




The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION




REGD. No. DA 781 | Vol. XXIX No. 354 | Poush 29, 1426 BS | **Your Right to Know** | JAMADIUL AWAL 16, 1441 HJIRI | 20 PAGES PRICE: Tk 12.00


“We will relay the message to India so that they comply with what they’ve already told us -- no death along the border.”
FOREIGN MINISTER AK ABDUL MOMEN AT A PRESS CONFERENCE IN THE CAPITAL. (PAGE 3)



“People involved in casino and narcotics trade want to survive by contesting elections... No one will be spared.”
HOME MINISTER ASADUZZAMAN TOLD REPORTERS ON PARTICIPATION OF CONTROVERSIAL PERSONS IN THE DCC POLLS. (PAGE 3)



“There are things I could have handled on the ground much better.”
AUSTRALIA PM SCOTT MORRISON REGRETS HANDLING OF BUSHFIRE CRISIS (PAGE 8)



ANTIBIOTICS USE, SALE Who needs PRESCRIPTION? *Despite HC directive, over-the-counter sale continues*

MOHIUDDIN AHMED SUJAN

Despite a court directive to stop the over-the-counter sale of antibiotics, the health authorities have taken no concrete steps in this regard, raising the spectre of superbugs, which cause some seven lakh deaths globally per year.

Sale of antibiotics without requiring prescription from registered physicians is still high in the country, The Daily Star has found visiting over two hundred drug stores and talking to experts.

Bacteria-fighting drugs known as antibiotics help control and destroy many of the harmful organisms that make people sick. But overuse and misuse of antibiotics prompt some strains of bacteria to make a small change in their DNA and become antibiotic-resistant “superbugs”, experts say.

There is no data on deaths caused by superbugs in Bangladesh, but professors at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) say about 70 percent of the deaths at ICUs are caused by AMR [antimicrobial resistance] infections.

AMR is a situation when microorganisms like bacteria, virus and some parasites resist medicinal interventions.

“Problem is people don’t know which drugs are antibiotics. Around 15 lakh people are taking antibiotics daily and most of them don’t have prescriptions,” Prof Sayedur Rahman, chairman of pharmacology department at the BSMMU, told The Daily Star.

A recent study, carried out jointly by the Directorate General of Drug Administration (DGDA) and the WHO, shows that antibiotics consumption in Bangladesh has increased by 30.81 percent in the last two years. The DGDA and the WHO used data from the pharmaceutical

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

- There are **118,901** licensed retail allopathic pharmacies in the country
- The number of unlicensed pharmacies is almost the same
- 68** percent clients visit pharmacies without doctor’s advice
- Around **15** lakh people take antibiotics daily, mostly without prescription
- Antibiotic consumption increased by **30.81** percent in the last two years
- In 2018, superbugs and multi-drug resistant bacteria were detected in **14** percent cases of all patients seen





“There are around 200 staffers, including 20 doctors, under the health ministry at every upazila. They can easily be involved in raising awareness on AMR [anti-microbial resistance]. The DGDA cannot sit idle for the recruitment of manpower.”

Prof Sayedur Rahman
Chairman of pharmacology dept, BSMMU

SOURCE: DGDA, WHO

Form bodies to stop ragging on campuses *HC directs govt*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the government to form anti-ragging committees and squads at all educational institutions, especially at universities and their affiliated colleges, within the next three months.

It also issued a rule asking the authorities concerned to explain in four weeks why their failure to formulate a guideline to stop ragging at educational institutions should not be declared illegal.

Secretaries to the ministries of home and education, and University Grants Commission chairman and other officials concerned have been made respondents.

The HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman came up with the order and rule after Supreme Court lawyer Ishrat Hasan filed a writ petition on January 8.

During yesterday’s hearing, Ishrat told the court that ragging at educational institutions became a culture and therefore, first-year and second-year students were living in fear.

Citing an example, she said the Jahangirnagar University authorities suspended 11 students from all academic activities for a year in December last year, as they were found guilty of ragging some freshers.

The suspended are second-year students and they were involved in ragging on their seniors’ directives, the lawyer said.

The authorities concerned are not taking

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

CITY POLLS DATE EC waiting for HC ruling on deferral plea

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The Election Commission would wait for High Court directives on whether to change the election date for the Dhaka city corporations, which is now January 30, an election commissioner said.

A writ petition was filed with the HC seeking a directive to defer the date for a week as Saraswati Puja is on election day.

“A writ petition is pending with the High Court. We would follow the instruction of the court,” Election Commissioner Rafiqul Islam told The Daily Star yesterday.

Demands for deferring the date for Dhaka north and south city corporation polls have been getting louder in the last couple of days.

Bangladesh Chhatra Oikya Parishad formed a human chain on the Dhaka University campus, and a group of DU’s Jagannath Hall students held a meeting with Election Commissioner Mahbub Talukdar to this end yesterday.

On Saturday, Dhaka University Central

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

COUNCILLORS IN DHAKA CITY POLLS Pro-BNP aspirants face 1,024 cases *Ten against pro-AL candidates*

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN and MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

At least 69 BNP-backed councillor candidates in Dhaka city are facing more than a thousand cases while only six Awami League-supported aspirants are facing 10 lawsuits, show their affidavits submitted to the returning officers.

More than half of the 1,024 cases against the BNP-backed contenders in 69 wards of the two city corporations were filed between 2017 and 2018 when the country’s politics got heated up over the 11th parliamentary elections.

The charges against them include holding rallies illegally, indulging in violence and preventing government officials from carrying out duties.

Only six AL-supported councillor candidates are facing 10 cases filed over corruption and repression of women.

However, this is not the complete picture as Dhaka North City Corporation was yet to make public the affidavits of the councillor candidates in 36 of its 54 wards. Dhaka South City Corporation published the affidavits of the contenders in all the 75 wards.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday evening, DNCC Returning Officer Abul Kashem said they would upload the rest of the affidavits soon on their official website.

In the DSCC, 57 BNP-backed contenders are facing 876 criminal cases and only four AL-supported candidates are facing four lawsuits filed over corruption, repression of women and making threats, according to their affidavits.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Cold wave to linger

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The cold wave sweeping over the country is likely to linger one or two more days.

According to Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD), the mild cold wave was sweeping over Ishwardi, Kurigram, Panchagarh, and Kushtia yesterday.

According to BMD records, the lowest temperature in the country was 9.5 degrees Celsius in Rangpur’s Rajarhat yesterday while the mercury dropped to 13.6 degrees Celsius in Dhaka.

Chuadanga experienced 9.8 degrees Celsius, Tentulia 9.9 and Ishwardi 9.8.

Parts of the country had been shrouded by mild to dense fog since midnight on Sunday.

Much of the country will be covered in mild to dense fog from late yesterday until early today,

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Questions rise after ‘shootout’

1 killed, 2 hurt in city’s Malibagh, Rab ‘takes away’ all CCTV footage of incident

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A suspected drug dealer was killed and two others, including a woman, were shot in the legs during what Rab said was a shootout in the capital’s Malibagh area yesterday morning.

Syed Iqbal Ahmed, 42, who was shot dead, used to bring yaba pills to the city from Cox’s Bazar, claimed Rab-2 Company Commander Mohammed Mohiuddin Faruque.

The incident happened around 7:00am near the ticket sales centre of an intercity bus operator. The area is covered by CCTV cameras of different nearby shops and businesses.

Employees of these shops told this correspondent yesterday afternoon that Rab officials had deleted the footage and didn’t let anyone see what had been recorded.

This correspondent visited the place in the afternoon and saw that the spot had been washed with water.

The two others shot are Rafika Jasmin, 29, and her brother Mashnur Hasan, 22. They were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital with bullet wounds in their legs.

Rab said Rafika was Iqbal’s wife and her brother Hasan was a private university student. They are also suspected drug traffickers.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5



BBPL’s last four stage begins today

SPORTS REPORTER

The race for the Bangabandhu Bangladesh Premier League (BBPL) title begins today with Dhaka Platoon taking on Chattogram Challengers in the eliminator match in today’s first fixture at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

Later in the evening, the tournament’s top two sides -- Rajshahi Kings and Khulna Tigers -- will duke it out in the first qualifier to see who goes on to the final.


The ongoing tournament is a special edition of the Bangladesh Premier League

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



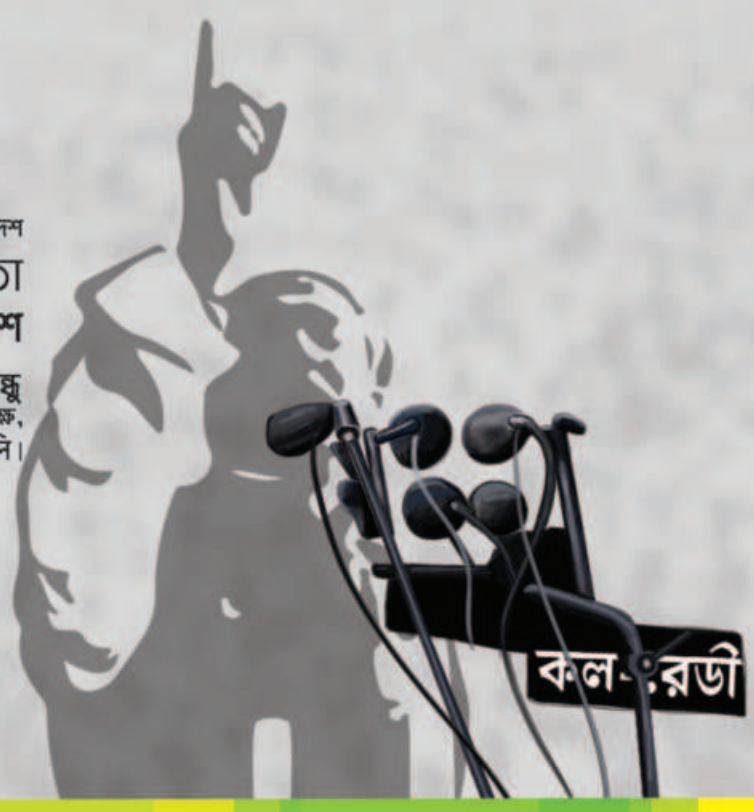
Just to keep warm, people huddled around a pile of garbage that they lit, ignoring the toxic fumes emanating from it. The photo was taken around 10:00pm Saturday night in Malibagh area of the city.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ



তোমার জন্মে সার্থক এই জাতি, সার্থক এই দেশ
তুমি ছিলে বলে হে পিতা
জন্মেছে সোনার বাংলাদেশ

হাজার বছরের শ্রেষ্ঠ বাঙালি বঙ্গবন্ধু
শেখ মুজিবুর রহমানের জন্ম শতবর্ষ উপলক্ষে,
কেডিএস পরিবারের পক্ষ থেকে শুদ্ধাজলি।



LIBYA CONFLICT

Truce agreed after 9 months of fighting

AFP, Tripoli

Both sides in Libya's conflict agreed to a ceasefire from yesterday to end nine months of fighting, following weeks of international diplomacy and calls for a truce by power-brokers Russia and Turkey.

The oil-rich North African country has been wracked by bloody turmoil since a 2011 Nato-backed uprising killed long-time dictator Moamer Gaddafi, with multiple foreign powers now involved.

The UN-recognised Government of National Accord (GNA) in Tripoli had been under attack since last April from forces loyal to eastern-based strongman Khalifa Haftar, which on January 6 captured the strategic coastal city of Sirte.

Late on Saturday, Haftar's forces announced a ceasefire starting at midnight (Sunday 00:00 local time, Saturday 2200 GMT) in line with a joint call by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin.

GNA head Fayez al-Sarraj followed suit early yesterday, confirming the ceasefire had taken effect.

The UN mission in Libya welcomed the announcements and called on all parties "to respect the ceasefire" and support efforts to launch an inter-Libyan dialogue.

Likewise, the Arab League urged Libya's factions to "commit to stop the fighting, work on alleviating all forms of escalations and engage in good faith aimed at reaching permanent arrangements for a ceasefire".

Since the start of the offensive against Tripoli, more than 280 civilians and about 2,000 fighters have been killed and 146,000 Libyans displaced, according to the United Nations.

Sarraj stressed the GNA's "legitimate right ... to respond to any attack or aggression" that may come from the other side, while Haftar's forces warned of a "severe" response to any violation by the "opposing camp".

Artillery fire could be heard shortly after midnight in the capital, before quiet settled over the southern Tripoli suburb where pro-GNA forces have been resisting Haftar's offensive.

Contacted by AFP at noon, a spokesman for the pro-GNA forces, Mustafa al-Mejii, reported "a calm situation so far on the frontlines".

The GNA later reported "violations" by "pro-Haftar militias" in the Salaheddine and Wadi al-Rabii areas south of the capital, "minutes after the ceasefire came into effect".

It also reiterated its "immutable position" that "any ceasefire initiative cannot succeed without the withdrawal of the aggressor from where they came", from the country's east and south.

Turkey's defence ministry said: "The belligerents have been trying to respect these truces since they came into force... and the situation has been calm apart from one or two isolated incidents."

The truce comes after a diplomatic offensive, led by Ankara and Moscow, which have established themselves as key players in Libya.

Ankara despatched military support to the GNA in January.

And Russia has been accused of backing pro-Haftar forces, which are also supported by the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, all regional rivals of Turkey.

Erdogan and Putin called for a truce at a meeting last Wednesday in Istanbul, and Turkey later asked Russia to convince Haftar, who had initially vowed to fight on, to respect it.

BBPL's last four stage

FROM PAGE 1

(BPL) and was renamed to mark the 100th birth centenary of the father of the nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. However, Bangladesh Cricket Board president Nazmul Hassan announced yesterday that the BPL will remain as the BBPL from now on.

Coming back to the eliminator match, Dhaka will sure miss the services of regular skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza. The inspirational cricketer has been sidelined by an injury he incurred while fielding against Khulna Tigers on Saturday.

The experienced Tamim Iqbal will have to pick up the slack and so, the left-hander will surely also look to play a big knock, which is yet to do in the tournament.

The likes of Mahedi Hasan and Mominul Haque are also in good touch and will aim to regroup after the final group match, where they lost to Khulna despite having posted over 200 runs.

Chattogram have also played good cricket so far with Imrul Kayes proving vital to their success while West Indian

big hitter Chris Gayle can prove devastating with the bat. With the ball, Mehedi Hasan Rana and Rubel Hossain have been instrumental for the side.

In the first qualifier, table topper Rajshahi will hope to continue their dominance with Liton Das and the young Afif Hossain having provided solid starts while skipper Andre Russell, Ravi Bopara and Shoaib Malik will add loads of experience to the side.

Khulna, however, will be beaming with confidence following their magnificent record run chase against Dhaka. Najmul Hossain Shanto became the first local player to hit a century in the ongoing BBPL in that match.

Meanwhile, skipper Mushfiqur Rahim, Rilee Rossouw and Robbie Frylinck are also in terrific touch and should offer an exciting game against Rajshahi.

The losing team of the first qualifier will get another opportunity to advance to the final when they face the winner of the eliminator game in second qualifier on January 15.

Pro-BNP aspirants face

FROM PAGE 1

BNP's Dhaka south unit Vice President Sirajul Islam, a candidate in DSCC ward 16, faces the highest number of cases -- 63 -- most of which were filed for holding rallies illegally, inciting violence and preventing government officials from carrying out duties.

Of the cases, 40 were filed between 2017 and 2018, and the rest between 2011 and 2015.

Sirajul, a businessman, contested the 2015 city corporation polls but lost to AL-backed candidate Hossain Haidar Hiru.

Another BNP-supported candidate, Harunur Rashid, joint general secretary of the party's Dhaka South unit, is facing around 50 criminal cases filed between 2012 and 2018.

He had been cleared of three other cases, his affidavit shows.

Contacted, Rashid, a businessman, said he had been "implicated in fabricated" cases to keep him away from politics.

"These are political cases. Whenever a party comes to power, it files cases against leaders and activists of rival parties."

He hoped the government would let him contest the polls without any hindrance.

The situation is different for the AL-supported candidates.

AL-backed councillor Abul Kalam, who is contesting the polls from DSCC ward 48, had five cases against him. Those were filed between 2005 and 2008 over trespass on private property, involvement in violence, and possession of explosives and illegal arms.

All the cases were withdrawn under section 494 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), according to his affidavit.

He, however, did not mention when the cases were withdrawn.

Another AL-supported councillor, Mohammad Nasim Mia of DSCC ward 52, had been accused in an arms case in 2003. The case was withdrawn in 2012.

"As per section 494 of the CrPC,

the charges were withdrawn during the tenure of the Awami League-led government in 2012," Nasim stated in his affidavit.

According to the section, a prosecutor can withdraw a case against an accused, with the consent of the court, at any stage of the proceedings.

AL-supported councillor Awal Hossain, who is contesting the polls from DSCC ward 33, had faced six cases.

Of those, one was filed for traffic rules violation in 2014 and the rest between 2001 and 2007 over abduction, murder attempt, trespass on private property, and possession of explosives.

He has been relieved of all the six cases.

In the DNCC, at least 12 BNP-backed candidates are facing 167 cases.

Of them, Sheikh Amir Hossain, a councillor candidate in ward 35 and the owner of a confectionary, is facing 46 cases. Those were filed for holding rallies illegally, indulging in violence and preventing government officials from carrying out duties.

Nurul Islam Ratan, AL-backed candidate from DNCC ward 29, had three cases against him. Those were filed between 1999 and 2009 for holding rallies illegally, inciting violence and obstructing government officials while on duty.

In his affidavit, Nurul stated that he had been relieved of all the three cases.

Form bodies

FROM PAGE 1

effective steps to prevent ragging, she said, adding that India has introduced a law to stop this at educational institutions.

Ishrat prayed to the HC to pass necessary orders on the authorities concerned to ban ragging at all educational institutions.

The anti-ragging committee receives complaints, while the anti-ragging squad takes actions, the lawyer told The Daily Star.



The Chattogram City Corporation installing escalators on a footbridge on Zakir Hossain road adjacent to Chattogram Diabetic General Hospital in Khulshi yesterday afternoon. This would be the first electric pedestrian escalator in the port city.

PHOTO: RAJIB RATHAN

Who needs prescription?

FROM PAGE 1

companies, and the study report was released on November 27 last year.

Earlier on April 25, the High Court ordered the DGDA to take steps to stop the over-the-counter sale of antibiotics.

The ruling came after a writ petition was filed by Advocate Sayedul Haque Suman over the matter. The writ was spurred by a report in UK's The Telegraph, which cited a report this newspaper ran under the headline "A big cause for health concern" in April last year.

High-ups of the DGDA -- the apex regulatory body for pharmaceuticals -- claimed they had done their best. But in reality, they only issued a notice in May to all district commissioners and civil surgeons, asking them to take steps in line with the court directive.

The notice was followed-up by a reminder a month later. That was the extent to which the DGDA acted.

DGDA Director Ruhul Amin told The Daily Star, "Our drug inspectors are regularly advocating this issue at meetings with stakeholders."

Queried further, he again mentioned that "awareness was all important" in this regard.

People concerned, however, said the DGDA's action was "just to save its skin".

Meanwhile, a laboratory analysis by the Department of Microbiology and Immunology (DMI) of BSMMU, conducted from 2010 to 2018, has found a sharp rise in the number of superbugs in the country.

In 2010, superbugs and multi-drug resistant (MDR) bacteria were detected in 6.5 percent cases of all patients seen. But it increased to 11-14 percent in 2018, according to the study.

Experts said it is the inappropriate and overuse of antibiotics which leads to the rise of antimicrobial-resistant bacteria or superbugs,

The AMR infections have become a global threat, with 10 million deaths predicted to be caused by it by 2050 if things go unchecked, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO).

But the country's authorities concerned seem to be taking the matter lightly.

GROUND REALITY: PROFIT OVER PRESCRIPTION

Recently, The Daily Star correspondents have visited drug stores in Farmgate, in front of Dhaka

Medical College Hospital (DMCH) and Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital in the capital. They have also been to pharmaceutical stores in both urban and rural areas in Savar, Rangpur, Khulna, Sylhet, Chattogram, Mymensingh and Rajshahi.

The scenario was similar everywhere.

