



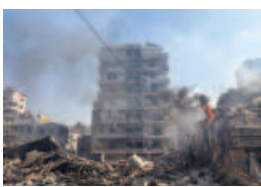
Gouripur Lodge now a neglected landmark

P3



Hamkura: a river once flowed here

P5



Israel pounds south Beirut with powerful strikes

P8



Cricket stuck in vicious cycle

P9



Construction of the 651-metre-long Baraipara bridge on the Nabaganga river in Narail's Kalia upazila has been going on for six and a half years, with the project deadline pushed back four times. Officials of the Roads and Highways Division attributed the delay mainly to design flaws, which have caused the project cost to rise from Tk 65 crore to Tk 135 crore. Officials are hopeful of completing the project by the revised deadline of June 2025. Once the bridge opens to traffic, residents of Kalia upazila will enjoy easier access to Narail town, Bagerhat, Khulna, and Gopalganj. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

JP, student group call off Kakrail rallies

Decisions come after DMP imposes restriction

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jatiyo Party yesterday postponed a rally scheduled for today outside the party's central office at Kakrail in the capital.

The decision came around two hours after Dhaka Metropolitan Police prohibited all meetings, gatherings, processions, and demonstrations at the party's headquarters and surrounding areas for today to prevent a face-off between the party and "Anti-fascist students, workers, and masses".

In a press release last night, JP said it called off today's programme respecting the law. Fresh programmes will be announced later.

The DMP made the decision under section 29 of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police Ordinance to address the situation and maintain public order, said a notice.

The rally was slated to be held at 11:00am.

Meanwhile, "Anti-fascist students, workers, and masses", a platform comprising mostly the leaders and activists backed by Nurul Haque Nur's Gono Odhikar Parishad, also declared that they would hold counter rallies.

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GANG VIOLENCE Another man killed in Geneva camp

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Another man was killed in a crude bomb attack amid fighting between two armed groups for control over Geneva Camp in the capital's Mohammadpur early yesterday.

This marks the fifth killing in the camp since the fall of Sheikh Hasina's government on August 5. Known as the Bihari Camp, it houses stranded Pakistanis who migrated to the then East Pakistan from the Indian state of Bihar during the partition of 1947.

The latest incident occurred around 3:00am yesterday, shortly after news spread of the arrest of Bhuiyan Sohel, also known as Buniya Sohel.

Hearing the news of Sohel's arrest, followers of Chua Selim attempted to

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Dhaka city running short of buses

Residents compelled to use smaller vehicles contributing to traffic jam

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Dhaka city is experiencing a significant shortage of buses and minibuses, the primary modes of public transport in the capital, causing daily hardship to commuters.

The permissible limit for buses and minibuses on the city's 110 active routes is 7,043. This number is based on the need and route capacity recommended by a government committee.

However, only around 4,500 vehicles -- approximately two-thirds of the required number -- are currently operating on these routes, according to an analysis of data from the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA).

As a result, many commuters are

forced to turn to smaller vehicles like private cars, auto-rickshaws, and rickshaws, exacerbating the capital's chronic traffic jams.

Sohel Mahmud, who works in a private firm, talked about the trouble he faces now while using public buses to commute to his Old Dhaka residence from his Farmgate office.

"Even a year ago, there was a [route No. 3] bus at Farmgate around 9:00pm every 10 minutes. Now, I often have to wait much longer -- sometimes even half an hour," he told this correspondent

recently.

"And the service has also worsened," he said, noting congested and untidy seats as well as reckless driving.

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A total of 4,444 buses and minibuses -- approximately two-thirds of the needed number -- are currently operating in Dhaka.

ONE-STOP CRISIS CENTRE

Conviction in less than 2pc cases

NILIMA JAHAN

The one-stop crisis centres are supposed to provide comprehensive support to women and children victims of violence, offering healthcare, police assistance, legal aid and other services.

But most of the victims, who take support from the centres, or their family members do not file cases. Even when cases are recorded, only a fraction ends in punishments for the accused.

The One-Stop Crisis Centre (OCC) was opened at Dhaka Medical College Hospital in 2001 and at 13 other medical college hospitals over the next 10 years.

According to data from these 14 facilities, 66,711 women and children took OCC support as of July 2024.

But only 20,914 cases were filed over the instances of violence. After trial proceedings, verdicts have been delivered in 2,392 of the cases and the accused were sentenced in 310, roughly 1.48 percent of the total.

Of the 66,711 women and children who took OCC support, 61 percent reported physical attack, 38 percent

OCC IN 14 MEDICAL COLLEGE HOSPITALS (2001-2024)

Number of victims seeking support

66,711

Number of cases filed

20,914

Cases that see judgement

2,392

Cases resulting in punishment

310

sexual assault, and 0.82 percent burn injuries.

In the first seven months of this year, 643 victims took support at the 14 OCCs. But only 227 cases were filed. No one has been convicted in any of the 12 verdicts delivered in these cases.

Women rights activist Khushi Kabir says, "Most victims do not file cases because the legal system is far from being women-friendly. Women have to face horrifying conditions at courts. It can take 8-10 years for a case to be resolved, which makes it almost impossible for the complainant to keep fighting, bear the costs, and withstand the social pressures."

OCC employees say the victims often do not seek legal remedy because they are threatened by the perpetrators. Sentencing is rare because of lack of witnesses, out-of-court settlements, and other complications.

According to Ain o Salish Kendra, 1,881 women and children reportedly faced violence in the first nine months of this year.

The OCCs are part of the Multi-Sectoral Programme on Violence Against Women which is implemented by the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Harris warns Trump will slash Obamacare

Trump says he never mentioned it; both candidates court Hispanic voters



REUTERS, Phoenix

Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris warned voters on Thursday that Republican Donald Trump and his allies would scale back healthcare programmes if he wins the White House and said his comments at a Wednesday rally were offensive to women.

In a brief press conference, Vice President Harris reminded voters that former president Trump had tried unsuccessfully to repeal the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare, during his 2017-2021 presidency.

"Healthcare for all Americans is on the line in this election," she told reporters in Madison, Wisconsin, before flying to Arizona and Nevada as both candidates took the campaign to the Southwest.

In response, Trump said he never wanted to get rid of the program. "I never mentioned doing that, never even thought about such a thing," he posted on his Truth Social platform after she made the remark.

Opinion polls show a historically close contest between Harris and Trump, with the outcome of Tuesday's US presidential election likely to be decided in seven battleground states.

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Democratic presidential nominee US Vice President Kamala Harris and US singer Jennifer Lopez attend a campaign rally in North Las Vegas, Nevada, US on Thursday.

PHOTO: AFP

DENGUE DEATH TOLL RISES TO 300



With three new dengue deaths yesterday, the total number of deaths has risen to 300 this year, depicting a grim picture of how losing lives to the mosquito-borne disease has become a regular scenario over recent years.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services, 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.

With the 382 new cases, the total number of dengue cases rose to 62,199 this year.

STORY ON PAGE 3

Polybag producers to face action from tomorrow

Says environment ministry

UNB, Dhaka

Although a ban on polythene bags took effect yesterday, makers of the product harmful to the environment will face “strict” legal action from tomorrow since Friday and Saturday are weekends.

Tapan Kumar Biswas, additional secretary (Environmental Pollution Control) and head of a monitoring team regarding the ban, revealed the information to the media during a drive against the use of such bags in Dhaka’s Mohammadpur yesterday.

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, along with the Department of Environment (DoE), conducted the monitoring drive at Mohammadpur Agricultural Market and several nearby supermarkets as part of efforts to curb the use of banned polythene shopping bags.

Members of the monitoring committee urged shoppers to use jute and cloth bags instead of polythene.

Vendors were instructed to cease using polythene bags, with a warning

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Rickshaws waiting for passengers at Dhaka University metro station near Bangla Academy, disrupting vehicular movement. The photo was taken yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Israeli strike on Syria weapons depots kills 10

Says monitor

AFP, Beirut

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said 10 people, mostly civilians, were killed in strikes on Syria’s Qusayr region bordering Lebanon, where Israel said it hit Hezbollah weapons depots.

The Britain-based war monitor said later on Thursday that three strikes targeted the town of Qusayr, where Iran-backed Hezbollah holds sway, and surrounding areas, later reporting further strikes on the area.

One strike targeted “a weapons depot and a fuel storage facility for Hezbollah in the industrial city of Qusayr”, killing seven civilians and three Syrian fighters working for the Lebanese group, the Observatory said.

At least 11 other people were wounded, it said, adding that the other strikes targeted warehouses near the Lebanese border and a bridge south of Qusayr.

The Israeli military’s Arabic-language spokesman Avichay Adraee said “weapons depots and headquarters used by” Hezbollah were hit in the Qusayr region.

Adraee said the strikes sought to thwart attempts to “transfer weapons from Iran via Syria to Hezbollah in Lebanon”.

Syria’s official SANA news agency reported Israeli strikes on Qusayr’s industrial zone and some residential neighbourhoods, saying they caused material damage.

Massive shootout in France wounds five

AFP, Paris

A massive shootout linked to drug trafficking has left a teenager and four others seriously wounded in western France, Interior Minister Bruno Retailleau said yesterday, in the latest such gunfight to injure children.

The shootout erupted in front of a restaurant overnight in the western city of Poitiers, Retailleau told BFM TV/RMC radio.

Conviction in less than 2pc cases

FROM PAGE 1

governments of Bangladesh and Denmark. The project period ended in June this year.

Currently, the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs funds the OCCs from its operational budget, says Project Director Prakash Kanti Chowdhury.

“The ministry is working on aligning the OCCs with a new project being reviewed by the planning ministry,” he adds.

At district- and upazila-level hospitals, 67 other OCCs operate.

These are linked to NGOs, civil society members, and local administration.

From 2012 to August this year, 137,152 individuals received OCC services. Of them, 16,813 were children and the rest were women, according to government data.

At the 14 OCCs at medical college hospitals, victims of physical assault are the majority. But at DMCH, and medical college hospitals in Cox’s Bazar and Pabna, the number of sexual assault victims are disproportionately high: 6,926; 1,816, and 412 respectively.

DMCH OCC lawyer Fahmida Akter says most sexual assault victims are sent there by the police for medical examinations.

Victims who go to the OCC by themselves are first assessed medically, then the OCC counsellors and police guide them through the process of filing cases.

However, many sexual assault victims initially wish to file cases, but backtrack on the decision later due to social pressure and threats by the perpetrators.

“The women beaten up by their husbands usually do not file cases. But those who avoid filing cases often return with more serious injuries,” Fahmida adds.

When witnesses consistently testify during trial, the proceeding can conclude within a couple of years. But it takes longer when witnesses are absent or unreachable, she adds.

Under the law concerned, cases should conclude within 180 days, but the deadline is rarely met, she says, adding sentencing in rape cases is rare because of lack of witnesses and out-of-court settlements.

“Penalties are more likely imposed in child rape cases, while cases involving adolescents are often settled privately by the families.”

Unless there is evidence of DNA, it is hard to prove a case in which the accused raped a woman by making promises of marriage.

Project Director Prakash says appointment of more lawyers and other steps are being taken to enhance the OCC support.

“A reform committee has been formed to analyse challenges, improve conviction rates, and expedite the trial procedures.”

Dhaka city running short of buses

FROM PAGE 1

Experts and officials have attributed the current situation mainly to a prolonged pause in issuing new route permits for buses, and the influence of a powerful syndicate of transport leaders who reportedly determine the allocation of these permits.

They also noted that the launch of the metro rail, combined with the ongoing transport chaos and indiscipline, is discouraging businesses from investing in this sector.

According to them, other reasons behind the worsening traffic situation include the authority’s failure to rationalise the haphazardly drawn bus routes and launch a bus franchise system.

The system to bring all the buses under one or some particular companies in the past decade has been much discussed in recent years, but initiatives to launch it failed.

According to the Population and Housing Census 2022, over 10.2 million people live in the city. However, the current population is believed to be much higher.

There are 386 approved routes in the city and adjacent areas, but only 110 of them are now in operation, as the authorities have already synchronized many of these routes around a decade ago, BRTA data show.

As many as 5,594 buses have received route permits from Dhaka Metro Passenger and Goods Transport Committee, a government body led by the Dhaka Metropolitan Police commissioner.

ABRTA official, seeking anonymity, said the government committee recommended giving route permits to 7,043 buses and minibuses on 110 routes, considering the capacity and necessity.

But another committee led by the then Dhaka South City Corporation mayor Sayeed Khokon in March 2019 decided not to give route permits to new buses. They decided to go for rationalising the routes and launch a pilot project, the official said.

Route permits for 1,150 buses and minibuses have already been scrapped for crossing 20 years of economic life. So, 4,444 buses now have permission to operate in the city and adjacent areas, the BRTA official said.

“The pause on issuance of route permits for over five years is the major reason behind the depleting number of buses in the city,” he said.

Mohammad Shahidullah, member secretary of the government committee responsible for giving route permits, said, “We are now working on re-orgnaising the committee and will resume the process upon approval from the authorities concerned.”

Against this backdrop, the government on October 24 gave six months to withdraw outdated vehicles from the streets across the country, considering the shortage of buses.

THE SYNDICATE
Entrepreneurs lost interest in operating buses because nobody can get a route permit without paying a handsome amount of money to a powerful syndicate of transport owners, a transport leader said, wishing anonymity.

The vicious circle keeps anarchy and indiscipline in the sector alive to get benefits of the situation, he said.

The launch of the Uttara-Motijheel metro rail service last year is another reason behind the fall in the number of buses on this particular route, the transport leader said.

A BRTA official said most of the bus owners in the city rent out their vehicles to drivers on daily contracts.

In this system known as “trip-based service”, drivers pay a specific amount to the owner on the basis of daily trips. To maximise profits they drive recklessly to make as many trips as possible in a day, creating serious safety risk.

This system also kept the capital’s bus services from flourishing, the official said.

Transport expert Prof Moazzem Hossain said heavy-investment projects like the metro rail instead of bus service got priority during the Awami League government’s tenure.

He said bus services would cater four to five times more passengers than three metro rail lines in Dhaka, including two under construction the existing one, once these lines are in operation.

While the construction of the metro lines would require around Tk 1.5 lakh crore, developing bus services like those in London would require

only Tk 8,000 crore, according to him.

But bus services did not get priority, and it was a “policy crime” of the previous government, he told The Daily Star on October 26.

RISE IN SMALL VEHICLES, CONGESTION

While the registration of buses and minibuses is witnessing a decline, the number of private cars and motorcycles is on the rise.

According to the BRTA, a total of 893 buses and minibuses got registered in the first nine months of this year in Dhaka city, while the number was 1,887 in 2023 and 2,233 in 2022.

On the other hand, 58,634 motorcycles and 7,384 private cars got registered in the first nine months of this year in the city, while the numbers were 90,403 and 9,687 respectively last year, BRTA data show.

Besides, the number of rickshaws, particularly battery-run rickshaws, saw a sharp rise in the city.

Prof Moazzem, a former director of the Accident Research Institute at Buet, blamed the shortage of buses for the rise in the number of small vehicles, which he said was the main reason behind the deterioration of traffic congestion.

“Improvement of bus services is much needed to reduce traffic congestion,” he said.

Experts suggested bus route rationalisation and introduction of a franchise system to bring discipline in bus services.

These methods were discussed for long and got momentum during late Dhaka North City Corporation Mayor Annisul Huq’s tenure. The initiative lost momentum after his death in November 2017.

The High Court in June 2019 directed the authorities concerned to bring bus services in all metropolitan cities under the franchise system.

A bus franchise pilot project was launched on the Ghatarchar-Kanchpur route in Dhaka in December 2021. Two more routes were added to the project later.

A failure to launch the system fully after around three more years is a clear indication that bus services were not the previous government’s priority, Prof Moazzem said.

JP, student group

FROM PAGE 1

However, they changed their decision following DMP’s restriction.

Talking to The Daily Star last night, Bin Yamin Molla, president of the Dhaka University chapter of Gono Odhikar Parishad, said they welcomed the decision of DMP and would gather at the foot of the Raju Memorial Sculpture around 11:00am today and decide the next course of action.

Earlier in the day, JP Chairman GM Quader said despite the risks of a confrontation, they would continue protesting “injustice and discrimination”.

The party would hold the rally in the Kakrail area protesting the filing of cases against JP leaders and the price hike of essentials, he told a press conference at the party chairman’s office in Banani.

Yamin of Gono Odhikar Parishad also said they would hold “mass resistance rallies” in front of JP offices across the country at 11:00am.

Speaking at a press conference at the Dhaka University’s Teacher-Student Centre (TSC), he said they would not allow the JP to hold political programmes.

Describing the JP as an ally of the Awami League, which he accused of mass killings during the July uprising, Yamin demanded that the government ban the JP, arrest its leaders, and bring them to justice for backing the AL.

On Thursday evening, a group of people marching under the banner of “Anti fascist students, workers, and masses” vandalised and set fire to the ground floor of the five-storey building housing JP’s central office in Kakrail.

JP leaders stated that the party’s leaders and activists were holding a preparatory meeting for today’s rally at the time.

No case was filed until the filing of this report around 7:30pm, said Payel Hossain, inspector (investigation) of Ramna Police Station.

‘WE’VE COMMITTED NO CRIME’
Condemning Thursday’s incident, GM Quader said, “Do not be afraid, stay where you are. We are ready to die if necessary. Let’s see how many people they are willing to kill. Remember, Islam teaches us to stand against injustice. If you cannot protest with your hands, speak up. We are ready to give our lives for this.”

Referring to recent events, he said, “We’ve committed no crime. We are being forced into a criminal role for reasons unknown to us.”

“We are labelled as associates of the Awami League, but there is no justification for that,” he said, describing the JP’s role from the 9th parliamentary elections in 2008 to the 12th parliamentary elections in 2024.

He expressed disappointment at the country’s current state, saying, “The nation seems divided. It feels like a certain group has taken over the country. We supported them, as did the ordinary people, but now it seems they don’t recognise that support.”

“They are dividing the country... similar to the divisions created under our previous leader [Sheikh Hasina].”

Expressing disappointment with Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus’ role, GM Quader said, “Our chief adviser, a highly respected figure whom we consider a guardian of the nation, has remained silent despite allegations against us from his closest people. This is deeply unfortunate for us.”

Meanwhile, JP’s former lawmaker Shameem Haider Patwary visited the party office yesterday afternoon.

He said no one has the right to snatch away their rights as they are a registered political party and have the freedom to hold assembly as per the constitution.

“People did not burn our office. A quarter with vested interests who were angry at us previously set fire here last night,” he told reporters.

“There is no state of emergency imposed, and the constitution is not suspended. So, no one has the right to snatch away our constitutional rights. Some people obstructed us illegally and burnt our party office. The state and the government are responsible for it.”

THE BURNT OFFICE

During a visit to the office yesterday, The Daily Star found that the ground floor of the five-storey building was burnt, and other floors were ransacked.

At least four witnesses told this correspondent that when a group of people were vandalising and setting fire to the office on Thursday evening, some police personnel were standing near the office, but they did not take any steps.

