

## PM'S QUOTA REMARK

### Late-night protests rock DU, other universities

DU CORRESPONDENT

Tensions flared up at Dhaka University late last night as hundreds of students came out of their dormitories to protest what they said was a "disparaging comment" by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina regarding quotas in government jobs.

Students at Jahangirnagar University, Jagannath University, Rajshahi University, Chittagong University, and Comilla University too staged protests.

They gathered on campuses and took out processions around 11:00pm, chanting "Tui ke? Ami ke? Razakar, Razakar! [Who are you? Who am I? Razakar, Razakar!]"

Earlier, in response to a journalist's question, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said, "Why do they have so much resentment towards the freedom

PHOTO ON PAGE 12

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## TEESTA RIVER PROJECT

### India should implement it if we're to get water

Says PM, vows to continue zero tolerance for corruption

STAR REPORT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said she wants India to implement the Teesta project and this is to ensure Bangladesh gets water from upstream.

She said, "The Teesta project is a longstanding issue. We will have to implement the Teesta project. China has made an offer and conducted a feasibility study. India also has made an offer. India will also conduct a feasibility study, and then we will accept the one that will be rational for us."

"But I will give priority to India for the project as India holds back the Teesta water. If we want to realise [share of the Teesta] water, India should implement the project. If they complete the project, they will provide everything that is required for the project. This is diplomacy. There is no hide-and-seek about this, and it's simple and clear."

Hasina said this while responding to a question from a journalist at a press conference at the Gono Bhaban on her recent visit to China.

She said Chinese President Xi Jinping mentioned assistance in four ways: grants, interest-free loans, concessional loans, and commercial

## Take steps in 24hrs or face tougher demo

### Protesters tell govt

STAR REPORT

The quota protesters yesterday urged the president to convene an emergency parliamentary session within 24 hours to reform the quota system in public service.

Otherwise, they said, they will go for an all-out movement to press home their demand.

They came up with the ultimatum in a memorandum they submitted to President Mohammad Shahabuddin around 2:40pm. Earlier, the protesters marched towards the Bangabhaban, defying police obstruction.

In the memorandum, they said they want a law to reform the quota system,

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**We can't do anything [about quotas] until the issue is resolved in court. It is the reality.**



Prime Minister SHEIKH HASINA

loans. China agreed to provide Bangladesh money equal to \$2 billion through the four ways, report UNB and BSS.

China also agreed to build the 9th Bangladesh-China Friendship Bridge for free, she said, coming down heavily on those criticising the outcome of her trip.

"Are these things nothing? They are mentally ill and these are the outcome of their illness," she said.

**QUOTA SYSTEM REFORMS**

Hasina said, "The executive authority has nothing to do [about quotas in public service] right now ..."

Hinting at the protesters, she said those who are waging the movement do not abide by the laws or follow the court, they do not

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



A bloodied but defiant Donald Trump, the Republican US presidential candidate, is being rushed off stage by US Secret Service agents after being grazed by a bullet during a rally in Butler, Pennsylvania.

PHOTO: UNB/AP

## Trump survives assassination bid

Urges Americans to 'stand united'; Biden, world leaders condemn shooting at rally

AGENCIES

Donald Trump yesterday called on Americans to stand united after he was injured in an assassination attempt – a shocking incident that opened a dark new chapter in an already polarised US presidential race.

The 78-year-old former president was hit in the ear at a campaign rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, while the shooter and a bystander were killed and two spectators critically injured in the worst act of US political violence in decades.

"In this moment, it is more important than ever that we stand United," Trump said in a statement on his Truth Social network, adding that Americans should not allow "Evil to win".

The Republican added that it was "God alone who prevented the unthinkable from happening" and that he would "FEAR NOT". The gunman has been identified as

20-year-old Thomas Matthew Crooks of Bethel Park, Pennsylvania, about an hour's drive from the rally site, according to an FBI statement early yesterday.

His motive remains unknown. US media later reported that the gunman had explosives in his car.

The Wall Street Journal and CNN said that explosive materials were found in a car belonging to the shooter, which was reportedly parked near the campaign event venue in Butler, Pennsylvania.

Authorities identified a rally attendee who was shot and killed as Corey Comperatore, 50, of Sarver, Pennsylvania, who Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro told reporters was killed when he dove on top of his family to protect them from the hail of bullets.

"Corey was an avid supporter of the former president, and was so excited to be there last night with him in the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

## The man who shot Trump

AGENCIES

The FBI identified 20-year-old



Thomas Matthew Crooks of Bethel Park, Pennsylvania as the suspect in Saturday's attempted assassination of former US president Donald Trump at a campaign rally.

The suspect was shot and killed by the Secret Service seconds after he allegedly fired shots toward a stage where Trump was speaking in Butler, Pennsylvania.

The FBI said it was working to determine a motive for the attack, in which one rally attendee died and two other spectators were critically injured. Trump was shot in the ear.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

**Congratulations**

Our heartiest congratulations to Mr. Mesbah Uddin Khan, Managing Director of Windy Apparels Ltd. (Sister concern of Windy Group), for receiving the National Export Trophy 2021-22 under the Gold Category from Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. He is a visionary leader and the founder of Windy Group. His thoughts, creativity, foresightness, professionalism, honesty and integrity paved the roads for achieving such an outstanding reward.

We sincerely hope for the continuity of his leadership in the future and for the sustainable growth of Windy Group.

Best Regards,  
All members of the Windy Family

**'Tk 400cr peon' is Jahangir BFIU freezes his, wife's bank accounts**

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

At a time when graft allegations against government officials are making the headlines, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina shared a

SEE PAGE 6 COL 7

In recognition of outstanding contribution to the export of electrical & electronics products

**Walton has been honored with the National Export Trophy (Gold)**

**NATIONAL EXPORT TROPHY 2021-2022 GOLD**

Popular Jute Exchange Limited has been awarded with 'National Export Trophy 2021-2022 Gold' for being the highest Raw Jute exporter of Bangladesh.

Heartiest congratulations to our Managing Director, **Kabir Ahmed (CIP)** for being honored with 'National Export Trophy 2021-2022 Gold' on behalf of all the members of the company. Special thanks to Export Promotion Bureau & Ministry of Commerce, Bangladesh.

**Popular Jute Exchange Limited**  
1, Tolaram Road, Naraygonj, Bangladesh

Director & Former Chairman of Walton Hi-Tech Industries PLC, S M Nurul Alam Rezvi received the National Export Trophy 2021-2022 (Gold) from the Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. State Minister for Commerce Ahasanul Islam Titu MP and the ministry's Parliamentary Standing Committee Chairman Tipu Munshi MP were also present.





শ্রী আর্থ ডিজিটাল টেকনোলজী ব্যাংকিং সেবা

AAA  
Rated Bankপূবালী ব্যাংক পিএলসি  
PUBALI BANK PLC.Open your  
Account  
from anywherePI Banking -  
a Pubali Bank apps

Islamic Banking services are provided through online from all our branches and sub-branches

QUOTES  
ON QUOTA

The anti-quota protest is a nonpolitical agitation. But BNP and their collaborators are trying to turn the movement into an anti-government agitation and they are instigating the movement making statements and comments.

OBABDUL QUADER  
Road Transport and  
Bridges Minister



Anyone can file a lawsuit if aggrieved. If the investigation reveals no merit to the case, it can be automatically cancelled, regardless of whether it takes 24 hours or 24 days.

ASADUZZAMAN  
KHAN KAMAL  
Home Minister



It's a "sub-judice" issue and the ongoing protests lack justification. The government has always been sympathetic towards students, which is why the quota system was abolished. However, many problems have arisen following that.

HASAN MAHMUD  
Foreign Minister



The government cannot do anything on the quota reform issue until the Supreme Court process is totally completed. There is no chance to change the High Court order by protesting on the streets.

MOHAMMAD  
ALI ARAFAT  
State Minister for  
Information



A playful moment suddenly takes a dangerous turn, as while trying to throw something at his friend, a student trips over and falls onto a busy road. An accident could have occurred with a bus rapidly approaching him, but the driver managed to break just in time, narrowly averting a tragedy. A moment of carelessness on the road can turn tragic if footpaths or nearby foot-bridges are not used. The photo was taken in the capital's Science Lab area recently.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## DELAYED MONSOON

Dengue may spike  
in Aug or Sept

Fear experts, call for central action plan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dengue cases might start to increase during August or September, as this year's outbreak will get delayed due to the monsoon starting late, said experts at a programme yesterday.

