



GDP growth tops 6% in third quarter

B1



Gautam Gambhir named India head coach

P11



How has Awami League fared in first six months?

P8



India races to build power plants in Arunachal Pradesh

P6

PSC QUESTION PAPERS

At least 30 leaks in 12 years

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

A syndicate involving officials and employees of the Public Service Commission has leaked at least 30 question papers for government recruitment tests, including those for the Bangladesh Civil Service exams, over the last 12 years.

Investigators, however, believe the syndicate has been active for about two decades.

This is according to CID officials and a first information report filed with the Paltan Police Station regarding the question leaks.

So far, 17 people, including six officials of the PSC, have been arrested. The arrestees include former PSC driver Syed Abed Ali, who lost his job in 2014 for involvement in leaking question papers.

Not having a job at the PSC did not deter Abed. He remained a key member of the syndicate and even got his son involved in the racket.

The CID filed the case on Monday night, accusing 31 named and 50 to 60 unidentified people. At least 14 named accused are on the run, read the FIR.

Investigators have found that at least two deputy directors -- Jahangir Alam and Abu Zafar -- and Assistant Director SM Alamgir Kabir and former assistant director Nikhil Chandra Roy, were involved. Jahangir, Zafar, and Alamgir have been arrested while Nikhil is now on the run.

These officials used to leak question papers and hand those over to Abed through PSC dispatch rider Khalilur Rahman and office assistant Sajedul Islam.

These former and incumbent PSC officials and employees have been found to have become very wealthy.

Even though some of them were fourth-class employees, they own expensive cars, multiple flats, and commercial spaces in posh areas of the capital.

Over the last three months, there were

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



The Patrakhata Feichka Government Primary School in Putimari char area of Kurigram's Chilmari upazila has been submerged for the past one week. With the Brahmaputra still flowing above the danger level, at least 80 homesteads, along with croplands, remain flooded in this area. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: S DILIP ROY

Driving to a fortune!

PSC chauffeur has wealth worth over Tk 50cr: CID

STAR REPORT

Syed Abed Ali, a former driver for a Public Service Commission chairman, owns assets worth over Tk 50 crore, the CID found in its primary investigation.

The assets include a six-storey building in Mirpur's Paikpara, three flats in West Shewrapara, a Toyota Harrier SUV and a Toyota Premio, along with cash in bank accounts, an investigator told The Daily Star yesterday.

The Criminal Investigation Department has already seized the vehicles.

Abed was arrested on Monday in a case filed for leaking the questions of 30 public service recruitment exams, including the BCS, over the last 12 years.

His name came to the fore

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



Syed Abed Ali

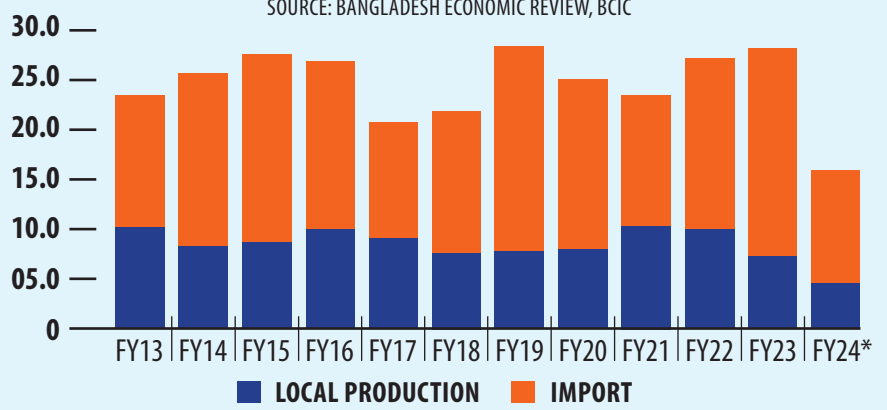
Urea output plummets on feeble gas supply

Imports meeting fertiliser needs ahead of aman season

UREA PRODUCTION HAMSTRUNG BY GAS SHORTAGE

(in lakhs of MT) *as of Apr

SOURCE: BANGLADESH ECONOMIC REVIEW, BCIC



ASIFUR RAHMAN and SAJJAD HOSSAIN

Bangladesh is mostly relying on imports for urea as gas shortage has brought local fertiliser production to a near halt, in a development that will cost the country dearly in terms of foreign currency reserves and food inflation.

The country's six urea factories need 329 million cubic feet of gas a day

(mmcf/d), according to Petrobangla. Since February, Petrobangla has been providing only 107 mmcf/d to the fertiliser sector. Subsequently, four of the six factories have halted production.

Only Ghorashal Polash Fertiliser (GPFPLC) and Karnaphuli Fertiliser (Kalco) are getting their required gas and are in operation. Of the two, the government

SEE PAGE 7 COL 6

HASINA, XI TALKS Economy, trade to be in focus

PORIMOL PALMA

Beijing will push for initiatives with strategic interests in Bangladesh and the Bay of Bengal, while Dhaka will focus on trade and economy as Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina meets Chinese President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang today.

The joint statement that will come out following the meetings at the Great Hall of the People will lay the vision for the future relationship, which is now a "strategic partnership of cooperation".

Foreign policy analysts view the three-day visit to Beijing, which comes 16 days after the state visit to New Delhi, as a balancing act by Hasina, who hopes to be in the good books of the two competing regional powers as they jostle for influence in South Asia as well as in the Bay of Bengal region.

"Balancing [relations with] the two Asian competitors is very crucial

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

Chinese firms to invest in textile, fintech and EVs

Hasina urges Chinese companies to expand investments in Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladeshi and Chinese companies yesterday signed 18 memorandums of understanding relating to investments in different sectors of Bangladesh.

Chinese companies have showed interest in investing in Bangladesh's textile, electric vehicle, solar power, fintech, and technology sectors, according to a statement from Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission.

Under an MoU worth \$50 million, Bangladeshi mobile financial service company Nagad will forge a partnership with Huawei Technologies to build a digital financial platform.

A \$20 million investment deal was signed for the "Bangladesh Capital Market Digital Transformation Project" between Dex Bangladesh Tech Ltd and Huawei Technologies.

Deshbondhu Group of Bangladesh signed an MoU worth \$400 million with Chemtex and China Chemical CNCC to establish a

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



Court orders confiscation of Tk 11.34cr assets of Ctg cop, wife

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A Chattogram court has ordered the confiscation of movable and immovable properties worth Tk 11.34 crore of Kamrul Hasan, additional deputy commissioner of Chattogram Metropolitan Police, and his wife Saima Begum over corruption charges.

Chattogram Metropolitan Sessions Judge Begum Zebunnesa passed the order on Monday after the Anti-Corruption Commission sought the court's order to confiscate the couple's properties and freeze their bank accounts.

The court asked the commission to take measures to appoint an administrator to look after the properties, Kazi Sanowar Ahmed Lavlu, a public prosecutor of the ACC, told The Daily Star yesterday.

The ACC, during an investigation, found that the couple owned land in the port city's North Halishahar, West Nasirabad, Khulshi, Chandgaon, and Dhaka's Savar.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



Buet students demonstrate in front of the main entrance to the university in the capital yesterday demanding scrapping of the quota system in government jobs. Students of most of the public universities across the country have also been boycotting classes and exams since Saturday to press home their demand.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

QUOTA REFORM DEMO Protesters set to resume blockade today

SC to hear petition against HC verdict restoring quota in govt jobs

STAR REPORT

After a one-day break in their blockade programme, students demonstrating against the quota system in government jobs have announced a nationwide blockade for today.

"As part of the programme, all highways and railways across the country will be blocked," Nahid Islam, a Dhaka University student and an organiser of the movement, told a press conference in front of the DU central library yesterday.

The daylong movement will begin at 10:00am and continue until dusk, during which students will enforce blockades at key intersections in the capital and highways adjacent to colleges and universities across the country, the organisers said.

However, many will be looking at the Supreme Court's Appellate Division today as it is scheduled to hear a petition against the High Court ruling that reinstated a 30 percent quota for the children of freedom fighters in the 9th through 13th grades of government jobs.

Regarding the hearing, Nahid said, "Since this case has reached the court, legal procedures will be followed. We have complete faith in the justice system."

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

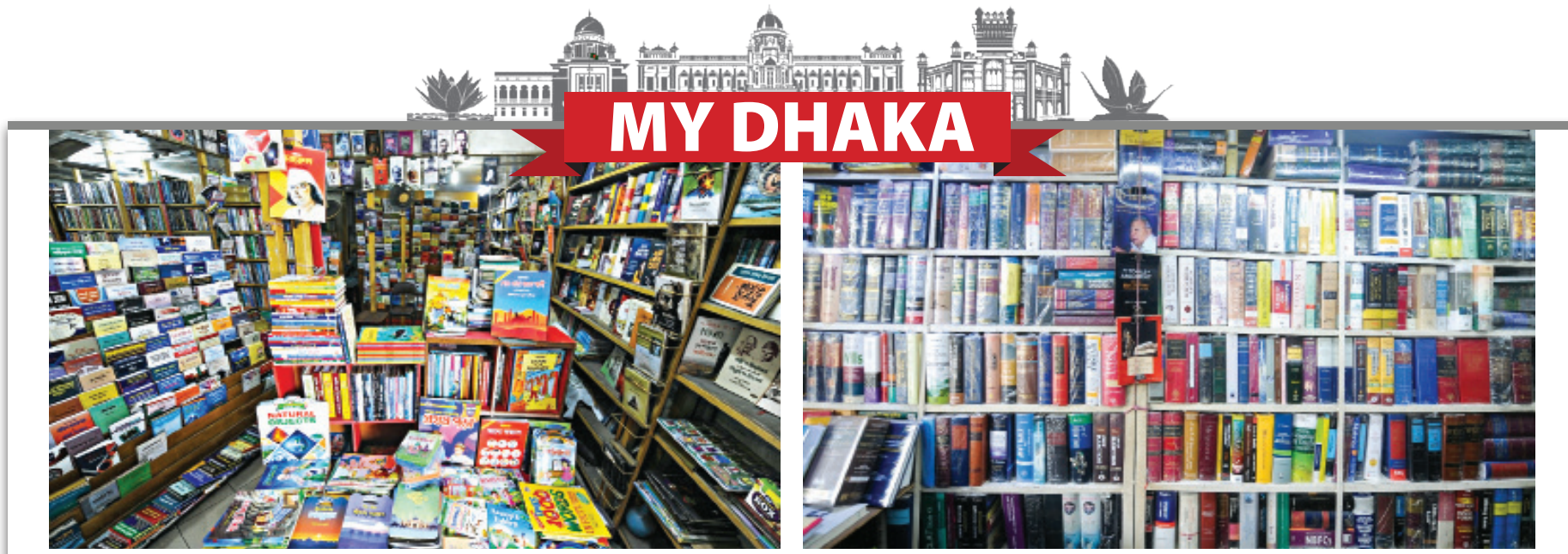


PHOTO: SHADAB SHAHROKH HAI

LIBRARY LANE

The forgotten bookshops of NEW MARKET

ASHIF AHMED RUDRO

Nilkhet, Mirpur, Banglabazar – many destinations are well known amongst bookworms of Dhaka. However, nestled within the bustling New Market lies a lesser-known, historical book market. What happened to Library Lane, this once vibrant hub of knowledge? Today, the future of the place hangs in the balance, its rich history fading into memory.

The forgotten lane

It used to fashion an apt moniker. Library Lane – they used to call it. And fittingly so.

Once upon a time, there used to be more than 50 bookstores here. This fabled lane is on the left of the Gate-1 of New Market. Shopkeepers here say the bookstores used to expand from Gate-1, all the way to Gate 2.

One could find all sorts of books here. Novels, self-help, classic literature, books on religion and law – you name it. It was also a major hub for academic

and reference books. The books sold here are original, either collected directly from the publisher or imported. However, their collections have been fading, much like the lane itself, which has been dissipating for years.

From more than 50 to 40, at the moment, barely 10-12 shops remain. Some of them have yielded to the market demand and given up their identity, making room for stationary products. Iconic bookshops such as Zeenat Book Supply, which had been a popular go-to place for book lovers since 1963, closed its business in 2023. Others stubbornly stand, but barely so under the pressure of the present market.

What happened?

It's a good question to ask. What drove such a popular section of the market into the present sorry state? The answer is: a lot happened over the last few decades!

Firstly, reading habits changed. Md

Jumma, the owner of one of the older shops in the market called Aligarh Library, which has been here since the '70s, holds a very strong opinion about this.

"Ever since passing became easy, reading habits went down. Nowadays, you can just write anything in the exam and still pass. There is no desire for knowledge, no desire to read. This has been one of the biggest issues that caused the decline in business. Of course, then came Covid," he said.

Md Reazul Hakim owns "Book Syndicate", one of the oldest bookstores in the market. He inherited the business from his father, who started the business back in 1954 when New Market was first opened.

"We sell original books and as you can imagine, they can be costly. Piracy has taken the market off balance by printing and photocopying books whenever they feel like it. And of course, they can sell at less than half price because of this," he said, referring

to the declining state of the library lane.

The bleak future

At midday, when the Nilkhet book market is abuzz, the Library Lane feels desolate. Standing on the pavement in the middle of the clearing, one can feel how much this place has witnessed and now it's a decaying history of Dhaka itself. Whatever buzz you find here is less because of the bookstores and more because of the stationary, crockeries, and accessories shops.

Since 2019, six bookstores have bidden farewell to their business here. The past year alone has witnessed the fall of four of those. At this rate, the lane will be nothing more than a memory in a few years.

Whatever remains of this once popular hangout of bibliophiles is now a skeleton of its older self. Whether or not this place can be revived, remains to be seen. But don't miss your chance to visit this place if you have a soft spot for books.

BB CYBER HEIST CASE CID gets 79th date for submitting probe report

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday asked the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) to submit the probe report in the Bangladesh Bank cyber heist case by September 4.

Metropolitan Magistrate Rajesh Chowdhury passed the order after Raihan Uddin Khan, additional superintendent of police and also the investigating officer of the case, failed to submit the probe report by yesterday.

CID has now taken 79 dates to complete its probe into the case filed over the heist of \$101 million from Bangladesh Bank's account with the Federal Reserve Bank of New York in February 2016.

On May 6, the same court asked CID to submit the probe report on the case by July 9 (yesterday).

At least \$81 million was transferred to the accounts of Manila-based RCBC, from where it disappeared into the casinos of the Philippines.

Bangladesh Bank Deputy Director (Accounts and Budgeting) Zobayer Bin Huda filed the case with Motijheel Police Station on March 15, 2016.

So far, Bangladesh retrieved \$15 million from RCBC and recovered another \$20 million sent to a bank in Sri Lanka.