Harris warns Trump

FROM PAGE 1

Reuters/Ipsos polling in October found the race to be sharply divided along gender lines, with Harris leading among women by 12 percentage points and Trump leading among men by seven percentage points.

More than 63 million people have already voted through in-person early voting and mail-in ballots, according to the University of Florida’s Election Lab.

With both candidates campaigned in the Southwest on Thursday, they made their pitches to Hispanic voters.

Harris, who has been receiving a slew of celebrity endorsements, got an A-list boost from pop star and movie actress Jennifer Lopez in Las Vegas, after Mexican rock band Mana played a brief set to introduce them and basketball great LeBron James endorsed her earlier in the day.

“I like Hollywood endings. I like when the good guy, or in this case the good girl wins,” said Lopez, born in New York to Puerto Rican parents.

Trump, while in Albuquerque, New Mexico, argued he could win over the

state’s large Latino population, even polling the crowd to see whether they preferred to be called “Latinos” or “Hispanics.” The response “Hispanics” won handsily.

Once again a campaign issue, the 2010 Affordable Care Act provides coverage to roughly 40 million Americans as part of the country’s patchwork of health insurance programs. A political liability for Democrats when signed into law in 2010, it is now broadly popular.

In his 2016 campaign, Trump repeatedly vowed to repeal Obamacare and following his election, when the House voted to do just that, he welcomed Republican representatives to the White House for a celebration. But the repeal effort died in the Senate in July 2017 when the late Senator John McCain cast the deciding vote with a thumbs-down gesture.

Trump has downplayed the issue during this campaign, though on Thursday he reiterated he would as president push insurers to cover the cost of in vitro fertilization (IVF) treatments.

‘Withdraw sedition case’

Hindu leaders allege police tried to bar people from attending Ctg rally

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Leaders of Sanatan Jagaran Mancha yesterday alleged that law enforcers in Chattogram created obstacles to bar people from joining its rally at the Cheragi Pahar intersection.

Swatantra Gouranga Das Brahmachari, a coordinator of Sanatan Jagaran Mancha, at the rally said, “Members of law enforcement agencies are obstructing people coming to the rally in different spots including Jamal Khan, Nandan Kanan, Anderkilla and Surson Road.”

“If they are not allowing the people of Sanatani community to come to the rally, we will go to the spots to bring them here,” he added.

The rally was organised

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Sanatan Jagaran Mancha held a rally at the Cheragi Pahar intersection in the port city yesterday demanding that the government withdraws the sedition case filed against 19 people including ISKCON Chattogram divisional organising secretary.

PHOTO: STAR

A guiding light for culture and consciousness

Say speakers on Abul Hasnat



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Abul Hasnat, editor of Kali O Kalom, always worked towards building a nation of rich cultural and literary legacy, said speakers at an event yesterday.

The remarks were made at the third instalment of “Abul Hasnat Memorial Lecture”, organised by Bengal Foundation in the capital’s Bengal Shilpalaya. At the event, speakers recalled the life, work and achievements of Hasnat.

Hasnat, who passed away on November 1, 2020 at the age of 75, was best recognised as the editor of Kali O Kalom, a revered monthly literary magazine.

He was also a poet, essayist, art critic, litterateur and cultural personality.

Eminent academic Prof Syed Manzoorul Islam said Hasnat was someone who dedicated his life to guiding others in their own journeys in life. He was well known for his deep connection to human sensibilities.

“His death has left a void in the cultural arena, we still do not know how to fill this,” he added.

Reflecting on the post-1971 era, Islam remarked, “We believed that the path of literature would flourish further. Sadly, we did not see the growth we had anticipated.”

Hasnat highlighted the growing question about the trajectory of literature, he added.

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Youth will lead the country

Says Nahid

BSS, Dhaka

Adviser of the interim government for posts, telecommunications and information technology Md Nahid Islam yesterday said the young people who dreamt of building new Bangladesh through July mass-uprising are taking preparation to lead all sectors including economy, politics, business and society.

“Young people have shown Bangladesh a new way... they will lead Bangladesh in all aspects,” Nahid, also adviser for information and broadcasting, said while addressing as special guest at an event marking National Youth Day-2024 at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in Dhaka, according to a ministry press release.

“Bangladeshi young generation has shown the world a new path through the July mass uprising, and the whole world is now waiting to see where this people will take Bangladesh,” he said.

“All took to the streets during the July mass uprising, with patriotism on one side and death



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Keep judiciary free from political interference

Speakers tell UPL discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The judiciary must be kept free from political interference in order to ensure its proper independence, said speakers at a discussion yesterday.

The discussion, titled “Independence of the Judiciary: Overall Reforms of the State,” was organised by the University Press Limited (UPL) at its office in the capital on the 25th anniversary of the Supreme Court verdict in the Masdar

Many lower court judges had refused to grant bail to many prominent persons but they are still in good positions, said Barrister Hossain, also the honorary director of Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST).

Some judges had to think about a lot of factors to grant bail to prominent persons like Prof Muhammad Yunus in cases against him, she said.

Dr Ridwanul Haque, a former teacher of Law at Dhaka University, said

The judiciary must be independent not only institutionally but also professionally. The appointments and removal of judges must be done based on specific rules or criteria for the sake of transparency.

BARRISTER SARA HOSSAIN
Senior SC Lawyer

The lower judiciary was completely subservient for the last 15 years as it was controlled by the then government. Many people involved in that government have earned crores of taka using the lower judiciary.

DR RIDWANUL HAQUE
Former Law Teacher at DU

Hossain (judiciary separation) Case and 17th anniversary of implementation of the directives.

Speaking at the event, Barrister Sara Hossain, senior lawyer of the Supreme Court, said, “The judiciary must be independent not only institutionally but also professionally. The appointments and removal of judges must be done based on specific rules or criteria for the sake of transparency.”

the judiciary must be recognised as an institution.

“The lower judiciary was completely subservient for the last 15 years as it was controlled by the then government. Many people involved in that government have earned crores of taka using the lower judiciary,” he said.

Former chief justice ABM Khairul Haque had a big role in scrapping the

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Dengue death toll rises to 300 as 3 more die

HELEMUL ALAM

With three new dengue deaths yesterday, the total number of deaths has risen to 300 this year, depicting a grim picture of how losing lives to the mosquito-borne disease has become a regular scenario over recent years.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services, 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.

With the 382 new cases, the total number of dengue cases rose to 62,199 this year.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services, 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.



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.

“We are mostly seeing Den-2 (serotype-2) cases this year, similar to last year,” said Prof Tahmina Shirin, director of the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) recently.

Dr Shirin said being infected with Den-2 does not necessarily spell danger.

“However, cross-infections involving different serotypes can lead to severe complications, especially if patients are not hospitalised in time. Delayed hospitalisation is one of the key factors behind worsening patient conditions and higher mortality rates,” she added.

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THURSDAY’S CLASH 9 held, 1,000 workers sued

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least nine people were arrested over clashes between police, army personnel, and demonstrating RMG workers in the capital’s Kachukhet and Mirpur-14 areas on Thursday.

Six persons were arrested on Thursday, said Faisal Ahmed, officer-in-charge of Bhasantek Police Station. They were produced before a Dhaka court yesterday.

Meanwhile, army handed over three more arrestees to police yesterday, said an ISPR press release.

Two cases -- one with Bhasantek and another with Kafrul police stations -- were filed accusing 1,000 unnamed workers.

On Thursday, the clashes left two workers with gunshot wounds and several others injured. A police truck and an army pickup were set on fire, said OC Kazi Golam Mostafa of Kafrul Police Station.

Police said the workers of Creative Designers Ltd took to the streets around 8:30am after their factory was suddenly closed by the managers. Their number grew rapidly as employees from other factories joined.

Clashes began around 45 minutes later as police tried to clear the roads.

Meanwhile, the ISPR press release said the operation of Bangladesh Army will continue against miscreants who deliberately set fire to army vehicles, create panic in the public mind and destroy government assets.

GOURIPUR LODGE IN MYMENSINGH

Once a cultural beacon, now a neglected landmark



AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

Gouripur Lodge, a century-old iconic architectural landmark, once used to stand in all its glory in the Jubilee Road area of Mymensingh city.

But now the historic landmark, which bears the rich history of the zamindar dynasty of the region, lies in a neglected state.

In a show of utter disregard for the historic and cultural value of this landmark,

the lodge is being used to house guest rooms, store rooms, etc, by a government-owned bank.

Meanwhile, the house has not even been registered yet as a historic landmark in the city by the Department of Archaeology.

Brajendra Kishore Roy Chowdhury, the zamindar (feudal lord) of Gouripur, established the two-storey, intricately designed Gouripur Lodge in 1828, as per estimation, on the bank of the Old Brahmaputra.

After partition in 1947, the house was used as a branch of the National Bank of Pakistan between 1949 and 1971.

After independence, Sonali Bank used it as a branch office till 1985, before abandoning the house, said sources at the bank.

The house has glass doors, wooden walls, and a corrugated iron roof. The construction was reportedly done by workers from China, with the glasses imported from abroad.

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No one has right to grab canals, rivers

Says Rizwana; nationwide cleaning drive launched

BSS, Dhaka

Canals and rivers are national assets and no one has the right to grab and pollute those, said Environment, Forest and Climate Change, and Water Resources Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan yesterday.

She said a canal cleaning campaign is being implemented in all 64 districts as part of the ongoing effort to make the country’s waterways free from pollution.

“Although the campaign will officially run till November 15, efforts to keep these waterways clean will continue. There will have a local committee for each canal to prevent pollution,” she added.

Rizwana was speaking as the chief guest at the national launch of the canal cleaning drive across 64 districts, held at Tri-Mohini Eidgah ground at Rampura, Dhaka.

Youth and Sports Adviser Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuiain officially inaugurated the canal cleaning campaign at Rampura-Zirani canal, marking the National Youth Day 2024.

Rizwana urged the volunteers and the youth to take on the national responsibility of keeping the canals free from pollution.

She said presenting the future generations with pollution-free canals and rivers will be one of the major successes of the Youth Day.



JULY UPRISING Families of martyrs to get financial aid from today

DU CORRESPONDENT

The July Shaheed Smriti Foundation will start providing financial assistance from today to the families of those who were martyred or injured during the July uprising.

Initially, the families of the deceased will get Tk 5 lakh each, while the injured will get Tk 1 lakh each.

Each week, 200 families will get the assistance, and the disbursement programme will be completed in four phases.

Sarjis Alam, general secretary of the foundation, shared the information at a press conference held at the foundation’s office in Shabbagh yesterday.

Sarjis said the first disbursement of funds will take place at the DSCC city hall for the families from the Dhaka division. “Not all martyr families will come tomorrow [today]; those who will receive the assistance have already been contacted,” he said.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

Fans gathered at Miniso Gulshan 2 to celebrate the launch of the Official Miniso x Sanrio product line yesterday. Surrounded by colourful decorations and life-sized Hello Kitty and Kuromi mascots, attendees of all ages enjoyed an experience filled with giveaways, engaging activities, and a display of Miniso x Sanrio merchandise.

Keep judiciary free from political

FROM PAGE 3
caretaker government system, and through this, the judiciary has been politicised, he added.

He said politicians and lawyers should be brought to accountability to ensure the independence of the judiciary.

Ridwanul also welcomed Chief Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed's recent initiative to send a proposal for establishing a separate secretariat for the judiciary.

Supreme Court lawyer Jyotirmoy Barua said the lower judiciary had been kept occupied for the last 16 years.

False and fabricated cases were filed against people, particularly the opposition leaders and activists, but they did not get bail from the lower courts for long periods, he said.

Even after the High Court

and Appellate Division granted bail to many of them, they wouldn't be released by jail authorities without permission from government agencies like DGFI and Rab, he said.

Jyotirmoy also said 12 HC judges have been forced to go on leave, which is not decent, and it is urgent to come out of this culture.

Zonayed Saki, chief coordinator of Ganosamhati Andolan, told the meeting that specific guidelines are needed for the appointment of judges.

Barrister Rumin Farhana, an SC lawyer and a BNP leader, said none of the political governments wanted the judiciary to be independent.

The governments led by Awami League and BNP did not implement the SC's 12 directives in the Masdar Hossain case for separating

the judiciary from the executive, she said.

Even the SC judges' retirement ages had been increased by amending the constitution to keep the next caretaker government in favour, she said.

Rumin said the AL government had formulated the Mobile Court Act, 2009 to run the mobile courts through the executive magistrates to control the judiciary.

The HC had declared the relevant rules of the Mobile Court Act illegal and unconstitutional, but the Appellate Division stayed the HC verdict following the government's appeal, she said, adding that no attorney general has taken the initiative to lift the stay order.

Presiding over the discussion, Nurul Kabir, editor of the English daily New Age, said a proposal was sent to the government from the SC 12 years ago for establishing a separate secretariat for the judiciary, but the government did not respond.

Dengue death toll rises to 300

FROM PAGE 3

She advised that anyone diagnosed with fever should immediately consult a doctor and follow prescribed treatments.

Staying well-hydrated is crucial, she said.

Dr HM Nazmul Ahsan, associate professor at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital, told The Daily Star yesterday, "Many patients are going into shock after their fever subsides, which is alarming."

He said patients with shock syndrome, bleeding, and expanded dengue syndrome are contributing to the rising death toll.

Many people even do not realise that they are in shock, and when they are taken to the hospital, it is already too late, he said.

He said the cosmopolitan sub-variant of Den-2 is especially dangerous due to its links to bleeding, increased severity, and a higher mortality rate, which is significantly present this year.

Early hospitalisation – especially for symptoms such as severe stomach pain, difficulty breathing, and bleeding – is critical to prevent fatal outcomes.

Entomologist Manzur A Chowdhury warned that dengue cases may peak in November but will not drop significantly afterwards, suggesting dengue infections could continue until February.

Prof Kabirul Bashar, entomologist at Jahangirnagar University, said changing patterns of rainy season is a reason for

prolonged dengue phase.

There are many factors for this prominent presence of dengue in the late season, which include climate change, lack of proper anti-mosquito drives, and urban sprawl, he said.

GM Saifur Rahman, an entomologist from National University, recommended that the government implement robust surveillance to identify hotspots, enabling coordinated intervention by local authorities, community groups, and schools.

Ctg grapples

FROM PAGE 5

Chattogram's average daily demand is 1,200MW in peak hours and 1,100MW in off-peak hours.

"On Thursday, it was 1,189MW at 11:00am, while 1,042MW power was available, causing a deficit of 147MW, resulting in load-shedding," he said.

The 22 power plants in Chattogram region – including five units of Kaptai, two units of Raozan, two units of Shikalbaha, and Matarbari Power Plant – jointly generated 1,637MW on Thursday – significantly higher than Chattogram's daily demand.

"Electricity generated by power plants are directly supplied to the national grid and we receive power from them, not directly from the power plants," Akbar explained.

PRAYER TIMING	
NOVEMBER 2	
Fazr	Zohr
Asr	Maghrib
Esha	
AZAN 4-55	12-45 4-00 5-30 7-15
JAMAAT 5-30	1-15 4-15 5-34 7-45
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION	

A guiding light

FROM PAGE 3

"Genuine liberation is more than political freedom. It is the freedom of thought and consciousness," he explained.

Islam noted that the tools for knowledge acquisition have changed, with social media taking the place of books. However, ability to critically assess these tools impartially seems to be waning, leading to a more one-dimensional society that stands in the way of a thoughtful, developed nation.

Islam expressed hope that future generations would grow in an environment that embraces culture and education.

"We may not fully realise how much we've contributed to this dream, but people like Hasnat bhai devoted their lives to such a vision," he added.

Nasimun Ara Haq, wife of Abul Hasnat, said, "Hasnat believed that culture is the life of a nation. He was involved in art, culture and progressive stream of politics throughout his entire life. He devoted his life to practising art and culture as well as establishing a progressive society of readers. He also helped many literary talents flourish as he considered that as his responsibility."

Journalist Abul Momen presented the memorial lecture at the event.

Born in 1945 in the Old Dhaka, Hasnat was actively involved with Chhatra Union while studying at Dhaka University. He was the vice-president of Chhatra Union in 1971. He also played a role in the Liberation War while staying in India.

A river once flowed here

FROM PAGE 5

halted the canal's excavation, leaving Hamkura landlocked. Within two years, the riverbed dried up, and what once supported livelihoods and local ecosystems became unrecognisable.

Today, the riverbed has been transformed into paddy fields, and most of its old path has been overtaken by encroaching structures, from small homes to brick kilns.

Villages around Dumuria now experience severe waterlogging and seasonal flooding, as rainwater has no path to drain. Locals said heavy rains this monsoon submerged nearly 150 villages, worsening each year due to the loss of the natural drainage route Hamkura

once provided.

Residents like Ismail Hossain from Katerdangi village remember when Hamkura was a nearly 400-metre-wide river, its strong current cutting through the land, with boats, launches, and trawlers navigating its depths. "Now it's only a paddy field. Farmers like us have lost a vital resource," Hossain said.

Ibrahim Sheikh of Thukra village echoed this sentiment, pointing out the suffering of farmers who now struggle without water for irrigation in the dry season.

"During the monsoon, without proper drainage, we're hit hard by waterlogging. Excavating the river could ease the burden on 18,500 hectares

of cropland and benefit 25 villages," he said.

Iqbal Kabir Jahid, chief adviser of the Bhavadah Water Drainage Struggle Committee, said if the river remains unexcavated, the region may face environmental catastrophe and permanent waterlogging.

"Tidal River Management through excavation would revive Hamkura's flow, benefiting everyone along its banks," he argued.

Contacted, Abdur Rahman Tazkia, executive engineer of BWDB-I, said the river has become heavily silted over the past decades.

"A feasibility study for excavating the river has been sent to the ministry concerned," he added.

Withdraw sedition

FROM PAGE 3

demanding the government to withdraw the sedition case filed against 19 people including ISKCON Chattogram Divisional Organising Secretary Chandan Kumar Dhar alias Chinmoy Krishna Das Brahmachari, on charges of "disrespecting" the national flag in Chattogram's New Market area last Friday.

Gouranga Das said they will submit a memorandum to the chief adviser through the deputy commissioners of 64 districts demanding withdrawal of the case on Sunday.

"We will go for a tougher programme if the case is not withdrawn by Monday," he warned.

He said BNP general secretary of the port city's Mohora ward unit Firoz

Khan filed the case on Wednesday, adding, "BNP has already expelled him from the party on charges of acting against the norms and ideology of the party."

"That means, BNP has understood that Firoz was trying to hamper the peaceful situation of the country by creating an untoward situation," he said, adding, "After his expulsion from the party, is there any moral basis for the case?"

Earlier, thousands of people gathered at Cheragi Pahar intersection around 3:00pm and chanted slogans for withdrawal of the case.

Contacted, Liakat Ali Khan, deputy commissioner (south zone) of Chattogram Metropolitan Police, did not want to make any comments on the matter.

