



Textile mills abandoned for 31 years

P5



Jamal Uddin Hossain no more

P6



India's hubris

P8



Prioritise mental health at work

P10

AGE LIMIT FOR GOVT JOB ENTRY 35yrs for men, 37 for women

Suggests govt committee; advisory council to decide on it soon

BAHARAM KHAN

A government committee has recommended raising the maximum age for applying for public service jobs to 35 years for men and 37 years for women.

The five member committee, which was formed to review the feasibility of extending the age limit, submitted its report to the Chief Adviser's Office last week.

Yesterday, a highly placed source with knowledge of the matter confirmed the recommendations to The Daily Star.

According to the source, the committee recommended 37 as the age limit for women because women often face interruptions in their education or careers due to factors such as marriage and childbearing.

The review committee's proposal will be placed before the Advisory Council for the final nod, which sources said was very likely.

"It will be unprecedented in the history of public service if the recommendations are approved," said a top official, wishing not to be named.

When asked about the committee's recommendations,



Silt accumulated near the Sholmari river sluice gate being removed by excavators. The river acts as the only means of water drainage for hundreds of villages in Khulna's Dumuria upazila. With so much silt near the gate, the villages have been facing intense waterlogging since the beginning of the monsoon. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Build a nation protecting rights of everyone

Prof Yunus urges people while visiting Dhakeshwari temple

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday said people should aim to build a Bangladesh where no one's right is infringed upon.

"We must remind ourselves that it is our failure that we are having to rely on the army, police, and Rab to celebrate a festival. This is not normal. We accept this failure for this time," he said while visiting the capital's Dhakeshwari temple.

"What will we do with a society like this? Do we want a society like this? We don't."

"We are ensuring with assistance from law enforcement agencies that you can celebrate puja. I hope we will never have to do this again. We all will work together to reach that goal."

Bangladesh must be a country where everyone's rights are guaranteed. "If anyone infringes on those rights, they

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



➤ Panel considered pandemic, economic downturn, Ukraine war

➤ Many couldn't complete studies due to harassment during AL's tenure

➤ Report analysed legal, administrative barriers to raising limit

➤ Possible impact on labour market, economy also considered

People want a party helmed by the youth

Say student coordinators after nationwide discussions

ASHIK ABDULLAH APU

Forming an alternative political force and ensuring transparency in government work were the two issues that figured most prominently in the district-level views-exchange meetings organised by the Anti-Discrimination Students Movement.

Among the other issues discussed were protecting the spirit of the July-August mass-uprising and avoiding divisions between the political parties that were involved in the uprising -- all to prevent a potential return of the "fascist forces" -- at least three organisers told this newspaper.

The coordinators and co-coordinators of the movement visited 44 districts, including Munshiganj, Chattogram, Rangamati, Sylhet, Barishal, Khulna, Rajshahi and Dhaka between September 8 and 18.

Then after a brief pause, the platform resumed discussions on October 9, starting with the students of Tejgaon College.

Students and people from all other walks of life attended the meetings and highlighted their expectations regarding state reforms.

Drawing on the takeaways from these discussions, the platform is now preparing a report.



The coordinators of the Anti-Discrimination Students Movement, the platform that spearheaded the student-people mass uprising that ousted the Awami League government on August 5, will discuss and finalise their next course of action after the report is completed.

Speaking to this newspaper, they said the issue of extortion came up at all the meetings. They were also advised to form an alternative political force with leaders of the movement at the helm.

Sarjis Alam, one of the key coordinators of the movement, said, "We've seen power being alternated between two major political parties who ruled the country for so long. Neither has been able to gain the trust of the people. At

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Last 15 years a show of absolute power

Says Prof Rehman Sobhan at webinar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The head of government has always enjoyed "absolute power" which corrupts an individual, Prof Rehman Sobhan told a webinar last night.

"When you are in power for 15 years, that is a demonstration of absolute power. And the power centred upon one person," said the chairman of Centre for Policy Dialogue.

The most powerful institution has been the prime minister's secretariat, and ministers became subordinates to the PM, reducing the authority of parliament, he told the discussion organised by the Samaj Gobeshona Kendra.

Regarding the reforms that the interim government will make, Rehman, a former caretaker government adviser, said as political parties to be elected in the next polls will be the implementer of the reforms, the parties should reach a consensus about the changes.

Prof Rounaq Jahan, distinguished fellow of CPD, said the speculations that rewriting the constitution might cause controversies are logical.

The issue can even delay the reaching of a consensus by the parties, she said. A proportional representation election system can prevent rulers from becoming autocratic. "But we have yet to see commitments from the BNP and Awami League about the system."

Prof Nazrul Islam of Asian Growth Research Institute said most countries, including nearly 70 percent of the developed ones, have proportional representation.

In such a system, the president will be elected by the MPs with at least two-thirds majority and no individual will be the prime minister for more than two times.

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Journo hacked to death in Mymensingh

18-year-old 'drug peddler' sent to jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

An 18-year-old was sent to jail for hacking a journalist to death in Shambhuganj Bazar - Majhipara area in Mymensingh city yesterday.



Swapon Bhadra

The deceased was identified as Swapon Bhadra, 65, resident of Majhipara and correspondent of local daily Dainik Swajan.

He was suddenly attacked when he was walking near his home around 11:30am, Md Saiful Islam, officer-in-charge and inspector (investigation) of Kotwali Police Station, quoted locals as saying.

Swapon, who was from Tarakanda upazila's Kakni area, was also the vice president of the Tarakanda Press Club, reports our local correspondent.

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A relatively empty Dhaka city yesterday late morning due to the extended Durga Puja holidays coupled with the weekend. Thousands left the capital to celebrate the festival with their families outside Dhaka. The photo was taken in the Farmgate area.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX 2024 Bangladesh slips 3 notches to 84

Level of hunger deteriorated from last year

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh was ranked 84 out of 127 countries in this year's Global Hunger Index (GHI), down three notches from last year, indicating a deteriorating food security situation.

A GHI score is calculated on a 100-point scale reflecting the severity of hunger, where 0 is the best possible score (no hunger) and 100 is the worst.

This year, Bangladesh scored 19.4, up from 19 last year. Each country's GHI score is classified by severity: low to extremely alarming. Bangladesh's score indicates a "moderate" level of hunger.

While Bangladesh, Mozambique, Nepal, Somalia and Togo have reduced their scores by more than five points compared with their 2016 GHI scores bucking the global trend, hunger remains a serious concern, according to the global report, which was released yesterday.

In 2016, Bangladesh scored 24.7. The level of hunger is "too high" in Bangladesh, said the peer-reviewed annual report, jointly published by Concern Worldwide and Welthungerhilfe, designed to comprehensively measure and track hunger at the global, regional and country levels.

The aim of the GHI is to trigger action to reduce hunger around the world.

The latest index shows 11.9 percent of the total population of Bangladesh is undernourished while 2.9 percent of the children die before reaching their fifth birthday.

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A group of people waiting under a crumbling passenger shade in the Basabo area of Dhaka yesterday. The rusted beams and partially collapsed wall, barely held together, pose a serious risk of collapse. With cracks and exposed metal, the structure is a potential hazard for those waiting underneath, raising concerns that an accident could occur at any moment if repairs are not made promptly. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

ELECTORAL REFORM

Most parties for proportionate representation

BNP leader calls it 'illogical'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of five political parties yesterday proposed introducing a proportionate representation system in elections during a seminar in Dhaka, while a BNP leader dismissed the idea as "illogical".

The seminar, titled "How to Reform the Electoral System?" was held at the CIRDAP auditorium and organised by the Reporters Forum for Election and Democracy (RFED).

While representatives from BNP and four other political parties reached a consensus on bringing back the caretaker government by abolishing the fifteenth amendment, the BNP leader remained opposed to any shift towards a proportionate representation system, despite support from other parties.

WHAT IS PROPORTIONATE REPRESENTATION?

Proportionate representation (PR) is an electoral system in which seats in parliament are allocated to political parties based on the proportion of votes they receive in an election. Unlike the current first-past-the-post (FPTP) system, where the candidate with the most votes wins a seat, PR ensures that political parties gain representation that mirrors their share of the national vote.

At the seminar, BNP Vice Chairman Asaduzzaman Ripon rejected the PR system, calling it impractical for Bangladesh.

He argued that reforms should be grounded in reality. On the caretaker government system, he said, "The caretaker government should stay in place for the next 100 years."

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CALLS FOR ELECTORAL REFORM

Brigadier General (ret'd) M Sakhawat Hossain, adviser for the Jute, Textile, and Shipping ministries, addressed the gathering as the chief guest.

He stressed that the aim of political reform should be to restore the collapsing state system.

"The students shed their blood to reform the state, not to govern it. Our goal remains to restore the collapsed system," he said. He urged political leaders to embrace reforms, however difficult the process may be.

Badiul Alam Majumdar, chairman of the election reform commission, echoed these sentiments, emphasising the importance of integrity and neutrality in the election process.

He said elections are a long term process, involving everything from voter registration to the voting procedure, and called for political parties to work together to ensure transparency.

WIDESPREAD SUPPORT FOR PR SYSTEM

The idea of proportionate representation found support from several political leaders.

Zonayed Saki, chief coordinator of Ganosamhati Andolan, called for the next three to five elections to be held under an interim government and backed the PR system.

He also proposed the inclusion of a "No Vote" option in future elections.

Ruhin Hossain Prince, general secretary of the Communist Party of Bangladesh, also highlighted the need for an election-time government to ensure free and fair elections. He too was in favour of the PR system.

Shafiqul Islam Masud, a member of Jamaat-e-Islami's executive council, also endorsed the PR system, saying it was essential for truly representative elections.

Other speakers included Jatiyo Party leader Shamim Haidar Patwari, AB Party member secretary Mojibur Rahman Monju, and BNP leader Syed Moazzem Hossain Alal. RFED president Ekramul Haq presided over the event.

'We refused to retreat, even with bullets flying'

Students share harrowing tales of July uprising

NILIMA JAHAN

When protests against the quota system in government jobs erupted in Bangladesh during June and July, students believed they were standing up against a system they saw as discriminatory. Never did they imagine that their call for reform would be met with the brutal force of ruling party goons and the bullets of law enforcement.

What started as a peaceful demand for change quickly escalated into a violent

The day Abu Sayed was killed, even female students were not spared. A group of them, along with two male students, sought refuge in a roadside abandoned toilet, but when they came out, they were attacked again. The violence never seemed to end; even those already injured were not spared.

MOMTAZ SOMA
BRUR Student

confrontation with the state. Over the course of 36 days, students found themselves on the frontlines of a deadly battle. They were killed on the streets, beside their universities and even in their own homes. Their comrades were gunned down, many of them blinded, some of them lost their



limbs or other vital body organs.

For students involved, the trauma runs deep. They faced a harsh reality where death was no longer an abstract fear, but a vivid, horrifying presence.

Among them was Abdul Aziz, a protest coordinator from Jahangirnagar University, who fought alongside others on July 18 in Uttara, one of the deadliest days of the uprising.

Five protesters died when police and Rapid Action Battalion opened fire on protesters in Uttara.

Over 500 were injured that day, he said.

"We refused to retreat, even with bullets flying," he added.

At one stage, the law enforcers shot aiming his head, he said.

He turned just right in time to evade a fatal headshot, but the bullet shattered his glass and hit his ear, he recounted.

"I was boarded on a rickshaw

van by fellow protesters. But then they realised, the rickshaw puller was already dead after sustaining a bullet at some point."

"Then, one of the protesters took it upon himself to pedal the rickshaw and bring me to Uttara Adhunik Medical College Hospital," he said.

Aziz was speaking at a webinar titled "Confronting Death: The Experience of Students Against Discrimination", hosted by Forum for Bangladesh Studies in Dhaka yesterday.

Though Aziz required urgent neurological care, he was denied further treatment at the facility.

"The head of neurosurgery refused to treat me. Awami League supporters were hunting for me," he shared.