At half a dozen drug stores at a rural market in Rangpur's Pargachha upazila, this correspondent last month found antibiotics being sold either without prescriptions or as suggested by medicine sellers.

"As antibiotics work better and are more profitable, we sometimes do suggest it. People usually don't buy full dose of antibiotics. Besides, they are also reluctant to visit doctors because it would cost them additional money," a medicine shop owner in the village market told The Daily Star.

Visiting at least 25 stores in Khulna's Hazrat Market, Moilapota intersection, Natun Rasta intersection and in front of Khulna Medical College Hospital, The Daily Star correspondents found customers buying antibiotic drugs without any prescription.

Jalal Ahmed, owner of Afroz Medical Hall at Moilapota intersection, said he was not aware of any formal instruction from the authorities on not selling the drugs without prescription.

There are more than a hundred pharmaceutical stores on the Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital Road. A medicine seller there said they make a huge profit from antibiotics sale.

"We have not got any direction in this regard," he said.

The Daily Star correspondents witnessed the same situation in Chowhatta and Amberkhana areas in the city.

Our Mymensingh correspondent and Rajshahi University correspondents also found antibiotics being sold over the counter in the two districts.

Usually people suffering from dysentery, diarrhoea, food poisoning, common cold, cough, fever, toothache, and ear and throat pain use self-prescribed antibiotic, shows a 2014 study conducted in Rajshahi and published in the journal of the National Centre for Biotechnology Information.

According to the DGDA website,

there are 118,901 licensed retail drug shops across the country.

A 2015 study by the System for Improved Access to Pharmaceuticals and Services, however, revealed the existence of approximately an equal number of unlicensed retail drug stores in the country, shows WHO website.

A majority (68 percent) of the clients visiting these drug shops came by self-referral and without a prescription, the study showed.

For another study, the Institute of Epidemiology, Diseases Control and Research (IEDCR) analysed some 14,669 samples collected from nine public hospitals across the country from 2017 and 2019.

It found Ceftriaxone, a watch group drug, to be the most used antibiotics, and that the drug's effectiveness has gone down by 10 to 92 percent in killing several bacteria.

According to the WHO, antibiotics are classified into three groups -- "access group" used for a wide range of primary level infection, "watch group" used against higher resistance bacteria, and "reserve group" only to be used when all alternatives fail.

Imipenam, another watch group drug, has been found to be 10 to 76 percent ineffective. If these don't work, it only leaves to a few other antibiotics.

"It indicates we are rapidly going to exhaust rest of the available antibiotics in our hand," said Dr Zakir Hossain Habib, principal scientific officer at the IEDCR, who led the study.

DGDA INITIATIVES -- NOT ENOUGH?

On the DGDA directive on stopping the sale of antibiotics without prescriptions, several deputy commissioners said the DGDA initiative had a very little to no impact on creating awareness on the matter.

"We have held a meeting with all stakeholders. However, we haven't conducted any mobile court drive yet," Md Asib Ahsan, DC of Rangpur, told The Daily Star, adding that they were focusing on raising awareness first.

He also said the issue deserves more campaigning and the DGDA needs to do more planning.

Asked, DGDA Director Ruhul Amin couldn't even say whether the sale and consumption of antibiotics without prescription was a punishable offence.

A DGDA official, however, said any

medicine seller could be punished under the existing law for selling antibiotics without proper prescription.

Such punishment, however, has yet to be meted out.

BSMMU's Prof Sayedur Rahman said the DGDA can impose a fine of up to Tk 40,000 for the offence. He said cases can be filed against the owner of the drug store and it also can be sealed off.

Contacted, Health Minister Zahid Malek apparently defended the DGDA, saying, "It has a shortage of manpower. It is tough for them to monitor drug stores across the country."

The DGDA has only 46 drug superintendents in its 54 district offices, said its sources.

COORDINATION IS THE KEY

Experts says the sale of antibiotics over the counter continues unabated mainly due to a lack of monitoring from the DGDA and coordination between the drug administration and the local administration.

"There are around 200 staffers, including 20 doctors, under the health ministry at each upazila. They can easily be involved in raising awareness on AMR [antimicrobial resistance]," Prof Sayedur Rahman, who led the antibiotic DGDA-WHO antibiotic consumption study, told The Daily Star, adding that the DGDA cannot sit idly for the recruitment of manpower.

He also said physicians often unnecessarily prescribe antibiotics "due to a lack of facilities to carry out antibiotic sensitivity [ABS] test."

Doctors in 55 districts do not have ABS test facility, he said.

Dr Zakir Hossain Habib, principal scientific officer at the IEDCR, however, said the required tests could be done manually with the existing facilities as an alternative to the ABS tests.

For that, the government must appoint enough lab technicians and ensure sufficient supply of reagents.

Dr Muniruddin Ahmed, professor of clinical pharmacy and pharmacology at Dhaka University, suggested involvement of all local bodies in the fight against over-the-counter sale of antibiotics. He wants the DGDA to take the lead.

Prof Sayedur Rahman suggested marking boxes of antibiotics red so that people can easily know they are prescription drugs.

[Our Correspondents in the districts mentioned above contributed to this story]

EC waiting for HC ruling on deferral plea

FROM PAGE 1

Students' Union, and Jagannath and Bijoy Ekattar halls unions in separate statements demanded changing the voting date.

On January 6, Supreme Court lawyer Ashoke Kumar Ghosh filed the writ petition.

The HC is expected to hear the petition in a day or two.

A top EC official yesterday said they were in discussion to find a solution.

The official said the commission might defer the election date to February 1. "If we decide to hold the polls on February 1, it will coincide with the first day of SSC examinations. So, we will need to request the government to change the SCC exams date."

"But everything depends on the commission decision," the official added.

Chief of Inter-Education Board Coordination Sub-committee Ziaul Haque said they would prioritise the Election Commission's instruction. "Elections are always their top priority," said Ziaul, also Dhaka Education Board chairman.

DEMAND GETTING LOUDER

Bangladesh Chhatra Oikya Parishad yesterday formed a human chain at the Raju Memorial Sculpture on

the DU campus to press home their demand.

It is a matter of sorrow that the Hindu community would have to go to polling centres on the day of worshipping their goddess Saraswati, said Saddam Hussain, DUCSU assistant general secretary.

Jagannath Hall union Vice-President Utpal Biswas said holding election on the day of puja would create various problems, including movement of worshippers.

On Friday, Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) Returning Officer Abdul Baten forwarded to the EC a Jagannath Hall provost's letter requesting change of voting date.

In the letter, Baten opined that many Hindus live in DSCC area. Jagannath Hall and Ramakrishna Math and Mission are situated there.

Several polling stations will be set up at educational institutions where Hindus offer Saraswati Puja. "Old Dhaka is a densely populated area, it will be difficult for Hindus to offer their puja ...," he added.

On January 7, in separate letters to Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda, Bangladesh Hindu-Buddha-Christian-Oikya Parishad and Bangladesh Puja Udjapan Parishad demanded change of the

election date.

"Earlier, we urged the EC to reschedule Rangpur-3 by-polls, held on October 5, which was the second day of Durga Puja, but the commission did not pay heed to our demands," the Oikya Parishad letter mentioned.

In its letter, the Oikya Parishad leaders warned that they would not take any responsibility if any kind of untoward incident happened on the day centring Saraswati Puja.

Cold wave

FROM PAGE 1

according to the Met office. However, no rain has been forecast during the cold spell.

Md Abul Kalam Mollic, a meteorologist of the BMD, said wind from the foot of the Himalayas which entered into the country, dense fog even during the day, and small difference between day and night temperature was making the cold wave feel worse.

He said now night temperatures are between 9.5 degrees and 15 degrees Celsius while day temperatures are between 16 degrees and 23 degrees Celsius.

He advised vehicles as well as vessels to ply carefully in the fog.

11 migrants die after boat sinks off Turkey

AFP, Istanbul

Eleven migrants died on Saturday, including eight children, when their vessel sank in the Aegean Sea off the coast of Turkey, state news agency Anadolu said.

The boat sank off Cesme, a popular tourist resort in western Turkey opposite the Greek island of Chios, Anadolu said, adding that eight others were rescued.

The nationality of the victims was not yet known.

The sinking comes just hours after another boat sank in the Aegean near to the Greek island of Paxi leaving at least 12 dead.

Turkey has taken in around four million migrants and refugees, the majority of them Syrians, and is an important transit country for those fleeing conflicts and seeking to reach Europe largely via Greece.

An agreement reached in March 2016 between Ankara and the European Union succeeded in considerably reducing the number of people arriving on the five islands closest to Turkey.



NOT ANOTHER ACTION MOVIE... The return journey of thousands of devotees attending the Akheri Munajat of the three-day Biswa Jtema was marked by fervour and fanfare. Trains were hopped and overflowed with passengers, while streets were jam-packed. The sheer enthusiasm of the attendees was a sight to behold. The photos were taken at Tongi and Tejgaon rail gate areas.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS, RASHED SHUMON

ABRAR MURDER Accused sent to jail after surrender

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sent one of the four absconding accused in Buet student Abrar Fahad killing case to jail after he surrendered before a court, seeking bail.

Metropolitan Magistrate Begum Yasmin Ara sent Morshed Amartya Islam to jail after rejecting his bail petition.

Morshed, an expelled student of mechanical engineering (batch 17), surrendered to the court around 12:30pm and prayed for his bail in the case.

He was a former member of BCL's Buet unit.

With him, a total of 22 accused in the case are now in jail.

On January 5, another Dhaka court directed police to publish an advertisement in two national dailies, asking Morshed and three other accused in the case who have been on the run, to appear before the court by today.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Don't vote for those involved in violence against women

Mahila Parishad urges all

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad yesterday called upon people not to vote for candidates involved in violence against women, corruption, spending black money and using "muscle power".

In a 45-point recommendation, the rights organisation also urged women councillor candidates to include women-related issues in their manifestos for the upcoming election to Dhaka north and south city corporations.

Dr Fauzia Moslem, acting president of the Parishad, made the call at a views-exchange at its Anwara Begum-Munira Khan auditorium in Dhaka.

Urban planners, rights activists and women councillor candidates attended the discussion on "Role of reserved seat women councillors in building a safe and woman-friendly Dhaka".

The Election Commission will have to ensure adequate measures so that women and people with physical disabilities can cast their votes in a free, fair and secured manner, Fauzia said.

Besides ongoing development activities, the government should also ensure security for women, she added.

Other than ensuring women's rights to cast votes properly, the EC will have to take appropriate measures so that anti-liberation forces, drug traders and human rights violators cannot contest the polls, Fauzia stressed.

Stressing that equal participation of men and women in running a state and decision-making process is imperative,



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

On the third day of the city corporation election campaigns yesterday, BNP's mayoral candidate in Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) Tabith Awal faced obstruction by Awami League supporters while starting his campaign from Mirpur-1 Shah Ali Mazar area at around 11am.

While Tabith and his supporters were shouting slogans seeking votes for their electoral symbol "sheaf of paddy", a group of Awami League supports were already coming from the opposite direction with slogans for "boat" -- the symbol of Awami League.

A scuffle broke out at the time, during which some supporters of Tabith were injured, said Mahmud Hasan, coordinator of the media cell for Tabith's campaign.

The incident was broadcast live from Tabith Awal's Facebook page.

"We would like to abide by the electoral code of conduct. From our side, we do not want any untoward incident to happen. Therefore we are changing our route," Tabith told journalists present there.

He also alleged that law enforcers did not help them during the time.

Asked about the incident, Awami League mayoral candidate for DNCC Atiqul Islam told The Daily Star, "Awami League

is a democratic party, and this kind of incident should not happen. If it did, it's reprehensible."

Earlier in the day, Atiqul started his campaign from Kosai Bari rail gate in Uttara and visited Uttarkhan, Dakkhinkhan, Moynartek, Abdullahpur and Bawnia areas.

Before starting his campaign, he joined the Akheri Munajat at the Biswa Jtema. "For development of new wards, Tk4,200 crore has been approved by Ecne, and if I get elected, I will continue development work of the new wards," he promised while addressing voters during the campaign.

In DSCC, BNP's mayoral candidate Ishraque Hossain started his campaign around noon from the District and Sessions Judge's Court area, and passed through Banglabazar, Shymbazar, Sutrapur and Luxmibazar. Senior BNP leader Khandaker Mosharrar Hossain took part in the campaigning.

Ishraque also alleged that their councillor candidates have been facing obstruction during campaign, adding that they have filed complaints regarding the matter to the Election Commission.

"We heard five Jatiatabadi Swetchhasebak Dal activists were arrested, and then released by police. However, we will continue our campaign and won't back down in the face of any obstacle," said Ishraque while starting his campaign.

Meanwhile, his AL counterpart

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Border killings still happening: Momen

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen yesterday said it is unfortunate that border killing continues despite India's commitment to zero deaths at the border.

"Unfortunately, it is still happening. Like you, we are also concerned. We would relay the message to India so that they comply with what they have committed -- 'zero death at the border'," Momen told a press conference at the foreign ministry.

India's Border Security Force (BSF) allegedly killed two Bangladeshis along the border in Thakurgaon and in Lalmonirhat last week. Earlier last week, two other Bangladeshis were allegedly killed by the BSF in Chapainawabganj.

Momen said Bangladesh and India agreed to the point that there would be zero death along Bangladesh-India border. A few days ago, Border Guard Bangladesh and BSF officials discussed the matter and renewed the commitment.

Asked if India-Bangladesh relations are strained, especially as three ministers cancelled their visits in last one month, the minister said, "You [media] say the relationship is cold, but it is actually warm."

"Diplomacy is on a high. It is very good. But media discovers some issues that are actually non-issues," he said. The Observer Research Foundation in collaboration with the India's Ministry of External Affairs is organising the Raisina Dialogue, a global meeting in Delhi beginning on January 14.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam was supposed to attend the event as a speaker, but he cancelled as he is accompanying PM Sheikh Hasina to her UAE visit from January 12-14, a foreign ministry statement said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

'Culprits of casino, drug trade won't be spared'

SAYS HOME MINISTER

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan has issued a strong warning against casino masterminds, narcotics traffickers and other criminals yesterday, saying that wrongdoers will be brought to the book.

"People involved in casino and narcotics trade want to survive by contesting in elections... No one will be spared," the minister said, in reply to journalists' query regarding casino and narcotics traffickers who are participating in the upcoming city corporation elections.

The minister was addressing reporters after inaugurating the television commercial (IVC) of Narcotics Information Management System (NIMS) at the Department of Narcotics Control

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Colourful blankets with intricate patterns are displayed to potential buyers who are in hopes of snagging a good deal. As the cold waves come and go, getting the right blanket for those especially chilly nights is essential. This photo was taken on Saturday from Purana Paltan.

The gift of a fixed heart

MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN

Due to financial constraints, 18-year-old Anamika had no choice but suffer the effects of ventricular septal defect (VSD) -- a hole in the heart that's present at birth.

For years, she had been ailing without hope at her home in Rajoir upazila under Madaripur district.

Her health would have likely worsened had she not undergone a simple but costly medical procedure -- done free of cost -- at the National Institute of Cardiovascular Disease (NICVD) in Dhaka recently.

Anamika has left the hospital and is now doing well.

"We brought Anamika here [NICVD] around six months ago when doctors suggested this procedure. Anamika's mother did not have the financial resources to afford the expensive treatment. Being advised, we waited for this free of cost operation," Nur Hossain, Anamika's uncle who brought her to NICVD, told The Daily Star recently.

Like Anamika, a total of 100 children and youngsters have undergone the non-invasive procedure from January 4 to 11 -- completely free of cost, thanks to donation from Qatar Red Crescent.

A team of surgeons from NICVD and Qatar has been applying the non-surgical intervention at the paediatric surgery unit of the hospital.

"These children had no option but to undergo this procedure. However, their families are not capable of bearing the medical costs. We selected them through a process," Dr Abdullah Shahriar, head of the paediatric surgery unit of NICVD, told The Daily Star.

This is the fourth charity programme at NICVD funded by the donor agency.

In the three previous instalments, 250 children were served.

"Unless we receive financial aid, we have no capacity to serve these disadvantaged children, and the donors have pledged to continue assistance in future," Dr Shahriar added.

According to the surgeons, each of this non-surgical VSD repair costs around Tk 16 lakh in Bangladesh.

Approximately 75 percent of small VSDs close on their own within the first year or by age 10, and do not require any treatment other than careful monitoring.

Adults with unrepaired VSDs have a higher risk of heart valve inefficiency and infections -- a potentially life-threatening infection of the heart -- according to doctors.

The rate of VSD is 8-11 per thousand live births in Bangladesh while around 25,000 of such children die each year, according to a study by doctors of Combined Military Hospital (CMH).

"Only 30 percent of children with VSD, whose defects are not repaired on their own, can be cured through this technique. Unfortunately, 70 percent of them require open heart surgery," Dr Shahriar said.

VSD repair is done through two methods: open heart surgery and the catheter-based technique, which are done to correct a hole between the left and right ventricles of the heart.

In the catheter-based technique, the interventionist closes the hole by setting up a closure device in the area, which is sent using a long and thin tube.

There is lack of well-equipped infrastructure as well as expert surgeons to apply such non-surgical method in the country, according to Dr Shahriar.

He said the Qatar Red Crescent has assured to provide support to build up a well-equipped VSD intervention facility, a CCU and an ICU at NICVD upon government approval.

"We, on behalf of Qatari people, have come here to serve our Bangladeshi brothers and sisters who are incapable to bear the expenses of such surgery," Dr Khalid A Alemelhoda, medical convoy's coordinator, told The Daily Star.

They would continue such efforts in future, he added.

It should be noted that Qatar Red Crescent has also been running three other medical missions for displaced Rohingyas in Cox's Bazar.

Besides, the organisation conducts charity programmes in Bogura, Rajshahi and Sylhet to help the poor.

WATER DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Lack of coordination, transparency must be addressed: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Environmentalists and civil society representatives at a seminar yesterday demanded transparency and accountability of Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) regarding embankment construction and management in the country's coastal region.

There is a lack of coordination among the activities of BWDB, they said, adding that if the institution is brought under accountability, embankment construction and management will be sustainable and cost-efficient.

They also demanded participation of locals in the process, to maintain transparency.

Coastal Association for Social Transformation (COAST) Trust, a non-government organisation, arranged the seminar on climate resilient embankment management at Cirdap auditorium in the capital.

Presenting a keynote paper on the topic, Arif Dewan, a programme coordinator of COAST Trust, said many people in coastal areas are passing their days in risk, while many were forcibly displaced from their homes due to mismanagement and lack of sufficient embankments.

Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad, noted economist and chairman of Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF), said BWDB needs to remain accountable to local governments, such as union and upazila parishad.

Shahid Uddin, chairman of Baraghop Union Parishad under Kutubdia upazila of Cox's Bazar, alleged that BWDB builds embankments only focusing on water flow, not thinking about people's needs.

That is why participation of local people in the coastal embankment construction and management process is imperative, he added.

GANG-RAPE OF MINOR IN N'GANJ

Accused BCL leader arrested

Our CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

A Bangladesh Chhatra League leader, who was accused of gang-raping a ninth-grader in Narayanganj, was arrested on Saturday in Brahmanbaria in possession of Phensedyl.

Abu Sufian Sohan (24) is vice president of BCL's Tarabo municipal unit under Rupganj upazila of Narayanganj.

Police said Sufian and some of his associates forcibly picked up the girl on a microbus from Gondhrobopur bus stand area of Rupganj upazila on Thursday afternoon. They took the girl to a house in Ruposhi area.

The alleged criminals kept the girl confined for two days in the house and gang-raped her multiple times.

Later on Saturday, the victim's mother filed a case against five, of whom two were unnamed. Police arrested Towsib Miah (22) and Afzal Hossain (24) the same evening, but Sufian went into hiding.

Police in Ashuganj of Brahmanbaria arrested Abu Sufian with 86 bottles of Phensedyl on Saturday, said Rafiqul Haque, inspector (operations) of Rupganj Police Station.

Another case was filed against him with Ashuganj Police Station on the charge of drug possession, for which he was sent to jail in Brahmanbaria. When Narayanganj police came to know about the arrest, Abu Sufian was shown arrested in the rape case as well, said police sources.

Meanwhile, hundreds of students of different local schools yesterday formed a human chain in Gondhrobopur area on Rupshi-Kanchan road demanding that the rapists be brought to book.