However, they said, the outbreak may not be as intense this year compared to last year.

They made the remarks at a discussion, titled "Reasons for failure to control dengue and what to be done", organised by Poribesh Bachao Andolon (Poba).

At the discussion, Be-Nazir Ahmed, former director of Directorate General of Health Services, said local government and the health department must work together to control dengue.

Suggesting the launch of a



Dengue death toll 48

Total number of patients 4,566

383 still undergoing treatment

Number of recovered patients 4,135

155 more hospitalised yesterday

SOURCE: DGHS

national strategy to control the mosquito-borne disease, he said

such a strategy was prepared a few days ago. But it needs to be updated, he added.

Kabirul Bashar, professor of Zoology at Jahangirnagar University, said, "Dengue may be prevalent in the country in August or September. This year's dengue outbreak may not be the same as last year."

Rumana Huque, teacher of economics at Dhaka University, said financial pressure also increases for a dengue patient, as both dengue tests and treatments cost quite a lot of money.

If a dengue patient takes treatment at a government hospital, it may cost them Tk 35,000 to Tk 40,000, and it may cost Tk 60,000 to Tk 65,000 on average at a private hospital.

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DB arrests  
mastermind  
of certificate  
forgery gang

UNB, Dhaka

The Detective Branch of police arrested the mastermind of a criminal gang who used to sell forged academic certificates.

The arrestee is Abu Zafar, 31. He sold the fake certificates of two private universities.

Cyber and Special Crime Department (South) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police conducted a drive on Friday and arrested Zafar, said DMP additional commissioner Harun-or-Rashid yesterday.

Harun, also the DB chief, said IT experts, a former teacher and an office assistant of a private university may have been involved in this racket.

On May 26, a case was filed with Tejgaon Police Station in this regard.

Restore 5 percent  
indigenous quota  
Demands Adivasi Quota  
Sangrakkhan Parishad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Indigenous people yesterday demanded reinstating the five percent indigenous quota in first and second-class government jobs.

The protestors against quota systems are creating inequality through their movement, said Alik Mree, convener of Adivasi Quota Sangrakkhan Parishad, during a press conference held on Dhaka University premises.

"Our living standard is completely different from others. We have had to grow up fighting adversity from birth. So, we think our demand for the restoration of the five percent quota is completely logical and we want to see its implementation as soon as possible," he said.

"The constitution provides special opportunities for the backward people of the country. After the cancellation of the quota in 2018, the number of indigenous people of the hills and plains entering government jobs has fallen drastically," he also said.

"Quota is a constitutional right. Various policies and laws of the state could not play an effective role in protecting the living standard and developing the rights of indigenous people. Rather, it has increased oppression and deprivation of indigenous people," he said.

**After the cancellation of the quota in 2018, the number of indigenous people of the hills and plains entering government jobs has fallen drastically.**

HC questions  
legality of 40pc  
quota for children  
of BR employees

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday questioned the legality of a provision to keep 40 percent quota for the children of Bangladesh Railways employees in BR.

The court issued a rule asking the government to show causes why the section 3(l) and (2) of the Bangladesh Railway Non-Cadre Recruitment Rules, 2020 that contains the provision should not be declared unconstitutional.

The HC bench of Justice Mustafa Zaman Islam and Justice SM Masud Hossain Dolon issued the rule following a writ petition filed by Supreme Court lawyer Md Rokunuzzaman.

He submitted the petition as a public interest litigation on May 26 to the HC saying that the Bangladesh Railway has purposefully framed the rules by fixing the 40 percent quota for the children of its employees for their own benefits which is contradictory to the circular issued by the Ministry of Public Administration in 2018 regarding cancellation of quotas and articles 27, 29 and 31 of the constitution.

Due to preservation of 40 percent quota for jobs in 14th to 20 grades in the railways, there will be discrimination against others, the petitioner said.

Rokonuzzaman himself moved the petition while DAG Tushar Kanti Roy represented the state.

## VACCINE FOR LIVESTOCK

JS body to look  
into tender graft

RASHIDUL HASAN

A parliamentary body yesterday formed a three-member sub-committee to investigate alleged corruption in the tender process to purchase vaccines for the fisheries and livestock department.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Fisheries and Livestock Ministry formed the sub-committee at its meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

SM Rezaul Karim, an Awami League lawmaker and chief of the parliamentary watchdog, presided over the meeting. MP BM Kabirul Haque was made convener of the sub-committee. The other members are AL MP Nur Uddin Chowdhury Noyon and independent MP Moshirur Rahman Mollah Shajal.

The investigation committee was asked to submit its report before the main committee within 15 working days, BM Kabirul Haque told The Daily Star. "Today was our first meeting. We are yet to go through all the documents related to the alleged corruption in the tender process," he said.

Kabirul said, "What we have heard is that there were some irregularities in the tender process as the due procedure was not followed during the tender floating."

The committee also recommended the ministry to suspend the Department of Livestock's ongoing recruitment process, as the decision regarding the quota system in government jobs is pending before the court.

In the meeting, the committee was briefed about the activities of the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock and its subordinate agencies and institutions.



Posters, advertising for hostels or coaching centres, remain nailed or pasted on trees along Mirpur Road in the capital. This blatant disregard for nature not only damages the trees but also is an eyesore. Later, these plastics end up in city drains, further adding to the waterlogging woes. The photo was taken near Dhaka City College recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

PRAYER  
TIMING  
JULY 15

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

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

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

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION







# SALT ON YOUR WALLS?

## Protect with a smart solution



**Efflorescence affects 70-80 percent of homes in Bangladesh. Salinity issues typically arise during or after the rainy season in our country. Once the problem arises, conventional methods of addressing efflorescence involve labour-intensive and temporary fixes. Typically, homeowners resort to breaking the affected plaster and reapplying a new layer.**

**Maintaining building surfaces during the rainy season is a significant challenge in Bangladesh. The monsoon's relentless rains not only test the resilience of structures but also put their aesthetic appeal at risk. Efflorescence, a common issue in this region, exacerbates these challenges, making it difficult to preserve the beauty and durability of walls.**

PRIYAM PAUL

Efflorescence occurs when water-soluble salts present in building materials, such as bricks and plaster, dissolve in water and migrate to the surface. As the water evaporates, it leaves behind white, powdery deposits, giving walls a neglected and aged look. More importantly, efflorescence indicates underlying moisture issues that can compromise the structural integrity of buildings over time.

Efflorescence affects 70-80 percent of homes in Bangladesh. Salinity issues typically arise during or after the rainy season in our country.