Under the cover of darkness, Aziz was moved to another hospital, but the damage had been

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Drives against crimes after Durga Puja

Says IGP

UNB, Dhaka

There is no scope to escape punishment after committing any crime in the country, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Md Mainul Islam said yesterday.

"Those who are involved in wrongdoings are few in numbers and if we all remain united, they will be insignificant. Yesterday's incident [attack on idols of a puja mandap in Tanti Bazar] proves this. We have arrested them and taken prompt action. So, those who want to commit crimes have no chance to escape," he said.

The IGP came up with the remark while talking to reporters after visiting Ramakrishna Mission Temple in the morning.

He also assured that drives will be conducted against mugging, extortion, drugs, criminal activities and for traffic management after Durga Puja.

Dengue claims nine lives

Highest in a day so far this year, 915 hospitalised

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



At least nine dengue patients died in the last 24 hours till 8:00am yesterday, highest in a single day this year.

Moreover, 915 patients were also hospitalised during this time. Of the deaths, one each was recorded in Barishal and Chattogram divisions, and the rest in Dhaka city.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services, with the new deaths, the total number of fatalities rose to 210, making it the third-highest death toll since the outbreak in 2000.

According to the DGHS, 1,705 dengue deaths occurred in 2023, marking the highest annual death toll to date. In comparison, there were 281 deaths in 2022 and 179 in 2019.

Meanwhile, total number of cases rose to 41,810, of which 23,851 are from outside Dhaka.

Currently, 3,651 dengue patients are undergoing treatment in different hospitals across the country.

A total of 37,949 dengue patients have been released from hospitals till yesterday this year.

Experts attribute the high mortality rate this year to factors including late hospitalisation, quick onset of shock syndrome, inaccurate test results, and recurrent dengue infections.

Besides, the ongoing rainy weather has worsened the situation, said experts.

Experts say such intermittent rain, coupled with high humidity, creates ideal conditions for Aedes aegypti mosquitoes, the primary carrier of the dengue virus, to breed. The rainy weather also increases the mosquitoes' biting tendencies, which will further escalate the dengue crisis.

BOLSTERING TIES

Foreign secy meets key US officials

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

In a series of meetings with key US officials between October 7 and 14, Bangladesh foreign secretary Jasim Uddin discussed the reforms of the democratic institutions and upholding of democratic values, as well as accountability for human rights violations.

In his first visit to the US after assuming office, Jasim Uddin met UN officials in New York and then flew to Washington and held meetings with key US officials, including US Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights Uzra Zeya, Acting Under Secretary for Political Affairs John Bass, Special Assistant to the US President and Senior Director for South Asia Lindsey W Ford, Deputy Secretary of State Richard Verma, among others.



Labour rights, Rohingya crisis, trade and investment, regional security and Indo-Pacific Strategy of the US were also discussed as Dhaka and Washington stepped up efforts to deepen relationship following the formation of Bangladesh's interim government.

Jasim also met US Assistant Secretary Ambassador Donald Lu, Acting Assistant Secretary Marta C Youth, Deputy Assistant Secretary Nicole Chulick, Deputy Assistant Secretary Monica Ager Jacobsen, as well as Director Alla P Kamins.

"US values Bangladesh as a partner in the Indo-Pacific region and our strong collaboration as their leading partner on Rohingya response and number one source of FDI," Uzra Zeya posted on X after meeting with the foreign secretary.

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The Hatkhola and Joy Kali Mandir roads (inset) are in a state of disarray for over a month following development work. After persistent monsoon rains, potholes have also developed, adding to the woes. While Joy Kali Mandir serves as the entry point for inter-district buses, Hatkhola road serves as the exit. Despite being two major roads, they lie neglected and in dilapidated conditions. In addition, their current state has led to massive traffic jams in the respective areas. The photos were taken yesterday. PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN, RASHED SHUMON



Gang posing as security forces rob cash, gold

Looted Tk 75 lakh, 70 bhoris of gold ornaments, say police

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of miscreants in the guise of security forces robbed Tk 75 lakh and 70 bhoris of gold ornaments from a building in the Mohammadpur area of the capital early yesterday, said police.

The incident occurred around 3:45am on the second floor of a five-storey building named "Abu Company Building" near the Tin Rasta intersection.

The building belongs to a businessman named "Abu", said locals.

According to the victims, a group of eight to 10 individuals dressed in uniforms resembling those of the army and Rab arrived at their home, and said they were there to conduct a raid to recover weapons.

They searched several

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KHULNA TEXTILE MILLS

Abandoned
for 31 years

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

The once-thriving Khulna Textile Mills Limited, now a neglected relic of the past, has remained abandoned for nearly 31 years. Established in 1931 as the Acharya Prafulla Chandra Cotton Mill, the mill sits on 25.63 acres of land in the heart of Khulna city. It was renamed in 1960 and nationalised in 1972, following Bangladesh's independence.

In 1993, the government laid off 1,600 workers and employees, shutting down operations with promises to resume, but the mill has remained closed ever since.

Over the years, various initiatives by the Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation failed to reopen the mill, leaving the vast industrial site unused and derelict.

The mill's land, now overrun with trees and dotted with just a few remaining buildings, stands as a reminder of its once-prosperous past.

When visiting the site, this correspondent observed an eerie calm, with three old buildings and a broken boundary wall the only remnants of the mill's operations. A police outpost and a small tin-shed housing security guards are the sole signs of human activity.

While the government continues to protect the land, residents and local authorities have raised concerns over its prolonged abandonment.

Sheikh Ashrafuzzaman, president of the Greater Khulna Development Movement Coordinating Committee, said, "This valuable land has been lying unused for more than three decades, with the government spending money just to protect it. The authorities lack sincerity and commitment to bring any positive change."

Various plans have been proposed for the site, none of which have materialised.

In 1999, the Awami League government initiated a project to develop a textile village, dividing 18.02 acres into 36 industrial plots. The remaining land was allocated for roads, mosques, schools, and other services.

However, the project missed its 2002 deadline and was never completed. In 2017 and 2018, BTMC invited tenders for the plots but received no serious bids, effectively halting the plan to establish the textile village.

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Once a thriving business, the Khulna Textile Mills Limited building is now simply a neglected relic of the past. It has remained abandoned for nearly 31 years. The landscape is now overrun with trees and dotted with just a few remaining buildings.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN



Chinese naval fleet begins goodwill visit to Bangladesh

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

A Chinese naval fleet Qi Jiguang and Jing Gangshan arrived at Chattogram Port yesterday on a goodwill visit.

During the fleet's four-day goodwill visit, a series of events will take place – including bilateral meetings, ship open days, and deck reception – to enhance China and Bangladesh Navy's cooperation and mutual trust, says a Chinese embassy statement.

"This visit marks the first occasion in four years since a Chinese naval fleet visited Bangladesh, and it is the first foreign naval fleet to visit since the establishment of the interim government," the release said.

Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Yao Wen welcomed the Chinese training fleet at the port.

Yao Wen and commanders of the Chinese naval fleet called on Rear Admiral Masud Iqbal, commander of the Chattogram Naval Area; Rear Admiral Md Moinul Hassan, Commander of the Bangladesh Navy Fleet, and Rear Admiral S M Moniruzzaman, Chairman of the port authority.

Low morale,
lack of vehicles

Ctg police yet to resume full operations

FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN, Ctg

Following the fall of the Awami League government and the subsequent attacks on police stations across the country on August 5, Chattogram police personnel have been grappling with low morale, severely disrupting their daily operations.

Although officers have returned to duty over the past month, the full resumption of police activities has been delayed, exacerbated by a significant shortage of vehicles.

This has created concerns over public safety, with patrols and emergency responses hindered.

During a visit to various parts of Chattogram city, this correspondent observed that key policing areas remain largely inactive, leaving residents vulnerable to rising criminal activities, including theft, robbery, and even murder. Police response to such crimes has been sluggish, largely due to the ongoing operational challenges.

Several field-level officers shared that they are still in search of a morale boost, citing fears of further attacks and a lack of logistical support, including vehicles for patrolling. This has made it difficult for officers to respond promptly to calls made

through the national emergency hotline, 999.

Night patrols, in particular, have been reduced due to concerns over potential attacks on police.

The Chattogram Metropolitan Police has acknowledged the current difficulties.

During a visit to various parts of Chattogram city, this correspondent observed that key policing areas remain largely inactive, leaving residents vulnerable to rising criminal activities, including theft, robbery, and even murder. Police response to such crimes has been sluggish, largely due to the ongoing operational challenges.

Officials said efforts are being made to fully restore services, though it will take time. "We are coordinating vehicles from other units to support the affected stations," an officer said.

In the aftermath of the August 5 attacks, the Kotwali, EPZ, Patenga, and Pahartali police stations were completely destroyed, while eight others were vandalised.

Several weapons, ammunition, and case evidence were either looted or destroyed, along with personal and official vehicles.

CMP data indicates that 28 police vehicles, including an armoured personnel carrier, were set ablaze, while approximately 30 more were damaged.

Noble Chakma, additional deputy commissioner of CMP's South Division, said two vehicles have been allocated to each of the Kotwali, EPZ, and Patenga police stations to assist with patrols and emergency responses. However, officers remain stretched thin.

"We don't have enough vehicles, so our patrolling has decreased significantly. The central authorities have provided two vehicles each for the EPZ and Patenga stations," said Shakila Sultana, deputy commissioner of Bandar Zone. Despite these efforts, many officers remain psychologically affected by the attacks, with some saying that both their personal and professional lives have been impacted. "We are still recovering from the trauma," said one officer.

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CROWN THEFT AT SATKHIRA TEMPLE

Case filed, four held

Police declare reward for info

A CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Satkhira district police have announced a reward for information leading to the capture of the thief who stole a crown of the goddess Kali at the Jeshoreshwari Temple in Shyamnagar, Satkhira.

The crown, a silver piece plated with gold, was gifted by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his visit to Bangladesh in March 2021.

The theft, which occurred between 2:47pm and 2:49pm on Thursday, was captured on CCTV footage, but the thief has yet to be identified.

Satkhira Superintendent of Police Monirul Islam sought public assistance through a post on the district police's official Facebook page, offering a special reward for any information that helps arrest the culprit.

Four suspects have already been arrested, according to Satkhira police, and operations are

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Mymensingh's sweet offerings for Durga Puja



OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Pera, a traditional sweetmeat, is having a moment of its own during Durga Puja this year.

It is made from solidifying cow-milk, and can be crafted in several designs and patterns.

However, despite being a delicacy, the traditional Pera has been gasping for survival in recent years.

This sweet is mainly used as a "bhog" item for various puja festivals, said 80-year old Jagadish Roy, of Mymensingh's Aamlapara area.

Pera is now being sold at Tk 550 to Tk 600 per kilogramme. For special orders, prices can be as high as Tk 700 per kg, said Saurav Das, proprietor of Bikrampur Sweet Meat at the city's Boro Kalibari area.

There was a time when pera had great demand among people and it was sent to different European countries.

"There used to be orders from different zamindar palaces," said Pintu Sarker, proprietor of Adarsha Mistanno Bhandar in the Boro Kalibari area.

Like many other traditional sweet items, it is lagging behind due to lack of publicity. The present generation is not familiar with this sweet item, said 58-year-old Pintu.

Recollecting memories, Pintu, the third generation in a line of sweetmeat makers, said their grandfathers late Suresh Sarker and Brojendra Sarker, hailing from Cumilla, came to Mymensingh in their youth and learned to make Pera. It is now a century old business.

Rina Sarker, proprietor of Jol Khabar Mistanno Bhandar, said the item they prepare has a difference in colour and taste than other sweetmeats.

Facing different odds including a serious crisis of skilled technicians to make pera, they have been continuing this business to honour to their ancestral trade, said Rina.

Rina added that they enjoy reliable retail sales around the year, as a large number of devotees visit "Loknath Ashram and Boro Kalibari Temple" in the area.

