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Your Right to Know

PLUS 40 PAGES 29TH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT SEGMENT 2

JAMADIAS SANI 19, 1441 HIRI

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"The day is not far away when Bangladesh will be transformed into a developed and prosperous country."
PRIME MINISTER SHEKH HASINA PAGE 2



"We will ensure that no drugs can go out of India nor come into India."
INDIAN HOME MINISTER AMIT SHAH



"To be blunt, an amoral, 'keep-em-guessin' foreign policy that substitutes threats, fear and confusion for trust cannot work over the long haul."
FORMER US AMBASSADOR TO UKRAINE MARIE YOVANOVITCH PAGE 6

What's the point then?

SC expresses disappointment at non-implementation of 2003 HC directives over arbitrary arrests on suspicion, torture on remand

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The Supreme Court yesterday expressed disappointment that the 2003 High Court verdict directing police to refrain from making arbitrary arrests on suspicion and torturing people on remand has not been executed in 17 years.

"What is the point of delivering verdicts if the directives are not followed?" the Appellate Division of the apex court asked.

The SC was hearing a review petition filed by the government against its 2016 judgement that upheld the 2003 HC verdict against the arbitrary exercise of power

"Will the state take its responsibility?"

THE APEX COURT ON ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCE

by law enforcers using several sections of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), including section 54.

The top court yesterday said people could be arrested under section 54 of the CrPC and it might happen to anyone's family members. And then the person may never return.

"Will the state take its responsibility?" it asked, saying that incidents of disappearance were alarming.

At one stage of the proceeding Attorney General Mahubey Alam sought adjournment of the hearing. The six-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain then adjourned the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Pedestrians dodge vehicles at speed and risk their lives to cross the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway near Uttara's Sector-6. The safer crossing, the footbridge near Rajuk Uttara Model College, inset, is not an option for them as it has been closed for repairs for the last two weeks.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



ANNOUNCEMENT

LIFESTYLE EVOLUTIONS

segment two of The Daily Star's 29th anniversary 200-page special supplement is out today, bringing you a glimpse of the ever-changing lifestyle of us Dhakalites. You will find a collection of articles on the facets of our digital life, cuisine, and fashion and tourism industries, and more.

Following are the names and publication dates of the three other segments:

"REIMAGINING GROWTH IN THE DIGITAL AGE" — February 16

"DIGITISATION AND INCLUSIVITY: TAKING EVERYONE ALONG" — February 18

"THE YOUTH IN THE AGE OF DIGITALISATION" — February 20

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4	5	6	7	8
1	12	13	14	15
3	19	20	21	22

'Two days' in 24 hours

AANILA KISHWAR TARANNUM

In recent memory, Pahela Falgun, the first day of spring according to the Bangla calendar, has fallen on February 13... or has it?

Turns out, it was merely our dependence on the Gregorian calendar that led to this day always being celebrated on a fixed date. If we look at the Bangla calendar, Pahela Falgun has actually fallen on February 14 for the past two years, and in the years from 2013 to 2016.

Rajib Kumar Saha, an officer at Bangla Academy's lexicography and encyclopaedia department, explained how there was always a discrepancy between the two

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Deadliest day of coronavirus crisis

Hubei alone reports 242 more deaths, 14,840 new cases; spike attributed to change in counting method

AFP, Beijing

China's official death toll from the new coronavirus spiked dramatically yesterday after authorities changed their counting methods, fuelling concern the epidemic is far worse than being reported.

As the figures soared in China, a troubling new front opened abroad as neighbouring Vietnam placed 10,000 people under quarantine after six COVID-19 cases were discovered in a cluster of villages -- the first such lockdown overseas.

Japan also saw its first death of an infected person yesterday-- a woman in her 80s, according to the country's health minister -- making it the third outside mainland China after the Philippines and Hong Kong.

Under criticism at home over the handling of the crisis, China's Communist Party sacked two top-ranking officials

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

COVID-19
UPDATE

1,370
DEATHS
60,329
confirmed cases

59,882
confirmed cases in mainland China

The virus spread to at least **25** countries

Two more Bangladeshis infected in Singapore

312 from Ashkona to go home tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two more Bangladeshi expatriates in Singapore have been infected with the novel coronavirus, The Straits Times reported yesterday.

Earlier, two Bangladeshis, aged 35 and 39, were reported to have been diagnosed with the novel coronavirus on February 9 and 11.

The two Bangladeshis found infected yesterday are aged 30 and 37 and all four are linked to a work site in Seletar Aerospace Heights.

One of the Bangladeshis confirmed to be infected yesterday fell ill on February 7.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

RIVER GRABBING

Direct the DCs to act tough

ACC asks the cabinet secy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has asked the cabinet secretary to give directions to district deputy commissioners (DCs) to save rivers from encroachers and take legal action against them.

In a letter to the cabinet secretary, the ACC's secretary Md Dilwar Bakh yesterday also suggested regular monitoring of the DCs activities in this regard.

The Daily Star obtained a copy of the letter.

The recommendation came following The Daily Star's four-page supplement published on February 07, 2020, titled "Save Rivers, Save Sonar Bangla", in which the grim picture of country's rivers was pointed out.

The newspaper appealed

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



'DEFAMING' ILIAS KANCHAN

Court accepts suit against Shajahan

Transport leaders threaten counter-cases, demo

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday accepted a Tk 100 crore defamation suit filed by road safety campaigner Ilias Kanchan against former shipping minister Shajahan Khan.

After scrutinising the documents, Dhaka's First Joint District Judge Utpal Bhattacharjee passed the order.

The court also summoned Shajahan and sought his explanation within March 22.

Ilias on Wednesday filed the defamation suit, claiming Tk 100 crore as compensation for his derogatory comments.

In his complaint, Nirapad Sarak Chai Chairman Ilias stated that Shajahan at a programme in Narayanganj on December 8 last year accused Ilias of illegally accumulating a huge amount of wealth.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



আপনার পানি কি জার্ম ফ্রি?

সাকিব আল হাসান বিশ্বসেরা ক্রিকেটার

Defeat evil forces to ensure public security

Hasina tells Ansar-VDP members

UNB, GAZIPUR

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged the members of Bangladesh Ansar and Village Defence Party (VDP) to work with honesty, courage and integrity to defeat evil forces to ensure public security.

Speaking at the 40th national rally of Bangladesh Ansar and VDP at Bangladesh Ansar-VDP Academy in Shafipur, Gazipur, she asked the Ansar and VDP members to contribute to the development of the country as Bangladesh has now acquired the capability to keep peace with the world.

Reiterating that her government has been taking the country forward, she said, “We’ve created scopes for all to work together in the [development of the country]. So, you’ve also many responsibilities here. You can make massive contributions to the development of the country.”

The prime minister asked the Ansar and VDP, being the largest force in the country, to perform the duties bestowed upon them properly.

“If we all work together, I think, the day is not far away when Bangladesh will be established as a poverty- and hunger-free, developed and prosperous country,” she said.

Mentioning that the government light up every house in the Mujib Year (2020-2021), she said the people of every village can enjoy urban facilities.

Praising the Ansar-VDP members, Hasina said the force has been playing a special role in curbing violence, militancy and extremism alongside performing their duties in different polls, including national elections.

The Ansar members have played a special role during the arson violence by making a significant contribution to protecting rail-lines, she said.

She said there are some 61 lakh Ansar-VDP members and 50,000 embodied Ansar members now engaged in ensuring security to public and private structures and organisations, keeping the wheels of the national economy running.

Hasina said the force has 42 battalions, including two female ones,

to ensure the security of the country and localities, and its 16 battalions along with the Bangladesh Army are actively participating in operation and maintaining peace and order in the hill districts.

She noted that the Ansar members are also engaged in ensuring the security (as aviation security) to the airports and the security in diplomatic zones, to diplomats, businessmen and important persons of the country.

“The formation of two more battalions are now at the final stage for ensuring security of Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant as well as Mujibnagar Muktiyoddha Smriti Complex and Amrakanan,” she said, adding that her government formed four Ansar battalions, including a guard battalion.

She said the Ansar and VDP Bank has been set up in addition to introducing risk allowance for the members of the force. The members of this force have brightened the image of the country in the international arena through sports and cultural practices as its members gained 68 medals out of 142 earned by Bangladesh in the recent SA Games.

On her arrival at the rally venue, the prime minister was received by Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan and Director General of Bangladesh Ansar and VDP Major General Kazi Sharif Kaikobad.

Earlier, the prime minister inspected a parade of Ansar and VDP riding an open jeep and received salute. She handed over eight types of special medals to 143 Ansar and VDP members for their bravery and praiseworthy services.

The medals are: Bangladesh Ansar Medal, President’s Ansar Medal, Bangladesh VDP Medal, President VDP Medal, Bangladesh Ansar Services Medal, President’s Ansar Services Medal, Bangladesh VDP Services Medal and President’s VDP Services Medal.

Hasina also handed over the posthumous medal to wife of late Golam Mostafa.

She later witnessed a colourful cultural programme performed by Ansar and VDP members and joined a “Darbar” of Ansar officers and members.

What’s the point then?

FROM PAGE 1

hearing until April 16.

The SC, however, asked the government to specifically mention in the review petition the inconsistencies of its directives and observations with relevant laws by April 16.

According to rights body Odhikar, 553 people reportedly disappeared between 2009 and 2019. Bodies of 74 were found later, 312 returned alive while 167 are still missing.

According to another rights body, Ain o Salish Kendra, as many as 350 people reportedly fell victim to enforced disappearance between 2014 and 2019.

At yesterday’s hearing, Mahbubey Alam assisted by Deputy Attorney General Bishwajit Debnath represented the government while Md Idrisur Rahman and Barrister Sara Hossain argued for the petitioners who sought SC directives against the police’s arbitrary use of power when it comes to arrest, detention and remand.

The AG later told The Daily Star that the Appellate Division made some comments that were not part of the judicial proceedings.

After the SC passed the adjournment order, Alam told reporters at his office that the government sought review of the SC verdict so that section 54 of the CrPC could be applied against suspects, including militants, rapists and drug traders.

The HC delivered its verdict on April 7, 2003, responding to a writ petition filed by a group of human rights organisations and individuals after the death of university student Shamim Reza Rubel in police custody on July 23, 1998.

In the judgment, the HC asked the government to amend some provisions of the CrPC of 1898 that contradicted the constitution. Those provisions gave police controversial powers.

It outlined some recommendations for making changes to the provisions and also proposed amending three other laws in order to safeguard people’s liberty and fundamental rights guaranteed by the constitution. The laws are Penal Code 1860, Police Act 1861, and Evidence Act 1872.

The HC verdict said the amendments were required to curb the arbitrary use of powers by police and magistrates in relation to arrest and remand and to take necessary steps in case of custodial deaths.

In the verdict, the HC also issued a 15-point directive and asked the government to comply with it

immediately to stop police from making arbitrary arrests on suspicion and torturing arrestees on remand.

But the then BNP-led government opted to file an appeal against the verdict, and the Awami League-led government has followed suit.

On May 24, 2016, the Appellate Division dismissed the appeal and upheld the HC verdict.

The apex court released the full text of its verdict on the appeal on November 10, 2016, in which it issued a 19-point guideline for police, magistrates and judges to stop arbitrary arrests on suspicion and torturing arrestees on remand.

To deny citizens their rights guaranteed by the constitution is to disrespect the country’s independence and what it stands for, it said.

In the full text of that verdict, the SC came up with the guidelines and some observations on the arbitrary use of powers by law enforcement agencies using certain sections of the CrPC including the 54.

Section 54, seen as a nefarious provision, empowers police to arrest anyone on mere suspicion. Under several other sections of the criminal law, arrestees are placed on remand and detained in violation of their fundamental rights to protection of life and liberty, it said.

The SC ordered police to use this power judiciously, curtailing police’s authority to arrest anyone under this section for the purpose of detaining them under the Special Powers Act.

The apex court also directed law enforcers to allow the detainees in question to consult lawyers of their choice or to meet their closest relatives if they so desire.

“The Magistrate shall not make an order of detention of a person in the judicial custody if the police forwarding report disclose that the arrest has been made for the purpose of putting the arrestee in the preventive detention,” the full text read.

The SC also said, “If the magistrate has reason to believe that any member of law enforcing agency or any officer who has legal authority to commit a person in confinement has acted contrary to law the magistrate shall proceed against such officer under section 220 of the Penal Code”.

The government filed a petition with the SC in 2017 seeking review of its judgement.

Court accepts suit

FROM PAGE 1

According to the case statement, Shajahan said he would make public how much money Ilias had received and for what purpose, and also how much money Ilias took for himself and in the name of Ilias’ son and daughter-in-law.

Shajahan’s comments at the time were published in different media, it said.

Such comments damaged Ilias Kanchan’s reputation nationally and internationally, Ilias said.

On December 11, Ilias urged Shajahan to withdraw his comment, but he did not do so, the case statement read.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Road Transport Workers’ Federation yesterday declared demonstration across the country on February 18 protesting the filing of a case against its executive president Shajahan Khan.

The federation took the decision at a meeting at its Segunbagicha office, Osmal Ali, general secretary of the platform, told The Daily Star last night.

“If he [Ilias Kanchan] does not withdraw the false case within February 18, we will announce our next programme,” he said, adding, “Cases would be filed against him across the country for filing a false case.”



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inspecting a parade of Ansar and VDP from an open-top vehicle during the 40th national rally of Bangladesh Ansar and Village Defence Party at the Bangladesh Ansar-VDP Academy in Shafipur yesterday.

PHOTO: P10

‘Two days’ in 24 hours

FROM PAGE 1

calendars. “Previously, each month from Baishakh to Bhadra had 31 days, while Ashwin to Chaitra had 30 days. On leap years, Falgun had 31 days.”

“There has been a lot of confusion regarding which calendar to follow for which occasion. It was always easier for everyone to follow a fixed date under the Gregorian system, but that often led to forsaking the accurate Bangla date,” said Rajib.

“For example, Ekushey would sometimes fall on Falgun 9, and sometimes on the previous date. The same would happen for Pahela Baishakh, with the day sometimes falling on April 14, and often on the next day,” he added.

In order to settle the matter once and for all, Bangla Academy and the Ministry of Cultural Affairs introduced a revised Bangla calendar for the country last year, in which Baishakh to Ashwin consists of 31 days, while the next six months, except Falgun, have 30 days. Falgun will only have 30 days on leap years.

“This revision locks the Bangla dates for days that are historically significant. February 21, March 26, and December 16, will always fall on Falgun 8, Chaitra 12, and Poush 1, which were the original Bangla dates in 1952 and 1971. This will also ensure fixed dates for the Bangla New Year, Rabindra Jayanti, and Nazrul Jayanti,” said Rajib.

While this revision has kept all other

dates unchanged from their typical day of celebration, Pahela Falgun will officially never fall on February 13 again.

People are finding it difficult to accustom themselves to the changed date, especially since it now coincides with the globally-celebrated Valentine’s Day, an event that’s completely different in terms of culture, nature of celebration, theme, and even colour.

Nafisa Khan, a final-year student of economics at Dhaka University (DU), dressed up to celebrate Falgun yesterday. “Pahela Falgun has always been one of my favourite festivals. Tomorrow [the 14th], the city will be overcrowded, there will be too much traffic, and everyone will be confused about what exactly they’re celebrating. I want to welcome spring today -- whether the calendar permits it or not,” she said.

“I think I’ll keep celebrating the day on February 13 every year,” Nafisa added, happily roaming around the DU campus, along with others who decided to ignore the new calendar.

Nafisa’s sentiments were echoed by multiple others, who feel that February 14 has already been branded as Valentine’s Day, a western celebration for love -- whereas Pahela Falgun has an entirely different theme of welcoming spring in vibrant colours.

An affinity for flowers is one of the few things in common between the two celebrations. “Sales during the off-season are around Tk 10,000 per day,

and doubles during these two days in February,” says Enamul Huq, who has a flower shop in Shahbagh.

Two other shop owners Mahfuz Chowdhury and Mamunur Rashid said they’ll improvise depending on demand. As the two days coincide officially for the first time, they’re hoping to see an increase in profits.

Twelfth-graders Faria and Onti, seen in yellow sarees at the DU campus, yesterday said, “We’re welcoming spring today because we doubt our mothers will agree to let us go out tomorrow -- they still think it’s just Valentine’s Day.”

Meanwhile, Tanvir Ahmed, waiting for his partner before class at DU, said he’s happy to celebrate both occasions today. “This is just more economical -- two celebrations in one day means fewer expenses,” Tanvir said laughing.

His friend Ishtiaque said the same can be said for traffic, “You’d have to battle two consecutive days of heavy traffic before, now it’s all squashed into February 14.”

Young people are generally at the heart of these celebrations, and their varied reactions to this change of date shows that there’s still a lot of adjustment left to do.

In the following years, we’ll get to see how this plays out -- the two occasions could merge, one could trump the other, or people might continue to reject the revised calendar and celebrate on separate days.

Deadliest day of coronavirus crisis

FROM PAGE 1

in Hubei province, the epicentre of the outbreak.

The developments came hours after President Xi Jinping claimed “positive results” from efforts to contain an epidemic that has now officially killed 1,367 people and infected nearly 60,000.

But the World Health Organization warned it was too soon to declare victory.

“I think it’s way too early to try to predict the beginning, the middle or the end of this epidemic right now,” said Michael Ryan, head of the WHO’s health emergencies programme.

In Hubei and its capital Wuhan, where tens of millions of people are trapped as part of an unprecedented quarantine effort, 242 new deaths were reported yesterday.

Another 14,840 people were confirmed to be infected in Hubei alone, with the new cases and deaths by far the biggest one-day increases since the crisis began.

Outside Hubei, there were 12 more deaths but the number of new cases fell for a ninth day in a row, with 312 extra patients.

Hubei authorities said the increases were because they had broadened their definition for infection to include people “clinically diagnosed” via lung imaging.

Up until now, they had solely confirmed cases with a more

sophisticated laboratory test.

Health officials said they looked into past suspected cases and revised their diagnoses, suggesting older cases were also included in yesterday’s numbers.

China had been praised by the WHO for its transparent handling of the outbreak, in contrast to the way it concealed the extent of the deadly SARS virus epidemic in 2002-2003.

But it has faced continued scepticism among the global public, with fears that there may be similarities to the way it dealt with SARS.

Criticism intensified after the death of a doctor who had tried to raise the alarm about the outbreak in December, but was silenced by authorities.

Analysts said Hubei’s new counting methodology might be a legitimate attempt to be more transparent, but the immediate impact was to sow more distrust.

“Oddly, this now is a moment of greater transparency,” Sam Crane, political science professor at Williams College in Massachusetts, told AFP.

“It is not clear if the problem up to now, on this issue, was lack of transparency or simply bad medical practice,” Crane said.

Yun Jiang, a China researcher at Australian National University, said the new methodology may be a “practical measure” because Hubei has a shortage of laboratory testing kits.

“I don’t think the numbers are necessarily manipulated for political

purposes but the numbers themselves may not be so trustworthy,” Yun told AFP.

In Vietnam, authorities announced they were locking down the commune of Son Loi, a farming region about 40 kilometres (25 miles) from Hanoi, for 20 days.

Checkpoints were set up around the commune, according to AFP reporters in a district on the outskirts of Son Loi.

Health officials wearing protective suits sprayed disinfectant on vehicles.

The biggest cluster of cases outside China is on a cruise ship quarantined off Japan’s coast, where 44 more people tested positive for COVID-19, raising the total number of infections on the Diamond Princess to 218.

Several countries have banned arrivals from China, while major airlines have halted flights to and from the country. Hundreds of people in some two dozen countries are infected.

United Airlines extended its China flight cancellations into late April.

The outbreak has wreaked havoc with global events, with the World Mobile Congress in Spain cancelled and the Hong Kong Rugby Sevens tournament and Formula One Grand Prix in Shanghai postponed.