Youth will lead

FROM PAGE 3

on the other. We had to fight choosing either the motherland or death," he said.

"Our fight is ongoing and we will definitely protect our motherland and stand high in the world again," he added.

Addressing as the chief guest, adviser for youth and sports Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuyain said a total five lakh jobs will be

created in the government sector in the next two years.

"As a demographic dividend, power of the youth is very important for the country's economy," said Asif, also adviser for labour and employment.

"Our interim government is developing the job-seeking youth as human resources through the Department of Youth Development," he added.

Once a cultural

FROM PAGE 3

The floors and pillars of the house were made of stones with a beautifully designed arched corridor.

The house has a total of 10 rooms. Of those, four on the ground floor are now being used as store rooms, and another is being used to accommodate the bank's Ansar members.

The five rooms on the wooden top floor are being used as a "guest house" for bank officials and kitchen.

"The use of the iconic landmark as a guest house and kitchen is an instance of utter neglect on the bank's part," said Advocate Shibbir Ahmed Liton, secretary of Mymensingh Poribesh Rokkha O Unnayan Andolon.

Ashit Chakraborty, a retired official of Sonali Bank, said the house's present condition is not good due to a lack of proper care and maintenance.

"If preserved properly, Gouripur Lodge can become a tourist attraction," he added.

Archaeology and history enthusiast Sajal Quraishy said Zamindar Brajendra Kishore Roy Chowdhury was also a renowned classical music exponent of the time.

Maestros of Hindustani classical music, including

Enayat Khan (father of Ustad Vilayat Khan), Wazir Khan, and Mohammad Ali Khan, direct descendants of Mian Tansen, Mohammad Dabir Khan, and many others, performed at Gouripur Lodge upon invitations by Brajendra Kishore, Sajal also said, citing the zamindar's son Birendra Kishore Roy Chowdhury's books, titled "Indian Music and Mian Tansen" and "Raga Sangeet".

Contacted, Md Hafizur Rahman, deputy general manager of Sonali Bank, said the house is a property of the bank and will not be handed over to the DoA.


Sabina Yeasmin, field officer of DoA (Dhaka and Mymensingh divisions), said Gouripur Lodge is indeed a "national heritage" as per the Antiquities Act-1968 (Amendment Ordinance in 1976).

She, however, admitted that the house has not been enlisted with the DoA yet, adding that it will be part of a survey by the department, proposed to be conducted on the archaeological sites under Mymensingh Sadar upazila.

Once enlisted after the survey, steps will be taken to preserve the house while no one will be able to claim it as their property, she added.

Death Anniversary

Today, on November 2, 2024, marks the 39th death anniversary of the late Alhaj Abdus Sattar, the founding Chairman of Hotel Purbani International Ltd. On behalf of the late chairman's family and all the staff of Hotel Purbani International Ltd., we humbly request everyone to pray for the forgiveness and peace of his departed soul.



Office Rent

Semi-furnished offices of 2000 sq. ft and 1000 sq. ft located in Dhanmondi Rd # 6/A are available for rent immediately.
Mobile # 01708519088



World Health Organization
Bangladesh

VACANCY NOTICE

World Health Organization (WHO) invites applications from the interested and eligible candidates for the following position under following contractual modality:

- Executive Assistant (Budget & Finance)**

For further details on submission of applications including detailed post description please visit our websites:

<https://www.who.int/bangladesh/about-us/employment>
<https://careers.who.int/careersection/ex/jobsearch.ftl>

Qualified **female candidates** are highly encouraged to apply.

 **WHO has a smoke-free environment and does not recruit smokers or other tobacco users.**

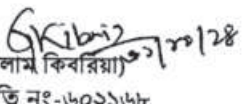
গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, এর কার্যালয়
সড়ক বিভাগ, মাগুরা।
ফোন ও ফ্যাক্স নং-০২৪৭৭৭-১০৩১৮
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স্মারক নং:- ৩৫.০১.৫৫০০.৪৪৩.০৭.১৫২.২৪.১৫৪৪ তারিখঃ ৩১/১০/২০২৪ খ্রিষ্টাব্দ।

সীমিত দরপত্র পদ্ধতিতে (LTM) ঠিকাদার তালিকাভুক্তি/লাইসেন্স নবায়ন-এর বিজ্ঞপ্তি (২য় পর্যায়ে)

এতদ্বারা সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, সড়ক বিভাগ, মাগুরা কর্তৃক পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা-২০০৮ এর আলোকে সড়ক ও জনপথ অধিদপ্তরের পরিচালন (রাজস্ব) বাজেটের আওতায় সীমিত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (LTM) প্রয়োগের মাধ্যমে আঞ্চলিক ক্রয়-কার্য (NCT-Works) সম্পাদনের লক্ষ্যে ২০২৪-২০২৫ অর্থবছরে ২য় পর্যায়ে ঠিকাদার তালিকাভুক্ত করা হবে। সিপিটিইউ কর্তৃক নির্ধারিত আবেদন ফরম অত্র দপ্তর হতে অফিস চালকালীন সময়ে সরবরাহ করা হবে। ১০০০.০০ (এক হাজার) টাকার অফেরতযোগ্য পে-অর্ডার/বাংক ড্রাফট নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, সড়ক বিভাগ, মাগুরা এর অনুকূলে জমা প্রদান করে অথবা মানি রিসিটের মাধ্যমে ১০০০.০০ (এক হাজার) টাকা পরিশোধ করে আগ্রহী ব্যক্তি/প্রতিষ্ঠান নির্ধারিত আবেদনপত্র (ডকুমেন্ট) সংগ্রহ করতে পারবেন। নতুনভাবে অর্জিতদের জন্য আগ্রহী ব্যক্তি/ প্রতিষ্ঠান নির্ধারিত আবেদন পত্র (ডকুমেন্ট) সঠিকভাবে পূরণপূর্বক প্রয়োজনীয় কাগজপত্রসহ আগামী ১৭/১১/২০২৪ খ্রিষ্টাব্দ তারিখ বিকাল ৫:০০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে অত্র দপ্তরে জমা প্রদান করবেন এবং ইতোমধ্যে তালিকাভুক্ত ঠিকাদারগণ আগামী ৩০/১১/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ তারিখ বিকাল ৫:০০ ঘটিক পর্যন্ত নবায়ন ফি প্রদানের মাধ্যমে তাদের লাইসেন্স নবায়ন করতে পারবেন। বর্ণিত তারিখ ও সময় চূড়ান্ত হিসেবে গণ্য হবে। উল্লেখ্য যে, সীমিত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি প্রয়োগের ক্ষেত্রে পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা-২০০৮ এর বিধি ৬৩ ও ৬৪ অনুসরণযোগ্য। উল্লেখ্য, এ তালিকাভুক্তিকরণ দরপত্র আহবান/কাজ প্রদানের নিশ্চয়তা প্রদান করে না।


(গোলাম কিবরিয়া)
পরিচিতি নং-৬০২১৬৮
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী (অঃ দাঃ), সওজ
সড়ক বিভাগ, মাগুরা।

GD- 851



Dhaka South City Corporation

Office of the Executive Engineer
Zone-1 (Nagar Bhaban)


"e-Tender Notice"

Memo No.: egp/dscc/zone-01/03/2024-2025 Date: 31/10/2024

These are online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in e-GP portal and offline/hard copies will not be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP system portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>).

e-Tender is invited in e-GP portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by Executive Engineer, Zone-1, Dhaka South City Corporation for the procurement of:

Sl. No.	Tender ID & Package No.	Name of works	Publishing Date & Time	Last Selling Date & Time	Tender Opening Date & Time
1	1004637 WR05/Z1/Cutting/FY2024-25	Repairing works for the cutting of Dhanmondi R/A road no-9/A in ward no-15 zone-01 under Dhaka South City Corporation.	03/11/2024 21:00	19/11/2024 13:18	19/11/2024 17:00
2	1026273 WR06/Z-1/Spcl_Alloc/FY2024-25	Installation of grill fencing on the median of hare road in ward no-19 of zone-01 under Dhaka South City Corporation.	03/11/2024 21:00	19/11/2024 13:31	19/11/2024 17:00
3	1026596 WR01/Z_1/Cutting/FY2024-25	Repairing works for cutting of the roads excavated by different organization in Zone-01 under Dhaka South City Corporation (Group-KA, FY-2024-25).	03/11/2024 21:00	19/11/2024 13:05	19/11/2024 17:00


(Saiful Islam Joy)
Executive Engineer
Zone 1
Dhaka South City Corporation.
Telephone No.: 02-223388454
E-mail: xenzoneldscc@gmail.com

ডিএসসি/পিআরডি/১০৪/২০২৪-২০২৫
(৬x৪)



5,503 students win reading contest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chattogram

A total of 5,503 students from 93 schools in Chattogram city were awarded by the Bishwo Shahitto Kendro in a book reading programme.

An award giving ceremony was held on the premises of Chattogram City Corporation Municipal Model High School and College in the port city yesterday.

Addressing the event, Professor Abdullah Abu Sayeed, president of Bishwo Shahitto Kendro, said a nation cannot move forward and become developed without its people acquiring new knowledge.

"Books are the source of knowledge. Everyone should read more books to become enlightened," he said.

About 15,000 students from 93 schools in the port city participated in the book reading programme in the 2023 academic year. Of them, 5,503 students were awarded for having shown achievement in the evaluation phase.

Elephant found dead in Sherpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

A wild elephant was found dead in Batkuchi Tilapara area of Madhutula Eco Park near Nalitabari border in Sherpur on Thursday night.

The Forest Department and locals suspected that the elephant died after being electrocuted when it came down from the hills to look for food at night.

On Thursday, a group of elephants descended from the hills while the farmers set up a generator's electrical connection wire in the field to deter the elephants.

Later, they came to know that the elephant died around 10:00pm and informed the forest department, said Rafiqul Islam, Madhutula range officer.

He said they are looking into the incident.



PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

HAMKURA IN KHULNA

A river once flowed here

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

The once-mighty Hamkura River that flowed through Dumuria upazila in Khulna now lives only in the memories of locals. Over the past two decades, this 12-kilometre waterway has gradually faded, its vibrant flow choked by infrastructure projects, sluice gates, and bridges that eventually led to its demise.

Originating from the Shree River in Jashore's Bhavadah area, Hamkura once served as a vital drainage route for the region. It carried water from the sprawling Beel Dakatiya wetland and over a dozen swamps and canals, eventually joining larger rivers like the Bhadra, Gangrail, and Sholmari.

For years, this river was a lifeline for the community, supporting local transportation, fishing, and agriculture.



Back in the day, ferries plied across Hamkura's 200-metre width, connecting people and trade routes like the Khulna-Satkhira regional highway. Fishermen caught fish, including hilsa, and farmers along

the banks relied on its waters to irrigate their crops.

The river's transformation began in the 1960s, when several sluice gates were installed along the Dumuria-Sahapur road in Amvita, limiting the river's flow.

In the 1980s, a bridge at Baniyakhali replaced the old ferry service, further changing the river's role. In 1990, the Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) attempted to address waterlogging in Beel Dakatiya by excavating a canal to connect the swamp to the Hamkura, which temporarily improved the river's water flow.

However, in 1995, as part of the Khulna-Jashore Drainage Rehabilitation Project, BWDB

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



Collectors gather at a booth to buy various out-of-circulation notes and stamps. Organised by Bangladesh Match Box Collector's Club, the carnival took place at the National Archives Building yesterday. The event hosted various booths selling and trading collectible match boxes, stamps, antiques, toys, etc.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

For birds, for environment Youth organisation sets up clay nests on trees



OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Batighar Adarsha Pathagar, a voluntary organisation, recently installed more than a hundred earthen pots on trees in the municipal park and neighbouring areas of Tangail for birds to make safe nests inside those.

They also organised an event in this regard with the motto "Birds protect the balance of environment, come forward to protect them".

Md Kamruzzaman, founder of the organisation, its members, and students of local Shaheen Science Academy participated in the programme.

Speakers at the programme called upon all to protect birds and create a safe haven for them in order to maintain the environmental balance.

Batighar Adarsha Pathagar was established in Chaurakar village of Tangail Sadar upazila in 2010.



গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
ফেনী ডে-কেয়ার সেন্টার
মহিলা বিষয়ক অধিদপ্তর, ফেনী।
২১৩, এস.এস.কে. রোড, ফেনী।

স্মারক নং-মবিঅ/ফেনী/ডেঃকেঃ/শিঃখাঃদঃপঃ/২০২৪/৯৪৫ তারিখ : ৩১/১০/২০২৪ ইং

খোলা দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

মহিলা বিষয়ক অধিদপ্তর, ফেনী ডে-কেয়ার সেন্টার এর শিশুদের জন্য মাসিক ভিত্তিতে একটানা ১২(বার) মাসের জন্য (সরকারী ছুটির দিন ব্যতিত) খাদ্য দ্রব্যাদি সরবরাহের ঠিকাদার নিয়োগের নিমিত্তে নিম্নলিখিত ভাবে দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

১। প্রকৃত প্রতিষ্ঠান ও সরবরাহকারীর হালনাগাদ ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, প্রতিষ্ঠানের হালনাগাদ ইনকাম ট্যাক্স সার্টিফিকেট, ভ্যাট রেজিস্ট্রেশন সার্টিফিকেট, ব্যাংক স্বচ্ছলতার সনদ, এবং খাদ্য দ্রব্যাদি সরবরাহের ২(দুই) বছরের অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে।

২। বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক বা সোনালী ব্যাংকের যে কোন শাখার টেন্ডার সিডিউলের ক্রয় মূল্য বাবদ ৭৫০/- (সাতশত পঞ্চাশ) টাকা (অফেরত যোগ্য) নতুন ১৪২২৩২৮ "দরপত্র দলিল ফি" কোডে জমা দিয়ে চালানের মূলকপি জমা দেয়া স্বাপেক্ষে দরপত্র সিডিউল ও শর্তাবলী নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর কার্যালয় ২১৩ এস.এস.কে. রোড, হাজী কেরামত আলী সড়ক, ফেনী হতে গ্রহন করা যাবে।

৩। দরপত্রের সাথে জামানত বাবদ মোট প্রাক্কলিত মূল্যের ৩% হিসেবে আর্নেস্টম্যানি ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার (ফেরতযোগ্য) কোন সিডিউল ব্যাংক হতে ডে-কেয়ার অফিসার, ফেনী ডে-কেয়ার সেন্টার, মহিলা বিষয়ক অধিদপ্তর, ফেনী এর অনুকূলে জমা দিতে হবে।

৪। খাদ্য সামগ্রীর বিস্তারিত বিবরণ ও শর্তাবলী দরপত্র সিডিউলে উল্লেখ থাকবে।

৫। দরপত্র সিডিউল ক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ ও সময় ১৪/১১/২০২৪ তারিখ অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত।

৬। দরপত্র ১৭/১১/২০২৪ তারিখ দুপুর ১২:০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত উপপরিচালকের কার্যালয়, মহিলা বিষয়ক অধিদপ্তর, ফেনী এ দরদাতা/সরবরাহকারীদের (যদি কেহ উপস্থিত থাকেন) উপস্থিতিতে দরপত্র খোলা হবে।

৭। দরপত্র ১৭/১১/২০২৪ তারিখ দুপুর ১২:৩০ ঘটিকায় উপপরিচালকের কার্যালয়, মহিলা বিষয়ক অধিদপ্তর, ফেনী এ দরদাতা/সরবরাহকারীদের (যদি কেহ উপস্থিত থাকেন) উপস্থিতিতে দরপত্র খোলা হবে।

৮। পিপিআর শর্তাবলী অনুসরণ করতে হবে।

৯। কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে কর্তৃপক্ষ যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ বা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।

(মোঃ ইদ্রিস উল্লাহ)
ডে-কেয়ার অফিসার (অতিঃ দাঃ)
ফেনী ডে-কেয়ার সেন্টার
মহিলা বিষয়ক অধিদপ্তর, ফেনী।

Agrani Bank PLC.
Establishment & Engineering Division
Head Office, 9/D, Dilkusha, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka

Invitation for Tender

1. Ministry/Division	Bank and Financial Institutions Division
2. Agency	Agrani Bank PLC., 9/D, Dilkusha, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka.
3. Procuring entity name	Agrani Bank PLC., Establishment & Engineering Division, Head Office (7th Floor), 9/D, Dilkusha, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000.
4. Procuring entity district	Dhaka.
5. Invitation for	Supply & Installation of 04 (Four) Air Coolers for Agrani Bank PLC., GM's Secretariat, Chattogram Circle, Chattogram.
6. Invitation Ref No.	E&ED/ Engg / Mchca-359/2024
7. Date	Date: 24/10/2024

KEY INFORMATION

8. Procurement method	Open Tendering Method (OTM).
9. Budget and source of funds	Own fund of Agrani Bank PLC.
10. Tender publication date	24/10/2024
11. Tender last selling date	17/11/2024
12. Tender receiving date and time	18/11/2024 at 10:00am to 3:00pm
Tender closing date and time	18/11/2024 at 3:00pm
13. Tender opening date and time	18/11/2024 at 3:15pm in presence of Tenderers or their representatives (if any present)

14. Name & address of the office(s)	
Selling tender document	Agrani Bank PLC., Establishment & Engineering Division, Head Office (7th Floor), 9/D, Dilkusha, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000.
Receiving tender document	Agrani Bank PLC., Establishment & Engineering Division, Head Office (7th Floor), 9/D, Dilkusha, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000.
Opening tender document	DGM's Chamber, Agrani Bank PLC., Establishment & Engineering Division, Head Office (7th Floor), 9/D, Dilkusha, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000.