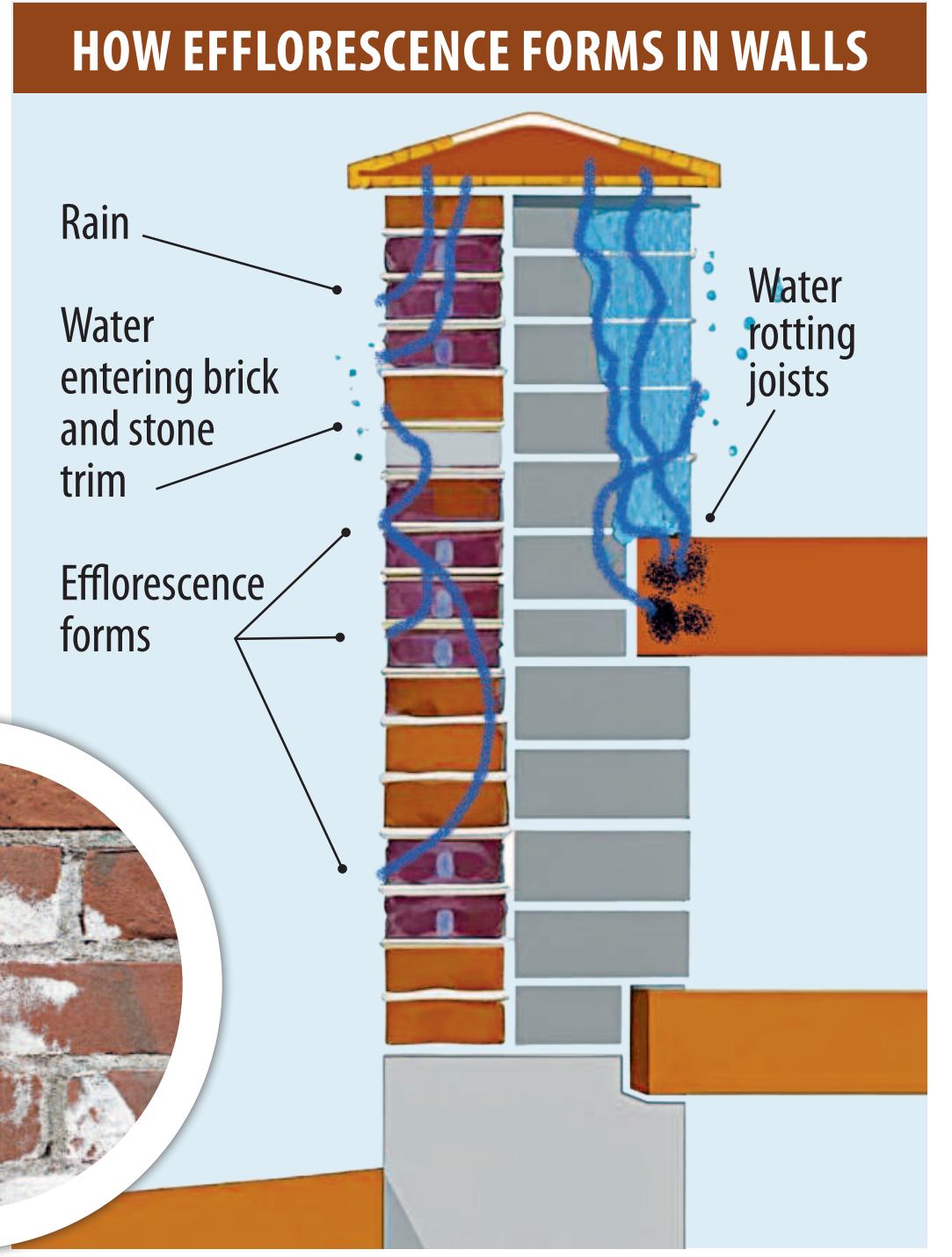
Once the problem arises, conventional methods of addressing efflorescence involve labour-intensive and temporary fixes. Typically, homeowners resort to breaking the affected plaster and reapplying a new layer. This process is not only cumbersome but also expensive, requiring significant time and effort.

Repainting walls or covering efflorescence-affected areas with furniture or tiles are other common solutions. However, these approaches merely mask the problem without addressing the underlying moisture issues, leading to recurrent efflorescence and ongoing maintenance costs.

One unique solution provided by Asian

Paints Bangladesh Limited is Hydroloc, which is designed to combat efflorescence without the need to break and replace existing plaster. This simple penetrative coating infiltrates the small pores in the plaster, neutralising the salinity inside the structure and forming a protective barrier that prevents salt build-up on the surface, ensuring long-lasting protection and aesthetic appeal.

In conclusion, homeowners invest effort and care in decorating their homes to reflect their unique style and maintain pristine living spaces. Efflorescence disrupts this by tarnishing wall paints and compromising aesthetic appeal. By choosing the right solution, homeowners can safeguard their homes' beauty and structural integrity.



**EFFLORESCEENCE  
RUINING YOUR WALL?**

SMARTCARE  
**HYDROLOC**  
ANTI SALT PLASTER COATING

**HASSLE FREE  
SMART SOLUTION**



FOR MORE INFORMATION  
PLEASE SCAN

## A waterlogged Dhaka is a policy failure

Sincere efforts by relevant authorities vital to address this issue

Monsoon brings new images and stories of sufferings every year, as did Friday's heavy rains in Dhaka. Two particular stories that seem to have stuck with many social media users involve the deaths of four individuals in electrocution and how several areas in DSCC remained submerged even 36 hours after the rain had stopped. For many, the first was a painful reminder of a similar tragedy in Mirpur last year. It too involved four people, including three of a family who died after being electrocuted on a waterlogged street. The second story comes with a side dish of irony, as it reminded many of a lofty promise by the DSCC mayor about ensuring swift drainage of rainwater—within 15 minutes no less. Promises, as one quipped, do die fast in Bangladesh.

But these are not just stories of sufferings but also of persistent policy failure. Unfortunately, those in charge of making sure these sufferings and disruptions do not occur can apparently say or do anything and get away without facing consequences. Over the past four years, more than Tk 730 crore has been spent by the two city corporations of Dhaka—Tk 370 crore by DNCC and Tk 360 crore by DSCC—to address this waterlogging problem. But despite the spectacular lack of effects of their initiatives, there has been no accountability whatsoever for the authorities and officials concerned.

The city corporations officially took over canal and drain management from Dhaka WASA on December 31, 2020. It was meant to streamline efforts to mitigate waterlogging. It did not happen, and as a result, the situation remains as dire as before. The city's drainage system continues to be weakened by poor design, weak maintenance, and ongoing road construction activities. Much of the drainage network remains clogged by waste, making it very hard for the rainwater to flow into rivers. Two city corporation officials, speaking anonymously, also acknowledged the failure of efforts to declutter the canals, canal drains, and box culverts.

Dhaka currently has a network of 2,211 kilometres of drains, with 961km in the south and 1,250km in the north. True, ensuring the smooth function of such a big network is a big task, but there is no alternative to improving the capacities of the city corporations to properly maintain it. But even that will not be enough. Given the unregulated growth of Dhaka, experts have stressed the importance of a master plan to restore all the canals and waterbodies, and preventing their encroachment by unscrupulous entities. Addressing improper waste disposal is also critical. But most importantly, Dhaka's persistent waterlogging problem cannot be resolved without the sincerity of the relevant authorities.

## Why are students still dying on roads?

RSF data paints alarming picture of road safety

Six years after the nationwide road safety movement that was sparked by the deaths of two high schoolers, nothing seems to have changed in terms of the safety of commuters, including students. According to the Road Safety Foundation (RSF), in the last five and a half years since 2019, some 34,478 people were killed in road crashes. Of them, 5,619 were students—making up 16.29 percent of all victims. While all such avoidable deaths are tragic, student fatalities are of particular concern considering their young age, their importance for the nation's future, and their starring role in the 2018 movement and subsequent acquiescence by the government. But as statistics show, they continue to be victimised as before.

Following the movement, we heard the authorities make numerous promises about improving road safety. Committees were formed, new laws and regulations were passed, and many crores of taka were spent in various projects. All of that evidently came to naught, with thousands perishing on roads every year. As per RSF data, 2,641 (47 percent) student victims were between the ages of 5-17, while 2,978 (53 percent) were between 18-25. Moreover, 1,534 (27.3 percent) of them were pedestrians. The fact that vehicle drivers were often reluctant to aid victims even after having hit them is another worrying sign.

The reasons RSF has identified as responsible for these incidents—including faulty roads and vehicles, lack of knowledge about safe road use, and reckless driving, including by student bikers—are well-known, which makes the glaring lack of results from government initiatives that much painful. According to a Prothom Alo report, over 600,000 vehicles are still operating without fitness certificates. One of the promises made after the 2018 movement was the removal of such vehicles from roads. How are so many of them still operating, then?

Clearly, the first thing we need at this stage is accountability for the failure of those behind such promises and initiatives. When a person dies in a road crash, it is not just the driver or vehicle owner who shares responsibility for it, but the system that protects or enables them is responsible, too. Over the years, we have seen how undue benefits and exemptions have been extended to transport associations. This needs to change. The authorities must go tough on those allowing unsafe vehicles and breaching other rules. They should also run awareness campaigns in educational institutions considering the vulnerability of students.