Hundreds of school students yesterday demonstrated at Gondhrobopur area on Rupshi-Kanchan road in Narayanganj, demanding trial of the rapists.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Culprits of casino

FROM PAGE 3

(DNC) headquarters in the capital's Segunbagicha.

AKM Mominul Haque Sayeed is contesting for councillor of ward-9 of DSCC. Asked why law enforcers are not taking actions against him even after allegations of casino business and narcotics trafficking, the minister said those who are earning money illegally are criminals. Whoever the perpetrator is -- whether a politician or public representative -- will not be exempt from punishment, he said, adding that there is a zero-tolerance policy against crimes and the government is determined to establish rule of law.

Asked about the ongoing narcotics drive, Kamal said, "The drive is on and some drug barons have been arrested in the last two years... law enforcement agencies are still conducting the drive to arrest others on their list," he said.

Earlier the minister inaugurated NIMS and its TVC, jointly organised by DNC and Koica (Korea International Cooperation Agency). Through the system, DNC officials will now able to follow cases, licence management, operations and hospital management online.

DNC Director General Jamal Uddin Ahmed, Home Ministry Security Service Division Additional Secretary (Narcotics Control Wing) Dr Tarun Kanti Sikder and Koica Country Director Joe Hyun-gue were also present among others.

Clinic employee

FROM PAGE 5

In Lalmonirhat, a man was killed after being hit by a tractor at Saptona in Sadar upazila yesterday morning, reports UNB.

The deceased was identified as Doyal Chandra, a resident of Bholabari village in Aditmari upazila.

Quoting locals, Mahfuz Alam, officer-in-charge of Sadar Police Station, said Doyal was walking towards the Medical intersection when the sand-laden tractor hit him from behind around 11am, leaving him critically injured.

He was taken to Sadar Hospital where doctors pronounced him dead, the OC said.

By-polls to Ctg-8 today

FROM PAGE 5

movement to free BNP chief Khaleda Zia. He also expressed concern over using EVMs and urged voters to remain vigilant.

Regarding Kalurghat bridge, he said though the AL has been in power for 11 years, they did not construct the bridge.

During campaign, both candidates lodged multiple complaints with the returning officer over violation of polls code.

Meanwhile, EVM machines and other electoral equipment were taken to the polling centres yesterday.

"The EC is all set to hold the polls in a free and fair manner," said RO Mohammad Hasanuzzaman, regional election officer.

"Strict security measures have been taken centring the polls," he assured.

Protect us

FROM PAGE 5

to cadastral survey (CS) map.

"We have completed 80 percent of the survey and hope it would be finalised within 10 or 12 days," he said.

The residents said around one lakh people will be affected if BIWTA conducts eviction drives after the survey.

Md Salam, another resident from Palashpur, said, "I purchased a piece of land in the area and have been living there for 20 years. Suddenly, a BIWTA survey team has

marked my houses as a part of the riverbed."

Deputy Director Ajmol Huda admitted the issue, saying over 1,000 establishments were included in the survey till now. "After completing the survey, we will take next steps after consulting with district administration and other authorities," he added.

contacted, BCC Mayor Serniabat Sadiq Abdullah said, "We received the memorandum and I assured them [the concerned residents] that they will not be evicted without rehabilitation."

Don't vote for those

FROM PAGE 3

Fauzia said a woman councillor [from reserved seat] has to work in three wards at a time.

In this context, women councillors cannot ensure their due role in development activities as they are deprived of adequate government funds and proper working environment, she said.

In his speech, urban planner Mobassher Hossain blamed the lack of proper coordination among the ministries, lawmakers and two mayors for various irregularities in Dhaka. "A city mayor's power should be increased," he recommended.

Farida Yasmin, general secretary of Jatiya Press Club, said without ensuring women's rights, no development activity could be sustainable.

Nargis Mahtab, a councillor candidate in Dhaka North City Corporation, alleged that women candidates are facing various problems; even from male candidates in their own party. "We must change our patriarchal mindset to establish a women-friendly city," she said.

Elections to two mayor, 111 councillor and 37 reserved women councillor posts in DSCC and DNCC will be held on January 30.

Accused sent to jail

FROM PAGE 3

The other absconding accused are: Buet BCL deputy office secretary Mustafa Rafid and members Morsheduzzaman Jishan and Ehtashamul Rabbi Tanim -- all expelled.

Before the order, the same court on December 3 last year issued arrest warrants against them as the investigation officer showed them as fugitives in the charge sheet.

On November 13 last year, DB Inspector and investigation officer of the case, Mohammad Wahiduzzaman, submitted a charge sheet against 25 accused including the four fugitives.

On October 7, Abrar, a second-year student of electrical and electronics engineering department of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, was beaten to death by a group of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) men at the university's Sher-e-Bangla Hall in Dhaka.

The murder triggered a firestorm of protests on campuses across the country. Many took to social media to demand justice for Abrar.

Tabith's campaign

FROM PAGE 3

Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh alleged that their supporters and councillor candidates were attacked on Saturday evening, when he visited Ishraque's house.

"While campaigning at RK Mission road, I went to the house of Ishraque Hossain yesterday [Saturday]. Unfortunately after returning from there, our councillor candidates were attacked," said Taposh before starting his campaign from Shantinagar kitchen market area yesterday.

Taposh campaigned in Paltan, Malibagh, Segunbagicha, Motijheel, Shahjahanpur, Shiddeswari and Baily Road areas yesterday.

Border killings

FROM PAGE 3

Early last month, Abul Momen and Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan cancelled their visits to Delhi amid protests against India's Citizenship (Amendment) Act that grants citizenship to people of Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi, and Christian faiths who faced "persecution" in Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Critics say it discriminates against Muslims and violates secular tenets of the Indian constitution. The law sparked furious protests as lakhs of people took to the streets across India.

The demonstrations led to many deaths, including more than 20 in Uttar Pradesh alone.

Asked whether media reports claiming Dhaka was not issuing visas to Kashmiri students wishing to study in Bangladesh, the foreign minister said it was not true.

Mansur Ali's 17th death anniversary

CITY DESK

Today is the 17th death anniversary of M Mansur Ali, a former minister, says a press release.

Ali passed away in 2003 at the age of 75. He served as the textile minister in 1979, and was also associated with Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy and AK Fazlul Haque.

He also served as president and general secretary of Khulna Bar Association.

M Mansur Ali Smrity Sangsad will hold a discussion and milad-mahfil today at Sathkira Zila Samity Office in the capital's Panthapath at 5pm. Friends, relatives and well-wishers are invited.



Stamford University celebrates anniversary



CITY DESK

Stamford University Bangladesh celebrated its 18th founding anniversary at their Siddheswari campus on Thursday, says a press release.

The university began its journey on January 5 in 2002 with the government's approval. It earned its reputation due to efforts of its founder, president and vice chancellor late Prof MA Hannan Feroz.

Stamford Board of Trustees Chairperson Fatinaaz Feroz inaugurated the event, while Vice Chancellor Prof Ali Naqi delivered the welcome address. Top university officials, faculty members and staff participated in the event.

Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University
Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207
Sayed Momena Montaj Foundation
Advertisement for PhD Scholarship

Applications are invited from suitable candidates who are interested to pursue PhD studies at the Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University under the Education and Career Development Program of Sayed Momena Montaj Foundation [A CSR concern of National AgriCare Group; a group consists of Pharmaceuticals (**ONE PHARMA LTD.**), Pesticides (**National AgriCare I/E Ltd.**), Hybrid Seed Production (**One Seeds Ltd.**), **Safe Pesticide Manufacturing (WDG) Plant**, China-Bangladesh Joint Venture Developers (**China Gardencity Developers Ltd.**), Singapore-Bangladesh Joint Venture ICT Company (**One ICT Ltd.**), and so on]. Three scholarships will be offered in the fields of 1) **Seed Production and Quality Control**; 2) **Application and Efficient Management of Pesticides, Herbicides and Plant Growth Regulators** and 3) **Fertilizer and Water Management**.

Qualification and Experience: The candidates should be research scientists or management specialists and have excellent academic career with bachelor and master degrees in agriculture from recognized agricultural universities. They should have at least 5 years research and field experience. Preference will be given to those candidates who have research publications in scientific journals and capability of writing scientific report.

For 1) the candidates should have master degrees either in plant breeding or agronomy with specialization in seed technology and quality control.

For 2) the candidates should have master degrees either in Entomology or Plant Pathology/ Agricultural Chemistry with specialization in pest control and management.

For 3) the candidates should have master degrees either in Soil Science or Agronomy/Irrigation and Water Management.

If you feel that qualifications and experiences match with our requirements, please forward an application letter, a CV and research proposal to the following address within 20th February 2020.

Dean, Post Graduate Studies
Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University
Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207
Mobile: 01552-358082
Email: parimalbiswas@hotmail.com

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
সড়ক পরিবহন ও মহাসড়ক বিভাগ
ঢাকা পরিবহন সমন্বয় কর্তৃপক্ষ
নগর ভবন ১৩-১৪তলা (পূর্ব ব্লক)
৫, ফনিঞ্জ রোড, ফুলবাড়িয়া, ঢাকা-১০০০।
ওয়েবসাইট : www.dtca.gov.bd

স্মারক নং-৩৫.০২.০০০০.০০৩.২২.০০১.১৯-১১ তারিখঃ ১২/০১/২০২০খ্রিঃ

খসড়া পার্কিং নীতি সম্পর্কে মতামত আহ্বান

এতদ্বারা সর্বসাধারণের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, ঢাকা পরিবহন সমন্বয় কর্তৃপক্ষ আইন ২০১২ এর অনুচ্ছেদ ৯(ঘ) অনুযায়ী ঢাকা পরিবহন সমন্বয় কর্তৃপক্ষ (ডিটিসিএ) এর অধিভুক্ত ঢাকা মহানগরী এবং গাজীপুর, নারায়ণগঞ্জ, নরসিংদী, মুন্সিগঞ্জ, মানিকগঞ্জ জেলার জন্য পার্কিং নীতি ২০১৯ এর খসড়া প্রস্তুত করা হয়েছে। পার্কিং নীতির খসড়া ঢাকা পরিবহন সমন্বয় কর্তৃপক্ষ (ডিটিসিএ) এর ওয়েবসাইটের (<https://dtca.portal.gov.bd>) নোটিশ বোর্ডের ক্রমিক নং-৬৩ এবং সড়ক পরিবহন ও মহাসড়ক বিভাগের ওয়েবসাইট (<http://www.rthd.gov.bd>) এ মতামতের জন্য প্রকাশ করা হয়েছে।

পার্কিং নীতির উপর ব্যক্তি/সংস্থার মতামত আগামী ২৬ জানুয়ারি ২০২০খ্রিঃ তারিখের মধ্যে নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারী বরাবর প্রেরণ করার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হল।

মো: আনিসুর রহমান
(উপসচিব)
ট্রাফিক ইঞ্জিনিয়ার
ঢাকা পরিবহন সমন্বয় কর্তৃপক্ষ
ফোন: ৯৫৬৯২৬২
মোবাইল: ০১৭১১-৮৯০৪৫৩
ই-মেইল: anis89buet96@gmail.com

GD-81

Employment Opportunity

The IFMC-II project is going to hire: Office Attendants to Dhaka (2), Cleaners to Dhaka (2) and Peon-cum-Security Guard to Dhaka (4), Rangpur (3) and Thakurgaon (3). For details: www.ifmcbd.org.

GD-84

PAN PACIFIC SONARGAON DHAKA
The Oasis of Luxurious Hospitality and Tranquility
Invitation for Tender

Sealed tenders are invited from bona-fide contractors/manufacturers/dealers/distributors & suppliers for supply of the following items. The detail Specifications, terms and conditions are mentioned in the Tender Schedule.

SL No.	Name of the item	Quantity	Schedule Price (Non-refundable)
1	New HR System & Database (Re-tender)	01 No.	Tk.1500
2	Floor Carpet	950 sq.ft.	Tk.1000

Interested bidders may obtain Tender Schedule from the Purchasing Department on submission of a letter on their respective letterhead up to **January 29, 2020** during office hours. Tender will be received up to **02:30 pm on January 30, 2020** and will be opened on the same day at **03:00 pm** in presence of bidders, if any.

Tender must be supported by an Earnest Money amounting to 5% of quoted price in the form of Bank Draft or Pay Order from any Scheduled Bank of Bangladesh in favor of Pan Pacific Sonargaon Dhaka.

Pan Pacific Sonargaon authority reserves the right to accept/reject any tender in part or in full or all tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Purchase Manager, Tel (880) 2 9128008, Extn: 4164

বাংলাদেশ পর্যটন করপোরেশন
বাণিজ্যিক বিভাগ, প্রধান কার্যালয়
বীর উত্তম এ কে খন্দকার সড়ক
৮৩-৮৮, মহাখালী বা/এ, ঢাকা-১২১২
নং-৩০.৩২.০০০০.০৫২.১২.০০৪.১৮ তারিখঃ ১৩-০১-২০২০ খ্রিস্টাব্দ

পুনঃ দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বাংলাদেশ পর্যটন করপোরেশন (বাপক)-এর পর্যটন হলিতে কমপ্লেক্স, রাজমাটি-এর 'বারটি' বেসরকারি ব্যবস্থাপনায় বার্ষিক প্রিমিয়ামের ভিত্তিতে পরিচালনার নিমিত্ত চুক্তি স্বাক্ষরের তারিখ হতে পরবর্তী ০৫ (পাঁচ) বছরের জন্য নিম্নবর্ণিত শর্তে দরপত্র আহ্বান করা হচ্ছে।

১।	হোটেল/মোটেল/রিসোর্ট/বার ব্যবসায়ের অভিজ্ঞতাসম্পন্ন আত্মীয় ব্যক্তি/প্রতিষ্ঠান দরপ্রস্তাব দাখিল করতে পারবেন।
২।	বাপক, প্রধান কার্যালয়, বীর উত্তম এ কে খন্দকার সড়ক, ৮৩-৮৮, মহাখালী বা/এ, ঢাকা-১২১২-এর হিসাব শাখা থেকে নগদ ২০০০.০০ (দুই হাজার) টাকা (অফেরতযোগ্য) পরিশোধ করে আগামী ২৭.০১.২০২০ তারিখ পর্যন্ত অফিস চলাকালীন সিডিউল ত্রয় করতে পারবেন। দরপত্রে অংশগ্রহণকারীগণের পালনীয় অন্যান্য শর্তাবলী সিডিউলে বর্ণিত থাকবে।
৩।	দরপত্রের সাথে উদ্ধৃত মোট মূল্যের ২০% আনেক্সটমানি (সমন্বয়যোগ্য) ডিডি/পে-অর্ডার আকারে বাংলাদেশের যে কোন তফসিলী ব্যাংক থেকে 'বাংলাদেশ পর্যটন করপোরেশন'-এর অনুকূলে সংগ্রহ করে জমা দিতে হবে।
৪।	দরদাতাগণকে দরপ্রস্তাবসমূহ সীল করা খামে মুখবন্দ অবস্থায় সরাসরি অথবা ডাকযোগে মহা-ব্যবস্থাপক (বাণিজ্যিক), বাপক, ৮৩-৮৮, মহাখালী বা/এ, ঢাকা-১২১২-এর দপ্তরে রক্ষিত টেন্ডার বক্সে আগামী ০৪.০২.২০২০ তারিখ দুপুর ০২.০০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে অবশ্যই পৌছাতে হবে। ০২.০০ টার পর কোন দরপ্রস্তাব গ্রহণ করা হবে না। প্রাপ্ত দরপ্রস্তাবসমূহ বাছাইয়ের জন্য এ দিনই দুপুর ০৩.০০ ঘটিকায় দরদাতাগণের অথবা তাদের মনোনীত প্রতিনিধির উপস্থিতিতে (যদি কেহ উপস্থিত থাকেন) বাপক-এর নির্ধারিত কমিটি কর্তৃক উন্মুক্ত করা হবে।
৫।	সফল দরদাতাকে সরকারি নিয়মানুযায়ী উদ্ধৃত দরের উপর ১৫% হারে ভ্যাট এবং ৫% উৎসস্বরূপ প্রদান করতে হবে। এছাড়া, পরবর্তীতে সরকার কর্তৃক নির্ধারিত বর্ধিত হার এবং সময় সময় নির্ধারিত সকল সরকারি শার্য প্রযোজ্য হবে।
৬।	অসম্পূর্ণ বা ভ্রুটিপূর্ণ দরপত্র সরাসরি বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে।
৭।	বাংলাদেশ পর্যটন করপোরেশন কর্তৃপক্ষ কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন দরপ্রস্তাব গ্রহণ বা বাতিল কিংবা সকল দরপ্রস্তাব বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।

স্বাক্ষরিত/-
মোঃ শহীদুল ইসলাম ভূঞা
মহা-ব্যবস্থাপক (বাণিজ্যিক)
ফোনঃ ৯৮৮০১৩৪

জিডি-৮০



Amid tight security, electoral equipment being scrutinised at the gymnasium of MA Aziz Stadium in port city yesterday. Around 4.75 lakh residents of Chattogram-8 constituency (Boalkhali-Chandgaon) will exercise their franchise today.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

By-polls to Ctg-8 today

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

The much-expected by-polls to Chattogram-8 (Boalkhali-Chandgaon) will be held today, with voters casting votes through electronic voting machines (EVM).

The voting will start at 9am and continue till 5pm at 170 polling centres, said election officials, adding that 4,75,988 voters are expected to exercise their franchise.

The constituency fell vacant due to death of lawmaker Moin Uddin Khan Badal on November 7 last year.

For the seat, the contest, mainly, would be between Awami League candidate Moslem Uddin Ahmed and BNP's Abu Sufian. Four candidates from Bangladesh Nationalist Front, Islamic Front Bangladesh and National Awami Party and an independent one are also contesting the polls.

Candidates stopped campaigning on Saturday midnight, as per the electoral code of conduct.

During his campaign, Moslem pledged to start the work for constructing Kalurghat road bridge over Karnaphuli river in a year, if elected. He also assured of improving road network and sewerage system.

Sufian emphasised "people's right to vote", which would strengthen their

Clinic employee run over by ambulance

STAR REPORT

Four people were killed in separate accidents across the country in the last two days, report our correspondents and a news agency.

In Sylhet, a hospital staffer was killed in a motorbike accident at Golapganj municipality area of Golapganj upazila yesterday afternoon, reports our Sylhet correspondent.

The deceased was identified as biker Mintu Ahmed (35). He was an employee of a private clinic in the upazila.

A Sylhet-bound ambulance from Beanibazar upazila hit Mintu's motorcycle, leaving him critically injured, witnesses said.

He was rescued by locals and rushed to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital by another ambulance. However, he died before he could reach the hospital, Mijanur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Golapganj Police Station said.

"Police have seized the ambulance and are looking for the driver. No case has been filed with the station in this regard yet", the OC added.

Meanwhile in Chattogram, two people were killed after their motorcycle collided head-on with a microbus on Chattogram-Cox's Bazar Highway at Lohagara upazila on Saturday night, reports our staff correspondent from Chattogram.

The deceased are Bishal Barua (18) and Uttam Barua (24), both hailing from Chhedirpuni of Adhunarar in Lohagara upazila, said police.

Liton and Uttam, both working in a motorcycle garage in the upazila, were returning home after duty by a motorbike. Around 11pm, a microbus coming from Cox's Bazar collided head-on with the motorbike, killing the duo on the spot, said Yasir Arafat, officer-in-charge of Dohazari Highway Police Station.

Police seized the microbus but the driver managed to flee, he added. "We are conducting drives to arrest the driver," said the OC, adding, "A case is being filed with the police station in this regard."

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Amid protests, JU observes founding anniversary

JU CORRESPONDENT

Amid continued demonstrations over removal of the vice chancellor, Jahangirnagar University (JU) observed its 49th founding anniversary yesterday.

The protesters -- students and teachers -- who have been agitating since August last year, brought out a "black flag" procession on the campus.

At 10am, they gathered in Transport area and marched to Arts building (old). Later, they formed a human chain on "Amar Ekushey" premises and held a rally under the banner of "Jahangirnagar against Corruption".