On February 1, 2022, Bangladesh Bank sued Rizal Bank in a US court in order to recover \$66m of stolen funds.

Chhatra Dal leader 'missing' for 9 days BNP claims he was 'picked up' by plainclothes men

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka College Unit Chhatra Dal Vice President Atiqur Rahman Rasel has been missing for nine days, after he was allegedly picked up by plainclothes men from Dhaka's Azimpur on July 1. His father Md Abul Hossain on July 2 filed a general diary with Lalbagh Police Station regarding his son's disappearance.

Talking to The Daily Star, Abul Hossain said he wants his son back safe. "We are anxious as we could not trace my son yet."

"If my son committed any crime, the law enforcers should produce him before a court. If they did not pick him up, it is their responsibility to trace him," he added.

Abul Hossain said they could contact Rasel on July 1 evening for the last time, when he said he was going to Azimpur. Shortly after, his phone was found switched off, he added.

Earlier, BNP in a statement, claimed plainclothes men picked Rasel up from Azimpur area.

At least 30 leaks in 12 years

FROM PAGE 1

transactions worth at least Tk 25 crore in the bank accounts of the syndicate members.

With assistance from the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit, the CID seized the bank account documents of 17 accused.

Sources said multiple money laundering cases could be filed after reviewing the documents.

Touhidul Islam, special superintendent of the CID's cyber investigation and operations, told The Daily Star yesterday, "We have found evidence that the 17 arrestees, including the PSC officials, were involved in leaking question papers for the railway recruitment exams held on July 5."

The syndicate was also involved in leaking questions of some other exams, he said.

Asked when the syndicate started leaking questions, Touhidul said one of the arrested PSC employees joined the commission in 1997 and began leaking questions within five years.

"We are investigating and conducting drives to arrest all those responsible," he said.

Asked about leaking questions of BCS exams, Touhidul said, "We have information, but we need to verify those."

Sources in the CID said they suspect more people from the PSC were involved.

During interrogation, Sajedul said he used to get the question papers from Zafar a day before the exam and that two members of the syndicate – businessman Sakawat Hossain and his brother Siam Hossain – would teach examinees the answers at flats in Dhaka.

Abed and his son's job was to get the examinees who would pay for the questions, said sources.

According to sources, PSC DD Jahangir, who hails from Gaibandha, has multiple flats in Dhaka in addition to a home in his village.

He has a 2,000sqft well-furnished flat in Block-D of Bashundhara Residential Area. The CID arrested him from there on the night of July 7.

The CID also found multiple flats owned by Jahangir in Mirpur and Bhatara of the capital.

Investigators have information that there were transactions worth at least Tk 13 crore in his three bank accounts, sources said, without mentioning when the transactions were made.

On July 5, when the railway exam was being held, there were unusual transactions in his bank account.

PSC DD Zafar, who hails from Patuakhali, lives with his family in Azimpur Government Colony of Dhaka. However, he owns a plot of land and a flat in Mohammadpur.

Along with Jahangir, Zafar owns a coaching centre – Jyoti Commercial Center – for jobseekers

at Chowdhurypara of Malibagh in the capital. The coaching centre is named after Zafar's wife, the sources said.

Asma Begum and Humayun Kabir, who run the coaching centre, used to gather jobseekers willing to pay for the leaked questions too, they said.

Meanwhile, six out of 17 arrestees yesterday made confessional statements before a Dhaka court. The 11 others were sent to jail.

Abed, Khalilur, Sajedul, Sakawat, Siam and private university student Liton Sarker made the confessional statements.

Yesterday evening, the PSC suspended Jahangir, Zafar, Alamgir, Sajedul, and Khalilur.

The PSC also formed a three-member probe committee, led by Joint Secretary Abdul Alim Khan, to investigate the allegations of leaking questions.

The other members of the body are PSC directors Mohammad Azizul Haque and Dilawer Durdana.

The committee has been asked to submit a report within 14 working days, said PSC Chairman Sohorab Hossain at a press conference at his office.

He said the railway recruitment exam would be cancelled if evidence of question leak was found.

His announcement came following a protest rally of jobseekers in front of the PSC Agargaon office yesterday demanding scrapping of the test.

Court orders

FROM PAGE 1

Kamrul also owns properties in a 12-storey commercial building in Savar named "Savar City Centre and Savar City Centre Tower".

The cop invested nearly Tk 8.02 crore in the commercial building, but the actual value of the properties is several times higher. He owns flats, shops, and commercial spaces in the building, the ACC investigation revealed.

The couple owns movable properties worth Tk 9.44 crore and immovable properties worth Tk 1.90 crore. Kamrul's wife owns M/S Sowdagor Navigation, which operates in the maritime sector.

ACC sources said the couple was trying to hand over their properties to others after the commission launched an investigation into their wealth.

Sanowar Ahmed said, "It's not possible for a police official to own such huge businesses and properties with his income. As the couple is trying to hand over their properties, we appealed to the court to issue an order, and the court granted our appeal."

Chinese firms to invest in textile, fintech

FROM PAGE 1

polyester staple fibre and other man-made fibre textile mill on 33 acres of land in Mongla Economic Zone.

The MoUs were signed on the sidelines of the "Summit on Trade, Business and Investment Opportunities between Bangladesh and China".

Bangladesh embassy in Beijing, Bangladesh Investment Development Authority, the SEC, and China Council for the Promotion of International Trade organised the event at the China World Summit Wing of Shangri-La in Beijing.

Speaking at the summit, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said now is the time for Bangladesh and China to explore new areas of further collaboration in trade and investment to create a prosperous future for both nations, reports UNB.

"Our shared vision for economic growth, technological advancement, and sustainable development forms the cornerstone of our bilateral relations," she said.

Hasina, now on an official visit to China, invited the Chinese businesses to visit Bangladesh, explore opportunities, and experience the warmth and hospitality of Bangladeshis.

"You will find in us all the support and assistance you need. Let us work together to build a stronger, more prosperous, and more connected world."

The PM said, "We are committed to addressing trade imbalances and creating a more equitable trade relationship."

Hasina said Bangladesh is keen on exporting more products, including textiles, garments, leather goods, jute products and agricultural produce, to China.

"We welcome Chinese investments in our export-oriented industries, which will help us diversify our export basket and reduce trade deficits," she said.

The premier encouraged Chinese companies to form joint ventures with Bangladeshi firms.

She also invited Chinese companies to establish R&D centres in Bangladesh, leveraging Bangladesh's skilled workforce and academic ingenuity.

Hasina called upon the Chinese business community to consider investing in infrastructure; energy, including renewable energy; and logistics in Bangladesh.

She said that climate-resilient smart farming opens opportunities for collaboration.

The premier said Bangladesh plans

to establish three special tourism zones where Chinese firms can invest.

She also urged Chinese investors to explore portfolio investments in Bangladesh, as the SEC is working to further develop the country's capital markets.

"We have made significant progress in developing a robust bond market. We are on the brink of introducing derivative products, which will further diversify and widen our financial markets," she said.

"China has been significantly contributing to our infrastructure projects, technological advancements, and overall growth of our economy."

She said Bangladesh offers one of the most liberal investment regimes in the world, and BIDA provides a number of services to foreign investors under one roof.

"... We are establishing 100 special economic zones (SEZs), each equipped with state-of-the-art facilities."

Bangladesh is also developing five country-specific economic zones to foster closer economic ties with the key partner nations, the PM added.

OTHER MOUS

China Road and Bridge Corporation and Ningbo Cixing Company Ltd signed an MoU on the investment framework agreement in Bangladesh's Chinese Economic and Industrial Zone.

Billion10 Communications Ltd and CHTC (HengYang) Intelligent EV Company Ltd signed a deal on manufacturing electric vehicles.

The Bangladeshi firm signed another MoU with Ningbo Sun East Solar Co Ltd to set up a solar farm in Sylhet. It also made a deal with HeSheng (Hoshine) Silicon Industry Co Ltd for investment in Bangladesh's renewable energy sector.

Billion10 also signed an MoU with Zhongke Guorui (Zuhai) New Material Technology Co Ltd for investment in Bangladesh's waste lubricant oil recovery and refining industries.

EB Solution Ltd and Hongji Intelligent Transport Co Ltd signed a deal to invest in the Dhaka City Mobile Project.

The Bangladeshi company signed another deal with Ningbo Shering New Energy Technology Ltd for investment in Bangladesh's smart cold chain logistic solutions sector.

Under an MoU on technical and financial investment collaboration, \$20 million will be invested in Bangladesh's waterways and road transport. The deal was signed between Intraco Refueling Station PLC and Shijiazhuang Enric Gas Equipment Co Ltd.

Zibo Jinhuateng Paper Machinery Co Ltd will invest in the paper machinery sector in Bangladesh jointly with Nitel Niloy Group.

Chinese firm Zhengzhou Dongfeng Mid South Enterprise Company will invest in TBR Tyre projects in Bangladesh in collaboration with Nitel Niloy.

Chinese company Shandong Sunite Machinery and Nitel Niloy signed an MoU to invest in Bangladesh's Aerated Autoclave Concrete (AAC) Block.

Chinese firm Daliam Huahan Rubber and Plastic Machinery will invest in Bangladesh's rubber machinery sector with Nitel Niloy.

ZP Technology (Anhui) Co Ltd will invest in producing lithium batteries and electric vehicles in Bangladesh jointly with Nitel Niloy.

ROHINGYA REPATRIATION

During a meeting with the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, Hasina sought Chinese assistance in repatriating Rohingyas to Myanmar.

Chairman Wang Huning of the CPPCC, who led a delegation in the meeting, said they would discuss the matter with Myanmar and play a role of facilitator.

"We will make our highest efforts to initiate Rohingya repatriation through holding discussions with Myanmar," he said.

Briefing reporters after the meeting, Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud said different bilateral issues, including Rohingyas; reducing the trade gap; the celebration of the 50 years of bilateral relations; and the contact between Awami League and Chinese Communist Party came up for discussion.

"CUT INTEREST RATES OF LOAN" Hasina yesterday asked the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) to further cut the interest rates on its loan for Bangladesh.

She made the request when the president of the Beijing-based lender, Jin Liqun, along with high officials of AIIB paid a courtesy call on her.

The AIIB officials said Bangladesh is one of its biggest borrowers and the bank has given Bangladesh a special concession in interest rate.

Financing infrastructure, river dredging, and climate change resilience came up for discussion. **PM LEAVES FOR HOME TONIGHT** Wrapping up her visit, Hasina will leave Beijing tonight and reach Dhaka in the wee hours of tomorrow, foreign ministry sources said.

She was earlier scheduled to leave Beijing on Thursday morning.

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Govt launches edn portal for curriculum

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government launched a new educational portal yesterday, featuring materials for students, teachers, and guardians nationwide, aligned with the newly implemented curriculum.

Education Minister Mohibul Hassan Chowdhury inaugurated the website themed "Curriculum Portal, a One-Stop Solution", at the International Mother Language Institute.

Regarding the curriculum's controversies and evaluation process, he stressed the importance of mindset and parental involvement for success.

"We will consider increasing teachers' salaries by adjusting the operational and development budgets," he said.

Director General of the Directorate of Secondary

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina pays tributes at the Monument to the People's Heroes at the Tian'anmen Square in Beijing, China yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

DHAKA-PADMA BRIDGE-JASHORE Wait for direct rail line gets longer



TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

People's wait for direct rail connectivity between Dhaka and Jashore via Padma Bridge is getting longer as the project authority could not complete work within the last month.

Now, the railway authorities are planning to open the line in November, as it would take four more months to complete all physical works, said project officials.

Project authority yesterday placed the new plan before Railways Minister Zillul Hakim, who had announced in May that the line would be opened within two months, they said.

Bangladesh Railway is constructing a 169km broad-gauge single-line from Dhaka to Jashore via Padma Bridge at a cost of Tk 39,247 crore.

This is the biggest project for BR in terms of cost, and over half of the cost is being provided by China as a loan.

The original deadline for the project was June 2022 and the latest deadline was June this year.

The Dhaka-Bhanga section of the line was opened in October last year and five trains are being operated

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Cargo village to be cleared finally

CAAB confiscates 12 abandoned aircraft, plans auction

RASHIDUL HASAN

The Civil Aviation Authorities of Bangladesh finally confiscated 12 airplanes that had occupied a large part of the cargo village for around 10 years, disrupting the loading and unloading of goods.

The aircraft include four MD-83s, one A310, two ATR 72s, and one Dash-4 owned by United Airways, two Dash-4s aircraft owned by Regent Airways, one MD-82 aircraft owned by GMG Airlines, and one AN-12 aircraft owned by Angel Airways, CAAB said.

The cargo village area has practically been turned into an aircraft graveyard as those airlines have not been in operation for one to 10 years, CAAB officials said.

CAAB Chairman Air Vice Marshal Mafidur Rahman said they will float a tender soon for selling those aircraft through auction.

According to CAAB notification, despite repeated requests to the authorities concerned to remove the planes, no action has been taken so far to remove them. That's why those aircraft were confiscated.

The 12 planes have been lying abandoned, occupying around 1,92,100 square feet of ground support equipment parking area,

CAAB also said.

It is causing problems with the parking of regular or irregular flights, loading of goods in aircraft and vehicular movement in the

The aircraft include four MD-83s, one A310, two ATR 72s, and one Dash-4 owned by United Airways, two Dash-4s aircraft owned by Regent Airways, one MD-82 aircraft owned by GMG Airlines, and one AN-12 aircraft owned by Angel Airways.

export cargo area.

The CAAB chairman said he now has the jurisdiction to float the auction of those aircraft as per the rules.

Around 12 bay parking will be prepared if those abandoned aircraft can be removed, he added.

Group Captain Kamrul Islam, executive director of HSLA, said the de-registration of those aircraft has already been completed.

He also said the respective airlines have failed to repay the

dues to CAAB and have failed to renew their licences.

CAAB said they will get around Tk 1,200 crore from the three airlines -- United Air, Regent Air, and GMG Air -- which will be obtained by auctioning off the planes.

United owes Tk 388.97 crore, Regent Air owes Tk 408, and Tk GMG owes Tk 396.45 crore to CAAB.

In February 2016, United Airways ceased suspended flight operations without any announcement.

Afterwards, the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission took the initiative to revive its operation and reorganised the board of directors of United Airways, with Kazi Wahidul Alam, an aviation expert, as its chairman.

Contacted, ATM Nazrul Islam, an independent director of United Airways, said they tried their best to revive the planes, but couldn't succeed as they didn't get cooperation from any government organisations except for BSEC.

