

# The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION



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**“It’s not possible to dispose of all the 31 lakh pending cases within a year, but it’s possible to reduce the number by five or six lakh.”**  
LAW MINISTER ANISUL HUQ AT A PROGRAMME PAGE 3



**“We’re taking part in the polls to further expose that no fair and credible election can be held under the Awami League.”**  
BNP SECRETARY GENERAL MIRZA FAKHRUL ISLAM ALAMGIR ON PARTY DECISION TO TAKE PART IN DHAKA CITY POLLS PAGE 3



**“They will pay a very BIG PRICE! This is not a Warning, it is a Threat.”**  
US PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP IN A TWEET WARNS TEHRAN AFTER PRO-IRANIAN PROTESTERS ATTACK US EMBASSY IN BAGHDAD PAGE 8

## ICU on sickbed

*Critical patients at lone govt cancer hospital deprived of proper medical service as vital equipment lying inoperative for long*

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

More than 12 years ago, the National Institute of Cancer Research and Hospital (NICRH) authorities had purchased eight high-end ventilators for its Intensive Care Unit.

But the Artificial Respiratory Ventilators (ARVs), the basic device required for running an ICU properly, had never been installed, depriving the critical patients of the medical services they are supposed to get at ICU.

Surprisingly though, the lifesaving devices -- each bought for Tk 70 lakh at that time -- are now left uncared for in a corner inside the ICU.

A central oxygen system was set up more than three years ago, but the ventilators were not installed. To make matters worse, the motherboards of the ventilators have been stolen in the meantime, rendering the machines dysfunctional.

This is one of several cases of irregularities The Daily Star has found during an investigation at the country’s lone specialised public hospital for cancer treatment.

The NICRH, situated in Mohakhali, is the go-to place for patients in the low-income bracket. According to an International Agency for Research on Cancer report

released last year, about 1.08 lakh people die of cancer while 1.5 lakh people develop the disease every year in Bangladesh.

### A SAGA OF NEGLIGENCE

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The ICU department also informed the matter to the authorities in writing and verbally, said the letter.

The Daily Star has obtained copies of the letters.

In the meantime, the 8-bed ICU has now become a 4-bed one.

“It cannot be called an ICU at all because it lacks the basic device,” said a doctor of ICU department, wishing not to be named.

“We are deceiving our patients in the name of ICU services and they are not getting the treatment they should,” he said.

Another doctor, preferring anonymity,

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PHOTO: MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA



## Sylhet leg begins today

SPORTS REPORTER

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### BARGUNA’S RIFAT MURDER CASE

## Minni, nine other accused indicted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

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The trial will begin on January 8 and continue until February 9. At least 37 witnesses are expected to testify.

Judge Md Asaduzzaman of the District and Sessions Judge’s Court framed the charges, prosecutor Mojibul Haq Kislu said.

Separately, Barguna Juvenile Court yesterday fixed January 8 for hearing on charge framing against 14 juveniles accused in the case.

The murder on June 26 last year sparked widespread outrage after footage of the attack went viral on social media. In a video clip, Rifat’s wife Minni was seen screaming and trying to save her husband from the attackers. Minni was arrested and placed on remand a few days later on charges of being involved with the killing. She was granted bail later.



Rifat Sharif

Besides Minni, 19, the court yesterday indicted Rakibul Hasan Rifat Faraje, 23, Al Kaiyum alias Rabbi Akon, 21, Mohiminul Islam Sifat, 19, Rejwan Ali Khan alias Tiktok Redoy, 22, Hasan, 19, Musa, 22, Rafiul Islam Rabbi, 20, Sagor, 19 and Kamrul Islam Saimun, 21.

Minni and six others were indicted under section 302 and 34 on charges of being directly involved. Two others were indicted under section 212 and 120 B (1) on charges of hatching conspiracy to kill and helping the other accused flee the scene.

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Minni

## Unblock mobile network in the border areas

*BTRC asks operators, revoking its earlier decision*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

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Mobile carriers said they have started unblocking, but providing full network will take about a day as the configurations in all towers, some of which are in remote areas, need to be updated.

BTRC on Sunday evening had asked all mobile operators -- Grameenphone, Robi, Banglalink, and Teletalk -- to restrict their network up to a kilometre from the borders.

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### DCC MAYORAL CANDIDATES

## Amusing affidavits

*All 4 main candidates educated, wealthy*

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

A Mercedes-Benz car, a Toyota Prado and a Mitsubishi Pajero are worth only Tk 17 lakh, believe it or not.

This is exactly what businessman Mohammad Saifuddin, Jatiya Party candidate for Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) mayoral polls, mentioned in his affidavit submitted to the Election Commission on Tuesday.

His wife owns a BMW car and a Nissan sedan but their prices were not given.

On the other hand, businessman Atiqul Islam, Awami League mayoral candidate for Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC), has no car, shows his affidavit.

A total of 14 mayoral candidates -- 7 each in the DNCC and the DSCC -- are contesting the January 30 elections.

Tabith Awal, BNP candidate for the DNCC and son of businessman Abdul Awal Minto, has a Lexus car worth Tk 7.60 lakh.

AL mayoral candidate for the DSCC Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh has three cars worth Tk 1.66 crore and his wife one with a price tag of Tk 1.63 crore.

He, however, didn’t mention the brands or models of the cars.

His main rival BNP candidate Ishraque Hossain, however, doesn’t have any car.

JP mayoral candidate for the DNCC Kamrul Islam, a former army brigadier, owns vehicles worth Tk 1.12 crore.

Kamrul, also president of Jatri Odhikar Sangrakkhan Parishad, didn’t mention the number or type of the vehicles.

The affidavits provided by the candidates contain their criminal and

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### COLD-RELATED DISEASES

## 51 dead in two months

*Another six thousand affected across the country, says DGHS*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Various cold-related diseases have affected around 5,998 people across the country in 24 hours until 8:00am yesterday.

According to the data from the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) control room, 948 patients received treatment for acute respiratory infection.

Another 1,980 were treated for diarrhoea and 3,070 for other diseases, including jaundice, inflammation in the eye, skin diseases, and fever, said Dr Aysha Akhtar, assistant director of the health emergency operation centre and control room of DGHS.

Fifty-one deaths were reported across the country between November 1 last year and January 1 due to cold-related diseases, she said.

Meanwhile, a mild cold

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**Primary students are all smiles as they hold the new books handed to them on the gymnasium premises of Dhaka University. Over 4.27 crore students of primary and secondary level institutions were handed new textbooks on the first day of the year, yesterday, officials said.**

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

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## Huji planned to form a ‘robber wing’

*Say CTTC officials citing info from six arrestees*

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

They planned to form a “robber wing” of Huji in the country’s southern and northern regions.

As per the plan, the banned militant outfit leaders managed to communicate with 20 people, who were involved in petty crimes like snatching and theft. These people were asked to use chloroform on their victims, said officials of the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit.

The leaders wanted 30 percent cut for the “welfare” of the wing.

The wing was supposed to take care of all legal issues of the members if they got arrested. It was also supposed to pay for arrested or on-the-run gang member’s family expenses.

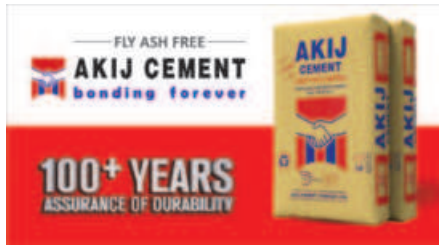
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Three other arrestees -- Billal Hossain, Nur Alam, and Akter Hossain -- would be placed before the court today after the end of their five-day remand.

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# Installation of metro rail tracks begins

Quader opens the work in Diabari; 8.5km of 20km-long viaduct now visible

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday inaugurated installation work of the tracks of the country's first-ever metro rail.

He also inaugurated the overhead catenary system, which would be used to supply electricity to trains.

"This is a milestone for the dream project," Quader, also the general secretary of ruling Awami League, said at the inaugural event, held at the metro rail's depot in the capital's Diabari.

Around 8.5 kilometres of the 20.10km-long viaduct is now visible, Quader said, adding that they hope to open the metro rail in December next year.

The construction work of the Tk 22,000 crore Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) Line-6, which began in 2016, has made 40 percent progress as of December last year.

Once completed, the rail service, which has 16 stations, will be able to carry 60,000 passengers per hour, reducing travel time from Uttara to Motijheel to at least less than an hour from the current two hours.

Initially, the authorities started installing "test track" inside the depot, which the trains would use for trial runs before going to the main track,

an official said.

The Dhaka Mass Transit Company Limited (DMTCL), a government-owned company, is implementing the projects.

Quader said the government aims to build six metro lines in the capital and its adjacent areas by 2030, mainly to reduce traffic congestion and air pollution. He said 175km rail lines would be constructed under these six projects.

The minister said physical work for MRT-1 and MRT-5 (northern route) would start soon as the project has already been approved by Ecne and there is no complexity regarding those.

According to DMTCL documents, the physical work of MRT-1 will start in December this year.

Mass Rapid Transit-1 (MRT-1) from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport to Kamalapur Railway Station would be built at a cost of Tk 52,561.43 crore.

This will be the country's first underground metro rail system. The 31.24km route will have an elevated section from Natun Bazar to Purbachalm expected to be completed by 2026.

Work for basic design of MRT-5 would start in March this year. The route -- from Hemayetpur of Savar to Bhatara via Gabtoli, Mirpur and Gulshan -- would be built at a cost of Tk 41,238.55 crore.

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## Govt to help ease case backlog: law minister

Over 35 lakh pending in courts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Anisul Huq yesterday said the government will take initiatives to settle pending cases so that at least five to six lakh such cases can be cleared from the existing backlog within this year.

"It's not possible to dispose of all the 31 lakh pending cases within a year, but it's possible to reduce the number by five to six lakh," he said.

"The government will take necessary programmes and increase manpower in this regard. I have already talked to the chief justice about this issue," the minister said.

Anisul Huq made the remarks while talking to reporters after attending the inauguration of a training course for assistant judges at Judicial Administration Training Institute (JATI) as chief guest.

As of March 31 last year, a total of 35,82,347 cases were pending with the courts across the country.

Around 30.53 lakh cases were pending with the lower courts, some 22,000 cases with the Appellate Division and 5.06 lakh with the High Court Division till March 31 last year, according to a Supreme Court report.

Yesterday, the law minister told reporters that the government will also take initiatives so that more cases are

## Modi, Hasina exchange new year's greetings

STAR REPORT

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday called his Bangladesh counterpart Sheikh Hasina to extend the new year's greetings.

Modi phoned the Bangladesh prime minister at 12:20pm, said PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim, reports UNB.

Extending her greetings to Modi, Hasina asked him to convey her good wishes to the people of India. The conversation lasted for about 15 minutes.

Our New Delhi correspondent adds, the Indian prime minister also congratulated Hasina on being reelected the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

## Focus must not shift from Rohingya issue

Says new foreign secretary

UNB, Dhaka

Newly-appointed Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen yesterday said the ministry's focus this year will be to keep the global focus on Rohingya issue unchanged for their early repatriation.

He made the remarks when members of Diplomatic Correspondents Association, Bangladesh (DCAB) met him at his office congratulating him on his appointment.

Masud said they will spend much time in public diplomacy, so that the global attention to the Rohingya issue does not shift.

He said the issue draws international attention and all parties -- including media, NGOs, INGOs, civil society and think tanks -- will have to work together to keep the focus unaffected.

The foreign secretary termed Rohingya repatriation a "medium-term to long-term" situation, as it will take time to repatriate

all Rohingyas even if the repatriation begins soon.

"How we manage the situation depends on how quickly we can begin. We need to start, even if on a small scale."

"Our key target is to make sure Rohingyas return to their homeland voluntarily and with dignity," he said.

The foreign secretary said there is a separate dimension of accountability -- confidence-building measures -- which will help expedite the repatriation process.

He termed China's engagement in the repatriation process a kind of extension of bilateral engagement, and also to some extent trilateral approach in which Asean and Myanmar's neighbours may come into.

Responding to a question on Bhasan Char relocation plan and its inclusion in the 2020 Joint Response Plan (JRP), Masud said discussions are going on.

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## 'Joining city polls to expose vote fraud'

Says Mirza Fakhurul

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhurul Islam Alamgir yesterday said their party is taking part in the upcoming city polls to "expose further that no credible election is possible under Awami League."

"Many ask us one question: why we're joining the polls. First, when we had boycotted the 2014 election, it was said we made a mistake. We took part in the 2018 election to prove we didn't make a mistake in 2014, as no fair election can be held under Awami League," he said.

"Now, we're asked again why we're going to join the city corporation elections. I would like to say we're taking part in the polls to expose once again that no fair and credible election can be held under the Awami League."

Fakhurul's remarks came in reaction to Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader's question about the reason behind BNP's participation in the city polls, since the party has no confidence in the Election Commission.

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal arranged the event at Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh, marking its 41st anniversary.

Fakhurul said Chief Election Commissioner Nurul Huda himself admitted that the commission could not ensure free and fair election, while another commissioner Mahbub Talukder clearly said this EC is not capable of holding a credible election.

## Magnets to smuggle yaba!

Detectives seize 50,000 pills in small packets attached to truck's body

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The detective branch (DB) of police seized a consignment of 50,000 yaba pills at the capital's Baridhara area on Tuesday night, in small packets attached to out-of-view parts of a truck's body with powerful magnets.

Two alleged drug traders who were in the truck -- Khairul Bashar (36) and Saizuddin (22) -- were arrested and the vehicle was seized.

Drugs smugglers are always finding innovative ways to carry the "crazy pills". They sometimes swallow small packs of pills, conceal them in fruits, fuel tanks or even mobile phones to dodge law enforcers. But this method is a new one, detectives said.

Tipped off that a gang of yaba traders are heading towards Kuril through Pragati Sarani with a consignment of pills, a team of DB (north) intercepted the truck around 11:20pm.

After a thorough search, DB members found 13 packets of yaba pills at different

areas of the vehicle.

"The drug traders put powerful magnets in each packet to keep them attached to the truck's body," Deputy Commissioner (north) of DB Mashiur Rahman told The Daily Star yesterday.

The seized pills are coloured light orange and is of high quality, each pill going for around Tk 300, he added.

Mashiur said the traders have been collecting yaba pills from Cox's Bazar's Teknaf, the gateway for smuggling the drug into Bangladesh, and supplied them to the capital and other parts of the country.

He said the arrestees admitted that they collected the pills months back and planned to sell them ahead or during new year celebration.

After the seizure, a case was filed under the narcotics act with Gulshan Police Station.

The arrestees were produced before a Dhaka court yesterday with 10-day remand prayer for each. The court granted two-day remand for each of them.

## Syed Tanveer passes away



CITY DESK

Former secretary Syed Tanveer Hussain passed away on Tuesday from prolonged illness, says a press release. His namaz-e-janaza was held on the same day and he was laid to rest alongside his parents and brother.

Syed Tanveer served as the secretary to the ministries of planning, housing, textiles, and environment and forests, according to his

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



Arambagh's Inner Circular Road is blocked by lines of sewage pipes. Locals say they've been here for around 3 months. In addition, no safety barricades can be seen even though the area is rigged with holes from ongoing road construction works.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON



On the first day of new year, four job seekers start their hunger strike with a demand for extending the age limit to 35 from 30 for entering government jobs. This photo was taken in front of Jatiya Press Club.

PHOTO: STAR

## Environment confce opens in city Saturday

Bapa, BEN to organise the event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (Bapa) and Bangladesh Environment Network (BEN) will organise a daylong conference on environmental movement at Stamford University in the capital on Saturday.

A total of 31 research and non-government organisations and 18 universities will support the event, where several academicians, researchers and environmentalists will share their thoughts and expertise.

The organisers made the announcements at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity yesterday.

Bapa President Sultana Kamal said they set the title of the conference as "Political Effectiveness of Environmental Activism in Bangladesh: Challenges and Way Forward", because politics plays a vital role in almost every decision-making process in the country.

"Bangladesh's environment is endangered in many ways. I invite people from all walks of life to participate in the event and share their opinion," she added.

Presenting a keynote paper, BEN founder Nazrul Islam said various topics -- including how political parties give priority to environmental issues and how political interference affects green activism in the country -- will be discussed at the programme.

Bapa Executive Vice President Abdul Matin and General Secretary Sharif Jamil also spoke at the press conference.

## DHAKA TODAY

### FAIR

Dhaka International Trade Fair  
Organiser: Ministry of Commerce and Export Promotion Bureau of Bangladesh  
Venue: Agargaon  
Time: 10am

### PROTEST

Demanding Justice for Ducus VP  
Nurul Haque Nur  
Organiser: Santrash Birodhi Chhatra Oikya  
Venue: TSC, University of Dhaka  
Time: 11am

### PERFORMANCE

Open Mic  
Venue: Jatra Biroti, Banani  
Time: 7pm

### MUSIC

Mehfil-e-mosiki  
Venue: Shilpakala Academy  
Time: 6pm

### EXHIBITION

Flash on Rohingya Genocide  
Venue: Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy  
Time: 10am





## AUG 21 ATTACK CASES

# Paper books for HC hearing to be published soon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Authorities concerned have finalised preparation for paper books of the sensational August 21 grenade attack cases for the High Court's hearing on the death reference and appeals in the case. At least 24 people were killed and around 300 injured in the grisly attack on an Awami League rally on the capital's Bangabandhu Avenue on August 21, 2004.

