



The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION

www.thedailystar.net

Your Right to Know

JAMADIU SANI 22, 1441 HIRI

20 PAGES PRICE: Tk 12.00



Winter Surprise!
Enjoy UP TO
200% CASH VOUCHER FREE
& Cash Back

Conditions:
• Have to complete product registration through SMS after buying Walton Fridge
• This campaign is conducted by fully computerized system fairly
• The authority reserves the right to change the campaign anytime
• Digital campaign facilities will be void in case of more than 3 registration from the same mobile number
This initiative is taken to ensure maximum customer facilities through research & development of products and digitalization
Return SMS may be delayed for the technical/network problems

The Mark of Aristocracy

Real Tempered Glass door

With Confidence of Best Quality Compressor
12 Years Guarantee

Hundred of Models & Designs

THE MOST LOVED BRAND

No.1 REFRIGERATOR BRAND 2019

Approx. **75%** Market Share in Bangladesh

Countrywide Walton Group has Approx. **17000** Retail Outlets

Free Call: 08000016267 Helpline: 16267 waltonbd.com

RIVERS IN DHAKA, CTG CITIES PM approves masterplan to save them

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and PINAKI ROY

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has approved a masterplan to free all major rivers in and around Dhaka and Chattogram cities from encroachment and pollution by 2030.

The PM also directed all concerned to work to this effect "without any delay", a top official at the local government and rural development ministry told The Daily Star.

The premier's approval of the masterplan came recently. A high-powered inter-ministerial committee, led by the LGRD minister, finalised it late last year.

Under the masterplan, the rivers around the capital -- the Buriganga, the Turag, and the Shitalakkhya -- will be freed from grabbing and pollution. The Karnaphuli in Chattogram will also be saved from encroachment and pollution.

"We started our work around three months ago. We have already distributed the tasks among different ministries and departments," LGRD Minister Tajul Islam told this newspaper after the committee met at the Secretariat yesterday.

"Now they are preparing action plans and working on the budget required to implement the masterplan."

The 25-member inter-ministerial body will monitor the progress of the implementation of the master plan as many ministries and departments are involved in the process. It will also ensure that the work of one department does not overlap that of another, mentioned the minister.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



Dirt, debris, and waste turn the Kutubkhali canal water dark in the capital's Shonir Akhra area and give off an overpowering stench. The water of this canal flows into the Shitalakkhya river. This picture was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

DoE punishes 23 errant factories

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Department of Environment yesterday disconnected utility connections of 23 dyeing factories and steel re-rolling mills in the capital's Kadamtali and Shyampur for polluting the Buriganga river and the air.

The drive, led by Director (monitoring and enforcement) of DoE Begum Rubina Ferdousi, also fined seven steel re-rolling mills Tk 1 lakh each for polluting the air.

The drive began at 11:30am and continued until 3:30pm in which representatives of Rab, police, Wasa, Desa, and Titas took part.

"We conducted the drive against the dyeing factories and the steel re-rolling mills as they did not have ETPs [effluent treatment plants] and environmental clearances from the DoE," said Rubina.

The drive is going on in compliance with High Court orders and it will continue against all such

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

KHALEDA'S RELEASE

Admit guilt, we'll consider your parole

Says home boss; BNP demands release on humanitarian grounds

STAR REPORT

Mentioning that BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia has not yet appealed for parole, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan yesterday said the government would consider it if she admitted guilt and apologised.

"The government will consider the BNP chief's release if she appeals for parole after admitting her guilt and offering apology for it," he said while talking to reporters after attending a religious programme in Tarail upazila in the afternoon, reports UNB.



SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

Measures starting to pay dividend

Claims China as new cases drop; Taiwan reports first death

REUTERS, Shanghai/Beijing

The number of new cases from China's coronavirus epidemic dropped for a third consecutive day yesterday, as an official claimed the strict restrictions that Beijing imposed on affected regions were beginning to show results.

Taiwan yesterday reported its first coronavirus death, the fifth fatality outside mainland China. Taiwan Health Minister Chen Shih-chung said during a news conference that the deceased person was a 61-year-old man who had diabetes and hepatitis B. Taiwan has to date accumulated 20 confirmed cases.

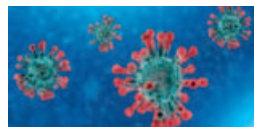
The coronavirus, thought to have emerged at a wildlife market in the central Chinese province of Hubei, has presented the ruling Communist Party with the huge challenge of stamping it out while at the same time minimising damage to the world's second-largest economy.

China's latest figures showed 68,500 cases of the illness and 1,665 deaths, most of them in Hubei.

The National Health Commission reported on Sunday 2,009 new cases, down from 2,641 the previous day, and 142 new deaths, just one lower than the 143 on the previous day. All but four of the new deaths were in Hubei.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

COVID-19 UPDATE



1,670 DEATHS

69,267 confirmed cases

68,500 confirmed cases in mainland China

Worst hit Chinese region Hubei 56,249 cases

The virus spread to at least 25 countries

At least 767 confirmed cases outside China

FEUDING AL FACTIONS IN CTG

'Go alone' policy got Rezaul ticket

NURUL HAYAT CHOWDHURY and ARUN BIKASH DEY, Chattogram

There were rumours in political circles over the last week that Mayor AJM Nasir Uddin would not get the Awami League ticket to contest the upcoming Chattogram City Corporation election.

At a meeting of AL's Local Government Nomination Board on Saturday, AL President Sheikh Hasina spoke her mind: "Leave Nasir out of consideration."

The 18 AL aspirants from the port city were present at the meeting at the Gono Bhaban, insiders told The Daily Star.

Hearing it from Hasina, most of the aspirants lauded the decision and said no businessman should get the AL ticket, indicating that Chattogram Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Mahbubul Alam should also not be nominated.

When the mayoral hopefuls said Hasina was the one who should pick the nominee, she announced the name of Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, joint general secretary of Chattogram City AL.

The city AL is divided in two factions -- one led by Mayor Nasir and another by the family of late mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury.

Rezaul, however, has never aligned himself to either

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

WASTING ICU EQUIPMENT

Govt finds 5 doctors of NICRH negligent

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A government probe committee has found five officials of National Institute of Cancer Research and Hospital to have been negligent in preserving and protecting hospital equipment, including intensive care unit ventilators, said a report submitted to the High Court yesterday.

The five officials are: AMM Shariful Alam, a director and project director between May 3, 2007 and February 8, 2009; Farhad Halim, who was project director from March 16, 2004 to May 3, 2007; Professor Mollah Obaidullah Baki, a

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Rickshaw vans carrying steel rods travel against the traffic near Rayerbagh bus stand on the Dhaka-Chattogram highway. Scenes like this are very common there and the traffic policemen stationed there, not in frame, rarely take action to stop the blatant breach of traffic law.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

HUMAN TRAFFICKING Will ask ACC to investigate Laxmipur MP

Says Qader; Momen terms allegations 'fake news'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Road, Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader will ask the ACC to investigate the allegations of human trafficking against Laxmipur-2 MP Quazi Shaheed Islam alias Papul.

"As per the prime minister's stance against corruption, I will ask the Anti-Corruption Commission to look into the matter," Quader told reporters at his ministry yesterday.

"Legal measures will be taken if there is any complaint of corruption [against Shaheed Islam]," he added.

However, Foreign

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

You wil be Remembered.....



Mr. Ekram Uddin Mollah

Born : 30th January 1991 - Died : 17th February 2019

We remember him in honor of the first death anniversary of Mr. Ekram Uddin Mollah, the honorable director of the Osman Group of Industries.

Board of directors of Osman Group of Industries,
A multitude of entrepreneurs, executives and employees



Osman Group of Industries

‘Amend article 70’

JP chief urges in JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party Chairman and Deputy Leader of the Opposition GM Quader yesterday stressed the need for amending article 70 of the constitution to empower lawmakers in parliament.

According to the article, lawmakers lose their seats in parliament if they vote in the House against the party that nominated them.

Participating in the thanksgiving motion on the president’s speech, the JP chief said for this article, the MPs have to stay loyal to the party in parliament as breaching article 70 leads to cancellation of their membership.

“But as per the Westminster system, all are private members except cabinet members. This is also present in our parliament’s rules of procedure,” he said.

The deputy leader of the opposition opined that if all lawmakers, including ruling and opposition, except the ministers perform this duty individually and collectively, then the

accountability of the government can be ensured in parliament.

“But article 70 is an obstacle here. Due to the article, all proposals from the ruling party are accepted in parliament. MPs cannot take decisions as per their conscience, and opinions of people of their respective constituencies,” he said.

Quader said duties of ruling party lawmakers are to give affirmative response to the government’s decision.

“Considering the country’s socioeconomic condition, it would not be practical to abolish the article 70,” he said, suggesting that the article be limited to formation of the government, budget approval, and no confidence motions.

Speaking on the thanksgiving motion on the president’s speech, Jatiya Party MP Anisul Islam Mahmud said time has come to think about why people have lost their interest in voting.

He said removing mistrust and lack of confidence are needed for bringing back the culture of participatory elections.

Govt finds 5 doctors

FROM PAGE 1
professor between August 16, 2009 and May 19, 2013; Prof Md Moarraf Hossain, a director and project director between December 31, 2014 and June 6, 2019; and Prof Manosh Kumar Bashu, who has been the chief of the anaesthesia department since February 7, 2015.

Besides, Prof Md Hafizur Rahman Ansary, who was the director at the NICRH from February 8, 2009 to August 16, 2009, did not take any initiative to install ICU ventilators and Prof Sheikh Golam Mostafa, who was the director and project director from May 19, 2014 to August 3, 2014, “did not have the time” to set up the ICU ventilators, the probe committee said.

The probe committee, led by the health ministry’s Additional Secretary Md Sirajul Islam, submitted the report before the HC yesterday through Deputy Attorney General Amit Talukder, as per its January 2 suo moto order.

After going through the report, the HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Md Mostafizur Rahman expressed dissatisfaction because the report did not mention whether any action had been taken against the NICRH officials for their negligence.

The court asked the government authorities concerned to inform it of the steps taken against the officials within a week.

The HC bench set February 23 as the date to pass further orders on the issue.

Following a report titled “ICU on sickbed” published in The Daily Star on January 2, the HC bench issued the suo moto rule on the same day and directed the government to suspend the retirement benefits of Prof Md Moarraf Hossain for his negligence in preserving and protecting hospital equipment.

It also ordered the health secretary and the director general of the Directorate General of Health Services to form a committee and conduct an enquiry into the allegations of negligence by the NICRH authorities, and submit a report before the court upon its completion.

In the rule, the court asked the government authorities concerned to explain as to why the reported negligence of the NICRH authorities should not be declared illegal.

SC lawyer Manoj Kumar Bhownick placed The Daily Star’s report before the HC bench, seeking necessary orders on January 2.

The NICRH, situated in Mohakhali, is the hospital of choice for patients in the low-income group.

According to an International Agency for Research on Cancer report released last year, about 1.08 lakh people die of cancer while 1.5 lakh are infected with the disease every year in Bangladesh.

‘Go alone’ policy

FROM PAGE 1
faction. Party insiders said it was his clean image that won over the AL chief.

Over the years, Mayor Nasir, general secretary of Chattogram City AL, kept his rivalry with the Mohiuddin family alive. He also alienated most of the senior AL leaders in Chattogram, including presidium member Engineer Mosharraf Hossain, insiders said.

AL members have also not forgotten that in October last year, Nasir forced Mohiuddin’s wife Hasina Mohiuddin, president of Chattogram City Mahila AL, to leave the stage during a programme in the presence of AL General Secretary Obaidul Quader.

AL insiders said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was fond of Mohiuddin’s family and she did not approve of the way Nasir treated Mohiuddin and his family members.

However, residents of the city and politicians were a little surprised by Rezaul’s nomination as he was never under the spotlight when the general public, activists, and media analysts were talking about probable AL nominees.

According to Chattogram City AL leaders, Nasir also had a rivalry with Mosharraf Hossain over the ownership of Jatinsangha Park when Mosharraf was the minister for housing and public works.

Besides, Nasir could not make any significant changes in the city as a mayor, said an AL leader, adding that he could not even set up a new park and instead allowed shops and business establishments to spring up in parks and on footpaths.

“Surveys were conducted on Nasir’s popularity by different agencies and all the reports went against him,” the AL leader said yesterday.

Days after taking over as mayor, Nasir alleged that bureaucrats demanded 5 percent of the development funds. It angered the bureaucrats, and as a result, the city corporation “did not get enough funds” for development during the first two years of his five-year tenure, said another AL leader.

Farid Mahmud, joint convener of Chattogram City Juba League, told The Daily Star that the PM had given recognition to a dedicated and tested leader from the grassroots by nominating Rezaul, adding that the grassroots leaders and activists were glad.

Mohammed Nasim, member of AL Local Government Nomination Board, said Rezaul was nominated because the board wanted to give the “new leader” a chance.

“I think, in some cases, new faces should be given chances so that they can prove their potential,” he said, “We also nominated new faces in other city corporations in the past.”

Contacted, AL presidium member Engineer Mosharraf Hossain said Rezaul had a clean image.

Mayor Nasir told The Daily Star that he had accepted the PM’s decision. “I am always loyal to her and will remain so forever.”

He added that he and his followers would do everything to help the party nominee win.

When contacted, Rezaul said, “I am grateful to her [PM]. I do not have any rivalry or rift with anyone.”

EC ANNOUNCES SCHEDULE
The Election Commission yesterday announced the schedule of the Chattogram City Corporation (CCC) election slated for March 29.

The last date for submission of nomination papers is February 27. The papers will be evaluated by EC officials on March 1, said EC Senior Secretary Alamgir.

The last date for withdrawal from candidacy is March 8. The contenders’ election symbols will be announced the next day.

Appeals against the EC’s evaluation have to be submitted from March 2-4. Decisions about the appeals will be taken from March 5-7.

Bandits kill 30 in northwest Nigeria attack

AFP, Kano

Armed gangs killed 30 people in raids on two villages in an area of northwest Nigeria plagued by cattle rustlers and kidnappers, police said yesterday.

Dozens of gunmen on motorcycles attacked the villages of Tsauwa and Dankar in Katsina state on Friday, shooting residents and burning homes.

“The bandits killed 21 people in Tsauwa and another nine in nearby Dankar,” Katsina police spokesman Gambo Isah said.

“Most of those killed were old people and children who couldn’t escape.”

Police and soldiers deployed in the area after the attack and arrested one suspect, Isah said.

The attackers burnt homes, livestock and food supplies before fleeing, said Tukur Mu’azu, traditional chief of Batsari, a district the straddles the two attacked villages.



Department of Environment officials, led by Director Begum Rubina Ferdousi, conducting a drive yesterday to disconnect the utility connections of 23 dyeing and steel re-rolling factories in the capital’s Kadamtali and Shyampur for polluting the Buriganga river and the air.

PHOTO: STAR

DoE punishes 23 errant factories

FROM PAGE 1

231 industries in Dhaka, she added.

“We severed electricity and water connections of six of them were also severed,” the DoE director said.

“If these factories and mills seek environmental clearances from the DoE after fulfilling all necessary requirements, we will restore their lines,” she added.

On January 20, the HC directed the

DoE to immediately shut down all 231 industries in Dhaka metropolitan area near the Buriganga.

The court asked Wasa, Titas, and Dhaka Power Distribution Company Ltd to disconnect water, gas, and electricity supply to the illegal industries.

It also directed the DoE to submit a report to the court by February 20 after complying with the directive.

The court further ordered the DoE to submit a detailed report within the next three months on the industries and organisations in the Dhaka metropolitan area which have no environmental clearances.

The HC ordered the local administration to stop dumping waste into the Buriganga and submit a report before the court by February 20.

The bench of Justice Gobinda

Chandra Tagore and Justice Mohammad Ullah came up with the directives during the hearing on a writ petition filed by the Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh.

On December 8 last year, the HC also ordered the DoE to close all industries, factories, and other structures on the river, which were running without the DoE approval and were polluting the river.

PM approves masterplan to save them

FROM PAGE 1

The committee was formed on December 5, 2016, to finalise the masterplan in line with the PM’s directives.

According to the masterplan, the government has set a short-term goal for one year, a midterm goal for five years and a long-term goal for 10 years. Those will be implemented simultaneously by different ministries and departments.

All the ministries and departments concerned are now preparing their action plans to free the rivers from pollution and encroachment.

Those include the ministries of LGRD; environment, forest and climate change; land; home; public administration; shipping; water resources; housing and public works; and fisheries and livestock.

As per the masterplan, all liquid waste from industries, households and other establishments must be treated at effluent treatment plants (ETPs) before it ends up in rivers.

Also, grabbers of the rivers as well as canals will be evicted, and the rivers will be dredged to restore their normal flow.

Earlier in 2007, the government and the World Bank jointly conducted a study which found that around 7,000 industries in and around the capital were discharging 1.5 million cubic metres of liquid waste into the rivers through 300 channels every day.

It also found 61 percent of liquid waste was being discharged from industrial units and the rest from households.

Under the masterplan, walkways will be built along riverbanks and trees will be planted on the shores of the rivers.

‘WORK WITHOUT FEAR’
The LGRD minister at yesterday’s meeting asked all concerned to work “without any fear” to implement the masterplan.

Representatives from the ministries and departments concerned were

present there.

A representative from the Department of Environment (DoE) told the meeting that if the authorities fail to act quickly, it would not be possible to save the Buriganga as the river has already turned into a stream of liquid waste.

The official further said many industrial units near the river set up ETPs as eyewash in the face of drives by the authorities. Actually, none of these ETPs works.

At the meeting, a committee was formed to free the Padma and the Meghna from pollution, and implement a project to channel water to the Turag through the Pungli river.

The Meghna is being polluted heavily at four points in Ashuganj, Narsingdi and Barodi in Narayanganj.

The minister later briefed journalists about the progress of their work and the meeting’s outcome.

On reducing pollution in the

rivers around the capital, the minister said a number of industrial units are still dumping waste into the rivers. The government is working to make the rivers and canals linked to those free from pollution and encroachment.

“It takes time to revive the polluted rivers,” the minister said, mentioning that it took nearly 50 years for the UK to revive the River Thames.

To save the rivers around the capital and the Chattogram city, the government in 2009 had formed a taskforce comprising government officials and civil society members.

The committee, headed by former shipping minister Shajahan Khan, failed to improve the condition of the rivers despite spending around Tk 1,000 crore on several projects. It sat at least 34 times, identified a number of problems and took several decisions to free the rivers around the capital from pollution and encroachment.

Admit guilt, we’ll consider

FROM PAGE 1

Law Minister Anisul Huq also made similar comments while talking to reporters during an event at Hotel Sonargaon in the capital yesterday.

Meanwhile the BNP has said Khaleda should be released on humanitarian grounds as her physical condition is deteriorating fast. BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir on Friday spoke to Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader over phone about her release.

On February 10, Khaleda’s younger brother Shameem Iskander wrote to the Bangabandhu Sheikh

Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) authorities, requesting them to recommend that she needed to be sent abroad for better treatment.

According to BNP sources, Khaleda declined to seek any parole as she believed that she had not committed any crime and deserved bail.

