made a proposal, and we have to consider it first. It is also good that China made a proposal. As India has made a proposal, we think it is good. If they [China] want, it will be discussed during the visit.”

Asked about Dhaka’s position on Beijing’s interest in upgrading the strategic partnership with Bangladesh to Comprehensive Strategic Cooperative Partnership, the foreign minister said, “Our relationship with China is deep, it is a strategic relationship. This will get stronger.”

During a briefing on July 4, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said the leaders of the two countries will have an in-depth exchange of views on how to deepen the friendship; on expanding beneficial cooperation; on regional and international issues of mutual interest.

The PM will reach Beijing around

6:00pm today. Tomorrow morning, she will make a courtesy call on Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank President Jin Lique.

She will then attend the “Summit on Trade Business and Investment opportunities between Bangladesh and China”. Hasina will then hold a bilateral meeting with Wang Huning, chairman of the 14th National Committee of the Chinese Peoples’ Political Consultative Conference.

On July 10, she will meet Chinese Premier Li Qiang at the Great Hall of the People and will attend a reception. The meeting will be followed by a banquet in her honour.

That afternoon, Hasina will hold a bilateral meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping at the Great Hall of the People.

Finance Minister AH Mahmood Ali; Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud; Prime Minister’s Private Industry and Investment Adviser Salman F Rahman; State Minister for Commerce Ahasanul Islam Titu; State Minister for Power, Energy, and Mineral Resources Nasrul Hamid; State Minister for Posts, Telecommunications, and Information Technology Zunaid Ahmed; Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen and other high officials of the ministries concerned will accompany Hasina.

‘It’s for the apex court to settle’

FROM PAGE 1
cancellation of the quota system, she said it was seen that the women were not getting chances as much as they were during the period of quota system.

She added that many people from remote areas and districts had been deprived of government jobs.

The premier said the deprived went to the High Court that declared the verdict (against the government decision to cancel the quota system). “We always honour the High Court verdict.”

The premier asked the demonstrators to prove that they had passed PSC examinations.

On June 5, the HC declared illegal the October 4, 2018, circular of the public administration ministry regarding the abolishment of quotas, including those for freedom fighters, in first and second class government jobs.

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court on Thursday last upheld the HC judgment.

About the pension scheme, Hasina, also the ruling Awami League president, said they have introduced the universal pension scheme for all in accordance with the party’s election manifesto of 2008.

“Only the government officials get pension and others are being deprived. So, several pension schemes

were announced as nobody can be deprived.”

The PM said those involved in politics, including leaders of Jubo Mohila League, should join the pension scheme for their future.

Recalling the contribution of the organisation to different movements, she said the organisation was always on the streets during every movement and its leaders and activists were subjected to inhuman torture by police and armed cadres of the BNP.

“I have no word to denounce the inhuman torture carried out on the Jubo Mohila League leaders and activists. The attackers even did not show any mercy considering them women.”

Hasina recalled the role of Jubo Mohila League in collecting the signature demanding release of her from jail during the tenure of the last caretaker government.

“We did not bow down to torture. We wanted one thing that is to establish democracy,” she said.

The PM briefly described her government measures for the overall development of the country, including women empowerment.

Hasina also inaugurated the website of Jubo Mohila League, established on July 6, 2002.

Power cut knocks out metro service for 30 minutes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Metro rail service faced nearly half an hour of disruption yesterday due to power cuts.

“Metro rail has started regular operation as power supply is now normal,” said a post on the official Facebook page of Dhaka Mass Transit Company Limited.

In an earlier post, it said, “Since 2:27pm, metro rail operation has been suspended due to power outage.”

From around 3:00pm, the train service became normal.

A Farmgate-bound passenger, Pinaki Roy, told The Daily Star, “The train stopped slowly at Shevrapara Station and stayed there for eight-10 minutes.”

“After that, the metro rail authorities announced over the loudspeaker, asking passengers to get off the train. All passengers waited on the platform for around 30 minutes.”

He added that the metro rail service resumed at 2:58pm.

Two sisters drown in Bogura

BSS, Bogura

Two minor girls drowned in a pond in Barpur Modhdhpara Barobari area of Bogura’s Sadar upazila yesterday.

They are Himu, 5, and her sister Jannat, 3, daughters of Md Habib of the area, said police.

Sub-Inspector Aminul Islam, in-charge of Phulbari police outpost, said the two drowned in a pond next to their house while playing beside it around 12:00pm.

When the girls went missing, family members started searching for them.

They were declared dead after being taken to Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital, Bogura.

Iran’s president-elect to be sworn in next month

AFP, Tehran

Iran’s Masoud Pezeshkian will be sworn in before parliament in early August as the Islamic republic’s ninth president, state media reported yesterday.

“The swearing in ceremony of the president will be held on August 4 or 5,” said the official IRNA news agency, quoting Mojtaba Yosefi, a member of parliament’s presiding board.

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It was a rough day for Dhaka commuters yesterday. The capital experienced severe traffic disruptions as students protesting quota system in government jobs blocked key intersections from morning to evening, causing immense suffering for commuters. Due to a scarcity of public transportation, many had to walk to reach their destinations. The situation became normal after 8:00pm. Students also declared to continue their anti-quota movement today. The photos were taken in Paribagh, Farmgate, Science Lab and Motijheel areas.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON, PALASH KHAN



WHAT THEY SAID ABOUT QUOTA PROTEST



“We gained an independent state through the Liberation War, only to escape discrimination. The constitution emphasises that. The quota system in employment is unconstitutional.”

GM QUADER
Jatiyo Party Chairman



“We must respect the rule of law and since the issue is still pending with the High Court, and a definite verdict will be given by our Supreme Court.”

MOHIBUL HASAN
CHOWDHURY
Education Minister



“We are observing the movements closely. I believe the issues will be resolved. The issue for which the students are protesting is not a decision of the government; it is a court ruling.”

OBAIDUL QUADER
AL General Secretary

People suffer amid 'Bangla Blockade'

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

Dhaka descended into a chaos yesterday as student protests demanding reforms in the government quota system for jobs brought traffic to a standstill. Long lines of vehicles, including private cars, buses, CNG run auto rickshaws, remained stranded for hours, unable to move an inch.

The impact on commuters was immediate and widespread. Job holders and students found themselves running late, their schedules thrown into disarray. Rickshaw-pullers, CNG-run auto-rickshaw drivers, and ride-sharing app drivers all saw their earnings plummet as the gridlock brought the city to a standstill.

The ordeal began early in the day with Dhaka College students taking over the Science Lab intersection, triggering traffic jams that spread across major roads like Azimpur-New Market to Mirpur and Gabtoli.

By 4:00pm, the gridlock intensified as students blocked more intersections, including Shahbagh, Hotel

Intercontinental turning, Banglamotor, Karwan Bazar, and Chankharpul.

This brought vehicular movement to a near halt, with reports of severe congestion in Tantubazar, Ray Saheb Bazar, Bangshal, Gulistan, Purana Paltan, Shahbagh, Karwan Bazar, Farmgate, Agargaon, Kazipara, Sheorapara, Mirpur-10, New Market, and Science Lab.

Private job holder Mahmudul

Hasan described his ordeal traveling from Khilgaon to Farmgate.

“I got stuck in a gridlock near Hotel Intercontinental,” he said. “The journey typically takes 30-40 minutes, but due to the traffic, it took over an hour to reach through Moghbazar.”

College student Raid Hasan shared his frustration after being stuck in the Bijoy Sarani area for over 30 minutes. Similarly, Adnan Sejan, a commuter, said he was stuck in front of Square Hospitals in Panthapath for 40 minutes.

The situation worsened during the evening rush hour, leading to further congestion.



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PROTEST OVER PENSION Univ teachers carry on strike

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Academic and administrative activities at public universities across the country remain halted due to the indefinite strike by teachers, demanding the reinstatement of the teachers' pension scheme.

Prof Nizamul Hoque Bhuiyan, secretary general of Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers' Association (FBUTA) and president of Dhaka University Teachers Association, said they will continue their movement until their demands are met.

Teachers of 35 public universities have been refraining from work since Monday, demanding the reinstatement of the previous pension facilities instead of the newly introduced "Prottoy" scheme of the Universal Pension System.

Besides, Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader, while talking to reporters at the secretariat yesterday, said the government is closely monitoring the ongoing movements of the university teachers against a new pension scheme.

Quader, also the road transport and bridges minister, said he has been in touch with the teachers but couldn't specify when a meeting would be held.

Meanwhile, Dhaka University Teachers Association

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

11.4pc in Bangladesh thalassemia carriers

Says BBS study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 11.4 percent of people in the country are thalassemia carriers, according to a new study by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS).

According to BBS data, 11.9 percent of men are thalassemia carriers, while the percentage is 11.2 among women.

However, there is no government data on the number of thalassemia patients in the country or how many children have thalassemia.

Thalassemia is an inherited blood disorder that results in abnormal haemoglobin, leading to anaemia. A carrier of thalassaemia is someone who carries at least one of the faulty genes that causes thalassaemia, but does not have it themselves.

The findings of “National Thalassemia Survey 2024,” for which the blood of 8,680 people was tested across the country, were presented at BBS auditorium in the capital

According to the survey, the highest number of thalassemia carriers are found in Rangpur division (27.70 percent), followed by Rajshahi (11.30 percent) and Chattogram (11.20 percent). Dhaka division has 8.60 percent of the carriers.

yesterday.

Of the carriers, 11.9 percent are 14 to 19-year-olds, 12 percent are 20 to 24-year-olds, 10.3 percent are 25 to 29, and 11.3 percent are 30 to 35, the study result showed.

According to the survey, the highest number of thalassemia carriers are found

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



Chief of Air Staff Air Marshal Hasan Mahmood Khan being adorned with the rank badge of Air Chief Marshal by Chief of Army Staff General Waker-Uz-Zaman and Chief of Naval Staff Admiral M Nazmul Hassan in presence of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Gono Bhaban yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

Armed forces, a symbol of our sovereignty

PM tells event marking 49th anniversary of PGR

AGENCIES

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said her government has taken measures to make the armed forces more developed as they are the symbol of Bangladesh's sovereignty.

The premier said this while addressing a programme arranged at PGR Headquarters in Dhaka Cantonment on the occasion of the 49th founding anniversary of President Guard Regiment (PGR), reports BBS.

She greeted the PGR members on the occasion of its founding anniversary

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Shrimp fry collection goes on despite ban

Experts, locals blame lax monitoring of authorities

SIFAYET ULLAH, Ctg

Despite a ban in place on collecting shrimp fries, the illegal activity has been going on unabated in Sangu and Karnaphuli rivers as well as the Bay of Bengal in Chattogram in broad daylight. This illegal activity is a big threat to marine ecology as it endangers fries of other fish species as well since those are largely discarded after being caught, according to experts.

Locals alleged that the authorities concerned have turned a blind eye to the menace.

The government imposed a ban on collection of shrimp fries from the coastal areas in September 2000.

Visiting different points on the Sangu river and the Bay in Banskhali upazila, this correspondent saw collectors catching shrimp fries using "pata jal", a type of net that is also

banned.

Abul Kalam, 55, a collector from Chantua union, said catching shrimp fries is more profitable than fishing in the sea.

He claimed to have no other option to earn a livelihood for his six-member family.

Collectors sell 100 fries of Galda and Bagda varieties at Tk 35-50 to brokers after catching those from the sea and river between April and August, during the full moon and new moon.

Most collectors admitted that fries of other species get damaged while catching shrimp fries using finely-meshed "pata jal".

The fisheries department has no data regarding the ecological damage of these illegal activities.

However, a March 2024 study by Md Abdulla Monzer, a researcher from Institute of Marine Sciences at

Chittagong University, showed that existing shrimp fry catching methods have led to accidental capture and death of fish fries of other varieties.

Due to illegal shrimp fry catching, the Sangu river can incur a loss of fisheries resources worth over Tk 87 lakh annually, the study also found.

Monzer called for immediate action to tackle the dual concern of ecological degradation and economic loss due to unabated shrimp fry catching.

The upazila administration, river police, and fisheries department conduct occasional drives and seize small quantities of illegally caught fries, but the perpetrators are never brought to the book, alleged businessmen from fisheries sector.

Sribas Chandra Chanda, district fisheries officer, claimed they are seizing fries and banned nets regularly even amid a manpower shortage.



'These are just rumours'

Say police on sudden rise in 'missing children' cases

STAR REPORT

"Breaking news! In the last 48 hours, 35 children have gone missing in Dhaka and Chattogram. Be vigilant."

Since Saturday morning, such social media posts have gone viral on different Facebook groups. It has spread panic among the people.

Police, however, dismissed the claims as rumours. They said filing missing diaries is a regular phenomenon, and many children return home after a short while.

In a statement, the Police Headquarters (PHQ) said some recent social media posts related to "missing children" have come to their notice. Such posts are mere rumours.

The PHQ is requesting all not to be confused or panicked by such rumours. If people spread such rumours, legal action will be taken against them.

MISSING DIARIES FILED REGULARLY

According to the database, at least 76 missing diaries were filed in the first seven days of this month in all 50 police stations of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

The figure was 260 in June, 199 in May, 221 in April, 213 in March, 217 in February, and 210 in January.

Kh Mahid Uddin, additional commissioner (crime and operations) of the DMP, said

reports of 35 children going missing within 48 hours is incorrect.

Mahid said 33 GDs were filed with different police stations in connection with missing children in 72 hours from May 4 to May 6.

Between June 4 and 6, at least 36 GDs were filed in 72 hours. Similarly, 32 GDs were filed in 72 hours from July 4 to 6.

In most cases, the children came back to their families within a short time, he added.

For instance, Mohammad Mohsin, officer-in-charge of Teigaon Police Station of DMP, in a social media post mentioned a boy left home to avoid studies.

The mother sought police help to trace the missing child and police found him shortly afterwards, he added.

POLICE PREPARING LISTS

In Chattogram, police are compiling lists of missing individuals, particularly children, in response to viral social media posts, said Niskriti Chakma, deputy commissioner (DC-Crime) of Chattogram Metropolitan Police.

Authorities are verifying reports to distinguish genuine cases from instances where children have temporarily left home due to familial pressures or personal reasons, said Abu Tyeb Md Arif Hossein, additional superintendent of police of the Chattogram Special Branch.

People suffer

FROM PAGE 3

Delwar Hossain, a pickup driver transporting ceramic goods, found himself stuck at Karwan Bazar for more than an hour.

"It took me three and a half hours to reach here from Dhamrai," he said. "The students' blockades have brought everything to a halt. Will causing us such distress help them achieve their demands?" he asked.

Private sector employee Hasan Uddin said, "Everyone is walking back home. I walked for 40 minutes from Kakrail intersection to Karwan Bazar."

Salam Hossain, who drives for a ride-sharing app, was stuck at Shabbagh intersection from 3:00pm to 7:30pm. "There was a teacher in my car who was forced to leave the vehicle and walk at 4:00pm due to a lack of alternatives," he said.

The protests, dubbed the "Bangla Blockade" programme, also caused hardship for rickshaw pullers like Soheb Miah. "I couldn't get a single trip all day," he said.

"I pleaded with the students to let me pass, but they refused. If my rickshaw doesn't run, I don't earn a living. I've been stuck here in Shabbagh since 3:00pm," he said.

Meanwhile, agitating students declared to block important intersections of the capital and highways adjacent to colleges and universities across the country today.

Univ teachers carry on strike

FROM PAGE 3

Association, those at Jagannath University, Rajshahi University, Chittagong University, Rajshahi University of Engineering & Technology and Comilla University, among many others, continued movement to press home their demand.

Teachers at these universities abstained from work, leading to a standstill situation.

Jagannath University teachers held a programme on the campus at 12:00pm.

