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Your Right to Know

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"Many people still think that freelancing is not a job despite their earning and this mindset needs to be changed."
PRIME MINISTER SHEIKH HASINA WHILE GIVING NATIONAL YOUTH AWARD 2019



"Take visible and effective measures to ensure security of our party agents and voters on the day of the Dhaka city elections."
BNP CHAIRPERSON KHALEDA ZIA'S ADVISER ABDUS SALAM ASKS EC

"It is a great moment for our country ... a moment of hope and opportunity."
UK PRIME MINISTER BORIS JOHNSON AFTER EU PARLIAMENT APPROVES BREXIT (PAGE 9)



CITY DEVELOPMENT

Attention not same for all

All the neighbourhoods see similar election fever but not equal infrastructural upgrade

ZYMA ISLAM

A mess only five years ago, the sidewalks in Gulshan-2 residential area now make for a streamlined jogging track, with dips in front of the gates of people's homes.

Stepping out of a gate, joggers can immediately pick up pace on the smooth pavement below, go all the way up to Banani's Kemal Ataturk Avenue and return. There will be fine tactile pavings under their feet all the time, except when the joggers will have to cross the Banani Bridge.

One may wonder in how many other areas in the city people can start jogging right in front of their home and cross such a long stretch of pavement without hindrance.

They certainly cannot do so in Khilkhet for instance.

There is no sidewalk from Bastola Road area to Karuna Garments on Lake City Road. There is a pavement from near the factory, but it is so narrow that two people can hardly walk on it side by side.

Despite the fact that these two neighbourhoods are under the same city corporation -- DNCC -- the scenario seems different when it is about infrastructure development.

It appears some areas are more important than others.

Ahead of tomorrow's city corporation polls, campaign posters have been hung in all the alleys in the capital. Not all roads in the city, however, were given the same treatment.

It raises one question: Isn't every voter equal?

One might not think so taking a look at the spending by the outgoing city corporations.

THE PUZZLING MATH

The Dhaka north and south city corporations have taken up large government-funded development projects to improve roads, sidewalks, SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



DHAKA CITY POLLS 2020
Officials demonstrate how to use electronic voting machines to a woman during mock polling at Dhaka Residential Model College in Muhammadpur yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN



Poor show of voters in mock EVM voting

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Only a few voters turned out at polling centres for mock voting using electronic voting machines (EVMs) yesterday.

The voting was organised to familiarise people with the new system, ahead of Dhaka north and south city corporation polls tomorrow.

In the first three hours of the voting yesterday, The Daily Star correspondents visited 18 centres, but they did not find a single voter in 11 centres. The highest number of voters at a single centre was seven.

The mock voting began around noon and continued till 7:00pm at 2,468 polling centres.

After visiting a centre set up at Sher-E-Bangla Nagar Government Girls' High School, Election Commissioner Mahbub Talukdar said he did not want to make any comment on the turnout.

"You know the reason better than me," he said at SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

'Want to see democracy in action'

Diplomats say; foreign minister not happy with their 'intervention'

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Diplomats from various western countries in Dhaka said they wanted to see democracy in action in tomorrow's city polls.

"The Dhaka City Corporation elections on February 1 are an opportunity for the citizens of Dhaka to exercise their democratic rights," said nine diplomats on the Facebook page of UK High Commission yesterday evening.

"We look forward to seeing democracy in action in polling centres across SEE PAGE 17 COL 1

AL for watch on polls observers

BNP alleges harassment, arrest of its activists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League yesterday urged the Election Commission to keep an eye on the observers and prevent them from exerting influence.

But a BNP delegation alleged that AL men were looking forward to win by taking control of the polling centres.

The AL election coordination committee co-chairman HT Imam yesterday said, "Observers should abide by the laws and regulations. No country should exert influence."

After meeting the election commissioners at the EC Secretariat, Imam told reporters that on some occasions, the observers made comments that were tantamount to hurting the country's sovereignty.

"We want the observers to observe the elections properly and freely. We also hope that they will follow the electoral code of conduct," he said.

In the last parliamentary election, the ambassador of a country entered a polling booth with a camera, breaching the conduct, he said.

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COMMENTARY

The farce of the manifestos

Do voters' reactions matter?

MAHFUZ ANAM

On January 29, about 36 hours before campaigning stopped, and two days before the election itself, the ruling party mayoral candidate for Dhaka south, Barrister Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh, made public his election manifesto.

A day earlier the BNP candidate for Dhaka south, Ishraque Hossain gave his. Tabith Awal (Dhaka north, the BNP) and Atiqul Islam (Dhaka north, the AL) did somewhat better by making their manifestos public on January 27 and 26 respectively.

We have two overall comments about their manifestos -- first the timing and

second the bundle of promises made.

First, the timing. Manifestos are programmes that candidates present to the public revealing their visions, specific programmes and detailed workings of how those ideas will be implemented. With their respective manifestos, candidates face their constituencies, the media and the general public on the viability of their projects and how they will implement them. Not solely but to a large degree, the voters are supposed to choose their favourites from such interactions.

So the question is where is the time to do all that? How do these candidates expect the voters to, first read, and then examine,

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

LAST DAY'S ELECTIONEERING

Candidates trade blame over 'bid to create trouble'

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

On the last day of polls campaign, mayor candidates of both the Awami League and the BNP yesterday accused each other of attempting to harm the election atmosphere.

Tabith Awal, BNP's mayoral candidate for Dhaka North City Corporation, expressed concerns over the arrest and "intimidation" of party leaders and activists in the lead-up to the polls.

He said the role of the EC was still a questionable one, but he would make a final comment on it after the election.

"Fear is rising as the election draws nearer. We are not yet certain about whether agents of all the candidates will be able to go to the polling stations," Tabith told journalists at the National Press Club.

He urged voters to cast their votes without any fear and stay in the polling stations to guard them.

Tabith's rival Atiqul Islam, speaking to journalists near SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

341 stranded in Wuhan to return home tonight

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Some 341 Bangladeshis stranded in the Coronavirus-hit Chinese city of Wuhan would be brought back home in a special flight tonight.

They would be kept at a makeshift hospital in Ashkona hajj camp in the capital for 14 days for observation, the health ministry's public relations officer said last night.

The decision was made in a Directorate General of Health Services meeting after the foreign ministry got the nod from the Chinese authorities.

"We were notified of the decision in the evening. Then we held a meeting at the DGHS. We are now preparing the Ashkona hajj camp to quarantine all returnees," Prof Meerjady Sabrina Flora, director of the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research told The Daily Star last night.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6



People wearing protective face masks are seen next to a pharmacy in Wuhan, in Hubei province, yesterday. Coronavirus has claimed more than 170 lives in China and it continues to spread.

PHOTO: AFP

Coronavirus cases surpass SARS

India reports first case; WHO to decide on global emergency

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE	170 DEATHS (ALL IN CHINA)	9,239 suspected cases
	8,100 confirmed cases	The virus spread to at least 16 countries

AGENCIES

Infection from China's coronavirus spread to more than 8,100 people globally yesterday, surpassing the total from the 2002-2003 SARS epidemic in a fast-spreading health crisis forecast to deal a heavy blow to the world's second-largest economy.

The vast majority of infections are in China where the virus originated in an illegal wildlife market in the city of Wuhan and has also claimed 170 lives, latest official data showed.

More than 100 cases have emerged in other countries, from Japan to the United States.

The World Health Organization (WHO), which has so far held off declaring the flu-like coronavirus a global emergency, began another meeting in Geneva to reconsider.

Such a declaration would trigger tighter containment and information-sharing guidelines, but may disappoint Beijing, which had expressed confidence in defeating the "devil" virus.

It could also further spook markets, already shuddering at the ripple effects of damage to China's economy.

The Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome also came from SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Gunman opens fire on anti-CAA demo in Delhi

One student hurt

AFP, New Delhi

A suspected Hindu nationalist yesterday live-streamed himself minutes before opening fire on university students protesting against India's new citizenship law in Delhi.

One student was reportedly shot in the hand before police arrested the alleged gunman, who timed his attack to coincide with the anniversary of the assassination of independence hero Mahatma Gandhi in 1948 by a Hindu radical.

Video circulating on social media showed the man brandishing a handgun and confronting protesters while shouting "Yeh lo azadi" ("Here is your freedom") and "Long live Delhi police".

In the background, dozens of police can be seen watching proceedings.

The highly charged word "azadi" was previously associated with Kashmiri separatists, but has been used widely in the past more than a month of protests against the citizenship law.

The law makes it easier for persecuted religious minorities from three neighbouring countries to get

Indian citizenship, but not if they are Muslim.

Critics say this forms part of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's master plan to remould India as a purely Hindu nation, marginalising its 200 million Muslims, something Modi denies.

Before yesterday's incident, the alleged gunman went live on Facebook as he walked around the protest area.

"On my last journey, take me draped in saffron and shout slogans of Hail Lord Ram," one post on his page read -- a popular chant for Hindu nationalists.

Saffron is a colour associated with Hinduism -- and with Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party -- while Ram is an important deity.

"Shaheen Bagh, Game Over," read another, referring to massive protests against the citizenship law taken up by women and children in the Indian capital.

Afterward the shooting several thousand people gathered at the site, an AFP reporter said.

Some pushed against barriers, and police responded with water cannon, media reports said.

Candidates trade blame

FROM PAGE 1

Bhasantek slum, alleged that his opponent was trying to bring outsiders into Dhaka to foil the voting atmosphere.

"I want to say no evil forces can stop the mass upsurge," he said.

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, speaking during a press briefing at the party's Nayapaltan headquarters, alleged that the AL was bringing in criminals from outside the city to create terror and that voters were threatened and discouraged to go to polling centres.

He also alleged that police were raiding the councillors' houses and arresting them to create panic.

AL candidate for Dhaka South City Corporation Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh alleged that there was a conspiracy to occupy 170 centres in the city corporation areas to influence the mayoral race.

While campaigning at Gopibagh, he requested the Election Commission and law enforcement agencies to take necessary steps to maintain a congenial atmosphere conducive to fair voting on election day.

However, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal told journalists that the law and order situation was under control and there was no risk.

BNP's mayoral candidates said they have enough manpower to appoint polling agents and if law enforcers do not obstruct, agents will be at the polling stations on time.

They said unlike the last city polls, they will stay in the battle till the end.

The AL said they would guard polling centres on election day to thwart any unwanted incidents

while the BNP urged voters to guard the polling stations till the vote counting would end.

Meanwhile, Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda told journalists that 75 platoons of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) were deployed in the capital yesterday ahead of the February 1 polls.

Shariful Islam, public relations officer of BGB headquarters, said 65 platoons would work in the field while 10 other platoons will be kept as reserves.

The prevailing atmosphere has voters wondering whether they would be able to cast their votes.

"In the last parliamentary election, I could not cast my vote. Only if the situation is calm I will think of casting my vote," Akram Hossain, a private service holder from Jigatola, told The Daily Star yesterday.

The Election Commission will employ EVMs as the sole voting method for the first time, a move that has been opposed by all mayoral candidates except the ruling party contenders.

VEHICLE MOVEMENT RESTRICTED

Meanwhile, the EC imposed a 54-hour ban on the movement of motorcycles in the capital, which came into effect from midnight yesterday. The restriction will remain in place until Sunday morning.

For 18 hours from midnight on January 31 to 6:00pm on February 1, the movement of motorised vehicles have also been restricted in election areas.

Motorcycles and vehicles with EC stickers, vehicles of emergency services, including ambulance, fire service and postal department, will be out of the ban's purview.

Coronavirus cases

FROM PAGE 1

China, killing about 800 people and costing the global economy an estimated \$33 billion, or 0.1% of world GDP, in 2003.

Economists fear the impact on global growth could be bigger this time as China now accounts for a larger share of the world economy. One Chinese economist has forecast the crisis would lop a percentage point off China's first-quarter growth.

Global stocks tumbled yesterday, while the yuan hit its lowest this year, oil prices slid again and safe haven assets like gold gained.

Almost all the deaths have been in Hubei province - of which Wuhan is the capital - where 60 million people are now living under virtual lockdown, only venturing outside with masks.

Australia, South Korea, Singapore, New Zealand and Indonesia were quarantining evacuees for at least two weeks, though the United States and Japan planned shorter, voluntary isolation.

Three Japanese, from 206 evacuated on Wednesday, were infected, and worryingly two of them had not shown symptoms, Tokyo said. A second Japanese flight included nine people showing fever or coughing symptoms, broadcaster NHK said.

India was the latest nation to report a case, a student of Wuhan University. And South Koreans protested at facilities earmarked as quarantine centres, throwing eggs at a minister.

According to one of the latest studies yet published on the deadly epidemic, the period between exposure to the new coronavirus and symptoms is 5.2 days on average, but varies greatly among patients.

While admitting that the estimate is "imprecise," the Chinese team behind a paper published in the New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM) on Wednesday said their findings support a 14-day medical observation period for people exposed to the pathogen.

And an Italian cruise ship's 6,000 passengers were kept on board while tests were held on two Chinese travellers.

The crisis has stoked a wave of anti-China sentiment around the globe, from shops barring tourists to online mockery.

In the corporate world, Alphabet Inc's Google and Sweden's IKEA were the latest big names to close China operations. South Korea's Samsung Electronics extended holiday closure for some Chinese production facilities.

Airlines to suspend flights to mainland China include Lufthansa, Air Canada, American Airlines and British Airways. Air France cabin crew unions were demanding the same, sources said, though the company has already allowed pilots and crew to opt out of China flights.

Fuelling concern over damage to productivity, thousands of Chinese factory workers on Lunar New Year holidays may struggle to get back to work next week, due to travel restrictions.

Policymakers are anxious, with China dominating US Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell's news conference on Wednesday. "China's economy is very important in the global economy now, and when China's economy slows down we do feel that," he said.

Streets in many Chinese cities were largely deserted and tourist attractions shut. Starbucks coffee shops were requiring temperature checks and masks.

Cases of human-to-human transmission outside China are of particular concern to medics, but it is too early to determine how lethal the coronavirus is, as there are likely to be many cases of milder infections going undetected.

It has an incubation time of between one and 14 days.

With local officials facing a backlash from China's public, especially over their early response, the health chief of Huanggang city - also in Hubei province, with a population of 7.5 million - was dismissed, authorities said. No explanation was given.



The squeaky clean Gulshan avenue, left, is in sharp contrast to almost inaccessible Badda high School Road, which is not far from Gulshan. The authorities, obviously do not give the same attention to all the areas in the city corporations.



PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Attention not same for all

FROM PAGE 1

storm drainage, parks and playgrounds.

But whether the corporations would focus on just the main arteries and its immediate connecting roads, or give the facelift to the entire area apparently depends on the average income of the people living there, documents suggest.

Areas in Gulshan, Banani, and Baridhara were shaped up under a Tk 70 crore project since 2015-2016. City corporation officials call it late mayor Annisul Huq's capstone project and a model to be imitated in other city areas.

Uttara residential area has got a similar treatment for Tk 85.9 crores, since 2015, shows documents of Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC).

Even though Khilkhet is situated near the city's main thoroughfares, such development work never seemed a priority.

As per DNCC budget documents, the area stretches over 15sqkm but facelift work is going on on three roads.

A quick scan of the real estate websites suggests property prices in Uttara and Gulshan are approximately three and five times higher than that of Khilkhet.

Mirpur is another area where the DNCC spent money on such work even though the area isn't stereotypically well-off.

Mirpur is a vast area consisting of seven wards, and flat prices varying from Tk 19 lakh to Tk 2 crore.

City corporation officials, however, say that road improvements were done there keeping in mind it will be the starting point of the first metro rail line, making it one of the best connected areas in the city in the near future.

"The entirety of the locality got a thorough facelift worth around Tk 700 crores, with nearly all roads covered, and no stone left unturned. We worked on building sidewalks and drains, in addition to roads," stated Faruk Hasan Md Al Masud, deputy project director of an infrastructure project.

This makes Mirpur the area where the DNCC spent the most money.

Overall, the DNCC has undertaken over a thousand crores' worth of government-funded projects to improve city streets. A majority of this went into Mirpur and adjacent areas, Gulshan, Banani, Baridhara, and Uttara, leaving a minor share for Rampura, Khilkhet, Joar Sahara, Kalachandpur, Jagannathpur, Kawran Bazar, Mohammadpur, Kafrul, and Shyamoli.

Many DNCC areas were left out altogether.

Meanwhile, the Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) has not undertaken any projects on the same scale as the DNCC. Their total expenditure comes to an approximate figure of Tk 300 crores over the last five years, according to budget documents.

DSCC officials refused to confirm the exact figure, despite repeated attempts by this correspondent.

"The city corporation worked on roads in Doyaganj, and are currently repairing sidewalks, drains, and roads in Shahjahanpur, Banasree, Meradia, Lalbagh, Kamrangirchar, and Shahidnagar," said DSCC's public relations officer, Uttam Kumar Roy.

SOME MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS

In addition to fixing the roads, the DNCC is also working to upgrade 20 parks and playgrounds. Nine of these are in Gulshan, Banani, and Baridhara areas.

The rest are near Town Hall, Tajmahal Road, Humayun Road and Iqbal Road in Mohammadpur areas, and one each from Rayerbazar, Shyamoli, Moghbazar and Kawran Bazar areas.

This still deprives the residents in DNCC areas of new and improved parks. In fact, the city corporation does not hold data on what other parks and public spaces there are out there, officials said.

By DNCC's own statistics, only 25 percent of its households are in areas where these new parks are located, or in areas adjacent to the parks.

"We had asked the respective owners of parks [like housing societies] to hand over the parks to us. Those that were handed over, we worked on them," said Tariq Bin Yusuf, executive engineer of a

project.

Once completed, the parks promise to be delightful places. As Yusuf explained, "The parks are being fitted with lit walkways so that they are safe at night, children's zones, security cameras, canteens, public toilets, and more." Gulshan Central Park, for example, will have a beautiful lake surrounded by a promenade, and floating platforms.

"We hope to take a look at public spaces in Mirpur in the upcoming years," said Yusuf.

The city corporations have also taken up projects to develop the 36 wards newly added. There are 129 wards under the two city corporations.

EXPERTS' TAKE

Sultan Hafeez Rahman, eminent governance expert and former executive director of Brac Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD), sees the risk of interference by local-level elites as a barrier to general development processes. "The appearance of elite influence is pervasive in decision-making processes, which may explain why certain areas are given priority over others," he stated.

"Given the limitation of resources, the city corporation must prioritise. It also makes sense because Dhaka needs development. The question is, how and where would you begin? It is difficult to understand why certain residential neighbourhoods are being chosen over others."

Ward meetings between the councilors and constituents need to happen, and in a structured, active manner, he added.

Adil Mohammad Khan, general secretary of Bangladesh Institute of Planners, reiterated the same view, adding that development expenditure should truly reflect the relative needs of a ward.

"There is a discrepancy in how long it takes for a road in a high-income neighbourhood to get fixed compared to one in a low-income neighbourhood," he stated.

The Daily Star repeatedly tried to contact the CEOs of the city corporations for comments on the spending, but they did not respond to phone calls and text messages.

Poor show

FROM PAGE 1

about 3:00pm.

DNCC Returning Officer Abul Kashem said the turnout was very low because it was a workday.

Replying to a query, he said, "Most of the Dhaka citizens are educated. They will easily be able to cast their votes."

DNCC

A correspondent of this newspaper found that 48 polling officials were waiting for voters at the Sher-E-Bangla Nagar Government Girls' High School, which had four polling centres.

All polling officials refused to talk with this journalist when he asked why people were not showing up.

At the Government Music College, which had two polling centres, no voters came to centre number 889 while only one turned up to cast a vote, till 2:30pm. There were about 20 polling officials present at the school.

No voters went to Dhaka YMCA School, which has two polling centres.

DSCC

At the three polling centres in City College, no one turned up to vote till 1:30pm.

"We were expecting voters, but nobody has come as of now," Ariful Islam, presiding officer of the centre number 269, said. Most of the polling officials were seen sitting together and chitchatting.

During the visit, it was found that seven voters cast votes in centre 76 at Basabo Girls High School. Three turned up to cast votes at centre 77 and two voters voted at centre 78 -- all housed in the same school building.

No voters turned out at centre numbers 79 and 75 at the school.

Asked why there were so few voters, Md Nasir Uddin, presiding officer of centre 76, said: "There was huge advertisement of mob voting... I don't know why people are not coming. But the voting will continue till 7:00pm."

341 stranded

FROM PAGE 1

"Ashkona is our primary option. If we need, we will also prepare Kuwait-Bangladesh Friendship Hospital.

"The foreign ministry is coordinating everything. We are now taking preparation to receive them safely," said Prof Flora.

An inter-ministerial meeting is scheduled to be held this morning at the airport.

Health Minister Zahid Maleque will brief the media after the meeting.

Earlier in the day, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen said the Chinese government would bear the medical cost of Bangladeshis if they get infected with the coronavirus in China.

Until yesterday, 370 Bangladeshis in Wuhan city have agreed to return to Bangladesh, he told reporters after attending the closing ceremony of the Bangladesh Development Forum at the city's Bangabandhu International Conference Centre.

However, 15 other Bangladeshis said it won't be good for the country if they were infected by the virus and returned home.

"There might be some more who would like to come home. We will repatriate them as soon as the Chinese authorities allow. They are now in quarantine," Momen said.

China has informed Bangladesh that it won't allow the Bangladeshis to leave before February 6, when two weeks of quarantine expires.

He said Bangladesh has commercial planes with 419 seats, and those can be sent to China to bring back the Bangladeshis.

Asked if there were any plans for imposing a travel ban, he said there was no such plan.

So far, no Bangladeshi has been infected with the coronavirus.

If anybody is found having symptoms, they would be kept under special observation at hospitals, and the health ministry has already made the arrangements, he said.

Hotels clear up as crackdown looks for 'outsiders'

Rab DG asks non-voters to leave capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The number of boarders at residential hotels in the capital has dropped significantly, following a police crackdown to arrest outsiders ahead of February 1 Dhaka city corporation elections.

Staffers of several hotels in Mohakhali, Banani and Tejgaon yesterday told The Daily Star some 70 percent of their rooms fell vacant since yesterday morning.

"Many guests from outside the capital said they would come back after the election," said manager of a hotel in Tejgaon rail gate area, wishing anonymity.

He said police visited the hotel on Tuesday, and wanted to know whether anyone came there for "election purposes".

Though in a small scale, law enforcers started a crackdown from Tuesday last to arrest "outsiders" who came to the city "without any reason", sources said.

Meanwhile, Director General of Rab Benazir Ahmed yesterday called upon people who are not voters of Dhaka city to leave the capital.

During a press briefing at the Rab media centre in the capital's Karwan Bazar, the Rab chief asked city dwellers to

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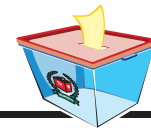


PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Ahead of the DNCC and DSCC polls tomorrow, polling materials, including the electronic voting machines, started to file into voting centres yesterday. This photo was taken from Dhaka's Residential Model School and College.

DHAKA CITY

POLLS 2020



A new beginning from Feb 1: Taposh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A conspiracy to occupy and control at least 170 polling centres in Dhaka South City Corporation area is ongoing, warned Awami League candidate Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh yesterday.

He made the remark while campaigning in Gopibagh area. On the last day of electioneering, Taposh started his campaign from Brothers Union Club field in the afternoon.

Taposh urged law enforcers to take necessary measures to maintain a congenial atmosphere on the polls day. "If congenial atmosphere prevails, we will win by a huge margin," said the candidate, while talking with reporters.

He said they are a bit concerned as few days back they saw BNP activists, in presence of their mayor candidate, go to an Awami League councilor aspirant's camp and attack AL activists and leaders who were campaigning peacefully.

He said they also heard that a person got arrested, who was identified as the personal secretary of the BNP mayoral candidate. That person also fired bullets on the day, Taposh added.

"If they [BNP candidates] try to occupy any centre, residents of Dhaka will resist it. We will stay with you and resist it," he added. "You all have to be prepared to drive them out."

Urging Dhaka dwellers to cast their vote for "boat", electoral symbol of Awami League, Taposh also pledged to work for the betterment of the capital and people.

"This is an election to the local government. Go to the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Exercise your right: Ishraque to voters

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP's mayoral nominee for Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) Ishraque Hossain yesterday called upon voters to cast their votes on polls day "in order to establish people's rights", overcoming panic and "threats from the ruling quarter".

"I want to dedicate my life to establish people's rights. So, don't allow any obstacle and don't be afraid of anyone," he said, calling upon people to cast their votes.

Ishraque, son of former undivided Dhaka City Corporation mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka, was speaking at a short rally at his Gopibagh home, at the closing of his electioneering yesterday evening.

The candidate of BNP's election symbol "sheaf of paddy" said he has garnered enormous love from the people during electioneering in the last few days.

After thanking his party leaders and activists for their efforts in campaigns, Ishraque shouted slogans for his symbol while hundreds of BNP leaders and activists echoed him.

Earlier in the day, Ishraque participated in several meetings with local BNP leaders held at different parts of Old Dhaka, his birthplace.

Sources at those meetings said the mayoral candidate gave directives and exchanged views with top leaders on various strategies ahead of the election -- slated for tomorrow.

Later in the afternoon, Ishraque campaigned in Tikatuli, Hatkhola, Central Women's College, KM Das Lane, Gopibagh rail gate, and RK Mission Road areas.

Meanwhile, BNP yesterday urged the Election

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Choose 'boat' for development: Atiq

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amid enthusiasm and festivity, Awami League mayor candidate Atiqul Islam carried out his campaign yesterday -- on the last day of electioneering.

He started the day with a visit to Bhasantek area (ward-15) under Dhaka North City Corporation around 11am.

His supporters, however, started thronging the area since early morning, shouting slogans in favour of "boat", AL's electoral symbol.