The devotees usually buy pera in pieces, and such sale is not enough for the survival of this sweetmeat making, said Khitiranjan Sarker, a retired school teacher.

Dr Ranjan Kumar Majumder, a resident of the Boro Kalibari area, said the Mymensingh region was once famous for its variety of sweetmeats, including pera. But many traditional sweet items are now in a tight spot due to various reasons, and they are struggling to cope with the situation, added Dr Ranjan.



Once upon a time, this was a normal street where vehicles could move freely. Now, countless makeshift shops have narrowed it down to such an extent that only pedestrians or rickshaws can use it. The photo was taken in the capital's Karwan Bazar area yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

CHATTOGRAM WATERFALLS
Scenic wonders
or death traps?

At least 12 tourists died since 2020

SIFAYET ULLAH, Ctg

Mahbub Hasan, a bank official, went to visit Khoiyachhara Waterfall in Chattogram on September 27 this year.

While bathing in the waterfall, he died after being hit by a stone that fell down the hill from the origin of the waterfall.

At least 12 tourists, including Mahbub, died from different types of accidents while visiting the waterfalls in Chattogram in last five years, according to sources at police, fire service and forest department.

Of them, six died this year alone till October 10, while two each in 2020, 2022, and 2023.

Drowning has so far been the cause of deaths in most cases, according to government data.

Chattogram is home to several waterfalls. Of those, the most popular ones among tourists include Khoiyachhara, Napittachhara, Rupasi, Sonaichhari and Kamaldah waterfalls, located in Mirsarai and Sitakunda upazilas.

During monsoon, the waterfalls take a scenic look with their flow, attracting hundreds of tourists every season.

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Iran sends satellites to Russia for rocket launch

REUTERS, Dubai

Iran has sent two locally made satellites to Russia to be put into orbit by a Russian space vehicle, the semi-official news agency Tasnim reported yesterday, in the latest space cooperation between the two U.S.-sanctioned countries.

The development of Kowsar, a high-resolution imaging satellite, and Hodhod, a small communications satellite, is the first substantial effort by Iran's private space sector, the report said.

Russia sent Iranian satellites into orbit in February and in 2022, when U.S. officials voiced concern over space cooperation between Russia and Iran, fearing the satellite will not only help Russia in Ukraine but also help Iran monitor potential military targets in Israel and the wider Middle East.

Kowsar could be used in agriculture, natural resource management, environmental monitoring, and disaster management, Tasnim said. Hodhod is designed for satellite-based communications and could be used in remote areas with little access to terrestrial networks.

In September, Iran carried out its second satellite launch this year using a rocket built by its Revolutionary Guards. The launch came as the United States and European countries accuse Tehran of transferring ballistic missiles to Russia that could be used in its war with Ukraine. Iran has denied this.



Displaced Palestinians make their way as they flee areas in the northern Gaza Strip, following an Israeli evacuation order in Gaza City yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Israeli strikes on Jabalia refugee camps kill 19

Say medics as tanks push deeper into the north; Palestinian health officials report around 150 killed in Jabalia over past week

REUTERS, Cairo

Israeli military strikes on Gaza overnight killed at least 19 Palestinians, medics said yesterday, while forces continued to push deeper into the Jabalia area, where international relief agencies say thousands of people are trapped.

Residents said Israeli forces continued to pound Jabalia, which is in the north of the enclave and is the largest of the enclave's historic refugee camps, from the air and ground.

The Israeli military published new evacuation orders yesterday to two neighbourhoods on the northern edge of Gaza City, which also lies in the north of the enclave, saying the area was a "dangerous combat zone".

In a statement, Gaza's Hamas-run interior ministry urged residents not to relocate within northern areas of the enclave and also to avoid heading south "where the occupation is conducting continued bombing and killing every day in the areas it claims to be safe".

There has been no fresh Israeli comment on deaths but the military said in past days that forces operating in Jabalia and nearby areas killed dozens of militants, located weapons and dismantled military infrastructure.

The operation in this area began a week ago and the military said then it aimed to fight against militants waging attacks and to prevent Hamas from regrouping.

Palestinian health officials put the number of people killed in Jabalia over the past week at around 150.

On Friday, Israeli strikes hit four houses in Jabalia, killing around 20 people and wounding dozens, medics said. The Israeli military has sent troops into the nearby towns of Beit Hanoun and Beit Lahiya as well as Jabalia and ordered residents to evacuate their homes and head to safe areas south of the enclave.

Palestinian and United Nations officials say there are no safe areas in Gaza. They have also voiced concerns over severe shortages of food, fuel, and medical supplies in northern Gaza, and said there is a risk of famine there.

Israeli offensive in Gaza, aimed at eliminating Hamas fighters, has killed more than 42,000 Palestinians since it began a year ago, according to Gaza's health ministry, and has laid waste to the enclave.

NEW MEMOIR

Navalny knew he would die in prison

AFP, New York

Russian dissident Alexei Navalny, who was President Vladimir Putin's top political opponent before his death in February, believed he would die in prison, according to his posthumous memoir which will be released on October 22.

The New Yorker published excerpts from the book, featuring writing from Navalny's prison diary and earlier.

"I will spend the rest of my life in prison and die here," he wrote on March 22, 2022.

"There will not be anybody to say goodbye to... All anniversaries will be celebrated without me. I'll never see my grandchildren."

Navalny had been serving a 19-year prison sentence on "extremism" charges in an Arctic penal colony.

His death on February 16 at age 47 drew widespread condemnation, with many blaming Putin.

Navalny was arrested in January 2021 upon returning to Russia after suffering a major health emergency from being poisoned in 2020.

"The only thing we should fear is that we will surrender our homeland to be plundered by a gang of liars, thieves, and hypocrites," he wrote on January 17, 2022.

The diary reveals the punishing toll that the prison regime and his hunger strike exerted on his body, according to further extracts published in the London Times.

"Today I feel crushed. We went to the bathhouse. I could hardly tolerate standing under the hot shower. My legs gave way. It's evening now and I have no strength at all. I just want to lie down, and for the first time I'm feeling emotionally and morally down," he wrote in one entry.



DIARY 'MY MEMORIAL'

The excerpts capture the loneliness of imprisonment, but also a touch of humour.

For instance, on July 1, 2022, Navalny outlined his typical day: wake up at 6:00 am, breakfast at 6:20 am and start work at 6:40 am.

"At work, you sit for seven hours at the sewing machine on a stool below knee height," he wrote. "After work, you continue to sit for a few hours on a wooden bench under a portrait of Putin. This is called 'disciplinary activity'."

The book, entitled "Patriot," will be released by US publisher Knopf, which is also planning a Russian version.

"It's impossible to read Navalny's prison diary without being outraged by the tragedy of his suffering, and by his death," wrote New Yorker editor David Remnick.

In the last excerpt published in the magazine, dated January 17, 2024, Navalny responds to the question asked to him by his fellow inmates and prison guards: why did he return to Russia?

"I don't want to give up my country or betray it. If your convictions mean something, you must be prepared to stand up for them and make sacrifices if necessary," he said.

Speculating on the fallout of any attempt to assassinate him, Navalny said his memoirs "will be my memorial."

"If they whack me, my family will get the advance and royalties that, I hope, there will be," he wrote.

"Let's face it, if a murky assassination attempt using a chemical weapon, followed by a tragic demise in prison, can't move a book, it is hard to imagine what would," he joked.

"What more could the marketing department ask for?"



Former US President and Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump speaks during a campaign rally at Gaylord Rockies Resort & Convention Center in Aurora, Colorado, on Friday.

PHOTO: AFP

Trump wants death penalty for migrants who kill Americans

REUTERS, Colorado

Donald Trump portrayed migrants as dangerous criminals during a rally in Aurora, Colorado, on Friday, calling for the death penalty for migrants who kill US citizens as he escalates the anti-immigration rhetoric that has fueled his presidential run.

Flanked by posters of alleged members of the Venezuelan gang Tren de Aragua, Trump also said that if elected he would launch a national "Operation Aurora" to target the gang members.

Trump, the Republican presidential candidate, has noticeably hardened his anti-immigration rhetoric in the final weeks of the Nov 5 election campaign, where he aims to defeat Democratic candidate Kamala Harris. Illegal immigration is a top voter concern, and Trump is seen by most voters as the person best able to address it, opinion polls show.

"I'm hereby calling for the

death penalty for any migrant that kills an American citizen or a law enforcement officer," Trump said to loud cheers from a large crowd of supporters.

Trump has already proposed an expansion of the death penalty for other offenders, including people convicted of sex trafficking women and children.

Trump has already proposed an expansion of the death penalty for other offenders, including people convicted of sex trafficking women and children.

Nearly half of U.S. states ban the death penalty. While there is a federal death penalty, it is rarely used, according to the Death Penalty Information Center, a

non-profit group. An expansion of eligible crimes would require an act of the US Congress.

One of the hallmarks of Trump's third presidential run has been his focus on what he calls "migrant crime", even though academic studies show immigrants do not commit crimes at a higher rate than native-born Americans.

The Harris campaign did not immediately respond to a request for comment related to the death penalty proposal.

Vice President Harris toughened her stance on border security after becoming the Democratic nominee in August, and faults Trump for helping stifle a bipartisan border security bill in Congress earlier this year.

SPOTLIGHT ON AURORA

During a Sept. 10 presidential debate with Harris, Trump claimed that members of Tren de Aragua controlled several dilapidated Aurora apartment complexes - allegations refuted by top city officials.

11 killed, 8 hurt in Pak firing incidents

DAWN ONLINE

At least 11 people were killed and eight were injured in shooting incidents in Kunj Alizai area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Kurram district, hospital and local officials said yesterday.

Kurram Deputy Commissioner (DC) Javidullah Mehsud confirmed the death toll to Dawn.com.

"There was shooting in the Kunj Alizai mountains near the Pak-Afghan border and on the roads there," DC Mehsud said.

Mir Hassan, medical superintendent of the District Headquarters Hospital, told Dawn.com that a total of nine injured people were brought to the hospital, out of which one succumbed to their injuries while treatment of the rest was underway.

He added that the condition of three of the wounded was "critical".

DC Mehsud asserted that steps were being taken to make the entry and exit routes to Kurram safe and to restore law and order in the region.

Pir Haider Ali Shah, a former MNA and a jirga member, said the latest incident of unrest was "unfortunate as jirga members were already present there for a peace agreement between the tribes".

Last month, at least 46 people were killed and 91 were injured in days-long violence that had erupted over a land dispute. A previous bout of clashes in July had also resulted in 49 deaths.

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Flood-hit farmers need proper support Govt must ensure swift response based on their needs

As floodwaters begin to recede in the Mymensingh, Netrokona and Sherpur region, the scale of the destruction caused by the recent flash floods is gradually becoming apparent. Current estimates suggest that Aman crops over 83,000 hectares of land have been totally or partially ruined, impacting around 322,000 farmers. Moreover, a large number of fish farms have been washed away. In Sherpur alone, floods have washed away the fish from 7,366 ponds, affecting around 4,500 farmers. While a comprehensive assessment of the damage done to agriculture, fish farms, livestock and properties can only be made after the water fully recedes, it is already clear that recovery will be an immense challenge for this agriculturally crucial region.

Farmers whose crops have been destroyed have an uncertain future awaiting them. The damage to this season's Aman paddy is beyond repair, as the window for new cultivation has already passed. How will these farmers survive? Or, consider the case of fish farmers like Mohammad Ali, who had taken the lease of an acre of land to set up a fish farm and invested nearly Tk 7 lakh by taking a bank loan. He and others like him have not only lost their livelihoods but are now saddled with a crushing debt.

While the flood situation in these districts has improved to some extent over the last few days, many villages in low-lying areas still remain inundated. According to the local administration, about 13,000 families are still trapped by water. These people, too, face an uncertain future, not knowing what awaits them when the waters finally recede.