On the other hand, several ministers said the government would not compromise on Khaleda’s release until she seeks parole.

Many BNP leaders believe that it is not possible to get her released through legal means as the government is “influencing” the judicial process.

On December 12 last year, the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court rejected the BNP chief’s bail petition in the Zia Charitable Trust graft case.

Khaleda’s lawyer Zainul Abedin yesterday told journalists that they would file a bail petition again this week.

Pointing to section 401(1) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, the lawyer said the government could suspend jail term of such convicts under special consideration.

The section says, “When any person has been sentenced to punishment for

an offence, the government may at any time without conditions or upon any condition which the person sentenced accepts, suspend the execution of his sentence or remit the whole or any part of the punishment to which he has been sentenced.”

Khaleda has been receiving treatment at the BSMMU since April 1 last year.

She landed in jail on February 8, 2018 after being convicted in the Zia Orphanage Trust graft case. She was convicted in another case later that year.

The BNP claims that both the cases are politically motivated.

Measures starting to pay dividend

FROM PAGE 1

The province and its capital, Wuhan, have been virtually sealed off and locked down since Jan 23, with schools, offices and factories shut and most travel suspended.

The virus is believed to have an incubation period of 14 days which would appear to indicate it has been spreading since the lockdown was imposed. But health commission spokesman Mi Feng said the campaign was beginning to show results.

“The effect of the coronavirus controls is appearing,” Mi told reporters.

Increased medical support and preventive measures in Hubei had headed off more critical cases and the proportion of critical cases among confirmed cases had fallen to 21.6% on Saturday, from 32.4% on Jan. 27, Mi said.

Mild cases were also being treated more quickly, preventing them from becoming critical, Mi said.

Nevertheless, restrictions were tightened in Hubei yesterday with a ban on vehicles, apart from essential services, and companies told to stay shut until further notice.

Outside mainland China, there

have been about 500 cases in some two dozen countries and territories, with 5 deaths - in Japan, Chinese-ruled Hong Kong, the Philippines, France and Taiwan.

The biggest cluster outside China has been on the Diamond Princess cruise ship quarantined off Japan’s Yokohama, with 70 more cases reported yesterday, taking the total to 355 of the roughly 3,700 passengers and crew on board.

Those testing positive are sent to hospital. No one from the ship has died of the virus.

The US Embassy in Tokyo said passengers and crew were at high risk of exposure to the virus and it recommended that the estimated 400 US citizens onboard get off and take one of the evacuation flights it is arranging yesterday.

“This is a rapidly evolving situation,” the embassy said in a notice.

The embassy said everyone would be screened before being allowed to board the chartered flights and quarantined for 14 days upon arrival back in the United States.

“No symptomatic or infected passengers will be allowed to board,” it said.

Hong Kong, Canada, Italy and South Korea also said they planned to evacuate their citizens from the ship.

Another cruise ship, Holland America’s MS Westerdam, docked in Cambodia on Thursday after being rejected by ports in several other countries and territories.

The ship was believed to be free of the virus but an 83-year-old American woman from it tested positive upon arriving in Malaysia, authorities there said, adding that a second test, at the request of the cruise operator, confirmed the finding.

The first fatality in Europe was an 80-year-old Chinese man who died at a Paris hospital, authorities said on Saturday.

Robin Thompson, an expert in mathematical epidemiology at Britain’s University of Oxford, said that with nearly 50 cases in Europe, a death was not surprising.

“There still hasn’t been sustained person-to-person transmission in Europe,” he said.

After an extended Lunar New Year holiday, China urgently needs to get back to work. But some cities remain in lockdown, streets are deserted,

employees are nervous, and travel bans and quarantine orders are in place around the country.

Many factories are yet to re-open, disrupting supply chains in China and beyond for everyone from smartphone makers to car manufacturers.

While there was been some hope that the disease may be peaking in China, a trend has been hard to discern, especially after a reclassification that widened the definition of cases.

World Health Organization (WHO) chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said on Saturday it was impossible to tell where the epidemic will spread.

“We are concerned by the continued increase in the number of cases in China,” Tedros told the Munich Security Conference in Germany.

The sickness, now officially labelled COVID-19, has killed about 2% of those infected. Cases have spread faster than other respiratory viruses this century.

The economic ripple effects go far beyond China.

White House economic adviser Larry Kudlow said the coronavirus might knock two- to three-tenths of a percent off US gross domestic product in the first quarter.

'Catch' tax-dodging foreign workers: ACC chief to NBR

UNB, Dhaka

Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Chairman Iqbal Mahmood yesterday asked officials of National Board of Revenue (NBR) to 'catch' identified tax-dodging foreign nationals working in Bangladesh.

He came up with the call at a training programme of ACC and NBR officials at BCS Tax Academy auditorium in the capital.

Iqbal Mahmood also asked NBR officials to strengthen connections with Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) and Immigration and Passports Department, so that nobody can evade taxes and misappropriate public money.

"Don't harass any honest businessman during

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



PHOTO OF THE DAY

RASHED SHUMON



Work for painting, cleaning and preparing the Central Shaheed Minar premises goes on in full swing, ahead of International Mother Language Day to be observed on February 21. On the day, Dhaka residents will pay tribute to the 1952 Language Movement martyrs at the monument.

Clean Air Act to be enacted to control pollution: minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Air quality of Dhaka city worsened between 2016 and 2019 as construction of various large infrastructure increased within that period, Environment Minister Shahab Uddin told parliament yesterday.

In reply to a query from ruling Awami League MP Manjur Hossain from Faridpur-1, the minister in a scripted answer also said brick kilns, vehicles, construction of different infrastructures and roads digging, civic waste, biomass and trans-boundary influence are responsible behind air pollution of Dhaka city.

The minister said the government has taken various short-, mid- and long-term plans to control air pollution.

"The government has already closed down around 600 brick kilns across the country. All illegal brick kilns will be shut down gradually," Shahab Uddin said.

As part of the short-term plan, the government ensured examination of emission levels of vehicles while providing fitness certificates. The government has also ensured waste management of the city corporations and stop burning of waste, he said.

As part of the mid-term plan, the minister said, the government has taken measures to set up high-speed water sprinklers at different hotspots in the capital to control air pollution through spraying water from high above.

Besides, the government will also set up dust sucker and introduce

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Keep your hands clean: Police HQ

Issues list of instructions to all units as coronavirus precaution

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Although coronavirus has not been reported in Bangladesh yet, the Police Headquarters (PHQ) in a precautionary move to prevent spread of the virus has issued a letter instructing all police units in the country to ensure hand-washing or sanitising facilities on their premises.

The letter, signed last week by Taptun Nasrin, assistant inspector general (health and education), also instructed all unit officials to not keep any birds or animals on the compounds of government residences.

The letter contains a brief description on how the virus spreads, symptoms and its prevention, along with instructions to keep police outposts, stations and barracks clean and arrange briefing for all officials by doctors or civil surgeons.

"We have issued the instruction to raise awareness [about coronavirus], and are giving reminders regularly," Sohel Rana, assistant inspector general of PHQ, told

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Poetry, novels dominate numbers

SAYED MOHMUD ULLAH

With poetry leading the tally of new arrivals, a total of 2,340 new titles hit the stalls in the first 15 days of the monthlong Amar Ekushey Grantha Mela this year, the highest at the halfway mark in last five years.

In the first 15 days of previous editions, the fair saw a total of 2,271 books last year, 1,771 in 2017, 2,076 in 2018 and 1,705 titles in 2016, according to statistics of the fair information centre.

According to this year's numbers, 684 poetry books were followed by 382 novels, 316 short stories, 126 essays, 103 children's books, 83 books on Liberation War, 76 biographies, 73 books on Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and 50 books on history.

Publishers are unveiling an increasing number of books, as most of them have already seen a boom



As the fair enters its second half, booklovers have started to turn up in droves at Bangla Academy and Suhrawardy Udyan premises.

in sales," said Osman Gani, former president of Academic and Creative Publishers Association of Bangladesh.

He said his publication house Agamee Prakashani has already published at least 100 new books, including books on Liberation War, Bangabandhu and research.

"Number of books would increase as most publishers would bring more book targeting February 21 [International Mother Language Day]," he added.

A stall attendant of Bayanno said booklovers are buying poetry books

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina places a wreath on the coffin of former state minister Rahmat Ali at the south plaza of Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban yesterday afternoon. The five-time lawmaker from Gazipur-3 constituency passed away at a Dhaka hospital yesterday morning.

PHOTO: BSS

Kazi Aref an example for politicians: speakers

Discussion held marking his 21st death anniv

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The dedication and sacrifice that Kazi Aref Ahmed made for his country and its political arena are exemplary, speakers said at a memorial discussion yesterday.

Many contemporary politicians of the country lack qualities such as selflessness and honesty that were hallmarks of Aref, a prominent Liberation War organiser and political leader. Through these, he will remain alive in people's hearts, the speakers added.

Kazi Aref Parishad, a social organisation formed in memory of the eminent political figure, organised the discussion at Jatiya Press Club in the capital to mark the 21st anniversary of his murder.

On February 16 in 1999, a group of outlawed political activists murdered Kazi Aref, one of the founding members of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD), and four Kushtia JSD unit leaders during a rally in the district's Daulatpur upazila.

Speaking at the discussion, Shahriar Kabir, president of Ekattorer Ghatik Dalal Nirmul Committee, said Aref was a key figure in almost every political movement of the country, from Liberation War in 1971 to the anti-autocracy movement in late 1990s.

Aref also made a significant contribution for ensuring trial of war criminals as one of the initiators of Gonadalot (court of people) which worked as a key movement demanding the trials, Shahriar Kabir said.

"People of our country will never forget the contributions of this selfless leader," he added.

Haroon Habib, secretary general of Sector Commanders Forum-Liberation War '71, said Aref is yet to be given the honour and recognition he deserves due to political biases, which is disappointing.

Fake currency factory busted

Eight held with 41 lakh 'rupees', equipment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detectives claimed to have busted a fake Indian currency manufacturing factory and arrested eight suspected gang members from the city Sabujbagh area yesterday afternoon.

The officials also recovered notes of 41 lakh rupees and fake note producing equipment during the drive, said Mashhur Rahman, deputy commissioner of the detective branch (north division) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

The arrestees are -- Bashir Uddin (51); Moniruzzaman (35); Monir Hossain (32); Abdul Quader (62); Enamul Haque Ashari (32); Akbar Ali (30); Kabir Hossain (35), and Sohel Mahmud (28).

Bashir is the mastermind, said police.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Erratum

In the headline of a news item published in Dhaka page yesterday, Bangabandhu was erroneously spelled Bangabandhu. We regret the inadvertent mistake.

ALL-IN RETURN FARES		
DESTINATION	ECONOMY CLASS FROM	BUSINESS CLASS FROM
Bangkok • Kuala Lumpur • Singapore	BDT 20,350*	BDT 80,350*
Bali • Manila	BDT 28,350*	BDT 90,350*
Osaka • Seoul • Tokyo	BDT 50,350*	BDT 115,350*
Adelaide • Perth	BDT 55,350*	BDT 150,350*
Brisbane • Melbourne • Sydney	BDT 60,350*	BDT 180,350*
Frankfurt • London	BDT 65,350*	BDT 200,350*
Auckland • Christchurch • Wellington	BDT 70,350*	BDT 190,350*
Los Angeles • New York • San Francisco	BDT 75,350*	BDT 250,350*

Your ultimate A350 experience now comes with these great fares from Singapore Airlines. Relax in wide, comfortable seats amidst spacious surroundings and arrive rested and ready to get more out of every destination. When you fly the world's newest aircraft on the world's most awarded airline, it's an A350 experience unlike any other.

Book now at singaporeair.com

SINGAPORE AIRLINES
A great way to fly

*Flights between Dhaka and Singapore are operated by the A350. Aircraft types from Singapore and beyond are subject to scheduling and destinations. All advertised Singapore Airlines fares include the price of the air ticket, associated taxes and surcharges only, correct as of 17 February 2020. Fares quoted are subject to change due to currency fluctuation. Fares quoted are available for sale from now till 16 March 2020. Fares quoted are per person in Economy Class and Business Class for travel out of Dhaka from now till 31 July 2020. Tickets are non-refundable; only exception could be made in case of visa rejection. Change and no-show allowed with fee. Other terms and conditions apply. For Singapore Airlines Hotline: +88-02-9851881

Bashan Char could be a resort or home to homeless: Momen

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen yesterday said Bashan Char, an island in Noakhali district that was recently readied to relocate Rohingyas, could either be a resort or a “good place for homeless people” instead of relocating the refugees there.

“We can think of an alternative instead of sending Rohingyas there. This is my personal thinking and there has been no decision from the government yet,” he told reporters at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, while sharing his experience of a recent visit to the island.

Mentioning economic activities there, the foreign minister said it would be better if other people are sent to Bashan Char instead of Rohingyas only.

Earlier, the foreign minister said Bangladesh would not relocate Rohingya people to Bashan Char if all concerned think it would be a problem for them.

Bangladesh is hosting around 1.1 million Rohingyas in Cox’s Bazar district, amid fears that there might be landslides during the upcoming monsoon causing casualties, according to officials.

‘Catch’ tax-dodging

FROM PAGE 3

tax collection. We want to widen the tax net, not to raise the tax rate. You [ACC and NBR officials] will work with transparency to achieve the vision of Bangladesh,” he added.

BCS Tax Academy Director General Md Lutful Azim delivered the welcome speech at the event.

Seven language

FROM PAGE 5

Chowdhury and former finance minister M Saifur Rahman.

During the programme, National Professor Jamilur Reza Choudhury and poet and diplomat Mofazzal Karim -- who were present as guest speakers -- unveiled the cover of a book titled “Shabdogan Roktomita”, launched by the SCC and sylhettoday24.com.

The book focuses on details of the roles played by Language Movement veterans including the seven.

SCC Mayor Ariful Haque Chowdhury, who presided over the programme, and sylhettoday24.com Editor-in-Chief Kabir Aahmed said, from now on, they will honour other language veterans in phases every year.

Scholarships for SSC students in Faridpur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A scholarship programme for meritorious students of Faridpur district was unveiled at Times Media Building in Teigaon yesterday, aiming to provide stipends to the district’s highest scorers in SSC exams, said a press release.

The “Professor SM Farhad Scholarship” is named after Prof SM Farhad, a teacher of Government Razendra College. The programme was introduced by Ha-Meem Group Managing Director AK Azad, a student of Prof Farhad.

The student and teacher shared words of gratitude for each other while speaking at the launching event. The event was attended by former students of the school.

Poetry, novels

FROM PAGE 3

in large numbers.

According to fair authorities, the fair saw publication of only five books on political affairs, six on religion, 41 science fictions, 45 on science, 23 translations and 45 books on research so far.

Farid Ahammed, publisher of Somoy Prokashoni, said titles of science fiction were 10-15 some five to seven years ago, but the number is increasing every year. “It is difficult to get adequate and quality manuscripts on science fictions, compared to books on poetry or novels,” he said

Asked about the low number of books on politics, Osman Gani said many publishers have published political analyses on Liberation War, and books on Bangabandhu, which have not directly been included under the category. “That is why the number is seen to be low,” he added.

Apart from poetry and prose fiction, a large number of university students are also keen to buy books on research, and that is why books on research are also increasing.

“I have published three books on research from different publications this year,” said young writer Mehedi Ullah.

Kazi Toufique passes away

CITY DESK

Dr Kazi Ali Toufique, research director at Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, passed away on February 11, said a press release.

Dr Toufique obtained his MPhil in 1990, and PhD in 1996 from University of Cambridge. He left behind a son, a daughter and a host of relatives and friends.

BNWLA elects new leadership

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Salma Ali and Zubaida Parvin were elected president and general secretary, respectively of Bangladesh National Women Lawyers’ Association for two years, said a press release.

Seema Zahur and Hasina Rashid were elected vice presidents while Hasna Begum and Rebeka Sultana were elected joint secretary and treasurer respectively, the press release added.

Fake currency factory

FROM PAGE 3

The gang had been running such factory, renting out flats in Sabujbagh and other parts of the city for a long time. In primary interrogation, the arrestees admitted that they had plans to sell one crore rupees monthly to their Indian counterparts at borders, said Mashiur.

According to detectives, fake currency notes are produced and circulated in several phases.

Of the arrestees, Monir and Moniruzzaman used to run the factory, Al Amin used to supply special paper and other ingredients while Kabir and Sohel printed the currencies, they said.

Enamul and Akbar used to buy the notes from factory owner Bashir -- one lakh fake currency at Tk 21,000. They used to sell those at Tk 25,000 to their Indian counterparts through Chapainawabganj bordering areas, the officials said.

Detectives claimed that Bashir was once a drug trader and got acquainted with a fake note producer while he was in jail in a case.

Coming out of bail, he started working as an assistant at another “factory”. He later decided to set up one by himself, they said.

A case was filed with Sabujbagh Police Station in this connection.

A feast for book

FROM PAGE 5

she added. Rubana said she bought eight books last year and is planning to add more to her collection this year.

Meanwhile, Pinku Barua was searching for comics and books by Prof Muhammad Zafar Iqbal. The seventh-grader was all smiles when his father bought those for him.

Asked, Nazmul Haque Duke said a total of 205 publishers are participating in the fair this year. “Of those, 111 publishers came from the capital. The number of participants was 140 last year,” he added.

“The enthusiasm of book lovers will encourage more publishers to participate in the fair in the years to come,” he said.

Clean Air Act to be

FROM PAGE 3

vacuum sweeping trucks instead of manual brooms to clean roads, he said.

Shahab Uddin said as part of long term plan, the government has also taken various measures including enacting the Clean Air Act-2020 for effectively controlling the air pollution at large.

RATS DAMAGED 1 LAKH TONNES OF CROPS IN 2018

Around 1 lakh tonnes of crops were damaged in 2018 due to attack of rats, Agriculture Minister Abdur Razzaque told parliament yesterday.

In reply to a query from ruling Awami League MP Habiba Rahman Khan (women’s seat-17), the minister in a scripted answer said around 90,385 tonnes of crops was damaged in 2017, 88,844 in 2016, 94,388 in 2015 and 96,696 tonnes in 2014 due to rat infestations.

“Each year, 5-7 percent of Aman rice, 4-12

percent of wheat, 5-7 percent of potato and 6-9 percent of pineapple got damaged due to attack of rats,” the agriculture minister said.

He also informed that rats also damaged 5-7 percent crops on field and 3-5 percent corps in storage units each year.

The agriculture minister informed the House about the government’s various measures to save crops from the attack of rats through eliminating them.

Meanwhile, Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Shahab Uddin yesterday told parliament that the government has created forests in 94,939 hectares and 71,456 square kilometre areas in the last 36 years since 1982 through social forestation.

In this period, the government distributed around Tk 356.82 crore among 6.78 lakh people who were engaged in this social forestation, the minister also informed the House.

11 killed, 22 injured

FROM PAGE 5

the accident took place when the motorbike tried to overtake a three-wheeler.

In Lalmonirhat, a college student was killed after being hit by a truck on Lalmonirhat-Burimari highway at Namuri in Aditmari upazila.