"We even found an investor willing to contribute around Tk 500 crore. However, they gave a condition that CAAB would have to waive the dues," he said, adding

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



COURT CORNER

Why no paternity leave: High Court

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday issued a rule asking the government to explain in four weeks why they should not be directed to formulate a paternity leave policy for employees at all institutions. The HC bench of Justice Naima Haider and Justice Kazi Zinat Hoque issued the rule following a writ petition.

On July 3, Supreme Court lawyer Ishrat Hasan submitted the petition, in which her six-month-old child's name has been included as a petitioner too, saying that the absence of paternity leave made it difficult for new fathers to take care of their wives and newborns.

NID, passport details of Matiur, his family sought

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission has requested Election Commission and Department of Immigration and Passports for the details of the national identity cards and passports of former NBR member Matiur Rahman, his two wives, and two children.

ACC sent the letters yesterday, confirmed an official of the anti-graft body.

"The request is part of an investigation into allegations of illegal wealth accumulation and money laundering against them," he said.

Yunus' petition hearing today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday fixed today for holding hearing on a petition filed by Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus and six others of Grameen Telecom, challenging a Dhaka court's order that framed charges against them.

The bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice Kazi Ebadath Hossain set the date. Barrister Abdullah Al-Mamun appeared for Prof Yunus, while Advocate Khurshid Alam Khan and DAG AKM Amin Uddin Manik represented the ACC.

HC orders to evict 850 structures from Bangshi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the government to evict 850 illegal structures from the banks of Bangshi river at Savar in the next two months.

According to a survey report submitted by the National River Conservation Commission to the HC on June 30, there are 850 illegal structures on the banks of the river.

Removing 'Sharifa's Tale' not a solution Says NHRC chairman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

National Human Rights Commission chairperson Dr Kamal Uddin Ahmed yesterday said the commission disagrees with the government decision to remove "Sharifa's Tale" from textbooks.

He said this at a meeting at the NHRC headquarters in the capital.

"This step [to remove the story "Sharifa's Tale" from textbooks] cannot be perceived as a solution. While this action is repressing the issue, it will arise again in the future for natural reasons," he added.

"Therefore, the NHRC finds it logical to disagree with this decision," said Dr Kamal.

Sharifa's story is about a woman ostracised by her family and society. The story highlights the hardships of the "third gender" community, as referred to in the textbook, and the formation of supportive bonds within it.

"We need to change our discriminatory attitudes towards them. Including these topics in our textbooks will help create positive awareness about these communities," Dr Kamal also said.

Speaking to The Daily Star, the NHRC chief said, "We

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



This dystopian sight sits right opposite the Adabor Police Station in Mohammadpur. Vehicles, some broken down, sits in this make-shift "impound" on the footpath after being confiscated by cops. As a result, pedestrians are left with no space to walk as vehicles continue to pile up in this space over the years. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Lalmatia field set for a facelift

HELEMUL ALAM

The National Housing Authority has started renovating the 2.25-acre playground near Aarong in Lalmatia, evicting encroachers from the site.

The field, previously used for a kitchen market, is now surrounded by corrugated iron sheets as part of the renovation effort.

An NHA official confirmed that the renovation plan includes the creation of walkways, a playground, a skating zone, a temporary shed, a kids zone, two entrances, a toilet, a parking area, and a Shaheed Minar.

The project, funded by the NHA at a cost of Tk 7.2 crore, began on May 22 and is expected to be completed by December.

However, Adil Mohammad Khan, president of the Bangladesh Institute of Planners, criticised the design. He argued that the inclusion of a shed in the middle of the park and the establishment of a skating zone would reduce green spaces and increase concrete areas.

This would also increase the project cost and reduce groundwater recharging ability, he added. He also criticised the lack of consultation with locals and professionals before finalising the design.

In response, the NHA official told this correspondent that 3,500 trees, including Kanchan, Ashok, Neem, and

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Appeal for help

STAR REPORT

The parents of three-year-old Suyaira Akter,



who was born with a congenital heart defect, are seeking financial assistance for her treatment, said a press release.

Suyaira needs surgery, which is costly and beyond the means of her family.

Her father, Md Shafikul Islam, a street vendor in Mirzapur Bazar, Tangail, has so far covered her medical expenses from his own income. However, the cost of the surgery is several lakhs of taka, which the family cannot afford.

He appealed to the kind-hearted people in society for donations to help cover the treatment costs.

Funds can be sent to: Md Shafikul Islam, A/C 0200022323477, Agrani Bank, Mirzapur Branch, Tangail. His bKash and Nagad account number is 01743460654.



People cross the busy Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue amid oncoming traffic, throwing caution to the wind. Disaster could strike at a moment's notice. The photo was taken near Karwan Bazar Metro Rail station recently.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

HC upholds death penalty of 'serial killer' Rasu Kha

STAR REPORT

The High Court yesterday confirmed the death penalty of Rasu Kha, the much-talked about "serial killer" from Chandpur, in the 2019 murder case of Parveen Akhtar, a garment worker.

The bench of Justice Syed Md Ziaul Karim and Justice KM Emrul Kayesh delivered the verdict after holding a hearing on the death reference and appeals, said Deputy Attorney General Md Monirul Islam.

According to a reported confessional statement, Rasu claimed to have killed at least 11 women. Pretending to be in love with his prospective victims, he would lure them into isolated locations and murder them.

Rasu was first arrested in Tongi on September 3, 2009 for stealing fans from a mosque in Chandpur. The police would again come across him following the murder of Parveen. Using her phone records, they tracked Rasu. He was soon arrested and placed on remand on October 7, 2009.

On April 22 in 2015, a Chandpur court sentenced Rasu to death for the rape and murder of another RMG worker Shahida.



Passengers suffer for dilapidated bus terminal

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

The central bus terminal in Patuakhali is in a dilapidated state and in dire need of renovation.

The terminal, constructed by the Local Government Engineering Department in 2003 at a cost of Tk 1.65 crore, was later handed over to the Patuakhali Municipality for operation and maintenance.

Visiting the terminal recently, this correspondent saw local and long-haul buses parked within muddy water as the terminal became waterlogged after rainfall.

Passengers were seen compelled to tread through the muddy water to get on buses or after stepping down from those.

Other amenities at the terminal, including sitting arrangements and restrooms for passengers, were also found in a sorry state.

"The terminal has long been in a poor condition. Even the slightest of rain causes waterlogging at the terminal. Clothes become dirty as we have to tread through muddy water. Travelling in this state is difficult and uncomfortable, especially on long journeys," said Ruhul Amin, a Dhaka bound passenger from Patuakhali Sadar upazila.

Abul Bashar, a resident of Patuakhali town,



and Abul Kalam, another passenger, echoed him. Md Shaheed, a driver of Rudra-Turya Paribahan on Patuakhali-Barisal-Kuakata route, said transport workers also have to suffer due to the terminal's present condition.

"People from all over the country come to Patuakhali town, mostly to visit Kuakata. They become surprised to witness the bus terminal's state. The terminal needs urgent renovation," said Golam Mawla, vice-president of bus owners' association in Patuakhali.

Jasim Uddin Arzoo, executive engineer of Patuakhali Municipality, said "Since Kuakata is a tourism centre, a new bus terminal with all modern facilities will be constructed soon."

Mass media employee bill to ensure job protection

Says Arafat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

All media, including electronic, print, and digital, will be included in the proposed mass media employee bill, said State Minister for Information Mohammad Ali Arafat yesterday. He said this law would ensure that all those working in the media will get job protection.

Arafat made the remarks at a meeting with the leaders of the Dhaka Union of Journalists at secretariat.

He said the government wants that the media should highlight its mistakes and failures. "Genuine criticism helps the government correct its mistakes. We don't fear constructive criticism, but we hate when someone misleads people with lies," he said.

Of an empty tiffin box

FROM PAGE 5

a chair. His eyes were vacant, still the sudden, unbearable pain that engulfed the 45-year-old was quite evident.

Silence hung heavy in the air, punctuated only by the occasional choked sob from a neighbour or relative.

When news of Atoshi's death had reached her elder daughter, Kanika Rani, 19, she rushed from Naogaon to see her mother one last time.

Lankeshar, a mason by trade, battled frequent illness, forcing Atoshi to take on whatever work she could find to keep the household afloat.

Sometimes, that meant sewing clothes for others in the village.

"We were all helpless without Ma," Kanika said.

"None of us knew where anything was kept in the house except her. We can't even imagine a single day without her," she further said.

"How will I take care of my little sister? Will she even survive?" Kanika had more questions than answers.

"I wish Ma was here," she said before starting to cry again.

Lipi Rani, a relative, said, "Due to poverty, Kanika had to get married. They spent nearly Tk 3 lakh, on the dowry and wedding itself, all borrowed from relatives. Atoshi started sewing clothes to help

repay the debt."

"Now, with her gone, that burden falls solely on the remaining family members. Atoshi's death has become a nightmare for us," she added.

Lipi Rani then recounted the fateful day at the Ratha Yatra festival.

"We were all barefoot during the procession. Atoshi held onto the chariot with one hand and Dulki with the other. Then, in a blink, everything went wrong."

"A jolt of electricity ripped through us," Lipi continued.

"Atoshi collapsed, a portion of her right hand catching fire. Her back, legs, and lower abdomen were burnt. She was unconscious."

"Dulki, thankfully, remained conscious despite burns on her hands, feet, and back. Seeing her mother lying there, lifeless, the little girl started looking for familiar faces, anyone who could help. When she couldn't find anyone, she broke down in tears. By that time locals intervened and rushed them to the hospital."

"She survived but it was too late for Atoshi," said Lipi.

Meanwhile, the district administration has formed a five-member investigation team while ISKCON a three-member probe body.

An unnatural death case has been filed over the incident.

No pure water

FROM PAGE 5

and rehabilitation officers of the two districts.

HOPE FOR

LALMONIRHAT, GRIM REALITY IN SIRAJGANJ

The situation in Lalmonirhat shows signs of improvement, with the Dharla river receding 19cm below danger level.

However, Sirajganj remains heavily affected, with the Jamuna river overflowing.

The river was flowing 30cm above danger level at Kazipur point and 46cm beyond at Sirajganj Hardinge Point at noon yesterday. The water level decreased by 11cm and 4cm respectively.

At least 336 sq km area became inundated by floodwater in the district, affecting 95,000 people, said Md Aktaruzzaman,

district relief and rehabilitation officer in Sirajganj.

Removing

FROM PAGE 3

need to understand that these people have constitutionally guaranteed rights."

At the meeting, DMP Commissioner Habibur Rahman, said, "People have conceptual limitations about these communities. Incorporating such topics into the curriculum of training institutes will be beneficial."

Govt launches

FROM PAGE 3 and Higher Secondary Education Nehal Ahmed said while younger teachers have adapted the curriculum, it remains challenging for older educators.

Addressing recent leaks of half-yearly question papers, Secretary of the Technical and Madrasa Division Farid Uddin Ahmed said, "We need to prevent such incidents.

Necessary measures must be taken."

Prof Md Moshuazzaman, acting chairman of NCTB, they have identified teachers involved question leak and instructed authorities to take punitive measures.

The curriculum portal <https://curriculum.gov.bd/> will contain audio-visual courses for teachers, their experiences, and guides on what and how to teach.

Lalmatia

FROM PAGE 3

others, would be planted in the field.

A small portion of the park has been reserved for entries and exits of a metro station planned for the area in the near future.

Manifa Rehnuma, landscape architect and co-founder of And ORDEN, the consulting firm for the project, defended the design.

She said the design has been prepared in a manner so that residents of the area can use it properly. The area, once a recreational hub for football and cricket, had been lost to encroachment over the years, she added.

She said the skating zone was included following demands from local skating clubs as there are no other properly designed skating parks in the area.

Wait for direct rail line gets longer

FROM PAGE 3

through this section.

While launching a commuter train between Dhaka and Rajbari on May 4, the minister said the Bhanga-Jashore section would be opened within two months.

The minister yesterday talked to the officials concerned to know the work progress and when the line could be opened, sources said.

Project Director Afzal Hossain, who was among the participants in the meeting, said they would require two more months

to complete installation of the signalling system.

Besides, they would require more time to complete the works at Bhanga junction station and the TT Para underpass.

"We will be able to complete all physical works within October and then the line will be ready to open in the first week of November," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Asked about the previously set July deadline, he said, "We can now operate trains on the line without a signalling system. But the operation would

not be smooth. Besides, we did not get manpower for the new line."

"So, we told the minister that the section should be opened upon completion of the entire works," he added.

Replying to another question, he said the project tenure has already been extended up to June 2025.

Contacted, BR Director General Sardar Shahadat Ali said the minister wanted to know about the update of the project and the project authorities informed him in detail.

Once the works are completed fully, the prime minister will inaugurate the line, he said.

Once the under-construction rail line becomes functional, the distance between Dhaka and Jashore will decrease by 200km, cutting the travel time in half. Currently, it takes over eight hours to reach Jashore.

The line, which will directly connect the country's two biggest seaports - Chattogram and Mongla - is estimated to boost the country's annual GDP by one percent.

Visa Processing
Nonimmigrant 5 years multiple USA visa processing, Foreign (UK, USA, CANADA, AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND, EUROPE) University/College admission
Admission going on CMT COLLEGE Canada & Open Hearts Language Academy Miami Florida USA
Ambassador Tours & Travels
Corporate Office : 317 Configure Bepari Tower (2nd Floor) GA-64 Bir Uttam Rafiqul Islam Avenue Middle Badda, Dhaka -1212 e-mail : iqbalamba@gmail.com
0088(0)1602039527 (Director of Operations)
0088(0)1739072261 (Managing Director)
0088(0)1612228706 (Creative Director)
0088(0)1714100599 (Finance Director)

Cargo village

FROM PAGE 3 that CAAB refused to comply.

Among the other two airlines, Regent Air announced a "temporary" shutdown of operations during the pandemic but did not start operations

after the pandemic.

Meanwhile, GMG suspended its operations in 2012 due to mismanagement, absence of proper planning, shortage of money, and huge losses, aviation experts said.

CDIP 1st Zero-coupon Bond

This is for the kind information of all concerned that the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) had accorded its consent to issue the Non-Convertible, Fully Redeemable, Unsecured CDIP 1st Zero-coupon Bond of BDT 1,710 million (face value) for 3 years of Centre for Development Innovation and Practices (CDIP) through private placement. The proceeds of the bonds will be utilized to extend financial support to its microcredit and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) through portfolio expansion via investments in both new and established initiatives. The consent has been accorded subject to compliance with the relevant laws and regulatory requirements.

Approved Information Memorandum (IM) is also available on CDIP's website https://cdipbd.org/CDIP_1st_ZCB_IM.pdf

Mifta Naim Huda
Executive Director
Centre for Development Innovation and Practices (CDIP)
House No.-22/9, Block-B, Babor Road, Mohammadpur, Dhaka-1207.



GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
Department of Textiles
Establishment of Sunamganj Textile Institute, Sunamganj Project (2nd Revised)
BTMC Bhaban (11th Floor),
7-9 Kawran Bazar, Dhaka-1215

Corrigendum Notice-2

Dated:09/07/2024

Tender Ref. No : T-4/Textiles Machineries Lab/2023-24 for Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Textiles Machineries and Lab Equipment for Institute has been published on 24 June 2024 in The Daily Star and The Daily Jugantor shall be amended as follows:

Serial Number Tender Notice	Description	Written as	Amended as
7	Date	June 2024	23 June 2024
14	Tender Submission Date and Time	24 July 2024 Time-12:30 PM	29 July 2024 Time-12:30 PM
15	Tender Opening Date and Time	24 July 2024 Time- 2:00 PM	29 July 2024 Time- 2:00 PM
19	Eligibility of Tenderer	(g) Minimum liquid asset 30,00,00,000.00 (Thirty Crore)	(g) Minimum liquid asset 29,00,00,000.00 (Twenty Nine Crore)
	ITT Clause 29.1 Tender Validity period shall be (Page No-28)	180 days	120 days

All other terms and condition will remain unchanged and this corrigendum notice will be part of the integral part of tender document.

Mohammad Moshuazzaman Hossain
Project Director
Establishment of Sunamganj Textile Institute, Sunamganj Project (2nd Revised)

ANNUAL SUMMIT Embattled Biden greets Nato allies in Washington

REUTERS, Washington

US President Joe Biden welcomed the heads of Nato member states to Washington yesterday for an annual summit that gives the embattled Democrat an international stage to convince allies at home and abroad he can still lead.

Biden, 81, has vowed to press on in his race against Republican Donald Trump, 78, despite concern from Democrats on Capitol Hill and donors that he will lose the November 5 election after a halting debate performance on June 27.

Biden made restoring the United States' traditional alliances abroad to counter the threat of autocracies the centerpiece of his foreign policy after Trump challenged allies as part of an "America First" approach. Who wins in November could have a substantial impact on Nato's and Europe's future.

Trump has suggested that, given a second term, he would not defend Nato members that did not meet the alliance's defense spending target of two percent of their respective GDP if they came under military attack. He has also questioned the amount of aid given to Ukraine.

Aides said Biden's opening speech expected at 5:00 pm Eastern time (2100 GMT) will highlight what his administration sees as a key accomplishment: a stronger and more united Nato, under Washington's leadership, with more members and a resolve to meet their collective security needs.

That brings, they say, tangible results for American voters: a safer country, with a strong international economic position, more alliances and power abroad, and less at risk of conflict with its adversaries.



Rescuers carry the body of a person found under debris at the site where an apartment building was hit by a Russian missile strike in Kyiv, Ukraine yesterday. Targeting hospitals in Ukraine is a "war crime," a senior UN official told an emergency meeting of the Security Council yesterday, called in the wake of deadly strikes that Kyiv blamed on Russia.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Ukrainian drones target Russian military airfield, oil refinery

AFP, Kyiv

Ukrainian drones targeted a military airfield, an oil refinery and a substation in southern Russia, a defence source in Kyiv said yesterday, after Moscow reported an overnight aerial barrage.

Kyiv has stepped up cross border aerial attacks on Russia in recent months, attempting to damage energy infrastructure and the Kremlin's war chest by hurting oil revenues.

Russia has launched drone and missile attacks that have crippled Ukrainian power plants and halved the country's generation capacity.

In an operation coordinated by Security Services of Ukraine and the country's military

intelligence, drone spurred explosions at the Akhtyubinsk military airfield in Russia's Astrakhan region.

It also said there had been blasts at an electrical substation in the Rostov region and an oil depot in the southern Volgograd region.

The source added that Ukrainian forces would pursue more strikes on "Russian military facilities working for the war against Ukraine."

There was no response in Moscow to the specific claims.

The Russian defence ministry however had earlier said that its air defence systems had destroyed 38 Ukrainian drones in regions near the border between the two countries,

including Rostov and Astrakhan.

Rostov's governor Vasily Golubev in comments to state-run agency TASS acknowledged an electric substation had been damaged in a drone attack, saying repairs would take three days.

And Astrakhan's governor Igor Babushkin said Ukraine had launched a "massive attempt to attack targets with drones" in the north of the region, adding that the attack had been "successfully repelled".

Both sides have used drones, including larger self-detonating craft with ranges stretching hundreds of kilometres extensively throughout the conflict, which began in February 2022.

A Bangladeshi

FROM PAGE 12

Yatharth Hospital, a private medical facility, reports Indian Express, quoting police.

In the alleged racket, records show, patients from Bangladesh were lured by a network of middlemen, Kumari, and their associates for organ transplantation in major hospitals around the Indian capital.

The Bangladeshis involved in the racket were named in the news report as Rasel, 29, from Kushtia, and his associates Md Sumon Miya, 28, Md Rokon, 26, and Ifi. All except Ifi were arrested.

Together with Tripura-based Ratish Pal, they lured potential donors from Bangladesh to Delhi, where the donors would receive four to five lakh rupees for their kidneys. Recipients were charged

25 to 30 lakh rupees, a source told Indian Express.

Donors and recipients coordinated their stay, treatment and tests through a medical tourism company named Al Shifa, sources said.

Rasel rented a flat in Jasola village, where potential donors stayed and met with recipients.

A source told Indian Express, "Five to six donors were staying at this rented flat. All the tests before the transplant were completed. The recipients would also meet the donors at the flat."

During the arrests, a bag recovered from Rasel's room contained nine passports, two diaries, and a register. These passports belonged to kidney donors and recipients and the diary reportedly had details of monetary transactions between the donor and recipient.

UK appoints

FROM PAGE 12

"the City" after the City of London financial district, since 2021.

Her appointment has not been formally announced by the government.

In May, she told the Financial Times that Labour would push the Financial Conduct Authority, Britain's

markets regulator, to do more to remove barriers to competitiveness and

growth.

New finance minister Rachel Reeves on Monday launched a new "national mission" to drive economic growth, setting out plans to increase housebuilding, unblock infrastructure projects and attract private investment.

Siddiq would succeed Bim Afolami, a former HSBC banker who held the role under the previous Conservative government.

Road crash

FROM PAGE 12

accident, Shahidul Islam the lorry, dead. Four passengers of the bus were rescued in a critical state. They were sent to SZMCH. Besides, some injured passengers were admitted to that hospital."

When asked about the

accident, Shahidul Islam said quoting witnesses that the lorry strayed from its lane and came to the middle of the road.

The bus passengers also told firefighters the bus had also moved from its lane to the middle of the road.

"Whether it is war, conflict... any person who believes in humanity, is pained when there is loss of lives."

Indian PM Narendra Modi tells Putin during Moscow visit

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Local Government Engineering Department

Office of the Executive Engineer

District: Dinajpur

www.lged.gov.bd

শেখ হাসিনার মুদ্রিত
রাম শংকর উইজ

Memo No. 46.02.2700.000.07.59.01.23-2890

Date: 09/07/2024

e-Tender Notice No. 01/2024-2025

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (OTM) (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for 01 No. Package of SSWRDP-2 Project, FY. 2024-2025 for this District.

SI No.	Name of Package	Name of work	Tender ID
1	LGED/SSWRDP-2/P-BD-P-98/23-24/75137-Structure	(a) Buried Pipe Network System at ch.12+870 km, (b) Construction of Header Tank (L=6.40m, W 4.2m & H=8.0m), (c) Pumping Platform (2Nos-7.5x2m), (d) Bank Protection work (L=24.4m), (e) Small Gully Crossing, (f) Road Crossing (L=90.0m). (g) Barbed Wire Fencing for Header Tank & WMCA Office Building (L= 102.8m), (h) Supply of Accessories for Pump, (i) Supply of Electric Pump and Motor with Power Connection, (j) Construction WMCA Office Building, (k) Electrical Works of WMCA Office, (l) Supplying furniture of WMCA Office Building, (m) Supply of Computer and other related item for WMCA Office, (n) Project Identification signboard, (o) Documentation of Works of Chakrampur Atrai Nadi (SP ID-75137) under Upazila: Sadar, District: Dinajpur.	999698

Last selling date & time 07-08-2024, 15:00, closing & opening date & time 08-08-2024, 11:00.

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches up to 07 August 2024, 16:00.

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

Md. Masudur Rahman
Executive Engineer
LGED Dinajpur
Phone: 02589923381
xen.dinajpur@lged.gov.bd

GD-29



গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ

কমান্ড্যান্ট, আরআরএফ-ঢাকা-এর কার্যালয়

মিলব্যারাক পুলিশ লাইন, গোভারিয়া, ঢাকা-১২০৪।

পুনঃ দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

তারিখ: ০৯/০৭/২০২৪খ্রিঃ।

তারিখ: ০৯/০৭/২০২৪খ্রিঃ।

প্রচলিত পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট আইন-২০০৬ এবং বিধিমালা-২০০৮ (সর্বশেষ সংশোধনসহ) মোতাবেক ২০২৪-২০২৫ অর্থ বৎসরে আরআরএফ-ঢাকা পুলিশের নিম্নবর্ণিত বিভিন্ন আইটেমের মালামাল সমূহ ক্রয়/সংগ্রহ কাজের লক্ষ্যে বাংলাদেশের প্রকৃত ব্যবসায়ী/ত্রিকাদার/সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হতে পৃথক পৃথক সীলমোহরকৃত মুহূবন্ধ নামে কাজের নাম উল্লেখ পূর্বক প্রতিযোগিতামূলক উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং-০২/২০২৪-২০২৫ অর্থ বৎসর

ক্রমিক নং	দরপত্রের/কাজের নাম	সিদ্ধিভূক্তের মূল্য	দরপত্র জামানত	কার্যকাল
১.	মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	১০৬০ /ই		
২.	সংস্থা			
৩.	দরপত্র সম্পাদনকারী প্রধান			
৪.	সংগ্রহ করার জেলা			
৫.	দরপত্রের বিষয়			
৬.	দরপত্রের পদ্ধতি			
৭.	বাজেট ও অর্থনৈতিক খাত			
৮.	দরপত্র প্রকাশের/ইমুর তারিখ			
৯.	দরপত্র সিদ্ধিভূক্ত সর্বশেষ প্রাপ্তির তারিখ			
১০.	দরপত্র জমা প্রদানের সর্বশেষ তারিখ ও সময়			
১১.	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়			
১২.	দরপত্র সম্পাদনকারী অফিস ও ঠিকানা			
১৩.	দরপত্র সিদ্ধিভূক্ত প্রাপ্তির স্থান			
১৪.	দরপত্র সাবিশের স্থান			
১৫.	দরপত্র খোলার স্থান			
১৬.	দরপত্র মূল্যায়নের তারিখ ও সময়			
১৭.	দরপত্রাদাতার প্রাথমিক যোগ্যতা বা দরপত্রের সাথে যে সকল কাগজ পরে দাখিল করতে হবে।			
১৮.	কাজের বিস্তারিত বর্ণনা			
১৯.	বিশেষ শর্তাবলী			

GD-28

(মহামান্য অ্যাপ্রিসেট ডিভিশন অব সুপ্রীম কোর্টের রায়ে আপসে)
কমান্ড্যান্ট, আরআরএফ-ঢাকা।

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

Ensure fairness in civil service tests

News of PSC question paper leaks deeply alarming

We are dismayed by the revelation of a question paper leak racket operating within the Bangladesh Public Service Commission (BPSC). According to a report by Prothom Alo, six officials of the commission and 11 others have been arrested by law enforcers for allegedly leaking question papers of various exams organised by the PSC. The group, according to Channel24, which broke the news after a sting operation, have sold question papers of at least 30 recruitment tests including Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) exams for over a decade.

At a time when students across the country are demanding quota reforms in public service recruitment to make it more merit-based, the PSC scandal deals a heavy blow to our objective of having qualified professionals in public institutions. The leak shows how the system is still largely rigged against meritocracy, often allowing candidates to exploit the preferential quota system or use bribery or political influence to secure a government job. Even the lengthy process of the BCS recruitment cycle works against meritorious students. Under such circumstances, how can we expect general students to feel hopeful about their future in the country? How can we expect honest and dedicated public servants when unethical practices and undue barriers haunt the entire recruitment process? And how sincere will those coming out of compromised tests be to rein in the corruption that is plaguing nearly every public sector?

Shedding light into the PSC scandal, investigations have revealed that Tk 2 crore allegedly passed between two racket members, both PSC officials, to obtain and sell the question paper of the Bangladesh Railway recruitment test held on July 5. Furthermore, a former driver at the PSC, who allegedly lost his job for leaking question papers in 2014, has reportedly amassed wealth worth at least Tk 50 crore. This raises the question: how is it possible that the PSC administration was unaware of the operation of this criminal network for so long? Who else were involved? How high up does it go? Where were the institutional checks and balances that are supposed to prevent this kind of scenarios?

The candidates of the July 5 recruitment test have demanded its cancellation—which is only logical—but those who unfairly missed their chances in the previous 30-something recruitment tests can no longer be compensated. Neither can we perhaps expect anything happening to those already recruited through this compromised process. This is as sad as it is alarming. The only way the government can ensure justice to those thousands of deprived candidates is by ensuring that the accused are brought to book, and the entire public service recruitment process is revamped to make it more merit-based.

Continuing flood exposes fault lines

Authorities must prepare better, more wisely

Bangladesh is in the middle of its annual monsoon, so the news of flooding along with the deaths and destructions that come with it is more or less expected, even though the pain of witnessing so much suffering doesn't go away. What's harder to accept, however, is when the suffering is exacerbated by things that are within our control. Two developments that have become synonymous with the flood this year, and natural calamities in general of late, are the crisis of relief supplies, especially for those stranded in remote villages, and the fragility of embankments and polders.

As the floods hit new areas, with as many as 20 districts and two million people affected so far, as per an estimate released on Sunday, the cries for aid are getting louder. Many have complained that they were yet to receive government assistance. This could be partly because of transportation and distribution challenges, with the upazila and union parishads in charge of aid deliveries, and partly because of the quantity of provisions allocated. The local administrations and public representatives have a big task here: they must ensure not only sufficient provisions but also proper distribution. And while at it, they must give special attention to those who could not make it to the temporary shelters.

The other development that caught our attention is how prone to damage many of the embankments and polders are, giving away at the slightest nudge, metaphorically speaking. We have had reports of crude materials like sand-filled geobags being dumped to check water flow through some of the collapsed dykes. While the pressure of floodwaters can be intense, especially when rivers flow above danger levels, any structural defence should be designed to withstand the pressure. What's the point of having them then? We must resolve these and other longstanding issues—including the largely ineffective river-dredging programmes that are supposed to help manage water flow and erosions—so that vulnerable communities do not have to suffer so much.