Sheikh Mashrik Hasan, general secretary of the JnU Teachers' Association, said, "We want to return

to our students. To protect the dignity and honour of teachers and save higher education from destruction, we demand withdrawal of the discriminatory pension notification."

At Chittagong University, teachers also held a sit-in on the university premises.

Prof ABM Abu Noman, secretary of the CU Teachers' Association, said, "This scheme is harmful to university teachers. With this scheme, meritorious students won't be attracted to this profession. Eventually, the nation will suffer. If there is no positive decision for us, our agitation will intensify."

At Rajshahi University, Omor Faruq, general secretary of RUTA, said, "This pension scheme will place our next generation in a difficult situation. Our movement is not only for us but also for the next generation, who want to enter the teaching profession."

Teachers of 35 public universities have been refraining from work since Monday, demanding the reinstatement of the previous pension facilities instead of the newly introduced "Prottoy" scheme of the Universal Pension System.

A flood the north

FROM PAGE 5

"The dyke will be repaired in the dry season," said Rakibul.

In Lalmonirhat, floodwaters from the Dharla River have affected three unions in the shoal areas under Sadar upazila, leaving more than 5,000 people waterlogged. The Dharla was flowing 18cm above danger level at Shishulbari Point yesterday morning, according to BWDB officials.

In Sirajganj, at least 83,000 people from around 18,000 families have been marooned due to the Jamuna River's flooding.

A total of 34 unions in the district have become inundated, and 6,497 hectares of croplands are submerged.

Additionally, 57 primary schools have become waterlogged.

The Jamuna was flowing 54cm and 61cm above danger level at Kazipur Point and Sirajganj Hard Point, respectively.

In Thakurgaon, low-lying areas have been inundated as the Tangon River swelled over the past two days due to downpours and upstream water. At least 800 families in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila are marooned, with around 200 families taking shelter in educational institutions.

Floodwaters have damaged embankments and roads in the upazila, with the most affected areas from DC slum, Monshipara, Khalpara, Senua, Chanmaripara, Rajagaon, Akcha, Mohammadpur,

and Nargoon unions.

Local administration has started distributing food materials among flood victims at temporary shelters. "Measures have been taken to address the damage to the river embankment at Kharibari and Collegepara," said Golam Zakaria, executive engineer of BWDB in Thakurgaon.

Officials from the Local Government Engineering Department and Thakurgaon municipality are working to repair the damaged roads. The floodwater is expected to recede if there is no further rain in the coming days.

Sisters die

FROM PAGE 5

also lost our two daughters on the same day. My wife has become sick. We are in dire straits, but it seems the authorities concerned have abandoned us," said Shahadat.

Kaliganj Union Parishad member Mohammad Ali, who visited the family, confirmed that no relief has reached the 500 affected families in his ward.

Kaliganj UP Chairman Riazul Islam Pradhan said he has discussed the matter with the upazila nirbahi officer.

Sibbir Ahmed, UNO of Nageshwari upazila, assured that the affected families will receive government assistance soon.

11.4pc in Bangladesh thalassemia

FROM PAGE 3

in Rangpur division (27.70 percent), followed by Rajshahi (11.30 percent) and Chattogram (11.20 percent). Dhaka division has 8.60 percent of the carriers.

Moderating the event, Mohammed Mizanur Rahman, director general of BBS, said the findings of this research

will play an important role in policymaking on thalassemia.

M u h a m m a d Wahiduzzaman, secretary for Statistics and Informatics Division, said, "Being a thalassemia carrier does not mean an individual is a thalassemia patient. Rather, when one carrier marries another, the disease can occur in

their children."

Thalassemia leads to a condition called anaemia, characterised by weakness, fatigue, feeling faint, for shortness of breath, and stunted growth, he added.

Md Shahiduzzaman Sarker, state minister for planning, and Dr Shahnaz Arefin, additional secretary of Health Services Division, also spoke at the event.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Executive Engineer
District: Bagerhat
www.lged.gov.bd

e-Tender Notice (OTM) : 01/2024-2025

Memo No: 46.02.0100.000.07.038.24-3134 Date: 07-07-2024.

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of stated below:

Tender IDs	Package Description & No.	Last Date & Time of Depositing Document fees
1002125	(a) Improvement of Haldibunia - Deshekhand Road By BC from Ch: 00m - 1000m [Road ID: 201584050] [Salvage Cost: 29,05,038] (b) Improvement of Mongla Chatterhat GCCR at Moukhali - Taibunia - Dattermate By BC from Ch: 00m - 1270m [Road ID: 201584013] [Salvage Cost: 11,31,880 tk.] [Mongla] [Bagerhat] [3rd Call] & Bag/YR-74/FY 2023-24.	24.07.2024 Time : 5:00 PM
1002126	(a) Improvement of Mongla - Chatterhat GC Road at Taibunia - Bururia School Road By BC from Ch: 00m - 1500m [Road ID: 201584017] [Salvage Cost: 39,73,242 tk.] (b) Improvement of Mongla - Chatterhat GCCR Road at Taibunia - Mithakhali Bazar Road By BC from Ch: 1000m - 2000m [Road ID: 201584019] [Salvage Cost: 10,22,315 tk.] [Mongla] [Bagerhat] [3rd Call] & Bag/YR-73/FY 2023-24.	24.07.2024 Time : 5:00 PM
1002127	Improvement of Kaliganj Bazar - Mollikarbar UP Road By BC from Ch.2650m-3546m [Road ID 201733010] [Salvage Value: 13,78,707.00 Tk.] [Rampal] [Bagerhat] [5th Call] & Bag/UNR-05/FY 2023-24.	21.07.2024 Time : 5:00 PM

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender shall be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies shall be accepted.

To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered Banks branches.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>).

(Md. Sharifuzzaman)
Executive Engineer
Phone: 02-479942042
e-mail: xen.bagerhat@lged.gov.bd

GD- 18

ফ্র্যাট বিক্রয়

জলশাসনে EYRIE ব্রাজেবন্ডে শাস্ত্র প্রণালীর তৈরি ৪৪৫০ বর্গফুটের দক্ষিণমুখী লান্ডারিয়াস সদ্য তৈরি ফ্র্যাট বিক্রয়। কারপারিং ২টি, রোড-৫০, গুলশান-২, সেভেল-৫, ফোন: ০১৭৯৯০০০০০৭

PRAYER TIMING

JULY 8

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 4-10 12-45 5-00 6-55 8-17

JAMAAT 4-45 1-15 5-15 7-00 8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH
HIGH COURT DIVISION
(STATUTORY ORIGINAL JURISDICTION)
COMPANY MATTER NO. 578 OF 2024

IN THE MATTER OF:
An application under section 233 of the Companies Act, 1994,
AND IN THE MATTER OF:
Md. Shofiqul Islam VsPetitioner

The RJSC and othersRespondents

Notice is hereby given that a petition under section 233 of the Companies Act 1994 for cancellation of all resolutions passed at any time without serving notice upon the petitioner in any meeting of the Board of Directors and/or in general meetings of Aman Feed PLC and for other reliefs was presented to the Hon'ble High Court Division by the above petitioner and that on 27.06.2024 the Hon'ble Court presided over by Mr. Justice K. M. Kamrul Kader was pleased to admit the said petition and the said petition is directed to be heard before the Hon'ble Court, and any one else interested in the matter may appear before the Hon'ble Court on the date fixed for hearing either personally or through duly appointed Advocate. Copy of the petition may be obtained from the undersigned on payment of prescribed fees.

Morshed Ahmed Khan, Barrister-at-Law
Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh
Tropical Park View, Flat # C-3, 9/1-9/4 Free School Street, Kathalbagan, Dhaka.

GD-21

Chittagong Dry Dock Limited
Bangladesh Navy
East Patenga, Chattogram, Bangladesh
Phone: +88 02333301117, Mobile: +8801769744450
Fax: +88 02333301123, E-mail: commerce@cdcl.gov.bd, contact@cdcl.gov.bd
Website: www.cdcl.gov.bd

23.02.1565.341.53.006.24.56 Dated: 07 July 2024

INVITATION FOR TENDER

Sl. No.	Particulars	Date
1.	Procuring Entity	Chittagong Dry Dock Ltd
2.	Invitation for	Tender Documents For MS PLATE (MARINE GRADE-A) & MS ANGLE (MARINE GRADE Q235B) (Detail Technical Specifications Mentioned in Tender Document)
3.	Reference No	23.02.1565.341.53.006.24.57 Date: 07 July 2024
4.	Tender Closing	23 July 2024 at 12:15 PM
5.	Tender Opening	23 July 2024 at 12:30 PM

N.B. All other relevant terms and conditions are available at CDDL website (www.cdcl.gov.bd)

Head of Commerce & Purchase Department

TANVIR AHAMMAD TALUKDAR
Commander BN
For Managing Director

GD-20

বঙ্গমাতা শেখ ফজিলাতুন্নেছা মুজিব বিজ্ঞান ও প্রযুক্তি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
মেলাদহ, জামালপুর-২০১২
ই-মেইল: registrar@bsfmstu.ac.bd, ওয়েবসাইট: www.bsfmstu.ac.bd
Ref: 37.01.0044.526.02.024.23 Date: 07.07.2024

e-Tender Notice

e-Tenders are hereby invited in the National e-gp portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of the works stated as below:

Tender ID	Package No	Name of Work	Last Selling Date & Time	Closing & Opening Date & Time
996102	37.01.0044.52 6.02.024.23	Supply, Installation, Testing, and Commissioning of Power System Lab at BSFMSTU	22-Jul-2024 17:00	23-Jul-2024 14:15

This is an online tender notice, where only e-Tender will be accepted through the National e-GP portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) and no offline/hard copy will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP system portal is required. Tender security will be deposited online at any branch of registered banks. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP system portal and e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Dr. Md. Rasidul Islam
Chairman, Dept. of EEE
BSFMSTU, Jamalpur.
Phone: 02223-377525
e-mail: eee@bsfmstu.ac.bd

GD-21

A flood the north will remember

STAR REPORT

This year, the flood in the north has been the worst in recent memory. And it continues to worsen.

New areas in Kurigram, Sirajganj, Lalmonirhat and Thakurgaon, Gaibandha and more are being inundated every day.

In Kurigram, over two lakh people are affected by flooding as the Brahmaputra, Dudhkumar, and Dharla rivers are flowing above danger levels.

The Brahmaputra was 67cm above danger level at Chilmari Point, the Dudhkumar 51cm above danger level at Pateshwari Point, and the Dharla 31cm above danger level at Bridge Point as of yesterday morning, according to the Bangladesh Water Development Board.

"Despite a slight decrease in the Brahmaputra's water level, the overall flood situation is worsening due to rising water levels in the Dharla and Dudhkumar rivers," said Rakibul Hasan, executive engineer of BWDB in Kurigram.

Floodwaters from the Dudhkumar caused a 120-metre dyke collapse in Nageshwari upazila, inundating 17 villages and affecting at least 3,000 families. Many residents have taken refuge on higher ground with their belongings and cattle.

The floodwaters have also damaged vast areas of croplands and Aman paddy seedbeds.

Temporary shelters have been opened for flood victims, and efforts are underway to check water flow through the collapsed dyke by dumping sand-filled geo-bags.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



'We could only save our lives'

Jamuna erosion leaves 100 families homeless

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, back from Sirajganj

It was the night of June 28. Suddenly, Ajuba Begum felt a tremor in the ground that sent shivers down her spine.

It could only mean one thing – the Jamuna, which was at least half a kilometre away from her home in Haat Pachil village under Shahzadpur upazila of Sirajganj, has reached dangerously close.

Ajuba took a glance outside to only confirm the inevitable.

Panicked villagers scrambled for safety, as the water devoured the land beside her home.

Inside, her family tried to salvage whatever they could from the approaching Jamuna. But it was too late.

Within minutes, water started breaching their residence. That is when Ajuba knew it was time. She took a deep breath, looked back at her home for one last time, and then ran for her life along with family members.

Within half an hour, the house went beneath the cold embrace of the river.

"Only a week ago, I was living happily with my family in our house. Now we are homeless," Ajuba said as she shared her story.

"We could only save our lives, nothing else," she said.

Ajuba is not alone. Jamuna devoured around 100 homesteads in the village as its erosion has turned severe, leaving around 200 people homeless.

The ongoing floods are only worsening the situation.

Both river erosion and floods are interconnected processes, and they can influence each other in various ways.

Over 1,000 schools closed in Sylhet, Rangpur

STAR REPORT

Over 1,000 educational institutions remain closed in the Sylhet and Rangpur regions due to the ongoing flood.

In Sylhet, Sunamganj, and Moulvibazar districts, over 800 educational institutions remain closed. According to district primary education offices, 594 primary schools have been affected by the floods, with 356 in Sylhet, 102 in Sunamganj, and 136 in Moulvibazar. Many of these schools are either flooded or being used as shelters.

In addition, 211 higher secondary schools, colleges, and madrasas are also closed in these districts.

Warning Centre of Bangladesh Water Development Board has reported that the water level in the northeastern region is gradually reducing, with a downtrend expected to continue for the next 72 hours.

Meanwhile, in Rangpur division, education for hundreds of primary school students has been severely disrupted due to recent floods.

In Gangachhara upazila, five primary schools have been closed for the past seven days as flash floods inundated low-lying areas due to rising water levels in the Teesta River. Additionally, 39 schools in Kurigram, Gaibandha, Rangpur, and Lalmonirhat districts have suffered

Education, said education services in 376 schools in these three districts have been suspended for the past seven days due to flooding. Seven schools, three in Kurigram and four in Gaibandha, have been washed away by river erosion.

Efforts are underway to relocate vulnerable schools to prevent further erosion damage.

As floodwaters recede, preparations are being made to resume education in the affected schools, although the majority remain closed. Teachers have been instructed to cover their syllabuses quickly once schools reopen, he added.

In Pargachha upazila, Char

Sisters die from electrocution in flood-hit village

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

A family in Kurigram's Nageshwari upazila is devastated after two sisters were electrocuted by a submerged live cable during the recent floods.

The victims, Sumaiya Akhter, 12, and Masuma Akhter, 7, died instantly when they came into contact with a live electric cable while crossing floodwaters on a raft.

Their father, Shahadat Hossain, a 50-year-old sharecropper, and mother Amiran Begum, 45, are still in shock

Their father, Shahadat Hossain, a 50-year-old sharecropper, and mother Amiran Begum, 45, are still in shock since the incident took place on Friday.

since the incident took place on Friday.

The family resides in Begunbari village, a remote area heavily affected by the swelling Dudhkumar river.

According to locals, the tragedy occurred as the sisters were on their way to their aunt's house, 400 metres away, when Sumaiya got entangled in the live cable from an irrigation pump. Masuma tried to save her, but got electrocuted herself.

Despite the family's plight, local authorities have yet to provide any support.

"We were already suffering, and then we



River erosion can change the shape and course of a river, reducing its capacity to carry water and leading to floods. Conversely, floods increase water flow and speed, intensifying erosion of riverbanks and riverbeds.

"The river has reached my house and eroded away a portion of it. Soon it will engulf the remaining as the erosion is only worsening over time," said Omar Ali of Haat Pachil village.

The victims blamed the Bangladesh Water Development Board for the situation.

"Jamuna's erosion isn't anything new, it has been continuing for years, but what did the authority do about it? Nothing," alleged Abed Ali of the village.

Md Najmul Hossain, BWDB's sub-divisional engineer, said a Tk 650 crore project to protect a six-kilometre stretch is underway and expected to be completed by next year.

The erosion and flooding have also affected Kojuri and Jalalpur union under Shahzadpur upazila.

Md Kamruzzaman, the upazila's UNO, said they have listed 78 victims and planned to rehabilitate them soon.