The Bangladesh Government Press will publish copies of the paper books very soon, and then the government will take necessary step for hearing on the cases, Law Minister Anisul Huq told The Daily Star yesterday.

A paper book contains all the details of a case, trial proceedings, statements, evidence, orders, verdict and other relevant documents. The book is necessary for the HC to hear and dispose of a death reference or an appeal.

"The paper books of the August 21 grenade attack cases are now going (from the HC) to the Bangladesh Government Press for their publication. After the copies

of the paper books are readied, I will instruct the attorney general's office to take necessary steps before the High Court to fix a date for hearing of the death references of the case," the law minister said.

The death references on August 21 grenade attack cases reached the HC on November 27 last year for examination of the trial court's November 10 verdict -- that sentenced 19 persons including former state minister and BNP leader Lutfozzaman Babar to death. Nineteen others, including BNP's acting chairman Tarique Rahman, were given life imprisonment.

According to the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), if a lower court orders death penalty, the verdict is examined by the HC for confirmation of the punishment.

Sheikh Hasina, the then opposition leader in parliament, narrowly escaped the attack with an ear injury.

The grenade attack, masterminded by some BNP leaders, is one of the most shocking political crimes in the country's history.



Almost the entire length of this footpath on Green Road remains occupied by vendors, leaving little to no space for pedestrians to walk. At the same time, the lane beside the pavement has become a parking spot for human hauliers. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## Tofazzel Hossain new PMO secy

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister's Personal Secreary-1 (additional secretary)

Md Tofazzel Hossain Miah has been promoted to Secretary to the Prime Minister's Office. The Public Administration Ministry issued a notification in this regard yesterday.

Tofazzel was appointed personal secretary-1 to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on January 25, 2018.

## Syed Tanveer

FROM PAGE 3 professional profile on LinkedIn. He also worked as a consultant for the World Bank.

He is survived by his wife and two daughters. His quikhwani will be held on Saturday after Asr prayers at Gulshan Azad mosque.

## Focus must not shift

FROM PAGE 3

DHAKA-DELHI TIES

About Bangladesh's close neighbour India and recent development there centring the National Register of Citizens (NRC) issue, he said they will have to work amid challenges, as it is usual to have some challenges among neighbours everywhere in the world.

The foreign secretary said they are keeping eyes on the situation in India.

He said the NRC is an internal issue of India and the initial instability is easing gradually, and hoped that India will manage it peacefully.

OTHER PRIORITIES

Momen told reporters he had a meeting with Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen yesterday, from where they got some directives for the new year on key issues, including how to address trade-related challenges in the coming years.

The foreign secretary said they would put emphasis on working closely with Bangladesh missions abroad, to uphold the progress across the world.

Highlighting Bangladesh's economic progress over the past years, Masud said the world now expects Bangladesh's leadership in many areas or looks at Bangladesh for taking the leadership role.

## Installation of metro

FROM PAGE 3

The 20km line will consist of underground and elevated sections. The project commits to a 2028 deadline.

DIABARI ABUZZ WITH ACTIVITY

A total of 52 structures would be constructed at the depot, which include shed for trains, a central control centre, administrative building, power sub-station and medical centre.

There would be several dedicated power sub-stations for the metro rail, an official involved with the project said.

Railway sleepers have already been set up on the viaduct's designated spots. Those tracks would be installed on a special type of pad so that it would not create any noise, according to metro rail officials.

Two lanes on both sides of the viaduct

were constructed for electric lines and there would be electric poles at certain intervals for the catenary system, they added.

Works for three stations in Uttara areas are also going on in full swing.

An official said there would be two elevators, two escalators and two staircases on both sides of each station. Also, parapet (low) walls have been installed on both sides of the viaduct.

Although it would be a ballastless track, ballast would be used at tracks (around 20km) inside the depot.

Apart from construction works, recruitment of drivers, station controllers and managers and engineers have already started, an official said. Many are being trained in various fields related to the work, and they would also be given training abroad, he added.

## Dream of new books

FROM PAGE 5

(19) were injured in the accident, reports our Cumilla correspondent.

ATM Sarfuddin, in-charge of Mia Bazar Highway Police Outpost, said, "The accident occurred when the couple were returning from Dhaka airport with Saiful's Saudi Arab expatriate brother Humayun.

Near Sujatpur bridge, the microbus lost control and fell into a ditch under Sujatpur bridge at Chiora of Chaudhagram."

Injured Humayun Kabir has been taken to Chaudhagram Upazila Health Complex while driver Mominul Islam has been admitted at Cumilla Medical College Hospital in critical condition.

In Natore, a man was killed and 30

others were injured in a collision between two buses at Kashiabari Bridge area in Sadar upazila yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Likhon, a bus helper, reports UNB.

The accident took place around 9:30am when a Rangpur-bound bus from Rajshahi collided head-on with another bus coming from the opposite direction.

This killed Likhon on the spot and left 30 others injured, said Asaduzzaman, deputy assistant director of Natore Fire Service and Civil Defence.

The injured were taken to a local hospital, from where three were referred to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

## No scope to

FROM PAGE 5

Cases have been filed against some officials in Chattogram and Cox's Bazar in this connection. Most of them are not our permanent staffers. They were recruited through outsourcing. No allegation has been found against any of our officers," said the CEC.

"Investigation has been going on and cases have also been filed against those who were allegedly found involved [with these illegal activities]," he said.

"After investigation, punitive action will be taken against those who will be found involved in the illegal process of registering Rohingya in voter list."

The CEC said investigators have found involvement of some public representatives in providing Rohingya with birth certificates, used to get registration in voter list.

In reply to another question, the CEC said apart from Rohingyas, a Chinese citizen was registered in the voter list but the EC officials detected it.

Another issue of the meeting was how to hold by-polls of Chattogram-8 constituency successfully, he said, adding, "We wholeheartedly believe that the polls will be held successfully in a free and fair manner."

## Modi, Hasina exchange

FROM PAGE 3

president of Awami League.

Modi also highlighted the progress achieved in India-Bangladesh relations in 2019.

He said the upcoming birth centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, 50 years of the liberation of Bangladesh and establishment of bilateral diplomatic ties "provided important milestones to further progress of the close India-Bangladesh ties, which is a priority of his government," according to a statement issued by the Indian PMO.

The Indian premier also expressed his condolence on the untimely demise of former high commissioner of Bangladesh to India, Syed Muazzem Ali.

## Govt to help

FROM PAGE 3

disposed of outside the court -- under the alternative dispute regulation system.

Necessary training will be provided to the lower court judges in this regard, he said.

Earlier in the day, the minister inaugurated the four-month foundation training for assistant judges.

JATI Director General Justice Khondker Musa Khaled and Law Secretary Md Golam Sarwar also spoke on the occasion.

## Muazzem Ali laid to rest with state honours


UNB, Dhaka

Former Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh and immediate-past High Commissioner to India Syed Muazzem Ali was laid to rest with state honours yesterday.

Muazzem, also a freedom fighter, was given state guard of honour at state guesthouse Padma after his first namaz-e-janaza earlier in the day. Representatives of President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina placed wreaths on his coffin at the guest house.

His second janaza was held at Gulshan Azad Mosque after Zohr prayers. He was then laid to rest at Banani graveyard. His quikhwani will be held tomorrow, said an official.

Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen, State Minister for Foreign Affairs M Shahriar Alam, former Finance Minister AMA Muhiith, former Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali, newly-appointed Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen, Dean of Diplomatic Corps and Ambassador of the Vatican to Bangladesh Archbishop George Kocherry, Indian High Commissioner to Dhaka Riva Ganguly Das, former diplomats and senior officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were present to show their last respects to Muazzem.



### AGRANI BANK LIMITED

Information Technology & MIS Division  
Head Office (1<sup>st</sup> Floor)  
9/D, Dilkusha C/A, Motijheel, Dhaka -1000.  
Phone: 88(0)-2-9512009  
Email: dgmit.operation@agranibank.org

Reference No: e-GP/IT/T24/OTM/01/2020Date: 01/01/2020

e-Tender Corrigendum Notice

Tender Package No. 641/02122019/T24/03, Tender ID No. 399360 invited by this office will be as follows:

According to the instruction given by competent authority of Agrani Bank Limited some corrections are made in the tender documents. Bidders are requested to pay careful attention to TDS Qualification Criteria ITT clause 15 (a) (vi) in the e-GP website prior to submission of the tender.

All other terms and conditions of the tender document will remain unchanged. This Corrigendum Notice will be the part and parcel of the Tender Document. For further information please visit the website: [www.eprocure.gov.bd](http://www.eprocure.gov.bd).

Sd/-  
(Shahinoor Begum)  
Deputy General Manager  
Information Technology & MIS Division  
Agrani Bank Limited

4 x 3

### Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority (DTCA)

South Nagar Bhaban, 12th Floor (East Block)  
Fulbaria, Dhaka-1000

### Invitation for Enlistment (Goods and Related Services)

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

1.	Ministry/Division	Road Transport & Highways Division.
2.	Agency	Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority.
3.	Procuring entity name	Executive Director.
4.	Procuring entity district	Dhaka.
5.	Invitation for	Enlistment.
6.	Invitation Ref. No.	
7.	Date	

KEY INFORMATION

8.	Procurement method	Limited Tendering Method.
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PARTICULAR INFORMATION

9.	Last date of application collection	19 January, 2020 at 14:00 hrs.
10.	Application submission	20 January, 2020 at 14:00 hrs.
11.	Name & address of the officer to collect and submission of application	Md. Saiful Islam, Assistant Transport Economist, Room No. 1317, Dhaka South Nagar Bhaban, Fulbaria, Dhaka-1000.

INFORMATION FOR APPLICANT

12.	Eligibility of applicant	(a) The applicant shall be a registered company in Bangladesh having minimum 5 years of general experience in Supply, installation, testing, commissioning of enterprise IT hardware equipment in government, semi-govt. & autonomous organization of Bangladesh. (b) The applicant shall have specific experience of at least 1 (one) successful completion record of regarding contract in government, semi-govt. & autonomous organization of Bangladesh for Supply, installation and commissioning of enterprise IT hardware equipment, having a minimum contract value of Tk 50 (fifty) lakh in the last five years under a single contract. Evidence documents must be submitted. (c) The applicant must have at least 5 qualified hardware engineers (B.Sc in CSI/CSE) having minimum 3 (three) years of working experience in related field. (d) The applicant shall be a certified partner/distributor of the related Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM). (e) The applicant must have valid ISO 2001:2015 certificate.
13.	Price of application form (Tk)	Tk. 500.00.
14.	Enlistment/renewal fee (Tk)	5000.00/2000.00.

PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS

15.	Name of official inviting application	Khandakar Rakibur Rahman.
16.	Designation of official inviting application	Executive Director.
17.	Address of official inviting application	DTCA, South Nagar Bhaban, 12th Floor, Dhaka.
18.	Contact person detail	Tel No. 47120831 e-mail: <a href="mailto:ateco@dtca.gov.bd">ateco@dtca.gov.bd</a>
19.	The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all applications.	

Khandakar Rakibur Rahman  
Executive Director

GD-05

### Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority (DTCA)

South Nagar Bhaban, 12th Floor (East Block)  
Fulbaria, Dhaka-1000

### Invitation for Enlistment (Software and Related Services)

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

1	Ministry/Division	Road Transport & Highways Division.
2	Agency	Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority.
3	Procuring entity name	Executive Director.
4	Procuring entity district	Dhaka.
5	Invitation for	Enlistment.
6	Invitation Ref. No.	
7	Date	

KEY INFORMATION

8.	Procurement method	Limited Tendering Method.
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PARTICULAR INFORMATION

9.	Last date of application collection	19 January, 2020 at 14:00 hrs.
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11.	Name & address of the officer to collect and submission of application	Md. Saiful Islam, Assistant Transport Economist, Room No. 1317, Dhaka South Nagar Bhaban, Fulbaria, Dhaka-1000.

INFORMATION FOR APPLICANT


12.	Eligibility of applicant	(a) The applicant shall be a registered company in Bangladesh having, minimum 5 years of general experience in development/integration/implementation/upgradation of software systems and related services in government, semi-govt, autonomous bodies of Bangladesh. (b) The applicant shall have specific experience of at least 1 (one) successful completion record regarding contract in government, semi-govt & autonomous organization in Bangladesh for software and related work, with a minimum contract value of Tk 50 (fifty) lac in the last five years under a single contract. Evidence documents must be submitted. (c) The applicant must have at least 5 qualified developers/B.Sc (in CSI/CSE) engineers of minimum 3 (three) years working experience in related field. (d) The applicant must have valid CMMi level 3 (or upper) certificate.
13.	Price of application form (Tk)	Tk 500/-.
14.	Enlistment/renewal fee (Tk)	5000.00/2000.00.

PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS

15.	Name of official inviting application	Khandakar Rakibur Rahman.
16.	Designation of official inviting application	Executive Director.
17.	Address of official inviting application	DTCA, South Nagar Bhaban, 12th Floor, Dhaka.
18.	Contact person detail	Tel No. 47120831 e-mail: <a href="mailto:ateco@dtca.gov.bd">ateco@dtca.gov.bd</a>
19.	The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all applications.	

Khandakar Rakibur Rahman  
Executive Director

GD-06



### -ঃ টেন্ডার নোটিশ ঃ-

( সংগ্রহ পদ্ধতি - LTM. )

মেমো নং : ২৭৭৭(২) /প্রকৌঃ

তারিখ : ১৬/১/২০২০ বঙ্গাব্দ ৩০/১২/১৪২৬ খ্রিস্টাব্দ

ক্রমিক নং	কাজের নাম	টেন্ডার ডকুমেন্টস বিক্রির শেষ তারিখ	টেন্ডার বজ্র বন্ধের তারিখ ও সময়	টেন্ডার খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	প্রয়োজনীয় তথ্য সংগ্রহের স্থান
ক)	মোকাররম হোসেন খন্দকার বিজ্ঞান ভবনের ৪র্থতলায় (পশ্চিম পাশে) রসায়ন বিভাগের জৈব রসায়ন শাখার দুইটি ল্যাবরেটরীর জন্য ১টি কলাপসিবিবল পেইন্ট সরবরাহ ও স্থাপন কাজ।	১২/০১/২০২০ অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত	১৬/০১/২০২০ দুপুর: ১২.০০ টা পর্যন্ত	১৬/০১/২০২০ দুপুর: ১২.৩০ মিঃ	প্রধান প্রকৌশলীর দপ্তর, নোটিশ বোর্ড, টাঃ বিঃ।
খ)	মোকাররম হোসেন খন্দকার বিজ্ঞান ভবন এলাকার বিজ্ঞান গ্রন্থাগারের দক্ষিণ পাশে একটি সাইকেল স্ট্যান্ড নির্মাণ কাজ।				

(মোঃ আরেফ আলম মুখা)

নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী (জোন-১)

ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়।

GD- 13



## Girls continue to top public exam scoreboard

*Why can't this success be replicated later on?*

IT is truly inspiring that our girls continued to perform extraordinarily in the two biggest public examinations in the country—Primary Education Completion Examination (PECE) and Junior School Certificate (JSC) Examinations—last year, outdoing their male counterparts in terms of participation rate, success rate and grades achieved. They also outperformed boys in the pass rate for Secondary School Certificate (SSC) and Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) and equivalent exams earlier in 2019, with an outstanding number of girls securing GPA 5. These results are a testament to what our girls can achieve if and when given the right opportunities. They also speak of the tremendous success of coordinated efforts of the government and NGOs in reducing the gender parity in education.

However, we are still struggling to replicate this success story as girls move up the ladder—dropout rates for girls are at a high 42 percent at the secondary school level and secondary level completion rates are at a mere 59 percent. Child marriage, entrenched patriarchal norms, sexual harassment to and from schools, lack of access to appropriate information about sexual and reproductive health and high cost of education continue to deter girls from realising their full potential. Unfortunately, these trends carry through tertiary education, explaining why the female participation rate in the labour market is still much lower than that of their male counterparts, despite the promise that girls show early on in their educational trajectory. Women are still predominantly employed in low-paid, low-productive activities, which further increase their vulnerability in the labour market and society at large.

Girls have consistently proved that they can deliver results—often better than boys. But we, too, must prove our commitment to our girls, by continuing to invest in their education, retain them in schools and create an enabling environment in which they can pursue their own dreams.

## BSCIC must live up to its expectations

*Improving the condition of its estates should be a priority*

IT is unfortunate that among the 74 industrial estates of Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC), only a handful are running with some form of efficiency. Most of the estates are in a very bad shape with plots lying idle due to a lack of basic amenities. On a recent visit to some of the estates, our correspondents have found that the road networks leading to the estates are very poor and many of the estates do not have proper drainage systems. Moreover, many of them even lack gas, water and power supply. Quite a few industrial units that are currently running in the estates have to suspend their operation during the rainy season because of waterlogging. Security issues, too, have not been addressed by the authorities.

The poor condition of the estates was reported by this daily several times in the past. It was reported that among the 74 industrial estates in 59 districts, at least 20 were established without any feasibility study. There were also allegations that many of the estates were established solely for political reasons. The result is that the BSCIC has failed to attract new entrepreneurs and generate employment among rural people.

