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Big scammers top defaulters' list

Finance minister unveils the list in JS; 8,238 owe Tk 96,986.38 crore to public, private banks

DATE	AMOUNT OF TOTAL LOANS (in crore taka)	AMOUNT OF DEFAULT LOANS (in crore taka)	PERCENTAGE OF DEFAULT LOAN
Dec 31, 1995	31,028.53	9,942.23	32.04
Dec 31, 2008	2,08,362.04	22,481.41	10.79
Sept 30, 2019	9,69,882.22	1,16,288.31	11.99

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The number of loan defaulters stands at 8,238 who owed Tk 96,986.38 crore to various public and private banks till November last year.

Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal disclosed this at a question-answer session in parliament yesterday.

He further said Tk 25,836 crore was

recovered from different defaulters as of November.

Apart from individuals, both public and private organisations are on the list.

Many of the business organisations, which swindled huge sums from different banks in recent years, dominate the list. Bangladesh Bank unearthed their financial scams by carrying out inspections.

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina scans her e-passport at a model immigration counter while inaugurating the distribution of electronic passports in a programme held at the Bangabandhu International Convention Centre yesterday. Story on page 16.

PHOTO: PID

DEMOCRACY INDEX Bangladesh moves eight notches up

India slides 10 places

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has moved up eight notches on the Democracy Index 2019 of the Economist Intelligence Unit.

Bangladesh falls in the "hybrid regime" category, which means that substantial irregularities often prevent the elections from being free and fair, said the report by the research and analysis division of the Economist Group.

"Government pressure on opposition parties and candidates may be common. Serious

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Stop production, use of laminated posters: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday ordered the authorities concerned to immediately stop production and display of laminated city election posters to save the environment.

The court also asked the authorities to properly dispose of the laminated posters which have already been produced and displayed.

The HC also issued a rule asking the respondents to explain in four weeks why they should not be directed to stop production and display of laminated posters across the country.

Environment and forest ministry secretary, LGRD secretary, health secretary,

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

ROHINGYA GENOCIDE CASE

ICJ ruling today

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) is set to deliver an order today in response to The Gambia's seeking provisional measures to stop genocide against the Rohingyas in Myanmar's Rakhine.

The top UN court, situated in The Hague, Netherlands and comprised of 15 judges, is scheduled to start delivering the order at 3:00pm (Bangladesh time).

The Gambia filed the case with the ICJ, also known as the World Court, in November last year. The West African nation, which is predominantly Muslim, took the legal step on behalf of the Organisation for Islamic Cooperation (OIC), which has held a series of meetings to encourage its 57 members to support the case.

Lawyers from The Gambia and Myanmar took part in the hearing held on December 10-12.

During the hearing, Justice Minister and Attorney General Abubacarr Marie Tambaou led the Gambian side, while the Myanmar side was headed by the country's State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, a Nobel Peace

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How Gambia took the case to the ICJ

PORIMOL PALMA

Bangladesh and The Gambia are located nearly 11,000-kilometre away and share no significant economic or political relation. But the countries stand together for one cause, justice for the Rohingyas.

The Gambia, a small country in West Africa, is a member of Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC). After the Rohingyas started fleeing their home in August 2017 following

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

BCL men at it again, torture 4 at DU dorm

They do it after branding them as Shibir activists, hand them over to cops who later release them

DU CORRESPONDENT

Chhatra League activists of Dhaka University's Sergeant Zahurul Haq Hall tortured four students for nearly three hours before handing them to police early Tuesday.

The BCL men labelled them as Shibir activists and handed them to Shahbagh police around 3:30am in the presence a team of officials from the DU proctor's office.

Shahbagh police released the four hours later but didn't say whether they found

their involvement with Shibir.

With bruises on his face, M Mukim Chowdhury, one of the four, began a sit-in at Raju sculpture on campus around 5:00pm yesterday, saying he would not leave until getting justice.

The student of tourism department said he had never supported Shibir and had been involved with the BCL.

Sanwar Hossain of political science, Minhaz Uddin of Islamic history, and Afsar Uddin of Arabic were the others who had been beaten up.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



The much-talked-about demolition of the BGMEA building began yesterday. Inset, Housing and Public Works Minister SM Rezaul Karim inaugurating the ceremonial demolition.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN



ILLEGAL BGMEA BUILDING Demolition to take 6 months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakkha yesterday started knocking down the much-talked-about BGMEA Bhaban, which was constructed illegally over a decade ago.

Rajuk officials said the 16-storey building was partially blocking Hatirjheel's water flow in the capital and that it would be demolished in six months.

The building is also like a "tumour on the beauty of Hatirjheel", Housing and Public Works Minister SM Rezaul Karim said while inaugurating the demolition work on the ground floor.

"Gradually, all illegal structures will be removed from the Hatirjheel," he said after making a hole on the floor with a drill machine.

Rajuk took the initiative to pull down the building in October last year but failed as Messrs Four Star Enterprise, which was hired for the demolition, expressed reluctance to do the work.

The company showed the reluctance after the city development authority allowed the Bangladesh Garment

RELATED STORY ON PAGE 3

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Forensic Lab to open in Rajshahi

It is expected to expedite investigations in Rangpur and Rajshahi regions

RAFIUL ISLAM

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) is going to launch a state-of-the-art forensic laboratory in Rajshahi for examining evidences, detecting crimes and identifying criminals in Rajshahi and Rangpur regions.

The laboratory has been set up in a four-storey building at Rajshahi Police Lines and Inspector General of Police Mohammad Javed Patwary is expected to inaugurate it on February 3.

"After inauguration, evidences of cases with Rajshahi and Rangpur metropolitans and ranges police can be tested there. They do not need to come to Dhaka anymore," said Shaikh Nazmul Alam, deputy inspector general of CID's Forensic Division.

"Earlier, it took a long time to get laboratory reports and this delayed investigations, and sometimes evidence would be damaged," said another CID official, adding that the lab will expedite investigations in these regions.

Initially, a 40-member team, led by an additional superintendent of police, will be deployed at the lab.

The lab in Rajshahi is the third of its kind in the country, with the other two in Dhaka and Chattogram.

CID officials said such labs play

a significant role in examining important evidences to solve criminal cases.

But sending evidences from one division to another requires time, leading to delays. The lab in Rajshahi will reduce hassle, they said.

"The laboratory is well-equipped with highly specialised and sophisticated equipment of international standards. It is competent to carry out any chemical examination and documentation," Rumana Akhter, special superintendent of CID's Forensic Division, told The Daily Star.

The officials further said there would be a "ballistics section" to examine arms and explosives and separate sections for inspecting forgeries and counterfeit notes.

A special crime scene unit has been added to the lab to collect evidence from the scene of crime.

There will also be finger and foot print sections to match prints collected, a handwriting analysis and photography sections to accelerate investigations.

Its chemical laboratories will help uncover the presence of intoxicants in dead bodies, even those dug up from graves. It can also be used to test explosives or acid to find out how they were made, CID officials said.



Mukim Chowdhury, one of the four Dhaka University students who were beaten up by BCL men at a dormitory on Tuesday night, began a sit-in at the base of Raju Memorial Sculpture yesterday, demanding justice.

PHOTO: ASHIK ABDULLAH APU

North Korea to ban tourists over China virus

AFP, Seoul

North Korea will ban foreign tourists to protect itself against a new SARS-like virus that has claimed at least nine lives in China and sickened hundreds, a major tour operator said.

Several nations including the US have stepped up checks on airport passengers to detect the coronavirus, which first emerged in the central Chinese city of Wuhan, but a ban on tourists would be a first.

The virus has caused alarm in China and abroad because of its genetic similarities to Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), which

killed nearly 650 people across mainland China and Hong Kong in 2002-2003.

The vast majority of foreign tourists to North Korea are Chinese, and their numbers have swelled significantly in the last year as relations between Beijing and Pyongyang have warmed, generating vital foreign currency for the isolated country.

But as of Wednesday, North Korea will "temporarily close its borders to all foreign tourists as a precaution to the coronavirus", Chinese-based specialist operator Young Pioneer Tours said in a statement.

Bangladesh moves

FROM PAGE 1

weaknesses are more prevalent than in flawed democracies -- in political culture, functioning of government and political participation," reads its definition of a hybrid regime.

"Corruption tends to be widespread and the rule of law is weak. Civil society is weak. Typically, there is harassment of and pressure on journalists, and the judiciary is not independent."

Last year, Bangladesh ranked 88th with a score of 5.57 and this year it ranked 80th with 5.88.

Among the South Asian countries, only India and Sri Lanka are ahead of Bangladesh. However, India moved down 10 notches on the index this year.

The Democracy Index provides a snapshot of the state of democracy worldwide in 165 independent states and two territories, according to the intelligence unit.

It is based on electoral process and pluralism, functioning of government, political participation, political culture and civil liberties.

Norway topped the index, with a score of 9.87, while North Korea was at the bottom, with a score of 1.08. China is now 153rd scoring 2.26.

The Index, published on the website of Economist Intelligence Unit yesterday, described 2019 as a "tumultuous year" for Asian

COUNTRY	RANK
Bangladesh	80
India	51
Nepal	92
Sri Lanka	69
Pakistan	108
Bhutan	91
China	153
USA	25
Russia	134

democracies. The biggest change occurred in Thailand, which moved up 38 notches, while introduction of a law against "fake news" in Singapore affected its score in civil liberties.

Singapore, Hong Kong and India have all dropped, with violent protests and threats to civil liberties.

"The 2019 result is even worse than that recorded in 2010, in the wake of the global economic and financial crisis."

The index reveals that despite a growing disillusionment with formal political institutions, political participation is on the rise in almost every region around the world, with the population being spurred into political action, the research group said.

Stop production

FROM PAGE 1

Election Commission and the chief executive officers of Dhaka north and south city corporations have been made respondents to the rule.

The High Court bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman issued a suo moto (voluntary) move in the wake of a report published in The Daily Star yesterday under the headline "Laminated posters in city polls: A big threat to the environment".

Supreme Court lawyer Barrister Manoj Kumar Bhowmick placed the news report before the HC bench for necessary order.

He told the court that laminated posters are harmful to the environment and public health. Therefore, the production and display of such posters need to be stopped immediately.

The elections to two Dhaka city corporations are scheduled to be held on February 1. Ahead of the polls, candidates are conducting door-to-door campaigns and hanging a huge number of posters in their respective areas.

About 140 mayor and councillor candidates out of total 745 in their disclosure of election expenditures mentioned that they would print

nearly 50 lakh posters.

Almost a week before the city polls campaign began, the HC directed the authorities concerned to ban single-use plastic products in coastal areas, hotels, motels and restaurants across the country in one year as those are hazardous to health and environment.

The plastic products include drinking straws, cotton buds, cigarette butts, food packaging, food containers, bottles, plates, plastic cutlery and plastic bags.

The HC bench of Justice Moyeenul Islam Chowdhury and Justice Khandaker Dilruzzaman came up with the order following a writ petition jointly filed by 11 rights organisations, including Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela), seeking necessary order.

The rights organisations submitted the writ petition as a public interest litigation on December 17 last year, mentioning the hazardous effects of plastic -- particularly single-use plastics -- on ecology, aquatic and marine life, soil fertility, agricultural production, human health and safety.

According to the Department of Environment (DoE), the country generates around 3,000 tonnes of plastic waste every day.

BCL men at it again, torture 4 at DU dorm

FROM PAGE 1

The event harks back to the killing of Buet student Abrar Fahad by BCL activists at a dorm on October 7 last year. The BCL activists labelled him as a Shibir man before torturing him to death.

Abul Hossain, officer-in-charge of Shabbagh Police Station, said the students were handed over to their guardians around 2:30pm yesterday.

However, Sanwar and Afsar's fathers told this newspaper late last night that they didn't know where their sons were and their phones had been switched off.

Minhaz told The Daily Star that he was at a relative's house in the capital.

Narrating the event, Mukim said, "Around 11:15pm on Monday, Chhatra League hall unit Vice-president Anwar Hossen called me and asked me to go to the hall's guestroom. After reaching there, I saw hall union Vice-president Saifullah Abbasi Ananta, General Secretary Toufikul Islam, hall BCL Joint General Secretary Amir Hamja and Anwar Hossain.

"Since another group of students were celebrating someone's birthday, the Chhatra League leaders took me to the hall union office.

"Then they called Sanwar and him to come to the union office. After Sanwar reached there, Anwar showed us screenshots of a Messenger conversation and said that it was proof that we were Shibir activists.

"At one stage, Amir Hamja started to punch me and kick me, saying that I was a Shibir activist. After a while, I realised

that the screenshots were fake.

"They kept asking us to admit we were Shibir activists. Hall union VP Abbasi then started beating us up with a hammer."

Mukim alleged that around 12:30am, the BCL leaders took them to the roof of the dorm where former BCL central unit member Mahfuzur Rahman Emon, Amir Hamja, Abbasi, and hall BCL Vice-president Kamal Uddin Rana struck them with wires and cricket stumps.

The BCL men mainly struck their on knee and hands, Mukim said.

"Around 1:30am, they took me to the guest room again and I saw Minhaz Uddin and Afsar Uddin come to the guest room after being called by the leaders.

"They continued to strike me and Sanwar up and started beating up Minhaz and Afsar as well," Mukim said.

He alleged that Prof Billal Hossain, house tutor of the hall, came to the guest room around 2:30am and didn't do anything to stop the beating.

The house tutor then informed the proctor's office and police.

Prof Billal could not be reached for comment.

Shabbagh police took Sanwar and Mukim to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital, and later to the police station.

Talking to this correspondent, Minhaz gave a similar account of the events.

Wishing anonymity, several BCL leaders, who were present at the scene, admitted they had beaten up the four students.

Big scammers top defaulters' list

FROM PAGE 1

These firms are largely responsible for the rise in defaulted loans in the banking sector.

Rimex Footwear Ltd, Crescent Leather Products Ltd and Rupali Composite Leatherwear Ltd -- all sister concerns of the Crescent Group -- are the top three loan defaulters, shows the list unveiled by Kamal.

The three firms, which took major portions of the loans from the Janata Bank, didn't pay back any money to the state-run bank.

According to Bangladesh Bank, the Crescent Group's total loan from Janata stands around Tk 4,000 crore. The state-run bank disbursed the loans, sidestepping the banking rules and regulations.

Three companies of AnonTex -- Galaxy Sweater and Yarn Dyeing, Simran Composite and AnonTex Knit Tex -- are also on the list of loan defaulters.

The group swindled more than Tk 5,500 crore from Janata between 2007 and 2014.

The list includes Benetex Industries, a concern of Buildtrade Group; Bismillah Towels, a concern of Bismillah Group; and Hallmark Design Wear, a company of Hallmark Group.

Buildtrade Group siphoned off more than Tk 3,000 crore from both public and private banks, according to BB data.

Three non-bank financial institutions (NBFI) have also become defaulters as they failed to pay back bank loans taken for running business.

They are Bangladesh Industrial Finance Company, International Leasing and Financial Service, and Peoples Leasing and Finance Services.

The BB has already started the process of liquidating one of the three NBFI -- Peoples Leasing and Finance Services -- for its failure to repay the depositors' money.

The central bank had earlier unearthed a number of financial scams at the NBFI.

Among the government entities, the food ministry's defaulted loan is Tk 26.46 crore.

Bangladesh Bank statistics show that the defaulted loans totalled Tk 1,16,288 crore in September last year.

According to Kamal's statement in the House, the amount fell by Tk 19,302 crore in the following two months.

Bank officials said the defaulted loans dropped due to relaxed loan rescheduling facilities offered by the government in September last year.

BANK DIRECTORS' LOANS

As of September last year, directors of various banks took loans amounting to Tk 173,230.89 crore from their own as well as other banks, said the finance minister.

The amount is around 12 percent of the total outstanding loans, according to him.

Directors of 25 banks have taken loans of Tk 1,614.77 crore from their banks -- around 0.166 percent of the outstanding loans of the banks.

Bank directors also took Tk 171,616 crore from 55 other banks. The amount is 11.21 percent of their total loans.

ICJ ruling today

FROM PAGE 1

Prize laureate who has been widely criticised for her role in the Rohingya crisis.

The Gambia argued that Myanmar has been committing genocide against the Rohingya Muslim population living in Rakhine state. To prove its case, it cited reports by the UN Fact-Finding Mission and different global rights bodies.

About 750,000 Rohingyas fled a brutal military campaign since August 2017 and took shelter in Bangladesh. They joined some 300,000 others who had fled previous waves of violence from Rakhine, where they have been denied citizenship since the 1970s and are deprived of basic rights like health and education, and freedom of movement.

More than 24,000 Rohingyas have been killed by Myanmar's state forces since August 2017, according to a report by the Ontario International Development Agency, which involved researchers and organisations from Canada, Australia, Bangladesh, Norway and the Philippines.

More than 34,000 people were thrown into fire and more than 114,000 others were beaten up, the report said.

It also said 17,718 Rohingya women and girls were raped since the Myanmar army and police systematically targeted the world's most persecuted group.

The UN termed it a classic example of ethnic cleansing, while an independent UN Fact-Finding Mission described the violence as having genocidal intent and demanded probing the senior military officers.

Though the UN repeatedly adopted resolutions condemning the atrocities by Myanmar, the UN Security Council could take no concrete actions against Myanmar to stop the genocide mainly due to opposition from the country's close allies -- China and Russia.

Bangladesh, influenced by China and India, signed a bilateral deal with Myanmar for the Rohingya repatriation, but the refugees refused to go back to Rakhine, saying the situation there were not conducive to their return and that there was no guarantee of safety and citizenship.

The Gambian Justice Minister Tambaou, who worked for years as a lawyer at the UN tribunal that dealt with the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, assumed a position of leadership in the lawsuit because of his special expertise.

Both The Gambia and Myanmar are signatories to the UN's Genocide Convention.

Gambia's filing the case marks the first time a country without any direct connection to alleged crimes has used its membership in the Genocide Convention to bring a case before the ICJ.

Earlier, the International Criminal Court began an investigation into the rights violation against the Rohingyas by Myanmar. The ICC holds accountable the individuals, while the ICJ holds accountable the state as a member of the UN Genocide Convention.

During the hearing, The Gambia argued that Myanmar had a state policy of eliminating the Rohingyas. Denial of citizenship, Rohingya ethnicity, restrictions on freedom of movement, marriage, health, education, and livelihood since 1970s are all part of that genocidal policy.

Further arguing that promoting the narratives of hatred, mass killings, rape and other forms of sexual violence, burning Rohingya villages in 2016 and 2017 bear the testimony of genocide, The Gambia requested the ICJ to ensure provisional measures to stop the ongoing genocide against the Rohingyas.

Lawyers for The Gambia also requested that Myanmar shall not destroy or render inaccessible any evidence related to the events described in the application.

Myanmar, on the other hand, outright denied the allegations of genocide and ethnic cleansing, though it said its army used disproportionate force and committed crimes against the civilians during clearance operations in Rakhine since August 2017.

Talking to The Daily Star, Nay San Lwin, media coordinator at the Free Rohingya Coalition, a global platform of the Rohingyas, said they were expecting the ICJ to order provisional measures to stop the genocide.

"We expect it because genocide has happened over the years against us. It still continues. It must stop and the evidences of genocide must be protected for holding Myanmar accountable," he said over phone from Germany, where he lives.

In its analysis, the Human Rights Watch (HRW) said Myanmar is legally bound to comply with the order, if given by the ICJ.

Under article 41(2) of the ICJ Statute, the court's provisional measures are automatically sent to the UN Security Council. Such an order would increase pressure on the council to take concrete actions in Myanmar, including through a binding resolution to address some of the indicators of genocidal intent.

Asked what would happen if China and Russia used their veto at the UN Security Council, Nay San Lwin said he expects that not to happen.

"If it happens, it means there will be no future for the Rohingyas as well as for the global justice and humanity. But we hope justice will be done."

How Gambia took the case to the ICJ

FROM PAGE 1

and the world is failing to protect vulnerable people 25 years later," he added.

Later, at the OIC conference, he proposed formation of an Ad Hoc Ministerial Committee on Accountability for Crime Against Rohingya.

Bangladesh, which was seeking a permanent solution to the crisis, and other countries of the 57-member body, strongly supported it.

Eventually, that OIC committee supported Tambaou, whose leadership eventually got the Rohingya genocide case to the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

ICJ is scheduled to issue a ruling today on the case that seeks provisional measures to stop the ongoing genocide in the Rakhine state of Myanmar and hold accountable the perpetrators.

The Rohingyas, for the first time, have found a hope of justice.

Many wondered how The Gambia, a low-income country of agrarian economy trying to recover from an authoritarian regime of Yahya Jammeh, comes to lodge such a case.

"Well, our experiences in The Gambia is what has actually informed the position of the government of The Gambia to speak out against the

oppression of others, wherever it occurs around the world," said Tambaou.

The fact that no one helped the Gambians, no one put pressure on President Jammeh to stop his atrocities has led them to go through a very difficult two-decade period, he said.

"We don't want others to feel our pain or our fate. We know how it feels like to be unable to tell your story to the world, to be unable to share your pain with others in the hope that they will help. We know what it feels like to be helpless. We have lived through it for over two decades, and we don't want others to suffer the same fate," he said.

Shireen Huq, co-convener of Bangladesh Civil Society Platform on Justice and Accountability for the Rohingyas, who was present at the ICJ hearing on the Rohingya case in December, said during the visit to Rohingya camp in 2018, Tambaou could smell genocide on the Rohingyas.

"The Gambia has actually created a giant example of standing beside the persecuted minority. It is a struggle for global justice and humanity," she told The Daily Star.

The Netherlands, Canada and the UK have supported the case. It is time for others to follow the case, she added.

'A win for the environment'

Experts say about demolition of BGMEA building

HELEMUL ALAM

Environmentalists yesterday termed the demolition of the much-talked-about BGMEA building a symbol of action against illegal structures that were constructed filling waterbodies or open spaces.

"This demolition will remain an example against illegal construction and filling up waterbodies," said Syeda Rizwana Hasan, chief executive of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela).

Rizwana said she hopes the government will take highest safety measures during its demolition work, so that safety of workers are ensured.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



SYMBOLS MATTER! With a boat (election symbol of Awami League) mounted on a push cart, supporters of party candidate for DSCC polls Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh distribute leaflets in New Market area yesterday. Inset, holding sheaves of paddy (BNP's electoral symbol) Ishraque Hossain campaigns in Kamrangirchar.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN, COLLECTED

DHAKA CITY POLLS 2020

Businessmen rule the race

Only four out of 745 councillor candidates list politics as their profession on affidavits

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

Businesspersons now find their representation in local government bodies more "lucrative" than before, as documents show about 67.5 percent of total councillor candidates are involved in business.