INFORMATION FOR TENDERER

15. Eligibility of tenderer	Supplier who have minimum 03 (Three) years of general experience of similar nature of works. Years counting backward from the date of publication of IFT. Having experience in successfully completion of Air Cooler with a value of at least 3.00 lac. in a single Tender during last 03 (Three) years (The year counting backward from the date of invitation of this Tender (IFT)). The Tenderer must process attested copy of: i) Up-to-date valid trade license, ii) Up-to-date income tax certificate, iii) Valid VAT registration certificate, iv) e-TIN certificate, v) In case of Limited Company, the certificate of Incorporation, Memorandum of Association, Article of association & Power of attorney. vi) Having minimum amount of liquid assets or working capital or credit facilities shall be Tk. 4.00 lac. Letter of commitment for Bank's undertaking for line of Credit is issued from the concerned Bank in between publication date and submission date of STD. The Tenderer must submit attested copy of: i) International Standard Compliance (CE/UL/ISO/Any other) ii) Catalogue/ Brochure must be submitted with Tender. iii) Necessary document of Distributor/ Authorized Dealer/ Importer of Mentioned Brand. All other reputed qualification, terms and conditions of the tenderer are shown in the tender data sheet (TDS) of Tender documents and all experience certificates will be submitted as per format. Necessary supporting Documents to be submitted as per requirement of ITT Clauses and technical specification of the tender.												
16. Completion time	03 weeks from the date of Contract Signing.												
17. Brief description of goods	Any brand manufactured or assembled in Bangladesh/China/ Turkey/ Vietnam or equivalent to these countries accepted/ approved by the bank authority in accordance with fulfillment of the given specifications and having relevant certificates as mentioned & as per detailed specifications & standard as mentioned in STD. <table border="1"> <tr> <th>Sl. No.</th> <th>Capacity</th> <th>Type</th> <th>Quantity</th> </tr> <tr> <td>01</td> <td>22,500-24,000 BTU/Hr (2.00 Ton)</td> <td>Split</td> <td>03</td> </tr> <tr> <td>02</td> <td>34,000-36,000 BTU/Hr (3.00 Ton)</td> <td>Ceiling</td> <td>01</td> </tr> </table>	Sl. No.	Capacity	Type	Quantity	01	22,500-24,000 BTU/Hr (2.00 Ton)	Split	03	02	34,000-36,000 BTU/Hr (3.00 Ton)	Ceiling	01
Sl. No.	Capacity	Type	Quantity										
01	22,500-24,000 BTU/Hr (2.00 Ton)	Split	03										
02	34,000-36,000 BTU/Hr (3.00 Ton)	Ceiling	01										
18. Brief description of related services	As described in Tender document.												
19. Tender document price	Tk. 1000.00 (Taka one thousand) only per set (non-refundable) by Pay Order/ Bank Draft from any schedule bank of Bangladesh in favor of Agrani Bank PLC., Head Office, Dhaka.												
20. Tender security money (Tk)	The amount of the Tender Security will be 10,000/- (ten thousand Taka only) in the form of Pay Order/ Bank Draft (refundable) from any scheduled bank of Bangladesh in favour of Agrani Bank PLC., Head Office, Dhaka.												

PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS

20. Name of official inviting tender	Md. Abdur Rahman
21. Designation of official inviting tender	Deputy General Manager
22. Address of official inviting tender	Agrani Bank PLC., Establishment & Engineering Division, Head Office (7th Floor), 9/D, Dilkusha, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka.
23. Contact details of official inviting tender	Deputy General Manager, Establishment & Engineering Division, Agrani Bank PLC., Head Office (7th Floor), 9/D, Dilkusha, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka. Tel: 02-223381674; e-mail: dgmeced@agranihank.org
24.	a. If it is not possible to receive/ open the tender on the schedule date & time for any unavoidable circumstances the same will be received/open on the next working date at the same time & same venue. b. All submitted documents must be signed by the tenderer in every page of tender all original/ photocopy must be attested as per prevailing Laws & Rules. c. If the Tenderer submits any false/ incorrect or forged certificate, action may be taken as per PPA-2006 and PPR-2008 and its amendments. d. This tender shall be governed by the PPR 2008 and its amendments. e. The procuring entity reserves the right to modify any information of the tender. It also reserves right to reject all Tenders prior to acceptance without assigning any reason. Agrani Bank PLC. shall not be under any obligation to accept the lowest tender.

GID-846

Md. Abdur Rahman
Deputy General Manager

Unlock export funds tied up in four banks

Any barrier to exporters' operations should be removed

We were worried to learn that a significant portion of the Tk 10,000 crore Export Facilitation Pre-Finance Fund (EFPF)—established by the Bangladesh Bank to help exporters finance raw material imports through the banking system—remains stuck in four crisis-hit banks: Islami Bank Bangladesh, Social Islami Bank, First Security Islami Bank, and Union Bank. According to a report in this daily, approximately Tk 3,035 crore remains unpaid to the central bank by these banks, which are struggling with severe liquidity shortages. This has made it difficult for other, sound banks to secure sufficient liquidity from the fund to lend to exporters for raw material purchases from foreign markets.

These troubled banks were previously controlled by the Chattogram-based S Alam Group, but following the political changeover on August 5, their boards have been restructured, removing S Alam's influence. Despite that, the banks continue to face a liquidity crisis that is affecting their depositors as well. Among them, only Islami Bank, which owes Tk 2,000 crore, is in a better state now, with the central bank officials optimistic that it may be able to repay its portion by December as its account balance improves.

The regulator introduced the EFPF in January last year to support export industries amid a persistent foreign currency crisis. Since then, it disbursed Tk 7,900 crore among various banks, while recovering Tk 3,200 crore in principal. Currently, members of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA), Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA), and B and C type industries in export processing zones (EPZs) are eligible for financing from the fund. Each borrower can secure up to Tk 200 crore through banks which are required to pay it back in six months. Without timely repayments by the banks, the fund cannot function as intended as this creates an artificial shortage of financing.

It is, therefore, important that the Bangladesh Bank takes measures to unlock the EFPF capital tied up in the troubled banks. One approach could be to facilitate strategic repayment arrangements, backed by partial guarantees, to ensure that the banks can gradually repay their dues while minimising disruption to exporters. It is equally important for the regulator to enforce tighter oversight over EFPF distribution to prevent future lapses, ensuring that the fund remains accessible only to responsible banks. Exporters are the backbone of our economy, contributing billions in foreign earnings and employing millions. Any barrier to their operations must be removed.

Policy shift necessary to solve gas crisis

Gas shortages hitting our industries hard

We are concerned about the acute gas crisis that has hit the country hard in recent times. While it has severely affected the industrial sector, the situation is also dire for households and filling stations in Dhaka and across the country, causing public sufferings. The condition of the industrial sector is particularly alarming, with textile and other factories being forced to reduce their production. The crisis is said to be increasingly severe in Gazipur, Narayanganj, Savar, Chattogram and Narsingdi.

Reportedly, our daily gas deficit is approximately 1.35 billion cubic feet, with industries receiving 30 percent less gas than their demand. Industry owners say they are having to run factories at additional costs for using alternative energy sources. If the situation persists, industrial production will face a severe crisis, potentially leading to many factory shutdowns. And if factories close or cannot pay salaries, a large number of workers may lose their income.

Among the affected industries, the textile sector is perhaps the most vulnerable, with its production down by 65 percent compared to the capacity. In many factories, gas pressure remains low or absent throughout the day, hindering production, while reliance on diesel instead of gas only inflates production costs. In Chattogram, the production of steel, cement, and glass is also being hampered by the gas crisis. Gas-based power plants are also struggling to generate electricity due to supply shortages. These plants require 1.2 billion cubic feet of gas daily to maintain normal electricity supply in the country, but they are currently receiving only about 920 million cubic feet.

The question is: why has the situation reached this critical point? Clearly, the previous government's flawed energy policy is to blame. The Awami League government focused heavily on importing LNG while overlooking exploration of domestic gas reserves, despite its significant potential. On the one hand, this negligence has led to reduced gas production; on the other hand, the demand for gas has increased, culminating in this acute crisis. Even importing adequate LNG has become difficult due to the dollar crisis. Many factories have already closed down due to these problems, and many owners are also contemplating keeping their operations shut, as remaining open leads only to losses.

Therefore, the government must urgently devise a solution to ensure adequate gas supply to the industries and households. For a long-term resolution, it needs to revise the energy policy, prioritising the exploration of domestic gas sources and reducing its over-dependence on imports.

CORRIGENDUM

In the article titled "An effective credit rating system could be a real game-changer," published by *The Daily Star* on October 31, 2024, the Credit Rating Agency of Bangladesh (CRAB) was incorrectly described as a regulatory body and a credit information provider, which it is not. We apologise for the error.

INTERNATIONAL DAY TO END IMPUNITY FOR CRIMES AGAINST JOURNALISTS

A moment for self-reflection



A CLOSER LOOK

Tasneem Tayeb
is a Bangladesh-based writer. Her X handle is @tasneem_tayeb.

TASNEEM TAYEB

Revolutionary or not, transitions are messy. In Bangladesh, the recent political upheaval has revealed just how deeply entrenched the challenges for the press have been. But it gives us pause to face a harder truth: that the journalist community must take responsibility for its role in a media landscape shaped by fear, restriction and, at times, self-censorship. As we mark the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists, this is an opportunity to not only demand justice for the crimes and repression they suffered, but also recognise where journalists have faltered—and where they must do better.

During the Awami League's tenure, the country witnessed escalating restrictions on freedom of speech and a constriction of press freedom. Intimidation, threats and lawsuits became common tools used to stifle dissent, yet these actions did not go unchecked by the media. However, too often, journalists and media institutions were hesitant to confront these injustices outright. Self-censorship—whether to avoid legal repercussions, or retain access to those in power, or simply out of fear—crept into the daily practice of journalism, subtly diluting the role of the press as a check on power. By choosing silence at critical moments or opting for softened critiques, journalism lost much of its power to rally people around the truth, to protect their right to know and, in essence, to protect democracy.

Today, as Bangladesh enters a new phase, our responsibility to confront this culture of silence and promote the practice of speaking fearlessly has never been greater. In the days following the Awami League's fall, journalists have been attacked, threatened and sued in various areas. On August 14, the Chittagong Press Club was stormed, injuring at least 20 journalists. Three days later, two Somoy TV journalists were beaten during protests in Sylhet. Several media houses were attacked



FILE VISUAL: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

and vandalised. These incidents, along with the ongoing assaults and arrests (at times in cases that look suspicious at best), remind us that the cost of pursuing truth can be high, especially in times of political transition.

It is a shame that even as we have ousted a fascist regime after a decade and a half of persecution, coercion and suppression, we have not been able to create a conducive environment where journalists can go about doing their work without fear or favour. Even today, we see journalists being assaulted by criminals, harassed or threatened on social media, or put behind bars, while known criminals are getting out on bail. In the aftermath of August 5, many journalists have remained missing in action. Have they gone into hiding? If yes, why? If not, have they been subjected to enforced silence? We do not know the answer, but this

By doing that, they can reinforce the standards of integrity, courage and transparency that are the cornerstones of a democratic press.

We must remember that journalists are more than just enablers of the fourth estate; they are essentially historians in their own right—recording facts, documenting truth for the future generations to study, and analysing the past. But if we can't be vocal when we should raise our voice, or if we opt for vague narratives when we should point to specifics, we would essentially be playing a role in the distortion of history that our children will identify with us and our actions.

International organisations, including the IFJ, BMSF, and the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, are all calling for journalists' safety and accountability for crimes against the press, but these

various key sectors. This commission must prioritise the need to uphold the freedom of the press and the security of journalists, so they are able to do their job without fear of unjust repercussions from those with influence.

Transitions, as I already said, are indeed messy, but they bring opportunities for change. Our nation deserves a press that does more than report; it deserves a press that illuminates, empowers, and inspires. To rebuild the trust that has been eroded over the years, journalists must now be part of the solution, creating a culture where speaking truth to power is the expectation, not the exception.

The time for action is now. Let us confront our past shortcomings and rise to the challenge ahead. The people of Bangladesh deserve better journalism, and we owe it to them to be fearless in this pursuit.

COP29 and the stakes for Bangladesh



Mizan R Khan
is a board member at Scientific Council of COP29 Presidency, visiting scholar at Brown University, and technical lead at LDC Universities Consortium on Climate Change (LUCCC).

MIZAN R KHAN

The 29th Conference of Parties (COP29) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) will be hosted by Azerbaijan, beginning on November 11. We all understand that COP29 will mainly focus on climate finance. There are reasons for this: no substantive progress has been achieved so far, despite having 11 so-called expert dialogues for the last three-plus years. A new collective quantified goal (NCQG), keeping the long-pledged \$100 billion as the floor, is to be agreed by and during COP29. But no silver lining is yet in sight.

The second issue of urgency at COP29 relates to completing the operationalisation of Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, which is about emission reduction through market and non-market mechanisms. Article 6 allows parties to voluntarily enter bilateral or multilateral cooperation as buyers and sellers to implement their nationally determined contributions (NDCs). Such cooperation can take three forms: cooperative approaches that involve the use of internationally transferred mitigation outcomes (ITMO, Article 6.2) in a decentralised manner; use of a centralised mechanism to contribute to GHG mitigation (Article 6.4), which replaces the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) under the Kyoto Protocol (both mechanisms must ensure environmental integrity through robust accounting and corresponding adjustments by both buyers and sellers); and non-market

approaches (NMAs), under which developing countries can mobilise finance through performance-based implementation of emission reduction policies and programmes, under Article 6.8.

COP26 adopted guidance on cooperative approaches under Article 6.2; rules, modalities and procedures (RMPs) for Article 6.4; and a work programme on NMAs under Article 6.8. However, COPs 27 and 28 failed to complete the operationalisation of Article 6.2 and 6.4 because of differences among parties about the level of transparency and coverage of areas for trading. For example, no decision could be reached yet on the agreed electronic platform (AEP) under Article 6.2. The Azeri Presidency appears determined to complete the process.

So, it is time for Bangladesh to consider a strategy of negotiation on Article 6. Experience in emissions trading shows Bangladesh as a front-runner among the LDCs, which could mobilise projects under both the Kyoto Protocol and the voluntary carbon market (VCM), which allows industrial country emitters to offset their emissions by purchasing reduction units, called certified emission reduction (CER) from projects in developing countries. The projects in Bangladesh, similar to other LDCs in some regards, involved brick kilns, waste management, clean cooking, control of methane and leakage of gas, and others. Reports

show that, unlike in the CDM where LDCs were very marginal—only three percent share of global CERs—they command 37 percent of market share when it comes to VCM.

Why is there this front-runner status of LDCs in VCM? First, sellers from LDCs are induced for short-term gains, as buyers from developed countries are out to get cheap harvest from the LDCs, which are easy to identify and quantify. This will leave for them the higher cost mitigation options in the future. Second, the distribution of benefits is unequal between buyers and sellers, with a layer of intermediaries like project developers, brokers, resellers, funders and consultants creaming off the major share. Third, the process is opaque in terms transparency about who gets what and how much. This was the reason why no consensus on AEP under Article 6.2 could be reached yet. Still, many LDCs entered into such unequal exchanges based on inadequately informed decisions due to weak institutional and individual capacities and knowledge. But emissions trading is perhaps the most complex, technical and knowledge-intensive area.

In actuality, the largely opaque carbon market inhibits a realistic assessment of resources, transferred so far to the LDCs including Bangladesh. A Carbon Market Watch report indicates the market value of LDCs from emissions trading amounted to around \$400 million in 2023, where the bulk of projects has been clean cook stoves. But in other developing countries, renewable energy, wind power in particular, formed a major share of the VCM market.

Therefore, the mobilisation potential of finance under carbon market is measly compared to other flows such as overseas development aid (ODA).

There could be other negatives

in carbon trading as well, affecting the LDCs. Investment in mitigation, which is already more than adaptation even in LDCs, may create additional incentive for buyer countries to further redirect ODA towards Article 6.2 activities, scaling their relabelling as climate finance in coming years. Also, the exemption of five percent of levy from projects under Article 6.4 in the LDCs and SIDS (Small Island Developing States) may be viewed as an additional contribution of donors for adaptation. This might be true only if such exempted levies are deposited directly into their national adaptation funding mechanisms. But, participation in carbon markets may contribute better to structural transformation of our economies if more projects are initiated in renewable energy and energy efficiency areas.

It is encouraging that in late June this year, the Bangladesh government issued a notification for establishing a National Designated Authority (NDA) on Article 6, to develop the required policy-institutional framework and build capacity for carbon pricing and emissions trading. Additionally, there are a number of projects, such as the joint crediting mechanism, with Japan or the World Bank supported Partnership for Market Implementation. These projects will contribute to a learning by doing process as well.

So, my final suggestion is to have a cautionary approach, with a "wait and see" policy. Negotiations on Article 6 are not yet complete. Currently, the average price per CER (one metric tonne) is below \$10. Once Article 6 is fully operationalised, demand for CERs may push the price up by several times. In the meantime, our newly established NDA could design appropriate frameworks and build capacity, while the private sector may lead in project development with external partners.

Footsteps to the future

Winning the second SAFF Championship should open more doors for Bangladeshi women footballers



Raiyan Binte Rafiq
is a sports columnist for The Daily Star. She is currently pursuing an LLM, while freelancing for INDIVISA. She also oversees recruitment at Next Level Sports Management based in Bangladesh.

RAIYAN BINTE RAFIQ

Till the 80th minute, the scores were tied at a goal each. Both Bangladesh and Nepal fought brilliantly till that point; however, after Nepal equalised, they began to pose more of a threat in the attacking third. Two attacks from Sabitra Bhandari exposed Bangladesh's deteriorating physicality, but somehow they held on. Then, a quick throw-in changed everything.

Ritu Porna Chakma received the ball well on the far left, quickly manoeuvring past the Nepali defender before lopping it over three players and the keeper. When the shot left her foot, it felt like time had stopped. It sailed past Anjila Subba and beyond her reach, hitting the back of the net. The entire stadium fell silent, except for the dugout of the visiting team. There it was, the winning goal, and it was a spectacular one.

Bangladesh came into the SAFF Women's Championship as the defending champions. After drawing with Pakistan, they convincingly defeated India, SAFF's powerhouse, with a scoreline of 3-1. In the semifinals, Tohura Khatun's hatrick and Sabina Khatun's brace secured a resounding 7-1 win, setting up a rematch of the previous edition's final against host Nepal.

Aside from India, no other team has won the competition, let alone twice. This victory comes at a critical time as Bangladesh undergoes a political and systemic reform. With a young leader, Asif Mahmud, at the forefront as the youth and sports adviser on the interim government, every major win strengthens the case for giving female athletes the respect and budget they deserve in order to progress their development.

Either way, our women's team really don't need more proof of their worth. Year after year, they have shown resilience and talent. But this is no perfectly oiled machine. There are many discrepancies, shortfalls, and missed opportunities to capitalise on growth. These stem from the Bangladesh Football Federation's failure to function effectively due to systemic corruption.

In 2022, when the women's team became champions for the first time, they were promised improvements and fair resource allocation. But those promises were broken, and the resources never arrived. When the team had a chance to play in the Olympic

qualifiers, Abu Nayeem Shohag, the former general secretary of BFF, claimed there was not enough budget for their travels to Myanmar. It was disheartening that in a country with so few sporting achievements, we were willing to forgo the of these due to women

mismanaged funds. Worse still, in 2023, FIFA banned Abu Nayeem Shohag and others for illegal conduct, failing to fulfil their duties, and falsifying accounts. The question remains: did these officials feel no shame when they denied the women's team the opportunity due to the federation's own dishonesty? Is our women's team really so low in priority that they received no respect or empathy for their hard work?

There is no denying that our current crop of players is generational in South Asia, and with a little support, they have limitless potential. The general mindset on women's football has evolved in the region as well. In contrast to 20 years ago, when some people, on the grounds of religion, protested against the women's team playing against a team from West Bengal, there is now a genuine appreciation and pride.

Another reason this final was important

is because it demonstrated the collective power of a united country. Several players come from Indigenous backgrounds, and it is vital to remember that the minority communities contribute immensely to the country. That's perhaps why Ritu's celebration felt appropriate. Her "shush" to the crowd could easily be interpreted as a response to those who fail to see their value. Without them, this final might have easily gone Nepal's way.