China’s economy is also taking a hit and having international repercussions, with global oil demand expected to suffer its first quarterly drop in a decade, according to the International Energy Agency.

Two more

FROM PAGE 1

He said that he had mostly stayed in his flat in Campbell Lane since he fell ill.

The 37-year-old was identified as a close contact of the two previously identified Bangladeshis, who worked at the Seletar Aerospace Heights work site.

Both were being kept in isolation rooms at the National Centre for Infectious Diseases.

The Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) in Dhaka said the condition of the two previously infected Bangladeshis in Singapore was stable.

A total of 58 people have been diagnosed with coronavirus, including eight new cases reported in the country, the Ministry of Health in Singapore said.

Meanwhile, the 312 Bangladeshis, who returned from the Chinese city of Wuhan and had been quarantined in the Ashkona Hajj Camp, would be going home tomorrow, Health Minister Zahid Maleque said yesterday.

“All the returnees from China are in the last stage of their quarantine period. They would be able to leave the camp on Saturday following health check-ups,” the minister said.

On February 1, 312 Bangladeshis, who had been stranded in Wuhan -- the epicentre of the coronavirus outbreak, were flown back to the country in a chartered flight arranged by the government and were kept quarantined in the camp.

After landing at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, eight of the returnees were sent to hospitals as they had fever.

Later, all of them were tested coronavirus negative by the IEDCR.

Three returnees, quarantined at the camp, were also hospitalised due to high body temperature. They were also cleared by the IEDCR.

The health minister yesterday urged people not to panic.

“Nobody inside the country has been infected so far. Medical admission [of any Chinese returnee] does not necessarily mean coronavirus infection. We should not say it’s a coronavirus infection until it is proven through a test. Otherwise, it creates panic.”

Yesterday, police detained five people from different areas in the capital for allegedly spreading rumours about the coronavirus outbreak.

Najmul Islam, additional deputy commissioner of DMP’s cyber security and crime division, said the detainees, using their Facebook accounts and different online portals, were spreading rumours that the virus had spread in Bangladesh.

They were taken into custody for interrogation, he added.

The virus has so far claimed 1,370 lives and infected 60,329 people, mostly in China.

PM’S CONDOLENCES

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday expressed deep condolences for the loss of lives due to the outbreak of coronavirus in Wuhan city and other places in China and offered the readiness of Bangladesh to extend any help to mitigate the plight of the victims.

“The prime minister expressed her profound condolence to Chinese President Xi Jinping in a letter,” said PM’s Assistant Press Secretary ABM Sarwar-e-Alam Sarkar.

In the letter, the premier said, “It is my firm conviction that the government of China, under your great leadership, will be able to face and stop the aggravation of the situation with utmost capacity and control.”

She added, “Establishing a taskforce and building emergency hospitals to address the crisis is timely and praiseworthy.”



WHAT ARE YOU DOING!!! A young man breezily crosses Pragati Sarani, as exasperated policemen rush to stop him, and passers-by gather to see a show. After a firestorm of protests following death of university student Abrar Ahmed near this very spot less than a year ago, authorities constructed a footbridge nearby. Although road medians have been warded off with ropes and bamboo, jaywalkers continue to flout traffic regulations, sometimes right in front of law enforcers. The photo was taken on Wednesday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

‘Amend University Ordinance of 1973’

BNP lawmaker demands at House to enforce uniform admission tests

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP lawmaker Harunur Rashid yesterday in parliament demanded that the government amends the University Ordinance 1973 to “force” four leading public universities to follow the uniform admission tests from this year.

Speaking on a point of order, the opposition MP also urged Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, who was presiding over the sitting at that time, to issue a ruling so that the government can introduce the uniform university admission tests from this year removing all barriers.

“Vice chancellors of 28 universities sat in a meeting on Tuesday. It’s a matter of concern that some VCs of major universities, including Dhaka University and Buet, are talking about the 1973 ordinance and showing their unwillingness to accept the uniform admission test,” he said, referring to media reports.

As per the ordinance, authorities of universities can make decision about their academic activities on their own.

According to media reports, Dhaka University, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet), Jahangirnagar University and Chittagong are

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Limit trans-fat use to 2pc in all foods

Consumer rights activists urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Consumer rights activists at a discussion yesterday urged the government to limit the use of trans fat in all foods to maximum of two percent, and maintain the standard strictly as the substance is injurious for health.

They also detailed a nine-point demand, including ban on hydrogenated oil -- the major sources of trans fat, and formulation of a policy in this regard.

Industrially-produced trans-fatty acid, also known as trans fat, causes severe health risks -- such as increasing risks of cardiovascular disease and cancer. However, several foods in the country contain an excessive amount of the fat and there is no policy to control it, they said.

Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB), National Heart Foundation of Bangladesh (NHFB) and Progotir Jonno Gyan (PROGGA), in association with Global Health Advocacy Incubator (GHA), organised the discussion on the health risks of trans fat at Cirdap auditorium in the capital.

Speaking as chief guest, Industries Minister Nurul Majid Mahmud Humayun said the government is working on regulating the use of trans fats and planning to formulate a policy in this regard.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



It might not have been Pahela Falgun yesterday, but spring was a state of mind for the colourfully dressed visitors at Amar Ekushey Grantha Mela.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

‘Don’t deport Rohingyas’

Global coalition urges Saudi Arabia

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Free Rohingya Coalition, a global platform of Rohingyas worldwide, has urged Saudi Arabia not to deport any Rohingyas until the genocide against Myanmar is over.

“Once the case is settled and peace prevails in Rakhing state of Myanmar, they will go back to their country of origin. At this moment, we urge Saudi authorities not to deport any Rohingyas -- either from the detention camps or outside in the Kingdom -- to Bangladesh,” said Free Rohingya Coalition Co-founder Nay San Lwin.

The urge comes as a Saudi delegation is in talks with Bangladesh authorities over the deportation of the Rohingyas from Saudi Arabia.

“This is a sensitive issue. We don’t want deportation for the sake of deportation. There are issues of security. We are talking about it,” said Mahir Abdul Rahman Gassim, Saudi Arabia’s Deputy Minister for International Affairs of the Ministry of Labor and Social Development.

He said this at a joint press briefing at the Economic Relations Division (ERD) in the

capital yesterday, after a two-day meeting of the Joint Commission of Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia.

The meeting discussed a range of issues including Saudi investments in Bangladesh and the welfare and protection of Bangladeshi migrants in Saudi Arabia.

ERD Secretary Monowar Ahmed said the Rohingya issue was raised at the discussion.

“We took note of it. A few ministries are involved in the issue. We will discuss and then decide on the matter,” he told journalists, but did not mention the number of Rohingyas Saudi Arabia wants to deport.

According to media reports, Saudi Arabia wants to deport some 42,000 Rohingyas, who are carrying Bangladeshi passports.

Nay San Lwin said there are some 3 lakh Rohingyas living in Saudi Arabia. Around 1,600 of them were in detention camps in Jeddah. Of them, a few dozen were deported to Bangladesh last year.

“The Rohingyas living in Saudi Arabia are a source of livelihoods for their families back either in Bangladesh or Myanmar.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

MIGRANT WORKERS IN LEBANON

470 to return home this week

JAMIL MAHMUD

Some 470 Bangladeshi migrant workers are set to return home this week from crisis-hit Lebanon, following applications for repatriation under a special programme announced by authorities. Many of them are desperate to return home, said officials and migrant workers living in the Arab country.

The returning migrant workers, including some physically ailing and more than 200 women -- will be the second batch of workers to be repatriated willingly since the programme was announced in September last year.

Six Air Arabia Airline flights will carry the workers to Dhaka between February 15 and 23, said an official at the Bangladesh embassy in Beirut.

The first batch, comprising about 582 workers returned home in December last year, the official said.

Amid an economic meltdown, around 1.6 lakh Bangladeshi migrant workers are passing days in uncertainty in Lebanon, as many of them have either lost their jobs or remained unpaid over the last few months.

Of them, some 30,000 are undocumented, according to media reports.

Abdullah Al Mamun, first secretary at the labour welfare wing of the Bangladesh Mission in Beirut, said they have received about 3,683 applications in two phases since the special programme was announced.

Of those, 2,383 applications were received in September and about 1,300 more in February this year, he told this newspaper by phone.

Mamun, also head of chancery at the Beirut Mission, said they are expecting to receive about 1,200 more applications in the second phase which will bring the number of workers to be repatriated under the programme to nearly 5,000.

“Those who applied are now illegal residents [in Lebanon],” he added.

He said they are looking for a suitable place outside the embassy to run activities under the programme, as the embassy premises is not large enough to handle the rush of the workers.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Nirmalendu Goon admitted to hospital



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BanglaAcademy, Swadhinata and Ekushey Padak winning poet Nirmalendu Goon was hospitalised last night with pneumonia and respiratory complications.

The 74-year-old poet is currently receiving treatment at the intensive care unit of LabAid Hospital under the supervision of physician Baren Chakrabarty.

Mrittika Goon, the poet’s daughter, said her father was hospitalised last night after he felt unwell.

“He has been suffering from respiratory and pneumonia related complications. The exact problem can be known after test results come back,” she added.

Nirmalendu Goon is one of the most prolific and versatile poets of Bangladesh. His poem “Shadhinota Ei Shobdoti Kivabe Elo (How did the word independence come about)” brought him huge fame. Apart from poems, his prose is also widely appreciated.

8th DEATH ANNIVERSARY

Al Hajj Lt. Col. Hesamuddin Ahmed, psc (Retd). served as a Secretary to the Government of Bangladesh in various ministries. He was the Administrator of the Dhaka Municipality, Chairman of RAJUK and other important corporations.

Being the Founder President of the National Shooting Federation Bangladesh, the Founder Member and Founding Vice Chairman RAOWA, his contributions will always be remembered.

He was associated with UCEP Bangladesh, SAHIC and various sports and social welfare organizations. In recognition of his remarkable contributions in the field of Sports development and social welfare he was awarded the National Sports Award (2003), Atish Dipannkar Gold Medal, Poet Sarojini Naidu Gold Medal, C R Das Gold Medal etc.

-Dearly Missed & Always Cherished by Wife, Son, Daughter, Daughter in Law Son in Law & Granddaughters

In the Loving Memory of Al Hajj Lt. Col. Hesamuddin Ahmed, psc (Retd).
“A silent thought, a secret tear,
Keeps your memory ever dear,
God took you home, it was His will,
But in our hearts, you live still.”

A mistaken first day of spring

SAYED MOHMUD ULLAH



It was not the first day of spring -- according to the revised Bangla calendar, but Amar Ekushey Grantha Mela still adorned the colours of the season yesterday. Visitors showed up in shades of yellow, and the fair took on a festive mood as evening fell.

Both Bangla Academy and Suhrawardy Udyan saw a large turnout of people as the day neared its end. Many visitors, dressed up for Pahela Falgun, claimed they did not know about any changes in the Bangal calendar.

Publishers passed a busy day with booming sales. “We are now waiting to welcome a large number of visitors tomorrow [today], on the occasions of Pahela Falgun and Valentine’s Day,” said Rezwana Habib Rafsan, a stall attendant of “Bhumi” at Suhrawardy Udyan.

Many visitors said they had been waiting near Faculty of Fine Arts in Dhaka University for the Boshonto Boron (Welcoming Spring) festival, planning to go towards the book fair afterwards.

“Since childhood, I knew that the first day of spring is celebrated on February 13, but today [yesterday] after reaching Charukola, I realised Pahela Falgun is tomorrow [today],” said a disappointed Saily Biswash Kotha (23).

Having started from home in a yellow saree, ready to celebrate the arrival of spring, Saily said, “Had Bangla Academy and other stakeholders carried out a wider campaign [about the change of date], we would be better informed.”

However, her visit to the book fair was not in vain, as she bought Marzuk Russell’s poetry book from the stall of “Bayanno”. A stall attendant of this publication house said the lyricist’s book saw a boom in sales yesterday.

Enthusiastic book lovers also passed a busy time, chit-chatting in front of some special corners, including Arjan Chattar -- featuring achievement of the country since 1971 on big cut out, Sangram -- featuring the history of the country’s Liberation War, Lekhak Bolchi -- featuring various

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

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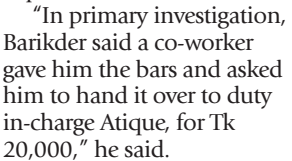


PHOTO: TITU DAS

There are 39 public universities, which enroll some 65,000 students every year through separate admission tests. Last year, some 9.88 lakh students passed the HSC and its equivalent examinations under the 10 education boards.

Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI) Director General Muazzem Hossain, GHAI Country Coordinator Muhammad Ruhul Quddus, CAB General Secretary Humayun Kabir Bhuiyan and PROGGA Executive Director ABM Zubair also spoke at the programme, among others.

All are requested to pray
for the salvation of Majid's
departed soul.



"Many media houses reported the change; people should have noticed that earlier," he added.

a motorbike from the opposite direction crushed him, leaving him critically injured," said Md Mazharul Karim, officer-in-charge of Kalmakanda Police Station. Hearing his screams, locals rescued him and took him to Kalmakanda Upazila Health Complex. Later, as his condition deteriorated, he was referred to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital, where he died in the evening.

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It is worth noting that authorities on

Rana Ahmed, a migrant worker from Brahmanbaria's Nabinagar upazila, applied under the special programme at the beginning of this month and have been

But the reality is still bleak. To regulate stone extraction, "The Mines and Minerals Rules 2012" was gazetted but to this day, all sections under the rules are being violated at all stone extraction sites.

However, income of such workers have come down to half now and sending even Tk 10,000 back home is quite difficult for them, he added.

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HEAVY RAINFALL IN AUSTRALIA

‘All busfires’ now contained: report

AFP, Sydney

All the blazes in Australia’s hard-hit state of New South Wales have been brought under control, firefighters said yesterday, signalling the end of a “black summer” that claimed 33 lives nationwide.

But heavy rains that helped extinguish the blazes that have raged along the east coast since September are causing flash floods in parts of the state, posing new problems for some residents.

“Not all fires are out, there’s still some fire activity in the far south of the state but all fires are contained so we can really focus on helping people rebuild,” the state’s fire service deputy commissioner Rob Rogers said on Twitter.

“It is very good news,” a Rural Fire Service spokesman told AFP.

Bushfires scorched more than 10 million hectares in the country’s east and south, killing at least 33 people and an estimated one billion animals, while destroying more than 2,500 homes. The fires were exacerbated by prolonged drought and worsened by climate change in the country’s hottest and driest year on record.

Days of recent rainfall have extinguished the largest fires and brought those that remain under control. Attention has now turned to tackling flash flooding expected in the coming days following the heaviest rains in 30 years.

On Thursday dams near Sydney overflowed after days of torrential rain. The Nepean dam was just a third full less than a week ago, but on Thursday video footage showing water cascading over the dam wall. Hundreds of people have been rescued from floodwaters in recent days.



Iraqi women raise placards as they take part in an anti-government demonstration in the capital Baghdad’s Tahrir Square, yesterday. The placard reads in Arabic: “Beware of Iraqi women’s anger”. More than 540 Iraqis have been killed in protest-related violence across Iraq since the rallies erupted, according to a recent toll by the Iraqi Human Rights Commission.

PHOTO: AFP

China appoints hardliner to Hong Kong office

China yesterday appointed a senior official known for a hardline crackdown on Christians to head its main policy-making body for Hong Kong, following months of pro-democracy protests in the semi-autonomous city. The reshuffle comes after months of political unrest — the starkest challenge to Beijing since the former British colony was returned to Chinese rule in 1997. Senior Beijing official Xia Baolong, currently secretary-general at the national committee of China’s top political advisory body, was promoted to director of the Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office of the State Council. His predecessor Zhang Xiaoming was demoted to deputy in charge of daily operations. Xia, 67, was Communist Party secretary of eastern Zhejiang province for five years from 2012. Xia also served as Xi’s deputy between 2003 and 2007 while the now-president was Zhejiang party secretary.

Senate moves ahead to curb Trump’s war powers

The US Senate advanced legislation on Wednesday intended to limit President Donald Trump’s ability to wage war against Iran, paving the way for a final vote as eight Republicans joined Democrats in supporting the war powers resolution. The resolution would require Trump to remove U.S. troops engaged in hostilities against Iran unless Congress declares war or passes a specific authorization for the use of military force. The vote was 51-45 on a motion to proceed to a final vote, expected on Wednesday or on Thursday. Republican opponents, including Trump, said passage would send the wrong message to Tehran. The US Constitution gives Congress, not the president, the power to declare war. Despite bipartisan backing, the resolution is unlikely to garner enough support from members of Trump’s party to overcome a veto if it does reach his desk.

Big Ben tower more badly damaged than thought



Britain’s Big Ben tower at the Houses of Parliament was more badly damaged by German bombs during World War Two than originally thought, experts said yesterday, as the bill for its restoration rose by nearly 20 million pounds (\$25 million). The 177-year-old tower has been swathed in scaffolding for the past three years as craftsmen refurbish its stonework and famous 12-tonne clock. Although the tower survived Nazi bombing, its roof and dials were damaged in a May 1941 air raid which destroyed the main House of Commons chamber. The latest refurbishment of the structure, during which its 13-tonne Big Ben bell has been largely silenced, is expected to be finished next year.

SOURCE: AFP

UK PM tightens grip on govt

Finance minister Javid resigns after row; Labour calls reshuffle “chaos”

REUTERS, London

British finance minister Sajid Javid resigned yesterday, a surprise move that underlined Prime Minister Boris Johnson’s desire to tighten his grip on government in a long-planned reshuffle by jettisoning a minister who refused to toe the line.

Johnson, who wanted to minimise any disruption from the cabinet reshuffle, quickly appointed Javid’s deputy Rishi Sunak, an ultra-loyal supporter of the prime minister who has often been put in front of the cameras to sell government policy.

The prime minister’s team had carefully choreographed the reshuffle, presenting it as an opportunity to foster new talent, particularly among women, while also rewarding loyal supporters to deliver his vision for Britain beyond Brexit.

But the finance minister’s resignation — which some commentators said might have been sought by Johnson’s team — due to a dispute over Javid’s advisers added to the picture that the prime minister will not tolerate dissent in his government.

“He has turned down the job of Chancellor of the Exchequer (finance minister),” a source close to Javid said.

The source said Johnson had told Javid he would have to sack his advisers and replace them with advisers from the prime minister’s Downing Street office. “The Chancellor said no self-respecting minister would accept those terms.”



Rishi Sunak



Sajid Javid

Sunak, who once worked for investment bank Goldman Sachs and is married to the daughter of an Indian billionaire, is seen by many Conservatives as a safe pair of hands who will easily get on board with Johnson’s agenda for a post-Brexit Britain.

Sterling rose on the expectation of investors that Sunak’s appointment

would pave the way for a more expansionary budget next month.

His sacking of Northern Ireland minister Julian Smith, who only a month ago had helped broker the restoration of a government in the British province, prompted criticism from politicians north and south of the border with Ireland.

Smith, who had been in charge of parliamentary discipline for Johnson’s predecessor, Theresa May, was the first minister to lose his job in the reshuffle. He was joined by business minister Andrea Leadsom and environment minister Theresa Villiers.

Ultra-loyal Alok Sharma, a former minister for international development, was appointed as the new minister for business and also the head of the COP26 climate change summit in Scotland in November, due to be attended by world leaders.

Opposition politicians said the reshuffle was a mess. “This is a historical record. A government in chaos within weeks of an election,” said John McDonnell, finance spokesman for the main opposition Labour Party.

TRUMP’S STONE INTERFERENCE

Republicans unmoved as Democrats demand probe

REUTERS, Washington

Republicans in Congress on Wednesday brushed aside calls to investigate possible political interference at the US Justice Department after the agency asked for a lighter prison term for President Donald Trump’s longtime adviser Roger Stone.