Under the circumstances, to make all the industrial estates fully functional, the authorities must improve the condition of its estates through ensuring sufficient gas and electricity supply as well as improving the road networks. The 496 plots that are currently lying idle should be allotted to entrepreneurs through a fair selection process. Moreover, the weaknesses in rules and regulations should be urgently addressed.

Of all the BSCIC estates, since the one in Dinajpur has been the most successful, it should serve as an example for the rest of the estates. Needless to say, if all the 74 industrial units can be properly utilised, the economic impact would be phenomenal.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

letters@thedailystar.net

### New Year resolutions

As 2020 has begun, I, like many others, have made my list of commitments for a fresh start in order to be a better person. I have decided to eat healthy, exercise regularly, be kind to people, help my mom in the kitchen, assist the needy, be optimistic and so on and so forth. I had done so last year as well, and tried to stick to my decisions to the best of my ability, which, in my opinion, was beneficial in more ways than one.

But somewhere down the line it seems that the pace with which we so eagerly begin tends to ease down and the resolutions seem to make less sense; and that is when I believe one should stand one's ground ever so firmly. Yes, life is about maintaining that healthy balance between the positive and the negative. As every beginning provides us an opportunity to better ourselves, I pray this year will be no different. Happy New Year, everyone.

Ishrat Jahan, Dhaka



MOHAMMED NORUL ALAM RAJU and FAIMA RAHMAN

THE severe cyclonic storm Bulbul originated from the Bay of Bengal advancing with a speed of 140 kph and started dwindling when the mouth of the storm crossed the Sundarbans and hit the mangrove forest at a speed of 70-80 km per hour. It's been over 10 years since cyclone Aila ravaged the Sundarbans in 2009, and the devastating cyclone Sidr in 2007 with a wind speed of 250km an hour hit the forest. The Sundarbans resisted the latter before it began to fade.

Playing the role of a shield against the ferocity of Bulbul, the dense forest full of various trees and bushes saved the coastal community from destruction. The storm entered Bangladesh through the Sundarbans and then hit Khulna, Satkhira, Bagerhat, Barguna and other districts. However, it claimed 12 lives in seven coastal districts as it uprooted trees, caused the collapse of houses, damaged crops and prevented people from taking their ailing ones to hospitals from cyclone shelters. Hundreds of people died in two similar storms in 2007 and 2009; but thousands of others survived as the Sundarbans stood as a safeguard between the habitants of the coastal districts and fierce winds during this volatile situation. The Sundarbans has always been like a mother to Bangladesh, protecting this country from the onslaught of cyclones and tidal surges. The recent cyclone, once again, reminded us of its importance.

It is proven that the mangrove forest has contributed largely to reducing the loss of life and damage to property from storms and cyclones as it reduces the impact of waves, storm surges and high winds during hazardous times. At least 4,589 trees were damaged under the pressure of Cyclone Bulbul in the Sundarbans, according to a report prepared by Bangladesh Forest Department (BFD); the report didn't consist of information regarding any wildlife being affected by the cyclone. However, infrastructure worth Tk 62.58 lakh was damaged in the Sundarbans due to the cyclone (*The Daily Star*, November 16, 2019).

Though the Sundarbans is a guardian

*If building the Rampal Power Plant proves to be one of the most damaging human interventions, then no matter what, the government should assert its intentions to save the Sundarbans. In this case, authority should be vested in the experts.*

POLITICS OF CLIMATE CHANGE



SALEEMUL HUQ

AS we enter the new year of 2020, we are in fact making a very significant transition when it comes to the issue of climate change. The first transition is a semantic one, but nevertheless a very significant one, namely that in 2019 we acknowledged that the climate change problem has become the climate change "emergency". This means that we need to prioritise it like we have never done before.

In scientific terms it means that the adverse impacts, and associated loss and damage, from climatic events such as floods, droughts, cyclones and wildfires can now be clearly attributed to the fact that human induced climate change has raised global temperature by over one degree centigrade from pre-industrial times and that abnormally severe events have now become the "new normal".

At the same time a new constituency of activists have arrived on the global scene with the potential to make a significant difference, namely the school strikers led by Swedish teenager Greta Thunberg. The scientific community had been warning global policymakers for several decades about the potential dangers of human induced climate change and the need to take action. And then the adversely affected vulnerable developing countries like Bangladesh and Tuvalu had added their voices in the last decade and the global leaders were able to agree on the Paris Agreement on Climate Change at the 21st Conference of Parties (COP21) in December 2015. However, since the withdrawal from the Paris Agreement by Trump and the election of leaders like Bolsonaro in Brazil and Scott Morrison in Australia, these leaders have decided to block any further action to tackle the climate change emergency.

This fact became abundantly clear at

## EDITORIAL

# Why saving the Sundarbans is so urgent

angel for us, our actions and interventions are risking its biodiversity and also causing extinction of many wildlife species.

The way the ecological quality of the forest is declining is very upsetting. Notwithstanding preservation commitments from governments, the Sundarbans is under threat from both natural and man-made causes. The fact that the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the official advisor on natural World Heritage, has recommended that the Sundarbans be classified as a 'World Heritage in Danger' should worry us all. The forest is also suffering from increased salinity due to rising sea levels and reduced freshwater supply.

The proposed coal-fired Rampal power station situated 14 km north of the Sundarbans at Rampal upazila of Bagerhat district in Khulna, is anticipated to further damage this unique mangrove forest according to a 2016 report by UNESCO.



PHOTO: STAR

The ecosystem of the Sundarbans has become very vulnerable to pollution.

Climate change, too, poses a threat to this great forest due to a rise in sea level, along with the establishment of industrial projects around the Sundarbans. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's 2007 report and a report by UNESCO, an anthropogenic 45 cm rise in sea level likely by the end of the 21st century, combined with other forms of anthropogenic stress on the forest, could lead to the destruction of 75 percent of the Sundarbans mangroves. Already, Lohachara Island and South Talpatti Island have disappeared under the sea, and Ghoramara Island is half submerged.

Agricultural activities had destroyed around 17,179 hectares of mangroves within three decades (1975-2010). Shrimp cultivation has destroyed another 7,554

and the livelihood of people. That's why Bangladesh has to take the highest measures possible to protect this unique forest.

Devising well-balanced coastal land-use plans, such as maintaining sustainable limits in logging and other harvesting activities of its resources are a must. Efforts in the direction of strengthening capacity building initiatives to reduce dependence on the land and forest, in collaboration with civil society organisations and regional stakeholders, can support internalisation of alternative livelihood opportunities. Community-based tourism can be encouraged as an alternative livelihood measure. While this may be a positive step for the community towards sustenance, it is important that the administration and community take equal responsibility in restricting the impact of

this initiative on the forest to a minimum. People of the area should be made aware about the issues faced by the Sundarbans; they should also be made aware of the consequences of manmade hazards like deforestation, etc.

Investments are required in bringing the mangroves back. Various international organisations, NGOs or other banks should come forward to grant the funds to save the Sundarbans. The local community should be provided with funds so that they can consume other sources of nourishment. We should consider this mangrove as part of the coastal zone management, coastal development strategy and coastal zone policy.

To save the Sundarbans we need to leave it alone, without any human intervention. The only thing the government can do is to minimise human intervention. This includes preventing people from polluting the nearby areas, refraining from disturbing the animals and

# What lies ahead for climate change

the recently concluded COP25 held in Madrid, Spain (but under the presidency of Chile) where despite adding two extra days (and nights!) to the negotiations, they failed to reach an agreement on several critical issues.

Thus if the UNFCCC is to retain any sense of credibility, the United Kingdom who will be hosting COP26 in Glasgow, Scotland in November 2020 need to think out of the box to change the format of the event as business as usual has been demonstrated to be unfit for the purpose.

At the same time, the actuality of the climate change impact around the world brings a new dimension to the task of

(CVF) from President Hilda Heine of the Marshall Islands in mid-2020 and will be chair for the following two years.

At the bilateral level Bangladesh can join forces with the UK, as it has already done during the UN Secretary General's Climate Action Summit in New York last September as part of the adaptation and resilience track. The two countries can develop their cooperation further in the run up to COP26 in November.

At the national level in Bangladesh, the UK can also provide support, as it has been doing for some time to Bangladesh's Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan which will be revised and launched in



PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

tackling the climate emergency that all countries will have to deal with locally, nationally, as well as globally.

At the global level, we now need to develop coalitions of the willing amongst governments of countries, both developing as well as developed, who want to take action to tackle climate change. Here Bangladesh has an important opportunity to play a leadership role, as Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will be taking over the chair of the Climate Vulnerable Forum

2020 taking it to 2030. One element of such a bilateral strategy between the UK and Bangladesh could be the development of an action research programme to tackle climate change and development related issues which would benefit other Least Developed Countries (LDCs), as well through South-South Cooperation.

At the same time, Bangladesh can play a leading role as the global champion of Community Based Adaptation (CBA) and supporting locally led adaptation around the world. This would build on the launch

*At the global level, we now need to develop coalitions of the willing amongst governments of countries, both developing as well as developed, who want to take action to tackle climate change*

of the locally led adaptation Action Track of the Global Commission on Adaptation (GCA) to be launched at the Gobeshona conference on climate change research into action on January 20.

The government of the Netherlands has offered to help Bangladesh set up a South Asian Regional Centre for Adaptation in Dhaka from 2020, which could become a means of sharing our experience and knowledge with our neighbouring countries in the region as well.

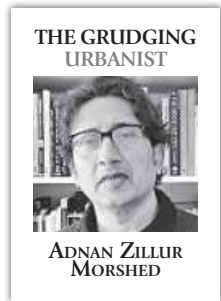
Bangladesh is pioneering the application of the concepts of whole-of-government as well as whole-of-society involvement not only in tackling climate change, but also for all 17 of the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), where we aim to achieve those goals by 2030.

Thus the year 2020 can indeed become the start of a new era for Bangladesh, as well as for the world, where we change the narrative from being one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change, to becoming one of the most resilient countries, by offering to share our knowledge and experience with other countries both through South-South as well as South-North cooperation. This could indeed become a new foreign policy strategy for Bangladesh going into the new decade.

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# What makes a city inspiring?



undergoing accelerated urbanisation and envisioning the next phase of their social, political, and national evolution. As experts demonstrate, cities have become not only the drivers of economy but also sites of national soul-searching.

I answered the students this way: a city is most inspiring when it is fair to all its inhabitants. A city is fair when it creates a culture of social justice across all its domains. A city ensures social justice when it offers equal opportunities to all its people.

But fairness, social justice, and equal opportunity are abstract ideas. How does one institute them in the physical conditions of the city? Is it possible to transform the abstract idea of social justice into something that we can visualise, feel, and experience in the spaces of the city?

As I pondered these questions, I recalled what the American poet and civil rights activist Maya Angelou once said: "I always knew from that moment, from the time I found myself at home in that little segregated library in the South, all the way up until I walked up the steps of the New York City library, I always felt, in any town, if I can get to a library, I'll be OK. It really helped me as a child, and that never left me."

A public library in the city—accessible to all, irrespective of their economic and social backgrounds—could be one of the most poignant symbols of a city that values social justice for all. Maya Angelou's racial discrimination in a segregated library in the American South could be mitigated by the robust publicness of the New York City library, where she didn't have to face the inhumanity of racism. She could walk up the steps of this library and feel that she could enter it without having to pass any discriminatory barriers. Angelou provided a most incisive physical portrayal of social justice in an urban condition with this simplest statement: "... in any town, if I can get to a library, I'll be OK." The feeling that you can access any opportunity and facility in the city without any social

As part of a class assignment last semester a group of architecture students asked me a question: what makes a city inspiring? This set me thinking. It could very well be a policy question, particularly for countries that are



and economic hurdle is a monumentally empowering condition. When that feeling is pervasive among the city's people of all ages, economic and social classes, gender, ethnicities, and physical abilities, a city is fair and practices social justice as its moral foundation.

As the year ends, I have been thinking about the "fairness" measure of cities in Bangladesh. As I go around in Dhaka I keep wondering, is this city fair to all its people? Is this city guided by a basic philosophy of social justice? Again, fairness and social justice are abstract notions, and often ignored quietly and cleverly as left-leaning obstacles to a neoliberal worldview, typically rigged to favour the privileged and the powerful. But we need to decide how we develop our cities and what kind of humanity we institute in them.

This is important for two main reasons. First, the middle-income status that we seek will be meaningful and sustainable only when that status is fair and achieved not at the expense of a vast majority of people. Second, around the world today, city administrators tasked with creating liveable cities are increasingly concerned with how to embody fairness in the city's planning. Liveability is not guaranteed by Smart City and its techno-glitz and seamless mobility. A Smart City could be liveable, provided it is fair to all its people, not just to its power-wielding CEOs and corporate executives.

So, I ask: How do we qualitatively measure something as abstract as fairness in the city's infrastructure, roads, footpaths, buildings, water sources, public transportation, green spaces, shops, and public places? Let me offer an example before I address my key contention today.

Consider public transportation from a fairness or social justice angle. Are we offering safe and gender-friendly mobility options for women in the public domain? If not, we are perpetuating patriarchy by means of public transportation, complicit in the creation of a biased social system that is inherently unfair.

For me the most glaring case of unfairness in the city resides in the way we define, confine, and manage poverty in our cities. It is unhelpful that in Bangladesh urban poverty is still largely understood through the lens of slum studies. To frame urban poverty in terms of the inadequacy of urban amenities (such as toilets and piped water supplies) in slums alone is to ignore a deeper social question: What is society's attitude towards the "poor"? It is important to revisit this age-old question to disrupt the cycle of urban poverty in a sustainable way.

Urban economists, social analysts, urban planners, and others produce a vast body of data on poverty in cities. But the big data can also overwhelm our compassion, our humane instincts. Any empirical study of the poor must be coupled with a fundamental ethical position that the poor is not the Other. The poor shouldn't be abstracted as a social category—a binary opposite of the bourgeois self—to be quarantined for research and experimentation. While empirical research is essential, without human compassion it bureaucratises the concept of poverty and dehumanises the poor.

It is not that empirical knowledge of the poor is unnecessary. But without compassion as public policy, big data keeps on calcifying the poor as a category, one that is isolated from any decision-making power structures. Without

any real agency, this category is on perpetual life support. In his work on gender justice, Amartya Sen argued that real societal progress is made when women's empowerment takes a strong hold on the public's ethical imagination. A similar argument could be made in the case of poverty studies. An ethically based view of the poor as fellow citizens, rather than as an objectified research category, is urgently needed for any sustained alleviation of poverty.

It is time policymakers, municipal administrators, and urban planners rethought urban poverty as a problem of social justice, not just as a problem of economic development. The issue of urban poverty should be examined with a bit of moral quandary and introspection into how the class-conscious bourgeoisie defines itself as the opposite of the poor. This very definition constitutes the central problem

*In designing cities in our country, urban planners can begin by acknowledging that urban poverty is, first and foremost, a crisis of social justice. City professionals must debunk the urban mythology that the poor is a closed social group in need of an improved ghetto.*

of urban poverty. The poor must be seen with a human face, not as an abstraction. The problem is that the poor's social invisibility is very much embedded in how we define poverty as an unreliable experience of the Other. And, big data tends to preserve the invisibility of the poor.

Let us forget, the idea of poverty has not been static in history. Both the idea and strategies for its relief have changed since the Industrial Revolution and industrial cities grew manifold in the modern era. Consider London, for instance. In the wake of the city's

intense urbanisation in the 19th century, a highly divisive political and philosophical debate raged about reforming laws related to poor people. At the centre of this vexing debate was this question: would top-down "help" (from the state and wealthy private citizens) diminish the poor's ability to take personal responsibility? So intense a philosophical discussion was it that even Tocqueville and Hegel followed the English turmoil with much fascination.

The dichotomy of state- and donor-driven top-down strategies of poverty alleviation and empathetic, bottom-up, and activist NGO efforts in capacity building among the poor continues to animate the urban poverty debate. In designing cities in our country, urban planners can begin by acknowledging that urban poverty is, first and foremost, a crisis of social justice. City professionals must debunk the urban mythology that the poor is a closed social group in need of an improved ghetto.

It is important not to forget that the poor are typically stuck in spatial traps, often legitimised through official planning processes. These spatial traps are slums, unsanitary industrial zones, flood-prone river banks, and footpaths. By keeping the poor confined to the urban fringe and hazardous areas, cities often deny them social justice and access to networks of economic mobility. By ghettoising the poor in undesirable, environmentally precarious areas, both cities and capitalistic systems seek to fortify a false sense of social hygiene. To mitigate this problem, urban planners need to see the disenfranchised classes not as the poor but as fellow "social citizens," who deserve, like anybody else, equitable access to healthcare, housing, education, and economic opportunities. But, at the same time, social citizenship comes with responsibility. All people of the city must accept the basic idea of the greater good—Greeks called it *eunomia* or good order—for the city to function as a fair place.

An inclusive and liveable city treats all its citizens with fairness and humanity. Only when we agree with the moral argument of this hypothesis can we begin to overcome the tyranny of GDP-centric economic philosophies, in which the majority of the people don't have access to opportunities that cities offer. A just city is the most liveable.