The deceased was identified as Numabi Islam, an eleventh-grader of Duhuli Technical College, said Aditmari Police Station OC Saiful Islam.

In Narayanganj, Sentu Mia (45) was killed after a covered van hit him while he was crossing Dhaka-Narayanganj Link Road in Fatulla.

Fatulla Model Police Station OC Aslam Hossain said Sentu died on the spot. The body was sent to Narayanganj General Hospital for autopsy.

Police detained the driver. Legal actions will be taken in this regard, the OC added.

In Sunamganj, two people were killed and two others injured as the bike they were on hit a roadside electric pole in Brahmanagan area under Sadar upazila.

The deceased were identified as Pabel Ahmed (17) and Sohag Miah (17). Both hailed from Majibari village in the upazila. Pabel was supposed to attend Dakhil examination this year.

The accident occurred after the rider lost control over the bike, OC Sohidur Rahman of Sunamganj Police Station quoted locals as saying.

Locals rushed them to Sunamganj Sadar Hospital where the doctors declared Pabel and Sohag dead and referred the injured to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital, the OC added.

Encroachment 8yrs

FROM PAGE 5

WITHOUT RAJUK APPROVAL

Shah Alam Chowdhury, director (zone-5) and design officer of Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (Rajuk), said they are yet to give approval to Sugandha.

Earlier, a Rajuk team knocked down the company’s office gate at Hemayetpur and warned them to stop activities, said the official.

When informed that the company is still operating, Shah Alam said, “We will look into the matter.”

Sugandha secretary Selim Reza said, “We applied to Rajuk for its approval but are yet to get it.”

When asked why they are running the company until it is authorised, he refused to comment.

Univ decides to revise

FROM PAGE 5

Meanwhile, a group of students of the university on Thursday locked the administrative building of the university, demanding withdrawal of the expulsion order.

The five expelled students submitted a note of apology to Vice Chancellor (VC) Prof Dr AHM Mustafizur Rahman yesterday, seeking a meeting with the VC, said Proctor Dr Uzzal Kumar Pradhan.

“At a meeting with the VC as chair today [yesterday] afternoon, it was decided that the expulsion orders will be revised in the next syndicate meeting,” added the proctor.

Following the decision to revise the expulsion orders, the students withdrew their protest programme around 2pm, said Nayeem Abdullah, a protester.

At the earlier syndicate meeting on

Thursday, Shayra and Tuama were expelled for one year; Md Zakir was expelled for three years; while Tanvirul and Mehdi were expelled for two years each, said university Registrar Dr Md Humayun Kabir.

Quoting the syndicate meeting, the registrar also said any form of ragging is prohibited at the university.

Shayra and Tuama were found guilty of ragging a first-year female student of theatre and performance studies department. The victim had fell sick from the “severe mental pressure”, and had to be admitted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH) on February 6.

Another first-year student of computer science and engineering also fell ill due to “mental pressure,” and was admitted to MMCH the same night.

Both students were released from the hospital the following day.



Brock University, Canada and Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at IUB campus recently, aiming to strengthen cultural and academic exchange between the two universities. Benoit Préfontaine, High Commissioner of Canada to Bangladesh, was present on the occasion.

To-Let

Independent 3 Storied building at Nikunja-1, adjacent Army Golf Club. Duplex, Central gas, Basement, 3 parking House-2A, Road-2. Ph: 01715 034984

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare Sheikh Fazlunnessa Mujib Memorial KPI Specialized Hospital & Nursing College C-12, Tetulia, Rajshahi, Bangladesh Phone: 88-02-44077031 Fax: 88-02-44077014 Email: tenderinfo@sfmmkpih.com Corrigendum Notice Package no. SFMM (GRB)-2003 for procurement of Urology Equipment and ICU central Monitoring. SFMMKPIH/Proc./Govt./2020/183 Date: 06/02/2020 is hereby amended to read as under: Existing entries Tender Package No SFMM (GRB)-2002 Amended entries Tender Package No SFMM (GRB)-2003 Mohd Taufiq Bin Ismail Chief Executive Officer

Rajshahi City Corporation Engineering Department Nagar Bhaban, Rajshahi শেখ হাসিনার মূলনীতি গ্রাম শহরের উন্নতি Memo No. 46.12.5081.14.137.2020.347 Date: 16.02.2020 e-Tender Notice IFT-09/2019-20 (Re-Tender) e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for the procurement of the following works: SL No. Reference No. ID No. Name of works Tender/proposal document last selling time and date 1 46.12.5081.006.14.21 3.2020.348 427089 Construction of CC Road with RCC Drain Under Ward No. 22, 23 & 24 (Salvage Tk 714846.23) 12.30pm on 11-Mar-2020 46.12.5081.006.14.21 4. 2020.349 427095 Construction of CC Road with RCC Drain Under Ward No. 03, 14 & 15 (Salvage Tk 378363.46) This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd). Md. Noor Islam Executive Engineer (Civil) Rajshahi City Corporation Rajshahi Tel. 01711484311 E-mail: nislamusher@gmail.com

Bangladesh Election Commission Use of Electronic Voting Machine in order to Apply ICT in Election System (EVM) Project Election Commission Secretariat Nirbachan Bhaban (8th Floor), Agargaon, Dhaka-1207 Corrigendum Notice No. 01 of Expression of Interest No. ECS/EVM/Pro/SD-3.1/2020 All concerned are hereby notified that the REOI notice published on 07/02/2020 vide Package No. SD-3.1 and Ref No. ECS/EVM/Pro/SD-3.1/2020/177 date: 07/02/2020 has the following amendments: Existing Amendment Required Minimum Qualification: • Should have 10 years of minimum experience in a supervisory position as Financial Management Consultant/ Specialist in GoB projects under any Government Ministries or Semi Government Agencies. b) Experience & Skills • Should have 10 years of minimum experience in a supervisory position on Financial Management under any Government/ Semi Government organization. All other information in the REOI notice will remain same. Md. Kamal Uddin Colonel Project Director, EVM Project Election Commission Secretariat GD-300

To-Let 7,000 sqft Banking/Office Space on Satmasjid Road. Contact : 01725 895 714

House Rent 4-Storied Building-Each Floor Around 3500 SQFT For Bedrooms, Attached Bathrooms, Drawing Room, Dining Room, Kitchen and Balcony, Total 14,000 SQFT Building. Duplex - Ground and First Floors; Second and Third Floors for separate stairs; Entire Vacant Lawn with Guard Room, Terrace and 6-Car Parking. Interested For Multi National Company for Personal Guest House Plus Small Office or Permanent Foreign Residents. House-14, Road-7C, Sector-3, Uttara Model Town, Dhaka. Phone: +880 17 4221 7746, +8801730700007, +880 173700002

CAR SALE Mercedes Benz E Class, E 250 A.M.G, Model: 2014, Registration: 2016, CC: 1991, Mileage: 9200, Full Auto, Color: Pearl White, Panoramic Sunroof. Contact only genuine buyer: 01756-682470.

SOLIDARITES INTERNATIONAL NATIONAL TENDER NOTICE Reference: BAN/NCT/FSL/2020/01 As part of our humanitarian programs in Bangladesh, SOLIDARITES INTERNATIONAL need to purchase: Sea Safety Material Kit The companies who wish to bid are invited to collect a tender file at SOLIDARITES INTERNATIONAL's office in Dhaka before the 23rd of February 2020, 4:00 pm at the following address: SOLIDARITES INTERNATIONAL, House no 15/A, Road # 5, Block # F, Banani, Dhaka Contact: Logistics Department Telephone: (+88) 019 56 83 32 66, (+88) 017 7777 37 08 - Or to get a soft copy of the tender file, by sending a request, by Email, to the following addresses: Email: dha.log.supply@solidarites-bangladesh.org dha.log.coo@solidarites-bangladesh.org The deadline for the submission of bids is set on the March 9, 2020 before 4 pm (local time).

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Office of the Director Institute of Epidemiology Disease Control & Research (IEDCR), Mohakhali, Dhaka-1212 Telephone: 9842270, 9898796, 9898691 Fax: 9880440 e-mail: info@iedcr.gov.bd Website: www.iedcr.gov.bd Memo No. IEDCR/STI Surveillance/Re-E-Tender/2019-20/ Date: 16.02.2020 Re-Tender Notice: 02/2019-20 Re-E-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) for procurement of the following goods: Sl. No. Package No. Name of the items Tender ID No. 1. IEDCR/STI/Re-Tender P-1 Desktop, Printer, UPS, Modem 427785 2. IEDCR/STI/Re-Tender P-2 Laptop 427833 3. IEDCR/STI/Re-Tender P-3 Real Time PCR Machine 427847 4. IEDCR/STI/Re-Tender P-4 Automated Microbial Identification & Susceptibility System with MIC 427856 5. IEDCR/STI/Re-Tender P-5 Heating Block 427862 6. IEDCR/STI/Re-Tender/P-6 RT PCR Kit 427868 7. IEDCR/STI/Re-Tender P-7 Bacterial DNA Extraction Kit 427880 8. IEDCR/STI/Re-Tender/P-8 NH Test Card, Calibration Kit, others 427883 This is an online tender, where only Re-E-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit Re-E-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) is required. The fees for downloading the Re-E-Tender documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered banks branches up to 2.00pm on 09.03.2020. The closing & opening time of tenders are shown below: Sl. No Description Date Time Closing Opening 1. IEDCR/STI/Re-Tender P-1, P-2, P-3, P-4, P-5, P-6, P-7, P-8 09.03.2020 3:00pm 3:00pm Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal (http://www.eprocure.gov.bd) and e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd). NB: Funding for this procurement under STI Surveillance (Survey Code-3257104). অধ্যাপক ডাঃ মীরজাদী সেব্রিনা ফ্লোরা পরিচালক ফোন নম্বর: ০২-৯৮৪২৭০ GD-302

A feast for book lovers

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

With a huge number of people thronging the Amar Ekushey Boi Mela every day, the MA Aziz stadium in Chattogram continues to wear a festive look.

The book fair began on February 10 on the stadium's gymnasium field and will continue till the end of this month.

The fair is being organised under the patronisation of Chattogram City Corporation, said Councillor Nazmul Haque Duke, also convener of the fair.

While visiting the book fair, this correspondent saw book lovers of all ages swarming the stalls to choose their favourites from an array of choices.

"So many collections... I'm yet to decide what to buy," said Shuvesha Ghosh. The Jamal Khan Road resident visited the fair with her husband.

"I am a huge fan of Humayun Ahmed and I will definitely buy some of his books to enrich my collection," she said, adding, "I'm also looking for books on travels."

Although there was a huge rush, especially on the weekend, no one seemed to mind.

Rubana Binte Kamal, a student of Chittagong College, said, "There's something magical about reading a new book. It's like going on a great journey. You don't know what'll happen, but something is bound to change. And for me, that change has always been good."

"I never miss the opportunity to visit the book fair here as it's not possible for me to travel to Dhaka that often,"

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



Visitors leaf through books at a stall at MA Aziz Stadium in Chattogram. With an array of selections, the Ekushey book fair continues to attract bookworms of all ages.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

FIVE EXPELLED OVER RAGGING AT JKKNIU Univ decides to revise order following protest

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Five students of Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University (JKKNIU) were expelled recently over ragging two freshmen.

Two first-year students, one of them female, were ragged by their seniors in the name of "learning manners" last week. Upon finding the allegations true, the university expelled Shayra Tasnim Anika and Tuama Nusrat Mim, both second-year students of sociology; Md Zakir Hossain and Tanvirul Islam of local government and urban development department, and Mehdi Hasan, a third-year student of electrical and electronics engineering.

The university had formed a four-member anti-ragging committee headed by Student Affairs Adviser Dr Sheikh Sujon Ali to investigate the incident. They found the five students to be involved in ragging and the decision to expel them was taken according to the probe committee's report, said the university's registrar.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Seven language heroes honoured

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Seven Language Movement veterans from Sylhet were honoured for their contributions to the 1952 demonstration, in the city yesterday.

Sylhet City Corporation (SCC) and sylhettoday24.com, an online news portal, gave the honour by presenting crests and sashes at a programme in a city hotel.

Former finance minister AMA Muhith was one of the seven.

The other six -- who were honoured posthumously -- are former foreign minister Abdus Samad Azad, Advocate Monir Uddin Ahmed, Dr Md Haris Uddin, comrade Asaddar Ali, educationist Prof Sadruddin Ahmed

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Encroachment 8yrs in the making Unapproved company grabs canal land in Savar, continues sand filling

AKLAKUR RAHMAN AKASH, Savar

Savar's Bamni Khal has almost gone out of sight as people living nearby gradually filled the canal with earth and has been using it as farmland over the years, with the authorities concerned being nonchalant to save the waterbody.

In the middle of it, an unauthorised real estate company made the situation worse by grabbing a large part of its land, said locals.

The 2.5km Bamni Khal once connected Karnopara canal at Nogorkanda end and the Turag River at Bazarpara end.

"Sugandha Property Development Ltd" has been piling up sand at Nogorkanda for eight years. Now, the grabbed part would be 50 decimals, said locals.

But, no one from the authorities concerned knew about the situation until residents informed them on February 9.

On that day, a team from upazila administration let off company officials with reprimands. Executive Magistrate Abdullah Al Mahfuz, also assistant commissioner (land) in Savar, led the drive. The Daily Star witnessed the raid from beginning to end.

The team asked the Sugandha authorities to remove the sand, but did not set any deadline.

Talking to this correspondent, locals said there is no sign of canal in the area as its land has been used for cultivation. Eventually, unscrupulous people started grabbing it for "development" activities, they added.

Jomir Uddin, a local, became nostalgic while talking about the waterbody. "We used to fish here and



PHOTO: STAR

"Sugandha Property Development Ltd" has filled up a major portion of Bamni Khal in Savar. The upazila administration recently set up a bamboo pole to demarcate the canal land, which did little to stop the illegal activity.

transport goods on a regular basis," he said.

If the government takes steps to re-excavate the waterbody, it would benefit people, especially farmers for irrigation, said the residents.

In addition, waterlogging would ease to some extent, said local activists. Poor monitoring and inaction by the authorities are reasons behind the canal's fate, said Shamsul Haque, president of Savar Nodi o Poribesh Unnayan Parishad.

The AC (land) team demarcated the grabbed part of the dead canal by putting up bamboos, which is not enough, said locals. The entire canal land should be marked to recover it, they added.

Asked, Savar Upazila Nirbahi Officer Parvezur Rahman said they already started such demarcation work. "We could not do so before as

we are busy with other administrative activities," he added.

Contacted, Selim Reza, secretary of Sugandha Property Development Ltd, said they did not grab the canal land.

On the other hand, AC (land) Abdullah Al Mahfuz said, "They did grab it. We will take legal action against them if the sand is not removed."

Selim Reza claimed that a little quantity of sand might have spilled out on the government land from ours. "We will remove those as soon as possible."

As of yesterday, a week after the drive, the sand remained as it was.

When contacted over phone, Deputy Commissioner of Dhaka Abu Saleh Mohammad Ferdous Khan abruptly hung up, saying, "Talk to me later."

He did not respond to further calls.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

11 killed, 22 injured in road accidents across country

STAR REPORT

Eleven people were killed in separate road accidents across the country in one day yesterday, according to reports from our correspondents.

Among them, five people were killed in two accidents at the two ends of Bangabandhu bridge in Tangail and Sirajganj.

In Sirajganj, three people were killed and 20 injured after a speeding bus hit a motorbike and plunged into a ditch beside Dhaka-Bogura highway in Talukber Bazar area under Kamarkhand upazila.

Of the deceased, Shapla Khatun (27) could be identified while identities of the other two are yet to be known, reports our Pabna correspondent.

Sayed Sahid Alam, officer-in-charge of Bangabandhu Bridge West Zone Police Station, said the accident took place around 1pm as the bus driver lost control over the vehicle while trying to save the bike.

The injured were taken to Sirajganj General Hospital, he said.

In Tangail, two people were killed when a bus ran them over at the east end of Bangabandhu bridge near Golchakkar in Bhuapur upazila.

Mayeen Uddin Hamim (25) and Sadia Islam Nodi (26), students of Medical Assistant Training School in Tangail, died on the spot, said Jayed Abdullah Bin Sarwar, sub-inspector of Bangabandhu Bridge East Police Station.

Police chased the bus down from Kamakkhar intersection area in

Kalihati upazila. They seized the bus but its driver and helpers managed to flee, SI Jayed added.

Protesting the accident, fellows of the deceased blocked Tangail-Mymensingh road in front of Tangail General Hospital, demanding arrest and capital punishment for the driver.

Students were demonstrating to realise their demands till filing of this report last night.

In Faridpur, two people were killed as a motorbike they were riding and a truck collided head-on at Ghanshampur in Sadar upazila.

Cattle traders Idris Paul (49) and Monayam Hossain (41) died instantly, said police.

Quoting locals, Md Belal Hossain, SI of Sadar Police Station, said

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Unidentified body found in Narayanganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

Police recovered the body of an unidentified man, aged around 35, from a drain at Tetlabo of Rupganj upazila yesterday noon.

Locals discovered the body lying in the drain and informed police. Later, law enforcers went to the spot around noon and recovered the body, said Azhar Ali, Inspector of Volta Police Outpost.

The body was sent to Narayanganj General Hospital for autopsy.

"We have found no injury marks on his body," Azhar said, adding that filing of a case was underway.

COMMERCIAL SPACE

@ MIRPUR 11

Please Call
01847-052352
01817-044565
01817-146233
01817-143881

Hotline
01885-000300

DOM-INNO

House 13, Road 7, Block F, Banani, Dhaka 1213
Ph-9871806-10, 9872167
sales@dominno-bd.com
www.dominno-bd.com

Can the polling system be saved?

The EC must be allowed to act neutrally

At a day-long discussion in the city on Saturday, political analysts, former bureaucrats and good governance campaigners were all in agreement that the country's democratic system would collapse without a free and fair polls system.

The blatantly low voter turnout at this February's mayoral elections has sent a sobering message to the country, in particular to those governing it. It reflected the apathy and lack of faith in the Election Commission (EC) and the entire electoral system. This disinclination to exercise one of the fundamental rights of a citizen belonging to a democracy has not come about in a day. It is based on the bitter experience of previous elections during which the Election Commission failed to hold elections without allegations of vote rigging, voter and opposition party intimidation, violence and other ploys that completely marred the electoral atmosphere.

It is a tragedy for the voters that despite all the pre-election assurances by the EC regarding the steps it would take to make sure that the mayoral elections would be held in a free and fair manner by taking action in the case of irregularities, in reality, all the fears voters had regarding the polls seem to come true. There were reports of opposition polling agents being driven away from the centres, "helpers" casting votes for the voters, lack of privacy while voting in the booths, fingerprints not matching with those on the databases and vicious attacks on journalists for trying to cover the polls. Thus, many voters who did vote were not very happy with the experience while others didn't bother to come at all because of experiences in previous elections. Logically, this is most likely to result in even fewer voters turning up for the next elections.