The Justice Department’s decision to back off its sentencing recommendation of seven to nine years for the Republican operative sent shock waves through Washington and prompted all four prosecutors to quit the case and one to quit the agency.

“There should be an investigation,” said House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi, the top Democrat in Congress. Other Democrats accused Trump of purging the US government of perceived enemies following his acquittal on impeachment charges last week.

They said they would question Attorney General William Barr about the matter when he testifies before Congress on March 31.

“You have taken steps that raise grave questions about your leadership of the Department of Justice,” Democratic members of the House Judiciary Committee wrote to Barr in a letter.

Republican lawmakers, who nearly all voted to acquit Trump of impeachment charges, offered muted criticism of the president but shrugged off suggestions they should investigate whether his political concerns were influencing law enforcement.

After the Justice Department decision, Trump on Wednesday praised Barr, his appointee to the law enforcement job, for “taking charge of a case that was totally out of control and perhaps should not have even been brought.”

US foreign policy ‘amoral’

Says ex-ambassador

AFP, Washington

The former US ambassador who was a key figure in President Donald Trump’s impeachment trial criticized US foreign policy on Wednesday as “amoral” and based on threats.

Marie Yovanovitch, who Trump abruptly recalled last May from her post as US ambassador to Ukraine, spoke at Washington’s Georgetown University where she received a prize from the school’s Institute for the Study of Diplomacy.

“Right now, the State Department is in trouble,” she said. “Senior leaders lack policy vision, moral clarity and leadership skills.”

“To be blunt, an amoral, ‘keep-em-guessin’ foreign policy that substitutes threats, fear and confusion for trust cannot work over



112-year-old Japanese man Chitetsu Watanabe poses next to calligraphy reading in Japanese ‘World Number One’ after he was awarded as the world’s oldest living male in Joetsu, Niigata prefecture, on Wednesday. Chitetsu Watanabe believes smiling is the key to longevity.

PHOTO: AFP

Plant a trillion trees

US Republicans offer fossil fuel-friendly climate fix

REUTERS, Washington

Republican lawmakers on Wednesday proposed legislation setting a goal for the United States to plant a trillion trees by 2050 to fight global warming, a plan intended to address climate change by sucking carbon out of the air instead of by cutting emissions.

The proposed legislation reflects an acknowledgement by some in the Republican Party of rising voter demand for action on climate change, even as it seeks to preserve the economic benefits of a historic drilling boom that has made the United States the world’s biggest oil and gas producer.

Republican President Donald Trump, who has repeatedly cast doubt on the science of climate change, had expressed support for the idea of a massive tree-planting campaign during a speech at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, last month.

The bill was one of several elements of a broader proposal on climate change

introduced by a half dozen House lawmakers on Wednesday.

Additional bills will be released over the coming weeks, focusing on expanding a tax credit to bolster carbon capture technology from power plants and directly from the air, creating a research hub to advance those technologies, and boosting “clean” energy, including natural gas and nuclear.

The bills focus on technology “innovation” and avoid setting a price for carbon pollution and setting or enforcing emission reduction mandates.

Democrats, including all the top presidential hopefuls in this year’s election, have made

proposals for a rapid shift away from fossil fuels to help the United States and other countries avoid the worst impacts of climate change.

Environmentalists argue that focusing on planting trees or investing in carbon sequestration technology while ignoring emission cuts from fossil fuel use is counterproductive.



Libya rivals ignore UN ceasefire call

AGENCIES

Rival forces clashed in the Libyan capital yesterday, witnesses and pro-Government of National Accord (GNA) forces said, a day after a UN Security Council resolution called for a “lasting ceasefire”.

Flights were again suspended at Mitiga, Tripoli’s sole functioning airport, following rocket fire, as fighting broke out between forces loyal to the UN-recognised GNA and fighters of strongman Khalifa Haftar in the capital’s south.

Witnesses heard explosions in the largely agricultural area of Machrou al-Hadhba about 30 kilometres (18 miles) south of the Tripoli city centre.

Rockets also struck residential neighbourhoods, killing one woman and wounding four other civilians, according to a spokesman for the health ministry, Amin al-Hachimi. Meanwhile, Haftar’s forces yesterday said they won’t allow United Nations to use the only functioning airport in the capital Tripoli.

The UN earlier warned flight restrictions by commander Khalifa Haftar’s forces known as the Libya National Army (LNA) were hampering humanitarian and mediation efforts in the oil-producing country embroiled in a conflict between loose alliances from western and eastern Libya since 2014.

The UN Security Council adopted on Wednesday a resolution calling for a “lasting ceasefire” in the conflict-hit country, a first since Haftar launched his offensive to seize Tripoli in April.

More than 1,000 people have died in the clashes between Haftar and the GNA, while another 140,000 have been displaced, according to the UN.



the long haul,” Yovanovitch said.

Trump last year disparaged Yovanovitch in a telephone call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky which was the center of his impeachment for abuse of power.

The House of Representatives impeached him for pressuring Ukraine to announce investigations, including into his political opponent Joe Biden.

In October Yovanovitch testified to Congress that she was recalled due to “unfounded and false claims by people with clearly questionable motives.”

The 33-year diplomatic veteran said she was subjected to a smear campaign orchestrated in part by Trump’s personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani.



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NEWSIN
brief

WHO extends
Ebola emergency

AFP, Geneva

The UN health agency on Wednesday said it was extending its global emergency designation for the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo but said the sharp decline in cases was “extremely positive”. The recent outbreak was first identified in August 2018 and has since killed more than 2,300 people in eastern DR Congo. The WHO, however, said it was downgrading the national and regional risk of the disease from very high to high, while it kept the global risk at low.

Somalia’s journalists
under fire: Amnesty

AFP, Nairobi

Journalists in troubled Somalia are “under siege”, facing bombings, beatings, attacks and arrests, rights group Amnesty International said yesterday. The East African nation has long been seen as one of the riskiest places to work as a journalist. Journalists face threats on all fronts, from attacks by Somalia’s al-Qaeda-allied Al-Shabaab fighters, to the internationally backed authorities. At least eight journalists have been killed since 2017, and at least eight more fled the country, the report said.

Australia extends ban
on visitors from China

AFP, Sydney

Australia yesterday announced a ban on travellers from China would extend for at least a week beyond Saturday’s planned deadline, as the death toll from the coronavirus soared. Prime Minister Scott Morrison said the government would maintain “entry restriction on foreign nationals who have recently been in mainland China” for further week “to protect Australians from the risk of coronavirus”.



Member of Parliament (MP) Gurjeet Singh Aujla (R) and Congress Party workers shout slogans during a protest against the price hike of the liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) cylinder, in Amritsar, yesterday.

PHOTO:
AFP

US announces 7-day
truce with Taliban

AFP, Brussels

The United States has secured a seven-day reduction in violence in talks to help seek a negotiated settlement in Afghanistan, Pentagon chief Mark Esper said yesterday.

The announcement came as Nato defence ministers met in Brussels and a day after Afghan President Ashraf Ghani reported “notable progress” in negotiations with the Islamist insurgents.

“The United States and the Taliban have negotiated a proposal for a seven-day reduction in violence,” Esper told reporters, dubbing his meetings with Nato colleagues “productive.”

“We’ve said all along that the best, if not the only, solution in Afghanistan is a political agreement. Progress has been made on that front and we’ll have more to report on that soon, I hope.”

Esper did not say when the partial truce would begin, but on Wednesday a Taliban official told AFP that the group would begin a “reduction of violence” starting from today.

“It is our view that seven days for now is sufficient but in all things our approach to this process will be conditions based, I will say it again, conditions based,” Esper said.

“So it will be a continual evaluative process as we move forward, if we go forward.”

Washington and the insurgents have been locked in gruelling talks that have stretched over more than a year, seeking an end to what has already become America’s longest war.

India SC tells parties to justify
rise in ‘criminal candidates’

Says ‘winnability’ can’t justify such malpractices

NDTV ONLINE

Political parties must upload on their websites details of criminal cases against poll candidates and the reasons for selecting them, the Indian Supreme Court said yesterday, flagging an “alarming rise in the criminalisation of politics” in the last four national elections.

The Supreme Court said it would be mandatory for parties to upload the details of their candidates’ criminal history on their websites, on social media and in newspapers within 48 hours of selection. “Political parties will have to specify reasons for selecting candidates having pending criminal cases against them on their website,” said the court.

Parties must submit the same details to the Election Commission within 72 hours, the court said.

“The reason to select candidates should be based on merit and not winnability. Winnability can’t be the only justification,” the top court directed.

If political parties failed to give the details, or the

Election Commission was unable to implement the directive, it would be considered contempt of court, the judges said.

The verdict comes on contempt petitions filed by lawyer Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay and others.

In September 2018, a five-judge constitution bench had asked the central government to immediately enact laws to ban those involved in serious crimes from contesting elections and becoming party officials.

BJP leader and lawyer Ashwini Upadhyay had filed a contempt petition against the central government and the Election Commission, alleging that no serious efforts were made to stop the criminalization of politics despite the court order.

The court had earlier even ordered that candidates publish their criminal details in the newspaper thrice after filing their nomination. The petitioner had alleged that the Election Commission had not attempted to implement this order effectively.

In the latest election, the Delhi polls, over 50 per cent of the newly-elected MLAs face serious cases.



‘It will save a lot of money’

Trump says he doesn’t mind if Manila cuts military pact

REUTERS, Washington

US President Donald Trump said on Wednesday he did not mind Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte’s decision to end a decades-old military agreement with the United States, a position at odds with that of his defense secretary who viewed the move with dismay.

Duterte on Tuesday announced termination of the two-decade-old Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA). U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper called the decision “unfortunate” as Washington and its allies press China to abide by “international rules” in Asia.

The US embassy in Manila called it “a serious step with significant implications.” Duterte’s decision, sparked by the revocation of a US visa held by a former police chief who led Duterte’s bloody war on drugs, takes legal effect in 180 days and US officials have expressed hope it can be reversed or delayed.

“I don’t really mind if they would like to do that, it will save a lot of money,” Trump told reporters at the White House when asked about Duterte’s move and

whether anything could be done to get him to reconsider. “My views are different from others,” he added.

Trump has frequently expressed a desire to bring US military forces home from decades-long deployments abroad and has strong-armed some allies into paying more for the right to U.S. defense.

Trump said the United States had helped the Philippines defeat Islamic State militants. He said he had “a very good” relationship with Duterte and added: “we’ll see what happens.”

Duterte’s decision could complicate US military interests in the broader Asia-Pacific region as China’s ambitions rise. Some Filipino senators quickly sought to block the move, arguing Duterte had no right to unilaterally scrap international pacts the country’s senate had ratified.

The VFA is important to the overall US-Philippines alliance and sets out rules for U.S. soldiers operating in the Philippines, a former US territory. Washington has called the relationship “ironclad,” despite Duterte’s complaints that include allegations of U.S. hypocrisy and ill treatment.



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (C) shakes hands with Pakistan’s Prime Minister Imran Khan upon his arrival at the Nur Khan airport in Rawalpindi, yesterday.

CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

DEVELOPMENTS

DEATH TOLL TOPS 1,360

China reports 242 new deaths and 14,840 new infections in Hubei, the biggest one-day increases since the crisis began. It comes after authorities broadened their definition for infection to include people “clinically diagnosed” via lung imaging. China’s new official toll stands at more than 1,360 deaths and nearly 60,000 infections.

PARTY CHIEFS SACKED

Authorities sack the top political leaders of Hubei province and Wuhan, the highest profile figures to be removed in a purge over the way the outbreak has been handled. A top Red Cross official in Wuhan has also been fired for dereliction of duty and health officials removed in other cities.

MASS QUARANTINE IN VIETNAM

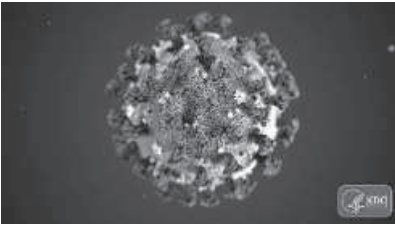
Vietnam becomes the first country outside China to impose a mass quarantine, confining more than 10,000 people to six villages near Hanoi for 20 days. Checkpoints are set up around the villages that make up Son Loi after the health ministry reports six infections there.

JAPAN SHIP CASES RISE

Another 44 people on board a quarantined cruise ship off Japan’s coast have tested positive, the health minister says, taking the number to 218. Thousands of people onboard the Diamond Princess are under quarantine until February 19, although Health Minister Katsunobu Kato says some elderly passengers will be allowed off if they test negative.

REJECTED US SHIP TO DOCK

The US cruise ship Westerdam is finally given permission to dock in Cambodia, having been turned away from several Asian ports over concerns that a passenger could be infected. This ship is to dock early Friday in Sihanoukville and passengers will be transferred directly to the airport to fly to Phnom Penh and onward.



MAJOR MOBILE FAIR SCRAPPED

The world’s top mobile telephone trade fair, the annual World Mobile Congress, is cancelled after fears stemming from the coronavirus spark an exodus of industry heavyweights. The event had been planned to run in Barcelona from February 24 to 27. The organising GSMA mobile trade association says “the global concern regarding the coronavirus outbreak, travel concern and other circumstances, make it impossible” for it to go ahead.

OIL MARKET HIT

The International Energy Agency warns that global oil demand will suffer its first quarterly drop in a decade as the COVID-19 virus lashes the economy in China and its impact ripples throughout the world. “Demand is now expected to fall by 435,000 barrels year-on-year in the first quarter of 2020, the first quarterly contraction in more than 10 years” when it dropped during the global economic crisis, it says.

SOURCE: AFP

KASHMIR, CAA

US senators
express
concerns

NDTV ONLINE

Ahead of US President Donald Trump’s India visit later this month, four top US senators have written to US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, expressing concern about the internet curbs in Kashmir more than six months after Jammu and Kashmir’s special status was scrapped under Article 370, as well the preventive detentions of political leaders.

In their letter, the senators also express concern over the Citizenship (Amendment) Act or CAA that triggered protests across the country.

The letter by the senators, two Democrats and two Republicans, says that the Indian government “continues to block most internet in the region... India has now imposed the longest ever internet shutdown by a democracy, disrupting access to medical care, business and education for 7 million people”.

“Hundreds of Kashmiris remain in ‘preventive detention’ including key political figures,” the letter to Mike Pompeo states. The senators said “these actions have severe consequences”.

Among the four senators who wrote the letter is Lindsey Graham who is very close to Trump.

“The Indian government has taken other troubling steps that threaten the rights of certain religious minorities and the secular character of the state. This includes the passage of the controversial Citizenship Amendment Act,” the senators say.

The US senators also want an assessment of the “number of individuals at risk of statelessness, denial of nationality pursuant to an NRC (National Register of Citizens)”.

Another wall goes up for Trump

India builds wall in Ahmedabad to shield view of slums

REUTERS, Ahmedabad

US President Donald Trump will be shielded from the sight of slums by a newly built wall when he visits the city of Ahmedabad during a visit to India this month.

A senior government said the wall was being built for security reasons, not to conceal the slum district.

But the contractor building it told Reuters the government “did not want the slum to be seen” when Trump passes by on the ride in from Ahmedabad’s airport.

“I’ve been ordered to build a wall as soon as possible, over 150 masons are working round-the-clock to finish the project,” the contractor said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The government official conceded that the wall was part of a “beautification and cleanliness” drive.

Whatever the reason, the 400-meter-long and seven-foot-high wall will prevent the US leader from getting a glimpse of a slum district that houses an estimated 800 families.

Trump, who has made his pledge to build a wall along the United States’ border with Mexico a feature of

his presidency, will visit India on Feb. 24-25 to reaffirm strategic ties that have been buffeted by trade disputes.

He is expected to attend an event dubbed “Kem Chho Trump” (“How are you, Trump”) at a stadium in Ahmedabad along the lines of the “Howdy Modi” extravaganza he hosted for Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Houston last September.

Speaking at the White House on Tuesday, Trump quoted Modi as saying “millions and millions of people” would attend the rally.

The event provides Trump, who was impeached in December, with the opportunity to woo the support of hundreds of thousands of Indian-American voters ahead of the US presidential election in November.

But some slum dwellers whose homes will be cordoned off by the wall in Ahmedabad - the largest city in Modi’s home state of Gujarat - said the government was wasting tax-payer money to hide the poor.

“Poverty and slums are the reality of our life, but Modi’s government wants to hide the poor,” said Parvatibhai Mafabhai, a day worker who has lived there with his family for more than three decades.



VIOLENCE IN MYANMAR’S RAKHINE STATE

20 children injured as
school hit by mortar

AFP, Yangon

Around 20 children were injured yesterday when mortar fire hit a primary school in the northern fringes of Myanmar’s Rakhine state, an area where the military is locked in battle with Arakan Army (AA) rebels.

The attack happened in Buthidaung township, one of several areas in lockdown, and it is not clear who was responsible. Scores of civilians have been killed, hundreds injured and some 100,000 displaced since January last year when both sides stepped up operations.

The AA claims to be fighting for more autonomy for ethnic Rakhine Buddhists.

Teacher Thar Aye Maung from Khamwe village told AFP by phone how his school was hit yesterday morning, injuring 21 pupils.

“One girl is badly hurt. Most of the others have injuries to their hands and legs.”

He said all the wounded children were ethnic Khami, a Buddhist minority in a state with a complex patchwork of different groups living alongside the Rakhine.

Maungdaw district chief Soe Aung confirmed the incident, but said 19 children had been wounded.

There was “no reason” to believe the mortar had been fired by the military, said Western command spokesman Colonel Win Zaw Oo, adding the army sometimes loses weapons and ammunition to the rebels.

“(The AA) fires at villages with our shells and then misleadingly claims the military is responsible.”

The armed rebel group could not be reached for comment.

The AA has ratcheted up operations in recent months with a series of brazen kidnappings, bombings and raids against the military and local officials.

The army has hit back hard, deploying thousands of soldiers to the area.

Buthidaung is one of nine townships to suffer a government-imposed internet blackout, restrictions decreed by rights groups in a statement yesterday.



Malind Biswas at his broccoli field of Panisail village under Barlekha upazila in Moulvibazar.

PHOTO: MINTUDESHWARA

Broccoli farming sees success in Moulvibazar haor

A sharecropper becomes the pioneer in growing the nutritious foreign vegetable in the area

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

It was hard for any ordinary farmer to see the prospect of an uncommon vegetable in haor region where cultivation of any crops other than paddy is somewhat unlikely. However, Malind Biswas, a sharecropper of Panisail village under Barlekha upazila in Moulvibazar has gained success in broccoli cultivation, growing the foreign vegetable for the first time in the area. The dark green nutritious vegetable resembles popular local vegetable cauliflower. The arable lands around Malind's village submerges round the year except the dry season when farmers mostly cultivate Boro paddy there. "I was almost broke after losing my

paddy during floods in 2017. I cultivated paddy in last Boro season too but I could hardly see any hope of profit by cultivating the usual crop," Malind said. "Then, I heard about the broccoli and decided to cultivate it. I collected 2200 seeds of the vegetable with the help of the upazila agriculture office and planted the seeds in late October last year. The seedlings were then planted on 15 decimals of leased land. "I faced problems due to lack of experience in broccoli cultivation but Upazila Agricultural Officer Debal Sarkar and Sub-assistant Agriculture Officer Subinoy Chandra Das helped me with their suggestions. "I have already sold 1200 broccoli at Tk 37,000. There are some 1000 broccoli in

my field for sale," he said, adding that he is planning to increase broccoli cultivation in the next season. He spent around Tk 15,000 for the cultivation. "When I started cultivating the foreign vegetable, people laughed at me. But I took the risk and gained success. Now locals honour me as a pioneer. Many of them have shown interest in broccoli cultivation," Malind said. Upazila Agriculture Officer Debal Sarkar said they have taken initiative to encourage farmers to grow broccoli as the soil and climate of the haor area is suitable for it. "Malinda Biswas is cultivating broccoli using locally produced organic fertilizers. Seeds of the vegetable are sown in the

second half of October. Later the seedlings are planted. Flowering takes place within 80 to 90 days," he added. Dr Md Sharaf Uddin, chairman of agro forestry and environmental science department of Sylhet Agricultural University, said, "Broccoli is rich in vitamin K, vitamin C, folic acid, potassium and fibre, which are extremely beneficial for health. It contains sulfuraphane, an ingredient helpful for prevention of cancer." The low calorie vegetable is also useful for keeping the heart healthy, he added. The nutritious vegetable is likely to be an economically viable crop in the haor area, said Dr Nurul Haque, health and family planning officer of Kulaura Upazila Health Complex.