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## PROJECT SYNDICATE

# There is more to life than the GDP



“NOT everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted counts.” This old adage is particularly pertinent as we look ahead to

2020 and beyond. Part of the popular backlash against political and business elites may simply be that people feel the elites are not really focused on what matters to them. But while the single-minded obsession with maximising market output and profits is being challenged, a more meaningful replacement is not yet in clear view.

Gross domestic product (GDP) has long been the preeminent metric for measuring the size and success of national economies. It is the key target of economic policy, closely watched by politicians, economists, businesses, and investors. But GDP is also deeply—and increasingly—flawed.

Widely regarded as a reliable and objective benchmark, GDP is actually a complex statistic shaped by a history strewn with errors, unresolved controversies, and changing methods and definitions. The core problem is that GDP is not a measure of economic welfare, but rather of output. Its architect in the 1930s, the economist Simon Kuznets, would have preferred to place greater emphasis on welfare. But the US government had tasked him with devising a metric that could guide fiscal policy and shape taxation and spending decisions, so that is what he did.

The result was a statistic focused solely on market-based activities, based on final goods and services to avoid the double-counting of intermediate inputs like raw materials. Yet non-market activities, such as home care and housework, contribute to welfare. Likewise, some market activities harm welfare: think of negative side effects of production such as pollution. Moreover, normative judgements have driven multiple changes in the definition of GDP over the years. Notably, government services, and later financial services, were eventually deemed productive and valuable, and so were added to the definition of GDP. Remarkably, none of this has stopped GDP being widely used as a measure of welfare.

But the problems don't stop there. Another issue is how to account for inflation, given that rising prices can boost

nominal GDP even when the volume of output hasn't increased. Measuring output has become increasingly tricky as the mix and features of products and services evolves ever more rapidly.

Consider the complications posed by digitalisation, embodied in smartphones, which have little in common with the mobile phones of just a dozen years ago. Statisticians have been trying to account for the advent of smartphones (and the relative demise of cameras, calculators, portable music players, and other devices) by adjusting prices to reflect quality changes, but, in the process, they are making a distinction between market prices and value, that is, their contribution to well-being.

A related problem is that more money

assets. But NDP still tells only part of the story. To get a fuller picture of the sustainability of economic activity, one would also need to account for investments in human capital and the adverse effects of resource depletion.

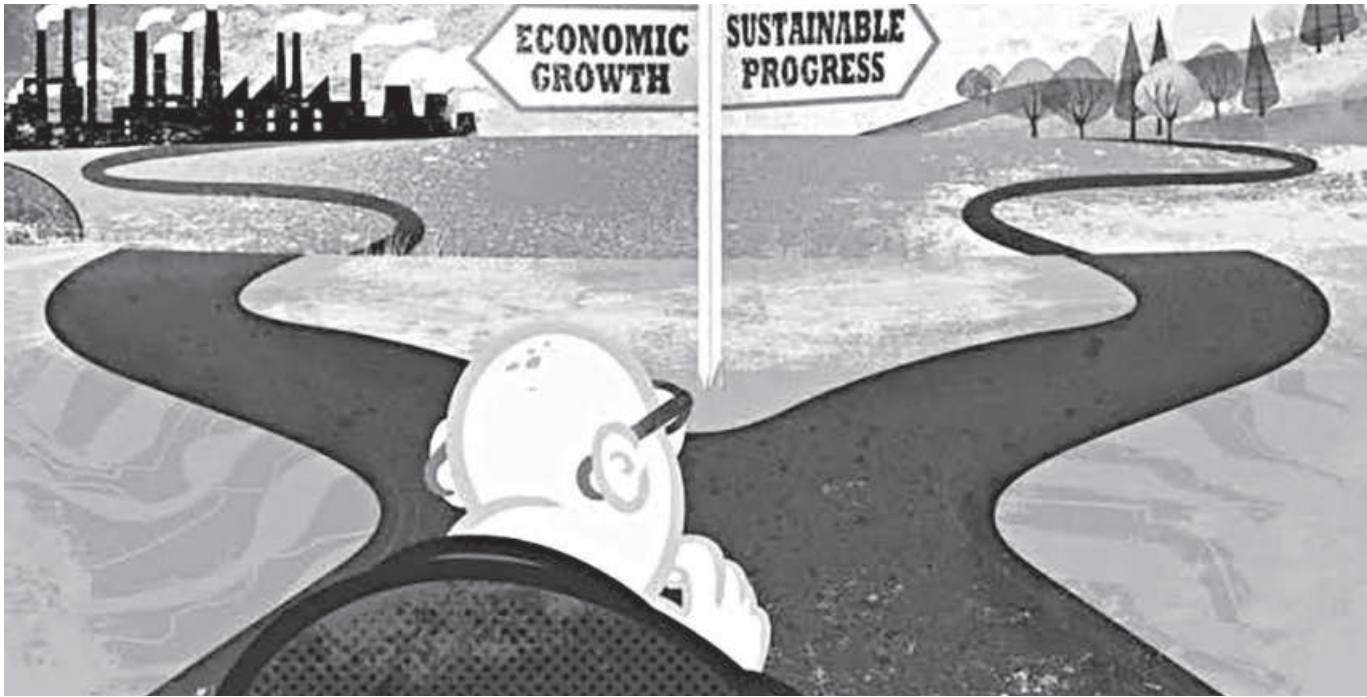
If it is true that "you manage what you measure," these problems with GDP are particularly troubling, because they are liable to distort government policy and economic decisions. Moreover, if we accept that GDP is not a measure of welfare, we have to ask whose interest it is really serving.

To be sure, GDP at least has an established infrastructure of statistical collection, and its market focus is useful for fiscal decision-making.

Moreover, while GDP can be distorted

against GDP-obsessed elites—suggest that a suite of alternatives is needed. Ironically, while digitalisation has made GDP all the more difficult to measure, it could also facilitate the creation of alternatives. The explosion of data collection—some of it real-time and geolocated—that we are now witnessing could open up many new measurement possibilities.

There is a parallel here to the growing range of indicators for corporate performance. Quarterly and annual profit figures once came in a plain vanilla, standardised form. Now, they come in a wide variety of flavours, and are supplemented by a range of additional indicators of balance-sheet health. Moreover, the Business Roundtable, an organisation of American CEOs,



does not always make people happier. In part, this is because people are concerned about their status and may be content with less money so long as they have more than others. As such, the distribution of GDP, not just its total, also matters for national welfare. Or as one woman put it in response to an economist's warnings about how Brexit might reduce the UK's output: "That's your bloody GDP. Not ours."

Yet another problem is that GDP does not take account of future prosperity. If the current output comes at the expense of future output, future welfare may be jeopardised.

True, statisticians do calculate Net Domestic Product by accounting for depreciation (wear and tear) of physical

in various ways, there are economists who doubt that such distortions are growing over time. In their view, GDP may be flawed, but it is still the best indicator of national prosperity that we have.

After all, GDP has maintained its dominant position largely because there are no ready-made alternatives without shortcomings of their own—many involving conceptual questions, such as what an aggregate measure is actually for. Is it to measure household welfare? To capture changes in sustainable national wealth? Other issues are more practical: Do we have the right data? Are we missing forms of capital, such as intangibles and natural endowments?

But whatever the drawbacks, GDP's obvious flaws—and the public backlash

announced a seminal shift in August by committing to delivering value not just to shareholders, but also to customers, employees, suppliers, and communities.

This is not the first time that the corporate sector has pledged to look beyond short-term profitability. But as we enter 2020—amid a climate that is deteriorating both literally and figuratively—businesses and politicians alike will be under intense pressure to improve societal welfare.

To succeed, they must first figure out how to count what counts.

Mark Cliffe is chief economist and head of global research of the ING Group. Copyright: Project Syndicate, 2019. [www.project-syndicate.org](http://www.project-syndicate.org) (Exclusive to The Daily Star)

## ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY



JANUARY 2, 1492  
Granada reclaimed by Spain

On this day in 1492, Granada, home of the Alhambra palace and the seat and final stronghold of the Moorish kingdom in Spain, was surrendered to the Catholic Monarchs, Ferdinand II and Isabella I, ending the Reconquest.

## CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

<b>ACROSS</b>	28 Central	5 Photo
1 Nick and Nora's dog	29 Carryall	6 Singer Amos
5 Police trap	31 Numerical prefix	7 Furious
10 Moves clumsily	32 College award	8 Spot to jot
12 Pay tribute to	36 Field worker	9 Waves to, perhaps
13 Indian faith	39 As done by	11 Gambler's cinch
14 Make a speech	40 Digression	17 Long swimmer
15 Here, in Quebec	41 Manners	19 Informant
16 Watch recipient, perhaps	43 Oxford features	22 Reverses
18 Edict	44 Cumin or coriander	24 Pitch cousin
20 Gifted	45 Used up	25 Building
21 Skilled	46 Young ones	27 Coat rack part
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26 Went 90	2 Pizzeria buy	33 Ham's device
	3 Gin mixer	34 Choose
	4 Say further	35 Moves carefully
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## YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

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WRITE FOR US. SEND US YOUR OPINION PIECES TO [dsopinion@gmail.com](mailto:dsopinion@gmail.com).



NEWSIN  
brief

Syria death toll for  
2019 lowest in 9 yrs

AFP, Beirut

Syria's nearly nine-year-old conflict which has cost more than 370,000 lives recorded its lowest annual death toll in 2019, a war monitor said Tuesday. A total of 11,215 fighters and civilians were killed in the past year, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said. Of those, 3,473 were civilians including 1,021 children, the Britain-based monitor said. The bloodiest year of the conflict was in 2014, when around 76,000 people lost their lives. That year saw the rise of IS across large swathes of the country and in neighbouring Iraq.

Jakarta flooding  
kills 9 people

AFP, Jakarta

Nine people died after Indonesia's capital was hit by its deadliest flooding in years, authorities said yesterday, as torrential rains on New Year's Eve left vast swathes of the megalopolis submerged. Electricity was switched off in hundreds of waterlogged neighbourhoods across greater Jakarta, home to about 30 million people, with some train lines and one of the city's airports also shut. Authorities said about 13,000 people were evacuated, but that figure did not include residents in Jakarta's satellite cities.

16 inmates killed in  
Mexican prison fight

REUTERS, Mexico City

Sixteen inmates were killed and five were wounded in a prison fight in the northern Mexican state of Zacatecas, authorities said, in one of the worst outbreaks of violence in the country's troubled penal system since President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador took power. The fight broke out around 2:30 pm on Tuesday afternoon at the Regional Center for Social Reintegration in the town of Cieneguillas, located on the western flank of state capital Zacatecas.



A handout picture received from the US embassy in Iraq yesterday, shows a US army apache helicopter dropping flares over Baghdad's high-security Green Zone on Tuesday, after Iraqi supporters of pro-Iran factions breached the outer wall of the US embassy over weekend air strikes that killed pro-Iran fighters in western Iraq.

PHOTO:  
AFP



India targets new moon  
mission in 2020

India plans to make a fresh attempt to land an unmanned mission on the moon in 2020 after a failed bid last year, the head of the country's space programme said yesterday. Work is going "smoothly" on the Chandrayaan-3 mission to put a rover probe on the moon's surface, Indian Space Research Organisation chairman K Sivan told a press conference. "We are targeting the launch for this year but it may spill over to next year," Sivan said. Indian sources said authorities had set November as a provisional target for launch. India seeking to become only the fourth nation after Russia, the United States and China to put a mission on the moon's surface and boost its credentials as a low-cost space power. The country's Chandrayaan-2 module crash-landed on the moon's surface in September.

Taliban kill 23 in attacks  
on Afghan checkpoints

At least 23 Afghan security forces were killed in a series of Taliban attacks across the country, officials said yesterday, despite winter snowfall that usually leads to a lull in violence. The assaults targeted vulnerable checkpoints in at least three northern provinces. In Balkh, militants stormed a checkpoint early yesterday and killed at least seven policemen, according to provincial police chief Ajmal Fayez. Separate assaults by the Taliban killed at least nine members of Afghan security forces in northeastern Kunduz, and seven in neighbouring Takhar province, officials said.

Pope says sorry for  
slapping devotee



Pope Francis yesterday apologised for his widely-viewed slap of a woman who had grabbed his hand as he greeted Catholic faithful on New Year's Eve. Francis had greeted children before the Nativity scene on Saint Peter's square and was turning away when the woman who had crossed herself then cried out something, pulled on his hand and almost caused him to fall. The 83-year-old pope grimaced before managing to break free by slapping her hand twice. He continued his tour, walking with some difficulty while maintaining a slightly greater distance from visitors, and gradually relaxed again as he came into contact with other children. "We lose patience many times," Francis said in his apology. "It happens to me too. I apologise for the bad example given yesterday," the head of the Catholic church said. SOURCE: AFP

AGENCIES

US President Donald Trump warned Tehran it would "pay a very big price" after a mob of pro-Iranian demonstrators stormed the American embassy compound in Iraq, as his government said it is sending hundreds more troops to the Middle East.

Angered by US air strikes that killed two dozen paramilitary fighters on Sunday, hundreds of protesters spilled through checkpoints in the high-security Green Zone Tuesday, demanding the removal of American troops from Iraq and voicing loyalty to a powerful Iranian general, Qasem Soleimani of the

BAGHDAD US EMBASSY ATTACK

Pro-Iran protesters begin leaving  
embassy, hardliners stay put

US to send hundreds more troops

Khamenei condemns US, warns  
Iran will confront threats



Revolutionary Guard Corps.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the attack was "orchestrated by terrorists," one of whom he named as Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis. Muhandis has been identified as second-in-command of the Tehran-backed Hashed al-Shaabi paramilitary group.

Defense Secretary Mark Esper said around 750 troops from a rapid response unit of the 82nd Airborne Division are prepared to deploy over

the next several days to the region.

Prior to the announcement, a US official told AFP that "up to 4,000 (troops) may ultimately be deployed".

The US had already flown a rapid response team of Marines into Baghdad to reinforce its embassy after the attack Tuesday, which left smoke and flames rising from the embassy entrance and further heightened tension between Tehran and Washington.

Trump blamed Tehran for the embassy attack and warned that it

would face punishment if Americans are killed.

"Iran will be held fully responsible for lives lost, or damage incurred, at any of our facilities," Trump said on Twitter.

"They will pay a very BIG PRICE! This is not a Warning, it is a Threat," wrote Trump, adding "Happy New Year!"

However, Trump later told reporters that he did not foresee war with Tehran.

Meanwhile, Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei yesterday strongly condemned the US strikes on pro-Iran forces that killed at least 25 fighters and warned his country was ready to confront threats. Live broadcasts showed the protesters battering down the high-security doors of the embassy reception building, smashing windows, burning a sentry box and chanting "Death to America!"

By yesterday afternoon, supporters of Iraq's pro-Iranian force Hashed al-Shaabi began leaving the encircled US embassy in Baghdad but hardliners insisted they would stay.

AUSTRALIA BUSHFIRES

Death toll rises as  
fires ravage homes

AFP, Sydney

Relief supplies began reaching thousands of people stranded in fire-ravaged Australian towns yesterday after deadly bushfires ripped through popular tourist spots and rural areas leaving at least eight people dead.

Navy ships and military aircraft were deployed alongside emergency crews to provide humanitarian relief and assess the damage from the deadliest spate of blazes yet in a months-long bushfire crisis.

Police said three more bodies were discovered yesterday, bringing the confirmed death toll since late Monday to eight, including a volunteer firefighter who died when a "fire tornado" flipped his 10-tonne truck. The latest deaths take to at least 17 the number of people killed in one of Australia's most devastating bushfire seasons of recent years.

The fires encircled seaside communities to trap thousands of holidaymakers and locals, cutting electricity and communication services that in many areas remained down late yesterday.

Cooler temperatures and easing winds provided a window of opportunity for relief efforts yesterday. Authorities however warned the fire danger would spike on Saturday as temperatures soar again. This season's blazes destroyed more than 1,000 homes and scorched about 5.5 million hectares -- an area bigger than Denmark or the Netherlands.

People take part in a pro-democracy march in Hong Kong, yesterday. A huge New Year's Day pro-democracy rally in Hong Kong ended with clashes between police and hardcore protesters, as demonstrators sought to carry their movement's momentum into 2020.

PHOTO:  
REUTERS



Taiwan leader  
rejects 'one  
country, two  
systems'

REUTERS, Taipei

Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen yesterday said the island would not accept a "one country, two systems" political formula Beijing has suggested could be used to unify the democratic island, saying such an arrangement had failed in Hong Kong.

China claims Taiwan as its territory, to be brought under Beijing's control by force if necessary. Taiwan says it is an independent country called the Republic of China, its official name.

Tsai, who's seeking reelection in a Jan 11 vote, also vowed in a New Year's speech to defend Taiwan's sovereignty, saying her government would build a mechanism to safeguard freedom and democracy as Beijing ramps up pressure on the island.

"Hong Kong people have showed us that 'one country, two systems' is definitely not feasible," Tsai said, referring to the political arrangement that guaranteed certain freedoms in the former British colony of Hong Kong after it was returned to China in 1997.

Taiwan's parliament passed an anti-infiltration law on Tuesday to combat perceived threats from China, further straining ties between Taiwan and Beijing.

China suspects Tsai and her independence-leaning Democratic Progressive Party of pushing for the island's formal independence, and has threatened it with war if there was any such move.