This championship gives us a chance to start anew and improve all aspects of women's sports, ensuring that no community gets left behind.

But how do we progress? What is the next step to ensure that we don't fall into the same broken path again? First, we need to pay these players the unpaid

salary they are owed. Yes, Bangladesh can boast of being a pioneer in women's sports with the highest player wages in South Asia, but if they are not paid, what is that really worth? Fortunately, the government has said steps are being taken to clear the dues. Second, we need to rethink the system of awarding large lump sums only when players win major tournaments. Bonuses are fine and justified, but a steady, systematic funding process is essential. This would allow growth in the game, better infrastructure, and improved academies to create a sustainable path to professional development. Most importantly, we need experienced coaches in the subdivisions of the sport, who can develop the different areas of a team. Organising more international friendlies is equally essential. We have barely played any international matches since 2022, and this lack of exposure shows when we face teams beyond South Asia.

There is much to be done if we want to elevate our women's team to the next stage. Systemic changes in BFF's fund management, resource allocation, and transparency are essential for developing our sporting department. Far too many talented youth have abandoned their dreams, and too many players are tired of being failed by the system. Unless we follow through on our promises, progress will remain elusive. Our women's team has never deserved to be a footnote; it's time we gave them a permanent place in the headlines.

And to the Bangladesh women's team and staff members: thank you for making us dream again.



After winning the SAFF Women's Championship for the second consecutive time, Bangladesh women's football team don't really need more proof of their worth.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Jack and the Beanstalk revisited



BLOWIN' IN THE WIND

Dr Shamsad Mortuza
is professor of English at Dhaka University.

SHAMSAD MORTUZA

There was this picture of a majestic swan held by a young boy who raided Gono Bhaban on the day of the fall of the Awami League regime. The boy was among the many enthusiasts who stormed the former prime minister's residence—maybe out of curiosity or out of the passion to collect a memento of the day in which our political history changed forever. I write "forever" with a pinch of caution, as one lesson we have learnt recently is that nothing lasts forever. Then again, there are situations in life that recur in history and form a pattern in our collective consciousness.

The reference to the boy with the swan came up in my folklore class recently. Didn't the picture remind us of Jack and the Beanstalk? It is the story in which a naive English boy sells his cow to a trickster for some magical beans. The beans sprout to reach the sky, and the boy climbs up the beanstalk through the clouds to enter the land of the giants. He kills a giant and steals his goose that lays golden eggs. The story disguises colonialism. It glorifies the adventurism of White men and normalises their pillage and pillering. Shakespeare used the famous rhyme, "Fee-fi-fo-fum/I smell the bones of an Englishman," in his play *King Lear*, highlighting the story's Englishness. Norse mythology is the source of one version of the story, which involves giant plants and giant-slaying, while various English colonies in Australia and the Caribbean contain other versions, making the story universal.

In contrast, the boy with the former prime minister's swan has a rather local and factual heritage, unless we think of him as one of the actors who slay the metaphorical giants of fascism. He was one of those who stole frozen fish from the freezer, chased deer in the garden, snatched rabbits from the cage. The list goes on. On that day, a defiant reclaiming of ownership marked the seizure of the

then PM's personal property. Narratives clashed to establish who the bigger thief was. Even when ordinary citizens intervened to stop some of the looters, the perpetrators responded by asking, "Where were you in the last 15 years when the country was being plundered?" A valid question. We were part of a system where the only means of punishing a politician's wrongdoings was through the national election. We lost that opportunity as there was no democratic method to intervene and penalise the wrongdoers. The mass uprising



VISUAL: ALIZA RAHMAN

was, therefore, inevitable. Change was achieved through numerous sacrifices. However, we are finding changemakers in different roles, prompting us to re-examine some of the fundamental cultural and moral questions.

These issues pertain to the significant social fragmentation and self-serving ambitions prevalent in our contemporary society. Parallels between our present climate and the enduring themes of our folk culture are unmistakable. The folk tales, riddles and rhymes that are passed down generations depict a world where the clever triumph over the righteous

and deception, rather than honour, often leads to success. Is it possible that, layered in our collective psyche, we nurture secret admiration for these cultural heroes who don't necessarily conform to social norms? Is it possible to consider our present political climate as an extension of our ancient legacy?

The way the former prime minister left the scene serves as a reminder of *Tonatuni* (tailorbird), who gathered all the ingredients to make a cake and consumed it all by themselves. The jungle animals were invited to celebrate; they assumed they would receive their fair share of the cake. When they arrived at the empty house, all they found were a few relics. I always questioned the rationale behind teaching our young learners the *Tonatuni* story, which extols the cunning of tricksters who prioritise wit and cunning over fairness or justice. After August 5, I knew this story had prepared us for history.

We grew up with many such stories,

folklore reveals certain shared symbols and archetypes that connect to our collective unconscious. These animals or similar figures rely on their cunningness to outwit stronger opponents.

The Native American prairie dog Coyote, for instance, uses trickery to teach moral lessons to his clan. His misadventures often cause chaos, but they chart human values. These characters, spanning continents and centuries, all share a single trait: they break the rules and upend established norms with impunity. The boy with the swan offered an epiphanic moment: a part of us, inherited through such tales and lore, harbours an instinctive desire for rule-breaking, and a willingness to overlook moral ambiguity if it means personal gain. Tales of *sheyal mama* (Uncle Fox) or *boka kumir* (the Foolish Crocodile) tap into a side of our psyche that perhaps senses the power dynamics in society—the need to outwit others to survive, a sentiment that is echoed in our modern culture's often uncritical acceptance of self-promotion and individualism at any cost. Let's not forget that, as a race, we inherit the notorious legacy of thuggery. English reformer Lord Bentick strongly stalled the rampant thugs of Bengal, who used scarves to strangle their victims. The gangs of Mohammadpur live up to the old reputation of thugs. We need the intervention of reformers to put a stop to this.

Political and criminal agents often act as "disrupters," implying that disruption, even in a ruthless or unethical way, is a virtue. It's not surprising that there is a growing culture of disrupters in our educational institutions. Students, frustrated with a lack of faith in the system, are taking matters into their own hands, seeking immediate satisfaction rather than long-term ethical grounding. Nobody wants failure. Everyone seeks "auto pass" without any opposition. It is as if their survival depends on the annihilation of the other. Rather than liberating the swan from the giant's grasp, they aim to take advantage of it, much like Jack in the fairytale. Rather than ignoring this tendency in our collective psyche, perhaps it's time we confronted it, questioned its role in our society, and, most importantly, sought ways to transform these energies into forces that serve the common good.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Falafel holder
- 5 Go by
- 9 Plains grazers
- 10 Hand costs
- 12 Bay
- 13 Kick off
- 14 Aiming to lose
- 16 2016 Olympics host
- 17 Top rating
- 18 Running wild
- 20 Rehab target
- 22 Not active
- 23 Tear into tatters
- 25 Crimson Tide, for short
- 28 Regardless
- 32 Just for kicks
- 34 Be in the red
- 35 Harry's friend
- 36 Succeeding
- 38 Some exams
- 40 Was frugal
- 41 Bother
- 42 Undoes a dele
- 43 Piano parts

DOWN

- 1 Beaten on the mat
- 2 Vacation spot
- 3 — the line (obeyed)
- 4 Ohio college
- 5 Elbows on the table
- 6 Hill builder
- 7 Was rude, in a way
- 8 Continuing story
- 9 Flora and fauna
- 11 Put away
- 15 Go aboard
- 19 Orderly
- 21 Part of a Caesar quote
- 24 As a group
- 25 Fifth element
- 26 Hooded jacket
- 27 Get by
- 29 Coolidge's successor
- 30 Young hooters
- 31 Fuses
- 33 Party VIPs
- 37 Pro —
- 39 Place down



YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS



WRITE FOR US. SEND US YOUR OPINION PIECES TO dsopinion@gmail.com.

EASTERN LADAKH Coordinated patrolling by India, China troops begins

THE HINDU ONLINE

The coordinated patrolling by the armies of India and China has started in Demchok, Army sources said yesterday. Patrolling in Depsang will also commence soon, the source confirmed.

The development comes after the completion of disengagement in both areas in Eastern Ladakh on Wednesday. It marked the completion of disengagement from all the friction points of the stand-off that began in May 2020.

Troops of India and China exchanged sweets at several border points along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) on the occasion of Diwali on Thursday. "The exchange took place at five Border Personnel



Meeting (BPM) points along the LAC," an Army source told PTI.

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said on October 21 in Delhi that an agreement was finalised between India and China following negotiations over the past several weeks and that it would lead to a resolution of the issues that arose in 2020.

The agreement was firmed up on patrolling and disengagement of troops along the LAC in eastern Ladakh, a breakthrough to end the over four-year standoff.

Four years ago, 20 Indian and four Chinese soldiers were killed during border clashes. The two sides then stopped patrolling several points on the border in Ladakh to avoid new confrontations, while moving tens of thousands of new troops and military equipment closer to the freezing mountainous region, reports Reuters.

The thaw is expected to boost economic ties that were hurt by the border tensions, although Indian officials said New Delhi would move cautiously given the trust deficit that has built up.



Firefighters pump out the floodwater from a tunnel where vehicles are piled up, after heavy rains in Alfafar, in Valencia, Spain yesterday. Spain sent more troops to help search for dozens of people still missing after devastating floods that have killed 205 people, with hopes of finding survivors fading three days after the disaster.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Israel pounds south Beirut with powerful strikes

REUTERS, Beirut

Israel pounded Beirut's southern suburbs with a series of powerful airstrikes early yesterday morning after issuing evacuation orders to residents, in the first such strikes in days targeting the dense urban area, Reuters witnesses said.

The Israeli military said it was targeting Hezbollah facilities and assets, an assertion that it has repeated over the course of dozens of strikes over more than a month in the neighbourhood where the Iran-backed group holds sway.

Thousands of Lebanese fled the southern suburbs after fresh Israeli evacuation orders. The strikes followed a renewed but as yet of fruitless bout of US-led diplomacy aimed at getting a ceasefire in Gaza and Lebanon to stop over a year of fighting between Israel and Iran-backed groups Hamas and Hezbollah.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken

said on Thursday that Israel and Lebanon were moving toward understandings on what is required for implementing a long-violated UN resolution, 1701, that would be the basis for ending the current conflict.

But Lebanon's Prime Minister Najib

⌕

Strikes suggest Israel's 'rejection' of truce: Lebanon

⌕

Death toll in Lebanon rises to 1,829

Mikati yesterday criticised Israel's "expansion" of its attacks on his country, saying they indicated a rejection of efforts to broker a truce after more than a month of war.

Four Thai nationals were killed and one was injured by rocket fire near the town of Metula, close to the border

between Lebanon and Israel, Thai Foreign Minister Maris Sangiampongsa posted on the social media platform X yesterday.

Since fighting in Lebanon escalated on September 23, after tit-for-tat cross-border exchanges which Hezbollah said were in support of Hamas, the war has killed at least 1,829 people in Lebanon, according to the health ministry figures.

The United Nations children's agency Unicef said Thursday that the war has caused the death of a least one child per day and wounded an average of 10 daily since October 4. Israel's military says 37 soldiers have been killed in Lebanon since ground operations began on September 30.

Lebanon's National News Agency (NNA) said the Israeli army carried out strikes on east Lebanon's main city of Baalbek on Thursday, two hours after it issued an evacuation order.

US PRESIDENTIAL RACE

High early voter turnout gives both sides hope

AFP, Washington

More than 62 million US voters have already cast their ballots in the 2024 election, breaking records in some states and leading both sides to hope it gives them an edge -- even as experts warn the data is difficult to interpret.

Opinion polls show Democrat Kamala Harris and Republican Donald Trump running neck-and-neck, including in the seven battleground states likely to decide the national vote.

Harris's campaign has encouraged early voting, with her running mate Tim Walz, outgoing President Joe Biden and former president Barack Obama all having already cast their ballots.

Trump had earlier cast skepticism -- without proof -- over the fairness of early voting, but has since embraced it, encouraging his supporters to cast ballots whenever suits them.

As of Thursday, at least 62.7 million people had cast votes early, accounting for almost 40 percent of the total vote count in 2020.

In Georgia, for example, more than 3.5 million people had voted, or 45 percent of registered voters -- a record, according to Republican Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger.

He added that he expected up to 70 percent of Georgians to vote early in this election.

US, Moscow on 'brink' of direct conflict: Lavrov

AFP, Ankara

The United States and Russia are very close to engaging in "direct military conflict," Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov warned in an interview published yesterday in a Turkey daily, just days ahead of a US presidential election.

"Under the current president (Joe Biden), who has taken the downward spiral of Russophobia in the US to its logical conclusion, our countries are on the brink of direct military conflict," he told the Hurriyet daily, without elaborating.

Asked about next week's US election pitting former Republican president Donald Trump against Democratic nominee Kamala Harris, Lavrov said the outcome would make little difference to Russia.

"We have no preference. When the Trump administration was in power, it adopted the highest number of anti-Russian sanctions compared to its predecessors," he said.

"No matter who wins the elections, we don't think the United States' anti-Russian bent can change," he added.

Time for girls

FROM PAGE 10

Cricket Board (BCB) also announced a reward of Tk 20 lakh.

The felicitation of the champions is still far from over as they are scheduled to meet with Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus at his Jamuna residence at 11:00 AM today.

But even amidst this outpouring of appreciation from all corners, Sabina, who has led the side in both championship-winning campaigns, had an eye on the future.

Sabina strongly feels that the time has come for Bangladeshi players to get a taste of the European club scene and wants the federation's help to make it happen.

"We cannot afford to lag behind anymore," Sabina told the media at the BFF headquarters yesterday. "It's time for the girls to go beyond South Asia. I have a good rapport with the Pakistan captain. She told me that many of us have the capability to play for European clubs. I would like to draw the federation's attention to this matter."

The entire country had similarly rejoiced after they had won their maiden SAFF title back in 2022 also in Nepal, but the enthusiasm fizzled out soon after.

The erstwhile BFF president Kazi Salahuddin had made many lofty promises to the players, most of which he could not keep as the federation seemingly lacked the desire to help take this talented group of players to the next level.

Salahuddin's 16-year tenure as BFF president has ended now and Tabitha Awal was recently elected as his successor.

Sabina hopes that Tabitha, who is currently in South Korea for an AFC event, will be able to meet the many requirements of the players and help them take the next step.

"There are definitely things that we want [from the new BFF president]. We want our salaries to be increased, to get our salaries in a timely manner. We want the women's league to take place regularly and want the season to last longer. We want regular matches. Also, we want to play more international matches.

"I have seen many of his [Tabitha's] interviews in which he spoke about the development of women's football. He spoke about working separately on women's football. I hope that he can fulfil our financial and other related demands," she added.

According to Sabina, their dream of "elevating" to the Asian level will only turn into reality with proper assistance and guidance from the country's football authorities.

Lawyers worried

FROM PAGE 10

so that no lawyer could represent the accused.

However, pro-BNP lawyers denied all these allegations.

Legal professionals and rights activists have expressed concerns about these confrontations, calling for increased security on the court premises to prevent any recurrence.

According to lawyers, many well-known pro-AL attorneys went into hiding after the fall of Hasina's regime, while some others did not dare to defend the arrested party leaders in courts, fearing reprisal.

Lawyer Sheikh Farid, who represented the accused AL leaders in the CMM court, also came under an attack. Farid and Morshed were among only six or seven advocates defending the accused in the court.

As Farid exited the CMM court building on October 17, a group of pro-BNP lawyers assaulted him, kicking and punching him even after he fell to the ground.

"We have the right to defend our clients in court. But we are being harassed and assaulted for participating in court proceedings," Farid told The Daily Star.

On October 7, former AL minister Saber Hossain Chowdhury was attacked on the Dhaka court premises. At least three people punched Saber as he was being taken to the CMM court lockup. Eggs were also thrown at him. Several police personnel were seen pushing the attackers away.

AHM Shamsuddin Choudhury, a former judge of the Supreme Court's Appellate Division, was produced before a Sylhet court on August 24, a day after his arrest from a bordering area.

As he got off a police vehicle, a group of people struck on his head, and some even threw shoes at him. He was beaten and the helmet provided by the police for his protection was removed.

The former SC judge had to undergo a surgery at Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital for injuries to his left scrotum.

Under the law, it is the duty of the police to safeguard individuals in their custody, but it appears that law enforcers have failed to fulfil this obligation.

Section 328 (a) of the Police

Regulation reads, "The officer-in-charge of a police station or post shall be responsible for the safe custody of all prisoners brought to the station or post."

Supreme Court lawyer Jyotirmoy Barua said while attacks on lawyers or accused happened in the past on the court premises, such incidents have significantly risen recently. He emphasised the need for immediate action to prevent such incidents.

"A lawyer cannot physically or verbally assault his colleagues for defending a client. This is a gross violation of their professional conduct," he told The Daily Star on October 29.

"The legal principle that everyone is presumed innocent until proven guilty must be upheld; otherwise, these troubling incidents will persist," he added.

Noted human rights activist Nur Khan Liton said, "It is the duty of the law enforcers to ensure safety of the individuals in their custody, and any assault on an accused under such protection is a clear violation of human rights."

The state has a responsibility to act in this regard, he said.

"The saddest thing is that some of the attackers are lawyers themselves. This kind of behaviour is unacceptable in a civilised society."

Terming such attacks "new form of mob justice", Nur Khan said the attackers must be brought to book.

Tareq Zubayer, deputy commissioner (prosecution division) of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said as the court police personnel are unarmed, they formed human shield on the court premises and sought help from the DMP's Lalbagh Division to ensure security of the accused.

"We are deploying a large number of police personnel for the security of the accused. They are also put on helmets and bulletproof vests," he said.

About the recent attacks on some lawyers by their colleagues, Tareq said they can lodge complaints with the Bar council in connection with those incidents.

Omar Faruq Faruqi, a top leader of a pro-BNP lawyers' platform, and also the Dhaka metropolitan public prosecutor, said none of their fellow lawyers were involved in assaulting the accused or creating chaos.

Polybag producers

FROM PAGE 2

that strict actions would be taken if polythene bags are found during future inspections, according to a media release from the ministry.

Instructions have been issued to deputy commissioners and DoE field officers in all districts to ensure compliance.

Although mobile courts were not being operated yesterday and today due to the weekend, monitoring would continue, Tapan said.

He called for public cooperation in eliminating polythene bag use, the press release said.

Joint Secretary Mohammad Rezaul Karim, Deputy Secretary Rubina Ferdousi, DoE directors Rajinara Begum and Mohammad Masud Hasan Patwari, and the officials concerned were also present.

3 Jubo Dal men

FROM PAGE 10

Lalmonirhat district unit and convener of its Lalmonirhat Municipality unit; Mominul Islam Momin, joint convener of the municipality unit; and Sumon Mia, organising secretary of Ward 7 Jubo Dal.