This includes 73 in Sylhet, 80 in Sunamganj, and 58 in Moulvibazar.

The overall flood situation in the region has not improved significantly, with the Kushiara river still overflowing at several points in Sylhet, Moulvibazar, and Habiganj.

The Surma is below the danger level at most points except Sylhet's Kanaighat Point, where it remains 48cm above the danger level.

The Flood Forecasting and

structural damage from floods and river erosion.

According to the Rangpur Division Department of Primary Education, around 411 primary schools in 15 upazilas, including Kurigram, Gaibandha, and Lalmonirhat, have been affected by the floods. Fifty-one schools are currently serving as shelters.

Md Muzahidul Islam, acting divisional deputy director of the Rangpur Department of Primary

Gabura Primary School suspended classes after floodwaters washed away the connecting bank.

Headteacher Akram Hossain expressed concerns about the school's ongoing vulnerability to erosion.

Meanwhile, locals have noted repeated damage to schools near the Teesta, Dharla, Brahmaputra, and Dudhkumar rivers, with some schools being relocated multiple times due to erosion.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলীর কার্যালয়, সওজ সড়ক বিভাগ, রংপুর email: eeran@rhd.gov.bd

স্মারক নং-৩৫.০১.৮৫৪৯.৪৬৭.০০.০০০.২৪-২০২০

তারিখঃ-০৭-০৭-২০২৪

সীমিত দরপত্র পদ্ধতিতে ঠিকাদার তালিকাভুক্তি/লাইসেন্স নবায়ন বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, নিম্নবর্ণিত সময়সূচি মোতাবেক রংপুর সড়ক বিভাগের ২০২৪-২০২৫ অর্থ বছরের সীমিত দরপত্র পদ্ধতিতে ঠিকাদার তালিকাভুক্তি/লাইসেন্স নবায়ন করা হবে। আগ্রহী ব্যক্তি/প্রতিষ্ঠান ঠিকাদারী লাইসেন্স নবায়ন/তালিকাভুক্তি করার জন্য নিম্নে বর্ণিত শর্তানুসারে আবেদন করতে পারবেন।

ছক-১ (নবায়ন)

বিবরণ	নবায়ন ফি (টাকা)	ভ্যাট (১৫%) (টাকা)	বিনা জরিমানায় নবায়নের সময়সীমা	৫০% জরিমানায় নবায়নের সময়সীমা	১০০% জরিমানায় নবায়নের সময়সীমা
ঠিকাদারী লাইসেন্স নবায়ন	২০০০/-	৩০০/-	০৭-০৭-২০২৪ হতে ০৬-০৮-২০২৪ পর্যন্ত	১১-০৮-২০২৪ হতে ২৯-০৮-২০২৪ পর্যন্ত	০১-০৯-২০২৪ হতে ৩০-০৯-২০২৪ পর্যন্ত

ছক-২ (নতুন তালিকাভুক্তি)

বিবরণ	তালিকাভুক্তি ফরমের মূল্য (টাকা)	তালিকাভুক্তি ফি (টাকা)	ভ্যাট ১৫% (টাকা)	তালিকাভুক্তি ফরম সংগ্রহ ও জমা প্রদানের সময়সীমা
ঠিকাদারী প্রতিষ্ঠান তালিকাভুক্তি	২০০০/-	৫০০০/-	৭৫০/-	০৭-০৭-২০২৪ হতে ০৬-০৮-২০২৪ পর্যন্ত

শর্তাবলীঃ

- ২০২৪-২০২৫ অর্থ বছরের লাইসেন্স নবায়নের জন্য অত্র দপ্তরের হিসাব শাখায় লাইসেন্স নবায়ন ফি ও ভ্যাট জমা পূর্বক মানি রশিদ সংগ্রহ করতে হবে।
- নতুন ঠিকাদার তালিকাভুক্তির জন্য ১০০০/- টাকা মূল্যের তালিকাভুক্তি ফরম অত্র অফিস হতে সংগ্রহ পূর্বক ফরমে উল্লিখিত সকল শর্তাবলী পূরণ করে দাখিল করতে হবে। তালিকাভুক্তি কমিটি কর্তৃক যাচাই-বাছাই করে উত্তীর্ণ ব্যক্তি/প্রতিষ্ঠানের তালিকাভুক্তি ফি গ্রহণ পূর্বক ঠিকাদার তালিকাভুক্ত করা হবে।
- নির্ধারিত তারিখের পরে কোনক্রমে ঠিকাদারী লাইসেন্স নবায়ন/তালিকাভুক্তি ফি গ্রহণ করা হবে না।
- ঠিকাদারী লাইসেন্স নবায়ন/তালিকাভুক্তির ক্ষেত্রে কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্তই চূড়ান্ত বলে গণ্য হবে।
- লাইসেন্স নবায়নের ক্ষেত্রে শুধুমাত্র ২০২৩-২০২৪ অর্থ বছরে নবায়নকৃত লাইসেন্স বহিঃ ২০২৪-২০২৫ অর্থ বছরে নবায়ন করা হবে।
- সীমিত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি প্রয়োগের ক্ষেত্রে পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা-২০০৮ এর বিধি ৬৩ অনুসরণযোগ্য এবং এ তালিকাভুক্তিকরণ দরপত্র আশ্রয়/কাজ প্রদানের নিশ্চয়তা বিধান করে না।

মোঃ সাজেদুর রহমান
পরিচিতি নং ৬০২১৬৭
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, সওজ
সড়ক বিভাগ, রংপুর

GD-19

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Dhaka South City Corporation
Office of the Project Director
Dhaka City Neighborhood Upgrading Project (DCNUP)
Level 10, West Block, Room -919
Nagar Bhaban, Fulbaria, Dhaka-1000

"e-Tender Notice" (Corrigendum-03)

e-tender are invited in e-GP portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by Project Director, DCNUP, Dhaka South City Corporation for the procurement of:

Sl	Tender ID, Ref No	Description of items	Start Date & Time	Last Selling Date and Time		Tender Closing Date & Time	
				Previous	Amended	Previous	Amended
01	Tender ID: 986468, Ref. No. 46.207.014.09.10.282 2024, Date: 24.04.2024	Works: Improvement and Construction works of Mayor Sheikh Taposh Bridge (Loharpool)-Contract Package No. DCNUP/W-03/KAC	27-May-2024 15:00 BST	07-July-2024 16:00 BST	14-July-2024 16:00 BST	08-July-2024 13:00 BST	15-July-2024 13:00 BST

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in e-GP portal and offline/hard copy(s) will not be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>).

(Rajib Khadem)
Project Director, PIU,
Dhaka City Neighborhood Upgrading Project (DCNUP)
Dhaka South City Corporation
Tel. 880-2223350461
e-mail: pddcnupsc24@gmail.com

মেমো নং ৪৬.২০৭.০১৪.০৯.১০.২৮২.২০২৪/৫৫২

Make a 'plan to control immigration'

Ex-PM Blair lays out 'advice' to Britain's new leader

AFP, London

Former Labour prime minister Tony Blair made an early intervention in British politics yesterday after Keir Starmer's landslide election victory, urging him to have a "plan to control immigration".

Blair warned Starmer, who will visit Scotland on his second full day as prime minister, that the anti-immigration Reform UK Party also posed a challenge to Labour, not just the Conservative Party.

The Reform UK party, led by Brexit firebrand Nigel Farage, maximised the damage to the Conservatives at the election by splitting the right-wing vote.

It won five seats in the Westminster parliament and 14 percent of the vote, prompting Farage to warn that it will target Labour voters next.

In a piece headlined "My advice to Keir Starmer", Blair wrote in the Sunday Times that "all over the western



world, traditional political parties are suffering disruption".

"Where the system allows new entrants to emerge, they are running riot everywhere. Look at France or Italy.

"We need a plan to control immigration. If we don't have rules, we get prejudices," he added.

Blair, the only Labour leader to lead his party to three consecutive election victories starting with his own landslide win in 1997, couched his "advice" in an article about harnessing the power of artificial intelligence (AI).

He said he believed digital ID technology offered the best solution to controlling irregular immigration, a key issue on the doorstep during the election campaign.

"We should move as the world is moving to digital ID. If not, new border controls will have to be highly effective," he wrote.

Other suggestions included "a tough new approach to law and order" due to the fact that "at present criminal elements are modernising faster than law enforcement".



Displaced Palestinians carry belongings as they walk in front of a destroyed building in Deir el-Balah in the central Gaza Strip yesterday. An Israeli air strike on a house in the town of Zawayda, in central Gaza, killed at least six people and wounded several others.

PHOTO: AFP

'Bulldozed and shelled'

Gaza farming sector ravaged by Israeli offensive now in its 10th month

AFP, Palestinian Territories

Tank tracks still fresh on his field in southern Gaza's coastal area of Al-Mawasi, Nedal Abu Jazar lamented the damage offensive has wrought on his trees and crops.

"Look at the destruction," the 39-year-old farmer told AFP, holding an uprooted tomato plant. He pointed to his greenhouse's metal frame and its white plastic sheeting strewn across the plot, inside an area designated a humanitarian zone by the Israeli army.

"People were sitting peacefully on their farmland ... and suddenly tanks arrived and fired at us, and then there were (air) strikes." Abu Jazar said the Israeli operation in late June destroyed about 40 dunams (10 acres) of land and killed five labourers.

His is not an isolated case. Across Gaza, 57 percent of agricultural land has been damaged since the offensive began, according to a joint assessment published in June by the UN's agriculture and satellite imagery agencies, FAO and UNOSAT.

The damage threatens Gaza's food sovereignty, Matieu Henry of the Food and Agriculture Organization told AFP, because 30 percent of the Palestinian territory's food consumption comes from agricultural land.

"If almost 60 percent of the agricultural land has been damaged, this may have a significant impact in terms of food security and food supply."

The Gaza Strip exported \$44.6 million worth of produce in 2022, mainly to the West Bank and Israel, with strawberries and tomatoes representing 60 percent of the total, according to FAO data.

Across Gaza, 57 pc of agricultural land has been damaged since the offensive began: FAO

The damage assessment on the agricultural land comes as the UN's hunger monitoring system estimated in June that 96 percent of Gaza faces high levels of acute food insecurity.

Contacted by AFP, the Israeli army said it "does not intentionally harm agricultural land".

In a statement, it said Hamas "often operates from within orchards, fields and agricultural land".

The impact is worse in the Palestinian territory's north, where 68 percent of agricultural land is damaged, although the southern area encompassing parts of

Al-Mawasi has seen the most significant increase in recent months due to operations.

UNOSAT's Lars Bromley told AFP the damage is generally "due to the impact of activities such as heavy vehicle activity, bombing, shelling, and other conflict-related dynamics, which would be things like areas burning".

Near the southern city of Rafah, 34-year-old farmer Ibrahim Dheir feels helpless after the destruction of 20 dunams (five acres) of land he used to lease, and all his farming equipment with it.

"As soon as the Israeli bulldozers and tanks entered the area, they began bulldozing cultivated lands with various trees, including fruits, citrus, guava, as well as crops like spinach, molokhia (jute mallow), eggplant, squash, pumpkin and sunflower seedlings," he said, before listing more damage in a testimony of the area's past agricultural abundance.

Dheir, whose family exported its produce to the West Bank and Israel, now feels destitute. "We used to depend on agriculture for our livelihood day by day, but now there's no work or income."

Farmer Abu Mahmoud Za'arab also finds himself with "no source of income". The 60-year-old owns 15 dunams (3.7 acres) of land on which crops and fruit trees used to grow.

Biden back on campaign trail as pressure mounts

AFP, Washington



US President Joe Biden headed back out on the campaign trail yesterday, desperate to salvage his re-election bid as senior Democrats meet to discuss growing calls that he quit the White House race.

The 81-year-old Democrat kicked off a grueling week with two campaign rallies in the battleground state of Pennsylvania, before hosting the Nato leaders' summit in Washington. He will do so under an increasingly unforgiving spotlight, as pressure mounts for him to drop out after his disastrous debate against Donald Trump last month ignited panic over his age and fitness to serve another four years.

Biden has remained defiant, unequivocally declaring -- at a rally, to reporters and on social media -- that he is fit to serve, the only one who can defeat Trump, and staying in the race.

"I beat Trump in 2020. I'm going to beat him again in 2024," his campaign social media account posted later on Saturday.

But a televised interview with ABC News on Friday has failed to quell concerns. His next major test in the public eye will be a press conference scheduled for Thursday, during the Nato summit.

Eight killed in gun battles in India's Jammu & Kashmir

Two soldiers among dead

AFP, New Delhi

Two soldiers and six suspected militants were killed in two separate gun battles in Indian's Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), police said yesterday.

Kashmir police inspector general Vidhi Kumar Birdi told AFP that authorities in the disputed territory had "carried out two different operations" in villages in the Kulgam district.

Birdi said two members of the security forces had been killed, with clashes continuing in Modergram and Frisal Chinnigam villages.

"We have retrieved the bodies of two terrorists from Modergram, and four others from Frisal Chinnigam," said Birdi.

This is the latest incident in an uptick of attacks in the disputed territory.

India and Pakistan both claim Muslim-majority Kashmir in full and have fought three wars for control of the Himalayan region.

Rebel groups have waged an insurgency since 1989, demanding independence for the territory or its merger with Pakistan.

The conflict has killed tens of thousands of civilians, soldiers and rebels.

In June, nine Indian Hindu pilgrims were killed and dozens wounded when a gunman opened fire on a bus carrying them from a shrine in the southern Reasi area.

Dorival takes responsibility

FROM PAGE 12

card given to Uruguay's Nahitan Nandez in the 74th minute, Brazil failed to break the deadlock as the feisty encounter featuring a tournament-high 41 fouls finished 0-0 after 90 minutes to go to penalties.

In the shootout, Eder Militao and Douglas Luiz failed to find the net for Brazil, while Alisson Becker denied Uruguay defender Jose Maria Gimenez. However, Manuel Ugarte converted the winning spot kick to send Uruguay into the last four and Brazil to an early exit.

Voter turnout high

FROM PAGE 12

through the European Union at a time when populist parties are strengthening support across the continent.

Voting was due to close at 6:00 pm in towns and small cities and 8:00 pm in bigger cities. Pollsters was due to deliver initial projections based on early counts from a sample of voting stations at 8:00 pm.

Macron called the snap election after his ticket was trounced by the RN in European Parliament elections last month, a move apparently aimed at wrong-footing his rivals in a legislative election. The vote is pitting a centrist government against opposition movements from the left and far right.

"The country is facing three radically opposed views of society," said Olivier Grisol, a retiree, as he walked towards his polling site in the middle-class town of Conflans Sainte-

Brazil head home after earning just one win in the group stage before being defeated by Uruguay in the first knockout round.

The result also represents a downward turn for the Brazilians, who were finalists (2021) and champions (2019) in the two previous editions of the Copa.

"This is a process; in general, you come across difficulties when you're creating a team," said Dorival, whose team was without the suspended Vinicius Junior in the quarterfinal.

"This was our first official tournament, and the result was far

from what was expected ... our main objective now is to qualify for the World Cup."

Dorival, who has just eight games under his belt, defended his players after they only recently wrapped up their club campaigns before the competition.

"Many of them joined us after long seasons," Dorival said. "Considering what we saw at the training sessions and every day, I think we can still grow as a team ... many people might not understand, things are like this when you're creating a team from scratch. There are ups and downs in football."

Honorine, west of Paris, with his wife.

Opinion polls forecast Marine Le Pen's RN will emerge the dominant force as voters punish Macron over a cost of living crisis and being out of touch with the hardships people face.

However, the RN is seen failing to reach the 289-seat target that would outright hand Le Pen's 28-year-old protégé Jordan Bardella the prime minister's job with a working majority.