Atiqul also brought in some star power to woo voters -- mostly slum dwellers. A number of media personalities including Hyder Husyn, Tanvin Sweetie and Azmeri Haque Badhon conducted campaign in his favour. They spoke to residents and handed out leaflets.

While talking to journalists, Atiqul said, "When I took oath for the first time as mayor on March 7 last year, the prime minister told me to prioritise Bhasantek slum."

"No one will be evicted from the slum without being rehabilitated," he assured locals.

Atiqul also promised, "Once elected, I, with the support of working class people and slum dwellers, will make a permanent arrangement for those living in the slums."

Responding to a query, he said, "The symbol of boat means development. We have no intention to thwart the election. Instead, we have heard that the opposition party is bringing in outsiders to create chaos during the polls. Just go to the polling centres and cast your votes."

Present at the campaign, former lawmaker Tarana Halim said, "Please go through the manifesto of our mayor

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

One held for opening fire during Wari clash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police arrested a man early yesterday for shooting during a clash between supporters of BNP and Awami League candidates in the city's Wari area on Sunday.

Police claimed the man is a personal assistant of Ishraque Hossain, BNP's mayoral candidate for DSCC. Ishraque, however, denied this while talking to reporters near his Gopibagh house, saying he has no assistant.

Ariful Islam (47) was held from Hatirjheel area in possession of a gun and 50 bullets, said Abdul Baten, additional commissioner (detective) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, at a press briefing at DMP Media Centre yesterday.

Ariful was a former leader of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, the police officer said.

The bullet shell recovered from the spot primarily matched with bullets in his gun, Abdul Baten said, adding that a case will be filed against him under the arms act.

The arrestee was identified after examination of video footage collected from nearby areas, the police officer said, claiming Ariful admitted to opening fire on that day during primary interrogation.

"I'm contesting as a BNP candidate. Thousands of leaders are coming, volunteering and participating in my various activities. I don't know what the outsider [Ariful] said. All I can say is propaganda is being spread to divert people's attention, seeing the wave of support for us," he said when reporters asked about the police claim.

On Sunday, supporters of Ishraque and AL-backed councillor candidate Rokon Uddin Ahmed clashed during campaigning, leaving at least 15 people injured.

Several gunshots were heard during the clash, and a number of vehicles were vandalised.

Police arrested several BNP men after a local AL leader field a case accusing around 200 BNP leaders and activists after the incident.

Unsure if polls will be free, fair: Tabith

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With only a day left to the city corporation polls, BNP mayor candidate for Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) Tabith Awal said he was still not sure whether the election will be free and fair.

Speaking at a views-exchange meeting with journalists in the capital's Jatiya Press Club yesterday, he also expressed his apprehension over the neutrality of Election Commission (EC) and fairness of electronic voting machine (EVM).

"Our fear is centring the election day, which is drawing nearer. I am not sure whether all of our agents will be able to go to the polling centres on that day," Tabith said at the event.

"On election day, we will realise how the EVMs ultimately work. We will also see how the EC acts following polls violence and irregularities. The whole country is waiting to see what EC does," he added.

At another views-exchange meeting, held at Dhaka Reporters' Unity (DRU), the BNP leader alleged that the EC showed a lack of sincerity towards the opposition party candidates, as it denied many of their complaints regarding attacks and electoral code violation.

He also urged journalists to play a responsible role, so that the real picture of the election comes out through their reporting.

On the last day of electioneering, Tabith spent a busy day talking to electorate and the press.

Speaking at one of the programmes, Jatiya Press Club President Saiful Alam expressed hope that the election would be free and fair. He also urged the candidates to

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



Members of Border Guard Bangladesh have started patrolling the streets of Dhaka since yesterday morning. A total of 75 platoons were deployed in both Dhaka north and south city areas to avert any untoward incident during the polls. Their deployment will run for four days, until February 2.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

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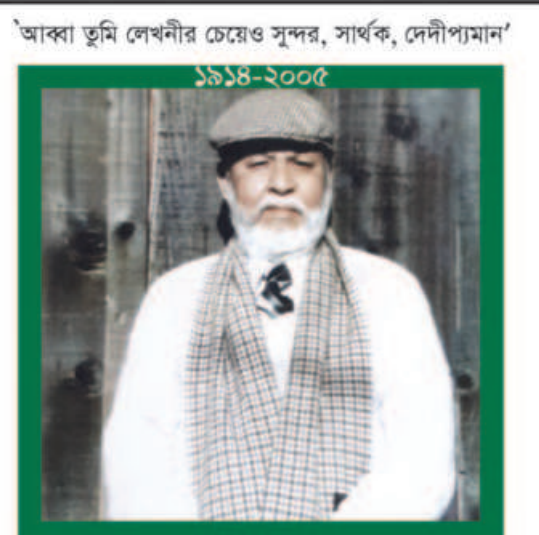
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IN REMEMBRANCE



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আনোক্তিত

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MUJIB BORSHO

Special souvenir to be published

BSS, Dhaka

The work on publishing a special souvenir marking Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's birth centenary celebration is going on in full swing.

The information was revealed yesterday at a meeting on publication of the souvenir at the International Mother Language Institute in the city, said a press release.

Chairman of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Birth Centenary Celebration National Implementation Committee Prof Rafiqul Islam presided over the meeting, while chief coordinator of the committee Dr Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury moderated it.

Rafiqul Islam said Bangabandhu's daughter Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has consented to edit the souvenir.

Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury said they have requested renowned authors to send articles on the life and work of Bangabandhu, and they have received many articles already.

Participants of the meeting expressed the hope that the souvenir will be published within a few months.

Former finance minister AMA Muhiith, National Professor Anisuzzaman and Prof Shamsuzzaman were present.

Hotels clear up

FROM PAGE 3

carry photo ID cards while leaving their homes.

"Many relatives of candidates took part in the election campaign held amid fanfare. Thank you very much. We expect you now to leave Dhaka. Unnecessary visit to Dhaka is being discouraged," the Rab DG said.

Asked whether Rab will take action if anyone does not leave Dhaka, the Rab chief said it is not Rab's objective to keep anyone in jail. What law enforcing agencies want is to ensure that voters can cast their votes without any problems.

"There is no problem in coming for emergency activities, medical treatment, job interview or travelling abroad," Benazir added.

Five capital-based Rab battalions and the elite force's bomb disposal unit and dog squad started working from yesterday in the city, and will be on duty till the day after the election.

Besides, checkpoints will be set up at different important points and entries to the capital, while 129 mobile courts will be in operation.

Meanwhile, Additional Commissioner (DB) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police Abdul Baten yesterday said, "Police are conducting drives only to arrest illegal arms carriers, and those who can create violence in the election," adding that no innocent person would be harassed.

Asked about BNP's claim that the drive is meant to arrest and harass BNP leaders and activists, Baten said it was not their concern to see who belongs to which party, or what any leader of a political party says.

Choose 'boat' for

FROM PAGE 3

candidate. He is offering solutions to our city problems. Vote for him for a better Dhaka."

Atiul also spoke to locals and sought votes from them. During the time, locals said they are deprived of civic amenities and are always under eviction threat. They said around 10 thousand families live in the slum.

"Many politicians made lofty promises but none of those came true after they were elected. We want to be rehabilitated permanently," said Ismail Bhandari (60), who has been living there for over 30 years.

After visiting the area, Atiul said, "In the last 20 days, I have visited all the 54 wards under DNCC. Problems of each ward are different and I have documented all of those. If I am elected, I will try to solve the problems."

From there, Atiul went to Natun Bazar around 3pm and campaigned in the area.

Exercise your right

FROM PAGE 3

Commission to take visible and effective measures to ensure security of their party's polling agents and voters on the day of elections.

A delegation of the party's DSCC election conducting committee made the demand in a meeting with Returning Officer Abdul Baten at his office, at Sadeque Hossain Khoka Community Centre at Gopibagh in the afternoon.

After the meeting, delegation leader Abdus Salam, also BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's adviser, told journalists that they urged the EC to establish a level playing field, so that ruling party cannot influence the elections in any way.

"We expressed grave concerns to the EC over the arrests of our leaders and activists and unnecessary search of their houses by police, as well as violations of electoral code of conduct by AL leaders and activists," he said.

Salam alleged that the EC is yet to take any action against ruling party men who have been carrying out many irregularities since beginning of the campaign. "However, we have submitted a written complained to EC," he said.

"Such role of EC has had a negative effect on city dwellers' minds," he added.

Among others, BNP organising secretaries Fazlul Haque Milon and Imran Saleh Prince, as well as assistant organising secretary Advocate Abdus Salam were present at the meeting, Salam told journalists.



Citizens suffer from ongoing road expansion and drainage repair work in Sylhet's Madina Market area, especially due to the lack of alternative routes for vehicles to travel through. To add to the woes, water used in the construction work and trash extracted from the drains are being dumped right on the street.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Technical edu top priority of govt: Rajshahi mayor

BSS, Rajshahi

The government attaches top priority to technical education aimed at generating skilled human resources, said Rajshahi City Corporation Mayor AHM Khairuzzaman Liton yesterday.

"The government is pledge-bound to take the country forward through substantial and sustainable improvement of technical and vocational education," he said while addressing an event in the city as chief guest.

Technical Training Centre (TTC) organised the programme to mark the reception of its new students and farewell of SSC (Vocational) students on its premises.

Mayor Liton said technical and vocational education and training among youths are crucial for transforming Bangladesh into a middle-income country.

He also opined that technical education could be an effective means of building competent and skilled human resources. Role of skilled people is also vital for earning more foreign remittance, which is significant for the country's development, Liton said.

The mayor also described the government's decision to promote remittance inflow as significant through exporting manpower legally and urged the officials concerned to make people more aware of going to overseas markets through legal ways.

Chaired by TTC principal Abdur Rahim, the function was addressed, among others, by Deputy Commissioner Hamidul Haque, Superintendent of Police Muhammad Shahidullah and Deputy Commissioner of Rajshahi Metropolitan Police Tariqul Islam.

Muhammad Imran receives UAE medal of independence

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladeshi diplomat Muhammad Imran has received the UAE's Medal of Independence of the First Order, in recognition of his efforts that contributed to promoting friendly relations and cooperation between the UAE and Bangladesh.

UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan conferred it to Muhammad Imran, who is now high commissioner of Bangladesh to India, reported UAE's state news agency Emirates News Agency on Wednesday.

Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, minister of foreign affairs and international cooperation of UAE presented Muhammad Imran with the medal at the former's office. Imran extended his thanks and appreciation to UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

Imran served as the Bangladesh ambassador to the UAE before joining his assignment to India.



Brac University partners with Duke of Edinburgh award

CITY DESK

An agreement signing ceremony took place on Wednesday between The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Foundation Bangladesh (DEA-BD) and Brac University (Bracu) on its campus, says a press release.

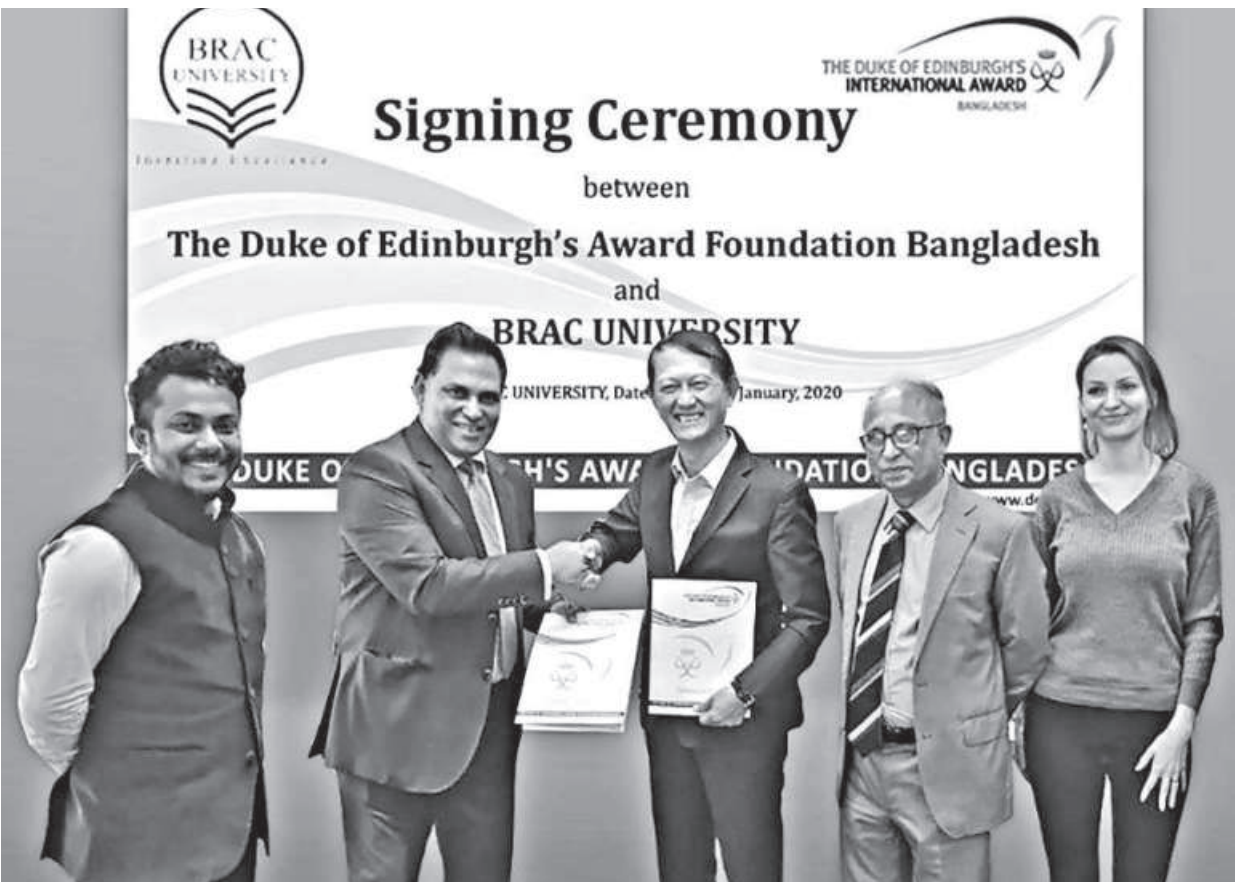
Bracu Vice Chancellor Prof Vincent Chang, and Brig Gen (ret'd) Kaiser Ahmed, national director of DEA-BD, signed for their respective organisations.

Bracu will offer the award programme to its 11,000 existing students and make it mandatory for the approximate 3,000 freshers every year.

The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award is a non-formal education programmes operating in 130 countries. In Bangladesh, 93 leading educational institutes are running it under sub-license from DEA-BD.

If offers a unique opportunity to youths aged 14-24 to discover their hidden talents and gain a special sense of responsibility.

Abdullah Chowdhury, director of Bracu's Student Experience and Alumni Affairs; Karla Fraser, director of Bracu's Campus Life; Irene Sommer, manager to Bracu VC's office; along with officials of DEA-BD were present at the signing ceremony.



A new beginning

FROM PAGE 3

polling centres and cast your votes to elect a qualified and fit person as your mayor, who will work for you," he told residents.

"City dwellers are waiting eagerly. We will have a new beginning towards a developed city from February 1," he said.

"When I was performing my duty as

a lawmaker, I felt an urgency to work for Dhaka and if we fail to transform the city into a developed one, all achievements will be lost," Taposh said.

Throughout the day, Taposh, accompanied by several leaders and activists, also handed out leaflets to city residents during his campaign.

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Vacancy Announcement

PKSF has been implementing "The World Bank" funded project titled "Sustainable Enterprise Project (SEP)" since August 2018. The objective of this project is to increase adoption of the environmentally sustainable practices by targeted microenterprises following business cluster development approach. PKSF hereby invites applications from the suitable candidates for the recruitment of the following positions under SEP:

S.N	Name of the Posts	Consolidated Monthly Salary
1	Program Officer (Enterprise Development- Textile and Fashion); No. of Post-01(one)	BDT 90,000/-
2	Program Officer (Enterprise Development- Food Technology); No. of Post-01(one)	BDT 90,000/-
3	Program Officer (Enterprise Development -Light-engineering); No. of Post-01(one)	BDT 90,000/-
4	Assistant Program Officer (Accounts and Finance) No.of Post -01(one)	BDT 70,000/-

The employees will be recruited initially for one year with an opportunity for performance-based annual renewal during the project period. Interested candidates who fulfill the requirements should apply online by **9 February 2020**. For detailed Terms of Reference (ToR) and instructions to apply, please visit PKSF website: www.pksf-bd.org.

Only short-listed candidates will be contacted. PKSF is an equal opportunity employer. Any kind of persuasion will be treated as disqualification of the candidate. PKSF reserves the right to cancel this recruitment process without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Golam Touhid
Deputy Managing Director



Amid festivity, the Hindu community celebrated Saraswati Puja yesterday. *Top*, people gather at Jagannath Hall premises of Dhaka University, where students of almost every department set up mandaps -- the major attraction of the celebrations every year. *Bottom left*, devotees offer food (prasad) to pay obeisance to the goddess of knowledge, wisdom and culture at a mandap in Sylhet. Anjali (flower petals) being offered to a Saraswati at a temple in Barishal.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS, SHEIKH NASIR, TITU DAS

DoE destroys 2 brick kilns in Sylhet

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Department of Environment yesterday destroyed two brick fields at Swaraswati area of Sylhet’s Golapganj upazila. The brick fields -- Bashir Bricks and Hafiz and Brothers -- were being operated for years without clearance certificate from the department. They were polluting the environment and lifting soil from nearby riverbanks, Israt Jahan Panna, director of DoE in Sylhet, said. Both the brick fields were also fined Tk 20 lakh each. DoE completely destroyed both the fields using excavator, Israt said. Earlier on Wednesday, DoE destroyed two other brick fields at Osmaninagar upazila in Sylhet. Such drives will continue, the DoE director said. Brick kilns are the top air pollutants in major cities of the country, particularly during dry season when most bricks are made, turning the air quality of these metropolises “severely unhealthy”, according to DoE.

ZAHURUL HAQ HALL

DU probe body talks to tortured students, accused

DU CORRESPONDENT

Three of the four Dhaka University students, who were tortured allegedly by Chhatra League men at a university dormitory on January 21, yesterday spoke to the probe body formed over the incident. The body, formed two days after the incident, also interviewed the accused Chhatra League activists. BCL activists of Sergeant Zahurul Haq Hall allegedly tortured Mukim Chowdhury and three other students for nearly three hours before handing them to police on early January 22. The three others are: Sanwar Hossain of political science department, Minhaz Uddin of Islamic History, and Afsar Uddin of Arabic. The trio was interviewed by the probe body yesterday. After being released from the police station, Mukim had started a sit-in at the base of Raju Memorial Sculpture, but was compelled to call it off when his father fell ill. Mukim and his father are now undergoing treatment at a hospital in Chattogram, his family said. Talking to The Daily Star, Mukim’s mother said, “My husband had a sudden brain stroke after hearing that our son was beaten up. Both Mukim and his father are sick; that is why Mukim could not respond to probe body’s call for interview.” The three-member probe body, headed by senior house tutor Prof Muhammad Jahidul Islam, was formed on January 23 to investigate the incident. The body was asked to submit its report by seven working days. Contacted, Prof Jahidul said they have interviewed three students and some accused BCL leaders. “But it would not be possible to submit the report by the stipulated time if the victims do not cooperate,” he added.

Cold-related ailments affect 4,631 in 24 hrs

UNB, Dhaka

Various cold-related ailments affected 4,631 people across the country in the last 24 hours until 8am yesterday, according to the government. Data from the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) control room showed that 980 of the patients received treatment for acute respiratory infection (ARI). Another 2,088 were treated for diarrhoea, and 1,563 for diseases including jaundice, inflammation in the eye, skin diseases, and fever. A total of 4,45,961 people were affected by various cold related ailments across the country between November 1 and January 30. Fifty-seven deaths were reported during this period. Due to foggy weather and cold wave, many people -- mostly children and the elderly -- are suffering from cold-related diseases. The people especially from the northern part of the country are the worst sufferers.

BREXIT

UK sees opportunity to do more with Bangladesh

UNB, Dhaka

The United Kingdom (UK) sees a real opportunity to do more on trade, development and other areas in the longer term with Bangladesh, as the UK formally leaves the European Union (EU) today. “There’s an increasing focus in the UK on the opportunities,” British High Commissioner to Bangladesh Robert Chatterton Dickson told reporters at his residence yesterday, mentioning that they will explore how they can best trade with Bangladesh. The high commissioner said he wants to see it as an “opportunity” to do more, as the UK seeks to deepen its relationship with global partners in the future. The UK will immediately enter an 11-month transition period after Brexit, during which it will continue to obey EU rules and pay money to the EU. As a least-developed country, Bangladesh benefits from the most favourable regime available under the EU’s Generalized Scheme of Preferences (GSP), namely the Everything but Arms (EBA) arrangement. EBA grants the 48 LDCs -- including Bangladesh -- duty-free and quota-free access to the EU for exports of all products, except arms and ammunition.



Robert Dickson

Following Brexit, the UK will be able to start talks with other countries about setting new rules for buying and selling goods and services. In the long term, he said they will be doing more, noting there are numerous business and investment interests in Bangladesh. Quoting British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, Dickson said, “Next Friday [today] marks an important moment in the history of our United Kingdom. No matter how you voted in 2016, it’s the time to look ahead with confidence to the global, trailblazing country we’ll become over the next decade and heal past divisions.” That is what, the British Prime Minister said, he will be doing on January 31. “I urge everyone across the UK to do the same.” The British high commissioner yesterday said the historic moment will be marked through a commemorative 50p coin, which will come into circulation on the day the UK leaves the EU. The public will see 3 million of these coins enter their banks, shops and restaurants from today, with a further 7 million entering circulation later this year. The British prime minister will be ‘one of the first’ to receive the new Brexit coin, which reads ‘Peace, prosperity and friendship with all nations’.

Two healthcare centres fined

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cg

A mobile court of Chattogram District Administration yesterday fined a diagnostic centre and a private clinic in the port city Tk 2.50 lakh in total for violating law. The mobile court led by Executive Magistrate Umar Faruque fined New Chander Alo Diagnostic Centre at Mailer Matha Tk 1.5 lakh for delivering pathological reports by copying the signature of a pathologist without his consent, said a press release. In the same drive, the mobile court fined Holy Care Nursing Home and Diagnostic Centre Tk 1 lakh for running the diagnostic centre without any licence, the press release added. Many unlicensed diagnostic centres and private hospitals in Chattogram are being operated without any trained medical workers, among other anomalies. In some cases, these healthcare institutions are starting their operations just after applying to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) for licence and without waiting for approval.

Nine ‘Allahr Dal members’ held in Sylhet

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Anti-Terrorism Unit (ATU) of Police claimed to have arrested nine leaders of the banned militant outfit “Allahr Dal” from Arambagh area of Sylhet Sadar upazila on Wednesday night. The unit in association with Sylhet Metropolitan Police (SMP) conducted a drive at 10:25pm and arrested the nine while planning anti-state activities, Paritosh Ghosh, additional commissioner of SMP, told a press conference in Sylhet yesterday. The arrestees are: Manik Akand alias Mehedy Hasan (32) of Bogura; Jahir Uddin Babar (20) of Noakhali; Rasel Ahmed (24) and Kamal Ahmed (25) of Zakiganj; Abul Kalam Azad (20) of Cumilla; Tomi Uddin Sumon (30) of Sunamganj; Ashrafal Islam (29) of Rajshahi; Jewel Ahmed (24) of Sylhet Sadar and Swapan Ahmed (21) of Golapganj. ATU officials in Dhaka said Manik has been working as the head of Sylhet division since 2018. Earlier, he used to be the regional chief of Naogaon, Chattogram and Cumilla from 2013 to 2018. He is one of the key members of the group. He joined the group in 2005, said law enforcers. Babar is working as Sylhet divisional

head of the outfit’s “Dawah” wing since 2018 while Rasel is the Sylhet district chief since 2018. Among other arrestees, Ashrafal is Sunamganj district chief; Kamal chief; Abul Kalam Shahparan thana chief; and Jewel and Swapan are ward unit chiefs of Sylhet city. MM Hasanul Zahid, superintendent of police (intelligence) of ATU, said in primary interrogation, the arrestees admitted that they were holding a clandestine meeting to take preparations for carrying out subversive activities. “All the arrestees are followers of Matin Mehedy of Kurigram who founded the outfit,” said Md Mahiduzzaman, ATU superintendent of police (legal and media). The Public Security Division, under the home ministry, banned the militant group on November 5, through issuing a gazette notification. The notification mentioned that the government thinks activities of the militant outfit named “Allahr Dal” are against peace and a threat to public security. The SP said they are investigating to find out details of their planning and capacity. ATU also seized Tk 16,000, some mobile phones, a registry book, some documents and books. A case was filed.

Biker dead, two hurt in Dinaipur road accident

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinaipur

A biker was killed and two were injured after a speeding tractor hit a motorcycle in Chirirbandar upazila on Wednesday night. The deceased was identified as Nazmul Haq (35), hailing from Majhapara village in the upazila. The injured are Manik Hossain (30) and Wahedul Islam (35). The accident occurred as the three were coming to Chirirbandar on the bike from Dinaipur town. As they arrived at Khuniadighi village on the Dinaipur-Chirirbandar road, the tractor hit them, leaving Nazmul dead on the spot. The injured are recuperating at M Abdur Rahim Medical College Hospital in Dinaipur after locals rushed them there.



Most of BRTC’s routes in Chattogram are being served by worndown buses like this one. Commuters of the city carry the risk of accidents every time they step out due to these unfit vehicles. The photo was taken at Shah Amanat Bridge.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN



Shefali Rani Sarker dries kumrabori, a delicious food item, in the sun. The photo was taken from Cheukhali village in Natore's Naldanga upazila on Tuesday.