According to BNP sources, the three leaders were detained by the army on Wednesday noon for their alleged involvement in tender manipulation at Lalmonirhat Sadar Hospital.

Mominul and Sumon were released on the spot, while Jahangir was handed over to Lalmonirhat Sadar Police Station and later released the same night.

Minhajul said Jubo Dal central committee president and general secretary ordered the expulsions, stripping the local leaders of all positions, including primary membership.

5 schoolchildren

FROM PAGE 10

Although cases dropped in 2023 to six, from 20 in 2022, the prime minister's office says there are currently 41 active cases in Pakistan.

Pakistan and Afghanistan remain the only countries where polio is endemic. Islamist militants have previously targeted polio teams, spreading false conspiracy theories that the vaccinations are part of a Western sterilization program.

Adani halves power supply to Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 10

The official added that they had submitted last week's payment to Krishi Bank as well, but the bank failed to open a letter of credit against the payment due to a dollar shortage.

About the additional payment, he said, when the PDB raised a question on the coal pricing in February last year, they signed a supplementary deal. The deal obliged Adani to quote coal prices less than the rates charged by the other coal-fired power plants, such as Payra and Rampal.

After the tenure of the one-year supplementary deal, Adani again started charging as per the PPA. According to the PPA, coal prices are calculated based on the average price of the Indonesian coal index and the Australian Newcastle index, which increases the prices.

The Adani letter said the company once again requested PDB to expedite payments of "material defaults" no later than October 30.

It said Adani revised the deadline for the suspension of power supply to October 30 from October 20 in response to a PDB letter on October

17, which confirmed that the Krishi Bank agreed to issue LC within 10 business days.

"We reiterate that non-submission of LCs and non-payment of outstanding amount within due date are the material defaults of PDB under the PPA, which has adversely affected the performance of APJL to supply power to PDB," it said.

"We have been facing tremendous difficulties in managing working capital for making payment to coal suppliers and operations and maintenance contractors on account of huge outstanding payments from the PDB and the non-availability of LC, as well as our Lenders having withdrawn the working capital support," the letter added.

Adani said that during the period of suspension of supply, the company reserves its right to recover capacity payments under Section 13.2(l) of the PPA.

Adani has been pressing the interim government to pay the dues since they took charge. Gautam Adani, chairman of Adani Group, also wrote to Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus.

Russia hands former US consulate employee nearly 5-year jail term

AFP, Moscow

A Russian former employee of the US consulate in Russia's Far Eastern city of Vladivostok has been sentenced to four years and ten months in prison for "secret collaboration with a foreign state", Russian agencies said yesterday.

Robert Shonov worked for more than 25 years for the US consulate until 2021, when Moscow imposed restrictions on local staff working for foreign missions.

Afterward, he worked as a private contractor compiling press accounts from publicly accessible Russian media, according to the US State Department.

He was arrested in 2023 on suspicion of passing secret information about Russia's war in Ukraine to the United States in exchange for money.

According to the judgement published on the website of Primorye's regional court, 400,000 roubles (€4,000) and an electronic device were seized.

In September 2023, Russia also expelled two US diplomats it accused of acting as liaison agents for Shonov.

The US State Department said that Shonov worked as a private contractor compiling press accounts from publicly accessible Russian media, "in strict compliance with Russia's laws and regulations".

What next for BANGLADESH'S GOLDEN GIRLS?

ASHFAQ-UL-ALAM

On Thursday, the champion Bangladesh team received a well-deserved hero's welcome after successfully defending their SAFF Women's Championship title the previous day against the hosts in Nepal.

After landing in Dhaka, Bangladesh's golden girls were adorned with flower garlands, paraded around the city in a specially-made open-top bus with thousands cheering them on from the streets before being greeted with sweets at the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) headquarters.

One must wonder, while soaking in the outpour of love from their countrymen in the streets of Dhaka, did a sense of Déjà vu creep into the minds of some of the girls.

Sabina Khatun, for example, who has led the team to the title in both editions, must remember how they had become the toast of the country after bringing home the title in 2022 by beating the same opponents on the same ground.

The procession of felicitation continued for weeks, with each player receiving grand reception upon returning to their respective communities. The praises kept coming in from all corners and various organisations announced financial rewards for the champion team.

The former BFF president Kazi Salahuddin made many promises

to the victorious players and why wouldn't he, as the SAFF triumph in 2022 was the crowning achievement of his 16-year tenure at the post.

It took some time, but eventually, the buzz wore off. The fans moved on, the media shifted their focus on to other things and the champion players returned to living and training at the BFF dormitory, away from all the limelight.

The next time the women's team featured in competitive football was almost 10



their belt since the SAFF triumph.

The team was set up for disaster and unsurprisingly finished bottom of their group, receiving an 8-0 drubbing by Japan and a 6-1 thrashing by Vietnam.

While the national team was sitting idle, the BFF devoted much of its attention to launching a franchise league for women's football, an idea that sputtered, coughed and finally died.

After achieving Bangladesh's biggest feat in football since the men's team won the SAFF Championship in 2003, Sabina and Co rightly demanded better wages which reportedly ranged from Tk 5000-20,000 at the time.

It took the federation almost 11 months to finally announce improved salaries for the players, with the wages ranging from Tk 20,000-50,000.

However, the BFF has also been

guilty of not clearing the dues of the players in time. Reportedly, players of the champion team are yet to receive their salaries for the months of September and October.

The women's league is also suffering from a lack of competition, as none of the premier division clubs in men's football form teams in the women's competition. Bashundhara Kings were the only exception for a few seasons, but they also left the league this year.

In less than two years, the optimism spurred by the triumph in Kathmandu had seemingly evaporated and an acceptance of mediocrity had crept in.

The 1-1 draw against Pakistan in the opening match did not spur any optimism and Monika Chakma saying after the match that new coach Peter Butler does not want to field senior players rang alarm bells of an impending disaster.

But like any feel-good sports movie, right when the chips were down and the team looked down and out for the count, they put aside whatever differences they had, came together and started on a path to resurgence.

It began with a 3-1 win over India,

followed by a 7-1 thumping of Bhutan in the semifinal and a hard-fought 2-1 win over Nepal in the final.

And just like that, Bangladesh's golden girls have done it again.

Winning the title back-to-back is definitive proof of Bangladesh being the best in women's football in South Asia at least for a few years.

However, while Bangladesh are languishing at 139th in the FIFA Women's Rankings, runners-up Nepal stand at 99th and semifinalists India are 68th.

The main reason behind this gulf is that Bangladesh don't play as many matches as the former two countries. Nepal, for example, took part in the West Asian Football Federation's Women's Championship in February this year as an invitee while Bangladesh were without any international action.

Still, the girls overcame the mounting odds and came out on top in a triumph that will go down as one of the greatest in Bangladesh's sporting history.

Right after the win over Nepal

in the final, the BFF's first order of business was preparing the open-top bus for celebration.

Celebrating this momentous occasion is all well and good, but once the euphoria over this incredible victory subsides, that's when the real task will begin for the newly elected BFF committee, led by president Tabith Awal.

Other than Sabina, all members of the champion team are in their 20s, and about to hit their prime. This is the opportune time to push this side and see how far they can go.

But if the federation remains content with being champions in



After this SAFF, we should no longer be stuck at the South Asian level. We need to elevate ourselves to the Asian level.

SABINA KHATUN, captain of Bangladesh women's football team.

a regional event that holds little importance in the global context, if the honchos don't dream of making a mark at the continental or global level, it would never come to be.

As they say, it's better to try and fail than to never try at all. This is the time for Bangladesh to try and climb up the ladder in women's football globally.

I WAS AIMING FOR GOAL Ritu Porna affirms about wonder strike

SPORTS REPORTER

In the 2022 edition of the SAFF Women's Championship, Ritu Porna Chakma came off the bench in all five of Bangladesh's matches and played mostly a secondary role in the country's maiden triumph at the regional football extravaganza.

But in 2024, Ritu was no longer at the backseat as the girl from Rangamati started in each of Bangladesh's four matches, made an impact in every game and scored one of the most memorable goals in the country's football history in the final against Nepal to seal back-to-back SAFF titles for the girls.

Her amazing left-footed strike that gave Bangladesh the decisive 2-1 lead was the talk of the final. The packed crowd at the Dasarath Rangasala Stadium in Kathmandu were left stunned and millions of TV viewers were perhaps in momentary disbelief after seeing Ritu curl the ball into the goal from such a tight angle.

There were doubts whether Ritu had actually intended to go for goal or if she was trying to whip a cross but misused it and the ball just curled away from the Nepal goalkeeper's reach and ended up in the back of the net.

Only Ritu can tell what her real intention was and the Dhaka University student cleared up all confusion yesterday by stating she was indeed going for goal.

"I just raised my head to see the Nepal post and then I took the shot for goal," Ritu told the reporters at the BFF House yesterday.

"I could not believe it myself but I was really happy to have struck the goal in that moment. I have since watched my goal more than 100 times."

Ritu hogged all spotlight throughout the tournament with her speed, skill and neat crossing from the left flank and was deservedly named the Most Valuable Player of the Tournament.

"I never thought I would be the best player of this edition because I played the last edition as a substitute player," said the former BKSP player, who also assisted Shamsunnahar Jr to level the margin against Pakistan in the stoppage time of Bangladesh's tournament opener.

Ritu also assisted her teammates in the 3-1 win over India and scored one and assisted one in the semifinal against Bhutan.

"The tournament was more competitive this time than the last edition. Every match, whether it was against Pakistan, India, Bhutan or Nepal, was tough," Ritu said. "We played our hearts out against India and the belief we gained from there gave us the courage to fight against Nepal."

"Everything – venue, crowd, environment – was in Nepal's favour in the final and the final was not easy for us because we knew that we had to fight against all adversities. But we were confident about winning."

After the triumph in 2022, Ritu was promised by a government high up that she would be handed a piece of land in Moghachori village under Ghagra Union of Rangamati to build a house.

Yesterday, in-between talking about her wonder goal and the team's incredible triumph, Ritu also revealed she never received that promised land, giving a solemn reminder of how easily promises made to sportspersons get forgotten in this country.



Cricket stuck in VICIOUS CYCLE

NABID YEASIN

Bangladesh cricket is unparalleled in terms of one thing – creating its own mess and then bemoaning the untidiness.

The country's cricket is stuck in a vicious cycle of creating history and then hitting the nadir almost immediately afterward – an example of it could include how the Tigers went from registering their maiden Test series victory over hosts Pakistan to being hammered away from home by India and then by South Africa at home inside two months.

It is undeniable that the professionals playing out on the field need to take the blame for their abysmal cricket. But the ugly culture of making cricket take a backseat to their own drama and then complaining about it is something that often gets overlooked but must be held responsible for playing a major role in not only stunting the growth of the sport but also thumping it back to square one.

The successful Test series in Pakistan was achieved when cricketers did not have anything but cricket on their minds. With new Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Faruque Ahmed taking over just on the opening day of the first Test in Rawalpindi, there was no scope for anyone to emulate former board president Nazmul Hassan Papon's modus operandi of travelling all the way to where the Tigers are only to be bothered with toss decisions. Nor were there any melodramatic situations created by players, needing over-involvement from anyone outside the team management.

But since then, the usual ugliness in the process has returned. Skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto followed in on the footsteps of former captain Tamim Iqbal while Faruque apparently assumed the role of



The country's cricket is stuck in a vicious cycle of creating history and then hitting the nadir almost immediately afterward.

Papon in the true sense.

The chaos created by Tamim's retirement from ODIs in the middle of the Afghanistan series back in July last year has now returned in the form of Shanto's wish to step down from captaincy getting out in the media in the middle of the South Africa Tests. Even Shanto admitted that the captaincy issue 'might have' had an impact on their innings and 273-run hammering in the second Test in Chattogram.

Before the Shanto conundrum, it was the dilemma over Shakib Al Hasan's potential return for his Test swansong that took the focus away from cricket.

Meanwhile, the unresolved matter of Shanto now awaits a final decision, subject to meeting and discussion with the board president – just like it used to be even in the pre-Faruque era when there was a one-man dominance in the board.

The same Faruque who had resigned from his former post of chief selector back in 2016 due to outside interference, has now become the board president who takes it up on himself to cross cities overnight to solve players' issues personally by disregarding the proper process.

Faruque had also admitted to having made investigations on his own accord ahead of Hathurusingha's sacking – a type of role that was actively played by his predecessor despite huge criticism.

Shanto wished for such outside noise to not to come to light before any series or tournaments when he last talked to reporters. But it is apparent that he failed to understand the irony of the statement he made as it is the stakeholders of the country's cricket who often play the major role in creating such a fuss only to cry over it later.

Nahid Rana called up for Afghanistan ODIs

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh pacer Nahid Rana was called up for the upcoming three-match ODI series against Afghanistan, starting November 6 in the UAE, a Bangladesh Cricket Board press release confirmed yesterday.

Nahid, 22, has played five Tests for the Tigers and is yet to feature for them in white-ball cricket.



In: Nahid Rana, Nasum Ahmed, Zakir Hasan


Out: Anamul Haque Bijoy, Tanzim Hasan Sakib, Taijul Islam

Wicket-keeper batter Liton Das was sidelined due to illness, while injury ruled out pacer Tanzim Hasan Sakib. Spinner Nasum Ahmed returned to the ODI squad for the first time since the 2023 ODI World Cup.

Left-handed opener Zakir Hasan was another notable inclusion in the 15-member squad. Taijul Islam and Anamul Haque Bijoy were dropped.


The Tigers will leave for Dubai in two groups on Saturday and Sunday, respectively. The second and third ODIs will be played on November 9 and 11.

Squad: Soumya Sarkar, Tanzid Tamim, Zakir Hasan, Najmul Hossain Shanto (C), Mushfiqur Rahim, Mahmudullah Riyad, Towhid Hridoy, Jaker Ali, Mehidy Miraz (VC), Rishad Hossain, Nasum Ahmed, Taskin Ahmed, Mustafizur Rahman, Shoriful Islam, Nahid Rana.




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‘Time for girls to go beyond South Asia’ Says Bangladesh women’s football team captain

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After conquering South Asia twice, Sabina Khatun, captain of the Bangladesh women’s football team, wants to achieve greater glory at the Asian level.



Sabina Khatun

On Thursday, Bangladesh successfully defended their SAFF Women’s Championship title by defeating hosts Nepal 2-1 in an entertaining final at the Dasarath Rangasala Stadium in Kathmandu.

The champion team received a grand reception upon their return to Dhaka on Friday, which included a trip around the city on an open-top bus. They were also greeted by Youth and Sports adviser Asif Mahmud at the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) headquarters.

The triumphant girls received a cheque of Tk one crore from the Ministry of Youth and Sports while the Bangladesh

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Shoppers carrying vegetables in polythene bags at the Town Hall kitchen market in the capital's Mohammadpur yesterday. Although a ban on the use of polythene bags came into force the same day, both traders and shoppers ignored the restriction at different markets. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

5 schoolchildren among 7 killed in Pakistan blast

REUTERS, Quetta

At least seven people including five school students were killed and 23 injured in a blast in southwestern Pakistan yesterday, a police official said.

“The target was a police van which was going to pickup a polio (vaccination) team,” Senior Superintendent of Police Rehmatullah told Reuters. One police officer was also among the dead, while 23 other people and officers were injured.

The explosion came from an improvised device attached to a motorcycle parked near a school for girls in the town of Mastung, he said.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attack. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif condemned the attack in a statement.

Pakistan is grappling with a surge in militant attacks in its northwest and a growing separatist insurgency in the south. On Tuesday, a policeman was killed in an attack on a health office that manages door-to-door polio vaccination campaigns.

The attacks have coincided with Pakistan’s third nationwide polio campaign, which was launched on Monday amid a significant rise in cases of the viral disease.

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4

Lawyers worried over attacks on court premises Call for stricter security measures

RAFIUL ISLAM and EMRUL HASAN BAPPI

Lawyer Morshed Hossain Shahin was speaking to reporters outside the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate’s Court in Dhaka after defending former independent lawmaker Syed Sayedul Haque Sumon on October 22. Suddenly, a pro-BNP lawyer approached and hit Morshed on the head.

Shortly thereafter, while he was speaking again, another lawyer confronted Morshed, forcefully grabbing him and pulling him out of the court premises.

This incident is the latest in a series of attacks on lawyers, former ministers and lawmakers, Awami League leaders, police officials, and journalists on court premises nationwide since law enforcers arrested them following the fall of the AL government on August 5.

Videos of the attacks went viral on social media.

The first attack was reported on August 14 when Salman F Rahman, former private industry and investment adviser to ex-prime minister Sheikh Hasina, and former law minister Anisul Huq were produced before the Dhaka CMM court in a murder case.

According to lawyers and court

“It is the duty of the law enforcers to ensure the safety of individuals in their custody, and any assault on an accused under such protection is a clear violation of human rights.”

NUR KHAN LITON
Human rights activist

staffers, pro-BNP lawyers frequently obstructed attorneys from representing the accused and, at times, even threw eggs at them before and after hearings.

When leaders of the AL and its allies were produced before the CMM court in cases filed after the July-August mass uprising, a group of people, including pro-BNP lawyers, created chaos.

In some instances, the pro-BNP lawyers caused disruptions in the courtroom

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OUTSTANDING BILLS Adani halves power supply to Bangladesh

ASIFUR RAHMAN

India’s Adani Power Jharkhand Limited has halved its power supply to Bangladesh, saying it has yet to receive outstanding bills.

Bangladesh reported a shortfall of more than 1,600MW on Thursday night after the 1,496 megawatt Adani plant reduced supply.

Power Grid Bangladesh PLC data show the plant is producing around 700MW from a single unit now.

Earlier, Adani Power Jharkhand Limited (APJL) had written to the power secretary, asking the Bangladesh Power Development Board (PDB) to pay the bills by October 30.

“Otherwise APJL shall be constrained to take remedial action under the Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) by suspending power supply on October 31,” Adani wrote in the letter seen by The Daily Star.

The letter, dated October 27, said: “As you [secretary] are aware, the deadline is approaching shortly and till date, PDB has neither provided LC for an amount of \$170.03 million from Bangladesh Krishi Bank nor cleared the outstanding amount of \$846 million.”

A PDB official told The Daily Star that they had cleared a portion of previous dues earlier, but since July, Adani has been charging more than the previous months.

He said the PDB has been paying around \$18 million weekly, while the charge is more than \$22 million. “This is why the due payments increased again.”

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GAZA STRIP Truce hopes fade as Israeli airstrikes kill 64 Palestinians

REUTERS, Gaza

Prospects of a ceasefire between Israel and its foe Hamas ran aground yesterday as Israeli airstrikes killed at least 64 people, most of them women and children, in the Gaza Strip, according to medics in the Palestinian enclave.

The attacks occurred in the city of Deir Al-Balah, the Nuseirat camp and the town of Al-Zawayda.

The Israeli military said its troops had identified and eliminated “several armed terrorists” in central Gaza and had eliminated “dozens of terrorists” in targeted raids in northern Gaza’s Jabalia area.