The far right's projected margin of victory has narrowed since Macron's centrist Together alliance and the left-wing New Popular Front (NPF) pulled scores of candidates from three-way races in the second round in a bid to unify the anti-RN vote.

"France is on the cliff edge and we don't know if we're going to jump," Raphael Glucksmann, a member of the European Parliament who led France's leftist ticket in last month's

European vote, told France Inter radio last week.

Political violence surged during the three-week campaign. Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin has said authorities recorded more than 50 physical assaults on candidates and campaigners.

Some luxury boutiques along the Champs Elysees boulevard, including the Louis Vuitton store, barricaded windows and Darmanin said he was deploying 30,000 police amid concerns of violent protests should the far right win.

A longtime pariah for many due to its history of racism and antisemitism, the RN has broadened its support beyond its traditional base along the Mediterranean coast and the de-industrialised north, tapping into voter anger at Macron over straitened household budgets, security, and immigration worries.

Hamas waiting for Israeli response

FROM PAGE 12

person was seriously wounded, police said. Hezbollah said it had fired rockets at an army base.

In Gaza, Palestinian health officials said at least 15 people were killed in separate Israeli military strikes yesterday. An Israeli airstrike in Gaza

City killed the Hamas-appointed deputy minister of labour in the Palestinian enclave, Hamas media reported.

Another air strike on a house in the town of Zawayda, in central Gaza, killed at least six people and wounded several others, while six others were killed in an air strike on a house in

western Gaza.

Tanks deepened their raids in central and northern areas of Rafah on the southern border with Egypt. Health officials there said they had recovered three bodies of Palestinians killed by Israeli fire in the eastern part of the city.

Electrocution kills five

FROM PAGE 12

Those who were in the chariot jumped from it to save themselves," he said.

"We rescued 20 injured people from the spot and hospitalised them. Four of them died at the Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital and one at the Mohammed Ali Hospital," Arup told The Daily Star.

Contacted, Khorajita Krishna Das, principal of ISKON's Bogura chapter, said, "We tried to move the procession very carefully. When the chariot came

near the electric wire, we warned the devotees so that they lower the dome. But they could not hear us due to noise."

Abdul Wadud, deputy director of the Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital, told The Daily Star that four died at the hospital as of filing of this report around 11:00pm and 38 others were undergoing treatment there. Two of the injured were in the ICU, he said.

Shafiq Amin Kajal, resident medical officer of the Mohammed Ali Hospital,

said four people were admitted there, of them Joly Rani, 35, died.

In a statement last night, Bangladesh Puja Ujjapan Parishad expressed deep shock and conveyed condolences to the bereaved family members.

Its leaders called upon the government to take effective measures for treatment of the wounded.

The local administration formed a five-member committee to investigate the incident and asked it to submit the report within 10 working days.

Quota protests bring capital to a standstill

FROM PAGE 1

from underdeveloped districts; 5 percent for members of indigenous communities and 1 percent for persons with physical disabilities.

"With due respect to the prime minister, we want to say that the students have provided the logic for the quota reform movement in 2018," said DU student Nahid Islam, one of the protest organisers under the banner of "student movement against discrimination".

The country's constitution speaks of equality for all and that goes against the quota system, he said.

"There is no point in showing us court -- we are fighting in favour of the constitution. The prime minister herself gave the verdict in favour of the quota cancellation in parliament," he said, adding that the protests will continue indefinitely.

Yesterday, several thousands college and university students gathered in front of the Dhaka University Central Library around 3:00pm in line with their earlier announcement of holding "Bangla Blockade".

They blocked the Shahbagh intersection at about 3:50pm and lifted the blockade around 8:00pm. Many protesters moved towards the Banglamotor and Sonargaon intersections at 6:00pm. They left Sonargaon intersection at about 6:50pm and Banglamotor around 7:00pm and returned to Shahbagh. A section of DU students first blocked

the Chankharpul intersection near Mayor Hanif Flyover around 3:30pm. The blocked the on and off ramp of the flyover for about four hours.

Another group of protesters also blocked the Science Lab intersection.

Meanwhile, students of Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University blocked a street near their university in the capital's Agargaon around 3:45pm, said Ahad Ali, officer-in-charge of Sher-e-Bangla Police Station.

Student also blocked the Dhaka-Chattogram, Dhaka-Aricha, Chattogram-Khagrachhari, Barishal-Kuakata and Dinajpur-Dhaka highways.

Hundreds of students of Jahangirnagar University blocked the Dhaka-Aricha highway near the campus for around two hours from 11:00am.

The protest caused a six-kilometre tailback on the highway, said AFM Sayeed, the officer-in-charge of Ashulia Police Station.

Many passengers were stuck for hours in a six-kilometre-long tailback in Kotbari crossing area of the Dhaka-Chattogram highway as the protestors from Cumilla University kept the highway blocked for four hours from 4:00pm.

Thousands of students of the University of Chittagong blocked the Chattogram-Khagrachhari highway for about two hours from around 4:00pm. "If the talented people are not evaluated properly, then there will be a brain drain," said Mubarak Hossain, a

student at the University of Chittagong's department of economics.

Hundreds of students from Barishal University kept the Barishal-Kuakata highway blocked for more than three-and-a-half hours from 11:30am, creating tailbacks on both sides of the highway.

Local and long-distance buses could not depart Nathullahad due to the protest, said Arichul Haque, the officer-in-charge of Kotwali Police Station.

Students from Hajee Mohammad Danesh Science and Technology University (HSTU) in Dinajpur blocked the Dinajpur-Dhaka highway for an hour from 11:00am, leaving hundreds of vehicles stuck.

Meanwhile, Education Minister Mohibul Hassan Chowdhury yesterday said it would not be appropriate for him to comment on the protest against the quota system as it is a sub-judice matter.

"Commenting on the matter will be tantamount to contempt of court. Any citizen of Bangladesh can comment on the street. But it is not possible to comment from a responsible place in government," he said.

The government is closely monitoring the ongoing movements of the university teachers and the students against a new pension scheme and quota in government jobs, said Awami League General Secretary Abul Kader, also the road transport and bridges minister, while talking to reporters at the secretariat.

BTI THE DAILY STAR STELLAR WOMEN-2023

Glimpses of Brilliance

bt The Daily Star STELLAR WOMEN

Spark Your Inner Power

In Bangladesh, women are forging paths of success by harnessing their inner strength to confront and overcome societal challenges. These women exemplify resilience and determination, breaking traditional roles and excelling in various sectors. Their stories of triumph not only inspire but also redefine societal norms, paving the way for broader empowerment and equality. The Daily Star and building technology and ideas ltd (bti) joined forces to launch the initiative 'Stellar Women - Spark Your Inner Power' to recognize these inspiring women. After successful completion of season 1, "bti The Daily Star Stellar Women 2023" Gala was held on June 8, 2024, at the banquet hall of Kurmitola Golf Club in the capital. At the event, twelve outstanding women from 12 different sectors in Bangladesh were honored for their exceptional accomplishments in fields ranging from development sector and technology to architecture, education, culture, corporate, agriculture, sports, writing, start-up & entrepreneurship, social welfare, and journalism. The Honorable Minister of Housing and Public Works, R.A.M. Obaidul Muktadir Chowdhury, graced the event as the chief guest.



Winners of "bti The Daily Star Stellar Women 2023" posed for a photo at the Banquet Hall of the Kurmitola Golf Club.

PHOTO COURTESY: STAR



"Now, we see that 60 percent of attendees in village high schools and colleges are women. This didn't happen overnight. The government provided various facilities to women, offered incentives and implemented numerous measures that led to their enormous empowerment."
R.A.M. OBAIDUL MUKTADIR CHOWDHURY,
Minister of Housing and Public Works



"The main theme of this whole effort is to highlight the brilliant roles that women are playing in the country. The leadership emerging at practical, enterprise, company, and small business levels is setting a trend and contributing significantly to the nation's progress."
MAHFUZ ANAM,
Editor and Publisher of The Daily Star



"Through this initiative, we're honouring those women who've been working for the society and having a profound impact in building the nation, despite facing enormous challenges. The stories of these stellar women and their determination will inspire and empower other women in the society."
FR KHAN,
Managing Director of bti



"bti has unwavering commitment towards women empowerment and with this aim bti has initiated 'bti The Daily Star Stellar Women' for those who have enormous contribution to the society in different sectors, including education, development sector, architecture, agriculture and technology."
NALAKA HETTIARACHCHI,
CEO of bti

SHAMSIN AHMED



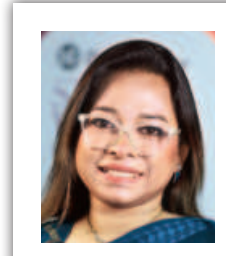
Shamsin Ahmed, the visionary founder of Identity Inclusion, was inspired by a loved one's struggle with psychosocial issues, and the subsequent bias they faced. Identity Inclusion focuses on training youth to provide psychosocial support and advocate for more inclusivity in all spheres. Over the past years, Shamsin has successfully assembled a team of social workers to assist people with severe mental illnesses and disabilities. The organization promotes the integration of individuals with special needs into mainstream society. Additionally, Shamsin offers consultancy services for disability inclusion. Through her dedicated efforts, she strives to reshape societal systems and policies, paving the way for a more inclusive world.

TASFIA TASBIN



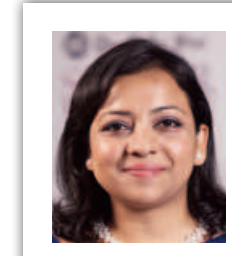
Tasfia Tasbin co-founded markopolo.ai with her friend Rubaiyat during the COVID-19 pandemic to provide digital marketing solutions for entrepreneurs. During the early stages, they partnered with some digital marketing agencies to establish their business. Their innovative product gained global recognition after being showcased at one of the world's largest product exhibitions. Currently, markopolo.ai operates in 31 countries, offering data-driven and automated digital marketing solutions that empower small businesses. Tasfia notes that many of her customers are unaware that the product is entirely developed in Bangladesh. Her contributions to the industry have earned her a spot on Forbes' 30 Under 30 list and a BIG win in 2023.

NAZLI HUSSAIN



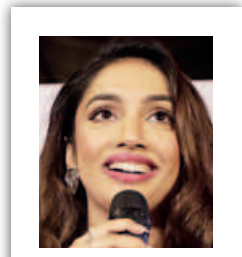
Nazli Hussain completed her education at BUET and honed her skills as a Project Manager at the British Council. With over five years of experience in architectural projects for banks, Nazli gained invaluable insights into Bangladesh's construction sector. She attributes her practical experience to her studies as pivotal in mastering the intricacies of architecture. Nazli's passion for sustainability led her to earn LEED accreditation from the U.S. Green Building Council while pursuing studies in sustainability. She proudly holds the distinction of being the country's first LEED Accredited Professional and serves as the Founder and architect at Praxis Architects. Her journey underscores a commitment to integrating sustainability into architectural practices, setting a profound example in the field.

SADIA JAFRIN



Sadia Jafrin, a pharmacy graduate, embarked on a transformative journey in 2019 when she founded the 'Grow Your Reader' Foundation. Driven by a desire to make a more significant impact on society beyond her career in pharmaceuticals, Sadia's foundation has become a beacon of educational empowerment. Recognized as an Acumen fellow in 2022 and a Top 100 Leader in Education, Sadia also serves as a Young Leader of the Queen's Commonwealth Trust, advocating for improved education for underprivileged children. The 'Grow Your Reader' Foundation has pioneered initiatives such as a mobile library (Wheels of Wisdom), Book Garage, reading circles (online book library), and a dedicated school called 'School er Baire Shikkha', in Jessore.

RIDY SHEIKH



Ridy Sheikh, born and brought up in Moscow, has maintained a strong bond with her Bangladeshi heritage due to her mother. Her passion for dance ignited at the tender age of 5 with Bangladeshi folk dance, marking the beginning of a lifelong journey in the arts. By 15, she was already serving as a junior choreographer at her school, eventually gaining recognition through her participation in 'So You Think You Can Dance', Ukraine edition. Today, Ridy stands as the founder and choreographer of Starbase Dance Studio and has also ventured into the world of fashion with her brand, Gemini. She is among Bangladesh's eight content creators selected by UNDP Bangladesh to promote Sustainable Development Goals, emphasizing clean energy and environmental conservation.

SHAMIMA AKHTER



Shamima Akhter's journey is a testament to her unwavering passion for mountaineering and her bold decision to transition from a successful 8-year NGO career to corporate leadership. Starting her career as a Communication Officer at the UN, Shamima swiftly progressed to managing USAID projects before transitioning to corporate roles at Qubee and Coca-Cola. Her ascent culminated in becoming the first Bangladeshi female director at Coca-Cola and she now holds the prestigious position of Director of Corporate Affairs, Partnerships, and Communications at Unilever Bangladesh Limited. Shamima's tenure at Unilever highlights her dedication to overcoming gender biases and fostering a gender equitable workplace. Her story inspires others to challenge norms and forge paths to success in male-dominated industries.

DR. SAKINA KHANAM



Dr. Sakina Khanam, Principal Scientific Officer at BINA (Bangladesh Institute of Nuclear Agriculture), became the Stellar Woman 2023 in Agriculture for being the leader of the team that spearheaded the development of the BINA-25 rice variety. Her keen awareness of climate related threats to agriculture motivates her quest for sustainable crop cultivation methods, crucial for regions grappling with saline soils and land scarcity. Currently, Dr. Sakina focuses on combating food insecurity in remote Bangladesh by cultivating climate resilient strains of rice, peanuts, jute, and mung beans with her team. Her pioneering efforts not only aim to boost crop yields but also reduce the nation's reliance on imports. Dr. Sakina's dedication and groundbreaking achievements in agriculture positioned her as an inspiring figure for aspiring Bangladeshi women.

SALMA AKTER MONE



Salma Akter Mone's passion for football, her favorite sport, led her to practice late at night on the streets of Netrokona, where facilities for women's sports were scarce and limited. Her breakthrough came in grade 9 when her coach recognized her talent, paving the way for her to finally play on the fields and enroll in referee courses. In 2021, Salma achieved her dream of becoming a FIFA assistant referee. By 2023, she became the first Bangladeshi female AFC Elite Assistant Referee. Salma's journey exemplifies her resilience, illustrating how perseverance and familial support can help someone overcome barriers and achieve success in professional sports.

LUTFUNNAHAR PIKI



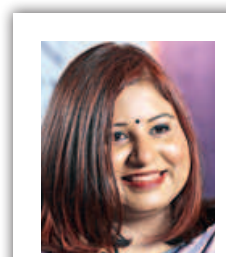
Lutfunnahar Piki embarked on a remarkable journey from becoming an Assistant Commissioner of Taxes to achieving her PhD. Her creative spirit, rekindled by her husband's encouragement, culminated in the publication of her debut novel "Otopor" in 2019, marking a significant milestone in her literary career. Piki's story is an evidence to the timeless nature of creativity, demonstrating that it can flourish at any stage of life. Her pursuits in literature began during her HSC level, when she wrote columns for 'Torun Kontho' in 'The Daily Ittefaq'. Currently serving as Additional Commissioner of Taxes at the National Board of Revenue, Piki continues to inspire with her scholarly achievements and professional dedication.

MONOSHITA AYRUANI



Monoshita Ayruani boldly challenged societal taboos surrounding women's undergarments by fostering open conversations about diversity and consulting on undergarment sizes. Recognizing Bangladesh's prowess in exporting lingerie abroad but the absence of quality options for local women, she founded SHAPE Industries Limited to provide affordable and diverse innerwear for all body types. What began with a team of 5 has grown to employ 12 individuals, driven by Monoshita's vision to empower women through inclusive fashion. SHAPE Industries not only meets a market need but also champions body positivity and dismantles stereotypes associated with lingerie, marking a transformative shift in Bangladesh's apparel sector towards inclusivity and empowering choices in women's innerwear.