PHOTO: STAR

Kumrabori brings solvency to many Natore women

At least 30 families of Cheukhali village in Naldanga upazila are engaged in making the delicious food item

BULBUL AHMED, Natore

Usually, poor people of the northern district pass their days in hardship between the months of October and February.

They have to struggle for a livelihood because there is no work available during this time.

But the story of many residents of a remote village in Natore's Naldanga upazila is a bit different.

A good number of people of Cheukhali village are passing a busy time preparing kumrabori, a dried paste of maskalai pulse, pumpkin and rice paste.

Members of at least 30 families, mostly women, at Cheukhali village are engaged in making kumrabori and sells their produces in different markets of the district.

The paste, mostly comprising the pulse, is made into small balls and then dried in the sun, especially in winter.

The curry and soup made from the item is favourite among the locals and people of some other districts as well.

"I used to sit idle after completing all my household works earlier. But now I prepare Kumrabori and earn some extra income that helps me to bear my children's education expenses," housewife Shefali Rani Sarker of Cheukhali village said.

"Making Kumrabori is not that easy. The pumpkin and maskalai pulse have to be well squeezed before mixing the two major ingredients. The ideal ratio is two kilogram of maskalai pulses, two and a half kilograms of pumpkin and some black cumin, locally known as kalijira," Shefali added.

Alongside Shefali, many other women like Sima Sarker, Suchitra Pramanik, Sudha Rani, Suchitra Sarker, Mili Mondal and Sadhana Mondal of the village are now able to contribute some financial support to

their families.

Another Kumrabori producer Krishna Khamaru of the village said each kilogram of the item sells for Tk 200 to Tk 250 to the wholesalers while it's being sold for Tk 250 to Tk 300 per kilogram to the retailers and common buyers.

It cost them Tk 900 to make 10 kilograms of Kumrabori and they can sell the produce at Tk 1,500, he said.

"We have to count loss when the sun does not shine. So we do not make much quantities every day," Suchitra Rani Sarker of the village said.

Natore Sadar Upazilla Health and Family Planning Officer Dr Mahbub Hossain said pumpkin, maskalai pulse, pumpkin and black cumin are nutritious and have huge health benefits.

Naldanga Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Sakib Al Rabbi said they will take necessary measured soon to support the Kumrabori makers.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Office of the Executive Engineer, DPHE
Barishal Division, C&B Road, Kazipara
Barishal-8200.
Email: ee.barisal@dphe.gov.bd



উন্নয়নের গণতন্ত্র
শেখ হাসিনার মূলমন্ত্র

Invitation for e-Tender Notice	
1. Ministry/Division	Local Government Division
2. Implementing Agency	Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE)
3. Project Name	Safe Water Supply Project by Installation of Environment Friendly Solar Water Desalination System.
e-Tender IDs	Description of Work:
418581 & 418583	Supply and Installation of Solar Desalination Unit in Different Upazila of Barishal.
Name & Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Md. Moinul Hasan Executive Engineer, DPHE, Barishal Division, Barishal-8200.
Contact details of Official Inviting Tender	Tel. No:- 0431-2174346 / Fax.No:- 0431-2174384. e-mail:- ee.barisal@dphe.gov.bd
This is online Tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in National e-GP portal and no Offline/ hard copies will be accepted. Interested persons/firms can see details in the website: www.eprocure.gov.bd	



(Md. Moinul Hasan)
Executive Engineer, DPHE
Barishal Division, Barishal.



A team of Department of Environment yesterday demolishes this illegal brick kiln in Sylhet's Golapganj upazila for not having clearance certificate from the authorities concerned.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Chattogram City Corporation
Tigerpass, Chattogram
www.ccc.org.bd



“আপনার সমস্যা-পরামর্শ
চট্টগ্রাম সিটি কর্পোরেশনের
১৬১০৪ নম্বরে জানান”

উন্নয়নের গণতন্ত্র
শেখ হাসিনার মূলমন্ত্র

Re-Tender No: CCC/CGP/ED/ICGP/B2/ChCC-33, 34, 38 & 39

Memo No: Date: 46.11.1600.002.32.20.000/ date-28/01/2020
e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following works, tender are given below.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives/Local Government Division.
2	Agency	Chattogram City Corporation.
3	Procuring Entity Name	Chief Engineer of the Chattogram City Corporation.
4	Procurement Nature	Works

KEY INFORMATION

5	Procurement Method	National Open Tendering Method (OTM).
6	Source of Funds	GOB & JICA ODA LOAN: BD-P79

FUNDING INFORMATION

7	Budget and Source of Funds	Development, JICA & GOB
8	Development Partners	Japan International Cooperation Agency

PARTICULAR INFORMATION

9	Project Name	City Governance Project (CGP)
10	Tender Package No.	ICGP B2 ChCC-33, 34, 38 & 39
11	Schedule Tender Publication Date & Time	Date: 30-Jan-2020 Time: 22:00
12	Tender closing Date & Time	16-Feb-2020 15:00
13	Tender opening Date & Time	16-Feb-2020 15:00

INFORMATION FOR TENDERER

14	Brief Description of Works:		
Sub-project No.	Tender ID	Tender Security Amount (Tk)	Completion Time in Days
ICGP B2 ChCC 33	Tender ID: 413194	33,00,000.00 (thirty-three lac only)	300 days
ICGP B2 ChCC 34	Tender ID: 412101	27,00,000.00 (twenty-seven lac only)	300 days
ICGP B2 ChCC 38	Tender ID: 413217	22,00,000.00 (twenty-two lac only)	300 days
ICGP B2 ChCC 39	Tender ID: 413503	17,00,000.00 (seventeen lac only)	300 days
15	Price of Tender Document (Tk)	Tk 4000.00	
16	Tender Validity Period	90 days	

The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all the tenders or annul the tender proceeding.

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and offline hard copies will not 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 date **16-Feb-2020 at time 13.00.** Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd)

Lt Col Sohail Ahmed, psc
The Chief Engineer
Chattogram City Corporation



গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ
পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়
সিরাজগঞ্জ
(www.sirajgonj.police.gov.bd)
উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

তারিখঃ ২৯-০১-২০২০খ্রিঃ

স্মারক নং-২৮৫/ই/চলতি ২০১৯-২০ অর্থ বৎসরে সিরাজগঞ্জ জেলা পুলিশের বিভিন্ন থানা/ইউনিটের নিম্নবর্ণিত ভবনাদি মেরামত/সংস্কার কাজের জন্য যোগ্যতাসম্পন্ন বাংলাদেশের প্রকৃত ঠিকাদারগণের নিকট হতে সীলমোহরকৃত বামে প্রতিযোগিতামূলক দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

১	মন্ত্রণালয়	ঃ স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রণালয়।
২	সংস্থা	ঃ পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, সিরাজগঞ্জ।
৩	দরপত্র সম্পাদনকারী প্রধান	ঃ পুলিশ সুপার, সিরাজগঞ্জ।
৪	দরপত্রের বিষয়	ঃ বিভিন্ন থানা/ইউনিটের ভবনাদি মেরামত ও সংস্কার কাজ।
৫	দরপত্রের সূত্র নং ও তারিখ	ঃ পুলিশ হেডকোয়ার্টার্স টাওয়ার স্মারক নং-৪৪.০১.০০০০.০৪৩.১১৬-২০১৯/৪৮২, তারিখঃ ১১-১২-২০১৯খ্রিঃ।
৬	দরপত্রের পদ্ধতি	ঃ (OTM) উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি।
৭	বাজেট ও অর্থনৈতিক খাত	ঃ পুলিশ বাজেটের অনুসূচী সর্বোচ্চ কোডে।
৮	দরপত্র প্রকাশের তারিখ	ঃ ০২-০২-২০২০খ্রিঃ তারিখের মধ্যে।
৯	দরপত্র সিডিউল সর্বশেষ প্রাপ্তির তারিখ	ঃ ২৩-০২-২০২০খ্রিঃ তারিখ অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত (সরকারি ছুটির দিন ব্যতিত)।
১০	দরপত্র জমা প্রদানের সর্বশেষ তারিখ ও সময়	ঃ ২৪-০২-২০২০খ্রিঃ তারিখ ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
১১	দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময়	ঃ ২৪-০২-২০২০খ্রিঃ বেলা ১২.৩০ ঘটিকার দরপত্রাদা বা মনোনীত প্রতিদ্বন্দ্বিতাদের উপস্থিতিতে (যদি থাকে)।
১২	দরপত্র মূল্যায়নের তারিখ ও সময়	ঃ ২৬-০২-২০২০খ্রিঃ তারিখ ১১.০০ ঘটিকায়।
১৩	দরপত্র সম্পাদনকারী অফিস ও ঠিকানা	ঃ পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, সিরাজগঞ্জ।
১৪	দরপত্র প্রাপ্তির স্থান	ঃ ১) রেঞ্জ ডিআইজি অফিস, রাজশাহী, ২) পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, সিরাজগঞ্জ ও ৩) পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয় পাবনা এবং মাইটের।
১৫	দরপত্র দাখিলের স্থান	ঃ পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, সিরাজগঞ্জ।
১৬	দরপত্র খোলার স্থান	ঃ পুলিশ সুপারের কার্যালয়, সিরাজগঞ্জ।
১৭	দরপত্রাদাতার যোগ্যতা	ঃ পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট আইন, ২০০৬ ও পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা, ২০০৮ এবং তৎপরবর্তীতে সংশোধিত ও প্রণীত আইন/বিধিমালা এর সকল শর্তাবলী কার্যকর হবে।
১৮	দরপত্রের সহিত যে সকল কাগজপত্র জমা প্রদান করতে হবে	ঃ হালনাগাদ ট্রেড লাইসেন্স, ভ্যাট রেজিস্ট্রেশন সনদপত্র, আয়কর সনদপত্র, ভোটার আইডি'র ফটোকপি, কাপোরা তালিকাভুক্ত নয় এর অধিকারনামা, নমুনা স্বাক্ষর, মালিকানা সনদপত্র, ঠিকাদারী লাইসেন্স, সর্বশ্রেষ্ঠ কাজের পূর্ব অভিজ্ঞতার সনদপত্র এবং মূলতম ২৫ (পঁচিশ) লক্ষ টাকার হালনাগাদ ব্যাংক স্বজ্ঞাততার সনদপত্রের মূলকপি, ছবি ০১ কপি, দরপত্র জামানত ও দরপত্রের সহিত সকল কাগজপত্র সচায়ািত করে দাখিল করতে হবে।

লট নং	কাজের বিবরণ	সিডিউলের মূল্য	দরপত্র জামানত	কাজ সমাপ্তির সময়
০১	সিরাজগঞ্জ জেলার কামারখন্দ থানার ১ তলা ২ ইউনিট এসআই কোয়ার্টার সার্বিক মেরামত ও সংস্কার কাজ।	৪০০.০০	১৩৫০০.০০	
০২	সিরাজগঞ্জ জেলার কামারখন্দ থানার ১ তলা ২ ইউনিট এসআই কোয়ার্টার সার্বিক মেরামত ও সংস্কার কাজ।	৪০০.০০	১৩৫০০.০০	
০৩	সিরাজগঞ্জ জেলার শাহজাদপুর থানার (১ তলা ১-ইউনিট) এসআই-২ কোয়ার্টার সার্বিক মেরামত ও সংস্কার কাজ।	৪০০.০০	৮০০০.০০	
০৪	সিরাজগঞ্জ জেলার শাহজাদপুর থানার ১ তলা (২ ইউনিট) এসআই কোয়ার্টার-১ সার্বিক মেরামত ও সংস্কার কাজ।	৪০০.০০	১৩৫০০.০০	
০৫	সিরাজগঞ্জ জেলার শাহজাদপুর থানার ১ তলা (২ ইউনিট) কনস্টেবল কোয়ার্টার সার্বিক মেরামত ও সংস্কার কাজ।	৪০০.০০	১২০০০.০০	
০৬	সিরাজগঞ্জ জেলার সদর থানার ২ তলা ৪ ইউনিট এসআই কোয়ার্টার-১ সার্বিক মেরামত ও সংস্কার কাজ।	৪০০.০০	১৫০০০.০০	
০৭	সিরাজগঞ্জ জেলার সদর থানার ১ তলা ২ ইউনিট এসআই কোয়ার্টার-২ সার্বিক মেরামত ও সংস্কার কাজ।	৪০০.০০	১১৯০০.০০	
০৮	সিরাজগঞ্জ জেলার সদর থানার টিনশেড কনস্টেবল কোয়ার্টার ৬ ইউনিট এর সার্বিক মেরামত ও সংস্কার কাজ।	৪০০.০০	১০৪০০.০০	৩০ (ত্রিশ) দিন
০৯	সিরাজগঞ্জ জেলার ১নং শহর পুলিশ ফাঁড়ি সংলগ্ন ট্রাফিক ব্যারাক (১ তলা ভবন) এর সার্বিক মেরামত ও সংস্কার কাজ।	৪০০.০০	১০৫০০.০০	
১০	সিরাজগঞ্জ জেলার পুলিশ লাইন্স রিজার্ভ অফিস ২ তলা ভবন সার্বিক মেরামত ও সংস্কার কাজ।	৪০০.০০	১৫২০০.০০	
১১	সিরাজগঞ্জ জেলার পুলিশ লাইন্সের অভ্যন্তরে অস্ত্রাগার ভবন এর সার্বিক মেরামত ও সংস্কার কাজ।	৪০০.০০	১৫০০০.০০	
১২	সিরাজগঞ্জ জেলার পুলিশ লাইন্সের অভ্যন্তরে কনস্টেবল কোয়ার্টার (৬০০ বর্গফুট) (৪ তলা ৮ ইউনিট) এর সার্বিক মেরামত ও সংস্কার কাজ।	৪০০.০০	১৭৯০০.০০	
১৩	সিরাজগঞ্জ জেলার পুলিশ লাইন্সের অভ্যন্তরে এসআই কোয়ার্টার (৮০০ বর্গফুট) (৩ তলা ৬ ইউনিট) এর সার্বিক মেরামত ও সংস্কার কাজ।	৪০০.০০	১৮০০০.০০	
১৪	সিরাজগঞ্জ জেলার বেলকুচি থানার ১ তলা ওসি কোয়ার্টার সার্বিক মেরামত ও সংস্কার কাজ।	৪০০.০০	৯০০০.০০	
১৫	সিরাজগঞ্জ জেলার বেলকুচি থানার ২ তলা (৪ ইউনিট) এসআই কোয়ার্টার সার্বিক মেরামত ও সংস্কার কাজ।	৪০০.০০	১৪৯০০.০০	

২০ বিশেষ জ্ঞাতব্যঃ

ক) ব্যক্তি বা প্রতিষ্ঠানের স্বত্বাধিকারীর স্বাক্ষরযুক্ত প্যাডে আবেদনপূর্বক অফিস চলাকালীন সময় পর্যন্ত ১৪নং ক্রমিকে বর্ণিত স্থান হতে সকল কাজপত্রের মূলকপি প্রদর্শনপূর্বক দরপত্র সিডিউল সজ্ঞহ করা যাবে।

খ) দরপত্র সংক্রান্ত অন্যান্য শর্তাবলী সিডিউল সজ্ঞহকালে নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর কার্যালয় হতে জানা যাবে।

গ) দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ হতে ৬০ দিন পর্যন্ত দরপত্র বলবৎ থাকবে।

ঘ) অনুমোদিত বরাদ্দের আলোকে কার্যাদেশ প্রদান করা হবে।

ঙ) দরপত্রের উন্মুক্ত সময়ের মধ্যে কার্য সম্পাদন করতে হবে।

চ) দরপত্র আহ্বানকারী কর্তৃপক্ষ যে কোন সময় কার্য দর্শনো ব্যতিরেকে দরপত্র বাতিলের ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করেন।

স্বাক্ষরিত/-
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জিডি-২০৬



A woman collects drinking water from Panekyang canal in Bandarban Sadar upazila. The natural waterbody, the only source of water for the locals, sees only a shallow thin flow as the surface water is drawn to underground due to lifting of huge quantity of water with power pump from a deep ring well, constructed by an influential person for running his hotel business.

PHOTO: SANJOY KUMAR BARUA

Deep ring well in canal for drawing water for hotel!

Crisis grips locals as their only water source now sees very thin flow

SANJOY KUMAR BARUA, Bandarban

Locals are facing water crisis as flow in Panekyang canal in Bandarban Sadar upazila is badly affected due to lifting of huge quantity of water from a 100-foot-deep ring well that a local influential person constructed for running a hotel.

Defying the protest from the locals, Kajal Kanti Das, an advisor to Bandarban district Awami League, constructed the ring well in the middle of the canal one year ago and around 12,000 litres of water is lifted daily from there using a power pump with high voltage motor.

Around 650 inhabitants of Kashem Para and Kosai Para under Bandarban Sadar upazila depend on the canal for their drinking water and daily works, including washing and bathing.

“We are badly suffering as huge quantity of water is lifted from the underground daily, causing decline in the surface water flow,” said Sharmin Akthar of Kashem Para area.

“We had urged Kajol Kanti Das not to construct the ring well in the canal, our only source of water. But the influential man didn’t pay heed to us,” said Saiful Islam, another local, adding that their water crisis worsened during the last few months.

Abul Kalam, ward councillor of the area, said, “We didn’t support when Kajal constructed the well in the canal around one year ago.”

“Around 12,000 litres of water is daily needed for running this hotel,” said Sultan Nafiz Mahmud, manager of Hotel Hill View, run by Kajal.

Shibendu Khastagir, superintending engineer of Bangladesh Water Development Board in Chattogram, said, “If huge quantity of water is lifted from underground through a deep well dug in a canal, it seriously affects the surface water flow.”

Contacted, Kajal Kanti Das said, “I constructed the ring well in the canal to bring water for my hotel. You can write as you wish. I don’t care.”

Bandarban Sadar Upazila Nirbahi Officer Md Noman Hossain said, “This is really unfortunate that a ring well has been constructed in the middle of a natural canal to draw water for hotel business. As the alleged person is influential, we would request the affected locals to come to my office with an application.”

Broccoli cultivation gaining popularity among farmers

Farmers in Faridpur’s Sadar, Boalmari, Alfadanga and Madhukhali upazilas are cultivating the green vegetable as it has a growing demand

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Cultivation of broccoli, a foreign variety of vegetable, is gaining popularity among the farmers in four upazilas of Faridpur.

Farmers of different village in four upazilas -- Sadar, Boalmari, Alfadanga and Madhukhali -- are showing more interest in broccoli cultivation, because they are not only getting a good price of their produces, but the green vegetable has a growing demand as well.

Faridpur Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) Deputy Director (DD) Kartik Chandra Chakraborty said, the green vegetable not only tastes good, it has many health benefits as well.

The vegetable also help manage diabetes, prevent cancer and reduces blood pressure, he said.

Although broccoli is mostly cultivated in Boalmari, Alfadanga, Sadar and Madhukhali upazilas, his department has no data about how much area have been brought under broccoli cultivation this year, the DD said.

Farmer Nannu Mollah, 49, of Satar village in Boalmari upazila, said he has cultivated broccoli on 60 decimals of land spending Tk 20,000.

He is expecting to earn Tk 1 lakh by selling his produces this year, Nannu said.



Besides, the vegetable can be harvested within 90 days of sowing, Nannu said, adding that, at start of the season he sold each broccoli for Tk 100 to Tk 120, while he is now selling it for Tk 30 to Tk 40 per piece.

Another farmer Nazrul Mollah of the same area said people from different areas come to visit his broccoli field every day.

Although, the expenditure of broccoli farming is less than any other crops, it gives them a good profit, he said.



Farmer Nannu Mollah tends his broccoli field. The photo was taken from Satar village in Faridpur’s Boalmari upazila recently.

PHOTO: STAR



An overhead reservoir and a pump house, part of a non-functioning drinking water supply unit, in Dakkhin Gideri area of Gaibandha Sadar upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

Most Barind water supply units not functioning

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

As many as ten out of 14 drinking water supply units, installed by Barind Multipurpose Development Authority (BMDA), now lie unusable without any water treatment plant.

About 11 years ago, BMDA spent around Tk 1.65 crore to install the water supply units in five upazilas. An overhead reservoir with a capacity of 25,000 litres and around six to eight thousand feet of water supply pipelines were installed as part of each supply unit. Each of the units was designed to provide pure drinking water to nearly 1,600 families, according to BMDA in Gaibandha.

Locals said since underground water in the service areas covered by the ten units -- in Gaibandha Sadar, Sadullapur and Sundarganj upazilas -- has high levels of iron and arsenic, consumption of the water without treatment is not safe.

In Gobindaganj and Palashbari upazilas, four such units are still in service.

BMDA primarily facilitates irrigation for farmers in the area. It later on took on various other projects including supply of drinking water, excavation of silted ponds and planting trees.

Motiur Rahman, a farmer from Dakkhin Gideri area under Gaibandha Sadar upazila, said

they stopped consuming the water supplied through the BMDA pipeline because it looks as red as the tainted water they used to get from tube wells at their homes.

An official at Gaibandha public health engineering department said a small-sized water treatment plant would cost around Tk 20 to 25 lakh.

Ejazul Islam, Executive Engineer of BMDA in Gaibandha, said they prepared a proposal for installing water treatment plants at each of the non-functioning water supply units.

Alternatively, to ensure iron-free drinking water, they will install deep tube wells with extraction pipes below two hundred feet in each service area, he also said.

Two Saraswati idols defaced in B’baria, Dinajpur

STAR COUNTRY DESK

Miscreants damaged two idols of Saraswati, the Hindu goddess of wisdom, in Brahmanbaria and Dinajpur yesterday when the minority community observed Saraswati Puja across the country.

An idol of Saraswati was damaged at Chatalpar Degree College in Nasirnagar upazila of Brahmanbaria district early Thursday, reports our correspondent.

“Some Hindu students of the college returned home after completing the decoration of the Saraswati idol here around 11:00pm on Wednesday. Next morning, I and my colleague Narendra Sutradhar saw the idol broken as we were preparing to perform the puja,” said Suranjit Das, a teacher of Chatalpar Degree College.

They immediately called college Principal Omar Ali, who informed the local UP chairman and the police of the incident.

“Police went to the spot and kept the broken idol in a separate room. Legal action will be taken in this regard after

investigation,” said Ranjan Kumar, in-charge of Chatalpar police outpost.

Later a new idol was brought and worship was arranged at the college premises.

Earlier on October 30 in 2016, religious bigots attacked five temples and vandalised and looted about 100 Hindu houses at several localities in Nasirnagar, following a Facebook post purportedly from the Facebook account of a fisherman belonging to the minority community.

Our Dinajpur Correspondent reports: Police arrested four people on charge of vandalising a Saraswati Puja spot in Phulbari upazila of Dinajpur on Wednesday night.

The arrestees, Shahidul Islam, 24, Azizul Islam, 24, Sekendar Ali, 45, and Manik Mondal, 23, all from Jiot village of Phulbari upazila, were sent to Dinajpur jail after police produced them before a court yesterday.

Local Hindus said Saraswati Puja was held at a makeshift temple at Jiot village on Wednesday and song was

played on sound boxes there.

At around 7:30pm on Wednesday, 10 to 12 people of Muslim community appeared there.

“They vandalised the sound system, damaged the Saraswati idol and assaulted several Hindus here. They also took away a mobile phone. The attack occurred apparently for playing songs on sound boxes,” said Sree Lochan Das of Jiot village, who filed a case with Phulbari Police Station on Wednesday night accusing seven named people and 12 unidentified others.

There is a mosque around 300 foot away from the temple.

The incident occurred as songs were played during the evening prayer, said Md Rubel Hossain, a former member of Aladipur union parishad.

A police team led by Mia Mohammad Ashish Bin Hasan, additional superintendent of police of Phulbari Circle, visited the spot on Wednesday night. Police arrested four of the accused and attempts are on to nab the others,” said Fakhruul Islam, officer in charge of Phulbari Police Station.



Fresh onion stalks, locally called Fulka, started to arrive at Natore’s Naldanga Haat. Each kilogram of the stalks was being sold at Tk 10 on Tuesday.

PHOTO: STAR

Deadly strikes hit Syria rebel bastion

10 civilians killed

AFP, Ariha

Air strikes killed 10 civilians near a bakery and a medical clinic in Syria's rebel-held Idlib region yesterday, as government forces kept up a ground offensive.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said Russian warplanes hit the Idlib province town of Ariha, but the Russian defence ministry said its "aviation did not carry out any combat tasks in this area of Syria."

The government and its Russian allies have upped their deadly bombardment of Syria's last major rebel bastion, slowly chipping away at it from the south.

Rebel-held territory has shrunk to just over half of Idlib province, along with slivers of neighbouring Aleppo and Latakia, following a series of government gains.

The saw Damascus loyalists retaking the strategic northwestern town of Maaret al-Numan on Wednesday.

Earlier yesterday, Russian air strikes hit near a bakery and the Al-Shami clinic in Ariha which is now out of service, the Observatory said.

The monitor says it determines whose planes carried out strikes according to type, location, flight patterns and munitions.