Meanwhile, the VC inaugurated the day by hoisting the national and JU flags and releasing balloons in front of Business

Studies Faculty [next to Arts building] at 10:30am.

Hundreds of former and current students, teachers, officials and employees were present at the time. Pro-VCs Prof Amir Hussain and Prof Nurul Alam, and Treasurer Prof Sheikh Monjurul Huq also attended the inaugural session.

The daylong event included a puppet show and other performances by Student Welfare and Counselling Centre of the university, at the Selim Al Deen Muktamancha.

Jahangirnagar University was founded on August 20, 1970. It formally began its academic activities as a residential university on January 12, 1971, with four departments, 21 teachers, 150 students, and three residential halls.

Work to materialise 'Sonar Bangla'

Law minister urges all

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Anisul Huq yesterday said those who could not accept Bangabandhu yet have no right to do politics in Bangladesh.

"This should be our oath," he said while speaking at a discussion as the guest of honour. Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote organised the event at Jatiya Press Club, marking Bangabandhu's Homecoming Day.

He said Bangabandhu rebuilt Bangladesh in three and a half years, and dreamt of turning it into "Sonar Bangla".

The minister said people of the country owe it to Bangabandhu and now is the time to pay off that debt by working together towards achieving his dream.

The Jote's central committee president Tarana Halim presided over the meeting, where president of parliamentary standing committee on commerce ministry and former commerce minister Tofail Ahmed also spoke.

Three lakh Rohingya children to be vaccinated for rubella

CITY DESK

A vaccination campaign against rubella (German measles) began at Rohingya refugee camps of Cox's Bazar and nearby areas yesterday.

The four week-long campaign aims to vaccinate over 315,000 children aged between six months to 10 years, said a press release.

Led by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, with support from World Health Organization (WHO), Unicef and other partners, the campaign aims to reach vulnerable children of the targeted age group, especially those who missed some or all previous rubella vaccination opportunities.

Rubella is a milder form of measles, which is a severe disease with fever and rash. Measles infections have previously caused

deaths in the camps. The rubella vaccine is safe for all children and offers protection against both diseases. All eligible children will be vaccinated irrespective of previous immunisation history. A small number of vaccine recipients may develop mild fever. If a child in the family gets fever after vaccination they should go to the nearest health facility, the press release added.

The vaccination teams consist of 132 trained vaccinators, 264 volunteers, 1,400 community health workers and 2,000 majhi. Some 30 supervisors and 68 camp coordinators will support the campaign.

The campaign will be monitored by health ministry, Office of the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner, WHO, Unicef, UNHCR, International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, icddr,b and other partners.

3 doctors sent to jail in Tk 10cr graft case

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

A Faridpur court yesterday sent three doctors of Faridpur Medical College Hospital to jail in a graft case filed by Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

The three are accused in the case filed over embezzling Tk 10 crore in the purchase of medical supplies for the hospital. They are: Assistant Prof Ganopat Biswas, former junior consultant Minakshi Chakma, and AHM Nurul Islam.

"Judge of additional district and sessions judges court Kamrunnahar Begum passed the order after the three surrendered before the court seeking bail," said Dulal Chandra Sarkar, public prosecutor.

The court then sent them to jail. The case was filed by Mamunur Rashid, sub-deputy director of Faridpur ACC on November 27, last year.

Others accused are: Owner of MS Anik Traders Munshi Sazzad Hossain, also administrative officer of National Institute of Diseases of the Chest and Hospital; another owner Munshi Farrukh Hossain; and equipment supplier Abdullah Al Mamun.

বাংলাদেশ সড়ক পরিবহন কর্পোরেশন	
পরিবহন ভবন, ২১, রাজউক এডিনিউ	
ঢাকা-১০০০	
পুনঃ দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি	
১ মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	সড়ক পরিবহন ও সেতু মন্ত্রণালয়।
২ সম্বন্ধক সত্তার নাম	চেয়ারম্যান্য বিআরটিসি।
৩ সংগ্রহ পদ্ধতি	উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (OTM)।
৪ কাজের বিবরণ	গাজীপুরস্থ বিআরটিসি সমন্বিত কেন্দ্রীয় মেয়াদক কারখানায় স্থাপিত কোন্ড গ্রেসেস টায়ার রিট্রিভিং প্র্যান্টটি দীর্ঘ মেয়াদী ভাড়ায় পরিচালনার জন্য দরপত্র আহ্বান।
৫ দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং	৩৫.০৪.০০০০.০১৮.০০.৯৭২.১২/২/২০১৯-২০২০
৬ অর্ধের উৎস	দরদাতার নিজস্ব অর্থ।
৭ দরপত্র সিডিউল বিরূপ ও গ্রহণের স্থান	এস্টেট শাখা (৮ম তলা), বিআরটিসি প্রধান কার্যালয়, পরিবহন ভবন, ২১, রাজউক এডিনিউ, ঢাকা-১০০০।
৮ দরপত্র সিডিউল বিরুদ্ধের শেষ তারিখ	০৩/০২/২০২০ তারিখ পর্যন্ত অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে।
৯ দরপত্র সিডিউলের মূল্য	প্রতি সেট দরপত্র সিডিউলের মূল্য ২,০০০/- (দুই হাজার) টাকা (অফেরতযোগ্য)।
১০ দরপত্র দাখিলের শেষ তারিখ, সময় ও স্থান	০৪/০২/২০২০ তারিখ দুপুর ২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত এস্টেট শাখা (৮ম তলা), বিআরটিসি প্রধান কার্যালয়।
১১ দরপত্র বাস্তব খোলার তারিখ, সময় ও স্থান	০৫/০২/২০২০ তারিখ বিকাল ৩.০০টা। এস্টেট শাখা (৮ম তলা), বিআরটিসি প্রধান কার্যালয়। দরপত্র বাস্তব খোলার সময় দরদাতাংশ অথবা তাদের প্রতিনিধি উপস্থিত থাকতে পারবেন।
১২ দরপত্র জামানত (আর্নেস্টমনি)	১,০০,০০০/- (এক লক্ষ) টাকা দরপত্র জামানত (আর্নেস্টমনি) হিসেবে 'চেয়ারম্যান্য বিআরটিসি'র অনুকূল পেমেন্টের মাধ্যমে দরপত্র সিডিউলের সাথে জমা করতে হবে (ফেরতযোগ্য)।
১৩ দরপত্রের সাথে সংযুক্ত ডকুমেন্ট	ক) সিডিউল ক্রয়ের মূল রশিদ, খ) ইজারাদার সম্পর্কিত হালনাগাদ নবায়িত ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, গ) ২০১৯-২০ সালের আয়কর প্রত্যয়ন, ঘ) ভ্যাট রেজিস্ট্রেশন সনদপত্র, ঙ) ব্যাংক স্বাক্ষরিত সনদপত্র, চ) জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্রের ফটোকপি, ছ) সন্য ভোটা ০২ কর্পি পাসপোর্ট সাইজের রশিদ ছবিসহ সকল কাগজপত্রের ফটোকপি ১ম শ্রেণীর গেজেটেড কর্তৃকর্তা কর্তৃক সত্যায়িত করে দরপত্র সিডিউলের সাথে দাখিল করতে হবে।
১৪ কর্তৃপক্ষের ক্ষমতা	ক) সিডিউল ক্রয়ের মূল রশিদ, খ) ইজারাদার সম্পর্কিত হালনাগাদ নবায়িত ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, গ) ২০১৯-২০ সালের আয়কর প্রত্যয়ন, ঘ) ভ্যাট রেজিস্ট্রেশন সনদপত্র, ঙ) ব্যাংক স্বাক্ষরিত সনদপত্র, চ) জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্রের ফটোকপি, ছ) সন্য ভোটা ০২ কর্পি পাসপোর্ট সাইজের রশিদ ছবিসহ সকল কাগজপত্রের ফটোকপি ১ম শ্রেণীর গেজেটেড কর্তৃকর্তা কর্তৃক সত্যায়িত করে দরপত্র সিডিউলের সাথে দাখিল করতে হবে।
১৫ নির্দেশনা	সিডিউলের সাথে ইহা দরপত্রের অবিচ্ছেদ্য অংশ হিসেবে পরিগণিত হবে। নির্ধারিত তৈয়ার বাস্তব সীলমোহনকৃত একটি খামে দরপত্র সিডিউল ফেলতে হবে। আলোচ্য বরাদ্দক পিপিআর-২০০৮ এর আওতায় গুপ্তন তৈয়ার পদ্ধতি অনুযায়ী পরিচালিত হবে।
আজ্ঞাপক আলী সিনিয়র সহকারী সচিব ম্যানেজার (এস্টেট) বিআরটিসি প্রধান কার্যালয়	
জিডি-৮২	

ILLEGAL BRICK KILNS

349 out of 559 shut down in five districts: DoE to HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Department of Environment (DoE) yesterday submitted a report to the High Court saying that it (DoE) has shut down 349 illegal brick kilns out of total 559 in Dhaka, Narayanganj, Gazipur, Munshiganj and Manikganj in line with the court's earlier directive.

The DoE said in the report that the brick kilns were shut down through mobile court drives and issuing notices. Tk 4.93 crore have been realised in fines from the owners, and the drives are going on, it added.

Deputy Attorney General Abdullah-Al-Mahmud Bashar placed the compliance report on behalf of the DoE before the HC bench of Justice FRM Nazmul Ahasan and Justice KM Kamrul Kader, during hearing of a writ petition filed by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh.

Meanwhile yesterday, writ petitioner's lawyer Advocate Manzill Murshid placed seven recommendations before the HC bench for reducing air pollution in Dhaka.

Citing the recommendations, he said vehicles producing smokes must be seized, sands will have to be carried in sacks, use of old and damaged batteries producing lead will have to be banned.

The court asked Manzill Murshid to submit his recommendations through swearing an affidavit before it today and also set today for passing an order on this issue.

Hearing the writ petition, the HC bench on November 26 last year ordered the government to conduct mobile court drives to shut down illegal brick kilns in those five districts within 15 days.

The court directed the authorities to take necessary measures to remove dust and waste from streets, footpaths, and flyovers in the capital within seven days.

The authorities have also been asked to have water sprayed in dust-affected areas, walls, and trees in the city at least twice a day.

On January 6, the DoE sent another report to the deputy attorney general's office for placing that before the HC. DAG Abdullah-Al-Mahmud Bashar said the report was partial, in which the DoE had said it shut down all illegal brick kilns in the five districts.

'Protect us from eviction'

Worried Barishal residents submit memorandum to mayor after BIWTA survey on Kirtankhola



PHOTO: TITU DAS

People gathered at Barishal city mayor's office on Sadar Road yesterday.

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

Worried over an ongoing riverbed survey to mark the Kirtankhola, residents of Barishal city's six wards submitted a memorandum to the mayor yesterday, demanding their protection from eviction.

Thousands of people from wards 5, 6, 8, 9, 10 and 11 gathered on Sadar Road during the submission.

Chan Mia from the city's Palashpur area under ward-5 said he fears eviction as his houses have been included in riverbed

area under the survey.

Many of the residents like him said a large number of establishments -- including dwellings, educational and religious institutions -- are in the area.

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) started the survey around 25 days ago. BIWTA Deputy Director Ajmol Huda Mithu said they are doing so as per High Court directive to recover the Kirtankhola according

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

ন্যাশনাল হোটেল এ্যান্ড ট্যুরিজম ট্রেনিং ইনস্টিটিউট	
...seamless prospect of brighter career	
বাংলাদেশ পর্যটন করপোরেশন	
(সরকারী পর্যটন সংস্থা)	
ভর্তি বিজ্ঞপ্তি	
ন্যাশনাল সার্টিফিকেট কোর্স	
দেশে-বিদেশে হোটেল, মোটেল, গেস্ট হাউজ, রেস্তোরাঁ, ফাস্ট ফুড শপ, বেকারী, ট্রাভেল এজেন্সি, ট্যুর অপারেটর, বিমান সংস্থাসহ পর্যটন শিল্প ও অন্যান্য সেবামূলক প্রতিষ্ঠানে প্রাসঙ্গিক ক্ষেত্রে কর্মজীবন গড়ে তুলতে অগ্রাধী প্রার্থীদের কাছ থেকে নিম্নবর্ণিত বিষয়ে ১৮ সত্তাহ মেয়াদী ন্যাশনাল সার্টিফিকেট কোর্সে ভর্তির জন্য নির্ধারিত ফরমে আবেদন আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।	
প্রশিক্ষণ কোর্সের নাম ও বিবরণ	ভর্তি পরীক্ষার তারিখ ও সময়
১ ফ্রন্ট অফিস এ্যান্ড সেক্রেটারিয়াল অপারেশন হোটেল, মোটেল, গেস্ট হাউজ ও সেবামূলক প্রতিষ্ঠান পরিচালনার ক্ষেত্রে অভ্যর্থনা সহ ফ্রন্ট অফিসের যাবতীয় কার্যাবলী। কোর্স ফি ৩০,০০০/- টাকা।	লিখিত পরীক্ষা ০৩-০২-২০২০ দুপুর ১২.০০টা
২ ফুড এ্যান্ড বেকারিজ প্রোডাকশন হোটেল, মোটেল ও রেস্তোরাঁ পরিচালনার ক্ষেত্রে আন্তর্জাতিক মান অনুযায়ী দেশী-বিদেশী খাদ্য প্রস্তুত ডেকোরেশনসহ সম্পূর্ণ বিষয়াদি। কোর্স ফি ৪৫,০০০/- টাকা।	লিখিত পরীক্ষা ০৩-০২-২০২০ সকাল ১০.০০টা
৩ ট্যুর গাইড এ্যান্ড ট্রাভেল এজেন্সি অপারেশন এয়ারলাইন, ট্রাভেল এজেন্সি ও ট্যুর অপারেটর প্রতিষ্ঠানসহ পরিচালনা এবং এয়ারলাইন টিকেটিং ও এয়ারলাইন ফেয়ার ক্যালকুলেশন অন্তর্ভুক্ত বিষয়াদি। কোর্স ফি ৩৫,০০০/- টাকা।	লিখিত পরীক্ষা ০৪-০২-২০২০ সকাল ১০.০০টা
৪ ফুড এ্যান্ড বেকারিজ সার্ভিস হোটেল, মোটেল ও রেস্তোরাঁ পরিচালনার ক্ষেত্রে আন্তর্জাতিক মান অনুযায়ী রেস্তোরাঁ সিগারেশন, টেবিল সেট-আপ, খাদ্য ও পানীয় পরিবেশনের কলাকৌশল প্রশিক্ষণ দেয়া হয়। কোর্স ফি ৩৫,০০০/- টাকা।	লিখিত পরীক্ষা ০৪-০২-২০২০ দুপুর ১২.০০টা
৫ বেকারী এ্যান্ড পেট্রি প্রোডাকশন হোটেল, মোটেল ও আধুনিক মানসম্পন্ন ফাস্ট ফুড শপ ও বেকারী পরিচালনার ক্ষেত্রে কেক, পেট্রি, ব্রেড, স্ন্যাক্স প্রস্তুত প্রণালী। কোর্স ফি ৩৫,০০০/- টাকা।	লিখিত পরীক্ষা ০৫-০২-২০২০ সকাল ১০.০০টা
৬ হাউজকিপিং এ্যান্ড লাদ্রী অপারেশন হোটেল, মোটেল, গেস্ট হাউজ ও সেবামূলক প্রতিষ্ঠান পরিচালনার ক্ষেত্রে কক্ষ সাজ-সজ্জা, বেড তৈরী, ক্লিনিং, লাদ্রী সার্ভিস, হাইজিন এ্যান্ড স্যানিটেশন। কোর্স ফি ৩০,০০০/- টাকা।	লিখিত পরীক্ষা ০৫-০২-২০২০ দুপুর ১২.০০টা
কোর্সের মেয়াদঃ ইন্ডাস্ট্রিয়াল এ্যাটচমেন্ট/প্রজেক্ট এ্যাসাইনমেন্টসহ ১৮ সত্তাহ। সত্তাহে ৫ দিন ক্লাস (রবিবার থেকে বৃহস্পতিবার, প্রতিদিন ৫ ঘণ্টা)।	
বৈশিষ্ট্যঃ	
* আধুনিক প্রাকটিক্যাল ল্যাব * আন্তর্জাতিকমানের কোর্স কারিকুলাম * দেশে ও বিদেশে প্রশিক্ষণপ্রাপ্ত দক্ষ প্রশিক্ষকবৃন্দ * প্রতিদিন ১ ঘণ্টা করে বিহারভিত্তিক ইংরেজী ক্লাস * বেসিক কম্পিউটার প্রশিক্ষণ * কৃষ্টি ও সংস্কৃতি বিষয়ে পাঠদান। ফরোয়ার্ড লিটকোজ এর মাধ্যমে এটাচমেন্ট ও প্রশিক্ষার্থীদের কর্মসম্পাদনের সুযোগ সৃষ্টি। সরকারি তত্ত্বাবধানে বিদেশে কর্মসম্পাদনের সুযোগ।	
আন্তর্য্য বিষয়ঃ	
১। অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে (সকাল ১০.০০টা থেকে বিকাল ৪.০০টা পর্যন্ত) মহাখালী ইন্সটিটিউটের অফিস হতে ৩০০.০০ (তিনশত) টাকা মূল্যে ভর্তির ফর্ম ক্রয় করা যাবে। পূরণকৃত ভর্তি ফর্মের সাথে শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতার সত্যায়িত সনদপত্র/প্রশাসনিক এবং ২ (দুই) কর্পি পাসপোর্ট/স্ট্যাম্প সাইজ ছবি জমা দিতে হবে।	
২। সর্বোচ্চ ৩৫ বছর বয়সের প্রার্থীরা আবেদন করতে পারবেন।	
৩। ট্যুর গাইড এ্যান্ড ট্রাভেল এজেন্সি অপারেশন এবং ফ্রন্ট অফিস এ্যান্ড সেক্রেটারিয়াল অপারেশন কোর্সের জন্য ন্যূনতম শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা এইচএসসি বা সমমান এবং অন্যান্য কোর্সের জন্য ন্যূনতম এসএসসি বা সমমান।	
৪। যোগাযোগঃ ৪৩-৪৪, Mohakhali, Dhaka-1213, Phone: 9899289, 9899291, www.nhtti.org/notice.php	
৫। আবেদনপত্র দাখিল করার শেষ তারিখঃ ০২-০২-২০২০।	
৬। কোর্স আরম্ভ হওয়ার তারিখঃ ২৩-০২-২০২০।	
আখলাকুর রহমান ভারপ্রাপ্ত অধ্যক্ষ	
জিডি-৭৯	

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR
LATE S. M. ALI

DHAKA MONDAY JANUARY 13, 2020, POUISH 29, 1426 BS

Safer roads remain a chimera

Will the situation ever improve?

DESPITE a plethora of promises and commitments, legislation and endless assurances by functionaries at every level of the administration to make roads safer for the users, people continue to lose lives and limbs in high numbers. Perhaps “accident” is not quite the right way of defining the situation prevailing in this sector. What we witness on the roads and highways in Bangladesh is near anarchy caused by often deliberate carelessness of the drivers and gross negligence of the owners, and perhaps it is they who should take the lion’s share of the blame for the deaths and injuries and for employing untrained drivers and unfit vehicles on the roads.

The situation has been well encapsulated in the latest report of an organisation that represents the stakeholders who are usually the worst sufferers in road mishaps, the Jatri Kalyan Samity. The report presents a very frightening statistic—that there was nearly a 10 percent increase in the number of deaths in 2019, although the number of accidents was almost the same. Each day, 21 people were killed.

While the administration may not agree with the statistics, the report should not be dismissed out of hand, as it often happens. We feel that there are a few important facts that emerge from the report which the administration should take cognizance of. For example, it is worth noting that there have been more deaths on regional roads than on the national highways. The fact that 56 percent of the deaths occurred due to victims being run over by vehicles and nearly a third of the mishaps involved trucks and covered wagons should provide pointers to the planners on what they should focus on. Very few would take issue with the causes of the accidents pointed out in the report. And those should be addressed earnestly, if the poor state of road safety is to be improved.

Dhaka dangerously too loud

How are the authorities deaf to it?