TC TO 18 SCHOOL STUDENTS

Probe body formed, headmaster asked to show cause

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

The upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) of Parbatipur in Dinajpur formed a three-member committee yesterday to investigate the issuance of transfer certificates (TC) to 18 students of different classes at Jamirhaat High School in the upazila allegedly for not attending the school's annual picnic. Abu Taher Md Samsuzzaman, assistant commissioner (Land) in the upazila, leads the committee while two other members are Merajul Islam, secondary education officer, and Anisur Rahman, youth development officer of Parbatipur. "I formed the committee after getting a complaint from six students who got TC from the school on Wednesday. A show cause notice has also been served to Jahangir Alam, the headmaster," UNO Shahnaaj Mithun Munni told the journalists yesterday. The committee has been asked to submit report as early as possible, the UNO said, adding that action will be taken after getting the report and answer to the show cause notice. The three members of the committee visited the school yesterday. They, however, declined to make any comment about their finding. Mostafizur Rahman, lawmaker of Dinajpur-5 (Parbatipur and Phulbari), also former minister for primary and mass education, is president of the managing committee of Jamirhaat High School. The annual picnic of Jamirhaat High School was held on Monday. Tk 400 was fixed as the contribution from each student but many students of the school did not attend the picnic as they failed to pay the amount. On Wednesday, the school issued TC to 18 students for 'violating the school discipline'. Talking with this correspondent on Wednesday, Jahangir Alam, headmaster of the school, said, "The 18 students participated in a separate picnic on the same day. But, their parents said that they could not pay the money for the school picnic."

Man killed, his vehicle snatched

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Unidentified criminals killed a battery-run auto-rickshaw van driver and took away his vehicle in Dhanbari upazila of the district early yesterday. The deceased, Mohammad Tara Miah, 55, father of five children, was a resident of Somotkur village under Dhopakali union in the upazila. Quoting the deceased's family members, police said Tara went out of his house with his battery-run vehicle on Wednesday and did not returned home. Locals spotted his body lying near a banana orchard at Mominpur Pashchimpara village and informed the police, who recovered the body and sent it to Tangail General Hospital for autopsy. Officer in Charge (OC) of Dhanbari Police Station Chand Miah said criminals might have stabbed Tara to death before snatching away his vehicle. Deceased's son Masud Miah filed a murder case with the police station later in the day, he added.



A team, led by Divisional Estate Officer in West Zone of Bangladesh Railway Md Nuruzzaman, faces obstacle when they went to evict illegal occupiers in Saidpur municipality of Nilphamari on Tuesday.

PHOTO: STAR

BR LAND IN SAIDPUR

Occupiers thwart eviction drive again

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

In face of obstruction by illegal occupants, an eviction drive to remove illegal structures from railway land in Saidpur municipality was suspended on Tuesday. It was scheduled to conduct the eviction drive on February 8, but the date was shifted to Tuesday in face of agitation. Earlier, a strong team, led by Divisional Estate Officer in West Zone (WZ) of Bangladesh Railway (BR) Md Nuruzzaman, made a list of 119 illegal occupiers in Haldar para and railway bazar area of the municipality and started eviction drive around 11:00am on Tuesday. Before the drive, a notice was served to the occupants 15 days ago and an announcement through loud speakers was made to move to their desired places. According to railway estate office in west zone, 447 acres of BR land and around 2,200 abandoned rail quarters in Saidpur municipality are under the occupation of influential locals. On Tuesday morning, when the eviction team accompanied by a large number of police and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) personnel and railway security staffers went to Halder para area where occupants constructed buildings to use it as residence and business centre, the occupiers and their men encircled them, said the divisional estate officer.

At that time, the officer who was enjoying magistracy power sentenced one Nadim, 28, to seven days' imprisonment for creating obstruction to the drive. Without demolition of any illegal structure, the team left the area and came to local railway market and faced obstruction by the occupants. The occupiers then sprayed pepper powder on the team. One of the accused, spice trader Hasinur Rahman, who sprayed pepper powder fled the scene when police went to arrest him. The eviction team later seized several maunds of onion, garlic, ginger and turmeric from Hasinur's shop and sold them in auction at Tk 12,000. At the time, Ershad Alam Pappu, councilor of ward no 11 in the municipality, came to the scene and repeatedly asked the officer to go to the municipality office and made cellphone call to somewhere to influence the team but the latter refused. At one stage, the officer suspended the eviction drive around 1:30pm. On contact, councilor Pappu refused to pressurize the officer and said, "I just requested him to give the victims some days so that they can take preparation to shift." Railway Divisional Estate Officer Md Nuruzzaman said, "The illegal occupants have been given 15 days to move to their desired places. Otherwise, we will start drive after the deadline."

RECONSTRUCTION OF SHAHEED MINAR

Human chain demands monument at previous location

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

People from all walks of life, including Language Movement veterans, freedom fighters, journalists and cultural activists, formed a human chain yesterday, protesting the ongoing construction work of the district central Shaheed Minar, changing it from its original location. They formed the two-hour long human chain at Mission Intersection in the town yesterday noon. Sufi Mohammad, president of Lalmonirhat Sangskritik Kendra, a cultural platform, also served a legal notice to Lalmonirhat municipality mayor in this regard yesterday. Speakers at the rally said Lalmonirhat municipality authority is rebuilding the Shaheed Minar spending Tk 16,90,937 from its development fund. They alleged that the authorities



Reconstruction work of Lalmonirhat Central Shaheed Minar is going on just behind the existing one at Thana Road in the town.

PHOTO: STAR

concerned are reconstructing the Shaheed Minar some few yards away from its original location at Thana Road so that the eye catching luxurious house of a local Awami

League (AL) leader can be visible from the main road. Speakers said reconstruction of the Shaheed Minar is going on at a corner behind its original location

which will not be visible for the passer by. Advocate Hafizur Rahman, member secretary of Lalmonirhat Sangskritik Kendra, said they will continue their agitations till their demands are fulfilled. Locals said the central Shaheed Minar was built at Thana Road in Lalmonirhat town in 1972. There is an old tree behind it, but its reconstruction is going on at a spot just behind the tree. Contacted, Suman Khan, former deputy publicity secretary of district unit AL, said the allegations brought against him are baseless. It's not him, but the municipality authorities who will decide where the Shaheed Minar would be rebuilt, he said. Lalmonirhat Municipality Mayor Riazul Islam Rintu said reconstruction of the Shaheed Minar is going on according to the design and make it more attractive.



The Sutang river flowing like a narrow canal contains pitch black liquid, thanks to the mindless dumping of industrial wastes. The photo was taken from Sutang Bridge area in Habiganj Sadar upazila on Wednesday.

PHOTO: STAR

SADIA KHALID

to represent Bangladesh in Berlinale Talents 2020

ASHLEY SHOPTORSHI SAMADDAR

Film Critic and journalist Sadia Khalid will represent Bangladesh at this year's *Berlinale Talents 2020* (February 20-March 1) in the category for film critics.

In harmony with this year's theme, *Collectives*, over 150 filmmakers, activists and artists, from various branches of the film industry and society, will meet with 255 Talents invited from over 80 countries, including cinema lovers of Berlin. "Since 2003, twelve other Bangladeshis have represented Bangladesh in the *Berlinale Talents* in various other categories," says Sadia, who was the first Bangladeshi female to attend 2019 Cannes Film Festival as a jury for the International Federation of Film Critics (Fipresci). "However, this is the first time a Bangladeshi will be attending the event as a film critic."

Published film reviews, participation in film festivals both home and abroad, and the ability to critique are three important factors that ensure participation in Berlinale talents. "We are to submit three work samples for their consideration, as they look into our association with film through our work," mentions Sadia.

Along with her application, she turned in her article, *The first timer's ultimate survival guide*, based on her experience from the 2019 Cannes Film Festival, her analytic piece, *How Hollywood invented the 'exotic Indian'*, and *Honest Reviews: 'Fagun Haway,' A rocky marriage between drama and comedy-- review of Tauquir Ahmed's Fagun Haway* (2019). "It will be an amazing learning experience and I hope this opportunity will inspire other aspiring film critics to take this as a profession," concludes Sadia.



PHOTO: SHAHREAR KABIR HEEMEL



Siam Ahmed



Afran Nisho

Embracing spring with LOVE



Nurat Imrose Tisha

PHOTOS : STAR



Sabila Nur



Mehazabien Chowdhury

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Today, we celebrate Valentine's Day and *Pohela Falgun*. On this lovely occasion, we caught up with few stars of showbiz world to find out about their plans for the day.

Nurat Imrose Tisha: Sarwar (Mostafa Sarwar Farooki) and I will be flying to Paris to attend the screening of *Saturday Afternoon* at Vesoul International Film Festival. We will be on the plane. I am happy to be travelling with the love of my life on this special day. I send out the season's greetings to my fans and hope that everyone has a great time with their loved ones.

Siam Ahmed: Personally, I feel that you do not need a significant occasion to show your love for someone. However, a specific group of people love to celebrate Valentine's Day by hanging out with friends and exchanging gifts, which I think is great! I will be busy with shooting today, but I will try to make it special for my wife.

Sabila Nur: I came to Sylhet with my family to celebrate the day. We will visit all the beautiful locations of Sylhet. Interestingly, Nehal has been surprising me with gifts from the first day of February. I feel that love is very important in our lives and we should embrace each day with love.

Mehazabien Chowdhury: I am spending the day out of the country with my family. I do not believe that Valentine's Day should be limited to our significant others and life partners only. We should celebrate all of our relationships on this day. I hope that all my fans have a great time today.

Afran Nisho: I have taken today off to spend time with my family. I believe, special days are meant to be spent with loved ones. We will go on a long drive, dine in at our favourite restaurant, and enjoy the rest of the day together. I wish everyone a Happy Valentine's Day and *Shubho Boshonto!*

EKUSHEY SPOTLIGHT

Noman: Antik Mahmud and Oishik Jawad's humorous superhero story

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

Antik Mahmud and Oishik Jawad's superhero comic book, *Noman*, about a boy who dreams of becoming famous in Bangladesh, is out now at the Ekushey Boi Mela.

Throughout the story, Noman, the titular character, fights small-time criminals and then uploads the videos of his fights on YouTube. However, he does not come across serious crimes in the country and wishes to fight a big villain someday. On the other hand, *Noman* narrates the story of a female criminal, who is determined to destroy a charity organisation. Published by Adarsha and priced at BDT 240, the book is available at stalls 421 to 424. Antik and Oishik plan to turn *Noman* into an entire series, moving forward.

Tracing back his journey as an artist Oishik shared that his interest in drawing grew from a fascination towards anime and cartoons. "After my SSC examinations, I attended a workshop conducted by prominent cartoonists Ahsan Habib and Mehedi Haque," he says. It made me realise that cartoonists and comic artists have proper career choices in Bangladesh and we do not have to be formal art students to develop a career in this field."

The story behind *Noman* was initially conceived by Antik, who currently runs an animation studio and a YouTube channel that focus on positive content. "The main aim of my work is to highlight the good aspects of our society in our monotonous life," he says. Antik has also released his thriller novel, *Chol*, at the Ekushey Boi Mela. He looks forward to the readers' feedback on his books.



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED



বিশ্বাস আর আস্থায়
ফ্রান্সের টোটাল
এলপি গ্যাস

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
কর কমিশনারের কার্যালয়
বৃহৎ করদাতা ইউনিট (LTU), ঢাকা
২য়-১২ তলা সরকারী অফিস ভবন (৭ম তলা), সেগুনবাগিচা, ঢাকা

নথি নংঃ ১ই-১৪/বৃকইউ/২০১৯-২০২০/১১৩৩

তারিখঃ ০৯.০২.২০২০ খ্রি.

“সংশোধিত নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি”

অর্থ মন্ত্রণালয়, অভ্যন্তরীণ সম্পদ বিভাগ, অধিশাখা-২(কর) এর পত্র নং-০৮.০০.০০০০.০৩৭.১১.০২১.১১(অংশ-১)-২৫৫, তারিখঃ ২১-০৪-২০১৯ খ্রি অনুযায়ী প্রাপ্ত ছাড়পত্রের ভিত্তিতে বৃহৎ করদাতা ইউনিট (LTU), ঢাকা এর অধীনে প্রোড-১১ থেকে প্রোড-২০ পর্যন্ত বিভিন্ন শূণ্য পদে সরাসরি অস্থায়ী জনবল নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে নিম্নে বর্ণিত জেলাসমূহের প্রকৃত স্থায়ী বাসিন্দাদের নিকট হতে পদের পার্শ্বে বর্ণিত যোগ্যতা সম্পন্ন প্রার্থীদের শর্ত সাপেক্ষে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে :

ক্রমিক নং	পদের নাম ও বেতন স্কেল (জাতীয় বেতন স্কেল-২০১৫ অনুযায়ী)	শূন্য পদের সংখ্যা	শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা	যে সকল জেলার বাসিন্দা/নাগরিকগণ আবেদন করার প্রয়োজন নাই
০১।	কম্পিউটার অপারেটর প্রোড-১১ (১২,৫০০-৩০,২৩০)	০৪(চার)টি	(ক) কোন বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে বিজ্ঞান বিভাগে স্নাতক (সম্মান) বা সমমানের ডিগ্রি। (খ) কম্পিউটারে টাইপিং গতি বাংলায় প্রতি মিনিটে সর্বনিম্ন ২৫ ও ইংরেজীতে প্রতি মিনিটে সর্বনিম্ন ৩০ শব্দের গতিসহ সংশ্লিষ্ট বিষয়ে Standard Aptitude Test এ উত্তীর্ণ হতে হবে। (কম্পিউটার পার্সোনাল নিয়োগ বিধিমালা, ২০১৯ অনুযায়ী)	
০২।	স্টাটিস্টিক্যাল- কাম- কম্পিউটার অপারেটর প্রোড-১৩ (১১০০০-২৬৫৯০)	০২(দুই)টি	(ক) কোন বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে অন্যান্য দ্বিতীয় শ্রেণী বা সমমানের সিজিপিএতে স্নাতক বা সমমানের ডিগ্রি। (খ) কম্পিউটার চালনা দক্ষতা থাকতে হবে। (গ) কম্পিউটার Word processing সহ ইমেইল ও ফ্যাক্স পরিচালনা দক্ষতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে। (ঘ) স্টাটিস্টিক লিখনে গতি প্রতি মিনিটে বাংলায় ৫০ ও ইংরেজীতে ৮০ শব্দ এবং কম্পিউটারে টাইপিং গতি বাংলায় প্রতি মিনিটে সর্বনিম্ন ২৫ ও ইংরেজীতে প্রতি মিনিটে সর্বনিম্ন ৩০ শব্দ। (কমন পদ নিয়োগ বিধিমালা, ২০১৯ অনুযায়ী)	
০৩।	ব্যক্তিগত সহকারী প্রোড-১৩ (১১০০০-২৬৫৯০)	০১(এক)টি	(ক) কোন বীকৃত বোর্ড হতে উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক সার্টিফিকেট বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ। (খ) কম্পিউটারে বেসিক ট্রেনিং কোর্সে উত্তীর্ণ। (গ) কম্পিউটার Word processing সহ ইমেইল ও ফ্যাক্স পরিচালনা দক্ষতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে। (ঘ) স্টাটিস্টিক লিখনে গতি প্রতি মিনিটে বাংলায় ৫০ ও ইংরেজীতে ৮০ শব্দ এবং কম্পিউটারে টাইপিং গতি বাংলায় প্রতি মিনিটে সর্বনিম্ন ২৫ ও ইংরেজীতে প্রতি মিনিটে সর্বনিম্ন ৩০ শব্দ। কম্পিউটার চালনা দক্ষতা থাকতে হবে। (কর বিভাগ নিয়োগ বিধিমালা, ২০১৬ অনুযায়ী)	
০৪।	উচ্চমান সহকারী প্রোড-১৪ (১০,২০০ - ২৪,৬৮০/-)	০২(দুই)টি	(ক) কোন বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে স্নাতক বা সমমানের ডিগ্রি। (খ) কম্পিউটারে বেসিক ট্রেনিং কোর্সে উত্তীর্ণ। (গ) কম্পিউটার Word processing সহ ইমেইল ও ফ্যাক্স পরিচালনা দক্ষতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে। (কর বিভাগ নিয়োগ বিধিমালা, ২০১৬ অনুযায়ী)	
০৫।	স্টাটিস্টিক্যাল- কাম- কম্পিউটার অপারেটর/কম্পিউটার অপারেটর প্রোড-১৪ (১০,২০০ - ২৪,৬৮০/-)	১২(বার)টি	(ক) কোন বীকৃত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় হতে অন্যান্য দ্বিতীয় শ্রেণী বা সমমানের সিজিপিএতে স্নাতক বা সমমানের ডিগ্রি। (খ) কম্পিউটার ব্যবহারে দক্ষতা। (গ) কম্পিউটার Word processing সহ ইমেইল ও ফ্যাক্স পরিচালনা দক্ষতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে। (ঘ) স্টাটিস্টিক লিখনে গতি প্রতি মিনিটে বাংলায় ৪৫ ও ইংরেজীতে ৭০ শব্দ এবং কম্পিউটারে টাইপিং গতি বাংলায় প্রতি মিনিটে সর্বনিম্ন ২৫ ও ইংরেজীতে প্রতি মিনিটে সর্বনিম্ন ৩০ শব্দ। (কমন পদ নিয়োগ বিধিমালা, ২০১৯ অনুযায়ী)	ঢাকা, টাংগাইল, শরিয়তপুর, জামালপুর, চট্টগ্রাম, ব্রাহ্মণবাড়িয়া, কুমিল্লা, লক্ষ্মীপুর, নোয়াখালী, সিরাজগঞ্জ, রংপুর, খুলনা, নড়াইল, পিরোজপুর ও পটুয়াখালী জেলা তবে, এতিম ও শারীরিক প্রতিবন্ধী প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে বাংলাদেশের সকল জেলার প্রার্থীগণ আবেদন করতে পারবেন।
০৬।	ডাটা এন্ট্রি অপারেটর/অফিস সহকারী কাম-কম্পিউটার মুদ্রাক্ষরিক প্রোড-১৬ (৯,৩০০ - ২২,৪৯০/-)	০৩(তিন)টি	(ক) কোন বীকৃত বোর্ড হতে অন্যান্য দ্বিতীয় বিভাগ বা সমমানের সিজিপিএতে উচ্চ মাধ্যমিক সার্টিফিকেট বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ। (খ) কম্পিউটার ব্যবহারে দক্ষতা। (গ) কম্পিউটার Word processing সহ ইমেইল ও ফ্যাক্স পরিচালনা দক্ষতা ও অভিজ্ঞতা থাকতে হবে। (ঘ) টাইপিং গতি বাংলায় প্রতি মিনিটে সর্বনিম্ন ২০ ও ইংরেজীতে প্রতি মিনিটে সর্বনিম্ন ২০ শব্দ। (কমন পদ নিয়োগ বিধিমালা, ২০১৯ অনুযায়ী)	
০৭।	গাড়ীচালক প্রোড- ১৬ (৯,৩০০ - ২২,৪৯০/-)	০১(এক)টি	অষ্টম শ্রেণী বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ এবং হালকা ও ভারী যানবাহন চালানায় বোধ দ্রুতীকৃত লাইসেন্সধারী হতে হবে। বাছুর অভিজ্ঞতা সম্পন্ন প্রার্থীকে অগ্রাধিকার দেওয়া হবে। (Transport Directorate Recruitment Rules, ১৯৮৪ অনুযায়ী)	
০৮।	অফিস সহায়ক প্রোড-২০ (৮,২৫০ - ২০,০১০/-)	০৬(ছয়)টি	(ক) কোন বীকৃত বোর্ড হতে মাধ্যমিক স্কুল সার্টিফিকেট বা সমমানের পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ। (কর বিভাগ নিয়োগ বিধিমালা, ২০১৬ অনুযায়ী)	টাংগাইল, কিশোরগঞ্জ, গাজীপুর, নরসিংদী, মানিকগঞ্জ, ময়মনসিংহ, শেরপুর, ব্রাহ্মণবাড়িয়া, চাঁদপুর, কুমিল্লা, নোয়াখালী, রাজশাহী, পাবনা, সিরাজগঞ্জ, বগুড়া, রংপুর, দিনাজপুর, সুনামগঞ্জ, খুলনা, বরিশাল, বিনাইদহ, বাগেরহাট, কুষ্টিয়া, পিরোজপুর ও পটুয়াখালী তবে, এতিম ও শারীরিক প্রতিবন্ধী প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে বাংলাদেশের সকল জেলার প্রার্থীগণ আবেদন করতে পারবেন।