## THIS DAY IN HISTORY



### Twitter publicly launched

Co-founders Jack Dorsey, Evan Williams, and Biz Stone publicly launched their online microblogging service Twitter (currently known as X) on this day in 2006. Within the following decade, it gained more than 300 million users.

## AUTOMATIC PRICING FORMULA FOR DIESEL

# BPC can no longer cry wolf about losses



Dr Ijaz Hossain is former dean of engineering at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET).

IJAZ HOSSAIN

Until very recently, the prices of liquid fuels such as diesel, octane, petrol and kerosene were fixed administratively by the government. There were always misgivings among the general public that the government is arbitrarily fixing the prices. Even though there was a formula of sorts, it was never revealed to the public. What transpired was that the administratively set prices for a long period were in favour of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC), the state-run company that imports, distributes and markets oil. During this period, the international crude oil price was very low, so the BPC made a hefty profit. Consumers felt they were being deprived of the benefits of low oil prices.

For a long, long time, the pricing principle was that diesel, being a common person's fuel, must be subsidised, while petrol/octane, being a rich person's fuel, must be taxed. As a result, for a long time, diesel was much cheaper than petrol. The BPC used this cross-subsidy to manage its books. The problem started when compressed natural gas (CNG) was introduced and thousands of vehicles moved away from petrol. Moreover, the low price of diesel prompted consumers to opt for diesel vehicles. The cross-subsidy was no longer working for BPC as demand for petrol started to fall and the consumption of diesel started to increase at a rapid pace.

The situation became untenable for the BPC when oil prices skyrocketed as a result of the Ukraine-Russia war. The financial burden became so heavy that huge subsidies had to be provided by the government to balance BPC's books. The government finally decided that it would no longer subsidise diesel, so the diesel price was increased from Tk 80 to Tk 110. This had an immediate negative impact on economic activities. Consumer prices of foodstuff shot up, leading to an inflation rate of over nine percent that hasn't come down.

Soon after the massive diesel price hike, the global oil price started to fall, but the government did not bother to reduce the domestic oil price. When consumers started clamouring for a reduction in energy prices, it responded by a nominal reduction, which angered the public further.



VISUAL: SHAIKH SULTANA JAHAN BADHON

The government understood it had to do something, and after much dilly-dallying, it introduced the so-called "automatic pricing formula" for petroleum products in March this year.

A comparison of diesel prices in six South Asian countries—Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka—reveals that Bangladesh has the second cheapest diesel price (Bhutan has the cheapest). However, a nearly Tk 108/litre price is a break from the old philosophy that diesel, the most important liquid fuel for developing countries, needs to be subsidised to foster the country's economic growth. India introduced the market-based pricing mechanism a long time back. Diesel price in India is high because of two taxes imposed on it: first, the federal government's excise duty, and second, the state government's VAT.

Whether diesel should be taxed or subsidised is a contentious issue. Some economists believe that since it is imported, it should not be subsidised, while another group believes it should be subsidised especially for irrigation. After the initiation of automatic

pricing, diesel has become a taxed product, the impact of which has already been felt with rising inflation. The argument often furthered by the energy ministry in support of keeping the diesel price high is to prevent smuggling to India. At one time, the price differential was so high that a substantial quantity of diesel got smuggled to India. With the new

automatic set price, the differential is not high enough to encourage smuggling, given the associated risks and costs involved.

BPC has a tendency to show that it is incurring losses and often claims that it needs funds for development projects. The company has undertaken several such projects, of which the second refinery is the biggest. Among the significant projects undertaken by the BPC in the recent past are: i) a second refinery; ii) Bangladesh-India friendship pipeline to carry diesel; iii) Parbatipur-Siliguri transboundary pipeline; iv) a 238km pipeline from Chattogram to Godnile, Narayanganj with an extension to Fatullah (8.29km), and Cumilla to Chandpur (59.23km) for diesel; v) a 17km pipeline for jet fuel from Pitalganj to Kurmitola; vi) 110km onshore and offshore pipeline under single-point mooring (SPM) system for imported crude and refined petroleum oils from carrying vessels to ERL storage; and vii) a smart fuel distribution monitoring system (SFMS) to modernise and streamline the fuel distribution process.

are, however, situations where these projects are inordinately delayed or face bottlenecks; the second refinery is a case in point. In such cases, the investment cost becomes a burden for the BPC.

Another oft-raised issue is the subsidy provided to the BPC when diesel was sold at a price lower than the international price. It is important to note that if a subsidy has been provided, there is no justification for that expense to be shown in the BPC's books as an outstanding amount.

Following the introduction of the new pricing formula for petroleum products, there is no way that the BPC can lose money, because it is a cost-plus formula. The imported costs of petroleum products as well as the cost of delivery borne by the distribution companies as well as the BPC's financing and operation costs are all fully recovered. On top of that, there is the BPC's margin, which should cover development costs.

**A longer version of this article is available on our website.**

## How our RMG industry empowered women



RMG NOTES

Mostafiz Uddin is the managing director of Denim Expert Limited. He is also the founder and CEO of Bangladesh Denim Expo and Bangladesh Apparel Exchange (BAE).

MOSTAFIZ UDDIN

Over the past few decades, Bangladesh has emerged as a global hub for the ready-made garment (RMG) industry. The sector has played a pivotal role in transforming the socioeconomic landscape of the country. At the heart of this transformation is the empowerment of women, who make up the vast majority of the RMG workforce. A report by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) reveals that, as of 2020, our RMG sector employs around 32 lakh women. This sector's growth has created numerous job opportunities for Bangladeshi women, contributing to their economic empowerment while also playing a vital role in the growth of the economy.

The RMG industry has provided lakhs of women, particularly from rural areas, with their first formal employment opportunities. This shift from informal, often agricultural work, to formal employment in garment factories has had profound implications for their economic status and independence.

Earning a regular income has allowed women RMG workers to contribute to their household finances, often making them primary breadwinners. This financial independence has given

them decision-making power within their families and communities. These women now have the means to invest in their children's education, healthcare, and better living conditions, leading to a positive cycle of development and improved quality of life.

Employment in the garment sector has also facilitated skills development. Many women enter the industry with little or no formal education. Through on-the-job training and experience, they acquire valuable skills in sewing, quality control, and production management. Some factories also offer literacy programmes and vocational training, further improving their capabilities and future employment prospects.

Beyond economic benefits, the RMG industry has been instrumental in fostering social empowerment of women in Bangladesh. By stepping into the workforce, women have challenged traditional gender roles and norms that often confined them to domestic duties. The presence of women in factories has gradually shifted societal perceptions of women's roles as well. As more women work outside home, the acceptance of women as economic contributors has increased.

Working in the garment industry has also facilitated greater social mobility for women. Employment has enabled women to move from rural areas to urban centres, exposing them to diverse cultures and ideas. This exposure has broadened their horizons, increased their awareness of rights and opportunities, and inspired many to pursue further education and

**The RMG industry has provided lakhs of women, particularly from rural areas, with their first formal employment opportunities. This shift from informal, often agricultural work, to formal employment in garment factories has had profound implications for their economic status and independence.**

career advancements.

However, this growth is not without challenges. Workers often face issues such as stagnated wages, long working hours, and challenging working conditions. These challenges have also sparked advocacy and efforts to improve labour rights and working conditions in the industry. Indeed, the rise of the garment sector has led to the growth of labour unions and advocacy groups fighting for workers' rights. These organisations have been instrumental in negotiating better wages, improving working conditions, and ensuring compliance with the labour law. Women workers have played a crucial role in these

movements, often leading protests and strikes to demand fair treatment.

The Bangladesh government, along with international bodies and NGOs, has taken steps to address these challenges. The government had to take initiatives such as the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh and the Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety to improve factory safety standards following the Rana Plaza disaster in 2013. Additionally, programmes aimed at promoting fair wages and gender equality in the workplace have been introduced, further supporting the rights of female garment workers.

Women's increased economic participation has contributed to community development. As women invest in their families and communities, there is a noticeable improvement in areas such as health, education, and infrastructure. Empowered women are more likely to participate in community decision-making processes, advocating for issues such as clean water, sanitation, and better schools.