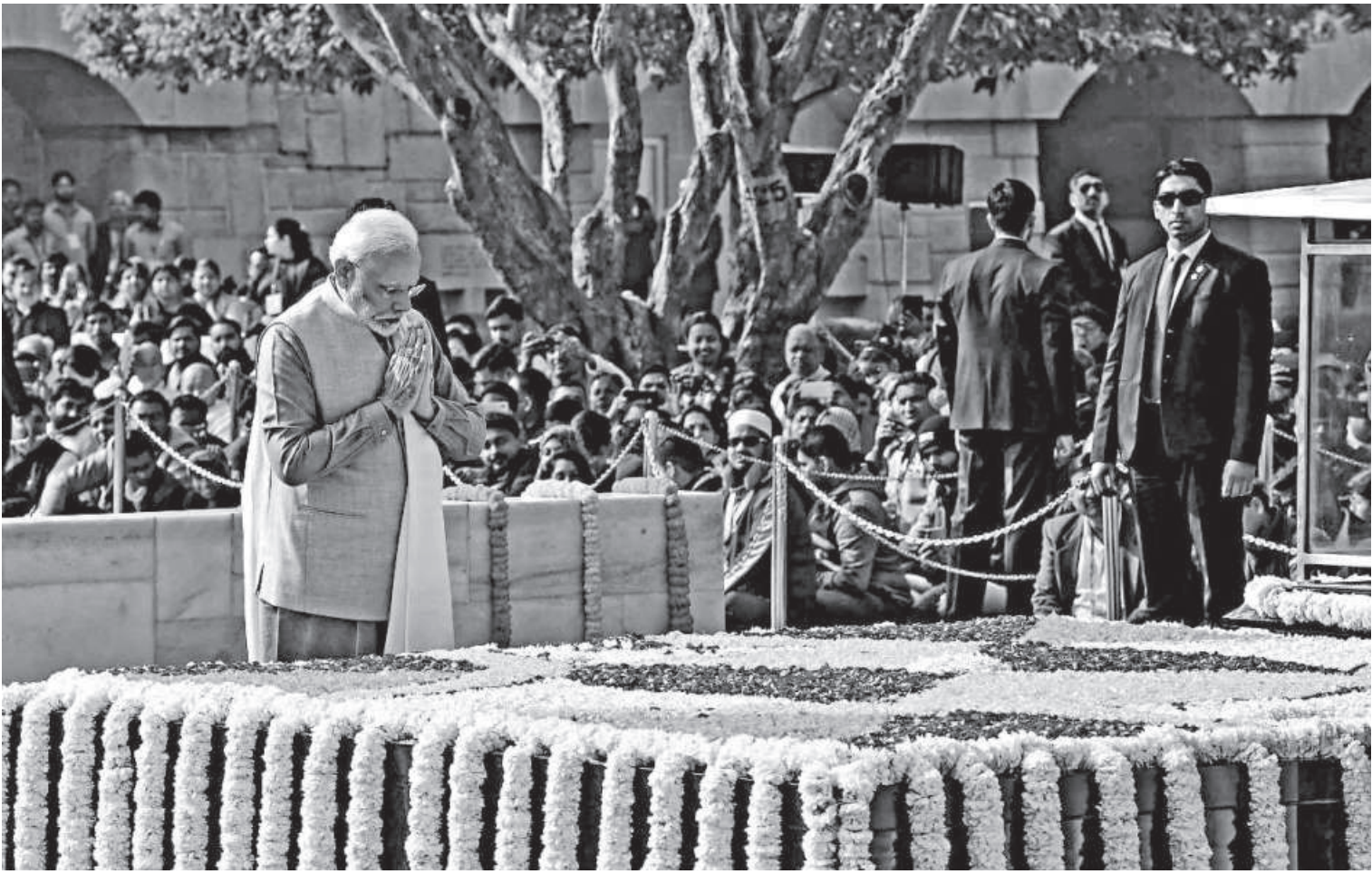
A dust-covered doctor ran out of the clinic screaming following the strike, which partially damaged the facility's walls, an AFP correspondent reported.

Nearby, three entire buildings had collapsed and several vehicles were reduced to mangled wrecks.

The wailing of women and children rang out as rescue workers searched for corpses beneath the rubble.

Toufic Saado, a paramedic, said he was inside the medical facility when three air strikes ravaged the area.

"The wounded were lying on the floor outside the medical centre," he said.



In this handout photograph taken and released by India's Press Information Bureau (PIB) yesterday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi (L) pays homage at Raj Ghat, the memorial for Indian independence icon Mahatma Gandhi, on Martyrs' Day to mark the 72nd anniversary of Gandhi's assassination, in New Delhi.

PHOTO: AFP

ANTI-CAA MOTION

Vote in European Parliament delayed

Indian govt claims diplomatic victory

Toi, New Delhi

A joint motion, combining five different resolutions tabled by Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) against India's Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), has been placed on the final agenda for debate at the Plenary session in Brussels on Wednesday.

However, an expected vote on the motion has been postponed until the Parliament's Plenary session in March.

"Following a decision by MEPs at the opening of today's Plenary session in Brussels, the vote on the resolution on India's Citizenship (Amendment) Act 2019 has been postponed to the March session," said a statement from the European Parliament, as it confirmed that the debate on the motion is to go ahead as scheduled later on Wednesday evening.

The reason behind the postponement of the vote is unconfirmed but will come as a boost to the Indian government's efforts against such a motion being voted on by the European Parliament.

Responding to the deferment of voting, government sources said that "friends of India" prevailed over "friends of Pakistan" in the European Parliament.

"We expect that our perspectives on CAA will be understood by all objective and fair-minded EU parliamentarians," the sources said, reiterating that the citizenship law is India's internal matter which has been adopted after due processes.

The motion takes note of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR) statement last month.

Heatwave renews worries

Dangerous weather warnings issued as more than 80 fires still burning across NSW, Victoria

AFP, Sydney

Australia was bracing for a heatwave to sweep across the country's fire-ravaged southeast in the coming days, with the forecast stoking fears the soaring temperatures could inflame bushfires.

Temperatures reached above 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit) yesterday in South Australia state, where dangerous fire weather warnings were issued in several bushfire-prone areas.

The heatwave is then expected to hit Melbourne and Canberra today before parts of Sydney reach 45 degrees Celsius on the weekend.

Authorities say the searing heat, accompanied by dry winds, would bring severe bushfire conditions to parts of New South Wales and Victoria -- where more than 80 fires are still burning across the two states.

"We've had the benefit of some suppressed, benign conditions over the last few days. However, as we've heard, it's going to be hot and dry," Victoria Emergency Services Commissioner Andrew Crisp said, urging residents to be prepared for bushfires to flare.

"If you're gonna wait until you see the smoke or the fire

at your doorstep, it's far too late. You've gotta get out early," he said.

Storms are forecast to follow the heatwave, bringing rain that could help dampen fires but also the potential for wild weather, including flash flooding.

Extreme weather has battered parts of Australia in recent weeks, bringing giant hail, floods and landslides.

The renewed fire threat came as worst-hit New South Wales announced an inquiry into the catastrophic bushfire season, which has left at least 32 people dead and devastated vast swathes of the country since September.

"The scale of these fires has been unprecedented and we must leave no stone unturned," Premier Gladys Berejiklian said. "This inquiry will allow NSW to learn from this season and the catastrophic conditions we've faced, and apply these

learnings for the future."

That comes on top of a Royal Commission inquiry announced by Prime Minister Scott Morrison earlier in January.

The months-long crisis has sparked renewed calls for Australia's conservative government to take immediate action on climate change, with street protests urging Morrison to reduce the country's reliance on coal.

BUSHFIRES IN AUSTRALIA



India's AYUSH ministry touts traditional remedies

AFP, New Delhi

As scientists race to find a vaccine for the deadly Wuhan virus, the Indian government said Wednesday that ancient homeopathy and Ayurveda remedies could hold an answer.

The ministry that promotes the country's booming yoga, naturopathy and homeopathy sectors released an advisory listing herbal oils to be rubbed into the scalp to purportedly ease the symptoms.

It also suggested ingesting Arsenicum album-30, a homeopathic treatment.

"The dose should be repeated after one month by following the same schedule in case coronavirus infections prevail," the Ministry of AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Sowa Rigpa and Homoeopathy) said in a statement.

The ministry also issued general advice on maintaining personal hygiene to

prevent the spread of the virus.

The advisory came as the Dalai Lama, in exile in Dharamsala in India, said on Facebook that followers concerned about the virus should chant a mantra that would be "helpful" in dealing with the situation.

India claims to have natural remedies for everything from cancer to the common cold.

The government in recent years has launched a drive to promote traditional remedies as it seeks to cash in on the multi-billion dollar global market for holistic medicine.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, a yoga practitioner, has said he wants the world to make Ayurveda "a way of life".

Ayurvedic medicine -- which means the "science of life" in Sanskrit -- treats the physical and mental sources of illness through, for example, prescribing herbs in conjunction with yoga or massage.

CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

The ministry suggested ingesting Arsenicum album-30 for treatment

It issued general advice on maintaining hygiene to prevent spread of virus



An official of Pakistan-based Chinese company (R) uses a thermo gun to check the temperature of the company's drivers, in Islamabad yesterday, after instructions from Pakistani authorities to take preventive measures against the coronavirus.

PHOTO: AFP

NEWS IN brief

Iranian factory makes US, Israeli flags to burn

REUTERS, Khomein

Business is booming at Iran's largest flag factory which makes US, British and Israeli flags for Iranian protesters to burn. At the factory in the town of Khomein, southwest of the capital Tehran, young men and women print the flags by hand then hang them up to dry. The factory produces about 2,000 US and Israeli flags a month in its busiest periods, and more than 1.5 million square feet of flags a year.

Japan's ex-emperor loses consciousness

AFP, Tokyo

Japan's former emperor Akihito, who abdicated last year, temporarily lost consciousness and collapsed at his residence this week, but medical checkups found "no abnormalities", the government said yesterday. The 86-year-old was examined by court doctors after Wednesday's incident, an official at the Imperial Household Agency told AFP.

Flash floods kill nine in Indonesia

AFP, Medan

Flash floods and landslides have killed at least nine people and forced thousands into temporary shelters on Indonesia's Sumatra island, the local disaster agency said yesterday. Torrential rain in North Sumatra this week sparked the disaster, with most victims drowning or hit by logs swept away in the current, the agency added. Rampant illegal logging in the area may have contributed to the disaster by loosening the soil and making it susceptible to landslides.

'Prisoner of fanaticism'

Pakistani Christian Asia Bibi recounts hellish condition inside Pak prison, pain of exile in Canada

AFP, Paris

Recounting the hellish conditions of eight years spent on death row on blasphemy charges but also the pain of exile, Pakistani Christian Asia Bibi has broken her silence to give her first personal insight into an ordeal that caused international outrage.

Bibi was sentenced to death on blasphemy charges by a Pakistani court in 2010 but then dramatically acquitted in 2018. She now lives in Canada at an undisclosed location.

French journalist Anne-Isabelle Tillet, who has co-written a book about her, was once based in the country where she led a support campaign for her.

She is the only reporter to have met Bibi during her stay in Canada.

In the book "Enfin libre!" ("Finally Free") -- published in French on Wednesday with an English version due out in September -- Bibi recounts her arrest, the conditions of prison, the relief of her release but also the difficulty of adjusting to a new life.

"You already know my story through the media," she said in the book.



"But you are far from understanding my daily life in prison or my new life," she said. "I became a prisoner of fanaticism."

In prison, "tears were the only companions in the cell". She described the horrendous conditions in squalid jails in Pakistan where she was kept chained and jeered at by other detainees.

"My wrists are burning me, it is hard to breathe. My neck... is encased in an iron collar that the guard can tighten with a huge nut," she wrote.

"A long chain drags along on the filthy ground. This connects my neck to the handcuffed hand who pulls me like a dog on a lead.

"Deep within me, a dull fear takes me towards the depths of darkness. A lacerating fear that will never leave me."

Many other prisoners showed her no pity. "I am startled by the cry of a woman. 'To death!' The other women join in. 'Hanged!' Hanged!'"

Blasphemy is an incendiary charge in Muslim-majority Pakistan, where even the whiff of an unsubstantiated allegation of insulting Islam can spark death at the hands of mobs.

Greece plans floating sea barriers to block migrants

REUTERS, Athens

Greece wants to install a floating barrier in the Aegean Sea to deter migrants arriving at its islands' shores through Turkey, government officials said yesterday.

Greece served as the gateway to the European Union for more than one million Syrian refugees and other migrants in recent years. While an agreement with Turkey sharply reduced the number attempting the voyage since 2016, Greek islands still struggle with overcrowded camps operating far beyond their capacity.

The 2.7 kilometre long (1.68 miles) net-like barrier that Greece wants to buy will be set up in the sea off the island of Lesbos, where the overcrowded Moria camp operates.

It will rise 50 centimetres above sea level and carry light marks that will make it visible at night, a government document inviting vendors to submit offers said, adding that it was "aimed at containing the increasing inflows of migrants".

"The invitation for floating barriers is in the right direction," Defence Minister Nikos Panagiotopoulos told Skai Radio. "We will see what the result, what its effect as a deterrent will be in practice."

"It will be a natural barrier. If it works like the one in Evros... it can be effective," he said, referring to a cement and barbed-wire fence Greece set up in 2012 along its northern border with Turkey to stop a rise in migrants crossing there.

Aid groups, which have described the living conditions at migrant camps as appalling, said fences in Europe had not deterred arrivals and that Greece should focus on speeding up the processing of asylum requests instead.

"We see, in recent years, a surge in the number of barriers that are being erected but yet people continue to flee," Boris Cheshirkov, spokesman in Greece for UN refugee agency UNHCR, told Reuters. "Greece has to have fast procedures to ensure that people have access to asylum quickly when they need it."

CORONAVIRUS

EVACUATION EFFORTS

These are the plans so far by foreign governments to evacuate their citizens from the epicentre of the outbreak:

AUSTRALIA: The foreign ministry said it was working on a plan to transport home all Australian nationals.

INDIA: The foreign ministry said it has now requested permission to operate two flights to remove some 250 to 300 nationals from China.

INDONESIA: Jakarta is still not decided whether to bring more than 230 Indonesians in China home.

JAPAN: A second plane chartered by the Japanese government left China and landed in Tokyo, bringing the total number of people repatriated to 400.

MALAYSIA: Kuala Lumpur says waiting signal from Beijing to evacuate some 78 Malaysians from Wuhan.

Philippines: Manila said it is ready to evacuate some 150 Filipinos in Wuhan and another 150 in other parts of Hubei.

SINGAPORE: Singapore flew home 92 of its citizens from Wuhan.

SRI LANKA: Colombo said they are ready to fly out roughly 860 Sri Lankan students.

SOUTH KOREA: Seoul yesterday sent chartered planes to Wuhan to return hundreds of its citizens.

THAILAND: Bangkok is waiting for Beijing's signal to evacuate its citizens, especially from Wuhan. Sixty-five Thais are in Wuhan.

UNITED STATES: 240 Americans, including consular staff, were flown out of Wuhan.

FRANCE: A plane was scheduled to land in Wuhan yesterday. About 500 to 1,000 French citizens are eligible for repatriation there.

EUROPEAN UNION: The block said flights are planned to evacuate more than 100 nationals from EU nations. Germany: Berlin is planning to fly out some 90 citizens on Saturday.

ALGERIA: Government is taking all measures needed to bring home 36 Algerians living in Wuhan.

MOROCCO: About 100 people, mostly students in Wuhan, will be evacuated.

Stranded in Wuhan

Foreigners, particularly from countries with less diplomatic clout, plead for help

AFP, Wuhan

Pregnant, newlywed and now trapped at the Chinese epicentre of a global health crisis, Thai national Aphinya is among thousands of foreigners desperate to escape -- and watching helplessly as the US and Japan fly their citizens home.

Hundreds were flown to safety this week to Tokyo, Singapore and California on government-chartered flights, but those from countries with less diplomatic clout fear they are being left behind.

"I feel hurt that they don't care about us," Aphinya Thasripech, 32, told AFP.

"Either I could starve or I'll get infected and die," said the factory worker, who is two months pregnant.

So far 170 people have been killed by the virus since it emerged from a market in Wuhan, and more than 7,700 people have been sickened.

The illness has also spread around the world, with cases being recorded as far away as the United Arab Emirates, Finland and the United States, but all of the deaths have been in China.

China has imposed transport bans in and around Wuhan -- effectively trapping tens of millions of people -- including



People dressed in protective clothes disinfect an area in Wuhan, yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

thousands of foreigners -- in a bid to contain the virus.

Aphinya arrived in China on two weeks ago to marry her Chinese husband in Xiantao -- about 200 kilometres from Wuhan.

Now the city is a virtual ghost town, with restaurants and shops shuttered.

Aphinya said she is worried for the health of her unborn baby, and desperate for the Thai government to get her out.

For days, the government in Bangkok has said they are awaiting "permission" from China to evacuate 65 citizens known to be at ground zero.

But the wait is taking its toll.

"Sooner or later, it will get to us," said Aphinya, adding she had heard that a man had collapsed in a restaurant near her.

Thai medical student Badeephak Kaosala has barricaded himself in his dorm room with a dwindling supply of food and water.



(From top left, clockwise) The Costa Smeralda cruise ship is docked in the Civitavecchia port 70km north of Rome yesterday. More than 6,000 tourists were under lockdown aboard the cruise ship after two Chinese passengers were isolated over fears they could be carrying the coronavirus; people from Myanmar, Thailand and US wear protective facemasks. China reported its biggest single-day jump in novel coronavirus deaths yesterday, as global fears deepened with more infections confirmed overseas.

PHOTO: AFP



Three Japan evacuees test positive for coronavirus

REUTERS, Tokyo

Two of three Japanese people evacuated from China and found to be infected with a new coronavirus had not shown symptoms, the health ministry said yesterday, adding to worries about the fast-spreading virus and its economic fallout.

The three cases were among 206 Japanese people who were evacuated to Tokyo on Wednesday from the Chinese city of Wuhan, the epicentre of the epidemic that has killed 170 people in China and infected nearly 8,000.

While the vast majority of cases have been in China, more than 100 cases have also appeared in about 15 other countries. Later yesterday, a Chinese man in his 50s, who had previously stayed in Wuhan, was found to be infected in the western prefecture of Mie, Kyodo news agency reported.

A Chinese woman in her 20s, who had previously stayed in Wuhan and was studying in Kyoto, was also found to be infected, broadcaster NHK said.

That brought the total number of cases in Japan to 13 including the three evacuees.

The two people who were confirmed as infected but had not shown symptoms were the first such cases in Japan, though suspicion has been rising elsewhere that people who have the virus but no symptoms can infect others.

That would make the virus much more difficult to control.

Japan on Tuesday classified the virus a "designated infectious disease", which would allow compulsory hospitalisation and the use of public funds for treatment.

But the designation - which takes effect on Feb 7 after ordinances are issued - does not apply to people without symptoms.

Asked about concern over transmission of the virus from people who have not shown symptoms, a health ministry official said it was not clear whether that had happened.



China virus could create US jobs

Says US commerce secretary Ross

AFP, Washington

US Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross yesterday said that the virus that has killed 170 people in China and sparked global health fears could help create jobs in America.

Ross said the virus, which has spread to at least 15 countries, was "very unfortunate" but that it was also a "risk factor" for businesses weighing up whether to operate in China.

"I don't want to talk about a victory lap over a very unfortunate, very malignant disease but the fact is, it does give businesses yet another thing to consider," he told the Fox Business TV channel.

"So I think it will help to accelerate the return of jobs to North America, some to (the) US, probably some to Mexico as well."

His comments triggered immediate criticism on social media and from health experts.

"You have somebody of that stature who makes an irresponsible comment, speaking on matters in which he has no expertise," Georges Benjamin, of the American Public Health Association, told the Washington Post.

Many governments have urged their citizens not to visit China, while some have banned entry for travellers from Wuhan.

Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell has said the SARS-like coronavirus poses a risk to the world economy.

Israel 'doesn't have to wait'

Questions raised after US's ambassador to Israel says, according to Trump's plan, the Jewish state can annex parts of West Bank immediately

AFP, Jerusalem

Questions surfaced yesterday over whether Israel would immediately seek to annex parts of the West Bank, after US President Donald Trump's controversial peace plan called for extending Israeli sovereignty to the area.

The plan, seen as overwhelmingly supportive of Israeli goals, has been firmly rejected by the Palestinians.

It gives the Jewish state a US green light to annex key parts of the occupied West Bank, including in the strategic Jordan Valley.

But uncertainty was mounting over Israel's next moves. After Trump unveiled his long-awaited plan in Washington on Tuesday, his ambassador to Israel David Friedman said the Jewish state "does not have to wait at all".

Israeli officials then said that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, a staunch Trump ally, would seek cabinet approval on Sunday to annex settlements and territory that would be part of Israel under the US plan.

But Jared Kushner -- Trump's adviser and son-in-law who spearheaded the Middle East

initiative -- said that Washington does not want any moves made before Israel's March 2 election.

The international community views Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank as illegal and an attempt to formally place them under Israeli sovereignty would likely trigger further

Netanyahu tells Putin Trump's ME plan a 'new opportunity'

Palestinian president to visit UN in next two weeks

Israel boosts army presence in West Bank, near Gaza

global uproar.

At the start of his meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, Netanyahu said Trump's initiative offered "a new and perhaps unique opportunity," without mentioning annexation.

The Russian leader did not mention the peace

plan at all in his public remarks.

Meanwhile, Israel's army announced that it had deployed extra troops to the West Bank and around the Gaza Strip ahead of any further Palestinian demonstrations against the Trump plan.

The protests have been relatively muted since the Trump announcement, with only isolated clashes reported. But one rocket was fired from the Hamas-controlled Gaza strip on Wednesday evening. In response, Israeli aircraft struck a "number of Hamas terror targets" in the southern Gaza Strip, the army said.

An Israeli military official told AFP the decision to deploy extra troops to the West Bank and the Gaza border was made "to minimise the risk of a flareup".

Meanwhile, Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas will visit the UN within two weeks to address the Security Council on his rejection of the new US Mideast plan, his ambassador to the body said Wednesday.

Trump's plan prompted a lukewarm response from Europe and the UN, and a furious rebuke from key Muslim countries who denounced it as betrayal of the Palestinians.

UK eyes future after EU divorce

US trumpets Brexit 'benefits' on eve of Britain's EU departure

AFP, London

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo predicted Thursday that Brexit would bring "enormous benefits" to the United States and the UK, during a visit to Britain on the eve of its historic departure from the European Union.

Ahead of talks with Prime Minister Boris Johnson about a post-Brexit trade deal and other key issues, Pompeo said he was optimistic about Britain's nearly half a century of EU membership ending today.

Britain will enter a new chapter when it becomes the first country to quit the EU's institutions at midnight Brussels time (2300 GMT) today.



"It is a great moment for our country... a moment of hope and opportunity," Johnson said Wednesday, as he prepared to address the nation at 2200 GMT-- an hour before Brexit.

Although Britain will remain under most EU rules during an 11-month transition period, it is then likely to lose privileged access to the single European market -- the world's largest and most important for UK trade.

Johnson has argued he can negotiate ambitious free trade agreements with both his 27 former partners and the US, but has seen recent strains in the so-called "special relationship" with Washington.

Britons narrowly backed departing the EU in a 2016 referendum that left the country locked in political crisis and acrimonious division.

Johnson, who headed the pro-Leave campaign, won a thumping election victory in December on the mantra "get Brexit done".

That is now finally happening, with Britain's departure set in European law Wednesday, amid emotional scenes, as the bloc's parliament voted to ratify the divorce papers.

"We will always love you and we will never be far," said EU Commission president Ursula von der Leyen, adding: "Long live Europe."



RAMPUR GREYHOUND

1 Male 16 months
2 Females 12 months

Mobile: 0171 1547878

'It's never too late'

If you stop smoking, your lung can heal itself

AFP, Tokyo

Smokers can effectively turn back time in their lungs by kicking the habit, with healthy cells emerging to replace some of their tobacco-damaged and cancer-prone ones, a new study shows.

Smokers have long been told their risk of developing diseases like lung cancer will fall if they can quit, and stopping smoking prevents new damage to the body.

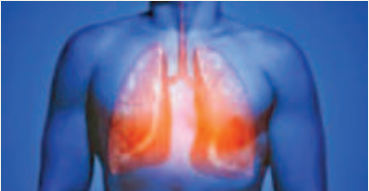
But a study published yesterday in the journal Nature found that the benefits may go further, with the body appearing to draw on a reservoir of healthy cells to replace smoke-damaged ones in the lungs of smokers when they quit.

The study's joint senior author, Peter Campbell of the Wellcome Sanger Institute, said the results should give new hope to smokers who want to quit.

"People who have smoked heavily for 30, 40 or more years often say to me that it's too late to stop smoking -- the damage is already done," he said in a statement issued by the institute. "What is so exciting about our study is that it shows that it's never too late to quit."

Some of the people in the study had smoked more than 15,000 packs of cigarettes in their life, he said.

The precise mechanism by which that replacement occurs is not yet clear, but the study's authors believe there may be a sort of reservoir of cells, waiting for a chance to emerge.



Declare 'emergency' for people and the planet

Activists urge leaders on global goals

REUTERS, London

Nobel peace laureate Malala Yousafzai and environmentalist Jane Goodall are among more than 2,000 activists who declared a state of "emergency" for people and the planet yesterday, in a letter demanding urgent action from world leaders.

"We need you to act faster", read the open letter, addressed to world leaders who in 2015 signed up to a series of UN global goals to tackle poverty, inequality and climate change by 2030.

"There are not just a few of us - there are millions with one voice and one question. How will you keep your promise and deliver dramatic progress towards the global goals this year?"

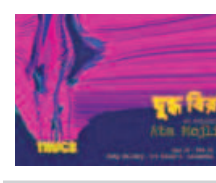
"Love, Actually" director Richard Curtis, who has campaigned for the global goals and was among the letter's signatories, said there had been "nothing like enough progress" in the five years since the goals were set.

But he said growing public awareness of issues ranging from climate change to modern slavery was forcing companies and governments to change their behaviour, citing Microsoft's recent pledge to remove all the carbon it has ever emitted.