A recent study has, unsurprisingly, found noise pollution in 70 neighbourhoods of Dhaka to be higher than the permissible level. Many studies prior to this had revealed similar results and a number of organisations, including the World Health Organization (WHO), have been warning about the grave consequences that exposure to such high levels of sound pollution may have on human health. Unfortunately, these warnings appear to have been falling on deaf ears, as the authorities have so far completely failed to reduce Dhaka’s noise level.

The fact that the recent study found sound levels to be higher than the permissible levels in every one of the 70 neighbourhoods they inspected, should turn at least a few heads. What is further shocking is that in the quietest of areas—the Secretariat area—the sound level was at 99.5 decibels (dB), which is double that of the standard noise level of below 50 dB for a silent zone, according to Bangladesh’s noise pollution guidelines. On December 17, the government launched a pilot project to reduce Dhaka’s sound pollution. As part of the project, the government declared the areas surrounding the Secretariat as “silent zone”. Ironically, the data for the study was collected between December 14-22, partly after a silent zone was declared.

If this is the state of things, then the overall situation is indeed extremely grim. According to an earlier report by WHO, exposure to sound above 60 dB can cause temporary deafness, and prolonged exposure to sound above 100 dB can lead to hearing impairment. Moreover, those who are usually worst affected by noise pollution are children, the elderly and expecting mothers. And exposure to noise can even affect the condition of a foetus and lead to premature delivery.

The authorities cannot ignore the seriousness of this crisis anymore. The study gave 11 recommendations, some of which were mentioned before in other studies, and some that the government had already tried to implement in the past, but failed—such as stopping the use of hydraulic horns. However, it is essential that sound pollution in Dhaka be immediately brought down. And so we must once again call on the authorities to get out of its nonchalant attitude and proactively work towards that singular goal.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

letters@thedailystar.net

Stop the wetland grabbers

Recently, Bangladesh Institute of Planners (BIP) disclosed their study findings on the alarming condition of the city’s wetlands. According to the study, Dhaka’s wetlands have declined to 4.38 percent from 14.25 percent in the last 20 years due to unplanned urbanisation. Also, the greeneries in the city came down to 6.69 percent from 9.20 percent while open space to 4.61 percent from 14.07 percent in 2019, compared to 1999. On the contrary, the report said, areas covered by concrete shot up to 81.82 percent from 64.99 percent during the same period.

A High Court bench has already instructed the authorities concerned to make a list of river grabbers and publish their names in the media so that they can’t contest in any election or avail themselves of bank loans. The HC has also made some other recommendations which should be strictly followed by the authorities. Tough action should also be taken against the wetland grabbers, particularly the repeat offenders, who have been committing such crimes with impunity for long.

Md Zillur Rahaman
Gandaria, Dhaka

Slow death of Bangladesh’s state-run jute industry

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

FOR hundreds of thousands of Bangladeshi state-run jute mill workers, this year began with an assurance that is all-too-familiar to them. After a month of protests, mostly by some 30,000 workers of nine state-run jute mills in Khulna’s Khalishpur area, the government, on January 2, promised to implement the new pay scale and disburse all their dues within 15 days. Although the workers left the streets when the state minister for labour and employment, Monnujan Sufian, made this promise, they expressed their disappointment and suspicion over the government’s commitment. These workers spent the entirety of December on the streets, staging protests and hunger strike for their dues. When around 1,000 workers fell sick and two of them died during the hunger strike, the state minister requested them to call it off and assured them of payment within a week. On December 21, the workers postponed the strike till December 28. However, nothing happened within that deadline. Subsequently, they started their strike and again the state minister came up with the same promise and a new, extended deadline. So, the workers’ suspicion and disappointment are not baseless at all.

While many private jute mills are making considerable profits, all the 25 state-run jute mills have been incurring such heavy losses that the mill authorities cannot even pay salaries and financial benefits to their workers. Workers of these mills are owed salaries of six to eight weeks, and since 2013, none of the retired workers got pension and gratuity. In 2015, the cabinet division headed by the prime minister approved a 100 percent increase of wages of workers of all the state-run factories. However, Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) failed to implement it in the jute mills due to heavy financial losses. At present, the permanent workers of these mills get only Tk 4,150 to 5,600 per month. However, a majority of the jute mills are run mostly by temporary workers who have to work on a “no work, no pay” basis. In the jute mills of Khalishpur area, these temporary workers earn only Tk 277 as daily wage. Unfortunately, jute mill workers do not even get this meagre amount regularly.

As a result, the workers took to the streets for large-scale protests in late 2018. Their principal demands were implementation of the new pay scale, regular payment of wages, and payment of all their dues. They spent almost the entire 2019 on streets due to empty promises made by government officials that led to frequent strikes. Thanks to their relentless protests and strikes, on November 26, the government allotted Tk 100 crore to the BJMC to pay all due wages and financial benefits of the workers. The fund was allocated on

several conditions—one of which was that the BJMC would not use it for any other purpose than the disbursement of outstanding wages and financial benefits of the workers. However, according to BJMC officials, the fund was too small to pay all the dues and implement the new salary scale, as the corporation has to spend around Tk 650 crore to pay salaries and wages for all of its workers and employees annually. At present, BJMC is asking for more funds from the government while the jute mill workers are passing days in abject poverty.



The state-run jute industry is confined to a vicious cycle of mismanagement and resultant financial loss that has threatened the very existence of the industry at a time when the global market of jute products is increasing significantly.

PHOTO: RASHED SUMAN

To save tens of thousands of these families, many of whom have been working in jute mills for generations, there is no option but to allocate necessary funds to pay their rightful dues as soon as possible. However, besides this humanitarian aspect, there is another more practical side to this crisis. The BJMC, an autonomous body tasked with operating and managing the state-owned jute industry, has been incurring financial losses for decades. It has earned notoriety for sucking thousands of crores of taka from the public funds without making any visible improvement of the industry.

When the Awami League government came to power in 2008, it made a promise to revive the country’s jute industry. In 2009, the government allocated Tk 5,241 crore for BJMC to revive the shrinking industry on the condition that the factories would become self-sufficient and the BJMC would not borrow funds

crisis. For instance, instead of purchasing raw jute during the jute harvesting season in June-July, jute mill authorities procure their raw material in the dry season. Due to this delay, they have to buy raw jute at Tk 2,000-2,200 per maund (around 40 kg) whereas in June-July the cost per maund is only Tk 1,000-1,200. The jute mills also don’t have any marketing and promotional initiatives. Thousands of tons of jute products are seen lying unsold for years. Currently, these mills sell their products, mostly sacks, to different government offices. For such limited production, large jute mills like Crescent Jute Mills and Platinum Jubilee Jute Mills are currently engaging less than 10 percent of their production capacity, but they are retaining a massive production line that comprises thousands of workers, officials and sophisticated instruments which require regular maintenance.

made of jute. Many privately-run jute mills are making profit by diversifying their products although their production capacity is much smaller than the state-run mills.

Before pouring taxpayers’ money into them, the government must devise a pragmatic and sustainable plan to rescue the industry. Radical reforms are necessary in BJMC and factory management to ensure transparency and efficiency. At the same time, age-old machines should also be replaced with modern technology. The jute industry is one of the few industries in Bangladesh that require very small investment, do not require any import, but can earn a huge amount of foreign currency. However, without these reforms, there will be no alternative to shutting down the state-run jute mills, and this will put the final nail in the coffin of this highly potential industry.

.....
Md Shah Nawaz Khan Chandan is a reporter for The Daily Star. Email: shahnawaz.khan@thedailystar.net

What Soleimani’s assassination means for the IS



which is still reeling from the death of its leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, in Syria last year. In a recent statement, IS has termed Soleimani’s death as a “divine intervention”, and suggested that the removal of their mortal enemy would now give them an opportunity to regroup and re-emerge.

So, how is Soleimani’s assassination linked with the IS? Soleimani was the head of Iran’s CIA equivalent. He dealt with everything outside of Iran and ensured its foreign intelligence interests. And it was Soleimani who masterminded the fight against IS in Iraq and kept them from reaching the border with Iran.

Beyond Iraq, Soleimani also played a key role in the downfall of IS in Syria, where he was fighting the cause of the Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. In fact, in November 2017, it was Soleimani who officially declared the defeat of IS in Syria and Iraq through a letter to Iranian Supreme Leader, Sayyid Ali Hosseini Khamenei.

In view of Qassem Soleimani’s role in the fall of IS in two of its major strongholds—Iraq and Syria—it is not surprising that IS would only heave a sigh of relief at his death. IS’ archnemesis is gone and it didn’t even have to lift a finger, thanks to US President Donald Trump who decided to kill a senior military official of a sovereign nation based on flimsy evidence of threat that the country has not yet been able to produce. This makes the legality of the assassination questionable, to say the least.

The murder of Soleimani has already unleashed a chain of events that has not only led to the deaths of 176 innocent people on board the Ukrainian jetliner Flight 752, which Iran mistakenly gunned down; his assassination has also opened a window of opportunity for the IS to regroup, along with other terrorist/militia outfits in the region. How? Let me explain.

First of all, the murder of Soleimani has shaken Iran—and of course, the Quds Force—to its core. It is natural that Esmail

the advantage of IS.

Third, in the aftermath of Soleimani’s assassination, the US and NATO announced that they were suspending their anti-IS initiatives in Iraq because they were concerned about the safety of their personnel, and they focused on countering retaliatory attacks, as they braced for reaction from the fallen general’s homeland. This interlude in the international forces’ activities against the IS, coupled with the distraction on the Iranian and PMF side, will aid the



Iranian guards hold a picture of the late Iranian Major-General Qassem Soleimani, head of the elite Quds Force, in front of the United Nations office in Tehran, Iran, on January 3, 2020.

PHOTO: WANA/NAZANIN TABATABAEE VIA REUTERS

Qaani, the new head of the IRGC’s elite force, will need some time to cope with the changes and devise further plan of action in Iran’s fight against the IS. This, unfortunately, will give IS the breathing space it needs to revive itself.

Secondly, with the murder of Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the second-in-command of the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) that has been an essential partner of Iran in the fight against IS, the drive will witness a slowdown, again to

potential revival of the IS.

Fourth, Syria’s Assad is also reeling from the aftershocks of Soleimani’s assassination. As a result, the IS fragments still left in Syria might get the chance to regroup. And with Donald Trump leaving the Kurds in northeast Syria last year—who had played a key role in dismantling IS in the area—to the tender mercies of Turkey, the IS’ chance of re-emerging in Syria has only increased. With the Kurds cornered and Soleimani gone, it might

not be very difficult for IS to realise their dream of a nightmarish return.

And one fears, with tensions and anti-US sentiments mounting in the region, desperate elements might view the IS as their answer to US aggression, and as a result, they might want to act as their patrons. This will be a very dangerous move. With Baghdadi gone, the IS might break down into various smaller factions with similar extremist ideologies spread all across the Middle East; or it might reappear as one single unit under a new leadership, equally dangerous to the world, if not worse. Both unwanted possibilities.

If anything, Soleimani’s assassination by the US might pave the way for the IS to reunite and reactivate itself. Looking at the potential repercussions of Soleimani’s murder, one wonders what Donald Trump was thinking when he gave this preposterous idea the go-ahead. If the US thinks that by eliminating Soleimani it has gotten rid of an existential enemy, it is wrong. By killing Qassem Soleimani, the US has killed an ally, one who was capable and pragmatic, and thanks to whose efforts in Iraq and Syria, the US’ fight against the IS had become easier. His murder is yet another spark in the tinderbox of the Middle East, and might come back to haunt the US and the world.

The US, NATO, Iran, Syria, Turkey, and regional and global partners now must get over their individual agendas in the region, and together focus on preventing the rise of the common enemy—IS. The world has seen enough deaths, enough bloodshed, enough violence and enough destruction. It is time for the regional and global powers to join hands and completely eliminate all and any possibility of the re-emergence of the IS. If this requires the US and Iran to swallow their ego, then swallow it they must, for the greater good of the region and the world.

.....
Tasneem Tayeb is a columnist for The Daily Star. Her Twitter handle is: @TayebTasneem

Yin and Yang of the Brahmaputra

It is when the water subsides that fates are decided. For one family, last year's catastrophic flood has left behind signs of promise.

NAUSHAD ALI HUSEIN

A lone structure is taking shape on a featureless, grey horizon. Two figures work under the beating sun, on an otherwise deserted landscape. One digs, the other carries loads of earth on her head. The sky is deep blue. All around there is sand... the dark grey patches where the river has left fertile alluvial deposits, and any stray seed will flourish; and the stark white, devoid of nutrition yet perfect for growing, say, ground nuts. Hints of green are beginning to appear in patches: unmistakable signs of promise.

When we encountered this scene, we were passing by, returning from a meeting in an adjacent island. Taking a break from their backbreaking work, Bashir and Amina (not their real names) told us their story.

Years ago, this was a thriving village. Bashir and Amina lived in it with their seven children, and while it wasn't a glorious life, they got by. In 2011, they lost their home and the only land they owned to river erosion.

For those living on islands in the middle of the river, the loss of homes is almost normal. Every year, the river breaks away large swathes of land from one place, and deposits it in another. Millions in Bangladesh live on these fluid landscapes, and like the land, they are perpetual nomads. They have never had roads, electricity, or much access to government services.

But Ganeshyampur, near the confluence of the Teesta and Brahmaputra rivers in northern Bangladesh, was part of the mainland. Only after 2010 did the area begin to erode.

When Bashir lost his land, he was so dependent on it that afterwards he couldn't pay the minimal rent for a house. The family spent eight years squatting beside a highway. Deprived of their own land to farm, the two have been relying on sporadic work as daily wage labourers. Their dreams



PHOTO: NAUSHAD ALI HUSEIN

of stability have been anchored to the land they lost.

"Every year I come back to see what the prospects are," says Bashir.

The relationships that people have with the river are complex. In a sense, it is nothing less than a parent. It provides land, water and fertility. But the river is also a monster, because in a moment it takes away everything it gives. In July last year, floods destroyed acres of farmland, broke homes, killed livestock and even swept away children.

Yet, when the water subsides, it often leaves behind the promise of rebirth. Last year's flood left more sediments on Bashir's land, and the water receded to a distance of three kilometres away,

convincing him that it was time to start building.

After five days of toiling under the beating sun, Bashir and Amina had raised a structure.

Now, a few months on, several others have also settled in the vicinity. This is a community of mavericks. Being one of the first to settle the land means that they must build everything from scratch. There is no sanitation or access to clean water until somebody sinks a tube well or builds a latrine.

Bashir has improvised a latrine, but for water he must walk to a neighbour's house almost two kilometres away.

They have added two more huts to the first: a kitchen and a room to

accommodate the family (three sons and a daughter, Nolok). Nolok is 30 but her parents cannot marry her off because of the stigma of her mental illness. Her mind is apparently a child's.

The exile has exacted the worst toll on Nolok. Having lived for years in poverty without any government support and without access to social services or healthcare, Nolok hasn't had the protections that she might have under different circumstances.

She has one daughter who is a toddler, and is currently pregnant with another child. Rather than joy, Bashir's eyebrows furrow with burden at the thought of these fatherless grandchildren.

Last year, river erosion affected several districts in Bangladesh that have never had this problem before. In Shariatpur, erosion has rendered some 4,000 families homeless, and caused a 2-storey health complex to crumble. In Manikganj, hundreds of homes and at least one school were swallowed by the Padma. Even smaller rivers like the Nabaganga have uprooted hundreds of families.

Landscapes that are prone to erosion, especially the areas not attached to the mainland, are in a sense detached from state mechanisms. The Jamuna is the widest river in Bangladesh, 12km at its maximum. Getting from the mainland to some of the remotest islands takes upwards of four hours, assuming a boat is ready and waiting.

The Bangladesh government has significant funds allocated to rehabilitate river erosion victims every year, and to check river erosion. Then there are NGOs bringing in adaptive solutions—like Friendship's hospital ships. Perhaps Nolok's children will not see the kind of vulnerability that she has experienced. But with some 68,000 displaced each year by river erosion, there needs to be a national strategy to respond to the question: how do we extend care, protection and opportunity to families who are vulnerable and rendered landless by these results of climate change?

At least for the next few years, Nolok and her family have the security of a home. Her children will not be spending this chilly winter on the edges of a highway. The ground nuts that Bashir's family has planted on about six decimals of land nearby are now a few weeks from harvest. They might harvest up to two maunds (75 KG), depending on their luck and skill, which would fetch about Tk 15,000 in the market—a significant boost.

But the sandbanks they grow on serve as a reminder that the river, though out of sight, is never far.

Naushad Ali Husein is a senior executive at Friendship, an NGO.

PROJECT ■ SYNDICATE

Putting a Price on Soil



ESTHER NGUMBI

LAST month, on December 5, the world marked World Soil Day. The theme of the day—"Stop Soil Erosion, Save our Future"—was chosen to raise awareness of the damage being done to soils around the world and start the process of reversing this trend. But how do we get more people to care about soil?

There is no doubt that they should. The importance of soil to human civilisation cannot be overestimated—it is present in everything we touch. Healthy soil underpins agriculture, farm productivity, and national economies. It grows healthy food, reduces nutrient losses to waterways, reduces greenhouse-gas emissions, increases carbon sequestration, and strengthens biodiversity, all while enabling crops to cope with the changing climate. As such, soil should be viewed as a natural, national, and strategic asset that must be managed wisely.

Yet around the world, soils are being eroded, dried out, and degraded, owing to poor land use and intensive agricultural practices that deplete soil nutrients. Other factors contributing to poor soil health and erosion include deforestation, excessive use of nitrogen fertilisers, and overgrazing. Ultimately, these

practices literally mine the life out of soils.

It is time to reverse this damaging trend. That means stopping soil erosion and other practices that are robbing our soils—and the billions of microorganisms and organisms that live in them—of their health. The question, then, is how to get more people to care?

One way to ensure that national governments and citizens appreciate soils and the value they hold is to put an economic price tag on them. Compelling recent evidence suggests that there are substantial profits to be

made from caring about soils.

For example, a report released in July by the Croatian Institute, targeting mainly investors, agricultural practitioners, entrepreneurs, and philanthropists, highlighted more than USD 320 billion in investment opportunities for sustainable food and agriculture, including 70 opportunities in regenerative agriculture worth USD 47.5 billion. Likewise, an article published in 2017 in *Nature* made a compelling business case that companies' bottom lines and their ability to remain competitive are closely connected to soil health, implying

that mitigation of soil degradation minimises economic risks.

Putting a price tag on soil is the right way to encourage the necessary efforts. Regenerative agriculture, while encompassing many other principles, comprises sustainable farming practices such as reduced tillage, cover cropping, intercropping, diversified crop rotations, rotational grazing, composting, and mulching. The goal is to build up and diversify soil organic matter, thereby promoting soil health, and mitigate climate change through the sequestering of carbon.

Equally important is the need to highlight the impact and benefits for growers who adopt these practices. We need more documentation about the differences that these practices can make. Metrics for documenting the effects can capture how soil health improves, for example, or how much more regenerative farms are that store soil carbon.

As we highlight impacts, we should also call attention to organisations that are leading the way in improving soils. Food Tank, for example, released the names of 15 organisations from around the world that are working to improve soil health. Their efforts include bringing scientists and policymakers together to address soil loss and soil biodiversity, as well as using storytelling and other forms of creative communication to raise consumer awareness about the connections between soil health, food security, and the climate. In 2018,

Food Tank featured organisations promoting regenerative agriculture, including the Rodale Institute, which is best known for its role in advocating for regenerative practices, and Soil4Climate, another leader in efforts to promote soil restoration.

To encourage ordinary citizens to get involved, we need to inspire many more organisations and countries to care about soils, while raising awareness about soils through initiatives like the United Nations' platform for spotlighting soil health initiatives from around the world.

To maximise the potential of regenerative agriculture practices and other measures to improve soil health, more data-based evidence is desperately needed, including to show pathways for scaling. More than ever, scientists must work together with growers to address questions and remove obstacles preventing more people from adopting such practices.

Reiterating the theme of this World Soil Day, the time is now to reverse the trend of soil erosion. By making a compelling business case as to why growers should adopt regenerative agricultural practices, and putting a monetary value on the impact of such practices, we can save the world's soils—and, ultimately, our own future.