I truly believe that Bangladesh's RMG industry is a testament to the transformative power of employment in empowering women and lifting them out of poverty. While challenges remain, the strides made in economic and social empowerment, skills development, and advocacy for rights are undeniable. As the industry continues to evolve, it holds the potential to further enhance the lives of crores of women, driving not only the economic growth, but also social progress and gender equality in Bangladesh.



# NGOs can help citizens learn to use the RTI Act

Dr Shamsul Bari and Ruhi Naz are chairman and assistant director (RTI), respectively, of Research Initiatives, Bangladesh (RIB). They can be reached at rib@icitech-bd.com.

SHAMSUL BARI and RUHI NAZ

Recently, there has been a perceptible increase in government advertisements promoting the Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2009, particularly on television. This is welcome news, indicating government recognition of the citizens' role in advancing good governance. The RTI Act was adopted, as enunciated in its preamble, to empower citizens to monitor the work of public offices by seeking relevant information on how they do their jobs. However, this is a complex task, as citizens must first understand the law's myriad possibilities to use it effectively.

Regrettably, there is still a significant lack of awareness about the full potential of the RTI Act. Due to its extensive nature, promoting its use through simple awareness sessions and advertisements is proving to be a challenging, if not impossible, task. The slogans used in ads, such as "Information is power," "Know your rights, ask for information," and "Access to Information is a citizen's right," may not resonate with the people. They require assistance in understanding the reasons for seeking information in the first place. Most individuals believe that information is only necessary for specific purposes and should be sought as and when required. Few realise that the law's primary objective is not to serve citizens' personal information needs, but to promote the larger public interest. They also need help in identifying specific goals for using the law.

Despite the challenges, significant progress has been made over the last 14 years. Many citizens have learnt to use the law to check, for example, if the government's social safety net programmes for those in need are reaching them properly; if school scholarships are reaching the students in full and not being truncated by school authorities; if free medicine at public clinics for people in need is not being sold to others; if contractors are not cheating on construction materials, etc. This progress, largely due to the support of many NGOs, is a testament to the potential of citizen engagement in governance. To maintain this momentum, there is a need to expand the focus and areas of interventions. Government advertisements and efforts of the Information Commission alone cannot achieve this. Citizens need practical support to identify issues and process RTI applications, a role that only NGOs can effectively fulfil.

To help citizens identify issues of common interest likely to benefit from RTI interventions, we consulted citizen groups in different parts of the country engaged in utilising the RTI law. Based on that, we devised a list relating to key public interest sectors in governance. We cite them here as an indicative list to provide a base for further additions. Experience gained in using them will likely lead to higher engagement levels in more sensitive governance

areas.

## RTI interventions in the education sector

- Information on resource management of schools/colleges to ensure they are properly and justly utilised.
- Information relating to fair recruitment and promotion of teachers and staff.
- Information on the functioning of management committees and the mechanism to assure their accountability, e.g., teachers' appointments, management of school funds, etc.
- Information related to admission practices, levying examination fees, etc.

## RTI interventions in the health sector

- Information relating to the management system of hospitals/clinics, e.g., availability of doctors at all levels.
- Attendance of medical staff and their maintenance of time schedules.
- Procurement of medicines and medical equipment.
- Information to check if healthcare services and resource distribution are available for all, including the disadvantaged.
- Roles and duties of hospital

culverts and other infrastructure.

- Measures to ensure transparency and accountability in the tendering process.
- Measures to reduce corruption and mismanagement in the provision of public services, e.g., appointment of rightful candidates at public services is ensured, and unlawful transfers/promotions are avoided.

## RTI intervention on public procurement

- Information on the bidding or tendering process, selection of suppliers, contract awarding processes, monitoring mechanisms for progress, and quality management.
- Information on measures undertaken to reduce corruption and prevent wastage of public funds, e.g., avoidance of repeated extension of project completion period.

## RTI intervention in social welfare programmes

- Measures taken to ensure just and equitable selection processes of rightful beneficiaries of specific services, e.g., pensions for old age, widow benefits, etc.
- Information on how specific programmes, e.g., social safety net programmes, are implemented and coordinated at all levels. Measures to reduce corruption in the disbursement of funds under safety net programmes.

## RTI objectives for infrastructure development

- Information on measures taken for efficient project implementations related to infrastructure



VISUAL: STAR

administration and their accountability.

- Cleanliness of hospital/clinic premises and toilets, how they are managed, and checking on the roster of duties.
- Information on the list of free services and free medicines and whether their availability is prominently displayed.

## RTI interventions on local government

- Information on budgeting and expenditure on local development projects, justifications for undertaking such projects, their progress, and who is responsible for monitoring and ensuring people's participation.
- Information on how effective public service deliveries are and whether access to such public service is ensured for all citizens.
- Measures to ensure fair implementation and distribution of development projects and resources.
- Measures taken to ensure regular maintenance, repair, and reconstruction of roads, bridges,

development and to reduce corruption and avoid project delays.

- Information on who is specifically accountable for such infrastructure's maintenance, repair, reconstruction, and operation.

Clearly, this is a preliminary and indicative list of issues related to limited sectors. However, they provide a basis to move forward. It must be noted, however, that identifying issues and transforming them into RTI requests are two different things. Experience has shown that ordinary citizens need support in both areas, more particularly in the latter regard. A few NGOs in the country have provided them so far as a part of their mission, though finding funds for them is not easy. Hopefully, they can continue to do so until the law strikes deeper roots. In a country where the more knowledgeable and educated section of society has largely remained aloof from using the RTI law, it is not difficult to understand the fate of the RTI Act in Bangladesh without NGOs' role in keeping it moving.



New British Prime Minister Keir Starmer delivers his speech outside Number 10 Downing Street, following the results of the general election, in London, Britain on July 5, 2024.

PHOTO: REUTERS

# A litmus test for UK's Labour Party

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DAVID CHEESMAN and M SAKHAWAT HUSSAIN

The 2024 UK general election was a political earthquake. The Conservative Party was almost wiped out. In the previous election in 2019, the Conservatives won a comfortable majority, with 365 seats, well above the 326 needed to form a majority. Labour, with only 203 seats, was humiliated. It was predicted that the Conservatives would be in power for the next 10 years.

Instead, Conservatives threw their majority away. After losing his seat in 2024, Sir Brandon Lewis, a former Conservative justice secretary, accused his own party of giving the nation a "clown show" of self-indulgent infighting and posturing. There were three prime ministers in 2022 and one of them, Liz Truss, wrecked Britain's international reputation for financial competence. She broke another record by becoming, at seven weeks, Britain's shortest-serving prime minister. Voters, who frequently cited Liz Truss as their reason for wishing to remove the Conservatives, took their revenge in this election by voting her out.

The 2024 election was marked by a steely determination on the part of the electorate to eradicate the Conservatives. There was no sign of great enthusiasm for the alternatives. Knowing this, Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer ran an exceptionally cautious campaign. The two main opposition parties, Labour and Lib Dem, took advantage of the national mood by concentrating their efforts on the seats they believed they could win. In the constituencies where either Labour or the Lib Dems polled second to the Conservatives in 2019, they did not actively campaign against each other. The results indicate ruthless tactical voting by the electorate, with the Lib Dem vote falling and the Labour vote rising in potential Labour gains and vice versa in potential Lib Dem gains. This confirms that many people voted for parties they did not support in order to kick out the Conservatives. This strategic campaigning won the Lib Dems 72 seats, their best result since 1923, and Labour 412 seats, their best since 1997.

The Conservatives were also fighting on the right. In 2019, the Reform UK Party entered into an election pact under which they would not stand against sitting Conservative MPs but Nigel Farage, the Reform leader, said at the beginning of the recent campaign that the Conservative Party was unfit to rule and his party should replace them. Reform's main manifesto commitment is for tougher immigration policies. The party only won five seats, but they received 15 percent of the national vote and many Labour and Lib Dem candidates won by sailing through the split in the Conservative/Reform vote. Some prominent Conservatives believe they should become closer to the

Reform Party so that they can emulate the success of Marine Le Pen's National Rally Party in France. Others argue that British elections are always won from the centre and so appealing Reform Party voters would take them to the fringes of the far right, making them unelectable.