A United Nations assessment last year found that progress has been made on the goal of ending extreme poverty, but in other areas, "progress has been slow or even reversed".



WHAT'S ON



Solo Art Exhibition
Title: Truce - Juddhobiroti
Artist: Ata Mojlish
Venue: Dwip Gallery, Lalmatia
Date: January 25 – February 1
Time: 3 pm – 9 pm (Except Mondays)



Winter Festival
Title: Heem Utshab
Venue: Jahangirnagar University
Date: February 6-7
Time: 10 am onwards



Group Art Exhibition
Title: 7
Venue: Galleri Kaya, Uttara
Date: January 24 – February 7
Time: 11:30 am – 7:30 pm



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)



Exhibition
Title: Whiny Women: Pop-Up
Venue: SAVVA, Gulshan
Date: February 2 – March 8
Time: 12 noon – 11 pm



Art Workshop
Title: Performing LIFE - A Performance Art Workshop in Bangladesh
Venue: Bangladesh National Museum
Date: February 3-5
Time: 10 am- 5 pm

EKUSHEY BOI MELA

preparations in full swing

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Books everywhere -- on shelves, shops, and vans-- this is how Bangla Bazaar, the biggest book hub of the country, looks like when preparations for Ekushey Boi Mela begins every year. Known commonly as *Boiyer Adi Bari*, Bangla Bazar turns busy since the month of January, among its hustle and tussle, and a crowd of cover designers, writers, editors, and most prominently, book binders.

With the month long Ekushey Boi Mela 2020 knocking at the door, over 400 different publishing houses are busy as ever. Around 3500 new books are launched every year at the Ekushey Boi Mela. Books that have been well received by the readers are reprinted as well.

The neighbouring printing presses of Bangla Bazar are spending hectic days, often even skipping lunches to complete their work fast. Over 100 book binding stalls are working double shifts, day and night.

Farid Ahmed, the President of Knowledge and Creative Publishers



This year's the Ekushey Boi Mela will feature 34 pavilions, accomodating 322 publishers.

PHOTOS: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Association, shared his experience. "We have been incredibly busy since the last couple of weeks," he said. "We plan to release all our new books by the first week of Boi Mela."

We also spoke to Monirul Hoque, owner of Ananya Prokashoni and Executive Editor of Knowledge and Creative Publishers Association. "We actually spend the whole year preparing for this event," he said. "However, the last moments are always full of pressure, and takes a lot of hard work."

Besides the publishers and writers, the

book cover artists and new writers are also spending busy days at Bangla Bazar since the past couple of weeks. Celebrating *Mujib Shoto Borsho*, more than 200 books, on the life and works of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, will be launched.

The construction of stalls and pavilions are also underway at Suhrawardy Udyan. This year's the Ekushey Boi Mela will feature 34 pavilions which will host the participation of 322 publishers. "We have already finished our work for the pavilion,"

mentions A K M Tarikul Islam Rony, the editor of Tamrolipi Publications.

A new entry gate, adjacent to the Teacher-Student Centre (TSC), University of Dhaka, will be built in order to ensure easy entries to the fair. For the first time, designated book launching corners and a platform for book readings and panel discussions has been constructed at the venue. The Boi Mela, which traditionally begins on February 1, has been rescheduled to open on February 2, due to mayoral elections.

In the mindscape of Ata Mojlish



PRIYANKA CHOWDHURY

Artist Ata Mojlish is known for his precision of work and impeccable presentation skills. As I opened the door to his ongoing exhibition, *Truce-Juddhobiroti*, at Dwip Gallery, I stepped into a red and blue zone. A CRT TV presents the basic intention of the artist. "I wanted to recreate my psyche here. Anyone who walks in will learn what goes on in my mind," said Ata as he caught me at the entrance. A square piece on the floor with the words, 'You do not belong here' made me anxious. I could not resist but ask what the artist meant - he shared that those words sum up the feeling of being uprooted from his home and placed in a space which is not his own. As he lives in the USA, many assume that Ata has an enviable life, but rarely do people realise that there are two sides of a coin. Ata highlights the side that is less talked about.

"I lost my father at a very young age. I practically have no memory of him. I accidentally found a portrait of him that was kept away from me for a long time. Finding that portrait made me realise that there is a void in my life," adds Ata. He faced further difficulties when he started living in a different country. Amid the apparent perfection of his life, he felt detached from his roots. Through digital photo manipulations and video making, which he defines as 'non art materials', he calls a 'truce' with his inner battle.

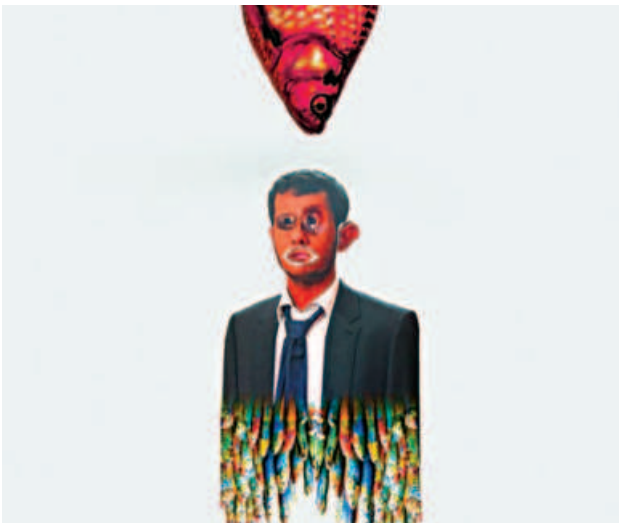
He practiced photography and worked around with photo editing tools for a long time. He consciously wants to break away from that to express his feelings of imperfection. "I try to process and represent the disconnection that I feel with my home. In an effort to find these photographs, I am trying to confront certain parts of myself as well," explains Ata.

Truce- Juddhobiroti is also a beautiful story of reunion of two close friends, Kazi Tahsin Agaz Apurbo, the curator of the exhibition, and Ata. The two have been confidants of each other for more than

a decade. "Since we were both in different countries, we practically worked through the exhibition online. I like dealing with works that break the hierarchy of art and make it more salient to public interaction," says Apurbo. To that end, the UV ray pens in the exhibition let the audience spend some time spotting the invisible writings on the walls and read through the commentary of the artist.

Ata explained that his mother, sister, fiancé and Austin's iconic *Hi, How Are You?* mural are the inspirations behind his work. "Everyone who walks into the exhibition and looks through the works are helping me become heard. I placed my lens at different spots to recognise their effort even in my absence," says the artist.

The nifty square frames, the colours and the provoking sound tracks are the subtle, yet striking details of the exhibition. At the same time, Ata intends to give a sense of the turmoil that occurs in the society. *Truce – Juddhobiroti* is open to all at Dwip Gallery till tomorrow.



Pictures on exhibit at the event.

BANGLADESH BANDS GEN NEXT

Fuze



PHOTO: COURTESY

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Bangladesh Band Gen Next is a project aimed to promote young and upcoming bands by providing them with a unique platform to express their talents. The programme has selected 26 young bands from Chattogram in for its first run.

Fuze is a rock band that started its journey in 2017. Made up of Anindo, Rocky, Sifat, Mithu and Raj, the musicians pride themselves on performing in a lot of live shows. "In Chattogram, there is a lot of talent, but few opportunities," says Anindo, the vocalist of the band.

Bangladesh Bands Gen Next is helmed by advertising agency Creato, and produced by 49 Blue. The programme is sponsored by Marks Full Cream Milk Powder. Fuze's *Kabbo* is now available for streaming on their YouTube channel.



PHOTO: COURTESY

REVIVAL'S 'ANUPRANAN-ENLIVEN'

shines a light on mental health

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Revival organised their first interactive event, *Anupranan – Enliven*, on January 24 and 25 at 3rd Space, Dhanmondi.

The opening ceremony of the event started with a speech by Revival's Founder and President, Tazreen M Khan. The event also included an art exhibition on mental health and an interactive session on normalising mental health issues with psychologists Rahnuma-E-Jannat and Tahneena Mehreinn. Rafsan Sabab and Tashfikal Sami put up a stand-up comedy show for the audience.

On the second day, free and quick counselling sessions with a therapist took place. Subsequently, the guest judge Morshed Mishu handed over the prizes to the participants and winner of the art and meme competition. The day was drawn to a close with an uplifting entertainment session featuring performances of music, comedy and poetry. Special guests Masha Islam, Tony Batch and Said Sizan were also in attendance.



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

An afternoon with Fuad and Friends

SADI MOHAMMAD SHAHNEWAZ

Line-up:
Fuad Almuqtadir - Keyboard
DRockstar Shuvo - Vocals
Johan Alamgir - Guitar
Amjad Hossain - Drums
Kazi Faisal Ahmed - Guitar
Bass King Pavel - Bass
Richard Modhu -Drums (USA)
Papa D Nayeem - Guitar (USA)

It was a cosy afternoon at a hotel in the capital, as we were waiting for Fuad and Friends. Last October, ‘Fuad Live in Dhaka’ surpassed all expectations, as Fuad Almuqtadir, with his all-star crew, became the talk-of-the-town once again. As the band arrived, all worn out after multiple shows, we sat down for a casual chat. “Even though it is a bit hectic, we

are having a blast,” said Fuad, who goes back and forth between Bangladesh and the USA for regular shows. The line-ups constantly feature renowned and promising artistes. In response to how these artistes are selected, the music director replied, “You can’t just decide who you’re going to be friends with, and our band works in a similar way.” Thanks to the band, artistes like Tashfee, Fairouz, Xefer and Anika were able to find new heights in their careers. Appearances from established names like Elita, Rafa, Kona and Bappa Mazumder brought a sense of grandeur to their live performances. When Fuad and Friends is performing in the USA, Richard Modhu and Papa D Nayeem join as the drummer and guitarist respectively. As we continued chatting in the hotel’s swimming pool area, the band’s vocalist,

DRockstar Shuvo arrived. “It has been almost fourteen years that we have been sharing the stage together,” said Shuvo. “From the very first moment, it felt like a family, and has become a part of my identity. Pavel, who is also the bass player for AvoidRafa, had an interesting story to share. “Fuad *bhai* initially knew me as a photographer,” he reminisced, “it was only when they were looking for a bassist when I was called upon. The talented musician has been with the band ever since. Johan, also known as the frontman for popular band Subconscious, is an ever-present figure in their shows. “For me, performing all over the world with this line-up is a dream come true,” he said, “what more can a musician ask for?” “I have learned a lot from Fuad and Friends,” said Amjad, who is an

established music director in his own right, “I am a musician first and music director second, and the band helps me keep this identity intact.” Going forward, Fuad and Friends plan to bring back old friends from the music industry -- “We plan to bring back Poonam, Simin and Anila going forward,” said Fuad, “I feel like that is the only direction we can go. Even though the musical landscape today is not in favour of physical albums, the band did not put the idea off the table. “We are constantly working on new music, and we will definitely think about an album. However, we basically live in different corners of the world now, so it would be very challenging.” As Fuad said these words, we knew that this ‘challenge’ was not too steep for the ace music director.

‘THE RHYTHM SECTION’ hits Star Cineplex today

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

The thriller film, The Rhythm Section, starring Blake Lively, Jude Law, Sterling K Brown and Daniel Mays, hits Star Cineplex today. It is directed by Reed Morano, with a screenplay from Mark Burnell, based on Burnell’s novel of the same name.

In the film, Stephanie Patrick (Lively) veers down a path of self-destruction after a tragic plane crash kills her family. When Stephanie discovers it wasn’t an accident, she soon embarks on a bloody quest for revenge to punish those responsible.



PHOTO: COURTESY

11th Classical Music Conference of Lakshyapar concludes

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

The 11th Classical Music Conference of Lakshyapar was organised on the eastern bank of the Shitalakshya River, recently. It marked a huge turnout reaching over 1500 students, who enjoyed every bit of this exceptional arrangement, featuring live presentations of tabla lahara, chhoto kheyal, and Kathak performances by various artistes.

The Lakshyapar caravan moved back to the western bank of the river port for the second session at the premises of Morgan Girls’ School and College. Over 1000 art lovers enjoyed Nrityachhanda’s Odissi dance, Bengal Parampara Sangeetalay Artiste Ilham Fuljhuri Khan sarod recital, and a *kheyal* presentation by students of Nalanda High School, respectively. Clay

modelling of musical instruments like sitar, sarod and many others added an interesting dimension to the conference. A friendly get together of the music teachers was also held. The conference concluded today morning after the nightlong live musical performances, especially on Indian classical, by various artistes.

HOICHOI’S ‘PANCH PHORON’ to spice up VALENTINE’S DAY



SADI MOHAMMAD SHAHNEWAZ

Unique stories, by renowned directors from India and Bangladesh, is set to release on Hoichoi on February 14. The project, titled *Panch Phoron*, will feature *Donor* by Nurul Alam Atique, *Pray Kafka* by Chandril Bhattacharya, *Afternoon Audition* by Sudipto Roy, *The End* by Arko Ganguli, and *Three Kisses* by Giasuddin Selim. This is the second time that the streaming platform has undertaken this project.



STAR YOUTH MEETS | EPISODE 1 |



Brahmo Samaj



Beauty Boarding



Northbrook Hall and Library

Strolling around in OLD DHAKA

WRITERS: MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE, SADIA TAHSIN, RASHEEK TABASSUM MONDIRA AND SHABABA IQBAL



Sadarghat

PHOTOS: PIYAS BISWAS & SHAMS ASIF

The team of *Star Youth*, *The Daily Star*, recently went on a tour to Old Dhaka, as a part of our monthly initiative, 'Star Youth Meets'. Here, some of us recount our experiences.

Even with all the hustle and bustle, Old Dhaka is majestic and unique in its own way. You can come across ancient architecture in the most unlikely of places in the area. Being in places that are hundreds of years old, gives one a sense of our history and our cultural heritage.

After meeting at the famous Bahadur Shah Park, we began our day tour in Brahmo Samaj, where the inhabitants are not bound by any one religion. No wonder, everything about the place was imbued with peace. Our guide informed us how this place calls for its visitors to leave their religions and beliefs outside the gate and pay respect to everyone's values during their stay in the area. This society which Raja Ram Mohan Roy established centuries ago with the hope to end religious barriers, is still a part of people's lives.

Next, we headed for breakfast at the iconic Café Corner, which is believed to be the first coffee shop of Old Dhaka. For Sadia, this

turned out to be a hilarious experience. She spent a great deal of time giving unsolicited advice to a busy server, explaining the differences between mumlet, omelet, and poached eggs, which he happily listened to. While she was busy prattling with her colleagues, the server took away her plate, full of unfinished food as she helplessly screeched, demanding her plate back, after which our whole team burst out laughing because he took it only to give her more *luchi* and *daal*.

After a light breakfast and some tea, we walked onto our next destination, the Northbrook Hall and Library, but unfortunately, we were not allowed to enter the building due to poor infrastructural support.

While walking around, we came across a temple preparing for the Saraswati Puja. Directly after, we went to another temple, which once had a school for the mute, right next to it.

Next, we went to Sadarghat through Shyambazar, experiencing

the chaos amidst the shops of vegetables and fruits. Sadargat is known to be built during the Mughal Em-

pire in the 17th century. Sadly, we couldn't fully appreciate the aura of the place, as the Buriganga River is in a disastrous state due to plastic pollution. Ignoring the rotten smell and the sight of water-bottles flashing up, we took a brief boat ride, which was quite fun.

Our next stop was Bulbul Academy of Fine Arts (BAFA), the renowned cultural institute dated back to 1955. The walls of the building and the intricate staircase imparted a splendour to the place. The history school's architecture truly

enthralled us. With such grand architecture, the school keeps on its legacy. We used the school's musical instruments and had a mini-concert of our own during our visit, as the students had not arrived yet.

Later, we covered Ahsan Manzil, the official residence of the *Nawabs* of Dhaka. A walk through the museum inside the palace provides a sneak peek into the glorious life of the *Nawabs*. The majestic museum and the building itself portrays the age-old legacy of Dhaka's founding fathers and their ways of life.

Our last stop, Beauty Boarding, was a place we had all read and heard about many times. Located close to Bangla Bazar, the book hub of Dhaka, it is known that poets, writers, often come to Beauty Boarding for *adda*. The boarding house is open for lodgers and the place is famous for the food they serve. This tour served as a condensed course in discovering

Even with all the hustle and bustle, Old Dhaka is majestic and unique in its own way. You can come across ancient architecture in the most unlikely of places in the area. Being in places that are hundreds of years old, gives one a sense of our history and cultural heritage.

the customs, people and places of Old Dhaka for us and it will stay with us for a long time.

There is a sense of antiquity in the air which gives Old Dhaka its special vibe. Be it the lively atmosphere, vivacious people or streets dotted with food corners, it is definitely a place to fall in love with.



The Star Youth team at Ahsan Manzil.





North-West Power Generation Company Ltd.
ISO 9001:2015, ISO 14001:2015 & OHSAS 45001:2018 Certified
(An Enterprise of Bangladesh Power Development Board)

Office of the Plant Manager (Superintending Engineer)
Sirajganj 225 MW Combined Cycle Power Plant (Unit-1)
Soydabad, Sirajganj.

Ref: 27.28.8878.101.07.001.19.042

Date: 30/01/2020

e-Tender Notice

The following e-Tenders are invited in the National e-GP System Portal (www.eprocure.gov.bd):


Sl. No.	Tender ID	Brief Description of Tender	Publication Date	Last Selling Date & Time	Opening Date
1	413767	Supply of spares for Nitrogen generator.	26/01/2020	17/02/2020, 3:45 PM	18/02/2020
2	415701	Supply of different Pit sewage Pump and Lube oil Pump	26/01/2020	23/02/2020, 3:45 PM	24/02/2020
3	416118	Supply of anti-static floor tiles	26/01/2020	19/02/2020, 3:45 PM	20/02/2020

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 (www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and e-GP Help Desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).



Shafiqul Islam
Plant Manager (S.E.) (Addl. Charge)
Sirajganj 225 MW Combined Cycle Power Plant (Unit-1)
NWPGL, Soydabad, Sirajganj.

GD-209



Bangladesh Bank
Common Services Department-2
Head Office
Dhaka
Website: www.bangladeshbank.org.bd

Invitation for Tender Through Web

01	Procuring entity	Common Services Department-2, Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka.
02	Invitation for	Goods & Related Services.
03	Invitation Ref No. & date	CSD-2(MES):17/1/2020-10 Date: 29/01/2020
04	Source of funds	Bangladesh Bank's own fund.
05	Name of the work	Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of Wall Mounted Type Variable Refrigerant Flow (VRF) Air-conditioning System for 5-storied Dormitory Building-1 at Bangladesh Bank, Mymensingh Office, Mymensingh.
06	Tender closing date & time	24/02/2020 up to 3:00pm
07	Tender opening date & time	24/02/2020 at 3:30pm
08	Name & address of the office(s) receiving & opening tender document(s)	General Manager (Engineering), Common Services Department-2 (6 th Floor of 30-storied Building), Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka.
09	Qualification of the tenderer	a) Tenderer shall have valid up-to-date Trade License, Income Tax clearance certificate, VAT registration certificate, Bank Solvency certificate etc. Tenderers shall have at least 10 (ten) years of overall business experience in the supply and installation of mechanical machineries; years counting backward from the date of publication of IFT in the newspaper. b) Tenderers having valid Agency/Distributorship certificate issued from internationally reputed VRF AC Manufacturer. An original copy of Distributor/Agencyship certificate shall enclose with the offer. c) Tenderer shall have successfully completed similar VRF System AC in any Govt/Semi-Govt/Autonomous organization worth not less than Tk 75.00 lac (Taka seventy-five lac) only in 02 (two) contracts during the last 05 (five) years. d) Proposed brand VRF Type Air-Conditioning system installed in Bangladesh shall have the record of satisfactory running condition till now to furnish certificate in this respect from the officers not below the rank of Executive Engineer or equivalent. e) The minimum amount of liquid assets i.e. working capital or credit line(s) of the tenderer shall be Tk 85.00 lac (Taka eighty-five lac) only. In case of credit facilities bank shall ensure that the above mentioned credit limit will be given if the said work is awarded to the contractor/supplier.
10	Brief description of goods	Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of 118TR Capacity Wall mounted type Variable Refrigerant Flow (VRF) AC of brand Trane/Carrier/York/Daikin/Samsung/LG/Panasonic/General/Mitsubishi/Toshiba/Dunham Bush/Acton or equivalent including all other accessories for Bangladesh Bank, Mymensingh Office, Mymensingh.
11	Tender security	Tender security amounting Tk 2.50 lac (two lac fifty thousand) only will be required in the form of Pay Order/Bank Draft/Bank Guarantee in favour of General Manager (Engineering), Common Services Department-2, Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka.
12	Time for completion of the works	06 (six) months from the date of signing the Contract Award.
13	Name of official inviting tender	Md. Tafazzal Hossain, General Manager (Engineering), Common Services Department-2 (6 th floor of 30th Storied Building), Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka.
14	Contact details of official inviting tender	Phone: 88-02-9530099, Fax: +88-029530321
15	Special instructions	i) The tenderer shall submit tender through Bangladesh Bank Website (e-Tendering) & shall have valid e-mail address for participate in e-Tendering. ii) Original PO/BD/BG as Tender Security shall reach at General Manager (Engineering), Common Services Department-2 within stipulated date and time of TDS. iii) Scanned copy of Tender Security shall be submitted with the tender through web. iv) Tenderer shall submit documentary evidence etc. (attested or original whichever necessary) at the time of tender opening or when required, failing which the tender may be considered as non-responsive. v) Tenderer shall duly fill in the Form PG3-1/A (Tender Submission Letter) and Form PG3-2/G-4 (Tenderer Information Sheet) as per format given in tender document. vi) PG3-2/G-4 form shall be completed and signed by the Authorized Signatory on the Letterhead Pad, attached by scanning during submitting tender and original will send to General Manager (Engineering), CSD-2 at scheduled time as per TDS. vii) Furnishing of any false, misleading documents shall result in rejection of tender and may lead to action under Rules 127 of PPR 2008. viii) All sorts of Security and Safety measures shall be carried out by the firm during execution of the work. ix) Bangladesh Bank reserves all right to accept or reject any or all the tender without assigning any reason whatsoever. No claim will be entertained in this regard.

ব্যক্তিগত ও আর্থিক সেবা পেতে হয়ারানির শিকার হলে কিংবা কোনো অভিযোগ থাকলে ১৬২৩৬ নম্বরে ফোন করুন।

Md. Tafazzal Hossain
General Manager (Engineering)

DCP: 48/2020-402
Date: 30-01-2020
GD-210

Invitation for Re-Tender

BANGLADESH PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION TRAINING CENTRE

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Public Administration
2	Agency	Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC)
3	Procuring Entity Name	Project Director, Enhancement of Training Capacity of BPATC Project
4	Procuring Entity Code	Not used at present
5	Procuring Entity District	Dhaka
6	Invitation for	Tender Goods Single lot
7	Invitation Ref No	05.01.267.248.07.020.17.09
8	Date	29/01/2020

KEY INFORMATION

9	Procurement Method	NCT	Open
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FUNDING INFORMATION


10	Budget and Source of Funds	Development Budget	Grant
11	Development Partners (if applicable)	GoB	

PARTICULAR INFORMATION

12	Project / Programme Code (if applicable)	5-0705-5002	
13	Project / Programme Name (if applicable)	Enhancement of Training Capacity of BPATC Project	
14	Tender Package No.	(a) GD-64.1	
15	Tender Package Name	(a) Supply of Lighting for BPATC Auditorium	
	Date		
16	Tender Publication Date	02/02/2020	
17	Tender Last Selling Date	11/02/2020	
	Date		Time
18	Tender Closing Date and Time	11/02/2020	02.00 pm
19	Tender Opening Date and Time	11/02/2020	02.30 pm
20	Name & Address of the office(s)	Address	
	- Selling Tender Document (Principal)	Office of the Project Director, Enhancement of Training Capacity of BPATC Project, BPATC, Savar, Dhaka-1343.	