TAWHIDA SHIROPA



Starting with personal funds, Tawhida Shiropa founded 'Moner Bondhu' to address mental health needs, a cause close to her heart. Overcoming initial hurdles, including securing grants, Tawhida's journey is a testament to her dedication. Her initiative initially targeted the RMG sector and its workers, organizing 5 to 7 successful programs before the pandemic. Despite challenges posed by COVID-19, Moner Bondhu continued its work, contributing to Tawhida earning international acclaim. The Tommy Hilliger Fashion Frontier Award further bolstered her motivation, recognizing her year-long efforts and commitment to improving mental health access in Bangladesh. Tawhida Shiropa's transformation from journalist to mental health entrepreneur underscores her impact in reshaping mental healthcare accessibility nationwide.

ROZINA ISLAM



Rozina Islam, now a Senior Reporter at Prothom Alo, started working with BRAC after her HSC exams. Even after taking a gap, she persisted in her career path, eventually contributing to 'Aiker Kagoj', where she wrote for the business page. Her scholarship in Delhi in 2005 played a pivotal role in shaping her journalism career. Rozina's steadfast dedication to exposing corruption earned her the prestigious 'Anti-Corruption Champions' Award from the US Department of State in 2022. The previous year, she was honored with the 'Free Press Award' in Amsterdam, recognizing her complete dedication to journalism amidst challenging circumstances.

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

Govt should reform the quota system

Public service recruitment should be based primarily on merit

The revival of the student movement for reformation of the quota system in public service was wholly predictable, given the way the government had reacted to the previous movement in 2018. Since, in totality, 55 percent of government jobs used to be reserved under the quota system—including 30 percent for freedom fighters' children and grandchildren—the protesters had legitimate grounds to demand a reevaluation of the system. The glaring lack of good jobs in the country and the need to ensure that the majority of public-sector recruits enter the service on merit warrant such a demand.

During the initial stages of the 2018 movement, the government refused to have an open dialogue with the protesters, labelling them as being involved with vague conspiracies. Once the students refused to budge from their position, we saw how Chhatra League cadres unleashed severe beatings upon protesters, with law enforcers often acting as bystanders. When the protesters still refused to back down, the government decided to do away with all quotas altogether—which the protesters had never asked for. The decision was regressive in nature given that it failed to reserve any seats for marginalised groups that are necessary for their upliftment.

On June 5, 2024, the High Court declared the circular that cancelled the quota system as illegal. After the government appealed the ruling and the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court upheld the HC directive, students once again were forced to launch a movement. While we cannot condone the blockades being implemented by protesters, we do find their demands rooted in logic. Reserving 30 percent of government jobs for the children and even grandchildren of freedom fighters goes against the spirit of our independence. Our valiant freedom fighters laid down their lives for equality; and although we honour their memory and hold the deepest respect for them, continuing to provide such a huge number of seats for their grandchildren makes little sense at present.

But that's not all. The government needs to reevaluate—as it should have the last time around—the whole quota system. We have heard previously that many of the seats reserved for marginalised groups used to remain vacant, another fault line in the erstwhile quota system. So, the government should involve all stakeholders in dialogue to find a solution that suits the needs of our time. Neither doing away with all quotas, nor simply continuing with the previous quota numbers, are appropriate solutions. The government needs to figure out suitable quota figures for marginalised groups, while reserving the majority of seats for meritorious students. We cannot steer the nation towards greater heights without having efficient and committed public servants at the helm.

Another public project gone awry

Abysmal pace of progress in hi-tech parks project raises questions

It is totally unacceptable that a project that was slated for completion in three years has achieved only 14.34 percent of physical progress after seven years. This glacial and, frankly, ridiculous pace of work has been noticed in an undertaking meant to build 12 hi-tech parks in various districts. Considering its nature, you would have thought a government so intent on bringing about the country's digital transformation would take it more seriously, especially when most of the budget is being borrowed from outside the country, indicating its significance. But this is how the project has ended up, like so many others before it, according to a report citing findings of the Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED).

The government initiated the project in April 2017, with the strategically placed hi-tech parks envisioned to prepare the nation for the future by fostering a skilled workforce in the information technology sector. It was originally scheduled to be complete by June 2020, but has since seen its deadline extended multiple times. The latest proposal is asking for a 2027 deadline, and an increase from the original budget of Tk 1,796 crore to Tk 2,000 crore. Even though project authorities claim more progress than shown by the IMED, current physical progress still varies widely among the parks, with some barely even started.

How will the authorities justify this abysmal pace of work? As per our report, it has been attributed to various financial and logistical issues, including insufficient allocations, COVID-19 pandemic, land acquisition issues, etc. But this is hardly convincing. Those behind the project should have accounted for potential challenges and have contingency strategies in place to deal with them. A proper feasibility study would have resolved many of the issues that arose. Clearly, what has really slowed the progress is systemic neglect and mismanagement which, combined with a lack of accountability for public officials, have undone so many projects before. The economic implications of such cost and time overruns cannot be stressed enough.

The hi-tech parks project was meant to be a cornerstone of Bangladesh's vision for a digital future. Instead, it has become a cautionary tale of how ambitious plans can falter without effective execution. We urge the authorities to put their foot on the accelerator and resolve all issues preventing the timely execution of this project.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY



Vasco da Gama's first voyage to India

On this day in 1497, Vasco da Gama sailed from Lisbon with a fleet of four vessels, and he ultimately opened a sea route from western Europe to Asia by way of the Cape of Good Hope, ushering in a new era in world history.

What options are left for us to fight unbridled corruption?



THE OVERTON WINDOW

Eresh Omar Jamal
is deputy head of editorial at The Daily Star. His X
handle is @EreshOmarJamal.

ERESH OMAR JAMAL

In recent times, allegations of serious corruption against a number of government officials have come to light. From former army chief Aziz Ahmed, former IGP and Rab chief Benazir Ahmed, and former Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Commissioner Asaduzzaman Mia and his family members, to public servants working in much lower positions in the government, corruption seems to have spread its tentacles across the country's public service sector.

During the Covid pandemic, we learnt how a driver of the Directorate General of Health Service (DGHS) named Abdul Malek acquired crores of taka through corruption. At the same time, graft allegations emerged against former DGHS chief Abul Kalam Azad as well. These two stories illustrate how corruption has become institutionalised from the very top to the very bottom echelons of our government.

Another recent case of sensational corruption involves a National Board of Revenue (NBR) official named Md Matiur Rahman, and his wife Laila Kaniz Lucky, chairman of Narsingdi's Raipura Upazila Parishad. What's interesting about their case is how they came to light. Matiur's corruption was revealed only after a video of Matiur's son buying a goat at Tk 15 lakh for Eid-ul-Azha went viral. Ironically, even the sellers of the goat were allegedly involved in corruption in the selling process as well as in other operations. Matiur's wife Lucky even submitted her tax files to the Election Commission (EC) before the upazila parishad polls earlier this year. But the commission failed to unearth the corruption of Lucky and her family at that time.

This brings into question how well our public institutions are doing in terms of identifying and addressing corruption. How is it that the EC failed to notice that Lucky had understated her wealth? In fact, prior to the last national election, this newspaper had reported how this election witnessed the highest number of candidates with movable or liquid assets of Tk 1 crore or more. A number of ministers

saw their wealth increase by more than a few thousand percent. And the EC showed no curiosity as to how these ministers managed to multiply their wealth by such absurd amounts. Are they just that good at business and investment? If they are such financial geniuses, why isn't our economy doing as well under their leadership?

And the same absurd wealth increase was seen among candidates during the upazila parishad polls. Again, the EC showed the least bit



What can ordinary citizens do to put a stop to the rampant corruption taking place in our government institutions?

SOURCE: TTB

of interest to find out how these candidates managed to acquire such massive wealth, similar to the national election candidates.

Far from addressing corruption, our public institutions seem to be doing the opposite. For example, right after the reports of alleged corruption concerning former law enforcement high-ups came out, the Bangladesh Police Service Association (BPSA) released a statement which seemingly threatened the media against reporting on corruption by law enforcers. Without being able to identify a single victim who was maligned by the media reports,

the BPSA labelled the reports as "partial, motivated, exaggerated, and misleading."

The BPSA also claimed that the reports were "tarnishing the police's image," while ignoring the damage done by the alleged corruption of its former members. Such claims have become the go-to tactic whenever allegations of corruption are raised. For example, Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader recently alleged—as many of his party members had previously done—that corruption accusations were being brought forth to portray AL as a corrupt party. Making such claims, without verifying the authenticity of the allegations, can often be seen as the most commonly used tactic in kleptocracies around the world.

And this is what the Opposition Leader and Jatiya Party Chairman GM Quader recently pointed out

But the fact remains that it is his party that has weakened the law when it comes to identifying and preventing corruption by public servants—through the Government Services Act, 2018, for example, which even AL leader and lawmaker Mahbul Alam Hanif said could be "considered a law to protect criminals."

Through an amendment to the Government Servants (Discipline and Appeal) Rules, 1985, the authorities in 2018 included "reprimand" as a penalty for corruption that has been proven through investigations. Before this amendment, the punishment was either "compulsory retirement," "removal from service" or "dismissal from service." To simply "reprimand" a public servant who has been found to be involved in corruption, while allowing them to remain in "service," is a slap in the public's face. And since 2018, numerous public servants proven to be involved in corruption have continued to remain in service due to this amendment, with only a slap on the wrist.

And it's not only the AL, but the BNP too, which through the 2002 amendment to the Government Servant (Conduct) Rules, 1979 relaxed the anti-graft rules for public servants. This only demonstrates the mindset of our political class in general: their primary motivation is to curry favour from public servants, rather than ensure transparency and accountability in public service for the sake of the public.

The only way to change this mindset is to get honest politicians into positions of power and hold to account those who are not truly serving the people. Unfortunately, all the mechanisms meant to do so seem to have been weakened, if not completely destroyed, one after another in recent decades. That's why the AL managed to make such an amendment to the public service rules, which can easily be argued to have breached Article 20 (2) of the constitution, while no other branch of government stepped in to prevent it.

So, ordinary citizens have only two options now: 1) allow corruption to run rampant and cost them in every sphere of life as a result; or 2) form mass movements that are strong enough to force politicians, public servants and other government authorities to not only rectify the legal issues that they have created, but enforce them to the letter, which will automatically deter government employees from getting involved in corruption.

Bangladesh's way forward to biodiversity conservation



Dr Haseeb Md Irfanullah
is independent consultant working on environment, climate change, and research system and visiting research fellow at the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB). He can be reached at hmirfanullah@outlook.com.

HASEEB MD IRFANULLAH

The global biodiversity is in a bad shape and a couple of numbers can confirm that: 12.5 percent of the world's eight million species will be lost forever in the next few decades; and between 1970 and 2020, big animals' numbers reduced by 68 percent. For Bangladesh, the numbers are not any better. Two studies led by International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Bangladesh and the Forest Department, and supported by the World Bank, showed that 24 percent animal species (data of 2015) and 39.4 percent of plant species (data of 2023) of the country will be extinct soon, if no measures are taken to save them.

Although these numbers are relatively recent, biodiversity loss was recognised as a problem much earlier. That's why the Convention on Biological Diversity was adopted by the world in 1992, the 2010 Biodiversity Targets were set in 2002, the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity (2011-2020) and Aichi Biodiversity Targets were adopted in 2010, and in 2015, the world agreed upon the 14th and the 15th Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aiming at biodiversity conservation.

In the same vein, in December 2022 in a meeting in Montreal, Canada, the countries adopted

the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework to save the world's remaining biodiversity by 2050. This most ambitious ever global plan to conserve biodiversity is also known as the "Biodiversity Plan" and has two main parts. The first part has four global goals to be achieved by 2050—protection and restoration of biodiversity, prosperity with nature, fair sharing of the benefits from biodiversity, and enhanced investment and collaboration. The second part includes 23 global targets to be achieved by 2030. The first eight targets refer to reducing threats to biodiversity, the next five talk about sustainable use and benefit-sharing to meet people's needs and the final 10 outline different tools and solutions for implementation and mainstreaming biodiversity conservation.

While many of these targets are qualitative in nature, some have ambitious numbers to fulfil. For example, Targets 2 and 3 talk about restoring 30 percent degraded ecosystems and conserving another 30 percent of diverse ecosystems, respectively. Target 18 wants to reduce harmful incentives every year by at least \$500 billion, while every year \$200 billion should be allocated for biodiversity from a wide range of

sources as envisaged by Target 19.

I believe Bangladesh is already a part of this new global plan. Our recent legal instruments, for example, Ecologically Critical Area (ECA) Management Rule, 2016, Protected Area (PA) Management Rule, 2017, and Bangladesh Biodiversity, Act 2017, are in line with the Biodiversity Plan, and these also have provisions to create new funds for conservation actions. Species conservation action plans, such as those on vultures (2016-2025), gharials (2016-2015), tigers (2018-2027), elephants (2018-2027), dolphins (2021-2030), and sharks and rays (2023-2033), also indicate our progress in conservation planning. Numerous projects implemented since late 1990s underscore Bangladesh's participatory and co-management experience—one of the oldest and latest examples are Management of Aquatic Ecosystem through Community Husbandry (1998-2003) and Protibesh (2021-2026) projects, respectively.

I also think, in some cases, Bangladesh exceeds the Biodiversity Plan's expectations. In 2011, the 15th Amendment of the Bangladesh Constitution confirmed that preservation of biodiversity is the state's responsibility. In 2019, Bangladesh Parliament unanimously adopted a motion on "Planetary Emergency" bringing biodiversity loss and climate emergency together. In the same line, the Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan (2022-2041) and the National Adaptation Plan (NAP2050, 2023-2050) have integrated biodiversity conservation and climate change actions for dual benefits.

To take the Biodiversity Plan forward over the next decade or

so, Bangladesh could take three specific actions. First, we need to contextualise it in our own way. The Department of Environment and environment ministry are currently updating the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), which should align with country's recently adopted Green and Climate Resilient Development Policy. It should mainstream our 30 years' experience of co-management of ecosystems by strongly adopting the ECA and PA Rules in all projects in and around biodiversity-rich areas. To maximise our financial resource utilisation, we should blend our climate and conservation actions. As the NAP2050 has strongly adopted Nature-based Solutions (NbS), the updated NBSAP should appreciate the climate emergency.

Second, Bangladesh should adopt evidence-guided policy making. To do that, it can establish a conservation portal for Bangladesh managed by the Forest Department to map out the portfolios of all recent past and on-going conservation projects. In this way, we will know what to fund, where to fund, and how to fund, in real time. Finally, we need sustainable financing for conservation. By using the experience of climate budget and gender budget, the government should prepare a conservation budget through a collaboration between finance and environment ministries. Similar to Bangladesh Climate Fiscal Framework, (2020), they should also prepare Bangladesh Conservation Fiscal Framework to guide the country's conservation funding. After all, national finance will be crucial for implementing the updated NBSAP.

The pension debate

Teachers of 35 public universities across the country have launched a simultaneous strike since July 1, protesting their mandatory inclusion in the universal pension scheme and putting forth their own set of demands. What are those demands, and what do others think of the protest? Four stakeholders share their views with The Daily Star.

The new pension scheme creates further discrimination



Dr Zeenat Huda is chairman at the Department of Sociology in the University of Dhaka.