The Election Commission can no longer bury its head in the sand and pretend everything is in order after letting the voters down so miserably. More importantly, the powers that be must recognise that having such a low voter turnout and the reasons behind it cannot be allowed to go on in future elections. It is about time that the Election Commission is allowed to act neutrally by addressing all kinds of irregularities before and during the polls and for the government to make sure that a conducive, intimidation-free atmosphere exists for voters in general, for opposition party candidates and their supporters, as well as for the media. Only then can we expect more voters to turn up at the polling centres. Only then can we say that we are in the right direction in upholding the spirit of democracy and of our Liberation War.

Dredging of Karnaphuli hampered by polythene!

Strictly enforce the ban on plastics

PLASTIC pollution in our rivers has reached such an alarming level that it has now become difficult for the authorities to even dredge the rivers because of these non-biodegradable wastes. We are stunned to learn from a report by *The Daily Star* on February 16 that the dredging work in the Karnaphuli river has slowed down because of a deep layer of polythene in the riverbed. Reportedly, the Chattogram Port Authority (CPA) had started a dredging project at a cost of BDT 258 crore in 2018 to restore the navigability of the Karnaphuli, but they found it difficult to continue the dredging because the cutter blades of the dredgers were getting jammed with polythene. Also, a survey conducted by BUET researchers has found that the riverbed has a layer of polythene and plastic waste stretching from two to seven metres.

Karnaphuli has become the worst victim of the polythene menace, since the polythene bags dumped in the 37 canals of Chattogram eventually end up in the river. What it means is that even if the dredging work of the river is done properly, the river will not get back its flow because of the continuous stream of polythene into the river. The only way Karnaphuli can be saved is by making sure that no polythene and plastic wastes are dumped in the city's canals.

While the authorities should continue with the dredging work, they must also coordinate with the city authorities to clean up all the canals. The clogged-up canals are the main reason for the city's waterlogging problem during monsoon. We hope that the Chattogram Development Authority and the Chattogram City Corporation will come to an understanding about cleaning the canals.

As for fighting the plastic menace across the country, the authorities concerned should follow the High Court directives, according to which the government must strictly enforce the ban on polythene or throwaway plastic bags through regular market monitoring and closure of polythene manufacturing factories. Only through complying with rules and regulations, and by raising awareness among people about the detrimental impact of polythene on our environment, can we stop plastic pollution and save our rivers.

LETTERS
TO THE EDITOR

letters@thedailystar.net

Uniform admission tests are not a good idea

Our Education Ministry fails to understand that implementing uniform admission tests for public universities will be chaotic and full of complexities. Firstly, the idea of short creative questions may enhance the duration of receiving the results. Secondly, deterioration of standards for setting questions is a big problem. I am certain these questions will be average, since the UGC intends to help every student pass. Renowned public universities like University of Dhaka and BUET will lose their question standards. Moreover, forgery, corruption, and inaccuracy in exam papers will increase. The intention behind the initiative is good but its results will be ominous.

Anika Tahsin Hafsa
Cantonment Public School and College, Rangpur



A CLOSER LOOK

Arjun Kejriwal has had smooth sailing at the recently held Delhi legislative polls, with his Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) being handed a strong mandate by the *Delhiwalas*, winning a sweeping 62 out of 70 seats. This is his third straight term in office.

Despite the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) landslide success in the 2019 national elections and Amit Shah's vitriolic campaign for the Legislative Assembly polls promoting the Modi's government's agenda of Hindu nationalism—which has raised important questions about the pluralistic democratic tradition of India—it was Kejriwal who emerged victorious in the February 8 polls. An overwhelming 61 percent of Delhi's 14.7 million eligible voters cast their ballots in the election.

The Delhi polls' voter turnout has been in complete contrast to the number of voters who showed up to cast their ballot in the Dhaka mayoral elections that was held on February 01, 2020. A mere 25.30 percent voters turned up in the Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) polls, while a slightly higher proportion of voters—29 percent—showed up in the Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) elections.

DNCC saw the re-election of Mayor Atiqul Islam with only 14.84 percent of the total voters, while Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh managed to get elected with the support of 17.30 percent of the voters. While the figures look bleak and have been blamed on the lack of Dhaka voters' interest in elections, in view of the significant voter participation in Delhi's legislative assembly polls—despite the political and social turmoil that India, especially Delhi, has been plunged into because of BJP's divisive policies,

Some might argue that AAP's success in Delhi was possible because the Indian capital is one of the more well-off urban centres where tax collection is among the highest in India. But so is Dhaka.



The so called "peace" plan, as it stands today, guarantees anything but peace for the region and beyond. The situation in Palestine has, over time, taken the shape of the world's longest standing instance of injustice. The plan, launched by President Donald Trump and crafted by his son-in-law and Special Representative for the Middle East Jared Kushner, effectively seeks to validate the illegal occupation of Palestinian and Arab territory by Israel since 1967 and, at the same time, deny even a semblance of Palestinian sovereignty over whatever would be left of it. Not surprisingly, it has been summarily rejected in unison by not just the Palestinians, but by the Arab League, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the African Union (AU). Even Washington's strong ally, the European Union, in a statement by its foreign policy chief Josep Borrell, said that Trump's plan departs from "internationally agreed parameters". Borrell added that the issues of the borders of a Palestinian state and the final status of Jerusalem were among those still in dispute, and steps by Israel to annex Palestinian territory, "if implemented, could not pass unchallenged". Such a rejection from the EU, all of whose members have strong diplomatic relations with Israel but maintain a studied position on the Palestinian question as a bloc, must have surprised Washington. The EU has earlier condemned Trump's decision in 2017 to recognise Jerusalem as Israel's capital, saying Washington had compromised its position as a mediator for peace.

Reactions to the proposal from other corners have been equally negative. Michael Lynk, the UN special rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967 pointed out that the deal doesn't offer Palestinians a state but a "21st century Bantustan in the Middle East. The Palestinian statelet envisioned by the American plan would be scattered archipelagos of non-contiguous territory completely surrounded by Israel, with no external borders, no control over its airspace, no right to a military to defend its security, no geographic basis for a viable economy, no freedom of movement and

A tale of two cities

What voter turnouts tells us about the state of democracy

including the NRC and CAA—this apathy of voters towards elections in Dhaka deserve introspection.

For one, the voters in Delhi had something to vote for. Kejriwal, in his last two terms in office, had been very active in addressing the basic needs of the people of Delhi: electricity, water, and sanitation. "AAP government has delivered on certain segments such as providing subsidised electricity and water, improving the condition of government schools and health clinics," said Rahul Verma, a fellow at the Centre for Policy Research, regarding the popularity of Kejriwal's AAP. Ever since Kejriwal came

running of affordable neighbourhood clinics in Delhi have also hit a resonant chord with the people. After his election victory, Kejriwal said, "It's not just my win. This is a win for every family whose children are now getting good education in schools, whose family members are getting good treatment in hospitals."

In comparison, if we ask what the people of Dhaka had to vote for, the answer would be simple: inaction, lack of foresight and a myriad of city service failures. Case in point: the failure of the two city corporations to tackle the dengue outbreak last year that claimed more than 164 lives, according to official

election campaign, also diminished the polls. And of course, there were the historic allegations of vote fixing and vote rigging against the Election Commission that put some people off from participating in the polls.

Some might argue that AAP's success in Delhi was possible because the Indian capital is one of the more well-off urban centres where tax collection is among the highest in India. But so is Dhaka. If Kejriwal could beat the nationalist narrative of the powerful BJP to woo the *Delhiwalas* with his pro-people policies and work, one must wonder, why can't our mayors do the same?



Supporters of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) celebrate after learning of the initial poll results outside its party headquarters in New Delhi, India, on February 11, 2020.

PHOTO: REUTERS/ANUSHREE FADNAVIS

to power in 2015, he made sure to make basic utilities available for the people of his locality, to the point where his victory in the recent polls has been attributed to what the BJP calls "freebies"—free water and power, to be specific. And if Kejriwal could, he would make all the services under his jurisdiction free for the people.

Kejriwal's agriculture policy—his announcement of compensation for damaged crops after his election in 2015—had instantly won the support of the farmers. His ministers and his team worked relentlessly in the rural areas to provide bus services to the people.

Kejriwal's education programme, which included improving government-run schools and the opening of vocational centres for skills training, was also a hit among the people living in the fringes of society. The establishment and

figures. The lacklustre performance of the two city corporations in combating dengue, including the use of ineffective insecticide and a strategy that was completely inadequate, to put it politely, goes on to explain why perhaps the people of Dhaka were not so enthusiastic to participate in the elections.

The constant water-logging woes of the people and illegal parking of vehicles were added elements that show the ineffectiveness of the two city corporations. Rampant illegal grabbing of public properties including public parks, footpaths, and other public places is also a key highlight of the ineffectiveness of the city corporations. The widespread use of plastic lamination for posters that decorated the alleys and streets of Dhaka in the lead up to the elections, as well as the waste of paper during the mayoral

Some questions are deeper than partisan politics. They relate to the fundamental nature of our polity; the democratic fabric that makes up our community. It is easy to take for granted their durability in the face of adversity, but lest we forget, our democratic rights were a hard-fought achievement and not a birth right.

Perhaps our leaders, the same leaders who had so valiantly fought for these rights, cannot sense the slow, insidious erosion of these ideals—perhaps there is no erosion at all. But the numbers reflect a fact that is hard to deny—the silent majority is growing more silent, and becoming even more of a majority. Surely, this cannot be a healthy state of affairs?

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

MIDDLE EAST PEACE PLAN

An unworkable approach

In an op-ed published on January 30 in *The Daily Star*, former Associate Editor Brig Gen Shahedul Anam Khan (Retd) described Washington's Middle East "Peace" Plan as a "recipe for further conflict". He backed his point with facts, exercising his liberty as a journalist to be totally candid. To put it more diplomatically, the plan, if not anything else, is unworkable.

The so called "peace" plan, as it stands today, guarantees anything but peace for the region and beyond. The situation in Palestine has, over time, taken the shape of the world's longest standing instance of injustice. The plan, launched by President Donald Trump and crafted by his son-in-law and Special Representative for the Middle East Jared Kushner, effectively seeks to validate the illegal occupation of Palestinian and Arab territory by Israel since 1967 and, at the same time, deny even a semblance of Palestinian sovereignty over whatever would be left of it. Not surprisingly, it has been summarily rejected in unison by not just the Palestinians, but by the Arab League, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the African Union (AU). Even Washington's strong ally, the European Union, in a statement by its foreign policy chief Josep Borrell, said that Trump's plan departs from "internationally agreed parameters". Borrell added that the issues of the borders of a Palestinian state and the final status of Jerusalem were among those still in dispute, and steps by Israel to annex Palestinian territory, "if implemented, could not pass unchallenged". Such a rejection from the EU, all of whose members have strong diplomatic relations with Israel but maintain a studied position on the Palestinian question as a bloc, must have surprised Washington. The EU has earlier condemned Trump's decision in 2017 to recognise Jerusalem as Israel's capital, saying Washington had compromised its position as a mediator for peace.

The so called "peace" plan, as it stands today, guarantees anything but peace for the region and beyond. The situation in Palestine has, over time, taken the shape of the world's longest standing instance of injustice.

need its consent for any construction or development. In this sense, not only does the plan fail to improve their predicament in any way, but, in fact, it leaves them worse off as it perpetuates the situation and gives it recognition".

Scholars and those who have followed the Palestine-Israeli issue for long in the United States have always argued that for Washington to be seen as an honest broker, it is imperative for it to be objective and fair. This means that the fundamental issues of illegal occupation and annexation of Palestinian and other Arab territories by Israel, Palestinian sovereignty on areas that would constitute the eventual Palestine state, and the final status of Jerusalem would need to be central to any peace process. Anything less would not work.

The Camp David Egypt-Israel Peace pact of 1978, moderated by President Jimmy Carter, largely worked despite initial rejection by an overwhelming majority of OIC members. This was mainly because it succeeded in achieving two major objectives: end of military conflict between Egypt and Israel and the withdrawal from all Egyptian territories captured by Israel in 1967. However, the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin—who signed the Oslo Accords in Washington with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat—by a Jewish fanatic youth in 1995, was reflective of the rabid anti-Oslo fervour amongst the Israelis, thereby burying whatever chance of peace Oslo offered.

Avraham Avi Shlaim, an Israeli historian, Emeritus Professor of International Relations at Oxford University and fellow of the British Academy, said, "For all their shortcomings and ambiguities, the (Oslo) accords constituted a historic breakthrough in the century-long conflict between Jews and Arabs in Palestine. It was the first peace agreement between the two principal parties to the conflict." He added that, "both sides agreed to resolve their outstanding differences by peaceful means. Mutual recognition replaced mutual rejection. In short, this promised at least the beginning of a reconciliation between two bitterly antagonistic national movements." He went on to explain that the return of the rightwing Likud party to power in Israel under the leadership of Binyamin Netanyahu in 1996, and his dependence on far right political forces for continuation in office, signalled the end of the Oslo peace process. Netanyahu made no effort to conceal his deep antagonism to the Oslo process, denouncing it as "incompatible with Israel's right to security and with the historic right of the Jewish people to the whole land of Israel".

President Trump's "peace" plan offers far less. Unlike Camp David of 1978 and the Oslo process of 1993, the latest plan was not preceded by any negotiations between the key stakeholders. It is not surprising, therefore, that the plan has met with widespread rejection. If genuine and lasting peace is to be ensured, it is imperative for all to go back to the drawing board and come up with fresh workable plans that feature a universally recognised and realistic two-state solution that guarantees peace and security for all sides. Sadly, given the current mood among the protagonists, this is unlikely to happen anytime soon. In the meantime, Netanyahu's policy of expanding Jewish settlements in occupied Palestinian lands, mostly in the West Bank, illegal annexation of territories and the killing of Palestinians continue unabated, and with impunity.

Shamsheer M. Chowdhury, BB is a Former Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh.

21st century skills and the 4th Industrial Revolution

How are we doing?



MANZOOR AHMED

PRIME Minister Sheikh Hasina recently said, “It is not only Bangladesh, the whole world will need skilled manpower... and for that we

have reformed our education system, giving priority to vocational training.” She was speaking at the international conference on “Skills Readiness for Achieving SDG and Adopting Industrial Revolution 4.0” on February 2, 2020. The event was organised by the Institute of Diploma Engineers Bangladesh (IDEB) and the Colombo Plan Staff College in Manila, Philippines.

The Prime Minister has rightly indicated an important priority. The question is: how are buzzwords such as the “Fourth Industrial Revolution” understood and what is happening on the ground in the thousands of secondary level institutions across the country?

Klaus Schwab, the founder of the World Economic Forum and the organiser of the annual Davos Summit, is credited with popularising this term. As Schwab explains, the First Industrial Revolution started in the 1780s, using water and steam power to mechanise production. The Second, beginning in the 1870s, used electric power to create assembly lines and lead to mass production. The Third, starting from the 1960s, used electronics and information technology, also known as digital technology, to automate production. The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) now builds on the digital revolution.

The latest Industrial Revolution blurs the lines between the physical, digital and biological spheres in an unprecedented way. The 4IR is radically different, since it is more than only a technological shift in economic

production, as the previous three were. It opens unlimited possibilities for addressing critical challenges of poverty, inequality and sustainable development. However, beyond the hype surrounding 4IR, the potentials and challenges have to be seen from the perspective of the real world, especially from the point of view of low income countries like Bangladesh where the majority of the world’s people still live. The prospects and problems are spectacularly different for most people in these countries when compared to those in wealthier countries.

Over 80 percent of our workforce are employed in the informal economy, which is not regulated by worker welfare and rights standards. A third of the workforce has no education, 26 percent have only primary education and 31 percent have only up to secondary education, according to a 2017 Labour Force Survey. Over 40 percent of workers are engaged in the low-skill and low-wage agricultural sector. The concept note for the Eighth Five Year Plan (FY2021-25) that is under preparation says that the overall quality of the labour force is much below the level that is needed to achieve the planned 15 percent growth in manufacturing, to expand the organised service sector, and to facilitate the transition to an upper middle income country.

Life and the livelihoods of the majority of people in Bangladesh are largely characterised by the use of the second or even the first Industrial Revolution technologies. At the same time, ironically, most people are also touched by the third Industrial Revolution through the penetration of mobile phone technology. The features of 4IR can be found in a handful of the better educated and privileged population who benefit from or contribute to its development at home or abroad. What this means is that simultaneously, technologies and people’s skills, as well as their

attitudes and aspirations, have to be lifted across the board in all four phases of industrial revolutions, starting from wherever the people are on this spectrum. This is where skills formation, the role of the education system and the relevance of 21st century skills come in.

What we call 21st century skills

skills recognises the value of the foundational skills of multiple literacies, the essential tools for learning. This is the base on which the higher order skills of solving problems and thinking critically are built. Young people also have to be helped with social and emotional maturity and acquiring moral and ethical values—

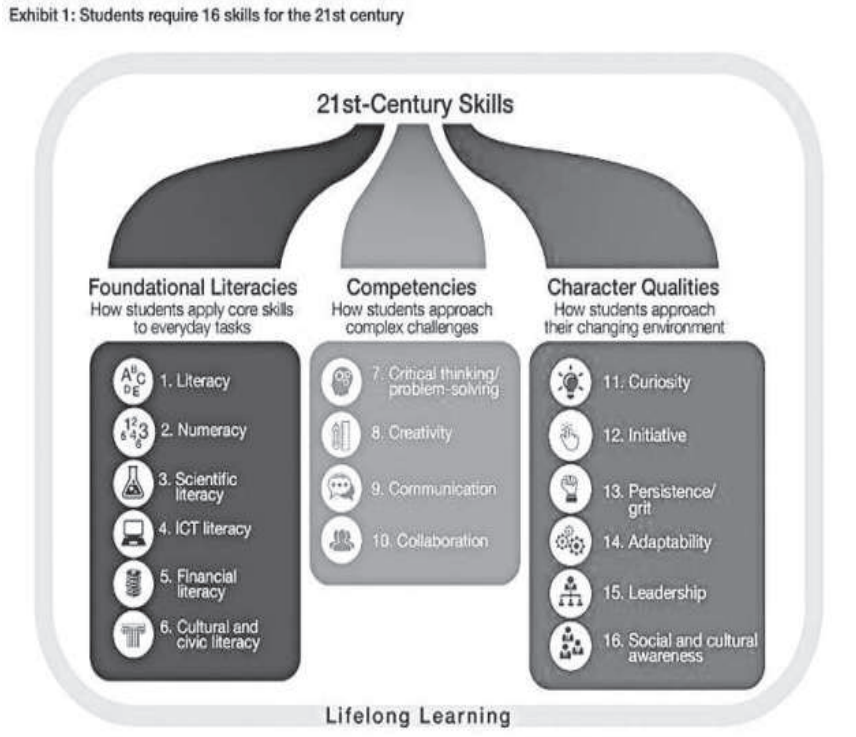
divisions of the Bangladesh Ministry of Education and the National Curriculum and Textbook Board—are engaged in a review of school curricula in the context of 21st century challenges. What is more important than formulating the curriculum is to find effective ways of implementing the curriculum. Teachers—their skills, professionalism and motivations—are the key here. So is the way students’ learning is assessed. Look at the negative backwash effects of the current public examinations—too early and too frequent; many questions on what they actually assess; and the distortion of the teaching-learning process in schools.