NO CONDITIONS APPLY FOR SALE, PURCHASE OR DISTRIBUTION OF TENDER DOCUMENTS

	- Receiving Tender Document	Office of the Project Director, Enhancement of Training Capacity of BPATC Project, BPATC, Savar, Dhaka-1343.	
	- Opening Tender Document	Office of the Project Director, Enhancement of Training Capacity of BPATC Project, BPATC, Savar, Dhaka-1343.	
21	Place / Date / Time of	Office of the Project Director, Enhancement of Training Capacity of BPATC Project, BPATC, Savar, Dhaka-1343.	
	Pre-Tender Meeting (Optional)	Date N/A Time N/A	
22	Brief Eligibility and Qualification of Tenderer	For Package GD-64.1: Experience in supply and installation of lighting systems to any Institution minimum at least 2 (two) years.	
23	Brief Description of Goods	For Package GD-64.1: Experience in supply and installation of lighting systems to any Institution minimum at least 2 (two) years.	
24	Brief Description of Related Services	For Package GD-64.1: Experience in supply and installation of lighting systems to any Institution minimum at least 2 (two) years.	
25	Price of Tender Document (Tk)		
	Lot No	Identification of Lot	Location
27	3 (GD-64.1)	Supply of Lighting for BPATC Auditorium	BPATC, Savar, Dhaka
	Tender Document Price	2,000/-	Tender Security Amount (Tk)
			1,15,000/-
			Completion Time in Weeks / Months
			3 weeks
28	Name of Official Inviting Tender	Md. Mofazzal Hossain	
29	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Project Director	
30	Address of Official Inviting Tender	Office of the Project Director, Enhancement of Training Capacity of BPATC Project, BPATC, Savar, Dhaka-1343.	
31	Contact details of Official Inviting Tender	Telephone: 02-7746623	Fax: 02-7745029 Email: etcbpatc@gmail.com
	The Procuring Entity reserves the right to reject all Tenders or annul the Tender proceedings		



(Md. Mofazzal Hossain)
Project Director
Enhancement of Training Capacity of BPATC Project

GD-207

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
সড়ক পরিবহন ও সেতু মন্ত্রণালয়
সেতু বিভাগ, বাংলাদেশ সেতু কর্তৃপক্ষ
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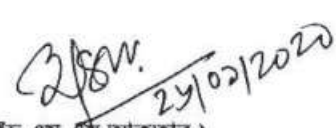
নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

সড়ক পরিবহন ও সেতু মন্ত্রণালয়ের সেতু বিভাগের আওতায় বাংলাদেশ সেতু কর্তৃপক্ষের অধীনে “সাপোর্ট টু ঢাকা এলিভেটেড এক্সপ্রেসওয়ে পিপিপি প্রকল্প” এ সম্পূর্ণ অস্থায়ী ভিত্তিতে (সরকারি বিধি মোতাবেক) জাতীয় বেতন স্কেল ২০১৫, অনুযায়ী সাকুল্যে বেতনে নিম্নবর্ণিত শর্তে জনবল নিয়োগের জন্য প্রকৃত বাংলাদেশি নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছেঃ

ক্রমিক নং	পদের নাম ও সর্বসাকুল্য বেতন (জাতীয় বেতন স্কেল ২০১৫ অনুযায়ী)	গ্রেড	পদ সংখ্যা	বয়স সীমা	শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা/অভিজ্ঞতা
১	অফিস সহকারী কাম কম্পিউটার অপারেটর সর্বসাকুল্য বেতন: ১৭,৩৪৫/-	১৬	১	১৮-৩০ বছর	ক) কোন স্বীকৃত বোর্ড/বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হইতে স্নাতক সার্টিফিকেট বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ হইয়া টাইপিং এ প্রতি মিনিটে ইংরেজী ও বাংলায় যথাক্রমে ৩০ ও ২০ শব্দ। খ) কম্পিউটার ও ওয়ার্ড প্রসেসিং এ জ্ঞান অতিরিক্ত যোগ্যতা হিসাবে বিবেচিত হবে।

শর্তাবলী:

- বর্ণিত পদে সম্পূর্ণ অস্থায়ী ভিত্তিতে মাসিক সাকুল্য বেতনে প্রকল্পের মেয়াদকালীন সময়ের জন্য চুক্তি ভিত্তিক নিয়োগ করা হবে।
- আবেদনপত্রে আবেদনকারীর নাম, পিতা/স্বামীর নাম, মাতার নাম, স্থায়ী ও বর্তমান ঠিকানা, জন্ম তারিখ ও ২৬/০১/২০২০ খ্রি: তারিখে বয়স, শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা, জাতীয়তা, ধর্ম, অভিজ্ঞতা, ইত্যাদি উল্লেখপূর্বক প্রকল্প পরিচালক “সাপোর্ট টু ঢাকা এলিভেটেড এক্সপ্রেসওয়ে পিপিপি প্রকল্প” সেতু ভবন, নিউ এয়ারপোর্ট রোড, বনানী, ঢাকা-১২১২ বরাবর আবেদন করতে হবে। আবেদনপত্র জিইপি/রেজিষ্ট্রি ডাক/কুরিয়ার সার্ভিস যোগ্য/সরাসরি অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে গ্রহণ করা হবে।
- আবেদনপত্রের সঙ্গে সকল শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতার মূল সনদপত্রের সত্যায়িত অনুলিপি, সংশ্লিষ্ট ইউনিয়ন পরিষদ/পৌরসভা/সিটি কর্পোরেশন এর চেয়ারম্যান/সহ চেয়ারম্যান/ব্যক্তি/কর্মকর্তার স্বাক্ষরিত নাগরিকত্ব সনদপত্র, একজন প্রথম শ্রেণীর গেজেটেড কর্মকর্তা কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত চারিত্রিক সনদপত্র এবং প্রথম শ্রেণীর কর্মকর্তা কর্তৃক সত্যায়িত সদ্য তোলা পাসপোর্ট আকারের ৩ (তিন) কপি ছবি সংযুক্ত করতে হবে।
- সরকারি/আধা-সরকারি ও স্বায়ত্বশাসিত প্রতিষ্ঠান সমূহে কর্মরত প্রার্থীদের যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের মাধ্যমে আবেদন করতে হবে।
- আবেদনপত্রের সাথে “সাপোর্ট টু ঢাকা এলিভেটেড এক্সপ্রেসওয়ে পিপিপি প্রকল্প” এর অনুকূলে ১০০/- (একশত) টাকার পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট (অফেরৎ-যোগ্য) সংযুক্ত করতে হবে।
- অসমাপ্ত ও নির্ধারিত তারিখের পর কোন আবেদন গ্রহণ করা হবে না।
- ২৬/০১/২০২০ খ্রি: তারিখ প্রার্থীর বয়স ১৮ হতে ৩০ বৎসরের মধ্যে হতে হবে।
- খামের উপর পদের নাম স্পষ্টাক্ষরে উল্লেখ করতে হবে।
- নির্বাচনী/মৌখিক পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের জন্য কোন প্রকার টিএ/ডিএ প্রদান করা হবে না।
- নির্বাচনী প্রার্থীদের বেতন-ভাতা ও অন্যান্য সুযোগ সুবিধা প্রকল্পে নিয়োগ সংক্রান্ত সরকারি বিধি-বিধান দ্বারা নিয়ন্ত্রিত হবে।
- প্রকল্প সমাপ্তির সঙ্গে সঙ্গে চাকুরীর অবসান হবে। সে অনুযায়ী সংশ্লিষ্ট নিয়োগপত্রই চাকুরী অবসানের নোটিশ হিসাবে গণ্য হবে।
- আবেদনপত্র গ্রহণ, বাছাই বা বাতিল করার পূর্ণ ক্ষমতা কর্তৃপক্ষের নিকট সংরক্ষিত থাকবে।
- পদ সংখ্যা কম/বেশী করার ক্ষমতা কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করে।
- বিজ্ঞপ্তি বাংলাদেশ সেতু কর্তৃপক্ষের [website: www.bba.gov.bd](http://www.bba.gov.bd) তে পাওয়া যাবে।
- আবেদনপত্র গ্রহণের শেষ তারিখ ২৫/০২/২০২০ খ্রি: বিকাল ০৫:০০ ঘটিকা।



(এ এইচ এম এস আকতার)
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The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR
LATE S. M. ALI

DHAKA FRIDAY JANUARY 31, 2020, MAGH 17, 1426 BS

A women-friendly city still a far cry

Women voters' voices need to be heard

SINCE Dhaka is increasingly becoming a city of fear for women, with incidents of rape and sexual harassment in public places and public transports rising by the day, ensuring the safety and security of women through taking some concrete steps should be one of the key responsibilities of our would-be city mayors and councillors. *The Daily Star* recently spoke to several women voters of the DNCC and DSCC and found that they are mostly concerned about their safety in the city, which was ranked as the seventh worst megacity for women by a 2017 poll conducted by the Thomson Reuters Foundation. According to the polls, it is also the fourth most dangerous city in the world in terms of sexual violence faced by women. Some of the women voters also expressed the need for talking to the ward councillors, preferably women, when in need, given that they do not feel comfortable to talk to male councillors about the problems they face as women.

While it is heartening to note that all four frontrunners in the mayoral race (from Awami League and BNP) have more or less addressed the issue of women's safety in their election manifestoes, there are some issues that did not get due attention. While the AL-backed candidates pledged to introduce a women-friendly mass transit system, women-friendly healthcare centres, installing lights and CCTV cameras on each city street, etc., the BNP-backed candidates promised to introduce separate bus services for women, safe housing and transport facilities for garments workers and also installing CCTV cameras on the street.

Unfortunately, none of the candidates have mentioned anything about how they can make the existing public transports, especially public bus services, safe for women. According to a 2017 Brac study, 94 percent of women experienced some form of sexual harassment while commuting on public transport. In our public buses, the reserved seats for women are still mostly occupied by men and for a woman to get into a public bus in the rush hours is as difficult as it could be. The city authorities will have to address the issues in coordination with the law enforcing agencies.

As for ensuring the safety of women commuters, will only installing powerful lights and CCTV cameras on each street ensure women's safety? None of the candidates have talked about how they will coordinate with the law enforcement agencies to ensure women commuters' security at the local level.

Moreover, according to the City Corporation Rules 2012, holding awareness campaigns on public safety issues and mobilising support from the local people are the responsibility of the councillors. Our would-be ward councillors should be empowered enough to play this role, which is essential to raise awareness about women's safety at the ward level.

According to Election Commission data, out of a total 5,463,467 voters in Dhaka South and Dhaka North city corporations, 2,620,459 are women. Without ensuring their safety, Dhaka can never be made liveable again.

Trump's Middle East 'peace plan'

A rejection of international law and decades of peace process

THE US and Israel have historically been allies and staunch supporters of each other's policies. Despite that, it was a disturbing scene when US President Donald Trump stood next to the smiling Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu at the White House and drew huge cheers from the crowd while unveiling what he called "the deal of the century"—a plan that strips the Palestinians of their rights and imposes apartheid-like conditions that would effectively make Palestine an Israeli colony.

For the controversial US president and the equally controversial Israeli PM, who is currently under investigation for corruption in a country paralysed by a political stalemate, this "peace plan" is an honest reflection of their views on Palestinian statehood and a golden opportunity to woo their Christian evangelical voters. However, their blatant disregard for the decades of negotiations and resolutions that have been part of the peace process, specifically the UN-sanctioned 1948 lines and the Oslo Accords, almost beggars belief. Not only does it take away huge swathes of land from Palestine and legalises Israeli settlements built on the West Bank in violation of international law, it gives complete security control of the West Bank to Israel, recognises Israeli sovereignty in disputed territories like the Golan Heights and Jordan Valley, and even makes plans for a "population transfer" of Israeli citizens of Palestinian origin to whatever is left of Palestine—which bears a worrying resemblance to the mass displacements of Partition that are still seared into the memory of the subcontinent.

As a nation of people who have lived under the yoke of colonialism and freed themselves from British and Pakistani occupation, we cannot in any way accept a "solution" in the Middle East that does not take into account the voices of the Palestinian people and the Palestinian National Authority. Nations of the Global South must stand together and speak out against injustice in the same way that we fought against injustice, and we urge the Bangladesh government to be a strong advocate for Palestine and lead the way in this respect. It is disappointing to see a muted response from the Arab world, and we urge the international community to now step up and condemn this attempt to use military and economic strength to overshadow the rights of a people to self-determination. After decades of speaking of universal human rights and the equal rights of all people regardless of where they are, it is time for US allies and intergovernmental organisations to put their money where their mouth is and take a stand against injustice, even at the risk of opposing the biggest bullies on the global playground.

BANGLADESH ECONOMY

Grappling with growing pains

Bangladesh's growth story cannot take the country far unless it is translated into sustainable development.



FAHMIDA KHATUN

high GDP growth, electoral promises remain unfulfilled in several critical areas. Many old woes continue to hamper the economy: a weak fiscal balance, a fragile banking sector and a shaky external sector.

Apart from high economic growth, the other silver lining for Bangladesh economy is the robust growth in remittance income. This helps maintain Bangladesh's low current account deficit. But exports and imports performed poorly last year, with export growth negative from June to November.

The textile sector—the main driver of exports in Bangladesh—experienced a larger decline than non-textile products, causing a dip in total exports. Amid the US-China trade war, Bangladesh's textile sector could not capitalise on the opportunity to increase exports to the United States, mainly due to a lack of supply-side capacity and product diversification. Currency devaluation in competing countries such as India and Vietnam also contributed to Bangladesh's poor export performance.

But as an importing country, Bangladesh's policymakers are cautious about devaluing the Bangladeshi taka against the US dollar because they want to avoid imports becoming too expensive. Imports declined in 2019 and capital machinery imports were negative, indicating low investment. Private investment has been stagnant at around 23 percent of GDP for the past few years. As a result, new job creation is limited and youth unemployment is 10.6 percent. High economic growth also failed to reduce inequality; instead, consumption and wealth inequality have widened.

Bangladesh has the lowest tax-to-GDP ratio among South Asian countries at 9.2 percent in the 2018-2019 fiscal year. The high target of resource mobilisation set for the National Board of Revenue (NBR) remains unfulfilled. Not only is the tax net narrow, tax avoidance is also high. NBR automation, human resource development and, above all, institutional autonomy and transparency are crucial for high revenue mobilisation efforts. The tax system has shifted towards indirect tax instead of a direct, progressive tax system.

Due to limited resource mobilisation, the government depends on bank borrowing to finance its development programmes. Several mega infrastructure projects are underway, including the Padma multi-purpose bridge, a mass rapid transit system, an LNG terminal and several power plants and deep sea ports. But delays in the implementation of these high-value projects have hugely increased their cost. By December 2019—only halfway through the fiscal year—the government had almost reached its planned bank borrowing target.

now functioning under the direction of external political forces, provided perverse incentives to loan defaulters. One example is the rescheduling facility. Last May, the central bank announced that it would allow loan defaulters to pay only a 2 percent down payment to reschedule their loans, extending the repayment period to 10 years, with a one-year grace period. Such undue benefits, granted to incentivise defaulters, also discriminate against good borrowers.

The government tried to rescue state-

Bangladesh's 2020 economic outlook will largely be determined by its performance in 2019 and the policies that its government pursues. A short-lived drive against corruption last year created a ray of hope for citizens. Such clampdowns on corruption must be continued and encouraged. Until now, policymakers have largely been averse to structural and institutional reforms needed to improve the economy.

What has been ignored and denied is that Bangladesh's growth story cannot



Delays in the completion of high-value infrastructure projects have hugely increased their cost.

FILE PHOTO: STAR

So, the government will face major fiscal challenges in managing expenditures and continuing development initiatives.

The most significant challenge for the economy is the weakening of the banking sector. Presently, banks are facing a liquidity crunch. This is mostly due to banks holding large amounts of non-performing loans (NPLs). NPLs accounted for 11.69 percent of total outstanding loans last June, and many of these are due to wilful defaulters.

Making things worse, policymakers have granted leeway to the defaulters. The central bank has lost its independence, and

owned banks by recapitalising them every year for the last decade. But this has not improved the performance of state-owned commercial banks, where NPLs account for over 30 percent of their total loans. Private commercial banks have also been afflicted by a loan default culture and experienced various scams.

But instead of letting the poorly performing banks die a natural death, the government provides them with funding. The internal governance of banks is also sometimes weak and needs to be strengthened through monitoring and technological adaptation.

take the country far unless it is translated into sustainable development. Cracks in the economy became prominent in 2019 and will remain in place unless they are addressed.

This year, Bangladesh will celebrate the centennial birthday of its founding father, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The greatest respect can be paid to him through fulfilling his dream of establishing a just and equitable society.

Dr Fahmida Khatun is Executive Director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue.

This article is part of an East Asia Forum special feature series on 2019 and the year ahead.

Dhaka's crucial role in enforcing ICJ ruling

KAMAL AHMED

ON January 23, when the President of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), Abdulgawi Ahmed Yusuf, at the onset of his deliberations pronounced that "the Court's references in this Order to the Rohingya should be understood as references to the group that self-identifies as the Rohingya group," some of us in the press room were elated. And then again, while establishing the link between provisional measures and the rights whose protection was sought, he said: "In the Court's view, the Rohingya in Myanmar appear to constitute a protected group within the meaning of article II of the Genocide Convention." Those survivors of the atrocities who were present inside the chamber and in the gallery later described their feelings as electrifying. Yasmin Ullah of the Rohingya Rights Network told a press meet that "it was a feeling of what was like to be human and equal to others."

The ICJ order that brought joy among the persecuted Rohingyas and humanists all over the world was, however, a rude shock to Myanmar and its powerful military. And it was reflected in their first official reaction. A statement by Myanmar's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that "Myanmar takes note of ICJ decision. There was no genocide in Rakhine." There was no outright rejection of the ruling. Instead, it tried to blame human rights defenders for allegedly presenting a "distorted picture" of the situation in Rakhine, and highlighted the findings of its own investigation which concluded that war crimes might have been committed, but not genocide. The statement also said "it was important for Myanmar that Court [ICJ] reaches a factually correct decision on the merits of the case."

It was something similar to an own goal for Myanmar. The Court's unanimous view on the level of atrocities committed against the Rohingyas was reached on the basis of two premises: one on the conclusions reached by the UN Fact-Finding Mission, and the other on the admission by the state party, Myanmar. ICJ Vice President Xue Hanqin, who had dissenting views on the reasoning, had noted that "during the oral proceedings, Myanmar acknowledged

In relation to the repatriation of the Rohingya refugees, Myanmar has wasted the better part of last three years in so-called verifying process and, more recently, telling the world that it is Bangladesh which is not cooperating with it to implement the process.

that during their military operations, there may have been excessive use of force and violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in Rakhine state." In her view, the provisional measures indicated by the Court "would enhance the control of the situation." Noting that "it is apparent that the Rohingya as a group remain vulnerable under the present conditions," Justice Xue Hanqin continued: "with more than 740,000 people displaced from their homeland, the situation demands preventative measures."

Some experts believe Myanmar will simply ignore the Court's ruling. But it will not be that simple. Myanmar had accepted the ICJ's authority and jurisdiction when Aung San Suu Kyi appeared before it and stated: "For materially less resourceful countries like Myanmar, the World Court is a vital refuge of international justice. We look to the Court to establish conditions conducive to respect for obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law, one of the fundamental objectives of the United Nations Charter." Myanmar also knows that its major backers—China and Russia—would be facing an awkward and daunting task to block any resolution at the UN Security Council on the enforcement of the ICJ's order.

The ICJ's unanimous ruling is also

an opportunity for Suu Kyi as she can now tell her backers in the military and extremist monks that to remain part of the rule-based global system, there is no alternative but to implement the provisional measures as ordered. There is, however, a suspicion that the Myanmar government will claim it is trying as best as it can and find various excuses to delay and dither in bringing real changes. The ruling party's reaction gives rise to such suspicions. A spokesman for the ruling National League for Democracy, Myo Nyunt, told Reuters that "the government is already doing most of the orders." "One more thing we need to do is submit reports," he added, referring to one of the several measures approved by the Court requiring Myanmar to submit reports on progress at regular intervals. And The New York Times quoted a spokesman for Myanmar's military, Brig. Gen. Zaw Min Tun, that it would "cooperate with the government and we will work under the guidance of the government" in response to the ruling.

Diplomats and observers who had followed Myanmar over the years are familiar with this tactic of the current leadership of the country. In relation to the repatriation of the Rohingya refugees, Myanmar has wasted the better part of last three years in so-called verifying process and, more recently, telling the world that it is Bangladesh which is not cooperating with it to implement the process. Clearly incensed by such an accusation, after the second attempt of repatriation failed in last August, Bangladesh responded by saying that it was "baseless, ill-motivated and totally unacceptable".

In the ICJ ruling, there are at least two points that give Bangladesh some advantage in pursuing its objective to repatriate all the refugees. Quoting the General Assembly resolution of December 27, 2019, the ICJ opined that "the Rohingya in Myanmar remain extremely vulnerable." Rejecting the country's claim of steps taken to facilitate the return of the Rohingya refugees present in Bangladesh, the Court noted that "Myanmar has not presented to the Court concrete measures aimed specifically at recognising and ensuring the right of the Rohingya to exist

as a protected group under the Genocide Convention." This observation by the ICJ gives Bangladesh a powerful tool to press Myanmar to resolve the citizenship issue because of which the Rohingya refugees have so far refused to go back to their country.

The second advantage for Bangladesh is the recognition of Rohingyas as a protected group under the Genocide Convention. In its reasoning for ordering provisional measures, the ICJ referred to a particular part of the UN General Assembly resolution of December 27, 2019, where it said: "in spite of the fact that Rohingya Muslims lived in Myanmar for generations prior to the independence of Myanmar, they were made stateless by the enactment of 1982 Citizenship Law and were eventually disenfranchised, in 2015, from the electoral process." This observation certainly removes the chance for all those frivolous labelling of Rohingyas as Bengalis by the Myanmar authorities.

On the other hand, Bangladesh has so far maintained all the niceties in its endeavour to resolve the Rohingya crisis, presumably due to the strategic preference of Myanmar to the two big regional powers, namely China and India. Bangladesh's inability or unwillingness to take a stronger position on the issue did not go unnoticed. The dissenting Justice Xue, while arguing against the Gambia's legal standing before the Court, opined that under the rules, this right belongs to "the injured state, the one which is specifically affected by the alleged violations."

The ICJ ruling has now provided us with a huge opportunity to pursue a forceful course of action. And it is not only for the repatriation of a million-plus refugees, but also for the sake of taking a moral position against genocide. Any nation that is not standing up against the Myanmar regime should also be advised not to be complicit in the genocide. Standing up for an oppressed people, the Rohingyas, is the right thing to do. It will also send a strong message to other nations who are systematically making religious minorities stateless.

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A notice from the Ministry of Housing and Public Works states that the land is demarcated for a housing project for lower and lower-middle income groups, and warns against entry without permission.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Four businessmen and a funeral

SHAYAN S KHAN

THERE is a story to be told of Dhaka—the once-provincial backwater-turned-megalopolis—but it was nowhere in the electioneering that wrapped up last night. There’s a story to be told; there are too many stories to be told. They are the tales foregone in the burnt down remains of 400 homes. “Shanties,” we call them, in the mangled tin and ashes of the lives that inhabited them. Lives that made each shanty a home, and in that most essential function that could accrue to any dwelling, of being a home, they were no less than any of their fancier counterparts. You do get all sorts, but these are shanties. Or slums. The difference obviously stopped mattering much.

Leaving aside for a minute the trials and tribulations and the abject condition of poverty, slums can be exciting places from the outside looking in. Just passing by, or from your window looking over them, maybe you take a shortcut through them when fetching the ball, or just lurking on the edges. They buttress the informal economy that is often more vibrant than the formal one in countries like ours. They thrum and they throb with an energy unrecognisable to us. It feels

is burnt, the sheets of tin are about melting. He sends the boy away and lights a cigarette with enough swag to undo decades of the ban on tobacco advertising, as he wraps up this final survey of a chapter that would soon be closing. If he is daunted, the face doesn’t show it.

The next shot is of a possible grandmother (a way to address her would be “chachi”) emerging out of the wreckage. Evidently, she has completed her own survey, and looked the part too. Hair tied back in a neat bun, *orna* locked at the waist, in a pair of sneakers. With her trusty sandals clasped in one hand, she means nothing but business. As it turns out, she is a businesswoman. Rahima Begum, 65, owned six hovels at the slum. “I rented out three of them. My family and I managed to escape when the fire broke out but we lost our television, refrigerator and 17,000 taka cash in the fire.” You wouldn’t bet against her owning all that again. She looks fit as a fiddle, hard as nails. Whichever of Dhaka’s 5000 slums (MICS 2013, Unicef) she ends up in next, nobody better mess with Rahima Begum.

Even her tenants were upwardly mobile, outward looking. One of them, Zohra Begum, a single mother,

fires in five months. Both unexplained, yet somehow explained-away (“plastic roofs helped the flames to spread quickly”). Committees have been formed of course, true to form; two are working at the moment to identify the cause of the latest one. They are likely to be at it still, until the next one. Meanwhile, there is no word on the first one.

On top of that, there is Bhashantek—a byword for the last time the urban poor of Dhaka were promised something along the lines of the Housing Ministry’s present proclamation, more specifically the callousness we afford ourselves in dealing with them. In 1998, the government initiated the Tk 341 crore Bhashantek Rehabilitation Project in another part of Mirpur encompassing what used to be the Dhamalcoat bosti, with the stated objective of building no less than 7,560 flats in over 100 high-rises for slum residents and low-income groups. The residents of Dhamalcoat were evicted by goons or wooed with the promise of a nicer flat, for which prices were fixed at rates that families could pay off over 10 years in monthly instalments. Over years and across governments, the project got mired in irregularities, mismanagement

who had even coughed up an initial deposit of Tk 10,000 in a Sonali Bank account to book that “dream home”.

Today, the Bhashantek debacle is part of the urban folklore. And a reference point for the Jhilpar-Chalantika residents to reject any notion that whatever the NHA is cooking up behind that big signboard stands to benefit them. Even the mere mention of the word “project” is a signal to resistance. Can anyone in their right mind really fault them?

One possible reason for their disregard is that slum-dwellers don't actually make it into the voting rolls. Or at least many of them don't.

close to its edges, exerting a gravitational pull of such force that even light cannot escape it.

I can imagine similar warnings for those growing up as kids in Dhaka, regarding slums. Of lives sucked in and never being the same again. It’s true that drugs, violence and crime in general thrived in slums. But they have a bad reputation, worse than they deserved. What people didn’t get was slums were not the only places where that stuff flowed. If you were starting to feel some pull towards any of that, it’s not like you would make your way to a slum to get your fix. Polite communities provide options aplenty.

Today, an actual extract from a science journal reads: “Scientists now believe supermassive black holes lie at the heart of nearly every galaxy in the universe, serving as essential fulcrums upon which the cohesiveness and stability of galaxies rest.” Just like urban planners now believe large, vibrant slums can be found alongside nearly every affluent neighbourhood in cities, serving as essential fulcrums upon which the cohesiveness and stability of communities rest. This is the kind of thinking one would look for in mayors for Dhaka city. But they don’t even care, it seems.