Ironically, only four candidates are politicians.

Of the 745 individuals contesting in 129 wards of Dhaka, 504 councillor candidates have mentioned their profession as business, reveals affidavits of the contenders submitted to the Election Commission (EC) recently.

Meanwhile, voters are also skeptical about the issue.

"Such involvement [of businessmen] creates doubt whether they will prioritise public interest," said Khandaker Enamul Haque, a banker.

Mahmudul Hasan, a stationary shop owner in Motijheel, said "Election is a business too! They [contenders] are investing now to reap benefits later."

PROFESSION			
Business	504	Lawyer	13
Homemaker	79	Landlord	10
Service	42	Politician	4
Social service	14	Others	79

EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION			
Masters	55	8th, 5th grade	91
Bachelor	84	Self-educated	205
HSC	87	Literate	32
SSC	116	Others	75

In 2015, a total of 848 councillor candidates had contested in 93 wards for general and reserve posts.

Of them, 572 councilors had disclosed their profession as business in their affidavits.

Such widespread involvement of

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Country enters e-passport era

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh yesterday became the first country in South Asia to enter the era of electronic passports.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina formally unveiled the e-passport and launched the automated border control management programme at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC) in the capital.

The Department of Immigration and Passport will start issuing the passports from regional passport offices in the capital's Uttara and Jatrabari, and from divisional passport and visa office in Agargaon, according to officials.

"General people will be able to apply for the E-Passport from today (Thursday)," e-Passport Project Director Brig Gen Saidur Rahman Khan told The Daily Star yesterday.

General passports will be delivered in 15 days, while urgent passports will be delivered in seven days. In case of re-issue, applicants will get their passports within two days, said the project director.

"Initially, we will start delivering e-passports on a limited scale, and it will be started across the country gradually," he added.

Machine-readable passports will remain valid even after the e-passport inauguration, but will be phased out gradually, according to DIP officials.

TWO TYPES OF E-PASSPORTS

There will be two types of e-passports -- one with 48 pages and another with 64 pages, and their tenure will be five

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

'Nothing to do with baul songs' Contribute to building Digital Bangladesh

Shariat Sarkar was arrested for a crime, PM tells House

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said baul singer Shariat Sarkar was arrested for his involvement in crime, and it has nothing to do with baul songs.

"As he was arrested, surely he was involved in some crime, or he was arrested as a crime was committed," she said in reply to a supplementary question from lawmaker Hasanul Huq Inu during the PM's question-answer session.

The premier said there is nothing wrong in singing baul songs.

"But if an individual baul singer gets involved in any crime, the law will take its own course. It has no relationship with the songs," she added.

Sheikh Hasina also counter-questioned if all baul singers are above the law, or whether it can be guaranteed that they would never commit any crime.

She advised baul singers not to do anything that put baul songs, which is a world heritage, under question.

The premier, however, said that if anyone commits any offence against baul singers, the government must take punitive actions against the culprits.

"Cutting off someone's hair or barring performance of songs is not acceptable at all," she said.

Police arrested Shariat Sarkar (40), a well-known baul artiste, in a case filed under the Digital Security Act on January 11 for allegedly making comments that hurt "religious sentiments."

During a concert in December, he allegedly criticised Muslim clerics who oppose singing, and challenged anyone to prove that music is forbidden in Islamic scripture.

One Mohammad Faridul Islam filed the case with Mirzapur Police Station on January 9, accusing Shariat of making the comments.

TOUGHER ACTIONS AGAINST CREATING ARTIFICIAL CRISIS OF ESSENTIALS

The prime minister also warned of tougher actions if someone is involved in creating artificial crisis of essential commodities in the market.

In reply to a query from Awami League MP Md Ebadul Karim (Brahmanbaria-5), the premier said some greedy profit-mongers often try to make undue profits and destabilise market by creating artificial crisis of essentials.

"Our government is well aware of this," she said.

Hasina, also the leader of the House, said, the mobile court drives are being carried out regularly to check prices of essentials, while district administrations in coordination with traders' associations are monitoring markets.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



Pedestrians in Dhanmondi regularly walk beside a dug up part of Satmasjid Road, where one small misstep may result in an accident. City corporation is working to improve the utility lines but have not put barricades to keep everyone safe. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Publish ad asking SK Sinha to appear on Feb 20

Dhaka court directs authorities

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday directed authorities concerned of the government to publish advertisements in two national dailies asking former chief justice Surendra Kumar Sinha and 10 others to appear before it on February 20 in a graft case.

After getting reports on execution of arrest warrant, Judge KM Emrul Kayesh of the Senior Special Judge's Court of Dhaka passed the order.

On January 5, the same court issued arrest warrants against all the accused in the case, as they were shown "fugitives" in the charge-sheets.

The court also took cognisance of the charges against them in the case filed for allegedly misappropriating and laundering about Tk 4 crore from Farmers Bank in 2016.

On December 4 last year, Anti-Corruption Commission pressed charges against Sinha and 10 others.

The other accused are: the bank's former managing director AKM Shamim; Senior Executive Vice-President and former head of Credit Division Gazi Salahuddin; First Vice-President of Credit Division Swapan Kumar Roy; First Vice-President Shafiuddin Askary; former chairman of the bank's audit committee Mahbubul Haque Chisty and Vice-President Lutful Haque.

One Shahjahan of Tangail's Sreehoripur village, Ranjit Chandra Saha of the district's Jodunathpur village, Sinha's wife Santri Roy and nephew Niranjana Chandra Saha were also made accused.

ACC in October last year said it found evidence of fraud involving transactions of Tk 4 crore borrowed with fake documents by two businessmen, Shahjahan and Niranjana, from the bank. It said the money was deposited to Sinha's account.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Pyramid scheme busted in Uttara

They lured jobseekers with false promises: Rab

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion on Tuesday raided a company in Uttara, which was stealing money from job-seekers through a pyramid scheme.

A pyramid scheme is a business model that recruits members via a promise of payments or services for enrolling others into the scheme, rather than supplying investment or sale of products.

Rab said the fraud gang has embezzled around Tk 1.03 crore through this scheme. Thirty people of the company were arrested.

The elite force raided Together Electric and Electronics Ltd, and found some 203 victims at the company's training centre. "This company lures unemployed youth, then takes money from them with the promise of a month-long training session and accommodation," said Mohammad Sajedul Islam Sajal, senior assistant director of Rab-4.

4 hurt in

FROM PAGE 5
(CFC) on the university's Central Field premises at 4pm, said police.
Activists of CFC group rushed to Suhrawardy Hall and beat up three activists of Bijoy group and fled the scene, police and BCL sources said. Later, both groups -- armed with weapons -- took position at Suhrawardy and Shahjalal halls respectively, triggering a chase and counter-chase.
Meanwhile, Bijoy group called an indefinite strike on the campus last night, demanding punishment of the attackers and declared CU unit BCL President Rejaul Haque Rubel persona non grata on campus.
Mohammad Ilias, a leader of Bijoy group blamed Rubel for the clash.
CU unit BCL President Rejaul Haque Rubel could not be reached over phone despite repeated attempts.
Proctor Prof SM Monirul Islam said they are closely observing the situation and have deployed additional police forces.



Chattoogram City Corporation, in a drive led by an executive magistrate, knocked down a number of makeshift shops in Hasmat Ullah Munsek Lane of the port city's Chawk Bazar area yesterday. PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Nine-year-old

FROM PAGE 5
collided on Bangabandhu Bridge in the morning, leaving two injured.
Kazi Aiubur Rahman, OC of Bangabandhu Bridge East Police Station, said the injured were rushed to Tangail General Hospital and Sirajganj Sadar Hospital.
Traffic movement on the bridge was halted till 9am.
In Rajbari, a youth was killed on the spot after a three-wheeler ran over his motorbike at Kolkoliya area of Kalukhali upazila around 10:30am yesterday, said police, quoting locals.
The deceased is Shimul Mondal (25). Police seized the three-wheeler but its driver fled the scene.
In Sylhet, Imtiaz Mahub Mirza (20) was killed and two were injured after a truck hit their motorbike at Chowhatta around 2:30am yesterday.
The three were rushed to Osmani Medical College Hospital, where doctors declared Imtiaz dead.

Focus must be

FROM PAGE 5
where the poor are benefiting from it. Asked about inequality, he said it's a challenge for many countries.
"It's not only absolute poverty, but also relative poverty that can destabilise a society. Even if people are better off, if others are much better off, that gives rise to instability in a society," said Sager, a former ambassador to the US.
"That's certainly a challenge. Bangladesh has to address it," he added.
About corruption, Sager said corruption anywhere is a big challenge, as it disrupts trust in the institutions.
"When you don't have trust in institutions, democracy cannot work because people become cynical, feel cheated. They have a feeling that their voice doesn't count, their grievances are not heard and not everybody is treated the same way."
"So, corruption in any country, in any form should be addressed and eradicated."
Speaking on the Rohingya crisis, Sager said there are various efforts at different levels, but they are not moving fast enough. Efforts for repatriation have to be strengthened, he added.
Swiss diplomat Christine Schraner Burgener, who is UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy on Myanmar, is working towards that end, he said.
"We -- all of us, the international community -- have to recognise that the Rohingyas are here now. They need to be taken care of," he said.
"Switzerland has been a reliable partner of Bangladesh -- be it in political, economic or development aspects."
"No matter what the challenges are in the future, also in connection to the transition of Bangladesh to a middle-income country, Switzerland will stand by Bangladesh," Sager said.

A win for the

FROM PAGE 3
The government will also have to take necessary measures so that the environment of adjoining areas is protected, she said.
Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (Rajuk) -- the capital's development authority -- finally began demolition of the illegal Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) building yesterday, after around a decade of its construction.
Abu Naser Khan, chairman of Poribesh Bachao Andolon, said it is a victory of the movement to save the environment.
This will send a message to encroachers that they will not remain safe and illegal structures may come under demolition even after decades, he said.
Sharif Jamil, general secretary of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (Bapa), said the BGMEA building was "a symbol of disgrace" for two major political party leaders, as one of them had given approval, and another inaugurated it.
But it is also an example of removing the stigma through its demolition, he said.
"We hope that the government will take steps at the beginning of construction of

illegal structures, so that they do not have to take steps to demolish those later," he said.
Urging the government to bring encroachers to book, Sharif said those who remain involved with encroachment and construction of illegal buildings do not face any punishment.
Iqbal Habib, joint secretary of Bapa, said there is a concern regarding the method being used to demolish the building.
The authorities did not take the alternative of controlled demolition concept, which would protect biodiversity and the environment, he said.
Iqbal said the chances of waterlogging and traffic congestion and risks relating to workers' safety have increased due to the manual demolition method.
He, however, added that waterlogging of a vast area on western side of Hatiirheel will be solved after the demolition.
He said it will also be possible to make this side a perfect extension of Hatiirheel through introducing water bus. "It is going to be a milestone in the process of our resistance against illegal encroachment of waterbodies or open spaces," Habib said.

Nothing to do with

FROM PAGE 3
She said a process is going on to control markets through appointing sources and intelligence surveillance across the country.
GOVT DETERMINED TO ESTABLISH RULE OF LAW
In reply to a query from AL lawmaker Mahfuzur Rahman, the premier said the current government is determined to establish the rule of law.
"The government has taken programmes to establish the rule of law through appropriate reforms of law and its execution, to provide security to lives and property of the people," she said.
In the scripted answer, the PM said the AL government has been able to give people the belief that every citizen is equal in the eye of law, and no criminal can escape after committing a crime.
Replying to a query from AL MP Shahiduzzaman Sarker, the PM informed the House that Bangladesh has achieved third position in producing vegetable and fish, fourth position in producing rice, seventh position in producing mango and eighth position in producing potato and guava.
At the question-answer session, the premier also replied to lawmakers on various issues, including her government's steps in combating climate change impact, improving the country's airports and ensuring fair price for farmers for their crops.

Businessmen rule the race

FROM PAGE 3
businessmen in politics was also noticeable in the 11th parliamentary elections -- where around 62 percent of the contestants were businessmen.
Interestingly, unemployed and students are also in the candidates' list. Seventy-nine candidates are homemakers.
EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS
Of the 504 businessmen contesting in the upcoming Dhaka city corporation polls, 132 are self-educated and 79 have passed SSC exams.
On the other hand, nearly 205 councillor candidates mentioned that they are self-educated and more than 150 aspirants have studied up to secondary and higher secondary levels.
Over 90 candidates have obtained bachelor and master's degrees, according to their affidavits.
According to political analysts, major political parties' dependency on businessmen has effectively turned politics itself into business.
Shushashoner Jonno Nagorik (Shujan) said similar situation also prevailed in other city corporation elections in recent times.
In the 2018 Gazipur City Corporation election, 335 contenders out of 584 were

businessmen.
In addition, out of the 159 recently-elected mayors and councillors in the four city corporations, 103 are involved in business.
Dilip Kumar Sarker, central coordinator of Shujan, said this raises question whether these businessperson-politicians will devote themselves for the betterment of people.
Addressing a rally on October 12, 2015, President Abdul Hamid also criticised this trend.
"It's a matter of regret that today's politics has gone into the pockets of businessmen... We have to get rid of it," the president had said.
Lawyers, businesspersons and farmers were the three most common occupations of the lawmakers elected to the country's first parliament in 1973.
Of the MPs in that parliament, 31 percent were lawyers and only 18 percent were businessmen.
However, in the fifth parliament, constituted through the election of 1991, businessmen outnumbered lawyers, with 38 percent being businessmen and 15 percent lawyers.
In the 2008 polls, 57 percent of the lawmakers elected were businessmen, which rose to 59 percent by 2014.

Publish ad asking SK Sinha

FROM PAGE 3
On July 10, the ACC filed a case against Sinha and 10 others for their alleged involvement with misappropriating and laundering the money.
CASE BY NAZMUL HUDA
The same court yesterday discharged SK Sinha after accepting the final report of a

graft case filed against him by former BNP minister Barrister Nazmul Huda.
On January 14, ACC submitted the report relieving Sinha as they did not find evidence of graft allegation against him.
On September 27 last year, Nazmul filed the case with Shahbagh Police Station alleging that Sinha demanded bribe from him.

Country enters

FROM PAGE 3
five years or 10 years.
Separate fees have been set for two types of passports. For general application for 48-page five-year validity passport, the fee will be Tk 3,500 and urgent fee Tk 5,000. For 10-year validity, the fee will be Tk 5,500 for general and Tk 7,000 for urgent.
The fees will be Tk 5,500 and Tk 7,000 respectively for general application for 64-page five-year validity passports. The fees will jump to Tk 7,500 and Tk 9,000 respectively for 10-year validity for 64-page passport.
If the passport is required most urgently within two days, the fees will be Tk 9,000 for 10-year validity for 48-page passport, and Tk 12,000 for 64-page passport. The fees will be Tk 7,500 and Tk 10,500 for 48-page passports.
An additional 15 percent vat will be applicable with the fees, the fees chart added.
Earlier, general application fees for machine-readable passports for five-year validity was Tk 3,450, and emergency fees was Tk 6,900 including vat.
People living abroad will also get their e-passports within the same delivery period, but they will not be eligible for the most urgent facilities even for re-issue service, said official.
The government has set separate fees for Bangladesh missions abroad, starting from US\$30 to highest \$225, depending on profession and category of application. The passport fees could be paid directly using debit and credit cards.
Regarding the 10-year validity, officials said applicants below 18 years of age or over 65, will not get the 10-year validity e-passport.
E-passport application can be submitted online or manually after downloading the PDF form, and no one needs to attach any image, said officials, adding that applicants will not need to attest any documents to submit with the application.

REGARDING THE 10-YEAR VALIDITY, OFFICIALS SAID APPLICANTS BELOW 18 YEARS OF AGE OR OVER 65, WILL NOT GET THE 10-YEAR VALIDITY E-PASSPORT.
E-PASSPORT APPLICATION CAN BE SUBMITTED ONLINE OR MANUALLY AFTER DOWNLOADING THE PDF FORM, AND NO ONE NEEDS TO ATTACH ANY IMAGE, SAID OFFICIALS, ADDING THAT APPLICANTS WILL NOT NEED TO ATTEST ANY DOCUMENTS TO SUBMIT WITH THE APPLICATION.
FACIAL RECOGNITION IN 30 SECONDS
Biographical and biometric information of passport holders will remain safe in the e-passport chip. The information of passport holders and facial recognition will be verified automatically within 30 seconds through digital signature, according to officials.
With the e-passport launch, 50 eGates will also be installed at 27 immigration check posts at international airports and land ports. The eGates are automated self-service barriers which use the data stored in the chip in biometric passports to verify identity.
Primarily, diplomatic and official passport holders, CIPs (Commercially Important Persons), tax card holders, and Bangladeshi pilot and crew members will be able to use the eGates.
According to officials, the e-passport will not have two information pages like the MRP Passport. Their will be a polymer chip and antenna on the front page with the passport holders name basic information.
There will be also machine-readable option on the passports, so that immigration officers can complete the immigration process by scanning the page if no eGates are available.

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e-Tender Notice

e-Tender is invited in the e-GP Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of the following work, details are given below:

S/N	Tender ID	Procurement title	Schedule price in BDT	Tender security in BDT	Tender last selling (date & time)	Tender closing & opening (date & time)	Procurement method
1.	415292 (Pur. 059)	Supply, installation, Testing & Commissioning of Internal Floating Roof including Calibration of POL Storage Tank No. 07 at ML, Chattogram.	2,500.00	1,75,000.00	16 February, 2020, 17:00 hrs.	17 February, 2020, 15:00 hrs.	OSTETM

This is an online tender where only e-Tenders will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>).

Request for Proposal (RFP)

International Labour Organization (ILO) Dhaka invites proposals from interested Firm/Organization for Technical Assistance in Greening Seven (7) Model TVET Institutions and Two (2) Centre for Skills Excellence. The bidding documents can be downloaded from the ILO Dhaka website under Procurement Notices at http://www.ilo.org/dhaka/WCMS_367536/lang-en/index.htm

The deadline for submission of proposal is **Wednesday, February 12, 2020, by 04:30 PM (BST time)** at ILO CO for Bangladesh, PPD Secretariat Office Complex, 2nd floor, Block-F, Plot-17/B&C, Agargaon Administrative Zone, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207, Bangladesh.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Upazila Engineer
Sarail, District: Brahmanbaria
www.lged.gov.bd

উন্নয়নের পথতন্ত্র
শেখ হাসিনার মূলমন্ত্র

Memo: 46.02.1294.0000.902.02.20-42 Date: 21-01-2020

e-Tender Notice No. 02/2019-2020 (OTM)

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal for the procurement of following works:

Tender ID	Description of works	Package No.	Tender document last selling/ downloading date and time	Tender/proposal security submission date and time
410420	Construction of additional classroom Bhushar GPS under PEDP4	e-Tender/PEDP4/BRB/SAR/2019-20/W2.0167	13-02-2020 11:45am	13-02-2020 1:00pm
412084	Construction of boundary wall including gate of Bariura GPS under PEDP4	e-Tender/PEDP4/BRB/SAR/2019-20/W14.72	13-02-2020 11:45am	13-02-2020 1:00pm

This is an online OTM tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees/tender security have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help ask (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Most. Nilufa Yesmin
Upazila Engineer
Sarail, Brahmanbaria
e-mail: ue.sarail@lged.gov.bd

Land Sale Seven Acres of land at Teknaf and one Acre at Yanani both on Marine Drive Cox's Bazar will be sold. Contact: 01711-821369	BUILDING & LAND SALE (Suitable for Factory/Hospital/University) Two Building (each 6 Storied @ 90,000sqft) total 1,80,000sqft, Land 5.50 bigha with Electricity /Gas/Water Facility. Both Building Accord Approved with Full Compliance. Presently Garments Factory running at Dhaka Road, Vogra before Gazipur Chowrasta. Contact: 01711-525563, email-1960skt@gmail.com
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Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Custom House, Benapole
Jashore

X-ray Generator for Heavy Luggage Scanning Machine
Tender No. 01/2019-2020

1	Ministry/Division	Internal Resources Division, Ministry of Finance.		
2	Agency	Custom House, Benapole, Jashore.		
3	Procuring entity name	Commissioner of Customs, Custom House, Benapole, Jashore.		
4	Procuring entity district	Jashore.		
5	Invitation for	Procurement of 01 (one) unit X-ray Generator for Heavy Luggage Scanning Machine (Model CX100100TI) with all standard accessories and 01 (one) year maintenance service @FOC for the delivered X-ray Generator at Customs House, Benapole.		
6	Invitation Ref. No.	File No. 1(12)/G.L. & Purto/Baggage Scanning/Bena/2015/Part-1/2019/989.		
7	Date	22/01/2020.		
8	Procurement method	Open tendering method (OTM).		
9	Budget and source of fund	Revenue Budget of GOB.		
10	Tender package name	Procurement of 01 (one) unit X-ray Generator for Heavy Luggage Scanning Machine (Model CX100100TI) with all standard accessories and 01 (one) year maintenance service @FOC for the delivered X-ray Generator at Customs House, Benapole.		
11	Tender publication date	22/01/2020.		
12	Schedule selling last date	10/02/2020 (during office hour).		
13	Tender submitting date and time	11/02/2020 (up to 12.00 Noon).		
14	Tender opening date and time	11/02/2020 at 12.30pm.		
15	Name & address of the office	Custom House, Benapole, Jashore.		
	- Selling tender document	Custom House, Benapole, Jashore.		
	- Receiving tender document	Custom House, Benapole, Jashore.		
	- Opening tender document	Custom House, Benapole, Jashore.		
16	Eligibility of tenderer	Tenderer must have legal, financial, professional and technical capacity to meet the requirements of this tender and must fulfill the obligations of all tax requirements. Other requirements are stated in the tender document.		
17	Brief description of goods	Procurement of 01 (one) unit X-ray Generator for Heavy Luggage Scanning Machine (Model CX100100TI) with all standard accessories and 01 (one) year maintenance service @FOC for the delivered X-ray Generator at Customs House, Benapole.		
18	Brief description of related services	As mentioned in the tender document/schedule.		
19	Price of tender document (Tk)	Tk 1,000/- (one thousand) in Treasury Challan with an official letter addressing Commissioner, Custom House, Benapole, Jashore (non-refundable).		
20	Identification of goods	Location	Tender security amount (Tk)	Completion time in days
	Procurement of 01 (one) unit X-ray Generator for Heavy Luggage Scanning Machine (Model CX100100TI) with all standard accessories and 01 (one) year maintenance service @FOC for the delivered X-ray Generator at Customs House, Benapole.	Custom House, Benapole, Jashore.	Tk 1,00,000.00 (one lac only)	40 (forty) days from the date of issuing purchase order
21	Name, designation and address of official inviting tender	Commissioner of Customs, Custom House, Benapole, Jashore.		
22	Contact details of official inviting tender	Ph: 0422875333	Fax: 0422875118	E-mail: benapolecustoms@gmail.com
23	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.			