Esther Ngumbi is Assistant Professor of Entomology and African-American Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Copyright: Project Syndicate, 2020.
www.project-syndicate.org
(Exclusive to The Daily Star)



PHOTO: REUTERS/MARIA ALEJANDRA CARDONA

QUOTABLE Quote



JANE ADDAMS
(1860-1935)
American social reformer and pacifist

The essence of immorality is the tendency to make an exception of myself.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

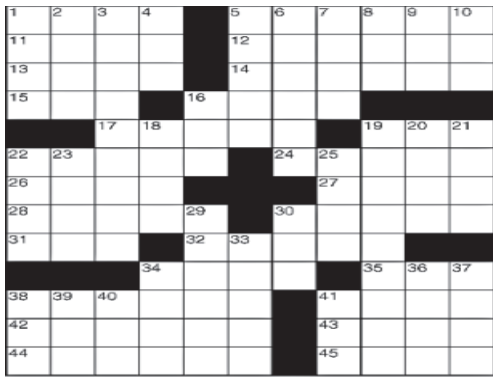
ACROSS

- 1 Fall mo.
- 5 Ten-armed swimmers
- 11 Stratford's river
- 12 Mountain
- 13 passage
- 14 Comic Danger-field
- 15 Curry on TV
- 16 Visitor to Oz
- 17 School paper
- 19 Old hand
- 22 Argo captain
- 24 "Beat it!"
- 26 Nerve impulse relay
- 27 Judy's daughter
- 28 Bessie Smith's music
- 30 Cruise ship

DOWN

- 1 Sweeping story
- 2 Writer Hunter
- 3 Identifies
- 4 Blasting stuff
- 5 Senator Thurmond
- 6 Brokers' numbers
- 7 Take apart
- 8 Travel stop
- 9 Ruby of films

- 10 Cunning
- 16 Wallet bill
- 18 Sharpen
- 19 Gets a hard copy of
- 20 Tear down
- 21 Poet Khayyam
- 22 Pokes roughly
- 23 Car bar
- 25 Brisk pace
- 29 Like sea-water
- 30 Bagel topper
- 33 Pond birds
- 34 Overturn
- 36 Frost, for one
- 37 Too
- 38 Form 1040 org.
- 39 – Aviv
- 40 Hoopla
- 41 Question of identity



YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS



BEEBLE BAILEY

by Mort Walker



BABY BLUES

by Kirkman & Scott



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

NEWSIN
brief

11 dead as storms
sweep through US

AFP, Washington

Severe storms sweeping the southern US killed at least 11 people, authorities said, as tornadoes and high winds upturned cars, destroyed homes and left tens of thousands without power. The storms hit parts of the south on Friday and were expected to move east and north yesterday, according to the National Weather Service. Among the dead were a policeman and firefighter who were hit by a vehicle in Texas after being called out to respond to traffic accidents in icy conditions.

Five killed by jihadists
in northeast Nigeria

AFP, Kano

Jihadists linked with the Islamic State militant group killed five members of a militia in an offensive in Nigeria's northeastern Borno state, militia sources told AFP. Fighters from Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) -- travelling in pickup trucks fitted with machine guns -- attacked Gajiram town, 80 kilometres (50 miles) from the state capital Maiduguri, on Friday. They targeted hunters and vigilantes who were guarding the town against attacks.

Talks with Maduro
unlikely: Guaido

AFP, Caracas

Venezuela's opposition leader and self-declared acting president Juan Guaido said Saturday it is unlikely he will resume negotiations with President Nicolas Maduro. Guaido this week survived dramatic attempts to remove him as head of the National Assembly, and called new protests to try to drive out the leftist Maduro. Aides to Maduro and Guaido held negotiations last year under mediation by Norway but both sides accused each other of breaking terms, and the talks stopped in August.



Malta gets new
PM after journo
murder outcry

AFP, Valletta

Outsider Robert Abela was set to become Malta's new premier yesterday after Prime Minister Joseph Muscat's downfall over the murder of an investigative journalist.

Abela, who is seen as representing continuity, was elected leader of the Labour Party, meaning he automatically takes the role of prime minister.

In the election run-up, Abela did not criticise Muscat, who announced in December he would quit following widespread anger over his perceived efforts to protect friends and allies from a probe into the 2017 slaying of blogger Daphne Caruana Galizia.

Muscat, 45, was set to resign yesterday. Prior to the election result, activist groups cast doubt on whether his successor would bring about real change in the Mediterranean country, which they say has been taken over by "criminals".

Dubbed the "one woman WikiLeaks", Caruana Galizia exposed corruption at the highest levels. She was killed by a car bomb on October 16, 2017 in an attack that made world headlines.

Less than an hour before her death, she wrote on her blog: "There are crooks everywhere you look. The situation is desperate." It was expected that some 17,500 Labour voters would vote for the party's first mid-term prime minister in history.



Lt Col Staci Colemsan said it was a "miracle" there were no casualties. PHOTO: CNN

US troops knew Iran
would attack air base

Reveals exclusive tour in Al-Asad's devastated site

CNN ONLINE

United States troops at the Al-Asad air base in Iraq were aware that an Iranian attack was imminent, allowing them to take shelter two-and-a-half-hours before missiles struck on Wednesday, CNN has been told during an exclusive tour of the devastated site.

Most troops were either flown out of the base or sheltering in bunkers by 11:00 p.m. local time Tuesday -- shortly before the first of four volleys of missiles began at just after 1:30 a.m. on Wednesday, officers said during the first tour by journalists of the air base.

The attack lasted around two hours, only targeting the US areas of the air base, which comprise around a quarter of the Iraqi base.

Officers called it a "miracle" that there were no casualties at the blasted site, with missiles landing just a few meters from bunkers, and some essential personnel remaining outside throughout.

It is the first time troops at the base have spoken in detail of the moments before the attack, revealing that they were able to seek shelter in bunkers shortly before missiles struck.

US troops knew there was going to be an attack on their base -- they just didn't know what the nature of the attack would be.

The Iranian attack on the Al-Asad airbase was one of two on Iraqi military bases housing US troops on Wednesday. The attacks were in retaliation for a drone strike at a Baghdad airport that killed Iran's most powerful military commander, Qassem Soleimani, earlier in the week.

President Donald Trump said Soleimani was plotting "imminent and sinister attacks" on Americans, though he has been unable to offer a time frame on when this would be.



Iran's Revolutionary Guards chief briefed parliament yesterday over the killing of Qasem Soleimani by the US, Tehran's retaliation and the subsequent downing of an airliner, ISNA news agency said. Major General Hossein Salami addressed the members of the Majles in a closed session. Parliament speaker Ali Larijani asked the Majles' security and foreign policy commission to examine the "grave incident" and how to prevent such disasters from occurring again.

the next two hours.

At dawn, officers finally emerged from bunkers to discover the full scale of destruction.

The Al-Asad air base, which houses US troops, is one of the largest and oldest military bases in Iraq.

CAA not to snatch citizenship

Modi tells Howrah gathering some people creating 'misconceptions' for political reasons; anti-CAA demos rage in Kolkata

AFP, THE HINDU

Amidst the ongoing protest against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday said the Act was aimed at giving citizenship, not taking it away.

"We have only brought an amendment to the Citizenship Act and have made it more easier to those who have suffered persecution in Pakistan after the partition of the country, to get Indian citizenship," Modi said addressing youths at the Belur Math, the headquarters of Ramakrishna Mission in West Bengal's Howrah district.

The Prime Minister, who is on a two-day visit to West Bengal, spent last night at Belur Math and yesterday morning addressed youth on the occasion of the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, which is also observed as International Youth Day.

During his half-an-hour address, Modi said that many, including Gandhiji, had said such people who had suffered persecution in neighbouring countries should be granted citizenship.

Exhorting the youth to say whether people who faced religious persecution in neighbouring countries should be left to die or not the Prime Minister said, "We only implemented

what the great freedom fighters had wished to do".

Pointing out that the Centre was trying to resolve a decades-old problem, Modi said that any person irrespective of his or her religion could seek citizenship of the country as per laid down procedures.

"We are not taking anyone's citizenship. A person irrespective of his or her religion, whether he/ she believes in God or not but has faith



in the Constitution of India can seek citizenship under already laid down procedure," he said.

The Prime Minister added that had his government not brought the CAA, the world would not have taken note of the atrocities committed by Pakistan on its minorities.

"It is the result of our initiative that Pakistan has to answer how they treated their minorities in the past 70 years."



People take photos of a phreatic explosion from the Taal volcano as seen from the town of Tagaytay in Cavite province, southwest of Manila yesterday. The volcano spewed a massive cloud of ash into the sky on Sunday, forcing the precautionary evacuation of thousands of residents, authorities said.

PHOTO: AFP

Top UK royals set
for crisis summit

AFP, London

Queen Elizabeth II will host a showdown meeting with Prince Harry today in an attempt to solve the crisis triggered by his bombshell announcement that he and wife Meghan were stepping back from the royal frontline.

Other senior royals including Harry's father Prince Charles and brother Prince William, with whom he has strained relations, will join the monarch at her private Sandringham estate in eastern England, according to British media.

Meghan will join the meeting via conference call from Canada as they attempt to work out the "next steps" towards a compromise and nip the growing crisis in the bud.

Issues up for debate include how much money the couple will still receive from Charles's estate, their royal titles and what commercial deals they can strike, according to the Sunday Times.

The newspaper reported that William believes he and Harry are now "separate entities", breaking the bonds forged following their mother's tragic death.

"I've put my arm around my brother all our lives and I can't do that any more; we're separate entities," the Times reported he told a friend.

Harry, Meghan and son Archie spent Christmas in Canada, with the American former actress returning there this week.

Saudi military trainees to be
expelled from US: report

AFP, Washington

The United States will expel at least a dozen Saudi military students accused of extremist links and child pornography, after an investigation into a shooting rampage by a Saudi officer in Florida, media reported Saturday.

In December, Mohammed Alshamrani, who was in the United States as part of a Saudi military training program, opened fire in a classroom at the Pensacola Naval Air Station, killing three sailors and wounding eight other people before being shot dead by police.

While the dozen or more trainees are not accused of aiding Alshamrani, some were found to have connections to extremist movements or be in possession of child pornography, CNN reported.

The probe, which was carried out by the FBI, also found that several had not reported the assailant's disturbing behaviour before the attack, according to The Washington Post.

In mid-December the Pentagon said it had conducted background checks on all Saudi military personnel currently training in the United States and found no

"immediate threat scenario."

Defense Department officials halted operational training for Saudi Arabian military students in the United States following the attack, though classroom instruction continued.

"In the wake of the Pensacola tragedy, the Department of Defense restricted to classroom training programs foreign military students from Saudi Arabia while we conducted a review and enhancement of our foreign student vetting procedures," said Lt. Col. Robert Carver, a spokesman for the Department of Defense. "That training pause is still in place while we implement new screening and security measures."

The 21-year-old gunman, a lieutenant in the Saudi Royal Air Force, was armed with a lawfully purchased Glock 9mm handgun, and is reported to have posted a manifesto on Twitter before the shooting denouncing America as "a nation of evil."

According to the Washington Post, the FBI asked Apple to help access Alshamrani's two iPhones, but the company is resisting governmental requests to alter encryption.

PENSACOLA SHOOTING



J&K cop arrested for
helping militants

AFP, Srinagar

A decorated Indian officer has been arrested for helping to transport rebel militants in Kashmir, the police chief of the restive and highly-militarised Himalayan province said yesterday.

Deputy superintendent Davinder Singh had worked for the police for decades and was a member of an elite counter-insurgency force in the disputed territory, which both India and Pakistan claim in full.

He was apprehended late on Saturday when his vehicle was pulled over at a police checkpoint south of Srinagar, the region's main city.

"The fast moving car was stopped and searched. Two wanted militants and our officer... and a third person were arrested in the operation," Kashmir police chief Vijay Kumar told reporters.

Kumar said police and intelligence agencies were questioning Singh, accusing the officer of a "heinous crime".

Security forces recovered guns and ammunition from several locations in the follow up to the arrests, including from Singh's residence in Srinagar.

Hours after the four men were detained, police killed three alleged rebels during a gunfight in southern Kashmir's Tral district, where the arrested militants were based.

One of those arrested was Naveed Baba, the deputy commander of the local rebel outfit Hizbul Mujahideen.



BUSHFIRE CRISIS

Aussie PM
expresses
regret

REUTERS, Melbourne

After weeks of criticism over the handling of the bushfires scorching Australia, Prime Minister Scott Morrison yesterday expressed regret over his handling of the bushfire crisis.

"There are things I could have handled on the ground much better," he said in an interview with ABC television. "These are sensitive environments, there are very emotional environments; prime ministers are flesh and blood too in how they engage with people."

He also said he will propose a national review into the response to the disaster, as the fires claimed another firefighter's life.

The Australian bush has been burning for nearly three months and the fires have killed 28 people, claimed 2,000 homes and consumed millions of acres of land and wildlife. The crisis is becoming increasingly political as the country looks at the causes and the government's response.

"There is obviously a need for a national review of the response," Morrison said.

Asked whether it should be a Royal Commission, a powerful judicial inquiry, Morrison said, "I think that is what would be necessary and I will be taking a proposal through the cabinet to that end, but it must be done with consultations with the states and territories."



A man dressed as the Grim Reaper warms up before a "run against dictatorship" in Bangkok yesterday. Around ten thousand Thais joined the run, shouting anti-army slogans and wielding three-finger salutes from the Hunger Games films in the largest show of political defiance since the 2014 coup.

PHOTO: AFP

WHAT'S ON



Group Art Exhibition
Title: Calling of the Roots
Venue: Zainul Gallery, DU
Date: January 8 – 14
Time: 11 am – 8 pm



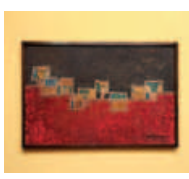
Workshop
Title: Kata Kuti - Collage Workshop by Kazi
Tahsin Agaz Apurbo
Venue: Studio 6/6, Mohammadpur
Date: January 25, 2020
Time: 11 am – 6 pm



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)

Sabila Nur gears up for a busy year

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Television actor Sabila Nur has charmed her fans with her vibrant personality and acting prowess over the years. In a recent conversation with The Daily Star, she talks about her busy schedules, upcoming projects and more.

Tell us about your latest projects.

My first television show this year, *Just Friends*, aired earlier this month. It was directed by a Mahmudur Rahman Hime. I have also worked on Mista Anan's *Proxy Prem*, a Valentine's Day special. In addition, I have worked in an untitled project directed by Imraul Rafat. My calendar is booked for the next couple of months.

What are your plans for this year?

I have been pigeon-holed for the catty roles that I play. However, in real life, I am not like that at all. I hope to experiment more with the kind of roles that I play this year.

You recently went on a trip to Singapore. Do you enjoy travelling?

My partner Nehal and I love travelling together. We celebrated New Year's Eve in Singapore. Besides our work and studies, we hope to travel a lot this year.

When you are not in front of the camera, how do you like to spend your time?

I love watching movies and reading books in my leisure time.



PHOTO: SHAHREAR KABIR HEEMEL

Prize-giving ceremony of 'Prothom Alo Borshoshera Boi' held at Bangla Academy

RASHEEK TABASSUM MONDIRA

The 16th prize-giving ceremony for *Prothom Alo Borshoshera Boi* was held at Bangla Academy's Abdul Karim Shahitya Bisharod Auditorium, yesterday. Contemporary writer Shahaduzzaman won the prize in the fiction category for *Mamilar Shakkhi Moyna Pakhi* and Rayhan Rhyne, Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy, Jahangirnagar University, received the prize for his nonfiction work, *Banglar Dorshon: Prak Uponibesh Porbo*. Both the books are published by Prothoma Prokashon.

The winners received crests, certificates and prize money of BDT 1 lakh. This is the second time that Rayhan Rhyne has won this prize.

Professor Emeritus Serajul Islam Chowdhury was the chairman of the judge's panel. Professors Syed Mohammad Shahed and Bhishmadeb Chowdhury, poet Sumon Rahman and writer Shaheen Akhtar were in the judge's panel. Sharmin Mustapha and Tahsin Reza started the event by reciting two poems of Rabindranath Tagore and Kazi Nazrul Islam. Professor Emeritus Serajul Islam Chowdhury delivered the keynote speech at the event. "Technology is threatening literature. In this age, practicing literature is important. *Prothom Alo* deserves praise for taking this initiative," he shared. The winners, Shahaduzzaman and Rayhan Rhyne, also spoke at the programme. Motiur Rahman, Editor, *Prothom Alo*, delivered the concluding speech.



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED



A still from the tele-fiction.

TISHA to play a politician

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

National Film Award winner Nusrat Imrose Tisha will be playing the role of a politician in the tele-fiction *Ada Somuddur*, directed by Raisul Tomal. Tisha is excited about the project. "I have never played

a role of a politician before. This is a new experience for me," she said. "My character's name is Hena, who runs for commissioner in the elections, with 'kite' as her polling symbol." The political story contains elements of romance as well, with a strong social message.



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

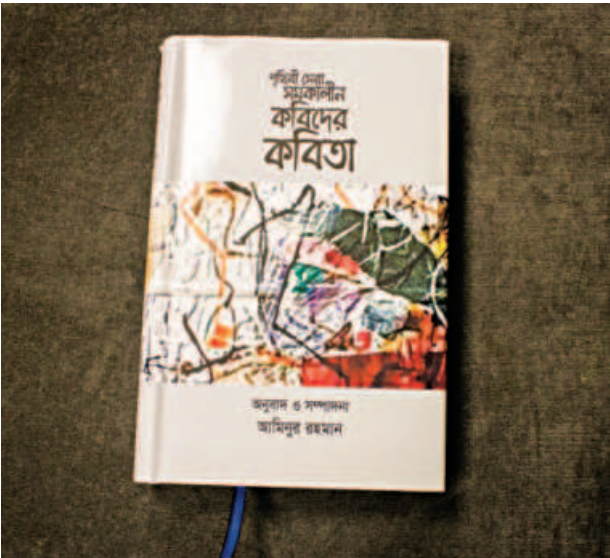
Publication ceremony of 'Prithibi Shera Shomokaleen Kobider Kobita' held



Special guests, organisers and featured poets at the programme.

PHOTOS: MONON MUNTAKA

The publication ceremony of Prithibi Shera Shomokaleen Kobider Kobita, was organised recently at BRAC Centre. The book, translated and edited by Poet Aminur Rahman, is published by Kathak.



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Eminent National Professor Anisuzzaman graced the event as the chief guest. "Back in the 80s, translating poems and novels was common, but now, few people take up such a task. I hope people like Aminur Rahman will continue their work," he shared.

Renowned educationalist and writer Selina Hossain, Director General of Bangla Academy Habibullah Sirajee, poets Mohammad Nurul Huda, Jahidul Huq, Shihab Sarkar, Kamal Chowdhury and Muhammad Samad, along with Professor Fakrul Alam, were present as special guests.

"We need more enthusiasts who will translate Bengali poems to

English and other languages for the world to acknowledge Bengali literature," said Selina Hossain.

Argentinean poet Jona Burghardt and German poet Tobias Burghardt were present as special guests. Their works have been featured in the book. They both recited parts of their selected poems.

The event concluded with renowned reciter Hasan Arif and Tropa Majumdar reciting some of the poems from the book, which features the works of 35 poets from across the globe.

Swedish poet Bengt Berg, Slovakian poet Milan Richter, Moroccan poet Dr Benaissa Bouhmala and Taiwanese poets Dr Lee Kuei-shien and Miao-yi Tu, among others, have contributed to the book.



Demonstrators shout slogans to protest against Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during a demonstration in Kolkata yesterday. Thousands of angry protesters took to the streets to tell India's leader he was unwelcome in Kolkata, in the latest rally against a citizenship law that critics say discriminates against Muslims.

PHOTO: AFP

Boko Haram militants kill four, kidnap four in Chad: officials

AFP, N'djamena

Boko Haram jihadists on Saturday killed at least four villagers and kidnapped four women in western Chad, the local governor and a security official said.

The attack occurred near Lake Chad, a vast area bordering Nigeria, Chad and Cameroon, where small islands and swamps serve as hideouts for Islamist militants to carry out raids on the three countries.

“Around one in the morning, Boko Haram fighters attacked the village of Alom, and there are four dead. When they withdrew they took four women,” a senior army source in the region told AFP.