আবেদন ফরম পূরণ ও পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের ক্ষেত্রে নিম্নবর্ণিত শর্তাবলী অবশ্যই অনুসরণ করতে হবে :

- বিজ্ঞাপন প্রকাশের তারিখে সাধারণ প্রার্থীর বয়সসীমা ১৮-৩০ বছর। তবে মুক্তিযোদ্ধা/শহীদ মুক্তিযোদ্ধাদের পুত্র-কন্যা এবং শারীরিক প্রতিবন্ধীদের ক্ষেত্রে বয়সসীমা ১৮-৩২ বছর। বয়স প্রমাণের ক্ষেত্রে কোন প্রকার একিভেটিং গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে না।
- সরকারী, আধা-সরকারী ও স্বায়ত্তশাসিত প্রতিষ্ঠানে চাকরিরত প্রার্থীকে যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের অনুমতিপত্র মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় অবশ্যই প্রদর্শন করতে হবে।
- সরকারী নীতিমালা অনুযায়ী কোটা সংরক্ষণ করা হবে এবং সরকারী নীতিমালা অনুযায়ী কমিটি কোটা বিষয়ে যেকোন সিদ্ধান্ত গ্রহণ করবেন নিয়োগ প্রক্রিয়া সেভাবে সম্পন্ন হবে।
- লিখিত/মৌখিক পরীক্ষার অংশগ্রহণের জন্য কোন প্রকার টি.এ./ডি.এ. প্রদান করা হবে না।
- এ বিজ্ঞপ্তি আংশিক বা সম্পূর্ণ সংশোধন/বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করে।
- বিজ্ঞপ্তি পত্রিকা ছাড়াও বৃহৎ করদাতা ইউনিট (LTU), ঢাকা www.itubd.org ওয়েবসাইটে পাওয়া যাবে।
- উপরে উল্লেখ করা হয়নি কিন্তু প্রয়োজ্যতা রয়েছে এমন ক্ষেত্রে জনপ্রশাসন মন্ত্রণালয় কর্তৃক জারিকৃত বিধি-বিধান প্রযোজ্য হবে।
- নিয়োগ সংক্রান্ত যে কোনো বিষয়ে নিয়োগকারী কর্তৃপক্ষের সিদ্ধান্তই চূড়ান্ত বলে গণ্য হবে।
- মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় নিম্নলিখিত কাগজপত্রের মূলকপি প্রদর্শনপূর্বক প্রথম শ্রেণীর গেজেটেড কর্মকর্তা দ্বারা সত্যায়িত সকল সনদের ফটোকপি দাখিল করতে হবে।
ক. প্রার্থীর সকল শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতার সনদপত্র (প্রয়োজ্য ক্ষেত্রে অভিজ্ঞতা সনদপত্রসহ)।
খ. প্রার্থী যে ইউনিয়ন/পৌরসভা/ওয়ার্ড-এর বাসিন্দা সে ইউনিয়ন পরিষদের চেয়ারম্যান/পৌরসভার মেয়র/কাউন্সিলর কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত নাগরিকত্বের সনদপত্র।
গ. মহিলা কোটা ব্যতীত অন্যান্য কোটা দাবীর সমর্থনে যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষ কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত সনদ/প্রমাণপত্রের সত্যায়িত ছায়াছবি।
ঘ. শারীরিক প্রতিবন্ধী, এতিম, ক্ষুদ্র নৃ-গোষ্ঠী এবং আনসার ও ভিডিপি প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে সরকারের সর্বশেষ নীতিমালা অনুযায়ী উপযুক্ত কর্তৃপক্ষের সার্টিফিকেট এবং মুক্তিযোদ্ধা কোটার আবেদনকারী প্রার্থীদের ক্ষেত্রে সরকারের সর্বশেষ নীতিমালা অনুযায়ী মুক্তিযুদ্ধ বিষয়ক মন্ত্রণালয় কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত মুক্তিযোদ্ধা/শহীদ মুক্তিযোদ্ধাদের পুত্র-কন্যার পিতা-মাতার/পুত্র-কন্যার পুত্র-কন্যাপ্রাপ্তের পিতার পিতা-মাতা/মাতার পিতা-মাতার মুক্তিযোদ্ধার সনদপত্র।
ঙ. আবেদনকারী মুক্তিযোদ্ধা/শহীদ মুক্তিযোদ্ধার পুত্র-কন্যা এবং মুক্তিযোদ্ধা/শহীদ মুক্তিযোদ্ধাদের পুত্র-কন্যার পুত্র-কন্যা হলে আবেদন পত্রের সাথে মুক্তিযোদ্ধার সনদপত্র এবং আবেদনকারীর সাথে সম্পর্ক উল্লেখপূর্বক সংশ্লিষ্ট ইউনিয়ন পরিষদের চেয়ারম্যান/পৌরসভার মেয়র/সিটি কর্পোরেশনের ওয়ার্ড কাউন্সিলর কর্তৃক প্রত্যায়নপত্র।
চ. প্রথম শ্রেণীর গেজেটেড কর্মকর্তা প্রদত্ত চারিত্রিক সনদপত্র।
ছ. ক্রমিক নং-৭ এ বর্ণিত গাড়ী চালক পদের প্রার্থীর ক্ষেত্রে ড্রাইভিং লাইসেন্সের সত্যায়িত অনুলিপি।
জ. জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র (NID)/জন্ম সনদের সত্যায়িত অনুলিপি।
ঝ. Online-এ পূরণকৃত আবেদনকারের কপি (Applicant's Copy)।
- অসম্পূর্ণ/ভুল তথ্য সংবলিত/ত্রুটিপূর্ণ এবং চানুরির বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে প্রকাশিত ন্যূনতম যোগ্যতার সাথে মেয়ন-বয়স, শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা, কোটা, জেলা ইত্যাদি যে কোন বিষয়ে অসঙ্গতিপূর্ণ তথ্য দ্বারা পূরণকৃত আবেদন নিয়োগের যে কোন পর্যায়ে বাতিল করা হবে। এক্ষেত্রে প্রার্থীর কোন আপত্তি গ্রহণযোগ্য হবে না।
- শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতার সার্টিফিকেট, জন্ম তারিখ, জাতীয় পরিচয়পত্র, জন্মস্থান সংক্রান্ত তথ্য অসত্য বা মিথ্যা প্রমাণিত হলে প্রার্থীর বিরুদ্ধে আইনগত ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হবে। প্রার্থীর যোগ্যতা প্রার্থী কর্তৃক প্রদত্ত কোনো তথ্য বা দাখিলকৃত কাগজপত্র জাল, মিথ্যা বা ভুল প্রমাণিত হলে কিংবা পরীক্ষায় নকল বা অসদৃশ্য অবলম্বন করলে সংশ্লিষ্ট প্রার্থীর প্রার্থিতা বাতিল করা হবে এবং তার বিরুদ্ধে যথাযথ আইনগত ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ করা হবে। ভুল তথ্য/জাল কাগজপত্র প্রদর্শিত হলে পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ যে কোনো প্রার্থীর প্রার্থিতা বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা কর্তৃপক্ষ সংরক্ষণ করেন।

২২. অনলাইনে আবেদনদায়ের পূরণ সংক্রান্ত নিয়মাবলী ও শর্তাবলী

(ক) পরীক্ষার অংশগ্রহণে ইচ্ছুক ব্যক্তি <http://LTUTAX.teletalk.com.bd> এই ওয়েবসাইটে আবেদনপত্র পূরণ করতে পারবেন। আবেদনদায়ের সময়সীমা নিম্নরূপ:

(i) Online এ আবেদনদায়ের পূরণ ও আবেদন কি জমাদান করুর তারিখ ও সময় ১৬-০২-২০২০ ও সকাল ৯.০০ ঘটিকায় নির্ধারিত করা হয়।

(ii) Online এ আবেদনদায়ের জমাধানের শেষ তারিখ ও সময় ০৮-০৩-২০২০ ও বিকাল ৫.০০ ঘটিকায় নির্ধারিত করা হয়। উক্ত সময়সীমার মধ্যে User ID প্রাপ্ত প্রার্থীগণ Online এ আবেদনদায় Submit এর সময় থেকে ৭২ (বাহাতর) ঘণ্টার মধ্যে এসএমএস এর মাধ্যমে পরীক্ষার কি জমা দিতে পারবেন।

(খ) Online আবেদনদায়ের প্রার্থী তার বাফর (দৈর্ঘ্য ৩০০ x প্রস্থ ৮০ pixel) ও রঙিন ছবি (দৈর্ঘ্য ৩০০ x প্রস্থ ৩০০ pixel) স্ক্যান করে নির্ধারিত স্থানে Upload করবেন।

(গ) Online আবেদনদায়ের পূরণকৃত তথ্যই যেহেতু পরবর্তী সকল কার্যক্রমে ব্যবহৃত হবে, সেহেতু Online এ আবেদন Submit করার পূর্বেই পূরণকৃত সকল তথ্যের সঠিকতা সম্পর্কে প্রার্থী নিজে শতভাগ নিশ্চিত হবেন।

(ঘ) প্রার্থী Online এ পূরণকৃত আবেদনদায়ের একটি প্রিন্টেড কপি পরীক্ষা সংক্রান্ত যে কোন প্রয়োজনের সহায়ক হিসেবে সংরক্ষণ করবেন এবং মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময় এক কপি জমা দিবেন।

(ঙ) SMS প্রেরণের নিয়মাবলী ও পরীক্ষার কি প্রদান: Online আবেদনদায় (Application Form) যথাযথভাবে পূরণ করে নির্দেশনা মতে ছবি ও বাফর Upload করে আবেদনদায় Submit করা সম্পন্ন হলে কম্পিউটারে ছবিসহ Application Preview দেখা যাবে। নির্ভুলভাবে আবেদনদায় Submit করা সম্পন্ন হলে প্রার্থী একটি User ID, ছবি এবং বাফরযুক্ত একটি Applicant's copy পাবেন। উক্ত Applicant's copy প্রার্থী Download পূর্বক রঙিন প্রিন্ট করে সংরক্ষণ করবেন। Applicant's কপিতে একটি User ID নম্বর থাকবে এবং User ID নম্বর ব্যবহার করে প্রার্থী নিম্নোক্ত পদ্ধতিতে যে কোন Teletalk Pre-paid mobile নম্বরের মাধ্যমে ০২(দুই) টি SMS করে আবেদন কি বাদ ১-৭ নং ফ্রীকলের জন্য ১১২/১; এবং ৮ নং ফ্রীকলের জন্য ৫৬/০- টাকা; অনধিক ৭২ (বাহাতর) ঘণ্টার মধ্যে জমা দিবেন। এখানে বিশেষভাবে উল্লেখ্য যে, "Online আবেদনদায়ের সকল অংশ পূরণ করে Submit করা হলেও পরীক্ষার কি জমা না দেয়া পর্যন্ত Online এ পূরণকৃত আবেদনদায় কোন অবস্থাতেই ঘৃণীত হবে না"।

আবেদনদায় গ্রহণের সময়সীমা শেষ হওয়ার পর প্রার্থী লিখিত পরীক্ষার প্রবেশপত্র ডাউনলোড করতে পারবেন। একই প্রবেশপত্র দিয়ে লিখিত এবং মৌখিক পরীক্ষা অনুষ্ঠিত হবে।

উল্লেখ্য যে, পরীক্ষার তারিখ, সময় এবং কেন্দ্রের নাম যথাসময়ে ওয়েবসাইটে (www.ltubd.org/)/SMS/পরীক্ষার বিজ্ঞপ্তির মাধ্যমে জানানো হবে।

প্রথম SMS: LTUTAX<space>User ID লিখে Send করতে হবে 16222 নম্বরে।
Example: LTUTAX XMSMX3
Reply: Applicant's Name, TK-112/56 will be charged as application fee. Your PIN is 12345678, To pay fee Type LTUTAX <space>Yes<space>PIN and Send to 16222 নম্বরে।
দ্বিতীয়: SMS: LTUTAX <space>Yes<space>PIN লিখে Send করতে হবে 16222 নম্বরে।
Example: LTUTAX Yes 12345678
Reply: Congratulations Applicant's Name. Payment Completed Successfully for LTUTAX Application for (Post Name) User ID is (ABCDEF) and Password (xxxxxxx).

(৯) প্রবেশপত্র প্রাপ্তির বিষয়টি <http://LTUTAX.teletalk.com.bd> ওয়েবসাইটে এবং প্রার্থীর মোবাইল ফোনে SMS এর মাধ্যমে (সুধুমাত্র যোগ্য প্রার্থীদেরকে) যতদূর সম্ভব জানানো হবে। Online আবেদনপত্রে প্রার্থীর প্রদত্ত মোবাইল ফোনে পরীক্ষা সংক্রান্ত যাবতীয় যোগাযোগ সম্পন্ন করা হবে বিধায় উক্ত নম্বরটি সার্বক্ষণিক সচল রাখা, SMS পড়া এবং প্রাপ্ত নির্দেশনা তাত্ক্ষণিক অনুসরণ করা বাঞ্ছনীয়।

(১০) SMS এ প্রেরিত User ID এবং Password ব্যবহার করে পরবর্তীতে রোল নম্বর, পদের নাম, ছবি, পরীক্ষার তারিখ, সময় ও স্থান/কেন্দ্রের নাম ইত্যাদি তথ্য সম্বলিত প্রবেশপত্র প্রার্থী Download পূর্বক রসিদ Print করে নিবেন। প্রার্থী এই প্রবেশপত্রটি লিখিত পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণের সময়ে এবং উত্তীর্ণ হলে মৌখিক পরীক্ষার সময়ে অবশ্যই প্রদর্শন করবেন।

(১১) সুধুমাত্র টেলিটক প্রি-পেইড মোবাইল ফোন থেকে প্রার্থীগণ নিম্নবর্ণিত SMS পদ্ধতি অনুসরণ করে নিজ নিজ User ID এবং Password পুনরুদ্ধার করতে পারবেন।

(i) User ID জানা থাকলে LTUTAX <space>Help<space>User<space>User ID & Send to 16222. Example: LTUTAX Help User ABCDEF

(ii) Pin Number জানা থাকলে LTUTAX <space>Help<space>PIN<space>PIN Number & Send to 16222. Example: LTUTAX Help Pin 12345678.

(১২) Online-এ আবেদন করতে কোনো সমস্যা হলে টেলিটক নম্বর থেকে ১২১ নম্বরে অথবা vas.query@teletalk.com.bd বা ltuit@dhaka.net ই-মেইলে যোগাযোগ করা যাবে।

GD- 285

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BANGLADESH INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

১৯৮০

No- 20.08.0000.200.11.006.20-45

Date: 13 February 2020

VACANCY

Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) under the ministry of Planning is inviting applications from bona fied Bangladeshi nationals for the post of **Research Fellow and Post-Doctoral Fellow**.

Name of the Post and Scale of Pay (NPS 2015)	Minimum Qualifications
<p>Research Fellow (RF)</p> <p>NPS 2015 Tk. 35500-67010/- with admissible allowances.</p>	<p>The candidate should have a Ph.D degree, two years of teaching/research experience excluding the period spent in Ph.D. program and two journal publications (of BDS standard)*. Ph.D requirement can be relaxed for otherwise excellent candidates.</p>
<p>Post-Doctoral Fellow (for a fixed period of up to 3 (three) years.</p> <p>NPS 2015 Tk. 35500-67010/- with admissible allowances.</p>	<p>The candidate must have a recent Ph.D degree in economics/social science or a related field and relevant post-doctoral experience would be preferred but not essential. He / she must be able to initiate and carry out high quality research independently.</p>

* BDS means Bangladesh Development Studies, which is a quarterly journal published by the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies.

The candidates for RF are expected to have a background in economics, development studies, sociology, anthropology, population studies or a related field. BIDS is particularly looking for people with a background or expertise in macro, trade, demography, industrial organization and political economy.

Application forms can be downloaded from the website of the institute (www.bids.org.bd). Completed application forms may be submitted electronically to rf@bids.org.bd / pdfellow@bids.org.bd for the post of Research Fellow and Post-Doctoral Fellow respectively by **10 March 2020**. Applicants are not required to send publications or certificates electronically or by post at this stage. An electronically generated acknowledgement receipt of the application will be sent to the applicant. If the applicant does not receive it in two days, it may be sent directly by post to the **Secretary, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), E-17, Agargaon, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka-1207**.

Candidates already in service should apply through proper channel. The authority reserves the right to accept and reject any or all applications or this appointment process without assigning any reason. BIDS is an equal opportunity employer. Women and those from ethnic minority groups are particularly encouraged to apply.


13.02.2020
(Subash Chandra Saha)
Secretary (a.i)
BIDS, Dhaka

Air pollution is a national crisis

And the authorities should act accordingly

ACCORDING to a report that is the first to assess the global cost of air pollution, in 2018 air pollution cost the world an estimated USD 2.9 trillion. The World Health Organization (WHO) already approximates that globally air pollution accounts for 29 percent of all deaths and disease from lung cancer, 17 percent from acute lower respiratory infection, and a quarter from stroke and heart disease.

Bad air quality is one index where Dhaka consistently tops the global chart—and more recently, it has cemented its place at the very top. A World Bank report previously estimated that Bangladesh loses about USD 6.5 billion every year due to pollution and environmental degradation in urban areas. However, given that the study is a few years old, and that air pollution has gotten significantly worse over the past years, the cost can safely be assumed to be higher now.

The environment, forest and climate change minister said that brick kilns are responsible for more than half the air pollution in the capital, followed by smog from a staggering number of unfit vehicles plying the city streets. But then again, we all know this. Different health and environmental groups have repeatedly highlighted this problem. And the media has time and again covered this issue. It is the authorities who have not done their part to address it. Given that the major causes of air pollution are well known and a number of clear-cut solutions have already been suggested to the government, the fact that the government has not responded timely is shameful, particularly because air pollution is responsible for the deaths and health problems of countless people including children.

The minister has also said that the authorities are looking into the matter. But what the authorities must realise is that people's lives and health are at stake here, which is why they must stop dithering about and act quickly.