Mohd Parvez Reza Chowdhury
Deputy Commissioner of Customs
For
Commissioner of Customs

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DIU celebrates its 18th anniversary

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

A four-day programme marking the 18th founding anniversary of Daffodil International University (DIU) began with great enthusiasm on its permanent campus in Savar's Ashulia, on the outskirts of the capital, yesterday.

State Minister for Disaster Management and Relief Dr Md Enamur Rahman inaugurated the celebration programme as the chief guest, while DIU Trustee Board Chairperson Dr Md Sabur Khan presided over the event.

DIU Vice Chancellor Prof Yousuf Islam and pro-Vice Chancellor Prof SM Mahubul Haque Majumder were present, among others.

To mark the anniversary, inter-department sports competition, Math Olympiad, inter-university cultural competition, IT quiz, project showcasing and photo exhibition have been arranged.

The programmes will also include pitha utsab, kite festival, discussion, picnic and tree plantation, among other activities.

Addressing the event, Dr Enamur said DIU is doing well in terms of providing quality education. He hoped that the university will continue to carry its good reputation into the future.

Dr Sabur, in his speech, said there are lots of opportunities to enhance career building skills and students should take advantage of those avenues.

DIU distributed over 40,000 laptops among students free of cost, and he urged students to fully utilise them for their entrepreneurial journey.

He added that DIU has set up a lab and fund for students to invigorate their entrepreneurial spirit.

It has also brought students and guardians under insurance coverage to provide safety nets for their education, he added.

He hoped DIU will one day become a role-model among universities.

PHOTO OF THE DAY



SHEIKH NASIR



An artisan puts final touches on the idol of Saraswati, Hindu goddess of knowledge, insight and wisdom, as preparations for the puja are going in full swing in Sylhet. This year's Saraswati Puja, which is on January 30, will be held in around 300 places in the city with throngs of people participating. The photo was taken in Tilagarh area yesterday.

Nine-year-old run over by pickup in Laxmipur

Four killed, 44 injured in other accidents

STAR REPORT

A nine-year-old was killed after a pickup van ran him over at Mandari Purbo Bazar area in Laxmipur Sadar upazila around 2pm yesterday noon.

The deceased is Nishan Ahmed. He was a third-grader at Mandari Govt Primary School.

The accident left Nishan dead on the spot, said police, quoting witnesses.

Police arrested the driver and seized the van from the spot.

Meanwhile, at least four people were killed and 44 injured in other accidents across the country yesterday, report our correspondents and a news

agency.

In Dinajpur Sadar upazila, at least 22 people were injured after a passenger bus overturned while overtaking a truck yesterday.

The injured were admitted to M Abdur Rahim Medical College Hospital.

Mozaffar Hossain, officer-in-charge of Dinajpur Sadar Police Station, said a packed passenger bus was coming to Dinajpur around 11:45am. As the bus arrived at Sahapur village, the driver lost control of the vehicle.

On information, firefighters in Dinajpur rushed to the spot and rescued the passengers.

In Tangail, two people were

killed and 20 injured in three separate accidents on and around Bangabandhu Bridge in Bhupur and Kalihati upazilas yesterday.

In Kalihati, Redwanul Haque Khan (32) was killed and eight were injured after a bus collided with a truck on a road connecting to Bangabandhu Bridge at Jokarchar area around 3am.

In Bhupur, Imon Miah (16) was killed and 10 were injured after two buses collided near the toll plaza of Bangabandhu Bridge around 7am. Imon helper of a bus driver. He died on the spot.

In another accident, two trucks

4 hurt in CU BCL infighting

One faction calls indefinite strike

CU CORRESPONDENT

At least four activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) of Chittagong University unit were injured in an infighting on the campus yesterday.

The injured received primary treatment from the university's medical centre, said police. The identities of the injured could not be known immediately.

Activists of shuttle train compartment-based group "Bijoy" launched an attack on an activist of another shuttle train-based group "Choose Friends with Care"

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

'Focus must be on skills dev, jobs'

Swiss Development Cooperation DG Manuel Sager tells Star

PORIMOL PALMA

Bangladesh faces a major challenge in providing fair jobs to the two million youths entering job market every year, says Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) Director General Manuel Sager.

"Two million young people enter the job market every year. Not all go to universities. As Bangladesh's economy progresses, it needs different skillsets... I see a major challenge in how to give skills and fair jobs to those who enter the labour market every year," he said.

Manuel Sager visited Bangladesh last week to see the SDC-funded projects on skills development, safe migration and democratic governance. He also visited the Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar and held talks with government officials and development partners.

His visit was aimed at understanding the areas of support and collaboration to take the bilateral relations to another level as Bangladesh is progressing towards a middle-income country status and beyond.

Sager thinks Bangladesh government should pay more attention to quality education, health and infrastructure. Particularly, he mentioned that there are rooms for progress in vocational training.

"Education is a major issue in Switzerland. We have very well-functioning vocational training. Other countries can benefit from our experiences on skills development," Manuel Sager said in an interview with The Daily Star, wrapping up his visit.

Switzerland, which plays an important role in migration governance at global stage, said Bangladesh is an important country as about 10 million of its citizens are migrants who send home \$18 billion a year.

"We want the Bangladeshis working abroad to be treated well," he said.

Elaborating on the matter, he said experiences of migrants, as they return home, are often not that great.

"They may have bad experiences. It is a challenge for Bangladesh's society to reintegrate them. We also have various projects in this field. We support your government so the migrants can better integrate in the society," Sager said.

His words are relevant because thousands of migrants, especially female domestic workers, who returned from abroad after facing various forms of abuses, faced challenges in integrating to the society. There is no government initiative yet to address the challenge.

Sager also talked about other development challenges, including inequality, improving governance and democracy.

"Citizens' participation in democracy is very important. We are supporting certain initiatives in Bangladesh to make sure of that... when citizens have grievances with the government or public services, they should be able to voice them and cooperate with the institutions to address them. It's an important aspect of a vibrant and healthy democracy."

The role of any government is to improve citizens' life and wellbeing, and that can only be done in a democracy and through dialogue between government and citizens, Sager added.

He lauded the steady economic growth of Bangladesh

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



HILSA IN ABUNDANCE... With fishers bringing their prized catches to the markets and buyers busy negotiating, Barishal markets are buzzing with activities these days. Although winter is usually an off-season for the popular fish, huge shoals of hilsa are being netted by fishermen from different rivers of the division. The photos were taken at Port Road market in the city.



PHOTO: TITU DAS

A welcome winter surprise

Barishal markets flooded with hilsa

SUSHANTA GHOSH, Barishal

The national fish is typically not associated with winter, but this year, large hilsa fish are being netted from the rivers of Barishal, and wholesale markets of the district are buzzing.

At Port Road's fish market, there were at least thousand mounds of large hilsa. Fishermen and traders were busy negotiating the price, which is cheaper this year due to the high availability.

Traders are sending the fish to Dhaka, Chattogram, Khulna and other areas in trucks. The people of Barishal are elated to find the delicious fish at cheap prices. Fishermen said the fish weigh 700-1200 grammes on average. "Usually large hilsa cannot be found during winter, but this time we are netting many," said a fisherman.

According to fishermen, many hilsa are being caught from different southern rivers of the division, especially Elisha and Meghna.

Port Road's wholesale hilsa market trader Ujjal Das said there has been a steady supply of large hilsa for the last three days. "If the fish weighs over a kilogramme, it's sold for Tk 800, and fish weighing lower is sold for Tk 650-700. Last year the prices were Tk 1,200 and Tk 800 respectively," said Ujjal.

Anishur Rahman, hilsa researcher and chief scientific officer of Bangladesh Fisheries Research Institute (BFRI) river centre in Chandpur, said the primary hilsa season is between August and October, but there's a short season from November to January. "The government's effort to protect jatka (hilsa fry) and ensuring its safe breeding has resulted in the availability of the fish during winter," he explained.

Two missing persons found

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The two persons -- son of a police officer and a businessman -- who remained missing in the city for a few days, were found yesterday.

Omar Faruque (34), an air-conditioner trader, who went missing from Moghbazar on Sunday, was found near Postogola Bridge in Keraniganj yesterday evening. He was blindfolded and his hands and legs were tied up, his brother Sarwar Jahan Mamun told The Daily Star last night.

Mamun said unknown people whisked his brother into a microbus when he was on his way home near Hatirjheel from Moghbazar area. The abductors took Tk 11 lakh he had, and left him yesterday evening.

Meanwhile, Mazharul Islam Aronno (13), son of police sub-inspector Abdul Motalib Bhuiyan, returned home yesterday. Motalib said his son actually went to his friend's house in Narayanganj on Saturday fearing scolding from parents, as he did not attend coaching classes.

He came to another friend's house near Bashabo, from where his parents took him home.

One jailed for gang-rape in Mymensingh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Police on Tuesday arrested a youth in connection with the gang-rape of a girl in Dhobaura upazila of Mymensingh.

The 18-year-old victim filed a case with Dhobaura Police Station accusing four youths on Monday night.

Soon after the case was filed, police arrested Islam Mia (22) of the upazila on Tuesday night.

The other accused are Ariful Islam (20), Rasel Mia (21), and Nazrul Islam (30) of the same upazila.

After interrogation, Islam Mia was produced before a Mymensingh court yesterday afternoon, which ordered him to be sent to prison, officer-in-charge of Dhobaura Police Station Ali Ahmed Mollah told The Daily Star.

During the interrogation, the arrestee confessed that they committed the crime in a pre-planned manner and Ariful was the mastermind, informed the OC.

Quoting the case statement, OC Ali said Ariful, son of Abdur Rashid Bepari, along with his three associates took the girl to a nearby waterbody, raped her multiple times and left her there.

The girl was able to reach home on Saturday morning with the help of locals.

A medical test was done at Mymensingh Medical College Hospital yesterday.

Police drives are on to arrest the other accused, OC Ali Ahmed Mollah added.

Ismat Ara Sadique laid to rest

UNB, Bogura

Awami League lawmaker Ismat Ara Sadique was laid to rest in Bogura yesterday afternoon.

Elected from Jashore-6, Ismat Ara, also the former state minister for public administration, passed away on Tuesday morning while undergoing treatment at a hospital in the capital. She was 78.

She was buried at her family graveyard in the district town following the third namaz-e-janaza after the Asr prayers.

Her first-namaz-e-janaza was held at the South Plaza of Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban on Tuesday afternoon.

After the janaza, President Abdul Hamid, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, among others, laid floral wreaths at her coffin.

Her body was then taken to Keshabpur in Jashore where a second janaza was held at Keshabpur Public Field after Zohr prayers.

From Jashore, her body was taken to her ancestral home in Bogura.

Ismat was born in Bogura on December 12, 1942. She left behind a son, daughter and a host of relatives, friends and well-wishers.



Protesting teachers and students of Jahangirnagar University yesterday brought out a masked procession, demanding removal of Prof Farzana Islam from the post of vice chancellor.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS AND PROTHOM ALO

Mystifying metamorphosis of a tragedy



C R ABRAR

DAYS ago, the editor of the leading Bangla daily Prothom Alo and a few of his colleagues were forced to secure higher judiciary intervention that ordered law

enforcers not to harass or arrest them until the hearing on a bail petition in a lower court. On January 16, a Dhaka court issued arrest warrants for Prothom Alo editor and publisher and nine others in a case that involved the death of Abrar, a ninth-grader. Abrar was electrocuted during the anniversary programme of Prothom Alo's youth magazine Kishor Alo on November 1 last year. The father of the deceased registered a case on November 5.

All the accused were charged under section 304(A) of the Bangladesh Penal Code. The section deals with deaths caused by a "rash or negligent act". According to the section, a person may face up to five years in jail if charges are proven against him or her.

The filing of a criminal case against the editor who was not even present at the site of the unfortunate accident has triggered deep anxiety among journalists and rights activists, both at home and abroad. The government and its intellectual cohort insist the family of the deceased is merely exercising their right to seek legal redress for an act that they perceive as criminal negligence. They deny any involvement of the state in the filing of the case. In contrast, many in the press fraternity, rights community and political circles of Bangladesh find reasons to believe that the tragic event has presented itself as a boon to forces that were looking for an excuse to tame the editor of the most widely circulated daily of the country and who stands out among his peers for pursuing independent and impartial journalism under strenuous circumstances.

Various national and international press freedom related and human rights organisations have time and again

reiterated that freedom of expression in print, electronic and social media, is under stress in Bangladesh. The arbitrary application of colonial defamation and sedition laws, the Special Powers Act, the Printing Press and Publication Act and the recently framed Digital Security Act hang as Damocles' sword over the Bangladesh media. The discretionary authority exercised in granting license and advertisements also disrupt the

of Prothom Alo and its editor needs to be assessed. Several factors merit consideration.

Against all odds, Prothom Alo's pursuit of independent journalism has led it to command the readership of millions of Bangladeshis both at home and abroad. In a polity where professional groups, civil society organisations and the media are in effect fractured along partisan lines,



PHOTO: COLLECTED

level playing field in a competitive market. Journalists at various levels endure threats and intimidation from the politically influential. On occasions, informal advice from powerful quarters also impede free journalism.

Taking into consideration all these factors, Article 19, the UK based press freedom monitoring agency, in a report marking World Press Freedom Day 2019 noted "Increased intimidation and threats to undermine freedom of expression has continued in Bangladesh... the situation for communicators in Bangladesh is dire". The regional director of Article 19 states "the kind of violations we are seeing, often totally unprovoked, hampers and limits the work of human rights activists, communication activists, writers, artists and media workers".

It is under such adverse circumstances the current predicament

the objective quest for truth followed by this newspaper has earned it ardent admirers who cherish accountability, transparency and the rule of law.

The forces that feel threatened by the pursuit of such values find plots and conspiracies in the actions of Prothom Alo and its associates. The November 1, 2019 tragedy is a glaring example.

At a press briefing, the Information Minister informed the media that in the Cabinet meeting of November 4, "several members expressed concern and frustration" over the death of Nayeemul Abrar. They raised questions on whether appropriate security measures were taken. He added that everyone expressed their displeasure that the organisers went ahead with the programme despite the death of the student and wondered why a postmortem was not conducted and the body was laid to rest without following

due procedure. The minister assured that investigation would surely reveal if the organisers had defaulted in any way.

In response to the minister's statement, the editor of Kishor Alo on November 5 stated that in order to ensure physical safety of all the participants, they secured the services of RAB, police and two reputed security companies, set up an emergency medical camp (in which two highly trained doctors were available) and kept an ambulance with intensive care unit facilities on standby. He asserted that thousands of participants would testify that the programme ended even before the hospital authorities pronounced Abrar dead. Therefore, the claim that the cultural programme continued even after the event was not true. The editor further stated that the decision to send Abrar to a particular medical hospital belonged to the attending doctors and that it was Abrar's guardians who, in an application, informed the police that since it was a case of accident, they did not want any postmortem to be conducted. Quite understandably, it was the family's decision when and where to bury the deceased. The explanation offered by the editor of Kishor Alo on the minister's statement clearly establishes the fact that the Cabinet was not appropriately informed about the incident.

It is a matter of extreme regret that young Abrar had died despite such detailed measures being taken to ensure the safety of participants. It is for the court to decide if there was criminal negligence of any quarter. However, the fact remains, on the day of the tragedy the father of the deceased informed the police in a letter that he accepted the death as an accident and it is in that context, he requested that no postmortem be conducted. One is not sure what made him change his decision, although he is surely entitled to that.

The speed and efficiency with which the case report was filed and the arrest warrant issued by the concerned authorities also raise questions. Defence counsel and others have argued that even though the legal proceedings could have continued with the issuance of a

summons, in this case, an arrest warrant was issued. It is also worth noting that the warrant was issued only a few hours before the weekly holiday commenced, in which case the opportunity for protection from a higher court was significantly reduced.

At the bail hearing, the state's vigorous opposition to the suggestion of granting bail to those accused also reinforces the argument that other considerations may be at play. This is because basic jurisprudence informs that an accused is denied bail when he or she is a flight risk (could potentially leave the city and not return for court appearance), is a repeat offender, could pose a threat to others and the crime is severe. In this case, the editor and his co-accused are eminent persons on trial for negligence and the Additional Attorney General representing the state had failed to provide any evidence that they could be a flight risk, repeat offenders and a threat to others.

The selective application of the law has given rise to the belief that the Prothom Alo editor is being unfairly targeted. As law professor Asif Nazrul has argued, if the state really wants the editor of Prothom Alo to account for an accident at an event organised by his enterprise, then should the state not also have investigated and punished the VIP who held back the departure of a ferry that led to the death of a youth in an ambulance or identified and taken action when 10 persons died in a stampede at a religious ceremony organised to mark the death of the former mayor of Chattogram?

The above considerations lead conscientious citizens to believe that some quarters may be using Abrar's accidental death to stifle and put undue pressure on one of the very few newspapers that carry critical perspectives, publish reports that call for accountability and transparency of state agencies and provide space for dissenting voices. They feel a tragedy be respected as tragedy, and it is time that reason prevails and undue influence on those performing the judicial task ceases.

C R Abrar is an academic and rights worker.

The mark-up monotony



MOSTAFIZ UDDIN

RMG NOTES
"FIND the right price for an irresistible offer, which, by the way, isn't necessarily the lower price." So stated W. Chan Kim, Professor of Strategy and

Management at INSEAD, one of the world's leading and largest graduate business schools.

Bangladesh stands as the second largest exporter of apparel globally, with the Ready-Made Garment (RMG) sector accounting for 83 percent of export earnings, 12 percent of GDP and employing some 4.4 million people, over 65 percent of whom are women. Given the importance of the sector to the nation the recent report "International Buyers' Sourcing and Suppliers' Mark-Ups in Bangladeshi Garments," issued by the International Growth Centre (IGC), raises some salient points about supplier and buyer relationships and the effect that they can have on apparel producing manufacturers.

The IGC is an international body with head offices in London, England, that aims to promote sustainable growth in developing countries by providing demand-led policy advice based on research undertaken in the field.

The report uses in-depth data, compiled from analysis of apparel exports from Bangladesh, to highlight

the importance of the effects on the industry by international buyers that use their purchasing power to squeeze profit margins, and have a negative effect on a supplier's mark-up of goods being produced.

It is important to highlight that the report focuses on is the mark-up on any given item of apparel being produced—namely the percentage difference between the purchase price received for the garment and the variable costs incurred in the production of the item. This does not refer to profitability, as the factory will incur fixed costs that are not included in the calculations of the report.

The report reveals that international buyers tend to source products in many different ways, best illustrated by two polar opposite approaches: the "American procurement system" and the "Japanese procurement system," terminology that stems from the car manufacturing industry but that now applies for industries as a whole.

With the "American procurement system," a buyer will use their market power to solicit bids through auction for a product, from various suppliers. The supplier with the lowest bid will be awarded the order. This system is generally associated with short-term contracts and relationships. Under this spot procurement system, suppliers are selected based on short-run cost minimisation criteria. The report identifies that buyers adopting this approach source from multiple suppliers, with whom trade relationships tend to be short lived and subject to termination if the supplier is

outbid by a cheaper manufacturer.

In some respects, the RMG industry itself is guilty of allowing these systems of procurement practice to continue. We have, since the foundation of the RMG industry in the 1980's, had a propensity to chase the lowest price for the product we produce, a situation that often sets manufacturers against one another and where the only winner in the process is the buyer. I appreciate that we operate in a competitive market but feel that we, as an industry, need to "call time" on procurement systems that encourage unhealthy competition and do not allow for fair, workable mark-ups for the manufacturer.

Is it not time, with all the investments that have been made in the industry over recent years, for the RMG sector to recognise the true value of the product that we produce and charge a fair price for it?

We may consider it as an industry, promoting a united front and no longer accepting the spot procurement approach from buyers. Instead we could highlight the improvements in compliance and factory safety that have been achieved over the last seven years in particular and concentrate our efforts on apparel product with more integrity, rather than the ongoing reliance on "basic," price sensitive items.

Conversely, with the "Japanese procurement system," the buyer prefers to rely on long-term relationships with preferred and trusted suppliers. Buyers concentrate orders onto a smaller number of suppliers on whom they can rely for on-time delivery and product shipments of consistent quality. Under this model, the report noted that buyers

tend to engage with the supplier's production practices to develop the manufacturers' capabilities, focus on the required research and development (R&D) and garner an understanding of the customers' requirements. Furthermore, the relationship-led approach was found to yield higher mark-ups for the manufacturers, allowing them to invest in plant and factory safety, environmental measures and fair wages for the workforce.

Surely, as an industry, we need to be actively pursuing customers that adopt the relationship-led procurement model as outlined in the IGC report? In order to do this, we need to continue with the improvements that the industry has made since the Rana Plaza tragedy in 2013 and need to actively encourage greater engagement with the right profile of customers.

We can rightly be proud of the steps that have been taken by the RMG industry, but without the proper approach and promotion of our endeavours, we will not gain the attention of the right business partners to secure a successful future for the sector.

Government can take up the baton in this respect. As opposed to compelling buyers to adopt pre-described procurement methods, our government needs to investigate ways to attract the right customer for the RMG industry. The customer that is willing to pay more for a consistent, reliable apparel product, made in the safest working conditions, also expects a system of reliable logistics and advanced infrastructure to ensure the smooth flow of goods being

exported from the country.

Here, as we are all aware, there is work that needs to be done, both in terms of our internal transport systems as well as the facilities at our docks. Government needs to address the logistic issues faced by the RMG industry and the nation as a whole, as a matter of urgency, and instill confidence in buyers who look for effective, efficient shipment systems to reduce the lead time of product.

Along with this, there is the need to establish an affordable finance structure within the country to allow manufacturers to be able to raise the necessary funds needed to secure the required variables (fabric and trims) specified by the customer.