Under the circumstances, the government must urgently come up with a robust post-flood recovery plan for all the affected areas, while continuing its relief efforts by providing food, medicine and other essential supplies to the victims. Understandably, livelihood rehabilitation, particularly for farmers, will be one of the government's biggest challenges as they need to be given an alternative choice of crops or vegetables to cultivate since the Aman season is already over. To this end, the Department of Agricultural Extension should swiftly assess the conditions on the ground and identify suitable crops and vegetables for the affected areas. Immediate distribution of crop sapplings, vegetable seeds, fertilisers, and other necessary inputs is also essential.

Those who cannot go back to their previous livelihoods must be given alternative means of earning a living. This is a huge task requiring strong coordination among all the relevant government agencies. We hope that the government will rise to the challenge, supported by NGOs and philanthropic organisations, to meet the post-flood needs of the affected communities.

Save Hatirjheel from overdevelopment

Why continue an initiative that will worsen waterlogging?

Waterlogging has been a perennial problem for Dhaka city, and we all know the reason behind it. Rampant encroachment of water bodies has resulted in water remaining stagnant in many areas as there is nowhere for it to go. Canals, ponds, and parts of rivers have been filled up to satisfy the greed of encroachers who often enjoyed political patronage. Hatirjheel is one of the latest casualties of this unplanned development that threatens to further worsen Dhaka's waterlogging problem.

According to a report, over the past 17 months, more than 10 acres of Hatirjheel Lake have been filled with sand as part of the Dhaka Elevated Expressway project. Authorities claim that the move was necessary to build 41 pillars for the project, despite warnings that it would severely disrupt the lake's natural water flow and reduce its capacity to retain excess rainwater. As a result, there would be increased waterlogging particularly in Dilu Road, Karwan Bazar, Banglamotor, Moghbazar and Tejgaon areas. Hatirjheel's biodiversity would also be affected, damaging habitats of aquatic life and destroying bird nesting areas. It is unthinkable that despite such dire risks, the authorities would allow this move to continue. Reportedly, the approval for the filling initiative came directly from the former Prime Minister's Office. And despite this violating Dhaka's Detailed Area Plan (2022) as well as the Environment Conservation (Amendment) Act 2010, both Rajuk and the Department of Environment remained silent.

But now that the former regime has been ousted, we expect things to be different. Given the environment adviser's track record for fighting against encroachment of rivers and waterbodies, we hope this dangerous initiative would be scrapped soon. While the elevated expressway has made life easier for many city dwellers in terms of mobility, it cannot be at the expense of the integrity of Hatirjheel or citizens' safety from environmental impacts. The government must stop the expansion immediately and develop a plan to undo the damage already caused and protect the lake in the future.

This year's floods in various parts of the country proved to be more severe precisely because floodwaters stagnated for days on end as most water bodies have been filled up or blocked by unplanned infrastructure development. The interim government should identify all at-risk water bodies in Dhaka and other cities that have been filled up or encroached upon, and take urgent steps to free them.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY



Italy declares war on Nazi Germany

On this day in 1943, the Kingdom of Italy officially joined the Allied Powers and declared war on its former Axis partner Germany.

India's hubris

STRATEGICALLY SPEAKING

Brig Gen Shahedul Anam Khan, ndc, psc (ret'd) is a former associate editor of The Daily Star.



BRIG GEN SHAHEDUL ANAM KHAN
NDC, PSC (RET'D)

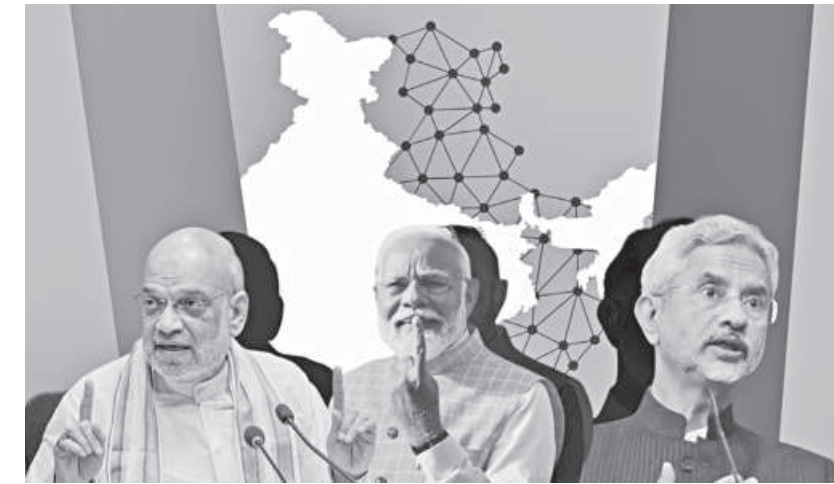
"We make our friends; we make our enemies; but God makes our next-door neighbours." - Gilbert K Chesterton

Isn't it time for India to come to terms with the reality about its neighbours, particularly about its most strategically located neighbour, Bangladesh? One wonders whether India realises that until the successful Monsoon Revolution in Bangladesh, the only government in the region that was close to it was that of Sheikh Hasina, whose regime, elected through questionable processes, India had consistently helped to sustain for 15 long years. And with every passing year, as the Hasina regime became more and more autocratic, India was seen as increasingly complicit in the travails and woes caused by the destruction of democracy and abridgement of the basic rights of Bangladeshis. Most saw the prolonged agony that Bangladesh went through as being the result of India's unflinching support for the Awami League (AL) to further its own geostrategic interests.

The degree of commitment of the Indian administration to AL is evident from the fact that some of the top leaders of the ousted regime have been given sanctuary in that country. Skeletons hidden in their closet for so long have only just started to emerge.

Before Bangladesh, it was for the Maldives to show that it had had enough of India. The gumption shown by the then newly elected president, Mohamed Muizzu, to say openly that his country would not be bullied by its big neighbour might have irked India, but that view is fairly representative of the views of citizens in India's many other South Asian neighbours. A new president in Sri Lanka from a party formed on nationalistic platforms must have added to India's worries.

India doesn't like being shown the door, and it showed after Muizzu ordered Indians to leave. And as is the tradition with the Indian establishment and media, it was the Maldives that was



VISUAL: ALIZA RAHMAN

Painted as the villain. No one bothered to analyse why Muizzu took the stand that he did.

The South Block and the Indian media must delve deep into why public opinion in Bangladesh had turned so vehemently against India over the years. It was guilt by association. Hasina served Indian economic and strategic interests—much at the expense of Bangladesh, we must add—and so India did everything to see that AL continued their hold on power. Anyone reading or watching only the Indian print and electronic media, particularly in the days following the July-August mass revolution, would be led to believe that a most benevolent servant of the people of Bangladesh, elected by overwhelming popular mandate, was illegally pushed out of power and made to flee to India!

The Indian media's lamentation about the death of democracy and collapse of Bangladesh's economy post-Hasina is in stark contrast to its deafening silence on Awami League's 15 years of misrule and wanton looting of national wealth by Hasina, her family, and party members, aided and abetted by a partisan bureaucracy. Largesse was also distributed among state institutions to make them pliant

to her plunder and pillage. Nothing of the kind was published in the Indian media. Needless to say, the Indian media's lamentation in unison represents the opinion and position of the South Block.

India continues to play the Hindu card, exaggerating the stray incidents in Bangladesh, quite happily forgetting the unabated persecution

of the foreign policy posture of Bangladesh since 1971. If one's foreign policy revolves around mainly three concentric circles—immediate neighbours, the region, and the international ambit—Bangladesh's first two circles have been dominated by India only, reminding one of the rueful remarks of a Mexican president, "So far from God, so near to the United States."

Indian leaders had not flinched from betraying their intention to be an "elder brother", if not a "big brother", and one of the foreign ministers is on record saying as much and in as many words. But while the main text has been followed to the letter and spirit, the subtext that it will care for its "younger brother" has been purged from the Indian leaders' mind.

A caring neighbour does not resort to shooting of harmless people on the border, nor does it renege on its commitment to observe the international norms and conventions related to the sharing of common resources. Nor would it take for a caring neighbour 41 long years to ratify an agreement. An administration that believes in dealings on the basis of sovereign equality with neighbours would try to remove the disparaging and irresponsible comments that have been coming out of the mouths of very senior Indian leaders, including ministers.

Indian scholars keep on harping on one single issue: anti-Indian activities conducted from inside Bangladesh. The same narrative has again been regurgitated by an Indian scholar in a recent interview with a leading Bangladeshi newspaper. What our interviewers failed to ask the Indian scholar was to say when such activities were last recorded.

It is not for India to ask for Bangladesh's assurance. All of India's security concerns have been met fully, and more. Rather, it is for Bangladesh to ask whether India would fulfil its commitments as a responsible neighbour.

We would like to remind our neighbour by repeating what we had said in the past: that there is a thin line between being a big country and being a great one. And that line is often inflated into a chasm by the petty-minded upholders of so called enlightened self-interest.

It is also a good thought to conclude that Bangladesh would like to see India as neither a big nor an elder brother, but a gracious neighbour.

of the minorities—particularly of the Muslims—in the last 10 years under the Modi regime.

The contrasting role of the media in the two countries has been very stark and noticeable. The media in Bangladesh has been virtually mum about the plight of the Muslims in India, fearing the oppressive laws that lay down stringent punishment for anyone expressing an opinion that might "harm bilateral relations" with our neighbours. Our mainstream media was scared even to publish the facts. Notice the contrasting role of the Indian media. Not only have exaggerations been resorted to but stories have also been fabricated to run a propaganda campaign about the so-called persecution of Hindus in Bangladesh.

India's diplomatic and intelligence failure in Bangladesh was hard to swallow for its leadership. Hence the venomous invective spewing from their mouth, which, thankfully, has been dismissed as guttural utterances by most world leaders. Such utterances do little to engender good neighbourly feelings, and good feelings are a precondition to a good mutual relationship.

Inevitably, India has predominated

Can Biman have a fresh beginning?



CAPTAIN A M MAQSOOD AHMED

Captain A M Maqsood Ahmed is captain of Boeing 777 with Bangladesh Biman and a former member of the fleet planning committee, that did the groundwork for the purchase of 10 new generation Boeing aircraft.

Following the July-August mass uprising, almost all service organisations, corporations, administrative bodies, and government offices in the country are experiencing significant changes, reshuffling, and overhauls. Previously stifled voices are now being heard, and we expect a new Bangladesh to emerge from the wreckage left behind by the Awami League government. The extent of embezzlement is staggering. Any honest person who envisions what could have happened if this money had been invested into the economy can't help but feel enraged by the fallen regime.

Towards the end of the regime, Salman F Rahman, the former adviser to the former prime minister on private industry and investment, spearheaded an attempt to purchase 10 new aircraft from Airbus. The intent was brazenly clear: to embezzle funds. That chapter is now closed. It's time to look forward and build a new Biman founded on professionalism, efficiency, transparency, and accountability.

The aviation industry experienced an unprecedented lull during the Covid pandemic, followed by a tremendous boom. Despite this, Biman has underperformed, especially considering it has a relatively young fleet.

In the aviation business, the margin for error is extremely narrow. A single poor decision can lead to total chaos for any airline. An accident can damage an airline's brand image so severely that it may take months to regain passenger confidence. Building a brand is a slow and painstaking process, but it can ensure a return on investment. For effective branding of Biman, key areas require attention.

A major complaint against Biman

is its poor "on-time performance". In the recent past, the importance of punctuality has been largely ignored. The airline's vision and mission do not appear to be clearly communicated to its employees and departments. A concerted effort is essential to ensure flights are dispatched on time.

Aircraft serviceability is one of the most important areas for profit maximisation. Aircrafts must be serviceable and in good condition, including in-flight entertainment systems. An aircraft that sits idle is useless unless the airline's operations

managers. Certain problematic individuals must be removed from sensitive positions immediately.