Kim ends moratorium on nuke testing

Threatens to demonstrate new strategic weapon soon as US misses deadline for talks

AFP, Seoul

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has declared an end to moratoriums on nuclear and intercontinental ballistic missile tests and threatened a demonstration of a "new strategic weapon" soon.

Analysts said the announcement, reported by state media yesterday, amounted to Kim putting a missile "to Donald Trump's head" -- but warned that escalation by Pyongyang would probably backfire.

Washington was swift to respond, with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo urging Kim to "take a different course" and stressing that the US wanted "peace not confrontation" with the North, while Trump played down the development.

Speaking to Fox News and CBS after Kim's announcement, Pompeo said a resumption of nuclear and missile tests would be "deeply disappointing".

"We hope that Chairman Kim will take a different course... that he'll choose peace and prosperity over conflict and war," Pompeo said.

Pyongyang has previously fired missiles capable of reaching the entire US mainland, and has carried out six nuclear tests, the last of them 16 times more powerful than the Hiroshima blast, according to the highest estimates.

A self-imposed ban on such tests -- Kim declared they were no longer needed -- has been a centrepiece of the nuclear diplomacy between Pyongyang and Washington over the past two years, which has seen three meetings between Kim and US President Donald Trump, but little tangible progress.



Any actual test is likely to infuriate Trump, who has repeatedly referred to Kim's "promise" to him not to carry them out, and has downplayed launches of shorter-range weapons.

Negotiations between the two sides have been largely deadlocked since the breakup of their Hanoi summit in February, and the North set the US an end-of-year deadline for it to offer fresh concessions on sanctions relief, or it would adopt a "new way".

"There is no ground for us to get unilaterally bound to the commitment any longer," the official KCNA news agency cited Kim as telling top ruling party officials.

"The world will witness a new strategic weapon to be possessed by the DPRK in the near future," he added, referring to the North by its

official name.

The full meeting of the central committee of the ruling Workers' Party was an indication of a major policy shift.

State television showed veteran newsreader Ri Chun Hee reading out the KCNA dispatch over footage of Kim addressing the officials and general imagery of the country.

The broadcast appeared to stand in place of Kim's usual New Year speech -- normally a key moment in the North Korean political calendar.

Kim acknowledged the impact of international sanctions imposed on Pyongyang over its weapons programmes, but made clear that the North was willing to pay the price to preserve its nuclear capability.

For months, Pyongyang has been demanding the easing of international sanctions imposed over its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes, while Washington has insisted it takes more tangible steps towards giving them up.

The US has already indicated that it will react if the North carries out a long-range missile test.

"We want peace, not confrontation," he added, with Seoul's unification ministry adding that a strategic weapon test "would not help denuclearisation negotiations".

Trump himself was emollient, saying that he thought Kim was "a man of his word" and that at their Singapore summit "We did sign a contract, talking about denuclearisation".

An ICBM launch would be likely to frustrate China, the North's key diplomatic backer and provider of trade and aid, which always stresses stability in a region it regards as its own back yard.



WHAT'S ON



**Group Art Exhibition**  
 Title: His Dream World  
 Venue: Shilpagan, Dhanmondi  
 Date: December 27 – January 11  
 Time: 3 pm – 8 pm



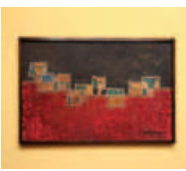
**Workshop**  
 Title: Kata Kuti - Collage Workshop by Kazi Tahsin Agaz Apurbo  
 Venue: Studio 6/6, Mohammadpur  
 Date: January 25, 2020  
 Time: 11 am – 6 pm



**Cultural Festival**  
 Title: Bangladesh Shanskritik Utshab 2020  
 Venue: Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy  
 Date: January 3- 23, 2020  
 Time: 4 pm – 8 pm



**Musical Evening**  
 Title: Plugged Out IV - One Night Stand  
 Venue: Counter Culture Club, Dhanmondi  
 Date: January 31, 2020  
 Time: 5 pm onwards  
 Tickets: BDT 300



**Group Art Exhibition**  
 Title: Breaking Ground: Modern Art in Transition  
 Venue: Subir Choudhury Exhibition Hall, Bengal Shilpalay, Dhanmondi  
 Date: Dec 17 – Feb 15  
 Time: 1 pm – 8 pm (Except Sundays)



STARS WELCOME 2020

As another decade kicks off, this is how celebrities ringed in the New Year across the world.



Rafiath Rashid Mithila dives into the new decade with the motto of learning, practicing, teaching and spreading empathy and love with her daughter.



Sabila Nur celebrates New Year at Universal Studio Singapore.



Amitabh Bachchan posted a throwback photo from his 2019 Diwali celebrations, with a sweet message in Hindi. In the photo, he is seen posing with his wife Jaya Bachchan and his grandchildren.



Virat Kohli and Anushka Sharma welcomed 2020 with actors Saif Ali Khan, Kareena Kapoor and Varun Dhawan in Switzerland. Anushka Sharma wished her fans a “happy new year” on Instagram with a picture from the party.



Tahsan Khan's New Year resolution: “Recording a live album with my band.”



“2020 here we come! Happy New Years EVERYONE,” actor Drew Barrymore shared on New Year's Eve.



“Happy New Years Everyone!” wrote singer Joe Jonas accompanying a festive photo of himself and actor Sophie Turner.

PHOTOS: COLLECTED FROM INSTAGRAM

Tirjak Natyamela 2019 concludes

ARUN BIKASH DEY, from Chattogram

Marking their 46th anniversary, Tirjak Natyadal, a theatre group of Chattogram, organised a five-day theatre festival, titled *Tirjak Natyamela* at Theatre Institute Chattogram. Thespians Bivas Chakraborty and Mamunur Rashid jointly inaugurated the event.

The festival featured performances commemorating their 46-year journey, including musical performances, poetry and dance recitals. Chattogram's folk songs were also presented in the open

space every evening for the audience to rejoice on traditional tunes.

Theatre personalities Ataur Rahman, Ramendu Majumder, Nasir Uddin Yusuf, Dr Afsar Ahmed, Kaushik Chatterjee, Mannan Hira, Golam Sarwar, Gazi Rakayet, M Saiful Alam, Dr Kuntal Barua, Alok Ghosh, Sanjib Barua and Ananta Hira, among others, participated in different sessions of the festival. Five plays, one on each day, were also staged at the festival.

*Tarangobhango*, a play written by Syed Waliullah and directed by Ahmed Iqbal

Haider, was staged on the first day of the event. Natyachakro, a theatre group based on Dhaka, enacted *Eka Ek Nari*, a play based on Italian playwright Dario Fo's *A Woman Alone* on the second day. *Oedipus*, directed by Ahmed Iqbal Haider was presented on the third day. Theatre Factory showcased *Asharashyo Prothom Dibash*, a play written by Mohan Rakesh, on the fourth day.

The festival concluded with Upstage's presentation of the play *Raat Bhore Brishti*, based on Buddhadeb Basu's novel of the same name.



PHOTO: STAR

MAQSOOD O' DHAKA'S New Year present



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Celebrated rock band Maqsood O' dHAKA has enabled free streaming for their song, Obhijog Nei on online music streaming platform Soundcloud, as a new-year gift to their fans.

The song is from their album *Shobdo Chitro*, released in 2014, and was available to listeners only on online purchase before 2020.

Written and composed by Mac Haque, the track features Mon2 on drums, Taposh on bass, Shakil on guitar, Bulet on keyboard, Rahin Haider on saxophone, and Rose on percussion. The track, mastered by Jewel, was recorded and mixed in Acoustic Artz Studio, Dhaka. The song is available free of cost at the website: <https://soundcloud.com/jazzbangladesh/obhijog-nei-shobdochitro>.



Mac Haque

PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED





Children of jute mill workers holding placards on the fourth day of the workers' fast-unto-death yesterday. The photo was taken near Platinum Jute Mills gate where the workers have been demonstrating for regular pay and implementation of wage board awards.

PHOTO: DIPANKAR ROY

## 20 jute mill workers taken to hospital

FROM PAGE 16  
met Sumaiya Parvin and her elder sister Robina, students of class IV and VII at the school. Their father Mizanur Rahman is a worker of Platinum Jute Mills.  
"My father cannot maintain our four-member family smoothly due to poverty. How would he bear our educational expenses?" she said.  
Sumaiya said her father was trying to send them to their village in Gopalganj's Moksedpur upazila within a month as he was struggling to meet basic household costs.  
Sahana Sharmin, president of Platinum Jute Mills Employees Union, said the deputy commissioner of

Khulna had asked them to sit in a meeting with him on Tuesday night, but they didn't agree.  
"State Minister [for labour and employment] Monnujan Sufian had taken the workers' movement to the wrong path by requesting the workers to refrain from carrying out the movement. Now we don't have trust in any such requests," she said.  
Sahana said many workers fell sick in the last four days as they had to stay on roads round the clock amid the cold weather.  
Meanwhile, sources at the Khulna deputy commissioner's office said Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) has called a meeting for today

at its office in the capital to discuss the workers' demands.  
Worker leaders said they were invited to the meeting by the BJMC, but they were yet to make a decision in this regard.  
Hamid, convener of Sangram Parishad, said they would attend the meeting if the workers granted them permission.  
Around 31,000 workers had gone on work abstention and observed fast-unto-death from December 10 to December 13.  
Production at nine mills came to a halt due to the demonstration. However, Carpeting Jute Mills in Jashore was operating at partial

production.  
Later, workers postponed their protest until December 17 upon assurances from State Minister Monnujan of fulfilling their demands.  
On December 27, the Sangram Parishad leaders announced that they would resume their movement as their demands were not met.  
The demands include cancellation of public-private ownership initiative, allocation of necessary fund for the jute sector, insurance for families of deceased workers, ensuring payment of provident fund and gratuity accumulation for retired workers and regularisation of jobs of temporary workers.

## US calls on China to release jailed Pastor Wang Yi

AFP, Washington

The United States called on China on Tuesday to release Pastor Wang Yi, the leader of an unofficial Protestant church who was sentenced to nine years in prison.  
"I am alarmed that Pastor Wang Yi, leader of Chengdu's Early Rain house church, was tried in secret and sentenced to nine years in prison on trumped-up charges," Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said on Twitter.  
"Beijing must release him and end its intensifying repression of Christians and members of all other religious groups," Pompeo said.  
State Department spokeswoman Morgan Ortugas described Wang's arrest as "yet another example of Beijing's intensification of repression of Chinese Christians and members of other religious groups."  
Ortugas called for his "immediate and unconditional release."

## 30,000 wait

FROM PAGE 16  
Immigration Department Director General Khairul Dzaimme Daud. "Indonesians, Bangladeshis and Myanmar nationals were among the highest number of illegal immigrants who registered under the programme..." he told reporters after leading an operation in Puchong, according to the report.

The Malaysian government offered the amnesty programme, which started on August 1, as part of its measures to reduce the number of illegal immigrants in the country, according to media reports.  
Khairul Dzaimme said during the implementation of B4G, the Malaysian Immigration Department had received numerous complaints about the existence of "touts or agents" claiming to act as middlemen to speed up the process of the programme registration.  
Following this, five individuals, both local and foreigners, detained for questioning, were believed to be such middlemen, he said.  
"They were found to be carrying out such activities [as middlemen] at the immigration offices in Putrajaya and Kuala Lumpur," he added.

## Ex-UZ chair

FROM PAGE 16  
Meanwhile, bus service from Bandarban to other parts of the country remained suspended for around two hours as transport workers' protested arrest of Kuddus, who was once the president of Bandarban Bus Owners and Sramik Oikkyo Parisad.

## 11 hurt as cops

FROM PAGE 16  
(JCD) for interrogation.  
Chhatra Dal leaders said several hundred JCD men gathered in Khokon Park area since 10:00am to go to the BNP office on Nawabbari Road to organise a rally, marking the 41st founding anniversary of the pro-BNP student front.  
Sanatan Chakraborty, additional superintendent of Bogura police, said some 50-60 Chhatra Dal men walked on the Shaheed Minar with their shoes on around 12:30pm. As the law enforcers asked them not to walk there wearing shoes, only some of them complied.  
But the others were angered at this. They carried out the attack, leaving five cops, including Sanatan, injured.  
Sanatan, ASI Ashraf, constables Sifat, and Mamun took primary treatment at Bogura Police Lines Hospital.  
Other injured Parvez was admitted to Bogura Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital with a head injury.  
Speaking to this newspaper, Bogura JCD General Secretary Nure Alam Rigan said they went to the police superintendent's office three days ago

to seek permission for holding a rally at the Titu Auditorium on the occasion of the student front's founding anniversary. But the SP asked them to organise the event at the BNP office.  
Yesterday, the JCD men gathered in Khokon Park area to go to the party office, around 100 yards off the park. Local BNP lawmakers GM Siraj and Mosharraf Hossain were also present.  
At one stage, police started using batons on the Chhatra Dal men alleging that they walked on the Shaheed Minar wearing shoes.  
"Police beat up Chhatra Dal leaders and activists, leaving many of them wounded. Six of them are now undergoing treatment at different clinics in the town," Rigan added.  
He claimed that police picked up over 20 JCD men.  
GM Siraj MP said a few Chhatra Dal men might have walked on the Shaheed Minar wearing shoes. "We said sorry to the police for any such incident. But despite that the law enforcers beat up Chhatra Dal men."  
Bogura Sadar OC SM Badiuzzaman said they would file a case against the JCD men over attacking police and obstructing them from carrying out their duties.

## China launches

FROM PAGE 16  
entered service on Monday after four years of construction.  
Self-driving Fuxing bullet trains, whose name means 'rejuvenation', currently operate on the rail line, which is a vital part of China's expanding high-speed transport network, according to China State Railway Group.  
The trains are guided by the nation's domestically developed global satellite navigation system Beidou. The £7billion (\$9billion) project will be complete next year and has been

designed to rival and eventually replace the US-developed Global Positioning System (GPS).  
"The Jing-Zhang High-speed Railway has realised the missions of smart construction, smart equipment and smart operation, and made the history of the global smart railway," Li Hongxia, a senior engineer at China Railway Engineering Design and Consulting Group, told Technology Daily.  
Li regarded the completion of the line a milestone in the country's rail history.

## Unblock mobile network

FROM PAGE 1  
According to the email sent to the operators yesterday, by Md Soheli Rana, a deputy director of BTRC's spectrum management division, they have now withdrawn the instruction completely.  
"In this connection, please reinstate operations of the BTSs [Base Trans-Receiver Stations] near the Bangladesh-India border sites immediately," the email read.  
"As per the BTRC directive, we have already started reactivating the BTSs located along the border areas. The reactivation process will take a while to complete since a lot of BTSs are involved here. We thank the affected customers for being patient with us," Shahed Alam, chief corporate and regulatory officer of Robi Axiata Ltd, told The Daily Star.  
Due to the previous decision, about one crore subscribers in 32

districts, near the borders with India and Myanmar, were affected.  
A BTRC official said they faced many complaints from different citizens and at the same time government high-ups expressed frustrations in this regard.  
On Sunday, when the network-blocking decision was made, Telecom Minister Mustafa Jabbar told The Daily Star that this was not their decision and they just followed the instruction.  
He, however, said the decision was made following a consensus of three to four ministries, and the foreign ministry was leading the efforts in this regard.  
"The security of the state is the government's first priority and that's why it made this decision," Jabbar said without elaborating.  
Contacted yesterday evening, Jabbar said the government made the decisions banking on a request by intelligence agencies.

## Let's get Brexit done and end division in 2020

Johnson tells Britons

REUTERS, London

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said he would bring his divided nation back together next year when Britain leaves the European Union, telling Britons they were set for a "fantastic year and a remarkable decade".  
Fresh from winning a large parliamentary majority in an election just over two weeks ago, Johnson said in a New Year's message that his first job was to ensure Brexit was delivered, more than three years after Britain voted to leave the EU, and then to heal the wounds the vote had opened.  
"As we say goodbye to 2019, we can also turn the page on the division, rancour and uncertainty which has dominated public life and held us back for far too long," he said.  
"Now we have a new parliament, elected by the people to deliver the people's priorities, which will finally respect the referendum and deliver Brexit. So we'll get Brexit done before the end of this month," he added.  
Johnson has already won initial approval for his EU divorce deal and the final stages of ratification will begin when lawmakers return after Christmas in time for a Jan. 31 exit.  
He will then begin talks on forging a new trading relationship with the bloc, having said those negotiations would not be extended beyond the end of 2020.  
With an eye on voters in northern and central England who broke their long tradition of backing the opposition Labour Party to support him in the election, Johnson also said the state-run NHS health service would be his top priority while vowing that extra funding for education and infrastructure would be spread "more fairly".

# US-Iran tensions won't derail rallies

Say Iraq anti-govt protesters

AFP, Diwaniyah

For months, their rallying cry has been "We want our country!" Now, Iraq's anti-government demonstrators insist they won't let the dramatic escalation between the United States and Iran steal their thunder.

The youth-dominated demonstrations have rocked Baghdad and Iraq's Shia-majority south since early October in outrage over government graft, a lack of jobs and the political influence of neighbouring Iran.

They have long been wary of political factions trying to coopt their movement and are now digging in their heels even further, saying their cause will not be derailed by a looming proxy war between Washington and Iran.