There is a lot to consider, but I sincerely believe that with data that is exposed by reports such as that from the IGC, the RMG industry and the government need to consider the type of business and customer we wish to attract for the country and what purchasing practices can be deemed appropriate when trading with other nations.

I'll leave the last words to Dr. Rocco Macchiavello, Associate Professor at the London School of Economics and co-author of the IGC report: "Yes, it is important what you export, it is important how much you export, but it is also very important to whom you export." A statement that the government and all suppliers in the RMG industry could take into account.

Mostafiz Uddin is the Managing Director of Denim Expert Limited. He is also the Founder and CEO of Bangladesh Denim Expo and Bangladesh Apparel Exchange (BAE). He can be reached at mostafiz@denimexpert.com.

QUOTABLE Quote

PETER DRUCKER
(1909-2005)
Austrian-born American management consultant, educator, and author.

The greatest danger in times of turbulence is not the turbulence; it is to act with yesterday's logic.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Walk unevenly
- 5 Propeller type
- 10 Freshener target
- 11 Relaxed
- 12 Too
- 13 Enjoy a book-store
- 14 Online slang
- 16 Personal annoyance
- 20 Baltimore team
- 23 Bear lair
- 24 Watchful
- 25 Like some canaries
- 27 Dijon denial
- 28 Stocks the party
- 29 Series featuring Agent 86
- 32 Divers wear

DOWN

- 1 Bank offering
- 2 Not active
- 3 Largest amount
- 4 Do well
- 5 Satchel part
- 6 Carburetor valve
- 7 Squabble
- 8 Print measures
- 9 Petite
- 11 Assists illegally
- 15 Cooped (up)
- 17 Border
- 18 Turn suddenly
- 19 Ceases
- 20 Tolled
- 21 Lotion ingredient
- 22 Let off steam
- 25 2006 Pixar film
- 26 Brought into harmony
- 28 Malicious
- 30 Take an oath
- 31 Gleeful
- 33 Tiny amount
- 34 Easy gait
- 35 Reasonable
- 36 Maze runner
- 37 Planning time
- 38 Through

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

YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

A	B	E	T	S	E	E	M
S	E	X	E	S	Y	O	U
P	L	E	A	T	A	U	R
I	A	M	R	E	P	R	E
C	Y	P	R	E	S	S	K
S	T	O	A	T	B	A	R
B	A	Y	E	A	U	D	E
T	O	M	E	M	P	R	E
E	X	P	R	E	S	S	M
L	O	R	D	S	U	R	I
A	P	E	S		B	E	T

BETLE BAILEY by Mort Walker

BABY BLUES by Kirkman & Scott

NEWS IN brief

China snubs US call to join arms talks

AFP, Beijing

China yesterday said it has "no intention to participate" in trilateral arms control negotiations, a day after Washington called on Beijing to join its nuclear arms talks with Moscow. The United States has held two rounds of talks with Russia. Washington has warned about a lack of transparency around China's growing nuclear arsenal, and US President Donald Trump has insisted that any new disarmament pact would need China to come on board.

Israel troops kill 3 Gaza 'attackers'

AFP, Jerusalem

Israeli troops shot dead three Palestinians late Tuesday who crossed into Israel from Gaza and hurled an explosive device at soldiers, the army said. Israeli public radio said the raiders penetrated 400 metres (yards) into Israel from central Gaza "under cover of stormy weather" before the troops stopped them. The nighttime incident came as world leaders were gathering in the Jewish state for a major international Holocaust commemoration.

Greece gets first female president



REUTERS, Athens

Top judge Katerina Sakellariopoulou became Greece's first woman president yesterday when lawmakers elected her head of state in a rare display of unity. Sakellariopoulou, 64, has been president of the Council of State, Greece's top administrative court. She will succeed Prokopis Pavlopoulos, whose five-year term expires in March. She was backed by 261 MPs in the 300-member parliament.



A man mourns over the body of his wife killed following an airstrike on the outskirts of the northern Syrian town of Atareb, yesterday. Russian air strikes killed at least 23 civilians Tuesday in northwestern Syria, as renewed violence tightened the noose around the country's last major rebel-held bastion and deepened an already dire humanitarian crisis.

PHOTO: AFP

India SC refuses to stay divisive citizenship law

Gives govt 4 weeks to respond to 144 petitions challenging the constitutional validity of CAA

AFP, New Delhi

India's Supreme Court declined calls to suspend the implementation of a new citizenship law yesterday, deciding that a constitutional bench of five judges was needed to hear all the challenges to legislation that critics say discriminates against Muslims.

The court gave Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government four weeks to respond to 144 petitions challenging the constitutional validity of the law which has ignited protests across the country.

The law, which came into effect on Jan. 10 after being passed by parliament in December, lays out a path for citizenship for six religious minorities in neighbouring mostly-Muslim countries - Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh.

Critics say that the omission of Muslims is discriminatory, and that basing the right to citizenship on religion violates the secular principles of India's constitution.

Opposition leaders, Muslim organisations and student groups had petitioned the court to hold off implementation of the law until the challenges to the legislation were settled.

But Chief Justice Sharad Arvind Bobde heading a three-bench panel told a packed courtroom that only a constitutional bench of five judges could rule on the matter and in the meantime gave the government more time to explain its stance.

"We will give you four weeks to file reply to all petitions," Bobde told the government's top lawyer, indicating that the next hearing will be held in late February.

The government says the law is for the benefit of religious minorities such as Hindus, Sikhs and Christians who face persecution in India's Muslim majority neighbours.

The biggest student organisation in the northeastern state of Assam, where some of the worst violence was seen last month during widespread protests against the law, said it would keep up its opposition.

Australia evacuates parts of capital as bushfires return

REUTERS, Sydney

Some residents of Australia's capital Canberra were evacuated briefly yesterday after a bushfire broke out near the airport as searing hot weather ended a few days of respite and the number of out-of-control blazes surged in the southeast of the country.

Roads were closed and the authorities told people to leave or stay away from suburbs east of Canberra, as photos posted on social media showed grey smoke billowing above the city's suburbs. There were no reports of injuries or damage, and the warning was downgraded an hour later.

In recent weeks, Canberra and the cities of Sydney and Melbourne experienced air quality rated among the worst in the world under thick clouds of bushfire smoke. The fire broke out as a huge dust storm crossed the country's south, leaving skies deep orange and engulfing some outback towns, the Bureau of Meteorology said.

Since September, hundreds of wildfires in Australia have killed 29 people as well as an estimated 1 billion native animals, while incinerating 2,500 homes and a total area of bushland larger than the size of Austria.

Firefighters had taken advantage of rain and milder temperatures in the past week to contain blazes, but the respite ended on Wednesday when high temperatures and winds returned.

The huge bushfires have cut through the country's east coast during the peak summer months when many businesses usually rake in earnings from both domestic and foreign tourists. Agricultural sectors, particularly the dairy industry, have also been hard hit.

Scores of fires were burning in the states of New South Wales (NSW) and Victoria on Wednesday. Temperatures in Victoria were expected to top 32 degrees Celsius on Wednesday, leading officials to declare "extreme fire danger" in some areas. Temperatures in NSW were forecast to hit 40C (104F) on Thursday.

Myanmar among countries to face US travel ban: report

US President Donald Trump said his administration was preparing to add a "couple of countries" to the controversial list of states whose citizens are subject to travel bans or severe restrictions on entry to the United States. The Wall Street Journal reported earlier that the administration planned to add seven countries including Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, and others in Africa and Asia. It said the other nations being considered for new rules were Belarus, Eritrea, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, Sudan and Tanzania.

Pollution chokes Thai capital

Authorities in the Thai capital ordered nearly 450 schools to close yesterday as pollution levels reached dangerously unhealthy levels. Bangkok, the world's most visited city, saw levels of PM 2.5 particles at 78.3 µg/m³. A level above 35 is considered unhealthy, according to independent air quality monitor AirVisual. PM 2.5 particles can include dust, soot and smoke and are so small they can lodge deep in the lungs and enter the bloodstream. The schools will be closed for one day. Last January, the city closed schools for a week because of pollution.

UN Security Council urges quick ceasefire in Libya

The UN Security Council called Tuesday on Libya's warring sides to quickly reach a ceasefire that would pave the way for a political process aimed at ending conflict in the oil-rich state. The United Nations meeting followed up on a weekend Libya summit held in Berlin, which saw the formation of a military commission that is supposed to define ways of consolidating a cessation of hostilities. It is to comprise five members each from the UN-recognized government in Tripoli and its opponents loyal to military strongman Khalifa Haftar.

Weinstein rape trial set for opening arguments



Opening arguments in Harvey Weinstein's rape and sexual assault trial were due yesterday, with the defense expected to detail "loving" emails between the once-mighty movie producer and his accusers. Weinstein, 67, faces life in prison if convicted of predatory sexual assault charges related to two women in the high-profile New York proceedings seen as key to the #MeToo movement. Prosecutors will argue that the former Miramax Films boss was a sexual predator. Weinstein's attorneys will try to convince the court that his two accusers engaged in consensual relationships with the defendant and only claimed the incidents were forced years later. More than 80 women have accused Weinstein of sexual misconduct since claims against him ignited the #MeToo movement in October 2017. SOURCE: AFP

IMPEACHMENT TRIAL OF TRUMP

WHAT'S NEXT



The US Senate voted along party lines to set the rules for President Donald Trump's historic impeachment trial. These are the next phases in Trump's impeachment trial, just the third of a president in US history:

OPENING ARGUMENTS: The Democratic members of the House of Representatives chosen to present the impeachment case against Trump will deliver opening arguments to the Senate beginning on Wednesday. They will have a total of 24 hours over three days to present their case that Trump should be impeached for abuse of power and obstruction of Congress over his attempt to get Ukraine to investigate political rival Joe Biden. Following the House presentation, Trump's defense team, led by White House counsel Pat Cipollone, will have 24 hours over three days to present their rebuttal.

WRITTEN QUESTIONS: Following opening arguments, senators will have a total of 16 hours to ask questions in writing to House prosecutors or the White House defense team. The written questions from the senators will be read out loud in the chamber by US Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts, who is presiding over the trial.

WITNESSES AND DOCUMENTS: Following the question period, House prosecutors and the White House defense team will have two hours each to argue for or against subpoenaing witnesses or documents. The Senate will then vote on whether any witnesses or documents should be subpoenaed. A simple majority vote of 51 senators will decide the issue. House Democrats have said they want former National Security Advisor John Bolton and White House chief of staff Mick Mulvaney and two others to testify. If there is an agreement to hear witnesses, they will first be deposed behind closed doors. The Senate will then decide whether they will be allowed to testify publicly.

SENATE VOTE: Following the conclusion of deliberations, the Senate will vote on each of the two articles of impeachment. A two-thirds majority of the senators present is required for conviction. Conviction on just a single article is enough to remove Trump from office. With Republicans holding a 53 to 47 majority in the Senate, Trump -- barring the unexpected -- is likely to be acquitted. The Senate vote could possibly be held late next week -- ahead of Trump's planned February 4 appearance before a joint session of Congress for the annual State of the Union speech. SOURCE: AFP

Putin forms new govt, keeps key ministers

AFP, Moscow

Russian President Vladimir Putin has appointed a new government, less than a week after he announced sweeping constitutional reforms and his longtime prime minister resigned.

Putin, who said there was a "demand for change" in his announcements last week, kept on key allies. Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu -- both staunch Putin supporters and major policy figures -- held on to their positions, as well as the finance and energy ministers, Anton Siluanov and Alexander Novak.

But he replaced several officials in charge of social affairs, including the ministers of health, education, labour and economic development.

Meeting the cabinet of new Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin for the first time, Putin said its most important task was to "increase the welfare of our citizens and strengthen our state".

The government of Putin's longtime ally Dmitry Medvedev resigned last week, a few hours after the president announced the constitutional reforms.

The reforms will transfer some authority to parliament, including the power to choose the prime minister, and beef up the role of an advisory body called the State Council, potentially headed by Putin.

Critics say Putin, 67, could use that position to continue to shape domestic and foreign policy after his fourth Kremlin term expires in 2024.

'Nobody likes' Bernie: Hillary

AFP, New York

Hillary Clinton launched a scathing attack on presidential hopeful Bernie Sanders, her rival for the 2016 Democratic nomination, telling a documentary that "nobody likes him."

The former US secretary of state also refused to say whether she would endorse and campaign for Sanders if he becomes the Democrats' choice to take on President Donald Trump in November's election.

"He was in Congress for years. He had one senator support him," Clinton says in a four-part series due to air on streaming site Hulu in March.

"Nobody likes him, nobody wants to work with him, he got nothing done. He was a career politician."

"It's all just baloney and I feel so bad that people got sucked into it," she adds.

Sanders, a leftist senator from Vermont, is among the leaders in the race for the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination. He sits second in national polls behind centrist Joe Biden and ahead of Massachusetts senator Elizabeth Warren, two weeks before the first nomination vote in Iowa.

Sanders, 78, pushed 72-year-old Clinton to the wire four years ago in an acrimonious, months-long battle for the party's nomination. Clinton won that race but lost to Trump. She has criticized Sanders and his supporters for not sufficiently backing her in the presidential vote.

Sanders played down the attack in the documentary, telling reporters that he was focused on Trump's impeachment trial.



N Korea says may seek 'new path' of weapons build-up

AFP, Geneva

Pyongyang on Tuesday warned that it could seek a "new path" and accelerate its weapons programme, after Washington imposed fresh sanctions on North Korean companies amid stalled nuclear talks.

North Korean representative Ju Yong Chol told the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva that his country's efforts to improve relations with Washington had been met with hostility.

"Although the US is talking about the resumption of dialogue, it has no intention at all from the beginning to drop its hostile policy towards the DPRK (Democratic Republic of Korea)," he said.

He said DPRK will steadily develop strategic weapons until the US abandons its hostile policy.

North Korea declared in December an end to moratoriums on nuclear and intercontinental ballistic missile tests, which had been a centrepiece of two years of diplomacy with US.

Harry, Meghan in new media spat

AFP, Victoria

Prince Harry and his wife Meghan started their new life in Canada on Tuesday by launching a legal warning to media over photographs of the duchess near their seaside bolthole.

Following their shock exit from life as working royals, Harry jettied out from Britain to join Meghan late Monday at a luxury house outside Victoria on Vancouver Island.

The Duke and Duchess of Sussex have temporarily set up base at the wooded home, having spent six weeks there over Christmas with their baby son Archie.

The couple, who married in May 2018, admitted last year that they were struggling with media scrutiny and have regularly hit out at the press in statements and in the courts.

Their lawyers issued a legal warning after various outlets on Tuesday published photographs of a smiling Meghan out walking her dogs with Archie.

In Britain, the pictures were used by The Sun and the Daily Mail newspapers. Lawyers claimed the images were taken by photographers hiding in bushes and spying on the US former television actress, the BBC reported, and that she did not consent to the photos. The couple were prepared to take legal action, according to the BBC.

The lawyers claim there had been attempts to photograph inside their new home using long lenses, and say paparazzi are camped outside the property.



A protester walks through the smoke of burning tyres in the capital Beirut, yesterday. Lebanon ended a painful wait by unveiling a new cabinet line-up, but the government was promptly scorned by protesters and faces the Herculean task of saving a collapsing economy.

PHOTO: AFP

<p>WHAT'S ON</p>	<p>Solo Art Exhibition Title: Truce Artist: Ata Mojlish Venue: Dwpj Gallery, Lalmatia Date: January 25 – February 1 Time: 3 pm – 9 pm (Except Mondays)</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>Cultural Festival Title: Bangladesh Shanskritik Utsab 2020 Venue: Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy Date: January 3- 23, 2020 Time: 4 pm - 8 pm</p>	<p>Musical Evening Title: Tondrahara Raater Gaan Organiser: Star Melodies Venue: The Daily Star Centre, Kazi Nazrul Islam Ave Date: January 25 Time: 6:30 pm onwards</p>	<p>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)</p>
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Kabori and Razzak



Suchonda and Razzak

PHOTOS: COLLECTED

'Rupban' staged in Mymensingh

AMINUL ISLAM, from Mymensingh

The traditional *jatra pala*, *Rupban*, featuring the ancient elements of the art form, was staged at Mymensingh Town Hall, recently.

Lokonatya Sangstha, a popular troupe in Mymensingh, staged the production at a cultural show, marking the centenary celebrations of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Adopted and directed by Dr Hossain Ahmed Golandaj Tara, the convener of the group, the ancient elements of the *pala*, including the *dohar*, was followed, and the event drew a large audience to the venue.

The cast of the *pala* included Sonia Moni, Dipshikha Khan, Lauky Akter, Tanvir Ahmed, Dr Tara Golandaj, Saiful Islam, MA Kashem, Baul Ferdous, Nazim Uddin, Emdadul Haque, and Amirul Islam, among others.

The production was assisted by Ustad A K M Shahabuddin Khan, Sarwar Kamal Robin, Aminul Islam and Mohammad Rofiq.



PHOTO: STAR

Remembering the Nayak Raj on his 78th birthday

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

There have been a lot of great actors, or *Nayaks* as we say in Bangla, but only one Nayak Raj – Nayak Raj Razzak. The multiple-time National Award winner acted in more than 300 Urdu and Bangla films throughout his career.

Born on this day as Abdur Razzak in Kolkata, he spent his childhood in the city. He would be 78 years old today. His passion for acting bloomed early, as he would participate in annual plays of his school.

As his ambitions grew, he played small roles in films like *Shilalipi*, *Pankitalok* and *Ratan Pal Bangali*. After his attempt at shifting to Bombay (now Mumbai) and starting a Bollywood career did not work out, he came back to Kolkata. At the age of 19, he married Khairunnesa Laxmi.

In 1964, he shifted to Dhaka with his wife and son Bappa Raj. After an initial struggle, he found footing due to the help of Abdul Jabbar Khan and went on to work as an assistant director in Kamal Khan's *Ujala*. At that time, he lived with his family in Kamalapur. He kept on acting as minor characters in films like *Dak Babu*, *Kar Bou* and *13 Number Feku*



PHOTO: STAR

Ostthagar Lane.

However, the turning point in the actor's career came with the film *Behula*, directed by Zahir Raihan. His pairing with Suchanda was an instant super-hit, and Razzak became a household name at the time. Zahir Raihan took the

opportunity and created *Anowara*, based on Mohammad Nazibur Rahman's novel of the same name, with the duo. The film also saw spectacular success. He was then seen in Zahir Raihan's *Shuorani Duorani*.

With time, the man who had once struggled to find work, had become the

most sought-after actor in the country. He could make any role believable with his outstanding presence on screen. His brilliance led to him being honoured with the nickname *Nayak Raj*, coined by Ahmed Zaman Chowdhury, then editor of the magazine *Chitrali*.

He went on to win the National Award 5 times for his roles in *Ki Je Kori*, *Ashikkhito*, *Boro Bhalo Lok Chilo*, *Chandranath* and *Jogajog*. In 2015, he was given the prestigious Independence Day Award by the Government of Bangladesh.

"Even though he was such an accomplished actor, he used to treat me like his brother. I have so many memories with him in get-togethers and events, where we had so many *addas*. Wherever he is, I hope he is in peace," said another great actor, Farooque. Nayak Raj's son, Samrat, has fond memories with his father. "My father is an inspiration to me. I remember times when we used to celebrate our birthdays, he was always very enthusiastic. I still miss him dearly," he said.

Even though Razzak passed away in August 21, 2017, his legacy as one of the greatest names in Bangladesh's film industry still inspires millions today.



Guests, patrons and organisers at the press conference.

PHOTO: COURTESY

Registration for 'Ispahani Mirzapore Banglabid' underway

Ispahani Mirzapore Banglabid, one of the most popular TV reality shows of Bangladesh, has begun its fourth season, with the promise of spreading our language, Bangla, to a wider scale, according to a press release. Registration for the contest is underway and will continue till February 21.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Ispahani Mirzapore, one of the country's most popular tea brands, organises the event every year to promote the proper use of Bangla to the young generation with the slogan, 'Banglay Jago Bhorpur'.

On the occasion of launching the new season, a press conference was arranged at the office premises of Channel i, recently. Chaired by Faridur Reza Sagar, Managing Director of Channel i, Professor Emeritus Dr Sirajul Islam attended the press meet as the chief guest. Habibullah Sirajee, Director General of Bangla Academy, Zahida Ispahani, Emaad Ispahani and Mirza Ahmed Ispahani, Directors of M M Ispahani Ltd and Omar Hannan, G M of Ispahani Tea Limited, among others, were present at the event.

This year, the show is going to be organised in a larger scale, as new games and challenges will be added. It is expected that the number of total registrations will surpass a hundred thousand.

The first three winners will receive BDT 10 lakh, 3 lakh and 2 lakh,

respectively. Each of the first 10 winners will receive a laptop, along with Bengali books and a bookshelf worth BDT 50,000.

Initially, students of classes 6 to 10 from different parts of the country will take part in the competition. After the primary round, selected participants will be brought to Dhaka for the studio round, and they will compete against each other. Later, the contest will be aired on Channel i.

Final winners will be selected after 20 different episodes of exciting competitions. An experienced judges' panel, consisting of representatives from the Bangla Department of University of Dhaka and language experts, will be actively involved in the selection process. *Ispahani Mirzapore Banglabid* is honoured to have renowned Professor Dr Soumitra Shekhar, Bangla Department, University of Dhaka and media personality Tropa Majumdar as judges of the show.

Ispahani Mirzapore Banglabid started its first season in 2017.

TRESemme Bangladesh Fashion Week 2020 kicks off today

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Internationally renowned haircare brand TRESemme's flagship programme, TRESemme Bangladesh Fashion Week 2020, starts today. It will be held at International Convention City Bashundhara (ICCB) till January 25.

21 local and 9 foreign designers will showcase their collection in the three-day event. On the first day, Anuj Sharma and Riddhi Jain from India, and Ajay Gurung from Nepal will present their collection, alongside talented Bangladeshi designers. On the second day of the event, Fashion Design Council of Bangladesh (FDCB) President Maheen Khan, will be joined by Emdad Hoque, Shaibal Saha, Farah Anjum Bari, Soumitra Mandal from India, along with Sonali Dharmawardena from Sri Lanka to display their works. The third day will feature designs by Chandan Dewan, Kuhu, Lipi Khandaker, along with Alka Sharma and Asif Shaikh from India, and Chandrika Tamang from Bhutan.

FDCB is the event partner, while Le Meridien is the hospitality partner of the programme.