When a teacher goes to retirement at the age of 65, it is important that they get a one-time allowance to secure their future and that of their children. The new universal pension scheme does not have any provision for the teachers to receive this amount upon retirement. Another huge issue is the age of retirement. Up until now, the retirement age was 65. The new pension scheme aims to make it 59, creating a gap of six long years. Since we started protesting, there have been government press releases saying that it would remain 65 for university teachers, even though the government-mandated retirement age would be 59. Does this not create discrimination, the very thing they wanted to remove with the universal pension scheme?

Moreover, the University of Dhaka is an autonomous institution, like many other universities and institutes in the country. The government cannot force an autonomous institution to participate in a universal pension scheme without dialogue or any sort of consultation.

The scheme also requires us to participate in a contributory fund, where we have to deposit Tk 5,000 out of our monthly salaries. Does it make sense for a newly appointed lecturer in a university, who gets Tk 22,000-30,000 per month in remuneration, to deposit Tk 5,000 each month out of their salaries? What are they left with? How will they cover their living expenses?

In the existing system, the nominee of a university teacher is also eligible for a life-long pension. In the new scheme, if a university teacher passes away at the age of 75, their nominees will not be eligible for pension benefits. They are left with little to nothing. The new scheme will only make teachers and their dependents more financially vulnerable. This cannot be the characteristic of a universal pension scheme, where one group is left off worse to supposedly benefit another group. This is discriminatory, to say the least.

We never wanted things to get this far where we had to stop taking classes. Students are our first and foremost priority. We have been protesting this move ever since the universal pension scheme was announced. We organised teachers from other universities and submitted a compiled, written document of our displeasure with this new scheme to the education ministry. We also prepared an evaluation report comparing the existing scheme to the new one, with the help of expert economists and business school teachers. As the general secretary of the teachers' association, I submitted the report to the ministry on behalf of all my colleagues. There have been no follow-ups on those reports.

When nothing worked, we started with two hour strikes, eventually moving to half-day and full-day strikes. We did not start protesting all of a sudden, whereas the finance ministry issued the notice for the new pension scheme on March 13 without any consultation with the stakeholders. We only scaled up our protests after we were left with no other options.

We have not held our students hostage in this situation; rather, we have been held hostage by the finance ministry. Our students will take on the roles of teachers in the future. The new scheme will not affect the existing teachers as much as it will affect the future generation of faculty members. So this is a battle we are fighting to protect our successors, our students who will take on our responsibilities in the near future.



Teachers of 35 public universities under the banner of the Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers' Association (FBUTA) have been refraining from work since July 1, 2024 protesting their inclusion in the new universal pension scheme. This photo was taken on July 3, 2024.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Decisions about teachers made without consulting them



Nasir Uddin Ahmed is associate professor of English at Jagannath University.

We have been protesting the new universal pension scheme from the very beginning. The strike is a step we are being compelled to take. So far, no officials have spoken to us, nor have there been discussions on how we would proceed to have a dialogue. The teacher's demands thus far have been for a separate pay scale, the creation of an environment for students where necessary skills

can be developed, exclusion of teachers from the Prottoy scheme and a separate pension system for them, and assurance that under no circumstances will teachers be deprived of the existing benefits.

The scheme is not "universal" as it does not encompass government officials. My question is, why should teachers be deprived of the existing benefits? We did not ask for this new scheme, so why is this being forced upon us? In the previous scheme, public university teachers would receive a lump sum amount of around Tk 80 lakh after retiring. What a teacher earns while working is spent trying to pay for basic necessities, and hence the amount left at the end of a teacher's career is not significant. Even this amount is not going to be available under the new Prottoy scheme.

There is also a lack of clarity regarding the pension being given at 60, whereas the retirement age for a teacher is 65. This confusion extends to festival bonuses and other such benefits, all of which were mentioned in the previous scheme. Why would the teachers, especially those who are new, willingly agree to a new scheme that is less beneficial for them?

Decisions regarding teachers are being made without any consultation with teachers. All stakeholders must be engaged in a discussion if it has an impact on their lives. If you won't consider teachers of the primary, secondary and tertiary levels as worthy of engaging in a conversation, who will be spoken to regarding a decision that will significantly affect teachers? It displays a blatant disrespect toward teachers from the government.

The government is completely dependent on the bureaucrats who are not qualified to make decisions impacting teachers. Teachers have been speaking of a separate pay scale for so long, with the issue being raised even in 2015-2016, yet no action has been taken in that regard. Not only are they not thinking of teachers, but they are not thinking of students either. What is the government doing to help students gain the necessary skills for employment?

In the realm of politics, there has been a severe issue of nepotism, with relatives of MPs getting appointed to positions of authority in various educational institutions. But it's the qualified people who must be the ones in the position to make decisions.

If you can't take into consideration the fate of the students, then for whom is all this development? How can I allow someone younger joining my profession to be in a worse condition than me? It is completely unacceptable and inhumane. If you destroy the education system by putting teachers at a disadvantage, the intelligent will leave the teaching profession. This will spell trouble for the nation.

Constructing buildings alone is not development. There are lakhs of Benazirs today because the government is unable to control its corrupt officials. Teachers will never want to take actions that harm students. Over the past three months, we have been protesting while keeping students safe. We need to think about the nation and respect teachers. Teachers need to be paid the appropriate amount to have a decent life.

Universal pension scheme aimed at helping people

Firstly, the goal of the universal pension scheme is to bring all the citizens of Bangladesh under its coverage. Currently, government and independent bodies provide pensions, but there is no specific funds allocated for them. Instead, every year, a specific amount is reserved in the budget for paying pension. As the number of employees and related expenses increase, the budget allocation for pension also increases. This is why the government has decided to transition to a funded pension scheme.

With a funded scheme, the government won't need to create a new budget for pension every year. Currently, it operates as an unfunded defined benefit pension system, but it will become a funded contributors' pension system under the new universal pension scheme. This scheme will provide pension to people who previously had none. Additionally, the Prottoy scheme, targeting autonomous government bodies, has been announced. Bangladesh has 403 autonomous government bodies, of which around 90 had a pension system, while 313 did not. The goal is to bring all these organisations under the same pension scheme.

As this will be a funded scheme, the benefits are clear: all citizens can be covered, and it will ensure the sustainability of the pension system. Another



Md Golam Mostofa is a member of the National Pension Authority under the Finance Division.

reason for the universal pension scheme is to address the demographic changes in Bangladesh. The country is currently experiencing a demographic dividend, but after 2040, the working-age population will start to decrease. The prime minister's vision of a smart Bangladesh by 2041 will not be achievable if a large portion of the population is elderly without a pension support system. Therefore, this scheme shows foresight in protecting the future.

Regarding the current state of the Prottoy scheme, it's important to note that pension systems in many countries undergo reforms as needed. Similarly, Bangladesh is reforming its existing pension system. The government aims to introduce the universal pension scheme with the flexibility to make adjustments, additions or removals as necessary.

When the Prottoy scheme was announced, university teachers had some questions, which the pension authority addressed through the Finance Division and a press briefing. The teachers were still not satisfied. If we could clearly understand which specific parts are still dissatisfying for them after our press briefing, we could work on further addressing these issues. For example, the retirement age is set at 65, and while it cannot be decreased, it can be increased if needed. Many developed countries have raised their retirement age to manage demographic shifts, as seen recently in France where they raised their retirement age by two years. Recently we visited South Korea, and they also plan on increasing it.

When the demographic dividend decreases and the working age population declines, increasing the retirement age becomes necessary to maintain a sufficient workforce.

So it is clear that just because a pension system has been announced, it doesn't mean that it is going to be the same forever. The reason for the pension system is to help people. Whenever there is a need to reform or change the pension system for the sake of the people, of course necessary changes will be made.

Are students sympathetic to the teachers' protest?

Returning to the classroom after nearly 18 months in 2021 due to the Covid pandemic was a daunting prospect. The thought of lost time weighed heavily on my mind. Session jams are a common issue at public universities, as everyone says, and seeing my peers at private universities make up for the lost time only added to my worries. The ongoing strike of teachers at 35 public universities demanding exclusion from the contentious Prottoy pension scheme adds to the worries of the students.

The finance ministry announced a pension scheme titled "Prottoy" on March 13 this year. Since then, many peaceful protests have been staged, including the distribution of memoranda, sit-in programmes, human chains, issuance of statements, and gathering signatures from the public. However, a full-scale strike



Azra Humayra is majoring in mass communication and journalism at the University of Dhaka. She can be reached at azrahumayra123@gmail.com.

started on July 1. Teachers at public universities across the nation, including Dhaka University (DU), have been abstaining from holding classes and exams in protest against the government's decision to force them to enrol in the Prottoy pension system.

As the teachers push for their demands, it is the students who face the harshest consequences. University classes and departmental offices remain closed, putting their education on hold. The suspension of official activity in the DU administrative building causes disruptions in critical academic support services. The closing of Dhaka University's Central Library deprives students and job seekers of critical study tools. This extended disruption not only postpones the students' schooling and future ambitions, but it also increases stress and worry about their academic and professional prospects.

The ongoing strike has caused tremendous frustration among students, making them increasingly unsympathetic to the teachers' protests, because with classes and departmental offices

closed, students are experiencing a significant academic disruption. As students bear the brunt of these effects, their initial understanding of the teachers' demands is being gradually obscured by their immediate struggles, resulting in a growing lack of solidarity.

Another reason behind the growing lack of sympathy is the teachers' poor communication with the students about the situation. Without a clear explanation of the reasons behind the strike and its goals, students feel blindsided by the sudden disruption. This lack of transparency makes students feel that the strike has been imposed on them without considering their future, further eroding their sympathy for the teachers' cause. Students, including myself, have been informed about the situation primarily through the media. There

has been no direct communication from the respective departments to update students on the current circumstances.

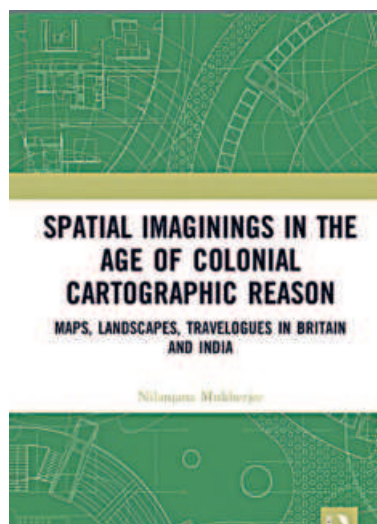
Protests are a big part of our student identity. However, teachers rarely show solidarity with our protests, regardless of their cause or goal. This recurrent lack of support from teachers during student demonstrations undermines students' sympathy for teachers' own protests, such as the current strike demanding exclusion from the universal pension scheme. The observed disparity in cooperation between students and teachers indicates a lack of solidarity in the educational environment.

There are various critical concerns at public universities that require joint efforts from students and teachers, for instance hall seat allotment, quota reformation, etc.

Students' issues frequently overlap with those of teachers, showing a shared stake in overcoming institutional shortcomings. However, the prevalent culture frequently encourages a sense of detachment, in which student difficulties are considered only as related to students while teachers' concerns are viewed solely as their own. Genuine empathy and mutual support require both parties to recognise and comprehend each other's contexts and concerns. To solve structural difficulties, we need to transition to a more inclusive conversation and cooperative approach. Public universities can better align their efforts to improve educational settings and promote the welfare of all stakeholders by cultivating a culture of shared responsibility, open communication, and solidarity.

CARTOGRAPHIC IMAGINATION AND COLONIAL LANDSCAPE PAINTINGS in and around Bengal

When the British began their mapping project in India, they were hardly equipped with enough information lying outside their immediate foothold. In fact, mapping was itself a way to gather, assimilate and document knowledge acquired on the ground to triumph over uncertainties. The colonial capital of Calcutta located on the Bengal delta was the only convenient location to begin this operation. Mapping activities began soon after the Battle of Plassey (1757) as the East India Company steadily took control over Bengal and expanded from there. The cartographer appointed to carry on the project was James Rennell (1742-1830), but he was only a hydrographer, who specialised in charting water and waterways. This proficiency was ideal to test out and chart regional connections through rivers tracing the Hooghly upstream.



Cover of the author's book, published by Routledge in 2021.

NILANJANA MUKHERJEE

Cartography in India might have had its roots in this expansionist ambition but went on to achieve much more than this. Rennell's *Map of Hindostan*, published by an act of Parliament in 1782, inaugurated the cartographic identity of modern India for the first time on the world stage. It geographically integrated the eastern entrepot all the way to the Himalayan hinterlands and the north western Punjab-Sind, reorienting existing land into a fresh geo-territorial unit heavily dependent on its eastern delta for overseas commerce. This is not to say that this outlying terrain was unexplored for exactly these reasons. Earlier regimes and powers, both local and foreign, had their stakes all over the Bengal littoral region, making it one of the most coveted and strategic locations in the world for a very long time. However, it was the British East India Company which was responsible for the territorial transformation of

foregrounding the importance of transport infrastructure, roadways, navigation, and later on the railways in British India, were based on this foresight of bringing products and capital into a disciplined and efficient system of circulation.

Cartographic practices were not limited to academic mapping alone. Pictorial representations flourished in abundance as riverine landscape paintings became a popular medium to portray journeys into the subcontinent. William Hodges and the Daniells were major forerunners in initiating the genre, making landscape paintings popular and lucrative for later European traveling artists to participate. From the late eighteenth century onwards, many amateur artists in the East India Company's service explored innumerable opportunities to record the sights of India. Among the most productive of amateur artists in India was probably Sir Charles D'Oyly (1781-1845). Son of a senior Company

and network of the ancien regime. D'Oyly's *The Sketches of the New Road* celebrated the initiation of the idea of geographical improvement and mobility as the signpost of British triumph. The areas surveyed by the artist's eye were brought under cartographic surveillance and military order. The *Sketches* simulated an ideal tour through a coherent visual experience. In this series, D'Oyly adopted the European style of the 'prospect,' by then a widely accepted format, for his panoramic views. A bird's eye view of an entire terrain, the style could include with fields, forests, roads and rivers, sometimes towns and cities, travelers on the road, tiny as against the scenic landscape. The road interlaced with semaphore towers, as it were, paved the way to India's modern future.

In *Views of Calcutta and its Environs*, D'Oyly ventured away from the banks of the Ganges into the black town in search of local experiences: the streets, bazaars, huts, rituals, fairs, and festivals of the locals. In 1808, when he was appointed Collector of Dacca, he promised Warren Hastings that he would offer "as companions a few of the ruins of the city of Dacca which [...] are exquisite for their magnificence and elegance and are calculated to tempt the pencil of an artist." The result was the drawings for *Antiquities of Dacca* (1830), planned as a joint venture with another professional artist, George Chinnery (1774-1852). His sketches and paintings dealing with Dacca were brought out from 1823 onwards in the form of folios from London. Each of these folios had about four to five sketches or paintings in it together with topical and historical descriptions of them. These brief explanatory notes were submitted by an acclaimed historian, Persian scholar, and artist, Military Surgeon James Atkinson (1780-1852). The roping together of image and accompanying explanatory letterpress was a relatively established convention at the time. D'Oyly granted greater significance to the vernacular and public architecture of an erstwhile important port

oppressive vegetation taking root in it, exuding a sense of decadence and a passing away of an old order. Also depicted are roads, rivers, and nullahs (streams) fallen into disuse.

D'Oyly starts off by recalling the strategic location of Dacca not only because it had once been the capital of Bengal, which rose to pre-eminence during the time of Aurangzeb, but also because of the presence of other European powers prior to the coming of the British and the East India Company:

Long before the English settled at Dacca, the Dutch had established a factory there, and transacted their business through native agents; [...] The English factory at Dacca, having been preceded by that which Tavernier terms "a tolerably good one", was rebuilt about a century ago by Mr. Stark, with the permission of Itizam Khan, [...] previous to which native agents had been employed to purchase cloths, and convey them for sale to Calcutta. It was not till the year 1742 that the French succeeded in getting permission to rebuild a factory here, which is now, as well as that erected by the Dutch, a heap of ruins.