Modern aircraft have the unique ability to communicate their health status to engineers, even mid-flight. However, we often fail to take advantage of this technology due to inadequate spare parts provisioning. Delaying repairs because of cost-cutting can be disastrous. Aircraft should not be left idle for days due to a lack of necessary parts. The prospect of providing maintenance to more foreign carriers may be explored to expand the spares pool.

Many of our international flights include short segments, such as Dhaka-Sylhet or Dhaka-Chattogram, before proceeding to the ultimate destination, which highly increases operating expenses. These short flights waste valuable engine, landing gear and auxiliary power unit (APU) cycles. A better strategy would be to operate point-to-point international

crew numbers do not allow crew to take time off to attend to personal matters. Aspiring young pilots should be given the opportunity to join Biman, and current pilots who meet the requirements should be promoted in due time.

Biman is a relatively small airline with few airplanes. So, it is very important to take advantage of any opportunity to optimise operations that come our way. For instance, the decision to procure Boeing 787s, despite their delayed delivery, was influenced by the ability of pilots to fly both Boeing 787s and 777s simultaneously. However, when the 787s arrived, the crew for both aircraft types were segregated, causing problems in planning issues and crew dissatisfaction. There are also issues with aircraft allocation in different routes that should be revisited.

Biman must immediately focus on future fleet planning based on pragmatic business solutions and operational needs. Failing to plan ahead will lead to major operational problems. We are already in a stage where aircraft shortage is inevitable.

Another area is communicating delays. We often see passengers getting agitated at the holding area because of a lack of information regarding delays. Passengers readily accept a delay of less than 30 minutes or even more if they are updated about it along with the reasons. Biman traffic personnel needs training on providing updated delay messages to passengers without exception. Any delay of more than 15 minutes must be communicated to the passengers.

Lastly, sufficient executive power must be granted to the managing director and chief executive officer to hold them accountable for decisions. In recent years, the board and its subcommittees made almost all decisions, leaving central management unaccountable. This led to unnecessary delays, and in some cases, decisions were rendered ineffective by the time they were made.

Proper brainstorming will bring forth many more steps that can be taken for the advancement of Biman and improve its brand image.

Towards the end of the regime, Salman F Rahman, the former adviser to the former prime minister on private industry and investment, spearheaded an attempt to purchase 10 new aircraft from Airbus. The intent was brazenly clear: to embezzle funds. That chapter is now closed.

are so inefficient that it is cheaper to keep aircrafts grounded.

Another issue that needs focus is efficiency, which is essential in every aspect of the airline, from marketing and sales to dispatch, engineering, maintenance, pilots, and cabin crew. Investment in efficient human resources and systems is never wasted and is crucial to achieving efficiency. As such, it is essential to emphasise proper recruitment and training, especially of managers.

A positive work environment is critical. Disengaged employees can cause significant losses. Responsibility and ownership are key contributors to an airline's brand image and efficiency. We need empathetic, knowledgeable

routes, like Dhaka to Dubai, Dubai to Chattogram, then Chattogram to Jeddah and so on. This would not only avoid unproductive short sectors but also save on engine, landing gear, and APU cycles. The short-sector flights are choking off domestic operators. The national carrier should not monopolise the market at the expense of underperformance.

Crew shortages should not hinder expansion or planning. Recruitment should be regular and recruitment numbers should be manageable within a set timeframe. Currently, because of crew shortage, and the reluctance of crew to stay over in Sylhet and Chattogram, direct flights from these cities cannot be operated. Inadequate

'There should be a central coordinator to oversee flood management'

Mohammad Abdul Qayyum, former National Project Director of the Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme (CDMP) and adjunct faculty at Dhaka University, talks to Naznin Tithi of The Daily Star about the weaknesses of our flood management efforts this year as well as the importance of stronger coordination and better flood forecasting.

Why have our flood management efforts been so weak this year, particularly in Sherpur, where inadequate government response was criticised?

I think the primary reason for the government's inadequate response is the instability within the administration. After the fall of the previous government, local government institutions were not functioning properly, which remains the case till now. So, during the floods, they could not engage with the affected communities properly. There were no significant efforts to visit affected areas to assess damage or coordinate relief, rescue, and rehabilitation efforts. Also, since some of the areas affected this year usually do not experience flooding, both local communities and relevant government bodies were unprepared.

However, after the experience of Feni and Noakhali floods, the government should have been more alert about the changing flood patterns and responded accordingly, but it did not. The Sherpur flood should not have caught it off guard, but it did, again indicating its unpreparedness.

In Sherpur, flood water recedes through two routes: one towards Netrakona and Mymensingh, the other to the Brahmaputra in Jamalpur. The lower riparian areas had time to evacuate people before the floods, but we saw no such action. I think the government should have given more importance to Sherpur, considering that it is one of the four key regions (along with Naogaon, Kushia and Bhairab) that produce surplus rice and vegetables throughout the year. So, its flood vulnerability should have been a priority.

This year's floods were more destructive than in previous years, even supposedly surpassing the 1988 floods in some areas. Besides natural causes, what human factors contributed to this scenario?

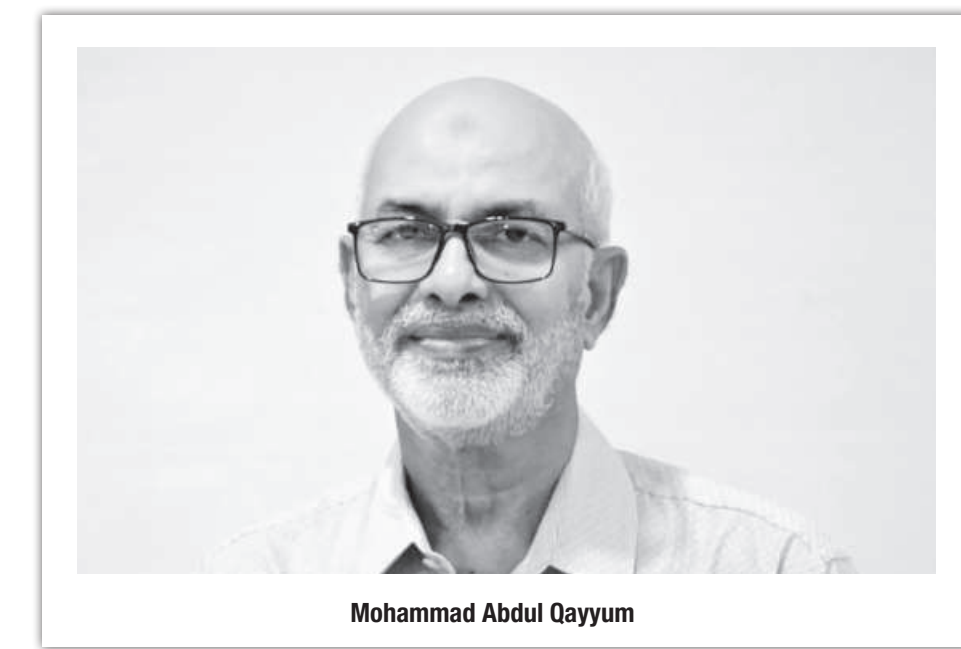
Central Bangladesh is known to be vulnerable to flooding. These areas are inundated to some extent every year. But this year's floods were not the usual type. Bangladesh usually experiences river floods in which water levels rise gradually and people somehow adapt to it. But this year, the floods were caused by excessive rainfall in both Bangladesh and India, along with sudden water surges from upstream, dam failures, etc. In Sherpur, heavy rainfall, sudden hill runoff from India, and breaches in the dams exacerbated the situation. Also, while the water is meant to reach the sea via various channels, the connecting routes were not in a condition to channel it quickly.

We saw how unplanned development works such as roads and various infrastructure projects obstructed the natural flow of water, trapping it in some areas for extended periods, while the depletion of forests in both upstream and downstream areas also intensified the severity of flooding. These man-made factors made this year's floods more destructive.

I was in the region during the 1988 flood and I can tell that the damage then was considerably less. But this time, the breach in the flood protection embankments worsened the situation. The same thing happened in Feni and Cumilla as well.

What are some of the areas the government should look into to expedite post-flood rehabilitation?

Post-flood, restoring the communication network is crucial. Damaged roads need urgent repair to ensure relief supplies, such as food and medicine, can reach affected areas. Moreover, if the roads are not repaired urgently, farmers face a two-fold problem. First, if they cannot transport their produce to market on time, they suffer financially as the prices of their products fall. Second,



Mohammad Abdul Qayyum

transportation costs for essential goods increase, which affects both farmers and eventually consumers.

Rebuilding livelihoods is another priority. During the recent floods, many people lost their livestock and poultry, while many fish farms were washed away. NGOs, which often provide livelihood support to rural communities, should collaborate with the government to offer new opportunities. Farmers need paddy saplings, vegetable seeds, and other resources to rebuild their livelihoods. Any delay in providing assistance only deepens poverty, and has broader economic repercussions for the country.

For all these efforts, effective government coordination is essential. This is lacking at present. I think what the relevant ministry can do is appoint a central coordinator to guide

local administrations in activating all local bodies and offices of various departments such as the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), Water Development Board (WDB), and the union parishads for post-flood rehabilitation efforts. The government has disaster management funds that can be used for recovery. But they need to be deployed effectively.

What preparations are needed for future floods in newly affected areas like Sherpur?

We need more flood shelters in regions like greater Mymensingh that are typically not flood-prone but now increasingly vulnerable. We must recognise that no areas are entirely safe from flooding anymore. Also, flood protection embankments need

to be built scientifically and maintained regularly. In many cases, the embankments are not built following proper designs and measurements—the top-bottom ratio is usually not maintained. Also, many embankments fail because they are built with poor-quality sandy soil which is not resistant to floods and can break easily.

Using more resilient materials like Etel soil and conducting regular inspections can prevent breaches. Moreover, resource-rich areas like Sherpur should receive more attention in national flood management planning.

How can our flood forecasting system be improved in the changed reality? The recent floods in the northern and northeastern regions have brought to the fore the shortcomings of conventional flood prediction methods...

We have an advanced flood forecasting system, but it is primarily designed to predict river floods. It does not account for localised floods caused by sudden rainfall or cloudbursts, as we saw this year. So, we definitely need to improve our flood forecasting system to address the new reality. At present, we have a flood forecasting unit under the Water Development Board that forecasts river flooding, while the meteorological department does rainfall forecast. By linking our flood forecasting unit with the meteorological department and ensuring data sharing in real-time, we can better predict localised floods such as the ones that occurred in Sherpur or Feni.

We also need better cooperation with India to ensure timely alerts when water is being released upstream, giving us more time to prepare for any eventuality. Improved coordination and technology can help us manage the increasingly unpredictable flood patterns we are now facing.

Removing roadblocks to economic and democratic recovery

AN OPEN DIALOGUE

Dr Abdullah Shibli is an economist and works for Change Healthcare, Inc., an information technology company. He also serves as senior research fellow at the US-based International Sustainable Development Institute (ISDI).

ABDULLAH SHIBLI



As one of the toughest nations on this planet, we Bangladeshis, have been able to overcome natural disasters, calamitous weather, political upheavals, and dictatorial regimes. The July-August mass uprising revealed the inner strengths of the people, particularly the younger generation, to tackle powerful and evil forces and to find an alternative roadway into the future. The path forward for us is undoubtedly full of uncertainties but also offers a rainbow of opportunities.

The interim government currently has many complex and deep-rooted political and socio-economic problems on its docket, which it has promised to address, and I often wonder how they will be able to do so within the time frame they have at their disposal. While I am for free, fair, and inclusive elections soon, I am also aware that the interim government is our best hope to: i) identify the critical problems, ii) chalk out alternative ways to resolve them, and iii) address some of the urgent issues. But they need a little more time than what the newspapers and some politicians are talking about.

Unfortunately, dark forces are already waiting in the wings and will try to strike at any moment to derail our march to true democracy. The roadblocks are political, global, and administrative. The immediate priorities are to stabilise the economy, confront the profit-seekers and tackle inflation and external debt.