A good move is to start streaming students to different tracks from 11th grade rather than 9th grade, something which is under consideration now. The aim is to build a common foundation of competencies for all, and not force young people to foreclose their life options early.

Klaus Schwab had warned that we face the danger of a job market that is increasingly segregated into “low-skill/low-pay” and “high-skill/high-pay” segments, giving rise to growing social tensions. Coping with the implications of this danger for education and skill development is a continuing concern. We cannot discuss the numerous structural and operational obstacles to necessary reforms in education and skills formation and how to deal with these within the confines of this article. But we can hardly ignore them either.

The decision-makers of today find it difficult to free themselves from the trap of traditional, linear thinking. They are too absorbed by the multiple, immediate crises knocking at their doors every day. Can they find the time and focus their mind enough to think strategically, looking at the bigger picture and with a longer time horizon, about the forces of change and disruption that are shaping our future?

Manzoor Ahmed is Professor Emeritus at Brac University.



Note: ICT stands for information and communications technology.

PHOTO: WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM, NEW VISION FOR EDUCATION (2015)

are not necessarily all novel, nor do they mark a clean break from what were important in the 20th century or the 19th century. There are common and timeless elements of quality and relevance for learners and the whole of society in any system of education. Education systems have always struggled to achieve and maintain these essential elements, and they have not become invalid in the 21st century.

This formulation of 21st century

the qualities of character. A lifelong learning approach has to be adopted for this. As in the case of technology adoption and adaptation, skills development and education also need to consider the perennial basic and essential elements that can respond to the diverse phases of technology, production, consumption, lifestyle and expectations in which people find themselves.

The education authorities—the two

Does art have to be objective?



SAAM HASAN

EARLIER this month, Todd Phillips’ *Joker* enjoyed a tremendous night at the 92nd Academy Awards, picking up a whole host of Oscars

including Best Actor for Joaquin Phoenix’s virtuoso portrayal of Arthur Fleck. However, the road did not begin as sweetly for the movie; even before it ever hit theatres, criticism was flooding in regarding the violent nature of the content and how it may impact viewers.

Straightaway, it goes without saying that some movies and shows make it extremely clear what message they are trying to send, with subsequent confirmation from directors or other relevant figures. It is also sad to note that many times those messages are rather regrettable, *cough* *Kabir Singh*. However, we still live in a world where thankfully, the majority of entertainment content available to us remains unbiased with regards to their social narrative.

Going back to the first example, the initial reception may seem incredibly strange given the *Clown Prince of Crime* is generally seen as one of the

most violent characters in all of pop culture. But *Joker* is certainly not the first film, TV show, song or any kind of art form to be called into question for the supposed message propagated by it. This leads me to ask, is it really an obligation for movies and other forms of entertainment to explicitly tow a line of morality when it comes to the expression of its characters? Is it a movie’s job to repeatedly tell you which of its people are bad and why?

Let’s start by looking at a movie from the perspective of a general viewer. When you go to a theatre or start streaming something on Netflix, the idea is to experience a story that is larger than life and that leaves you on the edge of your seat. And of course, in order for that to happen, said story must be centred around interesting characters and their developments. But does interesting storytelling and intriguing characters mean they have to be good people, or that the narrative has to clearly establish who is good and why? After all, the beauty of art is often in its subjectivity. You want to be able to debate the decisions made by a character, and see how your opinion of them stacks up against those of others. Good art can never have only one way of looking at it.

And on the subject of good art, or more specifically good movies and

shows, most critics and experts agree that the best stories are the ones that do not constantly underline and reiterate the meaning behind what we are seeing. “Don’t bash your audience over the head with it”, as it is often said. Subtlety is arguably the most important of all storytelling elements,



US actor Joaquin Phoenix poses in press room with the Oscar for Best Actor for “Joker” during the 92nd Academy Awards on February 9, 2020.

PHOTO: AFP

which allows plots to be deeply layered and nuanced. Hence, creative freedom and excellence often necessitate the disguising of meanings, allowing the

viewer to decide what they find to be good and what or who they find to be bad. At the end of the day, art is a representation of the world, the whole world, which of course includes people and emotions from all parts of the morality spectrum.

Thus, whenever an individual

art and present it to the consumer. The consumer must then decide on what it really means. And the question of whether or not people are able to interpret the meanings correctly and in a non-damaging way, is basically a question of whether or not people have an understanding and acceptance of what is ethically correct and what isn’t.

So whether it be the Joker instigating anarchy or Ki-woo conning his way into exploiting a wealthy family, the underlying negative emotions and motives are presented as they are, for the purpose of telling the story of their characters. It is this tapestry of dark desires that made these movies such a gripping viewing experience. Similarly, even with story lines such as Clarice Starling putting everything on the line to pursue Hannibal Lecter, or Tony Stark sacrificing himself to save the universe, it is still up to the viewer to decide how much they agree with their actions and how they think the characters could have achieved their goals in a different way better suited for everyone.

Art is meant to depict life in ways that we could not have thought of otherwise, but what it means and the message it sends, is also up to the audience.

Saam Hasan is a pop culture writer for whatculture.com.

Is it really an obligation for movies and other forms of entertainment to explicitly tow a line of morality when it comes to the expression of its characters?

QUOTABLE Quote

IRIS MURDOCH
Novelist and Philosopher
(15 July- 1919- 8 February 1999)

Our actions are like ships which we may watch set out to sea, and not know when or with what cargo they will return to port.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

1 Kaaba setting

6 Ancient Mexican

11 Flynn of film

12 Molar, for example

13 “Go ahead, ask”

14 Instructional kind of book

15 Fencing sword

17 Eat late

18 Waste container

22 Gambling city

23 Worries

27 Higher than

29 Towel material

30 Comicstrip makeup

32 Glimpsed

33 Drake’s genre

35 Bit of humor

38 Aspirin target

39 Highway ramps

41 Washington’s successor

45 Pond growth

46 Olympics award

47 Rider’s straps

48 Bitter humor

DOWN

1 Got together

2 Make mistakes

3 Weep

4 Visits

5 First Hebrew letter

6 Essentially

7 Menagerie

8 Pulls along

9 Words from

Caesar

10 Pork serving

16 Flow out

18 Snare

19 Singer McEntire

20 Shortly, in poems

21 Fails

24 Metal sources

25 Zwei follower

26 Agreement, of a sort

28 Passes

31 Relaxing resort

34 Home of the Marines

35 Bike part

36 Car bar

37 Leslie Caron movie

40 Light brown

42 Commotion

43 Fellow

44 Cunning

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

YESTERDAY’S ANSWERS

C	A	R	D	S	A	B	A	S	E	
E	V	E	R	T	C	O	D	E	D	
S	E	G	U	E	T	A	M	E	S	
A	N	I	M	A	L	I	K	E		
R	U	M	K	E	S	T	R	E	L	
S	E	E	B	A	T	H	E	R		
G	D	A	N	S	K	S	E	T		
N	A	I	V	E	T	E	U	N	E	
O	L	E			O	R	A	N	G	
M	O	T	E	L	A	A	U	D	I	
A	R	E	N	A		C	R	O	N	
N	E	R	D	Y		E	A	G	E	R

BEEBLE BAILEY by Mort Walker

BABY BLUES by Kirkman & Scott

NEWSIN
brief

Erdogan, Trump
discuss Idlib crisis

AFP, Ankara

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Saturday discussed with US counterpart Donald Trump ways to end the crisis in Idlib, Syria's last major rebel bastion, and condemned Damascus' attacks there, the Turkish presidency said. Hundreds of civilians have been killed while 800,000 Syrians have been forced to leave their homes to flee the offensive since December, according to the United Nations.

Ghani hopeful about
US-Taliban deal

AFP, Munich

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani on Saturday voiced cautious optimism about a partial truce agreed between the Taliban and US and said that a further announcement was expected in the coming 10 days. The agreement for a seven-day "reduction in violence" announced this week has raised hopes that a comprehensive peace deal could follow. But it is still not clear when the period will begin. The acid test of the Taliban's sincerity will be their willingness to accept elections, Ghani said -- something they have always refused to engage in.

Army deployed as
storm Dennis hits UK

AFP, London

Storm Dennis swept across Britain yesterday with the army drafted in to help deal with heavy flooding and high winds, officials warning it could be "life-threatening" in South Wales. Almost 200 flood warnings were in place early yesterday, extending from Scotland's River Tweed to Cornwall in southwest England. Winds of over 90 miles per hour were recorded in Aberdaron, south Wales.



Supporters of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) hold cut outs of party President Arvind Kejriwal and Indian national flags after Kejriwal's swearing-in ceremony as Delhi Chief Minister, in New Delhi, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Kejriwal sworn in
as Delhi CM

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Just a week after leading his Aam Aadmi Party to a stunning landslide victory defeating BJP in Delhi assembly elections, Arvind Kejriwal yesterday took oath as chief minister of the city-state at a mega ceremony, reports our New Delhi correspondent.

Attended by thousands of AAP supporters, Kejriwal and six of his key ministers Manish Sisodia, Satyendar Jain, Gopal Rai, Kailash Gehlot, Imran Hussain and Rajendra Gautam were also sworn in.

In a brief address after the swearing-in function at Ramlila Maidan, Kejriwal, 49, a former Indian Revenue Service officer, said "now that elections are over, the politics is also over and he has 'forgiven' his political opponents for the remarks they made during the poll campaign."

"During campaigns, politics takes place and it did. I forgive you for all the things you have said against me, I request you also to forget all negative things. We have to work together for the progress of Delhi. We will work with the Centre too," Kejriwal said.

"I am your chief minister. I am Delhi's chief minister. Even BJP's, Congress' chief minister," he said, adding "it doesn't matter who you voted for, now all Delhiites are my family. I will work for everyone, be it from any party, any religion, caste."

During the high-octane election campaign, BJP leaders had accused Kejriwal of being an "anarchist and terrorist" although they denied it later.

Aam Aadmi Party returned to power for the third consecutive time with 62 seats of the 70-seat parliament at the end of one of the most polarising campaigns in the backdrop of the anti-Citizenship Amendment Act protests.

31 civilians killed

UN says strike an apparent retaliation for downing of a coalition jet

AFP, Dubai

Thirty-one people were killed in air strikes on Yemen Saturday, the United Nations said, the victims of an apparent Saudi-led retaliation after Iran-backed Huthi rebels claimed to have shot down one of its jets.

The Tornado aircraft came down Friday in northern Al-Jawf province during an operation to support government forces, a rare shooting down that prompted operations in the area by a Saudi-led military coalition fighting the rebels.

The deadly violence follows an upsurge in fighting in northern Yemen between the warring parties that threatens to worsen the war-battered country's humanitarian crisis.

"Preliminary field reports indicate that on 15 February as many as 31 civilians were killed and 12 others injured in strikes that hit Al-Hayjah area... in Al-Jawf governorate," the office of the UN humanitarian coordinator for Yemen said in a statement.

Lise Grande, the UN coordinator, denounced the "terrible strikes".

"Under international humanitarian law, parties which resort to force are obligated to protect civilians," she said.

"Five years into this conflict and belligerents are still failing to uphold this responsibility. It's shocking."

The rebels reported multiple coalition air strikes in the

area where the plane went down, adding that women and children were among the dead and wounded, according to rebel television station Al-Masirah.

The coalition conceded the "possibility of collateral damage" during a "search and rescue operation" at the site of the jet crash, which left the fate of its crew uncertain.

Without stating the cause of the crash, a coalition statement released by the official Saudi Press Agency said the crew, comprising two officers, ejected from the plane before it crashed but the rebels opened fire at them in "violation of the international humanitarian law".

SAUDI-LED AIR STRIKES IN YEMEN



surface-to-air missile" and the moment it struck the jet in the night sky, sending it crashing down in a ball of flames.

"The downing of a Tornado in the sky above Al-Jawf is a major blow to the enemy and an indication of remarkable growth in Yemeni (rebel) air defence capabilities," Huthi spokesman Mohammed Abdelsalam tweeted.

The escalation follows fierce fighting around the Huthi-held capital Sanaa, with the rebels seen to be advancing on several fronts towards Al-Hazim, the regional capital of Al-Jawf.

Modi rules out rethink
over Citizenship Act

THE INDIAN EXPRESS ONLINE

Amidst the ongoing nationwide protest against the contentious Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday reiterated that his government stands by the decision "despite all pressure".

"For years, India had been waiting for decisions like repealing Article 370 and the introduction of CAA. These decisions were necessary in the interest of the country. Despite all the pressure, we stood our ground over these decisions and will remain so," Modi said while addressing a public meeting in Varanasi.

Modi, who is on a day-long visit to his Lok Sabha constituency, laid the foundation of 50 projects worth Rs 1,254 crore, news agency PTI reported. He also flagged off the IRCTC's 'Maha Kaal Express' through video link.

The prime minister also dedicated to the nation the Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya Memorial Centre and unveiled a 63-foot tall statue of the RSS ideologue -- the tallest statue of the leader in the country.



Earlier this month, Modi, while replying to the Motion of Thanks to the President's address in the Lok Sabha, had called the CAA protests "a road to anarchy" and that "protest marches, violence, and arson" against a law duly passed and notified by Parliament will "create a problem for the country".

He had also targeted the Opposition saying they are building narratives keeping only the vote bank in mind.

Widespread protests, largely led by women, against the amended law which grants citizenship to non-Muslim minorities from Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh have cropped up in the last two months. The law has become controversial largely because it excludes Muslims.

Several opposition ruled states across have also raised their concern against the CAA and said they will not implement the new citizenship law.

Besides the contentious Citizenship Act, Article 370 of the Constitution, which accorded special powers to the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, were abrogated by the government in August last year, turning the area into a federally-ruled territory.

Israel strikes Gaza
Cancels easing of restrictions

AFP, Jerusalem

The Israeli air force attacked Hamas positions in the Gaza Strip in retaliation to rocket fire from the Palestinian enclave into Israel, a military statement said.

The exchange of fire between both sides has escalated since last month after US President Donald Trump unveiled his Middle East peace plan, angrily rejected by the Palestinians as a capitulation to Israeli objectives.

"Fighter planes and helicopters have targeted positions of the terrorist organisation Hamas in central Gaza Strip," including a military post, said the Israeli military on Saturday, which earlier reported two projectiles had been fired into the Jewish state from the Gaza Strip.

Following the rocket fire, Israel announced it would cancel a slight easing of the blockade on the Gaza Strip.

"The extension of the fishing zone, the restoration of 500 commercial permits and the delivery of cement have been cancelled," because of the rocket fire, COGAT, the Israel defence ministry unit that oversees civilian activities in the Palestinian territories, said in a statement.

Hamas and Israel have fought three wars since 2008 but over the past year, the Islamists had gradually shaped an informal truce with Israel, under which the Jewish state has eased its crippling blockade of Gaza.

Israel justifies the blockade by the need to contain the Islamist movement Hamas -- designated a terrorist organisation by much of the West -- which has controlled the enclave since 2007.

Critics say it is collective punishment of two million people and feeds extremism.



Muslim women participate in a protest against India's new citizenship law, in Nagaon district of Assam, yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Rocket attack hits near
US embassy in Baghdad

Multiple rockets hit an Iraqi base hosting American troops near the US embassy early yesterday, the latest in a flurry of attacks against US assets in the country. "The Coalition confirms small rockets impacted the Iraqi base hosting (coalition) troops in the International Zone... No casualties," said coalition spokesman Myles Caggins. Iraq's military said three Katyusha rockets hit inside the Green Zone, the high-security enclave where the US mission and base are located, as well as Iraqi government buildings, United Nations offices and other embassies. The attack was the 19th attack since October to target either the embassy or US troops across Iraq.

9 homeless drug users
shot dead in Kabul

Gunmen shot dead nine homeless drug users in the Afghan capital, officials said yesterday, shining a light on chronic drug abuse in the world's biggest producer of opium but a rare incident of apparently coordinated violence against addicts. The motive for the Saturday night attack by the unidentified gunmen in Kabul was not known and police said they were investigating. The men had been sleeping in an open area and a forensic examination had shown they were drug users. There are an estimated 2.5 million drug users in Afghanistan, the Ministry of Public Health says.

Libya arms embargo has
become a 'joke': UN



An arms embargo aimed at curbing fighting in Libya has become meaningless because of violations and it is imperative that those who breach it are held to account, a senior UN official said on Sunday. "The arms embargo has become a joke, we all really need to step up here," UN Deputy Special Representative to Libya Stephanie Williams said after a meeting of foreign ministers to follow up on a Berlin summit last month that agreed to uphold the embargo. Fighting has continued despite a call for a truce. Several countries backing rival factions in Libya have repeatedly violated an arms embargo, according to the United Nations, which has previously named the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Turkey for breaching the embargo.

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

'Now, everything is allowed'

New era sees Saudi women light up in public

AFP, Riyadh

Rima settles in a chair at an upscale Riyadh cafe, looks around carefully and, seeing no one she recognises, drags on her electronic cigarette before exhaling a cloud of smoke.

"I feel that smoking in public is a part of exercising my newly won freedoms. I am happy that now I can choose," the 27-year-old Saudi who works for a private company in the capital told AFP.

Like Western feminists of the early 20th century, in an era of social change in Saudi Arabia some women are embracing cigarettes, shisha pipes or vaping as a symbol of emancipation.

The sight of women smoking in public has become much more common in recent months, an unthinkable prospect before the introduction of sweeping reforms in the ultra-conservative kingdom by the kingdom's ambitious de facto ruler, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

Women are now allowed to drive, attend public sporting events and concerts, or obtain passports without the approval of a male guardian.

Najla, 26, said that despite the rapid social changes, double standards still existed, and that it was still



considered a "scandal and disgrace" if women smoked.

Najla started smoking while still a school student and, like her, up to 65 percent of female Saudi high schoolers light up secretly, according to a 2015 study by the medical faculty at King Abdulaziz University cited by Arab News.

Despite the limitations, in a country where until just a few years ago religious police would chase and hit women for infractions like wearing nail polish or allowing a strand of hair to escape from their hijab, the changes have been head-spinning.

"Most of our women clients order shisha. It's something that was totally unimaginable just three months ago," a Lebanese waiter told AFP at an up-market cafe in north Riyadh.

Heba, a 36-year-old longtime smoker who sat at a table nearby, described growing up in a closed country where "everything was forbidden to women".

"I never imagined I would be able to smoke shisha in public next to men," she told AFP.

"Now, everything is allowed. Women venture out without hijab, without abaya and they even smoke publicly."

WHAT'S ON



Art Camp
Title: 4th Annual Art for Autism 2020
Venue: Charukola, University of Dhaka
Date: February 22
Time: 8:30 am – 3pm



Solo Exhibition
Title: Parables of the Womb
Artist: Dilara Begum Jolly
Venue: Bengal Shilpalay, Dhanmondi
Date: February 4 – March 28
Time: 2 pm – 8 pm (Except Sundays)



Book Fair
Title: Amar Ekushey Boi Mela
Organiser: Bangla Academy
Venue: Bangla Academy Premises
Date: Feb 2 - 29
Time: 3 pm – 8 pm; 11 am – 9 pm on weekends



Art Exhibition
Title: In/Out of the stones of our mind
Venue: Dwip Gallery
Date: February 19- 29
Time: 3pm to 9 pm (February 19 from 6pm to 9pm)



Art Exhibition
Title: Parampara
Venue: Gallery Chitrak
Date: February 15-29
Time: 10 am -8 pm



This year, Sporsho Braille Prokashona launched 15 new braille books.