In some of the worst-hit districts, water levels are decreasing but the overall flood situation has not improved yet. In Kurigram and Lalmonirhat, over 1.60 lakh people have been marooned. Farmers have suffered significant losses, with around 6,500 hectares of agricultural land including Aman seedbeds and vegetable fields submerged in Kurigram alone. Meanwhile, over 1,000 educational institutions remain closed in Sylhet and Rangpur regions. At least 10 have died, including two in Jamalpur on Monday. The growing human and economic tolls of the flood are becoming clearer as days pass. The least we can do in such a situation is prepare better, and wisely.

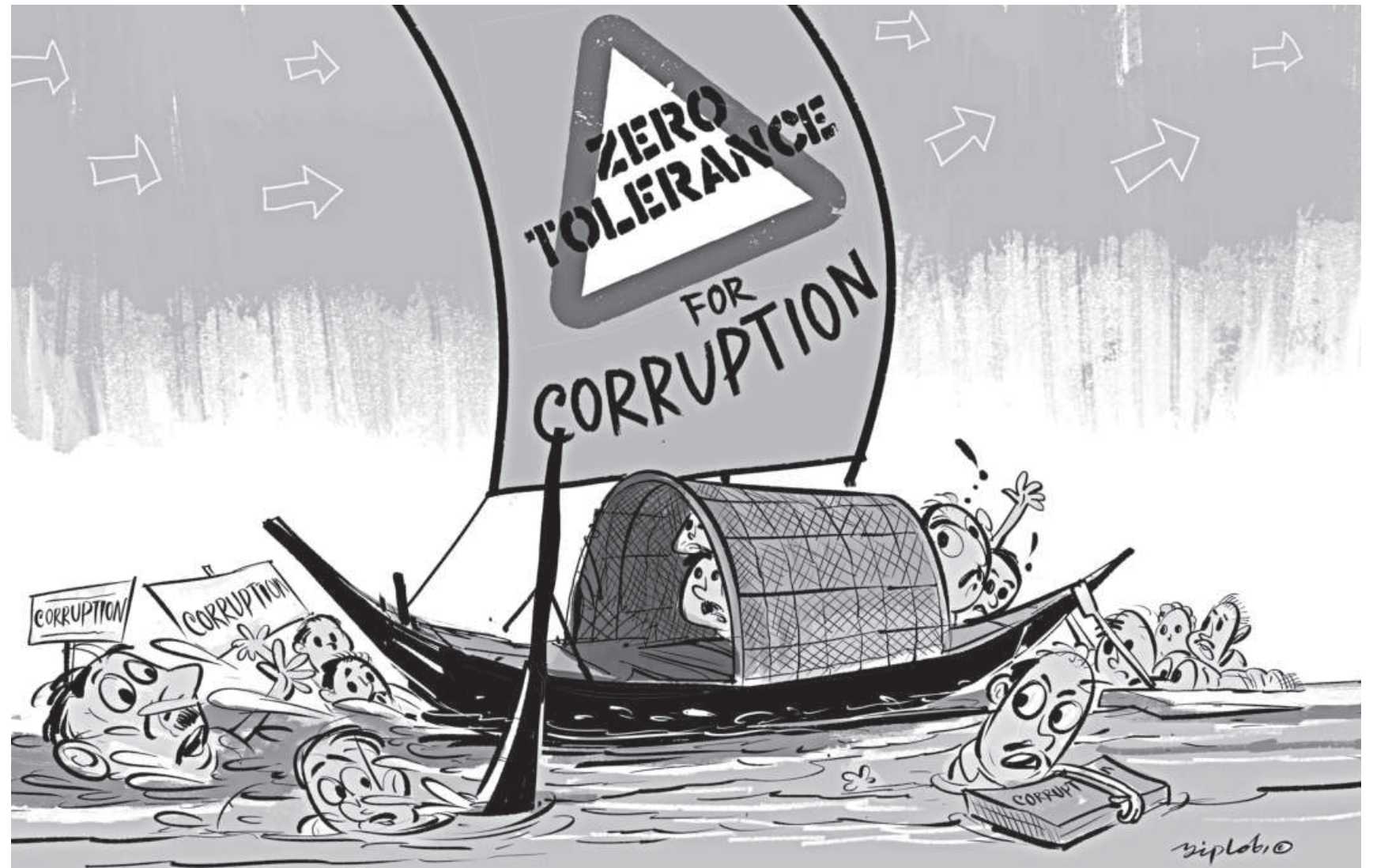
THIS DAY IN HISTORY



Telstar 1 launched

On this day in 1962, Telstar 1, the first communications satellite to transmit live television signals and telephone conversations across the Atlantic Ocean, was launched inaugurating a new age in electronic communications.

Anti-graft drive: How has Awami League fared in first six months?



VISUAL: BIPLAB CHAKROBORTY



Partha Pratim Bhattacharjee is planning editor at The Daily Star

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

The Awami League-led government completes six months of its fourth consecutive term in office today. Generally, six months is not enough time to assess the performance of a government. But for an incumbent government in seat since 2009, whose comeback was accompanied with many promises, it seems a good enough timeframe to evaluate its deeds over the last six months in the context of its 15-year rule.

In the past six months, the issue of corruption has truly come to the fore, and the government has acted in a handful of high-profile cases. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina recently vowed that no one indulging in corruption will be spared, irrespective of their identity, and that the ongoing drive against graft will continue. At the maiden cabinet meeting on January 15, she also gave strict instructions to not tolerate corruption and irregularity.

However, there are as yet no indications that the government is ready to tackle corruption holistically. No policy reforms have been suggested, no directives have been issued to concerned agencies, nor have law enforcement authorities been bolstered to act against those deemed corrupt. Instead, what seems to be clearer as days go by is that the government is cherry-picking certain individuals who may no longer be in favour, and conducting isolated drives against them, while others go scot-free.

The Anti-Corruption Commission is currently investigating the accumulation of illegal wealth by former inspector general of police Benazir Ahmed and his family members, former National Board of Revenue (NBR) official Matiur Rahman, immediate past NBR first secretary Quazi Abu Mahmud Faisal, customs commissioner Enamul Haque, former NBR commissioner Wahida Rahman, former additional inspector general of police Shamsuddoha Khondoker, Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk) director Mobarak Hossain and his wife, among others.

The amount of assets that the initial investigation by ACC has unearthed is mindboggling. It found illegal assets worth Tk 43.5 crore belonging to Benazir Ahmed, his wife, and two daughters. But the actual price of his wealth is many times higher than the amount shown in the documents.

Meanwhile, former NBR official Faisal has accumulated about Tk 1,000 crore by taking bribes for transferring income tax officials, intimidating taxpayers and resorting to other irregularities, according to ACC documents submitted to the court.

But the question that must be asked is, why is ACC investigating them now,

rather than when they were at the helm of power? Does the ACC truly deserve compliments for acting on command, rather than doing its constitutionally mandated duty? While the AL throws its sacrificial offerings to a crowd thirsty for blood, the one prickly issue getting sidelined is whether the AL government can escape responsibility for such unbridled corruption.

There have been innumerable occasions when the party has quite blatantly used the state machineries for political benefits. There has been widespread immunity for overreach of influential individuals and institutions,

The Awami League, in its manifestos before the last four national elections, vowed to strengthen the ACC, but Bangladesh Public Service Act 2018 essentially limits the anti-graft watchdog's power to arrest corrupt government officials, as it must get prior permission from the authorities concerned to arrest public servants.

which has given many the illusion of unbridled power—a perfect breeding ground for corruption and tyranny. The flurry of corruption allegations that have been raised against some former and incumbent government officials in recent times is nothing but an outcome of that situation.

Even a portion of AL leaders believe the government has failed to ensure accountability of government bodies, and is predominantly responsible for giving corruption its current institutional shape. On June 25, AL joint general secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif told the parliament that corruption is overshadowing all the government's achievements and that despite its policy of zero-tolerance against corruption on paper, corruption remains out of control in reality.

The very next day, AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader said it isn't just government officials who are corrupt, but politicians too. But then, in the very next minute, he tried to justify corruption in the country by saying it is a common phenomenon across the globe.

Such contradiction, unfortunately, seems to be the very mantra of the party's professed commitment to tackling corruption. The Awami League, in its manifestos before the

last four national elections, vowed to strengthen the ACC, but Bangladesh Public Service Act 2018 essentially limits the anti-graft watchdog's power to arrest corrupt government officials, as it must get prior permission from the authorities concerned to arrest public servants.

On June 10, ACC Chairman Moinuddin Abdullah accused ministries of fostering corruption by not including anti-corruption clauses in their regulations. The former bureaucrat also stated that all ministries have opened the floodgates to corruption. Meanwhile, ACC Commissioner (investigation) Md Jahurul Haque said, "Those in power in society are the ones who commit corruption. The CIP and VIP individuals, whom you try to honour, are involved in corruption."

The corrupt, indeed, are running the country, with impunity. Around Tk 92,261 crore has been plundered from the country's banking sector in 24 major scams over the past 15 years, as a result of irregularities, misuse of power, and potential money laundering, according to a report of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD). The figure can only confirm the ineffectiveness of the Money Laundering Prevention Act and the futility of the government's commitments to safeguard the banking sector.

The AL, in its manifesto, promised to recover default loans through enforcement of laws, but the total defaulted loan in the banking sector stood at Tk 1,82,295 crore as of March, highest in the country's history. But in 2009 when the AL led government came to office, the figure of total defaulted loan was Tk 22,000 crore.

We see the same impunity in the stock market. Low-performing stocks

Data suggests this may be a recurring issue. In 2022, the BSEC uncovered manipulation in several stocks, where the perpetrators gained an estimated Tk 253 crore but were only fined Tk 21 crore. In contrast, the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) identified 16 individuals involved in a stock manipulation scheme in June 2023 that generated over \$35 million in illegal profits. Consequently, the SEC imposed collective fines exceeding \$75 million, as reported on their website. This example highlights the significant disparity in how market manipulation is penalised in Bangladesh compared to the US. Instead of strong deterrents, we seem to be encouraging such practices by either turning a blind eye to them or letting perpetrators off the hook with a slap on the wrist.

Meanwhile, the success of every development project in the country is tainted by cost-overruns and innumerable project extensions due to corruption at every level for which no one is ever held to account. All this comes at a tremendous cost—the burden of foreign debt, which has now crossed \$100 billion, a nearly four-fold increase compared to \$25.3 billion in 2009.

And while the corrupt hoards wealth beyond our wildest imagination, ordinary people are barely surviving the onslaught of rising costs. The AL's top promise before the January 7 national poll was to address inflation and ensure a smooth supply chain to bring down commodity prices. But food inflation stood at 10.76 percent in May, a seven-month high. In June 2009, when the AL formed the government, the point-to-point inflation was 2.25 percent, while the average inflation rate was recorded at 6.66 percent.

The finance minister, while placing the proposed budget for FY 2024-2025, hoped to bring the inflation down to 6.5 percent. But given the country's current economic health and in the absence of any clear policy directives, it appears nothing more than a lofty assurance.

The party also promised to take strict action against illegal wealth acquisition in its election manifesto. The government, however, has taken the opposite position by once again deciding to allow black money holders to legalise undisclosed wealth without any scrutiny by paying a 15 percent tax.

The AL has long promised to establish a humane society by reducing social inequality, but the latest data of Household Income and Expenditure Survey reveals a totally different picture. Income inequality is at an all-time high in the country, with the top 10 percent of the wealthiest households now holding 40.92 percent of its total income.

The above scenario paints a depressing picture of the first six months of the government's tenure. We can only hope that morning does not show the day. Sheikh Hasina has proven to be the strongest leader of the country and we want to have faith in her to clamp down on corruption, regardless of affiliation, with greater vigour and steer her government to prioritise the welfare of the people.

Does the ACC truly deserve compliments for acting on command, rather than doing its constitutionally mandated duty? While the AL throws its sacrificial offerings to a crowd thirsty for blood, the one prickly issue getting sidelined is whether the AL government can escape responsibility for such unbridled corruption.

frequently appear on lists of top gainers or highest traded volumes in the stock market due to manipulations. Even when the Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC) detects such manipulations, the BSEC's punishments are too lenient, discouraging effective deterrence. For instance, in 2023, the BSEC fined Abul Khayer Hiru and his associates only Tk 5.25 crore for manipulating the stocks of NRB Commercial Bank and Fortune Shoes. This fine pales in comparison to their estimated gains exceeding Tk 68 crore, according to BSEC enforcement records.

LESSONS FROM FOUR ELECTIONS

More challenges to democracy ahead



BLACK, WHITE & GREY

Ali Riaz
is distinguished professor of political science at Illinois State University, US and a non-resident senior fellow of the Atlantic Council. His recent publications are "Pathways of Autocratization: The Tumultuous Journey of Bangladesh Politics" (Routledge, 2024) and "The Charade: Bangladesh's 2024 Election" (Prothoma, 2024)."

ALI RIAZ

In the year of elections, four recent elections have sent some messages which deserve our attention, particularly considering that we are living at a time when democracy is under threat globally and extremism is on the rise. These apparently disparate elections and their results seem to have some common elements with lessons for liberal democratic forces around the world. The elections I am referring to are the Indian election, the European Parliament election, the UK election, and the election in France. Held between April 19 and July 7, these elections were closely observed for several reasons. And there have been arguments that these may serve as barometers to the future of democracy.

India's election, with the largest number of voters in the world, and with the widespread prediction that Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will continue in power with a larger number of parliamentary seats this time around, ended up with a result which put a brake on Modi's authoritarian tendencies. Defying predictions by pollsters, the opposition alliance INDIA, led by the Indian National Congress, emerged as a formidable opposition after a decade, and BJP failed to secure an absolute majority.

The past decade witnessed a serious

Do these elections indicate a strategy to beat populist politics? In India, unlike the past two occasions, Modi's populist rhetoric did not work as the opposition made the election a choice of policy more than of personality. France's election, at least in the first round, sends a different message—populism works.

erosion of democracy in India. There were and still are concerns about what path the country will take under Modi's third term. The European Parliament election, held between June 6-9, was a gigantic endeavour because of the number of countries involved—27, to



VISUAL: STAR

be precise. With the growing appeal of rightwing populism in Europe, the question was: will the far-right eclipse the centrists and shape the future trend in Europe?