One possible reason for their disregard, is that slum-dwellers don’t actually make it into the voting rolls. Or at least many of them don’t. The last official census in 2011 put the population of Dhaka City under 9 million. Today, short of a census, the most reliable estimate that organisations like UNDP go with is around 16 million. Yet you may be surprised to learn that the size of the combined electorate for the two city corporations in Saturday’s vote is a mere 5.5 million. That means only one in three residents is registered to vote. Even if you take out the under-18 population that is ineligible to vote by projecting them generously at 40 percent (based on 2011 census for 0-19 years), the size of the population eligible to vote should be close to 9.5 million. That means around 4 million residents who should be eligible to vote as residents of the city are missing from the electoral rolls. Given that disenfranchisement is most common in informal settlements, it is reasonable to assume a large chunk of the missing 4 million are slum-dwellers.

Furthermore, as if their indifference over the course of the campaign period wasn’t enough, the four main candidates’ so-called “manifestos”, all delivered in a flurry over the last week, confirmed that none of them plan to expend too much of their energies on bringing disenfranchised slum-dwellers in from the cold, so to speak, where they could start availing some basic services.

To be frank, each candidate has produced a comprehensive—even exhaustive—list of talking points. No hint of an overarching vision or prioritisation, or a specific commitment that is close to their hearts. A manifesto is meant to provide mooring, voters should be able to hold candidates accountable to them. What these candidates have provided are the syllabi for two MCQ tests. It’s just as well that it doesn’t matter whether you pass or fail them.



On January 24, the morning after a second fire in five months gutted hundreds of homes in the Chalantika-Jhilpar bosti in Mirpur, the initial shock-and-awe (Fire Service received the first call at 4.11 AM, which is ungodly even for slums) had already given way to cold, hard reality.



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

almost banal to say they have more life to them. Any place where every slice of life is earned and accounted for, where every day and every breath counts toward the next, obviously would. You say life is not a rehearsal, and I will grant you that. Over there, though, every shot could potentially be your last one.

Last Friday, the morning after a second fire in five months gutted hundreds of homes in the Chalantika-Jhilpar bosti in Mirpur, the initial shock-and-awe (Fire Service received the first call at 4.11 AM, which is ungodly even for slums) had already given way to cold, hard reality. In a video posted by UNB, as the camera pans out to cover the extent of the carnage, the foreground captures a man and his boy getting busy with the work of what comes next. It’s past time for valuables, they’re picking through the rubble for anything still worth salvaging. The bedframe

said she’d been renting the home she shared with her daughter and son from Rahima for the last 10 years, “I have lost valuables including our television, refrigerator, and 6,000 taka cash. My daughter, a class nine student at Mirpur Ideal High School, fell unconscious as her books were gutted in the fire!”.

Others sound out suspicions, convinced of some diabolical plot in the works. They lead you to a spot that used to be part of the slum, but since the blaze that gutted over a thousand homes last August, has been made off limits. A large signboard warns against advancing any further, with a notice from the Ministry of Housing and Public Works proclaiming “Land demarcated for housing project for lower and lower-middle income groups. No entry without permission.”

Those who do, are not shy about stating it: “They want to evict us.”

It’s hard to argue in the face of two

and of course, corruption. When the time came for the first batch of flats to be handed over, it was found that the private developer that won the construction contract (North South Property Development Ltd, REHAB Membership No. 822/2008) had sold off over a thousand flats at higher prices to an affluent group.

In October 2010, the developer’s contract was revoked and the project was taken over by the National Housing Authority (NHA). With only 18 buildings built and tenders floated for 12 more, the government decided in December 2015 to abandon the plan for the construction of remaining buildings, and instead use the land for building quarters for government employees. And a particularly cruel slap across the face of some 1,300 families—almost all of them former residents of the slums that were cleared from the 47-acre site for the project—

GIVEN the timing, you would think that last week’s fire would find its way into the agenda for the February 1 mayoral elections. The fire coincided almost exactly with the start of the final stretch in the campaign. With councillors as well as mayor candidates criss-crossing the city like neutrinos in a particle accelerator, you’d expect a few of them at least to run into these families rendered homeless overnight. However, no candidate made time to go see them—not even for a photo-op. Even from afar, not a word was uttered in solidarity or reassurance. Not even after a casualty was confirmed at the DMCH Burn Unit. It was as if the election and that slum fire belonged in different planets.

Strictly speaking, Jhilpar bosti falls under Dhaka North, and so you could argue that the onus fell on the candidates in that half of the city to address what was at least a symptom of municipal dysfunction. Once the weekend passed, you knew no one was bothered. I found it hard to believe, given the estimates for the proportion of Dhaka’s total population that lived in slums (anywhere from a third to two-fifths), that Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) Unicef ran in 2013 put the number of slum residents at 4 million.

How Dhaka chooses to deal with its slums going forward is an issue that should concern everyone who lives here, and mayors are ideally placed to provide the leadership in adopting a new direction that is informed by the new thinking and emerging consensus around the issue of urban poverty. There was a time slums were looked at as black holes dotting a cityscape, when black holes (the ones in space) themselves were poorly understood and recognised only for their power to obliterate, sucking in anything that ventured too

Shayan S Khan is Executive Editor of Dhaka Courier.



WARMTH OF PITHA IN CHILLY WINTER

A CHILL in the air, foggy mornings and dew-kissed evenings are features of the Bangladeshi winter. That picture is only complete when paired with one other wintertime staple – the aroma of steaming pithas that are as varied in taste as they are in their shapes and hues -- the ever-popular bhapa pitha, chittoi pitha and patishapta, to name just three. Pithas, or rice cakes, are a specialty of the season that is as beloved by those who have fond memories of their mothers and grandmothers concocting the delicious creations and those of a younger vintage, who enjoy the best of both worlds. The winter morning may start with homemade pithas but with a proliferation of streetside shops offering these quintessentially Bangladeshi delicacies for just between Tk 5 and Tk 40, the pitha party keeps going throughout the day. These pictures were taken in different pitha hotspots of Dhaka over the last month.



Photo: ANISUR RAHMAN



UN confirms hack, but says no sensitive data compromised

AFP, Geneva

The UN confirmed a report Wednesday that it had suffered a cyberattack last year, including at its rights agency, but insisted the hackers had not accessed any sensitive information.

The New Humanitarian agency reported Wednesday that it had obtained a confidential UN report detailing how hackers broke into dozens of UN servers in Geneva and Vienna starting last July.

The group described the attack as “one of the largest ever known to have affected the world body”, and warned it raised serious data safety concerns.

The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), which collects highly sensitive data about victims and perpetrators of rights abuses around the world, was among the hacking victims.

UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric confirmed to reporters in New York the UN had been the target of a cyber attack “in the middle of last year”, stressing that “the damage related to the specific attack has been contained and additional measures implemented.”

He downplayed the importance of the attack, stressing that “the UN responds to multiple attacks at various levels of sophistication on a daily basis.”

“This particular attack is not a landmark event.”

The rights agency meanwhile acknowledged Wednesday that some of its servers had been targeted in the attack.

But it insisted that “although hackers accessed a self-contained part of our system in July 2019, the development servers they accessed did not hold any sensitive data or confidential information”.

The hackers had accessed the OHCHR’s Active User Directory, which contains user IDs for staff and devices, it said, adding though they had not accessed passwords nor any other parts of the agency’s system.

“The UN Human Rights Office takes breaches of security extremely seriously,” it said.

It stressed that it was well aware of “the potential effects should people gain unauthorised access to our data, and the responsibility we have, both online and offline, to protect victims, staff, partners and any individuals and groups who collaborate with us.”

“We want to assure all concerned parties that this hacking attempt did not compromise sensitive information within this Office.”

The rights office acknowledged that it like many other institutions and companies faces “frequent attempts to access our computer systems”.

But it said it was “constantly further reinforcing existing multifaceted safeguards to preserve the integrity of our systems and the data they hold.”

US-Israeli woman freed by Russia after Putin pardon

AFP, Moscow

Russia yesterday freed a US-Israeli woman jailed for drug trafficking after she was pardoned by President Vladimir Putin.

Russia released 26-year-old Naama Issachar as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met Putin at the Kremlin to discuss US President Donald Trump’s Middle East peace plan.

Issachar’s case caused an outcry in Israel and she was set to fly back with Netanyahu after his meeting with Putin, an Israeli government official confirmed to AFP.

Issachar was arrested at Moscow’s Sheremetyevo airport in April 2019 while she was in the transit zone en route from India to Israel.

Russian authorities said they found nine grammes (three ounces) of cannabis in her checked luggage and

she was sentenced in October to seven and a half years in prison.

Her case was controversial because she was sentenced for drug trafficking while she was in transit and the drugs were in hold luggage.

Putin pardoned Issachar on Wednesday after she submitted a request at the weekend.

“Guided by the principles of humanity, I pardon Naama Issachar,” Putin said in a decree cited by the Kremlin.

He told Netanyahu that it was lucky for Issachar that she did not cross the border, suggesting this would have complicated the pardon procedure.

“She -- thank God, it’s very good for her -- didn’t even cross the Russian border,” Putin said, adding that the drugs were found in her luggage while the baggage was being moved from one plane to another.

Want to see democracy

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the city,” they said.

They also hoped that the government, the Election Commission and all political parties would respect the citizens’ rights to cast their votes in a peaceful and festive atmosphere.

They added that the votes should be counted with fairness and integrity.

The signatories to the statement include Benoit Prefontaine, high commissioner of Canada; Charlotta Schlyter, ambassador of Sweden; Earl R Miller, ambassador of the United States; Robert Chatterton Dickson, high commissioner of the UK; Sidsel Bleken, ambassador of Norway; Winnie Estrup Petersen, ambassador of Denmark; Jeroen Steeghs, charge d’affaires of the Netherlands; Penny Morton, acting high commissioner of Australia, and Suzanne Muller, charge d’affaires of Switzerland.

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen yesterday said it was regrettable that some foreign diplomats sometimes intervened in the country’s domestic issues.

He said this when reporters asked him for comments about a meeting of diplomats at the residence of British High Commissioner Wednesday night, three days before the city polls.

The Election Commission has a code of conduct and so do the diplomats, Momen said.

“We hope they will adhere to the codes. However, the Election Commission will take measures if a diplomat violates the rules.”

The diplomats should be responsible in their actions, he told reporters after the closing session of Bangladesh Development Forum at the capital’s Bangabandhu International Conference Centre.

“If they don’t abide by the code of conduct, we will ask them to leave,” he added.

“The prime minister said that it should be an ideal election and there should be no interference,” he told reporters.

The EC in a statement said 74 officials of embassies and high commissions have been authorised to observe the polls.

AL for watch on

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“We do not want a recurrence of the incident. We respect ambassadors, but no one should take advantage of our hospitality.”

A BNP delegation met the election commissioners after the AL delegation left.

After the meeting, BNP standing committee member Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury said, “We complained to the Election Commission repeatedly about the breaches of electoral code of conduct, but we didn’t get the answer to a single question.”

He alleged that BNP leaders and activists were harassed and detained by the law enforcers en masse despite the EC’s promise that no one would be arrested unless there was a visible offence.

The EC should be there to protect peoples voting rights but this EC is

protecting the AL’s interest only, he said.

“Among the 22 local observers, 18 have no website and one person is at the helm of two organisations. These organisations are sponsored by Awami League.”

Asked about BNP’s allegations, Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda said the EC didn’t ask law enforcement agencies to conduct raids.

“But we are discouraging people from coming to Dhaka without a valid reason. We asked voters to leave the polling centres after casting their votes and not to gather in front of polling centres in groups,” he said.

“Compared to other times, a congenial atmosphere is prevailing. Candidates are campaigning. Voters are participating in processions and rallies,” the CEC told reporters.



Members of the Syrian Civil Defence, also known as the White Helmets, carry the body of a woman recovered from the rubble of a building at the site of a reported airstrike on the rebel-held town of Ariha in the northern countryside of Syria’s Idlib province early yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Bangabandhu’s nation-building challenges

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secretariat describes the meeting as ‘very satisfactory’.

McNamara is accompanied by IPM Cargil, director of Asia department of IBRD. It may be noted that Cargil visited Bangladesh following the Pakistan Army crackdown and suggested to the World Bank suspension of loans to the then Pakistan.

Seeing Cargil in the delegation, Bangabandhu reminds him of the report, “I know about your report. You must have noticed the change between your last visit and this.”

MUIJIB BAHINI AND DHAKA CITY COMMANDOS SURRENDER ARMS Members of Mujib Bahini hand over their arms to Bangabandhu in an arms laying down ceremony held at Dhaka Stadium.

In that mammoth gathering Bangabandhu declares that there must not be “any shot fired anywhere in Bangladesh from today.” He urges the people to inform the government

of whoever is concealing arms. Bangabandhu asks non-Bengali communities living in Mohammadpur and Mirpur to merge and unite with the people of Bangladesh by surrendering their arms and ammunitions which they had obtained from Pakistan occupation forces.

Referring to the Nixon government’s role in Bangladesh’s Liberation War, Bangabandhu says that these forces are again trying to sow the seeds of conflict between the people of Bangladesh and India but the people will foil such attempts.

Earlier in the morning, the commandos belonging to Dhaka city handed their arms over to Bangabandhu at the official residence of the Prime Minister.

Muhammad Monwar Hossain, a boy of hardly 11 who had lost two of his brothers in the freedom struggle, went there with the freedom fighters to deposit his arms. He was embraced and kissed by Bangabandhu.

The commandos carried a big

photograph of Shaheed Rezaul Karim Manik, who fell to the bullets of the enemy while on a bridge-blowing operation on November 14, 1971. The photograph naturally draws the attention of Bangabandhu. He enquires of the family of the martyr and takes the photograph from the commandos saying, “I shall keep it with me.”

FOUR MORE RECOGNITIONS FOR BANGLADESH

Australia, New Zealand, Cambodia and Fiji recognise Bangladesh as an independent and sovereign country.

Sir Keith Jacka Holyoake, the Prime Minister of New Zealand, says in a cable sent to Bangabandhu that as the independence of the former eastern province of Pakistan is now an accomplished fact, “it is in the interests of all concerned that this should be accepted as so by the international community.”

Sources: February 1, 1972 issues of Morning News, The Bangladesh Observer, Dainik Bangla, The Daily Ittefaq, The Azad and Purbodesh.

Senate may acquit Trump today

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“I don’t know that for sure one way or the other,” he said, but called the tone and questions of senators “not encouraging.”

Democrats were not conceding defeat, however.

“My gut tells me we’re making progress, progress, progress,” said Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer.

Late on Wednesday, White House deputy counsel Patrick Philbin was asked if Trump agreed that foreign interference in US elections is illegal. “Mere information is not something that would violate the campaign finance laws,” Philbin replied.

Democrats said they were aghast that a lawyer for Trump would suggest it is OK to solicit foreign interference.

“I’m pretty stunned,” said Senator Mark Warner, top Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee.

While the Senate is expected to acquit Trump and leave him in office no matter what happens, allowing witnesses could inflict political damage on the president as he seeks re-election on Nov 3.

One such witness is former national security adviser John Bolton, who left the White House in September after several sharp disagreements with Trump over the direction of foreign policy.

The New York Times has reported that Bolton wrote in an as-yet unpublished book that the president

told him he wanted to freeze \$391 million in security aid - passed by US Congress to help Ukraine battle Russia-backed separatists - until Kiev pursued investigations into Democrats, including Biden and the former vice president’s son, Hunter.

On Wednesday, the White House objected to the book’s publication. A letter from the White House National Security Council to Bolton’s attorney said that based on a preliminary review, the manuscript appeared to contain “significant amounts of classified information.”

Some material was deemed top secret and could “cause exceptionally grave harm to the national security,” according to the letter, which was dated Jan. 23. It said the manuscript could not be published without deleting the classified information.

The manuscript was submitted to the White House for pre-publication review, a process that civil libertarians have said gives the government too much power to censor speech.

Democrats believe Bolton, a Republican foreign policy hawk, could help them solidify their case against the president and want to call him and a small number of other officials to testify. Trump’s fellow Republicans in the Senate have resisted the idea.

Bolton lawyer Charles Cooper said on Wednesday that neither he nor his client believe that any information in a chapter on Ukraine “could reasonably be considered

classified.” He asked for a quick determination in case Bolton was called to testify.

Trump lashed out at Bolton on Twitter on Wednesday, saying Bolton “couldn’t get approved for the Ambassador to the UN years ago, couldn’t get approved for anything since, ‘begged’ me for a non Senate approved job” and added that “if I listened to him, we would be in World War Six by now.”

Trump added that Bolton “goes out and IMMEDIATELY writes a nasty & untrue book. All Classified National Security. Who would do this?”

Responding to a question by top Senate Democrat Chuck Schumer, lead House prosecutor Adam Schiff said there would be no way to have a fair trial without witnesses.

“And when you have a witness as plainly relevant as John Bolton who goes to the heart of the most serious and most egregious of the president’s misconduct, who has volunteered to come and testify - to turn him away, to look the other way, I think is deeply at odds with being an impartial juror,” Schiff said.

Trump’s legal team has argued that the evidence supporting the charges against him is based on hearsay. It also asserts Trump did not commit an impeachable offense even if the allegation is true.

Removing Trump from office would take a two-thirds majority. None of the 53 Republican senators has publicly advocated removal.

62,537 acres

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reply to a question from Chattogram-4 Awami League lawmaker Didarul Alam.

In a scripted answer, Saifuzzaman said the government has taken various measures to recover the land from the grabbers.

He said all deputy commissioners were given directives to recover the land.

The measures include conducting eviction drives against the grabbers, amending the record of khas land registered as the land of individuals in RS, BS or City Records, and preparing a list of grabbers.

Meanwhile, Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Huq told the House that 1,89,311 freedom fighters were getting monthly honorarium, as the present government was taking various steps for their wellbeing.

“As continuation of the welfare activities for the freedom fighters, the government has increased their allowance amount several times,” he said while answering a question from treasury bench MP Rubina Akter.

A freedom fighter is getting Tk 12,000 a month from 2019-20 fiscal year along with two festival allowances of Tk 10,000 each, he said.

“The freedom fighters and their family members are also getting Tk 2,000 as Bangla new year allowance in the present financial year along with the state honorarium. An alive freedom fighter is also getting Tk 5,000 as the victory day allowance,” the minister said.

Families

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Islam, officer in-charge of Gopalganj Sadar Police Station.

Receiving information, a police team rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control, the OC said, adding that additional forces were deployed in that area to avoid further clashes.

No case was filed in this connection when this report was filed late last night and no one was arrested.

All-round

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serve them a point against Pakistan in their last group stage game, was to improve their batting. Skipper Akbar Ali was jubilant after the batsmen had done an excellent job in yesterday’s game. Fifties from Tanzid Hasan, Towhid and Shahadat Hossain helped Bangladesh get a daunting total.

“Extremely happy. When we started the tournament, our aim was to make it to the semis. Now we have to focus and do well from here. After the toss we thought anything around 240 was a good total, our plan was that. Our top 5 batted really well, we kept wickets in hand and in the final 10, we exploded. It’s about character, everyone wants to reach the finals. I have to give credit to the batters. After the first innings, our spinners did well. It’s a complete performance,” said Akbar after the match.

Reward

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The agency offered few details on the reward, or how outsiders might pull off the task.

But its chief -- who said the cash would come out of his own pocket -- warned that he was not calling on amateurs to hunt down the reptile, but rather addressing people with a background in wildlife rescue and a thirst for conservation.

“We’re asking the general public not to get close to the crocodile or disturb its habitat,” said Hasmini Hasmar, head of the Central Sulawesi Natural Resources Conservation Agency.

Star

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DHAKA FRIDAY JANUARY 31, 2020, MAGH 17, 1426 BS

SPORT



It's a very good finish. We had our plans and we executed well. I was bowling wicket-to-wicket and varied my pace. It's a slow pitch and had assistance for spinners.

RAKIBUL HASAN
BANGLADESH U-19 SPINNER

Jubilant Bangladesh players celebrate securing a semifinal spot in the ongoing ICC Under-19 World Cup after thrashing hosts South Africa by 104 runs at the Senwes Park in Potchefstroom yesterday.

PHOTO: ICC

Young Tigers oust hosts South Africa

SPORTS REPORTER



A strong batting display backed by a clinical bowling performance, led by left-arm spinner Rakibul Hasan, helped Bangladesh crush hosts South Africa by 104 runs and qualify for the Super League semifinal stage in the ICC Under-19 World Cup at Senwes Park in Potchefstroom yesterday.

After piling on a challenging 261 for five, it was Rakibul's spin that dismantled the South African batting line-up as the hosts were bundled out for 157 runs in 42.3 overs.

Rakibul's fifer included the scalps of three of the top four South African batsmen. South Africa never looked on course in chase of the challenging total as the hosts kept losing wickets at regular intervals. Luke Beaufort was the only exception but he kept on running out of partners before he too was finally removed by Rakibul in the 43rd over after a resilient 90-ball 60. Rakibul finished with impressive figures of five for 19 in 9.3 overs as the unnerved young Tigers outplayed the hosts.

Skipper Akbar Ali had mentioned earlier about their intention to put extra effort on their batting, especially after their poor showing in the last Group Stage match

against Pakistan, where rain had saved the young Tigers' from blunders. Their efforts did pay off as Bangladesh got off to a decent start, courtesy of openers Parvez Hossain and Tanzid Hasan. The duo strung together a 60-run stand before Parvez was dismissed in the 13th over.

Tanzid, who provided a solid start, was dismissed in the 28th over after a solid 84-ball 80, featuring 12 boundaries. After that, it was a magnificent 102-run fourth-wicket stand between Shahadat Hossain and Towhid Hridoy that saw Bangladesh post a daunting total. Shahadat remained unbeaten on a 76-ball 74 while Towhid scored 51 off 73.

Bangladesh will now face New Zealand in a Super League semifinal match on February 6 at the same venue with hopes of making it to their first ever final in the biggest age-level event. Meanwhile, hosts South Africa can now only hope to finish fifth in their own backyard.

SCORES IN BRIEF

BANGLADESH: 261 for 5 in 50 overs (Tanzid 80, Towhid 51, Shahadat 74 not out, Moletsane 2-41)

SOUTH AFRICA: 147 all out in 42.3 overs (Bird 35, Beaufort 60, Lees 19; Tanzim 2-41, Rakibul 5-19)

Result: Bangladesh U-19s won by 104 runs. **Player-of-the-match:** Rakibul Hasan.

BCL set to get underway from today

SPORTS REPORTER



The Bangladesh Cricket League (BCL) is set to commence today with the two Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB)-run teams North Zone and South Zone locking horns at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chattogram while Walton Central Zone and Islami Bank East Zone are set to face each other at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

The BCB had earlier decided to cut the red-ball tournament short this time, running it in a single league format to create a window for the upcoming 2019-2020 Dhaka Premier League.

The only franchise-based first-class tournament of the country was arranged in a hurry this time with the players' draft completed on January 27, four days prior to the start of the tournament. East Zone skipper Mominul Haque reiterated that the BCL matches were good preparation for the Pakistan Tests.

While Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is yet to confirm whether Mominul will captain the side for the upcoming Test in Pakistan, it could be ascertained from the left-handed batsman's



East Zone skipper Mominul Haque (L) and his Central Zone counterpart Najmul Hossain Shanto pose with the trophy ahead of their BCL opening round clash today.

PHOTO: STAR

words that the matter is likely a formality.

"I think playing in the BCL will help us prepare [for Pakistan tour] better. As a captain I will be able to observe how others play, their approach and attitude. It is a very good opportunity.

"I think playing matches is very important. It helps you more than usual practice sessions. If you practice all year but do not play any matches then it won't be useful," said Mominul yesterday.

Mominul, was announced as the stand-in skipper for the Test series in India last year after then Test and T20 skipper Shakib Al Hasan was banned from all forms of cricket by the ICC for two years with one of those suspended.

East Zone will have to play the first round without opener Imrul Kayes, who has been suffering from hamstring injury. The left-hander will be unavailable till mid-February according to BCB chief physician Dr. Debashish Chowdhury.

Meanwhile, all-rounder Mehedi Hasan Miraz, playing for Central Zone will also be missing the first round and Debashish mentioned that the all-rounder will be assessed separately on Saturday for his finger injury.



Central Zone pacer Mustafizur Rahman takes a breather yesterday during training, on the eve of their BCL clash against East Zone at the SBNS in Mirpur.

PHOTO: STAR

NZ pace trio ruled out of India ODIs

AFP, Wellington

Struggling New Zealand will have their bowling stocks further tested after their three leading seamers were ruled out from the squad named Thursday for the one-day series against India.

New Zealand's fortunes have plummeted since making the World Cup final last year, losing three Tests against Australia and three Twenty20s against India.

Pace bowlers Trent Boult (broken hand), Lockie Ferguson (calf strain) and Matt Henry (broken thumb), who were all injured in Australia, have not recovered in time for the three ODIs against India which start next week after the final two Twenty20 fixtures.

Kyle Jamieson has been called into the squad for the first time while Scott Kuggeleijn and Hamish Bennett are recalled after last playing ODIs in Ireland in 2017.

Tom Latham, who broke a finger on his right hand in the third Test against Australia, has been cleared to resume playing.

"We've seen from the Twenty20 series (India) are clearly as strong as ever," he said.

Squad: Kane Williamson (capt), Hamish Bennett, Tom Blundell, Colin de Grandhomme, Martin Gupthill, Kyle Jamieson, Scott Kuggeleijn, Tom Latham, Jimmy Neesham, Henry Nicholls, Mitchell Santner, Ish Sodhi, Tim Southee, Ross Taylor.

Rain frustrates Zim

AFP, Harare



Heavy rain and bad light in the afternoon frustrated Zimbabwe's push to build a match-winning position on the fourth day of the second Test against Sri Lanka in Harare on Thursday.

A downpour mid-afternoon forced the players off the field and, although they returned briefly after tea, only 54 overs were bowled in the day, restricting Zimbabwe to 241 for seven at the close, an overall lead of 354.