PHOTO: PIYAS BISWAS

Sporsho Foundation celebrates Sporsho Braille Prokashona's 12th anniversary

RASHEEK TABASSUM MONDIRA

With the motto, *Manush drishtihin boleai ondho noy, manush muloto proggahin boleai ondho*, (People are blind not because they are unable to see with their eyes, but because they do not have the knowledge to visualise life from within), Sporsho Foundation has been working tirelessly to provide quality education to visually impaired children with their braille books. They celebrated the 12th anniversary of Sporsho Braille Prokashona at the Liberation War Museum in Agargaon recently.

National Professor Dr Anisuzzaman, Liberation War Museum Trustee Mofidul Haque and eminent writer Muntassir

Mamoon were present in the event, which started with a group performance of *Aguner Poroshmoni* by visually impaired children.

This year, Sporsho Braille Prokashona launched 15 new braille books. 15 children read excerpts from these books in the event. "We can read even when there is no light, then how are we *drishti protibondhi*? We are *drishtijoyi*!" shouted the children in unison.

A short video showcasing the struggles of a young visually impaired girl was screened at the event. Sporsho invited three mothers who have visually impaired children to talk about their individual struggles with their children's

education at a panel discussion.

Sporsho Braille Prokashona has been consistent in the Ekushey Boi Mela from 2011. "We are expanding our book stall to Chittagong this year and will continue to expand our activities in other districts," shared Nazia Jabeen, President of Sporsho Foundation. "Sporsho believes that the braille movement is an initiative for humanity and our efforts will ensure a brighter and inclusive society."

Ezaz Hossain and Munir Rana, respective champions and runner up of a special chess tournament for the visually impaired, were given prizes in the event.

Ahsan Habib (social work) Ashikur

Rahman Amit (app development) Fahima Khatun (professional success) and Dalia Nowshin (cultural achievement) were honoured with the *Drishtijoyi Shommanona* for their commendable work in their respective fields.

"We all have a specific duty towards visually impaired people and we tend to neglect it. Sporsho is doing an amazing job with their publications and they have my heartfelt gratitude," expressed chief guest Dr Anisuzzaman.

The event concluded with solo cultural performances by two visually impaired children. Sporsho Foundation's stall is located near the exit gate at the Ekushey Boi Mela.

EKUSHEY SPOTLIGHT

'Not all Springs End Winter' – Anupam Debashis Roy's 'guidebook' on starting a movement

SADI MOHAMMAD SHAHNEWAZ

Anupam Debashis Roy is known for being someone who "tells it like it is". The writer and political activist's release in this year's Ekushey Boi Mela, *Not All Springs End Winter*, draws parallels with the recent student movements – The Shahbagh, No VAT on education, quota reformation and safe roads – to the historic



PHOTO: COURTESY



movements of '52, '69 and 90'. "I was only an SSC student when the Shahbagh movement escalated, and was utterly fascinated by it," says Anupam, who graduated in International Affairs from Howard University. The writer consequently started his research in 2015, aided by distinguished names like Dr Ali Riaz and Rownak Jahan. "*Not All Springs End Winter* is essentially an extension of my dissertation paper. I wanted to write a

'guidebook' on how to start a movement, based on my own observation on how they work." The book is also available in Bangla as *Kalker Andolon*, *Ajker Andolon*, which uses a different cover and outlook. "I wanted the Bangla translation to be accessible to all who read it," said Anupam, who opted for two of his students to translate the book in an easy to understand way. Both of the versions of the book are published by Adorsho Publications, and are available at their stall in the Ekushey Boi Mela (421-424). *Not All Springs End Winter* is available at a discounted price of BDT 300, and is also available internationally on Amazon Kindle.

Valentine's special series on Imagine Radio



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENTS DESK

Imagine Radio released a special thematic mini audio series, *Oshomapto Kothopokothon*, in celebration of Valentine's Day. The series, featuring seven different episodes, portrays urban tales of love, devotion and dedication. Each episode of the series was launched on the Imagine Radio app from February 7 to 14. Writer Fahim Hasan was a part of the voice cast of *Oshomapto Kothopokothon*, along with Dhira, Suranjana, Rumi and Ira, among others. Bakhtiar Hossain was behind the sound design. The audio series is also available on Imagine Radio's official website.



Marking their 40th founding anniversary, Jahangirnagar Theatre staged their 37th production, 'Khoabnama', at the Jahangirnagar University campus yesterday. 'Khoabnama', an adaptation of eminent writer Akhtaruzzaman Elias' novel of the same name, sheds light on the Liberation War of Bangladesh through the eyes of the rural population.

PHOTO: COURTESY

Mymensingh dance festival concludes



PHOTO: STAR

AMINUL ISLAM, from Mymensingh

A two-day dance festival, held at Mymensingh Zila Shilpakala Academy auditorium, concluded recently. The programme, a first of its kind in the district, was jointly organised by Bahurupi Sangskritik Academy and Nrityagram, with the slogan, *Nrityajuge Monon Bikash, Nritye Nitita Abinash*.

The programme was inaugurated with a discussion, chaired by Shahadat Hossain Khan Hilu, secretary of Bahurupi Natya Sangstha. District Cultural Officer Arzu Parvez, Ustad A K M Shahabuddin Khan, Ustad Swapon Sarker, S M Ali Azhar, advocate Imdadul Haque Selim and

secretary of Mymensingh district Awami League advocate Moazzem Hossain Babul were present in the inaugural ceremony, among others.

Chitrangada, a dance drama adapted from Rabindranath Tagore's drama of the same name, were also presented by Bahurupi Sangskritik Academy under the direction of Manash Talukder.

Alongside these sessions, the event, anchored by Sarwar Jahan, featured various Bharatanatyam, Kathak and folk dance routines by the local cultural organisation of Mymensingh. Artists from Dhaka, including Hasan Istiaq Imrain, Juyeria Mouri, Nayeem Khan and Ariful Islam Arnob, also performed at the event, among others.

Best of Filmfare Awards 2020

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Filmfare Awards 2020 was a star-studded event with the presence of celebrities such as Ranveer Singh, Alia Bhatt, Ayushmann Khurrana and others. This year, the event took place in Assam. Here's the full list of winners:

Best Film: *Gully Boy*
Critics' Award for Best Film: *Sonchiriya* and *Article 15*
Best Actor in a Leading Role (Female): Alia Bhatt, *Gully Boy*
Best Actor in a Leading Role (Male): Ranveer Singh, *Gully Boy*
Critics' Award for Best Actor (Female): Bhumi Pednekar and Taapsee Pannu, *Saandh Ki Aankh*
Critics' Award for Best Actor (Male): Ayushmann Khurrana, *Article 15*
Best Director: Zoya Akhtar, *Gully Boy*
Best Lyrics: Divine And Ankit Tiwari, *Gully Boy*
Best Music Album: *Gully Boy* and Kabir Singh
Best Playback Singer (Female): Shilpa Rao, *Gunhroo*



Ayushmann Khurrana in 'Article 15'.



Ranveer Singh and Alia Bhatt in 'Gully Boy'.

Best Playback Singer (Male): Arijit Singh, *Kalank Nahi Ishq Hai*
Best Debut (Female): Ananya Panday, *Student Of The Year 2*
Best Debut (Male): Abhimanyu Dassani, *Mard Ko Dard Nahi Hota*
Best Debut Director: Aditya Dhar, *Uri: The Surgical Strike*
Best Actress in a Supporting Role (Female): Amruta Subhash, *Gully Boy*
Best Actor in a Supporting Role (Male): Siddhant Chaturvedi, *Gully Boy*

Best Choreography: Remo D'souza, *Ghar More Pardesiya*, *Kalank*
Best Dialogue: Vijay Maurya, *Gully Boy*
Best Screenplay: Reema Kagti and Zoya Akhtar, *Gully Boy*
RD Burman Award For Upcoming Music Talent: Sashwat Sachdev, *Uri: The Surgical Strike*
30 Years of Outstanding Contribution to Bollywood Fashion: Manish Malhotra
Excellence In Cinema: Govinda
Lifetime Achievement Award: Ramesh Sippy

Ex-minister

FROM PAGE 16
Born in September 16, 1945, Rahmat got into student politics at the tender age of 11. In 1962, at the age of just 17, he was arrested for a speech against the education commission. He was also detained in 1962 and 1966 for his outspoken activism. During the Liberation War, he was tasked with serving as a courier.

After the war, his political career proceeded amid more tribulations. In 1983, he was arrested and taken to the cantonment, where he was tortured incessantly, resulting in 17 broken teeth.

He was an elected lawmaker with AL ticket in 1991, 1996, 2001, 2008, and 2014. He was made state minister of local government and rural development and cooperatives in 1999.

His namaz-e-janaza was held at Shankar Jame Mosque in Dhanmondi after Zuhr prayers, at the south plaza of Bangladesh Jatiya Sangsad after Asr, and then at Baitul Mamur Jame Mosque in Science Laboratory.

A fourth janaza will be held at Bangladesh Supreme Court ground today.

He will be buried at his family graveyard in Sreepur of Gazipur on Tuesday following the completion of the last janaza at Sreepur Freedom Fighter Rahmat Ali Government College, named in his honour.

President M Abdul Hamid mourned the death of Rahmat Ali.

In a condolence message, the head of the state expressed deep shock and sorrow at his death, reports BSS.

President Hamid also prayed for eternal peace of the departed soul and conveyed profound sympathy to the bereaved family members of the freedom fighter, the message added.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina also paid rich tributes to Rahmat, reports UNB.

She placed a wreath at his coffin at the South Plaza of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

After placing the wreath at the coffin draped in the national flag, she also stood in solemn silence for some time as a mark of profound respect to the memory of Rahmat Ali.

Later, accompanied by senior party leaders, Hasina as AL president, laid another wreath at the coffin of Rahmat.

She later talked to family members of the deceased and prayed for eternal peace of the departed soul.

Ministers, deputy speaker, chief whip, whips, MPs and leaders of different political parties attended his janaza there.

‘We can’t keep

FROM PAGE 16
the banks were worsening day by day and the government was sustaining them by providing money.

“We can’t keep our eyes closed to this situation,” a four-member bench of the Appellate Division of the SC headed by Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain said.

The SC bench passed the order and made the observation during hearing an appeal filed by ILFSL, challenging the HC directive that asked the government to freeze bank accounts and seize passports of several people of ILFSL, including former managing director of NRB Global Bank and Reliance Finance Limited Proshanta Kumar Halder.

Following a petition filed by two depositors of ILFSL, the HC on January 21 directed Bangladesh Bank and all private banks to freeze the accounts of PK Halder, his five relatives, Bank Asia Limited’s former managing director Erfanudidn Ahmed and Halder’s cohort Uzzal Kumar Nondi on charge of embezzling Tk 3,000 crore from different leasing companies by taking loans in the name of fake companies.

The bench of Justice Muhammad Khurshid Alam Sarkar also directed the government to seize passports of PK Halder, now abroad, his five relatives, his mother Lilaboti Halder, brother Pritish Kumar Halder, wife Susmita Saha, cousins Amitav Adhikari and Avijit Adhikari and Erfanuddin Ahmed and Uzzal Kumar to stop them from leaving the country.

The HC also appointed Khondkar Ibrahim Khaled as the independent director and chairman of ILFSL to run the company.

Later on, ILFSL filed the appeal with the SC challenging the HC verdict.

Advocate Ahsanul Karim appeared for ILFSL while Attorney General Mahbubey Alam and Additional Attorney General Murad Reza represented the state.

Man killed

FROM PAGE 16
Ruhul Amin, owner of the rice mill who received burn injuries himself, said the mill was inaugurated this season and he was clueless about what caused the explosion.

Neither police nor the fire service department could immediately identify the reason behind the explosion.

People who were burnt are: Sahul Alam Sanu, 60, Mantaj Rahman, 55, Badal, 28, Tulshi, 28, Alam, 45, Arfina, 16, Ruhul Amin, 65, his son Johorul Islam, 45, and pedestrian Arif, 15.

They were admitted at Thakurgaon Sadar Hospital.



Members of the emergency services evacuate residents from flooded areas by boat after the River Taff burst its banks in Nantgarw, south of Ponypridd in south Wales yesterday, after Storm Dennis caused flooding across large swathes of Britain. PHOTO: AFP

‘Workers will share profit of industries’

FROM PAGE 16
After the meeting, in a conversation with newsmen, AL’s General Secretary Tajuddin Ahmad shares that they will respect the party constitution, which provides that a party member must resign his party office within 30 days of accepting any public office. ADAMJEE REOPENS
According to a decision taken under the advice of Bangabandhu, Adamjee Jute Mill starts production today. Syed Nazrul Islam, minister for industries, addresses the ceremony marking the resumption of production in the Mill. He calls upon the workers to change their traditional outlook of being

a mere employee and to work with redoubled vigour to increase production and earn more profits. He also assures the workers that a certain portion of the industry’s profit will be spent exclusively for their welfare and economic betterment and that their interest will be kept above all considerations. ASSESSMENT OF LOSS
The inquiry committee set up by the government of Bangladesh for assessment of the loss of life and property caused by the atrocities of the Pakistan army from March 26 to December 16 finalises the detailed procedure and questionnaire for information collection. It is hoped

that the questionnaire will reach all villages by the first week of March 1972. OVER \$565M NEEDED FOR BANGLADEE REFUGEES
UN Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim reports to the UN General Assembly that more than \$565million will be needed for refugees’ relief in Bangladesh for the remainder of this year. “Never in the history of the United Nations has international assistance been needed so urgently and in such great amounts,” he adds. The total aid requirement in Bangladesh for 1972 exceeds \$620 million, of which nearly 90 percent is for food imports, Waldheim’s report

informs. 54 COLLABORATORS SUMMONED
The government of Bangladesh declares former Deputy Speaker of Pakistan National Assembly ATMA Matin and 53 others as absconders for avoiding inquiry under the Bangladesh Collaborators (Special Tribunal) Order and directed them to appear before the magistrate by February 29. The immovable properties standing in their names or the names of their benamdars have also been attached under the same Order. SOURCES: February 18, 1972 issues of Dainik Bangla, The Daily Ittefaq, Azad, Morning News, The Bangladesh Observer and Purbodesh.

5,600 seek repatriation

FROM PAGE 16
and consulate general would submit the documents of the applicants to Saudi labour offices. The KSA authorities will then notify those who would be accepted for repatriation, said an official at the Bangladesh mission’s labour welfare wing. Due to the nature of the procedure, the Bangladesh mission will have no scope to know how many applications were accepted unless the workers themselves inform the mission offices, he said, seeking anonymity. He also said that the opportunity was limited to those who work at various companies in the Gulf country. Saudi Arabia is home to around 2 million Bangladeshi nationals,

according to Bangladesh mission. Mohammad Ashaduzzaman, a counsellor at Riyadh labour welfare wing, said the Saudi government did not mention any deadline for the programme. So, the mission will continue receiving applications from eligible workers until further notice, he said. “We will try to include every [eligible] worker in the initiative,” he recently told this correspondent over phone. Ashaduzzaman said a vast region of the KSA falls under the jurisdiction of the Bangladesh embassy office at Riyadh and that is why they were setting up makeshift camps in the Bangladeshi migrants-inhabited areas to reach out to them.

The effort has been taken against the backdrop of frequent detention and deportation of undocumented Bangladeshi migrant workers by Saudi Arabia. In 2019, some 25,789 Bangladeshi migrant workers were deported by the Gulf country, according to Brac Migration Programme. Many of them did not have the residence permit, locally known as “iqama”. When a migrant worker fails to obtain the “iqama”, he or she is declared illegal and faces legal action, said an official at the expatriates’ welfare ministry in Bangladesh. It is the responsibility of Saudi employers to arrange the “iqama” for foreign workers and renew it every

year, he said, seeking anonymity. However, in 5 to 10 percent of the cases, employers refuse to pay the money for their employees’ “iqama”, he said, adding that in such circumstances it falls upon the Saudi authorities to hold the employer accountable. Besides, there are some migrant workers whose “iqama” expired months ago, but they somehow continued working, he said. There will be no bar on their re-entry to the Gulf country after their return to Bangladesh, he added. Meanwhile, many Bangladeshi migrant workers have expressed their willingness to avail the opportunity after the mission issued notices on its Facebook page.

Darfuris rejoice as Sudan agrees to hand Bashir to ICC

AFP, Nyal

In the sprawling Camp Kalma, refugees displaced by the Darfur conflict are overjoyed at the decision by Sudan’s new authorities to finally deliver president Omar al-Bashir to the International Criminal Court.

Bashir, who was deposed in April 2019 following mass protests, has for the past decade flouted International Criminal Court arrest warrants on charges of genocide and war crimes in the ravaged Darfur region of western Sudan.

On Tuesday, Sudan’s transitional authorities agreed to transfer him to stand trial before the court based in The Hague.

“There was rejoicing across the camp after people heard Bashir is being handed over to the ICC,” 65-year-old refugee Adam Ali, a longtime resident of Kalma camp in Nyal, capital of South Darfur state, told AFP.

Darfuris and rebel groups have repeatedly demanded he be handed over to the ICC over alleged war crimes in a conflict which according to the United Nations left 300,000 people dead and displaced 2.5 million others. Local community leader Yaqoob Mohamed said the decision was “a victory for the victims” and would go a long way towards “rebuilding trust” with the leadership in Khartoum.

Hundreds of thousands of those displaced by the conflict that broke out in 2003 in Darfur, a vast region made up of five states, still live in camps and remain dependent on aid provided by the UN and other international organisations.

The conflict erupted when African minority rebels rose up against

Bashir’s Arab-dominated government in Khartoum that they accused of marginalising the region.

To crush the rebellion, Bashir’s government unleashed an armed militia of mostly Arab raiding nomads known as the Janjaweed, accused by rights groups of ethnic cleansing and widespread rape.

Thousands of the militiamen were later incorporated into the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, led by commander and current political powerbroker Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, known as Hemeti.

The decision to surrender Bashir to the ICC came after protracted talks between rebel groups including from Darfur and Sudan’s ruling body who took power after Bashir’s ouster and arrest.

Three of his aides, including former defence and interior ministers, are also to be handed over to the court, although a timeframe has not been announced.

“If Bashir and his aides are not handed to the ICC, peace will never find its way to Darfur,” said Hassan Issac, another Darfuri living in Kalma.

Hassan Isaac Mohamed, a 72-year-old Darfuri, said he felt “relief” in the wake of a war that had decimated his family, killing his father and two brothers.

Government spokesman Faisal Mohamed told reporters on Wednesday that “details of how Bashir and others will be presented in front of the ICC will be discussed with the ICC and armed groups”.