The British election, held on July 4, delivered a shift of power after 14 years from the Conservative Party to the Labour Party, as anticipated. But the results revealed a few disturbing trends. Parliamentary elections in France were held in two rounds, on June 30 and July 7, but were not anticipated to happen so soon before June 9. The early election was a consequence of the dismal electoral performance of President Emmanuel Macron's party in the European Parliament election. In a sense, it was a gamble by Macron, which turned out to be more high-stake than Macron and the French people had anticipated. The elections almost brought the rightwing National Rally (NR) to the gates of power, only to be pushed away by

must defend their records. But in these instances, including in part in the Iranian election, it was beyond anti-incumbency.

While economy is not the only reason for unseating the Conservatives in Britain, there are other factors such as the dismal state of the National Health Service (NHS). Nevertheless, the bread-and-butter issue was the driving force. In India, unemployment, falling incomes, and inflation coupled with farmers' discontent became the hurdles which Modi and his party failed to cross. France's debt situation has been a matter of concern for all in the Eurozone, while dissatisfaction has been growing among French citizens. The lesson is clear: "it is the economy, stupid."

The shock victory of France's left alliance has allowed many across Europe to have a sigh of relief. The victory of the Labour Party in Britain, although predicted ahead

the pernicious politics of division will be shunned. It has taken root in society, and cannot be ignored. In Britain, Labour has secured an historic win, but its support has remained almost the same as 2019, and an almost 20 percent swing from Conservatives did not go to Labour or LibDem, but to the extreme right wing Reform UK party. The Reform UK party has secured more than 14 percent of the popular vote, and has placed itself as the third largest party ahead of the LibDem.

In France, even after the left parties came together and reached an understanding with the centrist parties, the vote share of the NR and its allies stood at 37.6 percent. These figures echo the results of the European Parliament elections, which saw a surge of rightwing parties in Germany, France, Italy, and Austria. Although the European Parliament has limited power for domestic

issues, the rise of the rightwing parties was not a complete surprise. Indeed, one can take comfort in the fact that despite rightwing parties performing well, the centre-right and centre-left groupings have retained their dominance in the European Parliament. But what will happen in the future if the present trend continues is an open question. If there is a lesson, it is that the danger to liberal democracy is not over. Instead, the coming years will be more challenging.

Do these elections indicate a strategy to beat populist politics? In India, unlike the past two occasions, Modi's populist rhetoric did not work as the opposition made the election a choice of policy more than of personality. France's election, at least in the first round, sends a different message—populism works. The same is the message from the rise of the Reform UK party. In the European Parliament elections, the rightwing parties which did well are known for their populist rhetoric. Some analysts, for example, Max Boot in the *Washington Post*, suggest that centrist politics is the antidote to populism. He refers to the policy shift of the Labour Party under Keir Starmer vis-à-vis Jeremy Corbyn as an example. Undoubtedly, Starmer has moved the party to the centre, but there has been a price for that too. The Labour Party has secured less popular votes than in 2019.

The argument that moderation and centrism is the way to go does not resonate with the French election results, as the Left alliance has some parties which have somewhat left-extremist positions. The voters have not rejected them. As such, these elections have not made any serious dent to populist politics.

There is a need for soul searching as to how to address the rising appeal of populist demagogues. In the United States, Trump is the personification of such pernicious populist politics. His appeal to the voters has not subsided; instead, with less than five months to go before the election, he is ahead of his opponent Joe Biden.

Both the Indian and French elections demonstrated that in the face of grave threats from undemocratic political forces, it is imperative to close the ranks and build an alliance. The opposition alliance INDIA is a bloc of disparate parties, but their decision to stand together to challenge the Modi regime provided an alternative to Indian voters. Similarly, the NPF in France is not a cohesive alliance. In fact, the partners were engaged in rhetorical battle until the first round of the election. Whether they can work together and work with centrist parties will be tested in the coming days. But for the moment, one must acknowledge, the left has played an historic role.

How a US act revived Sino-Indian confrontation over Tibet



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M SAKHAWAT HUSSAIN

On June 12, 2024, both houses of US Congress passed a bipartisan bill called "Promoting a Resolution to Tibet-China Dispute Act," better known as "Resolve Tibet Act." The act calls on China to find a "peaceful settlement" to the 65-year-old Tibet issue through dialogue with the Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, who is in exile in Dharamshala, India. The Dalai Lama was rescued from Lhasa to India in March 1959, when Chinese troops were about to take over the Tibetan capital. He still heads a "Tibetan Government in Exile," based in the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh, despite strong Chinese disapproval.

Almost six decades after the Sino-Indian war over the Tibetan border issue and the Dalai Lama's ambivalent stand on Tibet's sovereignty, the US' Resolve Tibet Act would certainly bring the issue out of historical obscurity. The issue was thought to have been frozen after the China-US rapprochement and the US' acceptance of the One-China policy in 1972, while India is also said to have reconciled with the claim that Tibet is an integral part of China.

The issue was settled to an extent when China reconciled with India's takeover of Sikkim, considered one of the five fingers of Tibet, during the visit of India's late Foreign Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in 1979. But China never gave up its claim over outer Tibet including Aksai Chin, Tawang and Arunachal Pradesh—declared as one of the five fingers of Tibet by Mao Zedong—in the northeast.

Since its creation in 1949, the People's Republic of China (PRC) has denied the outcome of the Shimla Convention of 1914, which was attended by representatives of autonomous Tibet and the Republic of China

(ROC). Though the ROC attended the meeting, it refused to endorse the border agreement, claiming that the entire Tibet had historically belonged to China and would always remain an integral part of it.

The India-China dispute particularly centred on the western border in Eastern Ladakh, involving Aksai Chin—with there being controversy over the acceptance of the Macartney-MacDonald Line versus the Johnson Line. PRC claimed the Karakoram watershed line to be the correct dividing line, rejecting India's claim based on the Johnson Line further to the east. During his official visit to India in 1960, Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai refused to adjust the border along the Karakoram Range in exchange for recognition of the McMahon Line in Arunachal Pradesh. This refusal, despite efforts by then Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, regarding

After meeting the Dalai Lama, the US delegation also visited India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The fact that the Indian PM decided to meet with the US delegation sends a clear message to China as regards to India's position. Predictably, the delegation's visit drew angry responses from the Chinese authorities, who view the act as interfering with China's internal matters.

the Tibet and Dalai Lama issue, dashed hopes for a peaceful settlement between the two governments.

The complex relationship soured not only over the border dispute but was compounded by the involvement of CIA, India and Pakistan in the Tibet uprising and the extrication of the Dalai Lama, primarily facilitated by India, which provided him refuge. As a result, what began as an exemplary third-world

supply and troop deployment issues on the northeast through the Siliguri Corridor, also known as the Chicken's Neck. East Pakistan at that time stood in the way of any alternative supply route to the Chicken's Neck. And it's worth noting that China was increasing its presence at Nathula Pass in Sikkim and the Namka Chu Pass in Tawang region, posing a threat to the Siliguri Corridor between Tetulia, Bangladesh, and Nepal.

route, is insufficient due to its longer and more perilous journey. And so, the other obvious alternative being talked about in many leading Indian newspapers is through Bangladesh.

While the US was in the process of enacting the Resolve Tibet Act, China issued a new official map showing the entire Arunachal Pradesh as being a part of Tibet, changing its name to Xizang. What is interesting is that, within a week of the Act passing on June 18, a bipartisan seven member US Congressional delegation visited Dharamshala and met with the Dalai Lama.

Moreover, the act says that, "claims made by officials of the People's Republic of China and the Chinese Communist Party that Tibet has been a part of China since ancient times are historically inaccurate." And that, "United States public diplomacy efforts should counter disinformation about Tibet from the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Chinese Communist Party, including disinformation about the history of Tibet, the Tibetan people, and Tibetan institutions, including that of the Dalai Lama." It further calls on China to negotiate with the Dalai Lama's government in exile.

After meeting the Dalai Lama, the US delegation also visited India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The fact that the Indian PM decided to meet with the US delegation sends a clear message to China as regards to India's position. Predictably, the delegation's visit drew angry responses from the Chinese authorities, who view the act as interfering with China's internal matters.

Given these circumstances, it's important to ask where Bangladesh stands in regards to the geostrategic tensions between China and India. Bangladesh also needs to seriously think about the implications of allowing Indian logistical routes to bypass the critical Chicken's Neck for potential military-logistical buildup, perhaps against China in the future. Thus, it is essential to clarify whether India is seeking transshipment, transit, or a corridor through Bangladesh—which India has been trying to get since the time of Bangabandhu's government.



Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama exchanges greetings with former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi during their meeting at Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh, India, June 19, 2024.

PHOTO: REUTERS

relationship between China and India soon turned bitter.

These issues were central to the 1962 Sino-Indian war, in which India suffered defeat in both Aksai Chin in the west and Arunachal Pradesh in the east. The events of the war remain ingrained in the Indian psyche and continue to influence its military strategy and geopolitics. China unilaterally withdrew from Arunachal Pradesh but retained control over Aksai Chin. And the Chinese claim over outer Tibet in Arunachal Pradesh remains a contentious issue.

During that war, India faced significant

India learned an important lesson about its strategic handicap, vis-à-vis Arunachal Pradesh, which could be a flashpoint in any Sino-Indian conflict. But things have changed drastically since 1962, and both countries are now nuclear powers. And yet, reports indicate that both have heavily militarised along the McMahon Line, especially after the Sino-Indian Doklam standoff on the Sikkim-Bhutan border.

Chinese presence in Doklam makes it easier to threaten the corridor in the event of a wider conflict. Therefore, India's strategic pursuit of alternatives, such as the Kaladan



PHOTOS: COURTESY

UTTAM KUMAR ROY'S solo exhibition unveils reality through fiction

Uttam Kumar Roy developed artistic inclinations at a young age, leading him to pursue a five-year diploma in Drawing and Painting at the Bulbul Academy of Fine Arts (Bafa) in Dhaka.

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

The Actuality of Fiction, a captivating solo exhibition by acclaimed Bangladeshi artist Uttam Kumar Roy, is currently underway at Alliance Française de Dhaka. Curated by Mustafa Zaman, the exhibition opened its doors on July 5, and will continue until July 16.

The opening ceremony was graced by the presence of eminent artist Monirul Islam as the chief guest. Renowned sculptor Alak Roy, Art Bangla Foundation Chairman Professor Mohammad Eunus, and Bulbul Academy of Fine Arts Secretary Md Fazlur Rahman added further distinction as special guests.

The 57 artworks on display delve into the intricate relationship between the dynamism of life and the human mind's interpretation of it. Uttam Kumar explores the constant state of flux we experience and the psychological toll it can take. Through his art, he strives to uncover the root cause of this tension with a keen visual eye. The title itself hints at the interplay between reality and the narratives we construct around it.

Uttam Kumar's artistic process is a fascinating exploration of this dynamic. He begins by absorbing the constant movement and pressures of life. This immersive experience triggers a chain reaction within him – a mental reaction that leads to a deeper realisation. This realisation then finds expression on the canvas, transforming into an artwork. The creative journey does not end there. His artistic

choices, particularly his use of colour and technique, further shape the emerging motifs. This introspective process, with its distinct complexities and simplicities, reflects the multifaceted nature of human experience.

"Art is the reflection of the ethos of life and the reality one lives in amid one's actual and imaginary experiences. My art is shaped by life's realities and inner experiences. This ongoing exploration, fueled by the complexities of existence, drives artistic expression," the artist explained.

Upon closer inspection, it can be understood that the artist uses his imagination to make art. He does not focus on myths or stories but allows paint splatters and drips to guide him. These splatters become their own reality, reflecting the artist's physical and mental connection to the world. Unlike traditional paintings, they directly respond to the artist's experiences. Thus, the artworks on display are dreamlike figures that seem to exist in perfect harmony with their surroundings. These rhythmic paintings offer a way to experience life's true nature, not through fantasy, but through the artist's honest expression.



"Uttam Kumar's art challenges the narrow view of art imposed by colonial influence in India, which valued realism over imagination. He defies this limitation by creating abstract paintings that invite interpretation rather than offering a single clear meaning. His complex works demand active engagement from viewers, who are encouraged to be swept away by the experience rather than dissecting the two-dimensional details for a literal message," shared Mustafa Zaman.

Uttam Kumar Roy developed artistic inclinations at a young age, leading him to pursue a five-year diploma in Drawing and Painting at the Bulbul Academy of Fine Arts (Bafa) in Dhaka.

He also holds a Master of Science (MSc) in Botany from Jagannath University. This unique combination of scientific knowledge and artistic expression lends a fascinating depth to his work. He is currently a faculty member at Bafa, and generously shares his vast knowledge and experience with aspiring artists, nurturing the next generation of Bangladeshi art.

The exhibition is open to all till Tuesday, from 3pm to 9pm.

Faruque Ahmed takes on the director's chair



In his four-decade-long career, renowned actor Faruque Ahmed has earned a name for his performances on the theatre stage, television, and in films. Now, the artiste is set to make his directorial debut with the play, *Rongmohal*, written by Rubaiyat Ahmed.

"I am grateful to the eminent theatre personalities Nasir Uddin Yousuff and Shimul Yusuf for believing in me and giving me such a great responsibility," shared the actor.

The rehearsal of the play is underway and it will be staged in October.

Court orders removal of Aly Hasan's 'Nana Nati' from YouTube

Rapper Aly Hasan, lyricist of the song *Nana Nati*, received a legal notice for contempt of court, leading to its removal from YouTube.

On June 19, Advocate Fahim Hasnain, assistant public prosecutor of Sherpur District Judge Court, sent the notice. It alleged that the song contained the offensive line, "current court judgments run on money," and demanded its removal within 15 days along with a public apology from Hasan. Failure to comply would result in legal action.

Deputy Attorney General Sheikh Saifuzzaman informed the media that the High Court ordered the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) to remove the song. While no longer on YouTube, the song remains on RBT Entertainment's Facebook page.



NEWS

Driving to a fortune!

FROM PAGE 1

after Channel 24 ran a report on question leaks in the exams conducted by the PSC.

The CID arrested at least 16 others, including Abed's son Syed Sohanur Rahman Siam, relief and disaster management secretary of Dhaka North Chhatra League; and six PSC officials.

"Abed Ali recently sold two more flats in the West Shewrapara building. We suspect he has more property ... We are looking into it," the CID official said.

Working as a chauffeur, Abed, who is from West Botla village in Madaripur's Dasar upazila, amassed assets worth millions.

The eldest of three siblings, he left Madaripur for Dhaka after his father's death and began working as a porter. Later, with the help of a childhood friend, he started pulling rickshaws while living in a mess on Indira Road in the capital.

In 1997, he obtained a class-eight certificate from the Open University and managed to secure a job as the driver for the PSC chairman on December 2 that year.

That was when his fate began to change, locals and investigators said.

Within five years of joining, Abed got involved with a syndicate, along with some PSC officials, who were leaking question papers of various PSC recruitment exams to earn money.