Though they have a commanding majority in the House of Commons, Labour's electoral support is therefore waver thin. Few people in the UK electorate have strong party loyalties today. The Labour leadership is acutely aware that, if the Conservatives can throw away a majority, so can they. At around 60 percent, turnout was the lowest for 20 years. This reflects disillusion rather than apathy. Though disgusted with the Conservatives, voters consistently say they have little faith in any politicians to make positive change. Such low expectations may work to Labour's advantage.

**The single most important foreign policy issue for Britain is the war in Ukraine, though Gaza has taken a big space in public domain. The Russian invasion of Ukraine is widely regarded as an existential threat to UK sovereignty. On his first day as prime minister, Starmer spoke to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.**

In his first speech as prime minister, Starmer set himself the task of managing expectations, stressing that change cannot come quickly. Instead, he stressed a change in tone. His government would bring back the ethos of public service and show that "politics can be a force for good." If that message comes through, the electorate may trust them enough to give them a second chance at the next election to complete their task. As a demonstration of his commitment to action, he held his first Cabinet meeting on Saturday, July 6, less than 24 hours after becoming prime minister.

The new government will focus on domestic policies, restoring the National Health Service, which the new Health Secretary has described as "broken," improving care services and education, increasing the number of affordable homes, and sorting out local government finance. Their main area of domestic vulnerability is probably immigration. The Reform Party outflanked the Conservatives on this issue. If Labour finds itself on

the defensive about immigration at the next election, Reform might do the same for them.

The single most important foreign policy issue for Britain is the war in Ukraine, though Gaza has taken a big space in public domain. The Russian invasion of Ukraine is widely regarded as an existential threat to UK sovereignty. On his first day as prime minister, Starmer spoke to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. A key factor in Labour's crushing defeat in 2019 was the contempt many traditional Labour voters had for Starmer's predecessor, Jeremy Corbyn. In doorstep interviews, they consistently said that they perceived him to be an unpatriotic pacifist who was not committed to NATO and could not be trusted to defend Britain.

Pacifism brings few votes and keeping Corbyn away from the military machine helped the Conservatives win many Labour seats in 2019. This line of attack failed in 2024. Starmer has restored Labour's credibility as a party of serious government by promising to increase defence spending, confirming unwavering support for NATO and taking a leading role in confronting Russia. Labour must maintain these commitments if it wishes to remain electable.

By contrast to Ukraine, Labour's position on Gaza is an electoral liability. Corbyn has been expelled from the Labour Party but he is back in Parliament as an independent MP, along with four other independents who stood with him on a platform of solidarity with Gaza. All constituencies with substantial Muslim populations saw a fall in support for Labour, in protest against Starmer's refusal to condemn Israel's aggression against Palestine. This cost Labour two of its most prominent shadow cabinet ministers who lost their seats to independents on the Gaza ticket. As a reminder that Palestine is a progressive issue not just a Muslim concern, Starmer's own majority was cut by 18 percent by a Jewish independent standing in support of Gaza. Andrew Feinstein is the South African son of a Holocaust survivor. He was an MP for the African National Congress under Nelson Mandela. His wife is a Bangladeshi.

Given the fragility of Labour's vote, it cannot afford to alienate Muslims and progressives who have traditionally been among its strongest supporters. The Labour manifesto commits the party to recognising a Palestinian state "as a contribution to a renewed peace process," but without stating when this might happen. Given the domestic pressures, recognition of Palestine could be done quickly and at no cost if Labour is serious about rebuilding trust in politics.

We do not know what lasting changes the 2024 electoral earthquake will make to Britain's political landscape. That will depend on the performance of the Labour Party in office and the direction the Conservatives take when they select their new leader. The question remains: will the new prime minister contribute to the international politics of conflict or reconciliation?

## CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

### ACROSS

- Members of the force
- Archaeologist's find
- Bean-bearing tree
- Find darling
- Houston player
- Praline nut
- Fetters
- Child
- Egg layers
- Spends time at the mirror
- Ram's mate
- Is fearful of

### DOWN

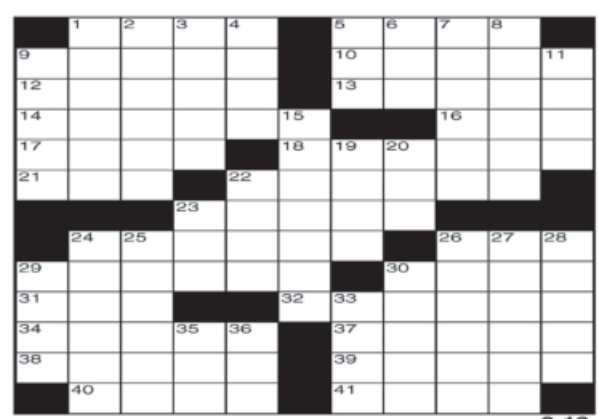
- Intended
- Peaceful
- Poker prize
- Apply hastily
- Dressed in
- Cereal grain
- Laundry problems
- Impassioned
- Detail map
- "Tomorrow" musical
- Suspicious
- Halt
- Whirl of water

### DOWN

- Kidney-shaped nut
- Gas pump number
- Louvre location
- Before long
- Keg need
- Keats work
- Ridiculed
- Intelligence
- Secret store
- Finishes
- Sports injuries
- Tear

### DOWN

- Have lunch
- Retro style
- Atlas page
- Bison's home
- Hidden
- Self-assured
- Stubborn
- Irritable
- Couch
- Diminished
- Floor piece
- 2016 Olympics host
- Slangy agreement



## SATURDAY'S ANSWERS





## 100m is a challenge and an honour: Imranur

Imranur Rahman is set to become the first overseas-based sprinter and overall, the third overseas-based athlete to represent Bangladesh in the Olympics. The 31-year-old British-Bangladeshi, who won gold in the 60m event in the 2023 Asian Indoor Championships, spoke to The Daily Star's Anisur Rahman and shared his excitement for the July-August's Paris Games and how he is preparing for the event. Here are the excerpts:

**The Daily Star (DS):** Since Bangladesh's first appearance in the Olympics in 1984, track and field athletes have represented the country in every edition through wildcards. You will be continuing that tradition this year. How are you feeling after getting this opportunity?

**Imranur Rahman (IR):** It's an incredible honour to represent Bangladesh on the world's biggest stage. The wildcard entry is a recognition of the hard work and dedication I've put into my sport, and it's a great opportunity to showcase my abilities and make my country proud.

**DS:** How have you prepared to compete against the world's top sprinters?

**IR:** Preparation has been intense and focused. I've been working closely with my coach on refining my technique, improving my start and building my stamina. I've also been studying my competitors to understand their strengths and strategies, which will help me perform at my best.

**DS:** The 100m event is considered the most attractive and prestigious event in the Olympics. How do you view it?

**IR:** The 100m event is indeed prestigious and highly competitive. It's often the highlight of the track and field events because it showcases the fastest athletes



in the world. Competing in this event is a tremendous challenge and an honour and I'm excited to see how I measure up against the best.

**DS:** So far, 17 track and field athletes have competed in the Olympics from Bangladesh and none of them have made it past the preliminary round. Are you hoping to become the first?

**IR:** It's a significant challenge, but I'm focused on giving my best performance. While breaking past records would be a tremendous achievement, my immediate goal is to perform to the best of my abilities and see where that takes me.

**DS:** You hold the national record in the 100m event, 10.11 seconds. Do you think it

would be enough to qualify for the semifinals?

**IR:** My personal best of 10.11 seconds is competitive, but the Olympics feature the fastest sprinters in the world. While it's possible that my best could qualify me for the semifinals, it will depend on the competition on the day. I'll focus on executing my race plan and hope for the best.

**DS:** You have been steadily improving your timing in the 100m race. In 2021, you clocked 10.32 seconds, then 10.29 seconds in 2022 and 10.11 seconds in 2023. Are you hoping to surpass it in Paris?

**IR:** I've been working hard to continue improving my timings and I want to set

a new personal best at the Olympics. However, every race is different and it's challenging to predict exactly how I will perform. I'll aim to deliver my best effort and hope it translates into a new record. But this is an if, something I cannot control.

**DS:** This year, you have only competed in the 60m event but you are going to compete in the 100m sprint in Paris. How difficult will it be for you to make that switch?