Rights groups such as Amnesty International are pressing for a swift handover of the toppled strongman.

Will ask ACC to investigate

FROM PAGE 1
Minister AK Abdul Momen said the allegation that a Bangladeshi MP is involved in human trafficking, as reported in the Kuwaiti media, is fake news.

“We have heard it’s fake news. We don’t have any information,” he told journalists at his ministry yesterday.

“Our mission has not provided any information about him. We don’t know about it. One newspaper published it, but then it said its factuality was not verified,” Momen said.

According to media reports, Quazi Shaheed Islam alias Papul is one of the three Bangladeshis who have been involved in human trafficking in Kuwait.

He left Kuwait just before a crackdown on human traffickers began there, Al-Qabas newspaper of Kuwait reported, quoting the country’s home ministry.

The ring of the three amassed about Tk 1,400 crore through trafficking 20,000 Bangladeshis to that country, the CID in Kuwait claimed.

Kuwait’s Arabic daily Al-Qabas and Arab Times last Wednesday published a report against the Bangladeshi human traffickers.

Meanwhile, Mohammad Anisuzzaman, head of chancery at the Bangladesh embassy in Kuwait, said following the media reports naming a Bangladesh MP, the embassy sought details from the Kuwaiti CID.

“We are yet to get any response,” he told The Daily Star.

Quazi Shaheed Islam is managing director & CEO of Marafie Kuwaitia Group of Companies, one of the largest companies in Kuwait.

Major work of the company is providing cleaning services and construction.

Kuwait is home to some three lakh Bangladeshi workers.

Recruitment cost for workers is around Tk 6 lakh, but the minimum

monthly salary is 75 Kuwaiti Dinner (Tk 20,000).

Including overtime, the salary stands at around Tk 27,000, which means it takes around two years to earn the money a Bangladeshi migrant spends as recruitment cost in Kuwait.

Tunisia’s PM designate forms govt but future uncertain

AFP, Tunis

Tunisian Prime Minister Elyes Fakhfakh on Saturday formed a new government but it immediately hit major hurdles after members of the key Islamist-inspired Ennahdha party pulled out of the lineup.

Fakhfakh, a former finance minister, was tasked by Tunisia’s president with forming a government after a previous list proposed under the leadership of Ennahdha was rejected by parliament following October legislative elections.

Several of the ministers chosen by Fakhfakh to join the cabinet are from the ranks of the Islamist-inspired party.

But even before he officially announced the lineup, Ennahdha said it was pulling out of the government.

“Ennahdha’s decision places us in a difficult position,” Fakhfakh said.

He said he had agreed with the president to search for a solution through legal and constitutional means, implying that his lineup could be modified.

Ennahdha won more seats than any other party in October’s legislative election, but was still far short of a majority.

Faster

FROM PAGE 16
Jamaican star’s record, commentators have assumed that the farmer would have run 100 metres in 9.55 seconds, which is 0.03 seconds faster than the Olympian’s feat.

India’s junior sports minister Kiren Rijiju Saturday said that authorities have called Gowda to the capital New Delhi for trials under the country’s best coaches.

“Officials from Sports Authority of India (SAI) have contacted him. His rail ticket is done and he will reach SAI centre on Monday. I will ensure top national coaches to conduct his trials properly,” Rijiju wrote on Twitter.

Many users have however cast doubts on his performance, considering the high standards of the Olympics and the help received from the buffaloes, who during the races are lashed together with ropes and outfitted with a plough while a participant matches their speed and controls them.

Gowda is a regular participant in the popular buffalo races held in the farming belts of the southern coastal state during the winter.

“I did not think I would run this fast. The buffaloes were quick and I followed them,” Gowda told reporters.

The sport was briefly banned following petitions by animal rights groups who decried it as cruel, but races resumed in 2017 under government orders.

Form DC-led

FROM PAGE 16
explain as to why their inaction to bar unfit vehicles and unlicensed drivers should not be declared illegal and why directives should not be given to implement the relevant laws, including the Motor Vehicles Ordinance-1983.

During hearing the rule on February 12, the BRTA submitted a report to the HC bench, saying that only 1,65,764 vehicles renewed their fitness certificates till December 30 last year among 4,58,359 that the BRTA had identified to be without valid documents.

Therefore, 2,92,595 vehicles without valid fitness documents are playing the roads since December 30 last year, according to the BRTA report.

The same day, the office of the inspector general of police submitted another report to the HC and said notices had been sent to filling stations so that fuel is not sold to vehicles without valid fitness documents.

Deputy Attorney General Manik placed the report on behalf of the IGP office.

The HC bench on that day set yesterday for passing order on this issue.

KSA sent back

FROM PAGE 16
Brac Migration Programme, said government and non-government organisations’ efforts were needed to provide support to the deportees.

It should be ensured that the workers have jobs in Saudi Arabia and are able to earn more than what they had spent to migrate, he added.

We’re something

FROM PAGE 16
including Twitter and Alphabet’s Google have come under increasing pressure to better combat governments and political groups using their platforms to spread false and misleading information.

Zuckerberg said he now employed 35,000 people to review online content and implement security measures.

Those teams and Facebook’s automated technology currently suspend more than 1 million fake accounts each day, he said, adding that “the vast majority are detected within minutes of signing up.”

“Our budget is bigger today than the whole revenue of the company when we went public in 2012, when we had a billion users,” he said.

“I’m proud of the results but we will definitely have to stay vigilant.”

14 year old charged in stabbing death of New York college student

AFP, New York

A 14-year-old boy has been arrested and charged in the stabbing death of a New York university student, authorities said Saturday, in a case that is being closely watched due to its racial dynamics.

Tessa Majors, 18, a freshman at Barnard College, was attacked by three teens as she walked through Morningside Park on December 11.

The park separates the prestigious Barnard College and Columbia University from Harlem, the predominantly black neighborhood in Manhattan’s northwest.

Majors, who was white, was found just outside the park bleeding heavily, the criminal complaint said. She had been stabbed multiple times in the chest and died at a hospital.

Rashaun Weaver, 14, who is black, was accused of stabbing Majors. He had been wanted for several weeks and was arrested without incident Friday night.

ATTACK ON JOURNO

Fellow journalists demand punishment of attacker

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Journalists in Tangail formed a human chain in the town yesterday, demanding arrest and exemplary punishment to the attacker of journalist Fazlur Rahman, Ghatail upazila correspondent of Bangla Daily Jugantor.

To press home their demand, journalists from different print and electronic media and online portals took part at the hour-long rally held in front of Tangail Press Club yesterday noon.

Speakers at the rally condemned the attack on Fazlur while performing his professional duties and demanded immediate arrest of alleged culprit Haidor Ali, chairman of Ghatail Sadar Union Parishad (UP).

They gave a 24-hour ultimatum to arrest the culprit, otherwise, threatened to go for a tougher agitation.

They also urged the authorities concern to remove Haidor from the chairman post.

Among others, Zafar Ahmed and Kazi Jakerul Maula, president and general secretary of Tangail Press Club respectively, Mohammad Ashraf Ali, former joint secretary of Jatiya Press Club, and Mohammad Nuruzzaman Miah, general secretary of Ghatail Press Club, spoke at the rally.

Mentionable, recently Haidor allegedly cut down some government owned roadside trees and sold those illegally.

On Thursday, journalist Fazlur went to the office of Ghatail upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) and asked his comment over the issue.

Haidor, who was present there at that time, physically assaulted Fazlur in front of the UNO.

Later, injured Fazlur filed a case with Ghatail Police Station against Haidor.



A hill affected by silica sand extraction in Mirzapur area under Sreemangal upazila of Moulvibazar. Below, an earthen road, made for movement of vehicles carrying the item from the area.

PHOTO: MINTUDESHWARA

Hills under threat as silica sand lifting unabated

Official ban fails to prevent unscrupulous men from the callous act

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

Mindless extraction of silica sand in Mirzapur area under Sreemangal upazila of Moulvibazar poses threat to environment and ecology.

A gang of influential sand lifters has destroyed several hills in Gollachipatila in Mirzapur union during the last four months, Jabel Bhuiyan, joint convener of Lawachhara Bon O Jibaboichitra Rokkha Andolon, told this correspondent.

“They are extracting silica by managing some corrupt officials as there is huge demand for silica in the glass factories in Habiganj and other areas,” he said.

A sand lifter, on condition of anonymity, said after selecting a hilly area for silica sand lifting they make a verbal agreement with the relevant local UP member.

Sand Quarry and Soil Management Act, 2012, prohibits sand extraction in a hilly area.

Visiting the area, this correspondent found that hills with thousands of trees are becoming victims due to loosening of earth as a consequence of the sand lifting. Huge piles of silica sand were found near

the spots. A newly-made earthen road was found in Mirzapur area for movement of silica sand carrying vehicles.

Several locals seeking anonymity said local Mirzapur union parishad (UP) member Monu Mia’s son Al Amin and Ronju Mia, a resident of Gollachipatila in Mirzapur union, are involved in illegal sale of silica sand for long, while Ahad Mia, local member of Bunovir UP acts as their accomplice.

Asked about the allegation, Ranju Mia said the hill is his property.

UP member Ahad Mia refuted the allegation against him and said some locals are plotting against him to damage his goodwill.

UP member Monu Mia and his son Al Amin could not be contacted for their comments.

Badrul Huda, assistant director at the Department of Environment (DoE) in Moulvibazar, said they visited Gollachipatila hilly area in Mirzapur union recently and found that silica sand lifting continued there.

“Around a month ago, an official of Bunovir union land office filed a case



against the sand lifters. We issued a notice on January 22, asking Al Amin, Ahad Mia and Ranju Mia to stop silica sand lifting but they have continued the callous act,” he added.

Shah Shaheda Akther, Sylhet divisional coordinator of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela), said, “Following a writ petition from Bela, the High Court earlier ordered leasing for silica extraction 51 spots in Moulvibazar district. The spots include Murachhara, Jaitachhara, Isamotichhara, Bilashchhara, Aliachhara, Naranyanchhara, Udnachhara, Langlichhara, Jagchhara (west), Jagchhara (east) areas belonging to the forest department.”

But some local influential people have continued sand extraction from hilly areas, she added.

Abdul Karim Kim, executive member of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (BAPA), said the continued sand lifting badly affects the environment but the authorities concerned have hardly taken any action.

Additional Deputy Commissioner of Moulvibazar Mamunur Rashid said, “We realized fine of Tk 55 lakh from illegal sand lifters in Sreemangal upazila last year. We need help from all quarters to prevent the illegal sand lifting and preserve our resources.”

Dense fog suspends ferry service for 10 hours

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Ferry services on Shimulia-Kathalbari route in the Padma river resumed yesterday after a suspension of over 10 hours due to poor visibility caused by dense fog.

Abdul Alim, general manager of BWTC at Kathalbari in Madaripur, said after 10:00pm on Saturday, the density of fog started to rise gradually in the river and the ferry services were suspended around 1:00am yesterday. The ferry services resumed around 11:00am as the fog disappeared, he said.

Around 700 vehicles remained stranded on both sides of the ghat.

No Shaheed Minar at 650 Jashore pry schools

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Most of the government primary schools in Jashore are without any Shaheed Minar, a monument to commemorate the martyrs of 1952 Language Movement.

According to Jashore district education office sources, 650 out of 900 government primary schools in Jashore have no Shaheed Minar.

Of 650 schools, 77 are in Sadar upazila, 65 in Bagharpara, 86 in Avaynagar, 84 in Jhikargachha, 60 in Chougachha upazila, 138 in Monirampur, 60 in Sharsha and the rest in Keshabpur upazila.

Students at some of these institutions build makeshift Shaheed Minars to pay tribute to the Language Movement martyrs.

Rahima Khatun, a student of Dattapara Government Primary School in Sadar upazila, said “We can’t pay tribute to the Language Movement martyrs on February 21 every year as there is no Shaheed Minar on the school premises.

Abdul Jabbar, headmaster of the school, said it is true that there is no Shaheed Minar at the school.

They could not construct Shaheed Minar on the institution premises due to lack of fund, said the headmaster.

Sadar Upazila Education Officer Kamruzzaman Jahangir said 77 government primary schools in the upazila have no Shaheed Minar. They have made a list of these institutions and sent it to the district education officer.

ASM Abdul Khalek, the district education officer, said they are trying to manage government funds to construct Shaheed Minars at the schools.

Shammi Islam, additional deputy commissioner of Jashore, said many schools could not construct Shaheed Minars because they have no space.

They will take necessary steps to construct Shaheed Minars at all educational institutions in the district, said Shammi Islam.



Visitors browse through books at a stall during a book fair in Moulvibazar’s Barlekha upazila yesterday. Nazrul Academy, Barlekha unit, organised the day-long fair at Barlekha Girls’ High School premises, about 78 kilometres from Moulvibazar town.

PHOTO: MINTUDESHWARA

Plight of a national hero

MD AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

Khandakar Abdul Malek Shahidullah was only seventeen in 1952 when the wave of protests during the Language Movement shook the country.

That same year, ninth-grader Shahidullah and eight other students of his school, Cooperative High School in Jamalpur’s Dewanganj, were expelled by the authorities for taking part in a procession in Dewanganj town along with a number of other students.

Endorsed by his father, a medical officer of railway in the town, young Shahidullah stood defiant and rejected the offer of reinstatement of his student status at the school by seeking clemency to the school authorities.

The defiant Language Movement veteran went on to become a member of the provincial assembly in 1970 and later on, an organiser of the Liberation War in 1971. When the country’s first president Shaheed Syed Nazrul Islam was president of Awami League’s Greater Mymensingh unit, Shahidullah served as the organising secretary of the unit.

At 85 years of age, this national hero now has nothing but the freedom fighter’s monthly allowance to support his family, residing in Nandibari area of Muktagachha town in Mymensingh, and cover for his medical expenses due to multiple brain strokes that he suffered last year.

Shahidullah’s right arm and leg became paralysed after the first stroke in October, 2019 and he became completely bedridden after the second stroke two months later, on December 13, said his wife Suraiya Malek.

After he suffered the last stroke, he was admitted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital from where he was released 10 days later.

Along with other longstanding



Bedridden language movement veteran Khandakar Abdul Malek Shahidullah looks at a crest at his house in Nandibari area of Muktagachha town in Mymensingh recently.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

health conditions, including respiratory and heart diseases, Shahidullah has been suffering from speech impediment since the last stroke.

Expressing dissatisfaction over the government’s handling of the national heroes of the country, Suraiya said it is beyond imagination that a language movement hero of the country is left in such a miserable state.

“It is beyond our capacity to ensure better treatment for him as the family mainly depends on his monthly freedom fighter’s allowance. The government should take responsibility of Shahidullah’s treatment.”

Khandakar Monjur Malek Sudipta, the youngest son of Shahidullah, said, “On various occasions, we sought national recognition for his contribution to

the Language Movement as well as to the Liberation War, but no one paid heed.”

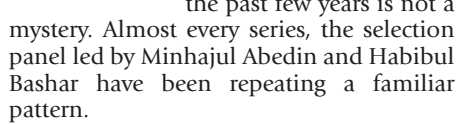
It is painful to watch that a national hero like Shahidullah is passing days without proper treatment while his family members cannot afford better treatment for him, said Abul Kashem, former commander of Muktiyoddha Sangsad’s Muktagachha upazila unit.

Shahidullah was active in social work from a young age and he never pursued affluence for himself or his family, Kashem lamented.


Contacted, Muktagachha Upazila Nirbahi Officer Suborna Sarker, also administrator of Muktiyoddha Sangsad in the upazila, said she visited Shahidullah recently and the government will provide urgent financial assistance for the language movement veteran.



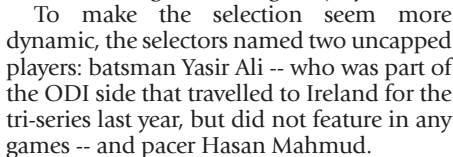
SPORTS REPORTER



Of course, there will be at least one fresh face in the side who will be rated as a player with huge potential by the selectors, at least for the time being.



MINHAJUL ABEDIN
CHIEF SELECTOR



But less than two weeks after Rubel's wayward performance against Pakistan saw him concede 113 runs for three wickets, he was dropped for the upcoming Test against Zimbabwe.

PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ALI JINNAT

Mominul Haque (Capt), Tamim Iqbal,
Saif Hassan, Najmul Hossain Shanto,
Mushfiqur Rahim, Mohammad Mithun,
Liton Das, Taijul Islam, Abu Jayed,
Nayeem Hasan, Ebadat Hossain,
Taskin Ahmed, Mehedi Hasan Miraz,
Mustafizur Rahman, Hasan Mahmud,
Yasir Ali.

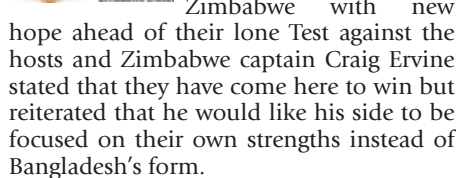
The latest buzzword among selectors and the team management is "continuity" but with the squad being chopped and changed without delivering a clear message to the players about why they were included or excluded, that will be hard to come by.



Fresh inclusion: Saif Hassan
Out: Shakib Al Hasan (banned), Soumya Sarkar,

PHOTO: STAR

SPORTS REPORTER



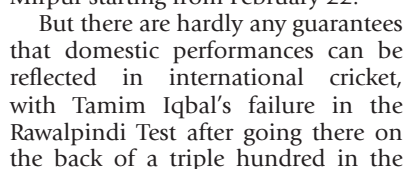
"Putting their [Bangladesh's] results aside, we just have to concentrate on what we need to do. We have got a few new guys

That also raises questions about Al Amin, who according to Minhajul was not fully fit for the Pakistan tour and needed Rubel as a back-up. So, why was a half-fit bowler was

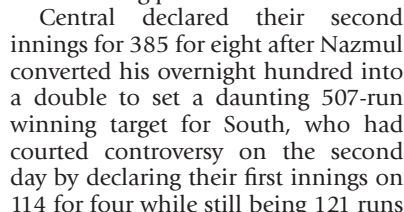
AFP, Centurion

Umpires: Adrian Holdstock (RSA), Allahudien Palekar (RSA)

SPORTS REPORTER



EAST ZONE: First innings 331 all out (Yasir 165, Imrul 76, Afif 26, Nayeem 31; Sunzamul 7-115, Sanjit 3-75)



What to WATCH

STAR SPORTS SELECT 1

English Premier League

Chelsea v Man United

Live from 1:50am (Tuesday)

TEN 2

Serie A

AC Milan v Torino

Live from 1:45am (Tuesday)

DAY'S EVENT

Bangladesh Cricket League

Four-day Match, Day 4

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 Mohammedan

Time: 3:15pm

Venue: Rofique Uddin Bhuiyan Stadium, Mymensingh

IOC, BARCA TWITTER ACCOUNTS HACKED

Twitter said on Saturday that an official Twitter account of the Olympics and the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) media Twitter account had been hacked and temporarily locked. The accounts were hacked through a third-party platform, a spokesperson for the social media platform said in an emailed statement, without giving further details. A spokesperson for the IOC separately said that the IOC was investigating the potential breach. Twitter also said Spanish soccer club FC Barcelona's account faced a similar incident on Saturday.