Tensions have escalated since a volley of rockets killed an American contractor in Iraq last week.

This prompted the US to respond days later with air strikes that killed more than two dozen pro-Iran fighters of Iraq's Hashed al-Shaabi military network.

On Tuesday, pro-Tehran demonstrators attempted to storm the US embassy in Baghdad, just across the river Tigris from the main anti-regime protest camp in Tahrir Square.  
"Some sides are trying to drag the protests in other directions," said Alaa Sattar, a demonstrator in Tahrir.

"But the position of the protests in Tahrir has been very clear since October 1: Iraq should not be an arena for score-settling or US-Iranian conflicts," he told AFP.

Demonstrators would stay in the streets, Sattar pledged, until early parliamentary elections produce a government "loyal only to Iraq".

Baghdad has close political and military ties to both Tehran and Washington, but those two powers have been at loggerheads since the US

withdrew from a landmark nuclear deal with Iran in 2018.

Iraq has feared that a proxy war between its two allies could play out on its soil, destabilising a country only just getting back on its feet after years of unrest and a devastating fight against the Islamic State group.

Following IS's defeat in 2017, Iraqis hoped to see their economy recover, services improve and to have more jobs for youth.

But with little improvement two years on, many have taken to the streets, pointing the finger at an entrenched elite they say is corrupt, inept and beholden to Iran.

When the protests were met with violence, demonstrators accused pro-Tehran factions in the Hashed of trying to crush their movement and intimidate activists.

The Hashed, meanwhile, has cast the rallies as a plot by the US and other powers to bring "chaos" to Iraq.

This tug-of-war over Iraq should add more fuel to the fire of the protests, said Husaam al-Kaabi, a demonstrator in Iraq's shrine city of Najaf.

"What protesters want is a change in the political situation, which regional and international factions rule right now," he told AFP.

"This is the main reason we went out into the streets -- so that the Iraqi government is the decision-maker," Kaabi added.

He suspected outside powers of trying to "exploit" the anti-government protests for their own political gains, adding slyly, "We know what they are trying to do."

In Diwaniyah, another protest hotspot, 57-year-old Ali Mahdi said the demonstrators would not veer away from their central demands.

"Protesters can see what's happening in this proxy war between Iran and the US on Iraqi soil. Iraq does not have a horse in this race," said Mahdi.

## Forest dept scraps plan

FROM PAGE 16  
Mohammed Shafiul Alam Chowdhury, chief forest conservator of the department, said they had already instructed the tree felling to be stopped when they came to know about the move.

"But we will still probe as you have raised the matter," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Local forest department officials earlier said the plan to cut the trees was made under the social forestry programme. But after media reports and local protests, they started saying the trees were marked for counting.

The department undertakes social forestry programmes across the country, involving locals in planting quick growing trees which are cut down after a certain period. The proceeds are shared between the government and the participants.

The common trees planted under these programmes include non-native timber trees like Acacia, which are fast-growing and sold for wood.

Anisur Rahman, assistant conservator of forest of the wildlife management and nature conservation circle in Moulvibazar, made a visit to the area recently and submitted a report to the forest department's central office.

On Monday, local forest department officials were told that the decision to cut the trees had been cancelled, he said yesterday.

"A meeting will be held with the participants who planted the timber trees before they are cut down," he said.

"And no fruit trees will be felled."

"In this meeting," he added, "we also hope to decide that the Chautali beat will not be used for social forestry programmes in the future."

**"WHY SOCIAL FORESTRY HERE?"**

Lawachhara National Park is a reserved forest, well known for being home to primates including globally threatened species such as the Northern Pig-tailed Macaque,

Phayre's Leaf Monkey, Capped Langur, and the Western Hoolock Gibbon.

The Chautali beat, adjacent to the park, is spread over a 32-hectare land. Most of the plants here are around 100-year-old and these plants provide the daily diet of rare wild animals, said Saju Marchiang, a forest guide.

"We have seen rare animals feeding off fruit trees in Chautali beat and returning to Lawachhara. Cutting down these fruit-bearing trees will threaten their survival."

Jabed Bhuiyan, joint convener of the Lawachhara Bon O Jib Boichitro Rokkha Andolon, said the number of large trees in the forest has decreased because of illegal logging and other human activities.

"Due to deforestation, sources of food for wildlife -- various fruits, leaves and flowers -- have dwindled, pushing many species to the brink of extinction. Now the forest department appears to be doing the same by marking trees to be cut down."

"Why is social forestry being undertaken in a natural forest?" he asked.

Wildlife lover Biswajit Bhattacharjee Bapon, also member of a local wildlife conservation organisation, said trees like Acacia were not fit for this protected forest.

He also asked, "Why were the fruit trees marked?"

Abdul Karim Kim, executive member of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (BAPA), said the Lawachhara forest was a precious asset of Bangladesh and should be protected by legal measures and proper management.

"Good laws are there but these are only facilitating more corruption instead of being properly implemented," he said.

"The government should have considered the biodiversity of the rainforest before making such plans to cut these trees."

## 2 Indian soldiers killed

FROM PAGE 16  
of suspension.

It has been decided to restore internet connectivity to all government hospitals with effect from midnight of December 31 besides fully restoring SMS on mobile phones," Jammu and Kashmir administration spokesman Rohit Kansal told reporters in Jammu, the winter capital.

Kansal said the administration in Kashmir is facilitating students, contractors, tour operators, government officials through various internet touch points.

"Nearly 900 such touch points and special counters are functional throughout Kashmir in districts, prominent tourist places and hotels, and about 6 lakh people have taken advantage of these touch points," the

spokesman said.

In response to a question on release of detained politicians, including three former chief ministers, Kansal said that "any release or detention, preventive or otherwise, is a decision that is being taken by local law enforcing agencies based on its assessment of the local law and order situation."

Five political leaders, who had been under preventive detention since August 5 were freed on Monday last but former chief ministers Farooq Abdullah, Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti are still under detention.

Kashmir has been split between India and Pakistan since the end of British colonial rule in 1947. The archrivals have fought two of their three wars over the territory.





A section of locals have continued encroachment on Zia Khal in Jhenidah's Moheshpur upazila. A major portion of the canal has been filled up with garbage.

PHOTO: STAR

# Canal-grabbing goes on

AZIBOR RAHMAN, Jhenidah

A group of local influential people have continued to grab Zia Khal (canal) in Moheshpur upazila headquarters although it plays a vital role in the lives of the residents of nearby villages. The villages include Kanaidanga, Rakhalthog, Fatepur, Krishnochandrapur, Purandapur, Saratala and Goalhuda. The grabbers have built a number of structures by occupying different parts of the 100-km-long canal. A local influential person named Sazzad Hossain has recently built a house and

sawmill by grabbing a portion of the canal, alleged villagers. Although local administration, on information, demolished the establishments, Sazzad continued dumping garbage into the canal to grab it, they said. Meanwhile, Fatepur area is being polluted too as the nearby villagers dump household wastes into the canal. Locals said the canal was dug from Fatepur to the Kadobak river in the upazila. The then president Ziaur Rahman inaugurated the canal and since then it has been known as Zia Khal. During monsoon, rainwater of the villages falls into the river through the canal, they said. If the canal is filled up with tonnes of garbage, flow of water is badly disrupted and due to this, the croplands in the areas remain submerged during the rainy season, causing immense sufferings to farmers. At present, a group of local influential people have built a mosque on the canal, said the villagers, adding that a major portion of the water body have also been brought under cultivation by the grabbers. Arafat Hossain, a resident of Saratala village, said the

land grabbers have continued to occupy the canal but the authorities concerned are yet to take any major steps to stop grabbing of the water body. Sazzad said no establishments were built on the canal after the house and sawmill was demolished by local land office. He will remove the garbage from the area soon, said Sazzad. Sirazul Islam, an official of Fatepur union land office, said they have stopped construction of the illegal structures on the canal. If anybody tries to build any establishments on the canal, they will take action, he said.

# Tea seller Bishal: An unstoppable

The 11-year-old boy secured GPA 5 in the PEC exams

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

A tea seller has got grade point average (GPA) 5, obtaining 529 marks out of 600 in this year's Primary Education Completion (PEC) examinations. Md Bishal Mia, son of Liakat Mia, took part in the PEC exam from Sahera-Gafur Government Primary School in Dakkhin Mourail area of Brahmanbaria town. The tremendous result has amazed people of his locality as the boy, who has to work at the tea stall of his father from 5:00pm to midnight every day, was rarely seen to manage time for his study. Hailing from Araisdha village in Ashuganj upazila, Liakat, father of three children, has been struggling to run his five-member family with his small income from the tea stall. He runs the tea stall at the platform of Brahmanbaria railway station from 5:00pm to 12:00am every day. Of the children, elder son Evan is

now doing his diploma at Brahmanbaria Polytechnic Institute, daughter Tarin Akter is a Class VII student of local school and Bishal achieved GPA 5 in this year's PEC exam, said Liakat. Bishal said earlier Evan helped his father. He is now working at the tea stall since his brother got chance in the polytechnic institute two years ago. "Every night I studied for two hours after returning home from the tea stall. I hardly could manage time for private tutoring," said Bishal. Bishal dreamt of becoming a cricketer or engineer in his life. School Managing Committee President Golam Mohiuddin Khan Khokon said 36 students, including Bishal, got GPA 5 from the school. Bishal was also the first boy in Class III and IV. Poverty cannot bar anyone from achieving his or her success, he said.



Bishal works at his father's tea stall at the platform of Brahmanbaria railway station.

PHOTO: STAR



A beekeeper inspects a bee colony in one of the hives he set up in Taltala village under Sadar upazila of Faridpur. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: STAR

# Beekeepers flourish around mustard fields

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Different areas near mustard fields in Faridpur Sadar upazila are now teeming with beekeepers from neighbouring districts. In Charnadhabdia union, several beekeepers from Rajbari has set up their man-made hives on open land near mustard fields where the honeybees forage for nectar. Beekeeper Arman Mandal, an 18-year-old from Goalanda upazila in Rajbari, told this correspondent that this year he came to Taltala village and set up bee colonies in 100 hives. "My father has been doing this work for 16 years and I've been doing this for five years." He has been extracting eight to ten maunds of honey from the bee colonies every week and the prices he was getting for each maund ranged between Tk 14,000 to Tk 16,000. Almost half of his earnings is spent on his



daily expenses during the extraction period and feeding of the bees in the off-season, he added. Mokter Mondal, another beekeeper this correspondent met in the village, said the weather condition this year has so far been favourable for harvesting honey and he was collecting about five to seven maunds of honey each week from 80 bee hives he set in the area. "I'm getting good price for it too," the man said happily. Contacted, deputy director of Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) in Faridpur, Kartik Chandra Chakraborty, said mustard is being cultivated on 8,305 hectares of land in nine upazilas of the district this year. He also said the department has been providing all sorts of support to the beekeepers and according to their estimation, about 14 tonnes of honey would be harvested in the district this year -- one tonne higher than that in last year.

# Bridge not rebuilt in 31yrs

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

People of nine villages in Nasirnagar upazila have been suffering much for years for want of a bridge on a canal in Khagalia area. Especially schoolchildren are the worst sufferers due to the communication problem. Despite repeated pleas, the authorities concerned are yet to take any steps to build a bridge there, said villagers. The villages include Bholakut, Kandipara, Bholakut-Kandi, Kahetura, Tekanagar, Nasirpur, Balikhola and Durgapur. Taru Mia, an elderly villager of Khagalia, said in 1986, Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) built a bridge on the canal, connected to the Meghna river to ease communication in the area, but it was washed away by floods of 1988. Five pairs of pillars of that bridge are now seen there only. Since then no new bridge was built there, leaving thousands of commuters in great trouble, said Taru. Mohammad Rubel Miah, chairman of Bholakut union parishad, said around 1,200 people live in Khagalia village. Two government primary schools, two madrasas, a community clinic, a century-old mosque and two markets lie there.



The bridge was destroyed by floods of 1988 and since then no new bridge has been built there, leaving thousands of commuters in great trouble of Brahmanbaria's Nasirnagar upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

Abu Ishak Al Mamun, headmaster of Khagalia Government Primary School, said during the monsoon months the canal overflows. Even after the rainy season, there is water in the canal for five months. During the time, the school sees poor attendance as the students have to cross the canal by country boats amid risk and due to this, the guardians do not want to send their kids to school, said the headmaster. Masud Rana, assistant engineer of LGED in the upazila, said as construction of a road between Nasirnagar upazila and Chatolpar union has already been started, a bridge will also be built there.



Children browse through the new books given to them during the government-sponsored Textbook Festival across the country on the New Year yesterday. The photo was taken from Achaipara Non-government Primary School at Perachhara union in Khagrachhari Sadar upazila.

PHOTO: SAIKAT DEWAN





Malipatan community clinic in Kachua upazila of Bagerhat remains closed during the work hours while a treatment seeker comes out frustrated from Tengrakhali clinic in the same upazila. The photos were taken a few days ago.



PHOTO:  
STAR

KACHUA UPAZILA IN BAGERHAT

Services scanty at community clinics

PARTHA CHAKRABORTY, Bagerhat

Several community clinics in Bagerhat’s Kachua upazila are failing to provide required services to treatment seekers due to various problems like shortage of doctors, medicines, diagnostic equipment, pure water and overall infrastructural facilities.

Visiting Tengrakhali, Malipatan, Pingaria, Charkathi, Bilkul and Baroikhali community clinics in the upazila, this correspondent found that presently a community healthcare provider (CHCP), a health assistant and a family welfare assistant are posted to provide healthcare services at each clinic.

The CHCP is supposed to attend the clinic from 9:00am to 3:00pm six days a week while the two others are assigned to work three days a week at the clinic, and make field visits for three more days to attend patients but there are allegations of negligence in the discharge of their duties.

Surprisingly, there is no doctor or nurse at the clinics.

Bina Rani Das, CHCP of Charkathi, said after doing MA in Bangla, she took a three-month training from Kachua Upazila Health Complex and started serving there in 2011.

“Generally, we provide treatments for cold, cough, flu, aches, cuts, burns and gastric problems, supply birth control pills and condoms, and

arrange measurement of weight and blood pressure.

“The stock of medicines supplied here for one-and-a-half month period is hardly enough for a month. The glucometre is damaged. The clinic building is a bad condition and the tube-well, the only source of drinking water, is out of order,” she said.

The CHCP at Tengrakhali Raisul Islam said they have to serve about 40 patients daily as people from around three and a half square kilometre area come to the treatment centre.

But the supplied medicine is not sufficient and there is no supply of drinking water, he said.

During this correspondent’s visit to Malipatan community clinic,

several locals seeking anonymity alleged that the clinic often remains closed as CHCP Molina Rani Biswas does not attend there regularly.

Contacted, the CHCP refuted the allegation and said there is no management committee for the clinic.

Several treatment seekers including Sheila Rani Saha, 42, Sumitra Saha, 40, Trishna Saha, 13, Jobeda Begum, 70, Sheuli Saha, 30, Amena, 80, said they come to the clinic for treatment of common health problems as going to the upazila health complex would require much time and money.

Under the supervision of Bangladesh government, Platform

for Dialogue (P4D) programme, implemented by the British Council and funded by the European Union, is conducting small projects to improve the quality of services of community clinics in Kachua upazila.

Bagerhat district facilitator of P4D Gopi Nath Saha said, “Under the Social Action Project work, we arrange meetings with community clinic management committees, discussions with government representatives, and awareness campaigns like human chains, rallies, dialogues with stakeholders, conveying messages through posters, to improve service quality.”

“There should be better

monitoring with functional management committees to ensure satisfactory services by the community clinic staff,” he added.

Contacted, Kachua Upazila Health and Family Planning Officer Dr Md Manjurul Alam said, “I have informed the Health Engineering Department about the bad condition of the community clinics. I also informed the project office about the requirement of medicines and medical equipment.”

“Despite limitations, 11 the 12 community clinics in the upazila are trying to deliver the best. We will take steps regarding Malipatan clinic as there are allegation of irregularity against the CHCP,” he added.



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Farm workers prepare an onion field in Gaznar Beel area in Pabna's Sujanagar upazila. The photo was taken a week ago.

PHOTO:  
STAR

Spiralling price lifts up hope

Pabna farmers, producing one third of the country's total demand for onions, eyes high price of the spice in the market

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPUI, Pabna

Pabna farmers are cultivating more land for the second season of onion eyeing the high price of the spice in the market, forgetting the loss they had suffered from their flood-hit crops in the September-October season.

Deputy Director Md Azhar Ali of Pabna Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) told The Daily Star, “In the last season, farmers cultivated 44,000 hectares of land and produced 6.5 lakh metric tons of onions. This season, we have targeted to cultivate 49,800-hectare for producing 7.5 lakh metric tons of onions.”

If the weather remains dry and favourable, then this season’s target will be the highest ever production in Pabna, according to officials of DAE.

Deputy director Azhar

informed that the total yearly demand for onion in the country is 24 lakh metric tons, and the nine upazilas of Pabna usually supplies 25 percent of it.

Next year, they are hoping to supply 33 percent of the total demand of onion, he added.

The deputy director noted that farmers, who could save their crop from flood during the last season, earned a lofty profit from the Mulkata variety selling it at the high market price. This motivated the other farmers to increase their cultivation for the current season.