Lake Chad regional governor Nouki Charfadine confirmed four people had been killed by Boko Haram and that four women were also missing.

Make a list

FROM PAGE 16
structures from around river and restrain polluters.

The HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman came up with the order and rule following a writ petition filed by Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela) on January 5 seeking necessary orders on the government to save the river.

Writ petitioners’ lawyer Sayeed Ahmed Kabir told The Daily Star that a group of “influential people” have reportedly encroached the land of the river and are running businesses by constructing harmful structures there. Therefore, the flow of the river has stopped and the area has become polluted.

Earlier in 2003, the Water Development Board had prepared a list of 285 polluters and encroachers of the Ichhamati.

The authorities concerned have not been taking effective measures against the polluters and encroachers, Kabir said citing writ the petition.

Advocate Minhazul Haque Chowdhury appeared for the petitioner.

Thousands seek

FROM PAGE 16
Nine elderly devotees died due to age-related complications and cardiac arrest on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, said Deputy Commissioner of Gazipur Metropolitan Police Manzur Rahman.

A total of 100 couples were married Saturday afternoon.

Police, Rab and intelligence officials have been deployed in the adjacent areas for security. The authorities set up over 400 CCTV cameras, 25 watch towers and 11 check posts.

The second phase of Ijtima will be held from January 17-19.

Teen with challenges

FROM PAGE 16
informed local influentials and later filed the case on Saturday night.

Afterwards, police arrested the 50-year-old from his house, the OC said, adding the other accused has gone into hiding and efforts were underway to nab him.

“The victim was taken to Pabna general hospital for medical examination on Sunday morning,” the OC said.

Protesters heap pressure on Iran

FROM PAGE 16
the dictator”, directing their anger at the Islamic Republic’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

“Apologise and resign,” Iran’s moderate Etemad daily wrote in a banner headline yesterday, saying the “people’s demand” was for those responsible for mishandling the plane crisis to quit.

The latest upsurge in anger adds to challenges facing the authorities, which launched a bloody crackdown in November to quell protests. The leadership is also struggling to keep the crippled economy afloat under rigorous US sanctions.

The Ukraine International Airlines plane was shot down minutes after taking off from Tehran on Wednesday, when Iranian forces were on alert for US reprisals following tit-for-tat strikes. Many of those on board were Iranians with dual citizenship, while 57 were holders of Canadian passports.

REVENGE
Iran’s president said it was a “disastrous mistake” and apologised. But a top Revolutionary Guards commander added to public fury when he said he had told the authorities on the same day as the crash that an Iranian missile had struck the plane.

The Guards’ top commander, Hossein Salami, said “we are more upset than anyone over the incident”, state media reported.

But others said Iran’s enemies, a term usually used to refer to Washington and its allies, were exploiting the incident.

“Iran’s enemies want to take revenge on the Guards for a military mistake,” said Ali Shirazi, Khamenei’s representative to the Quds Force,

an elite Guards unit, state media reported.

After Saturday’s protests, US President Donald Trump said on Twitter: “There cannot be another massacre of peaceful protesters, nor an internet shutdown. The world is watching.”

He warned Iran against killing protesters yesterday. “To the leaders of Iran - DO NOT KILL YOUR PROTESTERS,” Trump tweeted, warning the world and “more importantly, the USA is watching.” In an interview with CBS’s “Face the Nation” just before the tweet, US Defense Secretary Mark Esper said Trump was still willing to hold talks with Iran’s leaders.

Meanwhile, Britain said its ambassador in Iran had been briefly detained on Saturday night, which Iranian media said was because he was inciting protests. Some lawmakers said the envoy should leave Iran before being ejected, media reported.

Condemning the arrest, British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said Iran “can continue its march towards pariah status ... or take steps to de-escalate tensions and engage in a diplomatic path forwards.”

Iran summoned the UK envoy yesterday to complain about his attendance at an “illegal” rally in Tehran, Iranian Foreign Ministry’s website reported.

Iran’s headline Basij militia staged a demonstration outside Britain’s embassy in Tehran yesterday demanding that it be closed, Iranian state media reported.

CRIME AGAINST HUMANITY
On January 3, a US drone strike in Iraq killed prominent Iranian commander Qassem Soleimani, responsible for

building up Iran’s network of regional proxy armies in Iraq and beyond. Tehran responded with missile strikes on US targets in Iraq.

No US soldiers were killed, but in the tense hours after that, the Ukrainian Boeing 737 was cleared to take off from Tehran airport and brought down by a missile fired by mistake.

“It is not a human error. This is a crime against humanity,” the son of the toppled shah of Iran, Reza Pahlavi, wrote on Twitter. “Khamenei and his regime should go.”

In the November protests, demonstrators had chanted slogans supporting him. His father died in exile in 1980.

Rallying to the establishment, Iranian lawmakers praised the elite force’s commanders for courage in admitting the error, according to Fars, a news agency seen as close to the Guards, a parallel military set up to protect the theocratic system.

Iranian officials sought to portray the plane disaster as a second blow to a mourning nation after Soleimani’s death in a US drone strike.

The commander’s funeral had prompted huge public gatherings, which the authorities described as a show of national unity. But the displays of emotion have been swiftly overshadowed and protesters on Saturday tore up pictures of the slain general.

Public fury at Iran’s authorities had grown as questions about the plane crash mounted. Iranians on social media asked why officials were busy fending off criticism from abroad rather than sympathising with grieving families. Others asked why the plane was allowed to take off at a time of high tension.

Stability, peace for all

FROM PAGE 16

top Iranian military leader, Qassem Soleimani, in an US drone strike and Iran’s retaliation by firing missiles on US airbases in Iraq last week.

Security analysts say although there are hardly any possibilities of an all-out armed conflict for now, but risks of a long cycle of regional escalation, including substantial Iranian attacks on Gulf energy targets and direct naval clashes between the US and Iran, are real.

The Middle Eastern countries, especially Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, Oman, Bahrain, Kuwait, Iraq and Lebanon are some of the major destinations of Bangladesh’s overseas labour market. More than six million Bangladeshis work and send home more than 60 percent of the \$18 billion migrant remittances annually.

Bangladesh also depends heavily on these countries for oil imports. Besides, it maintains good relations with both the US and Iran. Policymakers say any conflict in the region will have direct impacts on Bangladesh’s economy.

“The prime minister will issue directives to the Bangladesh envoys on Dhaka’s role amid the tensed situation prevailing in the Middle East,” Momen said at the briefing.

He also said Hasina would address the Bangladesh envoys in Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arab and the UAE.

During meetings with the UAE authorities, the PM will discuss energy cooperation, investments, welfare of Bangladeshi migrants and job opportunities, he said

Momen also said the prime minister would give directives to the Bangladeshi envoys on how they could attract more investment in Bangladesh from the Middle East.

She will also discuss the plans of the Bangladesh missions in West Asia on celebrating the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Asked why the UAE was not

opening the labour market, which has been restricted for general category workers of Bangladesh since 2012, the foreign minister said the UAE has agreed in principle to open the market but gave some conditions.

“Those who go there should have training. They [the Middle Eastern countries] take actions if anyone violates law,” he said without elaborating the conditions, but added that Bangladesh expatriates’ welfare ministry was working on those issues.

He said there were some large investment proposals worth several billion dollars on refinery, energy and economic zone.

“The work is going on. It will be sped up with the prime minister’s visit,” Momen said.

Hasina is expected to meet UAE Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid al Maktoum and Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan and chairwoman of the Supreme Council for Motherhood and Childhood Sheikhha Fatima bint Mubarak Al Ketbi.

At the “Abu Dhabi Sustainable Week”, the PM will highlight Dhaka’s position in implementing sustainable development goals (SDGs) and apprise the world leaders of the initiatives taken by Bangladesh in achieving the goals.

She will also give a detailed overview about Bangladesh’s initiatives in the field of energy, health care, climate change, water and biotechnology to achieve “Vision 2041” to turn Bangladesh into a developed country.

Bangladesh and UAE are likely to sign two agreements – “Addendum to the MoU linked between Emirates National Oil Company (ENOC) and Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources, Bangladesh”, and ‘Protocol of Amendment to the Agreement on allotment of land plot in Baridhara Diplomatic Enclave’, Dhaka for the construction of embassy premises, Momen added.

Questions rise

FROM PAGE 1

According to Mohiuddin, Rab officers were waiting there after being tipped off about a man arriving from Cox’s Bazar with a yaba haul.

After the bus arrived and the other passengers had left, Iqbal was waiting there with at least 12 bags, Mohiuddin said.

Around 15 minutes later, two cars arrived apparently to pick up Iqbal.

As Rafika and Hasan got off the cars and started to put Iqbal’s bags into the cars, Rab members cordoned off the area.

Sensing their presence, Iqbal started to shoot at the Rab members who then retaliated, the officer added.

The suspects were shot in the resulting “gunfight”.

They all were taken to the DMCH where doctors declared Iqbal dead.

Mohiuddin claimed that three Rab men were injured.

The company commander also said Rab had collected the footage from the shops for investigation.

Rab claimed to have recovered one lakh yaba pills, Tk 1.80 lakh in cash, and a pistol from the scene.

A shopkeeper of the area said, “We were inside the shop and just heard seven or eight gunshots... We are not allowed to see the footage.”

Meanwhile, Rab officials have kept the injured suspects under strict surveillance at the DMCH. Journalists were not allowed to talk to them.

Iqbal’s relatives identified him at the DMCH morgue. They said that they didn’t know if Iqbal and Rafika were married because he was already married.

A woman at the DMCH named Shamim Ara Sharmin claimed that she was Iqbal’s wife. But they had broken up and hardly ever communicated with each other. However, they talked to each other on Thursday.

Iqbal’s brother said, “I know my brother ran a business in Chattogram. I do not know what he actually did.”

Iqbal was accused in at least six drugs cases, Rab claimed.

In the last three weeks, Rafika sent around Tk 1.5 crore to Iqbal through banks and other means, Mohiuddin said.

Later in the day, Rab officials raided Iqbal’s flat in Adabar and recovered 10,000 yaba pills and Tk 4 lakh in cash, Mohiuddin said.

Pre-school Picasso

FROM PAGE 16

fourth birthday. “We had already bought him enough cars and action figures, so we had the idea of getting him a canvas,” Kerem Akar said.

“The first picture looked fantastic, and I thought at first that my wife had painted it.”

“I thought maybe it was just coincidence, but by the second and third pictures it was clear he had talent.”

Akar’s talent is visible in his latest collection, a collaboration with Germany and Bayern Munich football star Manuel Neuer.

One work in the collection was recently sold for 11,000 euros (\$12,000), with proceeds going to Neuer’s children’s charity.

An explosion of colour reminiscent of Jackson Pollock, the piece is typical of Akar’s abstract expressionist style.

The seven-year-old tells AFP that his idols include Pollock, Michael Jackson and Jean-Michel Basquiat.

Singer held

FROM PAGE 16

clerics, staged a rally demanding the singer’s arrest.

Shariat could face up to 10 years in prison if found guilty at trial.

Journalists and right activists say the Digital Security Act, which was passed in 2018, is a serious threat to freedom of expression in the country.

Under the act, anyone can face a life jail term for “propaganda” against the nation and up to 10 years for digital content that “hurts religious sentiments” or “creates unrest”.

Odhikar, a rights group, reported at least 29 arrests last year under the law.

He has also developed his own techniques, which include applying paint by punching the canvas with his father’s boxing gloves.

At a presentation of Akar’s new work at a private gallery in Berlin last month, one visitor said she was “speechless” upon discovering that the artist was a child who was just starting primary school.

“The balance and harmony of the composition -- I wouldn’t expect that from a child,” Arina Daehnick, a photographer from Berlin, told AFP.

Diana Achtzig, director of the Achtzig Gallery for Contemporary Art in Berlin, said she was impressed by Akar’s “imagination and variation”.

“As long as he has someone supporting him and not exploiting him, then he has a great future ahead of him,” she said.

Qatar emir to visit Iran amid regional crisis

AFP, Doha

Qatar’s Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani will visit Tehran, the government said yesterday, amid soaring tensions following the US killing of an Iranian commander and retaliatory strikes.

Qatar is close to the US and hosts Washington’s largest military base in the region, but it also enjoys strong ties with Tehran, with whom it shares the world’s largest gas field.

Sheikh Tamim will meet with President Hassan Rouhani and other top Iranian leaders, Qatar-based broadcaster Al Jazeera reported.



One of the dredgers set for lifting sand from a spot very close to the bridge on the Manu river in Sharifpur union of Moulvibazar's Kulaura upazila.

PHOTO: MINTU DESHWARA

Sand lifting poses threat to bridge on Manu river

Moulvibazar, Tripura road link also under threat due to the callous act

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

Mindless sand lifting poses threat to Manu Bridge on Moulvibazar-Kailashahar road linking Bangladesh and Tripura via Chatlapur land port in Moulvibazar's Kulaura upazila.

Three local influential men, who took lease for sand lifting from a portion of the Manu river area six months ago, are extracting sand from a depth of around 50 feet of the waterbody near the bridge in Sharifpur union of Kulaura, said stakeholders.

During a visit to the spot a couple of days ago, this correspondent found three dredgers engaged in extracting sand near the bridge.

"Flood control embankment in Manu bridge area got damaged more than once due to unplanned sand lifting from the riverbed. Later authorities repaired it with sandbags," said Makhliur Rahman of Namaja area in Kulaura.

Many houses and other set-ups in the area are on the verge of extinction due to the sand lifting, said locals, adding that they observed different programmes including human chains on several occasions over the issue.

Seeking anonymity, several locals said the lease-holders conduct the illegal act at night amid lax monitoring by the authorities.

"I am going to lose three acres of land due to erosion caused by illegal sand lifting," said Firoz Khan, a local.

Md Junab Ali, chairman of Sharifpur union parishad (UP), said they submitted a complaint to the deputy commissioner of Moulvibazar demanding immediate steps to stop illegal sand lifting from the bridge area.

"If the callous act is not prevented, Manu Bridge will face threat, especially during the monsoon, when the water level sees an alarming rise.

"Once the bridge becomes unusable, import and export from and to India through Chatlapur land port will stop, causing trouble for a large number of

people on both sides," he said.

Abdul Malik, former president of Shamsheernagar Banik Samity, said he along with former local UP member Nashibur Rahman Nashim and Noor Ahmed Chowdhury Bulbul took the lease for sand lifting from the river area for 2019-2020 fiscal year.

Asked whether the deal allows them to lift sand from near the bridge, he declined to make any comment.

According to the Balu Mohal O Mati Babosthapon Aina, 2010 (Sand Fields and Soil Management Act, 2010), sand lifting is not allowed within 500 metres of any bridge area, said Abdul Karim Kim, executive member of Bangladesh

Paribesh Andolon.

But the syndicate of influential traders having political connections continued lifting sand near the bridge with powerful dredgers, he said.

Asked about the matter, Kulaura Upazila Assistant Commissioner (Land) Nazratun Naim said, "I seized different equipment from the spot several times and ordered the sand lifters to remove the dredgers from the bridge area. Administrative action will be taken if sand lifting is done there again."

Upazila Nirbahi Officer ATM Farhad Chowdhury said he will look into the matter and take action against the perpetrators.

Housewife stabbed for dowry

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A housewife, who was stabbed and tortured on Friday allegedly by her dowry greedy husband, is now undergoing treatment at Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital with severe stab injuries all over her body including face.

The victim, Farzana Akther Happy, 28, daughter of Yakub Ali of Debpur village in Habiganj's Madhabpur upazila, was first admitted to Madhabpur Upazila Health Complex on Friday night, from where she was later referred to Brahmanbaria.

Meanwhile, victim's brother filed a case with Madhabpur Police Station accusing his sister's husband Shafiqul Islam Babu, 33, on Saturday night, Officer in Charge of the police station Iqbal Hossain said.

Victim's father Yakub said his daughter was married to Babu, son of late Imtiaz Ali of Baisnabpur village in the upazila, in 2014.

Since the marriage, Babu had been torturing his daughter both physically and mentally for dowry, he alleged.

According to the case statement, Babu asked Happy to bring Tk 2 lakh from her father on Friday.

As she refused to do so, Babu first beat her mercilessly with stick and then stabbed her indiscriminately with a kitchen knife around 8:00pm and fled the scene.

Hearing cry for help, villagers rescued injured Happy and admitted her to Madhabpur Upazila Health Complex.

Fish poisoned dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Miscereants poisoned to death fish worth around Tk one lakh in a pond at Durakuti Bishbari village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila early Saturday.

Safar Ali, a farmer of the village, is the owner of the pond.

Safar said he found the dead fish floating on the water early in the morning.

Safar filed a complaint with Lalmonirhat Sadar Police Station in this regard yesterday morning, said Mahfuz Alam, officer-in-charge of the police station.



PHOTO: STAR

Poor visibility caused by dense fog has disrupted traffic movement in Dinajpur town. Vehicles move slowly with headlights on during daytime. The picture was taken from in front of Dinajpur Zila School around 8:30am yesterday.

SNATCHING OF CAMERA

Journos demand action against food officer

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Journalists at a human chain in Lalmonirhat town on Thursday demanded action against the food officer who took away video camera from a TV journalist on December 23.

The human chain was formed at Mission Intersection on Lalmonirhat-Burimari highway in the town.

However, three days after the incident, Shahinur Rahman, in-charge of local storage depot (LSD) at Purnabazar Kalibari in Lalmonirhat town, returned the camera to the journalist.

On 23rd of last month in 2019, Shahinur forcibly took away the camera from Jahedul Islam Somapto, district correspondent of Maasranga Television. Jahedul went to the warehouse to cover a news report on paddy procurement from rice mill owners.

Soon after the incident, the additional

district commissioner (ADC), members of police and local journalists went to the spot and the ADC, after primary investigation, found the food officer guilty of snatching the camera.

Journalist Jahedul, a resident of Thana Para area in the town, said "I got my video camera back three days after the incident, but I didn't get justice."

"I lodged a complaint with Lalmonirhat Sadar Police Station, but I didn't pursue it [the case] as the deputy commissioner had assured me of departmental action against the food officer within 15 days of the incident," he added.

At the human chain on Thursday, Majed Masud, general secretary of Professional Journalists' Platform in Lalmonirhat, said journalists in the district will call a tougher program unless action is taken against Shahinur by January 20.

RAPE OF SPEECH IMPAIRED GIRL

Key accused arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Police yesterday arrested one of the accused in connection with a case for raping a speech impaired girl in Pabna's Atghoria upazila on Saturday.

Police produced the arrestee, Abdul Karim, 50, son of Monjil Hossain of Gokulnagar village, before a court yesterday afternoon that sent him to jail.

Earlier on Saturday night, mother of the 18-year-old victim filed a case with Atghoria Police Station accusing two people.

Quoting victim's family members, police said Karim and his associate Belal Hossain forcibly raped the girl at her house on Saturday when none of her family members were present.

Hobby turns to profit

Jashore woman sets example by cultivating mushroom commercially

MOHSIN MILON, Benapole

It is not so easy to move something from a hobby to a business. But Farzana Yeasmin of Jashore town has turned it into profit with a measure of her entrepreneurial spirit.

Her raise and success story are now a great source of inspiration for many housewives and unemployed youths in the area.

Initially Farzana began mushroom cultivation with a few spawns (mushroom seed) as a hobby. Now, with around 1,300 packs of different varieties of mushrooms at her Bristi Mushroom Centre, she is now selling those commercially.

Farzana's rooftop farming of mushroom became very popular in the locality then, which

inspired her a lot.

In 2016, Farzana received training on mushroom cultivation from Magura Dream Mushroom. With Tk 2.50 lakh, she then commercially started mushroom cultivation on the rooftop of her rented house in the town's Murali area under a project. She collected spawns from Dhaka Mushroom Development Centre.

"When I started mushroom cultivation, I never really looked at it as a business but as pursuing a hobby. My project name is Bristi Mushroom Centre," said Farzana.

Each packet of mushroom is now being sold at Tk 250 while the production cost is Tk 25 for per pack, she said, adding that as the production cost is very nominal, it is a profitable business.

Buyers directly come to buy mushroom at her house, she added.

Farzana said her business is quite good and she is planning to export the mushrooms.