Celebrating the changemakers

Daily Star honours the selfless acts of two farmers

WE are delighted to be able to honour the extraordinary contributions of two farmers at the 29th Anniversary programme of *The Daily Star* on Wednesday. They have shown the world how the dedication and determination of a single individual can bring about change in society. Considering their modest backgrounds and their reality of constantly struggling to make ends meet, it is truly humbling that these individuals have sacrificed their time, energy and resources to do something for their community and, consequently, their country.

We applaud Mohammad Soinuddin Miah's initiative to build a 1.5 km earthen road for his village, Chakgadadhar, in Tangail, and Abdur Rahim for building Kaliganj Pratibandhi Bidyalay, a school for disabled children.

These two men, both farmers, have taught us that conviction, hard work and years of sacrifice can bring any dream to fruition, regardless of one's socio-economic background. It's admirable when people, despite many setbacks, come forward to help others; such visionary individuals set a positive example for us.

However, where sustainability of their projects is concerned, there needs to be more support from the government. While Soinuddin Miah has sold his family's paddy to work on building a road, Abdur Rahim spends his income from selling crops and vegetables to run his school. Additionally, they are helped by their communities and relatives. In order to help their projects to become sustainable in the long term, they both require a steady source of funding as their household incomes and donations alone won't be enough to foot the bill in the future.

Here we must point out the importance of the contributions of these two men. Selflessly they have tried to make a difference in their community. One built a road so that people, especially children going to school, could travel without hassle and the other provides education and hope to the children with disabilities. These are projects normally taken up by the state and therefore the state should assist these individuals so that they can continue to contribute to the development of their communities.

We request our government and policymakers to recognise the contributions of these two individuals and provide them with the necessary financial and technical support so that they may continue and even expand their work. It is the contributions of such individuals, when added together, that constitute nation building.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

letters@thedailystar.net

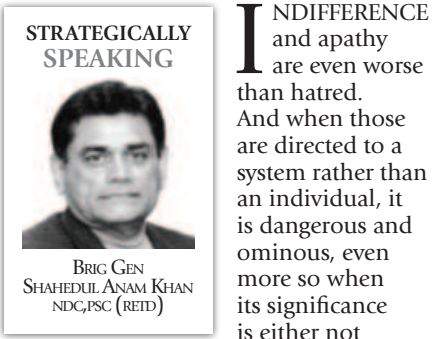
Save students from drugs

While the purpose of higher education should be gathering knowledge and skills and of course becoming a good human being, for some students the purpose seems to be the opposite as they indulge in activities likely to have contrary effects. I am talking about the students' exposure to drugs. A student has to work really hard for getting admission to a university, especially a public one, since the competition is high and only those with high calibre get the chance to get into their desired institutions. But unfortunately, after getting admission, many of these brilliant students get addicted to drugs and lose their interest in studies.

There are many who even fail to complete their education due to drug abuse. My question is, what are the university administrations doing to ensure that their campuses remain free from the clutches of drugs? Reportedly, those who killed BUET student Abrar were not only politically powerful but also used to taking drugs. The university administrations should give the issue due attention and raise a social campaign against drug abuse.

Md Oadud Rahman
Population Science & HRD, Rajshahi University

Don't take voters' apathy lightly



INDIFFERENCE and apathy are even worse than hatred. And when those are directed to a system rather than an individual, it is dangerous and ominous, even more so when its significance is either not comprehended or disregarded wilfully. Thus, amidst the constant barrage of hyperbole springing from some office-bearers of the ruling party on the causes of the very low turnout in the recently held election in Dhaka city corporations, a sensible explanation was offered by the party's secretary general. He ascribed the reason for the voters shunning the polling centres to public apathy. It was not surprising to the careful observers—the scant presence of voters attending the dry-run practice of EVMS a couple of days before the polls betrayed a lack of enthusiasm among them. It was an indicator of things to come.

However, in the midst of the political theatrics, the only redeeming feature was the EVM, which, despite all its demerits, prevented inflation in the voter turnout figure by the EC, something we witnessed done after the 2014 elections. But nothing is foolproof if the system is operated, and the environment hogged, by only one side. Eyewitness accounts—and there were many in the media—narrated the manner in which the EVMS were used to cast the votes as per the suggestions of those who controlled the system.

It was surprising to hear all kinds of narratives to justify the indifference of the voters of the metropolis, less than 30 percent of whom turned out to choose who they wanted to be the ones holding the important posts of mayors and councillors. It was equally astounding to see the two winning mayoral candidates taking a self-gratifying pleasure in their victory without realising the serious consequences of people's indifference to democracy and democratic institutions in the country. It should be a matter of concern for anyone seeking public office to find himself or herself a winner in a supposedly democratic contest where the vast majority of the stakeholders preferred to remain absent.

Reportedly, the polling booths were not left to the voters alone, as there were other people extraneous to the system present there. While it is not the intention to dwell on the inviolability of the EVM—incidentally, most countries who had introduced the machine in the system have done away with it—it is difficult to explain the symmetry in the pattern of voting as released by the EC in the two

city corporations polls.

One wonders whether the ruling party high-ups are aware of this either. If that were the case, the people would have been spared the imprudent comments describing this election as being the "best" in the country's electoral history. One senior AL office-bearer, in his unfathomable wisdom, even accused the BNP, holding it responsible for the low turnout, without offering any plausible explanation. Where, may one ask, were the local AL leaders? What is it that

and disregard for the decline of the state of democracy and democratic institutions in the country. Both are dangerous and portend an ominous future for our democracy. The DNCC/ DSCC polls have served as a damning indictment of our polity and democratic dispensation. There is no need to undertake any research into the reasons of the low turnout, as one Bangla daily had suggested after the polls. What is needed though is to cogitate on the only reason that the AL secretary general, in

equally worse when it comes to the manifestation of a relationship between the state (government) and the citizens, and can wreak immense damage, as warned by many philosophers, statesmen and politicians. French philosopher Montesquieu considered the apathy of a citizen in a democracy as being more dangerous to public welfare than the tyranny of a prince in an oligarchy.

What one hopes our politicians would do—particularly the ruling party—is to determine how people's apathy and



A combination picture shows different moments from the near-empty polling centre at Mohammadpur Government High School during the election in Dhaka city corporations on February 1, 2020.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

demotivated even them from turning up or herding their supporters to the polling centres? Are we to believe that AL supporters were also swayed by BNP arguments, whatever those were, to keep their distance from the polling centres? It is hard to believe that the BNP has the power to coerce ruling-party supporters into keeping away from voting, when very few of its own agents managed to get inside the centres.

What was betrayed in those insensible, and some might say puerile, comments was either that the ruling party is not aware of the consequences of the issue, or their total indifference to

a welcome display of objectivity, had suggested—APATHY of the voters.

The word "apathy" should not be taken lightly, as our politicians have done, not in the case of human relationship and even less in the case of elections, voting and voters. A display of apathy or indifference, which is worse than hatred, reflects an abysmal situation in the state.

American author Helen Keller termed the apathy of human beings as the worst kind of evil for which science has discovered no remedy yet. She was, of course, speaking of it in terms of human relationship. But it can be

the eventual slide to cynicism can be arrested. The reasons for people turning their back on elections are not far to seek. It is only the politically blind and deaf who are unable to get the message that the people's abstention conveys. Such an eventuality will be detrimental to politics, democracy and public interests. That is something totally unacceptable. Is it not the time to ponder on the matter, particularly in the centenary year of the colossus who had dedicated his life to democracy, the rights of people and freedom of speech?

Brig Gen Shahedul Anam Khan, ndc, psc (Retd) is a former Associate Editor of *The Daily Star*.

Intellectual property raises costs of living

CLAIRE LIM and JOMO KWAME SUNDARAM

MANY medicines and medical tests are unaffordable to most of humanity owing to the ability of typically transnational pharmaceutical giants to abuse their monopoly powers, enforced by intellectual property laws, to set prices to maximise profits over the long term.

Most basic research is funded by government grants, and in recent years, by philanthropic initiatives. When a profitable opportunity presents itself, venture capitalists fund "last leg" efforts to patent an innovation and "take it to market", as the patent holder "takes all".

Patents, a form of intellectual property rights (IPRs), are believed by many to be necessary to incentivise innovation, and to recover research and development costs, by creating a temporary legal monopoly.

IPRs are monopoly rights

After securing patents, patent holders typically take additional measures to deter and undermine potential competitors, and to consolidate and extend their monopoly position for as long as possible by any means available. Private companies have then used their monopolies to charge exorbitant prices.

In 2015, Turing Pharmaceuticals bought the rights to Daraprim—a drug used by cancer and HIV patients to fight deadly parasitic infections—raising its price 50-fold from USD13.50 to USD 750! The "price gouging" company was controlled by Martin Shkreli, dubbed "Pharma Bro" by the US media and once deemed "America's most hated man".

Private companies eager to extend their monopolies try to "evergreen" them, by registering "follow-on" patents involving minor variations closely linked to the original invention. By evergreening, the patents system has been used by companies to create long-term monopolies.

Others engage in "patent trolling", obtaining many patents to profit from litigation or licensing, without inventing anything or making products of their own. Trolling enables patent owners to blackmail those in need of their patents, sometimes by creating "patent thickets"—webs of overlapping IPRs—and related bottlenecks, limiting the utilisation of patented knowledge and effectively hindering further innovation.

Before the US withdrew from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) in January 2017, TPP provisions would have extended IP protections to cover "biologics", i.e., naturally occurring substances, such as insulin for diabetes

patients. These onerous TPP provisions have been suspended in the successor Comprehensive and Progressive TPP (CPTPP) following US withdrawal, but can easily be reinstated, e.g., to induce the US to rejoin the TPP.

Tripping up public health

Through various means, US-style IPR regimes have spread worldwide since the adoption of the World Trade Organization's (WTO) agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). Under TRIPS, all WTO members have to provide a minimum level of IPR protection which includes, among other things, patent protection for a minimum of 20 years, including for imported IPRs registered in other countries.

from pharmaceutical giants and their governments to limit, if not eliminate, the scope of these exceptions.

Malaysia is the first country to use "compulsory licencing" under TRIPS to produce sofosbuvir for Hepatitis C treatment. The drug, from patent owner Gilead, costs almost RM 300,000 (USD 68,000) for the full course, while generic substitutes cost just over RM 1,000. US "big pharma" has applied pressure on Malaysia to stop using its compulsory licence.

IP for intellectual piracy

Developing countries are generally unable to check the monopolistic practices of transnational pharmaceutical conglomerates due to underdeveloped antitrust regimes, weak law enforcement



People segregate expired medicines outside a chemist store in New Delhi, India, on February 2, 2018.

PHOTO: REUTERS/SAUMYA KHANDEWLAL

TRIPS also stipulates conditions for using the "compulsory licence" concession allowing governments to license the use of a patented invention to a third party or government agency without the consent of the patent-holder.

There is moot evidence that TRIPS benefits developing countries by attracting foreign investment, promoting technological transfer and increasing innovation. Instead, TRIPS has imposed substantial, avoidable costs on developing countries.

Where developing countries have made use of TRIPS concessions, they have faced international pressure

capacities and their influential partners. Such companies may re-package medicinal products and processes from developing countries' "traditional knowledge systems" to secure patents on them, including naturally occurring substances known as biologics.

Turmeric is widely used in India for medicine, food and dye, among other things. In 1995, the US granted the University of Mississippi Medical Center a patent for the use and administration of turmeric powder to heal wounds, granting it an exclusive right to sell and distribute turmeric.

Where developing countries have made use of TRIPS concessions, they have faced international pressure from pharmaceutical giants and their governments to limit, if not eliminate, the scope of these exceptions.

The Indian Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) objected, arguing that turmeric had been used in India for centuries, providing historical references in Sanskrit, Urdu, Hindi and other languages. The US patent was eventually revoked because it lacked the "novelty" element, but it required herculean efforts.

Alternatives

Developing countries are now no longer able to require technology transfer, further limiting their ability to develop their own technological capacities and capabilities. Hence, many developing country governments are told they have no other way to industrialise except by generously inducing transnational companies to locate parts of their "value-adding" activities in their economies.

The book "Innovation, Intellectual Property and Development", by Joseph Stiglitz, Dean Baker and Arjun Jayadev, suggests alternatives to incentivise innovation, especially relevant for developed economies. These include: centralised direct R&D financing; decentralised funding through tax breaks for research spending; using prizes to recognise and reward innovative research; and establishing open source platforms to promote free knowledge flows.

Without the strong private monopolies enabled by current IP rules, the currently unaffordable prices of medicines and other products can be significantly reduced while developing countries will have much better prospects for developing internationally competitive industrial capacities and technological capabilities.

Claire Lim is a lawyer who used to practice in England. Jomo Kwame Sundaram was a university professor and senior UN official. Courtesy: Inter Press Service

Changing the shy world of adolescent girls

Lessons from installing a girls' toilet facility

SYED SAAD ANDALEEB *and* ADNAN ZILLUR MORSHED

BACK in 2017, we had an opportunity to build a small and experimental toilet in Jhalokati, with the simple intention of helping adolescent girls in a rural school who had no real toilet to avail. We designed a cost-efficient, environment-friendly, safe, and sanitary toilet for them to access easily and to improve their menstrual hygiene. We also wanted to help them change their common perception of a toilet from a dark, dingy, and stigmatised space to a positive, light-filled, ventilated, and gender-friendly facility.

The toilet project soon evolved into a research topic, an opportunity to look at some of the typical social and hygiene-related problems that rural girls encounter at their schools.

Inadequate access to a comfortable, convenient, and secure toilet at schools is one of the most common forms of gender discrimination, experienced regularly by girls across rural Bangladesh.

Our hope was that this prototype toilet project would change the attitudes of school teachers, parents, local community leaders, and even adolescent boys regarding specific health needs of girls. Furthermore, a gender-friendly toilet would improve



The toilet after construction.

COURTESY: AUTHORS

the self-esteem of girls, enabling them to become more conscious and productive citizens.

It was a significant learning experience. We gained insight into how hygiene, adolescence, and social conditions intersect, while encountering a host of surprising repercussions in project management. In Bangladesh, 40 percent of adolescent girls do not attend school during the first three days of their period. Only 11 percent of schools have separate toilets for girls with water facilities, 3 percent have the facility to dispose of sanitary products, and 69 percent of school girls never change sanitary napkins during school time. About 45 percent of girls complain about the unavailability of water in school toilets. According to the Bangladesh National Hygiene Baseline Survey-2014, only 10 percent of students use disposable pads and only 12 percent schools have improved toilets for girls. Most of the time school girls use rags instead of sanitary napkins, resulting in urinary infections. This situation leads to a pervasive culture of school absenteeism among adolescent girls, eventually creating unfortunate conditions for many to drop out from school. Subsequently,

the evil of underage marriage rushes in.

During the course of our toilet design, we realised that research on girls' hygiene management as well as its influence on their education and well-being is scarce. Moreover, very little has been done to improve design guidelines and placement of toilets within a given school premise that specifically supports adolescent girls' special needs. Often times young girls never receive accurate information, guidance, and access to affordable sanitary options.

We came to the realisation that inadequate access to a comfortable, convenient, and secure toilet at schools is one of the most common forms of gender discrimination, experienced regularly by girls across rural Bangladesh. The most troubling part of this discrimination is that it occurs due to the community's pervasive apathy and unwillingness to address the issue. Menstruation is a taboo subject and everybody wants to avoid having to discuss it. Although considerable effort has been undertaken by NGOs and community groups to ameliorate the situation, there is still silence both at school and home. Neither parents nor teachers take necessary steps to educate girls on the subject. This form

of silence, further complicated by societal ignorance of and indifference to menstrual hygiene, breeds a fertile ground for discrimination and denigration.

We recently completed the construction of the toilet that we proposed back in 2017. A core concept of our toilet design was "no girl alone." Often times girls feel reluctant to go to the solitary toilet facility at school because they are afraid that they would be harassed on the way to or once inside the toilet. Our solution for this particular problem was to provide three functions—toilets, ablution space, and handwashing—so that multiple girls can be inside the facility at the same time as mutual protection. The toilet includes a low-cost, key-based sanitary pad dispenser. Furthermore, our design proposes to use waste water for the adjacent community vegetable garden that the girls will be responsible for maintaining. This way they will take ownership of the toilet, thereby feeling inspired to sustain it as best as they can. Maintenance of the facility in small teams is their responsibility.

Just because one has a good, philanthropic intention doesn't mean that people at the receiving end will accept something with open arms: in fact, there were serious obstacles. The toilet project required a monumental effort to get it approved by the omnipotent school committee. We first suggested a precondition that the local community would pay 10 percent of the total construction cost; a partial community ownership would mean better monitoring and maintenance of the facility. But the suggestion was met with dead silence!

The divisiveness of the school committee was forbidding. Not everyone agreed that a toilet for girls was even necessary. So much attention devoted to girls was perhaps unacceptable. Eventually, the committee agreed on the necessity of a gender-friendly toilet on the school premise and approved it. However, in the meeting minutes, the clause for the 10-percent community contribution

toward the construction cost was surreptitiously deleted.

Once the construction of the toilet began, local goons arrived to demand money from the contractor, who couldn't oblige because it was a small project with very little room for profit. His plea didn't soften the goons; they returned at night and destroyed the under-construction toilet. We were shattered. How could people be so insensitive and heartless? We approached the local political power-wielders and appealed for intervention. After multiple telephone calls and police visits to the school, things were under control, thanks to our "connection." The toilet finally came to reality after much consternation and high drama. This is only the first part of the story.

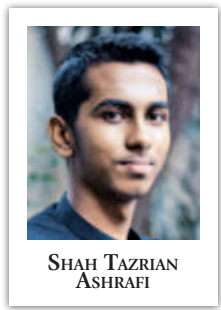
We recognise that the toilet may change neither the misogynist culture of a rural school nor the shy world of adolescent girls. The toilet may even fall into disrepair and become a putrid place as elsewhere. To stop that from happening, we thought it would be important to tie the idea of toilet hygiene with curricular reform in such subjects as civic responsibility, environmental sustainability, gender studies, and conscientious use of water. These ideas, even if they are executed at a micro-scale, are intimately related to the nation's broader interests because school girls will emerge as better human beings and, as mothers, also enlighten their progeny. We also believe that our small project can spur local initiatives for not just public health and wellbeing, but also social justice. We will continue to study the girls' response to the toilet facility as an everyday frontier to change society, one step at a time.

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Architects S.M. Shafaiet Mahmud, Tahseen Reza Anika, Faizal Bin-Alfzal Ash-Shafi, and Aarjiah Rashid participated in the design of the toilet.

Coronavirus and the politics of xenophobia



AIRPORTS beef up security, a ship full of passengers remains quarantined and docked at Yokohama, while racism takes root and flourishes under the shadow of an outbreak.

A novel virus, which has affected around 60,000 individuals, killed over 1,350 people globally, and reached 24 countries till now, has laid bare how it takes only a nudge to unleash xenophobic—intentional, subconscious, or institutional—values against a certain community.

Questionable memes attacking the Chinese as a whole are flooding the Internet. These justify the racial attack against the Chinese by basing it on their "food habits". The scientific journal, Nature, has mentioned the coronavirus's probable ties to pangolins—animals used for making "Traditional Chinese Medicine"—although the declaration is yet to be made formally.

Once I saw a comment that stated that even though being xenophobic against the backdrop of the coronavirus's outbreak was not and should not be justified, the Chinese needed to "be called out for their food habits". An

entire community, viewed as a single body, was inculpated, just like that. A blanket generalisation shunning the diversity and multiplicity of a community was evident in that comment.

That comment, unfortunately, does not echo an isolated view. It echoes a view shared by many who, knowingly or unknowingly, fall into the traps of hasty generalisation. It also echoes subtle xenophobia.