TIME magazine on October 3, 2024, published an article "How Bangladesh's Ousted Leader Sheikh Hasina Could Stage an Unlikely Comeback," written by Charlie Campbell, a

senior correspondent based in the Singapore bureau of TIME, and the former China Bureau Chief. The narrative of the article is full of speculative and biased conjectures. I only read it because of the eyebrow-raising title and the fear it was bound to arouse. My biggest concern



VISUAL: ANWAR SOHEL

is that he raises the possibility of the revolution floundering because of the hypothetical picture of gloom and doom the writeup portrayed.

Campbell mentions that the Asian Development Bank lowered its forecast for Bangladesh's economic growth from 6.6 to 5.1 percent due to the political tumult. The economic slowdown has been acknowledged by Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud, the adviser for planning and

education in the interim government. However, GDP growth may well dip due to many factors. Given that we might have a new election within the next two years, the political parties might try to take advantage of any possible bump on the road ahead. However, Bangladeshi voters are aware of the factors behind the economic slowdown and will not blame the interim government and look back at the former regime with any feelings of nostalgia.

First of all, the former government left a lot of debris in its wake that needs to be cleaned up. For example, during the uprising in July and August,

the public and private sectors dipped, and a major overhaul of the financial infrastructure is underway. Finally, there are genuine external shocks such as recent flooding, an increase in energy prices in the international market, and depreciation of the Taka. Therefore, the impact of these factors will not affect the popularity of the Yunus administration.

However, all said and done, the country might still expect the interim government to deliver on a few major promises including curbing corruption, banking reforms, and restoration of democracy. A relatively more open society with less repression

some attention even within the short timeframe, the interim government might have. These are the external debt crisis, inflation, and the near-collapse of the banking sector. "The interim government in Dhaka has work to do to reassure investors and creditors that it can guarantee the political stability conducive to economic repair work," according to a statement by East Asia Forum (EAF), based at the Australian National University.

Poor people will bear the brunt of these dislocations because of low employment, lack of overseas money, and the low government handouts they receive. Therefore, spending on safety nets, health, and education must be carefully prioritised and targeted to the most vulnerable.

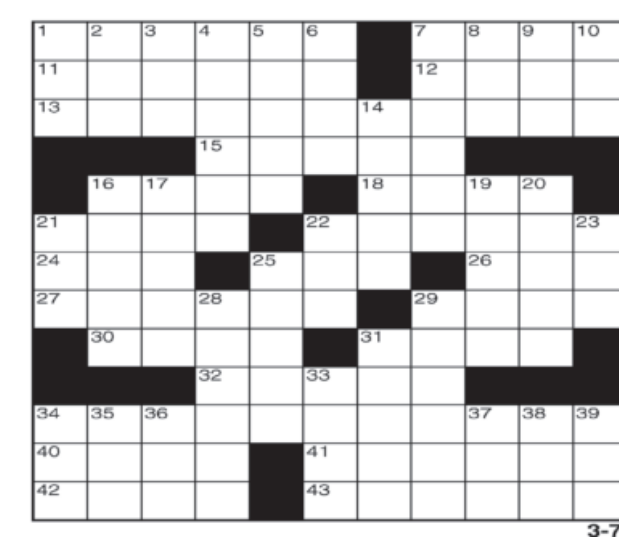
The International Money Fund (IMF) is holding out an olive branch. Kristalina Georgieva, managing director of the IMF, called on the G-20 countries to offer debt relief for indebted vulnerable countries through the Common Framework for debt treatments, adding that timely and orderly debt resolution is in the interest of both debtors and creditors.

The institutions working for good governance and sustained economic growth both in the private and public sectors need to be strengthened and allowed to work independently without any fear of retribution. For example, the dormant Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit was reactivated and it froze the bank accounts of some "bad actors" amid allegations of corruption, asset accumulation, and money laundering against them. Other such institutions that can help in the aforementioned areas are the Anti-Corruption Commission, Transparency International, and Grameen Bank.

The present macroeconomic crisis will be painful to resolve, but Bangladesh has the leadership, the institutions, and the support of the masses to bring some resolution before the next elections.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
1 Nautical unit
7 Marsh hopper
11 Large lizard
12 See 8-Down
13 Like some roofs and claws
15 Berth places
16 God with a hammer
18 Sanction
21 Serengeti cat
22 Oil field strike
24 Hockey's Bobby
25 Collection
26 Water, in France
27 Course unit
29 Audition goal
30 Glade grazer
31 Tops
32 Labor leader Chavez
34 Difficult to manage
40 Ascend
41 Reach
42 Petty fight
43 Not optional
- DOWN**
1 Fragrant tree
2 Long time
3 Chiding sound
4 Talk incessantly about
5 Studio sign
6 Spiked club
7 Whiskey holders
8 With
12 Across, Brat Pack actor
9 Athena's symbol
10 "My word!"
14 River catch
16 Ready for bed
17 Neigh sayer
19 In the lead
20 Decade divisions
21 Overy funny! O online
22 Gimlet base
23 Wheel track
25 Asian peninsula
28 Hush-hush
29 Freebooter
31 Barista's creation
33 Do a checkout chore
34 Taxing org.
35 Tiny taste
36 Screening org.
37 Misbehaving
38 Tell tales
39 Finish



YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

E	P	I	C	S		B	A	B	E	L
G	E	N	O	A		A	D	O	R	E
G	R	A	F	T		T	O	X	I	N
						F	I	S	H	
T	A	K	E	N	O	T	E			
E	R	N	E			L	U	N	G	E
S	L	O	B	S		B	E	L	L	E
T	O	T	A	L	S		R	U	S	E
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I	C	E	U	P			A	B	O	D
E	R	A	S	E			T	A	L	I
R	U	L	E	D				O	R	D

Write for us. Send your opinion pieces to dsopinion@gmail.com

How environment shapes women's well-being

For many women, the environment they live in profoundly shapes their overall health and happiness. Factors like home conditions, access to financial resources, and environmental health—such as air quality and pollution levels—play a critical role in their well-being. Younger women, in particular, often report feeling the strain of poor environmental conditions, which may explain why many are at the forefront of climate change activism. Their desire to improve their surroundings reflects their drive for a better quality of life.

As women age, however, their satisfaction with life generally increases, especially in areas related to their environment. Older women often report greater peace and contentment, likely due to improved living conditions and



more stability in their surroundings. This heightened environmental quality of life becomes a source of value for many, inspiring them to preserve it for future generations. This desire to protect and sustain their environment may even drive older women to advocate for long-term environmental solutions.

To enhance women's well-being, it is essential to focus on improving the conditions in which they live. Policymakers and communities should prioritise initiatives that enhance home environments, reduce pollution, and ensure access to both financial and social resources. In addition, creating opportunities for women to actively influence and shape their surroundings—through community programs or climate action—can empower them to improve both their immediate environment and their broader societal conditions.

By addressing these factors, we can help women of all ages enjoy better health, happiness, and a higher quality of life.

Source: PLOS ONE

Prioritise mental health at work

STAR HEALTH DESK

October 10 was World Mental Health Day. It celebrates awareness for the global community in an empathetic way, with a unifying voice, helping people feel hopeful by empowering them to take action and create lasting change.

There is a vital connection between mental health and work. Safe, healthy working environments can act as a protective factor for mental health. Unhealthy conditions including stigma, discrimination, and exposure to risks like harassment and other poor working conditions, can pose significant risks, affecting mental health, overall quality of life and consequently participation or productivity at work. With 60% of the global population in work, urgent action is needed to ensure work prevents risks to mental health and protects and supports mental health at work.

It is essential for governments, employers, the organisations which represent workers and employers, and other stakeholders responsible for workers' health and safety to work together to improve mental health at work. Action to address mental health at work should be done with the meaningful involvement of workers and their representatives, and persons with lived experience of mental health conditions. By investing efforts and resources in evidence-based approaches and interventions at work, we can ensure that everyone has the opportunity to thrive at work and in life. Let's take action today for a healthier future.

Mental health and work are closely linked. A supportive work environment fosters mental health, providing purpose and stability. But poor working conditions can harm mental well-being, reducing both job satisfaction and productivity.

There are various risks to mental health that workers may face including discrimination, poor working conditions, or limited autonomy. Low paid or insecure jobs often lack adequate protections, leaving workers in these jobs more exposed to psychosocial risks.

Lack of support for people with mental health conditions can negatively impact their self-confidence, enjoyment at work, capacity to work, absences and ability to gain employment. Carers and family members are similarly affected.

Poor mental health can lead to decreased performance, absence from work, and increased staff turnover.

with mental health conditions in the workplace. This means, for example, organizing regular supportive meetings, scheduling frequent breaks, gradually reintroducing workers to tasks, and providing storage for medication.

Employers should provide managers with training to recognize and address stressors in the workplace. Trained managers can effectively support their teams and foster a healthier, more supportive work environment.

Governments, employers, and representative organizations must work together to create policies that prevent mental health risks, promote well-being,



Depression and anxiety alone result in the loss of approximately 12 billion workdays each year.

Stigma and discrimination often prevent people with mental health conditions from seeking help or finding and keeping jobs. Reducing workplace discrimination through awareness, training, and engagement with people living with mental health conditions creates healthier, more inclusive work environments.

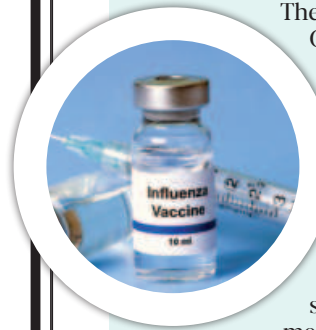
Employers should apply reasonable accommodations to support workers

and build supportive workplaces where mental health is prioritised.

Although governments and employers have the primary responsibility to protect and promote mental health at work, you can take steps to support your own well-being. Learn techniques to manage stress and stay mindful of changes in your mental health. If needed, reach out for support from a trusted friend, family member, colleague, supervisor, or health professional.

Source: World Health Organisation

Recommendations for influenza vaccine



The World Health Organisation (WHO) announced the recommendations for the viral composition of influenza vaccines for the 2025 influenza season in the southern hemisphere. The announcement was made at an information session after a 4-day meeting on the composition of influenza virus vaccines. The meeting is held twice annually, once for the southern and once for the northern hemisphere.

The recommendations issued are used by the national vaccine regulatory agencies and pharmaceutical companies to develop, produce, and license influenza vaccines for the following influenza season. The periodic update of viruses contained in influenza vaccines is necessary for the vaccines to be effective due to the constantly evolving nature of influenza viruses, including those circulating and infecting humans.

The WHO recommends that trivalent vaccines for use in the 2025 southern hemisphere influenza season contain the following:

- Egg-based vaccines**
- an A/Victoria/4897/2022 (H1N1) pdm09 like virus;
 - an A/Croatia/10136RV/2023 (H3N2) like virus; and
 - a B/Austria/1359417/2021 (B/Victoria lineage) like virus.
- Cell culture-, recombinant protein-, or nucleic acid-based vaccines**
- an A/Wisconsin/67/2022 (H1N1) pdm09 like virus;
 - an A/District of Columbia/27/2023 (H3N2) like virus; and
 - a B/Austria/1359417/2021 (B/Victoria lineage) like virus.
- The recommendation for the B/Yamagata lineage component of quadrivalent influenza vaccines remains unchanged from previous recommendations:
- a B/Phuket/3073/2013 (B/Yamagata lineage) like virus

Source: World Health Organisation

Health benefits of COFFEE CONSUMPTION

DR SHAHJADA SELIM

Recent research has revealed unexpected health benefits linked to coffee, despite earlier recommendations to limit intake due to heart disease concerns. Many studies have controlled for factors such as age, sex, and lifestyle influences, allowing researchers to isolate coffee's effects. Notably, a UK study in 2022 found that adults who drank more unsweetened or sugarsweetened coffee had a lower risk of dying from cancer and other causes over a seven-year period, while artificially sweetened coffee showed no notable impact on mortality.