Since mid-September price of onion kept on rising from Tk 40/kg to the record high of Tk 250/kg, becoming somewhat steadier in the last two weeks selling between Tk 50 to Tk 100 per kg, as quoted on the website of the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh.

Sources at the DAE explained that Mulkata sown during September-October is harvested around December while the current variety sown now will be ready for harvest by March.

This correspondent visited Santhia and Sujanagar upazilas, where most of the onions in the district are grown.

An onion farmer of Sujanagar upazila Md Ishhaque Ali said, “In last season, I cultivated 66 decimals of land but I did not get expected profit as most of the crop was damaged in sudden flood this year. I managed to save 20 mounds of onion and sold those for Tk 60,000. The handsome price of onion inspired me to cultivate again in more areas this season.”

Ishaque is cultivating onions on 165 decimals of land by leasing

99 decimals, expecting to earn Tk five lakh to Tk six lakh from sale of the crop, he said.

He, however, is concerned about winter rain damaging his crop again. “If it rains during winter, we may face loss again,” he said.

Forgetting the loss that he had incurred in the last season, retired college teacher Dulal Hossain of Narinda village in Santhia upazila cultivated five bigha of land for onion expecting to earn Tk five lakh. He, too, is worried about the weather.

“The recent dense fog disrupts onion cultivation. At the same time, we are worried about rain during winter,” Dulal said.

Farmers also urged the government to stop importing onions during harvesting time, so that they can get expected profit.

SANTOSH PUR RESERVE FOREST

Bare power line kills 1 wild monkey, burns 10 others

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

At least one wild monkey died of electrocution and 10 others badly burned in the last fifteen days after an uninsulated power line was inaugurated on December 15 through Santoshpur Reserve Forest in Phulbaria upazila.

Local lawmaker Muslem Uddin inaugurated the overhead electrical power line, installed by Palli Bidyut Samity (PBS) under Bangladesh Rural Electrification Board.

The reserve forest is habitat for various wildlife including more than 350 wild monkeys.

Advocate Imdadul Haque Selim, a member of the committee for forests and environment in Phulbaria upazila, said the authorities concerned did not bother to take necessary measures to protect the wildlife although the lawmaker had asked them to do so during the inaugural programme.

Ashrafal Alam Khan, a beat officer of Bangladesh Forest Department, said they informed PBS of the animal casualties since the line came in operation, but PBS is yet to take any steps in this regard.

Monkeys roam in troops and other members of the troop can get hurt while trying to rescue or save another member in danger, he said, adding that in May



An injured monkey

2018, the forest department had asked the PBS to refrain from laying any overhead power cable through the forest.

The forest department was trying to get a hold of the injured monkeys for providing necessary medical care, he also said.

PBS deputy general manager in Phulbaria, Anita Bormon, said they already visited the area and would take immediate steps for the protection of the wild animals in the forest.



In a photo taken on Tuesday, people look at one of the poles that Palli Bidyut Samity installed to lay an uninsulated overhead power line through Santoshpur Reserve Forest in Mymensingh's Phulbaria upazila.

PHOTO: COLLECTED



Star

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## SPORT



Sylhet Thunder coach Herschelle Gibbs (2nd from R), who has had trouble communicating with local players, oversees the team's practice session at the Sylhet District Stadium yesterday, ahead of their BBPL match against Cumilla Warriors today.

PHOTO: STAR

# Language a problem for Gibbs

*Sylhet Thunder coach frustrated by communication issues*

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangabandhu Bangladesh Premier League (BBPL) moves to Sylhet from today after the completion of the second Dhaka phase on December 31, 2019. It will however not be a happy homecoming for hosts Sylhet Thunder as they have no hope of making it to the play-offs after only registering one win in eight games.

Other than some occasional sparks from Andre Fletcher, Johnshon Charles and Mohammad Mithun, the overall performance of the side has been below par. Sylhet Thunder coach Herschelle Gibbs explained why the team might have been suffering. According to the South African, it is the language barrier that has caused a lot of problems throughout the

tournament.

"About local players, a lot of them don't understand English. So, it is difficult for me to make points all the time. It is frustrating," said Gibbs yesterday in Sylhet.

However, Gibbs is not the only South African on coaching duty with Bangladeshi players. There are in total four South Africans currently working in the Bangladesh national team management with head coach Russell Domingo, batting coach Neil McKenzie, fielding coach Ryan Cook and physio Julian Calefatto all from South Africa.

Gibbs also wondered how McKenzie managed to communicate with local players.

"I would love to be able to speak to them [players] like this, like I am speaking to you now and that they can say they understand every word. Unfortunately, that's

I would love to be able to speak to them [players] like this, like I am speaking to you now and that they can say they understand every word. Unfortunately, that's not the case.

**HERSCHELLE GIBBS**  
SYLHET THUNDER COACH

not the case. I am not sure what Neil McKenzie is saying (smiles). He is from South Africa and I am also from there. He [McKenzie] is also helping them to understand

what he is trying to do. But I know McKenzie is a good coach and the players will learn a lot from him. But I don't know how much he is actually getting across. Maybe I have to, you know, get a new language before I come here," said Gibbs.

A frustrated Gibbs also gave an example of his troubles while communicating with players in the BBPL.

"When I talk to them, I can see that they are listening but they are not really syncing in. I think the understanding of the game needs to be improved. I will give you an example. The other day Rubel Mia was batting and he was on 14 off 28 deliveries. I walked on to the field during the time-out and I said to him, 'what is happening, you got 14 off 28 balls?' and in reply he just shook his head," said Gibbs.



Australia coach Justin Langer (R) talks with captain Tim Paine during practice.

# 'Hope he plays as long as he can'

REUTERS, Sydney



Tim Paine will be Australia's captain for the foreseeable future and there is no reason why he would not lead the team in next year's inaugural World Test Championship final if they qualify, coach Justin Langer said on Wednesday.

Paine was seen by many as a placeholder when he became Australia's 46th Test captain in 2018 after the 45th, Steve Smith, was banned for 12 months for his part in the Newlands ball-tampering scandal.

Selected for his demeanour as much as for his batting and wicketkeeping skills, Paine was at the helm when Australia lost a first home series to India, but has since overseen the retention of the Ashes in England and two series triumphs. Langer gave the idea of a leadership change short shrift ahead of the third Test against New Zealand on Wednesday.

"Truth is there's been conjecture from outside but there's never been one millisecond of conjecture within our team," he told reporters at the Sydney Cricket Ground.

"He's almost our most important player because he's a very good leader, his captaincy's been excellent, he's the best wicketkeeper in the world, he's as fit as anyone in the group.

"If he believed he could bat as well as we think he can, then we'll see results like we did in the last Test."

Forty points from a victory in the third Test, which starts at the SCG on Friday, would help second-placed Australia close the gap on top-ranked India in the nine-team table.

Langer said he thought there was every chance Paine would lead the team out at Lord's in 18 months' time should they remain in the top two and qualify for the title-decider.

"I hope he plays as long as he possibly can because his leadership's been brilliant," Langer added.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

## ICC delegation due later in January

SPORTS REPORTER

A two-member International Cricket Council delegation comprising CEO Manu Sawhney and head of finance and commercial affairs Ehsan Mani is expected to visit Bangladesh later this month on a routine visit, informed Bangladesh Cricket Board CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury yesterday.

Sawhney, who was appointed as the fifth ICC CEO in April last year, is expected to exchange views with BCB.

"The delegates are expected to discuss about the tender process and commercial rights of upcoming ICC events after 2023. It's a routine visit from the ICC," Nizamuddin told The Daily Star yesterday.

## Mathews recalled

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka recalled former skipper Angelo Mathews to the T20 squad on Wednesday after a 16-month absence from the shortest form of the game for the upcoming India tour.

The cricket board said Mathews, 32, will be in the squad led by Lasith Malinga to play three matches in India.

The squad will leave Sri Lanka on Thursday, the board said in a statement.

Mathews played his last T20 international against South Africa in August 2018 when he led Sri Lanka to a three-wicket victory but failed to impress at the crease.



## WORLD ARCHERY AWARD

# Sana, Frederick in shortlist

SPORTS REPORTER



Ruman Sana, who led the gold rush as the Red and Greens clinched all 10 team and individual archery events in the 13th South Asian Games, has been nominated for the 2019 Athlete of the Year award by the sport's governing body, the World Archery Federation. Bangladesh coach Martin Frederick also made the shortlist for the coach of the year award.

Sana achieved many an accolade in this calendar year. The 24-year-old from Khulna started the year with a silver medal in the 3rd ISSF World Ranking Championship in Dhaka in February before winning a bronze medal in World Archery Championship in Netherlands in June, securing a quota place for next year's Olympics. He added a gold medal to his growing cabinet in the Asia Cup (Stage-3) in Philippines in September before the three-gold haul in Pokhara.

It was a perfect end to a year that had started on a high and ended even higher. Sana has been listed as a nominee for the Recurve Men and Breakthrough



RUMAN SANA

category. The awards will be decided by a combination of public and expert panel votes.

Sana is currently ranked 10th in the world in recurve individual men's category while Bangladesh men's recurve team are ranked 14th.

# Domingo ready to go to Pakistan

SPORTS REPORTER



Uncertainty has surrounded Bangladesh's scheduled tour of Pakistan later this month. While the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) was confident and adamant about hosting

all three scheduled T20Is and two Tests, the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) said that they would prefer a short tour but that too depended on whether the board could form a good team for the tour as a number of players and coaching staff were unwilling to travel to Pakistan.

However, Bangladesh head coach Russell Domingo made his stance regarding travelling to Pakistan clear yesterday.

"I think some guys [in the team management] are not keen to go. But if we have to, then I am going," Domingo told Cricbuzz yesterday.

The Bangladesh coaching staff comprises four South Africans -- Domingo,

batting consultant Neil McKenzie, fielding coach Ryan Cook and newly appointed physiotherapist Julian Calefatto. The other members are New Zealand's Daniel Vettori, the spin consultant, Indian analyst Shrinivas Chandrasekaran and strength and conditioning coach Mario Villavarayan from Sri Lanka.

While the Bangladesh head coach said he had no issue travelling to Pakistan, a final decision regarding the tour is still pending.

BCB President Nazmul Hassan had earlier said that talks were still ongoing with players as the board prepares to form the T20 squad. Bangladesh

are unwilling to play the Test series in Pakistan at the moment and also asked the PCB to consider moving the two Tests to a neutral venue. Meanwhile, the PCB had made it clear that Pakistan would not be shifting the Test venue.

However, Hassan also said that there were no doubts about the security system in Pakistan.



# NZ look to salvage pride in smoky Sydney

AFP, Sydney



Smoke haze could come into play as New Zealand look to salvage some pride from their miserable tour of Australia in the third and final Test in Sydney this week.

With bushfires raging across New South Wales state, day two of the match on Saturday shapes up as the biggest challenge with temperatures forecast to soar and smoggy conditions expected.

The issue of smoke is a difficult one for officials, who currently rely on a mix of air quality guidelines from the International Cricket Council, state governments and the Australian Institute of Sport.

But there are inconsistencies on what is considered "unsafe", with Cricket Australia and the players' association currently working to develop better protocols around

visibility and air quality.

It follows a Big Bash League match in Canberra being abandoned this month because of toxic bushfire haze.

Currently, it is up to the umpires to decide whether conditions are safe, without any formal framework for that decision.

With the first two Tests at Perth and Melbourne ending in heavy defeats inside four days, New Zealand will need all the help they can get.

Coach Gary Stead admitted the Black Caps were "beaten up by Australia again" in their 247-run Melbourne thrashing and they have had to go back to the drawing board.

"We've got to find some areas where we can keep chipping away, make improvements and put Australia under pressure for longer," he said.

"When you get put under pressure for the periods Australia have put us under, then you have to question what

we're doing.

"Australia have three bowlers at 145 kph and a spinner (Nathan Lyon) that's taken over 300 Test wickets so you're always up against it. You don't get a reprieve and that's the hard thing for us."

The bright spot from Melbourne was makeshift opener Tom Blundell's gritty second innings century and he is set to retain the role alongside Tom Latham in Sydney.

But there is doubt over skipper Kane Williamson, who has had a poor tour.

The New Zealand Herald reported that he missed training Wednesday with flu-like symptoms, with batsman Henry Nicholls suffering similar problems.

Jeet Raval is the only specialist batsman waiting in the wings, but he has been out of form and was dropped for Melbourne.

## SHORT CORNER

### Archer may miss 2nd Test

England paceman Jofra Archer may miss out on second Test against South Africa after skipping bowling practice at Newlands on Wednesday.

Archer, who took six wickets in the first Test defeat at Pretoria including 5-102 in the second innings, did bat in the nets and took part in fielding drills but a sore right elbow kept him from bowling.

A decision on the 24-year-old would have to be made just before the start of the Test on Friday.

-- REUTERS

### Naseem withdrawn from U-19 WC squad

One month after announcing the team for the ICC U-19 World Cup 2020, the Pakistan Cricket Board has withdrawn 16-year-old fast bowler Naseem Shah, on the grounds of him having already made his senior

team debut in November last year.

At 16 years and 279 days, Shah became the youngest Test cricketer to make his debut on Australian soil, when he was picked in the Pakistan XI for the first Test in Brisbane. He has since played two more Tests and picked up a five-for



in his last, the second Test against Sri Lanka in Karachi, which Pakistan won by 263 runs to clinch the series, becoming the youngest Test cricketer to snare a five-for in the process.

-- ICC

### Lyon against 4-day Tests concept

Australia off-spinner Nathan Lyon says he is totally against the idea of tinkering with the duration of five-day Test matches and hopes the proposal to shorten the game's longest format is not even considered by administrators.

The International Cricket Council (ICC), the world governing body of the sport, is set to reflect on the idea of making Test matches four-day affairs to free up a crammed international calendar and reduce player workload.

Australia have said they will seriously consider the concept, while England will back making it mandatory from 2023.

The cash-rich Indian board (BCCI) are yet to declare their stance on the matter.

-- REUTERS



What to WATCH

DAY'S EVENT

GTV & MAASRANGA

BBPL

Rangpur v Rajshahi

Live from 1:30pm

Sylhet v Cumilla

Live from 6:30pm

BANGLA TV

Federation Cup

First semifinal

Mohammedan v Rahmatganj MFS

Live from 4:00pm

SONY SIX

Australia v New Zealand

Third Test, Day One

Live from 5:30am (Friday)

STAR SPORTS SELECT 1

English Premier League

Liverpool v Sheffield Utd

Live from 2:00am (Friday)

Bangabandhu Bangladesh Premier League

Venue: Sylhet Int'l Cricket Stadium

Rangpur v Rajshahi

Time: 1:30pm

Sylhet v Cumilla

Time: 6:30pm

Federation Cup

First semifinal

Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium, Dhaka

Mohammedan v Rahmatganj MFS

Time: 4:00pm

Brighton & Hove Albion's Iranian forward Alireza Jahanbakhsh scored a spectacular bicycle kick to salvage a point against Chelsea at the Brighton Stadium on Wednesday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

# Brighton spoil Chelsea's party

AFP, London

Alireza Jahanbakhsh's spectacular overhead kick earned Brighton a share of the points against Chelsea and dampened Frank Lampard's New Year celebrations on Wednesday as Aston Villa secured a vital win against Burnley.

Kicking off a packed day of top-flight action, Chelsea's 1-1 draw on England's south coast meant they missed out on the chance to pull seven points clear of fifth-placed Manchester United in the race to secure Champions League football for next season.

Cesar Azpilicueta gave the visitors an early lead, tapping in from close range following a corner in the 10th minute but Brighton were never out of it and pulled level in the 84th minute courtesy of Jahanbakhsh's moment of magic.

Chelsea were quickly on top from the start of the match but Brighton came into the contest as it wore on, enjoying a spell of possession towards the end of the first half.

Leandro Trossard tested Kepa Arrizabalaga with a powerful strike but the Chelsea goalkeeper parried the shot with his right hand.

Lampard's team were again dominant

after the break. Christian Pulisic came close to doubling Chelsea's lead at Brighton after 55 minutes while N'Golo Kante and Reece James were denied.

But Brighton kept battling and Kepa was forced to produce an outstanding save from Aaron Connolly in the 80th minute as the home side pushed for an equaliser.

Their persistence paid off minutes later. Lewis Dunk kept the ball alive from a corner-kick and Iranian midfielder Jahanbakhsh acrobatically found the bottom-left corner to give his team share of the points.

In the other early kick-off, Villa beat Burnley 2-1 despite seeing Jack Grealish's opening goal controversially chalked off by VAR.

Wesley put Villa ahead in the 27th minute and captain Grealish doubled his side's advantage four minutes before the break as his powerful effort found the top corner.

Chris Wood pulled a goal back for Burnley with 10 minutes to go.

Pep Guardiola's Manchester City are hosting Carlo Ancelotti's Everton in one of the early evening matches before Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's Manchester United kick off against Arsenal in the late match. Runaway leaders Liverpool face Sheffield United on Thursday.

## BFF fined Tk 37 lakh

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) has recently been slapped with fine of approximately Tk 37 lakh by FIFA and AFC for different reasons, confirmed BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag yesterday.