PHOTO: UNB

Fulki's children-youth cultural festival begins today

MOSTAFA YOUSUF, from Chattogram

Fulki, a cultural and educational institution of the port city, has organised a three-day children-youth cultural festival, which begins today.

The festival will be inaugurated at Shilpakala Academy, Chattogram.

Shila Momen, Principal of Fulki School, announced the details of the festival during

a press conference at the school auditorium recently.

The last two days of the festival will be dedicated to Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. "Young people must know Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar's role in framing the Bangla letters and his relentless efforts to spread education among the masses, as well as Bangabandhu's contribution in the Liberation War," said Shila.

The festival will include karate sessions, musical performances, dance recitals, terracotta lessons, plays, art events, autobiography readings, a digital presentation of the Liberation War and an English learning session, titled 'Let's play with English'.

Abul Momen, President, Omar Kaisar, Secretary and Mubidur Rahman Sujat, Executive Secretary of the Fulki School Trusty Board were present, in the press conference, among others.



PHOTO: STAR

Charity brands number of UK prison deaths 'national scandal'

AFP, London

The death toll in British prisons is "a national scandal", a pressure group said yesterday, calling for a reduction in inmate numbers just as the government is promising tougher sentences.

Inquest, which probes state related deaths, said in a new report that there were six deaths and nearly two suicides every week inside British jails last year.

It called the rate "shocking and unacceptable", noting many fatalities were found to be preventable, and criticised record levels of distress and self-harm within the system.

The charity said Prime Minister Boris Johnson should make "a substantial reduction in the prison population" and invest instead in health and community-based alternatives to jail.

Johnson and his Conservative party won a comfortable parliamentary majority at elections in December on a manifesto that included vowing to be tougher on crime.

On Tuesday, interior minister Priti Patel and justice minister Robert Buckland unveiled plans to increase sentences for more serious crimes, including terrorism offences.

The plans also target the end of the early release of some prisoners.

The Tories pledged during the election they would create 10,000 more prison places and spend an extra £100 million (\$130 million, 118 million euros) cracking down on crime in jails.

Inquest's executive director Deborah Coles said the current rate of prison deaths, alongside the repeated failure to enact change, were leaving inmates and their families "traumatised".

"Appalling inspection reports, damning inquest findings, and statistics on yet more deaths, have become so regular that those in power seem to forget these are human beings to whom the state owes a duty of care," she added.

In its report the charity found there were 308 deaths in prison in the 12 months to September 2019 -- nearly double the number of a decade ago.

Re-election

FROM PAGE 16

differences of opinion among political parties regarding the use of EVMs in Dhaka city polls.

The commissioner said he supported the use of EVMs in the election for two reasons -- one was that it could put an end to "the culture of casting votes on the night before the voting day" and the other was that it would stop casting of 100 percent votes at any given centre.

"Using EVM in the polls is an acid test for Election Commission... future of the machine is depending on the success of its use in Dhaka city polls," Mahubb said.

At the meeting, law enforcers urged the EC to restrict the use of personal cars on election day as it would create problems for them to manage traffic as well as the movement of the people related to the election.

EC senior secretary Md Alamgir later said the commission had agreed to the proposal and no private cars would be allowed to ply during the election.

The restriction will be in force from the midnight of January 31 until 6:00pm of February 2.

Three workers

FROM PAGE 16

underway on the banks of the river. Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) is carrying out the work.

BIWTA officials said they awarded the contract to Standard Engineers Ltd and the company was responsible for ensuring the safety of workers.

Some locals said they heard a big bang after the iron pole came into contact with the electric wire. Panicked, some workers ran to safety.

A little later, locals rescued the victims using a bamboo. The injured were sent to a nearby hospital.

Asked about the incident, Nur Mohammad Sabuj, assistant manager (HR and admin) of Standard Engineers Ltd, said they hired several groups of labourers for the work and the victims were members of one those groups.

"We always made the workers' leaders aware of safety and asked them to use safety gears... We will talk to the victims' families and take measures as per the company policy regarding compensations," he told this correspondent.

BIWTA Joint Director AKM Arif Uddin said, "We should have been more careful about the safety issue... we will put pressure on the engineering firm to compensate the victims' families."

He said they would write to the authorities concerned to remove the electric wires dangling dangerously from electricity poles in the area.

The bodies of the victims were sent to Sir Salimullah Medical College morgue for autopsies.



Health officers screen arriving passengers from China with thermal scanners at Changi International airport in Singapore yesterday as authorities increased measure against coronavirus.

PHOTO: AFP

New virus could mutate, spread

FROM PAGE 16

In Wuhan, the epicentre of the epidemic, large public events were cancelled and international football matches were moved to new location. Visitors were urged to stay away, while residents were advised to not to leave the central city of 11 million people.

The illness is mainly transmitted via the respiratory tract and there "is the possibility of viral mutation and further spread of the disease", health commission vice minister Li Bin told a news conference in Beijing.

The virus has now infected at least 473 people across the country, with most cases in Wuhan. Li added that 1,394 people are still under medical observation.

The World Health Organization (WHO) started an emergency meeting yesterday to determine whether to declare a rare global public health emergency over the disease, which has now been detected in the United States, Taiwan, Thailand, Japan, South Korea and Macau.

WHO spokesman Tarik Jasarevic said new cases of the coronavirus may keep coming.

The first case in the United States -- a Seattle resident in his 30s -- is in good condition, American officials said.

The Chinese government has classified the outbreak in the same category as the SARS epidemic, meaning compulsory isolation for those diagnosed with the illness and the potential to implement quarantine measures.

But they still have not been able to confirm the exact source of the virus.

"We will step up research efforts to

identify the source and transmission of the disease," Li said, although he said experts believe "the cases are mostly linked to Wuhan".

Countries have been intensifying efforts to stop the spread of the pathogen -- known by its technical name 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) -- as the number of cases jumped.

Plane passengers are facing screening measures at five US airports and a host of transport hubs across Asia.

North Korea will ban foreign tourists entirely to protect itself against the virus, according to a major tour operator.

Britain's Heathrow Airport will introduce separate areas for passengers travelling from regions that have been affected by the new flu-like coronavirus in China, UK transport minister Grant Shapps said yesterday.

A prominent expert from China's National Health Commission confirmed this week that the virus can be passed between people.

However, animals are suspected to be the primary source of the outbreak.

A price list circulating online in China for a business at the Wuhan market lists a menagerie of animals or animal-based products including live foxes, crocodiles, wolf puppies and rats. It also offered civets, the animal linked to SARS.

"We already know that the disease originated from a market which conducted illegal transaction of wild animals," said Gao Fu, director of the Chinese centre for disease control and prevention.

He said it was clear "this virus is

adapting and mutating".

Hong Kong and British scientists have estimated that between 1,300 and 1,700 people in Wuhan may have been infected.

Health authorities are urging people to wash their hands regularly, avoid crowded places, get plenty of fresh air and wear a mask if they have a cough.

Anyone with a cough or fever was urged to go to hospital.

Surgical masks and antibacterial products were starting to sell out on some popular online sites and pharmacies.

At the capital's main international airport, the majority of people were wearing masks.

Hong Kong flag carrier Cathay Airlines said they agreed to allow staff to wear surgical masks on mainland China flights, adding they would offer masks and antiseptic wipes to passengers travelling from Wuhan to the city.

In Wuhan, police were conducting vehicle spot checks for live poultry or wild animals leaving and entering the city, state media said. Officials also screened people on roads, the airport and the train station for fevers.

"If it's not necessary we suggest that people don't come to Wuhan," Mayor Zhou Xianwang told state broadcaster CCTV.

The local government has cancelled major public activities and banned tour groups from heading out of the city. Women's football qualifiers for the Tokyo Olympic Games that were supposed to be held in Wuhan between February 3-9 were moved to the eastern city of Nanjing.

GOP-devised trial rules prevails

FROM PAGE 16

House, the State Department, the Defense Department and the Office of Management and Budget related to Trump's dealings with Ukraine.

By the same tally, senators also rejected requests for subpoenas seeking the testimony of acting White House Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney, former national security adviser John Bolton, White House aide Robert Blair and White House budget official Michael Duffey.

Under McConnell's hastily revised set of procedures for the trial, there will be 48 hours of opening arguments - 24 hours for each side - over six days, easing off an earlier plan to keep them to two days each. It also allows the House's record of the probe to be admitted as evidence.

The arguments were to begin when the trial resumes at 1:00 pm (1800 GMT) yesterday.

Republican senators have not ruled out the possibility of further testimony and evidence at some point after opening arguments and 16 hours of senators' questions, but they held firm with Trump's lawyers to block Tuesday's Democratic requests for witnesses and evidence - a potentially good sign for the White House.

White House counsel Pat Cipollone, who is leading Trump's defense, attacked the foundation of the charges against the Republican president and said Democrats had not come close to meeting the US Constitution's standard for impeachment.

"The only conclusion will be that the president has done absolutely nothing wrong," Cipollone said, arguing in favor of McConnell's proposal to wait until later in the trial to decide whether to allow further witnesses or documents.

"There is absolutely no case," he said.

After a particularly heated exchange over whether Bolton should testify, Roberts admonished both parties to remember they were addressing the world's greatest deliberative body. "I do think those addressing the Senate should remember where they are," he said.

Democratic Representative Adam Schiff, who helped spearhead the House impeachment inquiry, said the president had committed

"constitutional misconduct justifying impeachment."

While the evidence against Trump was "already overwhelming," further witness testimony was necessary to show the full scope of the misconduct by the president and those around him, he said.

Republican senators have not ruled out the possibility of further testimony and evidence at some point after opening arguments and senators' questions.

But Democrats said they forced repeated votes on evidence and witnesses, which extended late into the night, to get Republicans on the record immediately.

"This may be our only chance, tonight, to make this a fair trial. And it's just increasingly clear that the White House has no answers for why these documents and these witnesses shouldn't be produced," US Senator Chris Murphy of Connecticut told reporters.

Under McConnell's plan, lawyers for Trump could move early in the proceedings to ask senators to dismiss all charges, according to a senior Republican leadership aide, a motion that would likely fall short of the support needed to succeed.

Even if such a motion fails, Trump is almost certain to be acquitted by the 100-member chamber, where a two-thirds majority is needed to remove him from office.

But the impact of the trial on his re-election bid in November is far from clear.

Democrats accuse Trump of pressuring Ukraine, a vulnerable ally, to interfere in US elections at the expense of American national security and say he is a danger to American democracy.

Trump and his legal team say there was no pressure and that the Democrats' case is based on hearsay. Cipollone described the Ukraine investigation as an illegal attempt to remove a democratically elected president and avert his re-election.

"They're not here to steal one election, they're here to steal two elections," Cipollone said.

The White House defense team also repeated some false charges. Cipollone said Republicans were excluded from the secure facility where the initial depositions for the House impeachment hearings took

place, when Republican members of the House Intelligence Committee were not only present but questioned witnesses.

Trump lawyer Jay Sekulow said the White House was not allowed to have a lawyer present during the impeachment hearings, when in fact it declined to participate.

The Senate trial is expected to continue six days a week, Monday through Saturday, until at least the end of January.

Televised congressional testimony from a parade of current and former officials who spoke of a coordinated effort to pressure Ukraine to investigate Biden and his son, Hunter, has done little to change support for and against Trump's impeachment. Reuters/Ipsos polling since the inquiry began shows Democrats and Republicans responding largely along party lines.

No president has ever been removed through impeachment, a mechanism the nation's founders - worried about a monarch on American soil - devised to oust a president for "treason, bribery or other high crimes and misdemeanors." One, Richard Nixon, resigned in the face of a looming impeachment.

Stalker pushes

FROM PAGE 16

As Jerin took the autorickshaw to her school, Zakir and two of his accomplices intercepted the vehicle on its way and got into it.

Zakir tried to pressure her into a relationship once again inside the vehicle. As she refused, he shoved her out of the running autorickshaw.

Locals rescued Jerin and rushed her to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital where she succumbed to her injuries on Monday morning.

As the news of her death spread, Jerin's classmate blocked the roads adjacent to the school and demanded investigation into the incident.

The victim's father filed a case with Habiganj Police Station accusing Zakir and five other unnamed people on Monday night, said Masuk Ali, officer-in-charge of Habiganj Police Station.

Zakir was sent to jail through the Habiganj court, he said, adding that they were trying to arrest the rest of the perpetrators.

It's 'Mujib Borsho' gift

FROM PAGE 16

"We will celebrate Mujib Borsho from March 17, 2020 to March 17, 2021 and its countdown has already begun... we will also celebrate golden jubilee of the country's independence in 2021."

She expressed gratitude to the people for reelecting the Awami League and giving it the opportunity to serve them again.

Talking about expatriate Bangladeshis, the PM said they send remittances which were making huge contributions to the country's economy. "So, we remain careful to make sure that they don't become victims of any type of harassment."

Hasina said 118 countries have already introduced e-passports and Bangladesh is the 119th country to have done this. Bangladesh is the first country in South Asia which has been able to introduce e-passport, she added.

The PM said the government has digitalised all the activities of the Department of Immigration and Passports (DIP) to attain the immigration-related SDG.

"We have also set up 69 passport offices in 64 districts, 33 immigration check posts and passports and visa wings at 75 missions abroad aiming to reach the passport, visa and immigration services to the doorsteps of the people."

She said the government had launched the Machine Readable Passport (MRP) and Machine Readable Visa (MRV) in 2015.

"The MRPs have so far been issued to about 2.7 crore Bangladeshi citizens, while MRVs to 15 lakh foreigners," the PM added.

German Ambassador in Dhaka Peter Fahrenholtz and DIP DG Maj Gen Shakil Ahmed were present at yesterday's programme, chaired by Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan.

Later, the home minister formally handed the PM's e-passport to her.

The premier inaugurated e-passport and automated border control management programme by unveiling a plaque.

She also opened the e-passport complex and visited an enrolment booth of the e-gate.

Dancing dragon

FROM PAGE 16

Researchers, including Ashley Poust, a postdoctoral researcher at the San Diego Natural History Museum, later analyzed the fossil (at the time, Poust was still a student at Montana State University).

The findings were published last week in the journal *The Anatomical Record*.

"The new dinosaur fits in with an incredible [range] of feathered, winged animals that are closely related to the origin of birds," Poust, the study's author, said. "Studying specimens like this not only shows us the sometimes surprising paths that ancient life has taken, but also allows us to test ideas about how important bird characteristics, including flight, arose in the distant past."

This dinosaur was a juvenile when it died, according to its bones, but its feathers resembled that of a mature adult. This suggests that the feathers grew quickly, unlike modern birds, which take time to grow their mature feathers.

"Either the young dinosaurs needed these tail feathers for some function we don't know about, or they were growing their feathers really differently from most living birds," Poust said.

The dinosaur was an early relative of Velociraptors, which lived 75 million years ago. Its contemporaries would have been Microraptors, small feathered dinosaurs that resembled birds.

The researchers actually sliced into several bones from the fossil

and studied them with microscopes to understand the different regions of the skeleton. They also compared it to a close relative that also appeared more mature, known as the *Sinornithosaurus*.

Surprisingly, that dinosaur was also still growing when it died. The researchers said that histology, or cutting up the bones, was the only way for them to truly know the life stage of the dinosaurs when they died.

"We're talking about animals that lived twice as long ago as T. rex, so it's pretty amazing how well-preserved they are," Poust said. "It's really very exciting to see inside these animals for the first time."

Fossils from the Jehol Province have painted a portrait of the diverse life that once flourished there. It's an area in northeastern China full of exceptionally preserved fossil discoveries that has been studied for the past 90 years.

Researchers learned that birds, pterosaurs and bird-like dinosaurs all lived in the environment at the same time. This is also when flowering plants initially began to flourish.

"There was a lot of flying, gliding and flapping around these ancient lakes," Poust said.

"As we continue to discover more about the diversity of these small animals, it becomes interesting how they all might have fit into the ecosystem. It was an alien world, but with some of the earliest feathers and earliest flowers, it would have been a pretty one."

Demolition

FROM PAGE 1

Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) to take ACs, generators, furniture and other items from the building, said Rajuk sources.

Earlier, Rajuk Chief Engineer ASM Raihanul Ferdous told The Daily Star that the company had been given six months to complete the demolition.

As per an arrangement, the company was supposed to take all the furniture, electronic equipment and other materials from the building, demolish the structure and pay Rajuk Tk 1.55 crore at the end of the work.

But after Rajuk allowed the BGMEA to take the furniture, ACs and generators, the company would now give the development authority Tk 1.02 crore, said Rajuk sources.

The High Court had given the owner three deadlines to vacate the building. The latest deadline expired on April 12 last year.

On April 16, Rajuk went to the BGMEA Bhaban along with policemen and bulldozers, apparently to knock down the building.

People were, however, still inside and the authorities had to pull out for the day. The building was then sealed off.

Talking to reporters at the BGMEA Bhaban yesterday, Housing Minister Rezaul Karim said they were demolishing the building as per a High Court verdict. "All formalities are being done so that there are no legal complications."

He said two teams were working to monitor the work. One of the teams is comprised of representatives from Buet, fire service, army and Urban planning experts, while the other was from Rajuk.

The debris would be removed immediately and eventually dumped somewhere outside the city, he said.

Asked, the minister said they ensured all safety measures for the demolition.

He said they were using the traditional method of demolition as the modern one might cause damage to adjacent buildings as well as pollute the environment.

"With the completion of the work, the water flow of Hatirjheel will finally be restored," he added.

On November 28, 1998, the then prime minister Sheikh Hasina laid the foundation stone of the building, which was inaugurated by the then prime minister Khaleda Zia on

October 8, 2006.

Later, it was found that the building was constructed illegally.

Following a news report published on October 3 in 2010, an HC bench issued a suo-moto rule on the authorities concerned asking why the building should not be demolished.

On April 3, 2011, a HC bench ordered the demolition of the illegal building. Two days later, the Appellate Division, however, stayed the order for six weeks and asked the BGMEA to file a leave to appeal petition against the verdict.

On March 19, 2013, the HC in its verdict ordered the relevant authorities to demolish the building in three months.

The court also directed the BGMEA to refund money to the buyers of floor space within a year.

In April last year, an Appellate Division bench ordered the BGMEA building be demolished after April 12.

The court termed the building "a cancer in the Hatirjheel project" as it blocked water flow between Hatirjheel lake and Begunbari canal.

Contacted, BGMEA President Rubana Huq yesterday said they respect the court's verdict. "Topmost priority should be given on safety while demolishing the building," she said.

The association has already shifted its headquarters to the capital's Uttara.

4 held

FROM PAGE 16

headquarters in Dhanmondi at 10:30am today.

Seven suspects have been arrested so far in the case.

Two criminals attacked Sarwar, also a physician and prominent cultural activist, at his home in the capital's Uttara on January 5.

Sarwar escaped unhurt but his family members and two neighbours were injured.

Sarwar said a militant group might have carried out the attack. He filed a case with Uttara Paschim Police Station over the incident.

BSF kills

FROM PAGE 16

Lt Colonel Tauhidul Alam, commander officer (CO) of Lalmonirhat 15 BGB Battalion, said they sent a letter to BSF protesting the killing of the two Bangladeshis.



Roads and Highways Department

www.rhd.gov.bd

Office of the Senior System Analyst, RHD
Sarak Bhaban, Tejgaon, Dhaka

Expression of Interest (EOI) for Selection of Consulting Firm

for Consultancy Service for Design, Development and Commissioning of Unified Toll Collection and Management System of RHD

Memo No. 35.01.0000.167.16.001.20.2

Date: 20-01-2020

Brief Description of Assignment:

The Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh (GoB) will provide fund for Consultancy Service for Design, Development and Commissioning of Unified Toll Collection and Management System of RHD by engaging international consulting firm.

Office of the Senior System Analyst of RHD (hereinafter referred to as the 'Client') invites EOI from reputed consulting firm or firms as Joint Venture for shortlisting of the Consultancy Service.

The assignment includes (1) Assessment of current toll collection status (2) Identification of a nationwide toll system architecture (3) Assessment of existing software, databases, and ICT infrastructure operational in the RHD so that proposed platform can be built, integrated and functional under the hood of existing software, databases, and ICT infrastructure (4) Formulation of a national toll governance framework (5) Timeline for all toll systems to comply with uniform method (6) Supervision of compliance with uniform method.

Experience, Resources and Delivery Capacity Required:

Interested international consulting firms are invited to provide information indicating that they are qualified to the services. According to the PPA 2006 & PPR 2008, Rules 115 (2)- The assessment of an Applicant's qualifications shall review the following information requested in the Expressions of Interest to determine appropriateness for the assignment, poor to determine the best combination - (a) brochures submitted by the Applicants summarizing their facilities and areas of expertise; (b) descriptions of similar assignments; (c) experience in similar operating environments and conditions; (d) availability of appropriate experience and professional qualifications among Applicant's staff and adequate resources to carry out the assignment; and (e) managerial strength and financial capacity.

In applicable cases the applicants shall specify the type of association whether Joint Venture (JV) or sub consultants.

Other Details:

Interested firms may obtain further information from Office of the Senior System Analyst, RHD within 11.00am to 1.00pm prior to the closing of EOI.

EOI with supporting documents shall be submitted on or before Tuesday, 18 February 2020 by 2.00pm in sealed envelope with clearly marked "Expression of Interest (EOI) for Selection of Consultancy Service for Design, Development and Commissioning of Unified Toll Collection and Management System of RHD" and delivered to the address mentioned herewith.

The EOI may be submitted by hand, registered post or courier service and the firm shall be responsible for safe delivery in time. The procuring entity shall not be responsible for expenses incurred by the firms in connection with the preparation or delivery of the EOI.

Association with other firms:

International Consulting firm may associate or form consortium with other consulting firm(s) as joint venture to participate in this Consultancy Service

Method of Contract:

Contract will be made by using standard document of lump-sum contract issued by CPTU.

The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all the Expression of Interest (EOI) without assigning any reason.