**IR:** Switching from the 60m to the 100m does present some challenges, particularly in terms of endurance and race strategy. However, I've been training specifically for the 100m, focusing on maintaining my speed over the longer distance. It will be a test, but I feel prepared.

**DS:** Apart from you, four other athletes from archery, shooting and swimming are going to take part from Bangladesh. What is your expectation from them in the Olympics?

**IR:** I have great respect for my fellow athletes and their dedication. Competing in the Olympics is a significant achievement in itself. I hope they perform to the best of their abilities and gain valuable experience. Each of us will strive to make Bangladesh proud in our respective disciplines.

## Nadal to face Borg!

AFP, Paris

In the world of fantasy tennis, pitting Nadal against Borg may seem everyday but in the real world it has never happened before.

Sadly, although obviously given the age difference, fans at the ATP event in Bastad next week will not be watching the two kings of Roland Garros - Rafael Nadal and Bjorn Borg with 20 French Open titles between them.

Instead Nadal will be up against Leo Borg, the 21-year-old son of the long-retired former world number one, now 68.

"It was crazy because we were looking when they did the draw and my name just popped up against Rafa," said Borg, currently ranked 467 in the world. "I'm feeling very excited and it's going to be a great match."

According to his ATP biography, Borg has never watched a single point of his father's storied career which included six French Open titles and five successive Wimbledon.

Instead he credits Nadal as one of the reasons he turned to tennis as a child, making Friday's practice session together all the more special.

"It was a very good practice and of course he's been my idol since I was very young, so it's going to be a very special moment in my career," Borg said.

"But I'm looking forward to that and I'm feeling really, really excited."

Borg's only ATP Tour match win last year was in Bastad against Elias Ymer.



## Bielsa far from satisfied

REUTERS

Uruguay needed a late equaliser and penalties to beat Canada in Saturday's Copa America third-place playoff match, with coach Marcelo Bielsa saying the South American side had performed well below their level.

Uruguay, ranked 14th in the world, were on the verge of a shock defeat to the 48th-ranked Copa America debutants before Luis Suarez scored a stoppage-time goal to force a penalty shootout, which Bielsa's side won 4-3.

"It wasn't a great performance. The draw, at best, was barely deserved. I think that the opponent head coach's decision to prioritize physical aptitude instead of usual starters was more successful," Bielsa told reporters.

"I went with the usual starters in spite of them being weary. There were ups and downs. The chances created by both teams were even, but in all truth, we didn't play well."

"Regarding this third place, I do think Uruguay is one of the three best teams of this tournament. Even if this tournament came after long seasons and the tiredness affects players, I thought that given our roster, we could have played a bit better than what we showed."

Bielsa's counterpart Jesse Marsch said he was proud of the progress the team had made in a short period, adding: "The players are disappointed in the way that we gave the match away."

## Records that fell at Euro 2024

AFP, Berlin

As the Euro 2024 came to a close on Sunday night with the final between Spain and England, here is a look back at some of the records that fell over the last month at Euro 2024.

### Lamine Yamal: Youngest player and scorer

Spain teenage sensation Lamine Yamal made history in his country's opening game against Croatia by becoming the youngest player ever to appear in a European Championship game at the age of 16 years and 338 days.

In doing so he beat the previous record held by beat Poland's Kacper Kozłowski, who was 17 years and 246 days old when he appeared at Euro 2020.

Yamal, of Barcelona, then claimed another piece of history by becoming the youngest player ever to score a goal at the Euros in Spain's 2-1 semi-final win against France, at the age of 16 years and 362 days.

### Pepe the oldest player

At the other end of the scale, Portugal defender Pepe claimed the record for the oldest player ever at a European Championship when he took to the field in his team's opening game against the Czech Republic at the age of 41.

He was 41 years and 130 days old by the time he appeared in the quarter-final against France - an age at which almost every footballer has long since retired.



The Porto centre-back passed the previous mark set by Hungary goalkeeper Gabor Kiraly, who was 40 years and 86 days old when he played against Belgium at Euro 2016.

**Modric the oldest scorer**  
Luka Modric became the tournament's

oldest goalscorer when he netted in Croatia's final game, a 1-1 draw against Italy.

Modric was 38 years and 289 days old, breaking the record set by Austrian Ivica Vastic in 2008 by 32 days.

Croatia were eliminated in the group

stage, meaning that game is set to also go down as Modric's last ever at the tournament.

### Ronaldo's sixth Euros

At 39, Cristiano Ronaldo had been hoping to claim the oldest goalscorer record for himself, but he failed to add to his all-time tournament best tally of 14 goals on Portugal's run to the quarter-finals, notably missing a penalty against Slovenia in the last 16.

Ronaldo did, however, claim other records. Having first appeared at the tournament in 2004, Ronaldo competed at an unprecedented sixth European Championship in Germany, and has now made a total of 30 appearances, at least seven more than any other player.

### The fastest goal for Bajrami

Albania's Nedim Bajrami netted the fastest ever goal at a European Championship when he put his side ahead after just 23 seconds in their opening game against Italy.

Bajrami pulverised the previous Euros record for the quickest goal of 67 seconds by Dmitri Kirichenko of Russia against Greece in 2004.

However, his team went on to lose the game 2-1.

Merih Demiral of Turkey later scored the second-fastest goal by finding the net against Austria in the round of 16 after just 57 seconds.

## 'We have the best spin attack in the world'

Bangladesh's women's side are slated to play the Asia Cup in Sri Lanka, scheduled to begin on July 19, with an eye on the upcoming T20 World Cup at home in October. The Tigresses, however, have a lot to work out in the meantime as they suffered a slump in recent times, with batting being their main concern in series losses to Australia and India at home. Head coach **Hashan Tillakaratne** talked about how the Tigresses can recover from this slump, and use their spin advantage and their target in the Asia Cup during an interview with **The Daily Star's Abdullah Al Mehdi**. The excerpts of the interview are as follows:

**The Daily Star (DS):** How do you see the side going into the Asia Cup and how will the tournament help for the upcoming T20 World Cup at home?

**Hashan Tillakaratne (HT):** It's a good sign to have youth and experience on your side given that the T20 World Cup is around the corner. This [Asia Cup] is a very good tournament for assessing ourselves and if we play well, we have every chance of winning the Asia Cup.

**DS:** There were batting mishaps in the last few series. Did you address the issues with the batters?

**HT:** Quite a few players are pushing for their places in the side. Obviously, everyone wants to play in the World Cup and there is a bit of fear of failure. That's one of the reasons that often they look like they are negative and fearful of playing their shots. We have spoken about it - about how they can free their minds. We haven't seen their true talents yet but we want them to go out there and express themselves.

**DS:** Do you feel the team is sufficiently equipped in the spin department, especially with three leg-spinners in the ranks?

**HT:** I feel we have the best spin bowling attack in the world right now. We have three to four leg spinners and in women's cricket, batters are usually vulnerable to leg spin. We are very fortunate to have so many. Our spin bowling coach

Dinu [Dinuka Hetiarachchi] has done a lot for them. Subcontinent surfaces are slow and low and no matter how much effort you put in, they always tend to help spinners. Our spinners are genuine turners of the ball and the condition would support them.

**DS:** The spin dependency sort of backfired in the last two series against Australia and India. What's your take on it?

**HT:** I don't think the plans backfired. We had our chances in both the series. We missed chances badly because we fielded poorly against both India and Australia. The bowlers were spot on and they created opportunities.

**DS:** Has fielding improved?

**HT:** Fielding has improved and fitness levels have gone up. Right now, I will give them seven out of 10 in terms of fitness.

**DS:** Bangladesh failed to win a game in the last four T20 World Cups. Do you feel it's Bangladesh's best opportunity this time?

**HT:** Yes, right now we are in a very good shape and I have a lot of faith in them. We are in good shape to progress to the last four. In the last three to four global tournaments, the players were not ready as they were still learning the trade and developing. They have played a lot of cricket since then and we have won games outside the country (The Tigresses have won an ODI and a T20I against South Africa in December last year). Victories gave them massive experience and they have started to believe that they are capable of beating any side in the world.