The Zimbabwe captain Sean Williams, who made a century in the first innings, was 47 not out when bad light forced the players off and must now decide whether to declare overnight to give his bowlers a full day to try and win the match and square the two-Test series.

Brendan Taylor set the tone for the home side during the morning session when he made his second half-century of the

match. The 33-year-old struck a rapid 67 as the hosts added 117 during an extended morning session.

Lasith Embuldeniya was again the pick of the Sri Lanka bowlers, striking in the third over of the day when Regis Chakabva edged to Dhananjaya de Silva at slip having added just a single to his overnight 14.

Taylor joined Prince Masvaure who was run out for 35 after a needless mix-up over a second run and in spite of a dramatic dive for safety.

Timycen Maruma, who was drafted in as a 'concussion substitute' for Kevin Kasuza who was stretchered off on Wednesday after being hit on the head at short leg, scratched around for 14 balls before being stumped off Embuldeniya for a duck.

SCORES IN BRIEF

Zimbabwe: First innings 406 and second innings 179 for 5 (Taylor 67, Masvaure 35; Embuldeniya 2-57)

Sri Lanka: First innings 293.

Mario quits BD post

SPORTS REPORTER



Mario Villavarayan has tendered his resignation from the role of strength and conditioning coach of the Bangladesh national team, Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury confirmed. The Sri Lankan wants to oversee IPL side Sunrisers Hyderabad and thus the BCB will accept his resignation.

Mario had joined the Tigers, along with then head coach Chandika Hathurusingha back in 2014. Although Hathurusingha left to take up the Sri Lanka head coach's job, Mario remained and his contract was extended by two years following the 2019 World Cup.

"He submitted the resignation and in due course we will accept it. He has got an offer from IPL for three years. The BCB does not release member of coaching staff for other domestic competitions. Since we won't release for a tournament, he has tendered his resignation. It's a mutual separation as per our terms of agreement," Nizamuddin told The Daily Star today.

The date of his release is yet to be decided as per the BCB CEO.



Gayle to play in Nepal's Premier League

AGENCIES

Swashbuckling West Indian batsman Chris Gayle will play for Pokhara Rhinos team in Nepal's domestic T20 tournament, 'Everest Premier League', which begins from February 29 in Kathmandu.

The 40-year-old Gayle, who is nicknamed 'Universe Boss' and has now become a freelance T20 player, announced his decision in a twitter message.

"I will be visiting Nepal for the biggest sporting event, the Everest Premier League. Come and support my team Pokhara Rhinos and be part of a magnificent cricket fiesta. Nepal, get ready for the Gayle storm," he said in his inimitable style in a twitter post of the league organisers.

The organisers of the league also confirmed the development in a post on its official twitter.



PHOTO: FTRO AHMED

Bangladesh women's team players take a selfie after their official photo session for the upcoming ICC Women's T20 World Cup in Australia. The Tigresses will depart for cricket's showpiece event on February 2.

'Facilities not the same for women cricketers'

BCB President Nazmul Hassan says

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan said that the board have not been able to provide the same quality of facilities that the men's team were afforded, two days prior to the Tigresses' departure for Australia on Sunday for the 2020 ICC Women's T20 World Cup.

The women's side, who are set to board their flight on Sunday evening, took part in a photo session at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

"There are good expectations. While I won't say that the performances have been really good, but it's not bad either. We're Asian champions. We can't deny that the same facilities were not afforded to the women's side that were availed by male

cricketers," Hassan said.

The Tigresses failed to win any games in the last edition of the tournament played in West Indies. This time they have been placed in a strong group alongside Australia, India, New Zealand and Sri Lanka. The president said that more facilities were going to be given to women cricketers while also asserting that recent performances in India, where they clinched the Women's T20 Quadrangular series, should give them confidence.

"I believe our women cricketers will bring more success in the future," he concluded.

Captain Salma Khatun was reserved about the team's chances and said: "We're hoping for good cricket and to win one or two matches at the World Cup."

What to WATCH

STAR SPORTS 3

ICC U-19s World Cup
Super League Quarterfinal-4
Pakistan v Afghanistan
Live from 2:00pm

SONY SIX

Australian Open
Live from 10:00am and 2:30pm

STAR SPORTS 1

New Zealand v India
Fourth T20I
Live from 1:00pm

DAY'S EVENT

Bangladesh Cricket League
Four-day Match, Day 1
North Zone v South Zone

Venue: ZACS, Chattogram
Central Zone v East Zone
Venue: SBNS, Dhaka

REDUCING FOREIGN PLAYERS NOT THE ONLY SOLUTION

Weekend WINDOW

ANISUR RAHMAN

After failing to shine in the recent Bangabandhu Gold Cup at home, the national team forwards' inability to cash in on opportunities has once again come to the fore and Bangladesh head coach Jamie Day reiterated that changes in domestic football structure as well as reduction in the foreign players' quota in top-flight football would pave the way for local forwards.

The Red and Greens failed to score against a strong Palestine before firing three past lowly Sri Lanka goals, but the inability to convert opportunities against Burundi was evidence of a lack of cutting edge and eventually saw the hosts exit the tournament at the semifinal stage for a third consecutive time.

At the same time, Burundi striker Nshimirimana Jospin dominated headlines with his calmness in attaching third and his goal-scoring ability, netting seven times -- including two hatricks in four matches. All that despite the 18-year-old marksman, who was groomed at the Eagles Football Academy in Burundi, have only two seasons of top-flight football experience in Burundi.

It is far from the first time that the Bangladesh forwards were underwhelming. It has been a recurring theme for the national team.

Allowing four to five foreign players for each club is often blamed for the crisis as clubs depend heavily on foreign strikers and thereby overlook local forwards in domestic matches.

Is the reduction of the foreign players in the domestic circuit the solution to overcoming the goal-scoring crisis at international level? The country's top coaches, club officials, former strikers and current players have delivered their sentiments on how to overcome the goal-scoring problems.

SOME STATISTICS OF THE NATIONAL TEAM

From late 2008 to January 23, 2020, Bangladesh have played 88 matches, winning 21, drawing 22 and losing 45. They have scored only 71 goals at an average of 0.80 goals per game. At the same time, they conceded 141 goals at an average of 1.60 goals per match.

Strikers account for 37 of the 71 goals (52.11 percent) followed by the midfielders' 22 strikes (30.98 percent) and the defenders' 12 goals (16.90 percent).

Although strikers have always been spearheading the goal-scoring tally, they have been largely blamed for the failure to notch up deserved victories after wasting a lot of scoring chances.

Although this could be attributed to a lack of playing time in the domestic circuit, the reference of former national strikers can be made. Those former strikers fought for spots with foreign teammates and secured place in the starting eleven at club level before shining for the national team.

PAST & PRESENT SITUATIONS AT CLUB LEVEL

In the glory days of Bangladesh football, only title contenders such Abahani, Mohammedan and Brothers Union could afford to rope in two or three foreign players to accommodate the foreign players' quota, with the rest of the clubs banking on local players. However, the situation changed drastically once the professional football league was introduced in 2007 as all participating clubs signed up foreign players to fill up four to five spots in the foreign players' quota. It is also said that the lack of quality players in country prompted the Bangladesh Football Federation

to increase the foreign players' quota in the face of clubs' demand.

"When we played the top-flight football, only big clubs fielded foreign players and small clubs relied on local strikers. We fought against those foreign recruits to secure our place in the starting eleven at the club level. But, to be honest, we played for big clubs at that time after maturing by playing at smaller clubs. Rokonuzzaman Kanchan, Saiful Islam Moni and Amin Rana came up through smaller clubs before representing big clubs," former national striker-cum-coach Alfaz

before and the players went to top-flight football after playing pioneer, third, second and first division leagues but there is no chain at the moment and players step straight into the top-flight without playing lower-level competition. So, the players are not mature enough to play at the top level or the national team."

THOUGHTS OF THE COACHES

The country's lone UEFA A licensed coach Maruful Haque also believes a reduction of foreign players won't solve the problem, also opining that only a strong grassroots programme can solve the goal-scoring problem.



Ahmed said. "At the moment, the players get the opportunity to play for big clubs without maturity and they can't prove their quality against foreign players at the club level."

Agreeing with Alfaz's notion, former striker Imtiaz Ahmed Nakib said, "During our playing career, we learned many things from quality foreigners but this time around, aside from one or two foreign players, the rest hardly have any quality. I believe the current players are also less interested in learning from foreigners because they are getting huge money without labour. Our generation had the desire to pick up on good things from foreign players and play regularly for the club but the current strikers don't have that thirst," said Nakib, adding that he always followed successful striker Sheikh Mohammad Aslam to sharpen his goal-scoring ability.

THOUGHTS OF THE CLUB OFFICIALS

Club officials of big and small teams are against the reduction of the foreign players' quota and believe it is not the solution to overcoming the national team's problems.

Saif SC managing director Nasiruddin Chowdhury said that they gave opportunities to local strikers in the No. 9 position in last season and this season's Federation Cup but they could not score despite getting numerous chances.

"I don't want to blame local strikers for their failure. I would rather point to the faulty football education at the primary stage. The players are maturing in the Bangladesh Premier League and it is not possible to remedy their goal-scoring problem as long as basic errors persist," said Chowdhury. "I have seen that none of the players even discuss football or their performances in their leisure time at Saif SC. They are more celebrities than footballers because they are very busy with social media, fans and followers."

Brothers Union manager Amer Khan said: "Once we played with two foreign players but the local strikers could not shine in the domestic circuit. As per AFC Cup rules, four foreign players are eligible for each club and we follow it. If we cut the quota of foreign players and suffer defeats in the AFC Cup, then it is also a loss for the country."

Former national player Amer Khan said: "There was a chain of leagues

"To be honest, our footballers have no base. They are learning the things at the age of 17 or 18 instead of learning at the age of 10 to 12 under a qualified coach. So, there is no alternative but to have a strong grassroots programme to overcome this problem," said Maruful, adding that reducing foreign players in the domestic league is not a solution.

"A national team will be strong when it will have strong grassroots and a youth program with proper training being conducted by good coaches. Local players will play foreign leagues and top-flight leagues have to be competitive. Under these criteria, a national team can be strong. Does our country meet any of them?" questioned Maruful.

"When we are in a tough match, we cannot perform. That means the players don't have mental preparation. You can say this problem prevails because of the fixed-match in domestic competitions and bias refereeing," said Maruful, urging to start the grassroots and youth programmes immediately to get a permanent solution.

However, AFC A licensed coach Alfaz is in favour of banning foreign strikers in order to pave the way for local strikers, who, according to Alfaz, are worried about playing in the No. 9 position at club level.

"If we want to increase local strikers for the sake of the national team, we should ban foreign strikers for five to 10 years. Foreign players can play other positions," opined Alfaz. "There is a lack of quality players at the moment and if the new generation is assured that they will get chances to play upfront in future, then many will grow interest in playing football."

Nakib also wants to play only two foreign players for a certain period for the sake of producing the local strikers.

THOUGHTS OF A CURRENT PLAYER

Centre-back Tapu Barman believes the reduction of foreign players in domestic football would help local players, who showed their worth in a season when only three foreign players were eligible to play per match.

"The forwards from big clubs are getting calls to the national team but those players, barring Matin Mia and Nabib Newaj Jibon, also get less opportunities to play at the club level. So, when they come to play international matches, they can't perform consistently. It is not possible to cover the goal-scoring problem at international level with only two or three players who are playing for their clubs regularly," said Tapu, adding that central defenders were also facing problems because most clubs field foreign defenders.

"I think we should have special training with extra strikers from big clubs and small clubs, so that they can learn the techniques of scoring goals in training," said Tapu, who sometime rescues the national team with his prolific header from set-pieces.

He (Federer) started well at the beginning and I was pretty nervous. It was very important for me to win that first set. Mentally I relaxed after that.

NOVAK DJOKOVIC
SERBIAN TENNIS STAR



Serbia's Novak Djokovic celebrates after beating Switzerland's Roger Federer in the Australian Open men's singles semifinal in Melbourne yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Djokovic downs Federer

AFP, Melbourne

Novak Djokovic shattered the hopes of ailing rival Roger Federer yesterday to sweep into a record eighth Australian Open final and move closer to his 17th Grand Slam crown.

In the 50th instalment of one of sport's greatest rivalries, the Serb shrugged off a tentative start to reinforce his recent dominance, showing no mercy to the Swiss maestro in a 7-6 (7/1), 6-4, 6-3 win.

He will play either fifth seed Dominic Thiem or seventh-ranked German Alexander Zverev in Sunday's final, but it will take a monumental effort to prize another title from the 32-year-old.

Of the seven Melbourne finals Djokovic has made, he has won them

all.

If any extra motivation was needed, winning on Sunday will see the Serb reclaim the number one ranking after Rafael Nadal was sent packing in the last eight.

"Respect to Roger for coming out tonight when he was obviously hurt and not even close to his best in terms of movement," said defending champion Djokovic, who is into his 26th Grand Slam final.

"He started well at the beginning and I was pretty nervous. It was very important for me to win that first set. Mentally I relaxed after that."

It was the fourth time Djokovic had beaten Federer at the semi-final stage in Melbourne after doing the same in 2008, 2011 and 2016.

Federer, the 2018 champion, came into the match carrying a groin injury that he picked up in his five-set,

come-from-behind quarter-final win against Tennys Sandgren.

He was seen around Melbourne Park before the match with tape on his upper right leg and there were even rumours that he might pull out.

But that is not in the 38-year-old's nature -- he has only ever given up four walkovers in his long career -- and the show was on.

Djokovic was clear favourite after beating the third seed in every Grand Slam meeting since Wimbledon 2012, but in their 50th career clash it was Federer who initially set Rod Laver Arena alight.

The opening game, on Federer's serve, lasted six minutes in an indication of what might be in store.

When the Swiss star was broken to go 4-2 behind in the third, there was no way back as his rival extended his winning record over him to 27-23.

Kenin crashes Barty party

To face Muguruza in final

AFP, Melbourne

Unheralded American Sofia Kenin stunned world number one Ashleigh Barty to end home hopes at the Australian Open on Thursday.

Barty had sent Australian expectations soaring of a first home-grown winner since 1978, but aggressive 14th seed Kenin saved two set points in each set to win 7-6 (8/6), 7-5 and set up a championship final against Spaniard Garbine Muguruza on Saturday.

Unseeded Muguruza fought back from behind in both sets to defeat racquet-smashing fourth seed Simona Halep.

The Spaniard, a two-time Grand Slam champion, reached her first Melbourne final with a tough 7-6 (10/8), 7-5 victory at a steamy Rod Laver Arena.

The 26-year-old is the first unseeded player to reach the women's final since Belgium's Justine Henin in 2010.



I'm just speechless, I honestly can't believe this. I've dreamed about this moment since I was five years old... I've worked so hard to get here.

SOFIA KENIN
AMERICAN TENNIS PLAYER

Moscow-born Kenin, 21, looked stunned at reaching her first Grand Slam final, at a tournament where she has often gone unnoticed.

"I'm just speechless, I honestly can't believe this. I've dreamed about this moment since I was five years old... I've worked so hard to get here," said Kenin, who was a baby when her family moved to America with just a few hundred dollars to her name.

"She came up with some really great shots. I knew she wasn't going to give it up to me -- I really had to fight out here. There's a reason she's number one."

Kenin's win came on a day when temperatures hit 38 Celsius (100.4 Fahrenheit), prompting play to be suspended on outside courts -- following earlier problems with bushfire smoke, downpours, wind and even muddy rain at the season's opening Major.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Prepare long- and mid-term plans
- Have strong grassroots and youth programmes
- Quality education for coaches
- Regularise lower-division and district leagues
- Give players more time to mature

- Ignore club-level reserve-bench players for the national team
- Strengthen players' mentality
- Promote youth programme at clubs
- Appoint neutral manager for the national team
- Ban foreign strikers for a certain period



The Aga Khan Academy Dhaka is the fourth school in a global network of day and residential schools for exceptional students, offering a curriculum based on the highly regarded International Baccalaureate (IB) series of programmes. The Aga Khan Academies aim to develop future leaders with the skills and knowledge to support positive development in their societies, by recruiting talented young people from all backgrounds and providing them with the highest international standard of education. The Aga Khan Academy Dhaka's award-winning, world-class campus is situated in Bashundhara, Dhaka.

For further information please visit: agahkanschools.org/dhaka-info



Employment Opportunities

The Aga Khan Academy Dhaka is currently inviting applications for the following positions:

HEAD OF ACADEMY

Job Description

We are recruiting the Head of Academy whose responsibilities will include:

- establishing the Dhaka Academy as the Founding Head;
- working closely with the Project Management team overseeing the phased construction until its completion;
- leading the team developing the outreach with government schools, from the Professional Development Centre (PDC);
- managing the start-up budget, in partnership with the Head of Finance and the Academies Unit;
- overseeing the admission of students;
- overseeing the recruitment of staff;
- further developing and embedding appropriate management structures;
- championing the Academy in its dealings with other schools and organisations, ensuring it is embedded in the local community and connected nationally and internationally;
- balancing the needs of a complex set of stakeholders encompassing teachers, support staff, students, parents, alumni, local community representatives, Academies Unit and AKDN staff, governments and private donors.

Requirements

The successful candidate should have considerable experience in international residential schools and is expected to demonstrate:

- Academic and Management Leadership;
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- Experience of Boarding/Residential Community Life External Relations;
- Financial Management and Stewardship;
- Vision and Creativity;
- Relationship Building;
- People Skills and People Development.

The ideal candidate should have the ability to deal with a wide span of duties, and must be open minded and intellectually curious, with the ability to inspire others to push boundaries. The incumbent must be a sound decision maker, driven by a strong set of values and the need to attain 'excellence'.

Closing date: 12 February 2020

For further information and to apply, please visit www.akdn.org/careers



Families' fight takes teen's life

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Rony Hawladar, an SSC candidate from Gopalganj Sadar upazila, just returned home after attending private classes yesterday morning when a clash ensued just in front of his house.

Minutes later, when the 16-year-old boy stepped out to see what was going on, a bullet ripped through his chest.



Rony Hawladar

The bullet was shot by Azizur Sheikh, a former member of Karpara union parishad in the upazila, after his family rivals attacked his house.

It all began with a scuffle between Rahim Sheikh, a follower of Azizur, and Natun Mollah over sitting on a bench at a tea stall in Bongram Purbopara village around 9:00am, said locals.

"Sheikh" and "Mollah" are the titles of two families which have been in a long-standing row over establishing supremacy in the locality.

A few days ago, supporters of Azizur beat Natun. As a result, Natun engaged in an altercation as soon as he saw Rahim yesterday.

The altercation turned violent in no time as supporters of two families arrived at the scene wielding lethal weapons.

At one point, Natun's supporters launched an attack on Azizur's house across the road. Enraged, Azizur fired shots in the air to intimidate the attackers, but one of the bullets hit Rony, who had no involvement in the incident whatsoever, witness and police said.

Rony, son of Anwar Hawladar, was a student of Azharia High School and elder of two brothers.

A shroud of sorrow pervaded the area after the death news spread.

Ten others were injured during the clash, said Monirul

SEE PAGE 17 COL 6



A toddler learns to write the alphabets from a Hindu priest in front of an idol of goddess Saraswati -- a ritual that inaugurates the schooling of a child. The photo was taken at Dhaka University's Jagannath Hall on the day of the Saraswati puja yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

All-round U-19s through to WC semis

SPORTS REPORTER

An all-round performance by the Bangladesh Under-19s helped the young Tigers secure the semifinal spot in the ongoing ICC Under-19 World Cup as they thrashed hosts South Africa by 104 runs in Potchefstroom yesterday.

Bangladesh will now face New Zealand at the same venue on February 6 in their second-ever semifinal of cricket's biggest age-level event.

Left-arm spinner Rakibul Hasan shone for the young Tigers yesterday. He returned figures of five for 19 in 9.3 overs as Bangladesh bundled South Africa out for 157 runs in 42.3 overs after posting a challenging 261 for five. All the six bowlers used by Bangladesh on the day were economical with Towhid Hridoy being the exception, giving away seven runs in one over.

The challenge for the young Tigers, who saw rain

SEE PAGE 17 COL 6

Three killed in 'shootouts' in a single day

STAR REPORT

Three people, including two alleged muggers, were killed in "shootouts" in the capital Dhaka and Jashore early yesterday.

Two alleged muggers, who were killed in a "gunfight" in the city's Khilkhet area, are Nazmul and Shahin. They stood accused in at least four cases, including murder and mugging, police said.

A police team on Wednesday arrested a mugger who was accused in private university student Mizan murder case. Based on his information, the team raided different areas to detain his accomplices, police said.

The "gunfight" took place when a police team set up a checkpoint at Dumni around 3:45am, said Biplob Bijoy Talukder, deputy commissioner (Tejgaon division) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

When the team signalled a CNG-run auto-rickshaw to stop, the criminals opened fire from the vehicle. The law enforcers retaliated, leaving Nazmul and Shahin injured.

The two were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared them dead.

Police claimed to have recovered a firearm and seized the auto-rickshaw used

SEE PAGE 17 COL 3

FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH

Bangabandhu's nation-building challenges



Robert S. McNamara, president, World Bank, calls on Bangabandhu at the PM's official residence (January 31, 1972).

From today we start a new series recounting, day-by-day, the challenges Bangabandhu faced during first year in office. We hope our humble effort will help to educate the younger generation of the dexterity with which he led us into realising the Sonar Bangla of our dreams.

JANUARY 31, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

MUJIB-MCNAMEARA TALKS

In a 45-minute-long meeting with Bangabandhu at the Prime Minister's official residence, the World Bank President Robert S. McNamara urges Bangladesh to become a member of The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and IMF. The World Bank chief shares his plan to extend technical and financial support to the war-ravaged Bangladesh. A spokesperson of the Prime Minister's

SEE PAGE 17 COL 3



UPDF man shot dead in Khagrachhari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

A United Peoples Democratic Front (UPDF) member was shot dead when UPDF men and their rivals were involved in a gun battle in Matiranga upazila yesterday morning, said police.

The victim is Arjun Chakma, 40.

Shamsuddin Bhuiyan, officer-in-charge of Matiranga Police Station, said the two groups traded bullets at Aachai Para around 9:00am.

Arjun was found dead on the spot.

On information, police recovered the body and sent it to Khagrachhari Sadar Hospital for an autopsy.

In a statement later, the UPDF alleged that their rivals carried out the attack without specifying who the rivals were.

No case had been filed as of filing of this report at 7:30pm yesterday evening.

Reward for plucking tyre off croc's neck



AFP, Jakarta

Indonesian authorities are offering a reward to anyone who can rescue a saltwater crocodile with a motorbike tyre stuck around its neck.

The contest will see one brave croc hunter land an unspecified amount of cash, but it will mean coming face to face with the 13-foot (4-metre) reptile Palu, the capital of Central Sulawesi.

Local conservation authorities have been trying -- and failing -- for several years to find a way to untangle the croc after video showed it gasping for air.

That sparked worries the tyre was slowly killing the beast.

After a recent sighting, the province's governor instructed his resource-strapped conservation agency to figure out how to end years of fruitless attempts.

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62,537 acres of khas land grabbed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Grabbers occupy around 62,537 acres of khas land across the country, Land Minister Saifuzzaman Chowdhury told parliament yesterday.

Of the land, the highest 24,859 acres are in Chattogram division, 15,054 in Dhaka division, 7,388 in Rangpur division, 5,165 in Sylhet division, 4,070 in Barisal division, 3,446 in Khulna division, and 1,162 in Rajshahi division, he said.

The minister came up with the statistics in

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PRAYER TIMING JANUARY 31

Fazr Juma Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5:35 12:30 4:15 5:46 7:15
JAMAAT 6:10 1:15 4:30 5:50 7:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

TRUMP IMPEACHMENT

Senate may acquit Trump today

Democrats' push for witnesses falters; White House moves to bar Bolton book over 'top secret' material

REUTERS, Washington

A Democratic push to force Republicans to accept witnesses at President Donald Trump's impeachment trial in the US Senate appeared to be flagging on Wednesday, raising the possibility he could be acquitted as early as Friday.

As senators questioned both the Trump legal team and the Democratic managers of the trial, Trump lawyer Alan Dershowitz offered an expansive defense of presidential power that provoked astonishment among Democrats.

"If a president does something which he believes will help him get elected in the public interest, that cannot be the kind of quid pro quo that results in an impeachment," Dershowitz said, referring to the charge that Trump abused his power by using congressionally approved security aid as leverage to get a foreign power to smear his political rival, Joe Biden.

Democratic Senator Mazie Hirono told reporters: "That was one of the most bizarre things I've ever heard as a response."

Senator John Barrasso, the third-most senior Republican, said it was possible the trial could end on Friday without witnesses

being called, as Democrats want.

"The momentum is clearly in the direction of moving to final judgment on Friday. That vote will be Friday. We still have a couple of members who said they want to listen to the answers to questions, but that's where the momentum is," Barrasso said.

Asked when the vote might take place to settle the debate over witnesses and move to either acquit or convict Trump, Barrasso said probably Friday afternoon or late that day.

Other Republican senators were predicting a similar outcome in conversations with reporters during breaks in Wednesday's proceedings.

The Democratic-led House of Representatives approved the two articles of impeachment being heard in the Republican-controlled Senate in December. Democrats have sought to persuade at least four Republican senators to vote with them in favor of witnesses to assure a majority vote in the 100-seat chamber.

Democratic Senator Chris Coons was asked during a break if the Democrats' fight for witnesses was lost.

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Although there is a small population of Western Swampheens in Bangladesh, the beautiful purplish birds can often be seen in the haor areas. It is illegal to catch or kill the birds. The photo was taken at Tanguar haor in Sunamganj last week.

COURTESY: ALI ASHRAF BHUIYAN