Colorectal cancer prevention: Drinking four or more cups of coffee daily may lower the risk of colorectal cancer by 11-24%.

Endometrial cancer prevention: According to a study, women consuming four or more cups of coffee daily had a 25% lower risk of developing endometrial cancer compared to those who had just one cup. This reduction increased to 30% when compared to non-coffee drinkers.

Liver cancer and cirrhosis risk reduction: Research indicates that individuals drinking one or two cups of coffee daily have a lower risk of liver cancer. Those consuming three to four cups had about half the risk, and those drinking five or more cups had about one-third the risk. A Japanese study noted a 76% decrease in liver cancer risk for those consuming at least five cups daily, particularly benefiting those with hepatitis C.

Skin cancer risk reduction: Studies revealed that individuals consuming more than three cups of caffeinated coffee monthly had a 17% lower risk of basal cell carcinoma. Drinking four or more cups daily was linked to a 20% reduced risk of malignant melanoma, the most severe form of skin cancer.

Prevention of type 2 diabetes: In Finland, a study found that men drinking 10 or more cups daily had a 55% lower risk of developing type 2 diabetes compared to those consuming two or fewer cups. Women in the same category experienced a 79% reduction.

Suicide risk reduction: Two long-term studies showed that each additional cup of coffee consumed daily was associated with a 13% decrease in suicide risk. One study found a 50% lower risk among women who drank two or more cups daily compared to non-coffee drinkers.

Brain health and aging: Research suggested that coffee consumption could enhance cognitive function and slow age-related cognitive decline.

Risks associated with coffee: Certain risks must be considered. Studies indicate that consuming 300 mg of caffeine (about two to three cups) can decrease fertility and increase the likelihood of low birth weight in infants. Women over 65 who consume more than four cups daily may have a higher risk of hip fractures.

Heart diseases and stroke: Coffee consumption has potential cardiovascular benefits. Moderate intake is associated with a lower risk of heart disease, with some studies suggesting that drinking 3 to 5 cups a day may decrease heart-related issues. Coffee is rich in antioxidants, which can help mitigate oxidative stress and inflammation.

Overall, coffee consumption appears to provide more health benefits than risks for most individuals. Even one cup daily can reduce the risk of various diseases. However, women trying to conceive, those who are pregnant, and individuals over 65 should consider limiting their coffee intake.

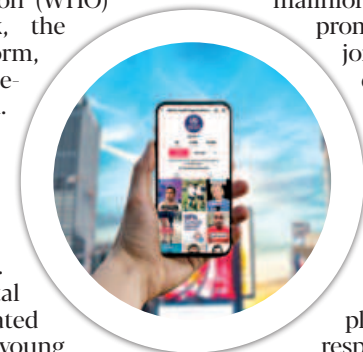
The writer is an associate professor in the Department of Endocrinology at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University.



WHO and TikTok team up for health awareness

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has partnered with TikTok, the popular short-form video platform, to promote reliable, science-based health information. This year-long collaboration reflects WHO's commitment to using digital platforms to enhance global health literacy and foster healthy behaviours in an increasingly digital world.

Social media plays a vital role in shaping health-related decisions, with one in four young adults seeking news on platforms like TikTok. However, misinformation and



malinformation are rampant online, prompting WHO and TikTok to join forces to address these challenges by encouraging the dissemination of evidence-based content and fostering positive health conversations.

Dr Jeremy Farrar, WHO Chief Scientist, stated, "This collaboration can prove to be an inflection point in how platforms can be more socially responsible." By partnering with TikTok, WHO aims to provide credible information and facilitate scientific

discussions to create a healthier future for all.

With over a billion users, TikTok is leveraging its platform to raise health awareness and provide access to trustworthy information. The collaboration will focus on relevant health topics, transforming scientific data into relatable and digestible video content. TikTok's creator training programs will also support influencers in delivering accurate health information.

The partnership aims to bridge the gap between scientific knowledge and everyday life, ensuring that health conversations on TikTok are impactful and informed.

Source: World Health Organisation

Dementia Alzheimers and THE SUNDOWNING EFFECT

DR ZUBAIR KHALED HUQ

Dementia itself is not a disease itself, a brain-related disorder. It is a syndrome of symptom complexes like memory impairment, language, and other mental skills. There are mainly four types of dementia, such as Alzheimer's disease, vascular, frontotemporal, and Lewy body dementia. Among all, Alzheimer's disease is the most common. It causes short-term memory loss. In vascular dementia, there is a lack of problem-solving and thinking speed. In frontotemporal personality and language skills are affected.

Signs of dementia are short-term memory loss, forgetting words, and disorientation with time and place. Difficulty in doing familiar works. The bad thing is all of these are progressive and worsening. Alarming thing is the frontotemporal type may start at an earlier age. Alzheimer's type starts late.

Talking therapies and anti-depressants are better treatments. Some drugs, like



benzodiazepine, if taken for more than three months, tricyclic antidepressants, and drugs to control overactive bladder, may increase the risk of dementia. Ways to reduce dementia are to pursue education, study throughout life, stop smoking, and socialise more. Drink less alcohol, and your hearing should be checked. The pharmacological agents such as Donepezil, Rivastigmine,

Galantamine, and Memantine do not have conclusive evidence in controlling the symptoms of dementia in the long run.

Sundowning is a behaviour when a person becomes intensely distressed and agitated in the late afternoon; the symptoms may continue throughout the night, making it hard for them to sleep. It is more common in later stages of life. There might be tiredness, hunger, pain, or other unmet physical needs. To address the problem, one should agree with a dementia patient, not shame them rather than distract them.

Reassure them, encourage them to make eye contact, and smile. Reminiscing about events, making their favourite food, playing music that they like, repeating words, showing empathy, handling with care, dignity, love, and affection.

The writer is a gerontologist and a public health specialist. E-mail: zubairkhaledjoy@gmail.com

Rising heat, rising risk: Diarrhoeal cases set to soar in Dhaka

STAR HEALTH REPORT

As one of the most densely populated cities in the world, Dhaka already faces a significant burden from diarrhoeal diseases, driven by factors like overcrowding, poor sanitation, and water contamination. With the looming threat of climate change, these challenges are expected to intensify. Warmer temperatures, irregular rainfall, and increasing humidity could create an environment where waterborne

diseases flourish, straining the city's public health infrastructure.

A recent study, published in PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases and led by researchers from University College London, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (icddr), warns that hospitalisations from diarrhoeal diseases in Dhaka are likely to rise significantly by the year 2100 due to climate change. The study predicts

that even if global efforts keep warming within the 2°C threshold set by the Paris Agreement, hospitalisations will increase by up to 7.4%, with children under five particularly vulnerable.

These findings highlight the growing impact of climate change on public health, underscoring that even moderate increases in global temperature could exacerbate existing health crises. Dhaka, with its high population density and fragile infrastructure, could see worsening water quality and increased disease

transmission as temperatures rise.

The authors stress the importance of strengthening the city's public health systems to cope with the projected rise in diarrhoeal diseases. Addressing sanitation, water safety, and climate resilience will be critical in preventing and managing the anticipated health risks. This study serves as a call to action for both local authorities and global health leaders to prioritise climate adaptation strategies.

What to WATCH

NAGORIK TV
Women's T20 World Cup
England vs Scotland
Live from 4:00 pm
India vs Australia
Live from 8:00 pm

SONY SPORTS 5
Sri Lanka vs West Indies
1st T20I
Live from 7:30 pm
SONY SPORTS 2
Nations League

Kazakhstan vs Slovenia
Live from 7:00 pm
Finland vs England
Live from 10:00 pm
Greece vs Ireland
Live from 12:45 am (Monday)

NCL start rescheduled to October 19

SPORTS REPORTER

The 26th edition of the National Cricket League 2024-25 has been deferred by five days to October 19 from October 14.

"The tournament has been rescheduled due to the current rainy weather. Now it will get underway on October 19," a Bangladesh Cricket Board official, who is aware of the development, told The Daily Star

"The tournament has been rescheduled due to the current rainy weather. Now it will get underway on October 19."

yesterday, adding that the matches of the eight-team first-class tournament will take place at eight different venues across the country.

Earlier, it was announced that the NCL format would change this year, adopting a single round-robin format. Previously, the competition featured a two-tier system, with the top four teams in tier-1 and the bottom four in tier-2, playing a double-league format.

The upcoming edition faces another title sponsor blank, with organisers struggling to secure a sponsor for the third consecutive year -- this time due to economic turmoil, according to a long-time sponsor official.

Local retentions and direct signings confirmed in BPL

SPORTS REPORTER

The governing council of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) received the list of retained and directly signed local players from all seven participating franchises yesterday, ahead of the players' draft for the 11th edition, which is scheduled to take place on Monday at a city hotel.

According to BPL and franchise officials, defending champions Fortune Barishal retained Tamim Iqbal and Mushfiqur Rahim and roped in Towhid Hridoy as their direct signing, while Chittagong Kings signed Shakib Al Hasan and Shoriful Islam.

Dhaka Capitals have Tanzid Hasan Tamim and Mustafizur Rahman on board, while Durbar Rajshahi -- another new franchise -- named Anamul Haque Bijoy and uncapped Jishan Alam as direct signings.

In a surprising move, Sylhet Strikers preferred to retain Zakir Hasan and Tanzim Hasan Sakib instead of going for Mashrafe bin Mortaza, intending to include him from the draft event, while naming wicketkeeper-batter Jaker Ali Anik as direct signing.

Elsewhere, Rangpur Riders retained Nurul Hasan Sohan and Mahedi Hasan and directly signed Mohammad Saifuddin. And lastly, Khulna Tigers retained Alif Hossain and Nasum Ahmed, and directly signed Mehedi Hasan Miraz.



India captain Suryakumar Yadav hugs Sanju Samson after the latter was dismissed following a 47-ball 111 in the third T20I against Bangladesh at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium in Hyderabad yesterday. (Inset) Bangladesh veteran Mahmudullah Riyad receives a crest from skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto prior to his last international match in this format. PHOTO: AFP/BCB

ANNIHILATION IN HYDERABAD

India's 297 for six against Bangladesh in the third and final T20I in Hyderabad yesterday is the highest-ever total by a Test-playing nation in T20Is, overtaking Afghanistan's 278 for three against Ireland in Dehradun in 2019.

Sanju Samson hit a 47-ball 111, reaching his ton in just 40 deliveries -- the second-fastest century by an Indian after Rohit Sharma's 35-ball ton against Sri Lanka in Indore in 2017.

India's 82 for one in the Powerplay is their joint-highest score in the first six overs. However, India had lost a wicket more the last time they got this exact score in a T20 World Cup game against Scotland in Dubai in 2021.

Pacer Tanzim Hasan Sakib's 66 for three in four overs is the costliest figure by a Bangladeshi in the shortest format.

India hit 22 sixes in the game -- the joint-highest for a Test-playing nation, along with West Indies and Afghanistan, in a T20I innings.

With 22 sixes and 25 fours, India broke the record for most runs (232) scored from boundaries in a T20I innings.

SAME OLD EXCUSES after another India drubbing

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh captain Najmul Hossain Shanto put forth the same old worn out excuses of 'not executing plans' and 'poor wickets at home' as reasons for the utter humiliation at the hands of India in the final T20I of the three-match series in Hyderabad yesterday, which ended in a crushing 133-run defeat.

As the margin of the defeat suggests, it was a total mismatch between the sides at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium with India doubling down on the dominance they had shown in the previous two T20Is with a victory that showed just how far ahead the reigning T20 world champions are compared to the Tigers.

India, who had rested several of their marquee names in the series, had already asserted their superiority over Bangladesh with wins by seven wickets and 86 runs in the first two T20Is, respectively.

But the hosts were only revving up their

T20 engine which went into overdrive in the third T20I and steamrolled the Tigers, crushing them under the humungous total of 297-6.