Israel’s assault on Gaza has killed at least 43,259 Palestinians and reduced most of the enclave to rubble, Palestinian authorities said yesterday.

At least 46 Palestinians were killed in Israeli military strikes across the Gaza Strip on Thursday, mostly in the north where one attack hit a hospital, torching medical supplies and disrupting operations, the

enclave’s health officials said.

Israel’s military has accused the Palestinian group Hamas of using Kamal Adwan Hospital in Beit Lahiya for military purposes and said “dozens of terrorists” have been hiding there. Health officials and Hamas deny the assertion.

The health ministry in the Gaza Strip called for all international bodies “to

protect hospitals and medical staff from the brutality of the (Israeli) occupation”.

Medical charity Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) said on Thursday that one of its doctors at the hospital, Mohammed Obeid, had been detained last Saturday by Israeli forces. It called for the protection of

him and all medical staff who “are facing horrific violence as they try to provide care”.

Meanwhile, Israeli bulldozers damaged the office of UN aid agency UNRWA in the West Bank’s Nur Shams camp on Thursday, the agency’s chief said, with Israel disputing his account in the latest exchange between both sides.

- Most of the dead are children, women
- Israeli forces damage UNRWA’s West Bank office
- Death toll in the enclave rises to 43,259

3 Jubo Dal men expelled over tender manipulation

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Jubo Dal has expelled three local leaders of Lalmonirhat on charges of tender manipulation by preventing others from submitting bids and helping preferred individuals win contracts.

In addition, the Lalmonirhat District Jubo Dal committee has been dissolved, Minhajul Islam Bhuiyan, assistant office secretary of Jubo Dal’s central committee, told The Daily Star yesterday.

An order signed by Minhajul confirmed the expulsion of the three local leaders on Thursday night, citing misconduct, and violations of party discipline, principles and unity.

The expelled leaders are Jahangir Alam Julhas, vice president of the organisation’s

SEE PAGE 8 COL 4



Lebanese people check the devastation in the aftermath of Israeli strikes in the neighbourhood of Haret Hreik in Beirut’s southern suburbs yesterday, amid the ongoing war between Israel and Hezbollah. PHOTO: AFP

Giant rats could help curb illegal wildlife trade

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

The world’s largest rats could help conservationists in the ongoing fight against the illegal wildlife trade.

Researchers have trained African giant pouched rats to pick up the scent of highly-sought elephant tusks, rhino horns, African blackwood and pangolin scales. The rare wood is threatened and the animals are critically endangered.

The rats weigh as much as nine pounds and measure up to 35 inches long from snout to tail and are classified an invasive species in Florida. In the past, the rats have been used to detect explosives. The rats are able to remember specific wildlife targets for several months.

“Our study shows that we can train African giant pouched rats to detect illegally trafficked wildlife, even when it has been concealed among other substances,” Dr Isabelle Scott, a researcher at the Okeanos Foundation, said in a statement.

Scott and other researchers from around the world conducted research at APOPO, a Tanzania-based non-profit organization. APOPO is also training “rescue rats” to potentially save lives. The work was published Wednesday in the journal Frontiers in Conservation Science.



The eco-warriors of Bangladesh

Youth at the forefront of climate awareness and action

“Through our platform, we aim to demonstrate that our youth possess the capability to tackle community problems. They engage with pressing global issues such as climate change, environmental pollution, gender equality, and women’s empowerment.”

SHEIKH TAJUL ISLAM TAJ

Estiak Ahmed Sajit is currently a third-year student at Khulna University. In 2007, his family was forcibly displaced from Rajbari to Keraniganj due to river erosion.

Reflecting on that experience, Sajit recalled, “I was just seven when my family and I had to move to a one-bedroom house in Keraniganj, Dhaka, due to river erosion. My father had a job in Dhaka at the time.”

Not just Sajit’s family, many of his relatives and other villagers had to relocate.

Determined to make a difference, Sajit took action to address the pressing issue of climate change. He is now actively working to raise awareness among students in Khulna, focusing on educating them about the impacts of climate change and the importance of environmental stewardship.

As a member of the BRAC Youth Platform, he collaborates with like-minded individuals, receiving guidance and support to enhance his efforts in promoting youth engagement in climate action.

Together with seven friends – Md Akil Khan, Emon Kazi, Arli Kazi, Sumaiya Akter, GM Rakib, Kilayat Ara Rifa, and Siam Babu – Sajit launched a project called “Ujjibon”.

This initiative aims to raise awareness about climate change and its effects on the environment. Through Ujjibon, they engage their peers in discussions and activities that highlight the importance of sustainability and collective action against climate challenges.



Members of “Towards Sustainability” along with school students planting trees in Khulna.

Sajit stated.

He emphasised their commitment to a sustainable future, focusing on recycling plastics and clothes as key components of the initiative.

The team sought out schools with students who were direct victims of climate change and ultimately selected Saraswati Secondary School in Batiaghata upazila, Khulna.

Through their project, they collaborated with 40 students and parents to promote the recycling of plastics and clothing.

As part of their initiative, the team installed dustbins for waste segregation at the school, encouraging proper waste management practices among students. They also conducted educational sessions on climate change, reaching 60 students from six different schools. To further their impact, they created eco-friendly pens to reduce plastic usage and engaged parents in learning about the manufacturing process of these sustainable products.

“We launched ‘Bondhu Bitan’ with a focus on innovative products: eco-friendly pens crafted from paper that contain plant seeds within their casing. When the pen is discarded, the paper decomposes, allowing the seed to grow into a plant. Additionally, we created portable grocery bags made from old jeans and mixed seed packets packaged in paper bags to help reduce plastic waste,” Sajit added.

“We’ve sold over 300 pens to date and have implemented an exchange programme where people can trade old jeans for books,” he said.

BRAC YOUTH PLATFORM

The BRAC Youth Initiative is not only guiding the young activists but also providing training to over a hundred youths who are making impactful contributions in their communities.

Initially, participants receive training on various critical issues such as gender equality, climate change, women empowerment, and waste management.



Project “Waste to Resource” collecting waste from Bangabandhu colony in Barishal.

Sariful Hasan, head of the BRAC Youth Initiative, said, “Through our platform, we aim to demonstrate that our youth possess the capability to tackle community problems. They engage with pressing global issues such as climate change, environmental pollution, gender equality, and women’s empowerment.”

Meanwhile, in Barishal, six students launched their “Waste to Resource” initiative in April 2023, aiming to keep the Kirtankhola River free from pollution.

“We first provide them with training and then encourage them to return to their communities to address local issues. They develop their own projects that create a positive impact. Many of these initiatives focus on training women and conducting awareness campaigns on various health issues,” he added.

Sariful added, “Some participants are focusing on climate change, while others are addressing menstrual hygiene. We plan to engage more youth in these activities and aim to connect with additional universities and colleges to create a larger and

promoting sustainable practices in the community.

Meanwhile, in Barishal, six students launched their “Waste to Resource” initiative in April 2023, aiming to keep the Kirtankhola River free from pollution.

Md Nazmus Sakib, Md Alamin, Abdul Hasib Molla, Sumyia Alin, Anindo Basak, and Md Hasan Shahrier recognised the detrimental impact of waste on the river and took it upon themselves to take action against the issue.

The students initiated a project to collect, separate, and convert organic waste into fertilisers. Locals have noted a significant increase in community awareness regarding the



A member of project ‘Waste to Resource’ turning organic waste into fertiliser after separating it.

more impactful change in our society.”

MORE INNOVATIVE INITIATIVES

Inspired by these youth-led initiatives, more young people across the country are developing innovative ideas. One notable example is “Shubhrota”, a platform based in Bogura that focuses on waste management and aims to produce eco-friendly products such as pens, jute bags, and fertilisers.

Another platform making strides in waste management and climate change is “Greentie”, which is dedicated to addressing these critical issues and

negative impacts of pollution.

Bithi Akter, a local, said, “Now we have become more aware of the bad effects of pollution. We also give our waste to the plants instead of throwing it away recklessly.”

Abdul Hasib Molla, one of the co-founders of the initiative, said, “When we visit the area, we learn about the challenges faced by the community due to river pollution. Many residents are unaware of the dangers it poses. To raise awareness, we started this initiative. We are determined that no waste should end up in the river, and

we’ll work tirelessly toward that goal.”

Initially, the team began by collecting waste from 10 households in the slum area, focusing primarily on kitchen organic waste. They established a small facility to store the collected waste until it decomposed and transformed into fertiliser.

In these facilities, the youth allow the waste to decompose for approximately two and a half months, during which it transforms into nutrient-rich fertiliser.

Additionally, the platform has trained over 100 individuals in effective waste management techniques and established a systematic waste collection process in the community.

Md Alamin, another co-founder of the initiative, shared that they have also begun selling fertiliser to residents with rooftop gardens. “We plan to expand our efforts by collecting waste from all households in the slum area, and by 2027, we aim to establish 30 such plants of our own,” he added.

LOOKING AFTER NATURE

Many students across the country are also working to create a more environmentally friendly future.

For instance, Nushrath Jahan Juhi, a master’s student from Khulna University, established a platform called “Towards Sustainability”, which focuses on distributing trees to community members.

Her initiative has not only made a significant impact in Khulna but has also extended its reach to Mymensingh, Rangpur and Chattogram, promoting reforestation.

Recently, through her platform, they planted 100 neem trees along Islamnagar Road in the Gollamari area of Khulna. Additionally, they distributed various vegetable seeds to promote food security and climate resilience, all under the inspiring motto “Sow, Grow, Expansion”.

“Volunteering has been a part of my life from an early age, and it’s my passion. When I moved to Khulna in 2019, I witnessed the devastating effects of natural disasters and climate change year after year. These experiences made me realise the urgency of the climate crisis,” said Nushrath.

“Towards Sustainability is my way of giving back to my country. Neem



Youths collecting waste from a house in Barishal.

trees not only contribute to a healthier environment but also offer countless medicinal and ecological benefits to the community. By planting these trees, we are combating climate change and fostering a sense of responsibility and connection to our environment,” she added.

These youth-led initiatives demonstrate a growing commitment among young people across Bangladesh to combat climate change and promote sustainable practices, ensuring a healthier planet for future generations.



Members of Towards Sustainability promoting climate action on a school campus in Khulna.



Youths conducting an interactive session on climate education at a school in Khulna.



Students at an awareness campaign inside a classroom.

Other members of Sajit’s team have also experienced the harsh realities of climate change. For instance, Rakib lost his home to Cyclone Amphan, while Arlin is also a climate migrant.

These personal struggles inspired the group to unite in their efforts to combat climate change. “That’s why we all came together to decide to work on climate change,” Sajit explained.

“We started our change-making journey through ‘Project Ujjibon’. We believe that while the Earth doesn’t need us, we certainly need the Earth,”

INTERVIEW

The old and new Bangladesh from the eyes of a historical fiction writer



ILLUSTRATION: MAISHA SYEDA

I think it is incredibly difficult to create a work of fiction that is both historically accurate and engaging. Keeping the plot consistent, tracking characters’ ages, and aligning personal stories with historical events requires a lot of effort.

SUMAIYA MATIN

When I first came across a review of Rahad Abir’s novel *Bengal Hound* in *The Daily Star*, I was intrigued by the storyline: A Dhaka University student in 1960s East Pakistan eloping with his love amidst political upheaval and protests that pave the way for independence.

Given the recent student protests in Bangladesh, I was curious to learn about the 1960s protests but told through a fictional story—what was different or similar?

Winner of the Georgia Author of the Year Award for literary fiction, Rahad Abir builds a world and characters that provide deep insight into the impacts of Partition and subsequent divisions of Bengal. He has a Master of Fine Arts in fiction from Boston University and is the recipient of the Charles Pick Fellowship at the University of East Anglia and the Marguerite McGlinn Prize for Fiction.

Recently I sat for an interview with the author on behalf of *The Daily Star*.

Thank you for writing this captivating story and sharing some of Bengal’s history with the world, for not too many people know about it. What is the genesis story of *Bengal Hound*? How did the concept of the novel come to you? What inspired you to write it?

I grew up reading Bengali classics—devouring the works of Bankim, Sarat, Tagore, Tarasankar, Bibhutibushan,

Manik, among others. I also began writing in Bangla. For most of my writing life, I have been intrigued by the history of India’s Partition, the pre-Bangladesh Pakistan era, and the never-ending Hindu-Muslim conflicts in South Asia. While many novels cover the 1971 War of Independence, only a handful explore East Pakistan’s turbulent and chaotic years of the late 1960s that led to the creation of Bangladesh. When I decided to write a novel, I wanted to specifically focus on the mass movement in 1969.

Bengal Hound is inspired by a family lore. In the early 1960s, my grandmother’s sister ran away with her boyfriend on her wedding day, only to be murdered by her family members shortly afterward. The family lore says that her dead body was thrown into the river. I wanted to place this tragic love story at the heart of my novel.

What did your research for this novel look like and how did you go about incorporating your findings? Were there any ethical considerations you made?

I started writing this book in 2014, planning to finish it in two years, but I ended up spending about eight years working on this novel—revising, rewriting, reworking it again and again. I don’t call the book a historical novel; rather, it is a work of fiction largely based on historical events. My source materials are obviously derived from history.

For my research, I initially tried to

read history books, but I found the writing of most history books boring and uninteresting. I began reading memoirs and nonfiction books about the same time period as my novel, and that worked for me. To me, reading memoirs is like reading someone’s diary. When we write in our diaries, we open up and become nostalgic, sharing our personal stories and emotions. As a fiction writer, I am more drawn to this kind of narrative. I also checked out photographs from the 60s to get a sense of the time and place.

What do you find are the biggest challenges of writing historical fiction and how did you navigate those for this particular novel?

I think it is incredibly difficult to create a work of fiction that is both historically accurate and engaging. Keeping the plot consistent, tracking characters’ ages, and aligning personal stories with historical events requires a lot of effort. Even moving a scene by a week or a month can affect the entire timeline, so I had to be very careful with dates, events, and years. Patience is essential. The novel took me about eight years to complete, though I finished the initial draft in less than two years. The rest of the time was spent editing, revising, refining, and adjusting the narrative within the context of historical events.

Although you wrote the novel in English, the essence of Bangla and Bengali culture emanates from

your storytelling. Would you be able to speak to your experience using the English language to immerse readers in a very particular cultural world? What are the advantages and disadvantages and limitations?

I always say that I write Bangla in English, because I started writing in Bangla and then switched to English. To me, this transition is just the continuation of my writing process; what I used to express in Bangla, I now express in English. Something, however, always gets lost in translation when moving between cultures and languages.

I believe being a bilingual writer is a big advantage. I grew up in Bangladesh and spent most of my life there, which probably gives me an edge over other Bangladeshi Anglophone writers who didn’t have the same experience or can’t read or write in Bangla. I think being bilingual helps me represent my home culture more authentically.

If I have to talk about limitations, I will say that, like any language, Bangla has unique words, phrases, and sayings that are difficult to express in English. We writers do our best, but translations often lose the original flavor and essence of the source language.

Many of the characters in *Bengal Hound* are grieving, and you explore their grief with the backdrop of political upheaval. Would you be able to speak to your experience writing the journeys of grieving characters, especially given that grief is not always linear?

Interestingly, I didn’t do all of this knowingly. I was writing the characters and the characters led me into their lives. They told me their own stories. One reason grief appears in many forms in this novel is that the Partition of India is a significant event that still impacts the lives of people on the Indian subcontinent.

For Bangladeshis, it’s more than that. First came the Partition, then Pakistan, and during that time, there was the unholy trinity between the Punjabi-backed government and the people of West Pakistan and East Pakistan, which ultimately resulted in the creation of Bangladesh after a bloody war in 1971. The Bengali people in Bangladesh went through a great deal. In the span of 25 years, from 1947 to 1971, a lot happened. Lives changed tremendously. First, you were a citizen of India, then Pakistan, and finally Bangladesh. That’s a lot to experience in one lifetime. Naturally, the geopolitical and political changes had enormous impacts on the lives of people, including psychological impacts. How do you expect them to act normally? That’s an abnormal expectation, isn’t it?

Your recent essay in *Shuddhashar FreeVoice* draws interesting parallels between the 1960s student protests to the recent ones in Bangladesh.

You write that ‘history repeats itself,’ prompting readers to reflect on the patterns that feed oppression. What do you see as the role of literature, particularly historical fiction, in responding to present-day issues?

Quite interestingly and surprisingly, *Bengal Hound* is very relevant in light of the recent political upheavals in Bangladesh. The novel captures the mass student protests of 1969 against the Ayub regime in East Pakistan which led to Bangladesh’s independence in 1971. The recent student protests in Bangladesh, which ended on August 5 with the overthrow of Sheikh Hasina’s 15-year dictatorship, are regarded by many as a second independence. So, though the setting and characters are different in *Bengal Hound*, the underlying theme is the same.

Philosopher Hegel once said, “One thing we learn from history is that we never learn from history.” I believe literature, art, and music help us understand who we are as humans. By studying a country’s literature and art, you can better understand its people. But do our politicians care to learn from history? Not at all.

Would you be able to speak to your experience writing about Bangladeshi and Bengali characters as a person of diaspora?

In the summer of 2012, I began writing in English. There are many Bengali authors I admire whose works are equally outstanding as those of many literary giants in English and other European languages. Unfortunately, because they chose not to write in the language of their colonizers, many of the best Bengali authors remain largely unknown to the world. My decision to start writing in English was primarily motivated by this factor. As I mentioned, I write Bangla in English. And writing in English enables me to respect the traditions and cultures of my home country while also understanding the enticements and expectations of a global audience.

As a writer from the Bengali diaspora, what are your hopes for Bangladesh?

In the West, South Asian literature is primarily dominated by works from India and then Pakistan. This dominance has made it difficult for Bangladeshi authors to receive the attention they deserve for their work. Also, not many Bangladeshi writers write in English, and there are still few English translations of Bengali literature from Bangladesh. I hope that in the future, Bangladesh will be seen not just as a nation plagued by corruption, political violence, or natural disasters, but as a country rich in new literary voices and young talent across all fields.

Sumaiya Matin is a Bangladeshi Canadian writer. To follow her work, visit www.sumaiyamatin.com.

FICTION

Ira in my town

MOJAFFOR HOSSAIN

After many years, Ira has returned to my town. She hops four towns to get here. We are supposed to meet today. I’ve been ready since morning. We will meet by the lakeside. She didn’t say anything, but I think she will wear a saree. And I will wear a suit. This is the first time I will see her in a saree. Ira has never seen me wearing a suit either. Still, we’ll be able to recognise each other.

I have decided on what I am going to say. I think Ira has done the same. Nothing seems to be unknown after such a long time, when everything seems known.

We both probably know what we are going to talk about.

“I couldn’t tell you that day,” I will probably say.

“You could have told me later. You never did,” she will reply.

It suddenly strikes me. I haven’t told her yet.