--- REUTERS



Abahani striker Sunday Chizoba celebrates his opening goal against Bangladesh Police in their Bangladesh Premier League match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday. Abahani won the match 2-0.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Abahani off to winning start

SPORTS REPORTER



Foreign recruits continued dominating the scoresheet of the Bangladesh Premier League Nigerian Sunday Chizoba and Kyrgyzstan's Edgar Bernhardt powered Abahani to a 2-0 win over promoted Bangladesh Police FC at Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Sunday gave Abahani the lead in the 43rd minute before Bernhardt ensured the victory in the 83rd minute, raising the overall goal tally of the league to nine from six matches, all nine coming from nine different foreign players.

The winning start in the league was a relief for six-time champions Abahani following their departure from the prequalifying stage of the AFC Cup last week.

Following a goalless draw in the second leg of that match against Maziya in Male, Abahani coach Mario Lemos urged his forwards to step up. The three forwards -- Sunday, Kervens Belfort and Nabib Newaj Jibon -- worked hard and delivered three points.

Bangladesh Police played with a defensive strategy by deploying five defenders, but failed to keep the Sky Blues at bay for long.

The Dhanmondi giants had a brilliant start and Sunday came close to breaking the deadlock in the eighth minute, but his header off Jibon cross narrowly missed the target while Police also got an opportunity from a sporadic attack but a header from Amirul Islam went over the crosspiece in the

ABAHANI 2 - 0 POLICE
Sunday 43', Bernhardt 83'

29th minute.

Abahani went ahead from a counter-attack as centre-back Tutul Hossain Badsha released a long ball for Belfort, who nutmegged two Police players to give a resulting through-pass to Sunday inside the box and the Nigerian finished it with a grounder in the 43rd minute.

After resumption, Police tried to press Abahani coming out of their defensive shell, allowing Abahani with acres space to exploit. Jibon came close to doubling the lead but goalkeeper Shariful Islam Khan brilliantly saved a point-blank header in the 65th minute before Sunday had a header come off the near post in the 76th minute.

The Dhanmondi-based outfit kept pressing to extend the lead and Sunday once again went close to doubling the lead, but the long-serving Nigerian saw his close-range header off a Belfort effort cleared off the goalline by defender Khan Mohammad Tara in the 78th minute.

Five minutes later, Abahani made the result safe when left-back Saad Uddin ran deep to whip in a cross for Jibon, who however slipped before taking the control of the ball and hit the ball back to onrushing Bernhardt and the Kyrgyz midfielder drove a harmless left-footer which embraced the back of the net.

NATIONAL FOOTBALL C'SHIP

Final round in March

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation has decided to hold the final round of the Bangabandhu National Football Championship in the first week of March with 10 teams -- eight zonal champions and champions and runners-up teams of services zone.

The decision was taken at a meeting of organising committee of the championship yesterday.

The 10 teams, split into two groups, will compete in two separate venues outside Dhaka as the committee wants to hold it in venues where there is no Bangladesh Premier League fixture.

The game's local governing body is also planning to allow more than 10 teams to take part in the upcoming Bangladesh Games even though the number of teams will be decided later, informed BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag.

The teams playing in the final round of Bangabandhu National Football Championship are: Cumilla, Netrokona, Cox's Bazar, Pabna, Rangpur, Khulna, Satkhira, Sylhet, BKSP and Bangladesh Army.

PSG held 4-4 by lowly Amiens

AFP, Amiens



Amiens' Serhou Guirassy scored an injury time equaliser on Saturday to secure a roller-coaster 4-4 draw with a Paris Saint-Germain side without Neymar and Kylian Mbappe ahead of next week's Champions League last 16 tie at Borussia Dortmund.

Relegation-haunted Amiens had been on course for a shock win when they surged into a 3-0 lead after 40 minutes before the French champions clawed their way back to lead 4-3 on the back of Tanguy Kouassi becoming PSG's youngest scorer in 44 years.

Brazil forward Neymar has been sidelined since February 1 with a rib injury while France World Cup winner Mbappe was rested ahead of Tuesday's trip to Germany.

The hosts' boss Luka Elsner made two changes to his side from last Saturday's loss to Monaco as Haitam Aleesami and Bongani Zungu started instead of the suspended Thomas Monconduit and Bakaye Dibassy.

Former French youth international Guirassy opened the scoring after nine minutes before ex-Chelsea midfielder Gael Kakuta doubled the lead 20 minutes later.

Fousseni Diabate, on-loan from Leicester City, made it 3-0 on the 40-minute mark after his low effort was deflected by PSG captain Thiago Silva.

Midfielder Ander Herrera cut the league strugglers' lead seconds before half-time with a side-footed volley.

Tuchel made two changes at the break with Marco Veratti and Marquinhos replacing Idrissa Gueye and Silva.

Teenager Tanguy Kouassi scored his first senior goal after an hour from a Julian Draxler header to become PSG's youngest goal scorer since Lionel Justier in 1976.

The 17-year-old holding midfielder, who remains on an academy contract with the Parisians, equalised five minutes later from an Angel Di Maria as PSG pushed on.

The visitors thought they had completed a huge comeback as Juan Bernat found Mauro Icardi at the back-post and the on-loan forward hit his 19th goal of the season.

But after one minute of injury time, Guirassy was fed by winger Quentin Cornette to equalise for his eighth effort of the campaign.

Klopp revels in 'insane' 25-point lead

AFP, London



Jürgen Klopp described his team's 25-point lead at the top of the Premier League as "insane" after Sadio Mane struck to give Liverpool a 1-0 win at storm-hit Norwich on Saturday.

The champions-elect were short of their fluent best in blustery conditions caused by Storm Dennis at Carrow Road but returned immediately to winning ways after their winter break.

They have now gone 43 top-flight matches unbeaten, just six behind Arsenal's record of 49 games in 2003-04 and are sprinting towards their first league title for 30 years.

Liverpool have earned 103 points from the past 105 available to them in the Premier League, winning 34 of their past 35 matches, and have one more point -- 76 -- than Manchester United accrued in winning the league in 1996/97.

Klopp said the wind and Norwich's organisation made it a tricky game but that his players remained calm.

"I could tell in all the players' faces that they weren't nervous, they were enjoying it, and if one team was going to score it was going to be us," he told Sky Sports.

"We protected against the counter-attack well too. It's really all about these wonderful football players.

"The gap is so insane, I don't really understand it. I'm not smart enough. I've not had that before. It's outstanding, it's so difficult. I go back



Sadio Mane scored in the 78th minute of their Premier League fixture against Norwich City on Saturday to drive Liverpool to a 25-point lead at the top.

PHOTO: REUTERS

into the changing room and we chat about the things and then I'm like 'oh, but congratulations. We won the game, another three points.'

The result leaves Daniel Farke's Norwich rooted to the bottom of the table, six points behind 19th-placed Watford. They look set for an immediate return to the Championship despite their battling performance.

Klopp brought back midfielder Naby Keita for his first start in a Premier League match since December and Mane was on the bench as Liverpool

started full of confidence.

The visitors controlled possession in the early stages without creating many clear-cut openings but Norwich managed some brief spells of attractive passing football themselves.

Just when it seemed Norwich could become only the second team this season, after Manchester United, to deny Liverpool all three points, Mane broke the deadlock.

The second-half substitute controlled a long ball from Henderson with his right foot in the 78th minute before lashing home with his left.

India to play D/N Test in Australia

PTI, New Delhi

India will play a day-night Test during their much-anticipated tour of Australia later this year, BCCI president Sourav Ganguly said on Sunday.

This comes a month after captain Virat Kohli asserted that his team was ready to play a day-night Test anywhere in Australia.

"Yes, India will play a day-night Test in Australia. A formal announcement will be made soon," BCCI president Sourav Ganguly told PTI.

Ganguly also said that the second Test of the next home series against England will be a day-night affair.

Dhaka Half Marathon on Feb 28

SPORTS REPORTER

A press conference announcing the third edition of the Glaxo-D Dhaka Half Marathon 2020 was held at a city hotel yesterday. The event will be held on February 28 with 2000 participants.

The Dhaka Run Lords, an organization that aims to inspire people from all walks of life through running, is organizing this annual event in association with GSK Bangladesh.

Dortmund's 'Yellow Wall' in wait for PSG

AFP, Dortmund



Packed with passionate home fans, Borussia Dortmund's imposing south stand -- dubbed 'The Yellow Wall' -- is the 'gigantic monster' lurking to test Paris Saint-Germain stars like Neymar and Kylian Mbappe in the Champions League on Tuesday.

"It's just a fantastic feeling that I haven't had before," is how Dortmund's star striker Erling Braut Haaland described scoring in front of 'Die Gelbe Wand' (The Yellow Wall) at Signal Iduna Park.

The 19-year-old has bagged nine goals in six games since Dortmund snapped him up for 20 million euros (\$22 million) from Salzburg.

Five of them have come in his three home appearances games, including one in the 4-0 thrashing of Frankfurt on Friday.

"If you are the opposition, it crushes you -- but if you have her at your back as a goalkeeper, it's a fantastic feeling," is how ex-Dortmund shot-stopper Roman Weidenfeller describes the experience of the imposing terrace.

For Bundesliga games, the south stand, which is 100 metres (328 feet) wide and 40 metres high, is packed with 25,000 fans, but capacity is reduced to 16,000 to

meet UEFA regulations for Champions League games.

Nevertheless, the noise will be deafening when the Dortmund team walk out for Tuesday's last 16, first leg tie.

PSG boss Thomas Tuchel, who coached Dortmund for two seasons until 2017, knows what to expect.

"We have a few boys used to the

stadiums of this world and whom I trust to play their best, on this stage as well," the 46-year-old told German daily Welt on Sunday.

"I know very well what energy is waiting for us there."

"Just look at the south stand in Dortmund," Johnny Rotten, lead singer of British punk band The Sex Pistols has

said on the matter.

"They all stand, chant and make such a noise that the stand seems like the pharynx of some huge, roaring monster. It's fantastic."

Dortmund fan Max Kiwit, 27, told AFP why he is a regular on 'The Yellow Wall'.

"Because here, everyone can let go of their emotions. No one will complain if they get elbowed in the head" or if they get showered by beer when Dortmund score to send thousands of plastic cups flying, he said with a smile.

Season tickets for the south stand start at 219 euros (\$237), but are often passed down from generation to generation.

The waiting list is often counted in years, as Max's girlfriend Sabrina Rupp discovered to her cost.

"Until I was 13, I had a season ticket," she admits regretfully.

"I gave it back, and that's the worst mistake you can make, because after that it's almost impossible to get it back."

'The Yellow Wall' is often described as the beating heart of Signal Iduna Park.

It's from there that designated fans lead the chants, yelling into megaphones while drummers beat out the rhythm.

The fans in the south stand sees themselves as the 12th man of the Dortmund team.



Terengganu yet to get prize money

SPORTS REPORTER



Three-and-a-half months after the completion of the 3rd Sheikh Kamal International Club Cup, champions Terengganu FC are seeking intervention of Bangladesh Football Federation to get their championship money worth 50,000 US

dollars.

The third edition of the international club tournament, organised by Chattogram Abahani, was held in the port city from October 19 to 31. The Malaysian clinched the title, beating hosts Chattogram Abahani 2-1 in the final.

"Terengganu FC informed us the matter verbally a couple of days ago and we have requested hosts Chattogram Abahani to settle the matter immediately," BFF general secretary Abu Nayeem Shohag said yesterday. "Chattogram Abahani's secretary general Shamsul Haque Chowdhury told me that they are taking initiatives to clear the prize money."

Tarafder Ruhul Amin, vice-president of the club and chief coordinator of the tournament, said that they could not clear the prize-money due to shortage of sponsorship money but they would try to clear it within a short time.

"We timely cleared the prize money to the champions in the first two editions, but this time we haven't got the full money from the sponsors. However, we are in touch with them [Terengganu FC] and hope to clear the money within the next week whether or not we get sponsorship money," Amin told reporters.

It may be mentioned here that the game's local governing body, BFF, had early taken nearly one-and-a-half years to pay the championship money to Bangabandhu Gold Cup champions Nepal.



PADMA BRIDGE RAIL LINK PROJECT
IS BEING BUILT WITH BSRM

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



GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS
RECORD HOLDER

GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS
RECOGNIZES

World's Largest VRM

SHAH CEMENT

UNFIT VEHICLES ON ROADS

Form DC-led taskforce in all districts

HC asks government

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the government to form taskforce in all districts, led by deputy commissioners, to stop unregistered and unfit vehicles plying the road.

Secretaries to the ministries of public administration, home affairs, and road transport and bridges have been asked to take necessary steps to form the taskforce in line with the Road Transport Act-2018.

The HC directed appropriate legal actions include seizing, stopping, and impounding of unfit and unregistered vehicles.

The court also ordered the authorities concerned to submit reports after complying with the directives within the next three months.

The bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice KM Hafizul Alam also set June 1 for passing further order on this issue, Deputy Attorney General AKM Amin Uddin Manik told The Daily Star.

He said each taskforce would be comprised of deputy commissioner, concerned executive magistrate, representatives from the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA), and police.

On March 27 last year, the same bench issued a rule after a report was published in this newspaper on March 23 under the headline "No fitness docs, yet running".

In the rule, it asked the authorities concerned to

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6



These threewheelers, with their polluting two-stroke engines, ply the streets in the city's Lalbagh area. They have been banned in the city and have no fitness certificates whatsoever. They have no turn signals and no number plates, just a few numbers painted on by their owners. Yet these vehicles were seen carrying passengers, inset, yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



Ex-minister Rahmat Ali passes away

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Former state minister, freedom fighter, and Awami League lawmaker of Gazipur-3 Rahmat Ali passed away yesterday morning.

He was 74.

Rahmat Ali, who was undergoing treatment at Square Hospitals in Dhaka, breathed his last around 7:35am, said Harun-or-Rashid Farid, former assistant secretary of Jubo League.

Rahmat, who was also an AL advisory council member, had been suffering from kidney ailments, diabetes, cardiac problems, and old-age complications for a long time, Harun added.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1
PHOTO ON PAGE 3

'We're something between telco and newspaper'

Says Facebook's Zuckerberg

REUTERS, Munich

Online content should be regulated with a system somewhere between the existing rules used for the telecoms and media industries, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg told global leaders and security chiefs on Saturday.

Speaking at the Munich Security Conference in Germany, Zuckerberg said Facebook had improved its work countering online election interference, and expanded on his previous calls for regulation of social media firms.

"I do think that there should be regulation on harmful content ... there's a question about which framework you use for this," Zuckerberg said during a question and answer session.

"Right now there are two frameworks that I think people have for existing industries - there's like newspapers and existing media, and then there's the telco-type model, which is 'the data just flows through you', but you're not going to hold a telco responsible if someone says something harmful on a phone line."

"I actually think where we should be is somewhere in between," he said.

Facebook and social media giants

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

'Workers will share profit of industries'



Bangabandhu having a conversation with the members of the AL working committee on February 17, 1972.

FEBRUARY 17, 1972
SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

FIRST MEETING OF AL WORKING COMMITTEE

The working committee of Awami League, in its first meeting after the Liberation War held in Dhaka today, discusses the political and economic situation in the country and matters relating to the party. The meeting was presided over by the party chief and Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The meeting adopts a resolution condoling the martyrs who laid down their lives in the struggle for independence and prays for the peace of the departed souls.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2



'We can't keep our eyes closed to this'

Says SC concerned over turmoil in banking sector

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday expressed concern over the situation in the country's banking sector, and wanted to know the state of International Leasing and Financial Services Limited (ILFSL), a non-banking financial institution.

The apex court asked former Bangladesh Bank deputy governor Khondker Ibrahim Khaled, who has been appointed as an independent chairman of ILFSL by the High Court, to explain the condition of the organisation in writing.

It also asked an official of the central bank, not below the rank of executive director, to appear before it at 9:00am on February 25.

It said the condition of

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Faster than Usain Bolt!



AFP, New Delhi

A farmer from India has allegedly beaten Usain Bolt's 100 metre sprint record - with the help of two huge buffaloes.

Srinivasa Gowda, from Karnataka, has since been called up for national trials after he set an incredible time of 9.55 seconds.

On a track of muddy slush, Srinivas ran 142.50 metres in 13.62 seconds on January 31, setting a record in the traditional buffalo race known as Kambala held every year in southern Karnataka state.

The 28-year-old farmer has since become a sensation after people praised him on social media and compared him to retired Jamaican sprint superstar Bolt, who is the world's fastest man for his record run of 100 meters in 9.58 seconds.

Comparing Gowda's performance with the

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

Man killed, 9 hurt in boiler explosion

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

A man was killed and nine others were injured as a boiler exploded at a rice mill in Sadar upazila of Thakurgaon yesterday.

The dead is Solaman Ali, 38, son of Abbas Ali of Rajagaon village in the upazila.

Mosharul Islam, chairman of the local union parishad, said the boiler of the rice mill exploded around 10:00am. Solaman died on the spot.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1



PRAYER TIMING FEBRUARY 17

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

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

KSA sent back 5,594 in 45 days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Saudi Arabia has deported 5,594 Bangladeshi migrant workers, including 300 women, in the last one and a half months, according to Brac Migration Programme.

This month alone, the country deported 1,959, including the 145 who arrived at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport around 12:15am on Saturday.

Immediately after their arrival, Brac and Prabashi Kalyan Desk of the expatriates' welfare ministry gave them water and snacks.

Many of the workers returned empty-handed and within months of their migration, officials said.

On Wednesday and Thursday nights, at least 285 migrant workers, including 20 women, arrived in Dhaka from Saudi Arabia.

At least 25,789 Bangladeshis were deported by the Gulf country last year.

Shariful Hasan, head of

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6



A fire in Narayanganj's Isdair Bazar burns down at least 50 shanties and warehouses for storing garment factory waste early yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

UNDOCUMENTED BANGLADESHIS IN KSA

5,600 seek repatriation

JAMIL MAHMUD

Around 5,600 undocumented Bangladeshi migrant workers in Saudi Arabia have applied for their repatriation under a special exit programme.

In December last year, the government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) launched the programme offering illegal migrants a safe return to their home countries.

After the programme was launched, some 3,599 Bangladeshis applied via Bangladesh Embassy in Riyadh while around 2,000 more applied via Bangladesh Consulate General in Jeddah, said Bangladeshi officials in KSA.

All the applications were submitted to labour offices concerned in the KSA for further processing, officials said.

Following a directive by the KSA, Bangladesh mission there started receiving applications from eligible migrants on December 22.

Migrants who work in different companies without residence permit and have been declared absconding are eligible for the opportunity, read a notice of the Bangladesh mission in Jeddah.

Besides, those who had earlier received an exit permit from their sponsors but did not leave the Gulf country on time will also have the opportunity to return home under the programme, it added.

The special exit programme can be availed by any foreign workers in the KSA.

Under this programme, migrants will have to return home on their own within 15 days of obtaining the exit visa, read another notice issued by the Bangladesh mission.

As per the initiative, officials at Bangladesh embassy

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2