Kazi Sayeda Montaz
ID No. 000903
Senior System Analyst
Management Information Cell
Sarak Bhaban, Tejgaon, Dhaka

GD-166



জগন্নাথ বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, ঢাকা-১১০০

এম.ফিল এবং পিএইচ.ডি প্রোগ্রামে ভর্তির বিজ্ঞপ্তি

জগন্নাথ বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে ২০২০-২০২১ শিক্ষাবর্ষে এম.ফিল এবং পিএইচ.ডি প্রোগ্রামে ভর্তির জন্য আগ্রহী প্রার্থীদের কাছ থেকে নির্ধারিত ফরমে আবেদনপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

আগামী ০১/০২/২০২০ তারিখ থেকে ০১/০৩/২০২০ তারিখের মধ্যে আবেদন ফরম যথাযথভাবে পূরণ করে পূর্ণকৃত আবেদন ফরমের সাথে গবেষণা প্রস্তাব (Synopsis), জীবন বৃত্তান্ত, সকল শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতার সনদ ও নম্বরপত্রসমূহের ফটোকপি এবং তিন কপি রঙিন ছবি সংশ্লিষ্ট বিভাগীয় চেয়ারম্যান-এর দপ্তরে জমা (অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে, সকাল ৮:০০টা থেকে বিকাল ৪:০০টা পর্যন্ত) দিতে হবে।

আবেদনপত্রের সাথে চাকুরীর প্রার্থীর ক্ষেত্রে যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের অনুমতিপত্র সংযুক্ত করতে হবে। মনোনীত এম.ফিল প্রার্থী (জগন্নাথ বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় ব্যতীত) কোন প্রতিষ্ঠানে কর্মরত থাকলে তাকে অবশ্যই কর্মরত প্রতিষ্ঠান থেকে এম.ফিল প্রোগ্রামে যোগদানের পূর্বে ন্যূনতম এক বছরের ছুটি (বাধ্যতামূলক) নিতে হবে।

আবেদন ফরম, এম.ফিল এবং পিএইচ.ডি প্রোগ্রামে ভর্তির যোগ্যতা/ক্লসসহ যাবতীয় তথ্যাদি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ওয়েবসাইটে (www.jnu.ac.bd) পাওয়া যাবে।

রেজাউল করিম

জগন্নাথ বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়।

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Office of the Project Director

The Pilot Project of Bamboo whole Bangladesh

GR Building

River Research Institute, Faridpur

Phone: +880-631-63465 Fax: 0631-63065 Web Site: www.ri.gov.bd

Memo. No.-RRI/Advertisement-1332/2018/147

Date:21/01/2020

e-Tender Notice

e-Tender are sited through e-GP portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) by the project director for the procurement of following process which will be available at e-GP website (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) from the date 21.01.2020.

Sl. No.	e-Tender ID	Package Name	Last selling date and time	Closing date and time
1.	414298	Construction of Bamboo Bandaling Structures for river bank protection of the Jamuna river and its branch channels near Banga Bandhu Bridge and at khaja Eunus Ali Medical College under package Si-1A of of Belkuchi Sirajgonj during 2019-20 to 2020-21.	04-Feb-2020 17:00	05-Feb-2020 12:00
2.	414325	Bamboo Bandaling Structures for river bank protection of the Jamuna river and its branch channels near Banga Bandhu Bridge and at Sonamukhi Dhangora Hat and Joysing under package Si-1B of of Belkuchi Sirajgonj during 2019-20 to 2020-21.	05-Feb-2020 17:00	06-Feb-2020 12:00
3.	414355	Bamboo Bandaling Structures for river bank protection of the Jamuna river and its branch channels near Char Salimabad under package Si-2A of of Chowhali Sirajgonj during 2019-20 to 2020-21.	05-Feb-2020 17:00	06-Feb-2020 12:00
4.	414364	Bamboo Bandaling Structures for river bank protection of the Jamuna river and its branch channels near Hatia Neorgacha Deuli Kadarpur Patchara and Agdighulia under package Si-2B of of Chowhali Sirajgonj during 2019-20 to 2020-21.	05-Feb-2020 17:00	06-Feb-2020 12:00
5.	414372	River bank protection using Bamboo Bandaling Structures in the Gorai River near Konagram Paturai Vati & downstream of the Baliakandi Sadar under the package RRI/HR/Raj-1A of Baliakandi Rajbari.	05-Feb-2020 17:00	06-Feb-2020 12:00
6.	415469	Construction of Bamboo Bandaling Structures for river bank protection in the downstream of Baliakandi Sadar under package RRI/HR/Raj-2 of Baliakandi Rajbari during 2019-20 to 2020-21.	05-Feb-2020 17:00	06-Feb-2020 12:00

This is an online Tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in the national e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the national e-GP portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the national e-GP system portal and from e-GP helpdesk (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>)

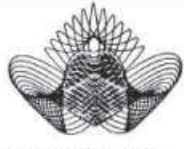
(Engr. Kazi Rezaul Karim)

Project Director Bamboo Bundling Pilot Project

&
Chief Scientific Officer

River Research Institute, Faridpur.

GD-164



দি সিকিউরিটি প্রিন্টিং করপোরেশন (বাংলাদেশ) লিঃ

গাজীপুর-১৭০৩

পুনঃ নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

দি সিকিউরিটি প্রিন্টিং করপোরেশন (বাংলাদেশ) লিঃ, গাজীপুর-১৭০৩ এ নিম্নোক্ত পদসমূহে নির্ধারিত বেতনস্কেল এবং প্রচলিত বিধি অনুযায়ী প্রদেয় অন্যান্য সুবিধাদিতে অস্থায়ীভাবে নিয়োগের নিমিত্তে বাংলাদেশের সকল জেলার স্থায়ী বাসিন্দাদের নিকট থেকে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে। উক্ত পদসমূহে আবেদনের জন্য আবশ্যিক শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা, বেতনস্কেল, বয়স ও অন্যান্য প্রয়োজনীয় তথ্যাদি নিম্নে প্রদত্ত হলোঃ

ক্রমিক নং	শ্রেণি	পদের নাম	পদের সংখ্যা	বেতনস্কেল, ২০১৫	বয়সসীমা	শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা
১	৩	প্রধান প্রকৌশলী	১	৫৬,৫০০- ৭৪,৪০০/-	ন্যূনতম ৫০ বৎসর	মন্ত্রকৌশল/তড়িৎ কৌশল বিষয়ে বিএসসি ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং ডিগ্রি। বৃহৎ শিল্প প্রতিষ্ঠানে ৪র্থ গ্রেড/সমমানের পদে ২ বৎসরের চাকুরীসহ ১ম শ্রেণির কর্মকর্তা পদে কমপক্ষে ১৫ বৎসরের চাকুরীর অভিজ্ঞতা। সকল পরীক্ষায় ন্যূনতম ২য় বিভাগ/শ্রেণিসহ যে কোন ২টিতে ১ম শ্রেণি/বিভাগ থাকতে হবে। কোন পরীক্ষায় ৩য় বিভাগ/শ্রেণি গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে না।
২	৩	মহাব্যবস্থাপক, উৎপাদন (ব্যাকেনোট/আদার সিকিউরিটি প্রোডাক্টস)	১	৫৬,৫০০- ৭৪,৪০০/-	ন্যূনতম ৫০ বৎসর	মন্ত্রকৌশল/তড়িৎকৌশল/শিল্প উৎপাদন বিষয়ে বিএসসি ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং ডিগ্রি। বৃহৎ উৎপাদন/প্রকারণ শিল্প প্রতিষ্ঠানে ৪র্থ গ্রেড/সমমানের পদে ২ বৎসরের চাকুরীসহ ১ম শ্রেণির কর্মকর্তা পদে কমপক্ষে ১৫ বৎসরের চাকুরীর অভিজ্ঞতা। সকল পরীক্ষায় ন্যূনতম ২য় বিভাগ/শ্রেণিসহ যে কোন ২টিতে ১ম শ্রেণি/বিভাগ থাকতে হবে। কোন পরীক্ষায় ৩য় বিভাগ/শ্রেণি গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে না।
৩	৫	ব্যবস্থাপক, উৎপাদন (ব্যাকেনোট/আদার সিকিউরিটি প্রোডাক্টস)	১	৪৩,০০০- ৬৯,৮৫০/-	ন্যূনতম ৪০ বৎসর	মন্ত্রকৌশল/তড়িৎ কৌশল/শিল্প উৎপাদন বিষয়ে বিএসসি ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং ডিগ্রি। বৃহৎ উৎপাদন/প্রকারণ শিল্প প্রতিষ্ঠানে ৬ষ্ঠ গ্রেড/সমমানের পদে ২ বৎসরের চাকুরীসহ ১ম শ্রেণির কর্মকর্তা পদে কমপক্ষে ১০ বৎসরের চাকুরীর অভিজ্ঞতা। সকল পরীক্ষায় ন্যূনতম ২য় বিভাগ/শ্রেণিসহ যে কোন ২টিতে ১ম শ্রেণি/বিভাগ থাকতে হবে। কোন পরীক্ষায় ৩য় বিভাগ/শ্রেণি গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে না।

১। গ্রেডিং পদ্ধতিতে প্রকাশিত ফলাফলের ক্ষেত্রে শিক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়ের ০২/০৬/২০০৯ ও ০২/০৩/২০১০ তারিখের প্রজ্ঞাপন নং-শিমা/শাঃ১১/৫-১(অংশ)/৫৮২ ও শিমা/শাঃ১১/১৯-১/২০০৭/১৭৪ অনুযায়ী বর্তমান প্রচলিত জিপিএ বা ক্ষেত্রমত, সিজিপিএ এর বিপরীতে পূর্বের ১ম, ২য় ও ৩য় বিভাগ/শ্রেণি নিম্নরূপে নির্ধারিত হবেঃ

(ক) এসএসসি বা সমমান এবং এইচএসসি বা সমমান পরীক্ষার ফলাফলের ক্ষেত্রে-

জিপিএ	প্রথম বিভাগ
জিপিএ ৩.০০ বা তদুর্ধ্ব	প্রথম বিভাগ
জিপিএ ২.০০ থেকে ৩.০০ এর কম	দ্বিতীয় বিভাগ
জিপিএ ১.০০ থেকে ২.০০ এর কম	তৃতীয় বিভাগ

(খ) অনুমোদিত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত সিজিপিএ এর ক্ষেত্রে-

অর্জিত সিজিপিএ	সমতুল্য শ্রেণি/বিভাগ
৪.০০ পয়েন্ট ফেলে	৫.০০ পয়েন্ট ফেলে
৩.০০ বা তদুর্ধ্ব	৩.৭৫ বা তদুর্ধ্ব
২.২৫ বা তদুর্ধ্ব কিন্তু ৩.০০ এর কম	২.৮১৩ বা তদুর্ধ্ব কিন্তু ৩.৭৫ এর কম
১.৬৫ বা তদুর্ধ্ব কিন্তু ২.২৫ এর কম	২.০৬৩ বা তদুর্ধ্ব কিন্তু ২.৮১৩ এর কম

২। 'O' Level ও 'A' Level এর ক্ষেত্রে এদেশীয় সংশ্লিষ্ট শিক্ষা বোর্ড হতে ইস্যুকৃত সমমান সার্টিফিকেট (Equivalence Certificate) এবং বিদেশী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে প্রাপ্ত ডিগ্রির ক্ষেত্রে দেশীয় সংশ্লিষ্ট বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়/বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় মঞ্জুরী কমিশন/উপযুক্ত কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক ইস্যুকৃত সমমান সার্টিফিকেট (Equivalence Certificate) অনুযায়ী ডিগ্রি ও ফলাফলের (শ্রেণি/বিভাগ/জিপিএ/সিজিপিএ উল্লেখসহ) তথ্য প্রদান করতে হবে।

৩। ইতোপূর্বে যারা আবেদন করেছেন তাদের পুনরায় আবেদন করার প্রয়োজন নেই।

৪। জীবন বৃত্তান্তে নিম্নে বর্ণিত তথ্যসমূহ সঠিকভাবে উল্লেখ করতে হবেঃ

১। নাম ২। পিতার নাম ৩। মাতার নাম ৪। স্বামীর নাম (বিবাহিতা প্রার্থীর ক্ষেত্রে) ৫। বর্তমান ঠিকানা ৬। স্থায়ী ঠিকানা (মহিলা প্রার্থীর ক্ষেত্রে স্থায়ী ঠিকানা) ৭। জন্ম তারিখ ৮। বয়স (০২/০১/২০২০ তারিখে) ৯। জাতীয়তা ১০। শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা ১১। অভিজ্ঞতা ১২। বৈবাহিক অবস্থা ১৩। আবেদনকারীর স্বাক্ষর।

৫। আবেদনপত্রের সাথে আবশ্যিকীয় দলিলাদিঃ

১। সকল শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতার মূল সনদ/সাময়িক সনদপত্রের সত্যায়িত কপি ২। সম্পৃক্ত তোলা ৪ (চার) কপি (ছবির পিছনে প্রার্থীর নামসহ) পাসপোর্ট আকারের সত্যায়িত ছবি ৩। পেজেন্টেড অফিসার অথবা দি সিকিউরিটি প্রিন্টিং করপোরেশন (বাংলাদেশ) লিমিটেড অথবা বাংলাদেশ কর্তৃপক্ষের মাধ্যমে দরখাস্ত করতে হবে। খামের উপরে পদের নাম লিখতে হবে। উল্লিখিত তারিখের পর প্রাপ্ত দরখাস্ত গ্রহণযোগ্য হিসেবে বিবেচিত হবে না। অনসম্পূর্ণ/ভুল তথ্য সফলিত দরখাস্ত কোন প্রকার যোগাযোগ ব্যতিরেকে বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে। কোন প্রকার কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকেই এনপিসিবিএল কর্তৃপক্ষ নিয়োগ কার্যক্রম বাতিল করার অধিকার সংরক্ষণ করে। বিজ্ঞপ্তি করপোরেশনের website: www.spccb.org.bd এবং বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের website: www.bb.org.bd-তে পাওয়া যাবে।

৬। আবেদনপত্র দাখিলঃ

আগ্রহী প্রার্থীদেরকে ব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালক, দি সিকিউরিটি প্রিন্টিং করপোরেশন (বাংলাদেশ) লিঃ, গাজীপুর-১৭০৩ বরাবরে লিখিত দরখাস্ত প্রেরণ করতে হবে যা সর্বশেষ আগামী ১১/০২/২০২০ইং তারিখ পর্যন্ত (অফিস সময়ের মধ্যে) গ্রহণ করা হবে। চাকুরীর প্রার্থীদের তাদের স্ব-স্ব নিয়োগ কর্তৃপক্ষের মাধ্যমে দরখাস্ত করতে হবে। খামের উপরে পদের নাম লিখতে হবে। উল্লিখিত তারিখের পর প্রাপ্ত দরখাস্ত গ্রহণযোগ্য হিসেবে বিবেচিত হবে না। অনসম্পূর্ণ/ভুল তথ্য সফলিত দরখাস্ত কোন প্রকার যোগাযোগ ব্যতিরেকে বাতিল বলে গণ্য হবে। কোন প্রকার কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকেই এনপিসিবিএল কর্তৃপক্ষ নিয়োগ কার্যক্রম বাতিল করার অধিকার সংরক্ষণ করে। বিজ্ঞপ্তি করপোরেশনের website: www.spccb.org.bd এবং বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের website: www.bb.org.bd-তে পাওয়া যাবে।

জিডি-১৬০

মোঃ আজিজুল হক
মহাব্যবস্থাপক (প্রশাসন)

GD-163



Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Bangladesh Police

Rapid Action Battalion Forces Headquarters

Central Procurement Section

Kurmitola, Dhaka-1229.

Memo No. RAB Forces HQ/CPS/2019-2020/4112316/720

Date: 22-01-2020.

INVITATION FOR TENDER (OTM)

01. Ministry	Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA).
02. Agency	Rapid Action Battalion (RAB).
03. Procuring Entity Name	DG, Rapid Action Battalion (RAB).
04. Invitation for	Tender of Goods.
KEY INFORMATION	
05. Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method (OTM).
FUNDING INFORMATION	
06. Budget and Source of Funds	Revenue Budget.
PARTICULAR INFORMATION	
07. Project/Program Name	Procurement & Installation of Tower for RAB VHF Network.
08. Tender Package No and Year	G-12(S)/2019-2020.
09. Invitation Ref No & Date	Memo No. RAB Forces HQ/CPS/2019-2020/4112316/720 Date: 22-01-2020.
DATE AND TIME	
10. Tender Last Selling Date	09-02-2020
11. Tender Closing Date and Time	10-02-2020
12. Tender Opening Date and Time	10-02-2020
13. Pre-Tender Meeting	30-01-2020
14. Place of Pre-Tender Meeting	Conference Room, 1st Floor, RAB Forces Headquarters, Kurmitola, Dhaka-1229.
15. Name & Address of the Office	Director (Admin & Finance), RAB Forces Headquarters, Kurmitola, Dhaka-1229.
16. Place of Selling Tender Document	Central Procurement Section, RAB Forces Headquarters, Kurmitola, Dhaka-1229.
17. Name & Address of the Office Receiving Tender Document	Director (Admin & Finance), RAB Forces Headquarters, Kurmitola, Dhaka-1229.
18. Place of Opening Tender Document	Conference Room, 1st Floor, RAB Forces Headquarters, Kurmitola, Dhaka-1229.
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER	
19. Eligibility of Bidder	The Bidder should have valid Trade License, Current Bank Solvency Certificate, Income Tax Certificate, VAT Registration Certificate and the legal capacity to enter into the contract. Bidder should not be blacklisted by any Govt. organization in Bangladesh. A complete set of tender document may be purchased by interested bidder for submission in written application on their own pad to the addressee below.
20. Brief Description of Goods	Procurement & Installation of Tower for RAB VHF Network.
21. Tender Document Price	BDT =1,000.00 (One Thousand) only. In cash payment.
22. Tender Validity	60 (Sixty) days.
23. Tender Security Amount in Taka	BDT =26,000.00 (Twenty Six Thousand) only.
Special Instructions:	
24.	a. The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any tender prior to acceptance. b. Interested bidder may obtain further information from the office of the Director (Admin & Finance). c. No tender document will be sent by courier or mail.

(MD ASADUZZAMAN)

BD/8769

Wing Commander

Director(Admin & Finance)

RAB Forces Headquarters, Dhaka.

Boon of orange on plain land

SHYKH SERAJ

Dear readers, a few days back I went to Chapatola in Jhenidah's Maheshpur upazila. For the past few months, I had plans to visit this place and there was a special reason to do so. I want to bring in front of you a fruit farmer who has done remarkably well. His name is Rafiqul Islam, who has cultivated orange on plain land for the first time, to the best of my knowledge. Seven years back, I featured orange cultivation from Moulvibazar's Juri upazila. A man named Anwar did the cultivation on the hills. As far as I know, Rafiqul is the first to cultivate orange on the plain land. Rafiqul is a very active person and he has been contacting me to visit his orchard for some years. And, he's an avid viewer of my programme, Hridoye Mati O Manush. Finally, I could make it happen. Rafiqul collected the orange saplings from abroad. Today, you'll get to know the amazing orange orchard of Rafiqul. He is cultivating some other crops as well. He has cultivated maize on four bigha of land.

I reached Chapatola, starting from Jashore at 4:00am. Rafiqul was waiting for me. He was so glad to see me. We went straight to his orchard. Oranges could be seen from a far distance.

"It's so good to see you," said Rafiqul hugging me.

"Look at your wonderful orchard," I replied.

"I have been waiting for you for a long time," he said.

"I'm sorry, but finally I could manage it Rafiqul," I replied entering his orchard.

Ripe oranges are all over. Colourful and large enough with deep green leaves. At times I felt the oranges are even more than the leaves. I could barely believe my eyes.

"How big is your orchard?"

"Five bigha (2,002 acres)."

"How many orange trees are here?"

"About 140."

"Do you have malta?"

"Yes, there are 500 malta trees."

"What about this one," I asked Rafiqul touching another variety of orange.



Shykh Seraj at Rafiqul Islam's orange orchard at Chapatola village in Jhenidah's Maheshpur upazila.

PHOTO: HRIDOYE MATI O MANUSH

Shykh Seraj is Bangladesh's pioneer development journalist. He received country's two highest civilian honours, Swadhinata Puroshkar and Ekushey Padak, respectively. He is a BIDS, Ashoka and Bangla Academy Fellow. He also received highest award for agricultural journalism from the United Nations, FAO A.H. Boerma Award, Gusi Peace Prize (Philippines) and many other prestigious accolades at home and abroad. At Channel i, he's the Founder Director and Head of News. He's also Director and Host of Channel i's popular agro-documentary, Hridoye Mati O Manush.



I picked one orange from his tree. I tasted and tell you what, it was so juicy and sweet. I really felt proud of Rafiqul who has done a tremendous job in producing orange on a plain land with such quality. In this great occasion, I was remembering Reboti Sikder, who did a fantastic job back in 2016 by producing sweet malta in Pirojpur's Dakatia. Rafiqul is researching with different varieties of oranges here. And most of his experiments went successful. Mandarin variety is comparatively smaller and has a reddish shade. This variety was produced at a great extent, says Rafiqul.

Bangladesh has been producing various types of fruits. We, however, spend a lot of foreign currency to buy apples and oranges every year. Rafiqul believes within two to three years, Bangladesh would be able to stop importing oranges.

"Our Honourable Prime Minister is very much a farmer-friendly person. If she looks into this matter, we'll definitely shine more," Rafiqul hopes. He also mentioned, if this orchard comes into notice of the Agriculture Minister, things will definitely go even bigger for an even better future.

The story of Rafiqul of turning into an orange farmer from a nursery owner is truly amazing.

"Actually, I was a nursery owner. After watching Reboti Sikder's malta success on Hridoye Mati O Manush, I thought I need to

become a successful farmer, not just a nursery owner," Rafiqul said.

After seeing the programme, Rafiqul wanted to have a malta garden of his own. He started off with guava. So far, he has sold guava worth Tk 10 lakh (USD 11,775). When he went to Darjeeling, he saw many orange trees in high and low lands with huge production. He collected 200 saplings from there. He came back and planted those.

In the meantime, he did some malta and those were giving him good produce. But, looking at the oranges after a couple of months of planting, he became really hopeful.

"However, people told me that growing oranges here is an insane initiative. I only kept on working hard and kept my focus on my work," said Rafiqul.

"But as you can see now, the result is much satisfying and hopeful. I believed that I could also grow foreign varieties of oranges here," added the confident orchard owner.

"Have the traders made any dealing?" I asked.

"They proposed Tk 120 (USD 1.41) per kg. My asking price is Tk 130 (USD 1.53)."

"How many kilograms you expect from one tree," I asked again.

"50 kilogram minimum," he replied.

"That's good, will the production increase in future?" I asked.

"I am expecting a double production next

season," replied the positive farmer.

"That's very impressive," I replied.