**DS:** Sometimes the burden of expectations sometimes weigh high on skipper Nigar Sultana Joty?

**HT:** Yes, lots of pressure on her since she is one of our top batters. Sometimes she has to take the side out of trouble and consolidate. So there are lots of things she has to do along with keeping wickets and managing expectations. She is very capable and understands her game well. We are fortunate to have someone like her.



Spain's Carlos Alcaraz celebrates after retaining his Wimbledon crown by defeating Serbia's Novak Djokovic 6-2, 6-2, 7-6 (7/4) in the men's singles final at the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club in London, Britain yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS



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## Alcaraz retains Wimbledon in style

AFP, London

Carlos Alcaraz overpowered seven-time champion Novak Djokovic in straight sets to retain his Wimbledon title on Sunday in a brutal statement that the new era of men's tennis has arrived.

The Spanish third seed produced a performance combining awesome power with delicate touch to win 6-2, 6-2, 7-6 (7/4), collecting the fourth Grand Slam of his young career.

Alcaraz equals the Open Era record for most Grand Slams won at the age 21 or under, joining Boris Becker, Bjorn Borg and Mats Wilander.

And he is just the sixth man to win the French Open and Wimbledon back to back.

Djokovic, 37, who had knee surgery just weeks ago, was aiming to win a 25th Grand Slam -- which would have been a record in

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4



Students of Dhaka University dormitories came out in droves around 11:00pm yesterday to protest against a comment Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina made on quotas at a press conference last afternoon. The photo was taken around 1:00am.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## 30pc quota a right of FFs' descendants

Says HC in full text of its judgment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court, in the full text of its judgment, has justified the provision for keeping 30 percent quota for freedom fighters' children in government jobs in the light of two previous verdicts -- one delivered by this court in 2012 and another by the apex court in 2015.

The court also observed that this privilege has become legal and a vested right of freedom fighters, their children, and grandchildren as sufferings over 21 years (August 15, 1975, to 1996) made them "most backward section of citizens".

The HC also directed the government to restore and maintain the quotas for "districts, women, physically challenged people, tribes, minor races, and ethnic groups and others, if any," and to publish a notification in this regard as soon as possible preferably within

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

## Frauds, criminals get govt jobs due to question leaks

HC expresses concerns at hearing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday expressed concerns over the incidents of question paper leaks, saying frauds and criminals have managed government jobs, like in the Bangladesh Civil Service, thanks to this.

"Many have taken advantage of the question paper leaks, which cannot be accepted," the HC bench of Justice KM Kamrul Quader and Justice Khizir Hayat Lizu said during the hearing on a writ petition.

"It is very painful for us as it deprives meritorious candidates of jobs."

Murad Bhuiyan, executive director of Sarda Society, a human rights organisation, recently filed the petition with the HC, seeking its order to conduct a judicial probe into question leaks.

In the petition, he said the maximum

punishment for those involved should be life imprisonment.

"A judicial committee should be formed to find those who became cadres between the 24th and 45th BCS exams with the help of leaked questions by people like Syed Abed Ali [an arrested former driver of a Public Service Commission chairman]. The committee should be asked to publish the list."

Saying it is a matter of concern that BCS exam questions are repeatedly leaked, the HC bench asked why those who are in the Public Service Commission are unable to stop it. "If they can't [stop it], they are

incompetent."

Deputy Attorney General SK Shaifuzzaman told the HC that a case has been filed over the BCS question leak incidents, and police are investigating it.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

## PENSION SCHEME ROW Univ teachers to press on with work abstention

Says meeting with govt representatives ended in 'stalemate'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Public university teachers continued their work abstention yesterday demanding the reinstatement of their previous pension scheme.

The decision was taken at a virtual meeting of the Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers' Association (FBUA).

This meeting was called to discuss Saturday's conversations between teachers and government representatives, which they termed as "fruitless".

"As our demands have not been met, we've decided to continue with our movement," Professor Akhtarul Islam, the president of the association, told The Daily Star.

This means the suspension of classes, exams, and other academic activities, which have been in effect for around two weeks, will continue.

Yesterday, the teachers at most of the 35 public universities staged sit-in demonstrations on their campuses, demanding the cancellation of the new "Prottoy" pension scheme and the reinstatement of their previous scheme.

They have also been demanding a super grade for

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

ATTACK ON MILITARY CHIEF

## Hamas 'pulling out' of Gaza truce talks

AFP, Palestinian Territories

A Hamas official yesterday said the group is pulling out of Gaza truce talks, following an Israeli strike that targeted the Hamas's commander Mohammed Deif.

"Commander Mohammed Deif is well and directly overseeing" the operations of the Hamas military wing, the official told AFP. Israel staged a huge bombing raid on a camp for displaced people in southern Gaza on Saturday that it said was an attempt to kill Deif.

Another senior official from the Iran-backed Islamist group, which has been fighting a nine-month-long war with Israel in the Gaza Strip, said Hamas was withdrawing from ceasefire talks because of Israeli "massacres" and the country's attitude in negotiations.

The health ministry in the Hamas-run Gaza Strip said at least 92 people had been killed, more than half of them women and children, and 300 wounded in a strike on the Al-Mawasi camp.

Ismail Haniyeh, Hamas's Qatar-based political chief, told international mediators of the "decision to halt negotiations due to the occupation's (Israel) lack of seriousness, continued policy of procrastination and

obstruction, and the ongoing massacres against unarmed civilians", the official said.

Talks mediated by Qatar and Egypt, with US support, have for months tried but failed to bring a halt to the war in the Gaza Strip.

➤ Top Hamas official says military chief Deif 'fine' after Israeli strike

➤ At least 92 were killed in Saturday's strike in an Israeli-designated 'safe zone'

➤ Death toll in Gaza reaches 38,584

Al-Mawasi, where the health ministry said dozens had been killed, had in May been declared a safe humanitarian zone by the Israeli military and civilians ordered to evacuate to it. However, there have been multiple deadly incidents there blamed on Israeli strikes.

Philippe Lazzarini, head of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA,

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## RUPALI BANK Three ex-bank officials jailed over Tk 2.59cr embezzlement

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

Three former Rupali Bank officials, along with three of its clients, were sent to jail yesterday over the embezzlement of Tk 2.59 crore from the bank's Mahasthangarh Branch in Bogura seven years ago.

They are former branch manager Jobayetur Rahman, former senior officers Ishrat Jahan and Mahatab Uddin, and bank clients Azmal Hossain, Jahidul Islam, and Mosharof Hossain.

The accused were present in court when they were given different jail terms in the verdict pronounced by Judge Md Shahidullah of the Special Judge Court of Bogura in the afternoon.

Jobayetur was sentenced to 27 years; Ishrat and Mahatab were

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PHOTO: REUTERS

Spain substitute Mikel Oyarzabal celebrates after sliding in for an 86th-minute winner to earn his team a 2-1 Euro 2024 final victory over England on Sunday and a record fourth European crown. England had levelled through a Cole Palmer strike after Nico Williams put Spain ahead in the second half but Luis de La Fuente's side made a stunning late comeback to win all seven games they played in the tournament.

## The poor priced out of fresh veggies

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and MD ABBAS

The prices of almost all vegetables have crossed the Tk 100-mark, piling pressure on the poor and the low-income segment already battling with a cost of living crisis for the past two years.

VEGETABLE PRICE (per kg)	Yesterday	Last week
Bitter gourd	Tk 120-140	Tk 80-100
Brinjal	Tk 100-140	Tk 80-100
Long beans	100-120	Tk 80-100
Spiny bitter gourd	Tk 100-120	Tk 80-90
Bottle gourd	Tk 100-120	Tk 60-80

From brinjal to bitter guard, long beans to spiny bitter gourd, from sponge gourd to bottle gourd, all now cost upwards of Tk 100 a kg after prices shot up by Tk 20-30 in a week because of the monsoon.

Nasir Uddin, a fresh vegetable trader at Ibrahimpur kitchen market, said his sales have decreased by one-third due to the price hike.

"I am known for selling fresh vegetables. For the last few days, due to the price hike, many of my customers have been unable to buy fresh vegetables," he said.

Many other vegetable traders in the capital's

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