He was dismissed from his job in 2014, after the allegations against him of leaking question papers in a recruitment test for first-class posts (non-cadre) were proved.

A departmental case was filed against Abed on April 22, 2014, as his active involvement was found in the leak of question papers for the post of "Assistant Maintenance Engineer" for the then Ministry of Information and Communication Technology in the non-cadre category.

"Abed has earned a bad name for many illegal activities and he is involved in habitual misdeeds," the PSC report said, adding that he got the job using a fake permanent address – Sirajganj instead of Madaripur.

According to the CID investigators, Abed continued to work with the syndicate even after losing his job.

His son Siam, who was relieved from his post in the BCL on Monday, used to abet his father in the crime.

CID officials and locals said that

Abed also earned money by lobbying for various candidates to get jobs in many government offices.

Locals said he built a duplex in his ancestral home in West Botla village at a cost of around Tk 3 crore, while his elder and younger brothers continue to live in mud-floored two-room tin-shed houses.

He also has a mango orchard in front of his house and built a mosque at a cost of Tk 1.5 crore, they told our Shariatpur correspondent, adding that he owns at least 25 three-wheelers.

Abed even tried to construct a cattle farm with over 100 cows on the right side of a bridge adjacent to Kamalapur Bazar in Dasar upazila. On the left side, he had put up pillars and laid the foundation for business establishments.

However, as it is government land, the upazila administration stopped both constructions. Speaking to The Daily Star, Abed's younger brother, Javed Ali, said, "My father was a farmer and my two brothers are also earning their livings by farming. I work as an easy-bike driver to run my family."

About his brother, he said, "If he is guilty, I want him punished."

In Dhaka, Abed has been living with his wife, two sons and a daughter in a flat in the 10-storey "Bismillah Tower" on West Shewrapara's Wasa Road for the past seven years.

Other residents of the building told this newspaper that Abed's family members left the flat after his arrest. They added that he owns three flats in the building and has two cars.

Locals said that he would introduce himself as a car trader and they heard he also owns a six-storey building in Mirpur's Paikpara.

Recently, Abed was vying for the chairman post of Dasar upazila, the polls of which were postponed.

In his Facebook ID, he recently posted videos of campaigning, urging locals to support him in the upcoming election.

In a video post in June, he spoke about owning a seven-story building and an 11-storey building in Dhaka, and about setting up a mosque and cemetery on 71 decimals of land.

"I have now started constructing a house, which already costs Tk 3 crore," the video showed him telling a gathering in the upazila.

Economy, trade to be in focus

FROM PAGE 1

for Bangladesh, but it will not be easy," said Sk Tawfique M Haque, director of the South Asian Institute of Policy Governance at North South University.

China is Bangladesh's largest trading partner, with bilateral trade between the two nations exceeding \$25 billion. However, exports from Bangladesh account for less than 3 percent of the sum.

Narrowing the trade gap will be a major focus of this trip.

"We would explore all ways of minimising this gap," Foreign Minister Hasan Mahmud told reporters on July 7.

The two countries are expected to sign 20-22 memoranda of understanding (MoUs) in the areas of trade and investment, digital economy, banking, infrastructure development, disaster management, agriculture and people-to-people connectivity. Yesterday, as many as 18 MoUs were signed.

However, hopes of getting a \$5 billion loan in yuan were dashed after Dhaka and Beijing failed to agree on the terms and conditions of interest and grace period of the loan, officials said.

"China will not provide the loan without conditions. Even if they provide the loan and other assistance, it will be a way for China to keep Bangladesh on its fold," said Tawfique, dean of NSU's School of Humanities and Social Sciences.

The Western powers will not be happy if such a currency swap happens between Bangladesh and China because this will be part of the de-dollarisation movement that China and Russia really want, especially after the Ukraine war, he added.

Bangladesh will seek Chinese support for the Southern Integrated Development Initiative (SIDI) centring the Payra Port in Patuakhali, Mahmud said.

Japan is supporting the Moheshkhali-Matarbari Integrated Infrastructure Development Initiative (MIDI) and the BIG-B Initiative (The Bay of Bengal Industrial Growth Belt). "Similarly, Dhaka wants Beijing to support SIDI," said a foreign ministry official informed with the proceedings.

On July 4, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said China

stands ready to work with Bangladesh to carry forward the spirit of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence.

China wants to "deepen political mutual trust, further synergise development strategies, advance high quality Belt and Road (BRI) cooperation, speed up implementing the Global Development Initiative (GDI), the Global Security Initiative (GSI) and the Global Civilisation Initiative, and elevate the bilateral relations to a new level," she said.

Bangladesh joined China's flagship Belt and Road Initiative when Xi Jinping visited Dhaka in 2016. Beijing wants Dhaka to join GDI and GSI too. However, Bangladesh is taking time before arriving at a decision.

Recently, there has also been a debate surrounding the Teesta project.

Following a proposal from Bangladesh, China showed interest in funding a part of the \$1 billion project in 2021. But the project saw no progress.

India, meanwhile, showed interest, and Hasan Mahmud said Dhaka would consider India's proposal first as it is a common river between the two countries.

China also wants to improve its political relationship with the Awami League and a delegation will be visiting China for signing an MoU in the days to come.

The objective of improving political relationships is to better implement the Chinese agenda in Bangladesh, said Imtiaz Ahmed, executive director of the Centre for Alternatives.

"China will work with whichever political party is in power. This is the Chinese approach. If the party in power [in Bangladesh] is strong in safeguarding national interest, there is no problem at all," Imtiaz said.

There is a competition between China and India over Mongla Port in Bagerhat, and it may be an issue in the coming days, according to people with knowledge of the talks.

"Bangladesh remains on the back foot because of its governance challenges. Therefore, the balancing act has become difficult for Bangladesh. We, therefore, should improve our financial governance and political consensus on foreign affairs before we fall into further trouble," Tawfique of NSU said.

Protesters set to resume blockade today

FROM PAGE 1

"Having said that, since the quota system was once abolished through a movement, we believe there is another opportunity for intervention ... this time, we want to settle the quota issue for good. We want a law passed in parliament as a permanent solution.

"So, our movement is now directed towards the government and the executive branch. The 'Bangla Blockade' will continue until our demands are met."

EYES ON COURT

Earlier in the day, two DU students filed a petition challenging the High Court verdict, which was later placed at the chamber court for a hearing today.

Justice Md Ashfaqul Islam, chamber judge of the Appellate Division, passed the order after senior lawyer Shah Monjurul Hoque submitted the petition on behalf of the students.

Two students are Al Sadi Bhuiyan, a student of the anthropology department and president of Dhaka University Journalist Association, and Urdu department student Ahnaf Saeed Khan.

Meanwhile, a full bench of the Appellate Division is scheduled tomorrow to hold a hearing on the government petition challenging the HC verdict.

Following a writ petition, the HC on June 5 declared illegal the government decision that cancelled the 30 percent quota for the children of freedom fighters in the civil service for ninth to 13th grades.

Law Minister Anisul Huq welcomed the students' decision to file the petition with the SC against the HC verdict and hoped that the agitators would now call off their movement.

"I think this decision to file the petition is a positive step. They can place their arguments through their lawyers. After hearing the arguments,

the court will ensure justice," he said in response to queries from reporters at his ministerial office in the Bangladesh Secretariat.

Students from public universities and colleges, along with job seekers, started demonstrating a week ago, with a four-point demand, including the reinstatement of a 2018 circular that abolished the quota system in government jobs.

On Monday, they launched the "Bangla Blockade" following a one-point demand for scrapping all illogical and discriminatory quotas in public service through enactment of a law and keeping a minimum quota for marginalised citizens in line with the constitution.

COUNTRYWIDE PROTEST

As part of the nationwide anti-quota movement, students at Rajshahi University held a sit-in at the university's Paris Road for an hour from 3:00pm.

Mehedi Sajeev, one of the coordinators of the movement, said,

"We want all discriminatory quotas to be reformed except the ones for the disadvantaged, disabled, and marginalised communities."

Rajshahi College students blocked a road in front of the college for three hours from 11:00am.

In Chattogram, students of Chittagong University held a mass campaign and formed a human chain at the university's Shaheed Minar premises at 10:30am.

Kaniz Fatima, a student of CU, said, "I'm the daughter of a freedom fighter and I don't want quota in government jobs. I will let my merit speak for itself."

In Savar, hundreds of students of Jahangirnagar University blocked the Dhaka-Aricha highway near the campus for 30 minutes from 3:45pm.

In Barishal, students of Brojomohun College, also known as BM College, blocked the Dhaka-Barisal highway in Nathullabadi area for two hours from 11:30am.

Minhajul presents old wine in new bottle at critical crossroad

SPORTS REPORTER

In an impromptu media briefing in front of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) headquarter yesterday, BCB's chief coordinator of programmes Minhajul Abedin Nannu spoke some bitter truths about the current state of the country's cricket, which different people have regurgitated many times before without any significant change afterwards.

The former captain pointed out that having a pool of only 27-30 cricketers to represent Bangladesh across all three formats was a big issue.

"Actually, there is no way to deny that [having a limited pool of cricketers for the national team]. Our cricket is basically Dhaka-centric. We haven't been able to decentralise cricket," Minhajul told the reporters in Mirpur yesterday.

"We are confined to a pool of 27 to 30 players in all three formats. We can only select players from this group. If we can't prepare at least 45 players, we can't create a sense of competition among the players," he added.

He was also upfront about the country not having an established first class

structure and how not having any other T20 tournament other than the BPL is holding back the Tigers in T20s.

"If you look at any other Test playing nation, they have an established first-class structure. Ours is still not established.

"We are far behind in T20 cricket. If you look at our domestic calendar, we play a smaller number of matches in the T20 format. In franchise tournaments like BPL, foreign players play in crucial positions and there is a limited opportunity for the local players," Minhajul said.

The points Minhajul raised all have merit and fixing these issues would certainly improve the country's cricket.

But the million-dollar question remains - who will bell the cat?

It has been 12 years since Nazmul Hassan Papon and Co took over the reins of the richest sports body of the country.

More than once, these matters have come into light and board officials had vowed to work on fixing these issues for the sake of Bangladesh cricket.

However, nothing significant ever gets done afterwards, as the country's cricket continues to stagnate.

The officials wake up from their slumber



We are confined to a pool of 27 to 30 players in all three formats. We can only select players from this group. If we can't prepare at least 45 players, we can't create a sense of competition among the players.

BCB's chief coordinator of programmes
Minhajul Abedin Nannu

and start talking about these problems every time after an underwhelming showing in an ICC event, much like the Tiger's performance in the ninth ICC T20 World Cup recently.

In that tournament, Bangladesh won three matches and qualified for the Super Eight and the board was seemingly

satisfied with it, even though the team showed a severe lack of intent when a golden opportunity to qualify for the semifinals presented itself.

The board had talked about decentralising cricket many times and made some ad-hoc committees for it. But since forming the committees, the board is yet to take any significant step to develop cricket at the regional level.

As the game remains Dhaka-centric, the selectors are left with a very limited pool of players to form squads. As a result, when a player fails to perform, an underperforming cricketer gets picked in his place, earning a callback without having done anything of note.

Minhajul spoke about a possible way to fix the shortage of players, "We are now thinking of increasing the number of domestic matches so that we can get some players for the T20 format. We also need to identify some players whom we can nurture, prepare for the game."

However, the question remains that if a board is still just talking about possible solutions and not implementing them after being in charge for 12 years, will anything ever get done?

Kings rope in Romanian Tita

SPORTS REPORTER

Five-time Bangladesh Premier League champions Bashundhara Kings have roped in Romanian coach Valeriu Tita for the upcoming season, hoping to produce good results on both the domestic and international stages.

The 58-year-old coach brings vast coaching experience, having worked with the Syrian national football team and various clubs in notably Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Iraq. Tita, who last worked with Al-Ain FC of Saudi Arabia in 2023, had guided Al Ittihad SC Aleppo to win the AFC Asian Cup in 2010.

Kings' decision to appoint Tita yesterday came just five days after parting ways with Spanish coach Oscar Bruzon.

"We roped in Tita for his vast knowledge of Asia and AFC competitions," Kings marketing and media manager Ahmed Shaek told The Daily Star on Tuesday, adding that Tita's experience of managing national players also worked in his favour.

Shaek further informed that Tunisian trainer Khalil Chakroun and set piece coach Dorel Stoica from Romania will form the coaching staff next season, which is expected to get underway in mid-September with the Independence Cup.



Stumbling England and Netherlands get shot at redemption

REUTERS, Dortmund

The route to the last four of Euro 2024 has been a rocky one for the Netherlands and England, and a few flashes of their best quality in their semifinal showdown might be enough for either side to make the final.

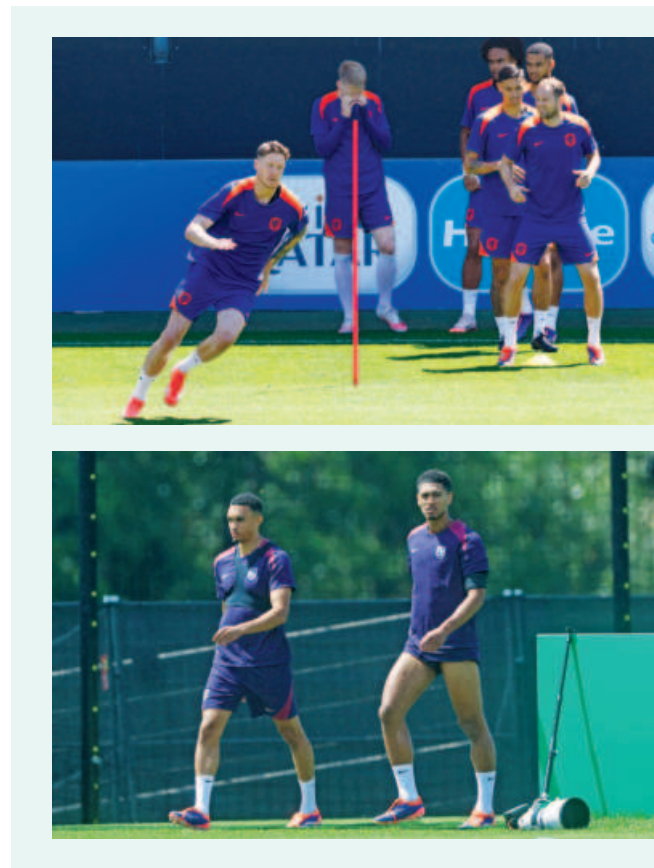
England's shootout win over Switzerland brought momentary euphoria, but it was more relief than redemption and Wednesday's date with the Dutch in Dortmund may require a transformation in attack for them to reach a third major tournament final, against France or Spain.