As the orange trees will grow more in coming years, it will give more fruits. Moreover, regular pruning would also help in increase of production, which will lead to a double production in the next season, Rafiqul said.

"I am very happy that the local agriculture officers have always supported me," he said.

All over, Rafiqul's production cost is Tk 50,000 (USD 588.75).

"How many kilograms of oranges do you expect?"

"4,000, and Tk 5,200 (USD 61.23) for every 40 kilograms.

"So, for 4,000 kilograms you're expecting to get Tk 5,20,000 (USD 6,123.02) while expenditure in only Tk 50,000?"

"Yes."

"That's just great!"

"Do we have any idea how much orange we import every year?"

According to a survey of Chattogram customs, in the fiscal year 2017-2018, 1,17,170 tonnes of orange and malta have been imported. Each tonne worth Tk 93,000 (USD 1,095.08). It means in total the expense is approximately Tk 1,090 crore (USD 128 million). In the previous fiscal year, 1,02,100 tonnes of orange and malta were imported. Within a decade, Bangladesh can become

self-dependent in producing oranges and he's extremely hopeful that Bangladesh would be able to export oranges very soon if farmers get the support at the right time, Rafiqul said. Rafiqul has also produced 30,000 mandarin orange saplings and selling those to other farmers. The one-foot tall sapling costs Tk 150 (USD 1.76) while the two-feet costs Tk 200 (USD 2.35).

Rafiqul's garden is now a dreamland for all the young entrepreneurs of the country. I also met the Sub Assistant Agriculture Officer (SAAO) Rabiul Kabir Pallab and discussed about Rafiqul's orchard.

"As a marginal farmer, he has taken a great risk and built up the garden. We could not imagine this much success in orange cultivation," SAAO Rabiul said.

"How can you help further?" I asked.

"We're always beside the farmers and we're going to help them with advanced technologies," replied Rabiul.

"We have already advised Rafiqul to make his soil more fertile," added Rabiul.

Dear readers, I wish to see Bangladeshi farmers go to the field and make abundant success. And, Rafiqul is just the perfect example of it. He not only wants to meet the demand of local consumption but also looking keenly forward to export. I truly hope and want that the dream of this dedicated, spirited and successful farmer gets fulfilled.



Logs lie scattered in the forest on a government-owned khas land in Paschim Singur area of Moulvibazar's Kulaura upazila on Tuesday, bearing testimony to mindless tree felling there while a truckload of logs (inset), allegedly collected from the forest, is being taken for sale.

PHOTO: MINTUDESHWARA

Logging puts forest in danger

UNO seizes 100 logs of trees felled at government land in Kulaura

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

Illegal tree felling poses threat to the forest on a government-owned khas land in Paschim Singur area of Moulvibazar's Kulaura upazila.

Kulaura Upazila Nirbahi Officer Farhad Hossain on Tuesday seized around 100 logs of illegally felled trees from the area.

A few people started felling trees there two weeks ago, allegedly with the help of the beat officer of adjacent Baramchal forest, several locals said.

"The gangs are cutting trees in Paschim Singur area, sometime in broad daylight, but villagers dare not say anything as influential people are involved in the act," Saidul Islam Shipon, a resident of Baramchal village in Kulaura upazila, told this correspondent.

As there is huge demand of wood for local

sawmills, they have targeted the forest, he said.

On condition of anonymity, one of the tree looters said usually they make a verbal agreement with the beat officer of adjacent forest after selecting a spot.

"The officer gets 40% of the money earned from each truckload of logs. If there is any disagreement regarding the dealings, the forest department begins drives against the illegal tree felling," he said.

Visiting the forest areas in Paschim Singur on Tuesday, this correspondent saw clear evidence of massive tree felling.

There were remains of trees and three huge piles of logs were found near a newly-made road.

Contacted, Ahmed Ali, beat officer of Baramchal forest, termed the allegations

against him as false.

"The area under question does not belong to the forest department. If we receive any information when loggers transport wood, we can seize the wood-laden vehicles. We don't have enough resources to conduct regular drives on the road," he said.

Abdul Karim Kim, executive member of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon, said, the forest faces the threat of disappearance due to the illegal tree felling.

Along with official action, social movement is necessary to save the forest, he said.

SM Sajjad Hosen, divisional officer of forest department in Sylhet, told this correspondent, "I wasn't aware of the matter until now. We will conduct an inquiry and take action if the allegations of tree looting are found true."

Woman murdered in Manikganj town

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

A woman was murdered in the town yesterday morning.

The deceased was identified as Mahmuda Begum, 45, wife of Zahirul Islam Aliar of South Sewta area in the town. The couple lived on second floor of their five-storey building.

Police and family members said some miscreants entered the floor around 10:00am and strangled the woman in her room. The murderers also tied hands, legs, eyes and mouth of the victim's daughter Jyoti Akhter, 20, and kept her confined to the adjoining room. At the time, Mahmuda's husband Zahirul was feeding pigeons on the roof of the building. After some time, he entered the flat and found his wife unconscious. Mahmuda was later

taken to 250-bed District Hospital where on-duty doctor declared her dead.

Jyoti said three unidentified persons tied her legs, hands, eyes and mouth when she came out from toilet and she was kept confined to a room. She then heard her mother screaming. Later, the miscreants fled the scene. Additional Superintendent of Police Hafizur Rahman said the woman was strangled. The rope was found on the spot. Preliminary investigation showed that it was a pre-planned murder, said the police official. Officer in-Charge of Manikganj Police Station Rakibuzzaman said the body was sent to the hospital for autopsy.

Superintendent of Police (SP) Rifat Rahman Shamim visited the spot. Police were trying to find out motive behind the murder, said the SP.



Seedlings are being sorted out by two female workers at a seedbed in Jujkhola village of Pirojpur Sadar upazila recently. It has been a long tradition in parts of the upazila and its neighbouring Najirpur upazila where women, after finishing their household chores, work alongside men at crop fields.

PHOTO: HABIBURRAHMAN

No bribe, no paddy procurement

S DIMP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Each farmer, whose name was drawn in lottery, will get a chance to sell one tonne of paddy to the government at Tk 26 per kg rate. But it has been alleged that the growers cannot sell their paddy without paying bribes to warehouse officers and labourers.

The government started buying paddy from farmers on December 15 last year and it will continue till mid-March. A total of 9,669 farmers who have been picked through lottery can sell their paddy to all the seven government food warehouses in the district. Each farmer can sell one tonne of paddy at Tk 26 per kg rate.

But the farmers are being harassed in various ways when they denied to pay Tk 500 to Tk 700 and Tk 1,000 to warehouse labourers and officers, alleged local growers, adding that especially farmers who come to sell their paddy in Puranbazar Kalibari and Dalpatti warehouses of Sadar upazila are the worst sufferers.

A target has been set to procure 9,669 tonnes of paddy from Lalmonirhat during the current Aman season. The paddy is being procured by seven government food warehouses in the district. About 3,83,800 tonnes of paddy have been harvested from 65,290 hectares of land in the district this year.

Lebul Islam, a farmer of Harati village in Sadar upazila, said "On the first day, the officer of Puranbazar Kalibari food warehouse returned my paddy showing the cause of moisture problem as I denied to pay bribe

money. But two days after the incident, I could sell the same paddy when I paid the bribe money."

Another agricultural card holder Ataur Rahman of Bhitorkuti village in the same upazila said they face various problem when they went to sell their paddy to the government food warehouse.

"If we protest over the corruption, we are harassed in various ways," said Ataur.

Solaiman Ali, a farmer of Gobdha village in Aditmari upazila, said "I was very disappointed when the food officer of the warehouse in the upazila returned my paddy showing the cause of moisture problem. It happened as I refused to pay the bribe money."

"I don't want to face such hassle again. So, I sold my lottery coupon to a local broker at Tk 2,500," said Solaiman.

Contacted, Shahinur Rahman, food officer of Puranbazar Kalibari warehouse, declined to make any comment on the issue.

District Food Controller Kazi Saifuddin said the government pays wages to warehouse workers through labour handling contractors.

"We gave clear instruction to warehouse staffers that no farmer would be harassed in selling their paddy. Despite the instruction, if any farmer is harassed, strict action will be taken in this regard after investigation," he said.

Deputy Commissioner Abu Jafor said if proof of any government warehouse staffer's involvement in irregularities is found, legal action will be taken after investigation.



Farmers wait at a government warehouse in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila to sell their paddy. The photo was taken on Sunday.

PHOTO: STAR



Agitating collectorate assistants in front of Tangail deputy commissioner's office yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

DEMAND FOR UPGRADATION

Collectorate assistants' strike enters third day

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

The collectorate assistants in Tangail continued their work abstention for the third consecutive day yesterday as part of their central programme demanding change of their official designation along with upgradation of salary.

They brought out a procession in the Judge Court area in the morning and later staged a sit-in in front of the office of the deputy commissioner, like the previous two days.

Mozibor Rahman, president of Tangail district unit of Bangladesh Collectorate Assistants Association, and Motaleb Siddique, its general secretary, spoke there.

They said although the designation of collectorate assistants and their

equivalent employees of secretariat were equal previously, the government in 2000 changed the designation of the latter and upgraded their salary with promotions.

On the other hand, the designation and salary grade of the collectorate office employees were not changed.

The employees of the collectorate offices have continued movement since 2001 for realising their rightful demands, but the authorities are yet to pay heed to it, the speakers said.

They warned of waging a tougher movement if their demands are not met.

Meanwhile, Md Shahidul Islam, deputy commissioner of Tangail, talked to the agitating collectorate employees and requested them to join their work.

Lalmonirhat shivering in cold

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Near-freezing conditions in the first week of Magh, the last month of winter season according to Bangla calendar, has brought everyday activities to almost a standstill in Lalmonirhat.

Yesterday morning, mercury fell to 7.2 degrees Celsius in Lalmonirhat where it dipped to as low as 8.2 degrees the day before.

People in the area are advised to brace for colder days as temperature in the district is likely to fall further, according to a forecast of the met office in Rajarhat.

The ongoing cold wave has been causing boundless sufferings for all -- especially the young, the elderly, day labourers and farm workers.

Saifur Rahman, a 70-year-old resident of Uttar Saptana village in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila, said, "The cold is unbearable" and this

has been the coldest year in his life.

With bone-chilling cold and a persistent blanket of fog over the area throughout the day, impoverished people have been trying to keep themselves warm by basking in straw fire.

Many of them, without any warm clothes, are still trying to make a living by working as day labourers at agricultural fields.

"I went to the field ignoring the cold to earn a living, but I couldn't carry on," said farm worker Nazir Ali, 65, from Bangram village of Sadar upazila.

Rickshaw puller Noor Mohammad, a slum dweller in Shaheed Shahjahan Colony area of Lalmonirhat town, said he did not even dare to get out with his rickshaw in such cold. "Besides, there's not too many passengers out on the road."

With no money coming in, he had to rely on

loans to feed his family, he added.

Unable to afford even any blanket, the homeless and the extreme poor, both in the town and in char areas of the district, are passing each day with the hope that the coming days will get warmer.

Homeless Momina Begum, from Khorapal village in the same upazila, said, "I'm a landless person living on an abandoned railway line. I'm trying to survive in the cold by bundling up in some old rags. Neither the government nor the NGOs gave me anything [blankets or warm clothes]."

Contacted, Lalmonirhat Deputy Commissioner Abu Jafor claimed that there is not much demand for free blankets in the district as the people there have become more "self-reliant". "At the beginning of the winter, we distributed around 4,000 blankets. There is no more demand now."



Braving bone-chilling cold and thick fog, an elderly farmer carries his produce to a kitchen market in Phulgachh village of Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila. The photo was taken yesterday morning.

PHOTO: STAR

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Upazila Engineer
Bhaluka, Mymensingh
www.lged.gov.bd

Memo No. 46.02.6113.002.000.001.20-997 Date: 22-01-2020

e-Tender Notice No. 04/2019-20

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of works. Details are given below:

Sl. No.	Tender ID No.	Name of works with package No.	Type of Method	Tender last selling (date & time)	Tender closing (date & time)	Tender opening (date & time)
01.	412567	Major Maintenance of 1. Bhoradoba, 2. Aulataloi & 3. Loha Boi Boradi Govt. Primary School (e-Tender/PEDP-4/MMN/BHA/2019-2020/W17.00644)	OTM	16-Feb-2020 at 17.00	17-Feb-2020 at 14.00	17-Feb-2020 at 14.00
02.	412568	Major Maintenance of 1. Dhakuria, 2. Panihadi & 3. Jhalpaza Govt. Primary School (e-Tender/PEDP-4/MMN/BHA/2019-2020/W17.00645)	OTM	16-Feb-2020 at 17.00	17-Feb-2020 at 14.00	17-Feb-2020 at 14.00
03.	412569	Major Maintenance of 1. Komo Para & 2. Dumni Ghat Govt. Primary School (e-Tender/PEDP-4/MMN/BHA/2019-2020/W17.00646)	OTM	16-Feb-2020 at 17.00	17-Feb-2020 at 14.00	17-Feb-2020 at 14.00

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To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered bank's branches. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

Mohd. Rafiqul Islam
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GD-167

SI closed for bribery

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A sub inspector (SI) of Faridpur Police Station was closed to Pabna Police Lines suspended yesterday for allegedly taking bribe from the families of two detained drug addicts on Sunday.

The policeman is identified as SI Mintu Das. SI Mintu was suspended as the allegation brought against him was proved in primary investigation, Pabna Additional Superintendent of Police Goutam Kuman Bishwas said.

On Sunday night, SI Mintu arrested two drug addicts -- Munnaf Hossain, and Russel Hossain of Per Faridpur village.

He later took Tk 20 thousand from the arrestees' families, assuring them to release the duo after producing them before a mobile court.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Local Government Engineering Department
Office of the Executive Engineer
District: Faridpur
www.lged.gov.bd

উন্নয়নের গণতন্ত্র
শেখ হাসিনার মূলমন্ত্র

Memo No. 46.02.2900.000.07.001.19.215

Date: 21-01-2020

e-Tender Notice No. 34/2019-20 (OSTETM)

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of

SI No.	Tender ID No.	Package No.	Name of work
01.	412274	CRMIDP/FARD/W-295	Construction of two (2) Storied Rural Market Building with 04 Storied Foundation in Bosuna Lokkhondia Bazar under Madhukhali Upazila Dist-Faridpur.

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted.

To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches up to 4:00pm on 23-02-2020.

Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).

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GD-161



Bangladesh T20I skipper Mahmudullah Riyad (L) was all smiles as the team reached the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport yesterday to start their journey towards Pakistan. Shorn of experienced players like the banned Shakib Al Hasan and Mushfiqur Rahim, who opted not to tour, the Tigers will be relying on the likes of (R-L) Soumya Sarkar, Al-Amin Hossain, Shafiu Islam, Mustafizur Rahman and Rubel Hossain during the tour. PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED/BCB

India will not host Asia XI-World XI matches

New Ahmedabad venue will not be ready in time

SPORTS REPORTER

India will not host any of the matches between Asia XI and World XI, organised by the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) to mark the 100th birth anniversary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Board of Control for Cricket in India [BCCI] president Sourav Ganguly had planned to have one of the two matches of the series at Sardar Patel Stadium, currently under construction in Ahmedabad, to mark the inauguration of the venue.

According to BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury, the construction of the stadium will not be completed in time to host one of the matches. BCB has planned to hold both matches - which will have T20I status -- on March 18 and 22 at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

"A match was expected to be played in India as they were expected to inaugurate a big stadium but now, they [BCCI] are not ready to do it and both matches will be hosted here," Chowdhury told reporters Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

The board is planning to invite legends of the game to attend the matches to add to the significance of the occasion.

"We are open to inviting everyone. We will definitely invite the high-ups of the cricket world, dignitaries who are in the ICC [International Cricket Council] and other important positions. Also, we will try to bring cricketing legends of different eras. We will try to make all the necessary measurements to make the event colourful."

"We are communicating with almost everyone. As I said, we are contacting every player in our list. There are a few complications that we need to work on. There are some cases where there is a series starting during or right after the event. In those cases, we are working on how we can ensure their participation," he said.

'Tigers should do well in Pakistan'

SPORTS REPORTER

More than eight private security personnel surrounded the elevator area leading to the A.S Mahmud Seminar Hall in The Daily Star

Centre as Shakib Al Hasan walked out from the elevator and went towards the packed hall to renew his brand ambassador contract with Lifebuoy yesterday.

Although he has been banned from cricket for two years, the second of which is a suspended sentence, for not reporting corrupt approaches from a bookmaker to the ICC's anti-corruption unit, Shakib's aura has not diminished even a little.

Bangladesh cricket's apex superstar has not been at the forefront since his ban in October last year and has generally avoided speaking to the media, especially about cricket, during promotional events that he has attended.

Yesterday was perhaps the first time since the ban that the 32-year-old came out of his shell after an video was played ahead of the event showing a determined Shakib working out in the gym and gearing up for his comeback. In the video, Shakib also pledged his continuing support for the national team despite currently being out of cricket.

Followed by the official introduction speeches it was time for the journalists to ask questions and

despite instructions from organisers to restrict queries to Shakib's involvement with the brand, that was not how it went.

Shakib replied in typical fashion when asked whether he was gearing up for a comeback, as shown in the video. "For that you have to wait until



SHAKIB AL HASAN

I return to the field. If I say I have done a lot of things for the comeback and it's not proven, then it won't be good and acceptable. Wait for it... if everything goes well you will get the answer," Shakib said with a smile.

When questions arose about how much he is missing cricket or how he is spending his days away from the game, Shakib chose to duck that line of attack.

"I don't want to share these things as when the right time comes when I need to share those, I will. But before that I am not comfortable to share such things," the champion all-rounder said.

But when you have Shakib in front of the media, questions about the 'Tigers' upcoming assignment are inevitable. Yesterday, the former Test and T20I skipper could not resist giving his take on Bangladesh's upcoming T20I tour of Pakistan.

"I would hope everyone will go there [Pakistan] safely and return home after playing well. Obviously, Bangladesh can get success there as Regular touch with Tigers' head coach Russell Domingo, as well as with board members. Meanwhile, millions of his fans would be eagerly waiting to see him not just in promotional events but also to witness his heroics on the field."

Shakib sets a different trend!

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan has set the rare trend of gaining more endorsements while serving a ban. Last year, a renowned company suspended their association with Indian cricketer Hardik Pandya after the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) suspended the all-rounder following misogynistic comments about women on a television show. What they believed was that such comments did not reflect the values of their company.

A shameful attempt to cheat in South Africa cost Steve Smith and David Warner huge sponsorship deals after they were handed 12-month bans over the ball-tampering scandal.

Golf icon Tiger Woods also lost a plethora of endorsements after a 2009 sex scandal while the world's leading companies suspended endorsement deals with Russian tennis star Maria Sharapova after she admitted to failing a drug test at the Australian Open in 2016.

Likewise, England all-rounder Ben Stokes lost lucrative contracts following a brawl at a Bristol nightclub, with one company commenting that such behaviour did not match their brand's culture and values.

Such examples abound because it is believed that such incidents go against the spirit of sport and any involvement with any disgraced athlete has an effect on the image of a company's brand.

Shakib, however, has been enjoying a different experience in this regard as he has signed a number of deals with major companies since the International Cricket Council (ICC) banned Bangladesh's Test and T20I captain from all cricket for two years, with one year of that suspended, after he accepted three charges of breaching the ICC's Anti-Corruption Code.

Shakib's latest was a contract extension with Lifebuoy that he signed during a programme at The Daily Star premises yesterday.

Curious reporters wanted to know about the recipe to his signing one deal after another while serving a ban and the 32-year-old only increased the curiosity by saying: "You have to try to find out the reason behind that."

However, only a good research can unearth the reason!

Tigresses win Women's T20 Quadrangular



SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh women's cricket team emerged champions of the Women's T20 Quadrangular series with a 14-run win over India B in the final in Patna yesterday.

Sanjida Islam and Murshida Khatun, each scoring 34, set up the Tigresses' total of 117 for seven after

skipper Salma Khatun chose to bat first at the toss.

Then off-spinner Salma and pacer Jahanara Alam bowled economical spells, taking two wickets for 18 and two for 17 respectively, to restrict India B to 103 for eight after 20 overs.

India A and Thailand were the two other teams in the quadrangular

tournament.

The Tigresses had lost just one match during their march to the final, when they were defeated by 14 runs by none other than India B on January 18. India B, meanwhile, had marched undefeated to the final, where Bangladesh avenged their league defeat by an identical margin to bag the trophy.

Mathews' 200 puts SL on top

AFP, Harare

Angelo Mathews scored a maiden Test double-century as Sri Lanka took control of the first Test against Zimbabwe at the close of day four at the Harare Sports Club on Wednesday.

Mathews was unbeaten on 200 from 468 balls after batting for exactly 10 hours to lead the tourists to 515 for nine declared and a first innings lead of 157.

Zimbabwe weathered a difficult period before the close to go to stumps on 30 without loss, with openers Prince Masvaire (15) and Brian Mudzinganyama (14) at the crease.

The uncapped Mudzinganyama is the sixth case of a concussion substitute in Test cricket since the rule was introduced on Aug. 1 last year.

SCORES IN BRIEF ZIMBABWE: First innings 358 and second innings 30 for no loss. **SRI LANKA:** First innings 515 for 9 declared (Mathews 200 not out, Mendis 80, De Silva 63, Dickwella 63, Lakmal; Nyauchi 3-69, Raza 3-62)

Cesar happy to be here

SPORTS REPORTER

Former Brazil goalkeeper Julio Cesar landed in Bangladesh yesterday afternoon as a special guest of Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) for the Bangabandhu Gold Cup.

Cesar, who represented the Selecao 87 times, was a member of the country's 2004 Copa America winning team as well as 2009 and 2013 FIFA Confederations Cup winning teams. At club level, Cesar won five Serie A titles, three Copa Italia trophies and one UEFA Champions League title with Inter Milan apart from numerous other trophies for other clubs in Europe and South America.

"I'm really happy to be here. I want to thank FIFA and BFF, who invited me here for this important moment regarding the Father of the Nation and for the tournament," Cesar told reporters at the Hazrat Shah Jalal International Airport.

Asked whether he knows about the huge following of Brazilian football in Bangladesh, Cesar said, "Brazil is one of the powerful countries in football. We have a lot of idols like Ronaldinho, Neymar, Kaka. So it is normal that there are a lot of people loving Brazil national football team," Cesar said. "I don't know too much about Bangladesh football, but I will spend time here to learn about that."