In both his Dacca and Behar paintings, D'Oyly reinforces his identity as an administrative officer in the colonial service by commenting on the state of decay and administrative lapse the regions had suffered in the recent past. *The Antiquities* deal with descriptions and depictions mainly of the architectural past and present, and there is inevitably an attempt to draw comparisons between past elegance and the poverty-stricken present.

Thus Dacca for more than half a century was the capital of Bengal, and continued to be enriched by the multitudes which crowded to the courts of its governors. The stupendous remains of gateways, roads, bridges, and other public works, which present themselves on every side, sufficiently prove the former grandeur and magnificence of the city.

by the common people at present.

He mentions no public buildings excepting those of the Europeans; although the Great Kuttra, a most magnificent edifice, as well as the Mosque of Syuff Khan, had been erected many years before, and the small Kuttra more recently; but still several years before the celebrated French traveller visited Dacca. These splendid buildings, as well as several others, seem to have eluded the observation, or escaped the memory of Tavernier.

While D'Oyly takes pride in exhibiting his discoveries through his drawings, he does not miss an opportunity to point out existing flaws in the survey of a representative of a rival European power, namely the French. In a move that marked the age, he disentangles what he sees from what is already known. When he mentions the Daniells and their inability to identify the picturesque significance of the location, he simply flaunts his artistic vision to complete an unfinished agenda – to reveal in sight an entire terrain which had been left out for so long.

From Chinnery's drawings, he finally chose only three that contrasted "present poverty with Mohammedan importance, and rusticity with architectural elegance" and explicitly commented on the decline of Dacca. The work ends with a high romanticist note contemplating on the passage of time, the fall of empires, and the vicissitudes of life and human endeavors:

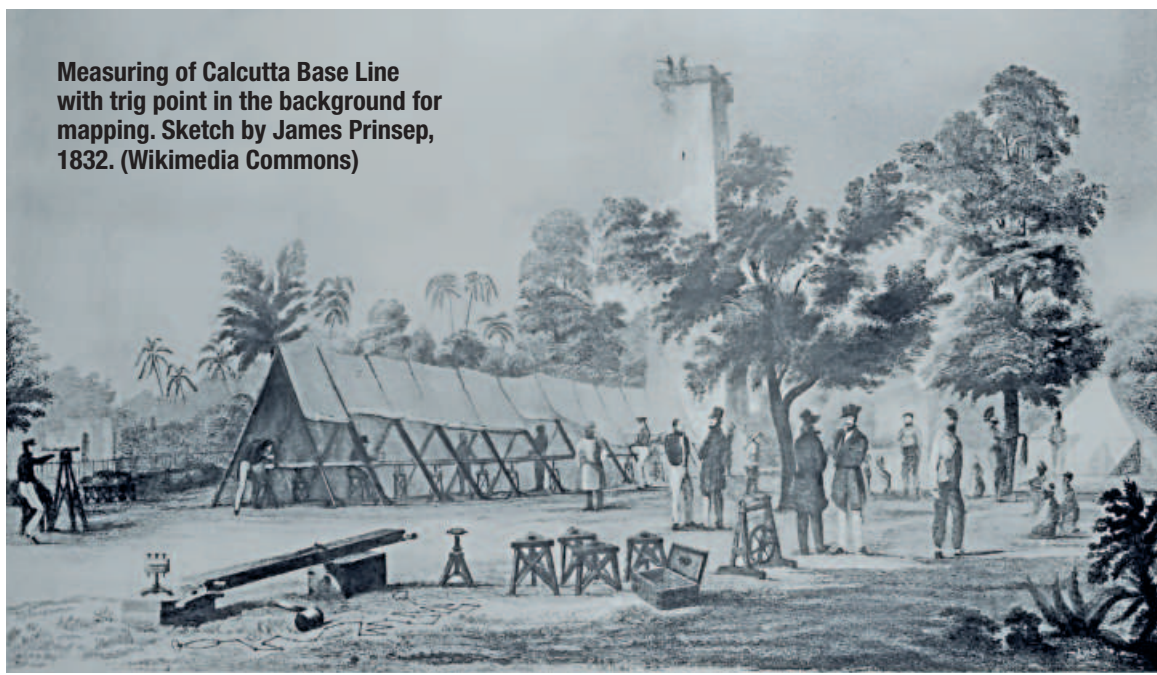
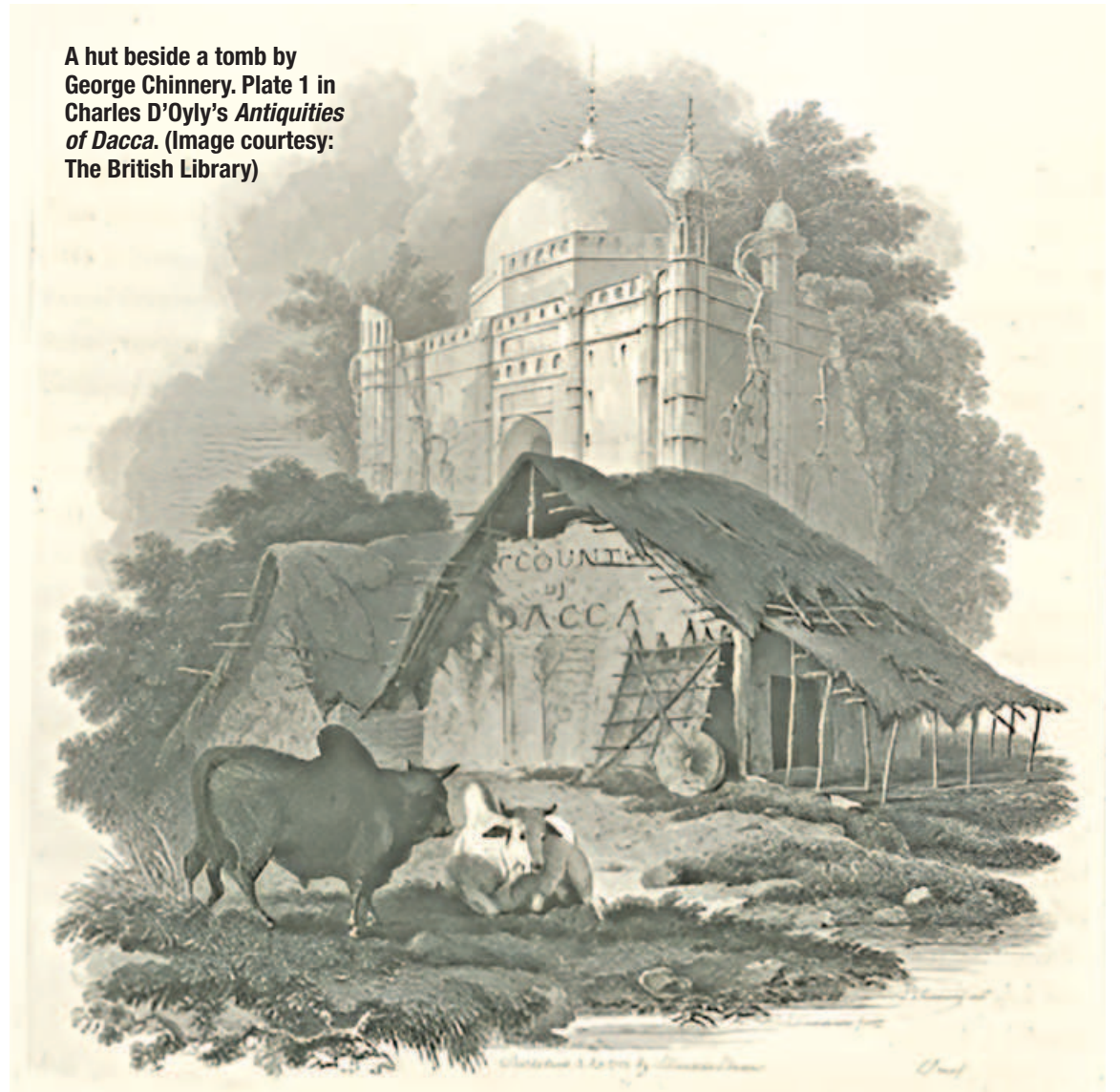
To the noise of mariners and shipwrights which once resounded along the nullah – to the bustle and pomp of commerce and princely equipage – has succeeded a degree of loneliness and silence. [...] The bridge before us is fast following its predecessors [...] Though now mutilated and mouldering under the effects of time and neglect, and the ruder dilapidations of war, it is still an interesting object to the eye of the landscape painter and poet.

Such comments establish connections between the medieval and the modern, nature and industry, to the detriment of the latter. The ruined mill of an earlier colonizing power proved purposeful in establishing a continuum, granting a timeless quality to the scene and the place. The seemingly romantic statement obliquely refers to the failure and falling apart of the earlier system of mobility and circulation, thereby suggesting the possibility of repair by a stronger force. This idea is reiterated in a number of his paintings in the series, such as in depictions of collapsed bridges such as the 'Paugla pool'. A picturesque scene could be granted a sublime status if it could nobly inspire the artist with elevated thoughts.

Topographic representations framed by philosophical and sentimental utterances reaffirmed the sublime prospect of the place, reflecting that cartographic amassment of geographic space was not wholly incongruous with the aesthetic predilections of the day.

Nilanjana Mukherjee serves as a Professor in the Department of English at Shaheed Bhagat Singh College, University of Delhi, and holds the position of Joint Secretary at the India International Society of Eighteenth Century Studies.

A hut beside a tomb by George Chinnery. Plate 1 in Charles D'Oyly's *Antiquities of Dacca*. (Image courtesy: The British Library)



Measuring of Calcutta Base Line with trig point in the background for mapping. Sketch by James Prinsep, 1832. (Wikimedia Commons)

The Dacca paintings share a similar format with the Calcutta paintings and capture mofussil life in its plebeian detail. Most depict Mughal architecture then in ruins, hovering atop dense oppressive vegetation taking root in it, exuding a sense of decadence and a passing away of an old order. Also depicted are roads, rivers, and nullahs (streams) fallen into disuse.

the region as the fulcrum of power.

With James Rennell's surveying operations surging outwards across India while being localized in Calcutta, large parts of India which were thus far outside the scope of the colonial information grid were fast brought under detailed observation. The utility of a panoptic knowledge of routes that was sought from the administrative class was stressed by Rennell in his book, *A Description of the Roads in Bengal and Bahar* (1788). Rennell lists four major centers, Calcutta, Murshidabad, Patna, and Dacca: "the first being the seat of government, and the others either the capital military stations, or factories or both." Since the grant of the Dewani to the English East India Company by the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II in 1765, the seat of power shifted from Murshidabad to Calcutta, which now needed to be connected with all major stations throughout the region. The British colonial regime, with its growth of mercantile capital, commercial manufacture, and a drive towards the monetization of social relations, transformed the existing circulatory practices. The decline in commerce and attrition of urban centers in the early phase of British colonization of India was therefore generally seen as a breakdown of an earlier circulatory regime. Many of the arguments

official, John Hadley D'Oyly, the Company's Resident to the Nawab Babar 'Ali at Murshidabad, Charles was educated in England from where he returned to India in 1797. He held minor posts in the Company at the beginning of his career but gradually rose to higher and more responsible positions in the service. His first major appointment was as Collector of Dacca from 1808 to 1812. Following this, he returned to Calcutta, first as Deputy Collector and then Collector of Government Customs and Town Duties, a post he held until 1821 when he was appointed Opium Agent in Patna. D'Oyly's specific aesthetics are infused with geographical knowledge. In his movement away from riverine landscapes into the mofussils and hinterlands, his art can be seen as depicting 'spatial stories,' which link together, draw itineraries, and hence organize places as though in a map. Be it his paintings of Calcutta, Dacca, or Gyah or his monumental work titled *Sketches of the New Road in a Journey from Calcutta to Gyah* (1830), a project undertaken on the occasion of the inauguration of a new military road linking the Grand Trunk Road to Calcutta, his drawings contextualise the new colonial circulation evolving from existing routes. His topographic drawings are a kind of spatial practice which narrativise the fresh emergence of space, supplanting the space



Paugla Pool by Charles D'Oyly. Part of his *Antiquities of Dacca*. (Image courtesy: The British Library)

township. He insisted on replacing the established hierarchical distinction between places, largely through preceding artistic ventures of Hodges and the Daniells, with a more fundamental equivalence. The Dacca paintings share a similar format with the Calcutta paintings and capture mofussil life in its plebeian detail. Most depict Mughal architecture then in ruins, hovering atop dense

While correcting earlier records such as that by the French traveller, Tavernier, D'Oyly takes credit for his own 'discovery', his detailed research and production of original knowledge: It would appear from this account by Tavernier, that almost the whole of Dacca at that time consisted of habitations built of mud, straw, wood, matting, and bamboo, such as are constructed

Shootout voodoo exorcised but concerns remain for England

REUTERS, Duesseldorf

England fans woke up on Sunday not quite sure whether to celebrate a remarkably confident shootout performance that sent them into the Euro2024 semifinals or lament another display of caution and inertia by their players and manager.

On the profit side of the ledger was a shootout that should, finally, banish the folk memory of all the penalty pain that preceded it since the first of many defeats by West Germany in the 1990 World Cup semifinals.

Cole Palmer, Jude Bellingham, Bukayo Saka, Ivan Toney and Trent Alexander-Arnold all looked as if they would score, and all did so, expertly.

It should not have come as a surprise as Palmer, Toney and Saka are all regular and hugely impressive penalty takers for their clubs, while Bellingham and Alexander-Arnold are among the sweetest strikers of a ball in the game.

With goalkeeper Jordan Pickford going through the full repertoire of "taking control" before saving Manuel Akanji's weak effort, it was an exemplar of how to go about a shootout.

Factoring in a Nations League playoff, also against Switzerland, England have now won three of their last four shootouts under Southgate, having lost six of their seven before that.

England now have a very winnable game against the Netherlands, who have stumbled and scrapped their way into the last four, with the possibility of a third major final appearance and first on foreign soil tantalisingly close.

And yet, behind the singing and dancing, looms the uncomfortable truth

▶▶ England have won just four penalty shootouts in their history but two of them have come against Switzerland, in 2019 in the UEFA Nations League and tonight at Euro 2024.

▶▶ England have reached the UEFA Euro semi-finals in consecutive tournaments for the first time.

▶▶ Switzerland have now been eliminated in all five of their major tournament quarter-final appearances: the 1934, 1938 and 1954 World Cups, and Euro 2020 and 2024.

▶▶ For just the second time in their 10th shootout at a major tournament (World Cup/Euros), England scored every single one of their penalties in the shootout (5/5), also doing so against Spain at Euro 96 (4/4).



that England have got this far largely playing very poorly, certainly in attack.

Their defence has been very good, with every opponent generally kept at long range, but despite boasting an extraordinary array of talent in their ranks, England have been nothing short of boring.

On Saturday, Saka's 80th-minute equaliser was their first shot on target, just as Bellingham's extraordinary equaliser against Slovakia was, in the 95th minute.

The average world ranking of the teams they have beaten -- Serbia, Denmark, Slovenia, Slovakia and Switzerland -- is 35, yet, other than in fleeting patches and moments of individual brilliance, never have now fifth-ranked England looked a dominant team.

They were better on Saturday in terms of probing for openings, but on the few occasions they did get behind the Swiss defence, the quality of cross or final pass was awful.

Southgate had, laughably, said on Friday that his mentality was to "go for it", yet England did anything but. On one occasion late in the game they took a short corner that, three touches later, ended up at the feet of their own goalkeeper.

For all the problems, however, England are still there, while Germany, Italy, Belgium and Portugal et al are not, and that's a scenario the fans would have gobbled up at the start of the tournament, however, it has been achieved.