I can only imagine what their (those who propagate xenophobia) responses would be had the communities they belong to been on the receiving end of a global xenophobia. Among others, those who share the Muslim identity can understand it well—for example, how it feels to be accused of being an Al-Qaeda fan due to the havoc wreaked by extremist terrorist groups.

In Leicestershire, two students were pelted with eggs, upon mistakenly deemed to be Chinese. In Los Angeles, a woman was verbally abused on public transport because of her Chinese descent after the virus's outbreak. A half-Chinese boy was "chased" and "cornered" in his school. The internet is filled with such stories of xenophobic behaviour against the backdrop of the global outbreak. #IAmNotAVirus, a vivid window into the high-spirited surge in racism, is now trending on Twitter.

The current scenario makes one reach some unsettling conclusions:



Passengers wear masks to protect against the spread of the coronavirus as they arrive on a flight from Asia at Los Angeles International Airport.

that xenophobia has always been there and the outbreak of a virus is only the pathway that allows and sustains its channelling; that racism probably stays at a distance until a moment comes when only the tag of a certain community is related to a certain thing or event causing global concerns; that no one is safe from the talons of hasty generalisation—even though you are totally a different, autonomous being, the communal tag drilled into your identity will perhaps always incriminate you for things you have no control over; that regrettably, a community is often

singularised, and utmost panic, at times subconsciously, at times consciously, drives its multiplicities into the wasteland.

It is absurd to think that earlier we had to derive these observations from terror attacks and now other mediums are gaining the limelight. In the future, we will probably be exposed to newer mediums uncovering xenophobia, bigotry, and other forms of toxic biases.

In the age of social media, memes seem to be the front-runners for blatant expression of racism, as they gain attention of the masses by making

derogatory puns and reigniting old biases against the Chinese culture in a new light. This is no new, divine finding; but the heavy normalisation of using a certain culture as fodder for racist, prejudicial, biased entertainment only reaffirms the fact that the perception generated by these racist means gives rise to the proliferation of this sick process. It also shapes the thinking of impressionable groups that find themselves on common platforms for directing their inner racism and, in the process, singularising a community on the grounds of stereotypes based on race and culture.

Old stories, new windows.

The invisible trap of generalisation catches its victims in the atmosphere of trepidation and fear surrounding public emergencies. Even though it sets out to catch its victims, it gives one the opportunity to choose between sides—a blatantly xenophobic one that capitalises on individual safety and views and warrants prejudices in a moral light, and a thoughtful one that allows oneself to believe that a certain community is not a solitary build-up of the same bones.

It is, perhaps, one of the many tests of the current time to see how people all over the globe can avoid the trap or fall into it.

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ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY

(14 February, 2008)

Registration of YouTube

Founders Steve Chen, Chad Hurley and Jawed Karim registered YouTube, a website for sharing videos, on this day in 2008. It became popular with more than one billion unique users visiting the site every month.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS	33 North Pole worker	10 Used to be 16 Casual top
1 Dance moves	34 Middle East tree	19 Sources of sudden wealth
5 Blue state	38 Party nibble	20 Pop star
11 Plot unit	41 Lotion additive	21 Henri's head
12 Iroquois League member	42 Coral isles	22 Sweeping story
13 Bank offering	43 Artery problem	23 Not to mention
14 Customs	44 Past and present	28 Bike pair
15 Deserving		29 Basic need
17 Rival	DOWN	30 Gettysburg
18 Namely	1 Secluded valley	
22 Tire in the trunk	2 File stand-in	31 Liam's cousin
24 Disparaging	3 Slapstick stunts	35 Hardy heroine
25 Maximum amount	4 Grad-to-be	36 "Behold!"
26 Negating word	5 Music category	37 Citi Field team
27 Swallows	6 Beginnings	38 Manx, for one
30 Soup server	7 Turn the page, say	39 Consumed
32 Useful ability	8 Outfit	40 Dijon denial
	9 Poem of praise	

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YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

1 JOSEPH	2 QUALMS
3 BROW	4 UNREAL
5 SEW	6 ARTERY
7 DIALS	8 SOB
9 ATOLL	10 TAHOE
11 YOWL	12 DOZE
13 ERNST	14 FEWER
15 SOS	16 UPEND
17 COZIER	18 SWAN
19 OVERDO	20 KNIT
21 Danson	22 ISLE

BEETLE BAILEY by Mort Walker

BABY BLUES by Kirkman & Scott

Family burnt alive as ‘bandits’ kill 21 in Nigeria

AFP, Kano

Armed attackers burned 21 people alive, including 16 members of the same family, in a revenge attack by criminal gangs on a village in northern Nigeria, residents said yesterday.

Gunmen on motorcycles raided the village of Bakali in Kaduna state on Tuesday, shooting and burning homes and vehicles to avenge a raid on their hideout by local vigilantes, inhabitants said.

“They killed 21 people in the attack,” Bakali’s community leader, Sani Nuhu, told AFP.

Residents said the assailants burned alive 16 members of the same family, including six children, and five members of a local self-defence group after locking them in a house.

A police spokesman said the force

had “received report of an attack by bandits on Bakali village” but was “still awaiting details”.

The area where the attack happened has in recent years been a haven for criminal gangs who steal cattle and kidnap people for ransom.

Local communities have formed vigilante groups to protect themselves but this has failed to end the violence.

Residents said that prior to the attack vigilantes working together with the Nigerian security forces had stormed the criminal gang’s camp in a nearby forest.

Last week the police said it carried out a major operation in the area that saw security forces “neutralise over 250 terrorists and bandits”.

There was no independent confirmation of the toll.

Beijing outlines plans to improve air quality more in 2020

REUTERS, Beijing

Beijing will cut smog levels further this year by putting more new energy vehicles (NEV) on its roads, reducing diesel-fuelled truck numbers and tightening its supervision of vehicle emissions and refined oil products, the city said on Thursday.

The Beijing Municipality government also said it will aim to cut emissions in the petrochemical industry.

The Chinese capital recorded an average concentration of tiny airborne smog particles known as PM2.5 at 42 micrograms per cubic metre last year, the lowest level since the country began an anti-air pollution campaign in 2016.

Nevertheless, that PM2.5 level is still more than four times the World Health Organization’s guideline of 10 micrograms per cubic metre of air.

“Beijing will make its best effort to improve air quality, with annual PM2.5 concentration and three-year average concentrations continuing to fall,” the Beijing Municipality government said in a statement on Thursday.

The city said it aims to have 400,000 NEVs - plug-in hybrids, battery-only electric vehicles and those powered by hydrogen fuel cells - by the end of the year, up from the 225,000 on its roads at the end of 2018.

It aims to speed up the elimination of high-emission cars and replace diesel-fuelled trucks with NEVs, which it will use for all its postal, intra-city delivery, environmental sanitation departments and for its airport and public bus systems.

Meanwhile, Beijing said it will strengthen its supervision of in-use vehicles by carrying out checks on at

least 1.5 million heavy-duty diesel vehicles.

It will set stricter standards on gasoline and diesel, with lower olefin, aromatics and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon (PAH) contents.

Emission levels at petrochemical firms will have to be cut by more than 30% in 2020 from the 2017 level, while industrial coating and furniture companies will undergo emission assessments by local authorities, according to the statement.

The city has seen PM2.5 concentrations of over 120 micrograms per cubic metre for five consecutive days since Sunday, despite the production and transportation disruptions due to the coronavirus outbreak.

“Pollutant emissions from heavy industry and residential heating, which account for two-thirds of the total in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, did not decline during the national holiday,” said the Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE) in a statement on Thursday.

While emissions from coal-fired power plants and steel mills fell by around 10% from their pre-holiday levels, there was little change in pollution level from the coke, petrochemical, glass and non-ferrous metals industries, the MEE said.

KSA sends

FROM PAGE 20

from Malaysia--were sent back home in separate cargo flights yesterday, said Shariful.

Two of the dead bodies from Saudi Arabia were of female workers, he said.

According to Brac, as many as 409 dead bodies of migrant workers were sent back home from different countries this year.

‘Bangladesh is a reality’

FROM PAGE 20

The PM replies with a smile, “My people put it on tape. I very much wanted to hear him but I had no time. So, I listened to his speech on tape.”

Earlier, Edward Kennedy addressed a jam-packed students’ meeting at Dhaka University where he said, “We are all Bengalees, we are all Americans. We are brothers in liberty, no man, no government can change the fact.

“The birth of the Bengali nation will be an inspiration to other people of the world -- a symbol to all who share your love of life and spirit of your courage but didn’t yet share your freedom.”

Commenting on a question about whether he had any discussion with Senator Kennedy regarding the recognition of Bangladesh by the US, Bangabandhu tells journalists, “Bangladesh is a reality. It has come to stay. We don’t care as to who didn’t recognise us.”

4 GALLANTRY AWARDS FOR ARMED FORCES

The Cabinet declares four gallantry awards for the Bangladesh Armed Forces, both regular and citizen soldiers. The awards are (in order of merit): Bir Sreshtha, the highest order; Bir Uttam, high order; Bir Bikram, commendable order, and Bir Pratik, gallantry certificate.

Bangabandhu presides over the cabinet meeting.

The Cabinet also declares that February 21 will be observed as Shaheed Day and the Day of National Mourning. It is also decided that the nationality of Bangladesh citizens will be termed as ‘Bengalee’.

Bangabandhu and his cabinet members listen to the recorded orchestration of the national anthem ‘Amar Sonar Bangla’ which is being sent to Moscow where it will be played during Bangabandhu’s state visit to the USSR, early next month. The orchestration has been directed by Samar Das.

SALT TAX GOES

The government of Bangladesh has decided to withdraw excise duty on salt for the current year. The decision has been taken to boost the production of salt and to provide relief to the salt producers.

LUXURY ITEMS BY GOVT. OFFICERS Air conditioners and carpets for the officers under the government of former East Pakistan cost about 2.22 crore rupees, paid from the public exchequer. A significant part of the expenditure involved hard-earned foreign exchange. Bangabandhu was shocked to find such a colossal wastage of public money. He ordered immediate and drastic curtailment of expenditure on luxury items in the offices.

SOURCES: February 15, 1972 issues of Dainik Bangla, The Daily Ittefaq, Azad, Morning News, The Bangladesh Observer and Purbodesh.

Portfolios

FROM PAGE 20

five cabinet members, curtailing the powers of two ministers and increasing the powers of two state ministers.

In July last year, Hasina reshuffled her cabinet for the second time by promoting a state minister to minister and inducing a new face.



Displaced Syrians flee the countryside of Aleppo and Idlib provinces towards Syria’s northwestern Afrin district near the border with Turkey yesterday, as regime forces push on with their offensive in the country’s northwest.

PHOTO: AFP

4th grader raped in Barishal

FROM PAGE 20

early yesterday, said Golam Sarwar, OC of Gourmadi Police Station.

The girl sent to Barishal Sher-E-Bangla Medical College Hospital for tests, the OC added.

Meanwhile, a nurse of a private clinic in Bhola sadar was allegedly gangraped by four men in Daulatkhan upazila of Bhola on Wednesday night.

The woman, 30, is now undergoing treatment at Bhola Sadar Hospital as she suffered serious injuries, police said.

Speaking to journalists, the woman said she was going to her work station after providing medical services to a patient around 9:30pm. She was on a battery-run easy bike. On her way, she stopped for a while at Miarhat area and sent the easy-bike driver to a roadside shop to buy some food.

Seeing her alone on the easy bike, four men forcibly took her to an empty area behind Halima Khatun College, covered her mouth with a scarf and gangraped her, she said.

At one stage, she managed to shout loudly. After locals heard her scream, they rushed to spot and rescued her. But the criminals managed to flee the scene, she added.

Police said she could identify two of the four alleged rapists and that

they were trying to arrest the two.

The process of filing a case in this connection remained under process till filing the report till 6:45pm last evening, said Md Siddikur Rahman, officer-in-charge (OC) of Daulatkhan police station.

In Narayanganj, two men were arrested on charge of gangraping an 18-year old girl.

The arrestees are Ronny Miah, 19, from Fatullah, and Hridoy Hossain, 19 from Kaatherpul. Another accused in the case, Md Hridoy, 22, a helper of an Allah-Bharosha paribahan bus, is absconding, police said.

OC of Fatullah police station Aslam Hossain said, “The girl’s father is a CNG driver. Through him, she was familiar with Ronny from before. On February 11, Ronny took the girl to his mess where the other two were already waiting. They then gangraped her.”

He added that the girl’s father filed a case against the three yesterday, after which police arrested Ronny and Hridoy from Shobujbagh area. Both of the arrestees confessed to the gangrape during primary investigation and police produced them before a Narayanganj court.

“The girl has been sent to Narayanganj General Hospital for

tests. Meanwhile, we are trying to arrest the other accused,” the OC said.

In Savar’s Ashuliya, a female worker of a garment factory in was allegedly raped by a local.

The incident took place on Wednesday evening in Ashuliya’s Gorat area when the woman, 19, along with two co-workers, was returning home from the RMG factory and Rana Miah, 23, and his two cohorts allegedly intercepted her and co-workers and forced them into a nearby brick kiln, reported our Savar correspondent.

There, three other associates of Rana were waiting. All of them beat up the woman’s co-workers while Rana raped her with the help of his two cohorts.

Hearing her screams, locals went to the spot to rescue her. The alleged rapists had fled the scene by then.

She later filed a case with Ashuliya police station that night, said Nahid Hasan, a sub-inspector of the station.

The woman was sent to the One-stop Crisis Centre in Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) for a medical test, he said, adding that police are trying to arrest the accused.

(Our Jhalakathi, Barishal and Narayanganj correspondents contributed to the report.)

Iran starts election campaign with thousands barred from standing

REUTERS, Dubai

Iran’s week-long parliamentary election campaign started on Thursday, state TV reported, a vote seen as a popularity test for the clerical establishment at a time when relations with Washington are at their worst since the 1979 Islamic revolution.

The Guardian Council, which must approve candidates, has rejected around 6,850 moderate or conservative hopefuls in favour of hardliners from among the 14,000 applicants seeking to contest the Feb. 21 vote.

About a third of lawmakers have also been barred from standing again.

“The 7,150 candidates who are running for parliamentary elections have started campaigning on Thursday,” state TV reported.

Pragmatist President Hassan Rouhani has criticised the disqualifications, but like supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei he has called for a high turnout as the country faces challenges over its disputed nuclear programme.

Tablecloth

FROM PAGE 20

at “which parts have influence,” and in which combinations.

In an initial study, diners were placed in different lighting conditions, but there was no effect on how much they ate, how long the meal lasted or how the soup was perceived to taste, except that it was reported as less salty in dim lighting. The researchers speculated that this could be because our sense of taste is heightened when our ability to see is reduced.

A second study was conducted involving 159 participants, adding table linen as an additional variable and eating in a group, rather than alone.

In the group that ate with dim lighting and a tablecloth, people consumed a mean 51% more soup than those who ate in dim light without a tablecloth. The neutral, gray-and-white checked tablecloth had a far stronger overall effect on the length of meal, amount consumed and enjoyment than lighting level.

Ströbele-Benschop said the findings could be useful in encouraging people in retirement homes, hospitals or schools to eat. While it could be difficult to improve the ambience in such settings, staff could do something as simple as choosing colorful plates, she suggested.

“It’s the combination of decorative aspects,” she said. “Any ambient factors could promote more enjoyment.”

While eating more is not always desirable, she said improving the atmosphere could help encourage diners to choose healthy food by making it seem to taste better.

The researchers wrote that the human body has a “sophisticated appetite control system which includes a variety of internal signals.”

There is an “abundance of physiological, environmental and psychological influences on our daily food intake,” including “eating with others, odor, color, physical surroundings,” they said.

An Oxford University study from 2015 found that heavy cutlery “enhances the enjoyment of food,” while 2008 research from Stanford University found that participants rated wines they were told were more expensive as tasting better.

Ströbele-Benschop said the most important factor on Valentine’s Day was to be “with the person you love” and create something you will both enjoy.

But a tablecloth can’t hurt. “Valentine’s is a day when it’s all about ambience.”

Educationists split over UGC move

FROM PAGE 20

is a waste of time and money. Considering the hassles, holding a uniform admission test is logical.”

He, however, said there would be some problems with the new system. “We don’t have any institution to organise such a uniform admission test. Results of the test will not be reliable.”

The DU teacher said managing the uniform test would be another challenge. “How will the exam be managed? We are hearing that all the public universities will manage the exam in turn. How will the smaller universities manage the test? Are they capable of it?”

He said every public university is autonomous and there are two important aspects of their autonomy -- appointment of teachers and enrollment of students. “The universities should have the jurisdictions. If anyone force any decision on the universities in this regard, it would not be consistent with their autonomy.”

Former UGC chair Prof AK Azad Chowdhury said there were some positives and negatives to the new admission system.

He said the admission seekers would be benefitted as the new system would reduce their hassles.

Prof Azad said world class foreign universities generally choose their own students. The local universities, who want to reach the level of excellence, should have the jurisdiction to pick their own students, he added.

He claimed that Oxford and Harvard universities enroll students based on their scores in different tests, including SAT, GRE. Besides, they also have entrance exams. Stanford University takes students through an exam.

The former DU VC also said Jawaharlal Nehru University and Delhi University have control on their own admission system while the institutes of technologies follow a central entrance test.

Another former UGC chairman Prof Nazrul Islam said a uniform entrance test was a positive step. “It will reduce hassles of students moving from one university to another to get admitted.”

“Holding a centralised admission test will not be easy. But it would be great if we could arrange it successfully. It will be difficult to determine how the method will work and how the different departments will pick their students. But I hope the authorities will address all these issues.”

He said all public universities enjoy autonomy. “It’s not fully correct that quality of education at large universities, run under the 1973 ordinance, are far better than in other public universities.”

Former DU professor Syed Manzoorul Islam said arranging a unified admission test is a good move and all the preparations should be made properly.

He recommended holding a dialogue with all stakeholders, including the admission seekers and those favouring and opposing the

initiative, to discuss the matter.

“We have to reach a consensus on the issue after hearing all the arguments from the stakeholders. It’s not a matter of imposing something on somebody.”

Manzoorul said introducing such a test would be a daunting task. “If we don’t make proper preparations, we might have to regret the decision later.”

Immediate past UGC chair Prof Abdul Mannan refused to make any comment on the issue.

UGC Chairman Prof Kazi Shahidullah said there was nothing to be worried about the autonomy of any public university.

“The universities will join the system after holding discussions with the respective academic councils and other bodies. So their autonomy will not be an issue,” he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Shahidullah said there would be three entrance exams -- one each for science, humanities, and commerce students -- based on their HSC syllabus. “Each exam can carry up to 100 marks,” he said.

On January 23, the UGC announced that it would hold a uniform admission test for the 2020-2021 academic year.

The country’s 39 public universities enroll around 65,000 students every year through separate admission tests.

Last year, some 9.88 lakh students passed the Higher Secondary Certificate and its equivalent exams under 10 education issue.



Bangladesh's U-19 World Cup winning captain Akbar Ali (Top left), batsman Shahdat Hossain (Top right), pacer Shoriful Islam (Centre), Hasan Murad (Left bottom) and Tanzim Hasan Sakib (Right bottom) were received by adoring crowds and family members upon their return to respective home districts following their triumph.

PHOTO: KONGKON KARMAKER, RAJIB RAIHAN, MOHAMMAD ALI JINNAT, SHEIKH NASIR AND QUAMRUL ISLAM RUBAIYAT.

Heroic welcome as young Tigers go home

SPORTS REPORTER

Players of the victorious Bangladesh Under-19 side, who won the Under-19 World Cup in South Africa, were received in festive fashion by people in their respective localities.