The 40-year-old will have a busy schedule today as he would start his official tour with a visit to Dhanmondi Road No.32 to pay homage to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman before heading to the BFF headquarters, where he would join training of women's football and have a session with the country's young goalkeepers.



Former Brazil goalkeeper Julio Cesar arrived in Dhaka yesterday for the Bangabandhu Gold Cup. PHOTO: BFF

Then he will spend time with BFF executive members before a briefing with the media in the afternoon. Cesar will then head to the Bangabandhu Stadium to meet the players of Bangladesh and Burundi before watching the second semifinal. The Brazilian is scheduled to leave in the early hours of Friday.

What to WATCH

BTV & RTV
Bangabandhu Gold Cup
Second Semifinal
Bangladesh v Burundi
Live from 5:00pm

STAR SPORTS 3
ICC U-19s World Cup
Australia v England
Live from 2:00pm
SONY SIX & TEN 2
Australian Open
Live from 6:00am & 2:30pm

STAR SPORTS SELECT 1
English Premier League
Wolves v Liverpool
Live from 2:00am (Friday)

DAY'S EVENT

Bangabandhu Gold Cup
Second Semifinal
Bangladesh v Burundi
Time: 5:00pm
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium, Dhaka

'STALKER' OSAKA NAME-DROPS FOLLOWER

After beating Zheng Shuai, reigning champion Naomi Osaka used her victory speech to name-check one of her 500,000 followers on Twitter. "I know there's a person sitting in the ninth row named Marcus, who I stalk on Twitter, and I see your tweet so shout-out, thanks for coming, see you!" The 22-year-old Japanese later told reporters that "I stalk Twitter. I know I probably shouldn't, but I just like clicking people's messages and then scrolling down and then clicking another person. She playfully warned one journalist: "I stalk your Twitter too sometimes. You do very good, good tweets."



Bangladesh players were in jovial mood at the Sheikh Jamal DC ground yesterday ahead of today's Bangabandhu Gold Cup semifinal clash against Burundi. The match will kick off at 5:00pm at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Burundi stand between Bangladesh and final

SPORTS REPORTER



Hosts Bangladesh are looking to book a place in the final of the Bangabandhu Gold Cup, but standing in their way are Burundi in the second semifinal at the Bangabandhu National Stadium, with the match scheduled to kick off at 5:00pm today.

Out of the five previous editions of this tournament, the men in red and green have played in only one final, which was in 2015. The hosts had to be content with a second-place finish behind champions Malaysia under-23 side that time while they fell at the semifinals stage of the last two editions, losing 1-0 against Bahrain u-23s in 2016 and 2-0 against Palestine in 2018.

Now they are on the verge of final again, but Burundi, ranked 151st in FIFA, could spoil their hopes, especially with the home side having to field a makeshift defence

in absence of two experienced centre-backs -- fever-hit Yeasin Khan and suspended Tapu Barman. Bangladesh coach Jamie day thinks, despite the challenges facing them, they can get the better of the East African side.

"Hope so [winning the semifinal]. That is the aim tomorrow. If we can reach the final that will be a fantastic achievement for us. We reached the semifinal by performing well against Sri Lanka and I am proud enough of the boys. The task is now to get into the final, so we hope for the best. The boys are confident and looking forward to the game," Day said at a pre-match press conference at the BFF house yesterday.

The 40-year-old coach believes whoever comes in centre-back position has to help the team keep a clean sheet like they did against Sri Lanka.

"It [absence] made it harder because we lost defenders, but again we had new midfielders

coming in for the Sri Lanka game and did very well. We have faced difficult situations throughout the tournament and we have dealt with that. We have to accept the situation and do the best so we can move on. It's a loss losing Tapu but we have players in the squad who can play. There is enough time to prepare, so we will decide the name before the game. Hopefully we will get tactics and performance right to win the game," said Day.

The coach is likely to play experienced Raihan Hasan along with young Riyadul Hasan in centre-back positions, with Rahmat Mia and Bishwanath Ghosh playing as full-backs. There may be other changes, with fit-again captain Jamal Bhuiyan coming back while the home side may go back to a conservative approach, with Matin Mia playing as a lone striker.

On the other hand, Burundi have earned the tag of the best attacking force after having scored seven goals in two matches

despite conceding the lead against both Mauritius and Seychelles. However, Burundi looked out of shape and disorganised in defence, and Bangladesh will look to take advantage of their opposition's defensive vulnerability.

Burundi coach Joslin Bipsubusa, though, warned the home side hinting that he could bring a change in strategy.

"It's all about tactic. If you saw the first and second game, we used two kinds of tactic but when we will play against Bangladesh, you will see a different tactic with a solid defence," Joslin said. "We are prepared for the semifinal. We know what tactic Bangladesh are going to use. We are confident of beating them because it is not the first time Burundi are going to face the home team. We have experience of how to manage the home side, who are always strong on their home ground, therefore we know how to play against Bangladesh."

Palestine labour into final

SPORTS REPORTER



Defending champions Palestine made it to the final of Bangabandhu Gold Cup with a hard-fought 1-0 win over Seychelles in the first semifinal at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Forward Layth Kharoub scored the decisive goal in the 79th minute to help the defending champions to their second final in two appearances in this six-nation tournament.

Palestine, ranked 106th in FIFA, were expected to cruise against the 200th-ranked Seychelles, especially with the way they stormed into the semifinals by comfortably beating Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, but Seychelles showed character to give Palestine a run for their money before conceding an unfortunate goal in the second half.

Seychelles, who booked their semifinal berth by virtue of better goal difference, looked very disciplined and organised in defence, keeping Palestine forwards at bay. They also threatened by earning a few free-kicks around the danger zone.

It was Seychelles who came close to taking the lead in the seventh minute but a dipping free-kick from Karl Hall went inches over the crosspiece before Kharoub saw his

PALESTINE 1 - 0 SEYCHELLES
(Kharoub 79')

shot well gripped by Seychelles goalkeeper Ian Ah-Kong in the 40th minute.

After resumption, Palestine tried to break the resistance of Seychelles but Sameh Maraaba headed wide from a Redwan AbuKarash corner in the 77th minute before Kharoub broke the deadlock from a difficult angle.

Availing lob from Mahmoud Abuwarda, Kharoub darted into the box from the right side and shrugging off his marker, he put a cross for Khaled Salem but the cross went into the net after hitting the inside of the bar.

Palestine assistant coach Fahad Atel said that they won the match through a lucky strike as Seychelles resisted well throughout the match.

"We are happy to reach the final," Atel said. "We knew the match would be tough because the players had four days' rest which made them relaxed."

"The boys played a very disciplined and organised game against Palestine but they conceded an unfortunate goal which I think nobody was coming. But it was a beautiful goal," said Seychelles coach Ralph Jean Louis.



Palestine forward Layth Kharoub (C) celebrates after scoring the all-important goal in the 79th minute of their 1-0 win over Seychelles in the first semifinal of the Bangabandhu Gold Cup at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED



Three students of Sunnydale School -- (L-R) Syed Rayan Rahman, Bijoy Sen, and Md Sydeed Ayman -- pose for photographs after receiving the prestigious President Scout Award-2018 at the National Scout Training Centre, Mouchak in Gazipur on Monday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

It's too late to be Messi, says Mbappe

AGENCIES, Paris



Paris Saint-Germain forward Kylian Mbappe has said that it is too late for him to follow the path of Lionel Messi and be a one-club man, instead saying he wanted his career to follow a similar trajectory to that of Cristiano Ronaldo's.

The World Cup winner has never denied his admiration for compatriot Zinedine Zidane, but the Portuguese has also been something of a hero for Mbappe.

"If you're French, then of course you grow up with Zidane as your idol," Mbappe told La Gazzetta dello Sport. "Another of mine was Cristiano Ronaldo, with whom I've already been able to measure myself against as an opponent, with the national team as well."

Naturally, upon Cristiano's name being mentioned, Messi's followed shortly after. But Mbappe feels it's too late to try to emulate the Argentine's career.

"It's too late for me to have a career like Messi. I'd have to have stayed with Monaco. But without taking anything from Messi, I now have to be inspired by Cristiano's career."

Mbappe might leave PSG in the summer, but for now he's enjoying playing alongside Mauro Icardi and Neymar.

"Neymar is a great player and we have a good relationship off the pitch," Mbappe said. "He's had two difficult seasons, but he's getting back to his best now, which is good for PSG fans and anyone who loves football."

"Mauro is one of the best strikers in the world, but he arrived with humility. He was determined to help the team and he only thinks about scoring. He's already scored a lot of goals, proving his importance."

Serena, Federer advance

Osaka sets up crunch clash against Coco

AFP, Melbourne



Fifteen-year-old prodigy Coco Gauff set up an Australian Open blockbuster with defending champion Naomi Osaka on Wednesday, as a pumped-up Serena Williams took another step towards a record-equalling 24th Grand Slam title.

On a day when men's seeds tumbled, Serbia's Novak Djokovic strode into the third round to be joined by Roger Federer, who dismissed Filip Krajinovic 6-1, 6-4, 6-1.

American teenager Gauff, showing a tenacity which is becoming her trademark, clawed her way back from a set down to beat the experienced Sorana Cirstea 4-6, 6-3, 7-5.

Gauff, who screamed and pumped her fists as she completed her victory, said her "will to win" had got her through the tough second-round match at a windswept Melbourne Park.

"My parents always told me you can always come back -- no matter what the score is," said Gauff, who beat seven-time Grand Slam champion Venus Williams in round one.

Gauff also beat Williams on her Grand Slam debut last year at Wimbledon, and in another quirk, faced Osaka in the US Open third round, going down in straight sets.

Japan's Osaka, 22, beat China's Zheng Saisai 6-2, 6-4 but briefly lost her cool mid-match, hurling and kicking her racket when she gave up a break in the second set.

"I was thinking that I really don't want to play a third set this time," explained Osaka, who is defending a Grand Slam title for the second time.

Former world number one Wozniacki, playing her final tournament before retiring, came from behind in both sets for a 7-5, 7-5 win over Dayana Yastremska of Ukraine.

Serena Williams shouted at the top of her voice during a testing second set against 70th-ranked Tamara

Zidasek, before seeing off break points to win 6-2, 6-3.

"She was a really good fighter -- she did not just let me win," said Williams, who can equal Margaret Court's all-time mark of 24 Grand Slams if she lifts the trophy.

Earlier, Australia's world No. 1 Ashleigh Barty raced through 6-1, 6-4 against Polona Hercog, buoying hopes of a first home winner since 1978. "It was very different end to end, I think the wind was a massive factor particularly with the new ball," she said.

Djokovic also weathered the breeze -- which followed heavy rain on Monday, and smog from bushfires last week -- to beat Japanese wildcard Tatsuma Ito 6-1, 6-4, 6-2 in 95 minutes.

"They were tough conditions, pretty windy and it was hard to know where the balls were going. My serve helped a lot to get me out of trouble," said the Serb.

Federer was barely detained by Krajinovic, the world number 41, as he moved smoothly through in 92 minutes in the night match on Rod Laver Arena.

In other results, Petra Kvitova, last

year's runner-up, came through 7-5, 7-5 against Paula Badosa of Spain, and China's Zhang Shuai ousted American Caty McNally 6-2, 6-4.

Former US Open champion Marin Cilic won a five-setter against French seed Benoit Paire, and one-time semifinalist Milos Raonic beat Chile's Christian Garin in straight sets.

Tennys Sandgren, engulfed in controversy over his political views and right-wing links during his run to the 2018 quarter-finals, took the biggest scalp so far when he ousted eighth seed Matteo Berrettini in five sets.

Sandgren's fellow American Tommy Paul also pulled off a five-set upset when he beat Bulgarian 18th seed Grigor Dimitrov 6-4, 7-6 (8/6), 3-6, 6-7 (3/7), 7-6 (10/3).

But Greek sixth seed Stefanos Tsitsipas was handed a slice of fortune when Philipp Kohlschreiber withdrew injured.

Among eight first-round matches held over from Tuesday, after rain wiped out half of Monday's schedule, Spain's Carla Suarez Navarro, also retiring this year, upset Belarusian 11th seed Aryna Sabalenka in straight sets.



Roger Federer got the 99th Australian Open win of his career yesterday, beating Filip Krajinovic 6-1, 6-4, 6-1.

PHOTO: AFP

10-man Arsenal hold Chelsea

AFP, London



10-man Arsenal slowed Chelsea's charge for a Champions League place on Tuesday as Manchester City kept up a distant pursuit of Liverpool with victory at Sheffield United on a dramatic day of Premier League football.

Newcastle improbably came back from 2-0 down to draw against Everton, with substitute Florian Lejeune netting twice in stoppage time, and Aston Villa found a last-gasp winner against in-form Watford. Elsewhere, Southampton climbed to ninth in the table with victory against Crystal Palace while Bournemouth gave themselves hope with a 3-1 win over fellow strugglers Brighton.

Fourth-placed Chelsea twice took the lead against Arsenal, who were reduced to 10 men after former Blues defender David Luiz took out Tammy Abraham when he was through on goal. Jorginho put Chelsea 1-0 ahead from the penalty spot in the 28th minute but Gabriel Martinelli equalised for Arsenal in the second half. Cesar Azpilicueta put Chelsea 2-1 up with just six minutes remaining but Arsenal levelled only three minutes later through Hector Bellerin.

The 2-2 draw leaves Chelsea six points ahead of fifth-placed Manchester United having played a game extra while Arsenal are 10th, seemingly out of the running for a place in the top four.

Chelsea boss Frank Lampard was frustrated that his team had not been more clinical in front of goal.

"We could have had three or four goals today," he told the BBC. "Having shots, crosses and lots of 'ooh' moments. We have to be clinical."

Arsenal boss Mikel Arteta hailed his side's reaction. "To do that against this kind of opponent in this stadium, I really value," he said. "The way they have done it, with the spirit they have done it, that's great."

Pep Guardiola's City looked as though they might rue Gabriel Jesus's squandered first-half penalty but their Argentine hitman Sergio Aguerro came to the rescue. Despite the 1-0 win, second-placed City remain 13 points behind runaway leaders Liverpool, having played two games more, and their bid to defend their title appears hopeless.

Sheffield United goalkeeper Dean Henderson denied Jesus from the penalty spot about 10 minutes from half-time after a foul on Riyad Mahrez. But City made amends when substitute Sergio Aguerro, on for Jesus, tapped in from Kevin De Bruyne's cross in the 73rd minute.

"We knew it would be a difficult place to come," Guardiola said. "We concede one or two clear chances, nothing more than that. "In the first half the 'keeper was excellent with the penalty and two incredible saves. It was an incredibly good victory for us to take a step towards securing Champions League football next season."



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New virus could mutate, spread

Warns China; cases reported in US, Thailand, S Korea, Japan and Taiwan as countries step up measures to prevent outbreak; 9 deaths reported so far

AGENCIES
A new virus that has killed nine people, infected hundreds and reached the United States could mutate and spread, China warned yesterday, as authorities urged people to steer clear of the city at the heart of the outbreak.
The coronavirus has caused alarm because of its similarity to SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome), which killed nearly 650 people across mainland China and Hong Kong in 2002-2003.
With hundreds of millions of people travelling across China this week for the Lunar New Year holiday, the National Health Commission announced measures to contain the disease -- including sterilisation and ventilation at airports and bus stations, as well as inside planes and trains.
Symptoms of the virus, which can cause pneumonia, include fever, coughing and difficulty breathing.
There is no vaccine for the virus, which can be passed from person to person. Fifteen medical personnel are among those infected in China.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2



A sinking paddy-laden trawler that hit an iron bridge, causing it to collapse, in Domrabad-Hosnabad area of Patuakhali's Mirzaganj upazila on Tuesday. The accident has caused disruption to road communications between Patuakhali's Mirzaganj and Barguna's Betagi upazila and waterways communications between Jhalakathi and Khulna districts.

PHOTO: SOHRAB HOSSAIN

USE OF EVM Re-election with ballots if turnout below 50pc

Observes Mahbub Talukdar

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

Election Commissioner Mahbub Talukdar yesterday said re-election should be held with traditional ballot papers if polls using EVMs see less than 50 percent voter turnout.
"Re-elections take place in many countries if the turnout is less than 50 percent," he said while speaking at a meeting with the chiefs of different law enforcement agencies at Nirbachan Bhaban.
The meeting was organised ahead of the two Dhaka city corporations polls slated for February 1.
Mahbub read out a written statement at the meeting in the presence of Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda, two other commissioners and top EC officials.
Mahbub said there were

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Stalker pushes schoolgirl off vehicle to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Initially, it appeared to be just another road accident, in which a 15-year-old girl was seriously injured on Sunday and died the next day in Habiganj Sadar upazila.
But after a two-day investigation, police found out that the girl was pushed off a CNG-run autorickshaw by a man who had long been stalking her.
The victim, Madinatul Kibria Jerin, an SSC candidate, was the daughter of Abdul Hye from Dhal village in the upazila and a student of Richi High School, said Mohammad Ullah, superintendent of police in Habiganj, in a press conference at his office yesterday.
The accused, Zakir Hossain, 25, from the same village, confessed to the crime before the court of Habiganj Senior Judicial Magistrate Sultan Uddin on Tuesday, hours after he was arrested, the SP said.
According to the confessional statement, Zahid planned to kidnap Jerin as she had turned down his proposal several times before.
He conspired with Nur Alam, an autorickshaw driver, and told him to be in front of the girl's house on Sunday morning.

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It's 'Mujib Borsho' gift for the nation

Prime minister says at the launch of electronic passport service

BSS, Dhaka

Launching the much-awaited electronic passport service, along with the automated border control management programme, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said e-passport was a gift for the nation in the "Mujib Borsho".
"We are handing over e-passport to the people of the country in the 'Mujib Borsho', the special year coinciding with the birth centenary celebration of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman," she said.
The PM was addressing a function at the city's Bangabandhu International Conference Centre, marking the launch of e-passport service and automated border control management programme.
Hasina said the two services would brighten Bangladesh's image in the digital world. She said the country would move another step forward due to the introduction of e-passport.
"There was a problem in the past about the passport as 'galakata' [tampered] passport was used at that time. But due to the launching of the e-passport, it [fraudulence] will never happen... the people will not be cheated any more, and they will move with transparency."
The PM said e-gate was going to be incorporated with e-passport, and once those were introduced, the immigration and passport services would be easier, smooth and of international standard.
She said the government wants to advance through keeping pace with the world, and the Awami League was working to achieve that goal.



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RELATED STORY ON PAGE 3

Three workers electrocuted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three workers, including two siblings, died from electrocution while carrying out piling work on the Buriganga in the city's Hazaribagh area yesterday.
Two other workers sustained injuries in the incident.
The dead were identified as Jhoru Sheikh, 45, and his brother Saiful Sheikh, 35, from Sirajganj, and Monjurul Haque, 40, from Bogura.
The workers were electrocuted around 11:00am when an iron pole used for piling work came into contact with a high-voltage electric wire, said Ekram Ali, officer-in-charge of Hazaribagh Police Station.
The victims were doing piling work for installing pillars to demarcate the river boundary. The three died on the spot, he added.
Locals alleged the contractor didn't take any safety measures at the site.
The piling work is

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'Dancing dragon' fossil discovered



CNN ONLINE

About 120 million years ago, a "dancing dragon" lived in China's Jehol Province. The discovery of a fossil belonging to the small feathered dinosaur is new to science and helps bridge the gap between dinosaurs and birds.
Researchers named the dinosaur Wulong bohainensis, which translates to "a dancing dragon."
The dinosaur was about the size of a raven but double its length with a long, bony tail. Its entire body was covered with feathers, complete with two plumes at the tail's end.
Despite its small size, it had a fierce, narrow face and a mouth full of sharp teeth. Like a bird, it had small, light bones and wing-like forelimbs. And there were also a number of feathers on its legs.
The fossil was initially discovered in the fossil-filled Jehol Province a decade ago by a farmer and was placed in China's Dalian Natural History Museum.

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4 held over attack on Sarwar Ali

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Police Bureau of Investigation yesterday arrested four men on charges of attempting to kill Liberation War Museum Trustee Sarwar Ali earlier this month.
Sarwar's former chauffeur Nazmul Hossain, who is the main accused in the case, was arrested in Gazipur. The three other suspects were arrested in different districts.
Banaj Kumar Majumdar, chief of PBI, told The Daily Star that they would reveal further details at a press conference at PBI

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PRAYER TIMING JANUARY 23
Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5:30 12:45 4:15 5:43 7:15
JAMAAT 6:05 1:15 4:30 5:47 7:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

BSF kills two Bangladeshis

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

Two Bangladeshi cattle traders were shot dead allegedly by Indian Border Security Force (BSF) along Hatibandha border in Lalmonirhat yesterday morning.
Omar Faruq, officer-in-charge of Hatibandha Police Station, said they, along with the members of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), recovered the bodies from Bonchauki border in Gotamari upazila.
The bodies of Suruj Islam, 18, and Suruj Mia, 37, of Amjhola village in the upazila, were sent to Lalmonirhat Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsies, our Lalmonirhat correspondent reported.
Quoting witnesses, Tapas Chandra, commander of Banchauki BGB Camp, said BSF patrol team of Setai camp in Cooch Behar district of India's West Bengal opened fire on the duo when they were entering Bangladesh with Indian cattle.

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Despite a ban on parking vehicles on roads or footpaths, the TCB office footpath in front of Sonargaon hotel is lined with parked motorcycles, creating obstacles for pedestrians. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

TRUMP IMPEACHMENT GOP-devised trial rules prevail

Senate votes on party lines to reject Democrats' demands

REUTERS, Washington

The Republican-controlled US Senate voted early yesterday on party lines to approve the rules for President Donald Trump's impeachment trial, rejecting Democratic efforts to obtain evidence and ensure witnesses are heard.
As the third presidential impeachment trial in US history began in earnest, Trump's chief legal defender argued the Democratic case was a baseless effort to overturn the 2016 election but a top Democratic lawmaker said there was "overwhelming" evidence of wrongdoing.
Trump was impeached last month by the House of Representatives on charges of abuse of power and obstruction of Congress for pressuring Ukraine to investigate former Democratic Vice President Joe Biden, a political rival, and impeding the inquiry into the matter. The president denies any wrongdoing.
After US Chief Justice John Roberts convened the proceedings, the two sides began more than 12 hours of squabbling that lasted into yesterday morning over Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's proposed rules for the trial.
Senators voted along party lines, 53-47, to block four separate motions from Democratic leader Chuck Schumer to subpoena records and documents from the White

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