'Lion-hearted' Dutch to 'go for it'

REUTERS, Dortmund

The Netherlands feel they have an unexpected opportunity to achieve something special at the European Championship after a gritty comeback to beat Turkey on Saturday and advance to the semifinal.

Their 2-1 victory in a tension-filled quarterfinal in Berlin has set up a last-four meeting with England in Dortmund on Wednesday and a chance to move closer to reprise their only major tournament success, at the last Euros that Germany hosted in 1988.

"We are going to play two more games, if all goes well," coach Ronald Koeman -- who played in the 1988 winning side -- said after his men put together a determined showing to overcome a halftime deficit against Turkey.

"Nobody expected this. But our mission is not over yet. If you play a semifinal, you also want to reach the final."

Koeman looked to get ahead of himself, however, when asked which country he

would like to face in Sunday's final. "I prefer to play against Spain because we have already played against France in the group stage," the coach said.

Then he checked himself: "We have to beat England first."

Koeman will know better than most what it takes to win the tournament, having been part of the side that won it 36 years ago by beating the Soviet Union in the final in Munich.

But this time his side have not had a convincing road to the semis, with the Dutch only advancing to the knockout stage of the tournament as one of the four lucky losers -- the teams finishing third in their group.

"As the Netherlands, we must be proud of our team. We have sometimes been criticised that other countries play more with their heart, but we have really shown a lion's heart," he insisted.

"We had to go very deep," added captain Virgil van Dijk.

Substitute striker Wout Weghorst agreed. "We are close. This is a unique opportunity. We are going for it."

Neer wins chess championship with heavy heart

ANISUR RAHMAN

FIDE Master Manon Reja Neer, a 14-year-old chess prodigy, emerged as the undefeated champion in the 48th National Chess Championship yesterday ahead of three Grandmasters, but rather than being on cloud nine, the teenager was going through a whirlwind of emotions, still coming to terms with the sudden demise of his beloved 'Zia sir'.

"I had nearly confirmed my championship win with two rounds in hand and was really happy about it. But now I am shocked and can't find the words to express my emotions after the death of my beloved Zia sir," Neer told The Daily Star yesterday.

Grandmaster Ziaur Rahman, who passed away on Friday after suffering a cardiac arrest during the 12th round match of the championship, had started coaching players in the last few years and Neer was one of his students.

Neer, who left for Sri Lanka yesterday to take part in two tournaments, emulated Zia with his championship win as the latter had also won his first title at 14 in 1988.

"Zia sir was my closest rival in the just-concluded championship, I was ahead by only one point. He probably would have been happy to see me to become champion as I had once trained



under him for 11 successive days, travelling from Narayanganj to his Mohammadpur resident," said the ninth-grader, adding that he could never beat GM Zia.

The teenage chess prodigy has become the 16th player to win the national championship. With his triumph, the ninth-grader also emulated GM Zia, who had also won his first championship at the age of 14.

However, the record of the youngest national champion in chess still belongs to GM Niaz Murshed, who won it in 1979 at the age of 13.

Neer surprised everyone by securing 10 points in 13 matches including three draws against three GMs -- Niaz, Zia and Enamul Hossain Razib.

Neer feels his performance in the 21st Bangkok Chess Club Open in April, where he secured 6.5 points out of nine helped him to win the championship after three unsuccessful attempts.

"Since I started playing in the national championship, my target was to become champion. I think good performances in Thailand helped me a lot to play better," said Neer, who earned his first International Master norm from the Bangkok Chess Club Open and secured the second IM norm from the just concluding national championship.

Asked about his future plan, Neer said, "My ultimate target is to become world champion which is hard but not impossible. The immediate target is to secure the IM title and then become the country's sixth GM within next two years. For that, I need financial help, sponsorship and training," said Neer who also thanked Bangladesh Cricket Board's media committee chairman Tanvir Ahmed Titu for providing him air tickets to participate in tournaments overseas.

EURO SEMIS

July 10, Wednesday 1:00 am SPAIN VS FRANCE	July 11, Thursday 1:00 am NETHERLANDS VS ENGLAND
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The 'Uruguayan style' shines

REUTERS

Uruguay's diligence and resilience under pressure after going a man down against Brazil in Saturday's Copa America quarterfinal victory put the team's distinctive character in the spotlight, coach Marcelo Bielsa said.

Uruguay lost Nahitan Nandez to a red card on a VAR review, which reduced their side to 10 men for the final stages of the second half, but they shut shop and defended resolutely to take the match to penalties where they prevailed 4-2.

"Everything that happens, happens in Uruguayan style, because the players are the ones that give their all to the team," Bielsa told reporters.

"It was a match with very little goal opportunities, highly contested, very close, even with very little changes in possession. When we were one man down, we decided to dedicate ourselves to defending in our half.

"So holding on to that result as the Uruguayan team did shows the profile of Uruguayan football. And they were very calm in the penalty shootout that demands not only accuracy but also character."

Bielsa's teams are usually characterised by relentless attacking football and no team has scored more goals in the tournament than Uruguay, who netted nine times in the group stage.

But three straight clean sheets have also helped Uruguay book a semifinal against Colombia and Bielsa was quick to praise his squad's mentality rather than take credit for their defensive record.

"I am a bit more drawn to the offensive than the defensive game, but in a match that was as tight as this one, we created one more opportunity than our opponent and we defended well," Bielsa added.

COPA AMERICA SEMIS

July 10, Wednesday, 6:00 am ARGENTINA VS CANADA
July 11, Thursday, 6:00 am URUGUAY VS COLOMBIA

Saifuddin paints Bangladesh cricket's sorry picture

SHABAB CHOWDHURY

Bangladesh seamer Mohammad Saifuddin does not always make things easy for himself whenever he speaks to the media.

From re-assuring that he wanted to play as a batter in an edition of the Bangladesh Premier League to complaining about BCB not paying enough attention to him while he was in rehab, Saifuddin has a history of landing in hot water for his statements.

This time, however, he exposed the fragility of Bangladesh cricket's dying pipeline by saying that the country hardly has 20-25 players capable of playing international cricket, meaning that there is a serious drought in the emergence of quality players.

Saifuddin, who trained for the first time in Mirpur yesterday since being left out of Bangladesh's T20 World Cup squad earlier this year, also said that his fitness was key for a return to the national side.

"To be honest, there are 20-25 players in Bangladesh who are capable of playing

international cricket; there aren't that many players," Saifuddin told reporters on Sunday.

"Opportunities will come if I can stay fit. If you look at other countries, you'll see that there is way more competition. I think the number of players who are of international standard is very low [in Bangladesh]."

Two major takeaways can be made from what Saifuddin said.

Naturally, the first one is that a current player is convinced about the fact that Bangladesh's pipeline is drying up as evidenced by the lack of quality players coming through the ranks which is why the BCB as well as the team management often resort to players like Soumya Sarker and Alif Hossain -- both of whom have done very little in recent times to warrant a place in a Bangladesh squad. BCB, under the leadership of Nazmul Hassan Papon, has always flouted the idea of having a strong pipeline but its boasting in this regard has, time and again, been deflated when they go to major events and play relatively superior sides. Even the composition of the squads heading

to these events portrays the harsh reality of Bangladesh's limited talent and a jeopardised future.

The second is a much more common loop in the country's cricketing scenario which has established a culture of failure. The loop brings forth how a player who gets dropped from the national team can bank on another player to underperform in order to make a return. In most cases, the player who gets dropped has very little urgency to perform his way into the team and can bide his time for someone else to lose his spot to get back in contention.

Saifuddin's case seems to be aligned with the latter as he may feel that the number of quality players in the pool is reasonable enough for him to make a comeback by dishing out average performances. The 27-year-old faltered when he had to compete with Tanzim Hasan Sakib in the Zimbabwe series before the team left for the USA for the T20 World Cup. Despite picking up more wickets than Sakib, he struggled to get his bearings right at the death in the final Zimbabwe T20I and that was enough for the selectors to axe him from the 17-member squad.

In an attempt to talk about a potential return to the national side and the general picture of Bangladesh cricket from his perspective, Saifuddin perhaps blurted out the reality of Bangladesh cricket and the mediocre mentality that a lot of players might harbour.






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Electrocution kills five at Ratha Yatra

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

Five people were electrocuted to death and 41 others injured during Ratha Yatra (chariot procession) in Bogura town yesterday afternoon.

The incident happened when the dome of the Ratha came in contact with the overhead electric wire around 5:15pm.

The deceased were Ranjita, 60, of Shahjahanpur upazila, Naresh Mahanta, 40, of Adamdighi upazila, Atoshi Rani, 40, of Sadar upazila, Alok Kumar, 42, of Shibganj upazila, and Joly Rani Saha, 35, of Sariakandi upazila, said police.

Ratha Yatra is one of the major festivals of the Hindu community.

Police and locals said the Ratha Yatra, participated by several thousand devotees, started from a temple in Seugari area around 5:00pm.

When the procession reached Amtala intersection around 5:15pm, Ratha's dome came in contact with the electric wire. The dome was made of steel, it electrocuted those holding it.

The procession was heading to Satmatha intersection area, said Arup Ratan, who joined the procession, adding that the dome caught fire and smoke was billowing.

"Everyone started shouting and running in panic."

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



Devotees take out a procession pulling a chariot carrying the idol of Lord Jagannath in the capital's Dayaganj area. Ratha Yatra is one of the major festivals of the Hindus.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

UP chairman shot dead in broad daylight

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

Chairman of Panchgaon Union Parishad, HM Sumon Howlader, was shot dead in broad daylight by a supporter of a president candidate of a school's governing body in Munshiganj's Tongbari upazila yesterday.

Police and eyewitnesses said the management committee polls for Panchgaon Waheed Ali High School was going on from 10:00am yesterday.

Sumon was backing Dewan Moniruzzaman for president. Noor Mohammad, a supporter of another president candidate Milan and also a "friend" of Sumon, got angry with Sumon and a brawl ensued.

At one stage, Noor shot Sumon in the chest around 1:00pm and left the school ground.

Sumon was rushed to the local upazila health complex. He was later sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital but he died on the way.

Munshiganj Superintendent of Police Mohammad Aslam Khan said that they learnt that the assailant was a friend of the victim.

Police arrested three people in this connection.



Sumon Howlader

Voter turnout high in French election

Far right hopes to win, but may fall short of absolute majority



French President Emmanuel Macron casts his ballot at a polling station in Le Touquet-Paris-Plage, France yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

REUTERS, Paris

French voters turned out in force for the second round of a parliamentary election yesterday that could see the far right National Rally (RN) emerge as the strongest party, severely denting President Emmanuel Macron's authority.

Turnout stood at 26.3 percent by around noon, up from 18.99 percent during the second round of voting in 2022, the Interior Ministry said. It was the highest midday turnout level since 1981, pollster Harris Interactive and Ipsos said, illustrating strong public interest in

an election that has polarised political views.

The latest opinion polls have forecast the RN to win the most seats in the National Assembly, but predicted it may fall short of an absolute majority. A hung parliament would herald a prolonged period of instability and policy deadlock in the euro zone's second-biggest economy.

If the nationalist, eurosceptic RN did secure a majority, it would usher in France's first far-right government since World War Two and send shockwaves

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

4 BNP city units get new convening committees

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP yesterday formed convening committees for its South and North Dhaka, Chattogram and Barishal city units.

All the previous committees, which were also convening committees, were dissolved recently as part of the party's revamping.

BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi made the announcement in a press release.

It said that Rafiqul Alam Mojinu has been made the convener of the Dhaka South, while Tanvir Ahmed Robin was appointed as the member secretary.

Saiful Alam Nirob has been selected as the convener of the Dhaka North, with Aminul Haque as the member secretary.

Ershadullah has been appointed as the convener of the Chattogram city and Nazimuddin Rahman its member secretary.

For Barisal city, Moniruzzaman Khan Faruk has been made the convener while Ziauddin Sikder Zia is the member secretary and Afroza Khanom Nasreen the joint convener.

Previously, Mojinu and Tanvir served as member secretary and joint convener of the Dhaka South respectively.

Nirob was earlier the president of BNP's youth wing Jubo Dal, and Aminul was a member secretary of the previous committee of Dhaka South.

Ershadullah earlier served as the vice president of the Chattogram City committee while Nazimur was the president of the district's pro-student body Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal.

The newly appointed leaders of the four city units have been given three months to form the full committees of their respective units.



GAZA CEASEFIRE PROPOSAL

Hamas waiting for Israeli response

55 more Palestinians killed as Israeli offensive enters 10th month

REUTERS, Cairo

Hamas is waiting for a response from Israel on its ceasefire proposal, officials from the group said yesterday, five days after it accepted a key part of a US plan aimed at ending the offensive in Gaza now in its tenth month.

"We have left our response with the mediators and are waiting to hear the occupation's response," one of the two Hamas officials told Reuters, asking not to be named.

The three-phase plan for the Palestinian enclave was put forward at the end of May by US President Joe Biden and is being mediated by Qatar and Egypt. It aims to end the offensive and free around 120 Israeli hostages being held by Hamas.

Another Palestinian official, with knowledge of the ceasefire deliberations, said Israel was in talks with the Qataris. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said that negotiations would continue this week but has not given any detailed timeline.

US Central Intelligence Agency Director William Burns will travel to Gaza this week for negotiations, a source familiar with the matter said.

Meanwhile, the health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said yesterday that at

- Tanks raid northern areas of Rafah
- Hezbollah unleashes heavy barrage in north Israel
- Gaza death toll now 38,153

least 38,153 people have been killed in the Israeli offensive now in its tenth month. The toll includes at least 55 deaths over the past 24 hours, a ministry statement said.

The UN agency for Palestinians, UNRWA, called the situation in Gaza increasingly tragic, saying in a post on X, "families continue to face forced displacement, massive destruction and constant fear. Essential supplies are lacking, the heat is unbearable, diseases are spreading".

Fighting also continued to rage across Gaza yesterday, and north Israel came under rocket attack from Iran-backed Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Air raid sirens sent residents of 24 Israeli towns running for shelter.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Dorival takes responsibility after Brazil exit

AGENCIES

Brazil coach Dorival Junior said he takes "full responsibility" for his team's underwhelming Copa America quarterfinal exit after losing to 10-man Uruguay 4-2 in a penalty shootout on Saturday.



"This type of work requires a great amount of patience," said Dorival, who took charge in January, after the defeat at Allegiant Stadium.

"I do have to acknowledge that these weren't the expected results, and I take full responsibility for them, but I do think as well that this team has great room to grow and evolve and improve."

Despite having a one-man advantage after a red

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



Brazil players cut forlorn figures following their penalty shootout defeat against Uruguay in a Copa America quarterfinal in Las Vegas on Saturday. The Selecao lost the game 4-2 in tiebreaker following a goalless draw in regulation time.

PHOTO: INSTAGRAM

Ruins of 4,000-yr-old temple found in Peru



REUTERS, Lima

A team of archaeologists have discovered the ruins of what appears to be a 4,000-year-old ceremonial temple buried in a sand dune of northern Peru, alongside skeletal human remains which may have been offerings for religious rituals.

The ruins were discovered in the sandy desert district of Zana, in the South American country's Lambayeque region, a short stretch from the Pacific Ocean and some 780 km north of the capital Lima.

"We are still waiting for radio-carbon dating to confirm the date, but the evidence suggests this religious construction could be part of a religious tradition of temples built on Peru's northern coast during that period," said Luis Muro, an archaeologist from Peru's Pontifical Catholic University who led the research.

Muro's team found the skeletal remains of three adults between the walls and bases of what was once a multi-storey structure, one of which was accompanied by offerings and possibly wrapped in a kind of linen or clothing, he said.