Akbar Ali and his troops left the BCB headquarters in Mirpur -- where they were given a grand reception on Wednesday after their return to the country -- and arrived at their respective hometowns yesterday. And the reception they received even in their locality was made memorable by the locals.

According to a report from our Dinajpur correspondent, the World Cup-winning skipper reached his hometown Rangpur in grand style. The wicketkeeper-batsman who landed at the Saidpur Airport at 12:30 pm, from where he was carried by a convoy of hundreds of motorcycles, jeeps, cars and microbuses



to his hometown Rangpur.

Hundreds of people carrying flowers, festoons, banners and puppets of Tigers were gathered at the Public Library Ground, where a stage was set to welcome their hero. Chants like 'Akbar is great'

came from the crowd as the champion skipper made his way to the stage.

Pacer Shoriful Islam also got a warm welcome when he arrived at his village Moumari in Panchagarh. After reaching the Saidpur Airport at noon he was

received by his family members and started for his village via a microbus. The pacer, whose aggression during the young Tigers' final against India caught everyone's eyes, was however very humble yesterday.

The left-handed seamer however got down from the microbus about a kilometre away from home as he opted to walk the rest of the way along with hundreds of his fans, who chanted 'our pride Shoriful' on their way to his home. It was a festive occasion for the locals as they celebrated receiving their champion player with music.

Meanwhile, Hasan Murad was also welcomed with garlands and flowers when the left-arm spinner reached Cox's Bazar airport at 4:00pm yesterday, as informed by our local correspondent. The Cox's Bazar District Administration received Murad at the airport from where he, like Akbar, was taken to his home through a motorcade.



Tigers given option to sit out

BCL third round begins today

SPORTS REPORTER

For the past week, all the media attention was grabbed by the Akbar Ali-led team that brought home the nation's first ever World Cup, which they won by defeating their Indian counterparts in a thrilling ICC Under-19 World Cup final in Potchefstroom last Sunday.

The champions have left for their hometowns and the focus now returns to the Bangladesh national side, whose recent performances have become a grave concern for the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB).

The Tigers returned early this week after an abysmal showing in Pakistan. The Momintul Haque-led side recorded their sixth consecutive Test defeat when they succumbed to a thumping innings and 44-run defeat against Pakistan during their first World Test Championship fixture of the three-phased tour of the country.

However, most of the side that played in the Pakistan Test, were not included in the squads for the third and final round of the Bangladesh Cricket League (BCL) which is scheduled to

begin in Cox's Bazar today.

The next assignment for Bangladesh is a home series against Zimbabwe that includes a lone Test, three ODIs and two T20Is respectively starting from February 22 before the Tigers leave for the third phase of the Pakistan tour in April. And keeping in mind the busy schedule, BCB opted to give the four fast bowlers who were in the Test squad -- Abu Jayed, Ebadot Hossain, Al-Amin Hossain and Rubel Hossain -- a rest while giving the batsmen the option to sit the round out.

"Most players [who played in the Pakistan Test] were given choices by the board about whether they want to play [BCL third round]. It was actually decided that the fast bowlers will rest and the batsmen were given a choice. The camp [for Zimbabwe series] starts on February 18 and the BCL will end on 17. So, the gap in between is very little," explained national selector Habibul Bashir yesterday.

The final round of the first-class tournament will see East Zone battle it out against North Zone at the Sheikh Kamal International Cricket Stadium while at the Academy Ground of the same venue, table-toppers South Zone

will square off against Central Zone.

Only three players -- Saif Hassan, Nazmul Hossain Shanto and Nayeem Hasan -- who were in the squad that played in Pakistan will be playing in the final round of BCL.

Soumya Sarkar, however, has a different reason for missing the BCL. The left-arter will be getting married this month and will be unavailable till February 29.

Mushfiqur Rahim, who opted out of the Pakistan Test, is however expected to play for North Zone today. It was earlier reported that Mushfiqur might be dropped from the Zimbabwe Test. However, Bashir informed yesterday that the stalwart is playing the BCL as he has not played the Pakistan Test and was an automatic pick for his BCL side.

The former national skipper also informed that the situation about Mahmudullah will be cleared in two or three days' time. It was earlier learned that Bangladesh coach Russell Domingo will be having a conversation with Mahmudullah, who has been undergoing a lean patch in the longer formats recently, and would be asked to rethink his future in Test cricket.



"A lot of sacrifices are attached to the process to shape up the likes of Akbar [Ali], [Tanzid Hasan] Tamim, [Parves Hossain] Emon, Rakibul [Hasan] and Shoriful [Islam]. Avishek [Das] returned home after making the country proud. He returned home after making the people of Narail proud. Go forward unconstrained and take the country to new heights. Tuhin kaka, Shanjib Bishwas Shaju, Imrul, I thank you. Because of your contributions, everyone can dream. In my eyes you are the unsung hero of the nation. Trust me -- I mean it." ODI captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza lauding the efforts of the local coaches in Narail who contributed to the growth of the U-19 cricketers in a Facebook post from his personal account.



Bangladesh ODI captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza leaving the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium following practice yesterday. The Tigers are gearing up for the upcoming ODI series against touring Zimbabwe next month under Mashrafe's leadership.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

'Cricket belongs to everyone'

AGENCIES, LAHORE

Kumar Sangakkara, the MCC president and captain of its 12-man squad on a week-long tour of Pakistan, believes in actions more than words, which is why he's in the country to ensure Pakistan is back on the cricketing map.

Addressing a press conference on Thursday he said it had been 47 years since the club last visited Pakistan and 10 years for him personally.

"Cricket belongs to everyone, but for the players to have that platform and display their skills you need to have that support," Sangakkara said in Lahore. "The fact is that you need to have an



underpinning of youth who can be inspired to take up the game. "So if there is no home cricket for a very long period of time, there is a danger that sometime that kind of hunger might go away. The more cricket that you

play here at home, the more times young children and the fabulous fans of Pakistan can see their side, their players play in front of them, within almost touching distance."

Sangakkara, who took over the charge as MCC president in October 2019, further said it's difficult to put into words what a strong Pakistan brings to world cricket, and how it's important to hammer home the message that touring Pakistan is now safe.

"Rather than a direct message by saying something to them, the best thing that we can do is send that message by the way we play in the field," Sangakkara said.

REUTERS, Melbourne



Steve Smith and David Warner will be ready for whatever South African crowds throw at them when the Australia batsmen return to the nation two years after the ball-tampering scandal, paceman Josh Hazlewood has said.

The pair will fly out with the Australia squad on Friday for a limited overs tour in the duo's first visit to the country since serving 12-month bans for their parts in the tampering plot during the Cape Town Test.

The pair were jeered relentlessly by English crowds during last year's one-day World Cup and the following Ashes series, and Hazlewood said they would be unfazed by more hostility.

"Steve and Dave have ticked off pretty much every box since coming back," Hazlewood told reporters in Sydney on Thursday.

"It's just another one of those and I don't think it'll faze them one bit.

"They probably play better when it's like this.

"It's nothing we haven't experienced before ... we'll be fine."

Both Smith and Warner have thrived since returning to the national fold after their bans expired last March.

Smith played a leading role in Australia's retention of the Ashes while Warner was awarded the Allan Border Medal for the third time on Monday as the country's top cricketer in 2019.

Local media have reported that the head

of the national players' union will tour with the side in South Africa to offer extra support for the players.

Hazlewood said Smith and Warner would not need to be shielded.

"They'll probably try to take as much heat as they can actually, try to keep the young guys out of the spotlight," added the paceman.

Hazlewood said engaging positively with fans was the best way to defuse them.

"Join in and try to have a good time with them. Often when you do that, they end up being on your side after a couple of overs," he said.

"It is when you fight them that it becomes to and fro, and quite abusive. Ride the storm and go along with it."

'Ride the storm and go along with it'

What to WATCH

SONY SIX
South Africa v England
Second T20I
Live from 10:00pm
STAR SPORTS SELECT 1
English Premier League

Wolves v Leicester
Live from 1:50am (Saturday)
STAR SPORTS SELECT 2
Bundesliga
Dortmund v Eintracht Frankfurt
Live from 1:15am (Saturday)

DAY'S EVENT

Bangladesh Cricket League
Four-day Match, Day 1
Time: 9:30am

Central Zone v South Zone
Venue: Cox's Bazar
East Zone v North Zone

Venue: Cox's Bazar
Bangladesh Premier League
Saif Sporting v Rahmatganj

Time: 3:15pm
Venue: Rofique Uddin Bhuiyan Stadium,
Mymensingh

Arambagh KS v Mohammedan
Time: 6:30pm
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium, Dhaka

Chelsea get Ziyech for just €40m

AFP, London

 Hakim Ziyech will join Chelsea from Dutch champions Ajax this summer in a 40 million-euro deal, the two clubs confirmed Thursday.

The announcement ends days of speculation over the future of the 26-year-old attacking midfielder, a Moroccan international.

"Ajax and Chelsea have reached an agreement for the transfer of Hakim Ziyech. The player will join the Premier League club on July 1st 2020 and will finish the season in Amsterdam," the Eredivisie champions said in a statement.

Chelsea confirmed the deal, praising Dutch-born Ziyech as a "prolific scorer throughout his career."

"Ziyech is a left-footed attacker who is comfortable playing off the right flank and coming inside, as he has often done in recent years to such devastating effect for Ajax, or on the left to attack with width and deliver into the box," Chelsea said.

The London-based side added: "The move is subject to the player agreeing personal terms and he will remain at the Dutch club for the rest of this season."

Ziyech joined Ajax in 2016 from fellow Eredivisie club FC Twente for a fee of 11 million euros, and has now scored 49 goals in 160 appearances for Ajax. His contract at Ajax was due to run until June 2022.

Ziyech was a key figure in Ajax's sensational run to the Champions League semifinals last year. But he reportedly wanted more football in Europe's top flight after the Dutch side were eliminated in the group stage this year -- in part because they lost at home to Chelsea and later threw away a three-goal lead at Stamford Bridge.




Fabian Ruiz celebrates his decisive goal Napoli against Inter Milan during a 1-0 win in their Coppa Italia semifinal first leg on Wednesday.

PHOTO: SSC NAPOLI

Ctg Abahani cruise, Kings toil

SPORTS REPORTER

 Heavyweights Bashundhara Kings and a rejuvenated Chattogram Abahani got off to winning starts, but title contenders Sheikh Russel stumbled against visiting Brothers Union on the opening day of the Bangladesh Premier League across three venues yesterday.

Interestingly, all five goals scored in the three matches came from foreign players, who basically made the difference in all three matches.

COLINDRES SINKS BARIDHARA

A late strike from Daniel Colindres helped holders Bashundhara notch a hard-fought 1-0 win over just-promoted Uttar Baridhara Club. Although the latter gave their superior opponents a run for their money, they were not lucky enough to snatch a point from the home side at the Sheikh Kamal Stadium in Nilphamari.

Bashundhara Kings, who started the season by lifting the Federation Cup five weeks ago, were made to sweat against Baridhara. The holders could hardly find any holes in the opposition defence but still fortunate to leave with three points courtesy of a strike from inspiring Costa Rican forward Colindres.

After a barren first half, Bashundhara Kings pushed hard for the lead and Argentine midfielder Nicolas Delmonte saw his left-footed shot from 30 yards go inches over in the 46th minute.

Spanish coach Oscar Bruzon strengthened the attacking line-up by sending on the fresh legs of Mahbubur Rahmn Sufil and Colindres rattled the sidebar in the 69th minute.

Centre-back Tapu Barman then failed to connect to a free-kick from Colindres in the 74th minute and three minutes later, Baridhara came close to taking the lead as Suman Reza rattled the woodwork.

Bashundhara ultimately broke the deadlock in the 86th minute when Baridhara defenders failed to stop a lob from Sufil and an unmarked Colindres tapped in from close range to send the few hundred spectators into a frenzy.

However, the holders left the field with 10 men after defender Yeasin Khan committed a second bookable offense just a minute



Chittagong Abahani's Chendu Mathew (C) casually celebrates the opener against Sheikh Jamal at the Bangabandhu National Stadium during the opening round of the Bangladesh Premier League yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

before regulation time ended.

NIGERIAN DUO OVERPOWER SHEIKH JAMAL IN DHAKA

One goal each from from Nigeria's Chendu Mathew and Jean Charles Didier powered visiting Chattogram Abahani to a convincing 2-0 win over three-time champions Sheikh Jamal at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

A rejuvenated Chattogram Abahani created more chances compared to their opponents and came close to taking the lead in the 17th minute but a powerful header from Uzbek defender Shukur Ali came off the crossbar.

Chittagong Abahani finally took a deserved lead in the 55th minute when national midfielder Rakib Hossain played

a diagonal pass to Mathew on the edge of the box and the Nigerian shrugged off his marker before firing home from inside the box.

Ten minutes later, Maruful Haque's charges doubled the lead as Mathew entered the box from the right side and cut back to Didier, who did not hesitate in driving a powerful left-footer past goalkeeper Ziaur Rahman.

After going two goals down, Sheikh Jamal coach Shafiqul Islam Manik sent on three pairs of fresh legs but it had made hardly an impact and Chattogram Abahani left the field with three points.

OTABEK CLAIMS DRAW WITH STUNNER

Although they finished in third place last

season, Sheikh Russel opened the new season by dropping points to lightweights Brothers Union after surrendering a first-half lead in a 1-1 draw at the Sylhet District Stadium.

Sheikh Russel got off to a fine start by taking the lead in the fourth minute through Raphael Odoyin, who rose above Brothers' foreign centre-back pairing to nod home a well-judged cross from Yeamin Munna.

However, the 2012 champions failed to hold onto the lead and Brothers levelled on the hour mark. Otabek worked hard on the left, nutmegging three players on his way into the box, before unleashing a curling shot from inside the box past national goalkeeper Ashraful Islam Rana to claim a share of the spoils.

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UNIFORM UNIV ADMISSION TEST Educationists split over UGC move

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

Renowned educationists are divided over the University Grants Commission's move to introduce a central entrance test for public universities.

Opposing the move, some academics said a uniform admission test would force the universities to "compromise on quality of students". They insisted that the universities should have the power to choose their students to "uphold their academic speciality".

They also expressed concern that the autonomy of the universities might be affected if the new admission system was introduced.

Educationists supporting the move said a central admission test would reduce hassles of admission seekers and their guardians.

However, educationists from both the groups said introducing such an admission test would be a daunting task and there should be a mechanism to stop any irregularities, including leak of question papers.

The UGC is all set to introduce the central admission test this year to reduce the hassles of admission seekers.

Speaking to reporters after holding a meeting with 12 VCs if public universities on Wednesday, UGC Chairman Prof Kazi Shahidullah said, "We have unanimously decided that a central admission test will be held this year to enroll students at public universities."

Prof Emeritus of Dhaka University Serajul Islam Choudhury said a uniform entrance test is needed to reduce the hassle of admission seekers who now take several tests within a short time.

"They need to travel to different cities and towns which

SEE PAGE 16 COL 3



A black-rumped flamebackwoodpecker pecks away at the bark of a flame-of-the-forest in Chattogram. On an average, a woodpecker pecks between 8,000 and 12,000 times a day and their beaks are built to withstand heavy g-force.

PHOTO: RAJIB RATHAN

EVENING COURSES DU deans for suspending admissions

DU CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka University committee, formed to evaluate the legitimacy of evening programmes at the university, has recommended that the departments temporarily stop enrolling students under these programmes.

The committee, comprising the deans of five faculties, made the recommendation in their report that was submitted to the university's vice-chancellor Prof Akhtaruzzaman last Sunday.

"We were asked to formulate a policy and give our opinion about the courses. We outlined a draft policy and recommended that the departments postpone enrolling new students under evening programmes until the policy is formulated," a member of the committee told The Daily Star.

He said that currently there was no central policy at the university for conducting evening courses.

Among the five deans, all but Prof Shibli Rubayat

SEE PAGE 16 COL 3

KSA sends 183 back

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Saudi Arabia sent back 183 Bangladeshi migrant workers, including 20 female workers, on Wednesday night and in the early hours yesterday, according to Brac Migration Programme.

A Saudi Airlines flight carrying 89 workers landed at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka around 11:20pm Wednesday, Brac said.

Another flight of the same airlines brought back 94 Bangladeshi workers around 1:10 am yesterday, it added.

Brac Migration Programme, with the help of Prabashi Kalyan Desk set up by the expatriates' welfare ministry at the airport, provided the returning workers with immediate support.

Shariful Hasan, head of Brac Migration Programme, said some 3,635 migrant workers, 175 of whom are female, were sent back by Saudi Arabia in January alone.

Many of the workers returned home "empty-handed", said Shariful.

He urged recruiting agencies to be more mindful while sending workers abroad so that they do not have to return home in this manner.

He called upon the government and Bangladesh mission authorities in the Kingdom to identify the reasons behind the deportation.

Eight dead bodies sent back home

The dead bodies of eight migrant workers-- five from Saudi Arabia and three

SEE PAGE 16 COL 2

FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES 'Bangladesh is a reality'



Senator Edward Kennedy accompanied by his wife and nephew calls on Bangabandhu at the Prime Minister's official residence on February 14, 1972.

FEBRUARY 14, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

BANGABANDHU GREETS KENNEDYS

Bangabandhu warmly greets Senator Edward Kennedy, his wife Joan B Kennedy and his nephew Joseph Kennedy at the prime minister's residence. Russell, the youngest son of the prime minister, speeds past his father to be the first to greet the senator.

When the PM sits down with the Kennedys for a chat, he mentions to Mrs. Kennedy, "I heard his [senator's] speech delivered today at the University [Dhaka University]. It was very nice."

Mrs. Kennedy asks the Prime Minister, "How did you do it? You weren't there."

SEE PAGE 16 COL 1

Portfolios of 3 ministers changed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has redistributed portfolios of a minister and two state ministers.

In the reshuffle, Minister for Housing and Public Works SM Rejaul Karim was made minister for fisheries and livestock, State Minister for Livestock and Fisheries Md Ashraf Ali Khan was made state minister for social welfare, while State Minister for Social Welfare Sharif Ahmed was made state minister for housing and public works.

The cabinet division issued a gazette notification yesterday in this regard.

This is the third reshuffle in the Hasina-led 47-member cabinet of the 13-month-old government.

The cabinet took oath on January 7, 2019, following a landslide victory in the December 30, 2018, national polls.

A minor cabinet reshuffle was made on May 19 last year, when Hasina reallocated portfolios of

SEE PAGE 16 COL 2

Tablecloth makes food taste better: study



CNN ONLINE

If you're hoping to impress a date with a romantic home-cooked meal today, Valentine's Day, don't forget the tablecloth.

Diners eat more and for longer, and rate the food as tasting better when seated with tablecloth, according to a study published in the journal "Food Quality and Preference."

Participants in the experiment by the University of Hohenheim in Germany were divided into four groups, eating tomato soup with or without a tablecloth, in high or low lighting. The tablecloth was found to have the biggest impact on how the quality of the food was perceived, the amount eaten and how long participants ate for.

Professor Nanette Ströbele-Benschop, the lead researcher in the study, told CNN the results were "fascinating."

She said previous studies had shown that environmental factors are important in how we perceive our food and she wanted to look

SEE PAGE 16 COL 6

4th grader raped in Barishal

3 more raped in
other districts

STAR REPORT

In Barishal, police yesterday arrested a bedding store trader for raping a fourth grader at his business place on yesterday noon.

The accused was identified as Harun Khalifa, 45, from Hosnabad bazar of Gournadi upazila.

On Wednesday noon, the accused called the girl and took her behind his shop where he raped her.

After returning home, she shared the incident with her family members, after which her mother filed a case against Harun

SEE PAGE 16 COL 3



PRAYER TIMING FEBRUARY 14

Fazr Juma Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5:25 12:30 4:30 5:57 7:15
JAMAAT 6:00 1:15 4:45 6:01 7:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