FIFA fined BFF 15,000 Swiss franc [US\$15,478] for violation of order and security while AFC imposed US\$ 28,000 sanction for irregular attendance of BFF's local coaches who are paid by the Asian football body.

"We have recently been showcased twice by FIFA and AFC. At the end of the Qatar-Bangladesh match of World Cup qualifiers on October 10, 2019 at the Bangabandhu National Stadium, some spectators tried to enter the ground over the fence, which was photographed by the match commissioner. That's why FIFA fined 15,000 Swiss franc for violation of order and security," Shohag said, adding that they had previously paid Tk 7 lakh fine for the same reasons as some Australian fans tried to enter the ground at the end of Australia-Bangladesh Word Cup Qualifying match in November, 2015.

"The AFC penalised BFF to the amount of US\$28,000 due to irregular attendance of our local coaches, who are paid by the AFC. Out of 19 paid coaches, 15 coaches had irregular attendance. The AFC audit committee found it out and deducted money which is equivalent to three months' salary of 15 coaches," Shohag said, adding that they failed to ensure regular attendance of the coaches despite repeated instructions.

# MSC, Rahmatganj have eyes on final

SPORTS REPORTER

Both Mohammedan and Rahmatganj are looking to make it to the final of the TVS Federation Cup as they square off in the first semifinal at the Bangabandhu National Stadium today, with the match scheduled to kick off at 4:00pm.

The season's curtain-raising tournament has already produced some major upsets, with five former champions – Abahani, Sheikh Jamal, Brothers, Sheikh Russel and Muktiyoddha Sangsad – already eliminated.

Out of six former champions, only 10-time winners Mohammedan have survived exit and the Black and Whites are now dreaming of making it to the final after 10 years. However, Rahmatganj, after beating 11-time champions Abahani, are standing on their way and hoping to qualify for the final of any top-flight tournament for the first time.

"We have nothing to lose, but something to achieve. We are dreaming of playing in the final after the young guns put up a brave performance in the last match,"

Rahmatganj coach Syed Golam Jilani said yesterday.

"The match is going to be difficult and we have to play well against a youthful Mohammedan, who have strong willingness to do well. We are hopeful of availing goal-scoring chances as our attacking line-up has been creating chances regularly," said Jilani, whose side is playing the Federation Cup semifinal for the first time since 2017.

Mohammedan coach Sean Lane is not taking Rahmatganj lightly as his young charges have less experience of playing such a pressure match.

"We know Rahmatganj will be a tough team to beat. We don't consider them to be minnows. They have had a very successful Federation Cup to date and they will be equal favourites," Lane said. "We will need to be at our best if we are to progress to the final. The boys need to cope up with situations like this. They dealt very well with the pressure of quarterfinals. However, I am confident in their ability and mental attitude to cope up with the pressure of semifinal."

## Venus out of Brisbane International

AFP, Brisbane

Venus Williams pulled out of the season-opening Brisbane International on Wednesday after a "setback" during practice.

The American veteran said she still hoped to play at the Adelaide International later this month ahead of the Australian Open, the first Grand Slam of the year.

"Unfortunately I will not be starting my season in Brisbane due to an unexpected setback during my training," the 39-year-old seven-time major winner said in a statement.

"I look forward to being in Australia in the new year and will see everyone in Adelaide."

The tournament, featuring a strong field including world number one Ashleigh Barty and Australian Open champion Naomi Osaka, gets underway on January 6.

Organisers will announce a replacement for Williams on Thursday.

## 'Everton ready for Man City, Liverpool'

REUTERS, undated

Everton manager Carlo Ancelotti said his players must relish the opportunity to test themselves against the best teams ahead of Wednesday's Premier League clash against defending champions Manchester City.

Everton also face their local rivals and European champions Liverpool in the third round of the FA Cup on Sunday, and the Italian is confident he can continue his strong start at the club having taken over from Marco Silva this month.

"Against City it'll be a fantastic test to see where we are. They are a really strong team but we have confidence to do our best," Ancelotti told a news conference on Tuesday.

"At the moment it is good to have this kind of test. Also against Liverpool. We have to try to be competitive against the top teams of England and Europe."

Everton beat Burnley 1-0 in Ancelotti's first game in charge and followed it up with a 2-1 win over Newcastle United to climb to 10th in the standings, building a five-match unbeaten run in the Premier League that began under caretaker manager Duncan Ferguson.

"Am I surprised? No, because we are working to try and win games," Ancelotti added. "I was surprised with the spirit of the team. I think the work Duncan did was really good."

"I found the players with character, with good attitude so I think this was the reason I didn't change a lot... The players showed confidence in games, and I hope this can continue in the next games which are really difficult."

### SHORT CORNER

#### Fahad stuns Russian GM

International Master Fahad Rahman stunned Russian GM Maxim Lugovskoy in the second round of EKA IIFL Investment Managers 5th International Grand Master Chess Tournament in Mumbai on Tuesday.

IM Fahad, along with 15 other players, shared the lead in the points table with maximum two points each while GM Ziaur Rahman beat Manish Kumar to earn 1.5 points.

-- SPORTS REPORTER

#### BGB retain handball title

Boarder Guard Bangladesh retained the title of National Handball Championship with a 31-17 goal win against Bangladesh Police Handball Club in the final at the Shaheed Captain M Mansur Ali Handball Stadium yesterday.

It was the ninth successive title for BGB, who dominated over Bangladesh Police in the first half with a 20-7 goal lead. Police came back strongly in the second half but their effort was not good enough as they had to be content with 15th consecutive runners-up trophy.

-- SPORTS REPORTER

#### National football c'ship split into nine zones

The Bangabandhu National Football Championship is set to roll out across the country from January 17 as the draw of participating 78 teams was held at the BFF House yesterday.

All 64 districts, except for Kishoreganj, along with six universities, five educational boards, BKSP and three services teams have been divided into nine zones with eight zones comprising 63 district teams while remaining 15 teams have been placed in services zone.

-- AFP

The matches of district teams will be played on home-and-away basis while universities, educational boards, BKSP and services teams, split into four groups, will play round-robin league matches. Champions of eight zones and champions and runners-up of services zone will advance into the 10-team final round to be held in Dhaka.

Harunur Rashid, chairman of organising committee of National Football Championship, informed that each district will receive Tk 1.5 lakh while each university, educational board, BKSP and services teams will get Tk 50,000 as participation money.

-- SPORTS REPORTER

#### Diego Alonso made Inter Miami coach

Diego Alonso has been named the first head coach of David Beckham's Inter Miami ahead of their inaugural season in the North America's Major League Soccer.

"In Diego we found a manager that fits our culture and has a strong desire to build a winning club for our fans," said Inter Miami spokesman Paul McDonough.

"He brings a lot of experience and championship-winning mentality as we begin our drive to be among the best clubs in the Americas."

Inter Miami, which opens the season March 1 against Los Angeles FC, is owned by five people, including Beckham.

Alonso, the only coach to win the CONCACAF Champions League with two different teams, reportedly beat out former New York City manager Patrick Vieira and former DC United midfielder Marcelo Gallardo for the job.

The 44-year-old Alonso most recently served as head coach for Monterrey in Mexico.

## Chelsea reveal £96.6m loss

AFP, London

Chelsea recorded a loss of nearly £100 million (\$132 million, 118 million euros) for the year ending June 30, according to financial results published by the club on Tuesday.

Turnover grew slightly to £446.7 million, with Chelsea citing a lack of Champions League football, a record spending on players Kepa Arrizabalaga, Christian Pulisic, Mateo Kovacic and Jorginho, as well as the costs involved in changing manager at Stamford Bridge, for the £96.6m loss.

Chelsea chairman Bruce Buck, in a statement, said: "Consistent revenue growth and careful financial management over recent seasons has allowed the club to make significant levels of investment in the playing staff whilst maintaining compliance with UEFA Financial Fair Play regulations."

"This has contributed to another Europa League victory at the end of the 2018-19 season and a return to the highest level of European competition."

"This solid commercial foundation, allied to a young and exciting team now led by Frank Lampard, means that the club is well placed to sustain its pursuit of success both on and off the pitch as well as maintain its financial stability over the coming years."

# Guardiola says City are 'team of the decade'

AFP, Manchester

Pep Guardiola has insisted Manchester City are English football's team of the decade, despite his side heading into 2020 some 14 points behind runaway Premier League leaders Liverpool.

Statistics appear to prove him right given City have won 13 domestic trophies since 2010, with only Chelsea (nine) within touching distance of that mark.

City have clearly benefitted from the financial clout they have enjoyed since being taken over by Abu Dhabi ownership in August 2008.

City manager Guardiola reached the peak of his powers when he oversaw an unprecedented treble in the 2018/19 season that saw the club win all three major English trophies -- Premier League, FA Cup and League Cup -- in the one campaign as well as the Community Shield.

Even though their league form has been a disappointment in the first half of the current season, Guardiola is in no doubt City are "the" team of the decade in England.

"I think this in the last decade was the best team in terms of points, in terms of goals, in terms of everything, titles even. So congratulate Manchester City for that," he said.

"When we analyse every single day here, what happened day-by-day gives us perspective in what happened in the last 10 seasons, especially when people from Abu Dhabi took over the club and bought good players, interesting managers."

The former Barcelona and Bayern Munich manager, who joined City

in 2016, added: "I think we did it incredibly well."

"People say 'how was 2019?' Now people are saying it is a disaster. We won four titles in 2019, so it was an incredible year for us, we enjoyed it a lot."

"In some games in this last part of the year we have struggled a bit but it was an incredible year for us. Congratulations for all the people working here."

"They were fighting with huge elephants here in England, big, big clubs with the biggest history. For the past decade we were part of them. That is amazing."

Despite their current 'troubles', City could still win any, or all, of the three cup competitions in which they are involved and Guardiola expects the club to remain a major player in the English game in the decade ahead.

"The big clubs here in England are always looking forward, we are going to try and analyse not just in terms of the squad but as a club how we can do better," he added.

"Hopefully in the next decade this club can be here for more time."

In the short term, Guardiola has long since conceded the race for this season's Premier League title to Liverpool and admitted they had to "pray" if they were to win a third successive domestic championship.

But the Catalan manager, who again ruled out being active in the January transfer window, believes his current squad could still have competed for the title had injuries and, he hinted, VAR not sidelined their bid.

"Work harder, play better, and pray," said Guardiola when asked how City can close the gap to Liverpool.





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# Boost light engineering

Directs PM while opening  
Dhaka int'l trade fair

Bss, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday inaugurated the 25th Dhaka International Trade Fair (DITF), announcing the "Light Engineering goods" as "Product of the Year" for 2020.

"As a part of export policy, we are declaring Light Engineering [goods] as the product of 2020 aimed at encouraging the product based export while we are calling for more investment," she said.

The premier said this while opening the month-long DITF-2020, jointly organised by Commerce Ministry and Export Promotion Bureau, at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC) in Dhaka.

She simultaneously stressed the need for taking appropriate measures to strengthen the light engineering sector and help explore its export potential.

The prime minister said that the light engineering products such as bicycle, motorcycle, automobile, auto-parts, electric and electronics, accumulator battery, solar photovoltaic module and toys have the potential of attracting more investment.

She said importance were earlier given on leather and leather goods, jute and jute goods and other products, adding, "But, this year we are giving importance on the light engineering as it has also huge potential of attracting investment."



SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



A motorcyclist riding with three pillion passengers, including two little boys without helmets, on Abdul Gani Road in the capital yesterday. Sadly, such blatant disregard for children's safety and traffic laws is all too common on the streets.

PHOTO:  
PRABIR DAS

## ILLEGALS IN MALAYSIA 30,000 wait to return home

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladeshis made up a large part of the 195,471 undocumented migrants who registered under the Malaysian government's amnesty programme "Back for Good (B4G)", which ended on Tuesday.

About 165,040 undocumented workers have already been repatriated to their respective countries, Malaysian newspaper Malay Mail reported yesterday.

Of them, some 38,734 Bangladeshis were repatriated under the programme as of mid-December, according to the media report.

Last week, a top official at Bangladesh expatriates' welfare ministry said at least 10,000 Bangladesh migrant workers who registered under the programme were waiting to return home.

The repatriation of some other 30,431 migrants hinged on their flight dates, the Malay Mail report said, quoting the country's

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## HUNGER STRIKE DAY-4 20 jute mill workers taken to hospital

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Many workers of nine state-run jute mills in Khulna fell sick as they continued their fast-unto-death for the fourth consecutive day yesterday to press home their 11-point demand.

The demands include implementation of the 2015 wage commission award and timely payment of wages.

Abdul Hamid, convener of Collective Bargaining Agents (CBAs) and non-CBA Sangram Parishad, claimed that 20 workers were admitted to local hospitals and clinics since the beginning of the protest at 3:00pm on Sunday.

Besides, at least 576 others became ill during the same period.

Yesterday, around 200 students of Platinum High School joined the demonstration on BIDC road in Khulna city's Khalishpur area. Many of them are dependents of jute workers.

During a visit there, this correspondent

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## GUNFIGHT WITH MILITANTS

# 2 Indian soldiers killed in Kashmir

Mobile phone SMS facility, internet services  
at govt-run hospitals in J&K restored

AGENCIES

Two Indian soldiers were killed yesterday in a gunfight with suspected militants along the border that divides the disputed territory of Kashmir between India and Pakistan, officials said.

The two were killed during an operation to intercept Pakistani infiltrators who were attempting to cross the heavily-militarised border into India, the Press Trust of India news agency reported officials as saying.

The operation was still in progress, army spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Devender Anand said in a statement.

An armed rebellion against Indian rule has raged for decades in Kashmir, and has left tens of thousands dead, mainly civilians.

New Delhi accuses Pakistan of arming and training anti-India rebels and sending them across the border to launch attacks on Indian forces.

Islamabad denies the charge, saying it only provides diplomatic support to Kashmiris' right to self-determination, reports AFP.

Indian-administered Kashmir has been tense since New Delhi revoked the region's semi-autonomous status in August and imposed a security and communications lockdown.

Some of the restrictions have since been eased. Broadband internet service was restored in government-run hospitals and SMS facilities were restored on all mobile phones yesterday, after over four-and-a-half months

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## ILLEGAL BRICK KILN Ex-UZ chair jailed for 10 years

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Bandarban

A special court of environment department yesterday awarded a former chairman of Bandarban Sadar upazila with 10 years' imprisonment and Tk 17 lakh fine for illegally establishing a brick kiln near the country's highest peak Tazing Dong.

Samiul Alam Qursy, chief of Bandarban's Department of Environment, said Chief Judicial Magistrate Md Abdullah-Al-Mamun passed the order against convicted Abdul Kuddus.

On September 23, locals of Tazing Dong submitted an application to the deputy commissioner of the district to stop operations of the illegal brick kiln in the area.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

## China launches world's first smart high-speed trains



MAIL ONLINE

China has introduced its first 'smart' high-speed trains to connect Beijing and Zhangjiakou, the two host cities of the 2022 Winter Olympics.

The carriages are equipped with an automated driving system, 5G signals, intelligent lighting as well as wireless charging docks, and can travel at a top speed of 350 kilometres (217 miles) per hour.

The \$6billion project is the first 'smart' high-speed railway in the world, a Chinese expert has claimed.

Covering 174 kilometres (108 miles) with 10 stops, the Jing-Zhang High-speed Railway officially

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

## 11 hurt as cops, JCD men clash

20 detained over  
wearing shoes on  
Shaheed Minar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

At least 11 people, including five policemen, were injured in a clash between Chhatra Dal men and police in Bogura town's Khokon Park area yesterday over walking on the Shaheed Minar wearing shoes.

Police detained over 20 leaders and activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2



## PRAYER TIMING JANUARY 2

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 5:30 12:45 4:00 5:30 7:00  
JAMAAT 6:05 1:15 4:15 5:35 7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



A primate perched on a tree close to the Lawachhara forest in Srimangal upazila of Moulvibazar. The forest department has halted its move to chop down 6,632 trees it had earmarked, inset, following protests and flak from environmentalists.

PHOTO: MINTU DESHWARA

## FELLING 6,000 TREES IN SRIMANGAL

# Forest dept scraps plan after outcry

MINTU DESHWARA

The forest department has halted its move to cut 6,632 trees in Srimangal, including natural fruit trees which are the source of food for wildlife, after it led to protests and drew flak from environmentalists.

The trees had been marked for felling under a social forestry programme in

Chautali beat, close to the Lawachhara forest, in Srimangal upazila of Moulvibazar.

Visiting the Chautali beat area in mid-December, this correspondent found that Chapalis, Bohera, Dumur, Haritaki, Amlaki, Jamrul, Ritha, Dewwa, Lotkon, Lukluki, and wood nut trees, among others, have been marked and numbered in red.

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## QULKHANI

Rukhsana Samad beloved wife, mother and grandmother passed away on the morning of 24<sup>th</sup> December 2019 (Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Ilayhi Raji'un). She was 68.

A gentle woman who lived her life making others smile and touched every single heart she came across in her life's journey..

A dua will be held at the Gulshan Society Mosque road 62 baad Maghrib on Friday January 3<sup>rd</sup> 2020 .

It will deeply touch our souls and make us most happy if you kindly join us in our prayers for her peaceful & eternal rest.

Towhid Samad , Faisal Samad  
Denebe, Raveen , Tanzania



Rukhsana Samad  
1951-2019