England have limped into the last four with tepid performances against opponents they should on paper have beaten easily, while the Netherlands have yo-yoed through and were 20 minutes from elimination before their quarterfinal fightback against Turkey.

The Dutch dazzled in their last-eight rout of Romania but have had to scramble too, having fallen behind in three of their four scoring games. Their three wins were all in regulation time, however, compared to one for England, and the Dutch have scored nearly double their number of goals at the tournament.

The Netherlands have the edge in attack, their nine goals at Euro 2024 coming from 20 attempts on target against 15 by an England side spearheaded by the usually lethal but currently subdued Harry Kane, Phil Foden and Jude Bellingham.

England improved against the Swiss but their five expertly struck penalties



Q This will be the fourth meeting between England and Netherlands at a major tournament. The Oranje and the Three Lions share one win each (in Euro 1988 and 1996 respectively), with the other contest (in the 1990 World Cup) ending in a draw.

Q England won only one of their last nine matches against the Netherlands in all competitions (4L 4D), with the solitary win coming in a friendly match in 2018 in Amsterdam.

Q This is England's fourth appearance in the semifinal of the Euros. The Three Lions were eliminated in the first two by Yugoslavia (in 1968) and Germany (in 1996) but went on to qualify for the final after beating Denmark in 2020.

Q For the Netherlands, it will be a sixth Euro semifinal. They were eliminated from four of their five semis and the solitary win came in 1988 when they went on to lift the trophy.

Q England have gone to extra-time in both of their knockout fixtures in this edition.

Q Netherlands have won two matches in the ongoing edition after conceding the first goal - beating Poland 2-1 in the group stage and Turkey by the same score in the quarterfinal. Only Czech Republic, at Euro 2004, have ever won three games having conceded first a single edition of the tournament.

Q England, under Gareth Southgate, have reached the semifinal of a major tournament on three occasions - in the 2018 World Cup, in Euro 2020 and the ongoing edition. They can become the fourth side to qualify for consecutive finals after USSR, Germany, and Spain.

rescued an attack that again looked frustrated, with Bukayo Saka's 80th-minute equaliser their first shot on target.

Netherlands do not have that problem and will bank on the tournament's joint top scorer Cody Gakpo to and trouble an

England defence that has been solid in contract with their jaded attack.

Southgate is again expected to stick to a similar lineup having been impervious to calls to shake things up or make substitutions earlier during the

tournament.

The Dutch have blown hot and cold and will need to be stronger at the back to stand any chance of reaching their first final since their 1988 Euros triumph, their only major tournament success.

Anderson's farewell dreams face Windies challenge

AGENCIES

It doesn't matter if James Anderson takes a bunch of West Indies wickets for England in the first Test at Lord's from Wednesday.

The series opener will be Anderson's 188th and last Test and he will transition into England's fast-bowling mentor.

He was pensioned off by England managing director Rob Key, coach Brendon McCullum and captain Ben Stokes. They met him at a Manchester hotel in April to say he wasn't in their plans for the 2025-26 Ashes in Australia.

This was a month after Anderson returned from India, where he took 10 wickets at an average of 33.50. That series was lost 4-1 but on the last morning of the last Test in Dharamsala, Anderson became the first seamer in history to take 700 wickets.

He spoke then of being in the best shape, liking where his game was at, and being really excited for this summer, when he will turn 42 at the end of this month.

This week, he said he was surprised at how calmly he took the news from Key, McCullum and Stokes. He understood their decision, adding, "I've sort of made peace with that."

Anderson warmed up for his last Test by showing his class last week in his first English County appearance for

Lancashire. He took 7-35, the best figures in the championship.

His 21-year test career comes full circle at Lord's, where he made his Test debut in 2003 against Zimbabwe. Lord's witnessed Anderson's career-best figures of 7-42 against the West Indies in 2017.



As one era ends, another could start. Surrey seamer Gus Atkinson and wicketkeeper Jamie Smith have been handed Test debuts. Both played white-ball cricket for England last year; Atkinson went to the ODI World Cup.

Chris Woakes returns for his first Test since he was the player of the series in last year's Ashes. Stokes was back as an

allrounder, allowing for offspinner Shoaib Bashir to make his home Test debut after taking 17 wickets in India.

The West Indies play their first Test since the extraordinary eight-run victory over Australia in Brisbane in January, after a 10-wicket thrashing in Adelaide.

Allrounder and former captain Jason Holder was recalled to the squad along with fast bowler Jayden Seales. St. Kitts and Nevis opening batter Mikyle Louis and fast bowler Jeremiah Louis are the uncapped players in the 15-man squad. Louis replaced an injured Kemar Roach.

In Roach's absence, Alzarri Joseph will lead the pace attack with Jayden Seales and Shamar Joseph, whose 7-68 scuttled the Australians in Brisbane in the second innings. That earned Shamar Joseph in his second Test the player of the match and short series.

Shamar Joseph called England retiree Anderson "perfect" as a Test player to the Jamaica Gleaner newspaper but "I want to rain on his parade."

Anderson said he was trying hard not to think of his pending forced retirement.

"The big thing for me this week is wanting to play well, bowl well and get a win," he said. "I'm sure the emotions during the week will change, but right now that's what I'm trying to focus on to stop myself crying."



Colombia defender Yerry Mina and forward Miguel Borja chest-bump each other during a training drill yesterday ahead of their Copa America semifinal against Uruguay. The Colombians would want to take a step towards adding to their maiden continental triumph with a win against the 15-time champions.

PHOTO: INSTAGRAM

A Bangladeshi runs transboundary kidney racket

Say Delhi police after arresting 7 including an Indian doctor

STAR REPORT

The "mastermind" behind the kidney transplant racket recently busted in Delhi is a Bangladeshi national and both donors and receivers in the case were also from Bangladesh, according to Deputy Commissioner of Delhi Police's Crime Branch Amit Goel.

Seven persons, including an Indian doctor, have so far been arrested in connection with the racket, he said in a statement yesterday.

All the people in the racket are suspected of having links with Bangladesh, reports our New Delhi correspondent.

Goel said, "We've arrested a person named Rasel who used to arrange the patients and donors and a female doctor working with the gang has also been arrested."

"Her role in this case was that she was facilitating organ transplants even when she was aware that the donor and receiver were not blood relations [as required by Indian law], making her part of the conspiracy," the DCP said.

The arrested Indian doctor has been identified as Vijaya Kumari, 50, from Delhi-based Indraprastha Apollo Hospital.

Now suspended by Apollo, she was the lone doctor working with the gang and had performed around 15-16 transplants between 2021 and 2023 in Noida-based

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

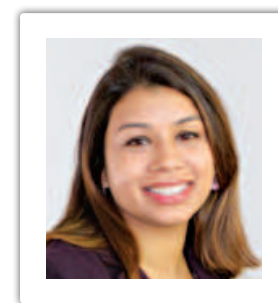


Palestinians inspect a house destroyed in an Israeli strike in Nusairat refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

UK appoints Tulip as City Minister

Reports Bloomberg



REUTERS, London

Tulip Siddiq has been appointed Britain's City Minister, the minister responsible for overseeing the financial services sector, Bloomberg News reported yesterday.

Labour won a thumping election victory last week, propelling Keir Starmer to power as prime minister.

Siddiq, 41, has led Labour's efforts to develop policies for the financial services industry, known as

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

Road crash claims 4 lives

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

At least four people were killed and seven others injured in a head-on collision between a lorry and a bus in Bogura early yesterday.

The accident occurred in the Banani area under Shajahanpur upazila around 2:30am.

Three of the deceased were identified as Jamal Hossain, from Sirajganj, and Shamim Hossain, 40, and Md Hridoy, 30, from Barishal, said police.

The other victim, a woman, could not be identified immediately.

The injured are Shaon Hossain, 30, Rezaul Karim, 45, Babul Miya, 35, Md Alif, 35, Sujan Miya 35, Md Amit, 10, and Md Saikat, 18.

All the injured were bus passengers, said the fire service personnel who rescued them.

"The victims' bodies have been kept at the morgue of Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital. The injured are undergoing treatment at the same hospital," said Lalon Hossen, assistant sub-inspector of the hospital's police outpost.

Shahidul Islam, senior station officer at Bogura Fire Service and Civil Defense Station, who participated in the rescue operation told the Daily Star, "We got information that a bus of Shah Fateh Ali Paribahan and a lorry collided in front of Banani Shah Sultan Filling Station around 2:30 am.

"We went to the spot and found two people, including the driver of

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5

'War cannot solve problems'

Modi tells Putin during Moscow visit

AFP, Moscow

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday told President Vladimir Putin that "war cannot solve problems" and urged peace on a trip to Moscow over two years into the Ukraine offensive.

On his first visit since Russia launched its campaign in Ukraine in February 2022, Modi said he and Putin had chatted on a range of issues, adding: "I was happy that on Ukraine, we could both express our views openly and in detail."

"When innocent children are murdered, one sees them die, the heart pains and that pain is unbearable," Modi told Putin in comments in Hindi.

"I know that war cannot solve problems, solutions and peace talks can't succeed among bombs, guns, and bullets," the Indian leader added. "And we need to find a way to peace through dialogue."

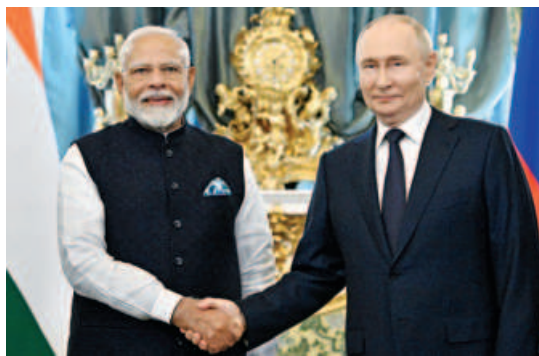
Putin thanked Modi for "the attention you pay to the most urgent problems" and said "you are trying to find some ways to solve the Ukrainian crisis, too, of course primarily by peaceful means".

Modi landed in Moscow on Monday hours after Russia launched a massive barrage across Ukraine that killed at least 38 people and heavily damaged a children's hospital in Kyiv, sparking condemnation from governments in Europe and North America.

On Monday evening Modi was pictured hugging Putin at the Russian president's country residence, where the leaders spent several hours together, according to the Kremlin.

Such warm contact drew condemnation from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

He wrote on social media: "It is a huge disappointment and a devastating blow to peace efforts to see the leader of the world's largest democracy hug the world's most bloody criminal in Moscow on such a day."



OXYGEN MASK ISSUE US regulator orders Boeing inspections

AFP, Washington

US aviation regulators said Monday that thousands of Boeing 737 airplanes would need to be inspected, amid concerns that passenger oxygen masks could fail in emergencies.

The airworthiness directive by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) comes into effect immediately and affects more than 2,600 US-registered airplanes.

The aim is to ensure that passenger service unit oxygen generators are in the right position on certain Boeing airplanes.

Operators are to check the oxygen generators and "perform corrective actions, if necessary, within 120 to 150 days," the FAA said in a statement.

It added that the directive was prompted by multiple reports of these generators shifting out of position, and called for a general visual inspection to be conducted.

In response to queries, Boeing said that a new adhesive introduced in August 2019 was found to sometimes allow oxygen generator units to shift from their positions.

Palestinians flee heavy Israeli assault

Hamas warns escalation threatens ceasefire talks; 50 more Palestinians killed

AGENCIES

Gaza City residents fled under Israeli fire as tanks thrust deeper into the heart of the city yesterday, the second day of a stepped-up military offensive that Hamas said could jeopardise ceasefire talks.

Qatari and Egyptian mediators, backed by the United States, have accelerated their efforts this week to seal a ceasefire deal aimed at ending the Gaza offensive and releasing Israeli hostages in the enclave in return for Palestinian prisoners jailed in Israel.

Yesterday, Israeli tanks deepened their incursion into some Gaza City districts including Shejaia, Sabra and Tel Al-Hawa, where residents reported the previous day some of the most fierce fighting since the start of the offensive.

Footage circulated on social media yesterday showed families packed onto donkey carts and in the backs of trucks piled with mattresses and other belongings racing through the city's streets to flee areas under Israeli evacuation orders.

"Gaza City is being wiped out, this is

what is happening. Israel is forcing us to leave homes under fire," Um Tamer, a mother of seven, told Reuters via a chat app.

She said it was the seventh time her family had fled their house in Gaza City, in the north of the enclave and one of Israel's first targets at the start of the offensive in October. "We can't take it anymore, enough of death and humiliation. End the offensive now," she said.

The Palestinian Red Crescent said all of its medical clinics were out of service in Gaza City due to the evacuation orders.

At least 38,243 Palestinians have been killed in Israel's military offensive in the enclave since October 7, and 87,903 have been wounded, the Palestinian enclave's health ministry said yesterday. A total of 50 Palestinians were killed in the past 24 hours, the ministry said in a statement.

The assault has unfolded as senior US officials were in the region pushing for a ceasefire after Hamas made concessions last week. But the renewed campaign "could bring the negotiation process back to square one," Hamas quoted leader

Ismail Haniyeh as saying later on Monday.

- » Israeli tanks go deep into Gaza City districts
- » Hamas, Islamic Jihad battle Israeli forces in close combat
- » Gaza death toll rises to 38,243

Second semi showdown promises a classic

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In the quest to establish continental supremacy, two former champions with rich heritage in the sport, Uruguay and Colombia, are set for a face-off in the second semifinal of the Copa America in North Carolina tomorrow (6 am, Bangladesh time) in what could likely be the match of the tournament's 48th instalment.

Both teams have been undefeated so far, with envious defensive records and goals to back up their feats. Colombia, however, arrive into the clash with a superior goal ratio, having annihilated Panama 5-0 in the Round of 16. On the other hand, the 2011 champions and joint-highest 15-time winners alongside Argentina, edged past powerhouse Brazil in tiebreakers in Las Vegas.

Also, if the tournament's history

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Women, including one holding a baby in her arms, climb over a central reservation to cross the road in front of the National Orthopedic Hospital and Rehabilitation Centre in the capital's Agargaon yesterday, putting themselves and other road users in harm's way.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

34,000-year-old termite mounds found in S Africa



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Scientists in South Africa have been stunned to discover that termite mounds that are still inhabited in an arid region of the country are more than 30,000 years old, meaning they are the oldest known active termite hills.

Some of the mounds near the Buffels River in Namaqualand were estimated by radiocarbon dating to be 34,000 years old, according to the researchers from Stellenbosch University.

"We knew they were old, but not that old," said Michele Francis, senior lecturer in the university's department of soil science who led the study. Her paper was published in May.

Francis said the mounds existed while saber-toothed cats and woolly mammoths roamed other parts of the Earth and large swaths of Europe and Asia were covered in ice. They predate some of the earliest cave paintings in Europe.