Opener Sanju Samson put on an exhibition, both caressing and hammering the ball to the boundary in a scintillating 111 off 47 balls which featured 11 fours and eight sixes.

Captain Suryakumar Yadav (75 off 35), Hardik Pandya (47 off 18) and Riyan Parag (34 off 13) also treated the thousands of home fans at the stands with a plethora of boundaries while the Bangladesh bowlers looked on helplessly, out of ideas and devoid of any inspiration to stop the Indian barrage.

In reply, Towhid Hridoy remained not out on 63 off 42 balls and Liton Das made 42 off 25 balls but that did little to hide Bangladesh's blushes in the match.

"We didn't play our best cricket," skipper Shanto, looking totally defeated, said after the match.

"We didn't execute our plans as a

batting unit. We bowled well for a couple of overs in some matches but today [Saturday] we didn't bowl well," he added.

Shanto, who about a month ago was beaming after leading Bangladesh to a historic 2-0 Test series sweep over Pakistan, is now seeing the other side of the coin, having lost the two-Test series against India 2-0 before the 3-0 drubbing in the T20Is.

Yesterday, Bangladesh did get an early breakthrough after they were sent to bowl first, with Tanzim Sakib getting opener Abhishek Sharma out for four in the second over.

But after that, Samson and Suryakumar went after the Bangladesh bowlers. They took a liking to the aerial route as they comfortably cleared the ropes on numerous occasions.

India hit a staggering 22 sixes in the innings, but when it was Bangladesh's turn to dish out some punishment, they could clear the ropes only four times, three of which came off the bat of Hridoy.

A lack of skills, poor planning and dearth of belief have been evident throughout the series in the Bangladesh camp. Shanto urged his players to acknowledge the shortcomings and take responsibility. "We need to believe in ourselves that we can compete against any team. We need to change our home wickets and the players need to take responsibilities."



Jannik Sinner beat Tomas Machac 6-4, 7-5 to reach the Shanghai Masters final on Saturday and ensure he finishes the year as world number one. The Italian will face Novak Djokovic -- a four-time Shanghai champion -- in the final on Sunday. The 23-year-old has been in top spot since June and after his ruthless semi-final victory will stay there until at least the end of the season, the first Italian to do so. PHOTO: AFP

Sri Lanka look to 'bring fire to T20s' too

AFP, Dambulla

After celebrating victories in Test and ODIs, Sri Lanka hope to extend their run of success to T20Is, with their first showdown in a three-match series against the West Indies set to begin Sunday in Dambulla.

Sri Lanka ended a 27-year dry spell by winning an ODI series against India, celebrated a Test victory in England after a decade, and notched their first series win over New Zealand since 2009.

The West Indies are third in the global T20 rankings, while Sri Lanka languish at a modest eighth.

But a series win could shake things up. "We've turned the tide in Test and ODI cricket, and now it's high time to bring that

same fire to T20s," skipper Charith Asalanka told reporters.

"If you look at our recent series, we've been playing below par. We've tweaked a few strategies and are rebuilding the squad with an eye on the next World Cup in two years."

Sri Lanka confirmed the return of hard-hitting middle-order batter Bhanuka Rajapaksa, marking his comeback since January 2022.

They face a depleted

West Indies, who are missing key batters like Nicholas Pooran, Shimron Hetmyer, all-rounder Andre Russell, and spin ace Akeal Hosein.

West Indies captain Rovman Powell, however, radiated confidence. "We're a solid T20 team," he said.

"We've got two T20 World Cups under our belt, and we're always aiming higher," he added.

"Our strength lies in our power hitters, and we're banking on them." With Sri Lanka set to co-host the next T20 World Cup alongside India, Powell said it was key to learn the conditions.

"This series is a golden opportunity to acclimatise. Sri Lanka is no pushover; they play fierce cricket. It'll give us a good gauge of where we stand and what to expect."



While Germany were boosted by a first-half brace from Deniz Undav in their 2-1 win against Bosnia and Herzegovina in Zenica on Friday, the Netherlands were pegged back by the sending off of skipper Virgil van Dijk (L) during their 1-1 draw in the Nations League. Florian Wirtz laid on a backheel for Undav's opener in the 30th minute before the Stuttgart forward made it two just six minutes later. The Netherlands will next go to Germany, who now remain one win away from the Nations League quarters, without their captain in a game that could see the Dutch rise to the top of the pool, or conversely, be cut five points adrift with two games to play. PHOTO: AFP/INSTAGRAM





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Ensure safety of Hindus, minorities

New Delhi urges Dhaka

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

New Delhi has voiced serious concern over the attack on a Durga Puja mandap in Dhaka's Tantibazar and the theft at the Jeshoreshwari Kali temple at Satkhira and termed them "deplorable events".

"We have noted with serious concern the attack on a puja mandap in Tantibazar, Dhaka, and the theft at the revered Jeshoreshwari Kali temple at Satkhira," the Indian Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement yesterday.

"These are deplorable events," it said, adding, "They follow a systematic pattern of desecration and damage to temples and deities that we have witnessed over several days now."

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6



Fishermen unload their nets and other equipment from a vessel near Rasulpur on the Kirtankhola in Barishal yesterday as a 22-day ban on hilsa fishing begins today. PHOTO: TITU DAS

Sycophantic media outlets will face music

Says adviser Nahid Islam

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Media outlets collaborating with the "fascist" Awami League government during the July-August uprising will be brought to justice, said Nahid Islam, the information and broadcasting ministry adviser to the interim government.

"Some media outlets worked in favour of fascists," he told journalists yesterday at Saidpur Airport in Nilphamari. Nahid was on the way to Rangpur to attend the 16th founding anniversary of Begum Rokeya University (BRU) as the chief guest.



Besides, many journalists who wrote and instigated genocide during the Students Against Discrimination (SAD) movement will be tried for genocide, he said, adding that some cases have already been filed.

Several arrests have also been made in the cases and further investigations are underway to ensure those responsible are brought to book, Nahid added.

Earlier, he was welcomed by local officials at Saidpur Airport, including Nilphamari's Deputy Commissioner Nayiruzzaman and Syedpur Upazila Nirbahi Officer Nur-

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Black hole tears apart star, uses energy to destroy another

INDEPENDENT ONLINE

Astronomers have observed a supermassive black hole tearing apart a star and using the stellar energy to "pummel" another star.

The discovery, made by an international team of astrophysicists led by Queen's University Belfast, has connected two cosmic mysteries that have baffled scientists for years.

The first involves something known as "tidal disruption events" (TDEs), where an object gets too close to a black hole and gets torn apart in a single burst of light. The second relates to "quasi-periodic eruptions" (QPEs), where bright flashes from the centres of galaxies were detected as X-rays, which astronomers presumed were connected to supermassive black holes but were not sure how.

"There had been feverish speculation that these phenomena were connected, and now we've discovered the proof that they are," said Dheeraj Pasham from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

"It's like getting a cosmic two-for-one in terms of solving mysteries."

The team used data from NASA's Chandra X-ray Observatory, the Hubble space telescope and NASA's Neutron Star Interior Composition Explorer (NICER) to observe that the remains of a star destroyed by a black hole continued to circle in a disc-shaped "stellar graveyard".



Children at risk in 21,500 shabby schools

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

With cracks in pillars and walls and leaks in the roof, the Gowrichanna High School-Attached Government Primary School building was declared risky about two years ago.

But despite the fear of a disaster, the teachers and students are forced to use the building, as the authorities have not yet constructed a new one for them.



- ➔ Many "abandoned" buildings are being used
- ➔ Recent floods damage 2,800 primary schools
- ➔ Shabby buildings affect learning: experts
- ➔ Govt plans to renovate the schools in 5 years

The institution in Barguna Sadar upazila is among over 21,500 primary schools that are operating with plasters falling off the ceilings, cracks in the walls, holes in the floors, water leaking through the roofs, and broken windows and doors.

"As there is no alternative, we are forced to teach in such a worn-out building. We have applied to the authorities for a new building," said Mainul Hossain, a teacher at the school.

"Our school has developed cracks in many places. We have to attend classes despite fear of a serious accident at any time," a fifth grade student said.

Meanwhile, recent devastation by flash floods damaged around 2,800

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Police yet to identify bottle thrower

Case filed over mugging; no case yet over the attack

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police are yet to identify the man who threw what locals said was a molotov cocktail at idols of a puja mandap in the capital's Tanti Bazar on Friday night.

Enamul Haque Khan, officer-in-charge of Kotwali Police Station, police will decide whether to file a case over the matter after consulting higher authorities.

The Tanti Bazar Puja Udjapon Committee has said it will not file cases, he added.

Kotwali police, however, yesterday accused three men, now in custody, in a case of mugging at Tantibazar Puja Mandap No 17 from where police recovered a bottle filled with what officers suspect was kerosene.

In a security camera footage the puja organisers showed reporters, a man in a white shirt is throwing

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Israel's war on two fronts will be catastrophic

Warn UN peacekeepers

AFP, Beirut

UN peacekeepers in Lebanon warned yesterday against a "catastrophic" regional conflict as Israeli forces battled Hezbollah and Hamas militants on two fronts, on the holiest day of the Jewish calendar.

Israel has faced a fierce diplomatic backlash over incidents in south Lebanon that saw five Blue Helmets injured.

Yesterday, the Lebanese health ministry said Israeli air strikes on two villages located near the capital Beirut killed nine people. Official media later reported an Israeli strike targeted a market in Nabatiyeh, an important southern city.

Israel had earlier told residents of south Lebanon not to return home, as its troops fought Hezbollah militants in a war that has killed more than 1,200 people since September 23, and forced more than a million others to flee their homes according to Lebanese authorities.

"For your own protection, do not return to your homes until further notice... Do not go south; anyone who goes south may put his life at risk," Israeli military spokesman Avichay Adraee posted on X.

Hezbollah said it launched missiles across the border into northern Israel, where air raid sirens sounded and the

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India smash records, sweep Tigers clean

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

India swept Bangladesh clean in the three-match T20I series, making apparent the gulf in class between the two sides with a thumping 133-run victory – the biggest margin of defeat by runs ever suffered by the Tigers in the format – in the final match at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium in Hyderabad yesterday.

Playing the series with a second-string side, India shattered a number of records yesterday as they recorded their third-biggest margin of win in the format.

Sanju Samson hit a whirlwind maiden T20I ton to see the hosts pile up 297 for six – the highest total by a Test-playing nation and the second-highest total overall in T20Is – before restricting the Tigers to 164 for seven.

Samson hit a 47-ball 111, reaching his ton in just 40 deliveries to become the second-fastest centurion for India after Rohit Sharma's 35-ball ton against Sri Lanka in Indore in 2017.

Samson's belligerent 173-run second-wicket stand with skipper Suryakumar Yadav is also the third-highest stand for any wicket for India in the format and the best-ever partnership for any wicket against Bangladesh.

After being asked to bowl first, the Tigers were left clueless on the field as they saw the ball fly all around the park right from the beginning.

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India leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi celebrates sending back Bangladesh batter Liton Das as Towhid Hridoy watches on during the third and final T20I in Hyderabad yesterday. Liton scored a quickfire 25-ball 42 while Hridoy remained unbeaten on 63 off 42 deliveries, but their efforts were never enough while chasing a record 298-run target set by India, who clean swept the three-match series with a 133-run victory in the final game. PHOTO: AFP

ICC Women's T20 WC Tigresses exit in disappointing fashion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh's journey in the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024 ended with a whimper as they fell to South Africa by seven wickets in their final Group B match in Dubai yesterday.

The result meant the Tigresses were officially knocked out of the competition, with two points in four games, after having started their campaign with a victory over Scotland – one that ended their 16-match and 10-year losing streak in the 20-over tournament.

The match once again delivered a similar old story for Bangladesh – evident in the preceding defeats against England, West Indies – where the batters showcased a below-par performance. In a match where boosting up the net run-rate was a priority to somehow stay in the



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