No. I couldn’t go. Although I have been ready since morning, when the time comes, I can’t do it. I have changed a lot over the years, so Ira must have done the same. We can never be together again. And the memory of her ingrained in my mind might disappear if I see her today.

As darkness falls, I assume Ira

has left after waiting for me. I want to send her a text, a sorry note. *Do I need to do that?* I ponder with the mobile phone in my hand. Right then, Ira’s message arrives.

Sorry, I couldn’t come. I travelled so far but I couldn’t cross this small distance. I couldn’t do it. Our wait is not supposed to be over in any way.

Translated from Bangla by Marzia Rahman.

Mojaffor Hossain is a fiction writer and literary critic of contemporary Bangla literature. He has published seven anthologies of short stories from Dhaka and Kolkata. His debut novel, Timiryatra, received the prestigious Kali O Kalam Literary Award (2019). For his short fiction, he has received the Anyadin Humayun Ahmed Award, Abul Hasan Sahitya Award, the Arani Sahitya Award and the Boishakhi Television Award. Currently, he is working as a translator at the Bangla Academy.

Marzia Rahman is a flash fiction writer and translator. Author of two books, The Aftermath and Dot and Other Flashes, she has been published widely in both print and online journals.



The manifold directions in IMRAN’S JOURNEY

This actor has consistently showcased his remarkable talent on OTT platforms, with performances in roles such as Moloy in ‘Mohanagar’ and Amlan in ‘Kaiser’. Through these and other memorable characters, Mostafizur Noor Imran has proven his versatility and skill, solidifying his reputation as a standout actor in the industry.

SHARMIN JOYA

His upcoming web series *Rongila Kitab*, directed by Anam Biswas, will premiere on Hoichoi on November 8. Imran stars as the lead, sharing the screen with Pori Moni. The Daily Star caught up with the actor to talk about his experience working on the project, his upcoming works and his thoughts on recent reforms in the industry, particularly the change in Actors Equity Bangladesh.

Actors Equity Bangladesh, the professional organisation for television actors, has recently come under scrutiny, with several artistes calling for significant reforms. In response, an interim reform committee was established on September 19 to limit the current leadership's decision-making powers. Led by renowned actor Tariq Anam Khan, this committee will serve for four months.

“Our industry has several organisations for actors, which is frankly unnecessary,” he remarked. “We need one unified body representing all actors across theatre, OTT, television, and film. Only by coming together can we drive meaningful change on a larger scale and work collaboratively to achieve global success—not just as a support network, but as a unified industry.”

He then highlighted that acting as a profession is still not widely accepted, which according to him, should be a primary focus of reform. “Due to personal interests and the surrounding politics, we continue to fall short of our goals. At the same time, we remain far from understanding what true reform could bring to the industry.”

However, he remains hopeful, mostly because the interim committee is being led by the eminent actor Tariq Anam Khan. “He is a respected figure in the industry, and we look up to him. I have full faith that he will do his best.”

The actor reminisced about the start of his journey in the industry, which began with the reality show *Super Hero Super Heroine* in 2009, where he was named the third runner-up.

Speaking about *Rongila Kitab*, Imran shared some interesting insights. “Our director included a lot of action scenes for me, which I personally enjoy. Interestingly, I also did some action during my reality show days. It was fun working with our action trainer, Shagor, who also performed in the show. He definitely deserves a lot of credit, because without him, the action scenes

would not have looked as good.”

Mostafizur Noor Imran also added that those who have read Kingkor Ahsan’s *Rongila Kitab* know just how intriguing the plot is. “I’ll be seen as Prodip, a politician who decides to leave his business in politics; however, it’s a never-ending cycle that keeps haunting him. Since it’s a love story—‘a story of love dyed in blood’—it follows Prodip and Shupti through many adventures that the audience will experience along the way.”

He described the project’s location as particularly wonderful, featuring the scenic beauty of the hills. “Apart from that, it was my first collaboration with Anam Biswas and Pori Moni. The director is incredibly calm and a true gentleman—I really appreciate his work. At the same time, as an actor who relies on the reactions of his co-actors, working with Pori was a great experience for me,” shared Imran, who is also the founder of Theater Repertory, Bagerhat.

The actor is reportedly working on Mejbaur Rahman Sumon’s upcoming film *Roid*, sharing the screen with Nazifa Tushi. Although he remained tight-lipped about details, reports indicate that the film, currently being shot outside Dhaka, recently received recognition. Organised by India’s National Film Development Corporation (NFDC), Film Bazaar awards cash prizes of US \$20,000—approximately Tk 25 lakh—to its top three projects. Among them are two Bangladeshi films, *Roid* and *Divine Chords*.

Imran is also the owner and founder of the production house Methodica, which has produced films like *Shahosh* and *Jahan*.

At the end of our conversation, the actor-turned-producer shared his current aspirations for the industry, “Following the July movement, the entire nation is in a state of upheaval, and our industry is no exception. I encourage our community to prepare and mobilise unitedly, just like other sectors are doing.”



PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

OUT AND ABOUT IN DHAKA



Dhaka Vibes

November 8 | 2pm

Bangladesh Shishu Academy



Dhaka Retro

November 15 | 3pm

Bangladesh-China Friendship Exhibition Centre



Cultural Fest 2.0

November 15 | 10am-11pm

Aloki, Tejgaon Link Road

TV TALKIES

‘The Sympathiser’ explores duality, unveils themes of friendship and conflict

One of the more intriguing shows of the year, *The Sympathiser*, directed by Park Chan-wook, famed for *Oldboy*, *The Handmaiden*, *Decision to Leave*, and others, is a rather complex exploration of identity and imperialism. The series has been adapted from Viet Thanh Nguyen’s Pulitzer Prize-winning novel of the same name.

Set in the immediate aftermath of the Vietnam War, referred to as the American War in Vietnam, the story depicts a fractured society and a conflicted individual.

The protagonist, known only as the Captain (Hoa Xuande), embodies a “sympathiser” in both the American

sense of being a “communist sympathiser” and as someone capable of understanding multiple perspectives.

The Captain becomes a North Vietnamese mole infiltrating South Vietnam’s secret police under General Toan Le. Reluctantly, he is assigned to travel to America to monitor the general and support his emerging plans, while the war continues for him.

Despite the circumstances, he bonds tightly with two childhood friends. Ultimately, their relationships drive the series forward, creating a profoundly moving story about friendship amidst various themes, making it a must-watch.



WHAT’S PLAYING

BLOOM

The Paper Kites’ *Bloom* is a delicate indie-folk track that feels like a gentle breeze across a late autumn landscape, capturing themes of longing and nostalgia. The song’s soft guitar strums and warm melodies evoke a cozy simplicity, while the vocal harmonies carry a bittersweet tenderness.

Despite its lyrical simplicity, *Bloom* resonates deeply, creating an atmosphere where emotions flow freely, like sunlight filtering through trees. Its soft rock undertone, coupled with hints of country influence, gives it an airy, effortless charm.

As the last track of *The Woodland EP*, *Bloom* will wrap you in a dreamy, contemplative spell, leaving you with a feeling of gentle awakening and peace.



TRENDY STREAMS

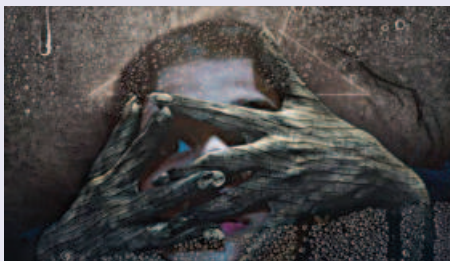
Netflix
Don’t move



Chorki
Adhunik Bangla Hotel



Deepto Play
Bibhabori



Amazon Prime
Citadel Diana



Hulu
Interior Chinatown



STYLE STATEMENT

DIMPLE KAPADIA

Dimple Kapadia’s recently published stunning photoshoot for Vogue has taken the internet by storm, igniting waves of admiration from fans and fellow celebrities alike. This much-anticipated cover, her first with Vogue, has left fans thrilled, many exclaiming, “Finally!” as they celebrate this iconic moment.

Draped in elegance and exuding timeless charm, the veteran actress’ look has added a fresh chapter to her legacy and become an instant classic in the world of fashion.

The 67-year-old star graced the frame in a chic black turtleneck top paired with an asymmetric wrap skirt, layered sleekly under a lush emerald-green overlay.

She adorned this exquisite ensemble with a statement aquamarine slab necklace that gleamed like crystal waters, paired perfectly with ethereal emerald wing-shaped earrings, and classic black stilettos.

Her coiffed updo added an elegant finishing touch, crowning the look with timeless sophistication.





In order to supplement inadequate health services, many patients are diverted to private healthcare options – mushrooming near government hospitals. This exacerbates the financial burden on patients and their families.

MD ASADUZ ZAMAN
and SOHEL MAHAMUD

After undergoing treatment at two hospitals in Chattogram and Khulna following a road accident, Jahangir Alam came to Dhaka to save his right leg from amputation. With treatment in the capital city, he has been able to do so.

However, neither the medical costs nor the recovery seems easy so far, and nothing guarantees things will return to how they were before August 5 – the day a brick-laden truck ran over Alam in Chattogram.

Alam, a 38-year-old garment worker at Chattogram EPZ, was rushed to Chattogram Medical College and Hospital. But prolonged treatment with relatives attending him there was not feasible for the man from Bagerhat. Therefore, he was shifted to Khulna Medical College Hospital, which was comparatively closer to his village home, but his condition worsened.

“I didn’t get proper treatment at Khulna Medical College, even doctors decided to cut my leg,” said Alam, lying on a bed in a tin-shed room in a Dhaka slum in Agargaon.

The 9x6 square foot room, where Alam waits for his next follow-up at the National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopaedic Rehabilitation (NITOR) at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the capital, is a temporary accommodation facility rented for patients and their attendants.

Zooming out to the bigger picture of Bangladesh’s national healthcare system, the accommodation is just a small part of the complex network of private clinics and diagnostic centres that has sprung up around Dhaka’s public hospitals, capitalising on

assistance from the garment factory.

The cost includes a number of surgical and medical materials, including needles, thread, plates, rods and screws, as the hospital said it did not have these items in stock.

“Initially, I had no idea where the surgical instruments could be found. Some hospital employees and other individuals, probably dalals (middlemen), suggested going to a shop close to the hospital,” said Jahanoor Begum, Alam’s 60-year-old mother, who is now staying with her son to attend to him around the clock.

“Later, we bought those instruments from the shop. Everything was available there,” she added.

“We have spent almost all the cash we had,” Begum said.

This explains why they rented a room in the slum even after being discharged from NITOR.

They said each trip to Bagerhat costs them Tk 8,000 for an ambulance. “How many times can I afford this huge amount?” Alam questioned.

National Institute of Cancer Research & Hospital (NICRH), and International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B), giving rise to rent-a-bed rackets at nearby lower-grade government staff quarters and at least 40 buildings in the neighbourhood.

Patients at the cancer hospital, who require chemotherapy, need a longer stay to complete the process.

Centring the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) at Shahbagh, dozens of hotels and residential buildings turned guest houses in the area and Banglamotor offer accommodation to patients, with room rents ranging from Tk 500 to Tk 1,500 per night.

There are several dozen small and medium hotels offering accommodation for patients at Panthapath, Green Road and Dhanmondi. Many of the accommodation facilities offer common kitchens for cooking, while room rates range from Tk 1,200 to Tk

Hospital, NITOR, or Dhaka Medical, medical machines lie idle after noon due partly to a manpower shortage every day.

This service suspension compels emergency patients to rush for tests at nearby private facilities.

Besides, patients who can afford treatment or tests at private clinics and want to avoid the lengthy diagnosis process, long queues and cramped hospital wards, go to the clinics.

In many cases, the clinics have middlemen to lure in patients. Sometimes, nurses and ward boys also refer patients to the clinics for commissions.

The consequences could sometimes be fatal.

For instance, take the case of five-month pregnant Sonia who came to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital in early October. She was admitted to the gynaecology ward of Dhaka Medical, where two patients have to share a bed due to limited resources and overwhelming patient inflow.

Iqbal Hossain, an attendant of a patient at the National Institute of Ophthalmology and Hospital, came to the shop to buy a travel bag. His mother has been admitted since last week.

“Although these floating shops charge higher prices, around 20 to 30 percent more, almost everything is available here,” he said.

Nearby, Mohammad Shahabuddin, a shop owner of surgical equipment, said he has been doing business there for the last decade.

“I sell most of the surgical items at a lower price. The patients don’t need to go elsewhere to purchase these materials,” he said.

High cost of low healthcare investment

In 2009, the Awami League-led government spent around Tk 5,104 crore in the health sector, which was six percent of the total budget for the fiscal year of 2009-10.

Since then, the government’s actual expenditure in the key sector has remained stagnant, and in certain fiscal years, exhibited a decline.

Due to low health allocation in the budget, out-of-pocket healthcare expenditure has been surging alarmingly over the past years, according to local and international studies.

Soaring out-of-pocket healthcare expenses pushed 6.1 million Bangladeshis, or 3.7 percent of the population, into poverty in 2022, according to a study by the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS).

Around 61 percent of people in the country face financial difficulties while seeking medical services in hospitals, it said.

On average, a family has to spend around Tk 55,134 when a family member is admitted to the hospital, and about 54 percent of this cost is spent on medicines, the BIDS study found.

BIDS Research Fellow Abdur Razzaque Sarker conducted the study titled “Catastrophic Health Shock and Impoverishment in Bangladesh: Insight from HIES 2022”.

“Due to the lack of adequate diagnostic facilities and doctors’ indiscriminate prescribing, a huge number of diagnostic centres and pharmacies have sprung up around government hospitals,” said Sarker.

Government hospitals often face a lack of skilled manpower and fund crises, he added.

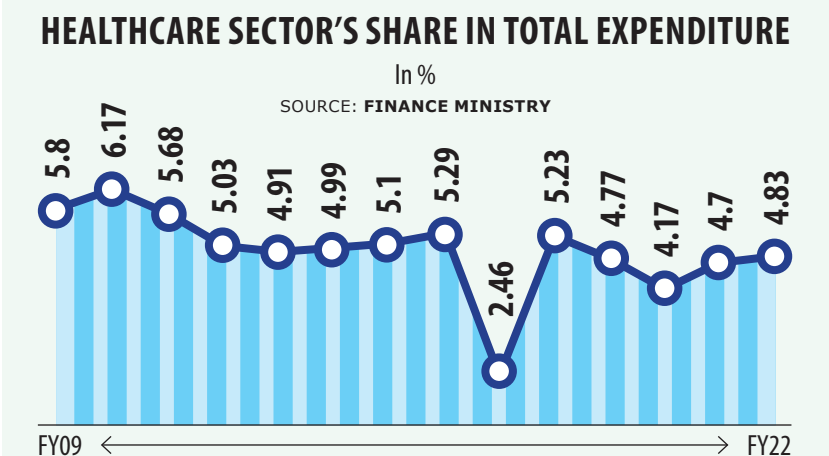
A large portion, around 54 percent, of out-of-pocket spending across all patient categories goes towards purchasing medicines.

“Remaining 27.52 percent was spent on diagnostic costs, 10.31 percent on consultation, and 7.77 percent on transport costs,” he shared the study findings.

Citing the World Health Organization’s Global Health Expenditure database, Sarker said out-of-pocket healthcare spending by Bangladeshis was under 56 percent in 1997.

However, by 2021, it rose to 73 percent, making it the second highest in South Asia after Afghanistan.

The Daily Star’s Staff Reporter Shaheen Mollah has contributed to this report.



the nation’s healthcare crisis. With primary healthcare falling severely short of public health demand, patients from across the country flock to the capital, overwhelming the already strained public healthcare facilities.

To supplement inadequate health services, many patients are diverted to private healthcare options – mushrooming near government hospitals. This exacerbates the financial burden on patients and their families.

For instance, poor Alam has already spent over Tk 200,000 on treatment, and he had to resign from his job to avail himself of the one-time cash

“So, we are forced to stay here just around 200 metres away from the hospital. The room rent is Tk 200 per night,” he said. They are currently buying food from a nearby eatery.

If they have to stay for more than 15 days, the mother and son duo said they would cook meals at a common kitchen in the slum shared by five such rented rooms.

Private housing for patients at other hospitals too

In Agargaon and Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, there are about half a dozen key public hospitals.

For temporary accommodations in the area, this means potential customers as most of the hospitals lack adequate numbers of nurses and ward boys, requiring patients to be attended to by their relatives in shifts.

Families and relatives, in this case, serve as caregivers, according to public health experts.

Secondly, experts say the ultra-centralised healthcare facility in Dhaka draws an overwhelming rush of patients from across the country, where even minimal treatment facilities are unavailable. This brings the accommodation issue to the forefront for hospital care in the capital.

Other hospitals in Dhaka are also not immune to the skeleton medical professional crisis, therefore, facilitating rent-a-bed businesses.

For example, the Mohakhali area of Dhaka hosts the National Institute of Diseases of the Chest and Hospital,

3,000 per night.

“I know my services are not adequate despite my best efforts,” said Deen Mohammad, owner of the rooms in one of which Alam now stays in Agargaon.

A narrow and cramped alleyway leads to the five-room facility in the slum. There is no furniture, as each room only has two beds, a ceiling fan and a bulb light.

“You understand that I do not receive customers every day, and many of my rooms remain unoccupied most of the time. My clients sometimes leave without paying their bills,” said Mohammad, whose family also lives in the slum.

“I charge a minimum amount of money as a fare, from Tk 200 to Tk 400. It depends on the number of guests. I try my best to ensure a standard service,” he added.

A clinic on every corner

The urban topography of any key public healthcare facility in Dhaka shares one thing in common – too many private clinics, diagnostic centres, blood banks and pharmacies surrounding them.

It may seem puzzling that if health services, diagnosis and medicines are free at public facilities, who would go to private clinics or how would they survive in business?

At any public facility, diagnosis services are officially available around the clock. But in reality, be it Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and

In the face of critical conditions and the want of a decent stay, the woman was lured by a nurse to an adjacent clinic. At the clinic, Sonia’s condition deteriorated due to quackery.

“Who would we save, the mother or the children?” her husband was given an option to choose as the woman was bleeding profusely. On the same night, Sonia was brought back to Dhaka Medical where on-duty doctors declared both Sonia and her child dead.

The hospital bazaar

From Dhaka Medical College Hospital to Old Dhaka’s Mitford Hospital to Mohakhali’s ICDDR,B to Sher-e-Bangla Nagar’s NITOR, hospital footpaths serve as mini-bazaars where almost everything is available for the Dhaka stay of patients and their attendants.

The footpaths are packed with hundreds of small shops, hotels, floating restaurants, surgical shops and pharmacies.

“We have almost all kinds of essential products that are needed for a patient and their relatives to stay there,” said Yamin Hossain, a shop owner in front of the NITOR.

Hossain’s store has almost all essentials like pillows, blankets, plastic items, knives, electric fans, shopping bags, kids’ items, crockery items and so on.

He said, “We run our store around the clock. My parents and I stay here by rotation.”

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