Fifteen male and female employees are now working at her centre, she said.

Emdad Hossain Sheikh, deputy director of Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) in Jashore, said encouraged by the success of trained grower Farzana, many housewives and unemployed youths are expressing their interest to receive training on mushroom cultivation.

They have already given training on mushroom farming to some youths, said the DAE official.



Farzana Yeasmin takes care of mushrooms at her house in Jashore town.

PHOTO: COLLECTED



Chattogram Challengers' left-arm seamer Mehedi Hasan Rana, who is among the top bowlers with 17 wickets, playfully tosses the ball during a practice session yesterday ahead of today's eliminator of BBPL against Dhaka Platoon at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

BBPL's business end begins today

SPORTS REPORTER



The ongoing special edition of the Bangabandhu Bangladesh Premier League (BBPL) was touted as a platform for local players to showcase their talent, and with the country's biggest T20 franchise league having entered its business end, now is perhaps the best time for the cricketers to do so.

The last four stage of the BBPL will hit the field today with Chattogram Challengers taking on Dhaka Platoon in the eliminator game in today's first fixture while Rajshahi Royals will face Khulna Tigers in the first qualifier later in the evening.

Chattogram's left-arm seamer Mehedi Hasan Rana has been the brightest spot for his side throughout this edition. The 23-year-old bagged 17 wickets in eight matches and is in third place on the highest wicket-takers list, just behind Rangpur Rangers' seamer Mustafizur Rahman and Khulna's Robbie Frylinck, who have 20 and 18 scalps respectively.

Chattogram, led by Mahmudullah Riyad, will also probably bet on another local player, Imrul Kayes, for today's encounter. The left-hander has been in fine form so far, having scored 405 runs, featuring four fifties, in eleven matches at an average of 57.85.

Needless to say, the presence of 'Universe Boss' Chris Gayle on the side will likely play a huge role even though the big hitter is yet to flourish in the two fixtures he has played up till now.

Likewise, Dhaka will bank on their locals as well with the likes of Mahedi Hasan having been a revelation for the side with his all-round performances.

The 25-year-old played a vital role to help Dhaka reach this point, having scored 256 runs and scalped 11 wickets till now in this BBPL. Meanwhile, Dhaka's Tamim Iqbal and Mominul Haque can also be devastating on their day.

However, Dhaka will surely miss the services of skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, who was injured while fielding in their final group match against Khulna on Saturday. The inspirational cricketer needed 14 stitches on his left-hand and so, will likely miss out on the remainder of the BBPL.

Later in the day, it will be an interesting battle between the tournament's top two sides -- Rajshahi and Khulna -- in the first qualifier, which will decide which of the two teams will go through to the final.

Khulna skipper Mushfiqur Rahim has led his side from the front and is the second highest run-getter with 449 runs in twelve games at an average of 74.83. First place is held by his South African teammate, Rilee Rossouw with 458 runs.

Meanwhile, Khulna's Najmul Hossain Shanto is the only local player to complete a century in the ongoing BBPL so far.

However, Khulna's opponents for the day are Andre Russell's Rajshahi, who have displayed good cricket all round.

Liton Das has been in prolific form, scoring 422 runs in eleven games. Paired with Afif Hossain, the duo have provided some blistering starts for Rajshahi throughout the tournament.

Rajshahi's mix of local talent and experienced foreigners, such as Shoaib Malik, Ravi Bopara and Russell, has helped the side emerge as a side to be reckoned with and so, one can expect an interesting battle between the sides.

'No Tests, only T20s in Pak now'

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan informed yesterday during a press conference that the board has been given directives from the government to only go for a short tour of Pakistan. After a board meeting yesterday, the board has decided that they are only willing to play the T20 series in Pakistan at the moment and cited that the present unrest in the Middle East was the reason behind this particular directive from the government.

"After we got security advice regarding the Pakistan tour, we applied for government order (GO) for the whole series. While we haven't got all the papers in our hand yet, we received a screenshot and have known of the salient points. The situation in the Middle East is different from other times. Considering the escalating situation in the Middle East, the government has told that the tour should be as short as possible. We have been given directives to come back following a very short T20 tour, and if the situation improves, then to play the Tests later," the BCB president said.

"This is what we have received and we are going to communicate the same thing to the PCB," he added.

Pakistan had previously communicated to the BCB that they wanted to prioritise the Test series and play the longer format first and reschedule the T20I series for another time.

During a four-hour long meeting, the board had discussed various issues with the central contract of players a major issue in the agenda. The central contract is being updated to accommodate recent changes, especially to include some new faces. ODI captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, who was previously in the 'A+' category, has asked the board to not include him



BCB president Nazmul Hassan (C) speaks at a board meeting on different issues at the home of cricket in Mirpur yesterday.

PHOTO: BCB

in the central contract list, according to the BCB boss.

"Mashrafe has asked me not to include him in the central contract. He will still be playing but his reason for the request was so that someone new can get a central contract. So the central contract will possibly not have Mashrafe in it," Hassan said.

Test matches are also going to be prioritised with a significant increase in match fees. The new proposal will see match fee for T20s increase to Tk 2 lakh from Tk 1.25 lakh. ODI match fee will be bumped from Tk 2 lakh to Tk 3 lakh while the match fee for Tests will rise from Tk 4 lakh to Tk 6 lakh.

The BCB also discussed 'steps to excellence' from 2020 till 2022. Hassan informed that the board approved consultant Ross Turner's proposal of a three-year training program. "Major emphasis will be on educational programs of umpires, coaches and curators, to increase their

standard, and the program will start very soon this year," Hassan informed.

Playing grounds were also discussed to reduce the scheduling pressure on the limited number of grounds present at the moment. The Sylhet ground is already undergoing changes while improving Barishal divisional stadium was discussed. An MOU has been signed with the Mymensingh Agricultural University to get two grounds ready.

National team sponsorship rights will come to an end soon and a new tender will be floated for the next two years. The BCB president also informed that three names have been shortlisted for the role of bowling coach, but no name has been finalised. Nazmul also added that he would travel to Dubai today to meet ICC Chairman Shashank Manohar.

He also informed that the BCB was planning to permanently name BPL as Bangabandhu Bangladesh Premier League (BBPL).

I'm ready to quit: Malinga

AFP, Colombo



Lasith Malinga said Sunday he was ready to stand down as Sri Lanka's Twenty20 skipper after the team's humiliating 2-0 loss to India in their latest foreign tour.

Returning from the series, the 36-year-old told reporters that Sri Lanka was just not good enough to make an impact in the 20 over game.

He said Sri Lankan bowlers weren't able to restrict opponents while the batsmen were incapable of putting up the 170 runs needed for a fighting chance in a match.

"We don't have that," Malinga said, adding that it was unfair to expect a winning performance from the team given they were ranked just ninth in the world when returned to the captaincy just over a year ago.

But he added that he was "ready to accept" his responsibility for the team's performance.

"I am ready any time. I am ready to quit," he said. Malinga led Sri Lanka to the T20 World Cup title in 2014 and remained in charge until early 2016.

His return to the top job in December 2018 was a surprise as he had lost his spot in the team after recurring injuries forced him to sit out several tournaments.

Frictions were evident in the Sri Lankan team under Malinga's leadership, the Sunday Island newspaper reported.

"There seems to be deep divisions in the side. As captain, he has also sidelined his predecessors" including Thisara Perera and Angelo Mathews, the paper said.

The first match in Guwahati was abandoned after rain, but India won the second by India by seven wickets and the third by 78 runs.



Ricky Ponting (R) and Shane Warne (L) will lead teams comprising of retired Australian cricket legends in a charity match to raise funds for people affected by the bushfires.

PHOTO: ICC

Aus legends to pad up for bushfire victims

AFP, Sydney

Cricket Australia chief Kevin Roberts said he hoped it would play a part in helping those impacted by the devastating fires that have killed at least 27 people and destroyed more than 2,000 homes.

"People the world over have seen the overwhelming images of hundreds of thousands of hectares burnt, precious lives lost, hundreds of properties destroyed and the devastating loss of wildlife as a result of the fires," he said.

Cricket Australia also injected Aus\$2 million (US\$1.38 million) into a fund to assist community cricket clubs impacted by the fires.

It is the latest initiative by sports stars to stomp up memorabilia and cash to help in the relief effort.

Cricket Australia chief Kevin Roberts said he hoped it would play a part in helping those impacted by the devastating fires that have killed at least 27 people and destroyed more than 2,000 homes.

"People the world over have seen the overwhelming images of hundreds of thousands of hectares burnt, precious lives lost, hundreds of properties destroyed and the devastating loss of wildlife as a result of the fires," he said.

Cricket Australia also injected Aus\$2 million (US\$1.38 million) into a fund to assist community cricket clubs impacted by the fires.

It is the latest initiative by sports stars to stomp up memorabilia and cash to help in the relief effort.

India is always tough to play at home: Richardson

PTI, Mumbai



Australian speedster Kane Richardson says coach Andrew McDonald "camped out" at the Wankhede Stadium on Saturday night to check on dew as his players prepared to practice with wet balls.

"Andrew McDonald camped out here last night to try and see what time the dew came in. Who knows, everyone is guessing. I think everyone is prepared," Richardson said.

"We're going to train today with some wet balls so we can practice that. We'll just wait and see on game day. It's nothing new, we have dew back home as well."

He said the Virat Kohli-led Indians were the favourites at home, calling his team the underdogs for the three-match ODI series, beginning here on Tuesday.

"I think the home team is always favourite. I think on the back of last year, I think Finchy (Aaron Finch) has said no team has ever won here back to back. It's going to be so hard,"



Australia's Adam Zampa (L) goes past teammates with a rugby ball during a training session ahead of the upcoming three-match ODI series against India in Mumbai yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Richardson said.

"India in India is always the biggest challenge and after what happened last year they will be ready for it. Confidence is up but the home team is always favourite. We are the underdogs," he said.

Last year, Australia had made a spectacular comeback to record a 3-2 win in the limited overs series in India.

The 28-year-old pacer, who has played 22 ODIs, also said playing in India, where the grounds are smaller, is the biggest challenge.

SHORT CORNER

Buttler apologises for outburst

England wicketkeeper Jos Buttler on Sunday apologised for the language that landed him with a fine during the second Test against South Africa in Cape Town.

Buttler was fined 15 percent of his match fee and given one demerit point by the International Cricket Council for an expletive-laden outburst against South Africa's Vernon Philander.

The incident was captured on the stump microphone and widely distributed on social media.

"I fully understand that as role models we have a duty to behave in a certain way," said Buttler as England started their preparations for the third Test starting at St George's Park on Thursday.

"I'd like to apologise. I understand that's not the way to behave so I'll take the slap on the wrist and move on."

He ascribed his behaviour to "heat of the moment and a bit of redness".

Asked his opinion on stump microphones staying switched on during play, Buttler said he believed there were arguments both for and against.

-- AFP

Stoinis smashes BBL record

Melbourne Stars' Marcus Stoinis scripted history as he slammed his maiden century during the team's Big Bash League (BBL) encounter against Sydney Sixers at the iconic Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) on Sunday.

Stoinis tore apart Sixers' bowling line-up and hit 13 boundaries and eight



sixes as he powered Stars to 219/1 in 20 overs.

Stoinis now holds the record for highest individual score in the BBL as he went past D'Arcy Short, who slammed a 69-ball 122* two years ago.

Overall, this is the 13th highest individual score in T20 history.

Stoinis' Indian Premier League (IPL) team Delhi Capitals were quick to take note of the right-hander's heroics.

-- AGENCIES

National school badminton back after 20 years

SPORTS REPORTER

Sheikh Russel National Shishu Kishor Parishad, in association with Bangladesh Badminton Federation, is all set to bring back the National School Badminton Competition after 20 years. The event will get underway at the Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Indoor Stadium in Paltan tomorrow.

A total of 60 schools across the country sent entries with some 200 budding shuttlers being expected to compete in four events -- boys' singles and doubles, girls' singles and doubles -- in three-day competition.

"There is no alternative but to start from grassroots through schools if we want to take badminton forward," tournament secretary and former national shuttler Ohiduzzaman Raju said at a press conference yesterday.



PADMA BRIDGE RAIL LINK PROJECT
IS BEING BUILT WITH BSRM

COUNTRY'S NO. 1 STEEL EXPERT **BSRM**
building a safer nation



GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS
RECORD HOLDER

GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS
RECOGNIZES

World's Largest VRM

SHAH CEMENT

Protesters heap pressure on Iran

Demand heads roll after admission of shooting down plane; UK envoy detained briefly for 'inciting' protests

REUTERS, Dubai

Protesters piled pressure on Iran's leadership yesterday with demands for top authorities to quit after the Iranian military admitted it had mistakenly shot down a Ukrainian airliner at a time when it had feared US strikes.

"They are lying that our enemy is America, our enemy is right here," dozens of protesters outside a university in Tehran chanted, according to video clips posted on Twitter. Scores of demonstrators were also shown gathered in other cities.

The social media posts could not be verified by Reuters. But state-affiliated media had reported protests on Saturday shortly after the Iranian military apologised for mistakenly bringing down the Ukrainian plane on Wednesday, killing all 176 aboard.

Tehran residents told Reuters police were out in force in the capital yesterday, as public anger boiled up following days of denials by the military that it was to blame, even as Canada and the United States said a missile had brought the plane down.

Riot police fired teargas at thousands of protesters in the capital on Saturday, where many had chanted "Death to

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2



Iranian students demonstrate following a tribute to the victims of Ukraine International Airlines Boeing 737 in front of the Amirkabir University in Tehran late Saturday. Police dispersed the students chanting "radical" slogans during a gathering to honour the 176 people killed when an airliner was mistakenly shot down.

PHOTO: AFP

Stability, peace for all

Hasina lands in UAE with message

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka wants peace and stability all over the world and this is something Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will emphasise during her three-day visit to the UAE where she reached last night.

She will attend "Abu Dhabi Sustainable Week", which is aimed to accelerate the world's sustainable development, and "Zayed Sustainable Awards Ceremony" at the UAE government's invitation.

She will also address global leaders and brief the Bangladesh envoys posted in the Middle Eastern countries.

Bangladesh maintains its core diplomatic motto: Friendship to all and malice towards none, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen said at a press briefing at his office yesterday. It was organised to brief the media on the visit.

The visit comes at a time when tensions have flared up in the Middle East following the killing of a

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5

Make a list of Ichhamati grabbers, polluters

HC asks govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday issued a rule asking authorities concerned of the government to prepare a list of encroachers and polluters of the Ichhamati river in Pabna and to submit it before the court in 90 days.

The court also issued a rule asking the authorities to explain in four weeks why they should not be directed to declare the 84-kilometre long river an ecologically critical area.

In the rule, the authorities have also been asked to show why they should not be directed to free the river from all encroachment and pollution by demarcating its boundary as per the Cadastral Survey report, remove all harmful

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Plastic it is not

Local company makes biodegradable packaging materials, bags from corn and maze



MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

A Bangladeshi company is producing biodegradable packaging from an unlikely source material -- corn or maze -- with the aim of offering a suitable alternative to polythene bags, which survive in soil for several hundred years and leave devastating impacts on the environment.

Expo Accessories Ltd has initially targeted Bangladesh's garment industry and supplies the bags to 30 factories, said Md Enamul Haque, its managing director.

"As our items are biodegradable and compostable, we are getting a huge response from the market," he said. "The demand for biodegradable products is increasing globally, and Bangladesh is no exception."

At present, Expo Accessories produces around 300,000 bags every day, but it has the potential to manufacture 800,000 pieces, he said.

The factory is located at Kamarpara in Gazipur.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

5 killed as bus, threewheeler collide

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Five people were killed and three others injured in a road accident on the Dhaka-Khulna Highway at Charkhankanapur area in Rajbari's Sadar upazila around 3:30pm on Sunday.

The dead were identified as Raseda Begum, 30, from Dhaka, Md Rifat, 32, from Faridpur, Md Mostafa, 45, from Rajbari and Md Mohasin, 30. A female victim was not identified immediately.

Quoting locals, Masud Parvaz, officer in-charge of Alladipur Highway Police Station, said, "The accident occurred when a Dhaka-bound bus collided head-on with a three-wheeler. Five people, all passengers of the three-wheeler, died on the spot. The three injured were taken to Goolanda Upazila health Complex and later referred to Faridpur Medical College Hospital as their conditions worsened."

Sumon Sheikh, 34, a passenger of the three-wheeler, said, "The driver of our vehicle was driving too fast. The accident occurred because he had no control over the three-wheeler."

Mehedul Hasan Akkas, an eye witness, said, "The bus driver tried his best to avoid the accident, but the three-wheeler was being driven rashly."

The OC said, "We have seized the bus but the driver of the vehicle fled the scene."

'Pre-school Picasso' shakes up art world



AFP, Berlin

Mikail Akar doesn't flinch as the cameras click around him. Born in 2012, the German artistic prodigy has spent half his life in the limelight.

With his striped jumper, goofy grin and dreams of becoming a professional footballer, Akar seems just like any other seven-year-old boy.

Yet the Cologne-born youngster is actually an expressionist whizz kid who has taken the international art scene by storm.

Dubbed the "pre-school Picasso" by German media, Akar's paintings now sell for thousands of euros (dollars) to buyers from across the world.

"At just seven years old, he is established in the art world. There is interest from Germany, France and the USA," his father and manager, Kerem Akar, told AFP.

Akar senior discovered Mikail's precocious talent by chance several years ago, when he gifted his son a canvas and some handprint paints for his

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5

DIGITAL SECURITY ACT

Singer held for 'hurting' religious sentiment

AFP, Dhaka

A Sufi folk singer has been arrested in Tangail under the Digital Security Act for allegedly hurting religious sentiment.

Shariat Sarker, 40, was detained in Mirzapur on Saturday after a cleric filed a case over comments made at a show in December, local police chief Saidur Rahman told AFP.

Clips of the show was uploaded to YouTube and a group of people, including

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5



PRAYER TIMING JANUARY 13

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 5:30	12:45	4:00	5:36	7:00
JAMAAT 6:05	1:15	4:15	5:40	7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Teen with challenges raped at home

One arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

An 18-year-old girl, who is deaf and disabled, was allegedly raped in her residence in Gokulnagar village in Pabna's Atghoria upazila on Saturday noon.

A case was filed by the victim's mother with Atghoria Police Station in this connection accusing two people, of whom one was arrested by police early yesterday. The court sent him to jail the same day.

The arrestee is a 50-year-old local man.

Officer-in-charge of the police station Md Rakibul Islam, quoting the victim's family members, said the arrestee and his associate of the same village raped the girl when she was alone in her home.

When her family members returned home, the victim managed to convey to her mother what happened and who were involved, police said.

The victim's mother first

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1



A man taking part in the Akheri Munajat of Biswa Ijtema that began on January 10. The photo was taken yesterday morning in Tongi Railway Station area. The first phase of the Ijtema ended yesterday and the second phase begins on Friday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Thousands seek divine blessings

First phase of Biswa Ijtema ends with Akheri Munajat

STAR REPORT

Hundreds of thousands of devotees yesterday raised their hands to seek divine blessings for mankind and the Muslim Ummah during Akheri Munajat of the first phase of Biswa Ijtema.

Maulana Zubair Hassan, imam of the capital's Kakrail mosque and leader of a faction of Tabligh Jamaat, administered the prayer.

The Akheri Munajat or final prayer began around 11:06am on the bank of the Turag in Tongi, Gazipur. Devotees gathered there from across the world and prayed for world peace, spiritual progress, happiness, and welfare of the Muslim community.

Many people of the country, who do not have the ability to go to Saudi Arabia for hajj due to health and financial constraints, consider the Ijtema as an alternative.

People in vehicles, on boats and rooftops in the area also raised their hands as the imam administered the prayer through loudspeakers.

PM JOINS MUNAJAT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina joined the prayers of the 55th Biswa Ijtema from the Gono Bhaban, BSS reports.

She was accompanied by her younger sister Sheikh Rehana.

RESTRICTION ON TRAFFIC

Dhaka-Mymensingh highway between Turag bridge and Bhogra was closed to traffic until 4:00pm. Several nearby roads were also closed.

The authorities operated 30 shuttle buses from Bhogra to Gazipur intersection for those who attended the Akheri Munajat.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1